**Annual Parish Meeting 3rd April 2024**

**Martyn Drury, Chair Friends of St Laurence Church**

**Role of Friends: To provide financial support to secure the fabric of the church building and its boundary. Maintaining this ancient building for the benefit of the community is a never-ending process – it’s not been here for over 800 years without some occasional TLC!**

**In past year we have raised £21,000 including: £2,000 from SODC, £5,800 from Milly and Paul’s Big Bash in September, £7,000 from OHCT, £1,700 from the Gospel Choir night that drew an audience of over 120 , membership subs, gift aid and so on.**

**Total raised to date is now over £100,000 since the Friends started out in 1990.**

**Since re-forming in 2020, some £50,000 has been spent on conservation works including:**

* **Belfry roof beam**
* **North transept crack repairs**
* **Chancel East wall masonry repairs**
* **Repairs to the collapsing boundary wall**
* **Preaching cross repointing**
* **Some roof repairs**
* **South dormer window repairs completed in Sept 2023**

**Next phase of work includes, at a cost of some £42,000:**

* **Thomas Blackall tomb dismantle and rebuild**
* **Tower masonry repair trial**
* **More transept masonry and drainage channel repairs**

**Subject to the last bit of funding being found, this work is planned to start in early May and take some eight weeks to complete. I’m sure we all look forward to the removal of the unsightly orange safety netting around the tomb - especially those on the Green South who overlook the churchyard.**

**Beyond that, we will continue to fundraise from charitable trusts, by holding village fundraising events such as the Big Bash and concerts in the church. The work in front of us will become even more expensive as we tackle some big-ticket items, namely to:**

* **fully repair the tower masonry – likely to be upwards of £150,000**
* **survey the main roof with a possible view to it needing to be retiled within the next five years – rough estimate, £100,000.**

**Also,**

* **refurbish the clock, louvres and tower roof.**
* **do more repairs on the boundary walls.**

**Hopefully this and more will ensure that we pass the church on in good working order to those who follow. THANK YOU**