

ST. ANNE'S CHURCH, TURTON
CHURCHWARDEN'S ANNUAL FABRIC AND
ORNAMENT REPORT 2019-2020

GENERAL

In what has been an unprecedented year many of the usual items in this report have been deferred as it has been impossible to gain access to our churches but unfortunately as I reported to the last PCC many items cannot be deferred or postponed indefinitely as we have a duty as custodians to keep matters in good order.

Issues raised by the Quinquennial Report that has been issued by the Church Architect together with matters from the Insurance Risk Assessors (we had a visit from the EIG surveyor in February), have had to be pushed back, but this has been done in agreement with both the Diocese and the insurers. Issues from the Quinquennial Report are mainly minor and are very much in line with the report from five years ago.

I have continued to monitor the Fire Risk Assessment that I carried out recently to ensure this is up to date and various measures have been introduced to put matters in place to make us compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

As reported last time and in line with the wishes of the former Team Rector, we looked at the land to the north side of the church to see whether this can be brought into use for other purposes. Following the PCC's authority to prepare a 'Master Plan' of the site the scheme shows our basic proposal together with a Tree Survey and this was submitted to the Council as a 'Pre-Application' seeking any thoughts and concerns that the Officers may have. Following a meeting with Council Officers a response suggested the Council consider that overall, the principle of this development is acceptable. However, the PCC decided to "hold" on this matter for the time being, as I reported last year.

We looked at a couple of projects over the last year namely provision of allotments for the wider community on the waste land to the north side of the church and disabled access to the memorial garden. I did have a meeting with a company that specialises in obtaining grants and we were hopeful that each project could attract grant funding. However the pandemic may have put a stop to that although Jean Rigby is still hopeful that we can obtain some form of funding. Meetings are due to be held shortly to see if progress can be made. I had applied for a Faculty for the allotments and this has run its course although was delayed as the DAC didn't meet for six months. They have now accepted the proposal in principle and I have now advertised the scheme as required and indications are that the Faculty should be approved in the next week or so. Interest from the wider community on taking an allotment was very good and we had over 20 expressions of interest. I can't see any progress on this till at least next year.

Items that will require attention in the next year or so are as follows: - Repairs to main lychgate; rain penetration to the spire.

We recently replaced the bird netting to the spire and cleaned out the belfry. We have used slightly more robust netting that will hopefully last longer than the ten years or so of the last netting.

As reported previously regular visits were made each Wednesday by the local branch of The National Association of Decorative & Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS) over the last year and we have now received the final version of their report which is kept in the safe and this covers all aspects of the fabric.

EXTERIOR

Boundary walls are generally in good order. There are some loose stones in the wall to the playground which I hope to attend to shortly.

Paths & Pavings

All pathways are generally in good order, although some areas of Tarmac are breaking up. The gardening team have treated areas which had excessive moss growth.

Churchyard

The churchyard continues to look in first class condition and many thanks, as always, must go to the churchyard working party for their sterling work, who continues to meet on Saturday mornings throughout the year. Sadly during the year we lost our most dedicated member, Reg Collier, who for over 25 years attended almost on a daily basis to do his work. He will be sadly missed.

One item that we need to keep on top of is that some headstones, particularly the crosses, can become loose. I have surveyed all the headstones and a number, although not in immediate risk of falling over, do need attention and it is the intention to fix these securely during the winter.

Discussions have been held amongst the gardening team as to the suitability of some of our lawn mowers. As the team get older the more suitable mowers are those that have a power drive. A number of the mowers are 'push-only' type and are very hard to operate once the grass gets long. We have put an appeal out via the on-line news letter to see if funds can be raised to buy at least two mowers.

Many thanks must be conveyed to Kathleen Smith, Margaret Forster and their apprentice Eileen Hobson who continued to provide drinks every Saturday up to lockdown.

Main Building

A few weeks ago we had a serious burst on a heating pipe at the back of church. As these are cast iron pipes the repair work is specialist work and most plumbers/heating engineers haven't the capability to do this. We appointed Medway Heating to do the work and it took them three days as the burst was trickier than they envisaged. Thankfully they stuck to their quote and it cost £1526.08 (inc. vat). I am very happy to report that the whole cost of this work has been paid for by a parishioner who wants to remain anonymous but, as reported at the last PCC, on behalf of the Vicar and the PCC can I express our thanks and gratitude for this incredible gesture.

Unfortunately we have had a major roof leak behind the spire where it abuts the main roof and this in turn has brought down part of the ceiling in the gallery. I suspect that this is due to a loose flashing but we cannot be certain till we access the roof in the next few days. Having looked at all options the most cost effective way is to hire a self-propelled boom lift (which the builder has checked can get through the lychgate). Cost including delivery / collection are in the region of £440 plus vat which is a minimum weeks hire charge including delivery, collection and £20 fuel. Obviously depending on the extent of the work we will have labour charges on top of the hire charges, plus any materials required. Whilst we have this on hire I intend to make sure all the gutters are cleaned out and do a further check across the whole roof.

We also have a major problem with the boiler (which during the pandemic has been switched off.) The boiler keeps going into 'lockout' and usually we can override this in the boiler room but this time it seems to have completely failed. I am awaiting a quote from Craggs, our maintenance contractor, who are trying to source boiler parts, which due to the age of the boiler are not easily obtainable.

I have had "interesting" debates with our lightning conductor maintenance company, PTSG, who took over our longstanding company, BEST, last year. Surprisingly, following many years of pass certificates we find that the installation is no longer adequate! We then paid to have the installation brought up to, what we thought, was full compliance, only to be later told that they wanted to carry out further work as they could not get an adequate reading. This in turn has resulted in many back and forth emails with EIG, our insurers' and PTSG, as I'm not happy with the way this has been handled. Following much debate, PTSG have now advised me that BEST introduced a mat a few years ago, so then issued a PASS certificate. However, EIG

are still not happy (as they require a reading of 10 ohms or under), we find that we are still not compliant and are now faced with:-

- * Remove the conductor (as EIG do not specify you have to have one at the church)
- * Undertake remedial work to bring it up to relevant BS standards, with a reading of 10 ohms or under.
- * Ascertain if further remedial work would give a reading of 10 ohms or less and if not what the reason is.

I am awaiting a response from PTSG on this matter.

As reported previously, to comply with latest legislation we had a surge protection survey carried out on our electrical system to comply with the requirements of BSEN62305 (Lightning Conductor Requirements) and the risk assessment identifies suggested we need surge protection providing and the quote for this is £675 +vat. I consider we are in a “low risk category” as far as this is concerned and we decided at a recent PCC to hold on this work until more funds are available, if indeed we do it all.

INTERIOR

No further progress has been made on repairs to the organ following the various reports carried out to see what we need to do to refurbish it. As reported previously we had a visit from the Church of England’s Historical Building Council’s Organ Advisor due to the fact that we have a very unique “Father” Willis organ and it is possible we may get a grant to refurbish. As requested at a recent PCC meeting I was asked to update the Faculty approval from 2009 to fully refurbish the organ, which has now lapsed, and the DAC want us to reapply. I have met with a representative of Harrison and Harrison the organ builders, and the cost for total refurbishment would be in the region of £100,000. The instrument would need to be taken away to Durham and a total time of six months would be needed for the necessary work. I suggest we don’t reapply for a Faculty until we are clearer how and if we can deal with this major work and expenditure. Serious consideration would have to be given as to how this work could be funded.

The PCC agreed at the last meeting to go with a three year deal with Smiths of Derby to continue with our clock maintenance. This provides a discount over the three years from having to pay annually.

Furnishings

Altar plates, altar frontals, silverware, hymnbooks, prayer books and bibles are all in good condition.

Thanks are due to all who ensure that the standard of cleaning in our church is kept up to the high standard that we have become accustomed, and particularly for the extra measures required due to the pandemic.

Stephen Hobson

Churchwarden Emeritus

October 2020