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A Letter from the Friends of St Nicholas Church

February, 2019.

Dear Friends,

An Appeal to Help with a Major Refurbishment and Revitalisation Project

The Friends of St Nicholas Stevenage Trust is a registered charity; it has the task of raising funds to assist the Parochial Church Council in repairing and maintaining the historic fabric of this Grade 1 listed building as well as making improvements to enable the church to serve the community both now and in the future.

St Nicholas Church is the oldest building in Stevenage and one of the oldest in Hertfordshire. Located in a conservation area and bordering Forster Country, the 900-year-old tower of St Nicholas Church Stevenage, with its 14th-century spire, has been a major local landmark for much of the history of Stevenage. Unsurprisingly, this beautiful church is a leading choice for family and community occasions. Many of your friends and neighbours, and perhaps you and members of your own family, have used St Nicholas Church for weddings, baptisms or funerals. All this makes it a well-loved local amenity, used by about 8,000 people a year.

The Project

The church now needs major maintenance work and the opportunity is being taken to make some modifications to the church to enhance the building's utility to all members of the local community, whether church members or simply families living in Stevenage.

Plans have been drawn up in consultation with the congregation and a number of heritage bodies to ensure that the beauty and historical importance of the building and the needs of the congregation are both taken into account. The plans have received the full backing of the Diocesan Advisory Committee, and have now received the Faculty permissions to do the work. Detailed tender documents are being drawn up with the work due to start just after Easter. The work includes...

- A new stone floor throughout the nave and chancel, replacing the dangerously worn stones and the woodblocks.
- A new energy efficient lighting system to current standards for a public building.
- Upgrading the audio-visual systems to cover all parts of the worship space.
- A new internal layout, re-siting many of the wooden screens to create a larger and more flexible main worship space, an east end chapel for small gatherings and private prayer, a crèche and a dedicated area for musicians.
- An underfloor heating system to provide cost-effective heating throughout the church, ensuring the church is always warm and welcoming.



- Replacing the in-fill of the arches between the church and the parish room with glazed panels, to provide greater light into the main body of the church. At the lower level these will be folding glass doors to increase the seating space for occasions when the church is past capacity.
- A new floor above the parish room, providing much-needed meeting space for Sunday children's groups and for other activities during the week.
- Associated works: to improve the facilities in the bell tower, create a welcome area, increase mingling space after services, and improve storage space.

The cost of work for this project has been estimated at almost £860,000, but approximately £650,000 of the funding required has been secured already. Alongside efforts from within the church and applications to other grant giving bodies, the Friends are keen to play their part. So with this project in mind, and to assist with fund raising, the Friends of St Nicholas Stevenage has been reactivated. We invite you to join us in this task.

If you would like to make a contribution towards this project or join in with the ongoing work of the Friends of St Nicholas, details of how you might go about this are on the attached leaflet.

Further fundraising events will be announced in due course, but in the mean time please do get in touch with us if you would like more information.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Gordon

Peter Gordon,
Chairman of the Trustees of the Friends of St Nicholas.
Charity No 1006512