The Friends of Hellingly Church

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Friends Newsletter **November 2026**

How Soon is Too Soon for a Christmas Greeting?

I am writing this before Halloween, Guy Fawkes Night and Remembrance Sunday but still the Christmas offers are appearing in the shops and the Bailey's is down to £12.00! Of course, planning is necessary, the complex light shows in places like Wakehurst and some of the National Trust properties must be on the drawing board more than twelve months ahead.

I remember as a boy going with my father to Charles Arkoll's Christmas show around June or July. Charles Arkoll was a grocery wholesaler in Maidstone and the Christmas show was the time for the local shopkeepers to view the year's festive goods and place their pre-orders for delivery in November. The show was held in a hotel or function room which was completely covered in Christmas decorations, a second Christmas in mid-summer.

So that brings us nicely round to planning and plans for our Sixth Christmas Tree Festival on 11th, 12th and 13th December are well under way. This is a wonderful event where Hellingly Church is filled with trees beautifully decorated by local businesses, associations and even families. The aroma of mulled wine wafts from the kitchen and the hum of conversation blends with the Christmas music from the speakers. Would you like a tree to decorate? At just £45 complete with twinkly lights you can add your own style, the tree is yours to take away after the event.

If decorating trees is not your thing, how about taking a turn in welcoming visitors, helping with the catering or selling a few raffle tickets? The smiles on people's faces as they consider which is their favourite tree and the comments like 'This really is the start of my Christmas' are a joy to be part of.

Last year over 500 people visited the festival and the event raised £2,350 towards protecting and preserving our beautiful building.

If you would like a tree or to be involved in the festival, please contact either Pip or Teresa on the numbers below.

We will circulate this after Remembrance, so providing that as you read this it is not 'too soon', let me be the first to wish you a joyful Christmas.

Best regards

Pip, For the Friends of Hellingly Church.

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