

In 2018, we launched the Friends in order to help care for our wonderful church at the heart of Tanworth in Arden and the surrounding villages.

The church receives no funds other than from voluntary contributions.

The purpose of the Friends is to engage all those people who appreciate the church, have special memories of its place in their lives and who wish to help preserve it for future generations.

The church of St Mary Magdalene is the most conspicuous landmark in Tanworth in Arden at the centre of the village and seen for miles around. Its architecture covers a number of periods including Transitional, Decorated Gothic, Perpendicular, Georgian and Victorian.

Originally a chapel in 1138, the church as we know it today was largely built between 1330 and 1340 using local grey sandstone. The church has especially fine windows with an ornate pattern of tracery. The spire was heightened in 1720 and surmounted with the current weathercock.

The large chancel has contributed to the church's reputation as **'the village cathedral'**. The 'weeping chancel' fails to align with the nave but unusually inclines to the south rather than to the north.

There are many notable features in the church including the beautiful stained glass windows, the monuments and memorial tablets, the 14th century chest likely to have been used for storing longbows and the records of births, marriages and deaths dating back to 1558.

The first recorded burial in the churchyard dates back to 1558 and the earliest standing headstone is dated 1762. There are three war graves maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Three local men who achieved international fame are buried here: **Nick Drake**, the singer-songwriter;
Mike Hailwood
, the motorcyclist; and
'Gentleman' Jack Hood
, the boxer.

The Friends is currently looking to attract its first 100 members and has already raised £3,000 as a result of its support for an opera in the church that raised funds primarily for MASIC a new charity that is aiming to reduce birth injuries for new mothers.

The funds that are raised by the Friends will enable the church to be maintained for future generations and we are currently considering proposals from the church for potential uses of the money that has already been raised and for future income that is expected from the many people who have indicated a willingness to get behind Friends and support it financially.

Membership of the Friends of St Mary Magdalene is as follows:

£25 for 2018/19
£250 for life membership

Cheques should be made payable to St Mary Magdalene Church (Friends) and sent to sent to The Membership Secretary, Friends of St Mary Magdalene, c/o The Vicarage, Tanworth in Arden, B94 5EB.

We will post regular news of how we are getting on with Friends initiatives and how the money we raise is being used.

