

News & Annual Report 2023

Supporting Churches in Essex and East London



Tower repairs at Brightlingsea, All Saints. © Alamy

Inside this newsletter



Roger Bowdler will give the Gepp Lecture on Thursday, 25th 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 2022-23

Chairman's message



Martin Stuchfield

One of the principal objects of the Trust is to “collect monies by public subscription and otherwise to enable the Charity to make grants to assist churches in the carrying out of repairs, maintenance and improvements”. Last year, I expressed disappointment at the level of grants awarded. However, I am very pleased to report an improvement in 2022 with a combined total of £178,500 (2021: £114,500) awarded to a total of eighteen different churches including a small grant to Becontree, St Mary in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham (see page 6).

I mentioned my desire to improve the profile of the Trust especially in the area of the historic county of Essex covered by the five London Boroughs. I am delighted to report that the Annual General Meeting will be held at Upminster, St Laurence in the London Borough of Havering on Thursday, 25th May. The Gepp Lecturer will be Dr Bowdler who lectures frequently on sepulchral art and historic monuments. Roger will speak (non-contentiously) on the subject of

Contested Heritage having contributed to the recent court case involving the monument commemorating Tobias Rustat (1608-94) at Jesus College, Cambridge. I look forward to meeting our many friends and supporters on that occasion.

Bishop Thomas McMahon, our President, will be retiring at the AGM having served in this role with considerable distinction for the past six years. Bishop Thomas has been involved with the Trust for more than sixty years and has been a huge support most especially to me. I am delighted that he has agreed to seek election as an additional Vice-President. I am pleased to announce that Julia Abel Smith has consented to become President (subject to approval at the AGM). Julia is an art historian and accomplished writer who served as a most effective Chairman of the Trust from 2007-9. Julia organised the highly successful 2022 Spring Study Day (see page 10).

I must also express my gratitude and pay a heartfelt tribute to Canon Harry Marsh who retired during the year having served with considerable distinction as Hon Treasurer since 2014.

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

Events

We started the year with a visit to Garlands at Steeple Bumpstead on 16th June by kind permission of John and Catherine Harrison. The Committee organised tables and chairs and served a magnificent tea with their now popular homemade cakes. Being a hot day, many turned out to support us and we all had a lovely afternoon, raising over £3,000. The NFU kindly sponsored the event with a chance to win a hamper from Fortnum & Mason.



The Garden Open Day at Garlands, Steeple Bumpstead. © Clare Ford

The Essex Gift Fair in October at Hylands House, Chelmsford was a huge success. We had over 40 stalls spread between house and pavilion. Despite a lower footfall nearly £9,000 was raised thanks to Natalie Rowe's brilliant organisation. Ceres Rural kindly sponsored the event.

The Christmas card was from St Michael & All Angels at Roxwell and depicts a stained-

glass panel that was printed on recycled paper with an adaptation as a postcard. Unfortunately, it did not sell as well as hoped partly due to the church being shut for repairs in the run up to Christmas. The threat of postal strikes also did not help.

For 2023 we have organised a talk by Andrew Prince on Thursday, 16th March at St Andrew's church, Hatfield Peverel. Andrew is a jeweller whose exquisite jewels have adorned celebrities including Michael Jackson, Miss Piggy, and the stars of Downton Abbey. His entertaining and informative lectures on the history of jewellery and fashion have delighted audiences around the world. The usual Spring Study Day will take place on Wednesday, 24th May, and an Open Garden event on Tuesday, 20th June at Shrubs Farm, Lamarsh. The Annual Ride+Stride is on Saturday, 9th September, and the Gift Fair at Hylands House on Wednesday, 11th October. We also hope to organise a Musical Evening in the Autumn. Please see the website for further details.

Thanks go to the whole Events Committee as without their support and hard work nothing would be possible: Jeremy Beale, Emma Brice, Georgie Dwerryhouse, Caroline Edwards, Rachel Grainger, Catherine Leeder, Lance Lepper, Jessie McGowan, Lucy Nicholls, John Pickthorn, Jo Pimblett, Natalie Rowe, Jess Southwell, Martin Stuchfield, Olly Surguy, Tory Toler and Becky Willis.

Clare Ford

Chairman – Events Committee

Email: events@friendsofessexchurches.org.uk

Grants

In my report last year I said that we hoped to receive more applications, and that has happened although not quite to the extent that I had wanted. The number of applications for repairs was the same – thirteen – but we made grants for six improvement schemes in 2022 as against just one in 2021. In all we offered grants totalling £178,500, well up on 2021 but still short of our allocation for the year.

To some extent we are all still feeling the effects of the pandemic and lockdowns, and work is slow to come back up to normal levels; it is noticeable that the number of faculty applications is down. On the other hand it is very good to see those six churches applying for grants for improvements, providing facilities for refreshments and lavatories, making the church buildings much more usable and welcoming not just for services but for wider community events as well. We are always glad to be able to help in these cases, whether we are considering a substantial extension, as at Brightlingsea, or a free-standing composting toilet in a glorified shed, as at Borley.

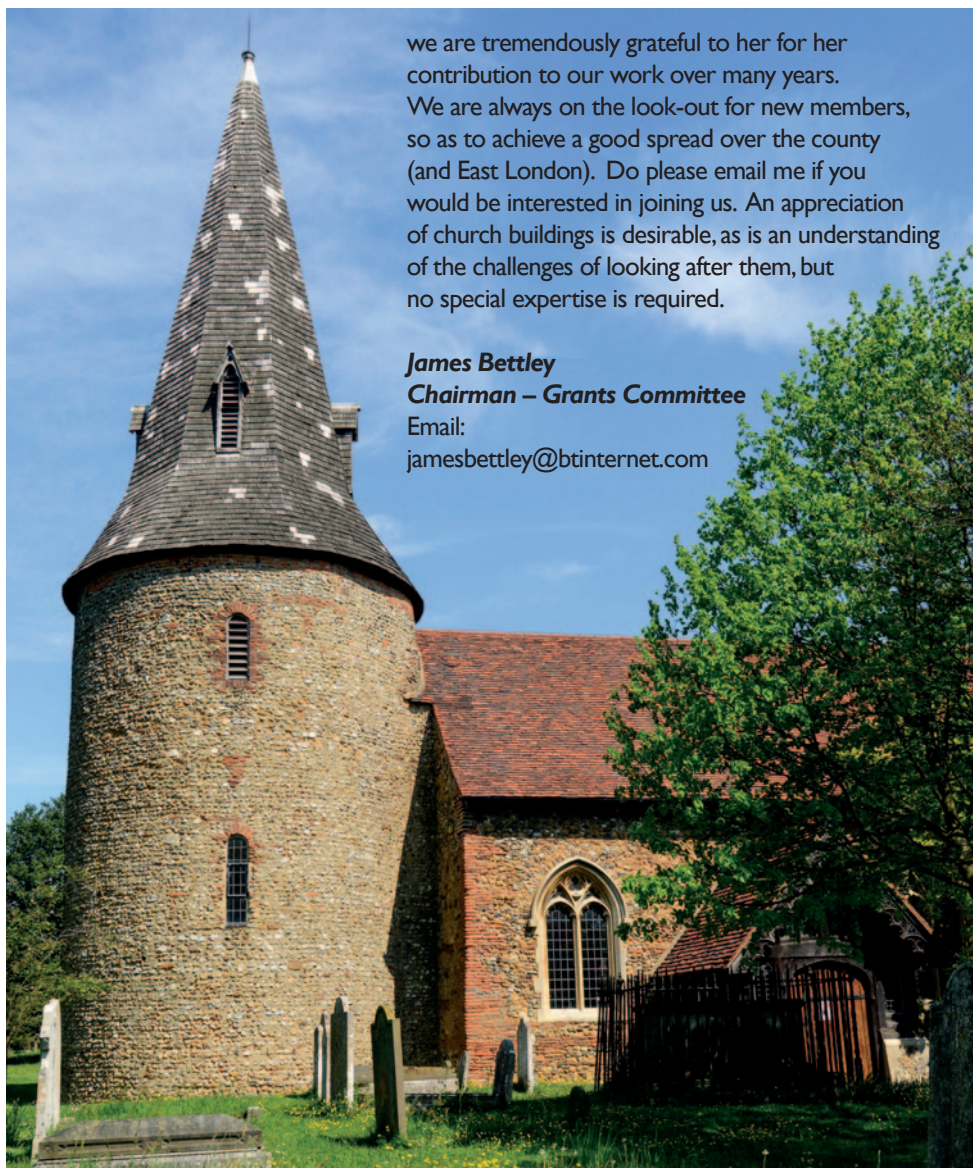
Careful readers will have noticed that we made two grants of £15,000 to All Saints, Brightlingsea, a significant award reflecting the exceptional nature of the work being undertaken to rescue this outstanding church. The state of the tower has been a cause for concern for many years and the parish have done a magnificent job in raising the necessary funds, helped by the National Lottery Heritage Fund but mainly through their own Friends. The other major grant of £30,000 was to

St Mary and St Leonard, Broomfield. Here the parish have embarked on an ambitious scheme (again with Lottery support) to restore the roof of their round tower as well as the wall painting by Rosemary Rutherford that decorates its interior. They were managing very well until the old shingles were taken off the spire and it was discovered that the timbers were in a very much worse condition than anticipated. We were very glad to be able to help meet this emergency shortfall.

Another emergency was at All Saints, East Hanningfield, where asbestos was discovered in the old heating chamber. Once you know you have asbestos in the building you want to get rid of it quickly, but it's an expensive business requiring specialist contractors. We were glad to be able to offer a grant between meetings so that the work could be done before Christmas, bringing peace of mind to the churchwardens.

Many of the smaller grants were for replacement of guttering and downpipes. Getting rainwater away from the building is perhaps the single most important aspect of church maintenance – a relatively small outlay that helps prevent expensive long-term damage to the structure. Roof repairs, as always, account for many of the grants. In the case of St Michael and All Angels, Roxwell, the parish had already managed to reroof part of the church without our help, so we were very happy to be asked to contribute to the next phase.

One of the longest-serving members of the Committee, Janet Hollis, retired in June, and



we are tremendously grateful to her for her contribution to our work over many years. We are always on the look-out for new members, so as to achieve a good spread over the county (and East London). Do please email me if you would be interested in joining us. An appreciation of church buildings is desirable, as is an understanding of the challenges of looking after them, but no special expertise is required.

James Bettley
Chairman – Grants Committee
Email:
jamesbettley@btinternet.com

Replacement of spire timbers at Broomfield, St Mary and St Leonard. © Alamy

Application forms for grants are available from John Bloomfield

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

Grant offers in full 2022

Repairs

Beneficiary	Repairs	Amount
Becontree, St Mary	Rainwater goods and brickwork repairs	£2,000
Brightlingsea, All Saints	Tower repairs	£15,000
Broomfield, St Mary and St Leonard	Replacement of spire timbers	£30,000
Bulmer, St Andrew	Repairs to tower stonework	£10,000
Bulphan, St Mary the Virgin	Porch repairs	£5,000
East Hanningfield, All Saints	Removal of asbestos	£3,000
Finchingfield, St John the Baptist	Roof repairs to north and south chapels	£5,000
Great Hallingbury, St Giles	Tower repairs	£7,000
Horndon-on-the-Hill, St Peter and St Paul	Repairs to dormer windows	£7,000
Liston, Dedication unknown	Rainwater goods	£4,000
Messing, All Saints	Removal of organ and floor repairs	£4,500
Newland, St Lawrence	Roof repairs	£15,000
Roxwell, St Michael and All Angels	Roof repairs to nave and north aisle	£20,000
TOTAL		£127,500



Porch repairs at Bulphan, St Mary the Virgin.

© James Bettley



Repairs to tower stonework at Bulmer, St Andrew. © James Bettley

Improvements

Beneficiary	Repairs	Amount
Borley, Dedication unknown	Free-standing composting lavatory	£5,000
Brightlingsea, All Saints	Extension including lavatories	£15,000
Good Easter, St Andrew	Kitchen and lavatories	£12,000
Great Yeldham, St Andrew	Hospitality area	£8,000
Harlow, St Mary-at-Latton	Accessible lavatories in church hall	£3,000
Rayne, All Saints	Tea-point cupboard	£8,000
TOTAL		£51,000



Roof repairs to north and south chapels at Finchingfield, St John the Baptist. © Alamy

Ride+Stride 2022

Many people were in reflective and sombre mood for our annual Ride+Stride on Saturday, 10th September, after the death of our glorious Queen Elizabeth II. Following guidance from The National Churches Trust we decided to go ahead with this wonderful day, and it was particularly poignant, with most churches being open, thus providing an opportunity for quiet contemplation of her life.

The weather was perfect, apart from a short downpour mid-afternoon, and many people found themselves exploring villages and churches hitherto unknown to them, and some churches had a good number of visitors. I visited churches around Ingatestone, Margaretting and Willingale, amongst others, and came across our President, enjoying himself hugely welcoming cyclists at Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic church at Stock. I was also treated to a personal concert from The Song Cycle, an a capella group at St Thomas of Canterbury parish church in Brentwood – they are very keen to revive their practice of singing four part motets in many different churches across the diocese, and hope to be active in 2023. I also caught the in-coming tide at Maldon, with one intrepid pair sailing up the River Blackwater to visit some of the fourteen places of worship in and around the town.

Everywhere I went I was met with energy and enthusiasm, and a strong desire for greater involvement from the many groups to be found cycling or walking around our

beautiful county. It seems that Ride+Stride in Essex is alive and well and should be thriving, as well as raising much needed funds to preserve so many beautiful and varied places of worship for future generations to enjoy.

Many people recognise this, and want to sustain our wonderful heritage whilst not necessarily having an affiliation to a particular congregation, and we need to find ways to facilitate their involvement with this great day, including moving to online and electronic payments for easier giving.

If your church is able to hold an additional event on the same day (tour of church, open tower visit, sale of used books, cake stall, garden show, coffee morning etc) you will inevitably draw in more people and raise more money, half of which is, as you know, returned to you. All churches have a project or two they would like financial help with, so please help us to help you.

Please put Saturday, 9th September 2023 in your diaries. Together we can achieve great things, and I would urge you all to support Ride+Stride as vigorously as you are able.

Rachel Grainger

Ride+Stride Organiser

Email: [@rideandstrideorganiser](mailto:rideandstrideorganiser)

@friendssofessexchurches.org.uk



Our President, Bishop Thomas McMahon, welcoming cyclists at Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic church at Stock. © Rachel Grainger

Study Days

Friends of the Trust enjoyed two splendid Study Days in 2022, visiting churches in north-west and central Essex.

The Spring Study Day on 11th May was led by Julia Abel Smith and commenced at the remarkable church of St Mary the Virgin at Radwinter. Very little of the medieval structure survives having been rebuilt in the High-Church style during the long



Monumental brass commemorating Sir John de Wautone, 1347, at Wimbish, All Saints. © Martin Stuchfield

incumbency of Rev Fred Bullock (1865-1916). The result is striking especially the Temple Moore work including the restored 14th century south porch that is unique for being the only dragon-beamed example in Essex. Next to All Saints at Wimbish an isolated church of Norman origins that was heavily restored in 1872. Fran Johnson (Treasurer) provided an enthusiastic introduction to the church followed by Martin Stuchfield who focused on the nationally important and third oldest effigial brass in Essex. This commemorates Sir John de Wautone, 1347, depicted with his wife Ellen, in the head of an octofoil cross the shaft of which rises from the back of a now lost elephant.

Following lunch the church dedicated to St Mary the Virgin and All Saints at Debden was visited. This most unusual building dating from the late 18th century stands in the grounds of Debden Hall. The chancel contains a most unusual ribbed plaster vault containing a series of Coade stone medallions and monuments to members of the Chiswell and Muilman families. Finally the delightful church of St Mary the Virgin at Wendens Ambo, replete with Norman tower surmounted with a Hertfordshire spike, commanded our attentions. The wall paintings on the south wall of the chancel and fragments of medieval glass set in a north chancel window in 1986 were much admired. Martin Stuchfield highlighted the importance of the splendid armoured brass thought to represent William Loveney, c.1410, now occupying a mural position in its original slab in the south aisle.

A sumptuous tea in the adjacent village hall rounded off a most enjoyable day.

The Autumn Study Day on 8th October was led by James Bettley and started at All Saints, Mountnessing, which stands some way from the village next to Mountnessing Hall. The building, which dates back to the 12th century, was sensitively restored and partly rebuilt in 1889-91 by G F Bodley. Tim Lee very kindly got out for us a fascinating collection of old photographs, including some which showed the interior before the restoration complete with box pews and stove. From there we went to St Mary Magdalene, Great Burstead, a large church reflecting the status of the parish that originally included Billericay. The oldest parts of the building are the south aisle and chapel, with 14th-century wall paintings discovered in 1989. The church was restored at least once in the 19th century, but even so the blocked east window was not opened up again until 1928.

At St Mary & St Edward, West Hanningfield, a major project to restore the tower, bell frame and bells was officially completed with a service of rededication on 20th March 2022, and as the Friends had contributed to the cost we asked Ann Usher, one of the churchwardens, to tell us how they went about it. A very positive and encouraging story was marred only by the news that the very dry summer has caused the timbers to shrink, meaning that the bells cannot be rung for the time being. Ann's talk was supplemented by Martin Stuchfield's fascinating account of the Clonville (Cloveille) brass of 1361.



Our President, Bishop Thomas McMahon, providing a history of Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic church at Stock. © James Bettley

The afternoon was devoted to Stock: first All Saints, where Adrian Rilstone, past churchwarden, told us its history. The church was badly damaged during World War II and most of the furnishings belong to the second half of the 20th century. An older survivor is the Twedye brass of 1574, again explained to us by Martin Stuchfield. Finally we went to the Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady and St Joseph, built as a school in 1890-1 and converted in 1937. The character of the sunny interior, with its elegant furnishings, is largely due to the taste of our President, Bishop Thomas McMahon, whose talk was generously followed by a lavish tea that featured cakes bought earlier that week at the Gift Fair – a perfect end to the day!

An enormous debt of gratitude is due to Gail Jones who acted as registrar.

James Bettley and Martin Stuchfield

Upcoming events

WEDNESDAY, 24TH MAY – *Spring Study Day*

Our next study day, led by John Vigar, will visit the churches at Elsenham, Henham, Stansted Mountfitchet and Widdington. Details to follow.

THURSDAY, 25TH MAY – *Spring Meeting including AGM and Gepp Lecture*

Our Gepp Lecturer for 2023 will be Roger Bowdler who lectures frequently on sepulchral art and historic monuments. Dr Bowdler will speak (non-contentiously) on the subject of Contested Heritage having contributed to the recent court case involving the monument commemorating Tobias Rustat (1608-94) at Jesus College, Cambridge. St Laurence Church, Corbets Tey Road, Upminster, Essex RM14 2BB 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 jeipickthorn@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.

TUESDAY, 20TH JUNE – *Garden Visit*

2.00p.m. – 4.30p.m. The much-admired garden at Shrubs Farm, Lamarsh will be opened for us to enjoy. Tickets are £13.50 each. Please make cheques payable to FECEC and send to: Emma Brice, Colemans Farm, Little Braxted Lane, Rivenhall, Essex CM8 3EX. Tel: 01376 518787 or 07801 986938. Email: emma@colemansfarm.co.uk.

SATURDAY, 9TH 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, 7TH OCTOBER – *Autumn Study Day*

Details to be confirmed but it is planned to visit the churches at Belchamp St Paul, Borley, Foxearth and Pentlow.

WEDNESDAY, 11TH 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.

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

Membership

The 2022 membership year has been another challenging one and the effects of the pandemic and rise in inflation continue to be reflected in the membership totals.

Membership numbers have reduced, with 309 paid up members at the end of 2022. Amounts paid by members vary considerably and these have also reduced during the year.

Donations are also substantially lower this year but are a much-appreciated source of income. The Trust has continued to benefit significantly from legacies from former members albeit on a much smaller scale. Please consider remembering us in your Will, as bequests to a registered charity are exempt from Inheritance Tax.

The churches and parishes who benefit from the monies raised by the Trust continue to support us either via membership or annual donations. Even though they are also suffering, the majority thankfully still share their funds albeit sometimes at reduced amounts from previous years.

However, it's not all bad news, as the Events Committee continue to encourage

new members to join and my thanks to them for their hard work in spreading the benefits of supporting this great Charity. Thank you for your continued support be it as a member, church/parish or part of a charitable foundation.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries or questions relating to membership.

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

Summarised accounts

Statement of financial activities for the year ended 31st December 2022

2021 £'000		2022 £'000
32.4	Donations and subscriptions	22.8
213.0	Legacies	82.6
17.0	Fundraising – Ride+Stride	26.2
23.1	– other events	22.8
8.9	Dividends and interest	10.4
294.4	Total income	164.8
(2.6)	Governance and support costs	(3.0)
(0.1)	Ride+Stride – fundraising expenses	(0.2)
(6.5)	– returned to churches	(8.9)
(9.6)	Other events – fundraising expenses	(10.3)
(1.5)	Promotion of public interest in churches	(2.1)
–	Repayment of grant for church roof alarms	(17.5)
(114.6)	Grants for work payable to churches	(173.0)
(134.9)	Total expenditure	215.0
159.5	Net income/(expenditure)	(50.2)
21.9	Unrealised gain/(loss) on investments	(10.3)
181.4	Net movement in funds	(60.5)

Summary balance sheet as at 31 December 2022

2021 £'000		2022 £'000
185.2	Investments – market value	174.9
460.0	Cash and deposits	405.2
645.2	Total assets	580.1
(155.8)	Undrawn allocated grants	(151.5)
(2.2)	Accruals	(2.0)
487.2	Net assets Represented by	426.6
469.7	General Fund (unrestricted)	426.6
17.5	Restricted Fund – grants for church roof alarms	–
487.2	Total funds	426.6

Treasurer's report

My first report must start by saying many thanks to Harry Marsh for looking after our finances for the last eight years, thank you Harry!

Our accounts are looking healthy thanks to generous legacies, subscriptions and our fund raising events – thank you for being a member, giving however large or small, attending our events and cycling around the beautiful county of Essex.

Although healthy the total funds of the Trust have reduced to £426,651 (2021: £487,232). An impressive and increased total of £173,000 (2021: £114,600) was paid out in Repair and Improvement grants

for projects that came to fruition during the year. The Benefact Trust (formerly The Allchurches Trust) provided a grant of £20,000 in 2019 to encourage the installation of roof alarm systems in order to prevent or minimise the theft of lead from church roofs. In accordance with the terms of the Grant Agreement the unspent portion amounting to £17,500 was repaid during the year.

For more details please see the summarised accounts on page 14.

Jo Pimblett
Treasurer

Email: pimbletts@btinternet.com

Legacies

We are hugely grateful for the bequests we have received over recent years. They have enabled the Grants Committee to repair and improve on a much larger scale.

Please do remember The Friends of Essex Churches Trust in your Will – a great

cause with the added bonus that it can reduce your liability to Inheritance Tax.

Please contact the Treasurer if you would like advice on suitable wording:
Jo Pimblett, Parsonage Bury, Henham,
Bishops Stortford CM22 6AN.
Email: pimbletts@btinternet.com

The Friends of Essex Churches Trust 2022-23

Patrons

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

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Rt Rev Thomas McMahon

Vice-Presidents

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Lord Petre, KCVO, JP

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Rachel Grainger (Vice-Chairman)
John Pickthorn (Hon Secretary)
Jo Pimblett (Hon Treasurer)
Jeremy Beale
Dr James Bettley, JP, DL, FSA
Clare Ford
Gail Jones
Catherine Leeder



Tower repairs at Great Hallingbury, St Giles. © James Bettley



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