



CHRISTMAS (REPORT) CARD TO CHURCH GRESLEY

We couldn't let 2025 end without updating you all on our recent news, without saying thank you for all your support during the last 12 months and without sharing our optimism and excitement about the progress of the project as we move into 2026. So, here goes

First of all a huge thank you to everyone who supported our Christmas Fayre on 22 November, which was held in Gresley Church



Community Centre. Despite the awful weather, there was a good turnout, many enjoyed the bacon sandwiches and perhaps their first mince pie of the season - and of course, children were thrilled to meet Santa! Our stall holders were happy with the sales they made, and we were pleased to have raised £413. Yes, it is a drop in the ocean compared to the huge amount that we will have to find in match funding for our Lottery bid but as a certain supermarket says, 'Every Little Helps!'

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HISTORIC ENGLAND ENCOURAGE BID FOR EMERGENCY REPAIRS



Historic England

In other exciting and encouraging news, we are now bidding for two new grants! Firstly, Historic England (H.E.) suggested we apply to them for money for emergency repairs. They hold the 'At Risk' Register and can fund repairs to arrest major damage to historic buildings. So we have been pursuing the Historic England grant process over the past few months, with the help of Richard Jordan, heritage roofer, who featured in our last newsletter and has costed the repairs.



Heritage Fund

Secondly, a new development is that the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) have suggested that they could fund part of the emergency repairs as well! So we are now temporarily switching our efforts from our main Lottery bid to one of their Smaller Grant applications – sadly 'Smaller' doesn't refer to the amount of paperwork involved! This is all to ensure that the building will be made watertight and saved

from further deterioration. If these bids are successful, we could be in a position to start essential work on the church in 2026 so, fingers crossed that our bids will be viewed favourably. Our NHLF contact, Lesley Owen-Jones, is working closely with our H.E. contact, Amanda White, and together with our NHLF consultant, Ross Ingham of Ingham Pinnock Associates, we have three key players who are giving our project priority. We do not believe that this would be happening unless both the NHLF and H.E. had confidence in the viability of the project.

CONSTRUCTION COLLEGE OFFERS SUPPORT

In mid November we had a very positive visit to the Stephen Burke Construction Academy in Swadlincote. Alan Burgess, the Chair of the Friends, had rung them to ask for help in putting together a budget for training opportunities in connection with our



emergency repairs. Alan met with their Director of Curriculum, Geraint Davies, who grew up on Church Street, Church Gresley! Geraint and his colleagues were very interested in our project and have sent us a letter of support. Their students rarely get the opportunity to be involved in heritage projects since their training concentrates mostly on trades associated with house building, so we could offer something that could expand the horizons of a few keen students. The college also has huge joinery and engineering workshops which could provide some practical help during the project. This is the kind of local involvement that the Lottery likes to encourage, so we look forward to students interacting with our heritage repair contractors at some point.

ESTATE AGENTS MEASURE THE CHURCH -BUT NOT FOR SALE!

Earlier this month we welcomed Catherine and Lewis Potter from EweMove estate agents in Ashby to the church, complete with hard hats, who very kindly came, in their own time, and at no cost to us to give accurate measurements of the church building with the



same lasers they use as part of the service they provide to house sellers. We now have accurate measurements and floor plan designs of the church which will be incredibly useful as the project moves forward. We have also been offered help from a professional designer to create a new arrangement for the interior.

PIPE ORGAN CASUALTY OF WATER LEAKS

Last week Jonathan Wallace of Organ Tuners and Builders, Henry Groves of Nottingham, who have maintained the Pipe Organ for many years, came to see the current state of the instrument. Historic England had recommended it be temporarily removed during work on the building. The question is, will it be fit to be reinstated and at what cost?

Jonathan found that the organ has suffered serious water damage and is no longer operable. We await his report and recommendations.



Green Mould on damp wall by Pipe Organ

WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE RESTORATION PROJECT?

- **CONCENTRATING ON EMERGENCY REPAIRS BIDS** To Historic England and the Lottery.
- **RAISING MATCHING MONEY.** Funders will not grant 100% of what we need so **we will need to continue to raise money**, for 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.
- **WORKING WITH LOCAL COMPANIES** to create a business-friendly facility.
- **RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS AND TRAINING.** There will be many opportunities for volunteering with the project both now and in the future. Training will be provided where some specialist skills are desired.

BE PART OF THE STORY!

- There's a great opportunity to **volunteer with the Friends Group!** As you can see, we still have much varied work to do. If you would like to join in we would be glad to welcome you on board! Or if you have helpful suggestions about any of our current tasks, please contact us. Especially if you have ideas to help our fund-raising.
- Please, if you possibly can, **donate to our appeal.** The **QR code** below links directly to St George and St Mary's restoration account. Remember companies can set off their donations against tax. Also we now have an **EasyFundraising** account. Sign up to donate cashback whenever you shop online.
- **Sign up to our Newsletter.** Just email us at friends@gresleychurch.co.uk or contact us via Facebook. It's also online at our Facebook page, 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.
- The Friends of St George and St Mary's is an official activity of the PCC, which is a registered charity, number 1159929.



How to Get in Touch

Email us at friends@gresleychurch.co.uk

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

Also, **COME AND MEET THE TEAM** at Morning Church at the Gresley Church Community Centre most Sundays at 10am.