

IN TOUCH



**St Dubricius Church secures £1.4m from the
National Lottery Heritage Fund
to save its rare oak spire** *(see page 10)*

JULY 2026

SUNDAY 12TH JULY

3PM

ST LEONARDS CHAPEL,
TIVINGTON

Service of the Word

Water of Life



St Swithin

-

***the gift of rain
in changing times***



SUMMER CHORAL CONCERT

Music for everyone,
from Bach to The Beatles

Sung by the Choir of Hendon St Mary
Directed by Richard Morrison, MBE

July

Sunday

19

2026

5.00pm - 6.00pm

Church of St Mary, Oare

All welcome, free entry





MORE SCONES AND SONGS



This time to raise funds for the
CHURCH SPIRE

To be held in Porlock
Small Village Hall


Tuesday July 21st, 3 – 5pm

Entry £8

*Tickets available from
Porlock Hardware*

*(there will also
be a raffle)*





**St Dubricius Church,
Porlock**

Flower Festival

**Friday 7th August
to Tuesday 11th August**

Please come and join us

- . Floral Displays .***
- . Refreshments .***
- . Live Music .***
- . Granny's Attic .***
- . Teddy Bear Hunt .***

Rector	The Reverend Ann Gibbs porlockposse@gmail.com	863593
Curate	The Reverend Alison Tolson Alison.curate@hotmail.com	07496 248789
Retired Clergy	The Reverend Stephen Humphreys srbh@mac.com Stowey Farm, Timberscombe	841265
Reader Emeritus	Rosemary Ball	862294
Retired Clergy	The Reverend John Rogers	07785 977771
Retired Clergy	The Reverend Colin Burke	
Assistant Treasurer	Peter Fosker Oakwing Office, St Dubricius School, Parsons Street, Porlock	c/o 862284
Assistant Treasurer & Gift Aid Co-ordinator	Bill Ball Oakwing Office, St Dubricius School, Parsons Street, Porlock	c/o 862284
Churchwardens- St Dubricius	Vacant	
Administrator	Rachel Kingdon dubricius465@yahoo.com (Church postal address) Oakwing Office, St Dubricius First School, Parsons Street, Porlock, Minehead. TA24 8QJ	862284

Church Facebook Page (The Churches of the Porlock Pilgrim's Trail):

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61553342729470>

WEB PAGES: St Dubricius, Porlock - <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/11306/>

All Saints', Selworthy - <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/11308/>

St Mary's, Luccombe - <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/11300/>

DATES FOR DIARIES & NOTICES

Reverend Alison Tolson – I'm sure you will be delighted to hear that after some negotiation, it has been agreed that Alison's curacy will be extended to July 2027. Rev. Ann

Advance Notice – St Swithin's Day service at 3pm, Sunday 12th July, Tivington Chapel

Open Door meeting every Friday at 11am.
Open Door on Friday mornings at the back of St Dubricius Church, Porlock.
Everyone is most welcome to come and join us for a cup of coffee and a chat.

Me & U Prayers – the first Friday of every month at 10.30am in St Dubricius Lady Chapel before Open Door – everybody welcome. Next one 3rd July.

Weekday Morning Prayer – This takes place at 9.00am weekdays at St Dubricius, Porlock or St Mary's, Oare; details each week can be found in the pew sheet.

We pray for...

Ivor Ellis, Rosemary Cape, Nick Simpson, Aaliyah, Ron & Iris Savery, Martin Spence, Dori Dawes, Steve Godfrey, Nicola Madeley, Anthony Rose, John Rogers, Pauline Clarke, Hazel Leeves, Malcolm Bleasby, Holly Bloys and Mike Rowe



Recently departed: Andrew Spence, Patrick Binding, Delwyn Hooper, Jane Brossard

Church Giving

If you wish to give a donation via regular giving, please leave your offering in the chest at the back of the church, or give your envelope to Bill Ball. He will then process the donation in the regular giving register and pay it into the bank.

Message from the curate

CHANGE – love it or hate it, it is all around us, some change we have chosen to pursue and some is put upon us – but I would suggest with for any times of change there is still an opportunity and a choice, to embrace it or fight against it, and as I consider this, I am reminded of that good old hymn,

Through all the changing scenes of life,
in trouble and in joy,
the praises of my God shall still
my heart and tongue employ.

Change had been the topic of our school collective worship over recent weeks, which is particularly relevant at this time of year, as some prepare to move on to the middle school in September and others to move classes; there are changes too for some of the adults, and through all those changes the God whom we praise remains alongside all of us.

Another reason for me thinking about change at this time of the year, is that it is ordination time, a time when those who have answered a call to ordained ministry, who have gone through a discernment process after answering the call from God on their lives and had that affirmed, who have undertaken the relevant training, are publicly affirmed in that calling and what a joy it was to attend a friend's ordination last week knowing some of the changes she is about to embrace. It is a time to reflect on my own journey to this point, and the changes that have already been made and to think of the changes that may lie ahead as the journey continues.

And for that reason I want to re-share a poem I've used before, for it constantly speaks to me, not to mention with the news of the National Lottery funding still ringing in our ears with the plans for St Dubricius standing alongside the hopes and aspirations of the congregations of Luccombe, Selworthy, Porlock, Culbone and Oare, I feel it is a good time to remind ourselves of just who is at the heart of all that we do.

The Heart Of The Matter

The Lord God said:

I myself will dream a dream within you.
Good dreams come from Me, you know;
My dreams seem impossible,
Not too practical, not for the cautious man or woman;
A little risky perhaps, a trifle brash perhaps;
Some of my friends prefer to sleep with visionless eye.
But for those who share my dreams
I ask a little patience, a little humour,
Some small courage and a listening heart – I will do the rest.

Then you will risk and wonder at your daring,
Run and marvel at your speed,
Build and stand in awe at the beauty of your building.
You will meet me often as you work – In your companions, who share your risk,
In your friends, who believe in you enough
To lend their own dreams, their own hands,
Their own hearts, to your building.
In the people who will find your doorway,
Stay a while and walk away Knowing that they too can find a dream.

There will be sun filled days
And sometimes it will rain
A little variety

Both come from Me – so, come, be content;
It is my dream you dream,
It is my house you build,
My caring you witness,
My love you share – and this is the heart of the matter.

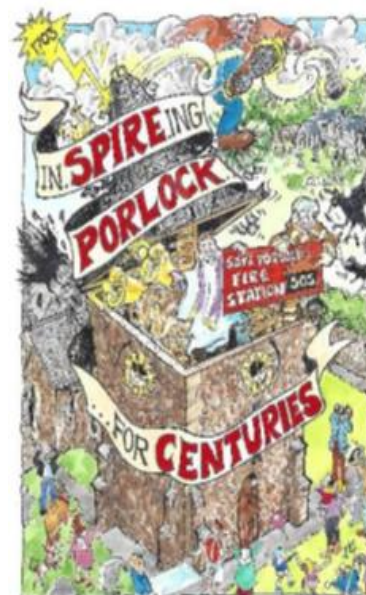
Anonymous

Porlock InSpired Application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund

To all Members, Supporters and Friends of St
Dubricius Church

We are delighted to be able to announce today that
our application to The National Lottery Heritage Fund
was **SUCCESSFUL**.

Our local fundraising, supported by so many of you,
raised £35,750, and that together with the £167,500
of grants we, together with the excellent help from
our fundraiser, have secured from other Trusts and
Foundations, persuaded the committee that we had
done enough for them to award us the balance of the
project cost, £1,432,672. We are extremely grateful to
everyone who contributed, whether with time, talents, or
cash. **THANK YOU ALL.**



A press release has been agreed with the Heritage Fund and it was issued to
the press Wednesday afternoon, for publication Thursday onwards, so there
may be coverage in the local papers and possibly on the local TV news in the
next few days. A copy of the press release is attached for anyone who
wishes to read it.

Our first steps now will be to begin the process of getting the scaffolding
constructed, to give access to the church spire and roof. The scaffold will be
quite extensive as it has to be stable and safe in the worst of the winds we
might get over the next year, so some parts of the churchyard will not be
accessible for quite a while. The disruption will be kept to the minimum
possible. The church will continue to be in use, although there might be
short periods both during the scaffold build, and during the repair works
themselves when access to the church also has to be limited or not
permitted.

Our local fund raising will continue. The current project whilst extensive does
not cover all the work that is needed. In particular the new heating system
that is currently funded will only be for the Nave. We hope that we can raise
sufficient further funds to enable heating of the South Aisle to be added to

the project. We are still submitting further applications to other Trusts and Foundations, with this in mind. We did initially propose to have the whole heating system in our application, but other costs were increasing too, and we had to strike a balance. The more we put in, the higher the total cost. A higher total cost made it less likely the application would be successful. So in the end we reduced the heating system scope.

As you will all be aware there are a number of activities also planned and funded as part of the project. We will be looking for volunteers in the next few months to help with these please – an opportunity for anyone who wishes to become involved in helping others.

Many thanks to all once again

Rev Ann Gibbs, and Porlock InSpired Teams

Press Release

St Dubricius Church in Porlock secures £1.4m from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to save its rare oak spire

St Dubricius Church in Porlock has been awarded more than £1.4 million from The National Lottery Heritage Fund to restore its iconic oak-shingled spire and safeguard the building for future generations.

The award supports Porlock InSpired, a £1.7million project that will not only repair the Grade I listed church's historic structure but also deliver a three-year programme of intergenerational activities designed to bring the whole community together.

At the heart of Porlock for centuries, St Dubricius Church is now in urgent need of repair. Its most distinctive feature is a rare truncated spire made entirely of timber and clad in oak shingles - believed to be the only one of its kind in the country. Last replaced in 1933, the shingles are now failing, leaving 13th-century timbers vulnerable to water damage. Rotting beams and damaged bell shutters also require immediate attention.

This once-in-a-generation project will repair the internal timber structure of the spire and fit new oak shingles to the whole of the exterior, re-slate sections of the church roof and conserve the historic reredos behind the altar. As part of the work, new solar panels and a modern heating system will be installed, transforming the church into a warm, welcoming and energy-efficient space fit for the 21st century.

Reverend Ann Gibbs, Rector of St Dubricius Church said: “There are many theories about why the spire has its unusual shape - some more fanciful than others. The most likely explanation is that it was damaged during the Great Storm of 1703 and capped rather than rebuilt. Other ideas range from angry giants and distracted builders to fairies or a simple lack of funds. Whatever the truth, this spire is extraordinarily rare and deeply tied to Porlock’s identity. We must ensure it survives for the next hundred years and beyond.”

Alongside the conservation work, the project will deliver a three-year programme of events celebrating the church’s heritage. Traditional crafts will be showcased through demonstrations and school workshops, while hands-on activities will help bring the village’s history to life. The project aims to support the local economy and provide lasting social benefits.

Working with partner organisations, the project will also address isolation among older residents through heritage-based wellbeing activities, while creating opportunities for intergenerational learning.

Young people, who often face limited opportunities in rural areas, will benefit from a creative, environmental and skills-based programme designed to build confidence and broaden horizons. A partnership with St Dubricius School will enable children to explore their local history, with research from the project shared for the benefit of schools and the wider community.

Stuart McLeod, Director of England – London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: “Thanks to National Lottery players, we are delighted to support the Porlock InSpired project that will restore and celebrate the remarkable heritage of St Dubricius Church. Its rare oak-shingled spire is exceptional and this project will ensure it is conserved for future generations. Just as importantly, the project will bring people together - offering opportunities to learn new skills, explore local history and strengthen community connections in Porlock. What a fantastic legacy to be added to the church’s amazing history.”

Reverend Ann added: “Projects like this are vital for rural communities. They create a shared sense of pride in what villages like Porlock have to offer. We’ve already seen incredible support through local fundraising which exceeded our expectations. This project simply wouldn’t have been possible without the community or National Lottery players.”

Repair works are expected to begin in the coming months, once extensive scaffolding is in place, with completion anticipated in 2027. The church will remain open and in use for most of the project.

Benefice Services (& Culbone and Oare) – July 2026

Sunday 5th July

(G) Genesis 24.34-38,42-49, 58-67, Romans 7.15-25a, Matthew 11.16-19,25-30

St Dubricius	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
St Dubricius	10.30am	Holy Communion (CW)
All Saints' Selworthy	11.00am	Matins (BCP)
St Bueno's, Culbone	11.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
St Mary's, Oare	3.00pm	Compline

Trinity 5

Sunday 12th July

(G) Genesis 25.19-34, Romans 8.1-11, Matthew 13.1-9,18-23

St Dubricius	8.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
St Mary's Luccombe	9.30am	Holy Communion (CW) (Joint service with Selworthy)
St Dubricius	10.30am	Holy Communion (CW)
St Mary's, Oare	11.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
Tivington Chapel	3.00pm	St Swithin's Day service

Trinity 6

Sunday 19th July

(G) Genesis 28.10-19a, Romans 8.12-25, Matthew 13.24-30,36-43

Lynch	8.30am	Holy Communion (BCP)
St Dubricius	10.30am	Morning Prayer
All Saints' Selworthy	11.00am	Holy Communion (BCP) (Joint service with Luccombe)
St. Mary's, Oare.	11.00am	Holy Communion (BCP)
St. Dubricius.	6.00pm	Holy Communion with anointing and laying on of hands

Trinity 7

Sunday 26th July

(G) Genesis 29.15-28, Romans 8.26-39, Matthew 13.31-33,44-52

St Dubricius 8.00am
St. Mary's, Luccombe. 9.30am

St Dubricius 10.45am
St Mary's, Oare 11.00am

Trinity 8

Holy Communion (BCP)
Morning Prayer (CW)
(Joint service with Selworthy)
Celebrate
Matins (BCP)

Sunday 2nd August

(G) Genesis 32.22-31, Romans 9.1-5, Matthew 14.13-21

St Dubricius 8.00am
St Dubricius 10.30am
All Saints' Selworthy 11.00am

St Bueno's, Culbone 11.00am
St Mary's, Oare 3.00pm
Stoke Pero 4.00pm

Trinity 9

Holy Communion (BCP)
Holy Communion (CW)
Matins (BCP)
(Joint service with Luccombe)
Holy Communion (BCP)
Compline
Lammas service
(3pm picnic, 4pm service)

CHARITY OF THE MONTH – JULY 2026

The RNLI Minehead

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution charity saves lives at sea. It's volunteers provide a 24 hour search and rescue service around the UK and Irish coasts. The RNLI operates 238 lifeboat stations in the UK and Ireland and more than 240 lifeguard units on beaches around the UK and Channel Islands. It depends



on voluntary donations and legacies to maintain its rescue service. Since the RNLI was founded in 1824, it's lifeboat crews and lifeguards have saved over 142, 700 lives.

The Lifeboat station in Minehead was built in 1901 following the decision to build a station there after the Forrest Hall overland rescue. It has been in constant use since that date originally housing traditional rowing, sailing and later motor lifeboats, before the introduction of the inshore Lifeboats in the early 1970s. Today, the lifeboat crew respond to between 30 and 40 emergency calls a year, along more than 30 miles of coastline - from Hinkley Point in the east to Lynmouth in the west.

Chosen to be our charity of the month for July our local RNLI station will benefit from any money that we raise as it will go towards the cost of maintaining the boats and station plus the costs of training the volunteer crews. The crew risk their lives to save others and they deserve to have our support.

Previously when we raised money for the RNLI in Minehead it went towards the costs of the refurbishment of their station. As you will be aware this station is now open and fully operational and I know that all involved are very grateful for the facilities they now have. Living by the sea as we do, no doubt we are all aware of the importance of the lifeboat along our coastline so please do give generously to this very worthwhile cause.

The Ancient Door at Stoke Pero Church

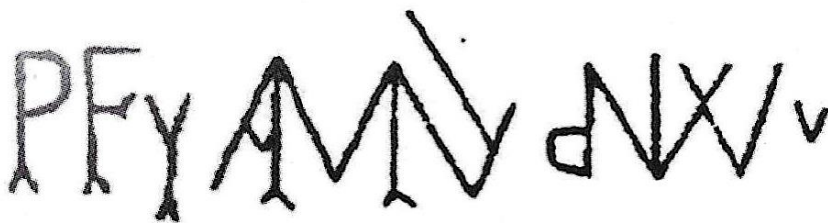
I have long been interested in the carvings on the entrance door of Stoke Pero church and wondered what they might represent. The door has previously been dated as 16th or 17th century, but the provenance and meaning of the symbols inscribed on it are, according to the guidebook, a mystery. What is very clear to the observer is that the centuries-old carvings are not simply graffiti that has been scratched onto the surface, they have been deliberately and carefully etched into the oak door using woodworking tools.

An Internet search with the help of AI reveals some interesting facts. These crafted markings are certainly not unique. They represent a tradition of spiritual protection known as apotropaic symbolism, intended to guard the church against malevolent forces.



King James I (of England/VI of Scotland – 1567-1625) was notoriously superstitious and wrote the 1597 treatise *Daemonologie*. In it, King James sought to prove the existence of witchcraft to other Christians through biblical teachings. He asserted that witches could transform into animals and slip into buildings through any

opening. Because of his fears—and similar theories propagated at the time—people focused their protective efforts against evil on ventilation points and entryways where drafts flowed freely.



Look carefully - Among the carvings on the Stoke Pero door are a series of interlocking "VV" symbols. These are called Marian Marks: The intertwined

letters M or V (for Mary or Virgin) and double-V marks were carved to invoke the protective presence of the Virgin Mary. Standing for *Virgo Virginum* ("Virgin of Virgins"). Another recurring mark, the "AM" monogram, represents *Ave Maria* ("Hail Mary"), reinforcing the sacred nature of the threshold. Consistent with other examples, intricate zig-zag patterns are used to form maze-like designs which, at the time, was believed to confuse or trap the harmful spirits before they could enter the building. There are similar Marian Marks at other churches including Bath Abbey, at Worcester cathedral and at Wookey Hole caves.

At the beginning of the symbolic carvings are a set of initials "PFY". Could these belong to a specific individual connected with the church's history? Could they represent craftsman or churchwarden who took responsibility for the building during the late 16th or early 17th century? In this period, it was common for the maker of a significant door, to leave a signature mark using carving chisels, both as a record of work and as a mark of craftsmanship.

One possible interpretation is that the initials "PFY" may relate to the Yeandle family (also spelled Yendall, Yendle, Yandell). — There is a documented lineage of the family being Exmoor carpenters, wheelwrights, and timber craftsmen associated with Exmoor including Timberscombe and Luccombe. (Records show Stoke Pero church was previously in the parish of Luccombe) So a possibility is that the lettering could have been left by the carpenter, a certain Mr Yeandle. Could it follow a traditional format in Latin? Specifically:

P[ero] F[ecit] Y[eandle], literally meaning "Yeandle made/created (this) for Pero,".

Fascinating possibilities!

Richard Mayhew

The Closure of the Co-op and post office in Minehead Saturday June 13th 2026

I went to the Co-op the day before the closure to say goodbye to the staff who had become my friends over the years. I took this photograph of John the manager serving the community for one of the last times. It was a very sad occasion. I would call into the Co-op regularly and knew the excellent staff working in the different departments and at the till. They had become part of my life sharing their lives and news.

The Co-op was built in 1984 on the site of the former bus station and had served the community for 42 years. (Before this the Co-op was in Friday Street.) For the retired and disabled this was where all their shopping was carried out and all would call in daily for shortages of essentials and newspapers. A home delivery service was available. The friendly helpful staff were well known to everyone shopping there.

Now the nearest Co-op is in Alcombe, impossible to walk to and nearest post office in Dunster where parking is difficult.

This was a sudden decision to close the store by Somerset Council planners far removed from Minehead. Plans had been drawn up to build retirement apartments alongside a smaller Co-op which I thought would work well. Somerset Council made a decision on its future saying the plans were not in keeping with the character of the surrounding houses and the appearance of the new store was incongruous. The present Co-op building is not the same character and age as the surrounding houses.

Rachel Gilmour , MP. for Tiverton and Minehead said ensuring residents have access to local services is a key focus. She is working with Post Office UK to pick up the service in Minehead.

The people of Minehead are very upset about the lack of control over the closing, little or no attention has been given to the development of replacement plans which could have been quite special with some care and thought and a great help to the town and community.

Rosemary Boaz

(This shop closure has certainly left a big hole for many people in Minehead. I am thankful we are so well served with shops & services in Porlock. Ed.)



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Church Wardens All Saints Selworthy	Vacant	
PCC Secretary All Saints, Selworthy	Vacant	
Churchwarden St Mary's Luccombe	Rosemary Gande eddiegande@gmail.com	862832