

St Matthew's, Harwell

Fabric Report 2024

Summary of work carried out to the Church in 2024

A special mention is due to all those who have given their time, either on a regular basis or occasional basis, to maintain and enhance our buildings. Thanks are also due to those members of the Church who give their time to ensure our buildings are kept clean and tidy, who ensure that they are maintained, decorated and generally in good order, who arrange flowers and who contribute generally to the upkeep of these buildings.

The Log Book of Church repairs has been maintained and is presented with this report. The Terrier, recording details of the Church buildings and land is held as subsection 1.2.2 of the Church's Maintenance and Operations Manual and is also presented, along with the Inventory of valuables. There is also a Log Book of repairs and maintenance for the Church Hall.

General repairs and maintenance to the fabric of the Church, the Church Hall and their surroundings have been carried out as and when necessary.

The PCC Buildings Committee continues to monitor implementation of recommendations from the Quinquennial Inspection carried out by the Church Architect in June 2021. It also maintains an Action List of all the small and larger tasks required for the good maintenance of the building.

Key items of work carried out in 2024 are as follows:

Electrical

A minor remedial item required in the Church from the 5-Year full electrical inspection of the Church and Church Hall, carried out in November 2023, has been completed.

The power supply for the 4500 radio microphone receiver WT 3810 failed and had to be replaced.

Light bulbs have been replaced as and when necessary.

External

Roofing

Broken and slipped red clay tiles on the roofs of the nave and transepts have been replaced. The gutters and downpipes were all cleaned and re-painted in 2024.

The Buildings Committee is continuing to investigate options for permanent wiring for the floodlights and improved security lighting on the church roof.

Other External Items

Flooding of the lobby of the extension has been a continuing problem when there has been exceptionally heavy rainfall. The problem is caused by the very large amount of water falling on the north side of the church roof, overwhelming the gutters and running under the extension door. A plan drawn up to re-lay the paving and provide a new drainage channel has now been implemented.

The external oak doors have been treated with teak oil and the metalwork painted with Hammerite water based black paint.

All metal windows and ferrous glazing bars have been cleaned off and painted with Hammerite water based black paint.

A new rope has been fitted on the flagpole.

Internal

In order to reduce energy costs, more use has been made of zoning the Church radiant heaters to restrict their coverage to parts of the church actually in use.

The south porch rendering has been repaired and the walls and ceiling re-decorated. The notice boards were painted and re-mounted. The lower walls of the vestry have also been re-decorated with Classidur paint.

Mortar joints on the walls between stairs and small pillar near tower door, and near sound desk, have been re-pointed. Small areas of rendering on the north and east walls of chancel have been touched up with Classidur paint.

Swift boxes have been installed in the south and east windows of the bell chamber.

A retractable stair gate has been fitted at the bottom of the extension stairs.

New shelving has been fitted in the Office and draughtproofing put around the windows. Broken window catches have also been replaced. Missing curtain hooks on the rails in the meeting room have been replaced.

The bookcase has been moved from the vestry to make more space for storage of Fledgelings items, and secured to the wall in a new position by the north door.

The Ethernet cable connecting the router in the Office to the area by the sound desk has been re-routed to avoid it being on the floor by the extension stairs.

Church Hall

The Hall has been used less than is ideal during 2024. In November 2023 the PCC had agreed to set up a new Project Group to pick up from the conclusions of the Working Group that reported in March 2023, in order to map out a path for the future of the Hall, and to advise the PCC of the best options to follow in the short and longer terms. This Group started work in early 2024 and recommended that every effort should be made to increase bookings for the hall, and that a number of improvements should be made to make the Hall more attractive to users. These included soundproofing in the main hall, better lighting and re-decoration of the main hall. The PCC accepted the recommendations and provided a starting budget for improvements. Some members of the Group then formed a new Hall Management Committee, that has very energetically obtained grants to add to the budget, implemented improvements, established a trial booking system in collaboration with the Village Hall, and, importantly, found a potential user that would use the hall on every weekday. It has also taken over general maintenance of the Hall from the Church Buildings Committee.

I am grateful to all those who are managing the Church Hall and, as well as improving its prospects, are helping to keep it in good working order. There are a number of general repairs and grounds work that need to be carried out each year and the details of these can be found in the Log Book.

Work planned for 2025 on the Church and Church Hall includes:

- Continue to action recommendations from the 2021 Quinquennial Inspection and other tasks identified by the Buildings Committee;
- Make any necessary repairs, mainly re-pointing, to external masonry;
- Move the old clock mechanism from the extension to a new temporary home behind the east side of the organ, and continue to seek a permanent location where it can be displayed;
- Investigate permanent wiring for the floodlight system and any additional lighting and other measures that would enhance church security;
- If funds permit, repair the rendering of the north transept;
- Continue to improve the facilities and the use of the Church Hall;
- To continue to look at improvements that could be made to the interior of the church to ensure that St. Matthew's continues to be a growing vibrant church for worship and a valued part of the local community;
- Keep utility costs under review.

Jane Woolley – Churchwarden