

St Mary's Church
Broomfield

January 2023

Dear Project Rutherford Supporter

I am contacting you to update you about our Project Rutherford.

The renovation of our tower and spire continues to prove a challenge but we are hopeful that work will begin again in the near future and that it will be completed soon after Easter.

Having discovered the poor state of the spire timbers, it took a while to get the necessary engineer's reports and materials. During this time we were busily applying for various grants to cover the costs of the extra work. To-date we have achieved £50,000, but we still need at least another £35,000 so please do pray for positive responses from the many applications that have been submitted. Work on the timbers commenced in October and was going very well until another complication arose, and the men were pulled off the site.

Apparently the scaffolding, when originally erected, did not exactly follow the design prepared. This was duly modified and was passed as safe by several different inspections. However, the designer never signed off the work and, when pushed, refused to do this because it had not followed his plan exactly. This negated Baker's insurance, and so the men could not continue to work on it. A new designer was identified but his initial plans contained some anomalies that required a comprehensive meeting of all parties on site after the New Year.

The way forward determined involves some strengthening to the spire frame prior to the scaffolding being partially removed, then a stronger scaffold being erected, after which work can be resumed. We are hopeful that the work will begin shortly.

Clearly we are unable to develop anything to do with the internal decorations of the round tower and the conservation of the fresco until the building work is completed, sometime in the spring.

Nevertheless, the teams of designers, researchers and activity volunteers are working apace and this side of the project is progressing well. The Faculty for the removal of the pews was finally completed and they have now been lifted, creating a lovely space for the exhibition area. Some work is still required to the plaster on the wall, but the ramp access is in situ and the temporary display now housed within the area.

Two of the pews have been sold but there is still 1 left so if you know anyone who would like one in their house or garden – a lovely piece of oak furniture for £300 – please let us know.

The design of the exhibition created by Patrick Readings and Ian Mercer is looking very professional and construction of this has now started in Jill Readings' garage. The materials to populate the displays are almost complete and we are hopeful that the permanent

exhibition can be opened on 25th March when Naomi Courtney-Luck gives her talk on the Life and Art of her Great-Aunt.

The activities team have been creating some really interesting ideas to stimulate the children and following the initial pilot, a second event with the Broomfield Beavers was undertaken in November.

The first of the *People and Stone* talks resumed in October, when Ken Crowe talked about the *Saxon Princely Burials* at St Mary's. Three more have been planned:

Saturday 28th January Ian Mercer *Deep History in the Church Walls*

Saturday 25th February Chris Parkinson *Stained Glass and Rosemary Rutherford*

Saturday 25th March Naomi Courtney-Luck *Life and Art of Rosemary Rutherford*

Tickets are £5 available at the door, in church, or from Ros Mercer.

The church is now open on a Tuesday and Thursday morning, 10.30-12.30hrs. As the exhibition will soon be up and running, if you still feel able to join the rota to assist with church sitting please do let me know as we would value more people helping maintain this.

Thank you for your continued interest in this important project.

With warmest wishes – and Happy New Year!

Trudy

Dr.T.A.Stevens
for St Mary's, Broomfield PCC

Trudy.Stevens2021@gmail.com