

Friends of St Michael's Church, Brent Knoll



NEWSLETTER No 5 May 2018

As I write I am looking at a page from the Oxford dictionary of Quotations. The sayings "Time and tide wait for no man" and "There is a time and place for everything" are old proverbs that date from the 14th and 16th centuries. They provide the key to the timing of this newsletter. To put my dilemma in simple terms there is never a right time to send out a Friend's newsletter, but this one is performing four functions.

First, some friends have been asking me for an update on Parish developments, and I have promised them that this will happen "soon". The last Newsletter went out in May 2017 so I can just squeeze this one in and fulfil my duty to keep you up to date on an annual basis, and, as in the past, to provide you with an update on last year's financial position. Second, you will have noticed that I sent out an email recently with some reminders about events for the Spring bank holiday. There are also a number of events coming up in June, July and September. I would like to take the opportunity of reminding you about these, particularly the fete. Third, people will be aware that Simon Lewis has moved to Blagdon and we are now in an Interregnum. It is not clear at this stage how long this will take, but I have made some comments under Parish developments. Finally I have been dealing with the introduction of the new General Data Protection Regulations for the Parish. This piece of legislation is mainly aimed at the large data providers who do all sorts of things with our personal data behind the scenes. The application of GDPR to small organisations is like taking a steam hammer to crack a nut. Nevertheless there are some minor adjustments that we have to make to forms that people sign. For Friends this will mean that I have to redesign the application form and obtain your signature. What a bore you say, I will have to fill in all my details again. No you won't because I can take advantage of the fact that your details are already on the database at the office, prefill the report with your data and print out the result. I shall be meeting most Friends in the course of my "daily rounds" and I will have to remember to get people to sign these prefilled forms.

For me the most pressing need is to ensure that the next events on the calendar go well so I start with these....

Ged Keele, Co-ordinator, St Michael's Church Friends

Future events

The **Brent Knoll Village Fete on Sat 9th June 2pm** is very significant for us because we shall be receiving a percentage of the profits from the event. You may recall that I mentioned last year that the Parish Hall have paid off their loan on the Jubilee Room so there is now less pressure on them to fundraise. We are very fortunate to receive a portion of the profits this year. As usual there will be **Plant and Cake Stalls**. If you have any plants that you can bring to the event for sale **please bring them sensibly potted and labelled to the stall before 12 noon**. Margaret Smith is doing the Cake Stall and would also appreciate cakes delivered to the stall on the morning of the Fete.

Classical music - Rod Winfield will be giving a talk at St. Michael's Church on Thursday, June 14 at 7.30pm The subject, 'Early Departures', is about nine composers who died before they were 40. Mozart, Schubert, Chopin and Mendelssohn are the big names, but Rod will also include surprises - much less famous composers, interesting not just for their music. The talk will be illustrated by music on CDs. Admission is free with a retiring collection. There will a retiring collection for Church Funds.
(My "refreshment assistant" has fallen through for this event so I would appreciate help that evening. Refreshments, which will be very simple, just drinks and biscuits. If you are able to help please contact me)

All-Sorts Community Choir - A Trip Down Memory Lane - at St Michael's Church on Thursday 19th July at 7.30pm

For those of you who have been to St Mary's in East Brent and heard the choir you will know that you are in for an excellent evening with plenty of participation, so come and sing along with the All Sorts Choir as we reminisce years gone by. Again admission is free with a retiring collection

(At this event we are intending to do more in the way of refreshments and run a raffle. New faces would always be welcome on the refreshment front for that event)

Dessert Island Discs – Brian Freestone and John Page will be doing another musical and audio visual presentation of classical music on Saturday October 6th at 7.30pm in the Brent Knoll Parish Hall – this year the format will be different and Brian has contacted a number of people in Brent Knoll for the choice of music to be played. He will talk about each piece that he plays. Excitement is running high in some quarters about individual selections, and I can report that at least one person has stated they won't come unless their piece is played. *Even if you haven't been approached please put this in your diary and hear what other people have chosen.*

Annual meeting of Friends - Last year the idea was mooted that we would hold an Annual Meeting in conjunction with the bell ringers who would explain the intricacies of their craft, whilst giving us a practical demonstration. For various reasons, time being a principle one, I have not been able to do this. There is provision in Friends Guidance notes, the parish instruments under which Friends operates, to have an extraordinary meeting but I don't think this is necessary. For what it is worth the actual Guidance Note states:

Decisions on expenditure relating to church buildings are the responsibility of the PCC. These decisions will be taken by the Buildings and Grounds team in conjunction with the Finance Team. Friends of a particular church will be permitted to express views on priorities for their church via their own Church Friends. These views will normally be collated and passed to the PCC at a Friends' Annual Meeting. In exceptional circumstances an Extraordinary Meeting of Friends may be called for the purposes of seeking Friends' views on a particular issue.

I will ensure that this doesn't happen next year. I will continue to make myself available for feedback from you and will continue to pursue the interests of Friends within the parish.

St Michael's Church accounts for 2017

As last year I am presenting two statements of account. The first is strictly related to the running costs of St Michael's (income and expenditure) and the second is a statement of balances for the year ends. My reason for presenting the income and expenditure in this way is to concentrate on the running costs of our church. The balances cover three accounts: Parish Heritage, Santander bank accounts and the St Michael's Trust shares.

Statement of income and expenditure for 2017 (2016 included for comparison)

	Income	Expenditure	Income	Expenditure
Donations, collections and grants	2,465		4,698	
Friends membership	1,005		926	
Interest on shares	1,318		1330	
Fundraising	3,102		3,051	
Legacy	2,000			
Gift aid	80			
Running costs (inc Insurance)		2,510		2,431
Heat and light		1,891		3,117
Maintenance and repairs		145		3,326
Other		60		546
Churchyard maintenance (paid by Brent Knoll PC)		(3,500)		(3500)
TOTAL	9,102	8,965	10,005	12,920

On the income side the regular income that is gained from your standing orders is maintained. This is a valuable contribution to the overall running costs of the church. The interest on shares held in the St Michael's Trust is also important and has been maintained. Please note that £2,000 has been added to the heritage account from a legacy in 2017. This will inflate the heritage account until it is spent.

On expenditure the most notable item is the reduction in heating and lighting costs from over £3000 in 2016 to less than 2000 in 2017. My immediate thought was that this was due to the boiler breakdown but then I realised that this took place in December 2016 so this was not the case. We must congratulate Mike Smith on managing the boiler to reduce our heating and lighting bill. As last year I have bracketed the amount that the Parish Council pays for the mowing contract to manage the churchyard. It is an expense that has to be borne by someone and we are very fortunate that Brent Knoll Parish Council pays this.

BALANCES at 31/12/2016	BALANCES at 31/12/2017
TPoTS Bank - 8,761	TPoTS Bank - 13,258
Trust Shares - 29,176	Shares - 30,709
Trust Santander a/c -517	Trust Santander a/c - 0
TOTAL 38,454	TOTAL 43,967

Please note that the Santander Account has now been reduced to zero by the transfer of Funds to the St Michael's Parish Heritage Account. Taken overall we appear to have run a surplus this year, but I have to point out that our expenditure on maintenance was virtually nil. Bearing in mind that quinquennial work must be done this situation will not continue. **If anyone wishes to query this presentation of accounts please contact me in the first instance. If I cannot answer the query I will refer to Jim Hanmer.**

Parish Developments

Church politics is a big “switch off” for some, but one of my functions as local coordinator is to keep people up to date with developments, so here goes.

RPOT – The Diocesan Advisory Committee has advised the RPOT Steering Team that it must produce a **Statement of Need** that justifies the need for transforming our church buildings so that they are fit for modern purposes, a **Business Plan** that outlines the potential business opportunities that exist for each of our three church buildings, and a **Statement of Significance** that describes the cultural and natural heritage values of each church. They have made it clear that there must be adequate justification to do the changes envisaged because as they stand, the current buildings have very significant heritage value. The Steering Team have obtained a grant of £7k to pursue these ends. No timescale has been mentioned in recent reports on RPOT but we are promised that there will be discussion at the coming PCC meeting in July on the next steps to be taken by Steering Team.

Quinquennial work – we need to bear in mind that our QQ report in April 2015 has specified roof repairs to the north aisle and tower. This is likely to cost around £70k. When RPOT was first discussed in 2015 it was decided to impose a moratorium on all building that was not urgent or needed for health and safety reasons.

Interregnum – we are not certain at this stage when there will be a formal advertisement for the post. The first step will be to produce what is known as a Parish Profile that summarises the parishes current position and its vision for the future. Once this has been achieved we can advertise. The selection process and interviews follow. Last time all this took around a year. However, it could be quicker this time.

Closure – last year I wrote about this issue and came to the conclusion that it was not really likely to happen because the process is so complicated that it will take years to resolve. Just carry on as usual..... I don't think much has changed here

Consultation – there are those who have felt a bit remote from the “centre” of the Parish. One particular concern has been over the possible use of the funds from the former St Michael's Trust for spending on other churches under RPOT. I have never been too concerned about this because this cannot take place without consultation. The relevant section of the Friends Guidance Notes states:

Where expenditure on a particular church will involve the use of restricted funds the PCC must consult the Friends of that church before making decisions on that expenditure. Once the views of the local Friends have been received the PCC should place due weight on these views before making a decision. However, the final decision on expenditure rests with the PCC.

What concerns me more is how Friends of St Michael's could contribute more in the future to the overall health of the Parish. With Simon's departure we are at a cross roads. The Parish will be reviewing all its processes so that they can they can be included in the Parish Profile. I will ensure that the future contribution by St Michael's Friends is included in this process. **If you have any thoughts on the matter please write to me on gerard.keele@btinternet.com and I will pass your comments on to the Parish.**