

Great Yarmouth Minster Preservation Trust
Chairman's Report 2014/2015

During the year, Collen Walker resigned as a trustee during the year due to the pressure of county council commitments.

The Trust continues to be a member of the Waveney and Blyth Arts and agreed to be a contributor to the Greater Yarmouth Tourism Business Improvement District.

The Trust has had an active fund-raising year. Margaret King at Brahams, in Market Row, has continued to sell tickets, for which the Trust is grateful. However, she has now retired and the Trust is using the Tourism Information Centre on Marine Parade a ticket outlet (less a small commission). However, it remains difficult to sell tickets for events and I would urge all trustees to help in this and also to support the events.

A two-month long exhibition on "Great Yarmouth and the Sea" by the Great Yarmouth Local History and Archaeological Society was hosted by the Minster. This raised funds (£274) and increased the footfall in the Minster. Many visited, especially those on holiday.

The Trust organised the following events:

Dixiemix Jazz Band raised £575 (much reduced on previous years' takings)

Umgawa Kagooga 8-piece Ska Band (only attracted 49 attendees). Raised £250 (thanks to a donation from Colin Smith of £250 – the band's fee).

For the first time a series of six Sunday afternoon concerts (with a slice of cake and a cuppa in the ticket price of £5) were organised. The concerts comprised different styles of music: Gorleston Community Choir, Wherry Brass Band, Mollyhawks shanty singers, Gary Winters and Hayley Moss, Kitty Collins (songs from the 1940s and 50s) and the curate Grant Bolton-Debbage with Bill Kibby. The total sum raised was £1,767. Cakes were made by Sara Smith, Sandra McCullough and Molly Davies.

The Blessing of the Nets with a herring supper was enhanced this year by the inclusion of two local schools. The congregation increased this year to c180. The herrings were cooked once again by the Burlington Hotel. The total raised was £978

The Christmas Tree and Crib Festival attracted c60 exhibits with 572 adults paying the £2 entry fee. The profit from the festival came to £2029.

The highlight of the year was Merry Opera's performance of Messiah by 12 accomplished singers. Sponsorship of £550 was obtained from six councillors' ward budgets. In spite of an audience of 135 a loss of £456 resulted.

The Third Celebrations Fair was cancelled as we failed to attract enough retailers.

A licensed bar has been run at many minster secular events

The Trust has received good publicity with the help of the Yarmouth Mercury, Radio Norfolk, the Norwich Diocesan Magazine and the Advertiser.

It also has a website (www.sncpt.co.uk) and a Facebook page entitled "Great Yarmouth Minster Preservation Trust". Both are updated regularly.

The Chairman has performed numerous church and graveyard tours and talks for various groups with the fees being donated to the Trust. Colin Smith has also donated his many lecture fees to the Trust, as has Hugh Sturzaker and Tony Smith.

The web-site: www.easyfundraising.org.uk has produced some finance. This site gives a percentage of the cost of purchases made through the site to our Trust. Most of the major firms (eg John Lewis, ebay, Amazon etc) contribute. It is a painless way of raising finance.

It is pleasing to note that progress has been made on the re-ordering of the Minster. A consultant is producing a plan for heating the whole Minster and the organ will be, hopefully, restored in 2016.

The Trust acknowledges the excellent secretarial support of Robin Hodds and Karline Smith and their colleagues and the work of Michael Muskett (treasurer). Also, Margaret King, for helping to sell tickets through Brahams.

The Chairman thanks the members and trustees for their support over the year, especially those, who have supported and helped at Trust events and sold tickets. However, there have been occasions when more support has been needed and the few trust volunteers at events have had difficulty in maintaining standards and have had to rely on people outside the Trust.

Paul Davies – November 2015