

The Friends of the City Churches (FCC)

Trustees' Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2019

In 2018/19, the year under review, FCC further developed the activities appropriate to its stated objectives:

'To preserve and protect for the public benefit:

- Churches and chapels of architectural and/or historic interest situated in the City of London, whether belonging to, or formerly used by, the Church of England, or any other body;
- The monuments, fittings, fixtures, organs, stained glass, furniture, ornaments and chattels of any such church or chapel and their untied parishes; and
- The churchyards and burial grounds belonging to or formerly belonging to any such church or chapel'.

FCC aims to keep churches open so that their architecture and decorative treasures are available to an interested public, be they City residents or workers, or visitors from elsewhere in the UK or overseas. It also provides an interesting programme of talks, walks and other activities for its membership and the wider public.

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| Trustees | Oliver Leigh-Wood | Chairman and Acting Honorary Treasurer |
| | David Jessop | Vice-Chairman |
| | Peter Eaton | Honorary Secretary |
| | Nancy Branson | |
| | Brian Evans | |
| | Signe Hoffos | |
| | Alexey Moskvina | |
| | John Reynolds | |
| | Lesley Thrift | |
| | Tony Tucker | |
| Observers | Judy Guy-Briscoe | Honorary Secretary designate |
| | Judy Stephenson | Editor, <i>Skyline</i> |
| | John Wilson | Book-keeper |
| Administrator (part-time) | Karen Hearn | |

Structure, governance and management

FCC is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and operates under the 'Association Model' constitution for such organisations.

Trustees are appointed by the membership of the CIO at the Annual General Meeting and serve for three years (unless filling a place vacated by retirement or resignation) after which they may offer themselves for re-election. Four of the

Trustees are ex-officio appointments: Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Honorary Treasurer and Honorary Secretary. The recruitment and induction process for new Trustees is operated in a manner commensurate with the scale and nature of FCC. All Trustees are required to have read the 'Guide to Trustees Duties' and 'Guidance on Public Benefit' publications issued by the Charity Commission, and to update themselves regularly on matters associated with the operation of small charities. To that end, all Trustees are directed to the regular Newsletters of the Charity Commission and relevant points are highlighted for their notice.

The Trustees have complied with their duty under law (s17(5), Charities Act 2011) to have due regard to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance when exercising powers or duties to which the guidance is relevant.

FCC is fully compliant with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The Trustees do not carry on activities, whether voluntary or for profit, which conflict with their duties for FCC. Several Trustees, however, do have roles in other charities or in churches, or work for their own account, which activities are complementary to their work for FCC. None of the Trustees receives remuneration for their work for FCC. A policy for Trustee expense claims is in place.

The Trustees hold 10 meetings each year to discuss strategic planning and priorities, to receive and act on reports from subcommittees and working groups and to agree financial commitments, including the award of grants under the FCC Small Grants Scheme.

Judy Stephenson resigned as a Trustee in January but continues to edit *Skyline*. Judy Guy-Briscoe has attended meetings as an observer in her role as Honorary Secretary designate. John Wilson attended meetings as an observer in his role as Bookkeeper.

Membership

Membership numbers have been maintained, with 1034 active accounts, of which 269 are Joint and 13 are Life memberships.

Trustee Signe Hoffos and Administrator Karen Hearn have continued to fine-tune the membership database system (MADS), which is now functioning as intended. Personal data is securely held and regularly backed up. Membership details are not divulged to third parties.

Promotional Activity

In 2017-2018, as previously, FCC's promotional activities included its regular publications: *Skyline* and *City Events*, the FCC website and other communications media, its programme of events and the sale of merchandise.

Skyline

Friends continue to show their appreciation for the magazine by writing in, but more important, by submitting interesting articles. Judy Stephenson is enjoying the role of editor, ably disciplined by Carol Stanley, who brings half a lifetime's editing for the BBC to the mix, and by her editorial advisors: Nancy Branson, Brian Evans and Paul Simmons. John Finn has made subtle changes to the design, making it more appealing (we hope you agree). From the May 2019 issue onwards, we are using compostable wrappers instead of polythene, and mindful of costs we have decided to turn to second class postage. Some Friends and several administrators have opted to receive an e-mail version of *Skyline*; there are no plans at all to discontinue the paper version. We still need a replacement for Vanessa Morris selling advertising space.

City Events

City Events, the free listing of services and other events in churches in the City and nearby, continued to be issued regularly, due to the tireless efforts of Trustee John Reynolds, working with Ingrid Slaughter. Thanks to a small group of volunteers, *City Events* was distributed in its hard-copy format to churches, information centres and other locations. *City Events* can also be downloaded from the FCC website.

Website and other communications media

Trustees David Jessop and Alexey Moskvina are responsible for updating the FCC website with new information, merchandise for sale and a gallery of attractive photographs.

FCC's Twitter account now has 1678 followers. It has proved extremely useful in reminding users which churches are open through the Church Watching scheme and alerting them to last-minute changes.

FCC's Eventbrite account is available for purchasing tickets. It has also been used on some occasions, such as lectures, where larger numbers of tickets are on offer and are available to the general public.

Events

Although the Friends of the City Churches are a secular organisation, with members drawn from many faiths and creeds, our events occasionally include special services at St Mary Abchurch, where we are based. In October, many Friends gathered to remember the late Melba Coombs, who launched and guided the FCC Church Watching scheme, which now helps to keep half of the City's working churches open to visitors on weekdays. We held a Harvest Festival in September, with donations to St Mungo's, a charity dedicated to helping the homeless. Our annual celebration of lessons and carols in December was again enhanced by the Vocal Consort of Haberdasher's Aske's Hatcham College (who have been singing with us for 13 years),

and generous donations of mince pies and mulled wine from Sainsbury's and Tesco. We were honoured that the new Bishop of London, The Rt Revd and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE, visited us for the first time in November to lead a moving rededication of the war memorial now mounted within the north wall of the church tower. Special thanks to our chaplain, Fr David Goodburn, and Trustees Nancy Branson, John Reynolds and David Jessop for their good work in organising these special services.

We also warmly thank those vital volunteers who help with refreshments and stewarding at services and lectures. Many hands make light work, so helpers are always welcome.

We enjoyed talks on 'How to be Lord Mayor' by Jill Finch at St Lawrence Jewry (the official church of the Lord Mayor of London and the City of London Corporation), and 'Medieval Church Graffiti' by Crystal Hollis at St Mary Abchurch (which harbours some striking examples).

Our ongoing series pairing City Livery Halls with their associated churches continued with Merchant Taylors' Hall and St Michael Cornhill, and Stationers' Hall and St Martin Ludgate. Although there are many halls yet to see, we will strive to repeat these oversubscribed events. In that spirit, we made our second visit to the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) in Hoxton to see a sample of that remarkable and varied collection, and two more tours of the stunning conservation project at the Painted Hall of the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich. With five dates over 14 months, some 85 members saw the work in progress.

The annual Chairman's Outing this year visited churches in the vicinity of Tenterden, Kent. As a new initiative, we arranged a tour of Coventry Cathedral, with the option of lunch with the group at the cathedral's excellent enterprise café; members found their own way to Coventry, some making a day of it and others staying over for a short break. On the success of this, we are looking into other cathedral cities within an easy journey of London for future outings. Closer to home, we had a fascinating curator's tour of the Roman Dead exhibition at Museum of London Docklands, and an entertaining visit to the City of London Distillery in St Bride's Lane, with tastings of their artisanal gins.

This year's guided walks ranged far and wide in matter and locale, with tours of London Docklands and 'Roman London and the Mitraeum' with Valeria Bellazzi; Fleet Street with Chris Ruff; a walk around Mile End, and the eastern portion of 'Clocks & Sundials of the City' with Judy Stephenson; a second group of medieval churches of the City with Steve Cook; walking the course of the Walbrook with Tony Tucker; 'Wrens Present and Flown' with Lionel Wright; and introductions to Farringdon, Smithfield, Spitalfields, Covent Garden churches and 'The Legal City' with the versatile Jill Finch. We are extremely grateful to all the City Guides who offer their time and expertise to lead walks for the Friends.

Merchandise

FCC continues to benefit from the sale of publications and branded merchandise. New this year was the publication of *Unforgotten: Lives from a Rediscovered City of London War Memorial* by Friends Elaine Edge, Ian Parrott and Mark Williams. This coincided with the repositioning inside the tower of St Mary Abchurch of the war memorial previously hanging in the crypt.

Our support for churches

St Mary Abchurch

Since the FCC opened up St Mary Abchurch seven years ago in May 2013, the building has been available each weekday for private prayer and quiet reflection, and as an important tourist site used by tour groups and individual visitors alike. Many thousands come to the church each year.

Services

Regular weekly communion services have been held during the last year led by our Chaplain, The Revd David Goodburn. Our thanks also to Terry Barber who usually helps with organising the services. The Russian Anglican Chaplaincy uses the church also on the first Sunday of each month. Our resident organist, Ian Shaw, conducts a weekly organ recital.

In 2018 we held two special Evensong services. On 26 September, we celebrated a Harvest Festival Evensong after a gap of several years. We collected money and personal hygiene items for distribution to homeless charities in and near the City.

On 14 November the new Bishop of London, The Rt Rev and Rt Hon Dame Sarah Mullally DBE, led a special service at the church to commemorate 100 years since the ending of the Great War and to dedicate a war memorial which had recently been removed from the crypt and rehung on the inside of the tower wall. The memorial is dedicated to employees of Joseph Travers & Sons from nearby Cannon St who lost their lives in both world wars. Three members of the Friends – Elaine Edge, Ian Parrott and Mark Williams – completed extensive research on those named and published a book to coincide with the special Evensong. The service was very well attended and included members of the British Legion and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The Chamber Choir of St John's Wood Church and our resident organist Ian Shaw provided the music. We are grateful to Trustees David Jessop and John Reynolds for arranging the services and putting together the various brochures.

On 13 December, the Friends held their annual carol service in the church with the vocal consort of Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College. We are grateful to FCC Trustee, Nancy Branson for the work she does to organise this event. Local companies and the Tyndale Society also held carol services at St Mary Abchurch.

On 25 January 2019 The Worshipful Company of Fruiterers held their annual service to install their new master, Cheryl Roux. This is always an important event for St Mary Abchurch as the Fruiterers are the only Livery Company to support the church regularly.

Fabric

The FCC continues to work with Transport for London on preserving the fabric of the church. Tunnelling has now been completed under the church for a new southbound platform for the Northern Line at Bank Station. The protective plastic sheeting has been removed from the windows.

Letting and income generation

The FCC lets out the church for spiritual and secular events and letting income comes from regular use of the church by the AA counselling groups and the choirs which use the building for rehearsals. Included amongst the latter are Orlando Choir, the London Chinese Philharmonic Choir, the Magnificat Choir and Stile Antico.

David Jessop has continued in his role of church manager coordinating and arranging events and the FCC thanks him as a matter of record. Sue-Anne James and Lynette Millson continued with their regular efforts to keep the church clean and in good condition. Janyce Rogers and Jennifer Shipley are also thanked for their hard work in regularly helping with administrative work

Church Watching

Church Watching is the very public face of FCC's role; keeping City churches open for visitors to enjoy the architecture and peaceful environment. This continued successfully in 2018/19, and the number of watched churches rose to twenty.

Watchers' sign-up meetings were moved from St Magnus the Martyr to St Mary-at-Hill and this has proved popular. The arrangement will run until the end of 2019; no additional monies were spent with this transfer.

Brian Evans stepped down as Watching Coordinator and Lesley Thrift assumed responsibility, ensuring Watchers' awareness of FCC's Safeguarding Policy. She is ably assisted by the Rota Manager team: Trevor Bates, Peter Eaton, Steve Welsh, Marion Watson, Judy Guy-Briscoe, Mary Ann Tarver and Amanda Kuijvenhoven.

Several new Watchers joined the scheme during the year and have been briefed by the Coordinator. Some older watchers have relinquished their role due to ill health.

FCC is extremely grateful to Lesley Thrift, the Rota Managers, all Watchers, and to John Reynolds who plays a vital role in checking and arranging the printed rota sheets.

Small Grants Programme

A grant of £561.00 was made during the year reported to St Mary Aldermary

Financial Review

The year reported saw revenue from subscriptions, donations, gift aid and bank interest rise to £34,342 (2018 £27,320). This is despite several members still paying the old rate of £15 those members are being contacted to revise instructions to their bank or issue cheques for the correct.

Events organized through the year also saw an increase in income generation contributing £4,585 (2018 £3931) to the funds of the charity

Shop trading made a net loss for the second year running being largely due to revaluing stock held, it is anticipated that the current year will see us returning to a modest income flow from the sale of merchandise

The costs involved in producing our quarterly Skyline magazine costs have reduced after engaging alternative production assistance.

Not all Churches that are benefitting from the City events circulations are paying the required annual fee of £200.00, in addition printing costs have been steadily increasing, as a result a small loss of £522 has been incurred. The bookkeeper is liaising with members and volunteers to see if he can assist in getting a more disciplined attitude to settlement by some of the parishes.

i Overall result

We thank all who have kindly made donations to FCC, which are very gratefully received. We did not receive any legacies this year. Given that we have little in the way of heritage grant income, all donations and legacies do continue to be vital in sustaining the work of the charity for the long term.

FCC continues to be a going concern and carries unrestricted reserves of some £253,000 Our reserves continue to be used in accordance with our Constitution and Reserves Policy for the prime purpose of preserving and protecting the City churches for public benefit.

This year the deficit by which our general operating expenses exceed our general operating income is reasonably comparable with prior year: the deficit for the General Fund was £6,243 compared with a deficit of 1,664 in the prior year.

After taking account of renovations to St Mary Abchurch and grants to other churches, our combined funds incurred a deficit of £11,479 compared with a deficit of £22,364 in the prior year. This depletion of our reserves is consistent with the Charity Commission's view that non-endowed funds should be spent in accordance with a charity's objectives rather than hoarded.

ii Endowment fund

During the year, in memory of the late Melba Coombs, an anonymous donor has established an endowment in perpetuity to be managed by FCC, and seeded this

with an initial donation of £50,000 yet to be received in the year reported Additional sums contributed will be matched by the founder pound for pound up to a limit of a further £50,000. Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) manage the fund, on a discretionary basis. Income is to be credited to the general fund but available for FCC heritage grants only. The Trustees are aware that they have full responsibility for the fund, and that it is to be applied for its specific purpose, and not co-mingled with the General Fund.

At the year end the fund at cost totaled £1,475 and was valued at £1475 as at present time it was held on deposit. No income was credited to the General Fund.

iii Restricted fund

At the year-end, we continue to have one restricted fund: the NADFAS (now known as 'The Arts Society') City Church Recording Fund. FCC has agreed to administer the income and expense of City church recording groups on behalf of The Arts Society. The Fund does not use FCC monies. The Trustees are aware that they have full responsibility for the Fund, and that it is to be applied for its specific purpose, and not co-mingled with the General Fund. In the event of the Fund becoming depleted, FCC has agreed to contribute up to £500 for each City Church Record completed.

This year there has been almost no movement of the fund.

iv Reserves

The Trustees have reviewed the Reserves Policy and felt no change is necessary to that put in place in the previous year. Our current view of the allocation of reserves carried forward depends largely on determining a more accurate estimate of the electrical renovation costs of St Mary Abchurch, and the amount of this which might be defrayed by the Diocese or by alternative funding. However, it is clear that all reserves now are in effect short- to medium-term in nature.

We continue to maintain an operational Liquidity Reserve of £30,000 (being approximately 6 months' normal operating expenditure) on readily realisable cash deposit (with CCLA), so as to provide for liquidity needs in an emergency.

v Investments

For the General Fund, investment of reserves continues to be by way of deposit balances with 'challenger' banks and building societies. All deposits are with institutions, which are protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

For the Endowment Fund, reserves are invested on a discretionary basis with CCLA.

vi Risk management

The Trustees regularly review the risk profile of FCC and maintain suitable documentation commensurate with the scale and nature of FCC

FCC is not responsible for the maintenance and repair of the structural fabric of St Mary Abchurch, nor its insurance, which is a Diocesan responsibility. FCC works with

the Diocese to ensure consistency and completeness of insurance coverage and regularly reviews Health and Safety matters.

Transport for London (TfL) have kept the Diocese and FCC regularly informed on the progress of the Bank Underground Station Upgrade project, which has included construction of a new tunnel for the Northern line partially under St Mary Abchurch.

FCC had a commitment to pay the Diocese of London rent of £125,000 over a five-year period up to 14 May 2018, which amount was reduced to the extent of agreed capital improvements made to St Mary Abchurch by FCC. As at 14 May 2018, capital deductions were £49,575, leaving rent due of £75, 425. Rental payments had in fact totaled £78, 500 over the five year period, an over payment of £3.075. A further five year agreement is being negotiated with the Diocese currently. In the absence of any agreement at the date of this report, rent is continuing to be paid non- contractually at the rate of £1,500 per month.

Apart from this, FCC has no significant contracts or liabilities, and has no pending litigation or threat of litigation.

vii *Financial controls*

FCC follows guidance issued by the Charity Commission on “Internal Financial Controls”. Our controls are kept under review annually and are designed appropriately for the scale and nature of our operations. Following a revision of bank signatories and the recruitment of a bookkeeper limits have been set regarding the authorization of payments. In addition new accounting software will allow all trustees to have access to all bank transactions rather than having to await a cash position each month. Where payments made are over £1,000 we will be asking the bank to facilitate texts alerts to designated trustees.

Conclusion

As in every year, we offer sincere thanks to all members of FCC, volunteer Trustees and Church Watchers, the contributors to our publications, as well as to guides and lecturers who give so much to make FCC the success it is. We also record our thanks to Karen Hearn, our Administrator, who works tirelessly as the ‘front of house’ face for members, churches, businesses and the general public. Karen’s warm and friendly disposition and her organisational ability are major assets for FCC.

On behalf of FCC, my sincere thanks go to our Archdeacon, the Area Dean and to Martin Sargeant for their continued support throughout the year. Also, I wish to thank the chaplain of St Mary Abchurch, The Reverend David Goodburn, who is constantly helpful to FCC.

Signed

Oliver Leigh-Wood, Chairman of the Trustees
30 April 2019

