

*Church & Tower Restoration
Project Update April 2025*



St Laurence Church
*'Balancing heritage with
function'*



We are delighted to report on our progress since our February 2025 update.

We believe that many of our prayers have been answered. You may recall that in February we asked for your prayers for:



*The Tower Project Team as they lead the project
*The extra funding needed to complete the whole project
*Government decisions around reclaiming VAT for places of worship
*Communications with stakeholders particularly neighbours
*Appointing a contractor
*Meetings with bat surveyors
*The timing of the project.

We were also looking to recruit an Evaluation Monitor

The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) have continued to monitor, advise and support the PCC Fabric Subcommittee when requested.

Updates since February 2025

- The NLHF have formally confirmed that they will increase the grant we are to receive. This will provide the extra funding needed to enable us to complete the tower project in full. They have also extended the grant expiry date the end of December 2025 to allow for the delays we have experienced.
- We have received confirmation from the Environmental Consultants (bat specialists) that our Bat Licence has been granted by Natural England.

The confirmation of the grant increase and Bat Licence is timely and wonderful news! This is a real answer to prayer!

- Obtaining the extra grant and Bat Licence mean that we have been able to instruct building contractors. Lodge and Sons were formally instructed on 31 March and contracts were signed. Lodge and Sons are our preferred contractors. They were voted in unanimously by the TPT on 31st March 2025 and are the contractors recommended by our Architects, Inkpen Downie, in their tender report.

This means that the building work start date will be April 22nd!

- The timing of our confirmation of the appointment of building contractors will allow us to reclaim VAT for the 24/25 tax year. This needed to be issued by midnight on March 31st and Inkpen Downie swiftly created and issued the contract paperwork before the deadline.

This means we save just under £3,500 in VAT!

- We have appointed a Party Wall Surveyor (PWS) to assist with the final decisions for the design and functionality of the screening on the scaffolding in order to provide privacy to neighbouring properties.
- Storage within the outer vestry (within the church) has been installed and is operational.
- The decision for the faculty for the shed is still awaited.
- We are in the process of considering designs and quotes for the new doors which will lead from the church into the tower. Faculties will be applied for in respect of the doors and the possible removal of the font step, which will improve accessibility.
- A faculty has been submitted for lighting to the lychgate. Extra lighting will improve safety of access.
- Sean Wood has provided us with media design guidelines for due consideration.
- Evaluation Monitors have been appointed and have provided us with an evaluation matrix for consideration.
- The previous Tower Restoration Project newsletter was sent out in February 2025.

Please continue with your prayers for:



*The Tower Project Team as they lead the project
*The commencement of the project on 22nd April
*The work of the Party Wall Surveyors
*Communications with stakeholders particularly neighbours