



Friends of Droxford Church

www.friendsofdroxfordchurch.org.uk

Registered Charity No 284744

Droxford Community Hub and Heritage Centre

Chairman's Report 2018-19

This was the most exciting year in the seven year history of the project to restore and enhance the church in Droxford, when we finally built the Community Annex to provide the toilet and kitchen facilities essential to the sustainable future of this Grade-1 listed Norman church. We launched an Appeal to the local community in October 2018, for £75,000 to allow us to complete the annex. Following a tremendous response to the Gift Day on 2nd December 2018, we had raised sufficient funds to appoint a main contractor (Jason Williams) in January 2019. Progress was rapid and by March the exterior walls and the roof were complete, with the flint walls and pitched roof blending well with the existing building and attracting favourable comments from passers-by.

By early March the Appeal had raised £57,000, or 75% of our target. Very many thanks to all those families and individuals who have generously donated – without whom we would not have been able to complete the construction phase. The Appeal remained open until 30 June 2019, to help fund fitting out and equipping the Community Café and the Heritage Centre.

In addition to individual donors and many fund-raisers, we gratefully acknowledge the grants received from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Hampshire County Council, Garfield Weston Foundation, South Downs National Park, Allchurches Trust, Headley Trust, Droxford PCC, and the Droxford Country Fair.

AGM – Friends AGM was held on **Thursday 25th April** at 7pm in Droxford church.

Country Fair, Saturday 1st June

Both the Friends and the PCC supported the Country Fair on Saturday 1st June, and a ‘ribbon cutting’ ceremony to mark the completion of the construction phase of the Hub Annex.

Wilfrid's – the Café on the Meon

The Community Cafe was a key part of the overall project business plan and a key deliverable for our two major funders, the National Lottery Heritage Fund and

Hampshire County Council. On Fair Day, Wilfrid's Café volunteers served tea and biscuits in the North Chapel to give a foretaste of what the Café would offer the community and receive feedback. The original plan was to open the Café regularly from September, but owing to delays to fitting out the annex and cafe area the Opening was delayed to January 2020.

Heritage Centre

The Heritage Centre was an integral part of the main Lottery Heritage Fund project, and was also supported by the South Downs National Park. It has been designed to display the history of Droxford's church and community from Saxon times to the 20th Century. The displays were installed in the North Aisle in December 2019. Highlights include John of Droxford, Chancellor of England in the early 14th Century, and Churchill's visit to Droxford Railway Station before D-Day in 1944.

Management and Finance

The year ended in September 2019 with the successful completion of the most important building project in our church for more than 100 years – on budget and to universal approval of its architectural congruence with the mediaeval church. We are hugely indebted to two of our Trustees John Dryden Brownlee (Architect) and Tony Hoile (Project Manager) for designing and managing this complex project so effectively. The operating budget was unexpectedly tightened midway through the construction phase when a major private donor withdrew his support on account of a change in his personal circumstances. Consequently the FODC ended the year with very low reserves but still cash positive thanks to diligent management of the project and careful husbanding of our funds by our Treasurer, Nick Capon.

More information

As usual more information is available on our website www.FriendsofDroxfordChurch.org.uk, or on Facebook, search 'Droxford Community Hub and Heritage Centre'.

John Symes
Chairman, FODC.