

St Matthew's, Harwell

Fabric Report 2025

Summary of work carried out to the Church in 2025

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. The next Quinquennial Inspection is due in 2026.

Key items of work carried out in 2025 are as follows:

Electrical

The timer for the Office storage heaters was found to be defective. It was replaced and the timings updated.

Portable electrical items in the church and church hall were tested.

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.

The Buildings Committee continued to investigate options for permanent wiring for the floodlights and had discussions with the Church Architect and a firm of consultants in June 2025. From these it became evident that for a satisfactory system the cost would be at least £7,000. Floodlighting will therefore be put together with other options for improvements to the church building that are intended for an 'Away Day' discussion sometime in 2026.

Other External Items

A defibrillator has been installed next to the church porch.

The lightning conductor system has been inspected and accessible joints checked.

Serious blockages to the drain from the disabled toilet and from the manhole on the north side of churchyard by the Rectory boundary had to be cleared.

Internal

The old clock mechanism and cabinet have been moved from the extension to the east area behind the organ. The Buildings Committee is considering where the mechanisms could be put on permanent display in the church.

The lower sections of the internal walls of the north transept have been re-rendered.

A fixed audio cable to provide easier connection to a microphone (e.g. lectern microphone) in the chancel has been installed.

The AV system projector has been serviced and an assessment made of whether its performance has deteriorated to the point when it should be replaced. The conclusion of this assessment means that the projector should probably be replaced in 2026.

Church Hall

The Church Hall is now run by its own Management Committee, accountable to the PCC.

Following installation of new lighting in late 2024, the main hall was re-decorated and special panels installed on the walls and ceiling to improve the acoustics. An energy survey was carried out with a grant from VWHDC, and other repairs and improvements made to prepare for use of the hall five days a week by the Wildflowers Montessori Nursery and Pre-school.

Wildflowers started at the end of March 2025 and is now in full operation. The Nursery commissioned a Fire Safety inspection and the recommendations are being followed up by the Nursery itself (where they relate to its operations) and by the Hall Management Committee where they relate to the facilities of the Hall itself.

In addition to use by Wildflowers, there is on average one booking each weekend (via the joint booking system now in place with the Harwell Village Hall), one evening yoga class per week and Youth Fellowship on some Sundays.

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 2026 on the Church and Church Hall includes:

- Continue to action recommendations from the 2021 Quinquennial Inspection and other tasks identified by the Buildings Committee. The next Quinquennial Inspection is due in 2026;
- Make any necessary repairs, mainly re-pointing, to external masonry;
- Decide on a permanent location for the old clock mechanism. We are obliged to keep it somewhere in the church rather than anywhere else;
- 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;

- Continue to maintain and improve the facilities of the Church Hall, including new fencing for the boundaries;
- Keep utility costs under review.

Stephen Manning – Churchwarden