



The Friends of  
Holland House

Friends of Holland House,  
c/o Holland House,  
Main Street,  
Crothorne, Pershore,  
Worcestershire  
WR10 3NB



Dear Friends,

The **AGM** of the Friends was held at 4.30pm on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> October in the Conference Room at Holland House. Here is a summary of the proceedings.

There were 27 people present, including 4 Committee members, two Trustees and the Warden. There were 29 apologies.

Hayward Osborne, the Chair of the Trustees opened with a prayer and the Vice Chair, Kathleen Bentley welcomed all. Kathleen announced that she was chairing the meeting, due to Brenda Morton's illness and explained that Brenda had decided to step down as Chair.

Our **secretary**, Wendy, reported that, during the year, we have lost a number of members due to death, moving, or for financial reasons. The current membership is 130. As our **Treasurer** was absent, our Secretary explained that the main expenditure items for the House this year were new Conference Chairs, the replacement of some of the Garden chairs and tables and a contribution to the Jazz Evening. Although the income from Friends memberships has declined slightly compared to the previous year, 60% of Friends contribute more than the standard membership subscription of £20 and there is still a good balance available for the Friends to support the House. Wendy informed all that Tarn, our current Treasurer is stepping down at this AGM and is being sent a card and token with thanks from the Friends.

The **Vice Chair**, Kathleen thanked the committee, Helen the warden and the House staff for their support and the Trustees particularly for attending committee members to bring up to date news. She also thanked the secretary, Wendy for keeping the Friends informed as well as herself.

Kathleen reported that in June, the committee worked with the Staff to host a Jazz Evening which was a perfect evening for sharing with friends and family and enjoying the music provided by Adam and his Group. She thanked committee member Emily for making all the arrangements for that event.

Kathleen stressed that the Friends support the House by membership, by providing funding for the provision of such items as new furniture and also giving further support by their prayers, by taking part in events and by volunteering. Training is booked for the afternoon of **9th January 2025** for those wishing to volunteer as receptionists and kitchen assistants.

Kathleen noted that the theme for the Quiet Garden Days this year was 'Flowers and plants'. Kathleen extended thanks all who have led these days, to those who have celebrated the Holy Communion, and to those who have contributed to these days by sharing their thoughts and reflections. Next year the Quiet Garden Days will run from May to September on the

3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month. April will need a separate arrangement as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday falls in Holy Week.

Finally, Kathleen added that the time had come for her to stand down as Vice Chair. She was presented with a card and flowers from the Friends.

Hayward Osborne introduced himself as Chair of the **Trustees** and outlined that the other Trustees appointed by the Friends are Sue Perry and Revd Alma Organ. Derek Valentine has been re-appointed as a Diocesan Trustee as well as Robert Jones, proposed as a new Trustee and Paul West's three-year Bishop's appointment has been extended. The Trust is appointing a seventh Trustee, Rachel Hextall, a methodist minister. The Trustees are supported by advisers on topics such as HR and Payroll, Health and Safety and for the Building fabric, Michael Hodges.

Hayward also stated that Helen, the new Warden is working hard as an ambassador for the House, spreading the reputation far and wide. He commented that the Finances are sound, although costs for events have increased. There are expected to be some expenses on the Building in the future.

Hayward noted how grateful he is to the Friends, for financial support, volunteering, running the Quiet Garden Days and spreading the word about the House. Hayward expressed his concern about Brenda and her long illness and thanked Kathleen for her support as Vice Chair over the last year.

The **Warden**, Helen reported that it had been a very busy year with more people coming through the House, both new and returning Friends. There has been a major restructuring with the staff involving a lot of work, resulting in a flatter organisation. Another key emphasis this year has been work to become compliant with legislation in areas such as health and safety, fire etc. Promotion of the use of the Den, both for retreat purposes and as a B and B has been undertaken

The programme put on by the House has met with mixed responses. Some weekends have been very full, and one or two have had to be cancelled. Helen noted that the House is currently experimenting with some weekend retreats which incorporate a free-standing Saturday on the same theme and with the same leader.

Helen noted that the Quiet Days have been well attended, especially the Quiet Garden Days put on by the Friends. Next year the programme will include some practical workshops, a monthly evening meditation, sessions with the Saints, some lectures and a liberation theology reading group.

With the help of the Lady Peel Legacy Trust, Holland House has commissioned an icon of the visitation which will form a focus of the House's reflective and educational work from Advent 2025 in tandem with the West Midlands Racial Justice Unit.

Morning Prayer and a weekly Eucharist continue to have regular if often small congregations. They are appreciated by visiting guests as well as some local people.

Volunteers to work in the Holland House Garden are being sought via Pershore College, the Pershore Volunteer bureau and The Friends.

A new Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer were appointed as well as two new committee members.

**Friends Committee:** Chair: Canon Dr Julie Fay, Vice Chair: Emily Miller. Secretary: Wendy Berry, Treasurer: Maureen Foxall. Other members: Mrs Kay Mason, Nicky Garrad, Sue Oliver.

**Friends' Trustees:** Revd Alma Organ, Mrs Sue Perry, Archdeacon Hayward Osborne.

**Diocesan Trustees:** Derek Valentine, Paul West, Rachel Hextall, 1 Vacancy.

The AGM concluded with the Grace at 5.30 pm.

Before the AGM, a Quiet Day retreat on the theme of Friendship led by Canon Ruth Wintle was held. After the AGM, a dinner was given with a light hearted talk about Hildegard of Bingen by Helen, the Warden.

**Date of next AGM: Monday 13th October 2025.**

With all good wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Fay', is centered on the page. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Julie Fay (Chair of Friends of Holland House)**