

An Open Letter to the people of Kelsale cum Carlton

To everyone living in Kelsale cum Carlton and to those of you who appreciate our village and our church.

In these days of economic difficulties, dwindling congregations and spiralling costs, St Mary & St Peter's church, the building we see today, is in danger of being lost to future generations.



St Mary & St Peter's is the focal point of this beautiful village. It has served its parishioners as a place for worship, weddings and burials for all members of the community for centuries.

If the cost of repairs cannot be met, the church will cease to be as it is today. The funds needed to keep the church in good order, as well as to make it more comfortable and accessible for us all to use, come entirely from the congregation and the generosity of occasional donors, but unfortunately this income does not cover the maintenance and repair costs. Without extra help, deterioration, dereliction, or conversion are the potential options, which might ensue within the lives of our younger generation.

In a single life time, the fully resident population of Kelsale has declined due to many factors such as farm mechanisation (fewer farm labourers), supermarkets, loss of jobs for youngsters, and unaffordable housing. The village shops, pubs, blacksmith, butcher, roadmen, railway workers at Saxmundham, gardeners, and the village policeman have all gone, and the church could be the next loss.

Whilst away from home most people enjoy visiting churches or places of historic interest. St Mary & St Peter's is not only a sacred place of worship; it is a physical landmark in our history. Its nationally important historic and architectural significance has been recognised by English Heritage and it is a Grade I listed church, the highest grade there is.

Now and in the future, St Mary & St Peter's will increasingly depend upon donations. As it is such a special building, we urge you to become a Friend of St Mary & St Peter's, no matter what your beliefs. We also ask you to encourage your friends and relations to contribute. Although they may have moved away, they may have had use of the church's facilities and have fond memories of St Mary & St Peter's.

The Friends of St Mary & St Peter's would like to hold events in the church and help to make it more comfortable so that more members of the community can use and enjoy it. If you would like to get involved in the work of the Friends, or want to suggest or organise events please contact either of us, the Churchwardens, Elizabeth Masterton-Smith (hen25ley@sky.com) or Cheryl Payne (cherylpayne@outlook.com). For more information and a membership form please go to our website: www.skc.church/friends-of-st-mary-and-st-peter-kelsale.

We feel future generations will never forgive us if this wonderful building were to become a ruin. The churchyard without this church would become a desolate lonely place and so would the village.

Thank you in anticipation of your support,
Cheryl and Elizabeth (Churchwardens)