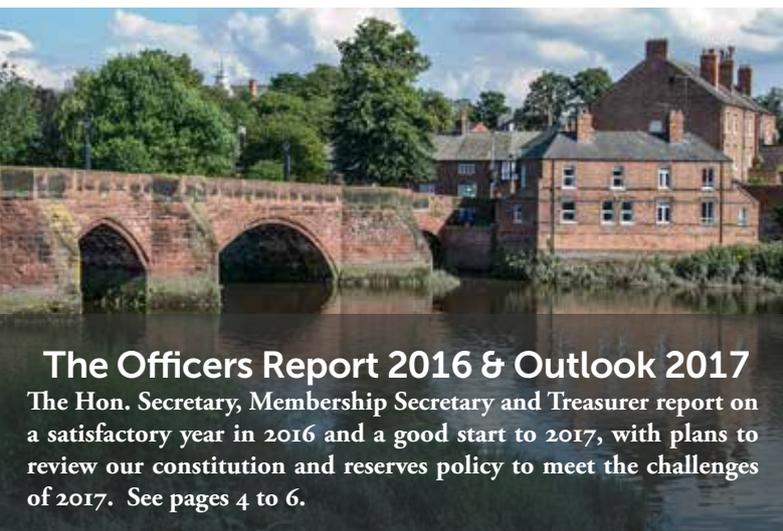




Friends Service, AGM & Soirée - Thursday 29th June 2017

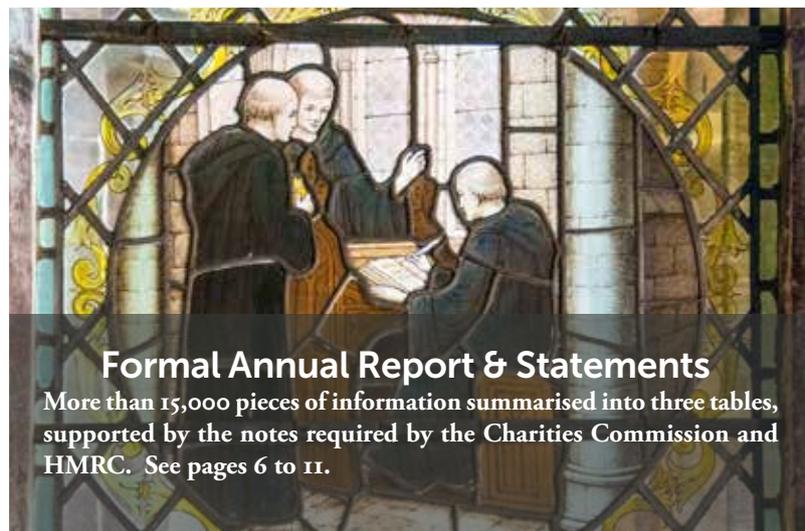
Please note that the date for the AGM was incorrectly stated in the November News Letter. The correct date is Thursday 29th June.

The AGM will take place in the Chapter House after Evensong (The Friends Service) and will be followed by a soirée in the Cathedral Garth. Should the weather be unkind the soirée will be transferred indoors. Light refreshments and beverages for the soirée will be provided by Gianni Poletti and his team to his usual high standard. There will be a modest charge for the soirée. See page 2 for more information.



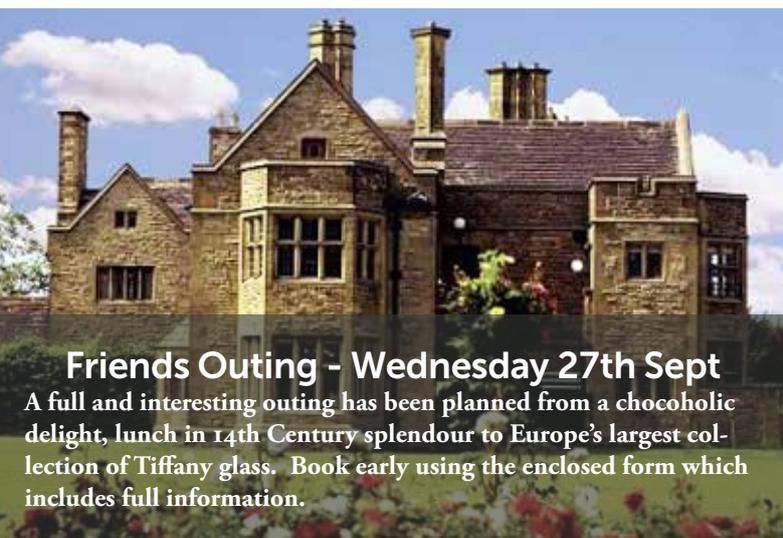
The Officers Report 2016 & Outlook 2017

The Hon. Secretary, Membership Secretary and Treasurer report on a satisfactory year in 2016 and a good start to 2017, with plans to review our constitution and reserves policy to meet the challenges of 2017. See pages 4 to 6.



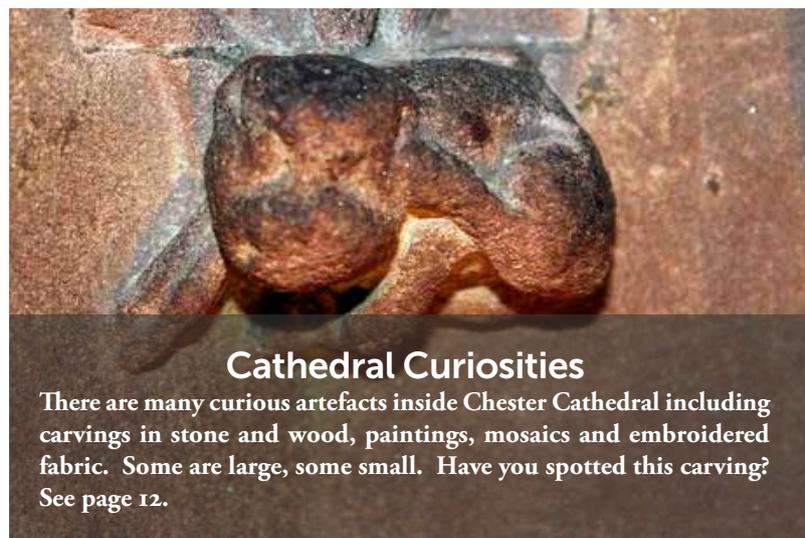
Formal Annual Report & Statements

More than 15,000 pieces of information summarised into three tables, supported by the notes required by the Charities Commission and HMRC. See pages 6 to 11.



Friends Outing - Wednesday 27th Sept

A full and interesting outing has been planned from a chocoholic delight, lunch in 14th Century splendour to Europe's largest collection of Tiffany glass. Book early using the enclosed form which includes full information.



Cathedral Curiosities

There are many curious artefacts inside Chester Cathedral including carvings in stone and wood, paintings, mosaics and embroidered fabric. Some are large, some small. Have you spotted this carving? See page 12.





Thursday 29 June 2017

- 5:30pm Choral Evensong in the Quire
6:30pm Annual General Meeting in the Chapter House
7:30pm Soirée in the Garth (Chapter House if wet)

AGM Agenda

1. Prayer
2. Apologies for Absence
3. Remembrance of past Friends
4. Minutes of 2016 AGM pages 2 & 3
5. Hon. Secretary's Report page 4
6. Hon. Treasurer's Report page 4
7. Hon. Membership Secretary's Report pages 5 & 6
8. Election of Officers
9. Election of Members of Council
10. Report on the past year in the Cathedral
11. Any other business
12. The Grace

N.B The Formal Financial Statements are on pages 6 to 11

AGM Soirée for Friends

29 June at 7.30pm

Tickets from Nick Fry via admissions desk

£10 must be pre-booked

Buffet provided by Gianni Poletti
and the Refectory Team

Includes a free drink on arrival with a
pay bar during the evening

If wet the event will be in the Chapter House

Minutes of the last AGM in the Chapter House, Thursday 30th June 2016:

Present: The Dean (Chair) Nicholas Fry (Hon. Secretary)
Barry Ingram (Hon. Treasurer) Derek Jackson (Hon Membership Secretary)
Canon Peter Howell-Jones 37 Members of the Friends

1. **The Meeting** opened with a prayer.

2. **Apologies** were received from the following:

The Bishop of Chester,
Angela Brodbelt
Bernice Meredith
Geoff Taylor

The Very Revd. Dr. Stephen Smalley
(Dean Emeritus)
Jill Langan
Randal Hibbert

3. **Remembrance.** A short silence was observed in memory of departed Friends.

4. **Minutes of the last AGM** on Friday 3rd July 2015, were accepted as a true record.

Proposed by Lavinia Whitfield

Seconded by Lyn Barritt

AGREED

An Overview by Nick Fry

It's good to report that the Friends of Chester Cathedral are flourishing! There is always room for improvement, but our numbers remain steady, flowers in the Cathedral continue to delight our visitors every day, organ recitals are sponsored and a considerable amount of money is granted to the Cathedral each year in support of a range of different projects; on the social side, our events continue to attract large numbers and Friends' outings almost invariably sell out. But complacency and self-congratulation are always dangerous, leading to a sense of inertia and inactivity, so perhaps the time has come to look at our own governance procedures. The Friends' Constitution was first written in the 1930s and consists of just 3 sides of A4, which seems remarkably brief for the organisation of a society of over 800 members with a turnover of several thousands of pounds each year. So over the next year, the Council will be reviewing the Constitution to ensure that we are as efficient as possible and ready for the challenges that future years will bring. It may be that little needs to be changed, but it is important that we ensure that our governance is both current and compliant with the Charity Commissioners' guidelines. Any suggested changes will of course, be presented to the AGM for approval in due course, when they can be fully discussed by the Membership. Ensuring that our Constitution is up-to-date provides a really solid foundation, allowing the Friends to play the fullest possible part in Cathedral life for years to come.

The Numbers by Barry Ingram

The formal accounts are, of necessity, rather detailed and somewhat indigestible! The key numbers are "how much money have the Friends granted to the Cathedral" and "have we achieved this without any unwarranted effect on our reserves". So, how was 2016?

- Grants paid in 2016 totalled £20,727
- Reserves (investments & current assets) at 31 December 2016 £168,826

And how do these numbers compare with previous years?

Although donations and legacies were modest, reflected in total income, grants were also modest and reserves (net assets) increased a little.

It should be noted that net assets rose sharply in 2014 and 2015 to accumulate and meet the expected grant towards Nave platform liturgical furniture. This was achieved by curtailing other grants in 2014 and exceptionally generous donations and legacies in 2015.

The continuing need for high reserves has been reviewed in 2017 with the conclusion that the expected grant for Nave Liturgical Furniture is unlikely to be called forward in the foreseeable future. The aim is now to reduce cash reserves to more normal levels (by increasing other grants).

Excludes Simmonds Legacy £135,806 granted to reduce Song School loan					
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Income					
Subscriptions & Gift Aid	£14,612	£14,502	£11,242	£16,094	£13,599
Events (net)	£1,611	£1,540	-£419	£341	£975
Interest Received	£3,743	£5,877	£5,651	£5,720	£5,856
Donations & Legacies	£2,309	£9,990	£8,613	£15,606	£2,164
Flowers & Gardens	£9,467	£5,552	£3,639	£4,487	£6,855
Total	£31,744	£37,461	£28,726	£42,248	£29,449
Expenditure					
Grants					
General	£18,410	£16,450	£1,345	£15,450	£9,464
Music	£5,306	£7,075	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
Flower	£4,630	£5,574	£4,920	£4,862	£6,810
Garden	£8,024	£1,482	£2,798	£1,435	£2,453
Grants Total	£36,370	£30,581	£11,063	£23,747	£20,727
Expenses					
	£4,216	£5,449	£3,473	£4,452	£5,189
Total	£40,586	£36,030	£14,536	£28,199	£25,916
Net Assets	£135,623	£137,054	£151,244	£165,292	£168,826

- Long term investments – no change
- Current assets – target ~ £25,000 compared to balance at 31 Dec 2016 of ~£58,000

2017 reflects a satisfactory start (to the end of March). Income has benefitted from donations and legacies which already exceed those in 2016 and grants totalling ~£3,500 paid. Further grants ~£8,500 have been approved and further new requests totalling ~£6,500 are expected shortly.

Please Remember 'The Friends' in Your Will

Over the years many Friends have remembered the "Friends of Chester Cathedral" in their wills and this has been greatly appreciated. The Friends are a registered charity and any bequest you make would be tax free.

For the convenience of those who would like the Friends to benefit from their estate the following form of words is suggested:

I GIVE to "The Society of the Friends of Chester Cathedral" (Registered Charity No 501740) of 12 Abbey Square, Chester, CH1 2HU the sum of [orpercentage of the residue of my estate] free of all taxes, duties and expenses, and I direct that the receipt of a person who appears to be a proper officer of the charity shall be a sufficient discharge to my Trustees.

Membership by Derek Jackson

The current Membership Figures show a small drop in members over the year 2016 -17. We currently have 708 Ordinary Members (a drop of 8 over the year) and 74 Life Members (a drop of 7). However, we no longer create Life Members, so this figure will inevitable disappear over the next decade or so.

Membership Summary March 2017 (March 2016)

Total Membership 831 (846): Ordinary 708 (716); Life 74 (81); Link Parishes 49 (49)

New Friends April 2016 to March 2017

Mr. F. & Mrs. C. Crowder	Miss J. Hunter	Mrs. A. A. Muddle
Mr. J. Digwood	Mr. S. A. & Mrs. D. Jones	Mrs. B. Osborne
Mr C. & Mrs. C. Dodd	Mrs E. Jones	Miss M. Papworth
Miss C. Drage	Mrs. A. B. Lamb	Mrs. L. Purcell
Miss J. Edwards	Mr. S. & Mrs. M. Lloyd	Mrs. J. Starbuck
Mr. E. Gorton	Mr. & Mrs. B. E. Lunt	Mr. W. J. & Mrs. A. Sutton Hughes
Miss J. Hargreaves	Mr. R. Mainard	Mrs. J. Tilley
Rev. S. & Mrs. H. Hildreth	Dr. R. & Mrs V. M. Mais	Mr. D. & Mrs. B. Wade
Mrs. P. Hunt		

The Membership and Recruitment Committee has a few ideas in the pipeline to help increase our membership. When we provided the television monitors in the Nave we had an extra screen. We are negotiating to use this - either fixed at an agreed point in the Cathedral or mounted on a moveable stand – to display a looped video giving details of the Friends and their activities within the Cathedral. It will also show the many ways in which the Friends have been able to provide extras around the Cathedral Estate which would otherwise not have been possible – such as the Rose Window in the Song School, the re-designing of the Jubilee garden, the replanting of the Garth, the installation of the icons in the Lady Chapel and the Chapel of St. Werburgh – as well as the more practical things - the new Nave lighting and, not so visible – but nevertheless very significant – a major contribution to settle the outstanding loan on the Song School, which allowed the Cathedral to move forward with many other projects.

We are also planning a 'Friends' Day, probably in October, which will underline the importance of the Society. It is hoped that a short presentation can be given about the Friends and that sermons on that day can emphasise the importance of our contributions to the Mission of the Cathedral. Maybe we will be able to offer the congregation something more substantial than coffee after the morning service!

Our Social Events have continued successfully – although they have not resulted in any significant increase in the recruitment of new members - they have been enjoyable social occasions.

As ever, we thank all our members for their donations and for the gift of their time. We thank fellow Council members for their continued support and unstinting help in organising events, meetings and publicity. Please continue to support *your* Society and don't forget.

“Every Friend should find a friend to become a Friend”

Obituary

We remember with sadness, but with gratitude, the lives of Friends who have died recently

Mrs. B. Boardman	Mrs. S. Harden	Mrs. S. Ropes
Mr. K. Coghlan	Mr. J. G. James	Mr. C. Seddon
Mrs. J. Cooper	Mrs. E. R. Mack	Miss F. V. Stantan
Mr. H. A. Dodd	Mrs. C. R. McGarva	Mrs. S. Terrett
Mr. R.J. Duncalf *	Mr. M. R. Newsum	Mr R.F.R. Towndrow #

* Rod (1943 - 2017) was a Verger at Chester Cathedral from 1980 to 2004

Richard (1935 - 2016) was Hon. Treasurer of the Friends and editor of the Newsletter from 2003 to 2016

If we have omitted any names we extend our sincere apologies and ask that we receive details.

Annual Report & Financial Statements of the Friends of Chester Cathedral:

(Registered Charity No: 501740) for the year ended 31st December 2016

Trustees: The trustees who served during the year ended 31st December 2016 were:

Mrs A Brodbelt	Mr J. Gillespie (from Nov 2016)	Mrs H. McNae (from Nov 2016)
Prof. G.J. Brooke	Rev'd Canon P. Howell-Jones	Very Rev'd Prof. G. McPhate
Miss B. Brett Rooks (until July 2016)	Mr B.M. Ingram	Mr M. Sykes
Mrs L. Carstens (from Nov 2016)	Mr D.N. Jackson	Mr G. Taylor (until Sept 2016)
Dr C. Chatterton (until June 2016)	Mrs B. Meredith	Mr R.F.R. Towndrow (until Sept 2016)
Mr N.J. Fry	Mrs D.M. McConnell (until June 2016)	Mrs A.P. Woodward

Contact Address: 12 Abbey Square, Chester, CH1 2HU

Bankers: Barclays Bank Plc, 30 Werburgh St, Chester, CH1 2DY

Investments: CCLA Investment Management Ltd,
Senator House, 85 Queen Victoria Street, London, EC4V 4ET

Independent Examiners: Pursglove & Brown incorporating Benjamin Morris & Co,
Military House, 24 Castle Street, Chester, CH1 2DS

Trustees

The Trustees have no beneficial interest in the charity.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Friends is a member association who appoint Trustees to oversee the running of the Charity. Trustees serve for four years and may not return for 12 months. The offices of Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Membership Secretary are renewable at each Annual General Meeting and may be continuous. The positions of Chair and Vice Chair are held by the current Dean and Vice Dean of Chester Cathedral.

Risk Management and Reserves Policy

It is the responsibility of the Trustees to assess the main risks the Charity is exposed to, particularly those relating to the operations and finances of the trust. The trustees undertake this assessment and ensure that systems are in place to mitigate and manage the Charity's exposure to any major risks.

The Honorary Treasurer presents a formal report at each council meeting (held about four times a year)

The level of unrestricted funds at end 2016 was £156,945. The trustees are satisfied that this is sufficient to meet any obligations arising through the operation of the Charity at the current time. The trustees have considered the requirement to maintain free reserves and are satisfied that the Charity has a need to establish free reserves to absorb the major fluctuations in funding received without curtailing services to its beneficiaries. This has currently been calculated to be approximately £25,000 and the remainder is held in investments and interest bearing savings to provide regular income for future services.

Statement of Public Benefit

The Trustees are aware of the Public Benefit provisions of the Charities Act 2006 and of the guidance on them published by the Charity Commission. They are satisfied that the objects of the Charity and the activities of the Charity are within the definitions of Charitable Purposes as set down in the Act. The Trustees are not aware of any public detriment caused by the Charity's objects or activities, and nor are they aware of anyone receiving any private benefit from the Charity's activities.

Objectives

Assisting the Dean and Chapter in furthering the religious and charitable work of Chester Cathedral by supporting the spiritual life, work and worship, and maintaining, improving, adding to and repairing the fabric, fittings, furniture, ornaments, services and music.

Principle Activities

The Friends raise money by an annual subscription. They also receive donations, bequests and legacies.

The Friends organise events to advertise the work of the Cathedral and Friends, attracting further support.

Achievement and Performance

Please refer to the various reports included with these accounts.

Volunteers

The Trustees are indebted to the volunteers who give up their time to the Charity and assist in its running.

Independent Examiner

Benjamin H. Morris FCA has indicated his willingness to continue in office and it is proposed that he is reappointed reporting accountant for the ensuing year. Friends should note that Benjamin Morris & Co have amalgamated with Pursglove & Brown, based in Chester, in which office Ben is now based. After a great number of years supporting the Friends, Ben is now planning his own retirement within the next few years and The Friends look forward to a developing relationship with his new colleagues.

By Order of the Trustees

B. M. Ingram, Honorary Treasurer

Statement of Financial Activities & Balance Sheet for Year Ending 31st December 2016:

2015			Income & Expenditure	2016		
£	£	£		£	£	£
Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Incoming Resources	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
	16093.91	16093.91	Subscriptions Received + Gift Aid - refunds		13598.80	13598.80
	8964.60	8964.60	General Donations		1163.62	1163.62
	6642.00	6642.00	Legacies		1000.00	1000.00
460.17	5259.91	5720.08	Interest Received	392.80	5463.22	5856.02
	9918.54	9918.54	Events & Other Income		11533.30	11533.30
	4487.00	4487.00	Flowers and Gardens		6855.13	6855.13
460.17	51365.96	51826.13	TOTAL INCOME	392.80	39614.07	40006.87
			Outgoing Resources			
	15450.00	15450.00	General Grants		9463.74	9463.74
	2000.00	2000.00	Music and Choir Grants		2000.00	2000.00
	1435.07	1435.07	Garden Grants		2452.71	2452.71
	4861.81	4861.81	Cathedral Flower Grants		6809.87	6809.87
	9577.57	9577.57	Events & other Expenses		10558.05	10558.05
	4451.98	4451.98	Operating Expenses including Newsletters		5189.06	5189.06
0.00	37776.43	37776.43	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	0.00	36473.43	36473.43
460.17	13589.53	14049.70	SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR YEAR	392.80	3140.64	3533.44
B. M. Ingram Hon. Treasurer				30 April 2016		

31 December 2015			Balance Sheet	31 December 2016		
£	£	£		£	£	£
Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Investments	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
	1313.53		CBF Deposit Account		1319.70	
	33000.00		CBF Cof E Global Equity Income Fund #		33000.00	
	21000.00		CBF Cof E Fixed Interest Income Fund #		21000.00	
	20000.00		CBF Cof E Property Income Fund #		20000.00	
	24000.00		CBF Cof E UK Equity Income Fund #		24000.00	
1265.41			CBF Deposit Account (Temple Legacy)	1658.21		
10000.00			CBF Invest. Fund (Temple Legacy)*	10000.00		
11265.41	99313.53	110578.94	* at investment cost see note 4	11658.21	99319.70	110977.91
			# at investment cost see note 5			
			Current Assets			
	1.00		Barclays Current Account		1.00	
	54237.63		Barclays Premium Account 33198308		56523.47	
	475.02		Barclays Flower Account		1323.65	
			Sundry debtors			
			Less Current Liabilities			
	0.00		Sundry Creditors		0.00	
	0.00		Unpresented cheques		0.00	
0.00	54713.65		NET CURRENT ASSETS	0.00	57848.12	
11265.41	154027.18	165292.59	TOTAL NET ASSETS	11658.21	157167.82	168826.03
10805.24	140437.65		Balance brought forward as at 1st January	11265.41	154027.18	
460.17	13589.53		Surplus / Deficit for the year	392.80	3140.64	
11265.41	154027.18	165292.59	Balance at 31st December	11658.21	157167.82	168826.03

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the current applicable accounting standards and the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice. They have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Funds

Accumulated Unrestricted Funds represent the funds of the FCC that are not subject to any restrictions regarding their use and are available for application on the general purposes of the FCC. Funds designated for a particular purpose by the FCC are also unrestricted. The Sir John and Lady Temple fund is restricted in the use of its income until 2020 when the capital reverts to the general fund. The income is to be used towards cathedral music and choir expenses.

Incoming Resources

Voluntary income and capital sources.

Subscriptions are recognized when received by the FCC. Income tax recoverable is recognized when the income is received. Grants and legacies to the FCC are accounted for as soon as the FCC is notified of its legal entitlement, the amount due is quantifiable and its ultimate receipt by the FCC is reasonably certain.

Other Income

The Gross income from functions is shown in the Statement of Financial Activities together with the related expenditure. The profits and losses on each event are shown in the Detailed Income and Expenditure Account.

Income From Investments

Interest entitlements are accounted for as they accrue.

Resources Used

The accounts have been prepared on the accruals basis which takes into account liabilities due at the year end for expenses incurred and matches expenditure to the period incurred or income gained. Grants and donations are accounted for when paid, or when awarded, if that award creates a binding obligation on the FCC.

Fixed Assets

Assets are generally written off in the year of purchase. The charity owns some office equipment of little value.

2. REMUNERATION

The Friends acknowledge the great amount of work carried out by its volunteers. No remuneration is paid to anybody.

3. SUNDRY CREDITORS, SUNDRY DEBTORS, PREPAID EXPENSES AND INCOME

There are no sundry creditors, sundry debtors or prepaid expenses and income.

4. TEMPLE ENDOWMENT ACCOUNT

In 2000 the £10,000 capital of the fund was invested in the CBF Church of England Investment Fund. No account has been taken of fluctuations in the value of the fund. The fund has undergone fluctuations in market value and was worth £13,241 at end 2016 and £1,658 retained interest paid. The investment is considered a longer term (20 years) investment and no change is envisaged at present.

5. CCLA C of E FUNDS: GLOBAL EQUITY , FIXED INTEREST, PROPERTY AND UK EQUITY

Total investment remains unchanged at £98,000. In addition £1,320 is held in the deposit fund. No account has been taken of fluctuations in the market value of the funds. The funds were worth £118,012 at the end of 2016 compared with a book value of £98,000. The trustees take the view that these are longer term investments and the capital gain of £20,012 in recent years (including ~£8,000 in 2016) is not reflected in the accounts.

6. CURRENT ASSETS - BARCLAYS PREMIUM ACCOUNT

The account balance at £57,626 is significantly more than the working target of £25,000.

A sum of £40,000 is being held in reserve in anticipation of a grant for the replacement of the temporary Nave altar furnishings with permanent liturgical furniture. This reservation is under review.

Detailed Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31st December 2016:

2015		Detailed Income & Expenditure			2016	
Restricted	Unrestricted	INCOME			Restricted	Unrestricted
	10847.96		Subscriptions Received (less refunds)		10727.64	
	5245.95		Gift Aid		2871.16	
	8964.60		General Donations		1163.62	
	203.00		Garden Donations (including NGS)		223.60	
	4284.00		Donations for Flowers, Memorials etc		6631.53	
	6642.00		Legacies / Bequests		1000.00	
460.17	5259.91		Interest Received	392.80	5463.22	
460.17	41447.42	41907.59		392.80	28080.77	28473.57
	-106.95		Friend's Day / AGM		100.00	
	0.00		Autumn Lecture / Event		-155.39	
	447.92		Outings and other events		1030.64	
460.17	41788.39	42248.56	TOTAL INCOME	392.80	29056.02	29448.82
			EXPENDITURE			
			Surplices for Girl Choristers		3000.00	
			Surplices for Boy Choristers & Lay Clerks		3000.00	
	150.00		Lock-in 2015			
			Peal Board QE II Birthday ringing		548.00	
			Mace repairs		672.00	
			Altar linen		500.00	
			Bibles for new Choristers		213.74	
	12000.00		Nave platform lighting		1530.00	
	3300.00		Nativity Sculpture 3 Kings		0.00	
	2000.00		Organ Recital Support		2000.00	
	4861.81		Flowers in the Cathedral		6809.87	
	1435.07		Trees & plants for Gardens etc		2452.71	
0.00	23746.88	23746.88	Total Grants	0.00	20726.32	20726.32
	3819.65		Annual report / Newsletters inc. postage		4347.11	
	347.33		General Expenses		487.95	
	285.00		Membership Leaflets & Membership Cards		354.00	
			Miscellaneous other expenses			
	4451.98	4451.98	Total operating expenses		5189.06	5189.06
	28198.86	28198.86	TOTAL EXPENDITURE		25915.38	25915.38
460.17	13589.53	14049.70	SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR YEAR	392.80	3140.64	3533.44

Report of the Independent Examiner to the Friends of Chester Cathedral:

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2016, which are set out on pages 6 to 11.

Respective responsibilities of the trustees and Independent Examiner

As trustees of the charity, the members of the FCC are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. They consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

Contd:

It is my responsibility to

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioner's section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in a full audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matters have come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with s.130 of the 2011 Act; or
 - to prepare accounts which accord with these accounting records have not been met;

or

- (2) to which in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

This report on the accounts of the FCC for the year ended 31st December 2016, which are set out on pages 6 to 11, is in respect of an examination carried out under section S.43 of the Charities Act 1993 ('the Act').

B. H. Morris FCA
Military House
Castle Street
Chester
CH1 2DS
Registered Auditors

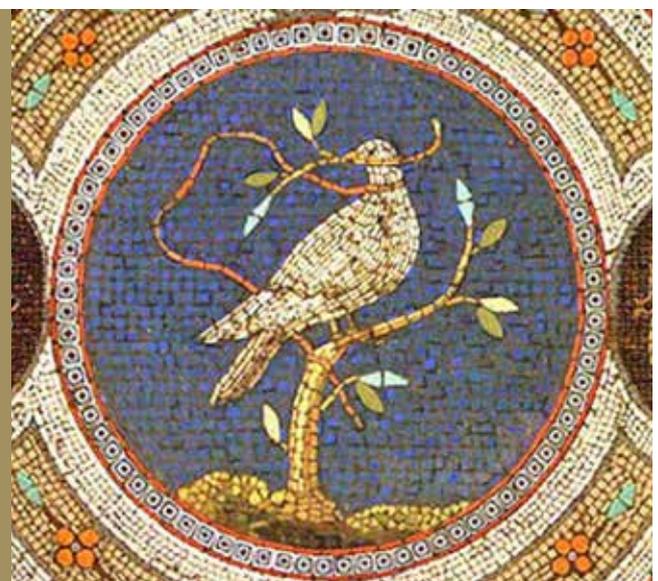
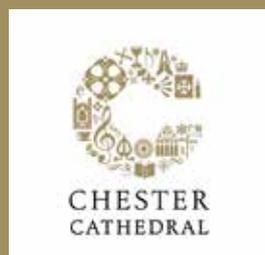
30 April 2017

Anglican and Catholic relations - a lecture

Tuesday 27 June 2017 7.00pm

Join Henry Wansbrough, a biblical scholar and a monk at Ampleforth Abbey, for a talk on the relationship between the Anglican and Catholic churches. The lecture will be followed by refreshments (8:15 pm) and Compline (8:45 pm).

Tickets are £3.00 per person.
To book contact the Box Office:
(01244) 500959
www.chestercathedral.com



The Shrine of St. Werburgh:

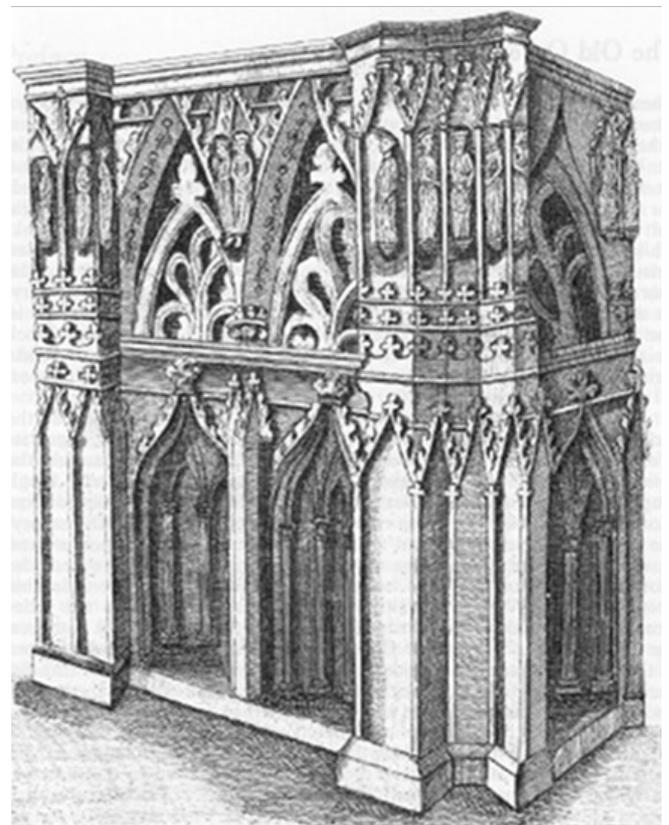
The shrine of St. Werburgh can hardly be regarded as a curiosity, but it is certainly true that it has many curious features about it. The story of the Saint is well known, and when the bones were translated to Chester around 900 AD, some sort of shrine must have been constructed. However, the present shrine dates from the mid fourteenth century, when it was decided to create a more fitting structure to house the relics, no doubt prompted by the completion of the rebuilding of the eastern arm of the church. It probably stood behind the High Altar, which at that time was situated several feet further west than the present altar, although there is a possibility that it once stood in the North Transept. There are only 7 shrine bases left in England, and of all of them, St. Werburgh's shows most clearly the idea of a shrine being a miniature building, and originally it would have had tall pinnacles on top. It is designed like a little two storey chapel, and pilgrims would have been able to see the reliquary itself through the windows of the upper level and then knelt to pray in the small niches of the lower level. In design, it relates to work that was being done at the same time in Yorkshire, and particularly in Beverly Minster, where some of the details in the fourteenth century wooden sedilia are almost identical to the ornament of the shrine. Some of the mouldings are unfinished, indicating that the masons began their work at the top and worked down - but for some unknown reason, their work was never completed. However, one delightful detail is the little dog scratching his ear, which can be found on the North East corner. The presence of a dog (and his fleas!) on something as sacred as a shrine may seem to be disrespectful, but they were just as much a part of God's world as the Saint whose bones were above. Thus the little carving reminds us that everything in this world belongs to God, whether saint or animal.



Shrines were ordered to be destroyed at the Reformation, and St. Werburgh's was no exception. The bones disappeared - there is a story that they were reburied somewhere in the area of the present High Altar - and the bottom storey of the Shrine was then placed in the Quire as the base of the Bishop's throne with the top story forming a sort of railing around the upper level. The figures are statues of St. Werburgh's family, the Royal House of Mercia which were beheaded either when the shrine was dismantled in the 16th century or during the English Civil War. It was not until 1872, when the missing parts of the shrine were discovered in a wall at the West end of the Nave, and a new throne constructed, that any form of restoration of the shrine was attempted. Rather oddly though, the Victorian restorers left their restorations clearly visible. It is probable that they had intended to carve their insertions, but perhaps the money ran out - a familiar problem! As a result, the present condition of the Shrine clearly shows that it has had a chequered history; but the Shrine still stands within the great church constructed to house it, and pilgrims still visit it in the spirit of their medieval forebears - a rare inheritance.

Nicholas Fry

*The shrine as it looks today. (top)
Shrine of St. Werburgh in Chester Cathedral -
as published in The Gentleman's Magazine of 1793. (right)*



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