

BATS IN CHURCHES



St George's West Grinstead

ST GEORGE'S, WEST GRINSTEAD, SUSSEX

The beautiful church of St George's occupies an idyllic rural location by the river Adur, within a large churchyard with mature trees. The church is a palimpsest of architectural and decorative features from the eleventh to the twentieth century.

The church and churchyard shelter a rich and diverse population of bats, with Natterer's, Noctule, Serotine, Common and Soprano pipistrelle and Brown Long-eared

bats found in the churchyard. Excitingly, a single Barbastelle pass has been recorded.

The surrounding mature trees and pastures are ideal bat habitat. The Natterer's bats have a medium sized maternity roost in the church roof and could access the interior prior to 2022. Flying around the nave, they left a lot of droppings and urine stains. The church community struggled with the impacts of bats; they had to clean intensively and cover the monuments either completely or with voiles to protect them.

 @batsinchurches

 BatsInChurchesProject

batsinchurches.org.uk



BATS IN CHURCHES



The Parochial Church Council worked with the Bats in Churches Project to find a solution to the bat mess in the church. First, the project commissioned a detailed bat survey from Bernwood Ecology, which identified exactly how bats were using the church. The PCC, Bernwood, the church architect and the project worked together to devise a way of separating the bats from the church interior, while enabling them to roost.

Since the church is Grade 1 listed, the Church Buildings Council advised on

proposals. They recommended that the building environment be monitored for a year prior to any intervention and this was done by Tobit Curteis Associates.

The solution was an ingenious modification of an historic building. A timber ceiling of cedar was re-instated into the south transept, creating a spacious void for the Natterer's maternity roost. The work was completed in 2022 despite an interruption by COVID. Bats can no longer get inside the church, which is free from bat mess. The monuments are no longer covered and can be seen in their full glory.

 @batsinchurches  BatsInChurchesProject batsinchurches.org.uk

