

The Parochial Church Council of the Parish of St Peter and St Paul Uplyme

Report on the Church Buildings activity 2016/17

1 Incidents, Reported Problems and Maintenance

The following is a list of incidents, defects and maintenance activities that have been reported and rectified or carried out through the year. There is no significance to a topic's position in the list as to their seriousness.

1.1 Incidents

1.1.1 Sink Blocked

Occasionally the Kitchen sink outlet became blocked and was cleared. The problem arises due to the poor fall of the waste pipework inside the church. The blockages were released using off-the-shelf pipe cleaner products and a plunger.

1.1.2 Radiator became loose from its Mountings

A radiator in the main body of the church became detached from its supports on the central pillar. No leak was apparent, because the radiator was supported on the pipe work. The radiator fixings to the wall have been renewed.

1.1.3 Leaking Radiator Valve

A minor leak from one of the radiator valves was rectified during the course of the boiler service.

1.1.4 Replacement of a Dripping Tap in the Toilet

The wash hand basin cold water tap developed a drip. Investigation showed extensive corrosion that precluded replacement of the washer. The tap was replaced.

1.2. Reported Problems

1.2.1 Health and Safety Issues

1.2.1.1. No illumination of Steps leading up to the Churchyard Path

The proposed course of action, which was agreed by the PCC, was:

- 1) Add white line markers to the step edges.
- 2) Add a pole mounted light, of the same type as that used to illuminate the path, adjacent to the Church Yard wall with the pole located to provide illumination of the steps without shadow.

Both of these actions have been completed.

1.2.1.2. Trip Hazard caused by Step Well to the West Door

The base of the West Door is at a lower level than the church floor, creating a trip hazard due to the two ancient steps up to the Chancel floor.

The area is screened off when not in use using event displays, thereby limiting access, but see item 1.2.1.7, which will require this issue to be re-thought out.

1.2.1.3. Balcony Safety Screens into the Church Nave

Safety Screens between the balcony viewing area and the Church Nave do not comply with Health and Safety requirements. They are too low. A long-term solution requires changes to the safety screens in the balcony arches. In the short term advisory notices have been installed warning of potential risks and adult supervision is to be provided whenever children are present in the balcony area. A long-term solution to this problem will now be developed because the Church Organ has been replaced and the space currently occupied by the existing organ at the balcony level has become free.

1.2.1.4. Potential Falling Slates into Churchyard from adjacent Farm Barn

An area of the Church graveyard, adjacent to the Barn in the neighbouring farmyard to the east of the Church, has been fenced off to provide a safety area to protect any person who happens to be in that part of the graveyard should any slates fall into the Churchyard from the obviously deteriorating Barn roof. See also Church Warden's report.

1.2.1.5. Worn Carpeting to Balcony Stairs

The carpet to the balcony stairs is badly worn creating a trip hazard. The hazard has been mitigated by the use of carpet tape over the worn areas to render the steps safe to use. The use of tape is a temporary measure and, in the longer term, there is no alternative to replacement of the carpet, or its complete removal leaving just bare boards.

1.2.1.6. Potential Fire Hazard due to Tree Growth near to the Boiler Chimney

We were given a verbal warning during the annual Boiler Maintenance check that an adjacent tree was encroaching on the Boiler Chimney and it should be trimmed before the growing season of 2017 to avoid any potential fire hazards.

It was agreed with our neighbour in the adjacent farmhouse that they would trim the tree, because it was growing out of the wall between the two properties.

In the event the tree has been removed at no cost to the Church.

1.2.1.7. Recent Fire Inspection Recommendations

A recent fire safety inspection has been carried out and we are recommended to:

- 1) Designate the West Door be used as a fire exit.

Clarity of the way forward has yet to be agreed (e.g. signage, illumination in the event of fire, marking of steps, use and type of door lock, and, potentially, a safety stewards' rota). Once PCC agreement is reached on the work to be done, this will be completed during 2017.

Note: Designating the West Door as a fire door means that plans to re-install the draft excluding curtains across that door will now have to be shelved and the safety screening of the steps will have to cease. What to do about the trip hazard will be considered by the PCC as part of designating the West Door as a Fire Door.

- 2) We are recommended to install to a Safety Fastening to the door lock on the Church back door at the foot of the stairs, (e.g. paddle lock, fire door exit bar or break glass lock)

- 3) Install a Smoke Alarm in the Vestry Office

- 4) Carry Out a Fire Safety Inspection by the responsible person for the Church and ensure that the findings are recorded and appropriate training is provided for all Church officers in attendance at Services etc.

All of the above will be addressed by the PCC and appropriate actions put into place during 2017/18.

1.2.2 Other Reported Problems

1.2.2.1 Audio Visual Operating Problems

The problems reported in last year's report, with the screens going out of service were traced to a failure of an equipment item at the heart of the system that is used to select the video input (iPad, Laptop, or Internet) and convert the income signal to that which is used by the TV screens and projector. The failure was put down to the Church being very cold during the winter of 2015/16 and the equipment being switched on when the temperature was too low. The failed item was replaced during the year and opportunity was taken to update the capability so as to accommodate the new video HDMI standard that was not previously supported.

As the 2016/17 year progressed, an intermittent problem emerged – sometimes, (and not every week) for no apparent reason, one or more of the TV screens, or projector, would go off for a few seconds and then return to normal operation. Just very occasionally the screen affected would fail to restart until power to the system was switched off and back on again. This situation is very bothersome to users and gives rise to a feeling of uncertainty – “will the system operate reliably for me when I want to use it?”

As with all intermittent problems, it is very difficult to say, with certainty, where the problem lies, unless the fault becomes permanent – which it has not.

We are currently trying out a series of temporary modifications to try and isolate the problem to a particular item.

What we are doing is making a change, followed by using the system for several weeks to see if the fault recurs.

During this investigatory period there will be some restrictions on capability to limit the range and scale of any particular failure to the area we are investigating.

Hopefully we can gradually home in on the faulty item.

Unfortunately this process is time consuming and has no time limit.

We shall only know the fault is fixed when the intermittent fault is no longer seen for a time period that gives rise to feeling of confidence in the system.

1.2.2.2 Intermittent Operation of the Heating System

As reported last year, we did not succeed in remedying an intermittent, boiler operating fault by the replacement of the external frost stat located in a damp, underground, boiler room, although the replacement frost stat did reduce the fault incidence.

To avoid unexpected boiler shut downs, resulting in a very cold Church, the boiler system was switched to "constant" so that the Church thermostat kept the church warm 24 hours a day. The side effect being that the boiler room stayed warm thereby stopping the Frost Stat from operating.

By running the heating system on "constant" during the spring months of 2016 we were able to prove that, no matter how cold, or damp, it got, there were no unexpected boiler shut downs. However, running the boiler continuously results in high Gas consumption and higher heating costs.

In October 2016, a new Church thermostat was fitted that runs the heating system on "constant" whilst providing a programmable heating cycle that is varied over a 24 hour day and 7 day week. Thereby providing an intelligent boiler shut down capability.

The revised heating arrangements now provide 5 different temperature settings per 24 day and each day may be different. The programmed settings may be temporarily overridden at any time, the thermostat returns to its programmed settings next day.

The Church heating programmed setting is set to:

- 10C at night,
- brought up to 18C for school services and morning prayer fireplace,
- then reduced to 14C for the rest of the working day,
- then in the evening it is raised again to allow for evening activity,
- before being run down at an intermediate setting in preparation for night.

Some parishioners have complained the heating is too hot, other that it is too cold, suggesting that the settings are about right.

There have been no heating system failures the winter of 2016/17, and in January the Gas consumption approximated to that prevailing in October before the thermostat was changed. We are now monitoring Gas consumption monthly over the year to understand how we might fine tune temperature settings to reduce Gas consumption further.

1.2.3 Maintenance

1.2.3.1 Lead Roof Repairs

The roof valleys and gutters, all lead lined, were cleaned and patched in July as part of the annual roof service. As in previous years there were a number of new defects in the lead roofing caused by age (cracking) and acid rain erosion (holes), a further 3 new patches were added taking the total of recently added patches to 14.

Of significance, we found a hidden crack under a joint in the lead that was probably allowing water to seep into the rear Balcony supporting pillar. The obvious water penetration in the pillar now appears to be drying.

1.2.3.2 Tower Roof Repairs

The lead flashing around the Tower roof, where it forms the seal between the tower stonework and the copper roof was inspected and repaired where it had cracked, a new patch was installed taking the total of recently added patches to 8.

1.2.3.3 Annual Gas Safety Check and Heating Maintenance

The annual boiler maintenance and Gas Safety Check was carried out early October. A Gas Safety Certificate was issued.

The boiler installation and pipework was rated as satisfactory.

- 1) As in previous years, the maintenance check noted evidence of intermittent boiler room flooding, although not at a level to shut down the boiler. The boiler room is below ground.
- 2) We were given a verbal warning that the tree in the boundary wall had grown to such an extent that it needed trimming before the next growing season, because it was likely to constitute a fire hazard. By the time of the next service.

1.2.3.4 Annual Fire Extinguisher Check

A satisfactory annual fire extinguishers maintenance check was completed in Q4 2015.

1.2.3.5 Electrical Safety Check

No check is required at the moment because all wiring is new.

1.2.3.6 Re-painting of the Churchyard Path railings, Church Guttering and Soffits

The railings to the Churchyard Path, Church Guttering and rainwater items in cast iron, Soffits and various other black painted items were repainted, in black.

It should be noted that the re-painting prompted a parishioners' request that the Church Porch be re-painted/varnished. The PCC refused this request.

2 Other Activities

2.1. Lead Roof Replacement – Application for Grant

In December 2015 the Government opened a fund to support replacement of worn our Lead Roof materials on Churches. The application process closed in February 2016, and at the time of the last APCM report we still awaited news of the outcome.

Our application requested circa £20,000.

Our grant application was not successful. We were advised that we could re-apply, meaning that the application process showed that our application had merit.

2.2. Water Meter Follow-Up

There has been no movement since last year on getting a Water Meter installed.

South West Water have stopped looking for the external stop tap and the Church should now be on the lowest lower water tariff based upon a single occupancy dwelling.

Some time in the future (possibly never) the water board will carry out a survey using pipe location equipment to find the run of the water pipes and locate the external Church stop tap. At that point we can have an external water meter fitted.

2.3. Disabled Toilet Facility

Work on this facility has not proceeded this reporting year.

However, ideas are now being explored to bring the disabled toilet facility inside the Church using some of the vacant space now that the Organ is replaced.

2.4. Installation of the Altar Rail Gate

A request has been made that the original Altar Rail Gate be re-instated.

The original gate has been located, installing it will require the existing rail to be dismantled and re-assembled the other way round. Work to achieve this has not yet started due to personal time issues, but a quotation for the work to be completed has been recently requested.

2.5. 2016 Church Organ Replacement

Following a long evaluation the PCC authorized the replacement of the Church Organ and this has now taken place.

The space left vacant by the new organ installation is screen off with curtains and is currently being used as storage space

2.6. Draught Reducing Curtains for the West and Tower doors

Curtains have been removed from storage and cleaned ready for installation in front of the West and Tower doors. Curtain Poles have been acquired and one will be installed over the Tower Door. The West door will not have a curtain, see item 1.2.1.2

2.7. Protection of the West Window that illuminates the Bell Ringing Floor

Protection for the West Window was requested so that the Bell Ringing floor area might safely accommodate a crèche. A mesh screen has been installed of sufficient strength that will stop toddlers from being to reach the window and its surroundings.

2.8. Shining Stars – Equipment Shed Installation at the Scout Hut

Advice was provided to the Shining Stars team on the provision and installation of a shed to accommodate their equipment. This culminated in on Sept 6th in a working party of Church volunteers assembling the Church supplied shed in the car park of the Scout hut.

2.9. Removal of Stones around the Church

The Church Insurers require that we remove loose stones left over from previous building work that are currently stored to the rear of the Church.

Unfortunately the stones cannot be sold or disposed of because they match the fabric of the Church.

As the stones are moved they are stored adjacent to the Churchyard wall.

There were two piles of stones and, to date, one has been moved.

The dismantled Victorian font that is also stored outside, next to the stones, will not be moved until guidance is received from Church Authorities on what we are to do with it.

2.10. Quinquennial Inspection Follow-Up

The formal Quinquennial Inspection report was received on 21st September 2014.

There are a total of 63 recommendations for work to be carried out, which if attempted in one go would prove to be expensive. Accordingly work is being spread over a number of years as funds allow.

The headlines and progress to completion of the items marked for action are discussed below.

- 6 Urgent problems associated with the lead roof and replacement tiles needed immediate remedial actions. The lead work issues have been addressed with patches, and slates have been replaced. Continued annual maintenance with new patches ensures that new problems are minimized.
- 26 problems were to be pursued within one year, 5 of which are associated with the roof and have been addressed. The remainders are associated with pointing work or general cleaning of drains and gutters. All drains and gutter and the roof are cleaned annually. Pointing is being pursued as an addition to the annual roof cleaning and patching. The last pointing items that require work relate to the buttress and water seepage at the South East corner of the Church. The aim is to have covered off all pointing before the next Quinquennial Inspection.
- 7 problems need pursuing within two years – these remaining items tend to be painting of external woodwork. These have now been covered off.
- 5 problems need pursuing before the next Quinquennial review
- 17 problems need longer-term consideration – i.e. beyond 5 years.
- Within the totals, 4 are identified as potential Safety issues, all have been addressed. There are new safety issues discussed in this report that if not remedied will feature in the next Quinquennial review. See the section on Health and Safety.
- 1 action is a requirement for an Asbestos survey to be completed and logged. This was planned for last year, but did not happen. It is hoped that it will be carried out this year. The task is low priority because it is believe there is no asbestos in the Church.

3 IT Facilities

The Church Computer and Apple TV used for wireless communication to the Church AV system have been updated with new operating systems to maintain security and performance.

Compliance of the Youth Team Church PC to latest anti-virus standards is reliant on the user maintaining anti-virus software via normal on-line communication.

4 Parish Council Take Over of Graveyard and Boundary Walls

The Church Wardens report will address this topic.

Geoff Linsley