

Friends of St Laurence Church, Blackmore

October 2025
Richard Thwaite

Tower and Lychgate –
project update: July
2024 – October 2025



Project Launch and Key Milestones



- Formal project launch: July 2024
- Architects and builders appointed through tender process
- Funding shortfall of £155,000 resolved by NLHF grant increase (£135,000) and local fundraising (£20,000, including £15,000 additional donation from FoSL)
- Independent evaluation consultant appointed

Challenges & Solutions



- Higher than expected contractor quotes led to a funding gap
- Government changes to VAT rules and increased contingency
- Legal delays in securing neighbour's permission for scaffolding
- Bat licence approval process delayed building start

Building Work & Timetable



- Scaffolding erected and roof stripped; minor timber repairs needed
- Replacement clay tiles and oak shakes installed
- Weatherboarding, guttering, and weathervane repairs underway
- Work on track on the Tower now complete, and scaffolding removal by end October 2025, before bat hibernation
- Work on Lychgate and Tower SE corner repairs to commence in November

Additional Activities & Accessibility



- Digital Assets Lead appointed (Sean Wood); ongoing primary school and other groups engagement
- Church volunteers cleared Tower, new storage installed in pre-vestry area
- Plans for glass doors and font step removal to enable a wheelchair ramp to improve access submitted for faculty approval
- Lighting upgrades approved; shed and path improvements pending permissions

Summary & Next Steps



- Core repairs and restoration progressing on schedule and budget – Historic England considering using the project as a best practice case study!
- Current Project is due to complete by end Dec 2025, this will likely be extended to May/June 2026, as some ancillary tasks (font, shed, doors, nature trail) may require more time
- Grant extension will be requested if this is the case
- On completion the NLHF will require a report confirming that we have achieved the agreed purposes that were the conditions of the grant

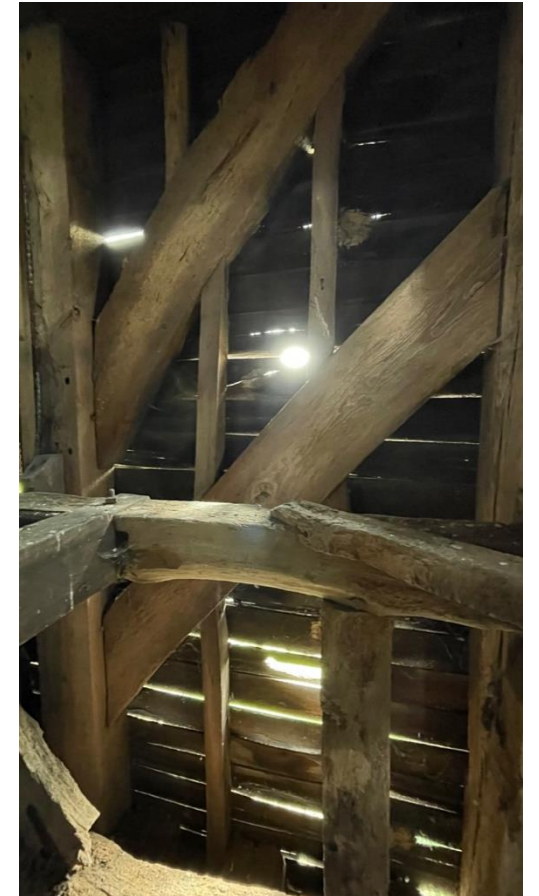
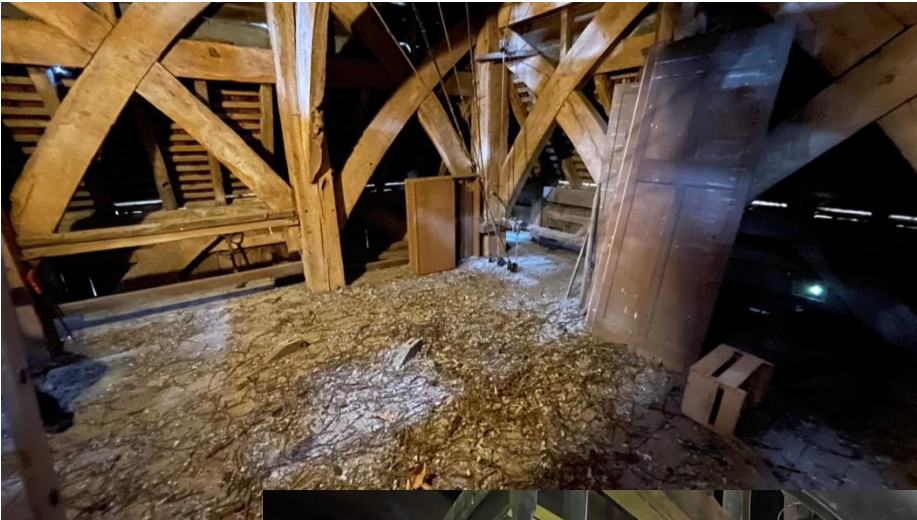
Timeline Photos



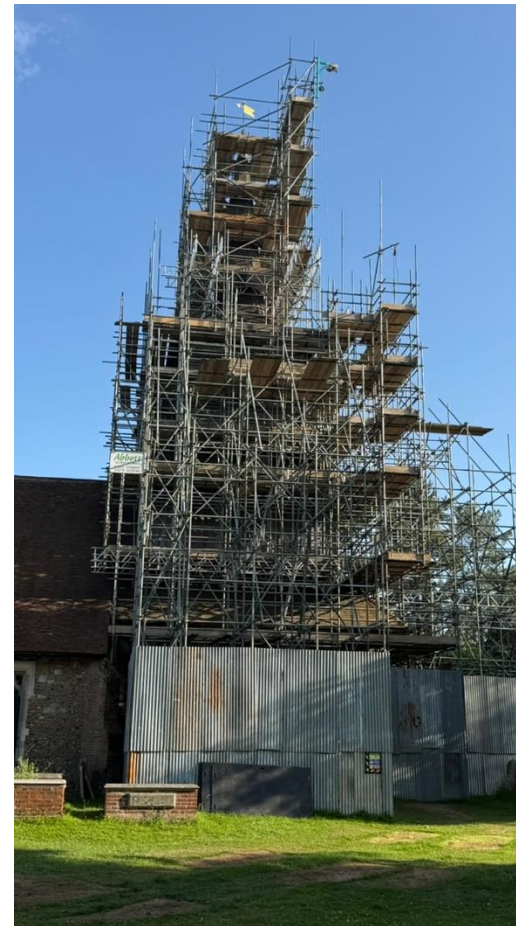
Timeline Photos – July 2024



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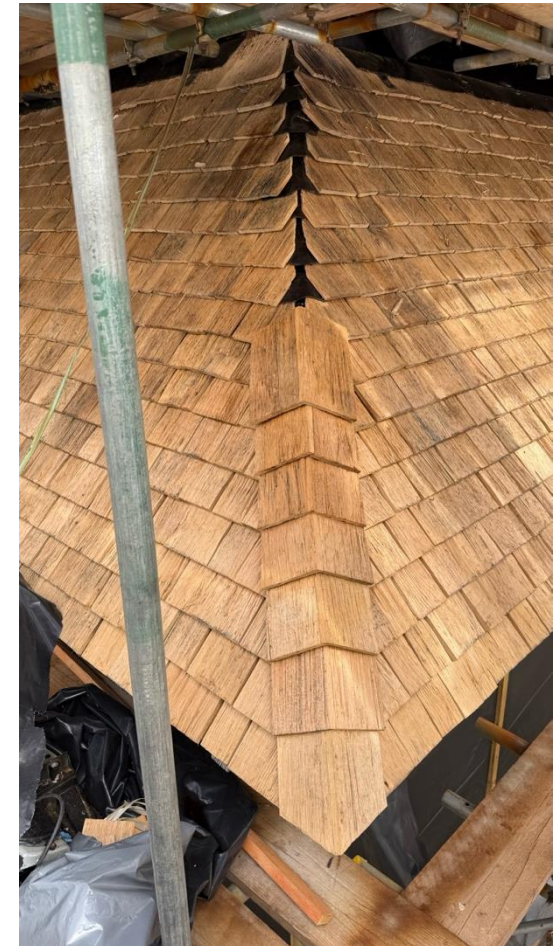
Timeline Photos – May 2025



Timeline Photos – Jun/Jul/Aug 2025



Timeline Photos – Sep/Oct 2025



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