**DRAFT FABRIC REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2023**

**Church**

The roof is generally in good repair, and there has been no repeat of the water ingress around the Belfrey following the fitting of baffles last year. Some cracks that were identified around the East window have been repaired by a local stonemason during the summer and no further problems are anticipated.

We are due a quinquennial inspection later this year, and this is likely to highlight areas of pointing and stonework that will need attention, including the south wall of the church which we are already aware of. Bearing in mind the elevation of the church, it is thought that some of the repairs will need professional assistance with high-access equipment (e.g. scaffolding towers or cherry pickers) which would incur some additional cost against our maintenance budget.

Throughout the winter, the wooden external door to the vestry has become harder to open and close as the doorframe swells in wet weather. Repairs will be carried out in the summer when it will have dried out.

The heavy baptistry covers were re-seated last summer in a way that we hope will better protect the paintwork and plaster around the top of the pool, and we appreciate the assistance from all those who were involved in those repair and maintenance activities which took several weeks to complete.

There is one area at the north-east corner of the Nave where it looks like some plaster has moved, and we think that this should be investigated and repaired shortly.

**Hall**

The gas central heating in the hall needs to be replaced, and this has become a major project for the coming year. The current boiler is 44 years old and the radiators are inadequate at heating the rooms quickly, but with the Church of England aiming to be carbon neutral by 2030, a like-for-like replacement is not acceptable. By the end of the 2023 it was determined that an Air-to-Air heat pump system would be the most efficient & low-carbon solution, and a local company has quoted for the work. For the work to go ahead, we have applied for a Faculty from the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) and it now appears that planning permission may also be required (although none of the units would be visible to the public).

This project will also look to further reducing our hall-heating needs and costs by:

* The introduction of insulation into the cavity walls and above the suspended ceilings.
* Separately controllable heating areas to suit room-bookings more precisely.
* 100% LED lighting throughout the building.

We are grateful to the members of the church who have generously donated funds to help with the cost of this project but, in the interest of careful spending, will also look to apply for external funding once the permissions are all in place.

There is a need for redecoration in several of the rooms and ceiling tiles in some rooms need replacement, but these tasks will not be tackled until the new heating system is in place and the old radiators and pipework have been removed.

Acoustic panels have been fitted to the walls in room 4 to reduce reverberation and help with audibility. In the kitchen, repairs have been necessary to both the water heater and the dishwasher which is not surprising given the additional use they have had over the past year with the Welcome Table activities.

**OMH**

The OMH has also seen an increase in use over the last year, but there have been no major issues, although we have repainted the fascia’s that look onto Trinity Street.

**Church Office**

The church office has had a few minor maintenance problems this year, with fuses tripping and water leaking in the bathroom, but these were quickly sorted.

**Churchyard**

We are grateful to David King for continuing to maintain the grass in the churchyard, and appreciated the work that Peter Herrick did in weeding and tidying the flowerbeds. We will miss Peter in so many ways.

Over the past year, the raised vegetable beds provided crops of potatoes, radishes, tomatoes, courgettes and runner beans which the children enjoyed picking throughout the summer.
A second compost bin is now in use, and six bird boxes have been put up in various places around the churchyard – courtesy of the diocese.

The plan to move a few of the isolated headstones to the perimeter wall has stalled, in part because of the slow response by the DAC, but also due to the cost of re-mounting the headstones. However, we continue to monitor them as a matter of health and safety.

**Net-zero plans**

Whilst we expect that the changes to the hall-heating (our Stage 1 for decarbonisation) will make a huge reduction in our gas-usage, the energy needed to heat the church during the winter remains significant and we have been considering ways in which our carbon-footprint can be further reduced.

Having had general approval from the DAC for the proposal to mount a photo-voltaic solar array on the south roof of the church with battery storage (our Stage 2 for decarbonisation), we now must gain Planning Permission from the LPA.

There are several bumps in the road for this project to succeed including dealing with the asbestos-cement roof tiles which were used for much of that roof-face and finding a contractor that will work to the DAC’s specification.

**Regular Checks, Servicing, Inspections and H&S**

In 2023, checks, servicing and inspections were carried out on the lightning conductor, the fire extinguishers, the emergency lighting systems, smoke & heat alarms and the heating boilers. Small electrical items were PAT tested and we also had a 5-year electrical inspection on all of our buildings. This only picked up a couple of minor recommendations, which have been implemented. We also had a thorough review with our insurance company, which has to be completed every 3 years.

The carpets in room 1, room 2 and the foyer have been cleaned twice during the year, as have the fans in the kitchen and toilets and the filters in the church heaters. Since September, in addition to cleaning the hall and toilets twice per week, the cleaners have been cleaning the church, creche and foyer, which seems to be very satisfactory.

In the autumn, we began a review of our Fire risk assessment, and Helen has updated our H&S policy and sent it out to all keyholders. We have also reviewed our COSHH requirements and ensured that keyholders are fully aware of where the accident books are located and how they should be used.

Finally, the wardens would like to thank Josh Powell who served as verger throughout the summer, tackling a number of maintenance jobs, as well as Andy Beadle, Sam Eedle, Clive Hopkins and Nick Kornjaca who have served faithfully as assistant wardens for the past year.