



One of the features of St. Mary Magdalene's churchyard is a splendid ancient yew tree in the southern part opposite the porch. Recently, a large section of the tree became detached from the base, where rot has set in, and is resting on nearby table tombs on the lower side. In consequence, the main structure is severely weakened with all the weight of the crown or canopy leaning to the north, making it susceptible to more damage.

After taking advice, we have concluded, sadly, that time has finally run out for this tree. It has been kept going over the years through careful management by those who came before us with skilful surgery work and by strengthening the structure using wire cables. The yew is multi-stemmed with four remaining trunks supporting a dense canopy. One option is to reduce the canopy as much as possible; however, this may just delay the inevitable.

The safety of everyone walking through or visiting the churchyard is paramount and the proximity of a well-used public footpath close by is a particular consideration.



Taking into account all relevant factors, including the imperative of spending our limited resources wisely, we have decided that felling the tree and carefully removing the timber, branch-wood and foliage is the optimum course of action for the long-term. This is to be done in such a way as to encourage natural regeneration so that, hopefully, fresh growth will emerge. The tree would then become a feature of that part of the churchyard again in years to come.

The law requires us to notify the local planning authority of any tree works in a conservation area; there is a separate procedure laid down by the diocese of Chichester. After consultation, we anticipate approval from Mid Sussex to fell the yew, leaving the stump in situ to promote regeneration. The diocese is expected to follow suit. Subject to receiving the necessary consents, and to our PCC allocating funds to meet the cost, it is intended to carry out this work over the autumn.

Churchwardens
26 September 2020