

PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MARY, SHORTLANDS

ANNUAL REPORT ON THE FABRIC AND ORNAMENTS FOR 2018

Introduction

This report is produced in accordance with the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Measure 1991.

Five significant items of work were undertaken this year – (i) cleaning and painting the walls and ceilings in the Millennium Chapel (MC), (ii) roofing repairs and painting of surrounds on the north aisle roof, (iii) repair of the heating system leak at the back of Church and replacement of under-floor pipework, (iv) clearing and tidying the vicarage garden and initial works on the house prior to re-decoration, (v) installation of ‘Tommy’ on the front church lawn. In addition, a number of miscellaneous items of work were carried out by various contractors and volunteers.

The premises were inspected on behalf of the Churchwardens in February 2019 with the conclusion that a number of more minor items from the Quinquennial Report (Nov 16) remain to be completed, either within a 2 year or 5-year period from that date as noted in the report. Some of the items intended for action in 2018 have been moved forward to 2019 due to unavailability last year. In addition, a number of other tasks need to be addressed as listed below.

The attention to fire safety and other potential emergencies resulted in a further evacuation test during 2018 at the end of a regular 10.30 service. Follow-up tests should perhaps take into account that one or more exits from Church may be unavailable during an emergency. Unwanted materials in the boiler room should continue to be cleared to avoid an excess of combustible material. A formal risk assessment for the premises is yet to be carried out.

The goods and ornaments were inspected by the Churchwardens during the year. There are separate statements on the contents of the Terrier and Log Book but key changes are highlighted below.

Repair and other work carried out during the year

Treatment and monitoring of Japanese knotweed has continued with success although one area between the Hall and Church House (CH) is still under observation. The drains were inspected/cleared in Oct '18 but work continues on a regular basis to clear leaves and debris from gutters and downpipes to ensure free running of storm and waste water. Wire cages in gutters are being replaced on the various roofs to prevent leaf blockages. Cracks in the north aisle ceiling have been filled to supplement the work done on that roof externally; leaking toilets in the Hall have been re-plumbed; the pulpit and lectern brick/blockwork has been re-painted. A Pre-School office has been constructed in the area which was formerly the Hall cloakroom and the hall corridor stair lift motor has been replaced. Fire extinguishers were serviced in March 2018 – the servicing contract has now been amended to include the Scout Hut. The organ was serviced several times throughout the year. The lawns were regularly mowed and in December a strong group of guides and volunteers cleared leaves and tidied the grounds.

Inspection of the fabric of the Church including the Millennium Chapel (MC) and curtilage

The inspection carried out on behalf of the Churchwardens showed the following main defects require attention. *[Actions suggested are indicated]:*

- Various coping stones have minor cracks, distorted lead flashing, missing mortar and stained brickwork underneath *[continue repairs 2019]*
- Further minor repairs are required to coping stones over the MC east wall. *[attend to in 2019]*
- The north aisle ceiling needs preparation and repainting. *[re-paint 2019]*
- The south porch doors and frame need preparation and re-coating and ideally a threshold fixing externally to the base of the doors to prevent water ingress into the south porch during stormy weather conditions. *[attend to in next 2 years]*
- Top fixing of lightning conductor at east end of south elevation is missing. *[Replace at next opportunity]*
- Several attempts have been made to investigate and repair the church bell so that it functions correctly and consistently, but this has not been successful and further discussions should be held with one or more manufacturers/contractors to identify and correct the problem. *[re-investigate discussions 2019]*

- Outer brickwork around the south porch coping stones and in the stonework around the windows on the west wall requires re-pointing. *[repair 2019]*
- An external crack in the north wall about a centimetre wide extends from the coping stones to the top of the second window from the west end. *[no change from 2017/8, continue to monitor]*
- In addition, external cracks at the top of the west corner of the north wall extend from the coping stones both vertically down the line of the lightning conductor through 25 brick courses and also diagonally downwards, via a hole in the brickwork, to an area close to the NW corner itself. NB: the lightning conductor on this north wall is about 1m from the NW corner. *[same as 2017/8 but continue to monitor]*
- There is also an external crack at the top of the north corner of the west wall, about 0.6m from the NW corner, extending down 25 brick courses from the coping stones. *[same as 2017/8 but continue to monitor]*

The comment made last year regarding the potential instability of this corner of the brickwork is still valid and the area should be kept under regular observation.

- There is a crack on the south wall at the west end (previously unnoticed) leading from the coping stones down vertically through about 50 brick courses. *[continue to monitor]*
- On the nave roof there are 2 minor breaks in tiles on the north facing side which should be repaired *[repair 2019]*. In addition, some of the repairs to mortar on the ridge tiles, carried out in autumn 2017, have come loose and should be monitored for further deterioration.
- A small area of the inside surface of the west wall (high up above the windows) is becoming detached *[monitor]*
- The south side rear choir stall and a number of pews are loose. *[replace screws and/or tighten 2019]*
- In the sacristy, no faults were found in the fabric of the leaded windows and surrounding stonework. *[continue to monitor staining on inside of stonework]*
- The perimeter dwarf wall needs repair/repointing in places and the gate posts need treating with preservative as does the gate from the north porch to the vicarage. *[attend to when time allows]*
- Tree branches overhang the vestry and scout hut roofs. Some lopping work has been carried out but continued work needs to be carried out. *[lop at first opportunity]*
- Japanese knotweed is under observation generally in case there are any further outbreaks *[continue monitoring and treatment]*
- The garden benches, apart from the new bench, are in poor condition and require restoration and treatment. *[review treatment within next 2 years]*. The newest bench, however, should be scrubbed and cleaned with water.
- Moss treatment should be continued on the various paths and steps and tarmac patch repairs carried out. *[Continue treatment and repairs when time allows]*
- There is an increasing amount of damage to grass verges around the parking areas outside the south porch – preventive measures should be implemented to preserve these areas from further damage from cars and/or contractor vehicles. *[implement in 2019]*

Inspection of the fabric of Church House (CH), flat and curtilage

The inspection carried out on behalf of the Churchwardens showed the following main defects required attention: *[Actions suggested are indicated.]*

- The wooden window frames are in poor condition and need replacement with UPVC, priority being the three windows above the main entrance, but also those at ground floor level and those at the rear of CH. *[replace upper front windows as soon as funds allow, repair/re-paint others in the next two years]*
- The hand rails on the steps between CH and the Hall need repainting *[attend to 2019]*
- The access hatch to the left of CH main door leading to the boiler room should be checked and repaired if necessary, to prevent water ingress into the boiler room area beneath. *[attend to 2019]*
- The carpet in the choir vestry is worn and may require cleaning/treatment. *[review 2019, replace if funds allow]*
- Some of the bricks of the retaining wall in the open area between CH and the Hall are displaced and are crumbling. *[repair when time and funds allow]*
- The corridor (Hall to CH/flat) east face boards need repainting. *[attend to in 2019]*
- Tarmac paths around CH have cracks and holes. *[carry out patch repairs in next two years]*

Inspection of the fabric of the Hall and curtilage

The inspection carried out on behalf of the Churchwardens showed the following main defects require attention: *[Actions suggested are indicated.]*

- The window frames and sills on the east wall need re-painting; one large window pane has been replaced. There is one broken window (to the room below the stage) *[replace glass and re-paint windows 2019]*
- There is a crack in the external north wall of the corridor leading to the Hall about halfway along which extends over 26 brickwork courses. *[continue to monitor]*
- The crack across the corridor floor adjacent to the Pre-School office is about 1cm wide and there are cracks around the office door frame and adjacent rooms. *[seal 2019 and monitor]*
- The corridor stair lift motor has been replaced (see above) but it should be checked whether the device needs servicing since the last maintenance inspection was 26/03/12. *[check required inspection interval with manufacturer]*
- The Hall has a number of cracks in the wooden flooring. *[fill cracks 2019]*
- The Hall east and south walls and below stage corridor cracks have not worsened significantly since the last crack inspection Feb '18. *[seal 2019 and monitor]*
- Lower parts of walls by the under-stage store and numeracy room have suffered damp and plaster has come off the ceiling inside the end room door *[replace plaster with waterproof plaster when time allows]*.
- The under-stage toilet area needs a comprehensive clean and the toilet seat needs to be replaced; the window catch is also insecure. *[attend to 2019]*
- Vegetation along the bottom of the east wall should be cleared/treated and leaves swept away. *[clear area in 2019]*
- The gate at the back entrance to the Hall/Scout Hut needs preservative treatment. *[Treat within next 2 years]*
- The picket fencing leading from this gate and along St. Mary's Ave. is in a poor state of repair. *[replace when funds allow]*

NB. The various work, actions and timings above are listed irrespective of the Site Development Plan soon to be tabled for discussion by the relevant PCC sub-committee. Depending on the outcome and way forward some of the items listed may change or be deleted entirely.

Changes to the inventory of Goods and Ornaments.

Wardens to advise.

Insurances

Insurances for all the buildings and contents were kept up to date (as were those for employee and public liability).

Acknowledgements

The churchwardens would like to thank the staff of the parish office for looking after the goods and ornaments of the church and keeping the associated records. The churchwardens also recognise the sustained efforts of the paid cleaning staff and are very grateful for the hard work done by the stalwart group of volunteer church cleaners, flower arrangers, mowers, gardeners and maintenance workers.

March 2019

Sarah Leonard
Churchwarden

Adolph Williams
Churchwarden