



# Friends of Launde

Charity No: 519042

## Easter Newsletter 2024



### ***A message from our Chairman***



Dear Friends,

I took over as Chair of the Friends Committee just over 10 years ago, at the AGM 2013.

Our main commitment as Friends is to raise funds for Launde Abbey. We immediately set about raising money for the lift to the chapel. It was a major job as it meant a lot of work to be done to make room for the lift. Anyway we raised near enough £100,000 for the project. This included a generous donation of £25,000.

We have had various fund raisers like the Bridge tournaments we held two years running. And in recent years the afternoon Friends Cream teas - last year's was held in the pouring rain! Amazingly it was a good turn out – it just shows the commitment there is to Launde by the long standing Friends.

And of course we have had two big fundraising events at Noseley, in 2021 and 2022, with the generous support of Robert and Sue Wilkinson, the owners of Noseley. There is now major restoration work being done to Noseley Hall, but we are hoping to have another Grand Gala evening when the work is finished.

With the money we have raised, along with your subscriptions and donations we have been able to give grants to Launde for much needed equipment, such as the purchase of a big shredder for the gardens (£10,000), new tables, and parasols for the courtyard (£2050), £1,550 for a repair to the organ, and we have agreed in principal a grant of £5000 towards their new website,

We are very pleased to have a new Treasurer, Alison Collis, taking over from Sarah Longhill who was such a reliable hardworking colleague.

You may have seen that Launde Abbey is creating a group of 'Companions' as part of their wider community. We would like to reassure all our Friends that we will continue to keep in contact with you all through our quarterly Newsletters. This will contain information regarding grants we have made or are about to make in the future to Launde Abbey Trust and also the social and fundraising activities that we have planned.

Your subscriptions, donations and support over the years have enabled us to provide Launde Abbey with much needed help and so thank you to you all.

*Brian*



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### Introducing Hazel Aucken: One of our Trustees

Hello Friends! I joined the Friends of Launde after moving into the Abbey back in October 2015. I lived in the staff flat as a resident member of the Launde team until August 2019, when I took up a curacy post on the other side of Leicestershire. I had arrived from London Diocese after an unsuccessful application for ordination training, and Launde helped restore my confidence as well as giving me invaluable experience which I thoroughly enjoyed. I still claim that I had the best 'underview' of the Abbey for I was part of the chapel, reception and gardening teams, helped out in the finance office and occasionally housekeeping and dining room. I even got to cook in the kitchen – but only for myself and family when the Abbey was closed for Christmas!

I got to know many of the Friends over the years as I often hosted the Literary Lunches, helped out with Brian's Concerts and the Christmas Carol Services as well as some of the residential and day retreats. I also ended up managing all the volunteers for the 900th Anniversary Weekend, including the Saturday 'Fun and Play' afternoon, which thanks in no small part to the Friends was a great success!

Leaving Launde was a wrench and I still miss the view from the flat over the chapel roof, but as a curate with Leicester Diocese was able to return periodically for training days, Quiet Days and gardening retreats – once we'd got past lockdown. Towards the end of my curacy, it became clear that none of the clergy vacancies were a good fit for me, and as my mother was approaching 90 and living near Chelmsford, that seemed an obvious place to look.

Since Christmas 2022, I have been the acting vicar of four rural churches halfway between Chelmsford and Harlow. It's a couple of hours drive from Launde, but I was keen to retain my link. Consequently, I joined the Friends' Committee in October 2022. It's a lovely way not only of continuing my support for Launde, but also of ensuring I make time to visit Launde at least three times a year and keep up with both friends and Friends.

*Hazel*

#### **Membership Secretary:**

[j.zientek12@btinternet.com](mailto:j.zientek12@btinternet.com)

#### **Friends of Launde Newsletter:**

[friendsoflaunde1@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoflaunde1@gmail.com)

#### **All donations are gratefully received:**

The Friends of Launde

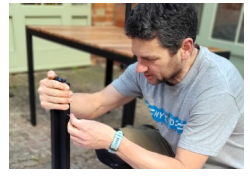
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Hello, I am Alison Collis, a trustee and the treasurer of Friends. One of the joys of holding both of these positions is that if there is a committee meeting I can plan my day so that I arrive for Midday Prayer and hopefully the weather will be kind enough to sit for a short while in the Quiet Garden. I am also the editor of our Newsletter.



Launde Abbey recently purchased the tables/parasols that Friends are reimbursing in the sum of a grant of £2050.

Thanks to Launde for the pics for you to enjoy re the assembly and also the gathering last Saturday of the Harley Davidson Chapter.

The weather was kind for our last meeting in mid Feb. As I arrived I could hear the garden shredder running and after Midday Prayer Hazel and I walked up the Snowdrop Walk. What a difference it has made as the walkway is now covered in large wood chippings from the shredder, grant funded by Friends, and of course there was the wonder of the snowdrops.



### Brian's Thank You Luncheon Party on 27th April in Leicestershire

Friends' members are invited to join in a 'thank you' in recognition of Rev Canon Brian's 10 years as chair of the Friends of Launde.

All RSVPs please by 16th April 2024 to: [madeleine.v.wang@gmail.com](mailto:madeleine.v.wang@gmail.com) after which further details will be provided.