

Parish of Witney Fabric Report 2021

St Mary the Virgin, Witney

During the last year, we have made certain improvements to the fabric of St Mary's, despite the restrictions imposed to control the Covid pandemic:

- The replacement of carpet in the High Altar area, the Nave altar crossing, all three side chapels and the 'cross' within the Nave.
- An upgrade to the Wifi capability, such that it is now accessible in all parts of the church, and to a degree also outside. This is seen as an essential pre-requisite to the streaming of services from the church in the future.
- The installation of comprehensive CCTV covering the interior of the church, the Parish Office, the entrance to the Winchester Room, the Toilet block, the store cupboards in the All Saints Chapel and the inside/outside of the North Door porch.
- Essential repairs and maintenance to the heating system within the Church

Peter Preston has been appointed as Inspecting Architect for the church, and he has already been proactive in giving advice and guidance to a number of the renewal projects that we wish to progress in the short term:

- Improvements to the facilities in the Winchester Room,
- new external doors to the North Porch, to provide for disabled access,
- more secure external doors to the Winchester Room, again with improved disabled access and
- possibly also improvements to the decoration and ambience of the St George's chapel.

With the exception of the improvements to the Winchester Room all these projects are at an early feasibility stage, and have not yet been funded or approved.

The design of a new external noticeboard facing onto Church Green has been agreed, and faculty application is in the process of being submitted to the DAC. This will be funded from a one-off donation specifically made to enable this change.

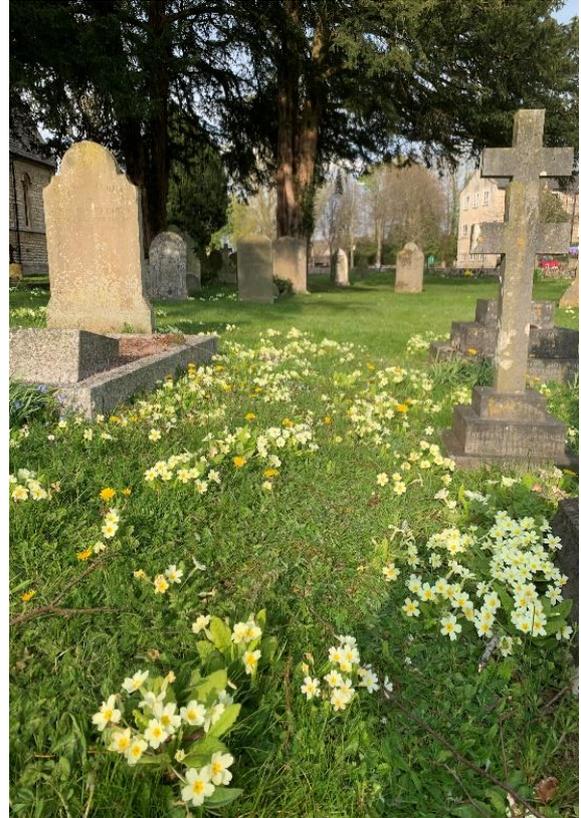
Sadly, the Town Council have had to cut down the beautiful Cedar of Lebanon tree to the south of the church in the churchyard. The wood from this tree will shortly be moved to a timber yard to be dried out, with an aspiration to use some of it to create a new Nave Altar for the church.

Unfortunately, the storms over the winter months caused substantial water ingress and damage to the paintwork in the church around the toilet block. We are working with Peter Preston to determine the best course of action to remediate this.

Kate Banks & Jeremy Lasman, Churchwardens

Holy Trinity Church

Since last year's report, no progress has been made with the repairs to the stone pillars or the cutting back of the evergreens in the churchyard. We were able to have the kitchen units replaced before the lockdown.



During the summer the south roof repairs were completed and the gutters cleared. The work on the north roof has not yet started because the fundraising had to be put on hold.

The servicing of the fire extinguishers, boiler and heaters and PAT testing were carried out as required.

Dair Henderson & Charlotte Tremain, Deputy Wardens

St. John the Evangelist, Hailey

Fabric

The last 12 months has seen the church used very infrequently because of the Covid-19 pandemic; this has brought with it some unexpected complications.

The works that were successfully undertaken to "Fix the Floor" have continued to look as though nothing had actually happened, which was the intention. The new wooden vestry screen and door, and the wooden servery screen have been a source of delight because of they are very attractive and very much in keeping with the period of the church and some of the repeating designs to be found within. However, the cold and damp over this winter, which would have been mitigated by regular use, has seen some of the newer wood expand somewhat and doors catching and some now difficult to open and close. The heating system in the church has been serviced and is now

being run in the same frequency as before lockdown. The church is inspected weekly and in so doing an exchange of air occurs. It also gets ventilated and heated ahead of any public gathering such as a funeral. Following a flood over Christmas there was water damage to the electrical systems in the basement which has since been fully repaired and a claim made on the insurance. The pump which is supposed to cut in if water levels appear failed. Lightening conductor was inspected, gutters are performing and a slate from the roof was replaced.

Churchyard

The churchyard has once again been a source of joy to many who visit it. The peace afforded to those visiting family graves, the Lights of Remembrance or the Nativity Tableau all presented an opportunity for showcasing this lovely space. The spring bulbs planted in previous years are coming through, and the volunteer "army" of gardeners once again came to help with the prewinter tidy up.



The ongoing grass cutting, and strimming has maintained the space well this year and we have the Parish council to think for the contributions towards this. The deputy



wardens have plans to plan for spring bulbs so as to make it even more attractive to those who might wish to enter this space. The ambition is that it could be viewed an oasis of peace and beauty, a space where individuals could spend time, and children might wish to follow some of the nature exploration we hope to stimulate.

Plans for creating a path from Middletown Grange and the church, though the southern boundary, and their carpark are in abeyance.

The Armistice stone carved specially for Hailey and sited adjacent to the Liquidambar styraciflua tree will receive a blessing once the church is open once again.

Robin Carr & Elpie Lewis, Deputy Wardens



St John the Baptist, Curbridge

This is the quinquennial year for Curbridge, so an expert opinion will be available soon.

The churchyard is in good shape, with lots of beautiful snowdrops and primroses. Most graves are cared for, and I do my best with the few which are neglected. There are some large cracks in the main pathway which need to be cut out for the path to be re-made.

The church building seems generally sound, with no obvious leaks or rot. The ancient electrical heating works every time it is asked to. There is no water or gas supply, so no toilet. On the plus side, there is no washing-up, either.

The church bell has seized up and needs to be freed and a new rope and mechanism fitted. It is such a shame that so many years have passed since the faithful were called to prayer. The organ is in working order but is due a service.

The church is clean and ready for use, thanks to a few dedicated people. Let us hope the inspection does not reveal any hidden horrors.

Ian Galletley, Deputy Warden

