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Registered Charity No.1099831

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## ***FRIENDS OF MORSTON CHURCH***

23<sup>rd</sup> August 2023

Dear Friends,

Having been away this year from the beginning of January to the end of March, I rather missed my New Year slot to write to you all. I decided that I would write after the AGM so that I could include the minutes of the meeting (see enclosed).

As I stated in last year's letter, the 2021 Quinquennial survey did not find anything of significance that was not already known about. However, the scaffolding that was erected in the church last year, to restore the tympanum, did allow a closer inspection of the eastern end of the nave. This suggested that much more work is needed than was originally thought. Therefore, the PCC is commissioning a further survey in the next few weeks to inspect the rest of the parapets. This survey, alone, will cost over £4,000 and will involve the temporary removal of pews to erect scaffolding. It will, however, enable the PCC to write a properly considered specification; allow a more confident estimate of costs and get a much more accurate tender. Once again, the degree to which the estimates for the cost of the repairs have gone up is astonishing.



Although no structural work has been carried out on All Saints' Church over the last year, one more obvious improvement has been made. After the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, it became apparent that it was very difficult to fly the flag on the church at half-mast without it dragging on the roof. So a longer flag pole has been erected and we can now proudly fly the flag over the church.

In the 2022/23 financial year we raised just under £16,000, which was up on last year largely because this year included two years' worth of Gift Aid, which was not included in last years' figures. Despite the loss of income from our book sale, over half of the income came from books collected by the Metcalfes and sold on-line or at specialist book auctions. This now raises over £8,000 each year. This is a tremendous boost to a charity of our size, so I must give a very big 'thank you' to Rob and Sally for all their hard work. If any of you are considering parting with any of your old books, the ***Friends of Morston Church*** would be very happy to take them off your hands.

As far as events are concerned, normality has returned. The annual Morston Quiz returned to its true home of Morston village hall, with Richard Longley stepping in as an excellent quizmaster. This raised nearly £1700, which was significantly up on last year, partly because we were missing a team last year, due to Covid, and partly because Richard persuaded several local businesses to donate very generous prizes for the raffle. The Shovell Dinner had to be held at the Harbour Rooms in Blakeney, due to the on-going refurbishment of its traditional venue The Anchor. The speaker was the harbour master of the port of Wells-next-the-Sea, Robert Smith MBE, who entertained us with the history of the port and his many adventures as the harbour master. If he had spoken for another hour, I am sure that he would still have had our rapt attention!

After much demand, in June this year we were delighted to welcome back the theatre company “Impromptu Shakespeare” ([www.impromptushakespeare.com](http://www.impromptushakespeare.com)). The improvised play was, once again, held in Gill Kay’s beautiful walled garden. Over a hundred people attended and we were blessed with a beautiful June evening. The company base their play on suggestions from the audience, which results in a riotous mix of comedy and tragedy that had the audience rolling in the aisles (if we had had aisles). This event was, again, a spectacular success and raised over £2000 for FMC. I would particularly like to thank Gill Kay for inviting us to use her garden and for all her hard work in making the garden look so beautiful for the event.



**This year’s Shovell dinner will be held on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> November.** The speaker, **Jonathan Hooton**, who has written several excellent books on the North Norfolk ports, will give a talk entitled “**The Glaven Ports to 1800**”. Tickets will be available from Peter Tibbetts at West Acre, Morston (01263-741082 or 07977-937707). Further details will be sent out nearer the time.

As always, I would like to thank you all so much for your continued support of the “*Friends of Morston Church*” and I look forward to welcoming you at one of our future events.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Tibbetts  
**Chairman**