

## Join the Friends of St Mary's

Welcome to St Mary's Church, in the delightful medieval town of Sandwich. In the Domesday survey of 1086, Sandwich ranked among England's twenty largest settlements and thrived as a major port for more than three centuries until the Wantsum Channel silted up. Today, St Mary's remains at the heart of Sandwich's heritage and cultural life - a space for art, music, and community. As a Friend of St Mary's, you will help us to make improvements to keep St. Mary's open and alive through the 21st century and beyond.

### A Brief History of St Mary's

#### Early Foundations (7th – 11th Centuries)

- 660s – Evidence of a nunnery by Domneva, sister of King Egbert of Kent.
- 11th–12th Centuries – Construction of three churches in Sandwich, including St Mary's, built in Caen stone with nave and tower; aisles added later.

#### Medieval Turmoil (13th – 15th Centuries)

- 13th–14th Centuries – Chancel and rare 'Banner Locker' added. In 1457 Sandwich was plundered and burnt, leaving St Mary's badly damaged.
- 1579 – An earthquake 'which did shake and cleave the tower arches' caused the tower and spires to collapse years later.

#### Rebuilding and Renewal (17th – 20th Centuries)

- 1675 – Main structure rebuilt, preserving visible traces of every earlier phase. It served as a parish church until 1948, when it became a Chapel of Ease for parishioners living farther away.
- 1956 – Plans to demolish the church were halted thanks to the newly formed Friends of St Mary's, who raised funds for essential repairs and created an endowment.

#### Safeguarding and New Life (1985 – Present)

- 1985 – St Mary's vested with the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT).
- 2017 – Partnership formed with the Sandwich St Mary's Community Trust (SSMCT), representing the wishes of the Friends. Together, we run a thriving Arts Centre that hosts theatrical and musical events, while welcoming community groups and visitors.

### Join Us – Become a Friend Today!

- Individual – £15 per year
- Joint/Family – £25 per year
- Friend for Life – £100
- Benefactor – £1,000 +

Sandwich St. Mary's Community Trust  
HSBC  
Sort Code: 40-40-34  
Account: 91080865

For more information contact: Chris Bell, SSMCT membership secretary - [cjb@btinternet.com](mailto:cjb@btinternet.com)