

St Sampson's Unlocked Project Update January 2026

A big personal thank you for your continued support for St Sampson's.

Restoration of St Sampson's Church is progressing, helping preserve a Christian presence in South Hill and ensuring the heritage building remains accessible for community use now and in the future.

We continue to hold a weekly Sunday service. Our doors are open when the building works permit. Our parish hall is home to Sampson's Supertots, a lively weekly toddler group, providing a welcoming space for local families. In April, we hosted another well-attended Easter trail and Easter egg hunt, and in the summer we held a children's holiday club themed around Creation. We have hosted musical events, with performances by Barretts Privateers, Sam Sweeney, Aderyn String Quartet, plus the 'Big Sing', and a memorable Medieval Summer Fayre with a falconry display.



Work began on the Manaton Chapel in October and we had an exciting time with the archaeologist discovering four Manaton burial vaults, which needed to be excavated before the new floor could be built. This culminated in a wonderful and moving memorial service and concert to re inter the disturbed Manaton remains. We are awaiting the final report, results from facial reconstruction from some of the skulls and DNA analyses.

The week of January 13th 2026 saw the exciting return of our bells after a four year absence and 50 years silence. They are now ringing out once more. Over 50 people welcomed back the bells and were able to view them closely before they were hoisted back into the tower.



Since the start of the project we have raised an incredible £750,000 from over one hundred successful grant applications, many generous individual donations, and fundraising.

We are truly thriving in this lesser-known part of Cornwall.

2025 has been busy year and 2026 is promising to be equally busy! Below is a summary of our plans and everything the St Sampson's Unlocked project has achieved so far.

2026 plans

- Manaton Chapel renovations and creation of Community Room continues – due to be completed April/May.
- Tower roof and internal louvre weatherproofing work
- Nave roof and ceiling replacement
- Creation of digital trail, virtual tour and church guidebooks
- More concerts
- Medieval Summer Fayre

Plus ongoing fundraising for the next phase: the remaining roof and ceiling works, south side rainwater goods, WC facilities, kitchen, flooring and redecoration.

Previous Works

- Relocation of Font (2020)
- Installation of mains water supply (2020)
- External path lighting (2020)
- Roof valley gutter (2021)
- Removal and storage of bells and securing the bell frame (2021)
- Compost toilet installed in churchyard (2022)
- Restoration of all thirteen windows, including stonework (2021-2023)
- Porch stonework repairs, including new stone and pointing (2023)
- External masonry wall repairs (2023)
- Restoration of the Michael Hill monument, now reinstated on the east wall in the Manaton Chapel (2023)
- Full Church of England faculty approval granted for roof, ceiling, WC facilities, and kitchenette, with phased work planned (2023)
- West door restoration (2024)
- Installation of new overhead heaters (2024)
- East wall external masonry repairs (2024)
- Tower stair door restoration (2024)
- Additional lightning protection on east end (2025)
- Rainwater goods on north side (2025)
- Restoration of internal tower screen door (2025)
- Tomb recess and dragon corbel repaired and restored (2025)
- Building regulations approval for WC facilities and drainage (2025)
- Planning approval for air source heat pump in Manaton Chapel (2025)
- Repointing various areas of the tower (2025) see photo
- Repair of tower roof door (2025)
- Repairs to chancel floor (2025)
- Tower pointing and downpipe refurbishment (2025)
- West end rainwater goods (2025)
- Bell restoration and re-hanging (2026)



Funding and Support

Our work would not be possible without the generous support of a wide range of funders, including: National Lottery Heritage Fund, National Churches Trust, Headley Trust, Cornish Historic Churches Trust, Historic England, Baker Estates, Sabrina Sutherland Charitable

Trust, Doctor and Mrs Alfred Darlington Charitable Trust, Jill Franklin Trust, Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme, Cornwall Community Chest, Trefinnick Solar Fund, Church Care, All Churches Trust, Congregational and General Charitable Trust, The Wolfson Foundation, Rural Churches Repair Fund, William and Jane Morris Foundation, Beatrice Laing Family Trust, Bells Gives Back, Swire Trust, Tesco Bags of Help, Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Sustainable Development Fund, Kingsgrove Charitable Trust, Lady Neville Charity, Lord Clinton's Charitable Trust, Abba Charitable Trust, Ian Foulerton Charitable Trust, Peoples Postcode Lottery, Funds for Mission, Penuel Trust, National Grid Electricity Distribution, Worshipful Company of Ironmongers, Buildings for Mission - Truro Diocese, The Saint Andrew Conservation Trust, Quick Wins - Truro Diocese, Benefact Trust, Sharpe Trust, Elmgrant Trust, Choral Evensong Trust, Give to Go Green, Foyle Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Aurelius Charitable Trust, Miss Anna Maria Gurney Charitable Fund, Fentogollan Farm, Brags Garden Supplies, and the Woodland Trust.

We are also deeply grateful for the contributions of individual donors and those who organise and attend our fundraising events and activities,

Thank You

A sincere thank you to all our funders, large and small. This is a remarkable achievement for a small rural parish, and a true testament to our commitment to serving the South Hill community.

Watch this space!

Blessings,

Judith Ayers

Local Lay Leader