

Church saved from collapse by village fundraising campaign

For over 700 years, the parish church of St Eustace has kept a commanding watch over the village of Ibberton. Perched on an escarpment on a 1:21 gradient hill, the church can only be reached on foot and even the most adventurous of drivers are discouraged from taking on the steep ascent and descent by road.

However, the church sits just two metres from the edge of the escarpment, and since monitoring of the church's condition began in the 1960s, cracks have appeared in the north aisle southwest corner, with the building being pulled ever closer to the escarpment's edge, putting it at risk of collapse.

For the past three years, the village of Ibberton – which has a population of just 110 – has been working to save the church, liaising with structural engineers and architects to devise a solution. From May to December 2024, the village undertook a major fundraising campaign, raising over £100,000 for essential works to stabilise the church. The works began in early 2025, and the stabilisation of the church has now been completed.

On Sunday 21 September, the Bishop of Salisbury, Rt Revd Stephen Lake, led a service at St Eustace's to mark the saint's feast day on 20 September, and was also invited to view the completed works. He commented: "I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations to this extraordinary small community for their dedication in fundraising such a huge sum to carry out these essential works to their parish church. This really is an incredible achievement, and through their work, they have saved this focal point of their community for this and future generations."



Annette Newman, Parochial Church Council secretary at St Eustace Church, said: "St Eustace's is so valued as the heart of our small community, and we are immensely grateful to everyone who has supported our campaign to save it – from individual contributions right up to trusts and foundations. But there is more to do! Our roof is leaking, and we are now turning our sights to raising funds for its repair."

<https://www.salisbury.anglican.org/supportforparishes/communications/news/church-saved-from-collapse-by-village-fundraising-campaign.php>