

ST COSMOS AND ST DAMIAN CHURCH, STRETTFORD

CHURCH PLAN



Introduction

Part A - Current Report

Church Introduction
and Statement of
Significance
Current Use (bookings)
and voluntary activity
Collection Review
Conservation Reports
Income, Expenditure
and Balances
Local Community
Officers Report

Part B - Survey

Results of our open survey conducted in 2020, canvassing all community contacts for feedback on the current report

Part C - Community Recommendations

Minutes of community meetings held to discuss opportunities, activities and plans for the church
Part A - Current Report

Part D - Action Plan

Details of short, medium and long term actions agreed upon through Community Recommendations, assigned to community participants or Churches Conservation Trust staff

Introduction

The Churches Conservations Trust's strategy is to empower and support communities to care for historic places of worship, for the benefit of all. A sustainable CCT church is well used by its communities, generates sufficient funds for the maintenance that keeps it in a good state of repair and is able to raise funds for specific repair and improvement projects. Local Community Officers facilitate this through their work with the community to co-create Church Plans.

Church plans are a living document which combines information on the church's history, significance, maintenance and repair needs and the current use of the church, with feedback and recommendations from the community, and concludes with an action plan setting out agreed short, medium and long term actions to support the sustainable use and care of the church.

Part A - Current Report

Church Introduction & Statement Of Significance

The church originates from the 12th century, it was extended in the 13th century, and partly rebuilt during the following century. The roof was constructed in about 1540. The church underwent a Victorian restoration in 1875 and further restoration in 1922. The church was declared redundant on 1 December 1972, and was vested in the Churches Conservation Trust on 25 January 1974.

The church is almost as wide as it is long. It is constructed in coursed rubble stone with ashlar dressings, and it has a machine-tile roof. Its plan consists of two naves and two chancels in parallel under a single roof, and a south porch. At the west end is a shingled bellcote with a small broach spire. In the north wall are a large lancet window, a small window with a semicircular head, and a blocked door with a semicircular head. The west window of the north nave has a two-light window with another circular window above it. The east window also has two lights. On the south side of the church are two lancet windows and a timber porch. At the entrance to the porch is an arch-braced tie-beam. The west window has two lights and the east window has three lights.

Dividing the naves and chancels is a central arcade in three bays. In the north wall are two tomb recesses, each containing two effigies dating probably from the 14th century. These are thought to represent members of the Delabere family who lived locally. The naves are divided from the chancels by two large 16th-century wooden screens. In the middle of the screens is a Jacobean pulpit. Each screen is in two bays, with a central door.

Current Use (Bookings) & Voluntary Activity

St. Cosmas and St Damian's currently enjoys permission from The Church of England for six Sunday services each year and an unlimited number of additional services on an occasional basis. During the last three years services held have included an annual Harvest service. Volunteer numbers have sadly dropped due to volunteers passing away.

Voluntary activity undertaken by local volunteers includes:-

Ad hoc reporting of building change

Cleaning ahead of any events

Church yard maintenance



Church Information

General Information:	
Open Churches Policy status:	Open
Local Community Officer:	Tracy Genever
Current projects:	Not at present
Parking:	None on site
Building services:	None
Churchyard:	Owned by CCT
Ring-able bells:	2 chiming bells
Organ:	Harmonium - working
Volunteering:	
Key holder role:	n/a
Key representative role:	Fulfilled (remittances, CCT liaison, Volunteer management, etc.)
Fundraising roles:	Vacant and necessary
Stewardship/events roles:	Vacant and necessary
Research, interp. & talks role:	Vacant and necessary
Cleaning schedule:	Led by volunteers in accordance with CCT guideline
CCT Items:	
CCT silver plaque:	Installed
CCT information board:	Installed
Oak post:	Installed
CCT freestanding board:	Installed
Wall safe poster:	Installed, current
CCT A board:	Not installed
Gift Aid envelopes:	Provided
Visitor book:	Installed
Welcome table:	Maintains stock of current leaflets

Tourism/Marketing:	
Nearby attractions:	Hereford Cathedral, Eastnor Castle, Berrington Hall
Social media presence:	Not at present
Images on CCT website:	One of four
Regular feature parish news:	Not at present
Events/Activity:	
Services per year:	One per year
Christmas memory tree:	Not currently
Heritage Open Days:	Not currently
Ride & Stride:	Not currently
Champing:	Not currently
Retail:	Not currently
Health & Safety:	
Fire rated capacity:	60
Seating capacity:	Not determined
Site plan:	Available
Roof alarm:	Not installed
CCTV:	Not installed
Individual item security measures:	None
Accessibility details:	Provided via website
Risk assessment general:	Current
Risk assessment fire:	Current
COSHH listing:	Current
Portable appliance listing:	n/a
Security Audit:	Current
Pews:	Sound, no defects

Conservation reports

Annualised maintenance costs (Exclusive of VAT): Annualised maintenance costs express the total costs of church maintenance divided by 25 years. Every forecasted cost which relates to the maintenance of this church over a period of 25 years is included. Any anticipated repairs are excluded. A list of typical maintenance tasks for any historic church, forecast over the period, is available to view at appendix 2.	£4,124.61
Routine maintenance costs (Per annum and exclusive of VAT): These are included in the annualised maintenance costs and are the total cost of two maintenance visits per year. A list of the typical maintenance tasks for any historic church included in the twice-annual maintenance visits is available to view at appendix 3.	£552.00
Other maintenance costs total (Exclusive of VAT): Additional maintenance needs discovered during twice-yearly maintenance visits, costed and listed individually below.	£811.00
- Pew floor repairs	£200.00
- Porch RWG	£275.00
- Minor patch pointing	£336.00
Total short term repairs: Small scale items of limited cost which could be fulfilled with minimal fundraising.	£164,000.00
- High level spire inspection and repairs	£12,500.00
- Internal ceilings and underside of the roof repairs to timber structure and plasterwork	£145,000.00
- RWG repair/ replace/ redecorate	£6,500.00
Total medium term repairs: More expensive needs such as roof repairs and tower repairs which may require more involved fundraising and grant applications.	£38,000.00
- Repairs to boundary walls	£14,500.00
- Inspect and repair pews and pew bases	£7,500.00
- Chest tomb repairs (est. four tombs in poor condition)	£16,500.00
Total long term repairs: Items which are known to require works in the longer term but which are not essential in the near future.	£0.00
Total desirable repairs: Repairs which are not essential to the conservation health of the church but which might improve aesthetics or usability of the building.	£0.00
All cost figures are estimates, exclusive of VAT and professional fees. VAT is charged at 20% of the total costs and can sometimes be recovered. Professional fees vary, but are either charged at an hourly rate or as a percentage of the total project cost. These are usually charged only on larger or more complex projects.	

Income, Expenditure & Balances

Stretford		Church Code: STR				
Visitors	Number of visitors	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
		749	1,017	763	0	0
	Site Wallsafe per Visitor	0.16	0.06	0.24	0.00	0.00
	Trust Wallsafe per Visitor	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.19	0.00
Income	Wall Safe	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
	Service Collection	118	61	181	109	156
	Service Fees	81	0	80	0	0
	Donations	0	0	0	0	0
	Events	1	0	21	0	0
	Third Party Hire	0	0	0	0	0
	Earned	0	0	0	0	0
	Grant	0	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	200	61	282	109	156
Expenditure	Total Conservation spend since Vesting (non maintenance)	172,898				
		2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
	Conservation	0	0	0	0	0
	Maintenance	1,479	1,613	1,162	1,346	456
	Electricity	0	0	0	0	0
	Gas	0	0	0	0	0
	Water	0	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	1,479	1,613	1,162	1,346	456
	Income less Maintenance	-1,280	-1,552	-880	-1,237	-300
	Income less Expenditure	-1,280	-1,552	-880	-1,237	-300
	Restricted Donation As of 1st April 2025	0				



**Churches
Conservation
Trust**

Income less annualised maintenance 2024/25 **-£3,924**

(Income from all sources, minus the annualised maintenance cost, as shown in the Conservation Report section above)

Local Community Officer's Summary

This pretty but isolated Herefordshire church has very low numbers of volunteers and is in need of more to ensure the church and church yard is cared for. Additional members of the community support the church through attendance at events. Signatures in the visitor book indicates some support from tourism.

The annual harvest service presents an opportunity to review the level of service collection donations, given that visitors may be currently unaware of our annualised maintenance liability.

Marketing could focus on historical societies with an interest in the history of the local area, seeking bookings to tour the church alongside other popular Herefordshire venues with a related connection. Voluntary effort towards research and interpretation products could facilitate encouragement of these bookings at the same time as enriching the visitor experience further.

The site has limited open floor space for alternative use.

The historic nature of the site with a pilgrimage route from Leominster, a hidden holy well and being on a lay line and a Roman Road, should make this a place of interest for many visitors.

Part B - Survey

Summary of consultation responses received by end August 2020

Following distribution of fifteen questions through our standard church plan questionnaire in summer 2020 to existing Churches Conservation Trust correspondents, (together with an invitation for correspondents to share the survey and associated Church Plan Part A), no response was received for **St. Cosmos and St Damian Church**, by the deadline of August 30th. An example of the survey is in appendix 1.

Part C - Community Recommendations

Stretford church plan meeting 27th January 2026 – 2 volunteers and LCO attended on site.

Visitor numbers are low and the wall safe takings are low too. There are very few people living in the vicinity of the church and so use of the church will come from on-off events or visitors. We are unlikely to attract many volunteers either, however, this church has a lot of interesting features and history and so by making it look cared for and by telling more people about the features we can make it more of a destination.

Volunteers

There are very few people living in Stretford and so volunteers come from further afield. It is thought that a local person may come in and clean the church occasionally.

A new volunteer has been working diligently on the churchyard to make it more accessible to visitors and still a home for nature.

Churchyard

Spring bulbs are coming through now the ground is a clearer. There is a lot of nutrient rich cuttings on the ground on the south side which will encourage the wrong type of vegetation like arum lilies. The north side of the churchyard has no memorial stones and so will be managed as a meadow. It was felt that a community day to help with raking up the thatch on the ground and to clean and polish the church could be a good one-off activity for residents in neighbouring villages. A tree survey has been carried out by CCT and there wasn't much to report.

Events

One volunteer reported that the Moravian church does a pilgrimage from Leominster and holds service once a year. He stumbled across it last year and it wasn't booked in. The pilgrims cleaned the church and had a nice time there. TG will get in touch and to get the date booked in for 2026. This kind of activity may be of interest to pilgrims.

There is plenty at the church to interest different visitors: history, architecture, pilgrimage, bats, plant life, family history, ley lines, unusual saints, Roman road. It was felt we could build on these to encourage more visitors.

One volunteer is now a licensed CoE clergy and so is able to lead a service. It was thought that a summer event like a service with a picnic (Pentecost picnic/Pimms and prayer, etc) might be a nice focus of activity and get locals to feel more involved with the church. A history talk would draw people in too but would need local historian to help.

Stretford Church plan update October 2024

All volunteers on our database have been contacted but some have sadly passed away in recent years. One community supporter is still associated with the church but does not appear to carry out any cleaning. Therefore, a church plan meeting was not possible. However, the local area volunteer does visit when emptying the wall safe.

TG (LCO) spoke to Rev MB on the telephone regarding the church and asked whether he knew who looked after it and he didn't know of any. The recent death of a prominent supporter

associated with the church, meant there were plans for a memorial service. The harvest service was held at the end of September and the church was cleaned and decorated for that.

Speaking to local residents, there is only one house inhabited close to the church and the resident is now unable to help due to age and health and wasn't aware of regular visitors or volunteers.

The church looks good but regular cleaning and church yard maintenance would enhance its appearance. The LCO left a poster in the church asking for volunteers.

Stretford Church Planning Meeting Held - January 2023, Attending GS (Local Community Officer) et al.

Volunteers/Supporters

Local community not very active at the moment, mainly because in the past been a small number of volunteers.

Services/Events

No services held at present, something that needs to be addressed and could be organised in the near future.

Detailed discussions took place and agreed that it would be great for the church to be used more for services and events.

Churchyard

Volunteers keep the church clean and maintain the front part of the churchyard, the back of the churchyard is overgrown and requires maintenance.

Part D - Action Plan

Community Actions

Short term actions (to end July 2026)

- Try to locate people who clean the church.
- Contact Rev Burns about a service/event in the church in 2026

Medium term actions (to end Dec 2027)

- Arrange a summer activity for the community.
- The community to investigate if some of the past volunteers would like to be involved in the church again.
- Explore marketing the church to the local community

Long term actions (to end July 2029)

- Discuss potential for regular church related features, parish newsletter and inclusion of church updates in parish council meetings.
- Consider means for increasing footfall and consequent donations.

Actions complete (to end July 2024)

Local Community Officer Actions

Short term actions (to end July 2027)

- Contact Moaravian church to enquire about annual visit
- Share tree survey with volunteers.
- Sign up any regular volunteers.

Medium term actions (to end Dec 2027)

- Look into past services e.g. by the Doctors and possibility of them holding services again.
- Organise regular meetings with the community.
- Look at getting different interest groups to visit the church.

Long term actions (to end July 2029)

- Consider means for increasing footfall and consequent donations.

Actions complete (to end September 2024)

- Explore with past volunteers if they want to be involved again and organise projects and services like they used to.
 - List church on tourism websites and Trip Advisor

Appendix 1: Summer 2020 Questionnaire

This is the first of fourteen questions in the survey - thank you in advance for working through each one. First of all, we need to know if you're completing the survey on behalf of an organisation or writing in a personal capacity (If you're writing on behalf of an organisation, please use the text box to let us know which one. Thank you!)

Which church are you writing about? (Don't worry, you can complete additional questionnaires for other sites if you like!) Please state the location and dedication, as in 'Sapperton, St. Kenelm's'. Thank you.

People are involved with our sites in so many different ways. In your own words, please describe your relationship with the church building.

Some people are actively involved at the churches we look after together. If you're part of this group, tell us about your involvement. Cleaning, attending services and fundraising are just a few of the most frequent activities we share, but we'd appreciate as much detail as you might be happy to provide.

In your own words, and having reviewed 'Part A' of our church plan (sent to you by email with the invitation to this questionnaire), please describe a perfect outcome for our work together at the church. What would you like to see happen in terms of community involvement and other use of the building?

Bearing in mind the repair liabilities and running costs described in the report you've read, what challenges do you anticipate for a sustainable future at your church?

Thinking about local life away from the church, which other community projects or activities are you aware of that could combine with our work to protect the church for the future?

Here are two questions together... Could increased use of the church benefit the community? How would this increased use benefit the church itself?

What do you think are the most important conservation priorities at your church? For each or all of these priorities, please also let us know about any ideas you have for addressing them.

Income and expenditure for the church is detailed in 'Part A' of the report we sent you. Addressing conservation priorities will entail finding new ways to raise funds. Tell us about any ideas or opportunities you have identified for raising additional income at the church.

What do you think might be the best ways to get started with any fundraising activities you have suggested?

If you don't already, would you be interested and available to take part in future fundraising activity?

Almost done! We'd like to invite you to join us in a group discussion about the church later this year, either in person or through 'phone / video conference. Would you be willing to join the discussion?

Last question! Is there anything else you'd like to share about your interest in the church which we haven't asked you already? Otherwise, thank you again so much for reflecting on the future of the church through your answers.

Appendix 2: Typical Maintenance Tasks Forecast For A CCT Church Over 25 Years

The list below gives examples of items that CCT needs to maintain in its churches. Some items on this list will not relate to this church but give guidance as to the typical items we cover. These estimations are based on the cost in 2020, please note we are not able to predict inflation costs and therefore these are not included.

A specific report is created for each church every nine years by an experienced and trained building inspector. This details the repair needs of the building and lists the repairs required according to their priority. Please contact your Local Community Officer if you wish to see this report.

Item	Method & Purpose	Cycle/ Yrs	Estimated Cost per visit (present day levels)	Cumulative Estimated Total Cost After 25 Years (2020 values)
Drains, rodding	Below-ground drains can be blocked by debris which stops the rain water dispersing properly and potentially leading to water backing up and overflowing. To prevent this they require rodding and cleaning even ten years.	1	£ 39.00	£ 975.00
Soakaways, inspection and clearance of silt build-up	Soakaways consist of a large pit filled with gravel of varying sizes which act as a filter to allow rainwater to slowly seep into the surrounding ground. Over time material carried into the soakaway in the rain water fills in the gaps and slows the rate of dispersal which can lead to water backing up and potentially damaging or even flooding the church	10	£ 600.00	£ 1,500.00
Mansafe hatchway system	Man safe systems are steel cables or anchor points which are fixed to the roofs of churches to allow people to safely access and work on the roof. As these systems are used for safety it is a legal requirement that they are tested every year for loose fittings or damaged cables.	1	£ 360.00	£ 9,000.00
Lightning conductor testing	Lightning conductors are required to be checked every three years to make sure that they are still performing correctly and will be able to disperse a lightning strike effectively. Metal thefts have often targeted lightning conductors and they may need replacing.	3	£ 480.00	£ 4,000.00

Organ maintenance	Organs are complex machines built using numerous natural materials which can be damaged by moisture, heat and animal attack. It is recommended that organs are checked every year to carry out minor repairs and to be re-tuned as required. Regular servicing can also reduce the likelihood of large unexpected repair bills.	1	£ 140.00	£ 3,500.00
Fire extinguisher inspection	Fire extinguishers servicing checks that the fire extinguishers are functional and maintaining adequate pressure for use in an emergency. Note the CCT only provides fire extinguisher in churches which are either stewarded, used for Champing™ or have significant timber items.	1	£ 166.00	£ 4,150.00
Electrical periodic inspection testing	Electrical tests ensure that the electrical system of the church is both safe and fully functioning. The test will check all elements of the system and highlight any concerns.	5	£ 350.00	£ 1,750.00
Replacement of electrical fittings	As items are highlighted as faulty through periodic testing and maintenance visits they will need to be replaced.	15	£ 1,500.00	£ 2,500.00
Replacement of lamps	General wear and tear - Bulbs require regular replacement. Note LED bulbs will be used where possible	2	£ 250.00	£ 3,125.00
Heating installation, servicing	Annual servicing of the heating system to ensure the efficiency and safe working order of the boiler etc.	1	£ 384.00	£ 9,600.00
Roof alarm, servicing	Roof alarms require annual servicing to check that the system is in good working order and to replace minor parts such as the batteries in sensors.	1	£ 316.80	£ 7,920.00
Rainwater goods, redecoration	All external rainwater Goods (RWG) require redecoration as they are in exposed locations and are exposed to significant amounts of water. The redecoration significantly extends the lifespan of the RWGs and ensures that they are working correctly and are securely fixed in position.	7	£ 1,560.00	£ 5,571.43
Internal & external ironwork redecoration	Redecorating the ironwork prolongs the life of the item and improves the aesthetic of the church. The redecoration of ironwork also provides a good opportunity to inspect the item for damage.	7	£ 1,500.00	£ 5,357.14

External joinery, redecoration	Redecorating external joinery prolongs the life of the item and improves the aesthetic of the church. The redecoration of ironwork also provides a very good opportunity to inspect the item for damage.	7	£ 1,875.00	£ 6,696.43
Window repairs	Minor repairs to the windows such as broken panes of glass, replacement of glazing bars, mortar repairs or lead work repairs are important to exclude the weather and birds and other animals.	5	£ 350.00	£ 1,750.00
Bell maintenance	Bells require ad hoc inspection and minor maintenance to fixtures and fittings	5	£ 235.00	£ 1,175.00
Condition inspection report, all specialists	We have a 9 yearly architect or surveyors inspection plan. When the survey is undertaken all elements of the church will be inspected and a prioritised plan for all required repairs will be created.	9	£ 450.00	£ 1,250.00
Roof overhaul	Roofs require constant minor maintenance with a major overhaul every seven years	7	£ 2,500.00	£ 8,928.57
Clock maintenance	An annual service of the clock with minor repairs and checks to ensure good timekeeping	1	£ 140.00	£ 3,500.00
Tree inspection	A five yearly inspection of all the trees in the churchyards we are responsible for to check for defects and enable us to plan for any required works.	5	£ 225.00	£ 1,125.00
Churchyard maintenance	Grass cutting and minor trimming of plants and bushes etc.	0.5	£ 200.00	£ 10,000.00
Overheads	Office costs to support maintenance planning etc.	1	£ 20.00	£ 500.00
Staff Costs	Staff costs incurred in preparing the required inspections and reports	1	£ 97.00	£ 2,425.00

The total cost over 25 years for this example of a typical church is £107,598.57 (exc. VAT)

The average yearly cost for this example of a typical church is £4,303.94 (exc. VAT)

Appendix 3: Typical Maintenance Tasks Forecast - (Twice-Annual Maintenance Visits)

Item	Method & Purpose
Gutters, downpipes and gully clearance	Gutters, hoppers and downpipes are easily blocked by leaves and debris both windborne and dropped by birds which can lead to overflowing and water damage to the building.
Roof, inspection & replacing slipped/missing slates/tiles	Over time some slates/tiles or the pegs/nails which hold them will reach the end of their useful lifespan. When this happens it will allow slates to move from their correct position which can let rain in to the building and potentially poses a risk to visitors as the slate/tiles can fall.
Vegetation, control of growth	Overgrown vegetation against walls and buildings can hold moisture against the building potentially causing damage and some plant species are invasive. Vegetation can also obscure the building hiding potential damage and can provide shelter for vermin such as mice.
Tower stairs & boiler room steps, sweeping	Leaves and other debris can build up on steps which could lead to accidents if people slip. Regular sweeping reduces the risk for potential accidents.
Principal steps and paths, clearance	Leaves and other debris can build up on steps which could lead to accidents if people slip. This is especially the case for churches with trees in the area. Regular sweeping of the steps reduces the risk for potential accidents.
Wall Safe, servicing	Servicing of the wall safe helps to ensure that the donations can be easily collected and also checks to ensure that there hasn't been an attempt to steal from the safe.

Appendix 4: Typical Champing™ Arrangements And Related Income

Champing™ is the exclusive overnight hire of a church to visitors. Camp beds and chairs are set up inside the church, along with tea making provisions, battery lighting, and cushions and blankets to give guests a cosy stay.

Guests book online through the Champing™ website www.champing.co.uk and these bookings are related to local contacts so everyone knows when visitors are staying. A local member of staff sets out equipment for the night and removes all gear each morning. Guests have exclusive access to the church between 6.00 p.m. until 10.00 a.m. so visitors can enjoy the church during the day.

Champers don't expect much in the way of facilities and understand that these are ancient buildings. For most churches we've installed eco-loos either inside or outside in wooden cabins. We don't allow candles but provide battery lanterns and fairy lights. As most of our churches don't have heating we only operate Champing™ between the end of March and the end of October, and we recommend Champers bring warm sleeping bags and extra blankets. We also supply bedding and breakfasts but this option isn't available at all churches. Most Champers will eat out locally or may bring their own picnic.

For those churches without electricity we provide a gas camping stove and we also provide ample bottled water for Champers and all visitors to use.

Typically Champers are couples and families. Some of our churches are large enough to welcome groups of up to 16 people. We are dog-friendly, and child-friendly. Many Champers appreciate the history, architecture, and unique features of their surroundings, and come to learn about the building and its locale through this unique accommodation. We offer those staying for the first time a free CCT membership so they can learn more about our work and consider support for The Trust after their visit.

You can evaluate typical income which derives from Champing™ in the table below.

Church	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Langport, Somerset	£10,47	£2,766	£3,810	£3,128	£7,748	£4,938
Emborough, Somerset	/	£2,024	£1,378	£2,625	£5,270	/
Chiselhampton, Oxfordshire	£10,156	£2,696	£5,864	£1,705	/	/
Wolfhamcote, Warwickshire	/	£3,001	£2,214	£1,624	£4,763	£5,924
Holme Lacy, Herefordshire	/	£4,369	£4,759	£1,004	£7,501	£4,144
TOTAL	£20,628	£14,856	£18,025	£10,086	£25,282	£15,006