

Diocese of Durham

## St John, Seaham

Church No 94

*Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018*

### Quinquennial Report

On the architect's inspection of

**25<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

Archdeaconry of Durham

Deanery of Easington

Grade II listed – Seaham Conservation Area

Incumbent – Revd. Canon Paul Kenedy SSC



Report prepared by

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## REVISION A – *First Issue*

Dates of inspection - 25.07.2023  
Weather – Warm with showers, 17°C

Date of report – August 2023  
Date of previous report – July 2015

### PART ONE

#### 1. Inspection notes

- 1.1 I have made a thorough general survey of the condition of the church and grounds. The inspection was such as could readily be made from ground and tower roof level. I have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and I am therefore unable to report that any such part is free from defect. None of the services were tested. Damp meters were not used.
- 1.2 It is not obvious that there are any asbestos containing materials in the church, however it could still be found in such things as 20<sup>th</sup> century additions or pipe lagging. This report is not a survey under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. If the PCC determines that a survey is required following their own assessment, a specialist contractor should be approached. The parish should make themselves familiar with the guidance provided to parishes by the HSE through The Church of England website.

#### 2. Brief description

- 2.1 The parish church of the planned town of Seaham Harbour, designed by Thomas Prosser, construction began in 1835 on a sloped site at the top of what is now named Church Street. The church initially had a rectangular Nave with a short Chancel, all of which have shallow slate roofs behind parapets. Constructed from limestone with sandstone openings, buttresses, and quoins in a robust perpendicular style. Entrance is through the tower to the west, which externally has four large clock faces at high level. A decorated N aisle was added in 1862 with steeper open roof. In 1886 the architect R J Johnson lengthened the Chancel and added vestries and a pine board ceiling to the Nave. A tall flat roofed organ chamber later added in 1907. In 1976 the N Aisle was divided off to form a Chapel, Hall, and Kitchen area, with an additional flat roofed NW entrance providing a lobby and WC's. Later, a Nave altar platform has been added level with the choir floor.
- 2.2 The most prominent building in the Seaham Conservation Area, in a churchyard (closed to burials, maintained by the Council, and cleared of gravestones to the most part) frequently used by the public as a meeting place and thoroughfare.
- 2.3 A pleasant interior well-lit and a large hall to the N Aisle, well used by the community. The carved and painted reredos gives the Chancel great character. Internally spaces flow well, the more recent lobby and WCs are showing their age and externally out of character with the rest of the building, with the flat roof gathering litter which is thrown onto this area.

#### 2.4 Listing Description

*4/27 Church of St. John the Evangelist 21.6.50 (Formerly listed as St. John's Church under Sophia Street)*

*Parish church. 1835-40 by Thomas Prosser, north aisle added 1860, choir and vicar's vestries added by R.J.Johnson in 1885-6. Dressed limestone with sandstone dressings and moderate-pitched graduated Welsh slate roofs. West tower, aisleless Nave and Chancel, north aisle, north choir and vicar's vestries. Perpendicular style. Windows have mainly rectilinear tracery with trefoil-headed lights, chamfered reveals, hoodmoulds and alternating jambs.*

2-stage west tower has chamfered plinth and diagonal buttresses; doorway in south wall under 4-centred-arched head; 3-light ground-floor window in west wall; belfry stage above string course has four louvred openings of 2 lights with pointed heads partly hidden by clock faces; slightly projecting battlemented parapet with corner pinnacles. South wall of wide 3-bay Nave has chamfered plinth and diagonally- buttressed corners with 2 stepped buttresses between bays; 2-light square-headed windows; low parapet with chamfered and roll-moulded coping. Canted porch in south wall at junction of Nave and Chancel has doorway with pointed-arched head and small lancet above. Lower and narrower 2-bay Chancel with chamfered plinth and low parapet has two 2-light windows, set high in south wall, with square heads and a stepped buttress between; diagonally-buttressed east end has tall 3-light window with pointed head and string courses above and below. Single-storey, gabled vicar's Vestry attached to north of Chancel has low 4-light window with square head. 2-storey choir Vestry has similar fenestration and door under pointed-arched head. Tall, 4-bay north aisle has double-chamfered plinth, chamfered sill band and four 2-light windows with square heads; gabled returns have chamfered coping and kneelers; steeply-pitched roof.

Interior: Nave has first floor gallery at west end and 3 ranks of C19 pews; panelled roof; north aisle arcade has 4 double-chamfered pointed arches on circular piers. Chancel: 2 steps up to 4-centred, hollow-chamfered Chancel arch; roof has 4 hammerbeam trusses with cambered collars. Elaborate stucco and marble monument to 3rd. Marquess of Londonderry, died 1854, has Gothick details and stands against south wall of Chancel.

Late C20 addition to north of tower not of special interest.

Listing NGR: NZ4270049334

### 3. Recent structural history

- 3.1 Over the last 20 years the parish has energetically raised money for repairs and improvements including:
- Reconstruction of three Chancel windows
  - Renewal of roofs at Nave, Organ chamber, Aisle valley and part of the Chancel
  - Rehangng of the bells, restoration of the clock dials in new cases and repaired openings
  - Repair of tower masonry
  - New insulated covering on the NW flat roof
  - Overhaul of the pipe organ

### 4. Recent recorded works

The logbook was available at the time of inspection, it contained some information but lacked specifics, each item should be dated a note made of who undertook the works.

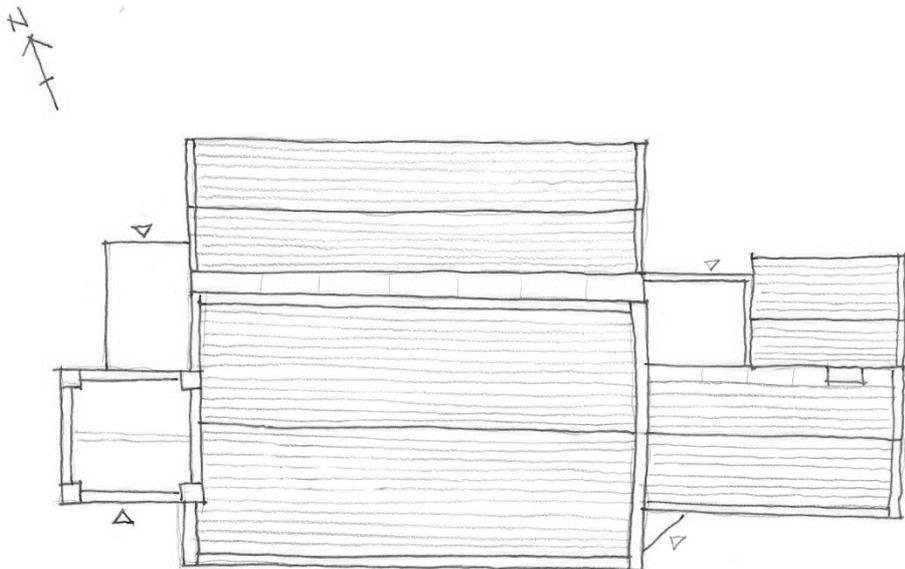
Works completed since the last inspection		
Date:	Description:	By whom:
2016	Works to parish room above kitchen, safety wooden wall and ladder	
2017	Removal of unsafe rails (Nave altar and lectern iron rails)	
	Carpet installed to Chancel to protect mosaic floor	
	Decoration to ancillary rooms.	
2018	Replacement of notice board	
	Bulbs replaced with LED & spotlights replaced to altar	
	Touch taps installed in WCs	
2019	Christmas 2018 break in required repairs to kitchen windows.	

2019	Vestry gutter replaced following storm damage	
	New cooker and fridge freezer	
2020	New hand dryers and towel holders	
	Internet installed, sound system moved	
	Front radiator pipe leak repaired	
2022	Combi boiler replaced and storm roof repairs	
	Tower clock chime mechanism replaced	
	New flag	
	Water boiler replaced	
	Drains cleared	Dynorod
2023	Parish room combi boiler replaced	
	Kitchen unit fronts and flooring replaced	
	Parish room LED lights installed	

## 5. Summary of condition

5.1 The building is stable and in good overall condition. The reroofing of the tower has some issues that need to be addressed. The suspended parts of the Nave floor may be weakening and require further investigation. Stone decay advances slowly at parts of the masonry and some windows.

### Plan of the church (NTS for orientation only)



## PART TWO - DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTERIOR

**6. Roof Coverings** - Welsh slate with stone ridges. Nave and Chancel have parapets with hidden gutters. The later Aisle and Vestries have overhanging eaves and tapered lead valley gutters abutting the original church. Flat roofs at the Tower, Organ chamber and NW entrance. The lead is protected with Smart water tracing fluid.

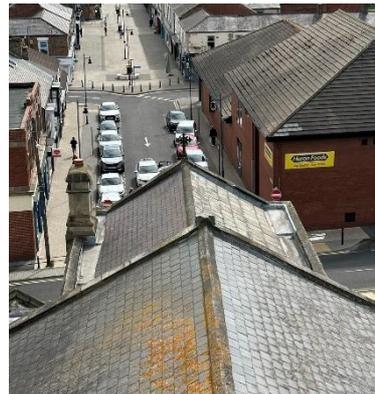
- 6.1 **Nave** – a broad shallow pitched roof, covered in modern Welsh slate, breather felt and battens. The last inspection reported one broken slate at W end of N eave and one very large slate broken at middle of S eave, these were not noted in the logbook as being repaired, but couldn't be seen from tower level at the time of inspection.
- 6.2 At the Nave N side renewed lead gutters in place of the parapet for the most part with small sections remaining at each end. Gutters reviewed in next section. The tiling appears sound. Adjacent to this is the south side of the north aisle, which is detailed at item 6.7.
- 6.3 Lead cover flashings turned over the slates at the E & W watertables and tower because the tables are too low for simple cover flashings.
- 6.4 The S Nave parapet gutter steps down to a sump and outlet near the centre. It is reported the bays had been reformed to provide the correct lengths for the lead. The area could not be inspected safely at close proximity, however as seen from tower, a football is in the outlet which seems to be a persistent issue and could cause drainage issues in heavy rain.
- 6.5 When the Chancel was lengthened in 1886 it seems the original diminishing Welsh slates were refixed on the S side and new regular slates fixed at N. In 2003 the N side was recovered in new Welsh with lead soakers and plain cover flashings at the Nave abutment. The very large, aged S slates were reportedly patched with salvage from the Nave and new lead flashings installed, lapping over the slates at the Nave abutment. All appears sound from the limited view from the tower and ground level.



*Figure 1- Nave roof*

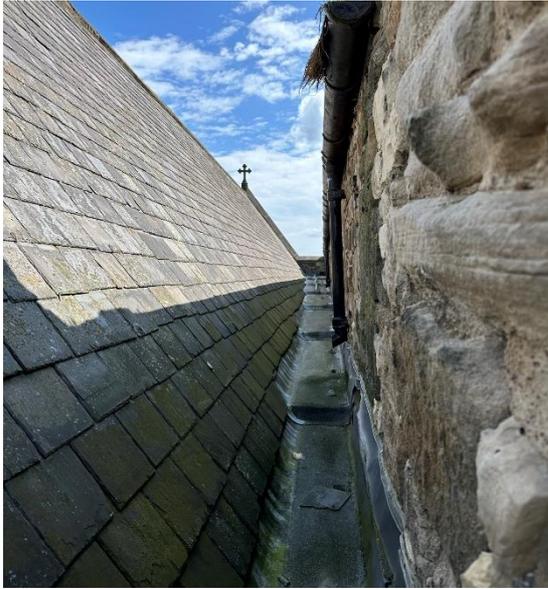


*Figure 2- N Aisle roof*

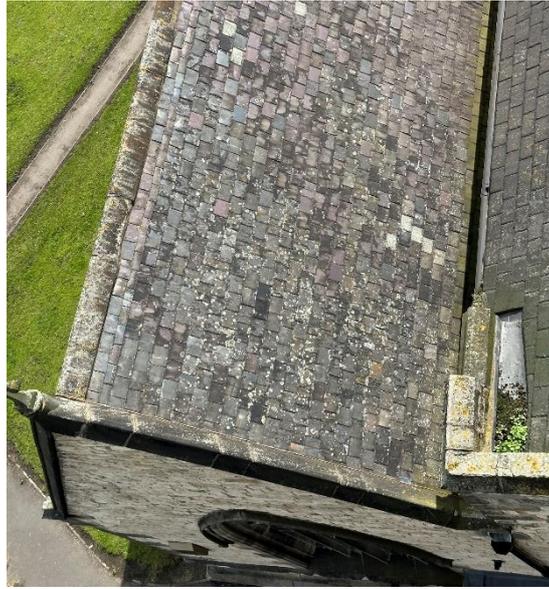


*Figure 3 - Limited view of Chancel*

- 6.6 The Chancel N parapet was reformed to meet recommended bay lengths with a side outlet and recovered in lead in 2003. The S parapet stepped lead gutter drains by sump and horizontal outlet. Lower gutter area to south unable to be seen.
- 6.7 The much steeper N Aisle of 1862 has Welsh slates in fair condition but some delamination of the older S slates. The S pitch appears sound apart from one slate missing near W end and one slate slipping at low level. The ridge tiles have some open joints and some appear to have a different profiles.



*Figure 4 – Aisle abutment to Nave*



*Figure 5 – N Aisle outlet*

- 6.8 The later Organ chamber roof abuts the Chancel, Nave, and Aisle. The flat stainless-steel roof of 2007 has a fall to one box gutter inside parapets. All appeared in good condition.
- 6.9 The Vestry has aged Welsh slate in fair condition with a stone ridge and lead flashings at the abutment and gable copings. Overhanging N eave. To the N slope one slate is missing at ridge and several corners are broken across this face.
- 6.10 The S slope abuts the Chancel at an internal gutter with an outlet to an internal lead downpipe in the Vestry. The gutter had a new lead burned outlet fitted in 2003, joined to the gutter with 'T-Pren' flexible neoprene joints to protect the lead from cracking due to thermal movement. Being shaded, movement should be limited. The gutter seems sound, at the last inspection there was a heavy silt build-up reported which appears to have cleared. It is unknown if the area was checked for damp penetration into the structure due to the former build-up. See item 12.3.
- 6.11 The small SE porch has a triangular slate roof and lead parapet gutter. The slate could not be seen but the gutter is reported to silt easily, needing annual cleaning.
- 6.12 The NW entrance, WCs and boiler room have a flat concrete roof covered with Sarnafil membrane on insulation with a side outlet. Minor Sarnafil patches are sound. The downpipe from the internal valley falls onto this roof and all appears ok apart from some debris which appears to have been thrown.

**7. Rainwater System, Drainage** - External rainwater goods are mostly cast iron, with differing levels of decoration. Some recent replacements in uPVC.

7.1 An inaccessible pipe from the Tower drops onto the Nave roof, which appears rusty with paint flaking or lost from each section.



*Figure 6 – Tower downpipe*

7.2 The Nave north gutter replaces the former parapet, the gutter has vegetation growing at the W end,

several outlets appear ok, some are at a height from the lead gutter and in heavy rains could direct water onto the opposite tiles. As seen in figures 4 & 5.

7.3 The Aisle abuts the Nave wall 1.5m below the Nave eave. A long internal tapered lead gutter draining the Aisle and Nave falls W through an opening in a stone parapet to a hopper onto the flat lobby roof, this hopper is loose at the top. The gutter is sound but has vegetation build up at corners and loose tiles stored at the E end.

7.4 Aisle N gutter bracketed from the rafters is rusting. Silt and plants in E end and a birds nest at the W end. The downpipes are rusted at the rear.

7.5 The internal downpipe from the Vestry internal gutter is cased and its drain connection unknown. No visible leakage.

7.6 The Vestry N gutter has been replaced in uPVC in 2019. The large pipe from the Organ roof is well painted.



*Figure 7 – Gully*

7.7 S of the Nave and Chancel single large hoppers and downpipes are sound and well painted. The small pipe from the SE Porch is tight to a corner where its back cannot be painted. Although protected it is rusting and will fail eventually. The base section of the Chancel downpipe is loose.

7.8 All gullies should be kept clean, the south gully has weeds growing and a pint glass in it. The downpipe is also rusty at the swan neck.

7.9 Reportedly, apart from outlets from the flat lobby, the rainwater drainage goes to a soakaway, but it is unclear where this is. Foul drainage is to manholes and sewer.

**8. External Walls, Buttresses & Chimneys**- Local limestone with sandstone quoins, copings, strings, and plinths.

8.1 In generally good condition after replacement of the most decayed mouldings at the Chancel and limited high level pointing at the S Nave and Chancel.

8.2 There is surface erosion, delamination to watertables and mouldings and loss of pointing behind some rainwater pipes and exposed walls, notably at the parapets, gable peaks, buttresses, and plinths. Replacement of certain stone dressings and local pointing in suitable mortar would slow decay.

8.3 A crack to the SE corner of the Chancel runs from the bottom RHS of the easternmost lancet.



*Figure 8 – Replacement stone*



*Figure 9 – Delamination*



*Figure 10 – Crack to SE*



*Figure 11 – Crack at NW*

8.4 South Chancel – former fixing of RWP leaves a hole that has decaying timber within it, this would benefit from being removed and re-pointed.

8.5 Nave to the S under windows, open joints and some cement pointing, generally the stone in this area requires pointing.

8.6 The watertable to the south Nave is delaminating and has large loose pieces.

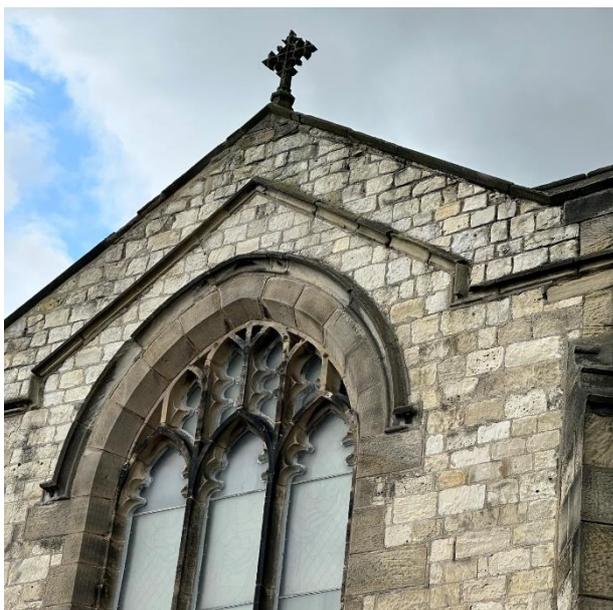
8.7 N side of the W end needs pointing at high level and low level.

8.8 North Aisle, W end crack to the top RHS, low level water table needs pointing.

8.9 High level pointing is breaking down at the E end and the stability of the cross cannot be checked, therefore when re-pointing is carried out the cross should be inspected. There is a crack to the organ tower radiating from the highest joining point of the Vestry. There are also open joints and cracks around the Vestry window. These should be monitored as it is the authors first inspection.

8.10 East gable of both the Vestry and aisle require pointing at high level and to the coping stones.

8.11 There appears as if there could be some slight eaves spread at the Chancel easternmost end, this may link to items 12.1 & 16.2.



*Figure 6- East gable*



*Figure 7 – S Nave beneath window*

8.12 The Aisle W gable peak has been pointed in cement mortar which is usually too hard and can damage stonework. The lower pointing remains weathered lime mortar.

8.13 The NW entrance is cavity concrete block similar in appearance to the limestone. Artificial stone copings and lintels replaced 2007 and capped with roof membrane to increase protection.

8.14 As noted in the last inspection report, occasional drips at or near the SW corner of the choir may have been due to seepage through open joints in the masonry over the Chancel roof. It is unclear if this had any remedial measures or if it is still an issue. No drips reported at the time of survey, but staining still obvious at item 14.1, this area should be re-painted and checks if the issue has been remedied can be made.

## 9. Tower, Bells, Frame, Clock

9.1 The tower masonry is in good condition after repairs in 2005 (part pointing, repair of string courses and reinstatement of hoodmoulds over the clock dials). A narrow vertical crack at the flue in the N wall thickness reported in the 1970's and still visible was stitched and a stainless flue liner installed.

### 9.2 Tower elevations

9.2.1 South – Some erosion to the string course and hood moulding of door, low level stone sees some erosion. Stone to top LHS of clock lancet has cracked at a point of penetration in the elevation. The lancet has open joints to the top, it looks as if the stone may have been replaced here.

9.2.2 West – OK, staining above lancet, mullion base to upper lancet has a crack.

9.2.3 North – Crack to stones down LHS of upper lancet appear historic, as item 9.1. This continues slightly below the string course. Otherwise, ok.

9.2.4 East – Very limited view, sandstone to hood moulding of upper lancet eroding.

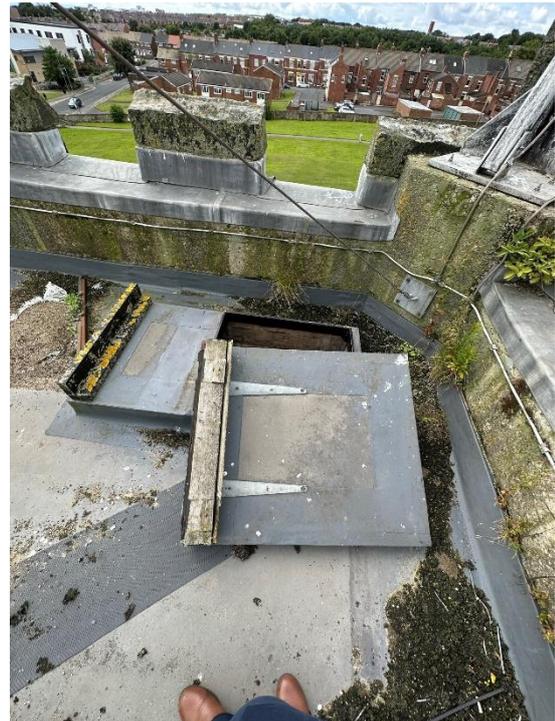
9.3 Pyramidal corner pinnacles were reportedly rebuilt with bronze dowels in joints. Painted stainless steel braces were bolted to an existing concrete ring beam behind the parapet. Lead caps the whole parapet and on the top string course.

9.4 A glass reinforced plastic flagpole held by galvanised wire stays with galvanised turn buckles, the latches of which are rusted in 2 No locations. The pole is supported from a bolted timber wedged up above the roof. More on this timber at item 9.7.

9.5 A metal pole with a 'crown' top sits loose on the tower roof and should be removed, it has gathered a lot of silt and debris which now has vegetation growing from it.



*Figure 8- Tower roof*



*Figure 9- hatch detached from structure*

- 9.6 It appears the tower roof covering has recently been replaced with a single-ply membrane, it is dressed up the hatch kerb and parapet and turned in under the concrete ring beam as far as can be seen. The hatch has also been covered with a single-ply membrane, apart from one section in bare timber. It is still hinged but the hinges are not attached to the hatch, therefore the cover is loose, heavy and unstable. A sapling still grows in a crack at the middle of the E edge of the roof, as reported at the last report, it is unclear if this is the same vegetation. The installation looks poor as per item 9.8 referencing the preparation of the deck.
- 9.7 The timber which supports the flagpole has simply been covered with a piece of single ply to its top side, this is likely to trap moisture beneath, there are a number of rubber supports between the timber and the main single-ply roof. It is unclear if the timber was removed to correctly install the new membrane underneath this, the ends are also exposed. There is a large build up of soil & vegetation around this.
- 9.8 It is clear that the deck supporting the roof is still rotten in places, as recorded at the last quinquennial, timber which should have been replaced appears to have been left in place and has trapped water in the structure. This is particularly evident to three areas, beneath the outlet to the rainwater pipe, to the northwest section, at the end of the rafters and to the entire east side at wall plate level, which was damp to the touch at the time of inspection.
- 9.9 Evidently, in addition to the trapped moisture there must be new moisture entering the structure, it is unknown if this is through the masonry at high level or the poor installation of the single-ply roofing.
- 9.10 The hatch is loose, heavy to lift and the ladder internally is a little unstable. Around the inside of the hatch, there is evidence of woodworm, not having been reported in the last QI, I am unable to report if this is historic or active and should be checked by a specialist.



*Figure 10- flag support beam*



*Figure 11- underside of single ply over beam*



*Figure 12 – damp ends of timbers*



*Figure 13 – rotten timbers under outlet*

9.11 This **clock dial stage** remains well ventilated, however the floor joists still appear altered, uneven and damp in places, as per the last report. The walls have some severe stone decay above the lancets, this is worst to the E, the N&S also see the stone losing its integrity but largely ok to the W side. The clock framework is bolted to the stonework, there is a significant gap between the support plates and stone in some areas, but this could be how it was fitted. There is a large hole in the flooring behind some of the clockfaces which leaves a large gap to open air, vulnerable to vermin and unsafe. There is a piece of damp timer in the wall, which is loose, the reason for which is unclear. There is a steel I-beam across the spring point of each arch, all of which are rusting.

9.12 An electric clock of 1948, the chime mechanism was replaced in 2022 by Cumbria Clock Co. reportedly keeps good time usually but at the time of survey a power outage had

stopped the clock at 08:00. The dials were accommodated by removing the former Y tracery in the arches. The tops of the stone mullions were braced to the walls by timber transoms. Four backlit cast iron dials glazed with opal polycarbonate were refitted into round painted stainless steel cases in new positions in 2005.

9.13 At the **belfry stage** about half the plastic bird mesh inside the louvres is loose but no present sign of birds getting through the louvre spaces. The louvres themselves to the E are loose. 2 No to the N & W sides are slipping and one is missing to the E. There is a large hole in the floor to the southwest corner. A residue had built up on the face of the timber beams, but the beams remain their integrity.



Figure 14 – clock stage floor

9.14 Eight bells by Gillet & Johnson of Croydon, 1929. Rehung 2005 between two pairs of new galvanised steel channels with new bolts. Clock chime hammers outside the bells. Hand chime hammers inside. Chimes were not working at the time of inspection due to the power outage requiring the system to be re-set.

9.15 The lower level contains the bell chime mechanism and operating room. Walls seem defect free, the floor is uneven in places with oil patches assumed from the mechanism. The timber control room is boxed out within this space and the roof looks as though it may be an asbestos containing material. The power to this area had tripped at the time of inspection but it was unknown why this had happened.



Figure 15 – hole to belfry floor

## 10. Window and Door Openings - All original and Aisle openings are in sandstone, most with hoodmoulds, all with dressed reveals. Some modern openings to the 1970's lobby.

10.1 Most of the windows are in an acceptable condition and some have seen plastic repairs, the Nave, Aisle W end and Tower windows are decaying from the joints in the mullions and tracery and at some cusps.

10.2 The E Chancel window seems to be the original repositioned and is sound though decay is progressing from open joints in the arch hoodmould. As per the previous report, pointing would slow decay. The renewed Chancel side windows with added lead caps on the hoodmoulds remain in good condition, with some historic staining to the cills.

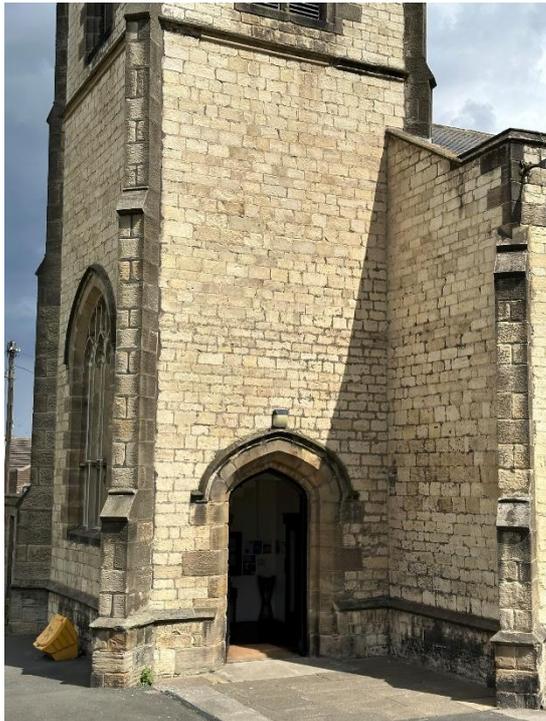
10.3 Decay at the Nave window hoodmoulds lets water run over the lintels and top reveal stones which show some surface decay but is very minor. There is also some erosion of the mullions to all windows to the south elevation, with very little change from the last inspection.



Figure 16 – 2023 mullion



Figure 17 – 2015 mullion



*Figure 18 – Tower south*



*Figure 19 – East Vestry window*

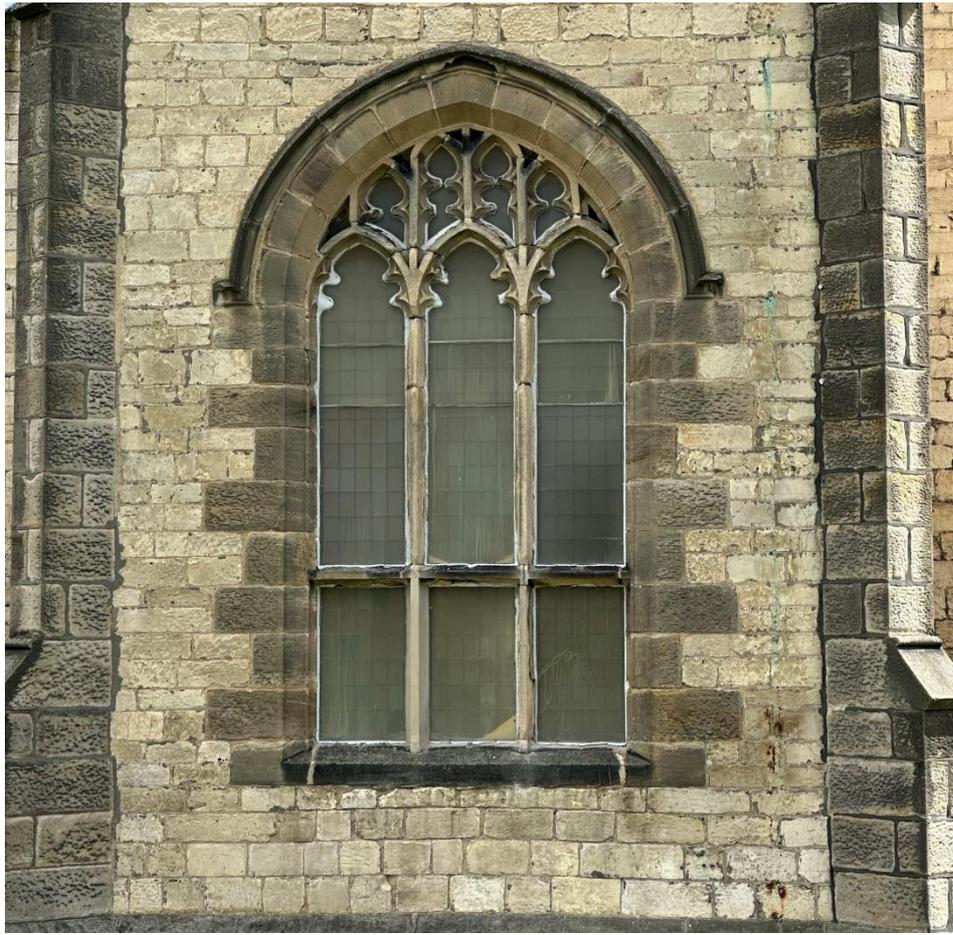
10.4 At the main Tower door, the hood mould decays from open joints. There are open joints in the inner and outer arches which could be repointed with care.

10.5 The last report states that small trials of 'plastic repair' (specialist mortar used to reform the original stone profiles) at some mullions was carried out in 2010 and appeared successful. However, did not state where these were to comment on their condition currently. Further plastic repair and pointing could be carried out to slow decay. In addition to pointing, plastic repair of the hoodmould may also be possible, otherwise they should be replaced to maintain protection of the test of the masonry.

10.6 The Aisle W window is mainly sound but decay from open tracery joints should be slowed by repointing.

10.7 At the Tower west window, the hoodmould is fair. There are losses from the cusps and front faces of the tracery at the tops of the mullions (figure 20). Inside, the transom and mullions further decay rapidly, suggesting damp is trapped, perhaps by the sealed glass protection. This will need to be a planned replacement as the window support is now failing as per item 18.7.

10.8 The later Vestry openings are softer sandstone, and the E window continues to decay, particularly at the head, these stones should be monitored for replacement (figure 19). The north window has a crack to the cill and slight open joints but otherwise the sandstone is in fair condition.



*Figure 20 – Tower west window*

## 11. External Iron and Wood

11.1 Inevitably the very large entrance door in the Tower is twisted and does not meet the frame all round, causing no more than draughts, it has been decorated since the last inspection.

11.2 The boiler door catches, the bottom and side rail are rotten, and its decoration is breaking down. The painted WC windows, and their mesh are ok but showing their age. The Vestry door is sound and well painted. The SE porch door is sound but requires decoration.

11.3 Blower house door is ok but would benefit from cleaning, the room itself looks dry but the ends of the roof joists are rotten.

11.4 Steel gates at the NW entrance step are rusting.



*Figure 21 – Vestry door*



*Figure 22 – blower room door*



*Figure 23 – boiler room door*

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERIOR

### 12. Roof timbers



Figure 24 – cracked truss timbers.

12.1 The **Chancel** has ornate exposed trusses with timber boards above. The third truss in from the east gable has a significant crack to the bottom chord. Looking to the other trusses, there appears to have been a repair at the same point on the eastern most truss in the past, suggesting it may be a weak point, possibly due to some minor eaves spread, as noted at item 8.11 and 16.2. This requires urgent repair.

12.2 The **N Aisle** timbers are partially visible but too high to be examined. No visible fault, some staining believed to be historic. The Aisle wall plate and rafters are concealed by plaster. Keeping the valley gutter in good repair is essential to avoid damage to the roof



Figure 24 – Nave loft space

12.3 The **Vestry** trusses are accessible in the roof void, several stains and a visible damp patch directly above the hatch, at the abutment to the Chancel. This could be due to the issue reported in the last QI of the gutter above being filled with silt, as item 6.10. This area needs to be monitored closely to ensure it dries out.

12.4 The **Nave** trusses are accessible in the roof void, from the hatch there appeared to be no visible issues, though this area should be checked regularly as there is staining to some of the beams and no historic data available at this time.



Figure 24 – Vestry rafters

12.5 At **SE porch** a very small ceiling hatch not entered due to storage, it was partially openable from ground level which showed some damp staining, it is advised that this area is made accessible for further inspection.

12.6 The area above the **organ** has a flat roof, visible from below are joists with assumed moisture resistant plywood above, the ply looks stained, but no historic data is available for comparison. The roof above appeared in good condition.

12.7 The hatch above the **WCs** was painted shut and therefore the area above was not inspected.

### 13. Ceilings

13.1 The original **Nave** lath and plaster ceiling is above the boarding, though covered in debris. The added pine board ceiling in ribs and beams with carved bosses appears sound. It gives the church character.

13.2 The sloping **Chancel** ceiling is similar with more gilded bosses and a gilded pierced cornice.

13.3 The **North Aisle Hall and Chapel** ceiling is sound steeply sloping insulated plaster between rafters and flat at truss collar level.

13.4 Painted plaster in the **Tower Lobby** is flaking, **Vestries** have some cracking to the plaster which appears historic, the **Kitchen, Passage and WCs** are sound.

#### 14. Chancel Arch, Arcade, Masonry

14.1 The fine Tudor four centred Chancel arch is sound, it appears a cable has been installed in the central joint to power the floodlight this should be filled so there is no suggestion that there is cracking in this location. Water staining to the Chancel side suggests that external masonry above may be letting water penetrate as per item 8.14, but unclear if this is a historic issue. To the Nave side there is a hairline crack to the S side from just below the mid-point of the arch.

14.2 The arcade is sound though slightly water marked. There are some historic easings which have been painted over and show no further progression.

14.3 At the Vestry Choir door minor rising damp to the door reveals and the stone steps. There is also slight rising damp to the base of the Chancel arch, though not currently problematic.

#### 15. Partitions, Doors, Paneling, Screens

15.1 The **arcade** is infilled with clear glass frames over panels which are plastered on the hall side and faced in stained ply on the Nave side, framed in softwood with ply scribed to the column mouldings. The screen is well built, sound resistant, and in good condition. Pinboards added to the hall side.

15.2 The **N Aisle Chapel and Hall** are divided by a heavy plasterboard partition with two steel posts within. The kitchen partition is plasterboard. Both have stained solid core flush ply doors with applied battens. Similar kitchen hatch and arched door to the Nave. All have good brass handles and are sound. The WC doors are lighter flush ply with aluminium furniture.

15.3 At main entry into **Nave** good, glazed oak revolving doors with brass fittings, folds for weddings and funerals. At SE porch the inner door is sound, the external door reportedly does not open anymore, hence this area being used as a store. The Vestry and cupboard doors are framed and painted.

15.4 Good oak panelling at the **Chancel**. One panel at N is still loose in the framing but stands. The S Nave has dado panelling which has one board loose. Similar wall panelling in the Hall is painted and similar in the Chapel at low level to the dividing wall. Ply facing where pews were removed in the N Aisle.

#### 16. Plaster, Decoration

16.1 The Chancel is distinguished by excellent paintwork on the unified E panelling, reredos and altar.

16.2 Good painted plaster throughout with the following defects:

- The vertical plaster crack over the E window peak was previously described as 'minor' but had no reference photograph, the crack is shown at figure 25 and should be monitored, it currently runs  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way to the ridge. This could be caused by some slight eaves spread. Small cracks to the underside of each purlin.
- In Tower entry flaking paint under the W window and large areas of decoration and plaster breaking down to all external walls. The W window mullions are severely breaking down and stone dust has built up in the glass cavity. More on glazing at item 18.7.
- At SE lobby flaking of ceiling and wall paint on plaster.

- There is a damp patch above the panelling on the south wall at the west end of the Nave, this should be monitored and carry out pointing externally if this has not already been completed.
- Flaking paint to the bottom RHS of the mid-window to the south Nave.
- There is a water stain to the SE corner of the Nave, potentially due to the poor pointing externally in this area, this should be closely monitored.



*Figure 25 – East gable*



*Figure 26 – Tower west wall*



*Figure 27 – SE Nave damp*

## 17. Ventilation

17.1 The only working window hoppers are in the kitchen but ventilation is prevented by sheet protection over the glass with small edge gaps now mortar filled. A large cooker hood extract through the W wall compensates.

17.2 The men's WC is not ventilated. A sliding ceiling shutter has been roofed over. The ladies has a controllable vent in the glass. Combustion air for the boiler by louvres in the door. All other rooms sufficiently ventilated by draughts in most circumstances.

17.3 Wall grills may serve the Nave and Aisle underfloor voids but not known whether they connect through the walkways or are large enough. At S Nave two of the three airbricks are house brick size, the third the size of two bricks, which is small for the width of the enlarged building, linked to item 19.6.

## 18. Glazing, Protection

18.1 All glass except the 'Frances Anne' in the Chapel was destroyed in the war and replaced to new design in the 1950's. good daylight due to white glass with inset stained glass or patterned leads and coloured glass. Light reduced by dirt and clouded protection in places.

18.2 Chancel E three light Glory and the three S Nave Miracles and Resurrection appear sound.



Figure 28 – E Chapel 'Frances Anne' window



Figure 29 – broken glass to N Aisle Hall

18.3 Chancel N and S lights are all white quarries, renewed in 2003, some dirt and erosion to the lower stone.

18.4 Chapel E 1965 'Frances Anne' memorial vivid stained glass including in the perpendicular tracery, dirty inside in places. Sound.

18.5 Chapel N two light Kerr-Morgan memorial 1951 stained glass. There is a small crack to the top LHS.

18.6 N Aisle Hall patterned leaded glass appears sound but the side window nearest the kitchen has a thin plastic patch over four broken bottom pieces, these should be replaced. There are a number of other cracks in the glazing which are less problematic. The large W window is part visible under the added kitchen ceiling and in the store above.

18.7 Tower entrance window mixed large white, pale yellow and green cast glass. Past repairs in various textures. One small piece missing in the tracery S end. Light severely dimmed by clouded protection and dirt including debris from masonry decay filling the voids between glass and putty protection. The mullion has lost so much of its integrity in one location that it no longer supports the lead.

18.8 Vestries and Passage have square white cast quarries. Sound except two minor cracks at Choir Vestry and some mullion decay could cause loss of fixings if this progresses. Wired glass in all the modern NW entrance windows and outer doors, one pane broken and poorly masked over. Some dirt inside.

18.9 All glass protected, in a variety of materials.

- 18.9.1 Chancel side good clipped ventilated clear UV light resisting polycarbonate, some dirt streaks. Frances Anne window has very rusted wire mesh in three pieces across the tracery
- 18.9.2 Aisle W window clipped, mortar sealed and very clouded polycarbonate reducing light and preventing ventilation.
- 18.9.3 N Vestry and NW entrance have galvanised mesh fixed through plastic strips
- 18.9.4 All other glass covered by aged, clouded polycarbonate cut to the tracery and mostly sealed to the stone by cracked wide fillets of grey compound like putty. Drain holes and lead calms at the larger lights. The Vestry E window has one sheet across all mullions and tracery making it look blank. Such protection is effective, but most excludes light. The sealed sheets look poor, overheat the glass and in parts build up dirt and debris. Much more durable ventilated, UV resistant polycarbonate is now available and was used at the Chancel sides.

## 19. Floors, Rails, Gallery, Stair



Figure 30 – cantilever

19.1 The Nave Gallery has two rows of pews on softwood & plywood steps. Tracery in the balustrade, leaves large gaps between. Two cast iron supporting columns, are well designed and made. Its stair and landing in the tower are cantilevered stone with elegant handrail, mostly in good condition, slight hairline crack to the cantilevered stair entrance.

19.2 The tower floor at entrance level has oak blocks with a brass edged mat well, fair condition but worn. Information from the last report states that a timber laminate covering was added and removed before 2005 when the blocks swelled because moisture in the subfloor could not escape.

19.3 Similar blocks at the rear of the Nave are carpeted over, and in the kitchen covered in laminate.

19.4 Small holes remain in the laminate on the Hall suspended floor where radiators were removed. The Chapel has good carpet on the suspended floor. Laminate on the organ passage floor has been renewed after heavy wear at the back door.

19.5 The Nave floor has been simplified with good carpet over the worn stone in both walkways and on the renewed stone at the Nave E end.



Figure 31 – Tower entrance

19.6 Bare softwood boards at the pews. Records show that when some boards were lifted a very shallow void was seen, perhaps not enough for good cross ventilation across the full width of Nave and Aisle or proper damp courses under the joists. Sample opening up may reveal whether there is decay. Signs of possible trouble:

- at the S pews some boards are concealed and flexing, and part changed to plywood at 4th pew from back.
- at the N pews some boards renewed and flexing slightly.
- middle boards are uneven and springy at the two back pews, with areas patched.
- at the S pews boards slightly sunk at edge.

19.7 A carpeted Nave altar platform at same level as the choir with steps, the steps are carpeted and have no nosing or colour differentiation.

19.8 The Chancel step is modern marble. Choir walkway sound mosaic bordered with marble. Now carpeted, reportedly to protect the floor as undulations in marble began to cause issues. Boards under the choir stalls with no visible ventilation so perhaps set on dry solid floor.

19.9 Sanctuary mosaic, marble steps and a chequer of frosterly marble. A few tiles raised by distortion. Oak communion rail with long centre rails hinged up. S half a little loose and leans back so the hinged rails don't meet. Sandstone steps at altar serviceable but eroded and worn in patches with open joints. Two steps down to Vestry have worn sandstone treads and risers pushed out a little due to damp at item 16.2.



*Figure 32 – Nave and steps to altar*



*Figure 33 – Sanctuary mosaic, new carpet, and rails*

## 20. Reredos, Monuments, Brasses, Furnishings, Organ

20.1 Three large monuments in Chancel, especially 3rd Marquis of Londonderry which is three marble panels in painted crocketed arches. Three good plain stone tablets and one brass in Nave. Brass tablets in Chapel and Hall. All well-made and in good condition but so me a little dirty, including the Marquis.

20.2 Painted carved altar continuous with the reredos. Good modern oak chairs in Chancel. Victorian oak choir and clergy stalls and low rails at Chancel arch.

20.3 Carved oak pulpit on stone base has a slight chip to the door. Marble and sandstone font with oak cover in SE corner. Coat of arms. Modern lectern in steel on a stone base. Original numbered varnished pine pews. Chapel altar with 'coal and port' relief carving, good oak chairs and frontal.

20.4 Pipe organ tightly enclosed in its chamber with new motor said to be underneath. Disused motor remains in the external housing. No issues reported.



Figure 34 – Pulpit



Figure 35 – 3rd Marquis of Londonderry

## 21. Heating

21.1 Church heated by pumped Victorian large bore cast iron pipes and radiators. Perimeter pipes and a separate loop under the floor rising to pass through the centre block of pews. No apparent drain point. Parts of the pipe circuit are buried in the solid floors without ducts. Leaking pipes in the floor at the back of the Nave were traced and repaired in 1998.



Figure 36 – Boiler flue terminal

21.2 Gas boiler renewed 1998 at new ground floor position. The stainless lined flue in the tower wall thickness terminates behind the tower parapet. Thermostat and timer replaced 2012. Access to the boiler room basement is impossible at the time of inspection due to the amount of storage.

21.3 Daily firing in the heating season keeps the church warm. The system is effective but expensive to run.

21.4 The Hall and other rooms now heated separately by panel radiator circuits from a combi boiler over the kitchen, replaced in 2023. Loose electric radiators in the clergy Vestry and NW entry. Electric wall heaters in the WCs.

## 22. Basement

22.1 From the previous report: *A hatch and ladder from the boiler room for access to the tower basement, the former boiler room. On one side disused underground oil tanks. When an automatic sump pump worked in the past it was sometimes possible to see a flow of clean ground water enter the basement through a hole in the masonry about half way up the S wall. The pump not working, the basement is now usually about a third full of water, covering the bottom of the wooden steps and old iron pipes.*

22.2 This area was not inspected, and it is advised access is made available for inspection in the near future, the churchwarden is to send recent photographs to the inspector in the meantime.

## 23. Electrical

- 23.1 Meters in disused external organ motor room. Earthed to rod behind the meter housing. Reportedly rewired and relit in about 2000 and kitchen rewired circa 2005. Wiring generally concealed and surface MICC. Modern distribution boards at Vestry and NW passage with RCD breakers. Last periodic test unknown – no certificates with logbook.
- 23.2 Metal 13A sockets at the E and W Nave and in the vestries. In the kitchen a cooker control socket. Twin 13A sockets and two spurs now blanked off. At basins by the WCs disused spurs for former electric instantaneous heaters.
- 23.3 Nave lit by multiple candle lamps in pendant brass chandeliers and the tower entry by a retained large pendant, all recently fitted with LED bulbs.
- 23.4 The Chancel is lit by four high spotlights, and two new LED floodlight fittings, and an additional LED floodlight to Chancel arch. A domestic light in the reredos canopy was not tested.
- 23.5 The Hall is lit by pairs of wide-angle spots at each truss corbel and later chandeliers which reduce glare. The combination works well.
- 23.6 Fluorescent strips at passages and minor rooms. Outside lights at the doors.

## 24. Lightning Conductor

- 24.1 Air rods at flagpole and each pinnacle, linked by sheathed copper cable around parapet formerly with two down conductors bonded across the bell steels and down to earth electrodes.
- 24.2 The NE corner cable passes over the Nave NW corner and over the Aisle W gable down to ground with low level protection. The cable down the SW of tower is all missing after theft. No earth resistance test report seen. Last satisfactory test in 2005 according to last report.
- 24.3 Given the prominence of the tower it is probably prudent to have a lightning conductor, though there is no legal requirement. Insurers' advice is generally that where there is a conductor it should be complete and properly earthed because a poor installation may increase risk by attracting lightning which then cannot pass safely to earth. The parish should follow insurers' advice on the balance of risk (theft and lightning) in this case.

## 25. Fire Precautions

- 25.1 Fire exit signs and extinguishers, all serviced Feb 2023:
- |             |                           |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| Tower entry | 6 litre water ,2 kg CO2   |
| Organ       | 9 litre water             |
| Hall        | 6 litre water             |
| NW entry    | 6 litre water             |
| Kitchen     | 2 kg powder, fire blanket |

25.2 The insurer EIG advises dry powder extinguishers should be confined to boiler rooms and kitchens because discharge (including accidental and malicious) in church risks serious damage to organs and delicate surfaces due to the powder being corrosive.

## **26. Water and Sanitary facilities**

26.1 Double drainer stainless sink and wash basin in kitchen and basins at the WCs, all with hot and cold from the combi boiler. Gents and ladies each with single we and basin. Gents seat remains loose.

26.2 A high-level water tank to the tower sounded like it had a constant drip but was too high to inspect.

26.3 Any water systems which are at risk of legionella should be assessed by the PCC in line with the guidance issued by Ecclesiastical Insurance Group.

## **27. Accessibility**

27.1 Level access through tower door to all parts except the Chancel. A step at the NW entrance prevents direct wheelchair access to the hall and the trim to the matwell is loose. Hall users have to pass through the church, which is not unreasonable, but the WCs are not equipped to be fully wheelchair accessible, although large enough.

## **28. Security**

28.1 Mortice deadlocks at the outer doors seem adequate. The window protection deters entry at the glass. The wardens' Vestry internal door has a rim lock but is not itself robust. A wall safe and modern floor safe.

## **29. Churchyard, boundaries, signs, paths, trees**

29.1 The churchyard is an important open space for the town. Its grass slopes up to W and S. It is closed to burials, and many large headstones were moved to the stone boundary walls. The head stones make maintenance of the wall difficult at S and W.

29.2 A line of medium sized trees along the main tarmac path past the S side of the church. Seats and low retaining walls, some with missing copings. Some holes in the tarmac paths. Disused Council lighting brackets on the church walls.

29.3 The low limestone walls mainly fair. The outside of the low E boundary is becoming loose in places. By the NW gateway pointing of the outside will be needed soon. Vegetation then covers the wall, further W the wall needs pointing at low level.

29.4 The permanent sign on the Chancel E wall has been replaced. One other sign board fair.

## **30. Archaeology**

30.1 The local authority archaeologist indicates that the church and its site are not of archaeological importance.

## **31. General comments**

31.1 The church has character inside and out. Its main strengths are the robust tower and good masonry, details such as the Chancel decoration, the Chancel arch, balcony, revolving door, and stair. It is important that the church remains a key place in the community to secure its future, this is aided by the well-appointed N Aisle Hall and its facilities.

31.2 The parish have maintained the building and planned works well to date. The repairs to the tower roof and the Nave floor require a little more investigation at this point. Future works should be planned to include stone replacement, particularly to the west tower window.

31.3 A fully fitted wheelchair accessible WC would be desirable and seems necessary to meet the Disability Discrimination Act. Generally, the WC's would benefit from modernising, therefore this improvement would fit nicely into the updating works.

## PART THREE

### Summary of repairs in order of priority

	Comment	Item ref	Budget Costs
<b>Category 1</b> - Urgent, requiring immediate attention.			
1	Carry out Electrical Test and keep certificate in Logbook.	23	£2,000 - £9,999
1	Clear debris from tower roof	9	
1	Tower Roof covering – damp timbers to be removed, trace water ingress and re-point where required or replace capping/coverings.	9.6	
1	Repair Chancel truss	12.1	
1	Replace any broken slates	6	
1	Re-fix bird mesh, louvres, and loose boards behind clock faces.	9.11, 9.13	
1	Clear gutters of debris, vegetation, and balls	7	
<b>Category 2</b> - Requires attention within 12 months.			
2	Paint gutters and downpipes and fix any that are loose	7	£0 £1,999
2	Re-decorate doors and gates	11	
2	Repair boundary walls (Council responsibility?)	29	
2	Re-point E gables and below S windows	8.5, 8.9, 8.10	
2	Re-point W Aisle at high and low level	8.7, 8.8	
2	Inspect basement and under Nave floor when accessible	19.6, 22	
<b>Category 3</b> - Requires attention within the next 12-24 months.			
3	Monitor damp above Vestry roof	12.3	£2,000 - £9,999
3	Replace stonework to W tower window and replace protection externally to prevent recurrence	10.7, 16.2, 18.7	
3	Localised stone repair or replacement to hoodmoulds, watertable and other decayed stonework	8.2	
<b>Category 4</b> - Requires attention within the quinquennial period.			
4	Replace broken glass to N Aisle	18.6	£0 £1,999
4	Inspector to monitor cracks and damp to determine any ongoing issues	All	
<b>Category 5</b> - A desirable improvement with no timescale.			
5	Re-align communion rail and re-fix loose panel to Chancel	15.4, 19.9	£2,000 - £9,999
5	Refurbish WC's and provide accessible facilities	27.1	
<b>Advice &amp; routine maintenance.</b> This can mostly be done without professional advice or a faculty.			
	Clean all gutters and lead valleys		
	Keep Logbook updated with all works		
	Obtain and act on insurer's advice on Lightning Conductor		

### AREAS NOT INSPECTED (The following list may not be exhaustive)

- Under floor voids (where present)
- Organ Pipework
- Covered timbers
- Rear of tanks and pipes where inaccessible

## Advice to the PCC

- This is a summary report; it is not a specification for the execution of the work and must not be used as such.
- The professional adviser is willing to advise the PCC on implementing the recommendations and will if so requested prepare a specification, seek tenders and oversee the repairs.
- The PCC is advised to seek ongoing advice from the professional adviser on problems with the building.
- Contact with the insurance company to ensure that cover is adequate.
- The repairs recommended in the report will (with the exception of some minor maintenance items) be subject to the faculty jurisdiction. Guidance on whether particular work is subject to faculty can be obtained from the DAC.
- **LOGBOOK** The parish has a duty under Canon F13(4) to keep a Log Book recording all work carried out on the building. I commend this practice to the PCC. Not only does it help the inspecting architect but it can prove a valuable aid to the parish.

- **Fire Safety Advice** can be found at <https://www.firesafe.org.uk/places-of-religious-worship/> <https://www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/church-fire-articles/>

- **Electrical Installation**

Any electrical installation should be tested at least every five years in accordance with the recommendations of the Church Buildings Council. The inspection and testing should be carried out in accordance with IEE Regulations, Guidance Note No. 3 and an inspection certificate obtained in every case. The certificate should be kept with the Church Log Book.

- **Heating Installation**

A proper examination and test should be made of the heating system by a qualified engineer each summer before the heating season begins, and the report kept with the Church Log Book

- **Lightning Protection**

Any lightning conductor should be tested at least every five years in accordance with the current British Standard by a competent engineer. The record of the test results and conditions should be kept with the Church Log Book.

- **Asbestos**

A suitable and sufficient assessment should be made as to whether asbestos is or is liable to be present in the premises. Further details on making an assessment are available on <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/churches/guidance-advice/looking-after-your-church/health-safety-security/asbestos>

- **Equality Act**

The PCC should ensure that they have understood their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Further details and guidance are available at <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/churches/open-sustainable/welcoming-people/accessibility> .

- **Health and Safety**

Overall responsibility for the health and safety of the church and churchyard lies with the incumbent and PCC. This report may identify areas of risk as part of the inspection but this does not equate to a thorough and complete risk assessment by the PCC of the building and churchyard.

- **Bats and other protected species**

The PCC should be aware of its responsibilities where protected species are present in a church. Guidance can be found at: <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint/taking-action/wildlife/bats>

- **Sustainable buildings**

A quinquennial inspection is a good opportunity for a PCC to reflect on the sustainability of the building and its use. This may include adapting the building to allow greater community use, considering how to increase resilience in the face of predicted changes to the climate, as well as increasing energy efficiency and considering other environmental issues. Further guidance is available on <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/churches/open-sustainable> and <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint>

