

The Churchwarden's Annual Report to the Annual Parochial Church Council Meeting of the Blessed Church of St Mary the Virgin, Wambrook

Fabric Report

Following the limited structural survey highlighted in last year's report, on issues with both internal and external pointing on the southeast corner of the chancel, the ensuing repair work was completed during two weeks in October 2018. Detailed photography at annual intervals is ongoing to establish if there is any movement in the structure, long term.

Again, as reported during the Churchwarden's reports of 2017/8, nothing has been done in respect of repairs to the West Door, a concern which again will have to be addressed before the coming winter, although estimates for the repairs have been requested, none have been received despite repeated requests.

A replacement flagpole was kindly donated by a member of the worshipping community, for which we are extremely grateful. Work is proceeding to produce the necessary fixings to attach the said flagpole to the Church Tower.

Work is ongoing to find an electrician with the necessary clearances, to supply and fit lighting for the new notice-board, now that the faculty for installation has been approved.

In turn, the five year survey of the electrical installation needs to be carried out. This is likely to be done when an electrician with the necessary clearances can be found as stated earlier.

A request has been submitted to the Church Architect to carry out the mandatory Quinquennial survey and the report has been promised for the end of April 2019.

Work has been completed on the Church inventory, as reported in the Churchwardens report for 2017/8. This matter is now closed.

Problems were again reported with the security access system and repairs have now been completed by the locally based security company. These problems manifest themselves during prolonged heavy rain and may occur in the future.

The much discussed introduction of community toilet facilities, first reported in the 'Community Survey' of 2014,⁽¹⁾ resulted in an informal DAC visit in December 2018. This produced a clear picture of the way forward and a sub committee are working on the project. It is hoped to complete the installation by the end of 2018 but it is entirely dependant on external factors. i.e. Funding, permissions and contractor lead times.

The overall décor of the building is now looking rather tired and will need addressing now that the integrity of the building has been secured.

Having said that, some plasterwork has become detached from the interior of the west slope of the North Chapel. A survey by the contractor, has identified a problem externally with the lead flashing, which will have to be replaced as part of the repair process. This roof slope was not part of the LPOW II repairs carried out in 2016/7. The registry have been approached, to see if the localized repairs can be carried out under the faculty, that was approved for the LPOW II repairs of 2017. We await a decision from the Chancellor and if rejected, a new list 'B' faculty will be raised.

Cleaning and Flower arrangements

I thank all those who have given their time, to carry out the regular cleaning and flower arranging in the Church during the past year and I sincerely hope they will continue to do so. Thanks must also be given to those who give their time drawing up the cleaning and flower rota, without which, confusion would reign!

Attendance at Services

Attendance at regular services has dropped slightly, since the previous report. There are no obvious reasons for this decline, but may be reflecting the national picture. The previously reported meeting with the Rural Dean, was well attended and all issues raised are now settled.

Service preparation

Thanks are due to the community, who attend the Church for service preparation and for stowing everything away after the service. Their help is appreciated.

The Bells

The bells under the guidance of the Captain of the Tower, have to date not been regularly rung. This has been entirely due to availability of ringers. Going forward it is hoped that the bells will ring out on a regular basis.

The Churchyard

Volunteer teams of mower and strimming operators, have continued to mow and trim the grass on a regular basis. The grass soon recovered after the hot summer and has stood up well during the winter. This years mowing teams have already been busy and working parties will soon be descending to tidy up after the winter. We welcome some new members to the mowing team this year, for which we are extremely grateful. Anyone can join in at any time. The path from the main gate to the west door has been repaired and returned to it's original width as highlighted in the 2018 report. Plans are afoot, to repair the path from the west door to the kissing gate on the south side, to the same standard. I therefore thank, those who have given their time to these activities during the year, not forgetting those who set out the rota's and spreadsheets.

Safeguarding

A safeguarding policy has been adopted by the Wambrook PCC for the safety of children and vulnerable adults alike. A safeguarding officer is available within the 'Cloverleaf Parishes' and members of the PCC have been cleared through DBS requirements or their equivalent. A copy of this policy can be downloaded from the Church website.

Health and Safety

A health and safety audit was carried out in February 2019 by a member of the PCC and myself. The latest version, is available as a download from the Church website.

The Clergy

Feedback from the parishioners and the wider community, has as previously reported, been generally positive. A playlist of popular hymns was circulated in the spring of 2018, for members of the community to indicate which were most favoured. At the time of this report, the favoured/popular hymns do not seem to have been fully integrated into services at Wambrook.

Thanks are due to the Rev Georgina, who has continued to bring new thinking, enthusiasm and vision to the Church, of which we are grateful.

In turn, we welcome the Rev Ann Kember to the community. Ann was appointed to the benefice in July 2018 at the completion of the interregnum period that commenced in late 2017. Ann was licensed in November 2018. We look forward to working with Ann, who we are confident will bring a new vision and ideas to the table.

The Future

With the installation of community toilet facilities being progressed for the benefit of all, this will hopefully encourage greater attendance and wider use of the building. A grown up discussion will need to take place, to encourage this greater use of the building and the matter of re-ordering of some of the internal fixtures and fittings to create community space, needs to be re-visited. This re-ordering for more space, was welcomed by an informal DAC visit in February 2015. Whilst this may be contentious in some circles, the wider community will need to decide, if they want or wish to ensure the long term viability of the building. With decreasing annual income, funds are being heavily squeezed by the increasing demands of mission, utility, repair and insurance costs. Mission fees, are the most significant financial burden at this time. With current financial trends and within the next five years, the building may not be financially viable and discussions need to take place now, to ensure the long term future of the building, before it is too late.

In conclusion

If I have omitted anyone or anything, it was not my intention and I offer my unreserved apologies and thank you all retrospectively.

Disclaimer

I am of the opinion, that his report is a fair and accurate record of the facts as interpreted by me, the Churchwarden for the Parish of Wambrook. There is no intent, implied or malicious, to misrepresent persons or events, howsoever caused, in this report.

Report end.

Graeme Pidgeon.

Churchwarden.

8th April 2019.

Reference:- The 'Community Survey' of 2014, ⁽¹⁾ can be read or downloaded from the Church website at www.wambrookparishchurch.com/downloads

