

All Saints' Church, Brixworth

Churchwardens' Report for the Year 2015/16

Church Fabric

1. General maintenance carried out throughout the year has included:
 - (a) Servicing of the fire extinguishers in the church and Heritage Centre
 - (b) Replacement of broken tiles on the north side of the Nave roof following storm damage. A total of 20 tiles were replaced. The work was carried out under insurance.
 - (c) Replacement of one of the chancel lights.
 - (d) Servicing of the central heating boiler.

PAT testing and servicing of the general electrics is scheduled for June.

2. The major work undertaken on the interior of the church this year has been the redecoration. This was completed by Christie Rogers Ltd at a cost of £18,788. Unlike previous redecoration, Health and Safety regulations necessitated the erection of fixed scaffolding which caused some disruption to regular services. Unfortunately, some flaking has already started to take place on the West wall. However, the works was carried out with a 5% retention pending satisfactory inspection after 6 months. The architect has instructed the contractors to rectify the problem.
3. Allied to the redecoration it was necessary to hire the services of a lighting specialist to reset the chancel lights which were knocked out of alignment by the scaffolding. This work also revealed a number of broken light bulbs.
4. Work on repairs to the external masonry still hasn't been progressed – priority being given to the redecoration. This will now be addressed this year. Initial quotes for the repairs ranged from £1,925 to £4,480. As these quotes are no longer valid, new estimates will be sought following the Quinquennial Inspection report due this year. This will be undertaken by a new church architect, Mr Adrian Ringrose, who was appointed to succeed Mr Bruce Deacon who has now retired.
5. In relation to the organ repairs, the DAC have not been happy with the detail of the specification of works presented by Norman Hall & Sons (£8,150). Following re-submission of a revised specification, the diocesan organ adviser inspected the organ and examined the alternative quotes from Cousans (£14,560) and Pipe Organ Services (£18,500). He will be advising the DAC and we await their decision. In the meantime, fundraising for the organ is being spearheaded by the Friends' trustees. People can show their support by 'sponsoring a pipe'. Application forms are at the back of church.
6. The old pews have been removed from the Lady Chapel and replaced with more comfortable chairs. This will allow a more versatile use of the space in

the Lady Chapel. The pews and some old prayer desks were sold locally. The chairs were purchased from funds reserved for the Lady Chapel.

Churchyard

1. The churchyard memorials are being tested for stability on an ad hoc basis. There is an issue with subsidence near the east boundary wall in the new part of the cemetery. A number of graves appear to have collapsed and destabilised the memorials. These graves will be made level in the Spring and the families contacted whose memorials are affected.

2. The boundary walls have continued to deteriorate, particularly immediately to the north of the church adjoining Mr Mallard's property. Repairs to these walls continue to be placed on hold subject to potential acquisition of this land as a churchyard extension. Negotiations are ongoing.

3. A small band of volunteers have continued to work hard to keep the grass cut throughout much of the churchyard. Many thanks to Derrick Grass, Anthony and Kate Knight, Robert Womack and others. There was a short period when we were unable to keep the grass under control following damage to one of our volunteer's mowers. (We have been advised that to purchase a suitable mower would cost about £1000) Following a request for help, a number of villagers - Mark Salter, Clare Moody and Dave Hackett did come forward to help cut the grass over the summer months, and a local business woman sponsored her gardener to do some work in the churchyard. However, the grass in the graveyard behind the church continues to be a problem which needs to be addressed this year.

4. The stability of a number of trees is a cause for concern, particularly those near the war memorial and on the bank to the north of the church. The Friends' trustees are working towards applying for a grant to allow this work to be carried out.

5. The broken drain in the car park by the churchyard gate was repaired by the Friends.

5. Future projects discussed by the PCC have been the provision of a refectory area at the back of church behind the font and toilets. Initial plans for a toilet block combining a storage area and basic kitchen and washup facilities have been produced by Nigel Turpin. The block is to be situated against the wall adjoining the Old Vicarage using services which will be installed as part of the renovation of the old barn. These plans are at a very early stage, but will be the focus of fundraising in the foreseeable future.

Signed

..... Michael Lewis (churchwarden)

..... Vanessa Crooks (churchwarden)

17th February 2016