

ASK Friends

Information about the future of Kenton church



Photo: Hugh Scudder

*"Don't it always seem to go; you don't
know what you've got till it's gone"*

Joni Mitchell

Who are ASK Friends?

All Saints Kenton (ASK) Friends is a community organisation formed in September 2020 to support the conservation, maintenance, and improvement of the fabric, furnishings and fittings of All Saints Church.



The Current Situation

Kenton church has been closed to the public since October 2019, due to fallen plaster from the south aisle ceiling. The north aisle ceiling also has cracks which need to be inspected and, if necessary, repaired to make the church safe. The cost of repairing both aisle ceilings is circa £40,000. Funds have now reached approximately £30,000 and the contract for repairs to the south aisle will begin on Nov 16. As well as the ceiling repairs, there is also a need to carry out other repairs including on the roof.



The Two Aspects to the Life of the Church

- 1) The spiritual life of the church: Kenton church is part of the “Five Red churches Mission Community” led by Reverend John Williams who is based in Exminster. Kenton has no minister residing in the village. It has a small PCC with no churchwarden and a small congregation.
- 2) The building itself: the church is a large grade 1 listed building which requires a huge amount of money to maintain.

Where Does the Responsibility Lie?

The church building is owned by the C of E, but the maintenance of the building is the responsibility of the PCC (Parochial Church Council), who are considered stewards. To merit a resident minister, Kenton has to contribute to the diocese “Common Fund” with this year’s annual payment set at £16,850.

The burden of this huge financial commitment and focus on maintenance of the building detracts from the spiritual aspect of church life. The financial burden has become too great for the small congregation and there is a real risk that without support, the church will fall into disrepair and close for ever.

In 2019 Kenton church members contributed £12,000, drawing on reserves to contribute to the Common Fund. This year, 2020, it has been unable to contribute anything. The situation has been compounded by Covid-19 as the church has not been able to hold services or fundraise. Until Kenton pays the full amount, it will not be considered for a new resident minister.

In addition, the insurance for the church is around £5000 per annum and the cost of energy £2-3000 per annum, also the responsibility of the congregation.

Why has ASK Friends Formed?

In September, a group (ASK Friends) was formed to spearhead a campaign to support the PCC and save the church.

Many people in Kenton care deeply about the church building which has stood for centuries at the very heart of our village. Of great architectural interest and visited by people from all over the world, it represents our heritage. Regardless of religious belief, we need to preserve it for generations to come.

Who are the trustees?

The four trustees are a mixture of people of faith, no faith and those in-between, who share a love of the building and its place in our local community. We are Jane Perkins (Chair), Robert Rand (Vice-Chair), Ann Bond (Treasurer) and Pik Rawlings (Secretary).



Jane Perkins



Rob Rand



Ann Bond



Pik Rawlings

What are ASK Friends Trying to Do?

Initially, our aim is to support the PCC to raise funds to repair the building so that the church can reopen. Later, we would agree with the PCC how the church could be developed as a community space for a whole variety of activities and events, in addition to church services. Please be assured that we will be working closely with the PCC on future plans for the church building. For the moment we are just trying to raise money for essential repairs, to stop the fabric of the church from deteriorating further.

Can Anyone Join Ask Friends?

We want as many people in the village as possible to get involved - anyone can be an ASK Friend. We are in the process of setting up a bank account and will be inviting people to become supporters. £2.50 (individual) or £5 (household) per year. Please join us!

How Will We Raise the Money?

One of our sources of funding will be through grant applications. However, money can be raised through various fundraising activities and we will of course welcome donations, no matter how small.

We are so grateful to all those who have already donated - £15,000 has been received since the end of August – an amazing response to the situation.

How Can You Help?

There will be many ways to get involved: becoming an ASK Friend, raising awareness, fundraising, tidying the churchyard, donating ...





Please share your ideas with us. We want this to be something with which the whole village can get involved.

Contact Us

email: askfriendsgroupkenton@gmail.com

Like us on Facebook: ASK Friends Group, Kenton

Follow us on Twitter @ASKFriendsGroup

Website: www.kentondevon.org.uk

THANK YOU!