

## ALL SAINTS', CHILTON

### ANNUAL FABRIC AND ORNAMENTS REPORT; 2012 / 2013.

#### OVERVIEW

Once again, this year has been one of general overall maintenance and improvements to All Saints', Chilton, but still with a significant number of tasks undertaken. The need for improved disabled access was again set as a priority. The churchyard has been 'challenging' this year.

#### Quinquennial Inspection (2011)

The mandatory five year inspection (QQI) was carried out in September 2011 by Philip Waddy, the church architect. The formal inspection report was attached to the Annual Fabric and Ornaments Report for 2011/12. The summary stated:

*“The Church is well looked after. Most of the work recommended in the last Quinquennial report has been attended to together with much more by way of routine improvements. There is very little work requiring attention.”*

The actions from the QQI and current are outlined below. (The numbers were added by the Fabric Committee for quick reference.)

#### IMMEDIATE WORKS OF URGENCY

*A1 Main switchgear to be tested and test certificate retained in the log book*

Action: A survey was carried out by Kennet Electrical on April 20th 2012. They undertook the electrical inspection that included a visual inspection of all wiring, including up to the Bell Chamber. They also advised that they serviced the organ and fan heaters, although written confirmation is still awaited. A thorough report was obtained and was regarded as being very professional. A copy is now in the log book.

We also received a quote for remediation work which is currently on-going.

*A2 Clip loose electrical wire at door to Vestry.*

Action: Complete.

#### WORKS WHICH SHOULD BE CARRIED OUT WITHIN 18 MONTHS

*B1 Replace Porch gully.*

Action: Ongoing. Part of drainage improvement plans and relevant to disabled access improvement.

*B2 Repair crack in rendered stone plinth SE corner of South aisle*

Action: Ongoing.

*B3 Repair sub sill to ground floor south window of extension*  
Action: Ongoing.

*B4 Adjust for level all rainwater goods.*

This matter had previously been discussed with Philip Waddy after the last QQI and again prior to the present. It had been agreed then that because the gutters are asbestos based and subject to regulation, we were best to leave well alone because they are not causing any difficulty. The Committee were thus rather surprised that the issue had been raised again.

Action: None being taken.

*B5 Ease and adjust jammed casements*

Action: Complete. Upper Room windows freed; kitchen windows are very rarely opened and easing them was deemed unnecessary at present.

*B6 Replace cracked/missing tiles at north west corner of meeting room extension.*

Action: Ongoing.

*B7 Replace glass in ground floor south window of Church Room.*

Action: Ongoing.

#### **WORKS TO BE UNDERTAKEN WITHIN THE QUINQUENNIAL**

*C1 Redecorate rusting ironwork to ground floor tower window and iron support bars to Chancel south windows.*

*C2 Redecorate Priest's door to south Chancel.*

Action: Discharged.

*C3 Access trap hinge requires longer screws.*

*C4 Redecorate ferris work to Tower windows.*

*C5 Minor repair to east wall of south aisle adjacent to electrical cupboard.*

*C6 Repair loose plaster to doorway to Vestry.*

Action: Discharged.

*C7 Redecorate base of tower using Classidur breathable paint.*

*C8 Remove ivy and re-point south wall and wall leading to Memorial Garden.*

*C9 Re-point wall to east and south of Memorial Garden*

*C10 Repair fence at south west corner.*

*C11 Repair broken gulley and fit path edging*

Action: Most on-going.

C8 and C9 form part of the major problem over the state of the wall surrounding part of the churchyard. Any action awaits legal advice being sought by the owners of Middle House, with whom we maintain an excellent relationship.

#### **WORKS REQUIRING EVENTUAL ATTENTION**

*D1 Infill joints to buttresses of Tower with lime putty*

Action: Ongoing.

*D2 Consider extra insulation across flat ceiling.*

This was considered and thought that it would not be cost effective given the very limited usage of the rooms.

Action: None being taken.

*D3 Wet rot in notice boards requires attention*

Action: On-going, but hanging notice board has again recently been repaired. Replacement will though, soon be required.

### **WORKS REQUIRING ROUTINE ATTENTION**

*E1 Remove moss on northern slopes of Porch and new extension.*

*E2 Ground gutter requires regular clearing of weed and grass.*

*E3 Regular redecoration of Oak Windows*

*E4 Remove or re-set damaged tombstones.*

*E5 Rod surface water drain regularly.*

Action: All On-going. As these are continuous activities and are part of our normal monitoring programme, they have been removed from future fabric reports.

### **WORKS REQUIRING MONITORING**

*F1 Cracks in flashing to parapet*

*F2 Minor decay in north west corner of Nave*

*F3 Open joints to dressed stone south face of entrance porch*

*F4 Hollowness to north wall of Nave and south wall of Chancel*

*F5 Wet rot in hardwood frames and casements*

*F6 Splits in lead upstand flashings of roof*

*F7 North and South Belfrey openings*

*F8 Chancel roof plaster dropping at extreme east end*

*F9 Bulging plaster in Church Rooms*

*F10 Bell frames rusting*

*F11 Diagonal crack, north west corner of Nave*

*F12 Church rooms – historic leaks at abutment with tower*

*F13 Valley gutters require regular cleaning*

*F14 Ground gutter requires regular cleaning*

Action: All are being monitored. As these are continuous activities and most are part of our normal monitoring programme, they have been removed from future fabric reports. Those not previously on our monitoring programme have been added.

### **Church Electrical Supply System**

Our electricity supplier has installed a new meter in the church.

## **Disabled/ Improved Access**

As mentioned previously, the committee discussed methods of helping elderly/disabled people up the step into the Chancel for communion. For a permanent fixture, it was felt that floor mounting was much preferable to attempting to fix into the wall. Both would require a faculty. Outline advice from the DAC has been obtained. Meanwhile the decision to station an attendant at the step to help has been well received.

Regarding improving the churchyard paths, a representative of Drayton Construction Ltd (suggested by the church architect) visited the churchyard and made detailed measurements. He strongly recommended digging out a shallow foundation for hardcore before applying resin-bonded gravel (otherwise weeds would apparently rapidly re-appear). A quotation from Drayton Construction was then received that was in variance with discussions with their representative and also advice from the church architect (thin 3mm layer of bonded gravel on 20mm tarmac and no digging out). They subsequently re-quoted to a higher specification which looks much better. However, because of the high costs involved, an alternative quote was also sought.

A representative of Perry Driveways then visited and suggested using 8mm self-binding gravel as being more appropriate; being more resistant to damage from mini-diggers crossing the path and also easier to repair. They quoted for this and for resin-bonded gravel.

The Perry Driveways quote was more expensive than Drayton Construction's for resin-bonded gravel (£15,000 as compared with Drayton Construction's £10,984), but the 8mm self-binding gravel was significantly cheaper at £7,700. However, Philip Waddy, the church architect, and Natalie Merry, the Oxford DAC secretary both favoured the resin-bonded gravel. The Fabric committee now intend to view resin - bonded areas previously completed by Drayton Construction as soon as we receive address details from them.

## **Fire Extinguishers**

A representative of West 1 Fire Protection checked our fire extinguishers on January 14th. A new certificate has been issued and is displayed on the noticeboard in the porch.

## **Heaters**

As our heating system is 50 years old and much of it now obsolete, the whole question of how best to heat our church is a priority review for the coming year. All ideas welcome as the Fabric committee begin to build upon excellent information recently given at a Diocesan workshop.

The fan heater by the font failed on February 10th. Subsequent investigations showed that both the outer and middle elements were broken adjacent to the first insulator stack on the left hand side of the top centre. Sterling efforts by a member of the Fabric Committee who cannibalised a similar heater that was stored has seen the heater (1961 vintage!) restored to working order. During the repair, instructions were found advising oiling the bearings at least annually.

*(Unfortunately the fan heaters have subsequently given problems, and they, and their power supply are still being worked on as of 23/03/2013).*

## **Sound and Vision**

A faculty was granted on 23 March 2012 allowing eight months for completion of work which was being undertaken by a volunteer task force, to whom we are indebted. Both projectors are now installed and have their permanent electrical supply. The switches are located in the electrical cupboard for the south aisle projector, and above the sound desk for the nave one. They are on fused spurs from the main body of the church ring main.

A small folding shelf for the laptop computer has been made and fitted adjacent to the sound desk and the organ. It will be varnished in due course.

## **Boundary Wall**

Little has changed during the year, but we remain in close and amicable contact with the owners of 'Middle House'.

## **Internal Notice Board**

The notice boards at the back of the Nave have been re-covered and look very much better.

## **Notice listing previous Rectors and Curates**

This framed notice inside the church has been significantly updated. Many thanks to a member of our clergy!

## **Christmas Trees and Lights**

We are again very grateful to Chilton Garden Centre and a church member for the donation of trees for the tower and inside the church respectively. Many thanks also to those who erected and dismantled the trees. Our new LED lights for the tower tree again attracted a positive response, and being very low energy and long life, were left on continuously.

The new lights were again used inside the church for the Christingle service in January.

## **Progression of 'Projects'**

The progress of any agreed 'project' can now be followed on line by all PCC and Fabric Committee members. The goal is to help speed projects along in an orderly manner whilst ensuring that church legal requirements are honoured in full. The first project to benefit from this facility is the Access Path Improvement.

## **Churchyard**

### **General**

We had received complaints about the state of the churchyard that included some in writing. Unfortunately these came at a time when grass was growing at its peak, the weather was very wet, and when daffodils etc. were being allowed to die away, leaving grass uncut. Our grass-cutting contractors, Berinsfield CP, responded well subsequently to these adverse comments. Following their work and much in-house work, the churchyard was subsequently much improved.

For the future, the Committee felt that the PCC had to decide how to handle this issue in future and that we had two realistic options:

- Cut the grass as soon as the daffodil flowers have gone, even though the bulbs benefit from the stems being allowed to die down;
- Have ‘maintained’ daffodils etc. in a single area and leave that area uncut until the stems die away. This would need to be clearly labelled as such so that visitors appreciated that it was deliberate. It would also help BCB know where to cut.

Committee members favoured the latter approach and it was approved by the PCC.

Following PCC approval over having a ‘designated area’, the Fabric Committee unanimously agreed to the area near the road where spoil from graves has been deposited as the area to plant new bulbs (and grass seed) and then leave to ‘die down’. For practical reasons, the Fabric Committee felt that only one such area could be envisaged. The gravediggers have been asked to leave future spoil on the compost heap as the current area had become an eyesore anyway.

It is important to note that existing bulbs outside the designated area will still be there; it is just that the stems will be cut down sooner.

Many thanks to the family who weeded much of the Garden of Remembrance during this period.

### **Churchyard Trees**

The Committee accepted an offer from ‘Jenks Oxford, Arboricultural Contractors’, of a free assessment of the state of the trees in the churchyard. We duly received a detailed report. There were a number of issues, but the most important and urgent was the perilous state of the horse chestnut near the lych gate. Jenks also offered a number of tree ‘management plans’ for the future.

The horse chestnut was duly felled and the management options discussed. The Fabric Committee recommended an option of accepting a ‘reduced management plan’ that comprised doing some of the smaller tasks ourselves. It was calculated that this would cost £313.05 as an initial deposit and a monthly payment of £30.07 (plus VAT).

The Fabric Committee felt overall that they should recommend that we accept this option, the reduced management plan, as this would ensure that we have done what is reasonable to

ensure that the trees on the site are safe and spreads the costs. However, this was not approved by the PCC in January due to our current financial position, and the PCC are arranging for an alternative assessment report to be obtained and submitted to the Fabric Committee for technical consideration.

A branch from one of the poplar trees was found to be lying on the electrical wire supplying the church above the road to the Village Hall. The local electricity company were contacted and came and dealt with it. They also trimmed some of the branches of the tree in the churchyard that the electrical overhead wire goes through, thus doing us a favour.

Subsequently, and additionally, the Committee has been made aware of a request from Chilton Parish Council that trees along the road to the car-park need to be trimmed back because they are obscuring the light from street lamps and thus making the path poorly lit. The Committee will discuss this and make recommendations to the PCC for action.

### **Bulbs**

Bulbs have been planted in the churchyard near the road to the car park where soil from graves used to be tipped. The area is now roped off and signed as being our new 'nature area' where grass will not be cut until the flowers and stems have died away. Bulbs in other areas will not be moved, but the stems will be cut along with the grass, as the grass requires.

### **Working Parties**

Small, but very hard-working parties carried out many tasks on Saturday June 30th and on Saturday October 20th. These included (some on both occasions):

- Clearing the remains of weeds and edging the path to Middle House;
- Raking and clearing grass cuttings;
- Weeding the French Drains;
- Lopping low tree branches;
- Rebuilding the two small walls at the main entrance;
- Shaving the wood and easing the windows in the Upper Room;
- A small fallen tree was removed;
- Elder and ivy from the clump at the top of Church Hill removed;
- Main paths were weeded and edged;
- Graves were cleared and weeded;
- Ivy was removed from trees and from some of the wall;
- Leaves were raked up;
- The Garden of Remembrance was weeded;
- A crack in plasterwork round the vestry door was filled.

### **Maintenance Tasks List**

Many items on the 'Maintenance Tasks List' remain 'on-going', but some have been completed or progress made. These include:

- Several spotlights that had failed have been replaced;

- The cane pole that was used to remove/replace the banner above the pulpit and had broken, has been replaced by a length of 18mm hardwood dowelling with a hook at the end. The metal hook has been covered with tape to protect the wall and can easily be re-covered.
- The cherry tree near the lych gate has been sprayed
- A remembrance plaque for Audrey Buckley has been placed in the Garden of Remembrance.
- The main door, extension door (into the kitchen), toilet door and support post have all been treated with Danish Oil;
- Shrubs have been trimmed;
- Additional strimming to that of Berinsfield has been carried out.
- One of the garden shed roofs suffered damage during the recent strong winds. The felt came off, revealing rotten wood. This wood has been replaced and the roof re-felted.
- The large pile of cuttings and branches from the churchyard that was near the Humfrey Stevenson Gate has been disposed of.
- The small hedge has been trimmed.

## **Ornaments**

The ornaments remain in very good condition, brass items looking especially well-cared for.

## **Thank you**

Many additional routine tasks have been carried out that are too numerous to mention. We would like to thank most sincerely everyone who has worked so hard in keeping the church, its contents and environs in excellent condition. We would like to express our gratitude for the generous gifts of time, effort, expertise, materials and finance. The compliments we receive from visitors are very gratifying.

## **Committee Membership**

We were delighted that Judith Russell agreed to become Churchyard Coordinator and she has subsequently worked hard in this role.

John Berry  
Chairman, Fabric Committee

*pp.*  
Naomi Gibson  
Andrew Hayes

Churchwardens

April 2013.