

Fabric Report

St Mary's Church Saffron Walden

The Terrier and Inventory were completed in April 2025. All items are present and correct, with the addition of a Ciborium and Silver Chalice and Paten, kindly donated by Martin Hugall, and four banners, beautifully made and presented to the Church by Tessa Hawkes' Sewing Circle. We are very grateful for both these enhancements to the beauty of St Mary's.

In terms of the fabric of the Church, it has been a relatively quiet year. Unfortunately, we had a break-in last June (more of this in the Churchwardens' Report). Nothing was taken but the Vestry door was forced and the lock damaged. This has been replaced and an additional bolt is being fitted to the main South Door.

The new lighting scheme is proceeding apace. We are very hopeful that, with your help and prayers, we will be able to bridge the remaining funding gap and, having been awarded a faculty, are therefore going ahead with plans to start work in September this year.

Unfortunately, the exterior floodlighting of the tower failed recently. Examination showed that it had reached the end of its life and would have to be replaced. We have had a quote for this which wasn't as bad as we feared and are now waiting for PCC approval before submitting it to the Archdeacon. We then plan to get this work done as soon as possible.

The Church roofs, previously kept clear of debris by volunteers, are now being managed by contractors. During their initial visit last autumn, they noticed some small cracks in the lead on the South Aisle roof. Lodge and Sons., who replaced the roof some twenty-five years ago, have been back and can weld these cracks relatively easily and inexpensively, and adjust the clips to ensure it doesn't happen again. We expect this work to take place in the coming months. Fortunately, our architect has now reported that the North Aisle Roof, which the Quinquennial Report indicated would need replacing within the next five years, should last considerably longer with careful maintenance.

Inside the Church, we are now receiving quotes to repair the broken slab by the South Chapel steps, a damaged ledger stone and to carry out some repointing to the stonework around the West Door. We have also had a quote to replace the Brass Memorial Plaque in the North Chapel. We are hopeful that all this work can be achieved in the near future. This will leave some work to the stonework and glazing bars in the Muniments Room still on the agenda, probably for next year.

Finally, in addition to the work on the fabric of the Church itself, some necessary repairs have been carried out to the Parish Rooms and the Verger's Cottage, where the roofs have been repaired, rotten window sills have been replaced and in the case of the Verger's Cottage, the outside plasterwork is about to be repaired and redecorated. Also a broken drain along the front of the building will be replaced during the course of the summer, hopefully resolving a damp problem.

Simon Potter and Vivian Falk
Churchwardens
April 2025