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Making Friends

Setting up a Friends group to support your church



“Do it and enjoy it! Don't make it a cross to bear, do it as an enjoyable project and it will be a success.”

a choir pew were mended, the graves were tidied up, some trees pruned, doors oiled, primulas were planted, the railings were painted, 30 church members dug a trench to lay a new BT cable with the help of the local Community Pay Back scheme, a large hole in the wall was fixed, a team of ladies spruced up the interior of the church, the paths were weeded and a large bonfire burned all the garden rubbish. Reading the newsletter is exhausting and exhilarating in equal measure!

In addition to reporting the successes, looking to the future, the April newsletter contains news about the rotting notice boards (£4000 needed to replace them) and continued fundraising to build a new extension.

For any church thinking about setting up a Friends Group, Bob has some excellent advice: “Do it and enjoy it! Don't make it a cross to bear, do it as an enjoyable project and it will be a success.”

The Friends are looking to the next tranche of work with their trademark vision and energy. Woodworm, new carpets, loose and cracked tiles plus the usual maintenance jobs are all on their agenda. Undaunted, the newsletters keep coming out, the funds keep being raised and everyone, church or not, is in it together, a group of dynamic, proactive and very good Friends.

To find out more, you can visit the church website at:
www.tattenhallchurch.co.uk



St Alban, Tattenhall

How the Friends of St Alban have supported repairs and improvements to the fabric of their beautiful church

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Helping your Church

With many beautiful and ancient structures in need of maintenance, where does the money come from for running costs, improvements and repairs? One answer is to set up a Friends group. Run by a group of trustees as registered charities, they charge their members a monthly fee and work as a team to raise funds.

Bob Blackhurst is one of the Trustees of the Friends of St Albans Church Building, Tattenhall. They were set up 8 years ago at the Rector's suggestion as the church was desperately short of money. With 6 trustees and 130 members, it's a thriving and business-like organisation, but perhaps surprisingly, many of its members come from outside the church congregation. Bob explains.

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The Friends don't let the grass grow under their feet. "In June 2013, we spent £25,000 on the church," Bob explains. "We bought a new boiler, had a flag pole put up, installed new lighting and built the Jubilee Path to the front door to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee." In 2014 – 2015, their list of achievements was equally impressive. The cellar and tower steps were repaired, the communion silverware

A lasting Gift



was rejuvenated, three beds of poppies were planted in the churchyard in memory of a local man's great-grandfather, a new security system was installed and a defibrillator purchased. There were also a number of other small repairs and modifications.

So how is all this achieved?

Bob explains the Friends'

model of fundraising. "When we started out, we tried a few social events, but to be honest, they weren't a great success so we decided to play to our strengths. We've approach other bodies when we've raised half the money and ask them to match fund. Our Parish Council have been incredibly supportive. They want the church to look good and to be a real part of the village, so the Jubilee Path and flagpole in particular were things they got on board with. We also work closely with the school who helped to design the Jubilee Path, and we often go to the Borough Council with projects."

The Friends have also realised that communication plays a vital role. "We've learnt that people are incredibly generous provided they can see that their money is being put to good use. Newsletters and regular updates are key. We take lots of photographs, before and after. It shows that the money is doing something."

The Friends produce 6 newsletters a year with the strapline "putting St Alban's first to make it last." Each newsletter is packed with news, photographs, updates and goals for the future. The April 2015 edition is typical in reflecting the unbelievable amount of work done by everyone in the community. A Frontal Chest in the church was repaired (accompanied by a picture of a local man doing it), the communion silverware, the organ keyboard cover and

