

St Mary's Church - Churchwarden's Report 2023-4

The last year has been relatively steady with little to report, except for the delivery of our Architect's new Quinquennial Report on the fabric of the Church. This report details the condition of the building and recommends repairs in many areas, some of which are urgent.

The most significant and urgent area of work is the top of the Tower, where there is significant erosion of the stonework. Some of the Nave clerestory windows are also in poor condition, and there is a long list of other areas where the stonework requires repair, as well as a number of other important items. The most urgent work will require about £100,000 to complete.

Unfortunately, as you will read in the annual accounts, we do not currently have substantial funds in the Fabric fund to start repairs. This is because of the extensive works conducted in the last two years.

Our congregation has maintained a steady level of giving, but high levels of inflation mean that we need more funding - we are at least 20% down on actual spending power since 2020. I urge those who have not increased their giving in recent years to consider an increase, if they can afford to.

In the next few months we will work with our Architect to develop a plan of work, and a fundraising effort. Generally, it is necessary to have both formal permission (a Faculty or Archdeacon's Consent) and a current tender (accepted by the PCC) before seeking funds from trusts and other funding bodies.

I have obtained a small grant from the Humberside Police and Crime Commissioner to install CCTV cameras, and we have now requested permission to do so, from the Diocese.

In the Churchyard, we have removed two large and rather unsightly ivy bushes, which has opened up the area behind the Church, and reduced the cover for antisocial activities. There is still a need for more ivy removal from tombs and gravestones, and any volunteers able to help me with this work would be very welcome. We have obtained a long ladder, which enables gutter clearance, very important because of the leaves shed by the large trees in the Churchyard.

Volunteers have developed a new children's area in the North Aisle, which has been much praised, especially by the children. We hope to offer a special family-friendly Sunday service from September, probably monthly.

The Church Hall is currently undergoing a refurbishment programme, which is separately funded from Church fabric. This will eventually include a refitted kitchen and changes to the toilets, as well as redecoration and new audio-visual equipment.

There has been only one Churchwarden for the last year. I am coping, mainly because of our excellent volunteers, who continue to work hard on various tasks, which in many parishes would fall to the wardens. I would like to thank everyone who does such a great job to keep our Church going.

My main concern is providing cover for the Sunday services, when I go on my annual holiday or hope to go sailing at the weekend. With two wardens, this is not such an issue. If nobody wishes to take on the full Churchwarden's role, I would be very grateful to find someone prepared to 'learn the ropes', so as to be able to deputise occasionally and cover the Sunday Parish Eucharist.

James Tannock