

Friends of the Holy Land - Beit Sahour project

Dear Fr. Joseph,

You should have received a letter from us in the last couple of days regarding the Beit Sahour project - this email is a copy of the letter but in electronic format to allow for easy cutting and pasting of the text into your newsletter/bulletin!

Over the last few years your Parish has generously raised funds through one or more retiring collections to Friends of the Holy Land. This initiative, coordinated for us by Rosita Thomas from the xxx parish, was for the specific purpose of funding the Beit Sahour Housing Project, an initiative outside Bethlehem to building 10 apartments for Christian families. Unfortunately, due to difficulties surrounding the title to the land and increasing planning restrictions in the West Bank, it has not been possible for our local Committee to pursue this project, despite support from the Latin Patriarchate and others.

As the funds were given by your parishioners for this specific project, we are required by the Charities Commission to alert them to a change of use. The funds will now be transferred to our General Fund and we anticipate the majority will be used to refurbish the houses of Christian families, many of which need damp-proofing, redecoration, attention to the electrics, improved access to water and in some cases reconfiguring, to provide better space for growing families.

The Charities Commission has agreed that our commitment to your parishioners will be fulfilled if a statement from FHL is placed in your weekly bulletin for 2-3 consecutive weeks. I do hope that you will be able to agree to that request.

Friends of the Holy Land. Peter Rand, FHL Vice Chairman has written to me, requesting the following is included in our weekly newsletter. 'Over the last few years parishioners have generously donated to one or more retiring collections for a specific FHL project - the Beit Sahour Housing Project - to build 10 apartments for young Christian families on land just outside Bethlehem. Despite every effort being made to move forward with this initiative, it has been reluctantly agreed that difficulties with title to land and increased planning restrictions in the West Bank, have made it impossible to proceed. As a Charity, we have an obligation to inform you that we now propose to transfer these funds to the FHL General Fund and expect that most of it will be used to refurbish the houses of Christian families. (Many need damp-proofing, redecoration, attention to the electrics, improved access to water and in some cases reconfiguration to provide better facilities for growing families or those with limited mobility.)

If you would like to read more about how FHL is helping the most vulnerable Christians in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel and Jordan please visit the website <<http://www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk>> www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk , where you will also find our latest newsletter published a few weeks ago. (FHL are currently helping around 2000 Christians in the region but there are many more on our waiting list, so please keep them in your prayers and be as generous as you are able to in helping FHL to preserve a Christian presence in the Holy Land.)

If space is limited, please omit the two sentences above in brackets. Thank you.

We have written individually to all parishioners who completed standing orders or made single donations to the Beit Sahour Housing Project.

I would be grateful if you could acknowledge the letter/email.

Kind regards,

Peter Rand

FHL Vice Chairman and Executive Trustee

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