



Registered Charity No. 1160314

The Friends of St Peter's Newsletter

Number 23 – Autumn 2024

Introduction by the Chairman of the Trustees

As you can see from the photograph we had a small section of ceiling fall in the North Transept recently. Although such falls can feel quite dramatic, the sobering truth is that the real drama is almost certainly going on out of sight. The fundraising needed to make St Peter's watertight again will take time, and of course as time passes so too the damage being done to the building increases. We're currently taking advice on various forms of temporary 'patching up' to reduce the damage being caused by heavy rainfall.



Buckets like these are appearing in several places in the church

In the meantime, if you could be evangelical about letting people know that St Peter's could do with their support at this time, and as ever, let them know that we're always looking for new friends:

<https://www.stpetersberkhamstedfriends.org.uk/get-involved/join/>

Fr Stuart Owen (rector@greatberkhamsted.org.uk)

St Peter's Church Repair and Renewal

Why we need an Appeal

The PCC is now committed to a major programme of repair and renewal to deal with problems affecting the fabric of St Peter's Church and the Court House. This is a once in a generation opportunity to make these buildings weather-proof, structurally sound and ideally ordered to serve the community of Berkhamsted. A committee has been formed to take forward the work needed to initiate and manage this challenging task. The role of the committee is twofold – firstly, to arrange a professional assessment of the work that is needed and the likely costs; and secondly, to seek professional involvement to expedite the necessary fund-raising.

One of the first tasks of the committee has been to confirm the main elements of the work that is needed, based on recommendations in the Quinquennial Report prepared in 2020 and on day-to-day experience of caring for the church and Court House.

St Peter's Church

Here the main concerns are the state of the roofs and the structural stability of the Lady Chapel. In the church, leaking rainwater is a serious problem in four areas:

1. *St John's Chantry* - Copper roof with long history of defects that allow substantial ingress of rainwater with increasing regularity.
2. *South Aisle* - Copper roof, continuous with the Chantry roof and subject to similar shortcomings though less severe and less frequent.
3. *St Catherine's Chapel* - Copper roof with leaks in several places, recently becoming more frequent.



Damage in St Catherine's Chapel

4. *North Transept* - Lead roof with longstanding intermittent leaks, recently becoming more frequent and causing damage to the plaster ceiling.



Damage in the North Transept

All these roofs have been inspected at various times in recent years by roofing contractors and repairs have been effected where problems could be identified. The fact remains however that the problems outlined above have continued to recur with increasing severity and regularity. The intention is therefore to replace all these roofs and make good as necessary any defects in the supporting timber and stonework. At the same time there will be an opportunity to install solar panels where planning regulations permit and this development will make possible the introduction of a new and more efficient heating system in the church. *Continued overleaf...*

In the Lady Chapel the most conspicuous evidence of instability is a visible gap between the east wall and the stone vault of the ceiling. In addition, the octagonal pillar between the Lady Chapel and the North Transept is no longer upright. Monitoring over a period of fifteen years has recorded the outward movement of the east wall and the movement of the pillar. Measures to control these movements are needed. Associated problems exist above the stone vault of the Lady Chapel ceiling.

A substantial volume of rubble is present here resting on the vault and must be removed; and timbers supporting the roof are seriously decayed and must be repaired or replaced.

The Court House

Here the main concerns are the state of the roof and the general condition of the older part of the building, particularly how far it remains serviceable as a community resource.



The tile roof is suffering progressive deterioration and needs to be completely renewed which will provide an opportunity to introduce much needed insulation. Interior re-ordering will extend the existing mezzanine floor to provide a complete and fully independent upper floor. Further improvements to the performance of the building and its viability as a community resource will be achieved by replacing the existing windows and creating a draught-proof outer porch.

The Appeal

The scope of the proposed work and the likely costs have yet to be professionally assessed. However, on the basis of budget figures already provided by contractors for part of the work, the Appeal Committee has set a provisional target of £1m for the Appeal. An approach will be made to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a major part of this sum, but a wide range of other initiatives will be needed to continue the fund-raising that began earlier this year and has already raised a sum in excess of £30,000.

If you value these buildings, please go to the parish website and make a donation

www.stpetersberkhamsted.org.uk

A Concert to Support Ukrainian Children and the St Peter's Appeal

We are pleased to announce that a concert will be held in St Peter's Church on November 9th 2024 at 7.00 p.m. in support of Ukrainian children and the St Peter's Roof Fund. It is entitled "Back to the Future" and will showcase the neoclassical music of Ukrainian pianist Yaroslav Oliinyk.

Yaroslav is an acclaimed young composer and pianist from the Ukraine, but is now based in England. He graduated from the P.I. Tchaikovsky National Music Academy of Ukraine, and has performed solo concerts in Ukraine and internationally.



Yaroslav Oliinyk

He has earned numerous awards in prestigious piano competitions in Ukraine, France, The Czech Republic, Spain and Italy, and has released three critically acclaimed albums of original music.

Joining Yaroslav on stage will be Alex Smirnov, a gifted Ukrainian saxophonist and flautist with over 20 years of international performance experience.



Alex Smirnov

Tickets cost £12 (U18 free) and may be purchased online and on the door, or from Brown and Merry Estate Agents, Berkhamsted.



Rectory Lane Cemetery

It has been a very busy summer in Rectory Lane Cemetery with a lot of events held, and many visitors impressed with the lovely peaceful surroundings. It has changed hugely since the beginning of the project which was **ten years** ago!

Many thanks must be given to James Moir and Kate Campbell, whose tireless work has guided the project to a very successful conclusion. Their team of volunteers has helped develop the site and continues to maintain and improve it year by year. It is a place for all to enjoy the peace and quiet in the centre of a busy town.



The Project Launch – releasing doves

Congratulations to the Rectory Lane Cemetery Team in winning the Green Flag Community Award once again - an unbroken run of four years! It is thought that the cemetery is one of only seven volunteer-run cemeteries awarded in the UK.



Celebrating the Green Flag Award



It's not everyday that a completely new memorial appears in the Cemetery and we are so pleased that a new Commonwealth War Graves Commission headstone has been installed to commemorate Albert Dollimore, a Private in the Army Service Corps who died in 1918.

The wild flower areas have come into their own this summer, and together with the wonderful work of the grave adopters, have produced a beautiful and colourful environment.



Beautiful planted graves

Efforts to encourage more biodiversity through our planting are paying off, as Chris Ridley from the Halsey Field Local Wildlife Site found when she undertook her regular butterfly walk and observed 24 butterflies mainly in the wild area.

Events:

In June a **Great Big Nature Hunt**, put on as part of Berkhamsted's Great Big Green Week in June. Sixty families attended the event and they loved discovering all the wildlife. Visitors also enjoyed following the trail by Books in the Woods outdoor playgroup, hearing about how wildlife is represented on some of our headstones.



Talk at the Great Big Nature Hunt

The Heritage Open Days took place in early September. Chris Dolton put together an interesting tour entitled ***By Road, Rail and Water - to the ultimate destination!*** It took in the stories of some of those buried here whose everyday lives and roles threw a light on bygone Berkhamsted: burials connected with the canals, railways and roads of bygone Berkhamsted. The tour was offered on two separate afternoons and both were much appreciated by the visitors.



Visitors to the Heritage Open Days

Rectory Lane Cemetery continued

The first Heritage Open Day tour was attended by Charlie Jarrett and his colleagues from Malcolm Jones & Metcalfe Funeral Directors who had pulled a 1930s funeral bier from their premises to Rectory Lane, in order to donate it to the project.



Other Cemetery Activities



Thirteen scouts from 1st Gossoms End (aged between 11 and 13) showed what they were made of by turning up on a really wet evening to help - and apparently had a great time! They were set an

ambitious set of tasks but they got stuck in enthusiastically and completed them all, with the aid of head torches.

The Hospice of St Francis includes the Cemetery in their programme of **Wellbeing Walks** each year, bringing people for a tour and then refreshments and to benefit from being in a beautiful natural space. This week, they linked with local charity **Herts Welcomes Refugees** to bring a group of refugees and asylum seekers by bus from where they are staying in Hemel Hempstead.

People from Iraq, Afghanistan, Sudan, South Sudan and Eritrea were welcomed and given a tour. It must have been an unusual, but hopefully welcome, afternoon - spending time here. During their tour there was discussion about the differences in customs around marriage and death. The sun shone and the Cemetery was a lovely place to be.



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