Registered Charity No. 1160314

The Friends of St Peter's Newsletter

Number 25 – Autumn 2026

Introduction by the Chairman of the Trustees

Thank you for supporting the work of the Friends of St Peter's. This is, on the whole, a really 'good news' edition of our newsletter. We have news about the successful repairs of the North Transept and vestry roofs, and great news about the funds being raised through a monthly market on the High Street.

I'm grateful to the Trustees of the Friends of St Peter's and to all our members for the great support you give us in so many ways. We are currently looking for a new Treasurer to succeed Steve Elliff, who has done outstanding work for the Friends; you can find more details in this newsletter.

by Father Stuart Owen

Christmas Services

Here is a list of the services at St Peter's church over the Christmas period:

Advent Carol Service – Sun 29th Nov 6pm

The Town Carol Service (with Bridgewater School choir) - Sat 12th Dec 6pm

A Service of Lessons and Carols - Sun 13th Dec 6pm

A Christmas Bedtime Story - Sun 20th Dec 4pm

Crib Services - Thurs 24th Dec 3pm and 5pm

Midnight Mass - Thurs 24th Dec 11.30pm

Christmas Morning Eucharist - Fri 25th Dec 9.30am

New! Late Night Shopping Event 3rd December 6pm to 9pm

Shops in Berkhamsted will be staying open later with music and entertainment provided by the Town Council. Don't miss this opportunity to find some Christmas Gifts – or just to treat yourself!



Roof Repairs

2026 began with much needed repairs to the North Transept and vestry roofs.



There had been a roof leak above the door in the North Transept for some time, and staining is still visible on the memorial above the door. The leak in the vestry was more recent but was rapidly worsening, and sometimes when it rained heavily the water could be seen pouring down the wall onto the surface below.

The North Transept and Lady Chapel were 'out of bounds' for several months while the repairs were completed. Thankfully, there were no 'nasty surprises' discovered during the course of the works, which were completed on time and within budget.



The works cost in excess of £50,000 plus VAT.

Up until recently we would have been able to reclaim the VAT on these essential works, but following the government's decision to suspend the Listed Place of Worship Grant Scheme that help was no longer available, adding a further 20% to the total cost to St Peter's of these repairs.



One Year of the Artisan Market

The Friends of St Peter's owes a debt of gratitude to Anne Foster who became a Trustee in July 2025. She immediately began thinking of ways to raise funds for the Friends and hit on the idea of running a Sunday market, noting that there was no existing market in Berkhamsted on the second Sunday of the month. No sooner had she thought of the idea than she was making arrangements for the first market. She made contacts with potential stallholders, did the organising, publicity, banners – in fact everything that needed to be done. The first market was held in October 2025, and she has never looked back. There is no stopping this lady!

Thanks also go to Paul Crosland for his invaluable help in setting up the market each month.

Here are Anne's reflections on the first anniversary of the market.

Reflections on a year of Artisan Markets

October marks 12 months since it first seemed like a good — if slightly mad — idea to run a regular Sunday Market as a fundraiser for FoSP. One year on, the market has raised around £12,000 and welcomed more than 130 different stallholders.

Behind the Scenes



I am not sure I fully realised what would be involved when we started, but it has certainly been an interesting experience. I owe many thanks to Adam, who ran the Antiques and Vintage Market and is now running his new venture in the old Lussmans premises. It is a beautiful shop, so do cross the road and have a browse.

From setting up a website and getting to grips with social media — Instagram, Facebook and even a dabble in TikTok — to distributing flyers, putting up and taking down banners around the town, and maintaining a database of stallholders, there has been plenty to learn. Dealing almost daily with booking requests has become part of the routine.

From nothing, we now have 135 stallholders registered with us. Some come to every market, some join us occasionally, and a few have decided it was not for them — but the range and quality of stalls has continued to grow.

The market on 11th October promises to be our biggest yet.* At the time of writing, 52 stalls are registered, stretching along the High Street from Dickmans, west of the traffic lights, and east of Tesco towards the church.

* and it proved to be so.

Weather, Wind and Gazebos

I hesitate to write this, but so far we have not had a wet market. We did, however, have a windy one in May — and wind and gazebos are not a good combination. Although gazebos are weighted with at least 12.5kg per leg, the quality of the gazebo is also important.

That day, gazebos were wrecked, tables lifted, glass broken and jewellery strewn across the road. I was one very frazzled organiser. I have now added an anemometer to my market kit so that I can check wind speeds and cancel if they reach 35mph.

The Market Kit

The market kit has grown over the months. It now includes cable ties, direction boards, rope for tying in gazebos, wood blocks to support tables on sloping areas, scissors, masking tape, sticky fixers, a hammer, screwdriver, extension lead, pitchmarkers, chalk, a one-metre measure, dustpan and brush, bin bags and gloves for litter picking the High Street before the market.

Last but not least, there are clipboards with lists of stallholders in pitch and name order, so that the doughty Paul Crosland and I can deal with location queries on the day.

Market Day

A market organiser's day — with no problem doing 10,000 steps — starts with an alarm at 5.45am. The morning begins with putting out pitch markers, litter picking the High Street and dealing with overflowing bins before the stallholders start arriving at 7am. The day ends around 6pm, after taking down advertising boards and making sure the High Street is left tidy. My thanks go to my fellow trustee, Paul Crosland — a tall person, unlike me — who always comes down to help with any issues and assist stallholders who have trouble putting up their gazebos.

Come and Explore

Do come and explore the market. We are on the High Street on the second Sunday of each month from March to December, with an amazing range of products and lovely stallholders who are always happy to explain how they do what they do — and often give you a demonstration.

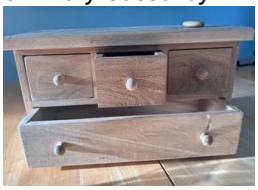
I am just there to organise — but my collection of purchases (see below) is growing!



Art from Mary Casserley



Hand printed and hand made bag from Michelle Tippet



Oak Chest from Gordon Afford



Vase from Sally Dorrity

Rectory Lane Cemetery

Berkhamsted achieved major success at the annual RHS Anglia in Bloom 2026 awards last month – in its first year of participating. Following the judges' visit in July, the town secured **Hertfordshire County Champion** (Best Town in Hertfordshire) and a **Silver Gilt Award** in the highly competitive Large Town category!

The Rectory Lane Ranger, Kate Campbell, along with others from the Berkhamsted in Bloom team, were presented with certificates and engraved wooden bowls to mark their awards.



The Friends of St Peter's **Rectory Lane Cemetery** won the **Special Award for Best Community Project** – a real coup in a region which covers Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Bedfordshire as well as Hertfordshire.



Whilst the judges were impressed with all eleven of the gardens they visited and the passion, enthusiasm and knowledge of the gardeners, Rectory Lane Cemetery was singled out for special praise, declaring that "*they had never seen anything like it!*" and it "*had a great range of planting with lots of wildflower areas and planting in many unusual areas, also lots of trees and hedges all well-managed… wildlife areas and ponds and a compost area which is very well managed and then sold and bee hives producing and selling honey and all run by volunteers... a wonderful community managing the area, with such a great group having so many new ideas and great ways to recycle just about everything*".

Kate, who is also on the Berkhamsted In Bloom steering group, says *"I guess by 'planting in many unusual areas' they mean our fabulous grave gardening initiative, in which neglected graves are transformed into colourful, uplifting flowerbeds! We had a great turnout of volunteers on the judging day and they couldn't fail to be bowled over by all the passion and enthusiasm they encountered. They also met and chatted to people passing through the Cemetery at the time – including Tracey on her mobility scooter who vouched for the brilliant accessible paths she used every day*".

Anglia In Bloom also nominated Rectory Lane Cemetery for the **National RHS In Bloom Community Project Award**, but it was not to be – this first year.



We hope that more volunteers will be inspired to join both Rectory Lane Cemetery and Berkhamsted In Bloom. Plans are already afoot to build on this success, starting with a Family Bulb Planting session in November. Get in touch team@rectorylanecemetery.org.uk or berkhamstedinbloom@gmail.com



Rectory Lane Cemetery continues to provide a welcome space for members of the local community – as a place for reflection, relaxation, socialising, exercising, communing with nature, and commemoration. If you are interested in becoming a part of this amazing project, then do come along and chat to us at the Mad Squirrel event shown above.

By Kate Campbell

The Search for a New Treasurer

We are currently looking for a new Treasurer for the Friends of St Peter's. The role involves:

- Making payments as requested
- Banking of any cash takings from events (Hemel NatWest or Post Office)
- Periodical update of the Excel finance file for receipts and payments
- Preparing brief Financial Reports for Trustees' meetings
- Annual task to create new tabs in the Finance Excel file for a summary page and transactions list for the new financial year
- Supplying physical accounts file and Excel file to Dux Advisory for the annual audit (Amersham House, Berkhamsted)
- Request Father Stuart to supply a new Chair's Statement for the accounts
- Responding to audit queries from Dux Advisory
- Arrange for accounts and management letter to be signed once audit completed
- Completion of the Charities Commission Annual Return and filing of accounts
- Maintaining the Charities Commission records of Trustee details

This may look a daunting list of tasks, but the current Treasurer assures us that it is all very manageable.

If you would be interested in possibly helping us with this important role, please contact the Chair of Trustees: fr.stuart@gmail.com

Our current Treasurer is committed to ensuring a good handover to his successor, so you will be well supported on taking up the role.

A Parish Pilgrimage

Last Saturday, October 16th, Fr Stuart led a small group of St Peter's people on a walk to Aldbury. The 10-mile round trip in blazing October sunshine reached the beautiful church of St John the Baptist, Aldbury, where the pilgrims received a very warm welcome from Aldbury parishioners. The plan is to do three pilgrimages in the year, of different distances, so there's an opportunity to take part for people with a range of abilities.



St Peter's pilgrims

Become a Friend

To join the Friends please use this application form (or a photocopy of it). Alternatively, you can download an Application Form from the Friends website:
www.stpetersberkhamstedfriends.org.uk

Personal Details:

Title:
Full Name:
Address: Postcode:
Telephone:
Email:

Subscriptions

Individual	£12
Family	£20
Corporate	£50

Gift Aid
My subscription payments **should/should not** be treated as Gift Aid donations (delete as appropriate)

Bankers Standing Order

Bank Name:
Bank Address: Postcode:

Please pay The Friends of St Peter's Church Great Berkhamsted, A/c No. 64109216, NatWest Bank (60-02-21) the sum of:

£	Amount in words

Beginning on :

Date:

and annually thereafter until further notice, charging my account:

Account Name:
Sort Code:
Account Number:

Date:

Signature:

Please return this form to: Paul Crosland,
11 Upper Hall Park, Berkhamsted, HP4 2NW