

Brief report from Friends of St Matthew's

The purpose of Friends of St Matthew's is to raise funds to support the upkeep of St Matthew's church and its grounds. Our enthusiastic committee work hard to put on fund-raising events throughout the year. Our big project is the installation of an accessible toilet and a servery in St Matthew's to make the church building a more welcoming space for everyone in the community.

Member of the Friends pay an annual subscription of £25 for joint membership or £15 for a single membership. We send the members newsletters at various times throughout the year, updating them on our activities and notifying them of upcoming events. If you would like to become a member of FoSM please contact our treasurer, Pete Irving.

We have been running a 100 Club for almost three years now and have currently sold 88 of the 100 numbers. It costs only £2 per month to have a number in the monthly draw and each month there are 3 prizes totalling 45% of the monthly subscriptions, with the remaining 55% going to FoSM. With 88 numbers sold, first prize is currently £44, second prize is £26.40 and third prize is £8.80. The first and second prizes alone will each cover the £24 cost of having a number in the draws for a year! We are trying hard to sell the remaining 100 Club numbers in order to get the prizes up to their full potential of a whopping £50, £30 and £10!! So, if you are tempted to join in the fun, please do contact me or Jill Dunkley.

In the past year the Friends have put on, or had a presence at, 3 fund raising events:

- 1) The Great Snail Race in September was an extremely lively well-attended event, the snails were in fine form and nearly £1000 was raised. The Snails will be going into training again soon for the next race which will be on Saturday 18 October in the village hall.
- 2) The Quiz in November was well-attended and a great evening was had by over 70 people in 11 teams, raising nearly £500.
- 3) FoSM had a fun crafting session making paper angels to decorate a 7ft tree for the Angel Festival held in December. This gave us an opportunity to advertise what FoSM is all about.

FOSM will be running a bottle stall at the Village fete on 5 July and we would be very grateful for any donations of bottles – wine, water, ketchup, vinegar, nail

varnish – anything you can spare would be very gratefully received by myself, or Jim Bond.

We were delighted to receive two anonymous donations, one of £10,000 and one of £2,000 to be put towards the toilet and servery project. We would be delighted to receive any donations, no matter how small, to swell the funds.

We currently have over £26,000 in the FoSM bank account to put towards the installation of the accessible toilet and servery, which (including connection to mains water and the sewers, plus the associated trenching) will cost in the region of £55,000.

After much paperwork, we are now well on the way to obtaining permission (called a Faculty) from the Diocese to undertake this work. We are now in a 28-day Notice Period, which is an opportunity for anyone with concerns about the project to raise them with the Diocesan Registrar. The notice period ends on 28 May, after which the Chancellor will make their decision as to whether or not to grant us the Faculty. We are very hopefully that this will be granted.

Our next phase of activity will be identifying and applying for grants to raise the necessary funds to begin the project.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the wonderful FoSM committee, the members of the Friends, the members of the 100 Club and all those who turn out to support us and help out at our events. It is very much appreciated.