

ALL SAINTS SEEK NEW FRIENDS

Pocklington's All Saints church is launching a new venture to help safeguard the future and promote the heritage of the town's only Grade 1 listed building.

The Friends of All Saints Church Pocklington has been set up to help with the task of maintaining, protecting and developing this historic building. It costs nearly £300 a day to keep the Church open and despite major fundraising the Church losses are predicted to approach £30 a day this year.

The church's impressive medieval structure, embellished by some unique memorials and carvings, is a building of both local and national importance.

The Friends want to increase the general awareness of its heritage and help secure the future of Pocklington's most iconic structure. The Friends also hope in future to encourage and help family history research.

David Stanton, who chaired the group that has set up the Friends organisation, said: "There are lots of past and present Pocklington residents that may be interested in what we are trying to do."

"The church works really hard to maintain the building; but I hope the Friends organisation will have a wider appeal to local people who may not necessarily want to be a regular member of the congregation, or individuals who have left the area, or have family connections. Anyone who wants to see the All Saints preserved, or wants to maintain their links with the town, is welcome to join us."

"Wealthy citizens and ordinary townsfolk from past centuries have left the Pocklington with this rich legacy. Now it is our turn to ensure that it can be enjoyed by future generations."

Everyone is welcome to become a friend of All Saints: local residents, businesses, visitors and anyone overseas who also feels a special affinity to Pocklington Church through religious, cultural or historic links. A brochure giving details about Friends of All Saints is being distributed throughout the town, and a website with more information and how to join has been set up on www.pocklingtonchurchfriends.org.uk.

Pocklington and District Local History Group member, Phil Gilbank, who helped produce the Friends' brochure added: "All Saints is Pocklington's most important building and is a storehouse of the area's history and stories of events and people going right back to Saxon times."

"It's visited by thousands of people from across the world, and I hope we can look at ways to make their visits more informed and meaningful. It would also be great if anyone who is interested in researching or promoting the history of All Saints could get involved."

Individual membership of the Friends of All Saints can be from as little as £1 a month, and there are also facilities for family, corporate, overseas and life members.

All members of the Friends will receive a copy of a 'Guide to Pocklington Church', a special certificate of membership, have the opportunity to have a guided tour detailing the history of the Church, receive regular Friends' newsletters and invitations to events, and have their name in a book of members held in the church.

Further information about the Friends and how to join is available from the website or by contacting David Stanton on 01759 302073.