

News & Annual Report 2018



Caring for Christian churches and chapels in Essex and East London



A stone mason carves a new figurehead at Willingale, St Christopher, as part of a large project to which The Friends contributed funds for roof repairs © David Kerwin

Inside this newsletter



Lord Petre will give the Gepp Lecture on 16th May. See page 11. Do bring a friend. The Lecture is free and open to non-members.

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The Friends of Essex Churches Trust 2017-18

Do you know someone who would like to be a Friend?

A message from our Chairman



Jeremy Beale

In my first year as Chairman I have frequently been impressed by the wealth of talent and the generosity that we are able to call on. The Friends of Essex Churches Trust is an entirely voluntary organisation

that depends on donors, fund-raisers and members, and on people with a wide variety of skills who give their time to deal with the different tasks we undertake.

The array of skills is matched by the variety of church buildings, built in all manner of materials and styles, in very different communities from the rural hamlets of outer Essex to the East London Boroughs that we continue to serve. The work we undertake is always interesting, throwing up the unexpected and unusual.

The Trust could not continue without its volunteers. We hope that our new website will make clear the different aspects of our activities, from fund raising to grant giving as well as the educational aspect of increasing knowledge of our church buildings. We also hope that members and supporters will take time to look at these different activities.

Both our Vice-Chairman, Martin Stuchfield, and I would welcome the opportunity to talk to anyone who would like to get involved in helping to maintain and improve the churches of all denominations in Essex and East London.

Jeremy Beale
Chairman – Friends of Essex Churches Trust



Borley Church was one of 38 churches to be awarded a grant in 2017

Events

2017 started with a wonderful evening of Art and Music at Layer Marney Tower. The Long Gallery was packed to hear Marina Abel Smith's delightful singing of arias and jazz favourites. Local artists displayed work for sale and a substantial sum was raised. Drinks and canapés by the Events Committee added to a most enjoyable evening – a true team effort.

In May the AGM and 5th Annual Gepp Lecture were held in St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden. Dr John Goodall, Architectural Editor of *Country Life*, gave a passionate talk about the treasures in the many parish churches of Essex. The Events Committee excelled themselves with delicious sustenance, and Gepp & Sons supplied the wine.

Our Garden Open was at Peacocks, in Margaretting. Phil and Carol Torr allowed us to explore their magnificent gardens, with Phil leading tours on the evolution of the garden. Attendance was great, and the Events Committee's cake sale raised additional sums for the Trust.

Dave Monk, of BBC Essex, opened our Gift Fair, which was held again at elegant Hylands House. Organiser Emma Brice created a financially successful day by her excellent choice of stalls, maintaining the Fair's sparkle and appeal. Refreshments were served upstairs, freeing floor space for more stalls and creating a relaxed area to meet friends and enjoy our baking. Attendance and takings rose by a quarter – truly excellent in these straitened times.



Dave Monk from BBC Essex opened our 2017 Christmas Gift Fair at elegant Hylands House

The 2017 Christmas card, featuring The Adoration of the Shepherds, came from St Nicholas, Little Braxted. This lovely image was photographed by Roger Jiggins and has sold very well.

I would like to thank the Events Committee for their great work, humour and enthusiasm. A small reshuffle means Clare Ford replaces Catharine Hutley as Treasurer, and Jessie McGowan becomes Secretary, replacing Victoria Toler. Claire Cottrell is leaving after many years of dedicated service and will be much missed.

Rachel Grainger
Chairman – Events Committee
E-mail: events@foect.org.uk

Grants – 2017 was a joyful year

When I look back through my past reports I am very aware that they have started on a gloomy note (lack of applications, low number of offers and budgeted funds unused). It is, therefore, a joy to report that 26 grants for Repairs were offered in 2017 compared to 14 in 2016. The Executive set a budget for the year of £140,000. However, due to the increase in applications and the number of higher value offers the Grants committee requested and were awarded two additional amounts of £15,000. These additional amounts brought the budget to £170,000, of which £167,350 was offered.

Not wishing to become complacent, however, I would like to repeat my messages from last year. Grant forms are very simple to fill in. There is plenty of help available either from the secretary John Bloomfield or me. Our contact details are given at the end of this report. There are no limits to the value. We have made grants in the current year ranging from £350 to £30,000. We are constantly trying to reach out to all who are proposing to carry out repairs and would encourage all who read this report to pass on this message.

The Grants Committee met as usual on four occasions and was kept busy at each meeting. Each parish applying for a grant was visited by a committee member to gain an insight into parish life and to finalise figures which might have changed since the application form was completed. Due to the increase in applications some



Roof repairs at Westcliff Crowstone © L Denton

committee members had to visit more than one parish; and I think it is important to remember that all of their efforts are voluntary. These visits are essential and I would like to thank the committee members for the valuable time they give both at the meetings and on the visits. During the year Keith Gardner stood down from the committee, of which he had been a member for many years. His reports were excellent and he will be greatly missed. The committee still needs further members and would welcome anyone who may feel suitable.

Applications again covered most of the county of Essex and there were two from the London Boroughs. However, as in previous years, there were no applications for any major projects in the boroughs. This continues to surprise me considering the size of some of the buildings. We always try to make sure our message reaches the non-Anglican churches and this year we were able to make offers to Great Baddow URC, and Westcliff Crowstone (King's Road) URC, our largest offer of the year.



Level floors and improved access for Alphamstone, St Barnabas



Window repairs for Goodmayes, St Paul



Repairs and a nave roof walkway for Hadstock, St Botolph



Gutter and rainwater pipe repairs for Inworth, All Saints



Kitchen and lavatory for Mount Bures, St John the Baptist



Window repairs for Thaxted, St John the Baptist



Ceiling plaster repairs for Tolleshunt Major, St Nicholas

I am not surprised that half of the applications were for roof repairs. Most of them were for significant amounts. It never ceases to amaze me how much parishes are able to raise, and they deserve praise for this. I hope that the grants offered this year have given them encouragement to forge ahead. Gutter and masonry repairs applications run a close second to those for roof repairs and plaster repair applications make an occasional appearance as well.

In March 2016 we were able to offer £15,000 to Willingale, St Christopher for urgent roof repairs and this offer enabled the parish to begin work. However, nobody realised just how frail the roof had become. When work started, the roof timbers were found to be in a very poor state and an additional £33,000 was needed. A large contingency had been included but the parish were still £6,000 short in their funding. The committee were very happy to offer the full amount.

This is the third year that we have offered Improvement Grants. After a poor response last year I am delighted to report that we made 12 offers totalling £106,000,

leaving a small sum of £4,000 from the budget unused. Half of the offers were for lavatories and kitchens. The amounts offered were quite significant and ranged from £8,000 to £25,000. It is hoped that the money provided by the Trust will help these much needed facilities come to fruition. Other offers included a fire alarm to our oldest and most unusual church, Greensted, St Andrew, and a nave roof walkway at Hadstock, St Botolph. This is a very historic roof and the walkway has already proved invaluable.

Finally I repeat my yearly appeal for parishes to present the committee with an interesting range of applications and ask potential applicants to note that we serve all Christian denominations.

David Lodge
Chairman – Grants Committee
E-mail: cardav87@talktalk.net
Tel: 01621 850079

Application forms for grants are available online at www.foect.org.uk and from John Bloomfield
E-mail: john.bloomfield@btinternet.com
Tel: 01708 745273

2017 grant offers in full

Repairs

Beneficiary	Repairs	Amount
Borley	Work to rectify dampness	£3,000
Eight Ash Green, All Saints	Underpinning and repairs	£5,000
Feering, All Saints	Recovering roof	£5,000
Goodmayes, St Paul	Window repairs	£5,000
Great Baddow URC	Roof repairs	£2,000
Great Bromley, St George	Masonry repairs to south aisle	£6,500
Great Canfield, St Mary the Virgin	Roof and gutter repairs	£2,500
Hadstock, St Botolph	Various repairs	£10,000
Harrow Green, Holy Trinity	Fascia repairs	£2,500
Inworth, All Saints	Gutter and rainwater pipe repairs	£4,000
Little Dunmow, St Mary the Virgin	Sundry repairs	£2,000
Mayland, St Barnabas	Re-slating of roof	£5,000
Mountnessing, St Giles	Drainage and masonry repairs	£4,000
Nazeing, All Saints	Roof repairs	£10,000
Stapleford Abbots, St Mary the Virgin	Roof and stone repairs	£2,000
Stebbing, St Mary the Virgin	Masonry repairs to nave parapets	£15,000
Stondon Massey, St Peter and St Paul	Roof and timber repairs	£3,000
Stow Maries, St Mary and St Margaret	Repairs to steeple and nave roof	£10,000
Thaxted, St John the Baptist	Window repairs	£10,000
Tolleshunt Major, St Nicholas	Ceiling plaster repairs	£350
Ugley, St Peter	Roof repairs	£4,000
Wendons Ambo, St Mary the Virgin	Tower roof repairs	£6,500
Westcliff Crowstone (King's Road) URC	Roof repairs	£30,000
Willingale, St Christopher	Roof timber repairs	£6,000
Witham, St Nicholas	Roof and ceiling repair to south aisle	£4,000
Wix, St Mary the Virgin	Re-tiling of bellcote	£10,000
TOTAL		£167,350

Improvements

Beneficiary	Improvements	Amount
Aldersbrook, St Gabriel	Additional heating	£4,500
Alphamstone, St Barnabas	Levelling floors improving access	£10,000
Becontree, St Cedd	Improvements to mechanical and electrical services	£3,000
Brentwood Vineyard Church	Heating	£5,000
Creaksea, All Saints	Kitchen and lavatory	£12,000
Greensted, St Andrew	Fire alarm	£2,500
Hadstock, St Botolph	Roof access walkway	£1,000
Mount Bures, St John the Baptist	Provision of kitchen and lavatory	£10,000
North Springfield Baptist Church	Kitchen and lavatory extension	£10,000
Saffron Walden, St Mary the Virgin	Provision of kitchen and lavatory	£25,000
Thorrington, St Mary Magdalene	Provision of lavatory	£15,000
Tillingham, St Nicholas	Provision of lavatory	£8,000
TOTAL		£106,000

2017 Ride+Stride

Ride+Stride, always on the second Saturday in September, has continued to be an established item in the calendar of Essex churches, as well as an eagerly anticipated event for many of the county's army of cyclists, and gentler, more leisurely, walkers. It is an enjoyable annual ritual for many people, as well as a significant fundraiser for the Trust. The day never fails to remind participants how fortunate the county is to have so many wonderful and diverse churches, and for those churches who throw open their doors to welcome visitors, it is a rare opportunity to show off their richness. Sadly, for good reasons, many churches remain locked when not actually in use, so it is particularly appreciated when the interior of churches can be inspected, however briefly.



Our Ride+Stride organiser John Pickthorn in action on 9th September 2017

9th September 2017 saw a return to good weather that Ride+Stride has enjoyed in the past, with the deluge of 2016 a mere blip. I was riding in the north of the county, and was very struck by the warm welcome I received in many of the churches that we visited. The refreshments were especially appreciated. It was nice to see how many of the regulars were taking part once again, and a new development in 2017 was the emergence of battery power assisted bikes (helpful in the hillier regions, but I usually advise its devotees to divulge their help to their sponsors).

Especial mention should be made of Song Cycle, the remarkable 'all singing all cycling male voice quartet' from Brentwood, and Mrs Libby Hill for her tireless efforts over many years. I must also record my sincere thanks to Ray and Beryl Clements, who serve as custodians of the not-insignificant amounts of correspondence (and payments) that Ride+Stride inevitably generates.

Although many of the regular participants are familiar with the Friends of Essex Churches Trust website and download the various documents themselves, some Ride+Striders and some church administrators prefer receiving the usual hard-copy mailings, and it was disappointing that we were let down by the printing firm entrusted with this in 2017. Steps have already been taken to ensure that this is not repeated in 2018, and the launch of our new website should ensure that it will be easier for those with internet connections and printers to have access to the various documents. £54,821 has so far been received for Essex and East London, slightly down on previous years.



Three young supporters made the 2017 Ride+Stride a family event for Shenfield, St Mary



The Ride+Stride team from Leytonstone, St Margaret with St Columba, were delighted to find Christ Church, Wanstead open

Plans are already well under way for this year's event on Saturday, 8th September 2018 and we are hoping to be able to announce by the time of the AGM an ambitious cycle tour around the whole area covered by the Anglican and Roman Catholic dioceses.

John Pickthorn

Organiser – Ride+Stride

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Study Days

Our two Study Days in 2017 were again very well supported and through the generosity of Friends and guests raised a considerable sum, approaching £2,000, for the Trust. The purpose of the Study Days is primarily to carry out our duty of education under the constitution of the Trust but, of course, fund-raising is a very welcome and worthwhile secondary function.

In May 2017 we visited four notable medieval churches in north-west Essex. We began the day at Stebbing, St Mary the Virgin, where we took the opportunity to examine the exquisite fourteenth-century screen. This was followed by Bardfield Saling (or Little Saling), St Peter & St Paul, its round tower being perhaps the latest of the six round towers in Essex. After lunch we visited Little Sampford, St Mary the Virgin, with its fine sequence of monuments to the proprietors of Little Sampford manor (including ancestors of the film star Gregory Peck). Lastly we met at Great Sampford, St Michael, an intriguing church which probably began as a minster long before the Norman Conquest. After the talk, there was plenty of time to examine the church carefully before sitting down to refreshments.

The Autumn Study Day took place in an area of south-east Essex unfamiliar to the majority of the Friends and guests. The four churches proved to be of great historical interest. The first was Fobbing, St Michael, originally built on an escarpment overlooking the Thames in perhaps the 10th century. Following a talk about the building, which was the parish church of the rebels who



Dr Christopher Starr leads our Study Days

initiated the Peasants' Revolt in 1381, we enjoyed refreshments before setting off for Corringham, St Mary the Virgin, a stone's throw away. Here the impressive early Norman tower has survived nine centuries remarkably well. Horndon-on-the-Hill, St Peter & St Paul came next after the lunch



Our Spring Study Day visited Stebbing, St Mary the Virgin

break. It was here, outside the church, that a Protestant martyr was burned at the stake for his faith in 1555. The last church of the day was North Ockendon, St Mary Magdalene, now in the London Borough of Havering. Here we saw an extraordinary series of monuments commissioned in memory of his ancestors by Sir Gabriel Poyntz who died in 1607. The monuments show successive generations of the Poyntz family, lords of the manor of North Ockendon, wearing clothes and armour intended by Sir Gabriel to be historically accurate. The day concluded as always with welcome refreshments in the church.

Once again our grateful thanks go to incumbents, churchwardens and parishioners for their help in making our visits such a pleasure. Special thanks go to the members of the congregation who so generously provided us with refreshments. Many thanks also go to Susan Clark-Starr for making the numerous and seamless, administrative arrangements for both Study Days.

Finally, as my tenth year as Study Day leader approaches, I would like to thank all the Friends and guests who attend, many of them regularly, for making the necessary research and planning so personally rewarding.

Christopher Starr

Save the date!

Wednesday, 9th May – Spring Study Day

Including visits to the churches at Barnston, Good Easter, High Easter and Great Canfield.

Wednesday, 16th May – Spring Meeting including AGM and Gepp Lecture

Our Gepp Lecturer for 2018 will be Lord Petre and his subject will be “An Essex Family’s Experience of Recusancy.” St Christopher’s Church, Willingale, Ongar CM5 0SJ at 8.15pm, following the Annual General Meeting at 7.15pm and refreshments from 7.45pm.

Open to members and non-members; admission free. Please email martinstuchfield@pentlowhall.uk to be sent further information; it would help us to know if you are planning to attend so that it is possible to gauge numbers for refreshments.

Thursday, 7th June – Over Hall Garden

Garden open at Over Hall, Colne Engaine, by kind permission of Michael and Jane Lambert. A rare chance to explore this wonderful garden, not normally open to the public. There is something for everybody, with formal gardens, walled garden, orchard, wooded walk, vegetable garden and much more. Ample parking. Further details to be announced.

Saturday, 6th October – Autumn Study Day

Details to be confirmed.

Thursday, 11th October – Christmas Gift Fair

The Christmas Gift Fair at Hylands House, Chelmsford CM2 8WG. The place to start your Christmas shopping in elegant surroundings with many new stalls each year. Light lunches available.



Book up for our next Study Day on 9th May and visit Barnston, St Andrew © Ruth Patten



We are grateful to Willingale, St Christopher (right) for hosting our 2018 AGM and Gepp Lecture. Willingale, St Andrew (left) is in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. Together the two churches, situated either side of the Epping to Harwich footpath, The Essex Way, are important features of the Essex rural landscape © David Kerwin

Lend me your ears!

requests our Membership Secretary

Have you noticed that, in recent years at least, we end up in the last but one part of this annual report? There is a good reason for this. What other than the accounts, which come very last, is less glamorous than subs, donations and Gift Aid? Essential but boring.

This time, I am not going to trawl through how much you gave last year, from which group it came and how are we getting on, except to say that last year was a little down on the last but one year but not seriously so.

It is, however, the last time I will be filling this space. Sir Alastair Stewart entrusted me with the tiller of the membership in 2004. Now after 14 circumnavigations, the time has come for me to stand down, five chairmen and three treasurers later.

There are more than a thousand of you. Many I have never met, but all along my aim has been to be a friend, not just a name on

a piece of paper; to keep in touch, without hustling for money, as so many well-known charities do. Thank you so much for trusting me with just on £600,000 in subs, donations and Gift Aid over these years and for being such a marvellous crew. A lasting memory.

Being involved at the centre of the charity's work has been very stimulating. One aspect that came my way was to visit groups interested in our work: U3As, WIs and the like. My last such visit was at the invitation of an Anglo-Catholic parish priest. I had not envisaged when taking on the job that I would be asked to spread the Gospel of The Friends, in place of his sermon, at a very High Mass on Advent Sunday. Life brings many experiences.

A last word. Friends, East Saxons and Countrymen, trust me: without you the Trust would not last. Thank you.



Greensted, St Andrew, the oldest wooden church in the world, was offered a grant for a fire alarm

Summarised accounts for the year ended 31st December 2017

Statement of financial activities

Total 2016 £'000		Total 2017 £'000
37.6	Donations and subscriptions	32.8
0.0	Legacies	4.5
70.4	Fundraising – Ride+Stride	56.9
17.4	– other events	25.0
16.4	Dividends and interest	16.7
141.8	Total income	135.9
(2.1)	Governance and support costs	(1.7)
(2.2)	Ride+Stride – fundraising expenses	(0.1)
(29.5)	– returned to churches	(24.9)
(6.4)	Other events – fundraising expenses	(9.6)
(1.8)	Promotion of public interest in churches	(8.5)
(111.8)	Grants for work payable to churches	(273.4)
(153.8)	Total expenditure	(318.2)
(12.0)	Net expenditure	(182.3)
20.0	Unrealised gain on investment	21.1
8.0	Net increase /(decrease) in funds	(161.2)

Summary balance sheet as at 31st December 2017

2016 £'000		2017 £'000
301.9	Investment – market value	323.0
263.0	Cash and deposits	275.3
1.5	Sundry debtors	2.7
566.4	Total assets 601.0	
(79.8)	Undrawn grants	(273.3)
(5.5)	Creditors – Gutter Clearance	(5.4)
(1.4)	Accruals	(3.8)
479.7	Net assets 318.5	
	Represented by	
479.7	General Fund (unrestricted)	318.5
479.7	Total funds 318.5	

Treasurer's Report

Once again the summarized accounts on page 14 show a large increase in the valuation of our investment in Charifund, which is fortunate as my comments last year about a reduced number of grant applications were very much reversed in 2017. A total of 38 churches were awarded the grand total of £273,350 – see pages 4 to 7 – an increase of almost 150% on the 2016 total.

As always thanks are due to all our supporters, be it via a subscription, gift or any of our fund-raising activities. 2017 net income from some of these was reduced – see pages 3, 8 10 and 13 – but overall the total was rather similar.

Harry Marsh
Treasurer

E-mail: harry.marsh@talktalk.net

Tel: 01245 478038

Legacies

We are always saddened to learn of the death of members, but sometimes the news is accompanied by donations taken at the funeral, a thought that is greatly appreciated. We have also, over the years, received some very generous bequests. We urge all our members to consider remembering us in their wills;

bequests to charity can reduce liability to Inheritance Tax.

Please contact the Treasurer if you would like advice on suitable wording – Canon Harry Marsh, 5 Vicarage Lane, Great Baddow, Chelmsford CM2 8HY
Email: harry.marsh@talktalk.net

The Friends of Essex Churches Trust 2017-18

Patrons:

The Bishop of Brentwood
The Bishop of Chelmsford
HM Lord-Lieutenant of Essex

President:

Rt Revd Thomas McMahon

Executive Committee and Trustees:

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Martin Stuchfield, MBE JP DL
(Vice-Chairman & Hon. Secretary)

Harry Marsh (Hon. Treasurer)

Jill Cole
Keith Gardner
Rachel Grainger
David Lodge, MBE
Patrick McEune
Ralph Meloy
John Pickthorn
Christopher Starr

We are grateful to all our supporters and members.



Saffron Walden, St Mary the Virgin, the venue of our 2017 AGM and Gepp Lecture. We look forward to seeing you at our next AGM on 16th May 2018 when the Gepp Lecture will be given by Lord Petre

© Dominic Davey



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Published by the Friends of Essex Churches Trust Charity No. 236033



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