

News & Annual Report 2022

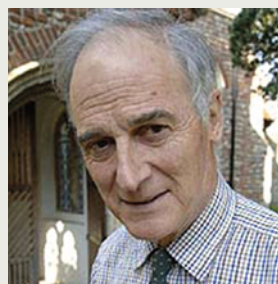


Caring for Christian churches and chapels in Essex and East London



Floor repairs at Great Tey, St Barnabas. © James Bettley

Inside this newsletter



Quinlan Terry will give the Gepp Lecture on Thursday, 19th May. See page 12. Do bring a friend. The Lecture is open to non-members.

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The Friends of Essex Churches Trust 2021-22



Chairman's message



Martin Stuchfield

This last couple of years has been extremely challenging for all concerned. I wish to record a huge debt of gratitude to Jeremy Beale, my predecessor, who in his quiet and unassuming manner has skilfully chaired the Trust for the last four years.

It is pleasing that we are able to emerge at long last from this ghastly pandemic. The Events Committee managed to hold three highly successful events during 2021 despite all the difficulties. A highly enjoyable Garden Open Day was held at Blake Hall in June, a Gin and Gypsy Swing evening at Terling church in September and finally the customary Gift Fair at Hylands House in October.

I am delighted to report that the Annual General Meeting will be held at Brentwood Cathedral on Thursday, 19th May. This is the first occasion that it has been possible to hold a physical AGM since 2019. It is very pleasing that Jenny Tolhurst, our Patron and

Lord-Lieutenant, has very kindly agreed to attend. It has been decided to reintroduce the Ride+Stride Fundraising Cup after many years in abeyance. The evening will include the presentation of the trophy by the Lord-Lieutenant to Frinton who raised a significant amount for the benefit of the Trust. I look forward to meeting our many friends and supporters on that occasion.

Sadly, our grant giving was considerably reduced with a total of £114,500 awarded representing slightly over half the sum allocated for Repairs and Improvements. Our churches (irrespective of denomination) have also suffered during the pandemic. Falling congregation numbers and increased costs (insurance and Parish Share) place additional burdens. The risk of redundancy has never been greater. It is important that incumbents and churchwardens are aware that the Trust has significant resources available to assist with worthy projects. I am very keen to improve the profile of the Trust especially in the area of the historic county of Essex covered by the five London Boroughs.

I wish to thank our dedicated Trustees and the members of the Events and Grants Committees who willingly devote huge amounts of time to further the interests of the Trust. Finally, I wish to express my appreciation to all our supporters without whom it would not be possible to operate.

Martin Stuchfield
Chairman – Friends of Essex Churches Trust

Events

Our events kicked off on 10th June with our Garden Open Day. A gorgeous afternoon with much chat, cake and roses – many thanks to Mr and Mrs Capel Cure for allowing 200 of us to invade their beautiful gardens at Blake Hall, Ongar.



Herbaceous border at Blake Hall. © Jo Pimblett

The Gin and Gypsy Swing on 18th September, our much Covid-delayed event at All Saints, Terling was worth waiting for – a very welcoming church full of people listening to Emma and the Djangleliers.

October brought the Gift Fair at Hylands House. Despite Covid, the fuel shortage and floods we had a very successful day! A year when shopping has been a bit tricky, it was a great bonus to have the extra space in the Pavilion and all the wonderful stalls.

This year's Fair is on Wednesday, 5th October at Hylands House and Pavilion – please do join us for shopping and sandwiches.

The Christmas card featured The Adoration of the Magi from a window in St Mary the Virgin, Radwinter and proved so popular we had to do a re-print. Thank you so much for buying it.

In the pipeline for 2022, we look forward to a Study Day on 11th May, our Garden Open Day on 16th June at Steeple Bumpstead and a bit of cycling in September too!



The Garden Open Day at Blake Hall. © Jo Pimblett

Many thanks to our enthusiastic and amazing committee: Jeremy Beale, Emma Brice, Georgie Dwerryhouse, Caroline Edwards, Clare Ford, Rachel Grainger, Lance Lepper, Jessie McGowan, Lucy Nicholls, John Pickthorn, Natalie Rowe, Jess Southwell, Martin Stuchfield, Olly Surguy, Tory Toler and Becky Willis.

Jo Pimblett
Chairman – Events Committee
Email: events@foect.org.uk

Grants

One of the pleasures of being on the Grants Committee is visiting the churches that have applied for grants as part of the process of assessing their applications. This means that we tend to see churches when they are in a state of disrepair, and we may well not visit them again until the next time they need our help, which we hope will be many years later. Sometimes, however, we are invited to attend services or other events celebrating the completion of work, and this was the case in October 2021 when we joined the congregation of St Mary Magdalene, Wethersfield, for an evening Service of Thanksgiving and Dedication.

In 2020 we made them a grant of £12,500 for roof repairs (towards the estimated cost of £120,000), but when work got under way in January 2021 it immediately became apparent that there was more work that needed to be done to the timbers. The cost of the project increased by £25,000, and we decided to make an

additional grant of £10,000. This enabled the work to go ahead, and we were delighted to see the results of the parish's fund-raising efforts at the service.

Unfortunately we could not see the roof itself, but photographs show the contrast between the poor state it was in, with 'temporary' felt held down by car tyres, and the beautiful new surface – which, unusually, is rubber (fleece-backed EPDM). But as a necessary part of the project the interior had been redecorated, with new lighting, and it was a joy to walk into the bright clean church, still smelling deliciously of new limewash, and to share the delight felt by the congregation.

For us the highlight of the evening was being presented with a cheque for £1,042 raised for Ride+Stride by a parishioner (and her parents) on a wheelchair bike, a truly epic achievement. You can read more about the repairs at Wethersfield on the 'Our Projects' page of the website.



Nave roof prior to repairs at Wethersfield, St Mary Magdalene. © Ben Walmsley

*Nave roof following repairs at
Wethersfield, St Mary Magdalene.*
© Ben Walmsley



2021 was a disappointing year in the sense that we offered very much less money than we would like to have done – a total of £114,500, just over half what we had allocated for the year. We offered thirteen grants for repairs (including the additional grant to Wethersfield) and only one for improvements, to Holy Trinity Rayleigh. We turned down one application, on the grounds that the parish had sufficient funds to cover the work, but otherwise the small number of grants was entirely due to the small number of applications. At one of our four meetings we had just one application to consider.

We hope to receive more applications in 2022, and as ever we hope that some of them will come from Roman Catholic and Independent churches, not just the Church of England. It is understandable that since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic it has been difficult to undertake even the most essential repairs, let alone embark

upon projects that can wait, including improvements. Many of the volunteers who run our churches on a day-to-day basis are still reluctant or unable to resume their past level of activity. Yet as life returns to something like normal churches will have as great a part to play in their community as ever, and it is important that they are not just in good repair but also able to offer the facilities and a degree of creature comfort that worshippers and other users expect. We have the money – help us to spend it!

James Bettley

Chairman – Grants Committee

Email: jamesbettley@btinternet.com

Application forms for grants are available from John Bloomfield

Email: john.bloomfield@btinternet.com,
or download from the website,
www.friendsofsexchurches.org.uk.



Retiling of nave roof at Greenstead (Colchester), St Andrew. © James Bettley

2021 grant offers in full

Repairs

Beneficiary	Repairs	Amount
Buttsbury, St Mary	Window masonry repairs	£5,000
Great Tey, St Barnabas	Floor repairs to north aisle	£3,000
Great Warley, St Mary the Virgin	Underpinning of porch	£5,000
Greenstead (Colchester), St Andrew	Retiling of nave roof	£15,000
Hadstock, St Botolph	Roof repairs to chancel	£15,000
Hatfield Heath, Holy Trinity	Guttering and associated repairs	£3,500
Little Clacton, St James	Roof repairs	£4,000
Messing, All Saints	Roof repairs to chancel	£6,000
Pebmarsh, St John the Baptist	Retiling of chancel roof	£5,000
Romford, St Alban	Repairs to flood damage	£9,000
Saffron Walden, St Mary the Virgin	Roof repairs to chancel	£10,000
Wendens Ambo, St Mary the Virgin	Roof repairs to chancel	£9,000
Wethersfield, St Mary Magdalene	Roof repairs to nave (additional)	£10,000
	TOTAL	£99,500

Improvements

Beneficiary	Improvements	Amount
Rayleigh, Holy Trinity	Major reordering including improved access	£15,000
	TOTAL	£15,000

Ride+Stride 2021

Can anyone look back on 2021 with anything other than disappointment? If 2020 was the year of the Covid-19 pandemic, only the gloomiest pessimists thought that the fear would continue for another year. In the Spring, prospects seemed good for a relaunch of the Ride+Stride, which, in addition to being great fun, contributes greatly to the finances of so many of our churches. Regrettably, the mood darkened in May and June, which is the critical period for churches to agree to be open on the second Saturday in September, and for participants to start raising sponsorship before the summer holidays. Without the certainty of churches (especially those offering refreshment and other facilities) being open, it is almost impossible for cyclists (or walkers) to plot a route with the necessary breaks. The arrival of various variants of the virus, and the uncertainty about the effectiveness of the vaccine programme meant, understandably, many church wardens were reluctant to commit, thereby making the difficulties of organising the event much harder.

Clearly, there needs to be a greater effort to encourage the decision takers at a senior level (diocesan or deanery, in the case of the Church of England churches) that the risks attached to opening churches are manageable, and the rewards of supporting the annual Ride+Stride outweigh the potential hazards. By September 2021, the penny was dropping, and although we had not yet established that the various

vaccines reduced the risks of the delta variant spreading, there was a general understanding that outdoor activities were to be encouraged, that there were many people longing to resume taking exercise for a good cause, and that churches were most unlikely to be contaminated by visitors who were merely passing through. In the event, those of us who did get on our bikes on 11th September had good weather and an enjoyable outing. I was very grateful to those churches who were open, and those providing refreshments were even more appreciated.



Striders from Upminster, St Laurence.
© Robert Brabner

Of particular note was the performance of Hazel Threadgold and her parents who made what she later described as “an epic trip” in aid of St Mary Magdalene, Wethersfield. They managed a 22 mile round trip taking in such beautiful churches as the Bardfields, Salford, Cornish Hall End and Finchingfield, raising over £1,000 in the process. Ruth Spellman was another who performed wonders, as she does every year.



Hazel Threadgold and mother outside Little Bardfield, SS Peter and Paul. © Roy Threadgold

In the past, the efforts of Wendens Ambo have been spearheaded by the late Rev Tim Hardingham, tragically killed while cycling with his family last October. In 2021, the village sponsored Jo Slota Newson, who completed a triathlon, taking Ride+Stride to a whole new level.

The Friends of Essex Churches Trust is therefore hoping that the spectre of the pandemic is now behind us, and, although everyone still has to be careful, the chance of contamination from riders or striders is, at most, small. This event should be a significant fundraiser, as well as being good fun and an outstanding way to familiarise

more people with the wonders of Essex's church buildings. It is to be hoped that all churches, and especially those churches that may be seeking grants in increasingly difficult times, will support the Event, and that 10th September 2022 will effectively relaunch the Ride+Stride across the county.

As always, my thanks to Ray and Beryl Clements for their invaluable work running the administration.

John Pickthorn

Organiser – Ride+Stride

Email: jeppickthorn@gmail.com



Roof repairs to chancel at Wendens Ambo, St Mary the Virgin. © James Bettley



Roof repairs to chancel at Messing, All Saints. © Martin Stuchfield



Guttering and associated repairs at Hatfield Heath, Holy Trinity. © James Bettley



Window masonry repairs at Buttsbury, St Mary. © James Bettley

Upcoming events

WEDNESDAY, 11TH MAY – *Spring Study Day*

Our next study day, led by Julia Abel Smith, will visit Debden, Radwinter, Wimbish and Wendens Ambo. Details to follow.

THURSDAY, 19TH MAY – *Spring Meeting including AGM and Gepp Lecture*

Our Gepp Lecturer for 2022 will be Quinlan Terry the renowned classical Palladian architect who will speak on 'Brentwood Cathedral and the five Classical Orders'. Brentwood Cathedral, Ingrave Road, Brentwood, Essex CM15 8AT at 8.15p.m., following the Annual General Meeting at 7.00p.m. and refreshments from 7.30p.m. Open to members and non-members; admission free.

Please email jepickthorn@gmail.com for 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, 16TH JUNE – *Garden Visit*

2.00p.m.–5.00p.m. The much-admired garden at Garlands, Steeple Bumpstead will be opened for us to enjoy. Tickets are £15.00 each. Please make cheques payable to FECEC and send to: Parsonage Bury, Henham, Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire CM22 6AN. Tel: 01279 850150 or 07890 625408. Email: pimbletts@btinternet.com.

SATURDAY, 10TH 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.friendsofsexchurches.org.uk/ride-stride and create your own fundraising page on www.justgiving.com/foect.

WEDNESDAY, 5TH 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.

SATURDAY, 8TH OCTOBER – *Autumn Study Day*

Details to be confirmed but it is planned to visit churches in Ingatestone and Stock.

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

Membership and Gift Aid

My role as Honorary Membership Secretary thankfully was not adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, although trips to the bank were challenging. Payments by standing order and bank transfer were even more of a blessing than usual!

Membership increased over the past two years. The Trust currently has 341 paid up members, with 74% using the standing order or bank transfer options. I would urge members to transfer over to standing orders, as this is much easier to administer and also ensures subscriptions are not forgotten. Of course, I do understand that this is a personal choice and am extremely grateful for all membership payments received in whatever format.

As one would expect, due to the pandemic and the knock on effect to our places of worship, our donations and memberships from churches has decreased by 13% and 17% respectively over the last two years. The majority are still forwarding reduced donation amounts to us, which are gratefully received.

Donations are mainly made up of sums forwarded in memory of past members of the Friends of Essex Churches Trust and other trusts. Our donation figure for 2021 was significantly larger than 2020 due

to the demise of the Colonel Sherwood Charitable Trust. This Trust has supported Friends of Essex Churches Trust for a number of years and we were extremely fortunate when the Trustees decided to allocate over £4,000 upon winding-up this Trust. Thank you for all of the donations received by the Trust during the past year.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries regarding membership or donations.

Subscriptions and Gift Aid

Subscriptions are received throughout the year with Gift Aid claimed on a large percentage thereby benefiting the work of the Trust.

Gift Aid is claimed against UK taxpayers only and for every £1 claimed an extra 25 pence is reclaimed by the Trust. For example, a subscription of £20 means that £5 can be reclaimed.

If you, as a subscriber, are unsure whether or not Friends of Essex Churches is claiming Gift Aid against your subscription then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Catherine Leeder
Membership Secretary

Email: leedercatherine@gmail.com

Tel: 07833 626843

Summarised accounts for the year ended 31st December 2021

Statement of financial activities

2020 £'000		2021 £'000
27.4	Donations and subscriptions	32.4
–	Restricted grant for church roof alarms	–
85.6	Legacies	213.0
13.0	Fundraising – Ride+Stride	17.0
11.0	– other events	23.1
8.7	Dividends and interest	8.9
145.7	Total income	294.4
(2.1)	Governance and support costs	(2.6)
(0.1)	Ride+Stride – fundraising expenses	(0.1)
(5.5)	– returned to churches	(6.5)
(4.4)	Other events – fundraising expenses	(9.6)
(2.1)	Promotion of public interest in churches	(1.5)
(147.0)	Grants for work payable to churches	(114.6)
(161.2)	Total expenditure	(134.9)
(15.5)	Net (expenditure)	159.5
(20.5)	Unrealised (loss)/gain on investments	21.9
(36.0)	Net movement in funds	181.4

Summary balance sheet as at 31st December 2021

2020 £'000		2021 £'000
163.4	Investment – market value	185.2
303.3	Cash and deposits	460.0
2.6	Sundry debtors	–
469.3	Total assets	645.2
(161.9)	Undrawn allocated grants	(155.8)
(1.6)	Accruals	(2.2)
305.8	Net assets	487.2
	Represented by	
288.3	General Fund (unrestricted)	469.7
17.5	Restricted Fund – grants for church roof alarms	17.5
305.8	Total funds	487.2

Treasurer's report

The Covid-19 pandemic continued to have a detrimental effect on the activities of the Trust. Despite the difficulties it is pleasing to report an increase in donations and subscriptions, fundraising (including Ride+Stride) together with dividends and interest amounting to £81,400 (2020: £60,100). However, the most significant development was a dramatic increase in legacies received that totalled £213,000 (2020: £85,600) resulting in a most unusual outcome for the year.

Grants awarded to churches in 2021 were lower with thirteen repair grants

(2020: 17 grants), one improvement grant (2020: 5 grants) and a small grant of £100 for gutter clearance totalling £114,600 (2020: £146,950). It is hoped that grant applications will increase in 2022 together with the completion of much-needed work for which grants have already been awarded.

My thanks go to all those who helped raise funds for the benefit of the Trust's charitable good works.

Harry Marsh
Treasurer

Email: harry.marsh@talktalk.net

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 2021-22

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The Bishop of Chelmsford
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Jeremy Beale
Dr James Bettley, JP, DL, FSA
Gail Jones
Catherine Leeder
Jo Pimblett



Roof repairs at Little Clacton, St James. © James Bettley



Roof repairs at Little Clacton, St James. © James Bettley



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