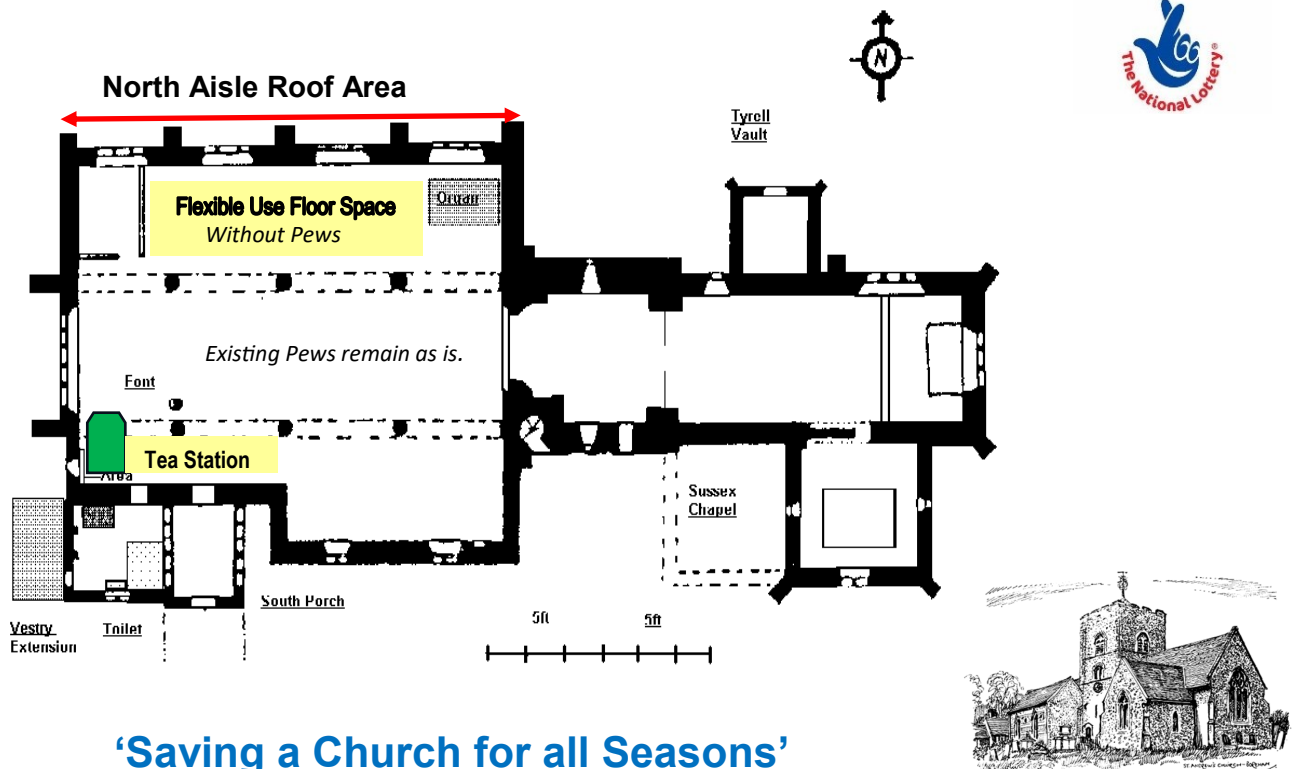


North Aisle Roof Project, August 2024

While we are very aware of much frustration over the length of time the project is taking, this is a difficult and complex road to navigate, so please continue to bear with us. However, we are now at the stage (**Development Stage**) to ask the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) for money to pay for the detailed work plans. Believe me, even these are complex as it involves so many agencies coming together: English Heritage (Grade 1 Building), Victorian Society, Structural Engineers, Architects, Bat Consultants etc. The actual roof repair work (**Delivery Stage**) can only be done during the summer months and when bats are not being affected, which hopefully means 2026, but even 2027. The outline plan is shown below.



‘Saving a Church for all Seasons’

Repairs to the North Aisle Roof were deemed essential in the last inspection by the church architect. Quite clearly there is significant remedial work required to preserve the heritage of this listed building, and to remove it from the buildings “At Risk” register. This was always going to be a costly and delicate project, preserving as much of the heritage timbers as possible and at the same time strengthening the structure and eradicating infestation.

While the need to address the structural issues above is compelling, NLHF grants also demand that space is created for a programme of new activities perhaps not possible without some significant financial assistance, so the community aspects of any application should contain an explanation of how this would be developed. Consequentially, our plan is to **restore** the failing Tudor roof structure over the north aisle, replace the roof covering and **create** a new community space beneath, with a new tea station at the west end of the church footprint, thereby facilitating wider use of the church and highlighting the rich and fascinating history of the building - do look at John Bostock’s display in the chancel.

“...one of the most complex churches in Essex – its building history not easy to unravel.” ref. Essex Churches and Chapels

Finance - Funding streams

Obviously it is hoped to finance this project mainly by means of National Lottery grants (Development Stage 2005 / Delivery Stage 2006/7), but the church must also seek to attract financial support both locally and more widely, so help and involvement is greatly appreciated. Overall project costs appear to be around three quarters of a million pounds (hopefully VAT reclaimable), while the church will need to find approximately £150,000 top up, from other grants, gifts and fundraising events. PH.