

THE FRIENDS OF ABINGDON

Abingdon's Civic Society



Dear Friends

It has been a very busy few months both for the Trustees and for me as new Chairman. We have undertaken a review of our activities and how we work together, so agreeing a new vision and how we organise ourselves. We have set out some goals for the future and a new structure which I will report on in the next newsletter.

We have also planned an exciting and enlarged programme of events for 2016: the preliminary programme is overleaf. One of the aims of the programme is to encourage a much wider range of people to be aware of and experience our wonderful Abbey Buildings. We want people in Abingdon to know the history of these great buildings which are at the heart of the town's existence.

In September we helped to arrange a most successful Community Networking Event for leaders of community groups and elected members. The purpose of this event was to generate ideas about how we could capture the interest of townspeople and engage and involve them in the place where they live - to help people feel proud of Abingdon and encourage more visitors to our beautiful, historic town. The event was generously hosted by our Vice President and Deputy Lieutenant, Felicity Dick. A range of ideas emerged, the main ones being a summer festival season in 2017 and a new initiative focussed on improving tourism in Abingdon. Both of these ideas are being vigorously developed.

We have also had a very busy few months at Community FreeSpace, our unit in the Abbey Shopping Centre, where a wide range of

community and interest groups have publicised their activities. It is very ably managed by volunteer Paul Johnstone, to whom we are most grateful. This is therefore a good opportunity for me to encourage other members to act as volunteers. We have a wide range of needs and opportunities in 2016 for members to engage more with the Society and use any spare time to help out with the Society's increasingly varied activities. Please contact our Secretary to find out more.

Finally, I am sure that you will all join me in giving a huge thank you and best wishes to our long serving Curator Jenny Berrell, who is taking a well-deserved retirement in the Spring. We are therefore been seeking a replacement (details are on the web site) and we would be grateful to members if they could use their networks to promote this opportunity to anyone that they think may be suitable.

We will distribute a fuller newsletter in the New Year.

Season's Greetings to you all

Bryan Brown



Reminder: subscriptions for 2016 are due now. If you pay by Standing Order please check that you are paying the correct rate: £8 single, £12 couple. If you pay by cheque please send your payment by the end of January to our Membership Secretary, Barbara Beach, 21 Gardiner Close, Abingdon OX14 3YA.



Friends of Abingdon – provisional events programme for 2016

Friday 15 and Saturday 16 April

Abingdon Fashion Show – based on 'Stravinsky's Rite of Spring'

Sunday 17 April Wedding Fair

Saturday 23 April

Clubs and Societies Day (organised by Abingdon TC, hosted by the Friends)

Wednesday 4 May

Talk on "The Mary Rose" by Stephen Griffiths – precursor to July visit (see below)

Late May (date to be confirmed)

Jazz Festival

Monday 30 May Bank Holiday Walks

Monday 27 June

Friends of Abingdon AGM and talk on "The History of Salters' Steamers" by Simon Wenham

Thursday 30 June

Concert: Abingdon Town Band

July (date to be confirmed)

Visit to Royal Dockyard, Portsmouth (joint visit with Abingdon Museum Friends)

Saturday 9 July

Concert and story-telling for young children with Ben Heaney

Sunday 17 July

"Music for a Summers Evening" with Abbey Strings

Tuesday July 25th

Talks on the work of Abingdon Street Pastors and the Good Neighbour Scheme

Thursday 25 August

"Spymaster": activities for 8 - 12 year olds

August (date to be confirmed)

Friends' Annual Lunch

Saturday 10 /Sunday 11 September

Heritage Open Days

Saturday 1 Oct

Concert – Classical Wind Octet

Friday 9 - Sunday 11 December

Abingdon Beer Festival



Unicorn Theatre events

(NB these are events known so far - there are many more in the pipeline)

Thursday 7 January

Music at the Unicorn: Lucy Kitt

15 – 23 January

Abingdon Drama Club pantomime: "Santa in Space"

Thursday 11 February

Music at the Unicorn: Charlie Dore

Thursday 3 March

Music at the Unicorn: The Willows

Wednesday 16 – Saturday 19 March

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf - Edward Albee
Abingdon Drama Club

Wednesday 6 – Saturday 9 April

Terry Pratchett: The Shakespeare Codex – Studio Theatre Club

Thursday 14 April

Music at the Unicorn: Megan Henwood

Thursday 5 May

Music at the Unicorn: Reg Meuross

Monday 6 – Saturday 11 June

ODN Drama Festival of one-act plays

Thursday 16 June

Music at the Unicorn: Jess Vincent

Wednesday 20 – Sunday 23 July

The Dover Road by A.A. Milne – Studio Theatre Club

Thursday 1 September

Music at the Unicorn: Ninebarrow

Thursday 3 November

Music at the Unicorn: Charlotte Campbell

Thursday 1 December

Music at the Unicorn: Martha Tilston

For more information about Friends of Abingdon events see future newsletters and our website. For other Unicorn events see <http://www.abingdonabbey-unicorntheatre.org.uk/> or the organiser's website

