

SUSSEX HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST

Crouchers
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January 2018

Dear Organisers,

The 2017 Ride & Stride Event

In my annual report I not only want to let you know how we got on last year, and tell you what our aims are for this year, but also to thank you for all your help and support that makes the Ride & Stride event so successful. Without your support we would lose the major source of funding for the Trust that enables us to give the much needed grants to the historic churches of Sussex.

I obviously want you to know this information as early as possible, and I have therefore decided this year to ask the webmaster to send this annual report by email to the Area Organisers now, and ask them to forward it to all their Parish and Local organisers as soon as possible. He will also put it on our website. We are keen to get your ideas and suggestions as to how we can encourage more churches and people to take part, thus increasing the amount we raise. The award ceremony will be held at St Peter's Church, Upper Beeding, BN44 3HP, on Saturday 10 March 2018 at 2 pm, when the Lord Lieutenant of West Sussex, Mrs Susan Pyper, will present the trophies and certificates. I do not have all your contacts details to send you personal invitations, but you will be most welcome to attend, and I hope as many as possible will come. It will be an ideal opportunity to learn more about the Trust, and to meet with other organisers and exchange ideas and suggestions. However, for catering purposes I need to know the numbers attending, so do please let me know if you are coming. My contact details are at the end of this report, and I look forward to meeting you and hearing your views.

Last year about 310 adults and children from 118 churches across Sussex took part in the Ride & Stride event and we raised about £48,000 including Gift Aid. This is an excellent effort by all those who took part and also from all the organisers and volunteers who worked so hard behind the scenes to make this annual event so successful. Excluding donations and Gift Aid, the average amount raised per church was £320. Thus if we were able to encourage even just one more church to take part in all of our 25 Areas, we would raise an additional £8,000. Can we set this as our target for 2018 please? To help, the webmaster will be sending emails before the event to remind all churches of when the Ride & Stride will take place, and encourage them to tell their congregations, and also remind them that 50% of the sponsorship will be returned to their church for them to spend as they wish, which always pleases treasurers!

We have always said that there are many ways in which you can take part in the Ride & Stride and you may recall last year I mentioned a note I received from St Mary's, Goring, that they had organised a virtual cycle ride on a static bike in their church. This year St Bartholomew, Burwash, and St George, Broad Oak, Heathfield also had static bikes in their churches, so why not suggest this to any churches that are reluctant to take part in your area.

I am sure by now that you will have seen the new website which is considerably improved. Stuart Lanham, the webmaster, has made the website far more marketing orientated and considerably easier to use. He has added links to Facebook and Twitter and he is keen to hear any ideas you may have on how it can be made to help you. You can contact him via the website.

There were some vacancies for Area Organisers which we were able to fill during the year, but inevitably other vacancies have now arisen and we are trying hard to find volunteers to take over the key role of Area Organiser

in Chichester, Battle, and East Grinstead. I would also like help in Arundel & Littlehampton Area as this is quite a large area for one organiser to cover, and hope that we will be able to fill all these slots before September. One thing I have discovered is that people don't volunteer of their own free will –you have to catch them. Don't ask for volunteers, but if you know someone who you think will be able to fill one of these slots, please ask them direct, or let me know and I will ask them. It is the best way to succeed!

The Treasurer has said that there has been a major improvement by participants in completing their forms resulting in us being able to claim more Gift Aid from HMRC. Please keep it up. In order to increase our publicity, I have purchased some more stickers with this year's date for the "Estate Agent" boards advertising the Ride & Stride for organisers, to be displayed in prominent positions across the areas, to enable previous boards to be re-used. These will be given to the Area Organisers at the Award Ceremony in March.

Unfortunately the online fundraising site, Justgiving has increased the amount they deduct from the funds raised, and also have reduced the amount of information provided to identify the web page of the participant, thus making it more difficult for the treasurer. Whilst we are keen to encourage online donating it is more difficult to work. We hope that there may be other online fundraising sites which are cheaper and easier to use.

Robert Symmons from St Mary's, Funtington, retrained the Individual Riders trophy with a staggering 199 stars, and the runner up was Neil Stanfield from St Peter, Cowfold, with 111 stars. The Individual Walkers Trophy was won by Jen White from St Peter, West Firle, with 43 stars, and the joint runners up with 24 stars, were Mary Levett from St Peter's, Upper Beeding, and Nigel Bown from St Mary's, Funtington.

In the Team category the "Woolbeding Wheelers" from All Hallows, Woolbeding won the Team Riders Trophy with 81 stars. The riders from St Luke's, Stone Cross were the runners up with 54 stars". The "Willingdon Walkers" from St Mary the Virgin, Willingdon, won the Team Walkers Trophy with 52, and the joint runners up with 29 stars were "Jimmy's Team" from St James, Birdham, and the team from Midhurst Methodist church, Midhurst.

Callum Prior from St Luke's, Stone Cross, won the under 16's Riders Trophy with 53 stars, and Ellen Hill from St Mary the Virgin, Barcombe, was the runner up with 28 stars. Kyleton Harman from St Peter the Hydneye, Eastbourne, was the winner of the under 16's Walkers Trophy with 32 stars, and Charlie Bell from St Michael, Amberley was just behind with 31 stars. The team from the First South Bersted Scouts, won the under 16's Team Walkers Trophy with 32 stars.

Pamela Lade from St John the Evangelist, Eastbourne, raised the amazing total of £1110, and won the Special Award, and Homer Cox from St Margaret the Queen, Buxted, raised £910.

I hope you will find my report informative and I thank you all for your efforts throughout the year, and of course to all those who took part, and I hope we can encourage more churches to take part this year and have an even more successful Ride & Stride event on Saturday 8 September.

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