

# Congratulations & celebrations

## Heritage Lottery Fund Bid (HLF)

WE were thrilled to learn in late September that the HLF had awarded Gissing a Delivery Phase grant following our application in June 2016. These funds will enable us to repair the collapsing vestry wall, lead roofs, undertake urgent work on the tower parapet, improve the drainage and carry out other essential repairs and restorations required for the building.

The grant will also enable Gissing to:

- upgrade the electricity supply
- install an efficient and effective heating system
- upgrade the lighting system, including illuminating the angel roof
- promote the heritage of the building in order to attract increased numbers of visitors
- be able to use the building more for community events

A team of people, in addition to the HLF Project Group, will be involved in the work programme, which is due to start in February 2017, and comprises the church architect, archaeologist, historian, conservator (monuments), quantity surveyor, bat conservation person, structural engineer, and a principle designer, as well as UK Power Networks, and heating and lighting experts.

Whilst recognising that work is needed to save the Grade I listed church from further structural decline, the HLF expect to see greater efforts put into promoting the church as a place to attract visitors, and as a venue for broader community events, other than weekly services. Therefore, the heritage related Activity Plans are also a key aspect of the grant. They include the promotion of the church via the website [www.fogchurch.org.uk](http://www.fogchurch.org.uk) development of new leaflets and guides, storyboards, a series of talks on the history of the church and its place in the village, and opportunities for adults and children to learn about the history and symbolism contained



within the monuments and not least the amazing angel roof. It also includes developing a conservation churchyard, with help and advice from Norfolk Wildlife Trust, which will set aside areas to protect rare wild flowers and plants.

As part of the promotion of the angel roof Gissing will become part of the Norwich Diocese 'Angel Trail'. Michael Rimmer, the author of *Angel Roofs of East Anglia*, described the church as a 'Faberge Egg' of a church and the rare roof as being one of only 4 in the region and 32 in the whole country. If you would like to know more please visit Michael's website at [www.angelroofs.com](http://www.angelroofs.com) which has a section on Gissing and photos of the angels.

Despite our success in receiving the HLF Delivery Phase funding there was still a shortfall of funds necessary to complete the entire project, as the HLF never awards 100% grants. Therefore, other charities were contacted to seek their help. We have been fortunate in securing grants from 10 other charities including the Norfolk Churches Trust and the Round Tower Churches Society. A full list is available if anyone wishes to see it.

We have not lost sight of the longer-term ambition set out in our 'Vision' document showing imaginative plans to provide a mains water supply, toilet and kitchenette, all of which would enable the church to be used for a far greater range of community activities during the whole year. However, the focus in the programme starting in February has to be on dealing with the urgent repairs, securing a better electricity supply/heating/lighting, and being more effective in promoting the undoubted heritage in the building.

If you have any questions about the Delivery Phase programme, then please do get in touch with any member of the HLF project team listed at the end of the newsletter.

**SOME people might ask why, now we have raised this grant support, do we still need to continue our local fund raising? Well, the award of an HLF grant represents only the capital costs (ring-fenced and closely scrutinised) for the repairs and restoration project and does not cover the routine 'year-on-year' expenses of keeping the church open and safe. Improved lighting and heating may mean an increase in running expenses so fund raising will need to continue. This is why we still need to ask you for your on-going support through Friends' membership, donations and support at events. For information about how the Friends money is spent see "How and where the money goes" on back page.**

# Now for a quick round up

## Spring/Summer events



- **In February**, Janet Sleep led a planting party to start the development of a 'Snowdrop Trail' around the village. The first plants were placed in the churchyard and the lower section of Rectory Road. There will be further planting parties in February 2017, and subsequent years, to eventually complete the trail.
- Janet has also continued to hold Plant Heritage events during the year and has raised much appreciated funds (£491) for the Friends contingency fund in the process.
- **April** saw the annual 'Gorgeous Gissing Litter Pick' – this is not a fund raiser but designed to be a community event. We had a good turnout of volunteers and this year we won the £200.00 prize draw!! Everyone seemed to enjoy the satisfaction of cleaning up the area as well as the scrumptious tea provided by Dave Smith and Moira Walters.
- **April** also saw the Friends Annual General Meeting when we were able to set out the details of the second stage bid.
- **In May**, the Friends invited the author of the 'Angel Roofs of East Anglia' (Michael Rimmer) in which Gissing's roof is featured, to give a talk to the village. The church was packed with over 100 people from the village and well beyond. After the talk, wine and cheese were provided by the Friends and Claire Calton Moore, to an appreciative audience. This raised (£598).



- **In June**, Moira Walters organised a Table Top Sale in the village hall with stalls for the Friends, Heart of Gissing, Garden Club and Greyhound Rescue. The Friends stall staffed by Veronica Manly and Sandra Worthington sold second hand clothes and funds were also raised through refreshment sales (£86). Many thanks go to all who provided cakes and pastries for this and for their donations.

- **On 30 July**, a Friends Bar-B-Q was held at Keeper's Cottage by kind invitation again of Tony and Heidi Baxter. It was a really enjoyable evening for everyone attending and guests showed their appreciation with some very generous donations. Ed and Denise Scoggins helped Tony and Heidi with preparing for, running and clearing up after, the party. Many thanks go also to Clive Homer, Ellie Jennings and her son Theo and his girlfriend Nia who ran a very busy bar and cocktail bar all evening, Alex Hudson ran his ever popular 'Night at the Races'!!,



- supported by Joe Cromley and Stuart Dobson provided the all-important loos for that 'one pint too many'! Thank you to all involved with this event especially those who lent much needed hands with the preparation and clearing away. From all this effort, the Bar-B-Q raised a fantastic £1,810. This was our major fund raising contribution towards the contingency we need as part of the HLF Grant conditions.
- **In August**, the Friends had a stall at the Gissing Summer Fete on Bank Holiday Sunday, which was organised by the Heart of Gissing. Everyone enjoyed the stalls, entertainment and refreshments and the rain held off until packing-up time which was good – if not for those dismantling the stalls! A steady stream of visitors supported the Friends purchasing items from our stall.
  - A further £125 was secured via donations during August.

# of events during the year

## Autumn/Winter events

■ **September** saw two hardy souls set out on the 'Stride & Ride Day', the annual sponsored cycle ride around the churches. This year Veronica Manly walked around the local 6 parishes, at times accompanied by friends including Pat Hutchins and raised an amazing £500. Paul Wright cycled around the Broads area visiting 25 churches and raised £380. Well done to them both.

■ **October** The HLF project required a big effort on the part of the Project Team with meetings every 6 weeks so it was a relief to hear that the bid had been successful. Even though the building work will not begin until February 2017, we decided to make a start on the Heritage related activities. We organised a photography weekend in the church to which historians, professional photographers and the press were invited. Ed and Tom Scoggins, together with Malcolm Turton, (with his well-used trailer to transport it), and Paul Wright, assembled and moved a six-metre tower scaffold the full length of the aisle and back again, enabling the visiting professionals to get 'up close and personal' with the angel roof. The photography took all weekend and the hard work and time spent by all concerned was so much appreciated – it might have been the 'lost weekend' for the 'scaffolders' but the

results are fabulous. The amazing photos of the angels will be used for publicity materials and the increased understanding of the roof carvings will improve our information guides.

■ The *Diss Express* and the *EDP* published the success story and took photographs of

the celebration at the Gissing Crown to which all Friends members, and other supporters in the village were warmly invited. The publicity complemented the earlier success for the Heart of Gissing Big Lottery Fund grant for the new community building, the development of



PHOTO CREDIT: MARK BULLIMORE

*Above:* A group of the Friends celebrating at the announcement of the £208,800 award of a Delivery Grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

*Below:* Photographer David Gutteridge capturing images of our roof angels during the study day in October.

which is well underway now. Between the Heart of Gissing and the PCC/Friends, the village will be having almost £1 million pounds of investment to provide a new community centre and a safe and sound church for residents and visitors alike. In fact, the Heart of Gissing Trustees and the Friends/PCC will be joining together for a Christmas meal at the Gissing Crown on December 8th to celebrate this momentous year.

■ **Note and Christmas cards** were kindly designed and printed for the Friends by Avril Pierssene during the summer and autumn showing new views of the church in different seasons. They have been selling well and we have gone to a reprint for the Christmas cards already which shows their popularity. If you would like any note-cards/Christmas cards, they can be purchased from the church or by contacting Fiona – details are overleaf.

■ **The St Nicholas Fayre**, organised by the Heart of Gissing was held on Saturday, 3 December. The Friends had a stall selling pottery donated by Pat Cattell and handmade bracelets by Moira Walters, as well as the note and Christmas cards. At the time of writing we do not have the figures but would like to thank all those involved, especially Ed and Denise Scoggins, and all who supported the stall.



## How and where the money goes

This last year has not been an ordinary year for the Friends especially with regard to financial matters. The payment of contractors engaged in the HLF 'Development Stage' and the reclaiming of VAT from the 'Listed Places of Worship Scheme' has led to a lot of work for the treasurer. Next year will be very much the same, only more so, as we navigate our way through the 'Delivery Stage'.

Perhaps this is a good time to explain where our income this year has come from and how it has been spent.

To make it less complicated we have removed all HLF grant income and expenditure and shown only the income we ourselves have generated.

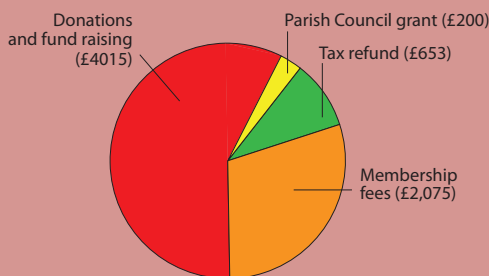
The pie chart for income shows that members' subscriptions, donations, fund raising events and recovery of gift aid bring in the majority of our money.

The second pie chart indicates how that money was spent. This includes the annual costs of keeping the building and its surrounds safe and secure – churchyard maintenance, building insurance, regular maintenance costs (organ tuning, fire extinguishers etc), fund raising costs, administration costs and our contribution towards the work of the 'Development Stage' of the HLF project. Any surplus is being put into a contingency fund just in case the work next year costs more than we are currently anticipating. If that money is not required it will

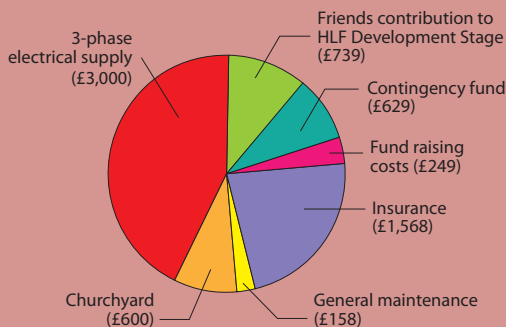
remain in the contingency fund and be used for the next phase of work which will bring mains water, toilets, kitchenette and a performance area to the church.

In all we have done exceptionally well and are in a good financial position to tackle the challenges which next year will bring. Well done everyone.

2016 INCOME: £6,943



2016 EXPENDITURE: £6,943



## Membership renewal

THE FRIENDS have been going for 5 years now and have achieved an amazing amount in such a short time. We hope to be able to count on your continuing membership in 2017. Some people will find in their Christmas card, a membership renewal form for those who are not on standing orders, which we would ask them please to complete, sign and return to Denise Scoggins if they wish to continue in membership. Also for those who have not yet updated their gift aid mandate (which needs to be updated every now and then) there will be a form to complete so we are able to continue to claim gift aid, if of course you indicated you were willing to do this. I know Denise will appreciate your co-operation in this exercise. Any queries about membership and gift aid should be through Denise.

It really is the case that without the support of Friends members and those who donate, it would simply be impossible to keep paying the bills to maintain the church and its grounds. The events and membership donations have also helped to raise awareness of the plight of St Mary's and have contributed towards us receiving the much-needed grant aid. Please be assured that your generosity is very much appreciated.

The panel at the left gives greater detail of how money is collected and how it is spent. This last year has been rather busy as we have planned many different events – all of which have been well attended and supported. Looking ahead, to when the current project is completed, we will need to ensure we can cover the regular building maintenance costs, organ tuning, building insurance, fire extinguisher refills, and churchyard maintenance out of our regular subscriptions and fund raising – and if we are fortunate put some money into our reserves for the next part of our vision for the church – water supply, toilets, kitchenette and performance area.

## Looking ahead



### BELLS AT MIDNIGHT

If you are in Gissing on New Year's Eve, as usual the Friends will be ringing the church bells at midnight to welcome in the New Year. You are sure to get a glass of whisky to keep out the cold!! Do come and join us.

### Church cleaning during 2016

Once again, I know the PCC join with us to thank all those people who have been so willing to undertake church cleaning sessions – this is a real help to the congregation and makes sure that the church is welcoming for visitors. A new rota is being developed for 2017 and so if you think you could help, please get in touch with Fiona.

Thanks are due also to Terry Fewell who opens and closes the church each and every day, keeping it safe and secure for all.

We hope you have found this newsletter informative, please get in touch if you would like any further information over the coming year. Wishing you and your family a very Merry Christmas and sending all good wishes for 2017. With many thanks:

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#### Denise Scoggins

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#### Ed Scoggins

Secretary, Friends of Gissing Church  
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#### Current membership of the Friends' Steering Group

1. Heidi Baxter
2. Tony Baxter
3. Joe Cromley
4. Howard Dyke
5. George Hammond
6. Judith Miller
7. John Nash
8. Milla Nash
9. Eddie Scoggins (Secretary)
10. Denise Scoggins (Treasurer)
11. Janet Sleep
12. Michael Tarry
13. Fiona Turton (Chair)
14. Moira Walters
15. Clive Willett
16. Paul Wright

#### HLF Project Team

1. Joe Cromley
2. George Hammond
3. Eddie Scoggins
4. Denise Scoggins
5. Fiona Turton
6. Paul Wright