

Report on Church fabric, goods and ornaments for the year ended 31st December 2020

The onset of Covid-19 and subsequent lockdowns meant that we were not able to use the church building or halls in the normal ways for many months. This was especially challenging in the first lockdown, when the building was completely closed, even for Easter – surely for the first time in its nearly 150-year history. However, a group of volunteers used the opportunity of the summer break to carry out a much-needed redecoration of the halls.

Following that lockdown the church was reopened in a Covid-safe manner, with an array of precautions which have become familiar. This included opening the church building for private prayer and reflection on weekdays, a practice which has continued during the second lockdown and has been a major, visible sign of God's presence in our community through the current pandemic. Work on building maintenance has also continued, including the repairs required by the Quinquennial Inspection, as stated in the report of the Buildings Committee.

There were no major changes or additions to the buildings and fittings in 2020, but several smaller purchases and maintenance tasks were carried out. Early in the year the outside LED light over the hall exit was replaced and, as already mentioned, the church halls were subsequently redecorated. In July a package of AV equipment (an access point router, cabling, a micro-computer and a camera) was purchased to enable the live streaming of church services: a vital part of our church's new and highly important digital Ministry. In November a new security alarm system was installed at a cost of £2,880, as the old system was found to be no longer fit for purpose.

Another change made early in the year was the installation of heated mats under the carpet in the Chapel of Remembrance. We hope this has made the chapel more comfortable for those using it during the week or attending Sunday 8 am Holy Communion.

The Church garden remained accessible throughout the year and was a haven of peace and beauty for church members and the wider community, always highly appreciated but especially so during lockdown. A number of new plants were added via the Gardening team. We thank the Gardening team for all their work and for their patience with the unavoidable Covid safety rules.

Following the church cleaner's period of illness and subsequent resignation, we were very grateful to Ron and Pauline Barrett for stepping into the breach. Although this cannot continue indefinitely the church continues to look clean and welcoming for us all due to their care and attention. Many thanks also to the flower team and to David and Daphne Bryan for preparing the altar table for Holy Communion. Inevitably the church has looked a bit different during the pandemic, but keeping it as close as possible to its normal appearance feels both right and reassuring.

The Wardens, May 2021