

St Stephen's Ealing

Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church for year 2023-24

For Annual Parochial Church Meeting 19 May 2024

(as required under the Church Representation Rules para II 9d)

As Churchwardens we are responsible, on behalf of the PCC, for all the buildings, plant & fabric and contents of the Church and Church Centre.

These also include maintenance of the buildings and fabric of the Cottage (occupied by our Premises Manager) and 26 Drayton Gardens (occupied by our Curate and her family).

We completed the annual terrier and inventory, and confirm that the silver and other possessions of the church are complete and in good order.

Our Quinquennial Inspection (QI) in July and August 2021 identified a number of issues that needed attention. We have since addressed and resolved most of these. The main concern was the state of the cupola on the Church roof which has now been rendered safe.

The QI Inspector, Steve Palmer, noted that the fabric of the St Stephen's building has been well maintained and this is largely thanks to the volunteers who lend their expertise during the year.

In November 2023 and May 2024, we organised two 'Sleeves Up Saturday' events when many cleaning and DIY jobs were carried out. These were well attended which made them a great opportunity to get to know other members of the Church community.

Our Premises Manager Jack Cahill, who joined in November 2022, carries out the routine maintenance and cleaning of the buildings.

In June 2023 the brickwork on one side of the north-facing gable over the worship area fell down the roof during a 9:00am Sunday service. This also caused some damage to the slates and guttering but, apart from a minor water leak, no internal damage. Nobody was hurt. After some delay due to the Diocese advising that a new QI inspector needed to be involved – this turned out to be unnecessary due to the expertise within the church – and in finding the required specialist expertise to replace the brickwork the repairs and replacement were finally completed in February 2024.

Also in June 2023 a large section of one of the old oak trees on the perimeter of the St Stephen's site fell partly on our property and partly on our neighbour's in the Avenue, bringing down a section of the fence. Again nobody was injured. The remainder of the tree was not viable due to extensive internal rot and at the end of July Ealing Council granted permission (the tree was subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO)) to remove it and replace the tree with three new trees of smaller species.

Due to the exceptionally wet conditions over the winter months and the late falling of leaves, some water ingress caused electrical problems in the south west area of the building. Regular clearing of blocked downpipes and mending any that are damaged should help resolve the problem in the future.

The scheme to enlarge and greatly improve the entrance to the building, approved by the PCC in early 2022 and to be generously funded by the St Luke's Trust, has progressed through the planning stage more slowly than we had hoped. In July 2023 the s.106 notice concerning the immature oak tree in front of the church was granted enabling planning permission to be granted in the same month. The Diocese had previously advised that no faculty would be required. However they

reversed this decision and, following due process, the faculty was finally granted in December 2023. Building Regulations permission is still outstanding but sufficient progress has been made to enable work on the foundations to begin. These delays have also held up work to re-level and re-surface the car park as the two schemes can only sensibly be carried out in conjunction with each other.

A number of other small but important tasks have been completed within and around the buildings. These include:

- The triennial inspection of the trees and annual spray treatments
- A projector in the worship area has been replaced
- A hot water system in the kitchen has been installed
- The lights and sound system in the hall has been updated
- A defibrillator has been installed in the corridor by the meeting room
- Emergency lights have been replaced
- The fan on the boiler has been replaced
- A number of measures to control the damage by pigeons have been taken
- The external noticeboards have been replaced.

We would like to thank all the members of St Stephen's who have helped us keep the building safe and in good repair over the last year and in particular Fred Eaves and the Building Team who have worked very hard behind the scenes and Andrew Whadcoat who replaced a projector in the worship area and sound system in the hall, and improved the hall lights as well as building a new Christmas crib. Thanks also go to the Gardening Team for their continuing hard work. However, without everyone's help our building would not be in the good state that it is now.

Mary Ann Auckland Ann Toley
Churchwardens

April 2024