

Project Outline

The latest QI report and further professional inspections identified that the existing lead sheet roof covering of the south aisle and parapet gutter lining have significantly deteriorated over many years of wear and is at the end of its serviceable life. There are approximately 60 lead patch repairs, it is also apparent that the lead sheets have slipped down to the parapet gutters by approximately 75 mm in some places, exposing the abutment stonework beneath the windowsill.

The south aisle has significant water ingress which has resulted in parts of the interior being 'cordoned off'. The walls are already showing signs of water damage and pews have been covered with boarding and tarpaulins to help protect them from further water damage. During bad weather, the puddled water from the tarpaulins has to be removed on a regular basis.

Patch repairs have been carried out over the years, but the lead is now so thin that it disintegrates when touched. Consequently, it has been recommended that, as a high priority, the roof be stripped off and re-covered. Extensive timber gutter and beam end repairs have been carried out previously as a result of leaks, but there is a high likelihood of other urgent structural timber repairs being required.

Heritage

St. Peter's Church, listed on Historic England's Heritage at Risk register, dates back to around 1113 AD and holds a Grade I listing as a site of exceptional interest. Built in Norman, Decorated, and Perpendicular styles, the chancel features a piscina, three fine sedilia, two lockers, a low side window, and an arch with rich hanging tracery leading to the chantry, which also has a piscina. It is one of only eleven churches in the country that once had a roof loft for the sacrament, with evidence of old stairs still visible at the chancel entrance, along with a third piscina in the wall above. Maxey, an ancient settlement, has ties to the Beaufort family, and Margaret of Lancaster, mother of Henry VII, is believed to have occasionally stayed at Maxey Castle and may have visited the church. The church's heritage, stories, and connection to local history are cherished by the community. Architecturally and historically significant, it also houses an intriguing collection of late-Victorian diaries by Rev. Sweeting, detailing village history and offering insights into the church and its parishioners.

This special building is used by the residents of Maxey, Nunton and Deeping Gate for worship but it also very much a community venue hosting concerts, Jazz evening, flower festivals, afternoon teas, and until the closure of the Tower, the parachuting of teddy bears from the tower parapet's, a great source of fun for both children and adults. Future planned events include a celebration of the proms evening and an overnight stay where people can come and observe bat activity.

Importance to the Community

This special building serves the residents of Maxey, Nunton, and Deeping Gate as a place of worship and for significant services like christenings, weddings, and funerals. It's also a vibrant community venue, hosting concerts, jazz evenings, flower festivals, afternoon teas, and even teddy bear parachuting from the tower, delighting both children and adults. Upcoming planned events include a proms celebration, more jazz evenings, and an overnight bat observation experience. The church is open to welcomes visitors every weekend, while weekday visits can be arranged by appointment.

St Peter's is home to a colony of pipistrelle bats, and repairs will be carefully scheduled to avoid disturbing them or their roosts. A comprehensive report from Natural England provides guidelines on the timing of the work. Local volunteers will continue monitoring the bats, installing bat boxes, and briefing contractors to ensure their safety. We carry out at least two bat counts every year to monitor the movement and numbers of the bats.

All projects enjoy full community support. Volunteers handle key responsibilities such as cleaning the church interior and maintaining the churchyard. Recent fundraising efforts have been community-driven and volunteer-led. Once repairs are complete, a celebratory event will be held to honour all contributors, including grant providers.

The most recent Quinquennial Inspection report refers to repairs needed for the church tower. We are very pleased to say that following fundraising events and grant contributions, including from yourselves these have very recently been completed, the tower has been reopened, and we are now able to ring the bells once more. We are very aware that the QI has raised areas of concern where attention is needed but we need to ensure that the church is watertight before this work is completed.