



# Friends of Launde

Charity No: 519042

## Christmas Newsletter 2023



### ***A Christmas message from our Chairman***



Dear Friends,

Our Vicechair, Madeleine Wang and I met with the Warden recently to discuss how the Friends would fit in with the new Launde Companions.

We then subsequently reported to the Friends Committee who supported our suggestions. It was agreed that the Friends in their present form would continue: raising funds through subscriptions and donations, and occasional fund raising events.

We also agreed that in future the Friends would not actively recruit new members but if approached we would not stop people joining.

Friends will therefore now have three choices going forward:

- a) To continue as they are, paying their subscriptions and donations to Friends of Launde.
- b) To change to being a Companion.
- c) To join both – staying in the Friends but also joining the Companions.

We understand that joining the Companions would enable people to have certain benefits like being given priority booking of some Retreats.

I do believe that Launde needs to build up a large and broad membership of people who will support the work of Launde in various ways thereby securing its future. This is what the Companions is about. I hope we can all support the splendid ideas behind the Companions, whether or not we decide to join them.

With all best wishes for Christmas and the New Year from me, Madeleine and all the other members of the Friends Committee.

*Brian*

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\*\* Since Brian wrote this message there is now a page on the Launde Abbey website regarding Launde Companions which has much more information. Access is from their dropdown menu 'About Us'.

Whilst on their site do have a look at the Abbey's programme of upcoming Retreats & Quiet Days which are being added on a very regular basis.

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**'Save the Date':**

**Brian's Farewell as Chair and Thank You Party on Saturday 27th April.**

Details to follow.



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### Introducing one of our Trustees

Hello,

I'm Ann Green and I have been a Trustee of The Friends of Launde Abbey for more than five years now. My professional background is primarily as an HR Director in the NHS – although I have also worked as an independent Consultant in various Healthcare organisations and charities. Nowadays, I am Chair of Light Project Peterborough – a Christian charity supporting rough sleepers. I am a committed Christian and worship at St John's Church, Werrington in Peterborough.

I first became aware of Launde Abbey more than 10 years ago when a charity with which I was involved held a Quiet Day at Little Gidding. The leader for the day was Sister Rachel Overton. Over lunch Sister Rachel mentioned that she and Rev Alison Christian – the then Warden at Launde Abbey – were setting up a two year course to train Spiritual Directors. I was really interested in the course and applied for a place. After a 'challenging' interview I WAS offered a place and embarked on the training in September 2013.

Before my interview, I had never been to Launde. It was a sunny day and as I drove over the cattle grid at the top of the hill I remember audibly gasping at the beauty of the scene in front of me. My feeling was, even if I was not offered a place on the course, I had to come back. And I certainly did – for approximately one day every month for two years. No "Zooming" or "Working from Home" in those days!

The course was challenging, exhilarating and exhausting, in equal measures, and after two years 16 of us – from both the Peterborough and Leicester Dioceses – qualified as Spiritual Directors.

Since that time, I have continued to work as Spiritual Director with many people from very different backgrounds and experiences. I would argue the title "Spiritual Director" is anomalous as there is no "directing" involved. It is simply about walking alongside someone on their spiritual journey. It is such a joy and a privilege to be called to do His work in this way.

*Ann*

**All donations are gratefully received:**

The Friends of Launde

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### Friends Retreat December 2023

It was good to be at Launde Abbey on a Friends Retreat in the leadup to Christmas. Over 30 of us gathered for this reflective, sociable and very enjoyable weekend.



Our thanks go to Jan for all his time and organisation with the bookings, to Brian for his leading of the retreat itself and of course to all the staff of Launde Abbey who made us all so very welcome as always.

The theme of this retreat was about seeking peace, and finding inner strength for living and loving; learning to relax by breathing deeply and finding stillness and peace with the help of words, music and shared silence and so discovering a few new ways of praying.

However it was also social. Our Quizmaster Steve Atkins kept us enthralled with an entertaining quiz on the Saturday evening and at the end of Sunday's shared act of worship we expressed our thanks to Brian for all that he had done for Friends and to use one of the quotes mentioned this weekend:

Life is only for love; time is only that we may find God.



*Alison*

Newsletter Editor

**Membership Secretary:**

[j.zientek12@btinternet.com](mailto:j.zientek12@btinternet.com)

**Friends of Launde Newsletter:**

[friendsoflaunde1@gmail.com](mailto:friendsoflaunde1@gmail.com)