

We currently have on our books 99 Life Members and 53 Annual members and although we have, sadly, lost several members this year we have worked hard to try to replace these numbers. I ordered a few extra Friends' Christmas cards and delivered them, together with a letter as a personal invitation to consider joining us, to selected houses in the village. Unfortunately the result was very disappointing.

If you haven't yet seen the new bookcases at the west end of the church under the tower and the new cupboards in the admin area, please pop in and have a look; you will be surprised at how much difference it has made. This has been done as a result of a generous bequest but The Friends have paid for all the new electrical work that was needed in order to brighten up the whole of that area. I will leave it to the treasurer in his report to update you as to that amount and the other things we have committed ourselves to financially.

We organised a very successful coach outing to Columbine Hall last year which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. On arrival we split into two groups and while the owner, Hew Stevenson, showed one group round his beautifully kept hall, his head gardener showed the other round the lovely gardens and grounds. The groups then reversed and we all joined up for tea and cake in the beautiful medieval barn. I thank Charles Dinwiddy for organising this. On the strength of the success of that trip I asked Charles to arrange another one this year, this time to Crow's Hall, Debenham. It will be on Tuesday 26th September D.V. with the coach leaving Lavenham at 1.30 and returning by about 6.00pm. The total cost will be £35. Please support this if you can.

Since our worthy and long standing treasurer moved to Kesgrave we have tried (although perhaps not as hard as we should) to find another treasurer. So far we have not been successful and Ian has agreed to carry on after the AGM for a while for which we are very grateful. We do, however, need to find another treasurer as it is not fair to expect Ian to come to committee meetings from that distance.

I would like to thank all the members of the committee but especially our secretary, Paul, and our treasurer, Ian and not forgetting Mary Wolton for inviting us to use her lovely house for our meetings and providing coffee and biscuits.

Finally, we must all make a special effort to recruit more members and the best way to do this is by word of mouth so please speak to neighbours and friends, making sure they realise we are not trying to make them come to church (although they would always be welcome) but they must, and should, be proud to have such a fine building at the heart of the community. I have no doubt that nearly everyone living in the village has, at some time, brought their visitors to see the church and it is one way of contributing a little to help make sure it is kept maintained for future generations.