



# THE FRIENDS OF ST JOHN'S CHURCH, CARDIFF

(Registered Charity 1066605)

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## NEWSLETTER

June 2022

Dear Friend,

### **THE CHURCH.**

With the lifting of coronavirus restrictions, the church is slowly step-by-step moving towards normality, though there is a little way to go yet. The congregation is still encouraged to keep distancing, but there is no longer a requirement to wear masks, and no limit on numbers that can attend. Congregational singing has restarted and communion is again administered at the altar, but only in one kind, so the cup is not used. The bells have started ringing again before service. After-service tea and coffee has been restored. As a result of this, there has been an increase in attendance at morning service, moving towards the numbers we used to get, including new worshippers.

Sadly, as yet the church has not been able to restart Sunday evening worship, but there are hopes that this can be done before long. The church continues to have short afternoon services live on the internet, on Sundays and weekdays. So far, though, it has not been possible to have the church open during the week. This requires volunteers to be available to steward the building. Moves to organise this are being made. We know that people like to come in during the week to look around, or have a quiet prayer.

### **THE CHOIR AND MUSIC.**

The church now has a fully functioning choir. The restriction to eight singers has gone, and the choir has developed so that there is now music for a full musical setting including an introit or anthem, as well as the hymns. New fresh voices have joined the older singers, and everyone agrees that the fine singing adds to the worship. Thanks are due to Olly Hearn and Philip Thomas our organist for the efforts they have made to bring this about.

As well as the choir, the church is tentatively making a move back towards the holding of organ recitals and other public musical events as was a regular part of the life of St John's. Some caution is still needed on these, because of the need to keep the church clean and sanitised, which relies on volunteers.

### **FRIENDS ACTIVITIES.**

With things still not fully recovered from coronavirus, no Friends activities are currently planned. The committee will be looking at this, and if it proves possible, will see what can be done before the end of the year.

## **ECO CHURCH.**

St John's has made progress in the Eco-Church scheme that it joined last year. This is a nationwide scheme intended to encourage churches towards being more sustainable. After conducting an audit, and making certain adjustments, the church was successful in its application for a bronze award, and now has a plaque to display to that effect. Many thanks to those who contributed, particularly Quentin Sandifer and Paul Davies who put in a lot of work. The church is now looking towards a silver award, but this may be difficult to achieve in a Grade 1 historic building, which is subject to many constraints and regulations.

## **BUILDING REPORT.**

The church has been able to complete repairs following malicious damage and break-ins. This work to three stained glass window panels and part of the south porch parapet was much delayed as a result of the closures because of the pandemic, but is now done, and things have been put back in good order. More work needs to be done, including security lighting to discourage further vandalism, and local repairs to some parts of the roof. This is being put in hand. It is an unfortunate fact that with a historic building like ours, even minor repairs tend to be costly.

## **THE VESTRY BLOCK.**

Plans were made some years ago for redevelopment of the vestry block, which is far from ideal for the current needs of the church. For many years it had served simultaneously as meeting room, choir vestry, Sunday school and Tea Room, and the idea was in part to provide separate spaces for these functions. The proposed project proved far too costly to carry out, and just before the coronavirus closure, a review was started of its future. That review was put on hold while the church was closed, but will be looked at again in the coming months.

With the closure of the church, the Tea Room also closed. It was run by volunteers, and it is difficult to get the teams back together again, so for now it remains closed. It was an important part of the life of the church in terms of both fellowship and finance, bringing both regulars and visitors into the building to enjoy the light refreshments on offer. Since autumn last year, the room has not been empty but is being used by an organisation called Kaleidoscope as a Cardiff base to provide counselling to drug users to help them get off their habit. This is on a one year trial basis.

## **LOOKING FORWARD.**

Now that the church is at least partly open, with regular services, it is hoped that in time things will start to get back to normal, with the church taking a full part in the life of the city centre. There is a long way to go yet to get there, but each month a little progress is made. The church remains grateful for the support it gets from its worshippers and its Friends.

Richard Hall, (Hon.Sec.)