

## **THE FRIENDS OF ELMSTONE AND PRESTON CHURCHES**

### **REPORT FOR PARISH COUNCIL AGM**

**APRIL 2025**

Since the arrival of our new Vicar, Revd Caroline, and an enormous amount of work towards proposed improvements at St. Mildred's Church, it has been an extremely busy 12 months.

#### **2024**

##### **WORK AT ST. MILDRED'S**

The Faculty for work at St. Mildred's Church was granted and grant applications were able to go ahead. We thank those who have kindly given donations. We hoped it will be possible to have all the work carried out last year, in several stages. This was to include the installation of a toilet, kitchen and rain water drainage which it is hoped, over time, will considerably reduce the dampness in the Church.

##### **INSURANCES**

The Friends continued to support St. Mildred's and Elmstone Church in many ways, including contributing £2,000 towards the insurance of both Churches which currently costs a total of just over £3,700 a year.

##### **HAPPY HOURS AT ELMSTONE CHURCH**

These monthly events continued at 6.30 pm on the first Friday of the month, in the Church or on Church Meadow, weather permitting.

#### **JUNE**

##### **VILLAGE FETE AT ELMSTONE**

We would like to thank everyone who helped with the village fete. It was a lot of work for the few who were very involved on the day, but well worth the effort. It was a success and it is hoped everyone who came along had a good time, helped in a large part by the weather being on our side.

We raised a grand total of £1167.65, which meant £583.82 to The Children's Burns Trust and the same amount to our Churches' funds.

#### **JULY**

##### **Cream Teas at St. Mildred's**

These were enjoyed by many people, outside, in the lovely weather. The wedding flowers inside looked wonderful and added so much to the afternoon. Apart from being a great social event, just over £200 was raised for funds. Thank you to everyone who helped to make this event special.

#### **AUGUST**

##### **"The Launch" at Preston Village Hall**

Tim Offord and David Kelly gave an excellent presentation of the planned work at St. Mildred's. It was hoped that work would start in the near future.

##### **Talk on Bishop Jenner, St. Mildred's**

Our thanks to Tim Offord who gave a brilliant illustrated Talk, which was very well supported and good feedback was received.

Thanks also to Penny Cornet and helpers for the refreshments, which helped to make it such an enjoyable occasion.

A total of just over £355 was raised.

## **SEPTEMBER**

### **THANK YOU**

Many thanks to the Bates family who very kindly cleared the gullies at St. Mildred's, not only benefitting the Church building but making it look so much tidier too.

### **OPEN CHURCH AT ELMSTONE**

The late Summer Open Church was enjoyed by those who braved the rain for a cup of tea with scones and cake. A small amount was raised which included sales of apples and plums. Thank you to those who helped and supported the event.

### **RIDE AND STRIDE**

Although this is not a "Friends event", we would like to thank those who organised the event, welcomed visitors to St. Mildred's, Elmstone and Stourmouth Churches, and those who participated. A proportion of the sponsorship raised comes back directly to our local Churches. Why not think about taking part this year?

## **OCTOBER**

### **HARVEST FESTIVAL AT ELMSTONE CHURCH**

Thank you to everyone who helped to decorate the Church and provided such a wonderful selection of fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as other goods, all of which were gratefully received by Age Concern, Sandwich. Thank you also to the Bates for kindly taking everything there.

## **NOVEMBER**

### **REMEMBRANCE SERVICE**

Due to the closure of St. Mildred's, for building works, the Service was taken by Anne Talbert at Elmstone Church instead. The names of the fallen were read out by Ivor Sneller and a wreath was laid by Chris Anderson. The collection was taken for the Royal British Legion.

### **PRESTON VILLAGE CHRISTMAS FAIR**

The Friends had a stall at this community event, selling Christmas and other cards. It was good to have a presence there. After the sale table cost, £15 was made for funds. Thank you to those who helped run the stall and supporters. Cards were then available at Elmstone Church. We are planning to have a new range of Christmas cards available later this year.

## **DECEMBER**

### **LIGHTING OF THE CHRISTMAS TREES**

The tree at Elmstone was lit after the service at the beginning of December. A tree was also placed outside St. Mildred's. Our thanks to everyone who helped with the purchase and installation of these, which added a welcome touch to Christmas.

### **WORK AT ST. MILDRED'S**

We were pleased to report that the external guttering and drainage work had been completed. The flashing to the Bell Tower was due to commence shortly and the inside plastering and painting on the wall next to the Belfry wall to follow as soon as possible afterwards. The rest of the internal work is currently on hold.

### **CHURCH YARD BASH - ST. MILDRED'S**

A start was made on tidying the Church Yard. Thank you to those who participated.

### **CHRISTMAS FAMILY CRIB SERVICE**

This Service, taken jointly by Revd Caroline and Anne Talbert, was held at Elmstone Church. Penny Cornet's Daughter in Law, Olivia, spoke to us about her Charity, Educate for Change in Uganda, which we support. A collection was taken to enable the children to have a Christmas party and a present each. This amounted to £150. Children had dressed up in their sparkliest party wear and took part in the Blessing of the Crib. Stars with messages on were added to the Christmas tree by the pulpit. Candles were lit on the windowsills. Seasonal refreshments were served afterwards.

### **CHRISTMAS CONCERT AT ELMSTONE CHURCH**

We were delighted to be able to have the Lees Court Ensemble who gave us a wonderful concert comprising Christmas music and carols. We had a full Church which was beautifully decorated and lit with candles which continued along the path leading to the south door. There were also lit Christmas trees inside and outside the Church. Mulled wine and mince pies were served after the Concert. £300 was made for The Friends. Thank you to everyone who organised the concert, helped with the decorations and supported the event.

### **CHRISTMAS EVE**

The well attended late night candlelit communion Service at Elmstone Church was taken by Revd Caroline. Thank you to all the flower arrangers for their time.

### **2025**

### **JANUARY**

### **CHRISTINGLE FAMILY SERVICE AT ELMSTONE CHURCH**

The Church was again lit with candles and, with the Christmas trees as well, made for an atmospheric service led by Anne Talbert.

### **WORK AT ST. MILDRED'S**

The repair to the lamp post in the Church Yard had now been completed. It was anticipated, subject to suitable weather conditions, that the outstanding repair work and plastering required to the Nave/Belfry wall would be carried out at the end of February. Whilst a scaffolding tower would be in use, it was expected to be able to use St. Mildred's during such time. We were therefore pleased to confirm that the Church would be in use again from February. It is very regrettable that the work for a toilet and kitchen facilities has not been able to go ahead, due to access issues, after so much time and effort had been put in by members of the Friends' Committee. However, it is hoped to be able to look at some alternative plans in the future.

### **FEBRUARY**

### **RE-OPENING OF ST. MILDRED'S**

The well supported Family Service, with Holy Communion, taken by Revd Caroline and Anne Talbert, was held at St. Mildred's for the first time in many months. The Church was decorated with pretty Spring flowers and bulbs. During the Service we had an update from Penny Cornet's Grand Daughter, regarding the Charity, Educate for Change, in Uganda. The children thanked us for their very enjoyable Christmas Party and were delighted with the new bedding bought for them, all of which was made possible through our donations made at the Crib Service at Elmstone Church in December. Refreshments were served after the Service.

**MARCH****ST. MILDRED'S CHURCH YARD**

Following the Church Yard Bash in December, we had a further event when much more work was done to tidy graves and trim trees. Thank you to everyone who helped. Work is ongoing in the Memorial Garden, and levelling of the soil and reseeding on the south side of the Church Yard. We are very grateful to Richard Kemp for his help with this.

**MOTHERING SUNDAY, ST. MILDRED'S**

This Family Service, taken by Anne Talbert, was well supported. Flowering plants were given out to all ladies attending and also taken to those unable to do so afterwards. Tea, coffee and home made cakes were served after the Service.

**APRIL****PALM SUNDAY**

This Family Service was taken by Anne Talbert and Barbara Way. Palm crosses were given out to everyone during the Service.

**EASTER SUNDAY, ELMSTONE CHURCH**

The Communion Service, to which everyone is welcome, will be at 10.30 am. Refreshments will be served afterwards.

**EASTER LILIES**

These will be arranged in Elmstone Church for the Sunday Service. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to these.

**ELMSTONE HAPPY HOURS**

The next date is 2 May, on Church Meadow, weather permitting, otherwise in the Church. Everyone is welcome, from 6.30 pm.

**ELMSTONE VILLAGE FETE, SUNDAY 11 MAY, 2.30 - 4.30 pm**

If you haven't already made a note of the date, please do so now. The Friends will be serving teas/cakes in the Church during this event. If you can help in any way, please let Janette Nickols know on 01227 722077 or 07803 086584.

**OTHER EVENTS**

We hope to be able to hold some other fundraising events during the year. If you have any ideas or can help in any way, please let a Church Warden or Friends' Committee Member know.

**SERVICES**

Our normal service pattern is:-

1<sup>st</sup> Sunday - Holy Communion, 10.30 am, Elmstone Church

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday - Family Service, 10.30 am, St. Mildred's, with Communion alternate months

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday - Holy Communion, 10.30 am, Elmstone Church

**Refreshments are usually served after Services**

In addition, in the Summer months:- Most 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays - Evensong, 6.30 pm, All Saints, Stourmouth

**THANK YOU**

Finally, a thank you to everyone who supports and helps at events and in other ways. This is very important to us and we look forward to your continued help this year.

**Elizabeth Timms, Secretary, The Friends of Elmstone and Preston Churches**