

<https://www.churchofengland.org/connectivity/why/st-martin-in-the-fields>

## Case study: St Martin-in-the-Fields, London

### An interview with Elena Davison, Digital Communications Officer

*St Martin-in-the-Fields is an 18th Century Neoclassical church with medieval origins, located in Trafalgar Square, in the deanery of Westminster, right in the heart of London.*



Its prominent position has helped make it one of London's (and by extension England's) most famous and well-loved churches; St

Martin's also enjoys the unique distinction of being the Royal parish church. But unlike many parish churches in England, the size of the church and the considerable number of visitors it welcomes annually means that St Martin's has its own marketing department; in which Elena Davison works as Digital Communications Officer.

Elena came to St Martin in the Fields in 2015 to help deliver a new website for the church, and has remained in the department ever since, working as part of a small team on the St Martin's social media, website, digital and print communications.



With a well-attended church, cafe, and shop – and a busy venue-hire service – there are many facets to what St Martin's offers parishioners and tourists alike; and most of these services increasingly rely on connectivity to function, and to help keep the building financially sustainable.

During 2006-2008, St Martin's underwent extensive renovations to the crypt, totalling some £36-million (almost half of which came from a Heritage Lottery Fund grant); the space beneath the church now houses a cafe which hosts jazz concerts whose profits support church programmes, and is also home to the London Brass Rubbing Centre, established in 1975 as an art gallery, book, and gift shop.

***"Not having WiFi underground would be a real detriment to our work. If there was no WiFi I couldn't go into the crypt and tweet, which is something I do quite regularly. Or during church services; if we go into social media, or if we're broadcasting from the church, we definitely need a decent WiFi signal for that."***

The underground location puts much of the crypt beyond reach of London's (generally strong) mobile-phone signal, so WiFi is a must for visitors and staff alike. From contactless donation points to



hosting conference calls, from taking card payments in the gift-shop to powering the staff's IP phones: connectivity is the lifeblood of many modern church function

Future plans for St Martin's include a more sophisticated public WiFi system using email addresses to gather useful information about visitors to the crypt and cafe, allowing the staff to target visitors with special offers, invitations, and a more personalised visitor experience, all-round.

***"There are people who would like to come to church but can't: people with disabilities or people who are house-bound for various reasons, or don't feel comfortable out in society. Being online, providing recordings of services, and generally being available online – they can still go to church this way."***

