



Friends of Holy Trinity Church Cuckfield

Chair's Report 2025

It has certainly been a busy year for the new Committee of the Friends of Holy Trinity Church Cuckfield.

Following the election of the new Committee at the 2024 AGM, it quickly became apparent that, although everyone was new, we were all willing to get stuck in. Apart from myself and Kate Berry, nobody had served on the Committee before, and unfortunately Kate had to leave the Committee early on due to ill health. My own contribution previously was limited to 2 Committee meetings, and I had only managed to help at one event!

The bank accounts took us until July to get all the processes in place to allow us to access them, so this is something that we are now mindful of, along with the need for enough signatories, in case of holiday or illness. Succession planning is also something that the Committee has tried to make happen, so that not everyone leaves the Committee at the same time.

The email account took us until November to get access so, to send out emails, we set up a temporary Gmail account, that we have now linked to TicketSource, so that Committee members are not inundated with texts every time someone buys a ticket!

Our first event, the Summer Picnic was not very well attended. There were only 2 Friends who braved the windy weather and so were treated to a private performance by No Strings Attached, who kindly waived their fee and just asked for some travel money, which they all then spent on the Raffle. This meant that, with the 3 families that attended, we made a small profit on the day. The main problem was sport Wimbledon Ladies final and the Euros Semi-final that England were playing in. We would like to thank Bryan and Sue Mayou (our President and his wife) for hosting this event, and for opening their conservatory for us all to enjoy a private concert by No Strings Attached out of the wind.

The next event – the Gin and Fizz Festival, that we hoped would become an annual event, had to be cancelled as, although we had signed up 3 Gin Distillers, not one of the Fizz producers that we approached responded to us. This was the same for 2025, when we tried again to engage with the Fizz producers.

Our regular Christmas Tree Festival Preview was better attended and, as we had raffle prizes left over from the Summer Picnic, we made a profit on the night, helped by the donations for the mulled wine and mulled apple juice that were on offer.



The Christmas Event at Cuckfield Park was a wonderful evening, but again not well attended, and we only made a small profit on the event. The soloist, Eloise Irving played the harp, sang and recited poetry in an evening of elegance and splendour in the beautiful setting of Cuckfield Park. The canapes were tasty and just the right amount, and the fizz and wine were wonderful. Again, thanks to Bryan and Sue Mayou for hosting this event.

The Handel by Candle event was an amazing experience, well attended overall but only by 21 Friends, despite the generous discount on the ticket price. We made a good profit on this event, due to total ticket sales covering the expenses, and payments for the wine and soft drinks providing profit. The soloist and Sussex Young Musician of the Year was generously sponsored by a Friend.

As I write this Report, our AGM is still to come. We will be serving coffee from 10am and have the usual AGM Business to discuss. We would welcome anyone who wishes to serve on the Committee to get in touch with us. Following the AGM, we have the future structure of the Friends to decide upon, following the advice that the PCC have received from their legal advisor, which needs to be sorted quickly. Do we stay under the PCC's registered charity number, or do we become a separately registered charity? Both views have pros and cons associated with them and we welcome you to attend and have your say.

Following the discussion, we will be serving lunch – followed by a talk by Nick Rowe that is due to start at about 1pm.

I hope that you will continue to support our events in 2025/6. We were thinking of a Proms at the Park event in late June, possibly 28th, but this would be sandwiched between the Music Festival 15th to 21st June and the Summer Show 4th & 5th July. We are therefore encouraging Friends to support the other two community events. As a result, the next Friends event is the Patcham Silver Band performing on the 18th October in the Church. Please look out for further information on this and other events. The Christmas Tree Festival Preview on the 4th December will be followed by the Friends Christmas Event at a new venue. Finally, our Spring concert next year will be the Welsh Male Voice Choir, making a welcome return to Cuckfield.

Yours

Janice Brinley Codd