

The Friends of St Matthew's Church

Leavenheath



The Friends

The Friends were formed in July 2019 as a charity independent of the church for the principal purpose of conserving the church building and its setting for future generations. The background to its formation was a real risk that Leavenheath's parish church might be compelled to close unless the building could be put into weather tight condition.

If, as is our objective, the building can be kept open, it will be able continue to fulfil its important roles as a place of celebration, worship and quiet reflection for all; as a building of historic significance in

the evolution of Leavenheath as a vibrant community; as an asset for the village as a whole; and, by no means least, as the home of the village war memorials and other memorials created in memory of residents and those that they have loved.

Our first task is to raise funds to ensure that the roof becomes watertight. In the longer term the Friends, as well as helping to keep the fabric of the building in good repair, hope to support improvements to the building and its facilities, so as to enable it to be used more widely by the whole community.

The Church Building and its History

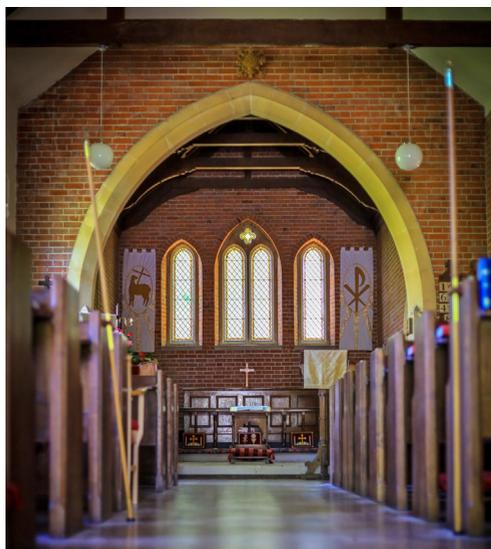
The church building, which is partly hidden from view, is located close to the east side of Sudbury Road (A134) in a dip roughly half way between the High Road and The Hare and Hounds.

It is a simple but most interesting Victorian building dating from 1835 and consecrated in 1836. It was built before Leavenheath became a separate ecclesiastical parish in 1863. As such it was initially a chapel of ease intended to make it more convenient for the then inhabitants of Leavenheath to attend services locally, rather than travelling to Stoke by Nayland. By 1843 it had its own perpetual curate, the Revd. Harold Curry, who is said to have been a fiery evangelical, and who lived in what is now The Old Vicarage.

The original building, designed by George Russell French, a London architect, was a simple hall of red brick with buttresses, with a porch protecting its west door and a small chancel at the east end. Its plain glass windows were in lancet shape and in Tudor style with dripstones. It cost £400–95 in 1835 prices raised by public subscription.

In 1863 Leavenheath became an ecclesiastical parish, and the Revd. W G Bryan became its first Vicar.

By the 1880s the building was in need of repair and had become too small for the numbers attending services, the 1851 census showing that by then services were attended by up to 200 worshippers. In 1882/3 the then Vicar, the Revd. H J Wattisford presided over the repair and enlargement of the building to a design by Satchell and Edwards, London architects. It was funded by voluntary subscription. The enlargement added three elements all constructed in red brick. First, a larger chancel was built at the east end with a vestry to its south both covered by a new roof. Second, a south aisle with its own gabled roof was added. Third, at the west end of the new aisle a square bell tower was built with an additional large door under a heavy arch. The tower has a pyramidal roof capped by a mini- spire, now finished in lead, surmounted by a stone cross. There are bell openings in the tower and a single bell, cast in 1801 for a Swedish ship. Natural light for the new extensions is provided by lancet windows with tinted glass.



Inside the Church



The inside of the church has a warm and intimate feel, and its condition and furnishings reflect the devoted care of many volunteers over the decades. Apart from the north side of the nave and its roof, which are plastered and painted, the interior is red brick. Where the southern aisle was added, there is an arcade on octagonal brick piers matching the chancel arch.

At the east end of the arcade an arch leads into a small chapel which may have been designed to site an organ, and which opens off the chancel. The chancel fittings are simple and made in wood. There is a small octagonal font at the west end, which dates from the original building. The church is now heated thanks to the village's generous response to an appeal in the 1990s.

Find the Friends on Facebook:
[facebook.com/FoSMLLeavenheath](https://www.facebook.com/FoSMLLeavenheath)



Memorials

The church includes a number of memorials, of which the most notable are the memorials to the fallen in the world wars, and the stained glass window above the west door. A special, additional and unusual feature of the first war memorial to the thirteen men from the village who were killed in that war are seven wooden crosses of the kind that were used then to mark temporarily their battlefield graves. Each carries the name of the serviceman lost and, poignantly, a photograph of him in uniform. The original wooden crosses would often have been returned to the families concerned.

The stunningly beautiful memorial window, which replaced the original plain window, was designed by Mike Courtney from Kelvedon, and was installed and dedicated in 2013. It was funded solely by donations from individuals living in or connected to Leavenheath in memory of those they loved.

Our aims

The Friends want to keep our church building open and alive for everyone of whatever faith or none:

For celebrations

For love

For family and friends

For worship

For remembrance

For reflection

For music

For new life

For all seasons

For everyone

Officers

Christopher Whybrow (Chair)

Ann Mayers (Vice-Chair)

Peter Irving (Treasurer)

The Revd Mark Woodrow (ex officio)

Jill Dunkley (Minute secretary)

Alice Curden

Jennie Jenkins

Jane Munro

Jim Bond (PCC representative)

Andrew Gowen (Independent Examiner)



Contacts

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01026 263492

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How you can help

To meet our first task of putting the building into watertight condition the latest estimates indicate that we need to raise about £25,000. In the longer term more will be needed. We have already been promised significant support but need more help.

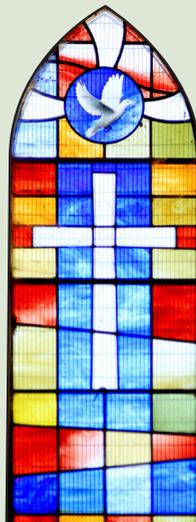
If you share our aims, we hope that you can help in one or more of these ways;

First, by becoming a Friend. Membership is open to all over 18, and to those of any faith or none. To raise funds we are inviting you to subscribe a minimum of £15 per year, or £25 for a joint membership. It would make it easier for us if you were able to subscribe by standing order, a form for which accompanies this leaflet. The standing order may be cancelled at any time. If you become a member we will keep you in touch with what we are doing, and we will invite you to social and other events, including the AGM, arranged by the Friends. An application form accompanies this leaflet.

Or secondly by making a donation by cash or cheque to be sent to the Treasurer (address above) or by bank transfer to the Friends of St Matthews, Lloyds Bank, a/c no 80357060, sort code 30 98 97.

If you are a taxpayer and willing to gift aid your subscription or donation it would be of additional benefit to us because it would add 25% without costing you more. A gift aid declaration (which again can be cancelled at any time by notice to the Treasurer) accompanies this leaflet.

All contributions will be warmly appreciated.



The memorial window, designed by Mike Courtney in 2013.

Become a Friend of St Matthew's



Friends of St Matthew's Application Form

The minimum subscription is £15 per year, or £25 for a joint membership. If you would like, and are able, to pay more, it would be most welcome.

Payment can be made by cheque and bank transfer or you can set up a standing order by filling in the form overleaf.

If you are a UK taxpayer, please fill in the Gift Aid declaration part of the form. Gift Aid is reclaimed by the charity from the tax you pay for the current tax year. Your address is needed to identify you as a current UK taxpayer.

Gift Aid will boost your donation by 25p of Gift Aid for every £1 you donate.

Please return your completed application form to:

Peter Irving
Orchard Farm
Leavenheath
CO6 4PF

fosmleavenheath@gmail.com

The Friends of St. Matthews holds details of its members solely for the purpose of maintaining its records and for communicating with its members. This information is not shared with, or given to, any other organization or person.

I/we wish to become a member/s of the Friends of St. Matthews.

Title/s

First Name/s

Surname.....

Address

.....

.....

Postcode

Telephone

Email

I/we will pay a subscription of:

- £15 a year
- £25 a year (joint membership)
- My/our choice

Payment Method (please tick)

- I enclose a cheque for
£
- I would like to set up a standing order (*please fill in the standing order form overleaf*).
- I would like to make a one off bank transfer (*please refer to the bank details in the standing order form overleaf*).

If you are a UK taxpayer, please also fill in the Gift Aid section of the form.

Gift Aid Declaration

I want to Gift Aid my donation of:

£.....

and any donations I make in the future or have made in the past 4 years to the Friends of St Matthew's Church.

I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and /or Capital Gains Tax in the current tax year than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Signature

Date.....

Name

Address

.....

.....

Postcode.....

Please notify the charity if you:

-want to cancel this declaration

-change your name or home address

-no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains

If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

Standing Order Form

Name and full address of your bank:

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Please pay to Lloyds Bank
for the credit of Friends of St Matthew's
Account No. 80357060
Sort Code 30 98 97

On the day of, 20.....

the sum of £.....

and annually thereafter until cancelled
in writing by me.

Signature.....

Date.....

Title.....Forename

Surname.....

Address

.....

.....

Postcode

Please debit my account:

Acc. No:

Sort Code:.....

Ref No (office use only):

This form should not be sent to your bank. Please send to the Treasurer of the Friends of St Matthew's (address overleaf).