

FRIENDS of KENT CHURCHES

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75th Anniversary Appeal

March 2024

Dear Member and Friend,

In England, County Trusts raise funds for the repair of churches and they raise awareness of their needs. The Friends of Kent Churches was the first County Trust to be founded, in 1949, and we have been one of the most successful in raising money and hence being able to help the county's churches to remain in good repair. We achieve this through the efforts of over 700 volunteers, who run the charity and its main fund-raising initiative, Ride & Stride.

As a member of The Friends, you are helping to preserve Kent's splendid churches and to keep them in good condition. We hope that you enjoy the visits to churches arranged during the summer and the lectures at Lenham, and that you enjoy socialising with other members over tea. We hope you like reading our Annual Report and the Autumn Newsletter.

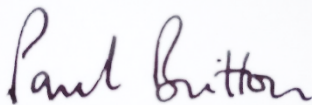
The income from the annual subscription covers the cost of printing and mailing, the modest charge for events covers the cost of tea plus the donation we make to churches and Lenham for the use of their building. We have not raised membership fees for many years because we want as many people as possible to be able to enjoy our events.

Every year we give around £150,000 in grants to churches in need of repair or new facilities. About half of that sum is raised by the annual Ride & Stride event in September. (R&S actually raises twice that sum, but half goes immediately to the supporters' own churches). The most important source of funding for the remainder of our grant giving is legacies and we are very grateful to those members who include The Friends in their Wills.

Since its founding in 1949, we have given grants amounting to several million pounds at today's values. The need for these grants is now very great because neither the Government nor Historic England any longer give grants for church repairs (other than to meet the cost of VAT) and the amount given by the Lottery is much reduced.

To mark this very significant anniversary we are therefore launching our first ever Legacy Appeal. We have the ambitious aim of raising £750,000 - £10,000 for each of our 75 years. We hope you will read the enclosed leaflet and consider how you might help us meet this target by leaving us a small share of your estate.

Our churches are not just centres of faith. They are also vital elements in their communities, many providing help of different kinds to those in need, from lunch clubs for the elderly and youth activities, to debt advice and food banks. They are also our country's greatest repository of history, architecture and the fine arts. Let us not take it for granted that our churches will be there for ever, because without financial support for essential repairs in time they will disappear. We hope you will help us to ensure that this does not happen.



PAUL BRITTON
Chairman