

Friends of St Britius Newsletter No 20 January 2016



Dear Friend(s)

***A very Happy New Year
to all Friends of St Britius***

It is good to report that 2015 was a very successful year in completing two projects, the new heating and the bells, and restoring the stone walls around the churchyard.

The New Heating & Wiring

The new under pew heaters installed by Stuart Finlayson & Garry Griffin have been declared a great success. In fact, at the Remembrance Service in November some members of the congregation decided to move pews because they were too warm! The heaters have only been installed at the front of the church, so those who prefer it cooler can sit at the back or in the north aisle.

The new wiring and plugs were in use at Christmas for the Christmas tree lights and for the lights strung along the tombstones for Midnight Mass.

The Bells

We rang the bells for Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve and hope we didn't wake anyone up if they had already gone to bed! We also rang on Christmas morning and those attending the family service said how nice it was to walk to church to the sound of the bells.

Churchyard Walls

We have spent just under £5,000 restoring two sides of the stone walls enclosing our churchyard. Many thanks to Jason Peach for his help and expertise with this.

Patronal Festival & Christmas Services

There was a good number of villagers at all of these services, particularly the Carol Service where it is always good to have the readers representing many strands of the village community. The church always looks so warm and welcoming with over eighty lit candles plus all the lanterns down the path. A big thank you to Timms & Sons for once again donating a beautiful Christmas tree for the church.



Future Fund Raising Events

Unfortunately this year Shrove Tuesday coincides with the monthly WI meeting. As many WI members enjoy coming to our Pancake Supper we shall not be running it this year as we rely on their support. We do however hope to be involved in the village celebrations of the Queens' 90th Birthday on 11/12th June. Any ideas for this fund raising event to be organised by the church would be most welcome.

Village Gardens Open for the NGS this year will be on Sunday 19th June from 2 pm. There will be a flower festival in church as usual.

Why we still need to raise funds - Friends of St Britius Subscription Renewal

Now that the church is warm and dry our attention turns to the ongoing problem of paying our way. Each year we are expected to contribute a very large amount of money (last year £15,000) as our Parish Share, paying towards our vicar's salary and many other costs within the Deanery & Diocese. This means finding more than £1,000 each month over and above our own running and maintenance costs (electricity, insurance, water etc., etc.) which are barely covered by our small regular congregation. To keep afloat we have had to dip into our general reserves which are now depleted. It would be ironical if we had to close the church having spent so much on the fabric.

We appreciate the efforts made by the village in helping to raise the money for the church roof and heating, perhaps now is the time to ask for another fund raising effort. We will revisit the successful fund raising activities from "Stop the Drips at St Brits" and hope to find some activities which will attract support. We have certainly missed the community spirit which helped so much to bring the village together so successfully.

In the meantime you can help by renewing your Friends of St Britius Subscription which has been very welcome over the past years. We do value your interest and support and your subscription will continue to make a considerable contribution to our church.

Please use the enclosed form to return your subscription to Dr Phil Holmes at Church Farm House, Carterton Road, Brize Norton, OX18 3LY. Cheques should be made payable to Brize Norton PCC. Monies can also be paid through online banking to Brize Norton PCC, Bank Sort Code 20-97-48, Acct. No. 20205559. Please use the Gift Aid Declaration on the form if possible as this adds 25% to your donation courtesy of HMRC. You must sign and date the form to qualify.

Also please consider setting up an annual standing order or direct debit from your bank using the above information, so we won't have to approach you every year.

Thank you

Once again your continued support is very much appreciated to keep St Britius a visible permanent sign of the Christian community in the village. It hopefully continues to speak, without words, of values and purposes that are important for us as human beings.

We hope this will encourage you to remain a Friend of St Britius. Thank you in anticipation.

A selection of photos from past fund raising efforts. Can you name the event?



For news and updates see our website at www.bncommunity.org