

## **Contact**

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## **Public meeting about the church that's falling down**

The Parish of Droitwich Spa, together with the Archdeacon of Dudley, has arranged a public meeting to discuss the future of St Mary's Chapel, on Wednesday 13th January, at 7.30pm in the Community Hall, Heritage Way, Droitwich Spa.

The 19th century St Mary de Witton Chapel, situated in the middle of St Mary's Churchyard, is in a state of dangerous repair, and is currently roped off to warn people of the danger of falling tiles. The chapel has not been used for public worship for over a quarter of a century, it is unlikely that there is any other use for it, and it would be hard either to find or justify the very large expenditure that would be needed to repair it.

The Archdeacon of Dudley, the Ven. Fred Trethewey, who will be chairing the public meeting said: "The fabric of St Mary's Chapel has now reached the point where decisions have to be made about its future and I hope that many local people will come to the meeting to make their views known."

Apart from a small cemetery attached to the Roman Catholic Church, all the burial grounds in Droitwich Spa are owned, cared for and maintained by the Church of England, but are open to use by the whole population. This is different from many towns and cities where the local authority provides a cemetery, and apart from a small grant, the Church bears all the costs in providing these facilities to the whole community.

St Mary's Churchyard will continue to be used for full burials and the burial or strewing of cremated remains, and it may be easier to make better use of the available burial space once decisions over the future of the chapel have been taken.

Rector of the parish, Canon Sheila Banyard said: "St Mary's Chapel has served Droitwich well, but in changing circumstances we now need to make decisions which will help both present and future generations in their task of caring wisely for the church's resources."

ENDS

Note: the churchyard is open at any time, and pedestrian and vehicular access is gained through the entrance to the Castle public house off Worcester Road. Photography can be done at your convenience, or by prior arrangement if a member of the Church Council or one of the clergy is required.