

A close-up photograph of oak leaves and acorns, serving as the background for the entire page. The leaves are green with serrated edges, and the acorns are light green with brown caps.

# Parish News

**St Mary's Church, Saffron Walden**

**St John, Little Walden and St James, Sewards End**

**Part of Saffron Walden & Villages Team Ministry**

**October 2025**

**FREE**





Thirty five Friends of St Mary's enjoyed a lunch together in the Parish Rooms on 10th August See page 14. Photograph by Martin Hugall



Enthusiastic volunteers setting up a stall in the Saturday Market on 16th August. Photograph by Martin Hugall

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## PARISH NEWS - EDITORIAL DEADLINE

The deadline for contributions for each issue is the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the previous month. Hence, the deadline for the **November** issue is **Sunday 5th October 2025**.

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*Front cover photograph of acorns by Edward Juxon*

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Links also at the bottom of our website pages

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## The Rector's Letter

From The Rev'd Jeremy Trew

Jeremy writes...

About the time this edition of the parish magazine is published, the church remembers one of its most famous saints – Francis of Assisi. He was, by any account, an extraordinary young man, who abandoned a privileged lifestyle in medieval Europe, to live out a peculiar and itinerant vocation that caused a remarkable revolution within the life of the church.

Francis was born into an affluent family, and had the opportunity to enjoy riches, and a lifestyle that went with such assets – but renounced them completely to pursue a ministry that was, at the time, so radical as to verge on the subversive. He took with him a handful of followers, and renounced not merely ownership of any possessions at all, but also any sense of home or base. He saw the joy of God the creator in every aspect of life – and indeed death – and was a guileless and loving champion for the Good News of God in Christ. His most remarkable - and, perhaps, most naïve - venture was to call on the Sultan of Egypt in 1219, in a single-handed attempt to end the crusades, and bring peace to the Holy Land.

The life of Francis is well-documented, although often his life is reduced to a nonsensical simplicity that portrays him as being little more than a Dr Dolittle figure that knew how to 'speak to the animals'. Much less documented are two of the twelve apostles, whose feast day falls very near the end of October – the two apostles who were known as Simon (but not Simon Peter!), and Jude (who is not Judas Iscariot). While Jude probably rejoices in not being his infamous namesake, most people would find it galling simply to be remembered for being not someone considerably more famous.

Almost nothing is known about either of these apostles – almost nothing save that Jesus saw in them both something so special as to call them away from their regular life in Galilee, to spend some three years in his company learning first-hand about the excitement of the in-breaking Kingdom of God. And while we are very unclear about any personal details in the lives of these two members of The Twelve, we will recognize that the



call to follow Jesus as an apostle was radical, costly and ultimately dangerous, and we assume that a martyr's death marked the end of the earthly life of both Jude and Simon.

Taken as a 'job lot' that mark the beginning and end of October, Francis, Simon and Jude make a strange little group. One is remarkably famous, and the other two curiously obscure (at least for two people who were personal friends of the earthly Jesus). But they are united in the embrace of a totally radical claim on their life, which turned it upside down, and saw them give up any notion of home, family, or security. Perhaps, as this month progresses, we should all pray for the gift of a life similarly stood on its head.

Best Wishes  
Jeremy

### **New Home Group**

Due to increasing demand for places on the existing Home Groups, we will be starting a new one, beginning on 5th October.

This is to be led by Gill Caswell and will take place in Vivian Falk's home, Brackendale House, Debden Road, Saffron Walden (just opposite Station Road), on the first and third Mondays of the month, between 1.45 and 3.45pm.

For those of you unsure what a Home Group is, and whether it might be for you, Home Groups are small informal gatherings of (normally) Church members interested in studying the Bible further. They are usually centred around a theme, which changes every term, and we normally use relatively simple materials which we source, after discussion with the group, from Church of England websites.

They are also opportunities for fellowship (accompanied by tea, coffee and biscuits!), general discussion around religious topics in a safe and welcoming environment and getting to know other church members outside the church setting.

If you think you might be interested in joining this group (and it doesn't matter if the 5th October has passed by the time you read this), please contact either Gill (01799 520485) or Vivian (07811 165049).

## The Rev'd Romey Poston



The Church of All Saints, Ashdon, was packed on Tuesday 2nd September for the Licensing by the Bishop of Colchester and the Induction by the Archdeacon of Stansted of Rev'd Romey Poston as Associate Priest of the Saffron Walden and Villages Team Ministry, with special responsibility for the villages of Ashdon and Hadstock.

The Archdeacon, the Ven. Kate Peacock, commented "We are delighted that God has called the Rev'd Romey Poston to be our new priest at Ashdon and Hadstock. Romey comes to us from Oxford Diocese where she has served as the curate in the Langtree Ministry Team. Romey comes with a huge passion for ministry and pastoral care as well as extensive international experience. She worked as a foreign correspondent in the Indian Subcontinent, before becoming Executive Director of an NGO establishing cross border aid programmes to Afghanistan. Romey later married a senior diplomat and has three grown children. She also has a keen interest in art and history, and loves walking her dog. Please pray for Romey as she leaves her current post to be with us and we look forward to welcoming her."

More information about Romey can be found in the News section on the website

Photograph by Mat Lester

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## **YOU** in the **PEW** interviewed by Chris Bishop

### **John Mumford**

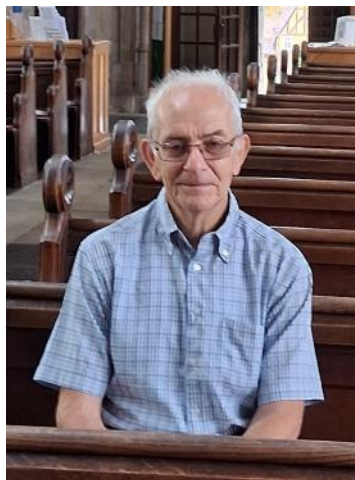
I was born in 1951 at Haymeads Hospital in Bishops' Stortford and have lived in Saffron Walden ever since. My parents Lewis and Ruth were married at St Mary's and were active members of the church, my father as a bell-ringer and a server, my mother also a bell-ringer, and a member of the Women's Guild.

Schooling started at the South Road Primary School, then to junior school at the Boys' British School in East Street, then finally to senior school at the Saffron Walden County High School.

In 1967 I started work as an apprentice laboratory technician at TI Research Laboratories at Hinxton Hall, these laboratories were the main research laboratories for the TI Group. The TI Group had a wide range of manufacturing companies in the engineering industry, which included steel making, precision tube, domestic appliance and bicycle manufacture. After completing my apprenticeship I was assigned to the Materials Sciences Department as a research technician assisting on research projects such as metal alloy and vitreous enamel development.

In 1988 the Hinxton Laboratories closed. After that I worked as a quality analyst at a company manufacturing gas absorbent products in Thaxted, retiring in 2014.

As a boy, I went to the Sunday School, which in those days was run by Millie Birch and Cathy Holland in what is now the Museum annexe in





Museum Street. Also I would attend Matins with my grandfather, often helping him with the collection. Regularly I would climb the 52 steps with my parents to the ringing chamber and sit quietly while they rung the bells for Sunday service. In 1963 I learnt to ring, and still ring regularly to this day.

June 26th this year was a most memorable day as we gathered with bell-ringing and church friends at John Taylor's bellfoundry in Loughborough for the casting of our replacement 7th bell. As the molten metal poured into the mould it was hard to believe that this bell would bear my name and that of fellow ringer Roger Collins to commemorate us each serving continuously for over 60 years.

Also about 1963 I became a server assisting in the roles of taperer, crucifer, and eventually sub-deacon. I retired from serving a few years ago after completing 50 years service. Over that time it was a privilege to be involved in so many of our confirmation, priesting, induction, and Advent Carol services which have taken place here. The Advent Carol service to me is the most thought provoking and enjoyable service of the Christian year as we move from darkness to light as we do in our journey of faith.

These days I continue to be involved with Parish Office activities and small maintenance jobs around the church. So my family coat of arms would most probably feature DIY tools, because in my spiritual journey I love just working quietly, practically, and loyally. Perhaps the motto "Practical & Loyal" may be appropriate?

### **A Prayer for October**

O God of all hope and peace, we bring to you the needs of our broken and hurting world.

Our hearts are breaking with images of lives lost and torn apart by grief in Israel and Palestine.

We pray for an end to violence and warfare so that the challenging work of rebuilding may begin.

Help us, O Lord, to affirm our common humanity so that in our differences we may build together for justice and peace.

In Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

*Provided by the Prayer Team*

## Radwinter Road Cemetery, Saffron Walden, CB11 3HU

Are you looking for a final resting place for a loved one? The Cemetery at Radwinter Road is an oasis in the town which is open 24/7 and there is tranquillity within.

Further information on burials is available from The Cemetery Officer at Saffron Walden Town Council, Saffron Walden, CB10 1HR Telephone: 01799 516501 or email [enquiries@saffronwalden.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@saffronwalden.gov.uk)

Our local Cemetery is a peaceful space which offers a natural environment for all types of wildlife and as a result is an important nature conservation resource in the town. Daily maintenance and gardening are carried out which ensures the space is both clean and tidy, where residents and visitors can visit for peace and reflection.

The Cemetery is divided into different areas; Lawn cemetery, Traditional area, Garden of Remembrance, scattered ashes, and areas for children and young people. There is also a separate section for War graves which is cared for by The Commonwealth War Graves Commission. A small well-appointed Chapel is available to hire.

<https://saffronwalden.gov.uk/services/cemetery/>



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## What's in a Name (11)?

Having explored the reasons why some of the streets on our new estates are named as they are and looked into the origins of Hollyhock Road, this month I am turning my attention to a road which has been part of Saffron Walden for hundreds of years: Abbey Lane.

I am sure some of you will already know the origins of Abbey Lane but people who have moved to the town more recently may not be aware that there was once a Walden Abbey. Today if you follow Abbey Lane from its junction with the High Street to its end at one of the back gates to the Audley End estate, you will find no trace of an abbey. In fact, no matter how hard you look, you will find no physical trace of an abbey, although it has been suggested that the building now called the Stables at Audley End might have been the monastic pilgrims' hostel.

However, there was an abbey. It occupied the site that is now Audley End House. The abbey, or monastery as it is sometimes called, was dedicated to St James and was founded by Geoffrey de Mandeville in around 1136. Geoffrey de Mandeville was a prominent baron around the time of the civil war between Stephen and Matilda, and his family became earls of Essex. The links between the de Mandeville family and Walden are commemorated in Mandeville Road.

The religious house began its life as a priory and was elevated to the status of a Benedictine abbey in 1190. The site that Geoffrey de Mandeville gave was almost a mile west of the castle and parish church. Originally the buildings were very modest, a wooden chapel with a cloister and a selection of domestic buildings. The wooden chapel was replaced by a small stone church with a cloister and later a chapter house was added.

The Abbey of St James was never a big house, but among the eighteen churches that were granted to it by Geoffrey de Mandeville was the parish church of St Mary which was described as standing just below the west side



of the castle bailey, but the incumbent at that time was not particularly happy with the arrangement.

Throughout the mediaeval period Walden Abbey would have played an important role in the life of the town but when the Dissolution of the Monasteries occurred in the reign of Henry VIII, the abbot of Walden Abbey surrendered it to the Crown on 22 March 1538 and five days later it was granted to Sir Thomas Audley (1488–1544), Lord Chancellor and former Speaker of the House of Commons. Audley converted the abbey into a mansion house but later work by Thomas Howard saw the disappearance of any signs of the abbey above the ground. So, Abbey Lane now preserves the memory of the Abbey of St James. Perhaps it was the route the monks took when visiting St Mary's.

If you want to know more about the early days of the Abbey, I recommend 'The Book of The Foundation of Walden Monastery' edited and translated by Diana Greenway and Leslie Watkiss (1999).

Hilary Walker



On 13th July, St Mary's hosted the premiere of the beautiful and moving motet '*Love called for Light*'. The text was specially written by Paula Griffiths with music composed by Brian Moles. '*Love called for Light*' forms one of a collection of three motets which were commissioned in memory of Chris Ferland (former chorister at St Mary's church). Our picture, taken by Martin Hugall, shows Brian, Paula and Oli King. It is hoped that the work will be reprised later this year.



## FRIENDS OF THE PARISH CHURCH

The Friends of the Parish Church is a very active group and has been so for over 90 years. We are able to help financially with minor and major projects at St Mary's. They range from the new Advent candle which we have just purchased to a substantial sum to help the proposed Lighting Project.

Almost 40% of our members have active and varied roles in the Church. We have a bookstand with an assortment of items on sale and next to that a dedicated noticeboard which will keep you up to date on our many activities. We are also on the Church website under "Groups" so do take a look.

If you would like to learn more, pick up a leaflet from the bookstand which also includes an application form to **join us**. Just hand it to any of the Friends' Council members or pop in the Parish Office letterbox. If you feel that you would like to leave us a legacy, there are forms available on the bookstand for this too.

Chairman: Denis Tindley, Secretary: Pamela Mugliston, Treasurer: Sandra Marsh

### The Friends Bring & Share Lunch

Despite having to move our date and a few people being on holiday we had a good turnout for the Bring & Share lunch on 10th August (see photo on page 2). As usual there was a wonderful table of food and a glass of wine enjoyed by all. Many thanks to ALL those who helped throughout the day and with all the cooking.

### Dates for Your Diary

The **Canterbury Cathedral** trip on 3rd October is fully booked but I am happy to take reserves just in case seats become available closer to the date. The next Cathedral trip will be in the spring of 2026, full details will be available very soon.

Also looking forward to next year, we have a **Talk** booked for January 26th. This is based on experiences whilst walking the **Camino De Santiago** pilgrimage by Julie Kendall and her husband Mark Vernon in May 2024. This will be in the Parish Rooms as usual. Full details closer to the date. I will endeavour to get the **Recipe Book** published in time for the Christmas Fair but a few issues are slowing that down at the moment. I will keep you posted. Thank you for all your contributions which sound delicious.





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# The Calendar

*This calendar is provisional. See The Grapevine or the church website for the latest information.*

## St Mary's, Saffron Walden

One service in church each Sunday is streamed on YouTube [Y]: details on the church website. Coffee is served after the Sunday 10.30am services.

### Thursday 2 October

10am Silent Prayer in the Parish Rooms

### Sunday 5 October

8am BCP Holy Communion

10.30am Holy Communion [Y] & Sunday Club

6.30pm Hannah's Mass set by Philip Sunderland



### Thursday 9 October

2pm Mothers' Union: *My Journey to Faith* by Rev'd Lynda Sebbage; in the Parish Rooms

### Sunday 12 October

8am BCP Holy Communion

10.30am Second Sunday Holy Communion [Y] & Sunday Club

6.30pm Choral Evensong

### Sunday 19 October

8am BCP Holy Communion

10.30am Holy Communion [Y] & Sunday Club

### Sunday 26 October (Clocks go Back)

8am BCP Holy Communion [Y]

10.30am Family Service

4pm Taizé service

## Regular weekday services at St Mary's

### *Tuesdays*

5pm Evening Prayer by Zoom, see weekly bulletin for login details

### *Wednesdays*

8am Morning Prayer downstairs in the Parish Rooms

9.30am Holy Communion (with Prayers for Wholeness and Healing on the 1st Wednesday of the month) in the Parish Rooms

## St James', Swards End

### *Sunday 5 October*

10.30am Harvest Festival

### *Sunday 19 October*

10.30am Holy Communion



## St John's, Little Walden

### *Sunday 12 October*

10.30am Family Service

### *Sunday 26 October (Clocks go Back)*

10.30am Holy Communion



## From the Registers

### **Baptisms**

8th July Peter Samuel Ireneusz Tate

20th July Darius Shanley-Grozavu

3rd August Hana Pamela McLachan

17th August Beatrix Margot Celeste Cole

### **Weddings**

19th July Catherine Peacock and Douglas Kent

2nd August Jessica Biss and Benjamin Richards

9th August Samantha Ball and Charlie Doré

30th August Johanna Beetlestone and Greig Collins

### **Funerals**

5th August Brenda Schooling

7th August Peter Faulkner

21st August Tina Knight

26th August Charles White



## THE MISSING EASTER BANNER – 30 Years on



St Mary's Sewing Circle began in 1985, stitching the kneelers in the North Chapel, and later, encouraged by the then Rector, Peter Harlow, we moved on to make some banners and altar-frontals. He wanted us to bring some colour into the church.

The first one was a 'rescue job' on a beautiful old silk-embroidered banner, where the silk background had become so brittle that it could no longer support the exquisite embroidery. So we cut out the salvageable pieces, and appliquéd them on to green velvet, with some embellishment. This is now the 'all-purpose' banner that is displayed in church. It was followed by the four candles for Advent.

Our next project was an adventurous Easter Banner designed by Dorothy Cooper, who had been at the Royal College of Needlework, which was extremely helpful to the rest of us. She drew the design to scale, and we each chose a Spring flower to make and appliquéd onto a wreath of leaves. Many of our old 'ragbags' were raided, as I'm sure you can imagine! As we

were all very proud of the finished banner, we agreed to exhibit it at the 1995 Knitting & Stitching Show, due to take place at Alexandra Palace in London. We carefully packed it up, and sent it to the exhibition, where the photograph opposite was taken by Diana Golding on its arrival. The exhibition moved on to Harrogate, and later to Dublin, but somewhere during all this the Banner vanished. The Show's organisers, and their counterparts in Yorkshire and in Ireland were unable to help, and an appeal in the Church Times produced nothing.

Back then, we needed a replacement, which Joan Liddle designed (shown below, in a cutting from the Walden Local, with Susan Walker, Joan, me and Kathryn Fiddock), but we are still hoping that the original one will turn up, all these years later. Can anyone help?

Tessa Hawkes



*...if you have been affected by any  
of the issues raised in this sermon...*



Muniments  
Room

## From the Archives

**A monthly record of pieces of interest from  
our past Parish Magazines**

**Compiled by our Archivist, the Rev'd Canon Chris Bishop**

From 1955...

### **The Choir “Buy-A-Psalter” Fund.**

The Hymn-books and Psalters used by the Choir are in very bad repair. Many of them have been in constant use for more than a dozen years, and it is a matter of some speculation whether the psalm or hymn to be sung appears in many of them at all.

The Proprietors of Hymns Ancient and Modern have awarded a generous grant to help in replacing the Hymn books; but the Psalters are in even worse condition. We are hoping that some members of the congregation may be willing to “buy-a-psalter” for the use of the choir. The cost of a Parish Psalter with music and bound more solidly than our present ones, is about 10/-; and a Psalter purchased in this way will be inscribed with the donor’s name. (It is hoped that this “personal touch” will induce the choirboys to treat them with added respect.)

Subscriptions to the Choir “Buy-a-Psalter’ Fund may be given to the Vicar, the Assistant Curate or to the Organist.

DB

### **St Mary’s Christmas Fair**

This popular annual event will take place in the church on Saturday 29th November, between 10am and 1pm.

The usual stalls will be available, including copious amounts of refreshments, handicrafts and Christmas gifts. There will be Christmas music and all the usual fun and fellowship. This is an opportunity to welcome our town guests into our beautiful church, and to enjoy all the seasonal treats. A new (and very famous) visitor is being planned (although he is very busy at this time of year, as we know).

Any enquiries, contact Sue Birchall 07819 947157 or sbirchall29@gmail.com

# Gelio's Anthology of Obscure Proverbs.



Here are a few proverbs on possessions and being poor. How dated do you think they are now?

From England *"He is not poor that hath little, but he that desireth much"*, and in much the same vein, there was a Latin proverb saying *"Not he who has little, but he who wishes for more is poor."*

A more pictorial one from China says *"To pretend to satisfy one's desires by possessions is like using a straw to put out a fire."*

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## St Mary's Music News

October will be a busy month for the musicians of St Mary's, following their well-deserved summer holiday. On the 5th October there will be a special communion service at 6.30pm at which the world premiere of a mass setting by yours truly will be performed. *Hannah's Mass* was written to commemorate the life of my sister who sadly died from breast cancer. The piece is inspired by her and by a quotation of the great C.S. Lewis, which is a sort of family mantra: "Joy is the serious business of heaven." Scored for choir, organ, brass and a battery of percussion, the mass setting is eclectic in style, reflecting my sister's wide tastes in music (probably the world's first ever calypso Hosanna!) but has its sombre moments. The Agnus Dei is punctuated by fifty-seven chimes on the passing bell, one ring for each year of my sister's remarkable life. Please come and support us – it promises to be a joyful evening!

The choir sing choral evensong on the 12th October at 6.30pm and as is now the norm, prosecco will be served after the service. On the 18th October, the choir are excited to be travelling to Bury St Edmunds to sing choral evensong at 3.30pm. An important aspect of the church's outreach programme, we would be delighted for any support – please email Caroline at [carolinegoulder@gmail.com](mailto:carolinegoulder@gmail.com) if you would like to attend.

Now to news of organ scholars past and present. Former scholar Elliot Randall has been appointed organ scholar at St Martin-in-the-Fields, following his successful studies at the Royal College of Music. Clearly this is an incredible achievement, given the highly professional musical tradition at the church. Furthermore it reinforces the importance of the organ scholar position at St Mary's and shows the results of the exceptional training given by Oli and Jeremy.



The SMMA is extremely pleased to announce that our new organ scholar will be James Razzell. James is a product of the music-making at St Mary's, having started as an eight-year-old with Kate Beare and Joyful Noise, moving on to the Junior Choir and now singing bass with the adults. His commitment to the church has been exceptional and he has performed some notable solos as a treble. An accomplished musician already on piano and violin, James is very excited

about the possibilities the organ scholarship will open for him and we are delighted to have such a cheerful, hard-working and motivated scholar!

As the summer light fades, and autumn comes upon us once more, we must try to recall the illumination created by the choir's performance at Evensong back in July, when they sang the premiere of the uplifting and moving motet '*Love called for Light*'. Brian Moles and Paula Griffiths joined us for this occasion (see photograph on page 13) and it was certainly an Evensong to remember: beautiful text set to wonderfully rich and fitting music.

Unfortunately, our autumn concerts will not be able to take place this year, owing to the disruptions of the lighting project, but we hope for your continued support when the concerts resume, and also at our Choral Evensongs!

Philip Sunderland and Hannah Razzell

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## **In the Houses of Parliament: Making the case for churches**

On the morning of 15 July I made my way through crowds of tourists to enter the Houses of Parliament. I, and two others who work with church buildings, Emily Gee (Director for Cathedral and Church Buildings in the C of E's national offices) and Becky Payne (Development Director of the Historic Religious Buildings Alliance), were appearing before the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee – a cross-party group of MPs who are carrying out an inquiry into Protecting Built Heritage: and an hour that morning was being devoted to considering historic places of worship.

Don't imagine the point-scoring and noise of Prime Minister's Question Time: these MPs were polite, interested, and genuinely wanted to hear what we had to say. They asked crucial and penetrating questions. How does a church's state of repair affect its ability to support a local community? (Hugely!) Are there special challenges—or advantages—facing churches in rural communities? (Yes, both!) What role do volunteers play in protecting historic churches? (They are vital!) How can the grant schemes to support churches be made more effective? (Make them simpler – and recognise the massive benefit to society of keeping historic churches in good repair!) What is the impact of the recent cap on claims to the scheme which repays VAT on repairs to historic churches? (Extra costs of £30,000 for our lighting project!) What about pressures on specialist skills? (Bells!) And much more.

All three of us came out an hour later feeling rather as we used to feel after exams – remembering everything else we wished we'd had time to say. But I was so grateful for this tremendous opportunity to speak at first hand about the pressures facing parish churches – and to describe the amazing energy, imagination and care so many congregations display in supporting their communities and in welcoming people of all faiths and none. Thank you for all the support, thoughts and examples many of you gave me.

The inquiry continues over the autumn, so the Committee probably won't report until 2026. And – although such reports are traditionally taken seriously by the relevant Government Departments – their recommendations are simply advisory: they can't tell Departments what to do.

But there has already been one positive outcome. Less than a fortnight after our session, the Chair of the Committee wrote publicly to the Heritage Minister urging her to make the VAT reclaim scheme permanent, and to



remove the cap. Will it happen? We all know how strapped the Government is for money. But we could not have asked for any quicker support for our case. Can you help? EVERY letter to a Member of Parliament is a powerful statement of public opinion, so you could add your voice by writing to support the continuation of the scheme, the lifting of the cap, and the immense benefits which our historic places of worship bring to society.

Paula Griffiths

(You can read a transcript of the Committee session on <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/16335/pdf/> )

## New Children & Youth Leader

Julie Lester, who has been appointed the new Children and Youth Leader from 1st September.

Photo by Mat Lester



## Lighting Installation – Progress To Date and What's Next

Our lighting contractors started work on Monday 4th August and, although most of it isn't visible, a lot of good progress has been made. What can be done before 15th September is restricted by Natural England due to our small bat roost and only from that Monday can Tom Flynn and his team start to work at ceiling level in the main body of the church.

At the time of writing, 5th September, the items completed include

- † Control panels installed in cupboards on the north and south side at the west end of the church – see photo of the servery side cupboard which will be fitted out so that the tables can still be stored there.
- † Cabling has been run across the organ loft from south to north. These will power the lights in the north chapel and north side of the chancel and sanctuary.
- † Cabling run under the floor from the servery to the north side welcome desk.
- † The lights in the clergy vestry have been removed and temporary lighting provided.
- † New lights installed at the west entrance and below the west tower ceiling, see photo. The contractors were allowed to work at ceiling level in the west tower in August and September but not in the main body of the church.....
- † 90% of the new light fittings have been delivered and prepared for installation.



From 15th September, the work will move to the north aisle and north chapel and there will be two scaffold towers, like the one shown, in the church during the week. These will be stored away every weekend and while there's work in the north chapel the statue of Mary will be boxed in and protected. The target is to complete the installation of the cabling and new lights in the north chapel by the end of Thursday 18th September and the north aisle by the end of the month. Any new lights will not be switched



on until they are connected to the control panels, later in the project.

The plan for October and November is still much as I described in the August – September edition of the Parish News. A focus on the south aisle and south chapel in October followed by the nave in November with the break for Christmas starting on Thursday 27th November.

In the last edition of the Parish News I confirmed that we had filled our funding gap. We were successful with 4 grant applications and withdrew the other two we had made once we had all the funding. The Church of England gave their maximum of £3,000 from a scheme which encourages churches to reduce their carbon footprint and we will use this to replace the lighting at all of the entrances to the church.

Stansted Airport awarded a grant of £5,000 which will be used to pay for the supply of the light fittings for the area below the chancel steps which is used extensively in our services and by the community and performers during concerts and recitals. We also were awarded £6,500 from Friends of Essex Churches Trust and £15,000 from the Congregational and General Trust.

Except for the CoE award, Trusts donate their grant on receipt of a paid invoice, however, as well as the £3,000 from the CoE we have also received the £20,000 matched funding that was offered via Essex Community Foundation. Your very generous donations have been matched as promised!

I updated the display in church at the start of September and will do so at the start of every month, do keep up-to-date by reading that and if you have any questions at any time, please do not hesitate to ask.

Steve Hasler 5th September 2025







## The Hundred Parishes Society—Crops

The topography, geology and fertile soils of the Hundred Parishes have combined to provide suitable conditions for farming.

Currently, cereals cover about two-thirds of our arable fields with crops of winter or spring-sown barley, oats and wheat. 20% of fields have been planted with oil seed rape or vegetables. Grasslands make up the remainder of fields, providing forage for cattle, sheep or horses.

Inevitably the weather influences the success or otherwise of crops. This spring has been exceptionally warm, very dry and sunny so there are concerns about a possible drought, reduced crop growth and lower yields. Some farmers started earlier than usual to irrigate vulnerable crops, and all are hoping for some more rainy days ahead as plants need moisture to absorb the nutrients they require for growth.

Healthy soils will retain more moisture; some farmers are planting 'cover crops' beneath the main crop as this will help to reduce water run-off and leaching of nutrients. Leaving wildflower margins around fields encourages assorted predators that eat pests of crops.

Many farmers diversify their activities to spread the risk: planting different crops, creating fishing lakes for anglers or converting barns for holiday lets or wedding venues.

In recent years, some have been able to realise the potential of their south-facing fields, conveniently located over underlying chalk, to plant grape vines. Guided by the results of detailed soil analysis, coupled with careful selection of appropriate species of grape, these winemakers are now producing first class sparkling English wines and also bottles of excellent red, white or rosé wine. Many offer tours of their vineyards as an added attraction.

Tricia Moxey, Trustee.



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by *Philip Sunderland*

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