

St Stephen's Ealing

Report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church for year 2024-25

For Annual Parochial Church Meeting 18 May 2025

(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 and 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).

Every year we complete 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. Our QI inspector, Steve Palmer, has now retired and a new one will need to be appointed for the QI due in 2026.

The QI Inspector, Steve Palmer, noted that the fabric of the St Stephen's building was well maintained and this is thanks to our Premises Manager, Jack Cahill, who carries out routine maintenance and cleaning, and the volunteers who lend their expertise during the year.

In November 2024 and May 2025, we organised a 'Sleeves Up Saturday' when many enthusiastic members of the Church community came along to help with repairs, cleaning and redecorating jobs around the Church Centre which helped improve the building.

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 more slowly than we had hoped. However, following a tender process, the 'Enabling' stage (or foundations work) for the external part of the new entrance was started in June and completed in August. More work on the drainage was required than initially expected. The car park area surrounding the foundations was re-laid but, following some subsidence, needed remedial work. While the work was underway the front area was inaccessible. Members of the congregation and visitors greatly enjoyed the garden area on the south-west side, thanks to the efforts of the Gardening Team. Meanwhile the PCC decided in September that the car park redesign and relaying should be part of the same contract as the main build project to avoid timing issues and the risk of any damage caused by different contractors' vehicles. Plans for the car park and front area were discussed by the PCC in March but no conclusion reached. The Faculty obtained for the Entrance Improvement Project required a time extension as it expired in December 2024. An extension to complete the works by August 2026 was granted.

Elsewhere, two of the three new native trees that are replacing the mature oak tree removed in 2023 were planted. And the location for the third is under consideration.

A far more cost-effective electric controlled hot water heating system was installed in the kitchen, replacing the tank in the office which was removed. Also in the kitchen the microwave oven was replaced with a combination model so the main gas oven needs to be used only rarely. The

Premises Manager, Jack Cahill, dealt with other issues including boiler malfunctions, electrical problems due to damp ingress in external lighting cases and the care of the mature trees around the site through spraying, etc. There was also some damp ingress in the worship area due to the gutter damaged by the brickwork cascade on the east side of the roof apex in 2023. This was repaired in early 2025 but may need further work.

The sliding panels between the Small Hall and worship area and those used to divide the Main Hall (but not between this and the entrance area) showed significant deterioration during the year and will need attention or, more likely, replacement in the near future. Other issues needing attention include installing a more effective opening/ locking system on the door to the accessible toilet, the projectors and audio system in the worship area and the kitchen in the Cottage.

An issue with drainage at the Curate's house in Drayton Gardens was finally resolved with major work at the end of this period.

We would like to thank all of the members of St Stephen's who have helped us keep the building safe and in good repair over the last year, and particularly those who bring their considerable expertise from related professions. Without all of your help our building would not be in the good state that it is now.

Mary Ann Auckland Ann Toley
Churchwardens