

Expert help secures progress on buildings

Diocesan advisers can help our parishes to repair and improve our church buildings for future generations to enjoy

CHRISTIANS have worshipped in this church for more than 1,000 years – and our vision is to ensure they continue to do so. One of the vital elements of that is repairing the building.

And at **St Peter and St Paul Church, Fareham**, there are many who are committed to doing just that, including 12-year-old bell ringer Brandon Joyce. He is so keen to raise money that he has created a calendar showcasing images from the church. He is now selling copies of it and putting the proceeds towards its building fund.

The ancient, grade II listed building is a mix of medieval, Georgian and Victorian architecture, and was the original parish church of Fareham. But, to continue centuries of worship, the building needs some essential repairwork.

The initial repairs this year have been to the roof of the church hall, which had been closed on health and safety grounds.

The old, leaking roof, which included asbestos, has been replaced with more modern roofing, which the PCC have invested approximately £100k in. Some refurbishment is now needed inside to make the hall operational again.

And the bell tower needs significant work to ensure its historic clock starts working, to repair its deteriorating cupola, and to allow bell ringing to begin again. The PCC



Brandon Joyce and his calendar, with bell ringers and congregation members from St Peter and St Paul, Fareham

has now committed itself to around £300k of repairs.

‘Ultimately, I’d love to be captain of the bell tower at this church’

While dedicated volunteers can do an amazing job, it’s this kind of specialist work that our diocesan staff support. Our advisers have a particular role in ensuring full consultation with interested parties and the quality of any repair work.

In the case of St Peter and St Paul, our buildings project manager Holly Reynolds has helped the PCC to understand the extent of work to

be done and liaised with buildings experts and contractors to see it through all the processes – from permission to work being completed on site. Strategic funding has been provided from the national Church to help Holly to support work here and at St Michael’s, Paulsgrove.

And the enthusiasm of parishioners such as Brandon really helps. He already rings bells at St Barnabas, Swanmore, but is keen to be part of the bell ringing community at St Peter and St Paul.

His drawings of the church have now been turned into a 2026 calendar, which is available for £10. You can buy a copy via: SsPeterAndPaul2026Calendar@hotmail.com

Improvements pave way for worship

REFURBISHMENTS in two Portsmouth churches have paved the way for brand new congregations to be created.

Both All Saints Church in Commercial Road, and St Alban’s, Copnor, have been refurbished with strategic funding from the national Church. They are both part of the Harbour Church network.

All Saints Church (pictured right) has seen new flooring, heating, plastering and new audio-visual facilities installed. The chancel has been restored to how it may have looked in Victorian times.

The completion of the project was celebrated at a Eucharist on All Saints Day to mark 200 years since the church’s foundation stone was originally laid.

These improvements mean a

new contemporary congregation can be launched. It’s called ‘The Eleven’ and starts in January.

Meanwhile, an all-age service called ‘The Ten’ was launched in St Alban’s Church, Copnor, in September for families who live in the area.

It came as a new cafe and welcome area is being created at the church’s entrance, and new chairs and flooring are ensuring that the space is flexible. Its kitchen and toilets will also be improved.

Harbour Church’s chief operating officer Josh Pearson acknowledged the healthy dialogue with the Twentieth Century Society, which has an interest in St Alban’s as a grade II listed building which includes historic artefacts – such as the font Dickens was baptised in.



Brandon said: “I already ring bells at St Barnabas, Swanmore, but my family regularly visits Fareham. I developed an interest in the bell tower and the clock, and I asked if I could ring the bells. I actually rang six of them, and I started practising here every Monday, as well as practising in Swanmore on a Friday.

“The bell tower needed to close for repair, so I asked how I could help. I enjoy drawing, and I was the cartoonist on my school magazine, so I thought about doing a calendar.

“Some of the drawings are inspired by photos, some are things that I’ve seen. I really like expressing my feelings by drawing. I actually had more than 12 drawings, so had to select which ones would be suitable for a 2026 calendar.

“I hope we can raise £700 from the initial printing of the calendar, but we’ll print more if we sell out. I’ve also got some ideas for a



Holly Reynolds in the tower at St Peter and St Paul, Fareham

Christmas card and an activity trail. Ultimately, I would love to be captain of the bell tower at St Peter and St Paul, after it reopens. I’m happy to do whatever we need to do to raise the money so that can happen.”

The extent of the repair work needed in the church was revealed in its latest quinquennial inspection. When Holly Reynolds began work for our diocese in March 2025, the two specific building projects she became responsible for were at St Peter and St Paul, and at St Michael’s, Paulsgrove. The Fareham

project involved her digesting the inspection report and liaising with the PCC to determine priorities.

She then helped to co-ordinate the architect, structural engineer and contractors so that work could be identified and costed. Scaffolding went up around the church hall in the autumn, and within four weeks a new roof had been installed. Some remedial work inside will now deal with previous water damage.

Holly also worked with the PCC on emergency work to keep the historic bell tower safe, outlined the scale of repair work needed, and has liaised with a horologist to work out how the church’s clock can keep time again. It’s hoped that this work can begin next year, after a tendering process.

“I really enjoy being on the coalface of this kind of work, liaising with experts to discover how we can improve a historic building,” she