

St Mary's Church Committee AGM
28 April 2022

Parish Fabric summary report for St Mary's Church and Church Centre

1. The team commenced its operation across the Parish during 2021/22 and this report covers the outcomes and plans for St Mary's Church and Church Centre.

Team composition: Dan Britton (Premises Manager, appointed by the PCC September 2021), and 6 volunteers: Ray Hambling, Paul Goodwin, Nick O'Riordan(chair), Nigel Stalley, Bob Whittaker and Nigel Winter. The team meets at 3 monthly intervals at which tasks are assigned appropriately and progressed. In addition, there is a small volunteer team that is responsible for Audio Visual transmission matters at St Mary's Church: the rota for system operators is coordinated by Tracy Winter and technical equipment installation, maintenance and development is by Sid Lobb and Bram Van Huet Lindeman.

2. Normal maintenance activities have been carried out by the team and term contractors throughout the year largely without incident and only exceptional items are reported below.

3. **St Mary's Church**

- 3.1 Church Fabric

The Victorian misfit cinquefoil window in the South Aisle is currently being restored: this will reduce draughts in that area.

The wood beetle infestation in the roof of All Saints's Chapel appears to have been eradicated through the use of blue light during Spring/Summer 2021.

Quotations for the structural stabilisation of the Hoo Memorial canopied tomb have proven to be difficult to obtain, in common with other buildings works across the parish, due to overheated demand upon specialists as a result of the pandemic.

We await the opinion of the Diocesan Chancery on our application for the temporary removal of pews on the South Aisle to improve access and utility of that area.

- 3.2 Audio Visual

The pandemic provided the catalyst for live streaming of selected congregational services and there has been progress with the installation of digital video equipment in the Nave and a control desk adjacent to All Saints' Chapel. The provision of a large, unwieldy temporary projection screen to carry images for congregational services has become more of a challenge; some damage, albeit repairable, has been caused to the reredos at the base of the East window. An alternative arrangement is being sought. An 84 inch TV screen and stand has been purchased to supplement the temporary projection screen.

- 3.3 Churchyard

Through the Ecochurch/Caring for God's Acre initiatives, we have met with Horsham District Council (HDC) staff to improve enjoyment and use of the accessible spaces to the west of the churchyard area and to improve biodiversity.

4. **Church Centre**

- 4.1 Minor improvements

Thanks to the generosity of donors and the skill of SKA Construction, during 2021/22 we have been able to remove an asbestos ceiling, radically improve accessibility and natural lighting at the entrance and foyer, replace the aging toilet infrastructure with six gender-neutral installations, two of which are fully accessible and with baby-changing facilities, and to add a kitchenette to St Peter's Chapel. We are seeing the fruits of this labour in terms of increasing uptake in use of all the facilities in the building.

There is a need to renovate the carpeting, and the underlying latex substrate over the greater part of the floor of St Peter's Chapel: this will be progressed in 2022/23.

4.2 Change of Use

A small but still significant part of the motivation in the minor improvements was to enable the St Mary's Pre-School to use the Manor Room weekdays and the Barn on three weekdays, termly. Despite this aim being entirely compatible with the Deed of Gift under which terms the PCC was given the Church Centre in 1971, HDC required us to seek a Change of Use through the formal planning process. This process has become stalled by the intervention of Natural England in requiring HDC to demonstrate water neutrality in non-domestic planning applications. Through our planning consultant we have supplied the necessary technical detail to show that we are indeed positively reducing water consumption through these works, however the matter remains unresolved within HDC's planning department.

4.3 Sound transmission control

Working with our party-wall neighbours at 31 Causeway, we have devised a trial acoustic panel installation. It is hoped that the trial will be underway shortly and from those results a permanent installation will be implemented.

5. Energy use and carbon footprint

Last year the PCC endorsed the General Synod's aim to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. Over the past 3 or 4 months we are witnessing increasing energy prices. We are therefore monitoring our energy consumption with increasing vigour. Heating system controls are set by our team and we rely on all those using the buildings to adopt the maxim: 'leave controls as you find them': our collective mission is to enable the increased use of the stewarded environment in our buildings post-pandemic. If you have any concerns or have suggestions for reducing energy consumption then please tell us!

The following table shows our energy consumption since 2019, and the associated carbon footprint:

		2019	2020	2021
St Mary's Church	Gas (kWh)	262000	122000	168000
	Electricity (kWh)	16800	10500	10200
Church Centre	Gas (kWh)	100000	59000	50000
	Electricity (kWh)	10500	7500	7600
	Total Carbon footprint	73 tonnes	37.5 tonnes	44.5 tonnes

Through better, more mindful use of environmental controls and investment in more efficient heating and lighting systems, our aim is to reduce our carbon footprint to well below 2019 levels whilst increasing the level of use of our buildings, now that we are emerging from the effects of the pandemic.

Nick O'Riordan

26 April 2022