

Combined Fabric reports for APCM May 2023

St. Cross Fabric Report for 2022 APCM May 2023.

The church building remains in good condition overall and many thanks go to all who have given practical and administrative help over the year to maintain and conserve St. Cross.

In May the annual in-house Ecclesiastical Insurance Risk Assessment took place; highlight strips were replaced on the internal steps and some loose floor tiles were re-cemented into place.

The Quinquennial Inspection took place in July. Three category one (urgent) issues were reported - pruning /removal of a holly tree impacting the drainage systems, clearance of the gutters and downpipes, and repair of the bell turret and ridge tiles. The first two have been done; for the latter, advice has been sought from Mark Battram, sourcing a job specification and potential costing. Deemed category three (essential within the next five years) the outer walls require some re-pointing with lime mortar, in addition to general maintenance of the stonework, flintwork and brickwork.

The east wall is showing signs of damp at lower levels but this is due to very soft external bricks and non-breathable internal paintwork. This is potentially difficult to rectify—when the church was built the east wall was a ‘temporary’ outside wall, as a tower was planned to complete the building, and it would then have become an internal wall. (A tower is not planned at the moment!)

The internal fabric is in good order. Thankfully there is no longer the access in the vestry roof which allowed birds to enter the building, and the annual plague of flies seems less than during other years.

In November the new entrance decking was completed by S.K.Wright, built on similar lines to the old one, but of a much darker material and therefore appearing smaller and less intrusive on the visual aspect of the building. There are plans to have a service of thanksgiving to celebrate this project later in the year.

For St. Cross,
Alison Cockerill.

Fabric Committee Tring Fabric Report April 2023

The Fabric Committee last met on 7th March 2023 to review progress on the quinquennial works and matters arising. A summary update is given below.

- The catch on the vestry door has been altered to improve access and egress.
- A quote for window cleaning is to be sought.
- Hedge and tree pollarding has been completed by Tree Monkey Ltd. An overview of the trees and hedges that were included in this work is shown in the image below. It is noted that there that two trees (westside, one with covered in ivy and one beyond that) will need to be removed in future. No

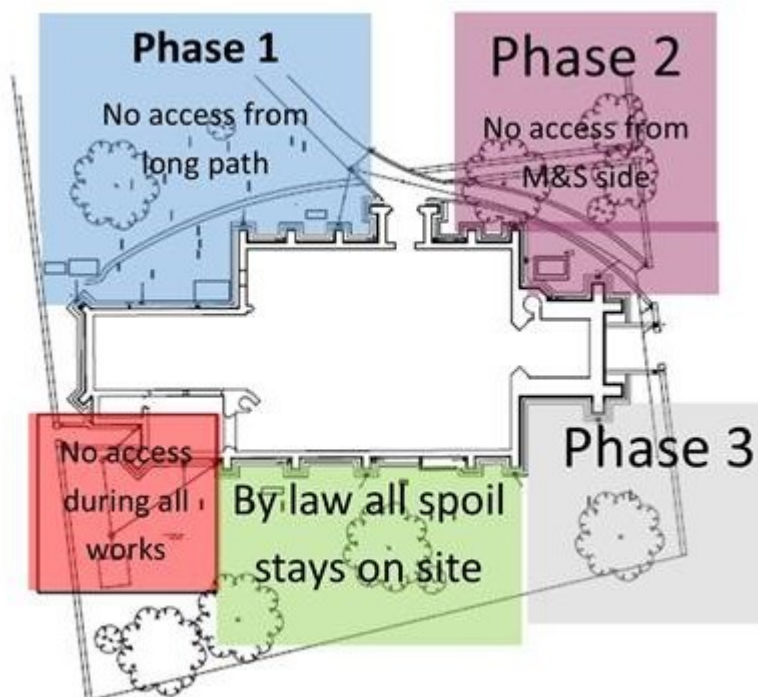
action is needed now, but this should be planned for the next time tree trimming will be required in 2028.



- PAT Testing is due and to be organised after Easter.
- To reduce environmental impact of running the building, the Fabric committee is looking into the feasibility of solar panels. A survey would cost circa £175 to identify if the church is a feasible location and grants for this work may be available
- A Smart meter has been fitted for electrical supply in early February 2023.
- The Ecochurch rating is to be reviewed to determine what is needed to gain a Silver rating.
- Work has commenced on drafting a Statement of Needs This has been shared with the Fabric committee for further comments.

Work to improve drainage beneath the church continues with several phases of work planned, commenced in late February 2023.

To maintain access to the building, the work is being undertaken in three phases, but despite this, it does mean unfortunately that accessibility will be somewhat restricted during different phases of the work. The main church door remains accessible, but not from all directions as shown on the on the diagram below.



These works are essential to help protect the church building from damage. The existing drainage is no longer functional and at the last quinquennial survey, it was noted that rainwater was being discharged alongside the historic walls. The soft friable Totternhoe clunch used as material for the walls is vulnerable to water damage from constantly being soaked, so this work is very important to help preserve and maintain the building structure.



The photo shows part of the existing drainage which was completely obstructed with debris and unable to be unblocked in situ.

The work now ongoing follows the urgent phase of work completed by the vestry in 2021 and is being undertaken in accordance with a faculty that has been granted by the diocese. This is a permissive right that is necessary to undertake works to a church building or its contents, a bit like a planning permission for churches.

Some of the conditions that were granted as part of the faculty require us to notify an appointed archaeologist if any remains are found. Remains are recorded and if directly affected by the works are removed for reburial as close to the point of origin as possible.

On day two of the works, excavations found some lead and work was stopped until the archaeologist could inspect. The edge of a lead coffin was found, it's date unknown without disturbing the coffin, and it is important not to if there is no good reason. The coffin was surprisingly close to the surface, probably indicating that this was once a superstructure but now lost in the midst of time.

It's likely it was a very wealthy person as a lead coffin would have been very expensive and is unusual, and also it's location so close to the church, as close to being buried inside the building as possible.

A number of bone fragments were also found during the excavation and are potentially of Victorian vintage. These are being kept and will be reinterred as close as possible to the area they were found once the works are completed.

All of these items have been measured and recorded by the archaeologist for the future.



Photo above showing lead coffin discovered at shallow depth during excavations

Legally all the excavated materials (spoil) are required to stay on site. The contractor carefully stockpiling the arisings to avoid damage to existing trees and minimise impact on any other biodiverse features on site.



Photo above showing some of the bone fragments discovered during excavations.

Church Bells

On Saturday 24 March, an accident occurred to the chiming hammer on the 4th bell. The hammer fractured at its joint with a rod which forms part of the apparatus. This also resulted in damage to the wheel of the 5th bell.

The church ringers effected a repair by welding the chiming hammer. This work falls within List A of minor matters which do not require an Archdeacon's letter or faculty.

APCM Fabric Report for All Saints, Long Marston. 2023

Firstly new kneelers were donated just before Christmas 2022 and later new curtains to shield the kitchen area were also donated. We were also very grateful for the donation from St Cross, Wiltstone, of some single pew cushions, which I hope can be recovered in a colour to match. These items have been warmly welcomed along with regular cleaning and provision of some flowers when appropriate. There is a rota for this consisting of ten people, for which we are very grateful.

Sadly at the end of a bad freeze in the winter, a tap in the kitchen was found to have been left on and the kitchen, some of the cupboards, tiles in part of the church and through into the parish room at the back, were all affected by the water. It was quickly cleaned up and a dehumidifier was left in the kitchen for several weeks. This successfully dried out the cupboards, so they do not need replacing. In the back room, carpet had to be removed and this revealed previously hidden attractive floor tiles. At some time this summer that room will be further stripped of the carpet and given a thorough sorting and cleaning. Hopefully the little side chapel will have this as well, making it more welcoming to a small congregation and easier to heat.

There was recently a request as to whether the organ needs servicing, which as we have no organist and it has only been played once that I know of, I assume it is not necessary.

The grounds are well maintained and the laying of one hedge was investigated, but it was not thought to be viable as there are too many gaps and large branches. It is planned to fill in these gaps and trim the rest at some point.

The uneven path is a worry as regards tripping up - one person tripped last year, fortunately without any obvious injury. Warnings are in place and now there is a designated car park alongside the churchyard, it is possible to walk through the churchyard and miss most of the path.

Judith Weatherill

ST. MARY'S CHURCH FABRIC REPORT – 2023

ST. MARY'S

There has been little action again this past year with regard to the fabric, expect that the stained glass porch window broken during the Storm Eunice has now been replaced.

We have just heard from Mathias Restorations that they hope to start the quinquennial repairs in late March/early April. Heating costs have now become an issue, but the underfloor heating control has now been turned down to 10 degrees, and then using the overhead heaters when a service is in progress.

The churchyard is in good shape, and with many thanks to Celestria Bell for keeping the Garden of Remembrance in good order. The spring flowers have just started to come out, and we await the appearance of the wild flowers that have been planted behind the old conifer stumps.

Our sincere thanks to the Puttenham Trust for continuing with payment for the general churchyard ground maintenance at a cost of approximately £5,500 for this past year.

CECILIA HALL

We have been working towards installing double glazing in order to contain the warmth which is currently being reduced due to the drafts from the ill-fitting Crittall windows. However, we have encountered various issues which still need to be resolved with the installers.

It has been found necessary to increase the hire fee to cover the higher electricity charges, but as this is the first hire fee increase since 2012, this should not cause too much of a problem.

Christine Rutter (Churchwarden)

February, 2023

St John the Baptist – 2023 Fabric Committee Report

Date: 5/3/23

Produced by Ian Munro (on behalf of Jane Brown, Churchwarden)

Fabric issues for St John the Baptist was discussed throughout the year at informal Parish PCC level communications and at regular StJtB DCC committee meetings (these having being reinstated following the lifting of restrictions imposed by the Covid19 pandemic in 2020 & 2021). As part of the wider team parish PCC process, discussion & agreement on actions that impact the fabric & physical entities of the church & churchyard were made.

The following items were discussed & various actions were identified / cleared. It is noted that the fabric committee continues to seek a volunteer to lead the team.

Significant actions arising:

I. Quinquennial report dated 2022 (received September)

The latest QQ survey report was received in September. Agreed QQ action items (from the previous report in 2017/2018) that have been progressed in the last 12 months;

- M.Batram to speak to Graham Warner re looking at woodworm issues – no progress in 2022
- Church masonry – Lynn Mathias has been instructed to conduct the repairs to the external church walls, following the scope of works produced by M.Batram. Works commenced in Autumn 2022 and are continuing into Spring 2023 – these works were enhanced to pick up additional scope items from the 2022 QQ report
- Rainwater goods, gutters & downpipes – M.Batram has produced a scope of works for the repair/clearance of all items, including required works to the roofs – M.Batram seeking suitable contractors to issue the scope of works to for pricing

(limited success in 2022), he will speak to a contact of Lynn Mathias (Dave) & Abbey Roofing

- Heating system – issue with the heating system (in the church & Chapter House) were identified & addressed – boilers now operational & heating system performance being monitored
- A meeting was held (6/2/23) between FOAC, the DCC and Mark Battram to better understand the scope of works coming from the QQ report and how they are to be scoped, instructed and funded
- A schedule of work packages was collated and produced from the most recent QQ report (as per previous years) to identify the maintenance areas to be addressed
- The external tap (outside the vestry) was replaced

2. General Fabric items (not QQ related)

- Storm damage to lych gate roof to be repaired – M.Battram has produced a scope of works & obtained prices (in Sept '21) to repair the lych gate roof – the funding arrangements are being discussed with FOAC – revised prices were obtained from SK Wright (& a possible additional quote from Alan Temple is being sought)
- M.Battram inspected the Nave & Aisle roofs following the previous occasional leaks from these roofs. No clear evidence of areas needing attention was found & hence this point will remain under investigation / surveillance, & this will continued during 2023
- LED spotlight bulbs have been installed throughout the Nave at high level (replacing the previous filament bulbs). A programme of replacing 'blown' lamps for LED fittings in the aisles is ongoing – this continued in 2022 and into 2023
- Roof Alarm & Estimates
 - A roof alarm has been previously discussed & costed. The ongoing maintenance & monitoring of the system makes it prohibitive
 - The Diocesan grant StJtB was being offered was £1K
 - Four quotes were obtained (by Jane Brown) & put into a comparison table showing that they were in the region of £2K - £3K annually

It is noted that the following works are currently on-hold & will be reconsidered in future months;

- Vestry refurb
- Progress potential scope & works re the tower clock face refurbishment

3. Work Packages – defining a process to follow

A process was discussed and agreed for the maintenance work packages that are identified for StJtB church or churchyard (primarily for the more significant items that require contractors to provide formal quotes for);

- define scope (usually extracted from the QQ)
- obtain approval from DAC to proceed (usually under an archdeacon's letter)
- produce a works package to obtain quotes
- issue works package out to contractors (min 3 hopefully) & chase for responses
- issue summary of responses & make recommendation to DCC/FOAC on who to appoint
- discuss works with the contractor
- if needed view the work periodically (or more commonly at completion)
- list out any snags/defects to be rectified
- advise on final payment to contractor when complete

4. Church Welcoming

Rear of church & entrance – enlivening the entrance area. A scheme was drawn up in greater detail to obtain formal pricing proposals from contractors. Budget proposals have been received from the contractors indicating that the works are able to proceed within the available legacy fund. The DCC will consider them finally & instruct the works accordingly.

Current progress is that the scheme has addressed comments from the Victorian Society and has been amended (in terms of materials) as directed by the DAC. Hoping to seek quotes for the works once a final approval has been given by the DAC.

5. Churchyard & hedges

- Summer strimming / clearance parties were not held in 2022 (due to coming out of the ongoing Covid19 pandemic restrictions and insufficient time to organise)
- Autumn working parties were held on 12th & 19th Nov 2022, focussing on 3 main areas;
 - Addressing the self-seeded tree sapling growth around the churchyard, particularly within graves, using a ‘tree popper’ borrowed from the Forest of Dean volunteers
 - Continuing to trim the Northern and Eastern boundary hedge to keep the resulting growth in control
 - Remove the debris & clear the rainwater drainage system around the base of the church & apron
 - Note: Colin Chambers to be contacted re scopes of work to address the more significant tree management works at high level