

A Building for Us All at the Heart of Our Village (Besides the Pubs!)

It is not unusual to have a significant Grade 1 listed building in an English village. More often than not this building is the parish church. Nor did it used to be unusual for an English village to have a pub or perhaps more than one pub, although sadly in many villages the pubs have long since disappeared. In Dullingham, we are very fortunate to have our two pubs and our church, in close relationship, one at each apex of the village green. It would be hard to imagine the village landscape without them, and in one way or another all three rely on the village for support.

The oldest part of our church dates back to the 13th Century, and this is the chancel, where the altar is. In so many English parish churches including our own, the chancel is smaller and architecturally inferior to the nave (where the congregation sits), because legally the nave used to belong to the parishioners, who would embellish it and regularly use it for secular (non-religious) and recreational purposes, particularly in pre-Reformation days: there are records in Aldeburgh to say that ship-auctions were regularly held in the nave as well as theatrical performances, and the south chapel of our own church once served as a school.

What relevance is this to today's Dullingham St Mary? Well, the church remains as it always has a strong physical presence at the centre of the village, and is open all year round during daylight hours, affording us all a chance for a moment of peace in a troubled world. The relationship between the church and the village community continues to be important and perhaps now more than ever. A step in this direction we'd like to take in the near future is to form a Friends of St Mary's Church, which will be a body to raise funds to care for the fabric of the church, through events, subscriptions and donations, promoting use of the church for a variety of secular purposes, serving the village. This will take time to get going, and in the meantime we are always looking for volunteers to assist us at our events, and for anybody who can spare a little time for the extremely important jobs which allow us to keep the building open, accessible and operational.

Economically, we receive no financial support from the Church of England or Government, and so we parishioners are responsible for sustaining the church financially (including with the other five churches in our benefice, the salary of our Rector), and you generously help us with this through donations and attendance at the events we put on through the year, such as the village fete and carol service. Financial donations are always welcome, as we try to recover from lost income during the pandemic, address some of the critical maintenance and repair issues facing our building, and modernise its facilities. Those of you who attended our recent events will know that we have a severe damp problem at the east end of the south aisle, perilously close to our lovely organ and this will cost approximately £40k to remedy. We are writing grant proposals in the hope of securing some funding toward this and other urgent repairs, but if you are able to spare a little in these very difficult times then we would be extremely grateful.

If you would like to get in touch with us, to volunteer, assist, help establish the Friends of St Mary's, provide ideas or donate towards our building repairs and upkeep, then please do contact one of our church wardens, Anthea or Peter. See overleaf for contact details.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this and we hope to see you at one of our upcoming events.

John Dalton, on behalf of the Parochial Church Council (PCC)

Church Wardens:

Anthea Kenna: anthea6@icloud.com or Peter Allan: peter@doxbondcambridge.co.uk

Our bank details are as follows and all donations towards repairs and upkeep of the church building very gratefully received. Please do reference Fabric or Building in the donation.

Account Names: St Mary's Dullingham Parochial Church Council

Sort Code: 20-60-38

Account Number: 40337684