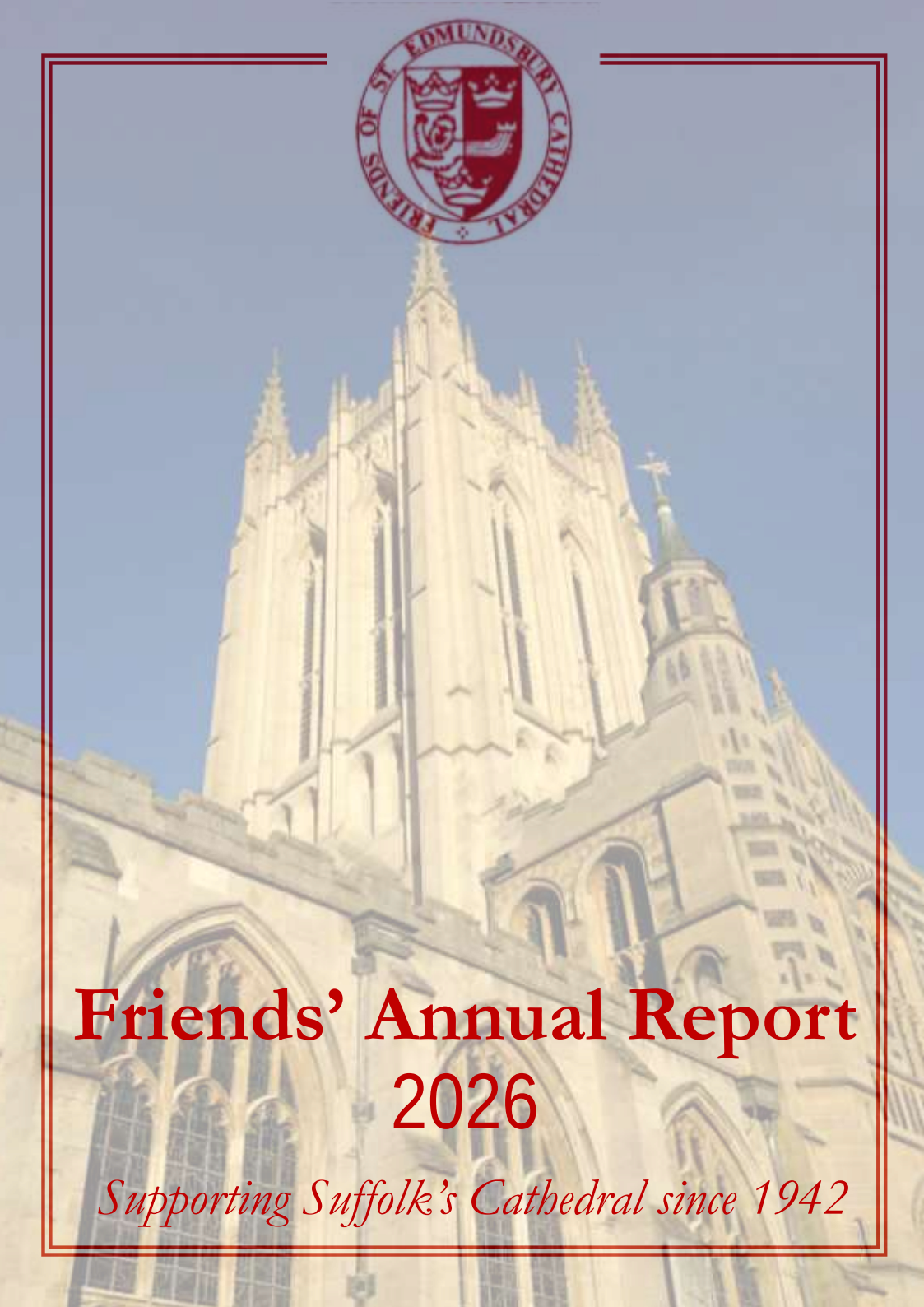


Friends' Annual Report 2026

Supporting Suffolk's Cathedral since 1942

PROJECTS SUPPORTED BY THE FRIENDS IN RECENT YEARS

	Contribution towards rewiring of lights in the Lady Chapel	1,250
2013	Contribution towards Bishop's Crozier Case	2,000
	Contribution towards cost of South Aisle roof repairs	5,000
2014	Grant towards book survey in Ancient Library	800
	Cost of new Altar linen	300
	Repair to Bishop's Crozier and cost of new microphone	622
2015	Contribution towards West End Refurbishment and grant for repair of the Jubilee Cross	10,020
2016	First contribution towards Bishops' & Deans' Stone	2,000
2017	Further contribution towards Bishops' & Deans' Stone	3,000
	Contribution towards new hymn books	1,200
	Contribution towards cleaning Reynolds Memorials and West End window	1,000
2018	Contribution to the WW1 work on Clerestory Windows and library roof repairs	2,716
	Altar Frontal and Dossal for The Lady Chapel	7,525
	Final contribution towards Bishops' & Deans' Stone	600
2019	Restoration of Ancient Library books	1,000
2020	Contribution to Abbey Millennium Anniversary Stone	5,000
	AV equipment for livestreaming of Services	1,400
2022	Restoration of *The Infant St John with A Lamb* by J. W. Guillod (1850)	750
	Contribution towards new chairs for the Nave	50,000
2023	Coffin trestles	2500
	Bishop of Dunwich Crozier Display Case	5465
2024	Lady Chapel icon	1200
	Lady Chapel communion table	500
	Restoration of books in Ancient Library	1000
2025	Contribution towards equipment for moving Nave chairs	4000
2026	Restoration of the Lady Chapel ceiling	9000
	Transportation and Storage of Nave Chairs	3150

THE FRIENDS'
ANNUAL FESTIVAL
THURSDAY 11 JUNE 2026

5.30 pm Eucharist and Evensong with the Cathedral Choir in The Nave led by the Rt Revd Dr Joanna Grenfell, in the presence of the Lord Lieeutenant

6.15 pm Our AGM in Pilgrims Kitchen chaired by Mrs Diana Hunt BEM JP DL

6.45 pm Supper in Pilgrims Kitchen with a presentation about our excellent choirs, by our Director of Music Claudia Grinnell

Please apply for tickets using the booking form enclosed.

For further information contact Friends Director Sue Cockram 01284 766688 or sue@friendsevents.co.uk

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Departures and arrivals, consolidation and plans for the future. That pretty much sums up 2025 to 2026 at St Edmundsbury cathedral.

The Crown Nominations Committee process for the appointment of a new bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich was joyfully concluded with the arrival of The Rt. Rev'd. Dr Joanne Grenfell as our new Bishop. Welcomed and enthroned on January 24th, Bishop Joanne has presided and preached many times already at the cathedral, most significantly memorably and moving for Holy Week and Easter. Welcomers are working hard to serve our primary focus as resource for her mission, ministry and teaching.

Our new-ish Canon Precentor, Katy Cunliffe has continued to bring superb organisation of regular and festival services, managing her team with tact and warmth, and enhancing the College of Canons with her excellent preaching, collegiality and gentle good humour. Canon Matthew and I feel blessed to have her on the team.

After over 35 years in post, knowing our cathedral and its precincts better than many others, and caring for them diligently and with a superb eye to our heritage, our Architect and Surveyor, Philip Orchard, retired on February 4th. A process of appointment bringing together the Fabric Advisory Committee and Cathedrals Fabric Commission had to wrestle with 15 excellent applications. It is therefore a testimony to the quality of her application, the experience she brings and her professional and engaging manner, that Alice Milligan of the Cambridge based Caroe Architects Partnership was appointed. Alice has begun her work with energy, spending a day every fortnight at the cathedral, joining staff meetings and the EcoStEds environment committee, planning the Quinquennial Inspection Report, to being involved and very much getting her hands dirty! We are delighted to have her on the team.

Inevitable, a major source of work across the cathedral staff team has been the development phase of the £10 million **'Abbey of St Edmund Reborn Project'.**

Much of 2025 was taken up with the consultations around the many plans and reports which form the basis of our stage 2 bid. The final bid itself was submitted on time by the end of February, running to hundreds of thousands of words, drawings, graphs and spreadsheets. We await a decision from the National Committee of the National Lottery Heritage Fund at their meeting on June 24th, which will be communicated to us soon after.

In parallel, the fundraising for the £2.6 million match funding contribution to the budget has proceeded apace. There has been an extraordinarily generous response from friends both within the cathedral and across the county. We await the outcome of applications to a number of grant making trusts, and are quietly hopeful of achieving the target ahead of the need to sign contracts for the delivery phase in September.

It is fair to say that, if successful, The Abbey of St Edmund Reborn Project will be transformative for our cathedral, town and of significant importance to the visitor economy of our county.

The Cathedral Masterplan 2020-30, halfway through its life, has been substantially revised by staff members, has now been sent to volunteers, Chapter Committees and the College of Canons prior to its launch at Greater Chapter on June 3rd.

Chapter has continued to strengthen its membership and that of its committees in line with the requirements of the Cathedrals measure. New members of Finance, Risk Audit and review, Nominations and Safeguarding Committees were welcomed throughout the year.

A positive INEQE national safeguarding report, part of a nationwide safeguarding audit of dioceses and cathedrals, undertaken in Suffolk in October last year was heartening in its recognition of examples of good practice, and in its recommendation that Chapter should appoint a part time Safeguarding Officer.

Accordingly, Tanya Dawson joined us in early 2026 and has become a much valued member of the team.

Chapter remains immensely grateful to the Friends of the cathedral for all of the ways in which you enhance the life of the cathedral and sustain the network of friendships across the county.

In the coming year, it is hoped that the Friends Council will be able to commit to support the Abbey of St Edmund Reborn project and the long awaited conservation of the Great West window and glazing of the Great West Doors.

We work very well together, and I am personally extremely grateful to Diana Hunt, Sue Cockram and the Friends council for their unfailingly positive support and friendship.

Dean Joe

The Very Reverend Joe Hawes
Dean of St Edmundsbury



INTRODUCING THE CATHEDRAL SHOP

Starting as Manager of the Cathedral Shop was a steep learning curve, not only was I running the shop but also working with a large group of volunteers, which I had no previous experience of. Prior to this I was Assistant Manager of a designer clothes shop. This role taught me a lot about buying and customer service so although I had moved into another sector of retail many of the same rules still applied.

Over time I made a number of changes in the shop from setting up an EPOS till system to developing the range of stock we sell. I identify key lines and fast sellers which reflect our ethos and environment but also generate a good return for the shop. This is something that must be constantly monitored as tastes and trends change as well as costs, so a best seller a year ago may not be worth stocking twelve months down the line.

Later in my tenure our Tourist Information Point was linked to the shop which was another string to our bow and another opportunity for us to offer information and help to visitors as well as diversify the ranges we sell. The refit of the shop was another big milestone, although I regularly use my design skills when devising products and creating displays. The refit allowed me to expand my creativity and redesign the layout of the shop, the furniture and shop branding.

All of this has created a professional and profitable outlet for the Cathedral with a happy and dedicated team of fifty volunteers, which can only be good for the Cathedral and our future. Join me in thanking our volunteers who make our Shop work so effectively, and come and say hello the next time you visit the Cathedral.

Jane Harrison
Enterprises Retail Manager

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Since I started being Secretary and then Membership Secretary of the Friends some years ago, I have been pleased to meet so many of you at events, trips or annual gatherings. Your enthusiasm and support for the Cathedral is very much appreciated.

You will be pleased to know that subscription rates have remained stable for the last few years and are still extremely good value at £15 per person or £25 for a couple. If you wanted to make a one-off payment and become a life member that is also available with prices starting from as little as £100 for individuals over 65 - details can be found on the Cathedral Website stedscathedral.org - search for the word Friends and you will find a link to our page with a flyer and application form.

Why not encourage a friend of yours to support our wonderful Cathedral by giving them a Friends subscription for a year? The Director, Sue Cockram, will send a letter of welcome and they will receive an annual report and invites via email to talks, events, trips and holidays.

Subscriptions may be paid by cheque or standing order, and cheque renewals can be posted for my attention to The Membership Secretary, The Friends of St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Cathedral Office, Abbey House, Angel Hill, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 1LS

We do now offer BACS transfers directly into our account for one off events such as Quirky talks, holiday or trips payments - we just ask that you contact me when you have done this so that I can check with our bank that payment has been received.

You can contact me on 01284 716499 or via email at friends@stedscathedral.org

Looking forward to seeing many of you again in 2026.

Louise Martin
Membership Secretary

OUR QUIRKY TALKS

SECRET GARDENS OF EAST ANGLIA

There's been a common theme - secrets - to our two most recent Quirky Talks.

On Wednesday 8 October Barbara Segall, local author, broadcaster and gardener, came to Drinkstone Village Hall to give us a fascinating talk - *Secret Gardens of East Anglia.* This is a subject well known to her as she has also written a book of the same name.

Some of the gardens were known to us, some not. The talk was well illustrated with some excellent slides and there was time for gardeners' questions after.

As usual, the talk was followed by a delicious home made tea.

We are particularly grateful to Barbara, who stepped in at very short notice as our scheduled speaker was taken ill. A very pleasant afternoon for those who were able to join us.

Nella Probert

THE SECRET INTELLIGENCE SERVICE

On a sunny March afternoon Lavenham village hall was again **filled to capacity for an unmissable 'Quirky' talk.**

Former MI6 officer Dr Mike Reynolds delivered an intriguing account of his career in the Secret Intelligence Service spanning the Cold War, Irish Troubles and the collapse of Communism.

Without the aid of notes, or of course revealing any actual secrets, our engaging speaker gave an eye-opening description of life in the

service from recruitment at Oxford, extensive training (including with the special forces) to the excitement of embarking on a career of foreign postings in many corners of the world.

An outline of the structure of the service and its equivalents abroad highlighted the fine balance between international cooperation, diplomacy and the guarding of a nation's own interests. It could not have felt more topical for our turbulent times.

While life in MI6 is not quite as depicted in novels and films we discovered that it does involve covers being 'blown', disclosures on a 'need to know' basis and the cultivation of 'assets', while classifying information as 'secret' can be more for the protection of the informant than a reflection of the material's own sensitivity.

Dr Reynolds shared a glimpse of the personal impact of leading a 'double life', alongside the satisfaction of being part of key global developments and witnessing, at first hand, momentous events like the fall of the Berlin Wall.

We learned how changes in recruitment mean that candidates are now drawn from both genders and diverse sources through an open process which no longer relies exclusively on males from collegiate backgrounds. With the recent appointment of the first female Chief in the organisation's history you could say that it's no secret that those days are gone.

As the post-talk tea was poured and homemade cakes served, we had to wonder just who we might be chatting with around the table … but remember, don't expect a tap on the shoulder as it doesn't work that way anymore.

Jane White

LEGACIES

It is a straightforward matter to make a bequest to support our work. The following wording will enable you to make a bequest in our favour.

"I give (state the sum in words and in figures) to The Friends of St. Edmundsbury Cathedral (Charity No 262815), Cathedral Office, Abbey House, Angel Hill, Bury St. Edmunds IP33 1LS and I declare that the receipt of the Treasurer or other duly authorised officer of the charity shall be a good and sufficient discharge to my Trustees".

If a will is altered at a later date, the legacy can form a codicil to the will, and provided the codicil is signed by the donor in the presence of two independent witnesses and dated, it may be kept as an attachment to the original will by the solicitor.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

We are always keen to welcome new Friends from across the Diocese and beyond. Please feel free to expand the membership by inviting a colleague or friend to join.

Friends annual subscription is set at £15 per person or £25 per couple at the same address.

Life membership rates

- Under 65 (individual) £200 Under 65 (couple) £350
- Over 65 (individual) £100 Over 65 (couple) £150

Corporate Membership, open to Church Councils, Schools, Clubs and Private Groups, is an annual minimum subscription of £25. Corporate Membership for Registered Businesses is £75 per annum.

FRIENDS OF ST. EDMUNDSBURY CATHEDRAL

Agenda for the 84th Annual General Meeting

6.30 pm Thursday 11 June 2026
in the Pilgrims' Kitchen

1. Welcome and Prayers
2. Apologies
3. Appointment and reappointment of Officers and Council Members
4. Minutes of the last AGM (12 June 2025) *enclosed*
5. Matters Arising
6. Dean's Report
7. Director's Report *enclosed*
8. Presentation of the Accounts
9. Appointment and Ratification of Independent Examiner
10. Any Other Business **

*** Any items for Any Other Business to be notified to the Director by 6 June 2026*

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Legal structure

The Friends are an un-incorporated charity, number 262815, operating with a constitution adopted on the 20 June 1942 and amended on 22 July 1972.
The trustees meet three times a year with the day-to-day operation of the charity delegated to the Director, Secretary and Treasurer.

Objects

To support and encourage the Dean and Chapter in their work and to add to the fabric and beauty of the Cathedral by contributing towards its restoration, maintenance and improvements as a token of the gratitude which the people of Suffolk, and others, owe to Almighty God.

Trustees

The trustee body consists of the following ex office trustees: The President, Deputy President, The Dean, The Canon Pastor, Director, Secretary, Treasurer and the Cathedral Wardens.

The trustee body includes up to 9 trustees elected to represent the Archdeaconries.

Public benefit

In planning the Friends activities for the year, the trustees kept in mind the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit at the trustees' meetings.

FRIENDS OF ST. EDMUNDSBURY CATHEDRAL
Registered Charity 262815
Established 1942

Patron
The Lord Lieutenant of the County of Suffolk

President
The Right Reverend Dr Joanne Grenfell

Deputy President
Vacant

Director
Mrs Susan Cockram

FRIENDS' COUNCIL

Chairman:
Mrs Diana Hunt BEM JP DL

Members
Mr Ian Brookman FCA (Hon Treasurer)
Miss Alison Evans
Mr Neville Horn
Mrs Lucinda Hutson MVO DL
Ms Louise Martin
Mr Tom McKenney
Mr Stephen Miles DL
Mrs Nella Probert
Mrs Sue Rawlinson
Ms Alice Robertson
Miss Jill Taylor

Ex-Officio
The Very Reverend Joe Hawes Dean of St Edmundsbury
The Reverend Canon Matthew Vernon Sub Dean and Canon Pastor
The Reverend Canon Katy Cunliffe Precentor
Mrs Barbara Pycraft and Mrs Terry Stark Cathedral Wardens

MINUTES OF THE 83RD ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE FRIENDS OF ST EDMUNDSBURY CATHEDRAL HELD ON THURSDAY 12 JUNE 2025

Clare, Countess of Euston, His Majesty's Lord Lieutenant for Suffolk attended the meeting in her capacity of Patron of the Friends of St Edmundsbury Cathedral.

The meeting was chaired by the acting Diocesan Bishop, Graeme Knowles.

Present: Sue Cockram (Director), Diana Hunt (Chairman), members of the Friends Council. 50 Friends.

Apologies: Ian Brookman (Treasurer) 28 Friends.

The Bishop opened the meeting with prayer.

Patron's Remarks: Lady Clare thanked Bishop Graeme for looking after the Diocese as a whole and the Friends at a turbulent time for the church. Lady Clare said it was an emotional evening for her as she was attending her last meeting as Patron, she retires from her role as Lord Lieutenant next year. She said the Friends were the beating heart of the Cathedral. Their constancy ensured the well being of a building which is loved by so many for so many reasons and which continues to be enhanced by the endeavours of the Friends. The cathedral represents a safe place in these uncertain times. It is full of love and has a remarkable soul. She thanked everyone for being a Friend and said it had been a privilege to be part of the group.

Appointment of Officers: The Bishop thanked all those who had served and invited those present to consider whether they could offer some time to help the Friends. The current Director, Chairman and Treasurer were each re-elected unanimously there being no other nominations. Bishop Graeme encouraged all those present to consider offering their services as Secretary in future so

that the Chairman did not have to take minutes as well as chair meetings.

The Minutes of the AGM held in July 2024 were approved.

There were no matters arising.

Dean's Report: Bishop Graeme thanked the Dean and reminded the meeting that the Cathedral is very fortunate to have the Dean who works so tirelessly for the worshipping community, the wider community and the fabric of the building. The Bishop voiced a serious concern that the Dean's diary is too full and his timetable too demanding and he exhorted everyone to show their appreciation of his commitment by supporting him in the future as he continues shouldering his Cathedral work as well as driving the ambitious "Bury Reborn" project.

Treasurer's Report: in the absence of the Treasurer this was read by the Director:

"The 2024 accounts show an increase in the yearly surplus of £4,000 in 2023 to £10,000. This is due to lower income from our events being more than compensated for by the level of grants to the cathedral. In 2025 we have made the decision to discontinue the Art Festival as the net return does not justify the significant investment needed in repair and replacement of the display boards and the level of return in relation to the work has also been falling over the last few years since COVID. On a positive note the Quirky talks have had a successful start to 2025 with the first talk making around £2,200. The Friends holiday has been cancelled for 2025 which is sad because of the loss of the opportunity for a holiday it provided for some Friends, but financially it always was around breakeven so it will have no impact on the surplus just reducing both our income and expenditure by around £10,000.

We have already agreed this year to support the cathedral by meeting the cost of three new dollies for moving the chairs which

will cost £7,500. As in previous years we continue to support the Ancient Library and the Flower Fund.

Our reserves of £140,000 means we can continue to support the cathedral with ongoing projects and give the reassurance that we have a ring fenced £75,000 as a strategic fund for contributing to a major project.

Warm thanks were recorded to Arthur Tanner for all his hard work organising outings and holidays over many years. It was suggested that if another organiser came forward it might be possible to reinstate the holidays and outings.

There were no questions. The Treasurer was thanked for his work on behalf of the Friends.

Appointment and Ratification of Independent Examiner: The Treasurer indicated that he would like to nominate Gascoignes. Proposed by Tony Earls and seconded by Jill Taylor. Unanimously agreed.

Any other business: Nella Probert announced that the Friends were organising a fund-raising event to be held at Snape Maltings in July 2026 "An Evening with Gary Avis". Details to follow.

The Director thanked Bishop Graeme for all his enthusiastic and practical support especially during his time as interim Diocesan Bishop.

On behalf of The Friends, the Director thanked Lady Clare warmly for all the work she has undertaken on our behalf through all the years of being our Patron. Petrina Miles presented a posy of garden flowers as a token of our appreciation and affection.

There being no further business, the meeting closed, and everyone present enjoyed supper, with an interlude of music from Richard Cook and Natalie Werner.

THE 2026 DIRECTOR'S REPORT

What a very busy year it has been! So many important services and changes in the Diocese and within the Cathedral itself. We welcomed our new Bishop in January with a very inspiring service, and I am delighted that Bishop Joanne has agreed to become President of the Friends. We said farewell to Lady Clare, retiring Lord Lieutenant and welcomed Mark Pendlington incoming Lord Lieutenant at a very joyous service in April. We are delighted he accepted the position as Patron of the Friends. Canon Katy Cunliffe, our Precentor who joined the Cathedral staff last June has had a baptism of fire as far as master-minding these services along-side her normal round of services and duties.

Our Festal Evensong, AGM and supper will be held on **Thursday 11 June when we celebrate St Bartholomew's Day.** Bishop Joanne will be presiding at the service and our new Patron Mark Pendlington will be joining us. During supper, our Director of Music, Claudia Grinnell, will be talking about our excellent Cathedral choirs. An application form for tickets is enclosed.



Before...

I am delighted to report that after several years it has been possible to clean and restore the Lady Chapel ceiling removing all the water stains etc. This has been funded by two legacies; from the estates of David Cockram and David Rees; two long standing members of the Congregation who both enjoyed spending time in the Lady Chapel, so it is good to see this work completed. If you are thinking about your Will, do please remember *The Friends of the Cathedral* and the work which we do to enhance the fabric of our beautiful building.



And after...

I know you will have received notification of our 'special' fund raising Concert to be held at The Britten Studio, Snape Maltings on Thursday 23 July. We are so fortunate that The St Martin Voices, together with Zeb Soanes, from Classic FM, are coming – the title of the Concert "The Fairest Isle" There will be a drinks reception before the concert starts. Do please come and support this event – we are raising money towards the project to re-new the Great West Doors to enable more visibility into the Cathedral. Drawings will be available for you to see at Snape. We are arranging a coach from Bury St Edmunds and please contact me at sue@friendsevents.co.uk for more information. There is a flyer in this Report.

Our Quirky Talks have continued to be very popular and we have another one planned for Monday 27 October at Lavenham Village Hall, when Mathew Long of Riverside Bulbs, Monks Eleigh will be coming to speak and tell us how to ensure a wonderful display of bulbs during the seasons. Details to follow.

I would like to thank all members of the Council who work so hard for The Friends, especially those who make cakes, scones and sandwiches for our Quirky Talks! This year Ian Brookman, our Treasurer, is standing down after many years as our Treasurer and I am extremely grateful to him for his advice and support since I became Director.

As you will have seen from the Dean's Report, The Abbey of St Edmund Reborn continues apace and we are eagerly looking forward to the next stage.

Whilst we have attracted eleven new Friends in the past year, I am anxious that we continue recruiting so please feel free to mention *The Friends* to your friends and colleagues.

With my thanks to you all.

Susan Cockram
Director

The Friends' Prayer

Almighty God,

To whose glory we dedicate
the work of your servants,
Pour down your blessing,
we beseech you,
On those who labour to
express our worship in beauty.

May our Cathedral Church
be sanctified
By the prayers of your faithful people;

May its holiness touch the
hearts and minds
Of all those who pass
through its doors;

May its beauty afford a glimpse of heaven
So that more may join your Church as living stones.

Amen