



Friends of All Saints' Church Cuddesdon

Newsletter No. 4 December 2025

Welcome to the Friends of All Saints Church Christmas Newsletter 2025.

As the year draws to a close, we're delighted to share a few highlights of our activities and from our village community, and to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who has supported us and our events through 2025. Wishing you a peaceful Christmas and a very happy New Year.



From the Chair

As the end of the year approaches, it's good to look back at recent Friends events and to look ahead to what 2026 has in store.

In our last newsletter I wrote about how I was looking forward to our sparkling wine tasting. I was not disappointed. We had a wonderful evening hosted by Philip Spinks and Graham Harding, who invited us to try six sparkling wines of varying price and flavour. We learned lots of interesting facts and were encouraged to finish the wines with delicious cheese and biscuits. The evening was hugely enjoyed by everyone, and we raised valuable funds towards the restoration of the lychgate. We are hopeful that we will be able to hold another wine tasting in the not-too-distant future - perhaps red wine next time?

Friends manned a stall at the village fete in May, selling our fabulous bags, notebooks and coasters. Gillie brought along a deceptively difficult marble game, which was in action throughout the afternoon.

The harvest supper is always a happy and social event. This year it was organised jointly by the Village Hall and Friends. We are so grateful to Jon Parry and Nicola Swift for cooking a fabulous beef casserole and vegetable lasagna, and for their generous donation of the meat. Thanks go also to all those who kindly brought desserts (there were too many to eat, despite our best efforts!) and to those who gave prizes for the raffle. Again, the evening provided both fun and funds, supporting both church and Village Hall.

Cuddesdon and Denton have now said goodbye to Bishop Humphrey and Emma Southern. They will be sorely missed. They have been staunch supporters of the village in so many ways. The Friends committee arranged a wine and canapés evening on 22nd November in the Village Hall to say thank you and farewell. We sent them off with a hamper of locally made produce from our gardens and hedgerows as a reminder of our bountiful blessings. We wish them a long and very happy retirement.

Evie Bennett hosted an excellent wreath making evening for Friends on Thursday 27th November. This was a terrific success last year and proved to be just as successful second time round. Light refreshments were served, accompanied by Christmas music and lots of foliage. Many front doors in and around the village are now adorned with magnificent wreaths!

On December 20th we will welcome back the Intermezzo Choir to All Saints for a concert of Carols and Christmas readings. Friends will serve mulled wine and nibbles to the choir and congregation whilst rattling the donations box!

We are now making plans for next year with lots of exciting ideas including another open gardens event!

We thank Robert Wilson most sincerely for the hard, apparently never-ending, work (and form filling) that he is doing on behalf of the whole village both to raise grants and acquire permission to start the repair of the lychgate. I suspect that those of you in the village who have undertaken building work on a listed property will have understanding and empathy for the hurdles that Robert is having to jump. We are grateful too for the support of the Church architect, Robert Montgomery, and the Diocesan representative, Oliver Mitchell. Thank you, Robert, for your summary of progress so far.

The lychgate is an integral part of the history of All Saints' Church. It has welcomed so many visitors to the church as well as featuring in hundreds of photographs! Thank you all for your ongoing support. We hope and pray that we will soon be planning a joyful celebration to mark its full restoration!

I wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year.

Anne Stern, Chair of the Friends of All Saints' Church

Friends of All Saints' Committee Members

Chair	Anne Stern	annestern99@gmail.com
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Events	Gillie Ruscombe-King Caroline Flockton Evie Bennett	
IT/Comms	Edward Collett	
PCC Liaison	Lorna Robertson	

Harvest Supper Report

This year's Harvest Supper was a truly joyful occasion, bringing together members of All Saints' Church, staff and students from Ripon College Cuddesdon, and residents from across the village and surrounding communities. It was wonderful to see the hall filled with conversation, laughter, and the unmistakable sense of togetherness that makes Cuddesdon such a special place to live.



Thanks to the enthusiasm and generosity of everyone who attended, the evening raised approximately £360 through ticket sales and a very popular raffle. These funds will be shared between the Village Hall and the Friends, supporting the continued upkeep of our much-loved community spaces and the activities that bring us all together.

A special word of thanks goes to Jon and Nicola for their delicious home-cooked food and for their generous donation of the beef. As ever, the hard work of the volunteers who prepared the food, set up the hall, and ensured the evening ran so smoothly deserves our heartfelt appreciation.

It was a memorable celebration of harvest, community, and shared purpose — a reminder of the strength of our village spirit. We look forward to welcoming everyone again next year for another wonderful evening together.



Report on Lychgate Repair



Friends of All Saints may well be wondering when work is to start on the lychgate. It had been scheduled for mid-September and then postponed until mid-October 2025, so that our application for grant from the Oxford Historic Churches Trust (OHCT) could be considered at their mid-October council meeting (they will not give grant if work has already begun).

However, some issues have arisen because of the project being considered by the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC). It is necessary for a faculty to be issued before work can start on this listed Ancient Monument and a faculty can only be issued by the Chancellor's office when the DAC supports the application. (This is the ecclesiastical equivalent of getting Planning Permission.) Currently, a final application for Faculty has been postponed because the Building's Officer of the DAC has strongly advised that we look again at various aspects of the restoration. I am working closely with Robert Montgomery, our architect, and with Oliver Mitchell, the Diocesan Buildings Officer, to resolve these issues.

Due to the nature of the heritage construction methods that will need to be employed the work must be deferred until next year, we are working so that it will certainly go ahead and be supported by grant from OHCT and by the very valuable contribution of the Friends of All Saints. In that context, you will be pleased to hear that £1,000 has been added to our account in support of the lychgate appeal by James Gray. This has been collected in memory of his mother, Lynda. We intend that a bronze plaque be placed on the restored lychgate to record our debt to three much-loved members of the congregation (John Paxton, Mary Palmer and Lynda Gray) and to the Friends for your continuing support of the project, for which the Vicar and congregation are most grateful.

Note from Bishop Humphrey

One of the joys that comes with being Principal of the college (or, indeed, a member of the college community in any capacity) is the privilege of worshipping regularly in All Saints', Cuddesdon.

I first entered the church as a prospective student in - I think - 1981 or 1982 before I joined the college as a full-time student in the autumn of 1983. Despite the intense cold that characterised the building in those far-off days, it rapidly became a very special place for me and so I was especially glad to become a parishioner again in 2015, almost thirty years after I had left.



Now that it is time to leave Cuddesdon again it will again be a wrench to leave this beloved building and its many associations and memories. That said, it is a delight to know how well it has been restored and is being cared for, a task in which successive incumbents and PCC members have been supported by the Friends.

A parish church is imbued with the prayers and petitions, the joys and the sorrows of generations of villagers and worshippers, all undergirded and held together by the weekly worship of priest and people, Sunday by Sunday.

The beautification, care and maintenance of the building by the devoted people of the parish is an aspect of this worship, and I pray God's blessing on the work of the Friends for long years to come.

Bishop Humphrey

Christmas Wreath Making Workshop

On the evening of 27th November, the Village Hall was transformed into a cozy and creative haven as 15 local residents gathered for a festive wreath-making workshop. With glasses of prosecco in hand and the scent of warm mince pies filling the room, participants settled into an evening of relaxed Christmas creativity accompanied by gentle seasonal jazz.



All the wreaths were made entirely from natural materials, generously foraged by volunteers from gardens in and around Cuddesdon. The result was a wonderful array of unique, beautifully handcrafted wreaths—each one reflecting the personality and flair of its maker. Many of these creations can now be spotted proudly adorning doors throughout the

village, adding a charming festive touch to our winter streets.

The workshop was not only an enjoyable and sociable evening, but also a hugely successful fundraiser, generating an impressive £550, which will go towards the restoration of the lychgate.

A big thank you goes to the volunteers, who gathered materials, prepared the refreshments, and particularly Evie who ably guided the wreath-making, as well as to everyone who took part. It was a delightful way to welcome the festive season, an evening full of kindness, creativity, and community spirit.



From the Treasurer

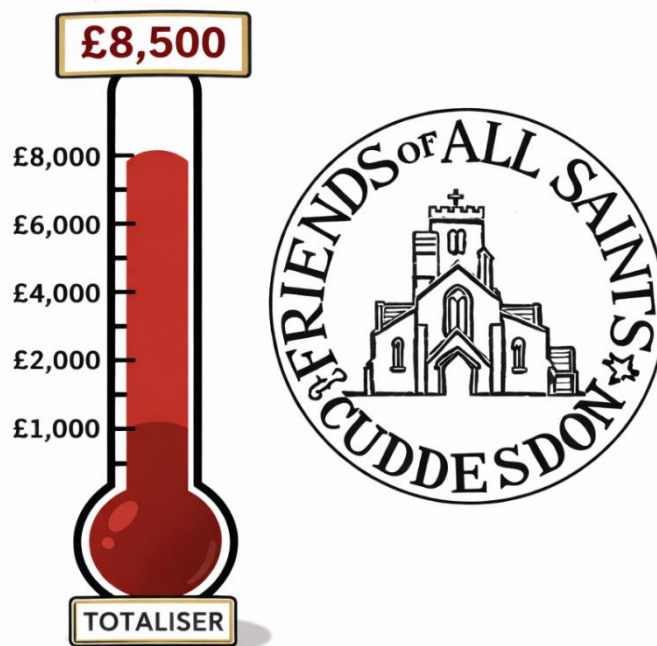
If you would like to join Friends and get on the mailing list then do, please pick up a leaflet from the Church or one of our events, or alternatively email me at: treasurer.foasc@outlook.com

There are no membership fees or further obligations. Should you wish to donate then just let a member of the committee know or pay directly to:

All Saints Parochial Church Council Cuddesdon
Sort Code: 20-65-21 Account: 80001376 Ref: Friends

Our bank account is managed on our behalf by the PCC, and all funds are ring-fenced for our projects.

£8,500 Raised in 2025!



Please contact me should you wish to utilise Gift Aid, which adds 25% to any donations.

Philip Spinks, Treasurer of the Friends of All Saints' Church