

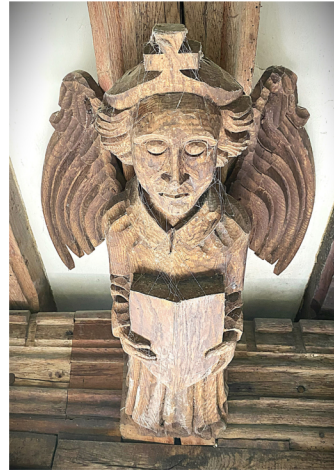


## The National Lottery Heritage Fund Stages for Funding



### Renovation Update

After 13 weeks, the scaffolding has finally come down, revealing a much brighter church interior thanks to several coats of limewash on the columns and walls. While there is still some painting to finish in areas that were blocked by the scaffolding boards, the majority of the work is now complete. All the new lights have been installed, and cracks — including some on the stone rood screen — have been repaired. The windows have also been cleaned, with broken quarries replaced. We thought you might enjoy seeing the faces that have been watching over us for centuries, as well as some close ups of some of the medieval glass in some of the windows.







**Meanwhile, in the churchyard,** archaeologists have spent several weeks carefully excavating skeletons and bones from the area designated for the new LPG tank. In total, 19 skeletons have now been respectfully removed and will be reburied in the churchyard during a special service at a later date to ensure they receive the dignity they deserve.



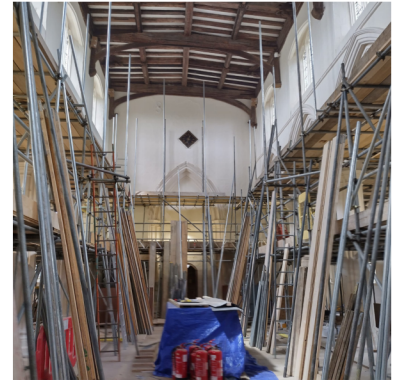
**On a very hot day,** at the end of June, we had a super afternoon wandering around the churchyard, collecting plants and flowers on sticky paper, enjoying cool drinks made from elderflower, dandelion and burdock, sampling biscuits flavoured with rose or lavender and the children did some lovely crafts under the shade of the trees. Richard, our ecologist, gave a fascinating insight into some of the plants we had collected, with some quirky facts thrown in. It was lovely to learn more about what makes up the vegetation in the churchyard and, also, knowing that the plants we found will be recorded as part of the national initiative known as Churches Count on Nature – which celebrates the natural beauty of churchyards and invites communities to record the plants and wildlife they find.



...cont/d p.3



With the scaffolding now removed, we were able to host our **first Take A Look tour in the nave**, with visitors entering through the tower door. The day before, the entire church had been swept and cleared of debris from the scaffolding — a hot, dusty, and challenging task on the hottest day of the year. This time, we were pleased to welcome even more visitors, and places were snapped up with just 24 hours! Guests were able to experience the newly levelled floor, which is now awaiting its final layer of bricks. They were free to explore the nave, view close-up photographs captured during the scaffolding works, and discover the fascinating community contributions for the time capsule, which will be buried in the nave this autumn.



Ben from the Colchester Archaeological Trust gave a wonderfully informative talk about recent discoveries during excavations both inside and outside the church, including old coffin handles and fragments of medieval stained glass. Additional photos of other finds offered a fascinating glimpse into the past. Adrian from Bakers of Danbury, our principal contractor, explained the complex recent works carried out inside the church and in the churchyard.

He described specialist stonework repairs to the rood screen, why a breathable limewash was essential for the masonry, and how their joinery team is reusing features such as pew ends to craft new furniture — helping to preserve the heritage we all value so much.

Whilst we anticipate the major restoration work to be completed sometime in November, there will still be lots of things that need to be done to complete the reordering. **We hope to be back in the building in the first quarter of 2026.** Plans for reopening will be published in due course.