

## St. Mary's Restoration Report Oct 2025

Things are moving along!

We are entering the final stages of the grant application for the Big Money. It will still be a long time before we hear anything though.

In August the Parochial Church Council (PCC) took consultation on a temporary floor. Many years ago the PCC had been discouraged from this course, but with new factors coming into play, it was decided to go ahead with it. (For example, at the moment, our insurance is over £5,000 - once we start using the church, it should reduce to about £2,000).

And so we have appointed a conservation accredited architect to make architectural applications for listed building consent. His costs are £900.

We have also appointed a conservation accredited structural / civil engineer for works to the floor. His fees are £1,050 + VAT.

This gives a total of £1,950 + VAT, and no, we can't do it cheaper due to 'Rules and Regulations', unfortunately; we have tried! We have to do all this before we can make a start on putting down a temporary floor. Tenders are being put out for materials and labour.

This would then mean that hopefully we could open our church, on a temporary basis, early next year, for Church services, including marriages and funerals, as well as exhibitions and other activities. It will give us more time to raise the ¼ million pounds that we expect a permanent floor and heating system will cost.

As said above, we are applying to the National Heritage Lottery fund and are cautiously optimistic that a sizeable chunk will be forthcoming. We were originally to put in for two lots of funding. This was almost ready to go, when it was suggested we put in one large funding request. Back to the drawing board with a lot of 'copy and paste'. Then the Lottery people said we should go *back* to the original 2 funding applications as this was more likely to be successful, due to other groups' funding applications. So, our first application is for the planning, and the second for the materials and labour. More copying and pasting yet again. Nothing is simple and things seem to change all the time. They are not going to give away money without a lot of effort on our part. Nearly there though.

For our grant application, we could do with emails or letters from anyone who would like to use the church building when it has a permanent floor. Would you want to use the church for an exhibition, concert, meeting, table top sale or any-

thing else? Apparently the church has excellent acoustics and we have full disabled access and toilets. Do you want to have your wedding or child's Christening there? Please let our Church Warden, Barbara, know on 01833 640571, or one of the other church officials, if you are interested in any of the above.

Meanwhile, coffee mornings on the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month are bringing in money for the Friends towards funding the restoration project. Please do join us. The Cake Stall and Tombola are great stalls, with bric-a-brac offering a wide choice of items, including lovely jewellery. With Christmas being just round the corner, you could find that special gift or something to put in a Christmas stocking. We know how hard the volunteers work to run all these, and are forever grateful.

As for raising funds, there are tote bags on sale (organised by Ted McFarlane) at the Village Bookshop, Jane Addison's shop and of course at our Coffee Mornings. Ted and his wife and daughter have been quietly (apart from some heavy breathing!) been raising money by completing a sponsored walk at the Cotherstone Fun Run, serenaded by Barney Band. The Gun club have also given us money from a sponsored shoot. Our home made sandwiches and cakes sold well to the competitors and supporters. Thanks Ted!

Two Totalisers placed around the village show the total money raised by the Friends. A 'Well Done' if you can find the location of both. Donations to the church can be made by BACS, sort code: 20 25 29, account number: 0072 1468. Gift Aid forms can be obtained from Barbara Moore (01833 640571) and McFarlane's butcher's in the village, who will also collect donations. Thanks Al!

Meanwhile, we still worship on the first Sunday of the month. The Methodists kindly let us have a Church of England Service in the Pathway, at 10.30am. Rev Geoff Lowson seems to gladly come out of retirement to take the services. He is a wonderful asset and we love his services. Thanks Geoff. And there is tea or coffee afterwards and often cake!

Please don't forget it's about our village church and our heritage. As the saying goes, 'Every little helps'.