

Fabric report for APCM 2021

Early in 2020 gales damaged our lovely cedar tree. Surgery was successful and the other trees were health checked. Little did we realise the stormy time ahead for everyone.

However, every cloud has a silver lining as the following report, which Martin and I prepared for the PCC in September, demonstrates.

“In March the floors of the Vestry, the main aisle and the area at the west end of the church were resealed and next day we had lockdown. The break from routine was used effectively as follows:-

- 1) at the Vicar’s instigation, and with his help, all vestments and robes that could be washed were suitably laundered;*
- 2) the children’s area and the Junior Church impedimenta in the Sacristy was tidied;*
- 3) the refreshment servery was cleaned and cleared of date-expired supplies;*
- 4) Mark Willcox found a window cleaner, with a system that cleans without water, who did the church windows inside and out and cleared away all the cobwebs;*
- 5) Jonathan painted the gallery rail;*
- 6) Lily painted the door shields;*
- 7) David Lizzimore refurbished the noticeboards;*
- 8) Mark Willcox painted the noticeboard struts and the benches at the church gate;*
- 9) Fred Watson painted the church gates, cleaned and painted downpipes and touched up window frames;*
- 10) John Crooks painted the doors bottom and top of the spiral staircase.*

In addition, we had the annual checks of fire extinguishers and the hall boiler, the church heating was checked, an intermittent fault in the choir stalls repaired and a new spotlight fitted in the centre of a chancel beam. This required some difficult manoeuvring of a scaffold tower to fix the wiring but the resulting enhancement of the altar and cross is most gratifying.

Throughout the lockdown and still continuing, Sally (with help at times from her husband) has been polishing the church woodwork, some of which may never have been polished before. Her work has extended to all corners and up into the ringing chamber. Sally refuses to invoice for any of those many extra hours. The Standing Committee decided we should treat Sally and Steve to dinner at the Angel. She was delighted with this idea and the bunch of flowers Jonathan handed over. We trust you approve.

In the Hall, Stefan was steam-cleaning and bleaching everything in sight. He then painted walls and woodwork up to roof level and was finishing off with the stage flats the day before his sudden and untimely death. He served us well and a few of us were able to pay our respects when Jonathan took his funeral.

The Nursery Holiday Club was able to start up in June and, in return for reduced hire charge, Emma undertook to do the necessary cleaning. This gave us breathing space to replace Stefan. It was decided to try having more than one person involved so that holiday or sickness cover would be available. We now have three ladies, Esme, Jo and Tashunka, sharing the load and we are already receiving compliments on the high standard achieved.

Before they began we cleared out the cleaners’ cupboard and Mark Willcox gave it a fresh coat of paint.

During the lockdown we called on Stephen Taylor to cut the grass, which he did most willingly. David Magor’s success is most pleasing but means he has little time to spare or the church flowerbeds and Steve has been asked to take over. He plans to start by refreshing the soil in the autumn and then replanting as necessary. The Community Service teams are now back with us and come every Saturday to cut grass, clean brass, etc.

Courtesy of Margaret Ridley, we were introduced to Luke Pung, who is willing to respond to maintenance emergencies and otherwise do any handyman tasks at mutually convenient times. In his quiet time post- Christmas, we hope he can paint the church stairwell.

One of our unsung heroes is Geoff Mann, who has produced editions of Roundabout regardless of Covid restrictions. Many people are grateful to Jonathan and Chris for their work in posting out copies of the magazine and for regular phone calls.

Chris dutifully filled in holes left by old sockets before he went off to Stourbridge Benefice. We shall miss his willing help with repairs but are glad he now has his own parish and is well settled. Our planned trip to his induction had to be cancelled but perhaps we could re-schedule for his first anniversary.

Ian Stobart's work on contactless giving was timely as we had the necessary plate set up in time for the re-opening of the church and it is proving useful.

Jonathan's arrangement of seating, orders of service and registration slips has met the Covid guidelines with the minimum of disruption. It has been interesting at the joint Evensong services to compare with other churches. You may have noticed some new faces in the congregation. These people tell us they feel comfortable with us and welcome.

We are most, most grateful to all who help to maintain both the church and the church hall. Thanks to all the work that has been done in recent months, both buildings are looking good and maintenance is up to date. If we could find money to complete the repointing, we could celebrate the parish centenary feeling we have kept faith with those who worked hard raising the money to establish St Augustine's."

The subsequent lockdowns mean Sally and Steve are still waiting for their promised dinner!

Since then, Community Service teams came throughout the second lockdown to cut grass, clean brass, etc. Their help to Martin with the Christmas tree was much appreciated.

As part of a rolling programme, the south half of the nave floor was polished, as was the main hall floor. Some more repointing has been done. This is the main, probably only, item remaining on the "to do" list but needs more money than the fabric fund can currently allow.

Two hall windows needed minor repair to ensure security. We managed to keep our hall manager and cleaners employed. Jo Ridpath bravely undertook to clean the church belfry, polish the wood there and repaint the spiral staircase.

Simon Le Mare continues to deter woodworm. He is one of the people whose work is generally unseen but is of enormous benefit in maintaining good order. Jonathan is often seen but much of what he does is unrecognised and even more results from his strong leadership. Thank you, Jonathan.

I apologise for the length of this report but I thought you would like to know that how much was achieved in difficult times.

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