

Friends of Romsey Abbey

**Notice is hereby given for
the 6th Annual General Meeting
of the Friends of Romsey Abbey
Tuesday 2nd June 2015 at 7.30pm
in the Abbey**

Charity number: 1134191

AGENDA

1. Opening Prayer
2. Welcome by President
3. Apologies
4. Minutes of the last meeting
5. Chairman's Report
6. Honorary Treasurer's Report
7. Honorary Secretary's Report
8. Honorary Membership Secretary's Report
9. Election of Officers and Committee Members
10. Any Other Business

Speaker

The Rt. Revd. Geoffrey Rowell,

speaking of his unique ministry as Bishop of Europe ,

2001-2013



**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE
FRIENDS OF ROMSEY ABBEY
TUESDAY 3rd JUNE 2014 IN THE ABBEY**

Present: were 41 members.

Welcome: The President Revd. Tim Sledge welcomed all the Friends and our two Honorary Vice Presidents, The Mayor of Test Valley, Councillor Jan Lovell and The Romsey Town Mayor, Councillor Peter Hurst.

The meeting began with The Friends prayer.

Apologies: were received from Caroline Nokes MP, Mags Twentyman, Mr and Mrs Traythorne, Mr and Mrs Wood, Ken Gibson, Mike Perfect, Chris Harpham, Mr and Mrs Dunning and Carol Lamb.

Minutes of the AGM on 4th June 2013 were agreed as a true record.

Chairman's Report was taken as read. John Twigg thanked the regular supporters who came to the events and said that the membership had gone up to 310. He hoped that we could find younger members and have projects suggested by young people. We now have a great opportunity to expand. We are always looking for new committee members and he hoped to find someone to take over the Events Sub Committee. He thanked all the committee members for their work and support, especially Lis Speck who runs the coffee mornings, with so many willing helpers. Tim Rogerson who is standing down from the Treasurers role, having been involved since the beginning. He thanked him for steering us through our first few years as a new charitable organisation. Fortunately, Tim has agreed to remain on our committee, where we will benefit very much from his financial and ecclesiastical knowledge. Roger Rowe has helped to set up the Projects committee with a new focus.

Treasurer's Report. This was presented in detail and had been set out as Charity Accounts. The total receipts for the year ending 2nd April 2013 were £8,288, this has risen to £9,100 at year ending March 31st 2014. The expenditure looks as if we have a loss, but in fact this is due to the timing of the payments. Money from the Bristol Trip came in last year but was paid in 2014. We have a surplus of just under £3,000.

The Secretary's Report was taken as read. The events diary for the year had been packed with inspiring visits, well supported by the Friends. These included entertaining the Chichester Friends, the Strawberry Tea, a three day trip to Bristol, the Gosport Royal Navy Submarine Museum, Brooklands Motor and Aviation Museum and the Annual Dinner.

Membership Secretary's Report. The membership stands at 310 from 296 last year. Most people pay by standing order but people who pay by cash or cheque who had not renewed this year would cease to be members from the end of June if they have not paid.

Election of Officers was chaired by the Revd Tim Sledge:

Chairman John Twigg

Vice-Chairman Revd John Clarke

Secretary Mrs Jill Hall

Treasurer Mrs Michelle Twigg

Membership Secretary Mr Roger Rowe

Committee members: Mrs Lis Speck, Mr Chris Harpham, Mr Philip Hutchings, Mr Mike Perfect (events sub-committee)

New Committee members: Mr John Thompson-Hall, Mr Ken Gibson.

Chairman of the Events sub-Committee Mr John Twigg

Mt John Compton will be taking over the website. Many thanks to Dominic Brenton who has done it previously.

AOB

Brain Lamb took the opportunity to inform the meeting that The Romsey Festival will be taking place in July and it was hoped that there would be good support for all the varied events.

The meeting was followed by a glass of wine and a recital on the organ by Tim Rogerson.

Tim Rogerson introduced our speaker: **Professor Peter Toyne, CBE DL**, one time High Sherriff of Liverpool and Vice-Chancellor of Liverpool John Morres University.

John Twigg thanked him for his inspirational talk, especially appropriate for us as a relatively new 'Friends Organisation'. His enthusiastic encouragement to "get involved" was so apt for the Church we know as **The Abbey**, and the way he conveyed his understanding of what that meant, and should mean, left us in no doubt as to the path we should now be treading.

FRA Chairman's Report 2014/15

I am pleased to report an encouraging year for The Friends of Romsey Abbey as we continue to grow in numbers, up from 310 last year to our present membership of 348 and the continued development of relationships with other groups within the Romsey Abbey Church family. There have also been improvements in our administrative structure with the transfer of much of the responsibility for day to day management from the Chairman to the Vice Chairman, the appointment of a new Events Committee chairman, plus setting up Internet Banking and the reprogramming of our membership data.

Social and Fellowship Activity:

A full programme of visits to places of interest and events within the Abbey was organised during the year and the Trustees are most grateful to all who have given their time to organise events or trips.

The Coffee Mornings, in Romsey Town Hall, continue to run bi-monthly through-out the year from January. As well as excellent freshly brewed coffee and home-made biscuits (only £2 for all the coffee and biscuits you can consume), there is also a friendly, welcoming atmosphere which has encouraged more people to join as 'Friends'. Friendship is indeed the main aim of these mornings and the new members and the steady income we achieve are an added bonus. Last year, the coffee mornings raised £930 for the Friends.

Projects:

The Projects Sub Committee has continued to develop links and help direct our support into areas of need.

We funded the printing of further Visitor Leaflets in (French, Spanish, and German).

The refurbishment of St Anne's Chapel is being funded by The Friends. The plans include new décor, flooring and lighting. There will also be a new altar with a rail protecting the Saxon Rood, candle holders and a lectern. A faculty for the work has now been issued. We hope that a start will be made in 2015.

Bicycle Racks have been installed in the South garth.

Funding has been provided for hardware and software to enable internet access throughout the Abbey, this means that services and other events are available to a public worldwide. Also, information about the link to The Abbey App is now available through the Stewards for visitors with electronic tablets and telephones.

We sponsored and funded the Ethelflaeda Week, including the talk by Kate Adie,

Improvements to the Children's Corner with the installation of new notice boards has been completed, but one the most cost effective projects has been the funding of the Stations of Easter prayer trail which has received many expressions of grateful thanks from visiting groups and schools.

Funds have been provided to purchase a defibrillator, this is now located just inside the North Door, for emergency medical use.

Thanks:

As mentioned earlier, the year has been encouraging in many respects. This is due to the dedicated commitment and hard work of your Trustees and those who provide support behind the scenes. My grateful thanks therefore must go to:

Lis Speck and her group of helpers for making the Coffee Mornings possible,

Jill Hall for her continued efficient service as secretary,

Michelle Twigg for taking on the role of Treasurer,

Dick Hewett for accepting the challenge of Chairing The Events Committee and

John Thompson Hall for his steady hand on our Projects Committee.

Our website is much improved in the way information is made available and this is still a work in progress thanks to John Compton, my thanks also go to Ria Skelton for producing our Newsletters. Of course thanks must go to Mike and Liz Hallett for the invaluable printing services they provide. Finally, my special thanks to Roger Rowe for taking over as Vice Chairman, shouldering much of the

administrative burden from myself and in addition installing a completely new Software programme to handle the complexities of controlling our membership data.

John Twigg
Chairman

Secretary's Report 2014-15

The Friends have had another interesting and successful year. The Main Committee has met regularly with the Events Sub Committee and the Projects Committee reporting to them. Our Events Diary for 2013/14 was packed with inspiring visits which were well supported by the Friends.

Our AGM in June was well attended and included the Town Mayor of Romsey and the Mayor of Test Valley. After the business side of the AGM the Friends were entertained by Professor Peter Toyne, academic, churchgoer and musician. He spoke from his experience of Friends organisations and was a very motivational speaker.

The Friends Annual Strawberry Tea was held on a Sunday afternoon at the end of August in the Vicarage Garden, by kind permission of the Revd Tim and Caroline Sledge. We are very grateful for their hospitality and warm welcome. About 35 Friends enjoyed local strawberries and homemade shortbread. There were some new faces as well as many loyal supporters. It was a lovely warm and sunny afternoon. The customary quiz led to some lively discussion about general knowledge and local events. The tea was followed by a special Friends Evensong in the Abbey. Many thanks to all who helped to set up the garden and to serve the tea.

The Events Sub Committee organised some well supported trips during the year, one of the most memorable was our trip to Bletchley Park, led by John and Julia Slade. What an amazing story this place has to tell, and it is sobering to realise the great debt of gratitude we owe to the 10,000 people who worked there during the war. We all had a very memorable day.

In November 35 people enjoyed a morning at a fascinating working museum, the Whitchurch Silk Mill. A rare glimpse into our water-powered history and the opportunity to see real craftsmanship still in action. The pub lunch at the end of the morning was just right – a truly lovely day out. The unrelenting rain did nothing to dampen the Friends' enthusiasm.

The Friends had a fascinating and informative talk about the Benedictines and their influence on our lives today. We discovered that the rules drawn up by the Benedictine monks are as relevant today as they were for the monks and nuns of Romsey in 907. We are very grateful to Revd Tim Sledge for his time and entertaining insight into the life of the Benedictines.

In March, The Friends of Romsey Abbey had an intriguing talk by Liz Hallett, about the Vicars of Romsey. We heard about fascinating characters, the influence of the nuns and changes to the Abbey over the years.

A religious community was established on the site in the 10th century but the first vicar, Nicholas de Botelstan was not appointed until in 1334. At the end of the talk Liz showed us a gallery of photographs including two of three vicars, unusually all in one photograph. The older photograph shows, from left to right, Revd Andrew Robertson, Canon James Cooke-Yarborough and Canon Corbin. The modern photograph, Canon Neil Crawford Jones, our present vicar, Revd Canon Tom Sledge and Revd David Sherlock.

On a warm day in April the Friends of Romsey Abbey went on a cruise down the Basingstoke Canal aboard the 'John Pinkerton' Narrowboat and a visit to Odiham Castle. The 37 mile long canal was opened in 1794. Despite every attempt to operate it on a commercial basis, the railways proved to be too much competition and the canal fell into disrepair.

In the mid 1970's it was purchased by Hampshire and Surrey County Councils and restored by a volunteer workforce, to eventually open again in 1991. The Friends were met at the canal side by a guide, a brilliant and knowledgeable historian who described the life at the thirteenth century Odiham Castle. The castle was built by King John and it was from here that he rode out to Runnymede to seal the Magna Carta in May 1215. The end of a fascinating day was rounded off by an excellent meal in one of the canal side pubs.

We hope that more people will join us for our events and trips next year.

Jill Hall
Secretary

TREASURERS REPORT 2014-15

The Accounts for the Year and the Trustees' Report are in preparation and will be published after approval by the Trustees, in time for the AGM.

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT 2014/2015

Our membership has risen encouragingly from 310 to 348. A number of members did not renew for this year but 57 new members joined (compared to 37 last year). Our year ran from April 1st 2014 to March 31st 2015.

Number of Members by year

Year	Members
2009/10	252
2010/11	270
2011/12	291
2012/13	296
2013/14	310
2014/15	348

Managing our Subscriptions.

We introduced membership cards for 2013/14 and 2014/15 but these have been of no real use and were complicated to design, print and distribute. The intention was to show members that they had renewed their subscription for the year. We have stopped using them and have introduced a Membership Letter distributed in March instead. It reminds members about their current subscription and Gift Aid arrangements - and shows them the contact details we have for them in our database records. We expect to continue with this process next year.

The Membership Letters have been successful in helping members correct their personal data, in encouraging members who can use email to give us their email addresses, in encouraging members to change to standing order subscriptions where appropriate, and in encouraging them to claim Gift Aid where they can.

We have just added internet banking to our Account at HSBC. The first application is to allow members who use internet banking to pay their subscriptions that way. Two members have done that so far and it is very convenient for members and for us – but please email me on office@romseyabbeyfriends.org if you wish to take advantage.

Membership Renewal

Members who pay by Standing Order have their memberships renewed automatically.

Members who subscribe by Cash or Cheque who have not renewed for 2015/16 should renew before the end of June. If they do not renew by June 30th they cease to be members and they will no longer receive our newsletters and invitations to attend our events. A list of members in this situation will be available at the AGM.

Roger Rowe, Membership Secretary

