

# MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OF THE ASSOCIATION OF THE FRIENDS OF SALISBURY CATHEDRAL  
HELD ON SATURDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2010 AT 3.15 pm IN SALISBURY CATHEDRAL

1. The Dean, the Very Reverend June Osborne, opened the meeting by inviting those present to say the Friends' Prayer.

## 2. President's Introduction

The Dean welcomed everyone to the AGM in the 80th Anniversary year of the Friends of Salisbury Cathedral on such a beautiful day; she welcomed John Bush, the Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire, who had offered to read a lesson at evensong later, which this year would include the admission of boy choristers in the presence of their families.

The Dean said that earlier in the week she had been to Durham cathedral, whose Dean once lived in the close, and they agreed that the two cathedrals were in joint first place as the best of all cathedrals – there was nowhere so sublime. She hoped that everyone had enjoyed the Liminality Exhibition of sculpture in the cathedral, the tours organised during the morning and Robert Key's fascinating lecture.

The Dean went on to say that when asked how things were in Salisbury, she had three answers. One: it had been a summer of losing bishops. Bishop David had retired and moved to Durham with a great send-off, but the Dean had not known then that Bishop Stephen would also be leaving to be Bishop of Ely at Christmas. To lose one bishop was bad but to lose two bishops was careless! It would be a long process before a new bishop would move into the South Canonry, possibly not until this time next year or longer, but meanwhile Bishop Graham would be here with assistant Christopher Herbert, former Bishop of St Albans. Two: money was tight and sometimes non-existent, and we all acknowledged that it was a time of great austerity. In the financial year 2009/10 the cathedral received £3.736m, but outgoing costs were £4.236m, so we spent £1½m more than we gained. £931,000 was spent on the MRP. To reduce the deficit, it had been necessary to reduce staff costs, which had meant staff redundancies and the pain associated with this. The Dean & Chapter had asked itself whether it could go on funding the MRP which was presently at the stage of completing MRA(10) phase 2, but because of a very large anonymous donation, work on the Chapter House would begin, due to be finished 2012/13. The Dean was extremely grateful for this, as it meant that Chapter could begin a much longed-for project: new toilets and new storage in the area adjacent, Little Paradise. It was the right moment for this project but without the help from the Friends, they couldn't have begun and this was a fantastic boost. Thirdly, the Dean talked about the arrival of Michael Deegan, again supported by an anonymous donor, who would be focusing on the cathedral's social justice policy, working with the congregation, and on how best to bring the Magna Carta into this. She said that every child in the Diocese, every pilgrim to Salisbury, should understand its significance for liberty and justice. In five years' time it was the 800th anniversary of Magna Carta, and it was hoped to exhibit it in a better interpretative space, so that visitors shouldn't be disappointed, but see it also as a Christian narrative. In daily services the cathedral continued to pray for justice, peace and reconciliation, especially for those in the Armed Forces, and she hoped that in due time, a place in the cathedral would be designated for this.

In closing, the Dean said she was deeply grateful for the Friends' support, to the Council and volunteers, who were an extraordinary bunch of people, and it was a great pleasure to work with us.

## 3. Apologies

The Chairman announced that apologies had been received from a number of Friends including: Miss H Bland, Mr F Earle, Mr & Mrs J Gammon, Mr I Henderson, Mr & Mrs P Hime, Mr J Kennerley, Mr H Moule, Mrs V Pitt-Rivers (Lord Lieutenant of Dorset), Miss S Vaughan, The Ven. G Walton, Mr & Mrs N Wingate, Mrs P A Wright.

## 4. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 19 September 2009

Canon Mark Bonney proposed, seconded by Mr Bruce Skidmore, that the Minutes be accepted as a correct record and this was passed unopposed.

## 5. Matters Arising

There were none.

## 6. Election of Members to Council

The Chairman thanked both Mr Paul Williams and Ken de Vere Lorrain, the valued outgoing members of the Council. He said that two candidates had been proposed and seconded to become members of the Council, Canon Christopher Bryant and Revd John Tarrant, who were duly accepted.

## 7. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that the year ending 31 March 2010 had been a fairly normal financial year for the Friends. However, he said that he would like to draw attention to three specific items in the accounts as follows. Firstly, the Friends had received a legacy of £80,000 which had been passed over for care of the fabric of the cathedral; secondly our investments had achieved a gain of nearly £70,000 taking them above their purchase price; and thirdly, we were obliged by the auditing regulations to include in the accounts grants to the cathedral of £364,000, although part of this would not be paid for a year or two. The Friends had paid £210,000 towards the cathedral's Little Paradise redevelopment in this financial year. Mr Bainbridge proposed, seconded by Mr Bill Oglethorpe, that the Accounts should be adopted, and this was passed.

## 8. Appointment of Honorary Auditors

The Chairman reported that Messrs Fletcher & Partners had agreed to continue as Honorary Auditors of the Friends' Accounts. He added his thanks to them, and also to Tory Hirst in the Friends' Office. The Friends were extremely grateful to James Fletcher and his staff for their excellent service and valuable advice. The Chairman proposed, seconded by Miss Jane Erith, that Fletcher & Partners should be re-appointed as the Association's Auditors.

## 9. The Secretary's Report

In addressing the Dean, Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire, the Chairman and members, Kate Beckett hoped that everyone who had taken part in the morning's tours and attended Robert Key's lecture had enjoyed themselves. On reporting on the past year, she said that it had again been another busy one in the Friends' office. As a subscription-based charity, her aim was as ever to increase membership, and therefore the support offered by the Friends to the Cathedral. Membership continued to hover around 3,500 and taking into consideration the changes to it throughout the year, it presently stood at 3,431. Sixty-nine new members had joined so far in the current financial year, of which ten joined through the cathedral Open Day. She voiced her grateful thanks to John Kennerley, the Membership Secretary. It was a challenging task to increase numbers and promote the Friends, but one which she hoped every

member could help with, as the personal approach was by far the best way to get new members. Governance costs had risen; an update to the Friends' member database had been purchased, and the cost of postage and printing continued to rise. In these difficult times, Kate reiterated the need for strategies to be put in place to take the Friends forward and increase membership, not an easy task with only two people in the office, and she appealed to members for their help.

Kate publicised an evening dinner on Friday 1st October, organised with the help of Sally Smythe, Keith Millman, and Tory Hirst, to celebrate the Friends' 80th Anniversary and highlight the Little Paradise project. She expected it would be a super evening, starting with a walk through the Cathedral with Helen Martin from St Ann's Gate Architects, then Evensong. The Dean, the Friends' President, was to host drinks in the Deanery, and an excellent dinner was arranged in the Refectory. The evening had been arranged with the very generous assistance of many people, who had either donated their time or prizes, waived their charges or discounted costs. Guest speaker Paul Atterbury, one of the well-known experts on the Antiques Roadshow, was also donating his fee and would auction some first rate items and raffle the excellent prizes. She urged members to apply to the office for the few tickets remaining.

Kate outlined the plans for the redevelopment of Little Paradise. Once conservation work on the Chapter House had been carried out, the space alongside it – the area known as Little Paradise – was to be remodelled over the next four years, to house a new building for new toilets and storage space, at an estimated cost of approximately £900,000. After lengthy discussion and consideration at Executive Council meetings, the Trustees agreed this project was top priority, and whilst this might mean we could not support any other projects until this was finished, the Friends would offer as much help as possible. In June this year the Friends paid the enabling costs of £210,000, with a further £60,000 due to be paid over in due course. Whilst to find the remaining costs was a daunting task, the Friends did want to contribute as much they could within the programme's timescale.

In addition to the above, Kate confirmed the Friends' had enough funds to cover existing grants. Work had begun on the Te Deum Altar Frontal and Carpenter Cope and progress was being made on improvements to the lighting in the Quire. The second phase of monument conservation would begin towards the end of 2010. The flower arrangers had expressed their appreciation for an annual grant of £2,000 recently approved for cathedral flowers. The repairs to the pinnacles and spirelet on the north transept had been completed, assisted by the £100,000 grant from the Friends. The Chair Project was also continuing to produce income. Kate thanked all members for their support; it was through their generosity that we were able to fund such important projects for the cathedral.

Income from other sources included our investment portfolio; at the year end, the total return was 32.9%, which performed well against the benchmark of 33.4%. The Friends' Council had every confidence in John Godfrey, our investments manager, who joined the Council meeting in May to talk about 'hedge' funds, in answer to questions raised in an earlier meeting. In addition, we also claim Gift Aid annually, which at the year-end amounted to over £8,000, an extremely important part of our income. Kate confirmed that we could only claim it against member donations if a Gift Aid form had been signed, so it was important for members to check with the office or take a form if they were not sure if they were signed up. She also hoped that members would continue to support the Friends Association in their wills, as so many had in the past; it boosted funds for grants.

Christmas and Note cards were selling well, as were the new Friends' shopping bags, which were practical and a good way of advertising the Friends. Sue Finnis had painted this year's Christmas card design, and also very kindly donated the original, to be auctioned at the dinner. Orders were processed in the office by stalwarts, Peter and Sheila Brown, and our Christmas cards were also available in the shop and through Cards for Good Causes at Southons, with our volunteers there.

In the past year, many Friends enjoyed trips to Wells Cathedral, the holy island of Iona on a pilgrimage led by Canon Jeremy Davies, the Houses of Parliament and evensong in Westminster Abbey, and the Passion Play in Oberammergau, Bavaria. Forty Friends were shortly going to Ludlow, with a day in Shrewsbury and a ride on the Severn Valley Steam train. Kate thanked Shirley Reeves, who was a wonderful help with the trips, and they were already making plans for next year.

Kate concluded her report by giving her grateful thanks to all volunteers, whose tremendous time and effort was invaluable in running the charity. She also thanked cathedral staff and clergy, without whom the Friends could not function, especially today, the Chairman and Council members for their support, and Tory in the office. The secretariat continued to work hard to maintain the Friends' commitment on behalf of all its members who loved Salisbury Cathedral, the building and the community, and recommended continued support of the Friends to fund vital projects, make lasting relationships and support our important fellowship.

#### **10. Any Other Business**

Tim Tatton-Brown, the Cathedral's Archaeologist, informed those present that work would shortly begin on archaeological excavations within the Little Paradise area, now that the concrete had been removed, and urged members to have a look.

The Meeting ended with the Grace at 4pm.