

THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST JULIAN THE HOSPITALER AND THE NEXT 600 YEARS

THE PAST

St Julian's has played an important role in the lives of Wellow's villagers for more than 600 years. It is recognised as being one of the finest churches in Somerset and has a Grade 1 listing.

Most of the building is thought to have been built by Sir Thomas Hungerford and his son, Walter, in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Sir Thomas was the local landowner and parliamentarian who became leader of the House of Commons and the first man to be known as 'the Speaker.' It was dedicated in 1372 and replaced a much older building, possibly dating from the 8th century.

It is the only church in England dedicated to St Julian the Hospitaller, a 4th century saint, and contains some extraordinary treasures like its 15th century wall paintings, the only ones surviving in an English parish church. There are also carved 15th century oak pews and a painted 15th century rood screen. The wooden angels that support the roof are exquisite and rare too.

Within its walls are smaller features such as stone carved heads, woodwork, metalwork and tapestries created by local artists and craftsmen, testament that



this fine building has been cherished by many of Wellow's past inhabitants.

Their dedication has ensured that we, today's 21st century parishioners and visitors, can enjoy its beauty and tranquillity and experience a strong and tangible sense of our village's history.

THE PRESENT & THE FUTURE

However, rare and precious as it is, St Julian's is under threat due to an ageing and diminishing population. It will fall into ruin unless we, today's generation, are prepared to work to maintain, preserve and modernise it. The Friends of St Julian's has been created with the intention of bringing this about.



In the past, parish churches were used, not only for worship and traditional gatherings to mark births, marriages, christenings and deaths, but also, at various times, as market places, courtrooms, schools and for sanctuary. The Friends' aims are to enhance this fine church so that, as well as its religious role, it may be used for all kinds of social, cultural and community events much as it was in the past. We want it to be more than just an historical monument.

To survive and play a central role in our community today, St Julian's needs several improvements. Its heating urgently needs updating and creating toilet facilities and a kitchen would mean that its range of events could be widened. The Friends are determined to achieve these changes in due course, and so targeted fundraising will be a major part of their work.

Right now, the Friends urgently need help with the day-to-day care and running of the building. We need anyone with energy and enthusiasm who cares about this gem in our midst.

