

THE FRIENDS OF WAKEFIELD CHANTRY CHAPEL

Registered charity no 1004105

Chairman's Report for the Year 2017-18

To be presented at the Annual Meeting at 3.30pm on 7th October 2018 in the Chantry

Once again we have had a successful year, with several events and many more visitors.

During the AGM on the 26th June last year the majority of the officers of the management committee previously elected agreed to stand for a further term. David Royston as Chairman, Brian Holding Vice-Chairman, Richard Atkinson Hon Treasurer and Ann Kendall as Secretary. Bill Dawes, Wendy Robb, Judith Royston, Angela Parkin and Marisa Mroczek also agreed to continue on the committee. Additionally the Very Revd. Jonathan Greener and Malcolm Warburton continued to represent Wakefield Cathedral and Roger Scott representing the Chantry Lodge of Freemasons.

An additional member, Mr. Danny Parsonson was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Miss Grudgings.

All candidates who were nominated and had agreed to stand were voted on with unanimity.

I am very grateful to all officers and members of the committee for their help and support. Ann takes the minutes at meetings and circulates them and she produces the splendid newsletters which are sent regularly to all our members. They are now sent mostly by email to the members and this has saved costs considerably on printing and postage etc. The list of members is continually being updated as there are a number of members listed from whom we have heard nothing for some years with their subscriptions not having been kept up to date. We are very grateful to Ann for organising this and would be obliged if anyone still receiving bulletins by post would be able to supply an email address.

We are grateful to the Hazell Family for supporting us as corporate members Mr Nicholas of Ashtree Roofing and Mr Christian of Tubs and Taps who also very generously open when we have a major event so that our patrons can use their toilet facilities, etc.

Apart from looking after our finances, almost a full time job in itself, Richard has been giving a very entertaining series of illustrated talks on the Wars of the Roses. The first in September last year, a Medieval Christmas themed version in December and a revamped edition on the 15th September this year. This series of talks are truly international as he took it to Edinburgh in August; also at Sandal Castle on the 15th September and St. Mary's Church in Beverley on Saturday 6th October and finishing at St. Lawrence's Church in York on the 20th October. Although there has been a suggestion that he may be willing to give another Christmas themed talk in December in the Chantry.

Brian organises the Art walks and other exhibitions including the exhibition of ceramic art last September and the Christmas market at the end of November. He also opens the Chapel to visitors every Tuesday during the summer months; and is planning the next Christmas Market in the Chantry which will be on the 1st and 2nd December. These, together with Richard's, talks have certainly given our fund raising efforts a significant boost.

Marisa has re-organised the Chantry's profile on Facebook and other social media. She has publicised up coming events and is currently exploring other ways to increase our public profile.

The Friends have again packed a great deal into the past year. We opened the Chapel on Bank-Holidays, for the National Heritage weekend, and on Tuesday afternoons throughout the summer months. There were 192

visitors during the Heritage weekend 9th & 10th September 2017 and an impressive 324 visitors this year; we opened over two weekends 8th & 9th; then 15th & 16th September. As always I am very grateful to the stalwarts amongst the Friends who staff these occasions.

Wakefield Bridge Club held a bridge tournament in the Chantry on 23rd July last year, Bridge on the Bridge so to speak. It was a splendid event which raised over £720.00. We are very grateful to Danny Parsonson for organising it and to all those who took part. Additional thanks to those who helped with the planning and running it on the day. Thanks also to the people and organisations that generously provided prizes for the raffle. There was to be a similar event on the 10th June this year but it had to be cancelled at short notice due to contractors working in the Chapel. It is planned to be re-scheduled for the 28th October this year. Again we ask for the donation of any prizes for the raffle.

Additionally we are most grateful for the support of several local businesses that support us by displaying collection boxes, with very impressive results. Particular thanks to Angela Parkin, Tubs & Taps, Kingfishers Post Office, Ossett Photography Shop and Headways. Also thanks to Diana Grudgings for collecting and banking these donations.

The Historical Society meets regularly in the Chantry and there is a Julian Meeting in the morning of the second Tuesday of each month.

We have held a few concerts over the last year. Osp & Sophie Ramsey performed for us on the 25th March also the Via Nova Ensemble on the 3rd August. Both stunning concerts and very well attended.

There have been a number of individual tours or visits; The Yorkshire Historic Churches Trust in July last year; The Westwood party from Sacramento U.S.A on 1st November; Matlock Travel on 7th November 2017. Followed in March 2018 with a U3A group; the Barnard Castle Richard III Society in May, the London Richard III Society in June and the Jennings party in July.

Mass was celebrated in the Chapel on the 29th October by the Priest from St. Peter and St. Paul Sandal. Additionally Latin Masses were celebrated by the Leeds Latin Mass Society for the Feast of the Immaculate Conception on 8th December and the annual Requiem Mass for Richard, Duke of York on the 30th December. The choir from St Austin's church sang at both of these events. There were two wreath laying ceremonies also on the 30th which saw many visitors including the Bishop, some in medieval costume, others in full armour, a splendid sight!

Once again we are very grateful to Patrick Ganley and the marvellous St. Austin's Choir. The now, "traditional", St. Austin's Choir Christmas concerts were a great success. The choir were joined this time by the Mulberry singers from Wakefield Girls High School on the first night and by the Leeds Waits on the second.

It was a wonderful start to Christmas week on the 19th & 20th December and raised a fantastic £1,359.18. Tickets are already on sale for both concerts this Christmas which will be on Tuesday the 18th and Wednesday the 19th of December; and are available through the Theatre Royal box office, already selling fast.

This of course is not the only occasion when St. Austin's Choir support us, they sang during the Heritage Open weekend last year. The choir are planning to hold a concert in the Chantry later this year, this time the proceeds are towards restoration work at St. Austin's Church. I hope that as many of our members as possible will attend this event. St. Austin's have helped the Chantry enormously over recent years, it is a good opportunity to say "Thank you" by supporting them!

On the 8th of October last year The Chantry Lodge of Freemasons held their annual service in the Chapel; this is a lovely service and as always very well attended. The Chantry Lodge service is planned again for the 14th October this year.

Our annual Harvest Festival Service, always on the first Sunday in October was once again a special event. The organ was kindly played by Roger Scott, the Chapel looked resplendent with the flowers and many donations of fruit vegetables and other produce; afterwards these are given to the various charities supported by the Cathedral. The service concluded with refreshments of cheese and wine etc donated for the occasion. The AGM this year will precede the Harvest Festival Service.

We were grateful to have been once again invited to attend the Annual Meeting of the Pensioners of the Charles Brotherton Trust on the 6th April in the Salvation Army Citadel in Vicarage Street. I was pleased to attend and the Friends of the Chantry Chapel were awarded a grant of £250.00 at that occasion. The Charles Brotherton Trust support many charities and worthwhile causes in the city and we are always very pleased and grateful to be included. Additionally we are again very grateful to the Aire and Calder Methodist Circuit for their substantial donation.

In October last year, together with the Wakefield Historical Society we hosted a conference in the Hepworth gallery in memory of the late Kate Taylor. The nature of this conference had particular emphasis on medieval bridges and bridge Chapels. One of the speakers was Sue Threader; a fellow of the Institute of Civil Engineers and Bridge Clerk of the Rochester Bridge Trust. Whilst in Wakefield she took the trouble to have a look at the structure of the Chantry Bridge. She advised that due the poor state of the road surface and also some of the drains being blocked, water had for some time been seeping into the structure of the bridge causing some damage.

We brought this to the attention of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, in whose responsibility this and other bridges in the area lie. After some time they did affect some repairs to the road surface, although at the time we felt these repairs to be inadequate.

However more recently, on Monday 10th September together with Canon Tony Macpherson we were invited to attend a meeting on the bridge with 3 representatives from the council. We were advised at that meeting, that it is the council's intention to completely resurface the bridge, also to clear out each of the drains and ensure that they are functioning correctly. The new surface of the bridge will be of a resin type material and will give the impression that the surface is covered in fine gravel, which I think will look rather nice; also it should make the surface water tight.

They were, however, concerned that some large goods vehicles have come onto the bridge from time to time and the excessive weight could damage the structure further. To alleviate this problem they intend to erect a set of bollards at the north end of the bridge. One or more will have the ability, when unlocked, to be removed: thus allowing access onto the bridge to the Chapel for services and other events. The Chapel will have a key to enable us to open it as required.

In January 2017 the Chapel had the Quinquennial inspection by Thomas Ford & Partners, Chartered Architects and Surveyors. The report following the inspection is a substantial and detailed document of some 23 pages. It suggests that "it would be beneficial to attend to a small number of items and the Cathedral are encouraged to put these in hand." There are two items marked as requiring prompt attention, seven requiring attention within two years and six attention within five years. Also they suggest it would be desirable to have the glass inspected, but this is by no means urgent. The Trust agreed to fund all of the recommended work.

The concluding remarks, we thought, very encouraging. "The Chantry Chapel has undergone significant work over the past ten years and is in a good state of repair, much better than it has been for many years and all those who work with the Chapel are congratulated." Unfortunately we were misled by this statement and thus not prepared for the costs that were involved!

The contractors costs were £47,905.60, a further £2,475.60 for architect's fees; bringing a total of £50,381.26. This was well over double the costs involved in the previous Quinquennial (then £21,567.60). The costs

should be compared with those for the total reordering of the Chapel in 2010 being little more than our relative “minor” costs this year. Due to an oversight, the Cathedral Chapter did not give the “Friends” copies of the estimates that had been submitted for this work; nor any involvement in the selection process to award the contract to any particular firm. Accidentally we were not given any indication when the work might commence, hence the cancellation of both the Bridge Tournament and also the Spring Bank holiday opening at very short notice.

Additionally we had paid for 6 new chairs in November last, the costs being £1,422.00. These costs have devastated what we thought to be a strong fund: our greatest concern is that should any substantial problems arise over the coming months or even years, whether we would still be in a position to fund the expenditure? Bearing in mind that another Quinquennial inspection is due in four years!

In my report last year I made mention of a bequest from the late Dr. Patricia Mary Morris. Due to the complexities of this will it has taken some time to resolve. However we have now received a portfolio of shares from this bequest. We have received £3,091.53 in dividends from these shares since probate was granted. Additionally in July we were grateful to receive a bequest from the late Mrs Eileen Calkeld to the value of £3,429.44.

It will have been noticed that the flag of St. George has been flying from the flagpole on the tower throughout the year on all suitable occasions. We are very grateful to Mark Wilson for going up the tower on a regular basis to raise and lower the flag.

The Dean, the Very Revd Jonathan Greener was appointed Dean at Exeter Cathedral last year. Before leaving Yorkshire for Devon, we were pleased that Jonathan was able to attend a Trustees meeting on 3rd October 2017. Usually meetings had been held at the Deanery but on this occasion it was in the Chantry as Jonathan and Pamela were in the midst of packing. At this meeting the Friends of Chantry Chapel made a presentation of an engraved crystal decanter to the Dean.

Whilst we were happy for Jonathan and Pamela, we were also very sad to lose them both. Jonathan had been a great friend to the “Friends”; he was fully committed and had always supported us offering a great deal of help over the years. Pamela also often played the organ for us at services.

We are grateful to the Revd Canon Tony Macpherson, acting Dean throughout the interregnum, for all of his help. In spite of having his own job to do and the responsibilities of the post of Dean he has always had time for us.

Following his installation in the Cathedral on the 29th September we are looking forward to welcoming the new Dean, the Revd Canon Simon Cowling and wish him every success in his appointment.

We are delighted that we have been able to welcome 2,277 visitors through the Chantry door since our last AGM. However we need more volunteers to steward at open days and at other events if we are to remain able to respond positively to these.

David J. Royston.
Chairman
Board of Trustees and Friends of Wakefield Chantry Chapel

7th October 2018