

St Matthew's, Harwell

Fabric Report 2020

Summary of work carried out to the Church in 2020

A special mention is due to all those who have given their time, either on a regular basis or occasional basis, to maintain and enhance our building. Thanks are also due to those members of the Church who give their time to ensure our buildings are kept clean and tidy, who ensure that they are maintained, decorated and generally in good order, who arrange flowers and who contribute generally to the upkeep of these buildings.

The log book of Church repairs has been maintained and is presented with this report. The Terrier, recording details of the Church buildings and land is held as subsection 1.2.2 of the Church's Maintenance and Operations Manual and is also presented, along with the Inventory of valuables. There is also a log book of repairs and maintenance to the Church Hall.

General repairs and maintenance to the fabric of the Church, the Church Hall and their surroundings have been carried out as and when necessary. In 2020 this and other regular activities have of course been affected by the pandemic and the way the use of the buildings has changed. In particular, the Quinquennial Inspection of the Church, due in 2020, was postponed to 2021.

Key items of work carried out in 2020 are as follows:

Electrical

All portable electrical equipment in the Church and Church Hall was tested by an electrical contractor and all items that failed were disposed of or repaired.

Some work to implement recommendations from the 5 year electrical inspection carried out in October 2018 has been done, but completion has been affected by the lockdowns.

Electrical repairs were necessary in the upstairs extension following accidental severing of a cable in the lighting circuit during the roofing work.

External

Roofing

A major project has been to re-roof the north aisle and extension with terne coated stainless steel, to replace the lead stolen from the north aisle in July 2019 and to replace the aging felt roof of the extension. A Faculty and VWH Planning Permission were granted in June 2020. Before the work could start in September a hive of bees had to be removed from the eaves of the north aisle and taken to a new home. The roofing work was completed in early November.

The work also required asbestos surveys to check and deal with suspect material and some adjustments to the lightning protection system.

Other External Items

The lightning conduction system has been inspected.

This year it was not possible to put a Christmas tree on top of the tower, due to the pandemic restrictions. However, the floodlights, lighted cross and coloured lights were put up, and a Christmas tree with lights set up just to the east of the porch.

Internal

A rope handrail for the tower stairs up to the ringing chamber has been installed after approval was obtained from the Archdeacon.

Church Hall

Due to lockdowns, and restrictions on meeting indoors, the Hall has been used less than normal during 2020. Between lockdowns over the summer, some existing bookings continued to make use of the hall, following completion of risk assessments, and with enhanced cleaning measures and ventilation. Day to day management continues to be undertaken by Brian Zimmerman, and bookings during the course of the year managed by the church administrators (Vicky Johnston, and Deborah Evans during Vicky's maternity leave), and support on maintenance issues, lawns and hedges by the Rector. We are grateful for all those who manage the Church Hall and help to keep it clean and tidy and in working order. There are a number of general repairs and grounds work that need to be carried out each year and the details of these can be found in the Log Book.

Work planned for 2021 on the Church and Church Hall includes:

- Make good minor damage to the internal walls of the north aisle caused by water ingress after the lead theft in July 2019;
- Finish implementing recommendations from the 5 year full electrical inspection of the church;
- Review the recommendations from the 2015 Quinquennial Inspection so as to prepare for the inspection in 2021;
- Maintain and re-oil the woodwork of the extension windows and investigate the possibility of providing secondary double glazing;
- Continue the work of making improvements to the two toilets in the extension when funds permit;
- Consider re-painting the rainwater goods and window bars if funds allow;
- Progress replacing the inner porch doors with glass doors, under the terms of a legacy;
- To look at other improvements that could be made to the interior of the church to ensure that St. Matthew's continues to be a growing vibrant church for worship and a valued part of the local community.

Rebecca Lewis and Allan Macarthur – Churchwardens

With thanks to Tony Hughes for preparation of this report.