



The Friends of Morley Final Newsletter February 2010

Closure of the Retreat House

As we mentioned at Christmas, early in 2009 a large Christian organisation had approached Jeff about buying the House and operating it as a Retreat House. This seemed to be a positive proposal and throughout 2009 they were involved with the Diocese in the various formalities of selling a property belonging to the church that had never been sold before. By the end of the summer the sale needed to be approved by the Charity Commission. The sale was eventually approved at the beginning of December. We all thought it was moving satisfactorily, albeit slowly. However we heard that the buyer had withdrawn their offer the day before. This came as a huge disappointment to all involved here. We have since discovered that they are involved in a new exciting Christian venture that is more closely related to their core business activities. The Diocese have reconsidered and are in contact with estate agents to advertise and sell the House. Sadly the chance of it continuing as a Christian Retreat House now seems most unlikely.

Closure of the Friends of Morley

The Friends' Committee met in January 2010 and in the light of the above news took the decision that there was now regrettably nothing further that could be achieved by us. It was felt that the service of celebration held at Swanwick last May had provided an enjoyable opportunity to meet together for one last time and that this had given closure. We would especially like to offer our thanks to Rev'd Susan Bailey for her helpful address, and hope that you will all be able to remember with thanksgiving what the Retreat House has meant to each of you over the years. The committee decided therefore to formally wind up The Friends of Morley. We discussed what should happen to the remaining funds and have agreed to make donations to both the Friends of Launde Abbey and the Partners of Scargill House. Our work may be over but theirs continues. We recommend both these Houses to you all.

We have arranged that the website (www.morleyretreat.co.uk) will remain open until the House is sold. This letter will be published there and any further information about Jeff and Catherine's future work or the sale of the House will also be posted there.

There will not be another newsletter.

On behalf of the Committee and all the former staff at the Retreat House we thank you for your interest and faithful support, in prayer, in finance and in personal visits and friendship over the years.

A Final Word from Jeff ...

Derby Diocese offered me a House-for-Duty contract as Resident Caretaker after the Retreat House closed last April. I accepted this post because I knew a Christian group wanted to buy the House and employ me to manage it for them. The sale was proceeding satisfactorily and eventually received Charity Commission approval in December but sadly the buyer then decided to withdraw their offer and they are now embarking on a totally different venture instead.

The summer gave me an opportunity to enjoy a welcome break after all the additional work involved with winding up the business but by the autumn I started to put more time into various voluntary activities such as

- Archway: As treasurer of the Retreat House Wardens Association, I also took on the roles of newsletter editor, website editor and conference organiser.
- Churches Together in Derbyshire: Another organisation for which I'm treasurer.
- St Pixels: I'm a director of this internet church.

It has been particularly helpful to maintain contact during this time with Archway, and our other "trade association" CCI, as this has kept me in touch with developments within the Christian residential sector and I recently attended the conferences which both organisations hold each year. Through these links I have become aware of a number of opportunities at centres in various parts of the country and I'm currently waiting to hear if any of them would like to employ me. Once I've found a suitable position I shall be moving from Morley, unless the Diocese find another buyer first in which case I'll be taking early retirement to one of my cottages in Norfolk.

Catherine has recently started a part-time job cooking in a local Children's Home but this is just a temporary position until my own plans are clearer. Once we have any firmer news about either our own future or that of the House, we will ensure that it is posted on the Friends' website

Please pray for...

- Other Friends as they continue to seek God in their various church settings.
- The Diocese of Derby as they sell the Retreat House.
- Jeff and Catherine in their search for new work opportunities.