

Summer and
Autumn 2019

Friends of Holland House

The Friends of Holland House support the ministry of the House, its



Trustees, Warden and Staff through counsel, prayer, financial support and practical assistance

A Positive Report

**Don't forget
to book!
Friends'
Quiet Day,
AGM and
Dinner
Monday
October
14th**

Each year the Trustees of Holland House make a report and financial statement to the Charity Commission and here we share some of the report which has just been submitted.

“We open this year’s review of activities by sharing a comment from our guest book, written in October 2018:

“This place has changed my life and my happiness for the better. A new start.”

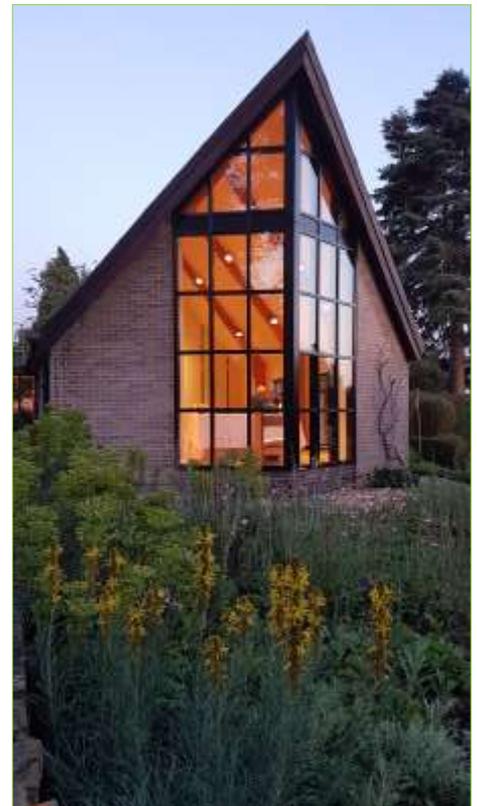
If we had to summarise our recent activities in a single sentence, it would be difficult to do better than this, as this guest’s comment articulates all that we hope to achieve - the end point of a trajectory that our activities are working towards. There are many other supportive comments written in the guest book, and the House enjoys a constant stream of thanks and good wishes, including through social media, but this one particular comment is an eloquent summary of our work.

Our mission is to support the Church, promote harmony within creation, and proclaim the gospel through a way of operating that is open, welcoming and affirming to all - after the example of Christ himself.”

The report goes on to describe the varied range of activities taking place in the house, the sustained income and successful Anniversary Appeal, and the dedication and hard work of the staff – all helping Holland House to achieve the aims set out in the 5-year plan for 2015-2020 – and ends....

“Looking to the future, we intend to develop a new five year Strategic Plan for 2020 - 2025. This will seek to build upon the achievements of the last five years, maintaining and deepening our traditional business whilst developing our reach into new markets that fit with our vision of being a Christian house of welcome living in harmony with creation. “

The report to the Charity Commission is available from the House and at the Friends' AGM



**The Friends'
Weekend 2020 will be
Friday May 1st —
Sunday May 3rd.**

This is still in the planning stages—if you would like to be involved in planning and preparing for the weekend you would be **very welcome**—email friends@hollandhouse.org or leave a message at the House

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(Note that the Crophorne Walkabout will be held on Sunday 24th and Monday 25th May 2020)

What on earth are the *Friends* for?

I hope that you are not offended by the headline – at least it has caught your attention and I hope you will read on....

I have been a Friend of Holland House for more than twenty five years and during that time have come to appreciate the support that the Friends have given to Holland House through donations, time, friendship to staff, prayer and creativity. I have made friends with others who enjoy the House and the things **that happen there, and then worked with them on the Friends' Committee and** now as a Trustee. I have spent many days and nights in the House and learnt more about its history as a Retreat Centre and been challenged by the experiences of retreat, worship, discussion and teaching I have shared in.



Throughout much of its history as a Retreat Centre Holland House has had Friends – indeed the Friends of Holland House were formed to enable the House to continue and develop its work sixty years ago. It was through the dedication of the Friends that the House was leased to a newly formed Trust in 1975 . Importantly the Trust included three Trustees nominated by the Friends in addition to three nominated by the Bishop and Diocese of Worcester. This ensured the independence of the Trust from the Diocese although of course the Trust, Holland House and the Diocese have always worked closely together. This independence means that the House is not primarily a Diocesan Retreat House but has the opportunity to work with and involve people of other denominations and faiths and those of no faith.

The Friends continue to have the privilege of nominating three Trustees as well as collecting and managing their own funds, appointing a committee to act on their behalf and receiving regular news of the House. Over the years Friends have been closely involved in activities within the House, voluntarily supporting the staff and helping to organise activities. For many over the years the House has become a place of significance in their own life journey.

Sixty years is a long time in the history of any place and people come and go, ideas change and develop, needs are expressed and met differently, concerns and priorities are challenged but Holland House continues to provide a space where people can come and be supported, inspired and renewed, and experience Christian hospitality - and Holland House continues to need Friends!

How can we best be Friends to Holland House in a changed and changing situation? The House is now financially quite secure, breaking even over the last few years, there are bookings for a number of years ahead, a wide range of groups are using the House for their day or residential retreats, meetings and activities, the kitchen has a reputation for delicious food and is building a local following for afternoon teas, much of the House has been renovated and is in good repair and last year the Chapel refurbishment was **completed (with significant support from Friends' donations).**

Alongside this a survey I conducted of Friends four years ago showed that of those who responded 81% were then aged over 65, 51% aged over 75 and none were under 40 years. About half had been Friends for (often much) more than ten years. Most were Anglican, lived in Worcestershire and had attended at least one event during the past year. Since 2014 a number of Friends have died or are no longer able to come to events at the House. Small numbers of new Friends have been recruited. Each year it has proved more difficult to find people willing to serve on the Committee and much of the administration and communication is now undertaken by a very small group of people. That said the Friends have successfully organised four **Friends' Weekends and enabled the House to be open and serving teas during the Crophorne Walkabout** and some have supported the 17/18/19 club to raise funds for the Chapel refurbishment. A number of activities usually attended by Friends continue, although reduced in numbers, in particular the Quiet Garden

What next for the *Friends*?

Days and the Friendly Lunches. However much of the day to day work of the House is carried out without the awareness of or active support of most Friends.

In my view (and this is a personal view based on experience) it is no longer clear quite what the Friends are for – yes money is being raised and small amounts each year provide additions to the House but the House is now reasonably financially stable, less likely to suffer from cash flow problems and can usually respond to emergency equipment or building failures. No doubt staff feel supported by prayer and interest from Friends and others. Some older Friends are no longer physically able to take part in the activities of the House, and sometimes for them, and others, the changes in culture mean that the House no longer holds the same significance for them as it did in earlier days. We have not been able to recruit many new, younger Friends during the past few years – in part, I suggest, because we are not quite sure what we are recruiting them to be involved in.

And yet Holland House needs Friends – the staff, the Trustees **and** the people who come and enjoy the House and gardens, who value the spirit and ethos of the place, who find solace, refreshment, challenge and friendship here, as people have through the years – they **all** need to know that there are people who are **especially Friends of Holland House, who know the place well, who share in its ‘ministry’, who are concerned for the future, who are willing to respond to needs, to share in celebrations, to be part of the process of envisioning that future.** The Trust depends on there being a wider group of deeply involved people who positively want it to continue as those Friends did 60 years ago and can identify people who can serve as Trustees.

Somehow I don't think we really have that at present – our committee members are carrying on because we feel we should – **we can't quite let it go, our numbers are dwindling and that is disheartening. We sometimes** feel out of touch with the everyday life of the House, we want to help but we are not sure how best to do that.

I suggest that we give ourselves a bit of timeout, an opportunity to explore different ways of being 'Friends', an opportunity to just spend time together at Holland House, maybe for some an opportunity to say 'you know what – **this is no longer for me**' - and we ask any Friends and others who feel the House is special to them to join us in that exploration - **no pressure.....**

Email me, talk to me – **let's see where the Spirit takes us!**



Liz Ross – liz.ross48@btinternet.com

PS I guess we will still need to have a committee and the occasional committee meeting and elect a new Chair – **and, of course, organise another Friends' Weekend!!!**

On Sunday June 23rd Holland House hosted over 60 people from five **different faith communities. We built a “village of Faiths” with tents** and gazebos, and shared the treasures of each Faith tradition.

Accompanied by solo singing, chanting and choir music, and visited by the Deputy Lieutenant of Worcestershire (representing the Queen) the afternoon culminated in a wonderful vegan lunch created by the three fabulous Holland House Chefs. Among the voices of division around the world, this event shone as an example of people of Faith loving and respecting one another, our differences and our similarities.

On November 11th Holland House will be hosting a Worcestershire Interfaith Day focusing on the environment and climate change with representatives from nine local faith groups and particularly those involved and interested in these issues. If you are interested in attending please contact Ian Spencer at Holland House.

Welcoming all faiths at Holland House





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Be a Friend to Holland House

- Come along to programme events
- Wear one of the Friends of Holland House badges (available from Reception) when you are in the House and tell others about us
- Sign up for a poster to display in your church or organisation
- Volunteer at Holland House - see the Friends' pages on the website
- Remember the staff and all who visit Holland House in your prayers

Contact Friends of Holland House via Holland House or friends@hollandhouse.org

See the latest news of the Friends on the House website:

www.hollandhouse.org

Click on [Friends of Holland House](#) for the Friends' pages

AUTUMN AT HOLLAND HOUSE

SEPTEMBER Mon 2nd 4pm—Fri 6th 2pm	CARM Calligraphy with Sunita Auger and Judy Dinnen, Residential Retreat, £395 fully inclusive
Monday 9th September	Bishop Robert Patterson in conversation with..... John Stroyan, Bishop of Warwick. Hot supper served at 6.30pm followed by conversation - £25
Wednesday 11th September	Richard Rohr Meditation, 'Going down is going up—the path of descent, ' 9.30am—4pm £38 including lunch and refreshments,
Thursday 12th September	Quiet Garden Day, hosted by the Friends, 10am—4pm, £12 (including refreshments) + £12 for a pre-booked two course lunch
Friday 13th September	Marianne Rankin—'Many Religions or None? The teachings of Bede Griffiths and Jiddu Krishnamurti, 9.30am—4pm, £38 including lunch and refreshments
Tuesday 24th September	Yoga for Christians, 9.30am—4pm, £38 including lunch and refreshments
OCTOBER Monday 14th October	Friends Quiet Day 10am—4pm, followed by AGM at 5pm and Dinner at 6.30pm
Fri 18th—Sun 20th	John Bell Retreat — 'The Greening of God'. Residential Retreat from 6pm Friday, fully inclusive, £275, currently fully booked
Monday 21st October	Bishop Robert Patterson in conversation with..... David Urquhart—Bishop of Birmingham. Hot supper served at 6.30pm followed by conversation - £25
Tuesday 22nd October	Praying Differently - for folk looking for a richer experience of prayer. Small group up to four people. 9.30am—4pm, £40 including lunch and refreshments
NOVEMBER Fri 1st—Sunday 3rd	Neil Douglas-Klotz — 'Treasures of the Hidden Gospel', Residential retreat from 4pm Friday, £265 fully inclusive
Thursday 7th November	Richard Rohr Meditation, 'Image of God—let God be who God is,' 9.30am—4pm £38 including lunch and refreshments,
Tuesday 19th November	Yoga for Christians, 9.30am—4pm, £38 including lunch and refreshments
Monday 25th November	Bishop Robert Patterson in conversation with..... Rowan Williams— former Archbishop of Canterbury. Hot supper served at 6.30pm followed by conversation - £25
DECEMBER Fri 6th — Mon 9th	The 2019 Richard Rohr Retreat: The Universal Christ, Residential Retreat from Friday 12 noon to Monday 2pm, £295 fully inclusive

To book at Holland House:

Book online at www.hollandhouse.org

Email enquiries@hollandhouse.org

Phone 01386 860330