

Title	Buildings and Fabric Report for 2020 prior to APCM		
Purpose	Review by PCC in advance of APCM		
Author	Clive Charlton		
		Doc name & version	Buildings and Fabric Report for 2020 Ref PCC Mar21_07

Buildings and Fabric Report for 2020 for APCM April 2021

Church

The church building was open as normal until the start of the first national lockdown on 23rd March when it was fully closed for 3 months. During that time the building was inspected for security purposes each week and after any spell of heavy rain or high winds which was to comply with conditions of our buildings insurers.

Before it reopened, initially for private prayer and then for services with limited capacity, a full risk assessment was undertaken including planning an intensive cleaning rota to meet government guidelines. When limited live singing in services was permitted further risk assessment was undertaken. Shortly before lockdowns a number of hymns and other items were recorded. These were used for pre recorded services and played in church before any live singing was permitted. Some of the equipment used for live streaming services was originally loaned with the purchase of inexpensive cameras and microphones. The sound quality was initially poor so a more expensive multi directional microphone was purchased. There is no internet connection into the church (although this is included in the plans for spaceforall) so services were streamed using a 4G phone signal. This did fail one Sunday morning so we continue to explore solutions for a more secure connection via The Cornerstone.

During the first lockdown there was some vandalism in the churchyard with removal of several notices which had been placed to remind visitors to maintain social distancing. The perpetrator was known to have mental health issues and it is thought that he was also responsible for removing a similar notice on the south west pillar of the tower when it was in the display cabinet which was by ripping the whole frame off the wall! A replacement cabinet has been procured but fitting has been delayed until the periods of lockdown are passed.

During the year a Faculty to install a cooling system in the ringing room was applied for and granted in August with the installation undertaken in October. Toward the end of the year we were notified by our insurance underwriters that the level of lead theft cover would be substantially limited and premium considerably increased if we did not install an intruder alarm to cover the areas at risk. The necessary permissions were obtained in 2020 with installation and commissioning being scheduled for mid January 2021. We received significant grants from both the Allchurches Trust and the Berkshire Historic Churches Trust for which we are most grateful.

The outstanding items identified in the 2018 quinquennial inspection include the potential need to explore the condition of the nave roof, repair the parapet walls and un-rendered puddingstone and overhaul of the rainwater goods. The pandemic has disrupted our plans we had that funding this work and restoration of the pillars would be by applying for Heritage lottery funding as their funding streams have also been changed. The whole *spaceforall* programme has been reconfigured during the year and uncertainty remains as we enter 2021. The number of failed light fittings did not increase during the year probably because of decreased use, but as rewiring is no longer a first priority in *spaceforall*, there will be potential new areas of "darkness" within the building.

Churchyard

A tree survey has identified work that needs to be undertaken on a large willow tree in the churchyard, and work is needed on an oak tree damaged by wind during a storm. This and an adjoining tree became the subject of a telecoms provider's application to reduce their height to improve their signal. Their approaches to the Council resulted in a Tree Preservation Order being applied to the tree! We had also opposed the height reduction in any event and in due course the telecoms company withdrew their application, but the TPO remains in place adding to the paperwork required to make the tree safe! Elsewhere some non-viable and crowded saplings trees have been removed. With the churchyard steward and Council tree officer we are developing a replanting plan prior to felling the diseased copper beech by The Cornerstone.

No other changes to the fabric or fittings in the church have been undertaken other than general routine maintenance.

Clive Charlton, Alun James - Churchwardens