

Dear Editor,

We are writing as minister and church wardens of St Mary's church in Sheering which was devastated by fire on the 11th January. We want to thank all the local people who rallied round to assist us and offer support at a time when the disaster to our building caused so many people heartache and great sadness. The life of the church goes on and we will maintain all of our planned services and commitments using our Church Room or alternative venues. Details of any changes will be publicised locally and on our website http://www.essexinfo.net/st_marys_sheering/. We would especially like to thank the Fire Service personnel who took immense care with the building and its contents. Despite the icy conditions they not only extinguished the fire but helped us rescue many of the well loved and important moveable items that were at risk, but which are now in safe storage away from the sad shell of the building.

We can confirm that restoration work to the part-Norman grade one listed building is already being planned and initial inspections have taken place. We are grateful for the offers of financial support we have already received. The continuing fund raising will be managed by the Friends group who have in the past worked tirelessly to raise money to support our very special building. Donations can be made payable to The Friends of St. Mary's Sheering and sent to the Benefice office, The Vicarage, Broomfields, Hatfield Heath CM23 7NR. If anyone would like further information please contact the office (01279 730288) or the Rev'd Brian Surtees (01277 363607)

Mrs Irene Hariss Mrs Fiona Klimcke Rev'd Brian Surtees"