

FABRIC REPORT

COVERING THE YEAR JANUARY - DECEMBER 2025

St John the Divine

During 2025 the organ access was improved for health and safety reasons. The south staircase to the gallery and entrance lobby were redecorated/refurbished together with new carpeting to the lobby and narthex to make the church welcoming.

Prepared by Martin Brecknell
7 May 2026

St Mary Magdalene

The extensive works to replace the decayed timber beam in the South Arcade (between the Nave and the South Aisle) were at last completed in October 2025, and the scaffolding could be removed after being in place for some 18 months. The eventual cost of the works was £93,894, net of VAT. These works were undertaken principally by Stone Edge Conservation Ltd.

The affected areas on either side of the South Arcade have been replastered, but these need to fully dry out before they can be repainted. The decorative ceiling in the South Aisle may require a specialist decorator to blend the areas that require to be painted with the existing.

In order to hopefully prevent future water ingress and damage to the beam, works are being carried out to the South Aisle roofs to improve rainwater drainage. External scaffolding has been in place for some time at the south-west corner of the church to provide access to the roofs.

As mentioned in last year's Inspecting Architect's Fabric Report, the scaffolding proved a useful opportunity to carry out various repairs at the same time, including replacing several dozen slipped and broken slates, remove moss and weeds, renew some of the cast-iron rainwater goods, repair leadwork and repair part of the stone cornice that had fallen off. Stone Edge Conservation Ltd were instructed to carry out these works, which will continue into 2026.

Daniel Benson, the Parish Inspecting Architect, of Ablett Architects, carried out the Quinquennial Survey of St Mary Magdalene in December 2025. Many of the urgent items he identified in his Report were already scheduled into the roof repairs mentioned above, but other urgent works are recommended which will need to be dealt with over the coming months.

An independent Fire Risk Assessment of the church was undertaken in July 2025, which highlighted some recommendations and these are being implemented.

The order was placed in November for new railings to be installed alongside the south passage beside the church. These are being made by Leighton Ironcraft Limited and will be installed in phases in 2026. The initial two phases will run between the yew bushes, which have been pruned back to a goblet shape in anticipation. The final phase may have to be delayed until the site huts that have been built to facilitate the Parish Rooms project have been removed.

The Faculty for the project to replace/retune the St Mary's peal of bells was granted in July 2025. This project has taken many years to get to this stage, and credit has to go to Jackie Harrison for her persistence and overcoming the many hurdles along the way. The bells team must be congratulated for running a highly successful fundraising campaign and have raised close to the £200,000 required to pay for the new peal of bells.

A Faculty has also granted for the new liturgical furniture – including a new Nave Altar, clergy and servers chairs and kneelers, Lectern, credence table and display case for our Book of Remembrance – which has been designed by Luke Hughes Designs Ltd, and which will be delivered in Spring 2026. The new furniture will cost £77,500 net of VAT, largely covered by generous donations from parishioners.

Prepared by John Buckingham
5 May 2026

St Matthias

The reroofing of the South Aisle and Organ Chamber was completed at the beginning of 2025.

A large piece of stone fell from the Tower and caused damage to a roof rafter in October. This damage was repaired. Detailed analysis of the stonework on the Tower is still needed – this may involve either a drone survey or a stonemason abseiling down the Tower.

The proposed redesign of the Foyer area including a new heating system has been put on temporary hold until an energy audit and heating survey of the whole church can be organised. This is currently in progress.

The current heating system with a gas boiler is in poor condition and difficult to repair. The heating system needs to be replaced but cannot be progressed this until the energy audit and heating survey has been carried out. The Diocese will not allow the replacement of the gas boiler so any new system will probably involve the use of heat pumps and underfloor heating.

The production of the final design of the new font was delayed for a few months due to the heavy workload of the furniture maker. The final design drawings have now been received, and the faculty application will be submitted very soon.

Prepared by Sally Gill
5 May 2026