

Brief Report Regarding St Mary's Church

The church is alive and well, and still the only place to get a free cup of filter coffee on Sunday mornings – but there is another important matter we all need to be conscious of – the long term maintenance and viability of the fabric of St Mary's Church.

Some time ago the Church Council, the PCC, was advised to set aside £16,000 per annum for this purpose. However it has not been able to do this, instead relying on reserves to deal with the regular and sometimes frequent calls for maintenance expenditure.

This is no longer possible. Furthermore this year we are conducting our Five-Yearly Architect's Inspection, which often unearths significant work – resulting in a financial burden which the current congregation is no longer able to bear.

The PCC is conscious that the building and Churchyard enjoy a large measure of goodwill within the community at large – the building is used regularly by the schools in the village, it houses the War Memorials, offers an active venue for concerts and performances and meeting space for general use. The Churchyard is a quiet and natural open space available to all, and a final resting place for all resident in the village.

The challenge is to determine a means of funding which could enable support for the building, with the community and public service life of the Church, to be spread more widely across our community.

The PCC has therefore determined to establish a "Friends of St Mary's" as a separate charity to achieve this. This is being set up now and the purpose of this note is to invite people to express an interest in getting involved. Volunteers are needed as Trustees and in the fullness of time we hope that a wide section of the village will sign up as "Friends". If you would like to be involved – or would just like to know a bit more – please contact either of the Churchwardens or indeed myself. Thank you.

Christopher Pope.