



Friends of St George & St Mary's NEWSLETTER

No 5, JUNE 2024

**FESTIVAL
EXTRA!**

WE'RE ON THE WAY!

The National Lottery Heritage Fund have accepted our Expression of Interest, the essential first stage in a bid for a grant! This opens the door for us to apply in detail for funds to repair Gresley Parish Church. We now have to complete a very involved application –We will also need to engage architects and other professionals, obtain planning permission from the local authority and Church authorities, and quotes from a variety of contractors. In addition to all that the Lottery requires that we **raise tens of thousands of pounds** as matching funding.

WE COULDN'T DO THIS WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT!

You have already helped us! Your amazing response at 2023's Festival of Leisure was a significant factor in helping us show the Lottery that our project had merit. Of 380 who signed our petition, over 98% of you supported our goal. **You showed us that you wanted us to succeed** and gave us positive ideas about what facilities and activities you would like to see in the restored building. This impressed the Lottery panel and gave us the heart to roll up our sleeves and embark on this daunting process. **Thank you so much!**

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WHAT WE HOPE TO ACHIEVE

A RESTORED BUILDING

Our project began from the deep desire, shared by so many of you, to see St George and St Mary's Church repaired, and reopened. It has looked so forlorn and uncared for with its safety fencing and scaffolding. The stonework's dangerous condition even led to its being entered **on the Heritage At Risk Register**. Clearly such an ancient stone building, almost 900 years old, will require stonemasons and other specialist craftsmen to put it right. And who knows what unseen damage may come to light once the builders start? The estimates for the cost of everything have grown with inflation over the years to many hundreds of thousands of pounds. This is why we have applied to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the only source of such large awards. Their acceptance of the value of our vision is the encouraging first step.

NEW COMMUNITY FACILITIES

We very soon realised it would be missing an opportunity just to return the building to how it was before closure. The facilities available in the building need modernising to make it a **useful amenity for the whole community**. The congregation needs a place of worship, but Church Gresley also needs a multipurpose building. One that is welcoming and available throughout the week for a whole variety of community groups and activities.

A CELEBRATION OF OUR HERITAGE

Part of the requirements of the Lottery Heritage Fund involves researching and presenting both the history of the church building, and the shared heritage of Church Gresley as a whole. As a team we have found this **a very exciting part of our work** towards the Lottery Bid. We have made many interesting discoveries and learned much in the process. This will be the basis of

programmes of activities once the building work is completed. **We aim, not just to show and tell, but to get you involved, immersed in our shared story.**

Those who responded to our Memories Day last year told poignant stories stretching back into the last century and beyond. We would love to learn more of your family history! All we have learned will be made accessible online for this and future generations.

A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY RESOURCE

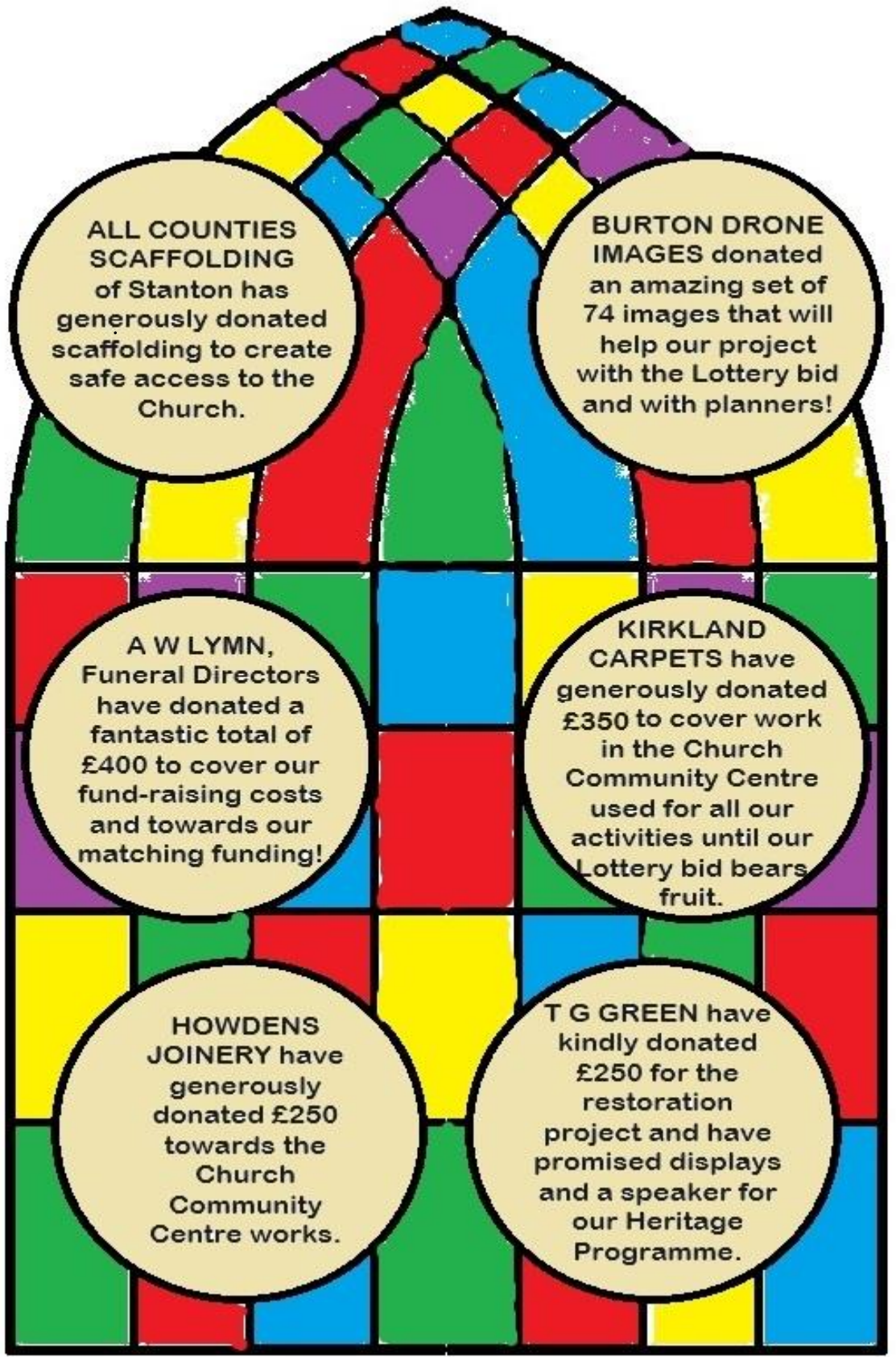
We aim to create an environmentally friendly hub sitting proudly atop Cappy Hill for many decades to come. We want to hand on a viable, energy-efficient building to our children, the churchyard to enjoy increased biodiversity, the stories of those buried there to be celebrated, and the surroundings to offer a peaceful spiritual haven in our busy lives.

THIS IS OUR VISION – WILL YOU HELP US?

St George and St Mary's Church from the Northwest.
Our thanks to Kev Smith of **Burton Drone Images** (see on Facebook) for this and many other aerial images that will be extremely useful in our bid.



THANK YOU TO BUSINESSES SUPPORTING OUR PROJECT



**ALL COUNTIES
SCAFFOLDING**
of Stanton has
generously donated
scaffolding to create
safe access to the
Church.

**BURTON DRONE
IMAGES** donated
an amazing set of
74 images that will
help our project
with the Lottery bid
and with planners!

A W LYMN,
Funeral Directors
have donated a
fantastic total of
£400 to cover our
fund-raising costs
and towards our
matching funding!

**KIRKLAND
CARPETS** have
generously donated
£350 to cover work
in the Church
Community Centre
used for all our
activities until our
Lottery bid bears
fruit.

**HOWDENS
JOINERY** have
generously
donated £250
towards the
Church
Community
Centre works.

T G GREEN have
kindly donated
£250 for the
restoration
project and have
promised displays
and a speaker for
our Heritage
Programme.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE RESTORATION PROJECT?

- **RAISING MATCHING MONEY.** The National Lottery Heritage Fund does not give 100% of what is needed. So **we will need to raise eye-watering sums of money**, over £200,000 as our contribution to the work. There are other Grant Making Bodies but we need lots of additional ways of achieving the total. Any ideas you have that could **help us climb this mountain** will be much appreciated.
- **OBTAINING PLANNING PERMISSION** from the Local Authority and the Church of England. This will involve finalising all of the plans for work on the church building and churchyard, and then persuading bureaucracy to see it our way!
- **RESEARCHING AND GATHERING EVIDENCE** We have to prove that we understand the needs and potential interest of the local community. We covered some of this research in the questionnaire many of you kindly completed last year, but we have still more to do.
- **RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS AND TRAINING.** There will be many opportunities for volunteering with the project both now and in the future. Training needs to be provided where some specialist skills are desired.
- **LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.** The project heritage activities need to be able to engage and educate (and entertain!) all age groups through local schools and organizations.

CAN YOU HELP US OUT?

- Please, if you possibly can, donate to our appeal. The QR code below links directly to St George and St Mary's restoration account.
- Sign up to our Newsletter. Just email us at the address below or contact us via Facebook. It's online at Issuu.com, just search Friends of St George and St Mary's Newsletter.
- Follow us on Facebook. We will publicise our news and activities there. Please like and share our posts on your own Facebook news feed.
- Why not Volunteer with the Friends Group? As you can see above, we still have much work to do. If you would like to help us we would be glad to welcome you on board! Or if you have helpful suggestions about any of the current tasks, please contact us. Especially if you have suggestions to help our fund-raising.
- Continue to tell us your stories about Church Gresley and your families.



How to Contact Us

Email us at friends@gresleychurch.co.uk

Message us or comment on Facebook at Friends of St George and St Mary's.

Also, **CHURCH IS STILL HAPPENING** in the Gresley Church Community Centre each Sunday at 10am.

Why not come and meet us?