

## **Roger Lewis, Chair of the Friends Council, writes...**

Strange times. As I write (Sunday 29 March 2020) I have just returned from my permitted one-hour exercise close to home – walking on Westwood. Today, the section next to the grammar school; I plan to explore other segments during this period of ‘social distancing’ (by the look of it there will be plenty of time for such projects). Even the weather is odd. After so much water (rain, floods) even the normally boggy areas are dry; the sun is strong (along with a very cold wind). Today: hail and snow flurries; banks of dark grey cloud alternating with bright sun. We’ll remember all this when we look back and tell our children/grandchildren of ‘what happened in 2020’.

You will know (via this website or through having had a booking cancelled) that our Spring day school is not happening. Our guest lecturer – Roger Willson – had worked hard on his preparation and we know, from previous day schools he has led for us, that it would have been not only a good learning experience but also an opportunity for spiritual refreshment. The event is postponed rather than cancelled, to be rescheduled for 2021.

One of the ‘objects’ of the Friends of Beverley Minster (as set out in our founding document) is ‘to seek to bind together in a common fellowship all those who love Beverley Minster’. The wording is perhaps a little old-fashioned, dating from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the sentiment remains current.

The consequence of Covid 19 gives us a challenge: how can we build fellowship at a time of social distancing and self-isolation? We can’t meet physically but we do have other means of making contact. These include email and the website on which you are reading this message.

The Friends funded the development of the Minster website some 15 years ago. We were in the vanguard thanks to the prompting of Leslie Froomes – one of many things for which we must thank Leslie (who also led the Welcomer team for several years).

Now, in 2020, we owe thanks to Mervyn King for keeping the website up-to-date and visually attractive. It is coming into its own in these difficult times when electronic media enable us to maintain speedy contact with many people. We plan to use the Friends’ pages on the website to keep in contact with you, our members – not least to let you know when our social programme will resume.

The Minster is closed (it’s an interesting question as to when this was last the case). We are unable to go inside but we can continue to explore the building virtually. It’s no coincidence that the use of the National Gallery website has hugely increased as people realise they can look at the paintings – in some ways more closely and easily – via their screens. The Minster’s history, sculptures and carvings, glass, bells, architecture can all be accessed via the internet.

We hope to provide ideas, links and suggestions to help you too to continue to explore the Minster and its significance. It needn’t be one-way communication; you can contact us by using the email address given on the website; we can all thus continue to participate in the fellowship of the Friends’ community.

So let’s keep in touch and remain active until life returns to its customary pattern, when we can resume our programme of events and other activities.