

# *The Friends of St. Michael's Cyfeillion Eglwys Sant Mihangel*

*Newsletter – October 2023*

## *From the Chair*

We have had a very strange couple of years since the Covid Pandemic, but think we are now “back on track” as regards our visitor numbers and finances.

We have already exceeded 12,000 visitors this year and are likely to achieve at least the same as last year (13,700) by the end of 2023. Our income this year is already £1k more than the whole of 2022 although some of this will be attributable to the increased prices of several items of our merchandise. We are looking at ways to maximise our income, by both Gift Aid (GA) and the GADS scheme (Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme) although it seems that we cannot claim GADS without claiming GA. We withdrew our original Gift Aid envelopes before the Pandemic but will be restoring them early in the new year. We introduced a Card payment machine last year, and this has proved highly popular.

We will need to look at further restoration work on the building very soon. The main Nave roof is now showing signs of decay and is likely to cost in excess of £60k to restore. We shall of course be using the original “thick” slates, and we have a friendly roofing contractor who has a stock of similar slates, as used previously on the Vestry & north transept roofs. There is obviously going to be damage to the ceiling of the nave when this work is done, so there would be added costs there.

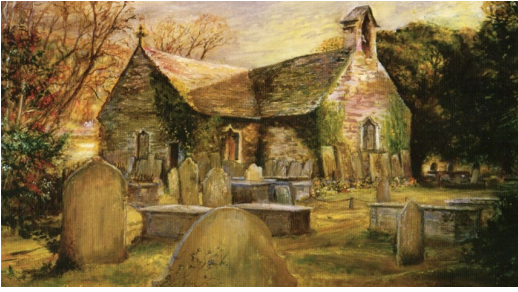
We shall inevitably have to secure the services of an Architect and make a grant application through CADW or the Heritage Lottery Fund. Our present funds stand at around £30k.

We still hope to set up the Churchyard trail, highlighting the several graves of some well-known (and lesser known) artists who founded the artists' colony in Betws-y-Coed. There is also much flora and fauna in the churchyard, some unique to St Michael's. The yew trees may be in need of further work and attention, as is also the old Lytch Gate and the river boundary wall of the churchyard. Whilst these are not the direct responsibility of St Michael's (we only have responsibility for the actual church building itself) we hope we can make a contribution to the works on these aspects.

Our Flower Festival this year was as always very successful, raising £583. A wonderful achievement and thanks to all who contributed and helped to make it such a success. Special thanks go to our main organiser, Kathy Laws for her time and dedication.



St Michael's Day (29<sup>th</sup> September) was celebrated as usual by a Holy Eucharist service led by the vicar of Betws-y-Coed, Rev Stuart Elliott. This was followed by a short concert given by Cass Meurig, a Christian singer/songwriter and fiddle and crwth player,



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who lives in Bala. This was well received by the small audience present.

The forthcoming Candle-light Carol Service on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> December will be the final event of the year. This always attracts a good congregation, and by holding it between Christmas and New Year, means we can attract the visitors to the village and area.

We have been very remiss for several years in not holding any Annual General Meetings of The Friends of St Michael's. I am delighted at long last to be able to rectify that issue and confirm that we shall be holding our AGM, (on-line by Zoom) on **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 7pm**. We hope that all our members will be able to log on. Details and the Agenda are elsewhere in this Newsletter. If you are able to attend, please email us and we will send you the link to enable you to log in and join us.

Our current Treasurer, Jon Richmond, who was also the founding Chair of The Friends, will be standing down from his role as Treasurer, after 15 years' service. He will however retain his role as a Trustee of the St Michael's Betws-y-Coed Trust, and we hope also to keep his seat on the Committee of the Friends. We thank him for his sterling work and for looking after our finances so well.

The comments left by our visitors in the Visitors Book often make interesting reading! Some of this year's quotes are shown below, but a vast number all say that they appreciate the peace and tranquillity they find within the walls of the church.

Many of our members have been with us since The Friends was founded in 1994 and we are especially grateful to them for their continued

support and interest. We have likewise gained several new members over the last few years, and we thank them for their interest and encouragement also. However, we do still need more new members, so I would encourage you all to try to recruit at least one new person to our gathering. We can send you the application form which gives full details etc.

Membership fees are £15pa (£25 for two persons in the same household) payable ideally by Bank Standing Order. We would appreciate that those who are still paying the old rate of £10 please amend their Standing Order to reflect the above figures. Regrettably, there are still a few. If we do not have your current email address, again please let us have that, to enable us to reduce our postage costs.

Just email me at [friends@stmichaelsbyc.org.uk](mailto:friends@stmichaelsbyc.org.uk)

or our Membership Secretary, Kathy Laws at [kathy.laws@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:kathy.laws@hotmail.co.uk)

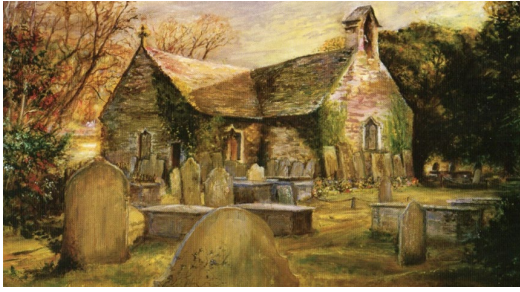
Dates of our events for 2024 are shown elsewhere in this Newsletter and we hope that you will be able to visit us and see at firsthand what has been achieved over the last 30 years of our existence.

Our dedicated team work hard to both promote and restore the church. We have much still to do, but together we can achieve our goals.

May I take this opportunity of thanking you all for your continued support and wish you and your families a very happy and blessed Christmas and all prosperity in the coming new year.

*Jim Boughton*

Chair



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## ***Extracts from the Visitors Book for 2023***

Charming and beautiful little church.

Great information panels.

Beautiful little church. It is so peaceful.

Beautifully restored and cared for. A serene place.

Thank you for preserving this sacred place.

Calm church gives a huge sense of peace & light to all.

So peaceful.

Peaceful retreat.

What a gem – beautiful and peaceful little chapel.

Tranquil and peaceful.

Makes you feel calm in today's troubled world.

Impressive in its simplicity.

A wonderful sanctuary to take a moment.

It is a privilege to rest in the presence of God in a building where generations past have done the same.

So calm and peaceful.

Music so prayerful playing in the background.

A tranquil sacred place.

Beautiful building – you can feel the Lord.

Serene – loved the music.

Soothed my troubled soul.

Welcoming – even though no-one here.

Stunning church – full of rich history.

Beautiful and spiritual place. Thanks be to God.

Love the simplicity of this beautiful little church.

Peaceful sanctuary.

## ***Dates for 2023 / 2024***

### **Christmas Fayre**

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December

St Mary's Church Hall 11am – 4pm

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### **Candle-light Carol Service**

6pm Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> December 2023

### **Flower Festival**

Friday – Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Open 10am – 5pm daily

If you would like to contribute a display

please contact Kathy Laws

kathy.laws@hotmail.co.uk

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### **St Michael's Day**

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Eucharist service 11am (to be confirmed)

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### **Candle-light Carol Service**

6pm Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> December 2024



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## *The Friends of St Michael's Betws-y-Coed Annual General Meeting*

**Notice of the AGM**  
to be held on

**Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023**  
**Via Zoom at 7pm.**

### *Agenda*

Welcome by Chair – Jim Boughton  
Apologies for absence  
Report by Chair  
Adoption of Accounts for years ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022  
Elections: Chair - Secretary - Membership Secretary - Treasurer  
Any Other Business

Please email Jim Boughton at [friends@stmichaelsbyc.org.uk](mailto:friends@stmichaelsbyc.org.uk)  
for log on details to enable you to join us for this meeting

We encourage ALL of our members to join us for this meeting.

### **Contacts**

#### **Membership/ Newsletter/ Flower Festival:**

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#### **Web Site:**

<http://www.stmichaelsbyc.org.uk>

You can renew your membership, (or become a member!) and download a standing order form or catch up on the latest news via our web site.

#### **Facebook:**

Come and tell us about your thoughts on Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/stmichaelsbetws>