



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

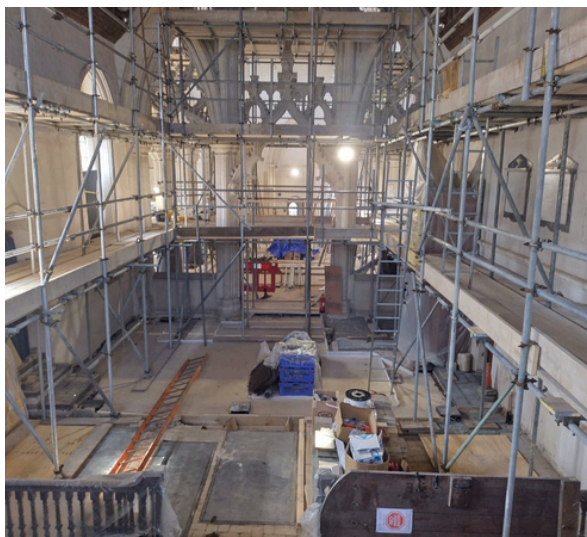
July 2024 - Dec 2027

Renovation Update

Since our last update in March, the church has entered its next phase of renovation. To facilitate this work, three storeys of scaffolding have been erected.

- Flaking plaster and cracks have been meticulously repaired.
- More wall paintings have been uncovered.
- New layers of specialized paint have been applied.

The electricians have also been hard at work, positioned high at the roof level, installing cables and new lighting that will provide significantly improved illumination compared to what was previously in the church. Additionally, the scaffolding has offered a close-up view of the various angels and gargoyles perched high in the rafters and stonework!



Work has also progressed in the kitchen, with new units installed and additional electrical wiring set up for lighting and appliances. Decisions have been made regarding the repair of cracked window panes and the cleaning of the remaining glass windows while the scaffolding is still in place. Additionally, renovations for the toilet will soon be underway!



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Springtime Spectacular: A Community Success

Spring has continued to renew a sense of energy and excitement to St Mary's, not only through the ongoing restoration work but also through the Springtime Spectacular afternoon on Saturday 3rd May.

Our Heritage Engagement Officer, Esther, writes, "Planning for the event began months ago, working with local groups and volunteers to bring together a variety of activities designed to appeal to all ages. The goal was to create a space where the community could connect with one another while also engaging with the restoration work at St Mary's.



From Planning to Execution

"Coordinating the event involved working closely with several local groups, including the Stebbing Local History Society, Meadow Oak Distillery, Men's Breakfast, and various volunteers.

Organising fun activities (and coordinators) while managing logistics such as power sources, signage, and risk assessments was a challenge, but slowly, but surely, the event started to come together.

The Day Of

"The afternoon's activities were well received by all ages. The field was dotted with families enjoying pizza, hot dogs, teas, cakes, and gin under the sunshine, which thankfully lasted until pack-up time. Both the church car-park field and Priors Hall Barn buzzed with activity as families moved between archery, badge-making, and the edible plant station, while the smell of the BBQ filled the air.

"Of the event's two competitions, the Bake-Off was won by Mia, a Year 6 pupil at Stebbing Primary School. According to the judges, it looked like winning had truly made her day — a well-deserved win, especially as all entries were anonymous."



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"Meanwhile, over on the field, the archery competition was in full swing, with many people going back for another go. Henry took the win by a long shot (quite literally, as it was uncontested!). We hope he enjoys the taster session with the Braintree Bowmen.

The herbal remedies, badge-making, grow-your-own plants, and VE-Day tables all drew steady crowds throughout the day. And our fundraising effort through the Donate a Brick activity raised a fantastic £225 towards the building work.



"Throughout the day, it was encouraging to talk to participants, many of whom had little previous connection to the church. It was also heartening to see both participants and volunteers enjoying themselves and engaging with the project in a hands-on way.

Feedback and Looking Forward

"Reflecting on the event, we received valuable feedback from both volunteers and participants. While everyone seemed to enjoy the day and felt it went well, several

people pointed out small hiccups that, while not affecting the overall success, could be addressed to make future events run even more smoothly.

"As we move forward, this feedback will be invaluable in shaping future events, ensuring they are even more impactful and enjoyable. The feedback I gathered has already been compiled into a document that can serve as a checklist for next time.



"The event also highlighted the importance of our team of volunteers, who generously gave their time to help in many different ways.



"We truly couldn't have pulled off such a successful event without them — a huge thank you to each and every one! We are also thankful for our Bake-Off Judges, local baking experts, Alison Horne, Steve Sparrow, and Hayley Bulgen (Mrs B Bakes)."

