



## Why St Mary's "Always Needs Your Help"

Our village church has stood at the heart of the community for generations. It is a beautiful, historic listed building, with many outstanding features, not least its stained-glass windows and its bells, which have marked the great occasions of village life for centuries. It is part of the landscape we know and love and, I suspect, something most of us would greatly miss if it were no longer here.

**But a church is much more than an old and beautiful building.**

At its heart is a warm and inclusive Christian congregation, seeking to live out the Gospel by worshipping God and serving our neighbours. The church is there at some of the most significant moments in people's lives: baptisms and weddings, funerals and times of bereavement. It offers regular worship, celebrates Christmas, Easter and Harvest, provides a place for quiet prayer and reflection, and brings people together. Through the incumbent, the Church also provides pastoral care throughout the parish — visiting, listening and simply being alongside people when life becomes difficult. Much of this ministry is offered to people who may seldom, or never, attend a Sunday service.

**The church is here for the whole village, not simply for those who come through its doors each Sunday.**

Keeping it here, however, comes at a considerable cost. It currently takes around **£3,000 every month** to maintain the church and its ministry. There are insurance and utility bills, routine maintenance and the particular responsibilities that come with caring for an ancient listed building. There is also our contribution towards providing a vicar and supporting the wider ministry of the Church.

**For a small congregation, £3,000 every month is a daunting sum.**

This is why we need the help of the wider community. We are immensely grateful for every donation, whether large or small, and for everyone who supports our fundraising events. Regular giving is particularly valuable because it enables us to plan ahead with greater confidence.

Yet this is not simply about paying bills or preserving an attractive old building. The Church's first purpose is its **mission**: to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and to put that faith into practice through welcome, compassion, service and care.

We want our church bells still to be ringing, our doors still to be opening and Christian worship still to be offered here for generations to come. We want the Church to remain a place where anyone in our community can turn — in celebration, in sorrow, in faith, or simply in need of a listening ear.

**That is something worth preserving. And it is something we can only do together.**