



Forward Momentum

BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE WAY FORWARD PROJECT

The National Lottery Heritage Fund Stages for Funding

First Round Bid

COMPLETE

Development Phase

COMPLETE

Second Round Bid

COMPLETE

Delivery Phase

CURRENT

November 2021

May 2022 - July 2023

August 2023

July 2024 - Dec 2027

Renovation Update: In the past two months, significant progress has been made at St Mary's. As we shared in our previous update, the timber shutters were installed, marking the future locations for the ledger stones. These shutters created spaces around which the extensive cabling for the electrics, audio-visual system, and pipework for the underfloor heating could be routed. The underfloor heating system alone spans over one mile, while the electrical cables stretch over two miles, and the audio-visual cables extend well beyond five miles. Additionally, a new stone base for the font was laid in the south aisle, near the entrance.



We hosted another Take A Look tour in February which allowed members of the public to come and see inside the church and marvel at all the work being carried out.



After the cables and pipework, the next crucial step was the installation of the final layer of limecrete. This process, carried out by hand, was both time-consuming and technically demanding. The workers transported the limecrete using wheelbarrows, with the mixture prepared on-site in a special lorry. Long planks of wood were used to smooth the limecrete over the network of cables and pipes. Throughout the process, the team carefully measured the depth of the floor to ensure it achieved the necessary gentle slope from the chancel. The timber shutter boxes were used to guide the limecrete around the areas designated for the ledger stones.

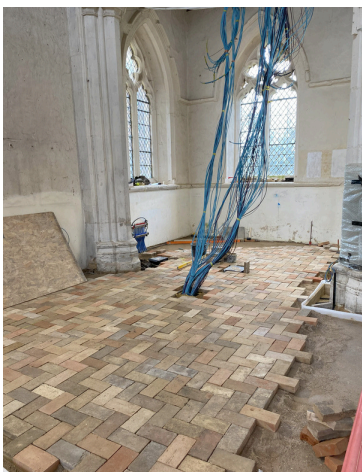
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Limecrete, distinct from concrete, is designed to allow moisture to pass through, which is essential for maintaining the right humidity levels in historic buildings like St Mary's. Its flexibility helps to reduce the risk of cracking and structural damage over time. Furthermore, limecrete provides excellent insulation, improving energy efficiency. In historic buildings, it can reduce heat loss by up to 20%, contributing to a warmer, more comfortable environment. This, coupled with the wall-mounted radiators that were delivered this week, will make a noticeable difference in the building's warmth during the colder months.

You can view videos of both the cabling and underfloor heating installation, as well as the limecrete application, on The Way Forward website. Simply visit the main menu, click on "Videos," and look for the updates from February and March. <https://www.wayforwardstebbing.org/819/Videos>

In other areas of the church, brickwork has been laid in the kitchen and at the back of the church, where new furniture will be placed. The kitchen has also had cracks in the walls repaired, and a smooth plaster finish has been applied. Excavation work has now begun for the installation of the new LPG tank, which will be located in the churchyard behind Rose Cottage. Trenches for pipework will be dug in the coming weeks.



On the community side of The Way Forward project, Esther, our Volunteer and Training Coordinator, alongside Caroline, our Historian, and Richard, our Ecologist, have been actively engaging with Stebbing Primary School. Throughout the school's community month, they delivered a variety of workshops that brought the project to life for the students.



Activities ranged from creating bug hotels and treasure hunts in the churchyard to photo walks along Stebbing High Street and even making stained glass cookies!

Every class has had the opportunity to participate in these hands-on experiences, and the school were really grateful for all the team's efforts.

Looking ahead, the project team is also excited to be planning a **Springtime Spectacular**, which will take place on the first bank holiday in May, Saturday, May 3rd. More details are available on The Way Forward website under the "What's On" section. This is an opportunity to get to know neighbours and have an enjoyable afternoon with family and friends. A range of activities and food and drink will be available. There's even a bake-off competition for those who love to bake! **We encourage you to sign up via the website** so that we can cater accordingly: <https://www.wayforwardstebbing.org/842/Springtime-Spectacular>



It's an exciting time for the project, though it has not been without challenges. The recent cut to the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme has left the project short by £138k, with only two months' notice. You may have noticed James Cleverley, MP, highlighted this on his social media account when he visited the church recently. You can view his video:

<https://www.facebook.com/james.cleverly/videos/1086112766605349/>



Thankfully, The National Lottery Heritage Fund has agreed to increase its grant by £100k, and we have applied for funding from several other sources. Please keep us in your prayers, particularly as we approach May when significant project expenses are due.