

Our principal maintenance concern is the exterior deterioration of the church. We have over many years been struggling with the upkeep in decoration and repairs to the timber-framed windows. This has reached the point where we have to reconsider seriously whether the time, effort and expense of the constant round of renovation is justified or whether there is a more sustainable and economical solution to the problem. To that end we have sought advice in investigating whether a modern, efficient glazing system would be more suitable and practical. It seems that there are potentially viable and commercially available double-glazed curtain wall systems and so, as a DCC, we have decided to embark on the first stage of a process that has invited three architectural practices to come and make presentations to us of their ideas. The DCC is part way through that process in selecting our preferred architect who will partner with us to the next stage of developing a scheme which, with the consensus of this church we shall subsequently present to both the Diocese and our local Horsham planning authority for approval.

In looking to the future of St John's, itself at the heart of the village which is due to double in population to more than 6,000 over the next five years, we are taking this opportunity to review our likely church needs in serving the local community for the next generation. To that end we have briefed the architects with our thoughts and await their translated ideas.

Around the church, routine maintenance has ticked on; the Remembrance garden faithfully restored, a Silver Birch planted to replace the old beech tree, boilers serviced, paint touched up here and there and even an emergency unblocking of the drains. New planters have been delivered from the old Shelley fountain to replace the existing timber planters on the four corners of the church. The grass has been regularly cut and the problems of unsavoury behaviour of youth and dogs in various places around the grounds seems to have been resolved by judicious siting of new security lights and notices.

Our church has been wonderfully decorated for the principal festivals. The audio/visual controls have been relocated to the back of church and the hall has been wired for services transmission. The church heating has been rationalised and made fully automatic by remote control with direct linkage to the convector fans. And the main church lighting is in the first stage of conversion to LED.

Bob Silver, April 2017