



NEWS LETTER

January 2021

A Very Happy, Peaceful and Healthy,

New Year to all our Volunteers and Supporters

The New Year Update

With all the upset and difficulties we have experienced due to Covid over the past year it is great to be able to give you some positive news about the Trust and the progress we have been able to make. Despite these difficulties there have been many positive achievements.

Project Managers Appointed

Following the news that we had been successful in obtaining the second phase funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund the trustees have appointed our Project Managers for overseeing the tasks involved. Following the procurement process of advertising, shortlisting and interviewing we are delighted to have secured the services of Greenwood Projects Ltd to undertake this vital role. Nicola Dyer and Gemma Davies will be our lead managers. Both were involved in our early stage one bid and come with a wealth of experience on similar projects as well as already having the knowledge and background from being involved with the Trust in the earlier phase. Lovely to have you back with us Nicola and Gemma!

Community Engagement Worker Joins the Team

We have also appointed our full time Community Engagement Worker. We are pleased to confirm Natalie Hanson has been selected and accepted the post. Natalie comes to us not only with a wealth of experience of working with students and community groups but also with a real interest and academic qualifications in history. Natalie will be joining us early in the New Year and will be based in our newly acquired premises in the Riverside shopping centre. Natalie will be working with the Trustees to implement the education programme involving the 27 local schools who have engaged with our scheme, encouraging more community involvement in our activities and organising all the other parts of our community engagement programme over the next two years. Welcome on board Natalie!

Trust Acquires Its Own Premises

Thanks to Chase Commercial Ltd, the Evesham Abbey Trust now has its own office and display space right in the heart of town at a peppercorn rent. We are fortunate in having been allocated shop premises in the Riverside shopping centre close by the Market Square and the Bell Tower entries to the shopping centre. We have enough space to accommodate a school class, displays and artwork as well as working space for our Community Engagement Worker, Natalie, and as a meeting space for Trust gatherings. We have also managed to equip the shop with furniture and equipment free of charge thanks to CollectEco, a charity that recycles office furniture and equipment on behalf of big companies.

Once Natalie is in post we would like it to be open most days so if you would like to volunteer to help man the office let me know. The shop will also provide a great public access point on the work of the Trust.

Thank you all at Chase Commercial, and particularly Julian Meredith, for your interest and support in our venture. Local community support from local commerce and business means a great deal to the Trust.

Archaeology Volunteers

In 2021 we can turn our attention to developing our volunteer archaeology team. As part of the exercise we shall be providing some training sessions in the near future to ensure everyone has the basic skills to be involved with the professional team. We will be starting off on site with five pits as follows: The “ceremonial doorway” in the North wall, establishing the location of the Western wall of the Abbey nave, the 1952 pit by the East wall of the nave, and two pits to establish the line of the Southern wall of the Abbey church. All work on site will be subject to Covid restrictions, as will volunteer involvement. We will keep you posted on developments and try to move forward as soon as conditions allow. We will keep you posted on developments and try to move forward as soon as weather and Covid allows.

If you want to put your name down for the training sessions please let Chris Bloomfield (who sent this newsletter to you) know as soon as possible so we can judge demand and arrange the training sessions appropriately.

Trustees

The Trust has made enormous progress over the past four years. We started with just €100 in the bank, a lot of faith and hope and a firm vision for the future. We have been through ups and downs, worked hard to get all the basics in place and ultimately been rewarded by the faith shown in us by NHLF, Historic England, the local Councils and countless individual and funding bodies.

During these times we have relied on the variety of skills and interests of our Trustees and committee members all of whom have made their own distinctive contribution to the work of the Trust. We welcome two new members to the Trust committee, Mike Taylor, who is representing the ground work volunteers, and Mick Hurst who is bringing his experience and skills from organising the Battle of Evesham event to the Trust.

Inevitably members of the trust leave from time to time, for personal or work related reasons so this is a good time to recognise the contribution of Sue Ablett and Gill Pawson and Galen Bartholomew. All have left during 2020 for personal reasons after having made their own distinctive contributions to the work of the Trust over the past few years. Sue and Gill however wish to stay in touch and offer their voluntary services where and when they can. Thank you all for all for your valued work on behalf of the Trust.

The Trust now has vacancies for several new Trustees, including the need for an honorary treasurer. All we require from anyone is an interest and enthusiasm in what the Trust is undertaking and a modicum of practical common sense together with a little time each month to help us guide the project through the next year or so.

The Trust meets once a month for about two and a half hours to formulate plans and policy, agree contracts and supervise the work of the Project Managers and the Community Engagement Worker. If you would like to consider joining us give me a ring on 01386 442910 for a chat.

Garage Arts Workshop Mural

Some of you may have recently visited the site and seen the tremendous mural that the Garage Arts Workshop in Evesham has painted for us to cover the side of our storage container. This piece of artwork was painted on four 8ft x 4ft ply panels donated by Build Base. Taking themes of the local natural environment and marrying them with religious symbolism the resulting piece of work has been much admired. If you have not seen it make the effort, it will be worthwhile!

Thank you Garage Arts for your contribution and welcome to our community effort to restore the Abbey remains. We hope in the long term to preserve the artwork for permanent exhibition as part of the project.

Site Works

In the run up to Christmas progress was made by installing the access track to the Abbey site across the Christmas tree field off Abbey Road. This track will ultimately provide a vehicle route on to the site by crossing Little Abbey Lane close by the ex-police houses and through the southern boundary wall. The final breakthrough will be made once the main conservation works contract has been awarded and on site restoration works start. A big thank you to the land tenant, Gary Andrews, for his kind cooperation in getting this vital link in place.

We have also ordered the supply of water from Severn Trent Water and hopefully this will be installed in the new year. This provision also involved negotiations with Historic England to ensure that we met agreed scheduled ancient monument requirements and regulations.

Auction, Christmas Card and Other Fund Raising Success

Many of you will be aware of the two fund raising features over December. The live auction that had been planned for the Autumn inevitably became a casualty of the Covid pandemic but despite this difficulty the format was changed to an online offering which still attracted enough support to enable over £1000 to be raised towards our cause. Our thanks to Trustees Sue Ablett and Gill Pawson for their efforts in this event and the many donors who offered items for sale.

Over the Christmas period we also printed our Trust Christmas Cards for sale both as a fund raiser and to raise the profile of the Trust. We have to thank Joyce Doyle again for allowing us to use one of her paintings of Evesham as the picture for the large card, and what a splendid reaction our cards provoked! With two thousand sold we have certainly had an impact on card sales in Evesham. Trustee Gill Pawson also produced a smaller card decorated with painted images of the cloister arch by a local artist which also sold well and helped towards our profit of over £700. Thank you all for your efforts, painters, packers and sellers..... didn't we do well!

We are very grateful to our local housing association, Rooftop Housing, for their donation of £500 towards the work of the Trust. Rooftop has a great history of supporting local good causes and their support means a great deal in demonstrating local grass roots involvement in the Abbey project. Thank you Rooftop!

We are also delighted that the Harris Charitable Fund has awarded the Trust a £5,000 grant towards our work. Donations of this magnitude are particularly significant at a time when funding streams have been significantly impacted by the Covid epidemic and many charitable foundations are concentrating support to Covid relief appeals.

Many thanks from all the trustees for your contribution and support in 2020 and very best wishes for a happy, safe and healthy 2021

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