

St Mary's: a Church for everybody in the community



- We aim to be a dynamic, welcoming and inclusive Church.
- We are a Church for all ages, from the youngest to those enjoying later life.
- The Church is a place of friendship, tranquillity and peace, and we want to repair it so it can continue to offer Weddings, Funerals, Christenings and Festivals such as Christmas.
- Outreach into village life and beyond includes Tuesday Toddlers, Bumps and Babes, Wild Church, collecting for the Foodbank and Community lunches.
- We are passionate about being a rural Church in a rural community, and we care greatly about our local nature, agriculture and habitats.

The Cabin

- The Cabin has become a busy hub for village life, made possible by volunteers from St Mary's, who give a lot of their time to make sure everything runs smoothly.
- Activities being booked include yoga, pilates, Brownies and Rainbows, Colour Wheel, Meditation, forest school, parish council meetings, cabin creative art and the WI.
- **We are immensely grateful for all the support from so many in the village. Your help with fundraising made our vision possible. We have come so far but we still have a lot of work to do, in repairing the medieval Church building itself.**



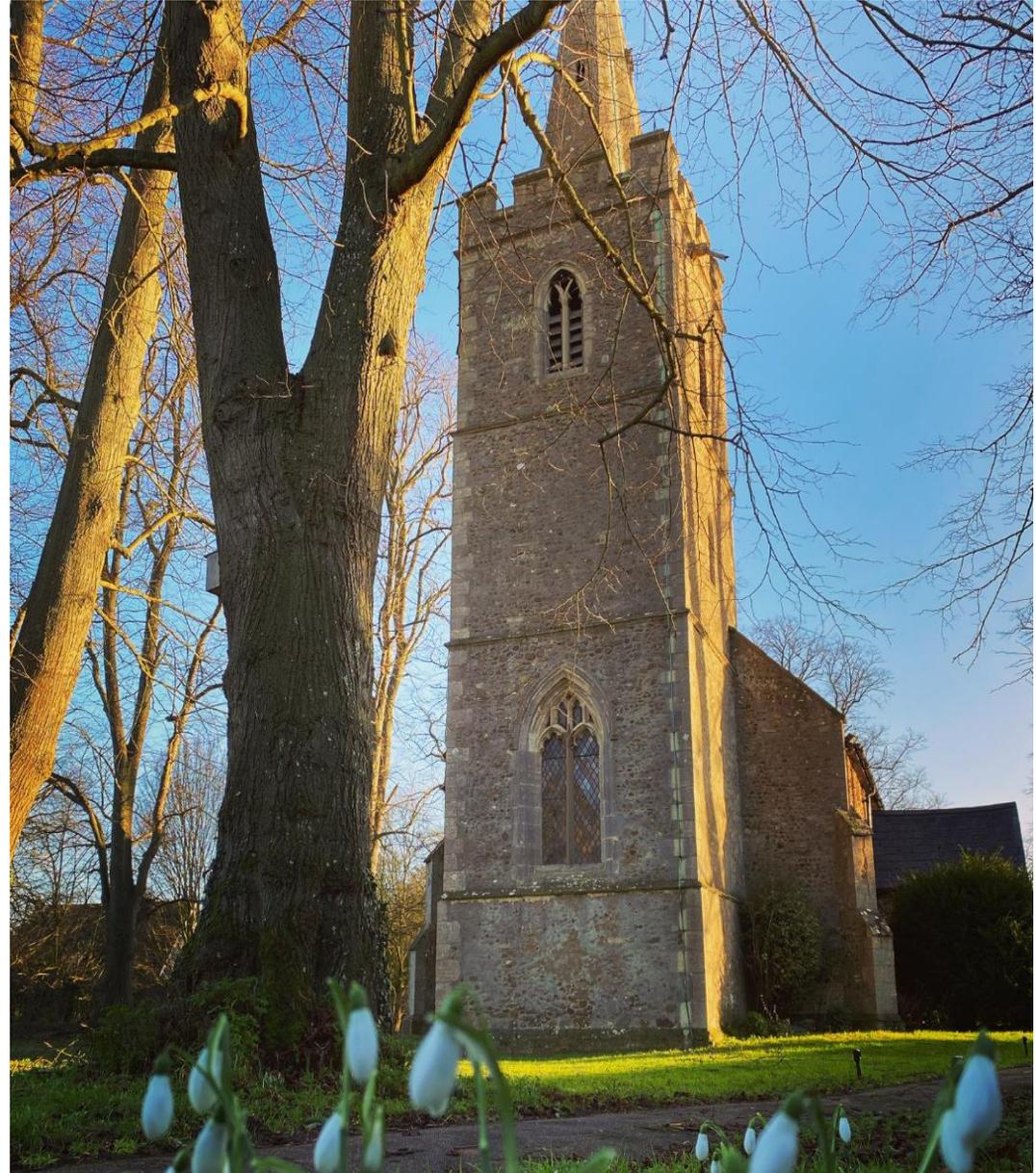
St Mary's Church, Hardwick



- The stained glass window at the east end of the Church is just one of the beautiful features of our little Church.
- St Mary's is the oldest building in the village, dating back to the Fourteenth Century.
- The ceiling is comprised of lath and limestone plaster, we think re-done in the late Victorian restoration of the Church in 1901.
- The Church underwent its last restoration and repair work in the mid 1980s. Whilst preparing the walls, a painting on the south wall and roundels in the chancel were discovered.
- These circles containing crosses can be seen either side of the chancel and are believed to be consecration crosses, marking the points on the walls where a Church was anointed as a place of worship.
- The medieval wall paintings were painted over by the Rector in the 1850's and are thought to date to 1460-1480. It is thought to be a mural depicting the seven deadly sins, under an illustration of the seven corporal works of mercy. It extends along the entire length of the south wall.

Biodiversity at St Mary's

- A dedicated team from LOTS and the congregation have been planting hundreds of snowdrops, daffodils and bluebells throughout the spring to enhance the beautiful green spaces around the Church and the Cabin.
- We are members of A Rocha Eco Church and the Wildlife Trust, and hold bronze awards from both.
- We have bat boxes, bird boxes, bug hotels, bird feeders and wildflower areas, which encourages insects, birds and small mammals.
- The proximity of fields, woods and the allotments alongside our pond and nearby waterways creates a very special nature mosaic which is important for the local environment, and we are working hard to enhance it.
- We are very grateful for all the help from the Chivers family in developing this green lung.
- Wild Church in particular has been a good way for children and families to connect faith with nature in Hardwick.



Plaster Falls



- St Mary's has had several plaster falls over the past few months, and most recently a significant fall at the back of the Church within the cordoned off area.
- A previous inspection identified a plaster bulge of concern, and this area of the Church was cordoned off, and access restricted.
- A full plaster survey is now needed for the entire ceiling, and this should identify any further areas of concern.
- Repairs are being planned, with the hope of reopening the Church as soon as possible.
- We have already taken advice from Historic England and a number of experts to make sure we make the right decisions for the wellbeing of the building.

Plaster Falls

The gap in the Nave ceiling is a result of a recent plaster fall, which led to the Church being closed for urgent repairs



Vestry Crack

- Weather patterns in recent years have subjected the building to a great deal of strain, resulting in visible and urgent problems.



Cracking

- The cracking in the building exemplifies the repairs that cannot be put off any longer.
- We need to undertake several urgent and costly repairs throughout the building, and this will include external work too.

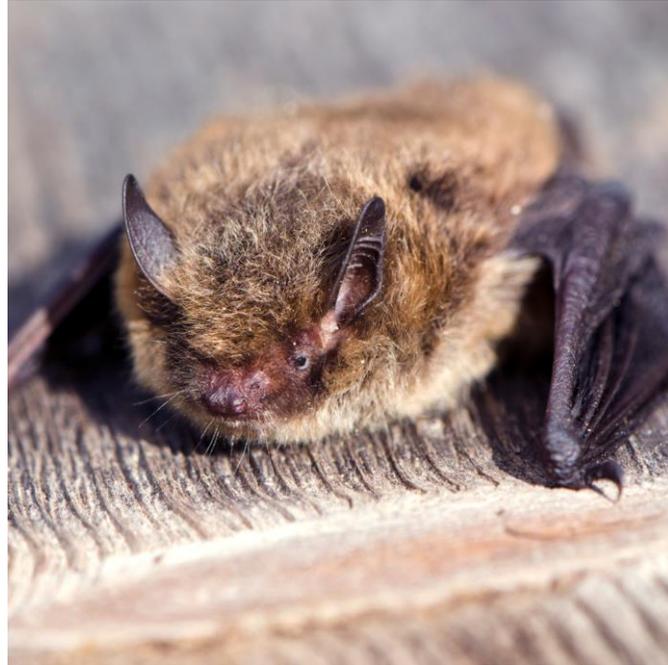


Bats at St Mary's

A recent bat survey has discovered the following bat species around the area of the Church:

- Pipistrelle bats
- Brown Long eared bats
- Serotine bats

A Dusk bat survey is being planned in the coming weeks.





Bats at St Mary's

Brown Long eared bats and Pipistrelles are fairly common in this part of Cambridgeshire.

Bats at St Mary's

Serotine Bats are relatively rare in Cambridgeshire. A group recently ringed at Wimpole and Eversden Woods have been tracked to Hardwick!

Bats often live for 40-50 years and only have one offspring a year (and occasionally twins). This is why they need protecting.

