

News & Annual Report 2019



Caring for Christian churches and chapels in Essex and East London



Our Spring Study Day on 8th May will visit Rettendon, All Saints.

© James Bettley

Inside this newsletter



Brian Mooney will give the Gepp Lecture on Wednesday, 15th May. See page 12. Do bring a friend. The Lecture is open to non-members.

- 2 Chairman's message
 - 3 Events
 - 4 Grants
 - 6 2018 grant offers in full
 - 8 2018 Ride+Stride
 - 10 Study Days
 - 11 Upcoming Events
 - 13 Membership and Gift Aid
 - 14 Summarised accounts
 - 15 Treasurer's Report
- Legacies
The Friends of Essex Churches Trust 2018-19

Chairman's message



Jeremy Beale

The Friends of Essex Churches Trust was founded in 1951, a very recent event compared to the age of some of the buildings we seek to befriend, but in human terms nearly a lifetime.

One of the key objectives of the charity is conservation, conservation seeks continuity; in times of change and political uncertainty steadiness of purpose can seem a merit in itself.

Readers of these reports will have noticed widely varying totals of awards listed in the grants report: £108,500 in 2014, £159,000 in 2015, £112,750 in 2016, £273,350 in 2017 and £89,000 in 2018. There is little continuity in grant awards because there is no continuity in application. Each church or chapel applies as an individual without any thought about the general condition of other places of worship across Essex and East London. Although we cannot predict applications we can take a view of the future task.

It would be a great error to think a fall in applications indicated a reduction in need. There are hundreds of ancient churches and chapels across the county. Their congregations are declining, fewer lay people take time to help with maintenance

and administration. The need for charities such as ours will not diminish. We seek continuity, we try to hold back the changes brought by time and decay but our real foe is complacency.

The Trust and its membership have a proud history and, as I wrote last year, a very dedicated and skilled group of people who volunteer to help in the varied activities we undertake. The work we do is warmly rewarded by the thanks given by recipients of grants. We have achieved a great deal and the steadiness I mentioned earlier is a key part of our ethos but we also need urgency. Preserving these buildings gives us pleasure and is our gift to future generations.

Jeremy Beale

Chairman – Friends of Essex Churches Trust



Lamarsh, Holy Innocents. © James Bettley

Events

2018 began with a delightful evening of music performed by The Galliard Trio, with works by Mozart, Handel, Bach and Shostakovich, at All Saints Church, Rettendon. Dreadful weather notwithstanding, an impressive attendance raised a substantial sum. Drinks and canapes were provided by the committee.

In May, the AGM and 6th Annual Gepp Lecture were held in St Christopher's Church, Willingale. Lord Petre gave an entertaining and informative talk about 'An Essex Family's Experience of Recusancy' to a packed church, and the committee again excelled with canapes, whilst Gepps supplied delicious wines.

Our Garden Open was at Over Hall, in Colne Engaine. On a glorious day Jane and Michael Lambert allowed us to explore their magnificent gardens. The committee provided tea and ran a cake stall. Attendance was excellent and a good sum was raised.

Mrs Jennifer Tolhurst, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Essex, opened our Gift Fair at Hylands House. Organiser Emma Brice excelled by arranging an eclectic mix of high-quality stalls. Refreshments were served upstairs, with plenty of room to catch-up with friends. Takings rose and a considerable sum was raised.

Our Christmas card featured an exquisite detail of the Madonna and Child from the 14th century east window in the



Mrs Jennifer Tolhurst, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Essex, opened our Gift Fair. © Rachel Grainger

choir vestry of St Mary the Virgin, Harlow, photographed by John Lawrence Jones. Organised by Jo Pimblett it sold very well.

I would like to thank the Committee for their hard work, cheerfulness and enthusiasm in devising, organising and running our events – their baking skills and canapes would be the envy of many Michelin starred restaurants! Clare Ford, Treasurer and mailing list coordinator, deserves special thanks for her huge efforts on our behalf.

We have welcomed several new members, but sadly lost some too. Catharine Hutley's vast experience will be much missed, as will Leonie Marks, who leaves after many years of dedicated service.

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

Grants

2018 was an unusual year for the Committee, as we received fewer applications for help than usual; so we were able to be generous to those who met our criteria for assistance. Even so, due to the lack of applications, we did not spend all the money we were allocated for the year.

We are concerned that we do not get as many applications as we would like from Roman Catholic or Non-conformist churches. Do all these churches know we are non-denominational?

During the year we approved grants to ten churches for maintenance and repair, and to five churches for improvements. The total amount pledged was £89,000. This was substantially less than in recent years, but it was a reflection of the low number of applications. There were some cases where we refused help, either because the applicant church already had the funds they needed or because the

application fell outside the criteria as to the type of work we can support.

During the year David Lodge retired as Chairman, though fortunately not from the Committee. Huge thanks are due to him for his many years' service in that role. David was always willing with his advice and knowledge to give support to churches facing building crises or in doubt as to the right course of action to take with regard to work required. The present and slightly temporary Chairman (two years) is very glad he still has David's wise counsel to fall back on.

We made grants to churches as scattered as Clacton, Little Yeldham and Stratford. There is no part of the historic county of Essex where we are unwilling to help. The largest repair grant we made in the year was £12,500; the smallest £2,000. For improvements the largest grant was £10,000 and the smallest £2,000.



Tower and roof repairs at Aldham, SS Margaret & Katherine. © James Bettley



General external repairs at Buttesbury, St Mary. © James Bettley



Roof and masonry repairs at Chingford, SS Peter & Paul. © James Bettley



Retiling and rainwater goods at Corringham, St Mary the Virgin. © James Bettley



Plaster work to chancel and nave at Hockley, SS Peter & Paul. © James Bettley



Stabilisation of the east wall at Kirby-le-Soken, St Michael. © James Bettley



Nave ceiling replacement at Stratford, St John. © James Bettley



Spire re-tiling at Wethersfield, St Mary Magdalene. © James Bettley

I would like to thank our Secretary, John Bloomfield, for the great amount of time he puts into his work for the Committee. We are always fully briefed on every application. He and the Chairman rely also on the reports that the members of the Committee bring to us at our meetings, after they have visited the applicant churches. Without their help we could not function. We are always looking for new recruits to the Committee. Serving with us is rewarding and interesting if you are interested in churches. If any member would like to volunteer, please get in touch, either with me or with John Bloomfield.

Lance Lepper
Chairman – Grants Committee
E-mail: cardav87@talktalk.net
Tel: 01245 400284



*Clay tile replacement at Manuden,
St Mary the Virgin. © James Bettley*

**Application forms for grants are
available from John Bloomfield**
E-mail: john.bloomfield@btinternet.com
Tel: 01708 745273

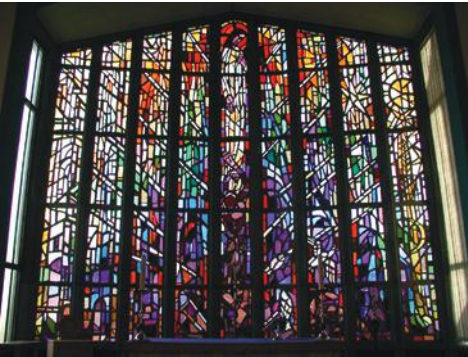
2018 grant offers in full

Repairs

Beneficiary	Repairs	Amount
Aldham, SS Margaret & Katherine	Tower and roof repairs	£7,500
Buttesbury, St Mary	General external repairs	£3,000
Chingford, SS Peter & Paul	Roof and masonry repairs	£10,000
Corringham, St Mary the Virgin	Retiling and rainwater goods	£10,000
Hockley, SS Peter & Paul	Plaster work to chancel & nave	£4,000
Kirby-le-Soken, St Michael	Stabilisation of the East wall	£8,000
Leaden Roding, St Michael	Window and plastering repairs	£3,000
Manuden, St Mary the Virgin	Clay tile replacement	£5,000
Stratford, St John	Nave ceiling replacement	£12,500
Wethersfield, St Mary Magdalene	Spire re-tiling	£2,000
TOTAL		£65,000

Improvements

Beneficiary	Improvements	Amount
Clacton-on-Sea, St Paul	Major kitchen update	£10,000
Great Tey, St Barnabas	Accessible lavatory and baby change facility	£6,000
Holland-on-Sea, St Bartholomew	Kitchen and lavatories	£2,000
Little Yeldham, St John the Baptist	Improved access for those with disabilities	£2,000
Leytonstone, St Margaret	Provision of step-free access	£4,000
TOTAL		£24,000



Major kitchen update at Clacton-on-Sea, St Paul
© James Bettley



Accessible lavatory and baby change facility at Great Tey, St Barnabas. © James Bettley



Kitchen and lavatory improvements at Holland-on-Sea, St Bartholomew. © James Bettley



Improved access for those with disabilities at Little Yeldham, St John the Baptist. © James Bettley

2018 Ride+Stride

For several years, there has been a growing acceptance that Ride+Stride “isn’t quite what it used to be”; this is expressed not just in Essex, but across the country, with most counties finding it increasingly difficult to build up the event to the same extent as in the 1970s and 80s, when it came to be recognised not just as a significant fundraiser, but a much anticipated and dynamic day in the Church’s calendar. There are various reasons for this, but it has been disappointing to observe that, in the years when cycling has increasingly become a ubiquitous leisure activity (and a sport that Britons are actually good at), Ride+Stride (and, by extension, the churches of our county) have not been able to capitalise on this development.

By the greatest good-fortune, Essex may have stumbled across a way to reverse this. The Ven. Robin King, fit, energetic, and in possession of an excellent racing bike, volunteered to do a circuit of his Archdeaconry of Stansted. There were months of planning to discuss the route, how his circuit could include as many of ‘his’ churches as possible without going on any of the busier, more dangerous roads, and how his efforts should be publicised. Eventually it all fell in to place, and a ‘Tour de Stansted’ was devised, taking in over 50 churches on the perimeter of the Archdeaconry. Even allowing for a minimal five-minute stop at each church (usually to devour the much-appreciated cakes kindly provided), it was clearly not possible

to complete the circuit (over 150 miles, from Coggeshall) in a day, so it was agreed to spread this year’s Ride+Stride over a weekend with an overnight break (in Great Chesterford). I am pleased to report that a peleton of at least half a dozen riders (including Revd Canon David Tomlinson and Steve Hasler from Saffron Walden) completed the feat in time for Evensong on the Sunday. The gauntlet has been thrown down for other cycling clergy and vicars on velocipedes.

Many thanks to those who supported Ride+Stride 2018 throughout Essex, and particularly to those non-cyclists who kept their magnificent churches open for the event. They should know how appreciated this is.

John Pickthorn

Organiser – Ride+Stride

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Tel: 01799 523311



The tour leaders pause outside Great Canfield, St Mary the Virgin. © John Pickthorn



Start of Day 2 in Great Chesterford. © Clifford Want



Only 10 more cakes until lunchtime. © Clifford Want



I'm sure someone must have a map. © Clifford Want



The Archdeacon exhorts his flock. © John Pickthorn

Study Days

Once again we held two very successful Study Days in 2018, visiting nine churches in all, and raising a splendid total in excess of £2,000. We thank you for your support, and for your donations and note that two of the churches included in the Study Days were beneficiaries of substantial grants from the Trust last year.

Our Spring Study Day was held in central Essex beginning with St Andrew, Barnston, an exquisite little Norman building almost hidden by trees down a country lane. Here the original parsonage was actually bigger than the church, a reflection perhaps of past attitudes and bigger households. This was followed by St Mary the Virgin, Great Canfield, with its sensitive thirteenth-century wall painting of the Virgin and Child, still clearly visible after eight hundred years. The church has some extraordinary Norman architecture which is also remarkably well preserved. After lunch we visited St Mary the Virgin, High Easter, a large Norman church which may once have served as a minster for the surrounding parishes. Here the fine fifteenth-century timber roof caught our attention. Finally we assembled at St Andrew, Good Easter, first for a talk about the history and architecture of the church, and then for some welcome refreshments.

The Autumn Study Day in parishes along the Stour Valley in the north of the county visited five exceptional churches. Beginning with St Andrew, Wormingford, we saw

the noteworthy stained glass and the nineteenth-century tomb chests in the churchyard in memory of the Constable and Boggis-Rolfe families. Our second church was St John the Baptist, Mount Bures, which is unusual as it stands between the manor house and an eleventh-century castle mound at the foot of which a high-status Iron Age burial which was found in 1849. All Saints, Middleton, came next and the recent theft of the unique Tudor royal arms was discussed. Sadly, thefts from churches are becoming more frequent, and irreplaceable treasures are being lost at an alarming rate. After lunch we visited Holy Innocents, Lamarsh, one of the six churches in Essex with a round tower. The last church of the day was St Barnabas, Alphamstone, where we saw the recently-restored chancel and nave of this lovely out-of-the-way church. Our visit concluded with a splendid tea in the village hall.



Great Canfield, St Mary the Virgin. © James Bettley



Our Autumn Study Day at Wormingford, St Andrew. © Susan Clark-Starr



Bradwell-juxta-Coggeshall, Holy Trinity.
© James Bettley



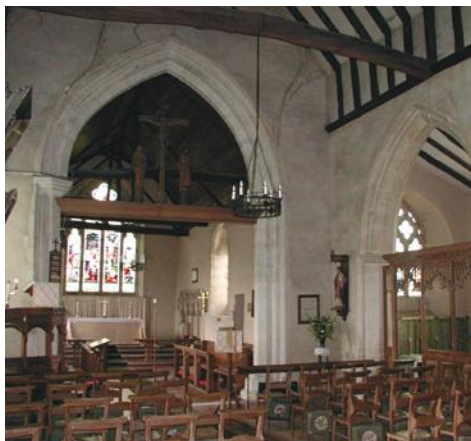
High Easter, St Mary the Virgin. © James Bettley



Wormingford, St Andrew. © James Bettley



Woodham Ferrers, St Mary. © James Bettley



Alphamstone, St Barnabas. © James Bettley

Our thanks to all those who supported our Study Days, including Friends and their guests, clergy and churchwardens, together with the kind people who provided such enjoyable refreshments. Finally my thanks as always to Susan Clark-Starr for so successfully making the administrative arrangements.

All are welcome to join us on our 2019 Study Days. On 8th May we will visit

Rettendon, Runwell, Woodham Ferrers and West Hanningfield, and on 5th October (which will be my last Study Day) we will visit four churches in the Coggeshall area including Bradwell-Juxta-Coggeshall where I hope to launch my new book about John Hende, Mayor of London, who was buried at Bradwell in 1418.

Christopher Starr

Upcoming Events

Find full and updated details of events at www.friendsofessexchurches.org.uk/events.

WEDNESDAY, 8TH MAY – *Spring Study Day*

Our next study day, led by Dr Christopher Starr, will visit Rettendon, Runwell, Woodham Ferrers and West Hanningfield. Details to follow.

WEDNESDAY, 15TH MAY – *Spring Meeting including AGM and Gepp Lecture*

Our Gepp Lecturer for 2019 will be Brian Mooney on his 1,322 mile pilgrimage walk from Coggeshall to Rome. St Peter-ad-Vincula Church, Coggeshall CO6 1QF at 8.15p.m., following the Annual General Meeting at 7.15p.m. and refreshments from 7.45p.m. 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, 6TH JUNE – *Garden Visit*

2.00p.m. - 4.30p.m. The much-admired garden at Scripps, Coggeshall Hamlet will be opened for us to enjoy. Tickets are £13.50 each. Please make cheques payable to FECEC and send to: Becky Willis, The Old Rectory, Church Street, Goldhanger, Essex CM9 8AS. Tel: 01621 788225 or 07711 347782. Email: willisbecky@btinternet.com

SATURDAY, 14TH SEPTEMBER – *Ride+Stride*

9.00a.m. - 5.00p.m. Take part in our sponsored cycle ride and walk. Visit unique churches, have fun with the family, enjoy some gentle exercise, and have a great day out in aid of a good cause. Download sponsorship and other forms from www.friendsofessexchurches.org.uk/ride-stride and create your own fundraising page on www.justgiving.com/foect.

THURSDAY, 10TH OCTOBER – *Gift Fair*

Our acclaimed Gift Fair at Hylands House, Chelmsford CM2 8WG is the perfect place to start your Christmas shopping. Light lunches will be available. Details to follow.

Membership and Gift Aid

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.

Keith Gardner
Membership Secretary

West Hanningfield, SS Mary and Edward © James Bettley

Summarised accounts for the year ended 31st December 2018

Statement of financial activities

Total 2017 £'000		Total 2018 £'000
32.8	Donations and subscriptions	58.2
4.5	Legacies	1.0
56.9	Fundraising – Ride+Stride	50.0
25.0	– other events	19.5
16.7	Dividends and interest	14.1
135.9	Total income	142.8
(1.7)	Governance and support costs	(2.0)
(0.1)	Ride+Stride – fundraising expenses	(0.2)
(24.9)	– returned to churches	(20.4)
(9.6)	Other events – fundraising expenses	(5.4)
(8.5)	Promotion of public interest in churches	(2.5)
(273.4)	Grants for work payable to churches	(83.6)
(318.2)	Total expenditure	(114.1)
(182.3)	Net (expenditure)/income	28.7
21.1	Unrealised gain/(loss) on investment	(27.4)
(161.2)	Net (decrease)/increase in funds	1.3

Summary balance sheet as at 31st December 2018

2017 £'000		2018 £'000
323.0	Investment – market value	180.4
275.3	Cash and deposits	257.7
2.7	Sundry debtors	2.7
601.0	Total assets	440.8
(273.3)	Undrawn allocated grants	(119.5)
(5.4)	Creditors for gutter clearance scheme – now released	0
(3.8)	Accruals	(1.5)
318.5	Net assets	319.8
	Represented by	
318.5	General Fund (unrestricted)	319.8
318.5	Total funds	319.8

Treasurer's Report

The number of grant applications was largely reduced from 2017 and only 15 awards for a total of £89,000 were made (although due to minimal applications since introduction of the gutter clearance scheme in 2013 we decided to write back the £5,350 previously reserved). These grants will continue to be available each year.

Investment values reversed in 2018 and the Trustees decided to sell a sizeable part of our single investment in good time.

Details are shown on page 14 and my thanks go to all who helped to finance the grants by subscription or attendance at our fund-raising activities. We were particularly grateful for a £27,000 donation by a charitable trust.

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 2018-19

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The Bishop of Chelmsford
HM Lord-Lieutenant of Essex.

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Catherine Arnold
Jill Cole
Rachel Grainger
Lance Lepper
David Lodge, MBE
Ralph Meloy
John Pickthorn



We were delighted to offer Great Tey, St Barnabas £6,000 towards an accessible lavatory and baby change facilities. © James Bettley



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