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ARCHITECTS



Diocese of Durham  
Quinquennial Inspection Report 2023  
St James Church  
Coundon

Inspection of Churches Measure 1955

(Current Version)

Inspected October 2023

Archdeaconry of Auckland

Deanery of Auckland

Incumbent: Fr Gary Nicholson

Inspection Architect

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This report has been prepared on the basis of the 'Modern Diocesan Scheme' recommendations for inspecting Parish Churches as published in 1995 by the Council for the Care of Churches 'CCC' in conjunction with the Ecclesiastical Architects and Surveyors Association 'EASA'.

Inspection of Churches measure 1955 (Current Version).

### Index

- 1.0 Background and General
- 2.0 Scope of report
- 3.0 Works carried out since previous report
- 4.0 General condition of Church

### External Inspection

- 5.0 Roof coverings
- 6.0 Rainwater goods and Drainage
- 7.0 External walls and Structure
- 8.0 Exterior doors
- 9.0 Exterior windows

### Internal Inspection

- 10.0 Roof structure and Ceilings
- 11.0 Internal doors and windows, screens and panelling
- 12.0 Ground floor structure
- 13.0 Internal finishes
- 14.0 Fittings, fixings and furniture
- 15.0 Vestry
- 16.0 Heating installations
- 17.0 Electrical installations
- 18.0 Fire precautions
- 19.0 Disabled provision

20.0 Toilet and Kitchen

21.0 Bats

### Curtilage

22.0 Churchyard and Environs

23.0 Security

24.0 Log Book

25.0 Memorials

26.0 Previous quinquennial reports

### Recommendations

Where work is recommended a code number is entered in the right hand side page margin to indicate the priority as follows:

- 1 Urgent works requiring immediate attention.
- 2 Work recommended to be carried out during the next 12 months.
- 3 Work recommended to be carried out during the Quinquennial period.
- 4 Work needing consideration beyond the Quinquennial period.
- 5 Work required improving energy efficiency of the structures and services.
- 6 Work required improving disabled access.

## **1.0 Background and General**

- 1.1 The Church of St. James is located in Coundon, to the west end of the village, just south of the B6287 through road.
- 1.2 Coundon began as a small agricultural settlement but, with the prosperity that mining brought to the area, the population numbers quickly increased. In the early 1840s, St. James Chapel was built to specifically serve the Parish of Coundon.
- 1.3 The Reverend Thomas Farquhar Hill was appointed to the parish in 1870 and it is reported that he was instrumental in requiring the new “more imposing Church, further up the hill”.
- 1.4 The current Church was built between 1871 – 1873 and was designed by Architect, Ewan Christian. William Lloyd Wharton donated land for the Church and extended Churchyard. The Church was built with sandstone quarried from Westerton. Colliery owner Collingwood L Wood, of Howlish Hall, contributed a third of the total building cost.
- 1.5 The Church is a Grade II Listed Building.
- 1.6 Ordnance Survey Map Reference NZ2361629780.

### General Description of Church

- 1.7 The Church is constructed in snecked stone with ashlar dressings. The roofs are of Welsh slate and include a bell spire above the Chancel apse.
- 1.8 The Church comprises Chancel and Nave on a traditional east/west liturgical axis; the Chancel gable is rounded with a hemispherical vaulted roof. To the north there is the unusual composition of 4no. pitched roof gables, which comprise the entrance porch, north Aisle and Lady Chapel. The Organ Chamber is a lean-to structure adjacent to the east end.
- 1.9 Since 2008 the Church has undergone a major reordering/refurbishment programme at the cost of over £400,000. This included major improvement works to the Church fabric and infrastructure, the implementation of toilet and kitchen facilities and the creation of the well reported ‘Learning Porch’; which is a unique educational project to the west end of the Church.

## **2.0 Scope of Report**

- 2.1 This is based on findings of an inspection made from grounded level with the aid of binoculars. Parts of the structure which were inaccessible, enclosed or covered were not opened up, or any loose floor coverings lifted.

- 2.2 No manhole covers were lifted or drains checked.
- 2.3 The following inaccessible parts are not included in this inspection:
1. Boiler house/oil store underneath west end of original Nave (now The Learning Porch/kitchen/toilet end).
  2. Any roof voids.
  3. The underside of roofs and roof structure were examined from floor level only.
- 2.4 The weather on the day of inspection was dry, mild and overcast.
- 2.5 See Appendix 'c' of this report for a full description of the limitations of the inspection.

### **3.0 Works Carried out Since Previous Report**

- 3.1 The Church Log was not available at the time of inspection. The Churchwardens should ensure that over the next quinquennium a log is kept and that a more accurate account of the necessary servicing and maintenance is available. 3

### **4.0 General Condition of Church**

- 4.1 On the day of inspection, the Church was warm and provided a very inviting and comfortable atmosphere.
- 4.2 As previously discussed, a programme of significant refurbishment began in 2008 which dramatically reordered/repaired/redecorated the Church over the subsequent 5+ years; as such, the Church is in really good condition.

The schedule of maintenance has understandably slipped in recent years, principally owing to the Covid 19 pandemic, but it is suggested that with the help of this report as an informative, things can be brought back up-to-date.

- 4.3 Like most Churches at present, congregation numbers have declined and that has had a financial impact and reduced the number of available volunteers; both of which contribute significantly to the successful running and up-keep of the Church. Physically, the Church fabric has also suffered from months of being unoccupied. Notwithstanding the current energy cost crisis! That said, the continued hard work of the PCC and Churchwardens, despite the recent tough times, is to be acknowledged and encouraged greatly.

### **External Inspection**

#### **5.0 Roof Coverings**

- 5.1 **Nave:** The roof structure over the Nave is significant and comprises the main body of the Church. It is a steep, dual pitched roof, with slate

coverings. The ridge is of terracotta, angled tiles, with crested detail. The west gable has a stone water table, with a stone finial to the apex.

5.2 **Chancel:** The roof structure of the Nave runs over the Chancel to the east end, but is rounded; the roof coverings are continuous. The apex of the roundel is defined by a leaded ball finial. The slate pattern of the roundel is broken up the roof slope by 3no. bands of scalloped lead flashing.

5.3 **Bell Spire:** To the east end of the Nave is a 4no. sided belfry and spire; the roof coverings are slate. The hips appear to be lead rolls. The apex of the spire is defined by a leaded square finial with metal crucifix on top.

The base of the belfry is leaded with traditional lead roll detailing. The belfry appears to be a simple timber frame, on which the spire is mounted.

The previous Q.I. reports that the roof finishes and the decorative lower lead facing was fully repaired in 2004.

5.4 **Porch/Pilgrim Suite/Lady Chapel:** The north of the Church has an unusual composition of 4no. dual pitched gables, with valley gutters between, which abut the north elevation of the Nave. The porch ridge is at a slightly lower height than the other 3no.

The roofs have slate coverings and terracotta, angled, ridge tiles, with crested detail. The gables have stone water tables; with a stone crucifix finial to the apex of the porch.

5.5 **Organ Chamber:** To the east end of the Nave is a lean-to roof which abuts the north elevation. The roof has slate coverings with a stone water table to the east gable end. The roof valleys into the Lady Chapel roof at the west end.

5.6 The condition of the roof is generally excellent. Some invoices found suggest some remedial works to coverings and leadwork were conducted as recently as 2021/2022. All visible slate coverings and lead work appear sound.

There are a couple of slipped slates evident on the roundel Chancel roof that should be repaired, and the only minor concern to note would be the condition of some of the water table coping stones. Monitor for further deterioration/delamination. 2

## 6.0 Rainwater Goods and Drainage

6.1 **Generally:** Pitched roofs fall to perimeter half round, cast iron gutters on brackets; painted black. Downpipes are round and cast iron; painted black. The downpipes drain to surface gullies.

The previous Q.I. reports that the gutters and downpipes were all replaced as part of a repair programme in 2004.

6.2 **Valley Gutters:** The 4no. dual pitched gables to the north side fall to 3no. lead valley gutters between. These were not inspected, as they are not visible from ground level, but the previous Q.I. reports that they were repaired following lead theft (2011). The valley gutters drain to cast iron hoppers/downpipes on the north façade.

6.3 The condition of the rainwater goods is generally good but there are some areas requiring attention:

6.4 On the northern elevation, where the Organ Chamber abuts the Lady Chapel, the walling around the downpipe appears wet and mossed. It would seem that the gutter/downpipe is being overwhelmed and is over spilling, or that there are failed joints in either the gutters or the downpipe. Any obstructions should be cleared immediately, and the situation monitored, so that the problem can be identified and rectified. 1

6.5 On the northern elevation, there is vegetation growing from some of the valley gutter hoppers and the walling around the downpipes appears wet and mossed. It would seem that the hoppers are congested, and rainwater is over spilling, or that there are failed joints in the downpipes. The valley gutters should be inspected, and any obstructions should be cleared immediately. The situation should be monitored so that the problems can be identified and rectified. 1

6.6 On the western elevation of the porch there is a fractured joint in the gutter, near to the downpipe. This should be repaired. 1

6.7 With the winter weather due, all gutters, downpipes and gullies should be cleared. 1

The rainwater goods should be monitored over the winter in wet weather to assess whether any joints or connections are leaking, so that they can be repaired. 2

6.8 As a routine maintenance item, the gutters, downpipes and gullies should be regularly inspected and cleared. 3

## 7.0 External Walls and Structure

- 7.1 **Generally:** The condition of the stone walls is good. There are no obvious structural concerns. It is reported that the first stage of works, following receipt of the Heritage Lottery Grant, was repairs to the stone fabric.
- 7.2 There are some minor areas of mortar pointing loss that should be repaired. Any repointing must be with NHL lime:sand mortar. 3
- 7.3 There are some areas where the walling is wet and mossed, but it is believed this is the result of defective gutters and/or downpipes and is covered in 6.0.
- 7.4 The site has a significant tree coverage and, as covered in 22.0, would benefit from a programme of removal and/or trimming back works to enable the Church fabric to dry out and breathe.

## 8.0 Exterior Doors

- 8.1 **Main Entrance:** To porch; north elevation. Apex arched surround of dressed, chamfered stone, with hood mould. Double, timber boarded, doors with decorative wrought ironmongery.
- There is daylight visible between the timber boards, at cill level and at the meeting stile. In the first instance the door would benefit from a fill, rub down and redecorate. When funds permit, an improved cill and meeting stile detail is recommended to discourage water ingress and vermin. This would also benefit security. 3
- 8.2 **Organ Chamber:** North elevation. Squared surround of dressed stone. Timber boarded door with decorative wrought ironmongery. Not inspected internally as the area was inaccessible. Externally, it appears to have been redundant for some time owing to the build-up in cobwebs/debris.
- The door would benefit from a fill, rub down and redecorate. 3

## 9.0 Exterior Windows

- 9.1 **Nave:**  
South – 3no. windows.  
Each comprising 3no. tall lancet panes; stone mullions/surrounds. Panes are leaded in a diamond pattern with clear glass; borders are yellow glass.
- External polycarbonate protection with what appears to be decorative wrought iron protection between.
- 9.2 West – 4no. windows.

3no. tall individual lancet panes and 1no. roundel centrally, to the apex of the gable; stone surrounds. The 3no. lancet panes are leaded in a diamond pattern with clear glass; borders are yellow glass. The 1no. roundel pane is leaded with coloured pictorial glass.

A brass plaque on the west wall reports that, "The round stained glass window and three lancet windows in this west wall were dedicated on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 1989 by The Lord Bishop of Durham, The Right Rev'd David Jenkins, to the memory of George Stephenson Liddell, a former Churchwarden of this Parish and Auckland Deanery lay Chairman, who died on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 1984."

External polycarbonate protection with what appears to be decorative wrought iron protection between.

**9.3 Chancel:**

East – 5no. windows.

5no. individual lancet panes; stone surrounds. The panes are leaded with coloured pictorial glass.

External polycarbonate protection.

**9.4 South – 1no. window.**

Comprising 2no. lancet panes and 1no. roundel centrally, above; stone mullions/surrounds. Panes are leaded in a diamond pattern with clear glass; borders are yellow glass.

External polycarbonate protection with what appears to be decorative wrought iron protection between.

**9.5 Pilgrim Suite/Lady Chapel:**

North – 3no. windows (1no. to each gable).

Each comprising 3no. tall lancet panes and 1no. roundel centrally, above; stone mullions/surrounds. Panes are leaded in a diamond pattern with clear glass; borders are yellow glass.

External polycarbonate protection with what appears to be decorative wrought iron protection between.

**9.6 Porch:**

West – 3no. windows.

3no. individual lancet panes with modified chamfered heads; stone surrounds. The 'glazing' appears to be a polycarbonate-type replacement material, with integral mesh reinforcement; presumably to enhance security.

**9.7 Organ Chamber/Vestry:**

North and East – 2no. windows.

2no. individual lancet panes; stone surrounds. The 'glazing' appears to be a polycarbonate-type replacement material, with integral mesh reinforcement; presumably to enhance security.

External decorative wrought iron protection.

- 9.8 Generally, the condition of the windows is good; the external protection has served to prevent any obvious damage. That said, the windows would benefit from a clean, internally and externally. The external protection has resulted in a built up of cobwebs and debris behind; removing this for cleaning will facilitate a closer inspection of the windows condition. 2

### **Internal Inspection**

#### **10.0 Roof Structure and Ceilings**

- 10.1 **Chancel:** Hemispherical vaulted structure with exposed timbers radiating from the apex, which are supported on stone kneelers. Decorative timber wall plate cornice.

Ceiling is plastered and decorated in an attractive blue colour and has painted gold stars.

- 10.2 **Nave:** Barrel vaulted structure with exposed timbers, which are supported on stone kneelers. The style of the kneelers are different to those in the Chancel. Decorative timber wall plate cornice.

Ceiling is plastered and decorated white.

- 10.3 **Between Chancel and Nave:** Decorative timber panelling to 'arch' with gold detailing.

- 10.4 **Porch/North Aisle:** Multiple apex structures with exposed timbers.

Ceilings are plastered and decorated white.

- 10.5 There are no obvious structural concerns with the roofs and the condition of the ceiling finishes, generally, are satisfactory. There are some areas requiring attention:

- 10.6 The paint finish in the porch is blistering/flaking off. This could be the result of a previous water ingress issue, but it should be checked that this is not a current issue. This could also just be the result of the cold and damp porch environment. 1

- In the first instance the areas should be rubbed down and allowed to dry/air if required. Redecorate with a lime paint (to the specification of the Church Architect) when appropriate. 2
- 10.7 The paint finish in the Nave, particularly to the west end, is showing signs of potential surface mould. This could be the result of a previous water ingress issue, but it should be checked that this is not a current issue. This could also just be the result of the cold and damp environment the Church has experienced of late. 1
- In the first instance the areas should be rubbed down and allowed to dry/air if required. Redecorate with a lime paint (to the specification of the Church Architect) when appropriate. 2
- 11.0 Internal Doors and Windows, Screens and Panelling**
- 11.1 **Pilgrim Suite Door:** Apex arched opening with dressed stone surround. Single, timber boarded door with decorative wrought ironmongery. Good condition.
- 11.2 **Learning Porch Door:** Apex arched opening with dressed stone surround. Double, timber boarded doors with decorative wrought ironmongery. Good condition.
- 11.3 **Kitchen/Toilet Doors:** Modern, flush, fire doors.
- 11.4 **Learning Porch Screen:** Timber panelled screen across the west end of the Nave; with double doors to The Learning Porch and serving hatch to the kitchen. The previous Q.I. reports that this dividing screen was salvaged from the old Vestry and is in its original condition. Good condition.
- There is a small stained glass above the double doors, featuring a shell and the inscription, "House of God, Gate of Heaven". It is reported that this is by Josie Kime and a brass wall plaque adjacent dedicates this to the memory of Kaye Marie Johnson.
- 11.5 **North Aisle Screen:** Timber (reported to be Douglas Fir) and glazed screens between the structural apex arches, separating the Nave from the north Aisle. These was implemented as part of the reordering/refurbishment works and have been particularly effective in recent years as the segregation has facilitated a more comfortable space for more intimate congregations. Beautifully designed; good condition.
- There is a small crack in one of the glazing panes to the Lady Chapel. Monitor. 2

- 11.6 **Organ Chamber Screen:** Timber screen between the structural apex arch separating the Lady Chapel and the Organ Chamber. Comprising central door and side panels. Good condition.
- 12.0 Ground Floor Structure**
- 12.1 Following the reordering/refurbishment works, the Church is now on one level (except the High Altar). The previous Q.I. reports that changes in level between the Nave and the Chancel, and the west end of the Nave, were levelled out. It is reported that some of the carpeted areas (the central Aisle, for example) have been insulated and ply-boarded over.
- 12.2 Generally the floors are a mixture of timber boards and carpet. The boarding has been recently waxed and is in good condition. No carpets were lifted in the inspection.
- 12.3 As a routine item of maintenance, the carpets should be lifted and the sub floors inspected to ensure there is no damp, rot or insect infestation. 3
- 12.4 The Chancel and High Altar floors are tiled in a decorative, red/black/buff, geometric pattern. The previous Q.I. reports these were repaired and cleaned in the reordering/refurbishment works.
- There are some isolated areas of loose tiles; these should be re-fixed to prevent cracking. 3
- 12.5 The toilet/kitchen floors are finished in a luxury sheet vinyl type material. This is a sensible option for the use of the spaces.
- 13.0 Internal Finishes**
- 13.1 Generally the walls are plastered and painted throughout the Church. There are no obvious structural concerns with the walls but the condition of the wall finishes, generally, are poor.
- 13.2 In most areas the paint finish is blistering/flaking off. This could be the result of a previous water ingress issue, but it should be checked that this is not a current issue. 1
- 13.3 It is suspected that the issue is more likely the result of a prolonged cold and damp environment; due to inoccupation and no warmth.
- 13.4 In the first instance the areas should be rubbed down and allowed to dry/air if required. These areas should be monitored over the next quinquennium. Hopefully, with more stable times ahead, the Church will be occupied and heated more frequently, and the wall condition will improve. 2

Redecorate with a lime paint (to the specification of the Church Architect) when appropriate.

- 13.5 The previous Q.I. reports that the walls were redecorated in the reordering/refurbishment works with Farrow and Ball Lime White No.1, in oil bound distemper.

#### **14.0 Fitting, Fixtures and Furniture**

- 14.1 **Organ:** Located on the north side in a lean-to extension that was probably the original Vestry. A fine, wooden, example, with makers inscription "Bevington & Sons of London". The pipes (23no.) are silver.

An invoice found suggests the Organ was re-tuned by Harrison & Harrison Ltd. of Durham, in January 2022. Regular servicing and maintenance should be continued, and the evidence should be recorded in the Church log. 3

- 14.2 **Font:** Located to the rear of the Nave. Stone bowl with octagonal pedestal; painted white and gold. Oak cover with wrought ironmongery. Gold inscription reading, "suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not for of such is the kingdom of heaven". Good condition.

- 14.3 **Pulpit:** Located to the front of the Nave; south wall. Rounded stone with stone steps up to a timber deck; painted white and gold with timber top edging. Gold inscription reading, "he that hath my word let him speak my word faithfully". Good condition.

- 14.4 **Pews:** Central aisle to the Nave with pew banks either side. Simple, wooden, examples (reported to be pitch pine) with open backs. The previous Q.I. reports that these are originals; they are currently not fitted, but their feet would suggest that they once were, as part of a more traditional raised pew-deck arrangement. Good condition.

The choir pews in the Chancel are more decorative, typical, examples that face towards the central aisle. They are fixed on a raised timber deck and have boarded backs. They appear to be of the same material and finish as those in the Nave. Good condition.

To each side of the aisle, in the Chancel, there is a single seat pew with book mount in front; these are very similar in material and design as the adjacent choir pews. Both book mount pedestals are loose and should be secured immediately, so as not to present as a fall hazard to somebody. 1

14.5 **Lectern:** Located to the front of the Nave, but a mobile example. Comprising chunky, brass, pedestal, with decorative eagle book mount. Slightly worn memorial inscription to "Margaret Birkbeck Walker d.1930". Good condition.

Located to the rear of the Nave, but a mobile example; a second, decorative, oak, lectern. Good condition.

14.6 **Altar Table and Rails:** Timber Altar table with over cloth. Multiple brass candlesticks on top and 2no. decorative, brass, floor mounted candlesticks either side.

Basic, make-shift table to rear of Altar table; adapted to hang/store the various Altar cloths. Multiple brass candlesticks and crucifixes on top.

Brass Altar rail, comprising a simple handrail and supported by 4no. (each side) decorative brass pedestals. No gate. Good condition.

14.7 **Tabernacle:** Located on the north side of the High Altar with curtains and light over.

14.8 **Miscellaneous:**

Throughout the Church: "Stations of the Cross" imagery affixed to the walls. A brass plaque in the Nave dedicates these "to the memory of David and Edna Ellen Vickers, Matthew and Hannah Jane Elgie, 2006".

High Altar: 2no. decorative, timber chairs. Appear to be of historic significance, but not recorded in the previous Q.I?

High Altar: Timber credence table with cloth over. Large brass plate stood at its base.

High Altar: Decorative brass urn hanging from the apex of the domed ceiling.

Chancel: To the north side, adjacent to the Organ; small St. James, Coundon, tapestry.

Nave: To the north side, at the front; large, floor mounted, effigy of Mary holding baby Jesus. Smaller, ornamental, version sitting in the cill of one of the Nave windows – south side.

Nave: To the north side, at the rear; timber display table, with glass lid, housing the Book of Remembrance.

Nave: To the south wall; large timber bookcase for hymn books, pamphlets etc. An invoice found suggests this was a 2017 addition by

Maurice Hogarth Furniture Maker, of Stanhope. This evidence should be recorded in the Church log.

Nave: To the south side, at the front of the pew bank; timber prayer bench. The previous Q.I. references a "prayer seat" installed in January 2012, which I believe to be this? This evidence should be recorded in the Church log.

**15.0 Vestry:**

15.1 Owing to the external appearance of the lean-to structure on the north facade of the Church, it is assumed that this was originally a more traditional Vestry. Today the Organ occupies the most of the space and what remains is inaccessible/contrived.

The space accommodates some cleaning and seasonal items. It is recommended that these be stored elsewhere to provide easier and safer access to the lighting and electrics in this area. 3

15.2 The Pilgrim Suite, which occupies the 2no. central gables of the north aisle, serves as a modern-day Vestry. The previous Q.I. reports that the series of useful, timber, cabinets, along the north elevation, were installed between 2009 and 2010.

**16.0 Heating Installation**

16.1 Space heating to the main body of the Church is provided by black, cast iron, pipework, running at floor level or below. The path of below floor pipework is denoted by cast iron floor grates. The pipework feeds black, cast iron, traditional, radiators, dispersed throughout the Church. Repairs to the heating pipes were recorded in May 2009.

16.2 The boiler is gas and is in a subterranean housing to the west gable; accessed externally. The boiler house was not inspected as it was not safe to do so alone.

The previous Q.I. reports of the boilers old age and the poor access to, and condition of, the boiler house; with "damp from rain penetration through the concrete walls and roof slabs". Repairs to the boiler, following flooding of the boiler house, were recorded in October 2012.

As per the previous Q.I. report, owing to the age of the boiler, it is recommended that Church fund raising works towards an upgrade of the system. At such a time, consideration should be given to whether the boiler can be relocated and/or the existing boiler house be refurbished. 5

16.3 The previous Q.I. reports that the structure adjacent to the boiler house accommodated the former oil tank. It is now redundant.

- 16.4 Whilst the operation of the main heating system was not discussed, Father Gary did discuss how infrequently it has been used in recent years; owing to Covid 19 and astronomical energy costs. The fear of unaffordable bills has meant smaller congregations have occupied the Pilgrim Suite or Lady Chapel which can be independently, and more efficiently, heated.
- 16.5 There is a domestic scale gas boiler located in the cabinets of the Pilgrim Suite. The exhaust for this can be seen on the north elevation. The previous Q.I. reports this and an additional radiator were installed in November 2010, to presumably provide an independent heating option for this space.
- 16.6 There are also several wall mounted radiators in the Pilgrim Suite and Lady Chapel, which appear to be electrically operated. Again, it is presumed that these were to provide an independent/alternative heating option for the spaces. The previous Q.I. reports these were installed 2010/2011.
- 16.7 The heating systems should be tested annually. There was no evidence available to confirm the date of the last boiler test; this should be addressed, and a test scheduled if one is due. Servicing and maintenance should be recorded in the Church log. 1

## **17.0 Electrical Installation**

- 17.1 The electric supply enters the Church above ground to the east end of the Vestry. It is assumed that metering and distribution equipment is then internally wall mounted, but this area was not accessible/inspected on the day.
- 17.2 Church lighting internally varies, but mostly consists of upward and downward facing flood lights, mounted at eaves level. The uplighting is effective in highlighting the ceiling structures. The light quality is satisfactory, but the distribution is not particularly comfortable and there is the obvious issues of glare and shadowing.
- 17.3 The curvature of the High Altar structure is emphasised by floor level strip lighting. At present this draws to the aforementioned wall finish issues, but otherwise is an effective feature.
- 17.4 Kitchen and wc: simple, flush, ceiling pendants to flat ceilings.
- 17.5 The Learning Porch: directional spots to illuminate the installations.
- 17.6 The Pilgrim Suite: decorative, wooden, hanging pendants from ridges.

- 17.7 Church lighting externally is limited. Additional external lighting may be beneficial to safety and security.
- 17.8 The Church has a sound system; the control unit is evident on the Pulpit deck. An invoice found suggests external speakers were purchased in 2022 and the Churchwarden explained that some services (funerals for example) tend to attract large numbers, and they enable the service to be heard from outside.
- 17.9 Some invoices found document that there was a comprehensive lighting/electric upgrade in 2020, by Electrical Answers Ltd. of Bishop Auckland. Most of the lighting/electrics were replaced in the reordered/refurbished areas.
- 17.10 The electrical systems should be tested every 5 years. There was no definitive evidence available to confirm the date of the last electrical test; this should be addressed, and a test scheduled if one is due. Servicing and maintenance should be recorded in the Church log. 1
- 17.11 PAT testing should be carried out annually. There was no evidence available to confirm the date of the last PAT test; this should be addressed, and a test scheduled if one is due. Servicing and maintenance should be recorded in the Church log. 1
- 17.12 There is a lightening conductor installed; it can be seen down the side of the belfry. There was no evidence available to confirm the date of the last test; this should be addressed, and a test scheduled if one is due. Servicing and maintenance should be recorded in the Church log. 1
- 18.0 Fire Precautions**
- 18.1 There is a water fire extinguisher to the rear of the Nave. Tested by H.E. Woolley in November 2018. It would appear that no further tests have been executed.
- 18.2 There is a powder fire extinguisher in the kitchen. Tested by H.E. Woolley in November 2018. It would appear that no further tests have been executed.
- 18.3 The previous Q.I. reports that there was a carbon dioxide fire extinguisher near the organ. This was not evident on the day of inspection, so either it has gone or was simply missed.
- Enquiries should be made to the local Fire Safety Officer as to whether the Church has the correct quantity/distribution/type of fire extinguishers. 1

- 18.4 Fire extinguishers should be tested annually and the evidence recorded in the Church log. 1
- 18.5 The serving hatch between the kitchen and the Nave has a fire shutter on the kitchen side. There was no evidence available to confirm the date of the last test; this should be addressed, and a test scheduled if one is due. Servicing and maintenance should be recorded in the Church log. 1
- 19.0 Disabled Provision**
- 19.1 The Equality Act requires that places of worship should comply. Excellent steps have been made to facilitate ease of access by a wheelchair user.
- 19.2 The modifications to the main entrance, with the inclusion of an external ramp, facilitates wheelchair access. The previous Q.I. reports of this being in the pipeline, so is works executed post 2012.
- 19.3 The toilet facilities implemented circa 2008 are fully accessible and comprise a full Doc M pack.
- 19.4 Internally, all the areas of the Church (except the High Altar) are now on one level, providing full wheelchair access. The previous Q.I. reports that changes in level between the Nave and the Chancel, and the west end of the Nave, were levelled out in the 2008-2010 reordering/refurbishment works.
- 20.0 Toilet/Kitchen/The Learning Porch**
- 20.1 Both the toilet and kitchen were installed to the west end of the Nave as part of a comprehensive reordering/refurbishment programme circa 2008. This was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- 20.2 The toilet is a fully compliant accessible wc.
- 20.3 The kitchen is well equipped for most service needs, comprising sink and separate hand wash sink, electric hob and oven, microwave and a range of base and wall units. It would appear that hot water is provided to both the kitchen and the toilet by undercounter electric boilers.
- 20.4 Electric control infrastructure on the north wall of the kitchen suggests the toilet and the kitchen are managed independently from here. Evidence of 'Klargester' and 'sump pump' might indicate that foul waste is to a septic tank, or similar.
- 20.5 There was evidence of mice droppings and a trap in one of the kitchen base units. Vermin activity should be monitored and pest control contacted if they continue to be an issue. 2

20.6 An integral part of the reordering/refurbishment works to the west end of the Church, circa 2008, was the creation of The Learning Porch. This comprises a number of educational display panels to the walls.

### **21.0 Bats**

21.1 There are no reports of bats roosting in the Church but owing to the nature of the Church building, its age, and its location, it is highly likely. An Ecologist should be consulted before any intrusive building and/or roof works are scheduled so that a risk assessment/mitigation strategy can be prepared.

### **Curtilage**

### **22.0 Churchyard and Environs**

22.1 The Church is accessed from the main highway, up a steep embankment. The previous Q.I. reports that the approach was resurfaced and upgraded in 2009.

22.2 Part way up the embankment is a narrow opening to the Churchyard. This is tight for a car, so anything of more significant size might struggle. There are no gates on this opening; when funds permit, gates might be beneficial to security. 3

22.3 The Churchyard is extensive to the west, south and north. It is understood to be maintained and managed by the Local Authority and certainly in the immediate vicinity of the Church building, the grassed areas are well kept. The boundary enclosures comprise stone wall and fencing; these were not inspected.

22.4 Surrounding the Church there are many significant trees and they create an oppressive canopy over the main approach and Church building. A professional tree survey would be recommended to ensure that they are all sound and safe. 3

The trees are particularly dense on the north and south sides and don't allow much sunlight to hit the Church. A programme of removal and/or trimming back works is recommended to enable the Church fabric to dry out and breathe. 3

### **23.0 Security**

23.1 Owing to the secluded location of the Church, it is always going to be at an increased risk of theft and vandalism etc. Father Gary lives in the adjacent Vicarage, so is able to keep an eye on things. The previous Q.I. reports of lead thefts and break-in attempts.

23.2 When funds permit, a replacement gate on the vehicular entrance may be beneficial to security. 3

- 23.3 External lighting is limited. When funds permit, additional external lighting may be beneficial to security. 3
- 23.4 There is a security alarm installed. There was no evidence available as to when this was last checked/serviced. The alarm should be checked by a competent person annually and serviced as part of the electrical test schedule every 5 years. 1
- 23.5 When funds permit, a cctv system may be beneficial to security. 3
- 23.6 It is recommended to check with the Church insurers regarding their current minimum requirements to ensure that the Church is compliant. 1
- 24.0 Log Book**
- 24.1 The Church Log was not available at the time of inspection. The Churchwardens should ensure that over the next quinquennium a log is kept and that a more accurate account of the necessary servicing and maintenance is available.
- 25.0 Memorials**
- 25.1 Nave, south side. Wall mounted, marble. Thomas Farquhar Hill, Vicar of Coundon, 1870-1902.
- 25.2 Nave, south side. Wall mounted, marble. George Edwin Hill, 1851-1918.
- 26.0 Previous Quinquennial Reports**
- 26.1
- Dennis H Jones Dip Arch RIBA 2012

## Recommendations

### Urgent Works Requiring Immediate Attention: Category 1

### Item

- |       |  |      |
|-------|--|------|
| i)    | On the northern elevation, where the Organ Chamber abuts the Lady Chapel, the walling around the downpipe appears wet and mossed. It would seem that the gutter/downpipe is being overwhelmed and is over spilling, or that there are failed joints in either the gutters or the downpipe. Any obstructions should be cleared immediately and the situation monitored, so that the problem can be identified and rectified.  | 6.4  |
| ii)   | On the northern elevation, there is vegetation growing from some of the valley gutter hoppers and the walling around the downpipes appears wet and mossed. It would seem that the hoppers are congested and rainwater is over spilling, or that there are failed joints in the downpipes. The valley gutters should be inspected and any obstructions should be cleared immediately. The situation should be monitored so that the problems can be identified and rectified. | 6.5  |
| iii)  | On the western elevation of the porch there is a fractured joint in the gutter, near to the downpipe. This should be repaired.   | 6.6  |
| iv)   | With the winter weather due, all gutters, downpipes and gullies should be cleared.   | 6.7  |
| v)    | Ceilings: The paint finish in the porch is blistering/flaking off. This could be the result of a previous water ingress issue, but it should be checked that this is not a current issue.  | 10.6 |
| vi)   | Ceilings: The paint finish in the Nave, particularly to the west end, is showing signs of potential surface mould. This could be the result of a previous water ingress issue, but it should be checked that this is not a current issue.  | 10.7 |
| vii)  | Internal Walls: In most areas the paint finish is blistering/flaking off. This could be the result of a previous water ingress issue, but it should be checked that this is not a current issue.   | 13.2 |
| viii) | Pews: To each side of the aisle, in the Chancel, there is a single seat pew with book mount in front; these are very similar in material and design as the adjacent choir pews. Both book mount pedestals are loose and should be secured immediately, so as not to present as a fall hazard to somebody.  | 14.4 |
| ix)   | The heating systems should be tested annually. There was no evidence available to confirm the date of the last boiler test; this should be   | 16.7 |

addressed, and a test scheduled if one is due. Servicing and maintenance should be recorded in the Church log.

- x) The electrical systems should be tested every 5 years. There was no definitive evidence available to confirm the date of the last electrical test; this should be addressed, and a test scheduled if one is due. Servicing and maintenance should be recorded in the Church log. 17.10
- xi) PAT testing should be carried out annually. There was no evidence available to confirm the date of the last PAT test; this should be addressed, and a test scheduled if one is due. Servicing and maintenance should be recorded in the Church log. 17.11
- xii) There is a lightening conductor installed; it can be seen down the side of the belfry. There was no evidence available to confirm the date of the last test; this should be addressed, and a test scheduled if one is due. Servicing and maintenance should be recorded in the Church log. 17.12
- xiii) Enquiries should be made to the local Fire Safety Officer as to whether the Church has the correct quantity/distribution/type of fire extinguishers. 18.3
- xiv) Fire extinguishers should be tested annually, and the evidence recorded in the Church log. 18.4
- xv) The serving hatch between the kitchen and the Nave has a fire shutter on the kitchen side. There was no evidence available to confirm the date of the last test; this should be addressed, and a test scheduled if one is due. Servicing and maintenance should be recorded in the Church log. 18.5
- xvi) There is a security alarm installed. There was no evidence available as to when this was last checked/serviced. The alarm should be checked by a competent person annually and serviced as part of the electrical test schedule every 5 years. 23.4
- xvii) It is recommended to check with the Church insurers regarding their current minimum requirements to ensure that the Church is compliant. 23.6

**Indicative cost for the works in Category 1 would be £1500 excluding VAT and fees.**

**Work Recommended to be Carried Out During Next 12 Months: Item Category 2**

- xviii) There are a couple of slipped slates evident on the roundel Chancel roof that should be repaired, and the only minor concern to note would be 5.6

the condition of some of the water table coping stones. Monitor for further deterioration/delamination.

- |        |   |      |
|--------|---|------|
| xix)   | The rainwater goods should be monitored over the winter in wet weather to assess whether any joints or connections are leaking, so that they can be repaired.   | 6.7  |
| xx)    | The windows would benefit from a clean, internally, and externally. The external protection has resulted in a built up of cobwebs and debris behind; removing this for cleaning will facilitate a closer inspection of the windows condition.   | 9.8  |
| xxi)   | Porch Ceiling: In the first instance the areas should be rubbed down and allowed to dry/air if required. Redecorate with a lime paint (to the specification of the Church Architect) when appropriate.  | 10.6 |
| xxii)  | Nave Ceiling: In the first instance the areas should be rubbed down and allowed to dry/air if required. Redecorate with a lime paint (to the specification of the Church Architect) when appropriate.   | 10.7 |
| xxiii) | North Aisle Screen: There is a small crack in one of the glazing panes to the Lady Chapel. Monitor.   | 11.5 |
| xxiv)  | Internal Walls: In the first instance the areas should be rubbed down and allowed to dry/air if required. These areas should be monitored over the next quinquennium. Hopefully, with more stable times ahead, the Church will be occupied and heated more frequently, and the wall condition will improve. | 13.4 |
| xxv)   | There was evidence of mice droppings and a trap in one of the kitchen base units. Vermin activity should be monitored and pest control contacted if they continue to be an issue.   | 20.5 |

**Indicative cost for the works in Category 2 would be £1500 excluding VAT and fees.**

**Work Recommended to be Carried Out During Next 5 Years:  
Category 3**

- |        |   | <b>Item</b> |
|--------|---|-------------|
| xxvi)  | The Church Log was not available at the time of inspection. The Churchwardens should ensure that over the next quinquennium a log is kept and that a more accurate account of the necessary servicing and maintenance is available. | 3.1         |
| xxvii) | As a routine maintenance item, the gutters, downpipes and gullies should be regularly inspected and cleared.  | 6.8         |

- xxviii) There are some minor areas of mortar pointing loss to the stone walling that should be repaired. Any repointing must be with NHL lime:sand mortar. 7.2
  
- xxix) Main Entrance Door: There is daylight visible between the timber boards, at cill level and at the meeting stile. In the first instance the door would benefit from a fill, rub down and redecorate. When funds permit, an improved cill and meeting stile detail is recommended to discourage water ingress and vermin. This would also benefit security. 8.1
  
- xxx) Organ Chamber Door: The door would benefit from a fill, rub down and redecorate. 8.2
  
- xxxi) As a routine item of maintenance, the carpets should be lifted and the sub floors inspected to ensure there is no damp, rot or insect infestation. 12.3
  
- xxxii) Chancel and High Altar: There are some isolated areas of loose floor tiles; these should be re-fixed to prevent cracking. 12.4
  
- xxxiii) Organ: An invoice found suggests the Organ was re-tuned by Harrison & Harrison Ltd. of Durham, in January 2022. Regular servicing and maintenance should be continued, and the evidence should be recorded in the Church log. 14.1
  
- xxxiv) Vestry: The space accommodates some cleaning and seasonal items. It is recommended that these be stored elsewhere to provide easier and safer access to the lighting and electrics in this area. 15.1
  
- xxxv) Curtilage: Part way up the embankment is a narrow opening to the Churchyard. This is tight for a car, so anything of more significant size might struggle. There are no gates on this opening; when funds permit, gates might be beneficial to security. 22.2
  
- xxxvi) Surrounding the Church there are many significant trees and they create an oppressive canopy over the main approach and Church building. A professional tree survey would be recommended to ensure that they are all sound and safe. 22.4
  
- xxxvii) The trees are particularly dense on the north and south sides and don't allow much sunlight to hit the Church. A programme of removal and/or trimming back works is recommended to enable the Church fabric to dry out and breathe. 22.4
  
- xxxviii) When funds permit, a replacement gate on the vehicular entrance to the Church may be beneficial to security. 23.2

xxxix) External lighting is limited. When funds permit, additional external lighting may be beneficial to security. 23.3

xL) When funds permit, a cctv system may be beneficial to security. 23.5

**Indicative cost for the works in Category 3 would be £20,000 excluding VAT and fees.**

**Work to be Considered Beyond 5 Years: Category 4** **Item**  
**NONE**

**Works Recommended Improving Energy Efficiency: Category 5** **Item**

xLi) Boiler: As per the previous Q.I. report, owing to the age of the boiler, it is recommended that Church fund raising works towards an upgrade of the system. At such a time, consideration should be given to whether the boiler can be relocated and/or the existing boiler house be refurbished. 16.2

**Indicative cost for the works in Category 5 would be £20,000 excluding VAT and fees.**

**Work Recommended Improving Access: Category 6** **Item**  
**NONE**

## Appendix

### a) General

This report is not a specification for the execution of works and must not be used as such. It is a general report as required by the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955.

The Architect has indicated in it such maintenance items, if any, which may safely be carried out without professional supervision.

Conservation and repair of Churches is a highly specialised subject if work is to be carried out both aesthetically and technically in the best manner, without being wasteful in expenditure. It is, therefore, essential that every care is taken to ensure that no harm is done to the fabric or fittings and when the Parochial Church Council is ready to proceed it should instruct the Architect accordingly, when he will prepare specifications and schedules and arrange for the work to be carried out by an approved Contractor under his direction.

Costs on much of the work or repairing Churches cannot be accurately estimated because the full extent of damage is only revealed as work proceeds, but when the Architect has been instructed to prepare specifications, he can obtain either firm prices or considered approximate estimates, whichever may be appropriate.

The Architect will be glad to help the Parochial Church Council to complete an appeal application to a charitable body if necessary, or to assist in applying for the essential Faculty or Archdeacon's Certification.

### b) Priorities

Where work has been specified as being necessary in the preceding pages a code number from 1 to 6, has been inserted in the margin indicating the degree of urgency of the relevant works as follows:

- 1 Urgent works requiring immediate attention.
- 2 Work recommended to be carried out during the next 11 months
- 3 Works recommended to be carried out during the Quinquennial period.
- 4 Work needed consideration beyond the Quinquennial period.
- 5 Work required to improve energy efficiency of the structure and services.
- 6 Work required improving disabled access.

### c) Scope of Report

The report is based on the findings of an inspection made from the ground and from other easily accessible points, or from ladders provided by the Parochial Church Council, to comply with the Diocesan Scheme under the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955.

It is emphasised that the inspection has been purely visual and that no enclosed spaces or inaccessible parts, such as boarded floors, roof spaces, or hidden timbers at wall

heads have been opened up for inspection. Any part which may require further investigation is referred to in the appropriate section of this report.

d) Cleaning of Gutters etc.

The Parochial Church Council is strongly advised to enter into an annual contract with a local builder for cleaning out the gutters and downpipes twice a year.

e) Pointing and Masonry

Wherever pointing is recommended it is absolutely that the procedure in item (a) of this appendix be adhered to as without proper supervision much harm can be done to the fabric by incorrect use of materials and techniques.

f) Heating Installation

Subject to any comments to the contrary in Section 16.0 of this report, the remarks in this report are based only upon a superficial examination of the general condition of the heating installation, particularly in relation to fire hazards and sightlines.

NB: A proper examination and test should be made of the heating apparatus by a qualified engineer each summer, prior to the start of the heating season and the report of such examination should be kept in the Church Log Book.

The Parochial Church Council is strongly advised to consider arranging a regular inspection contact.

Wherever practicable, subject to finances, it is recommended that the installation be run at a low setting throughout the week, as distinct from being 'on' during services only, as constant warmth has a beneficial effect on the fabric, fittings and decoration.

g) Electrical Installation

Any electrical installation should be tested every quinquennium and immediately if not done within the last five years (except as may be otherwise recommended in this report) by a competent electrical engineer or by the supply authority and an insulation resistance and earth continuity test should be obtained on all circuits. The engineer's test report should be kept with the Church Log Book. Where no recent report or certificate of inspection from a competent electrical engineer (one who in on the role of approved contractors issued by the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting) is available, the comments in this report are based upon a visual inspection made without instruments of the main switchboard and of sections of wiring selected at random. Electrical installation for lighting and heating, and other electrical circuits, should be installed and maintained in accordance with the current editions of the Institution of Electrical Engineers Rules and the more specific recommendations of the Council for the Care of Churches, contained in the publication "The Lighting of Churches".

h) Lightning Conductors

As a defective conductor may attract lightning, the lightning conductor should be tested every quinquennium in accordance with the British Standard Code of Practice

(current edition) by a competent electrical engineer and the record of the test results, conditions and recommendations should be kept with the Church Log Book.

Conductors on lofty spires and other not readily accessible positions should be closely examined every ten years, particularly the contact between the tape and the vane rod of finial. If the conductor tape is without a test clamp, one should be provided above ground level.

i) Maintenance Between Inspections

Although the measure requires the Church to be inspected by an Architect every five years it should be realised that serious trouble may develop between survey if minor defects such as displaced slates and leaking pipes are left unattended.

j) Fire Insurance

The Parochial Church Council is advised that the fire insurance cover should be periodically reviewed to keep pace with the rising cost of repairs.

At least two Class A fire extinguishers per floor, these should comply with BSEN3 and should be kept in an easily accessible position in the Church, together with an additional extinguisher of the foam or CO<sub>2</sub> (Class B) type where heating apparatus is oil fired, all fire extinguishers should be in a stand or attached to a wall.