



**Who are we?
What do we do?
Are we worth funding?
We brought the elephant into the
room.....**



Busting a Myth of Church Funding:
A National and International Perspective

Many people think that church buildings, as historic public buildings of the National church, receive funding from the state to maintain them. This is not true in England though it is more true in other countries. Recently, Felicity was asked to write about this for our local businesses group because we have been talking to them about supporting the *Friends of St Mary's* scheme. As we are thinking about church finances this Lent you might also like to read how England is different from other countries in (not) funding the maintenance of our historic national churches.

Scroll to the bottom of this newsletter to read what happens in France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, Belgium, and Poland - and what happens in England.

Sunday 8th Mar
Third Sunday in Lent

8am Holy Communion (St Mary's)

10am Holy Communion
(St Mary's and livestream)

10am Holy Communion (St John's)

9pm Compline (Chancel in St Mary's)

Mon, Weds and Fri
10am Pause for Prayer online

Tuesday 10th Mar
7.30pm Iona Service (St John's)

Weds 11th Mar
11am Holy Communion (St Mary's)

Sunday 15th Mar
Mothering Sunday

8am Holy Communion (St Mary's)

10am Open Space Service
(St Mary's)

10am Holy Communion (St John's and
livestream)

10am Holy Communion
(Hampton Poyle)

9pm Compline (Chancel in St Mary's)

All livestreams are here:
www.youtube.com/@KidHPChurch

Don't forget our service sheets are downloadable
and online. Feel free to bring a tablet to the
service to help the environment.

Parish Office: 01865 375611
office@kidhp.org.uk

Lent 2026



'Come and See'

This Lent, we're inviting you to *Come and See* - an opportunity to explore the profound meal at the heart of Christian life. Whether you're new to faith, returning after a break, or have been part of church for years, this is a chance to pause, reflect and explore what the Eucharist might have to say to you. In addition to the group, you can also sign up to receive free daily Lent emails with short reflections, plus a weekly video from Bishop Steven. You do not need to sign up to take part in the group, but if you wish you can sign up here:

<https://oxford.anglican.org/come-and-see>

We'll be running *Come and See* at St Marys on Mondays from 2:30pm - 4pm, starting on February 23rd, in a discussion group similar to previous years.

"The Making Group: Lent 2026"

The Making Group is convening again to respond to the Diocesan Lent Course "Come and See" in our own unique way. The group will meet on Friday afternoons in Lent, on the following dates:- Friday 20th and 27th February, 6th, 13th, 20th March, with 27th March as the day to put it all together. The Refectory, 2:30-4:00pm. All are welcome, and no particular skill is required. Just bring your imagination, an open mind, and a willingness to use your hands to create something special for Lent.

Please let Rosemary Meara know if you would like to join the group. Rosemary.meara@gmail.com

Compline Services and Talks – St Mary's Kidlington 8.45-9.15pm

On each Sunday evening during Lent and on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Holy Week, starting at 8.45pm, there will be a short talk followed by the service of Compline (starting at 9pm).

The ancient office of Compline is a service of quietness and reflection at the end of the day.

Children & Young People: News

I'm pleased to announce the launch of the Youth Homegroup every 4th Sunday 7.00pm to 8.30pm at St John's Vicarage (next door to the church). It's for anyone of Secondary School age. Dates for this year are: April 26th, May 24th, June 28th July 26th [not August], September 27th, October 25th, November 22nd [not December]. Each week we'll look at one of Jesus's parables to see what we make of it and how it might have something to say to us. This will form the starting point of a discussion where they can raise or explore ideas and issues, ending with a short and simple time of prayer.

Everyone is welcome to one or the other or both – but NB spaces may be limited.

We're not booking places yet but if you're interested in finding out more just RSVP to Oliver: 07787 991320 or oliver@kidhp.org.uk

Please note that the Easter Fun Day and Desert Island Discs advertised within are both raising money for the live Nativity in December (camels). The cost of the camels does not come from our church budget. Do come and support these events, thanks all.

SPRING CLEANING AT ST JOHN'S

We are hoping to give St John's a "spruce up" on the mornings of Saturdays 7th and 14th March, 10am to 1pm, and invite you to join us - there's plenty of choice of things to do. Basic materials (and coffee and biscuits) will be provided but do bring along your "favourite" cleaning tools and materials too. Do come and join the party.

SUMMER SUNDAY TEAS



The summer teas rota is now being compiled. We serve teas in the Refectory each Sunday from May to the first weekend of September. We have 4 people to serve each Sunday and 3 people to bake cakes. This is very worthwhile and fun to work together to serve the community. I'm welcoming offers of help please. It would be very helpful if you could let me know when you can do this. We need a big team. Newcomers to the church would be very welcome. Thanks. Philippa. 01865 378444

Did you know?

- That we are already planning for the Christmas Live Nativity event with 3 camels? Desert Island Discs and Easter Fund Day are fundraising for this so that the cost does not come out of the general budget.

Bach to Bollywood concert

We are delighted to let you know that a concert, "Bach to Bollywood", will take place on the evening of **October 24th**, 2026, at St Mary's. All are invited to perform! You could sing, dance, play an instrument or recite a poem as a solo or ensemble, and are welcome to offer a piece of any genre. Please note that the duration of your performance should be a maximum of 4 minutes.

If you would like to participate, please contact Daffy (daffkrish@gmail.com) and Shreya (shreya@krishnanm.com).

Serving the Community

Dates for your diary :

Funerals:

4th Mar, 1pm St Mary's
Irene Greenway (Eileen)
10th Mar, 11am St Mary's
Christopher Hair
11th Mar, 1pm Oxford Crematorium
Mavis Fry
17th Mar, 1pm St Mary's Roy Taylor

In our Prayers this Week

Peter, Eirian and James
Sheila
Sarah and Vassilis
David and Tricia, Pat, Diana
Andrew
David and Joan T
Graham Bullock

Those who have died: Mavis Fry

We continue to pray for all where there are wars and that the cease-fire in the middle east will hold.

Last Sunday we thinned the snowdrops from the churchyard, potted and sold them and raised £92. Well done to those who helped !

The Friends of St Mary's

...is hoping to find some 'street reps' from different areas in Kidlington to distribute the leaflets and posters advertising their programme of interesting events and speakers. Can you help? Hope so - contact Joanna on joannakfoster@icloud.com.



Men's Pub Night

First Friday of every month

Kings Arms from 7.30pm.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

A service for everyone!

Friday 6 March

I will give you rest, come

Nigeria 2026

Please join us for this
service
at
St John's Church
The Broadway OX5 1DD
at 7.30pm

All welcome



INFORMED PRAYER PRAYERFUL ACTION

24-7 365 Days a year Prayer movement Ecumenical International Women-led

wwdp.org.uk

Registered Charity Number 233242

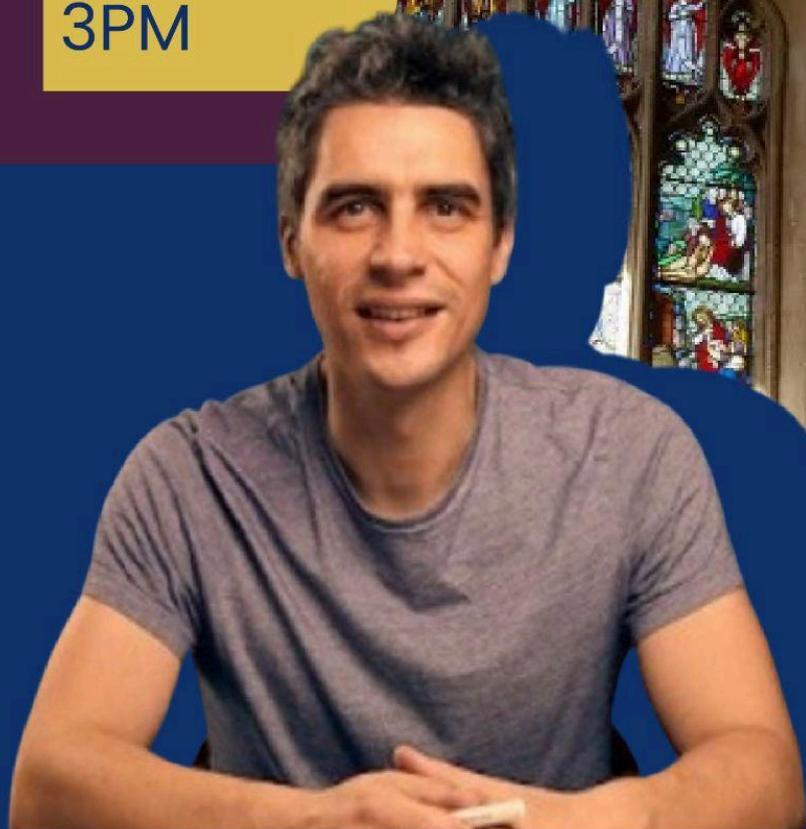
TEA TALK AT ST MARY'S CHURCH

Church St, Kidlington,
OX5 2BA

DAVID HEWETT

Professor of Mathematics at
UCL and Director of Music at St
Mary's Kidlington

SUNDAY
8TH MARCH
2026 AT
3PM



FREE ENTRY

In this talk, which will feature live musical demonstrations, David will explore some of the many connections between mathematics and music, sharing some insights into his academic research into the mathematics of acoustics and his maths-music collaboration with a professional percussionist.

Tea follows the
talk – Donations
in aid of Church
Funds



LEADING CHANGE

a discussion with



**Vice-Chancellor
of Oxford
University**

– Professor Irene Tracey



**Bishop of
Oxford**

– the Rt Revd
Dr Steven Croft



**SATURDAY
21ST MARCH
6 PM**

St Mary's Kidlington,
OX5 2BA

BOOKING
fosmk.org.uk
or **Eventbrite**



TICKETS £25 -
discounts available



St Mary's Church, Kidlington

Easter Fun Day!

Tuesday 7th April

10am - 3pm

Free entry!

*charge applies to some activities

Bouncy castle*

Easter hunts with a chocolate
prize!

Easter crafts

Face painting*

Easter storytime

Garden games

Hot food from
'The Crock Pot'*

Refreshments*



Saturday 18th April
St Mary's Church
7pm



DESERT ISLAND DISCS

Buy tickets here:
<https://tinyurl.com/oliver-desert>



Rev'd Oliver Harrison

Interviewed by Jan Jeffreys

£12.50 on the door

Includes a glass of wine and nibbles



**FRIENDS
OF**

**ST MARY'S
KIDLINGTON**



Future events

-Saturday, 6pm 21 March at St Mary's

Leading Change

Professor Irene Tracey, Vice Chancellor of Oxford & The Rt Revd Dr. Steven Croft Bishop of Oxford will discuss the challenge of honouring tradition while meeting the technological, scientific, spiritual and social demands of the 21st century.

-Sunday, 6pm 26 April at St Mary's

Musical dialogue

A conversation between two outstanding pianists - Dame Imogen Cooper and Tim Horton who will be discussing the pleasures and pressures of performance.

Monday, 13 July. 3 pm

Visit to Exeter College, Oxford

led by Professor John Maddicott

Sunday, 5pm 6 September at St Mary's

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

presented by *This is my Theatre*

How Churches are Funded

The January speaker for *Kidlington Connections* was Joanna Foster CBE who spoke about the newly relaunched *Friends of St Mary's* [church, Kidlington] organisation and the new opportunities for local businesses to become involved through sponsorship or business membership.

We all enjoyed the talk and there was some discussion afterwards about how churches are funded in this country. There are a lot of myths and misunderstandings around this, so I have been asked to write this piece as a bit more of an explanation. For clarity, I am writing only about the Church of England, not Methodists, Baptists, RCs, or the free churches.

Who is the Church of England for?

Everyone who lives, works, or passes through the geographical parish boundaries. It doesn't matter if people go to church, call themselves Christians, or care about the church at all; if someone lives in our parish we have a care for them. This is one result of being the national church, and of being organised in a geographical parish system. Every square inch of the country is in a CofE parish so every person in the country has a parish church if they wish to connect with it.

People connect in all sorts of ways – through community groups, children's work, lunches and socials, bereavement work, schools work, cultural events, pastoral care, social justice, ecological initiatives, use of the buildings, volunteering, and of course life events. You are *legally entitled* to be baptised, married (with a very few exceptions), and have your funeral taken in your parish church.

The CofE also has a civic role which places our parish churches at the heart of our wider communities. We are not just here for those who come to worship week by week; we are here to be a service to our community. In Kidlington we take this very seriously and are running three community projects – for pre school families, supporting mental health, and making a community garden.

How are churches funded in other countries?

It's interesting how different countries fund their churches.

In France: the Church depends solely on donations from church members to run pastoral and spiritual care and general mission, but any church buildings (built before 1905) generally belong to the municipalities, which are responsible for their maintenance. (So that would mean Cherwell District Council would maintain St Mary's Church)

In Germany: the state collects a church tax from everyone associated with a church and gives it to the church – this adds up to about 3% of all state income tax. You can opt out.

In Austria: the church receives a percentage of the annual taxable income of church members and also receives annual “reparation payments” from the state, compensation for property confiscated during the Nazi era and not subsequently returned to it. They represent about 8% of the church budgets.

In Italy: the state levies an indirect church tax. This is subtracted from the total proceeds of personal income tax. Since 1984, each taxpayer can decide, in their tax return, to allocate the eight per thousand fixed either to the State, or to one of the twelve religious communities which have concluded an agreement with the State. You cannot avoid this so-called “mandate” tax by leaving the Church. These taxes are 70% of the Italian Catholic Church's income.

In Belgium, since Napoleon, the State directly or indirectly finances the tasks of the Church through various legal arrangements. The clergy are paid by the State, which also funds clergy pensions. The funding of Church institutions and projects is by negotiation with public authorities.

In Spain: taxpayers decide voluntarily, when completing their tax return, whether 0.7% of their tax contribution should be allocated either to the Catholic Church or to social or cultural objectives.

In Poland: more than 40 million euros per year are deducted from the state budget to supply an “ecclesiastical fund.” This fund was created in 1950 to compensate for the expropriation of religious communities during the communist era. It is used to pay the pension and other social insurance contributions of a large part of the clergy of all denominations, as well as the maintenance costs of the churches.

And How Do We Fund Churches in England?

In England the Church of England is the State Church and has legal responsibilities within our society. Yet no church in the UK receives any financial support from the state. Church buildings are maintained only by their congregations and people who love them. This is a HUGE burden.

Churches can claim gift aid on donations (not sales or subscriptions) which adds 25% to their value, but there are no other concessions available. After April 2026 listed church buildings will no longer be able to reclaim the VAT paid on any repairs. Grants for repairs are few and far between.

Domestic houses cost a lot to insure, heat, and maintain: How much more does a historic church building cost?

All the costs of our churches in England are paid for through voluntary donations. This includes, insurance, heating and lighting, roof and spire repairs, plumbing, maintenance and improvements, access requirements, plus the costs of clergy, all ministry and resources, all the office costs associated with running a small business, and any employed parish staff.

There are some strong myths around:

- that 'the church' is rich, with historic assets and investments to fund it.
- that there is help available to maintain the heritage in our church buildings,
- anyway no one cares about church any more.

None of these are true.

What is true is that:

- church congregations all across the country struggle to maintain historic buildings that are a great asset to their communities
- actually very many people care deeply about their local church, whether or not they are regular worshippers
- church buildings and church volunteers add value to local communities in every part of the country, socially, pastorally, culturally, as well as spiritually
- there is a huge need for people who care about a church existing in their community to contribute to its continued existence.

What Does This Mean For People in Kidlington?

St Mary's is a thriving and very active church, but it cannot be maintained solely by the people who attend regularly.

If you care about St Mary's Church, Kidlington in any way please consider joining the *Friends of St Mary's*.

Your modest membership fee will help towards maintaining and improving this magnificent church for all local people to enjoy, and you can get involved in the varied programme of events, talks, festivals, trips, and productions which FOSMK puts on.

And if you are part of a local business, we have a new Business Membership and Sponsorship Scheme for you.

I hope this goes some way to answering the questions that Joanna's talk provoked. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of any more help in any way at all. We are here for every local person.

Felicity