

St Peter and St Paul Wadhurst APCM 2020

Fabric Report

In May 2019 the dear old Church fell victim to a spot of lead theft! Not just once but twice!! We became aware of this villainous activity only after a bout of heavy rain which poured into the Choir Vestry. I must admit my initial thought was blame poor Roger Goldsmith, who I suspected had not cleared the guttering properly! Anyway an immediate inspection of the roof soon revealed the crime in its full splendour!



The area was temporarily felted by James Stevens and both the Police Heritage Crime team and Ecclesiastical Insurance was informed and acted accordingly.

We were advised by both our insurance company and church architect to look at alternative coverings. These give an appearance of lead but have the advantage of being waterproof but without any monetary value, thus preventing any further criminal interest.

Having originally submitted a list B application to the Diocese, which was rejected on the grounds that the work did not fall within its remit, a Chancellors Dispensation was secured and permission granted by the local planning office. Clearly any repairs will need to be undertaken before the worst of the weather sets in ,with any internal decoration to the Choir Vestry awaiting the completion of the roof repair.

Quinquennial Work:

I am currently working in line with the Quinquennial Report prepared by Richard Andrews (Dioceses Architect) in November 2017. The objective continues to be that we achieve the suggested work within the proposed 5-year time frame, budget restraints allowing.

Memorial Wall in the Churchyard:

Over the summer our neighbour, Sue Swift, had some landscaping work conducted by a local builder. Unfortunately during the course of that work, the Memorial Wall became unstable and needed to be rebuilt. Though technically the walls upkeep is the responsibility of Sue, the Memorial Plaques attached to the wall are not. Though great effort was made both through our Architect and myself to ensure that the specific bricks that support a plaque be retained, this was not in the end possible, and the builder removed the plaques and rebuilt the wall using new bricks.

Fortunately, our Wardens had recorded where each plaque had been positioned, and Vanessa was able to oversee a two day restoration of the Memorial Wall by the Goldsmiths.

Church Heating:

Unfortunately, in November our boiler decided to 'down tools' during a particular cold spell! and the spare part required for its repair needed to be sourced from Italy! This caused a lengthy delay and electric heaters were hired by the Wardens to overcome the bitter conditions.

The boiler was fitted about 15 years ago and was manufactured in Germany. shortly afterwards the company went into liquidation and ceased to manufacture any parts or components. A employee of the company purchased the manufacturing rights and produced components for a limited period only.

Our boiler is fitted with a unique Burner component, which is not found in any modern unit and does not conform to British Standards. The engineers who attend, literally have to read the manual to work out how to service it. Hence why we tend to get the same chap each time. Any parts must be sourced from a very limited and dwindling supply from the continent.

Hedley Visick have been managing to keep an obsolete and unreliable boiler running over the last ten years with limited materials to hand, but time is running out. The PCC has undertaken to explore all of the options of upgrading the boiler as soon as it is financially viable.

Ian Fitzgerald
Fabric Chairman