ST MARY’S CHUTE FOREST

CHURCH PLAN FEBRUARY 2023

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# Part A - Current Report

# Part B – Survey

Results of our open survey conducted in Summer and Autumn 2020, [open and available at this location](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/86VTZZL) for initial or repeated surveys.

# Part C - Community Recommendations

Minutes of any community meetings held to discuss the information available in other parts of the Church Plan.

# Part D - Action Plan

Details of any actions agreed through Community Recommendations, assigned to community participants, Churches Conservation Trust staff, or to the Churches Conservation Trust Local Community Officer specifically.

**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 relies on its communities. These communities keep the spaces alive, as well as helping to generate sufficient funds for maintenance to keep it in a good state of repair and campaigning to raise funds for specific repair and improvement projects.

Local Community Officers facilitate these aims by working with communities to co-create Church Plans.

These plans are living documents, subject to frequent review to ensure that they can meet the changing needs of their churches and communities.

This plan will outline information on the church’s history and significance to illustrate why this church is so important, before explaining maintenance and repair needs to address the challenges faced. The document will then look at current use of the church with feedback and recommendations from the community, before concluding with an action plan to set out agreed short-, medium- and long-term goals to support the sustainable use and care of the church.

Further information on the maintenance and repair costs that CCT’s churches face can be found in the appendices at the close of the document.

# Part A - Current Report

## Church Introduction & Statement of Significance

St Mary's Church in [Chute Forest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chute_Forest), [Wiltshire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiltshire), England, was built between 1870 and 1871 and consecrated in 1875. It is recorded in the [National Heritage List for England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Heritage_List_for_England) as a designated Grade II\* [listed building](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Listed_building#England_and_Wales). It was declared redundant on 23 August 1972 and was [vested](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vesting) in the Trust on 26 March 1974.

The church was built of knapped [flint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flint), brick and tile with a pyramid [spire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spire), by [John Loughborough Pearson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Loughborough_Pearson) for the Fowle family. At the time there were 188 parishioners. It was consecrated by the [Bishop of Salisbury](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishop_of_Salisbury) on 15 August 1872. The [nave](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nave) and [aisles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aisle) are spanned by a single roof. There are [encaustic tiles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encaustic_tile) on the raised floor of the [chancel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chancel).

The roof is of open [trussed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Truss) timber rafters. There is a three-stage tower topped with the spire which is a highly visible from the surrounding area. The church had six bells cast in 1871 by Mears & Stainbank of [Whitechapel Bell Foundry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whitechapel_Bell_Foundry). In 1976 these were removed and rehung in the Church of St Nicholas in [Chute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chute,_Wiltshire). The west window includes [stained glass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stained_glass) by [Clayton and Bell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clayton_and_Bell) a partnership of John Richard Clayton (London, 1827–1913) and Alfred Bell (Silton, Dorset, 1832–95). The provenance of the East window requires further research. There is a wall tablet to Frank G. Fowle who died in 1942.

The parish was merged with that of [Chute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chute,_Wiltshire) in 1954. The Chute Forest church closed in 1972. An annual service is still held at the church.

## Current use (bookings) & voluntary activity

St Mary’s has been fortunate to benefit from the voluntary support of several local neighbours, as well as from the local parish team who organise an annual service at the church. Voluntary activity undertaken by this group includes:

* Organising and supporting an annual service
* Remittance of service funds
* Conservation cleaning before service
* Planning and delivery of all bookings including services.
* Ad hoc reporting of building change

## Collection Review

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **General Information** | |
| Open Churches Policy status: | Open |
| Local Community Officer: | Philippa Wood |
| Current project: | Power and Glory: electricity and lighting project |
| Parking: | None formal. Spaces on road near bus stop 50m walk from the  Church using footpath on dirt track. |
| Accessibility details: | Provided via website |
| Building services: | No electricity or heating |
| Organ: | None |
| Churchyard: | Owned and maintained by CCT |
| Ringable bells: | Removed to St Nicholas Church in Chute |
| Pews: | Yes |
| **Volunteering** | |
| Keyholder role: | None formal |
| Key representative role: | Fulfilled (CCT liaison, maintenance reporting) |
| Area volunteer role: | None |
| Fundraising roles: | None |
| Cleaning | Before services and events |
| Stewardship roles: | None |
| Research, interpretation & talks: | None |
| **CCT Items** | |
| Welcome table: | Present |
| Visitor book: | Provided |
| Gift Aid envelopes: | Provided, but donations box not suitable for use |
| CCT silver plaque: | Installed |
| CCT information board: | Not installed |
| Oak post: | Not installed |
| CCT freestanding board: | Provided |
| Wall safe poster: | Installed |
| CCT A board: | None |
| **Tourism and Marketing** | |
| Nearby attractions: | Access to a wide range of rights of way across the  North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural  Beauty |
| Public transport: | None |
| Social media presence: | None |
| CCT webpage: | https://www.visitchurches.org.uk/visit/church-listing/st-mary-chute-forest.html |
| Regular feature parish news: | No |
| **Events and Activities** | |
| Services per year: | One annual service, plus occasional weddings and funerals for local residents. |
| CofE support for services: | Yes, as above |
| Heritage Open Days: | No |
| Ride & Stride: | No |
| Christmas memory tree: | No |
| Tea Party: | No |
| Historic Church Tour: | No |
| Learning and Participation events: | No |
| Explorer tags | No |
| Retail: | No |
| Champing: | No |
| **Health & Safety** | |
| Fire rated capacity: | 100 |
| Seating capacity: | Not determined |
| Site plan: | Available |
| Risk assessment general: | Valid until March 2025 (barring alterations to use / access) |
| Risk assessment fire: | Valid until March 2025 (barring alterations to use / access) |
| COSHH listing: | Current |
| Portable appliance listing: | Not Applicable |
| Security Audit: | 2016 |

## 

## Conservation & Maintenance

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.

**Maintenance Costs**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Annualised Maintenance Costs (exc. VAT)** | |
| Total costs of church maintenance forecast over 25 years divided by 25.  Includes all maintenance costs except the twice-yearly maintenance visit and any anticipated repairs are also excluded. See Appendix 2 for a list of typical maintenance tasks. | £5,086.44 |
| **Routine Maintenance Costs (exc. VAT)** | |
| Routine maintenance costs (two visits per annum). 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. | £1235.52 |
| **Other Maintenance Costs (exc. VAT)** | |
| Additional maintenance needs discovered during routine maintenance (see below) | £250.00 |

**Forecast Conservation Costs**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Short Term Repairs**  Small scale items of limited cost which could be fulfilled with minimal fundraising. | |
| Roof repairs and repairs of tower rear gutter | £4,900.00 | |
| Rwg and drainage - Repairs and redecoration | £3,900.00 | |
| External walls – minor repairs | £2,800.00 | |
| External Openings -Repairs to windows and doors and renewal of window guards | £3,300.00 | |
| Minor repairs and adjustments to internal surfaces and fittings | £2,700.00 | |
| Churchyard – ongoing tree maintenance and repairs | £1,100.00 | |
| **Total** | **£11,500.00** | |
| **Medium-Term Repairs**  More expensive needs which may require more involved fundraising and grant applications. | |
| Roof renewal | £95,000.00 | |
| Minor repairs and adjustments to internal surfaces and fittings | £4,800.00 | |
| External Openings -Repairs to windows and doors and renewal of window guards | £1,500.00 | |
| Churchyard – ongoing tree maintenance and repairs | £500.00 | |
| **Total:** | **£101,800.00** | |
| **Total Long-Term Repairs**  Items which are known to require works in the longer term but which are not essential in the near future. | |
| External Walls – minor repairs | £6,000.00 | |
| External Openings -Repairs to windows and doors and renewal of window guards | £10,300.00 | |
| Churchyard – ongoing tree maintenance and repairs | £9,689.00 | |
| **Total** | **£25,989.00** | |
| **Total Desirable Repairs**  Repairs not essential to the conservation health of the church but which might improve aesthetics or usability of the building. | |
| **Total** | **£0** | |
|  |  | |
| **Total Essential Repairs:** | **£146,489.00** | |
| **Total Desirable Repairs:** | **£0.00** | |
| **Other Maintenance Costs:** | **£250.00** | |
|  |
| **Total Repair Costs:** | **£146,739.00** | |
| **Anticipated Fees / Access Costs** | **£52,478.00** | |
| **Total Forecast Costs (expected to increase with inflation and market fluctuations)** | **£199,217.00** | |

## Income, Expenditure & Balances

**Income**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2023/24** | **2022/23** | **2021/22** | **2020/21** | **2019/20** | **2018/19** | **2017/18** | **2016/17** |
| **Wallsafe** | £20 | £194 | £6 | £0 | £17 | £0 | £19 | £237 |
| **Total** | £1,829 | £1,694 | £79 | £1,750 | £170 | £1,909 | £2,238 | £1,537 |
| **Visitor #** | 1162 | 1008 | 140 | 0 | 1500 | 1070 | 688 | 695 |
| **Wallsafe per visitor** | £0.02 | £0.19 | £0.04 | £0.00 | £0.01 | £0.00 | £0.03 | £0.34 |

**Income / Expenditure (2023 – 2024)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Unrestricted** | **Restricted** | **Grant** | **Total** |
| **Income** | £324.35 | £1,505.00 | £0.00 | £1,829.35 |
| **Expenditure** | £0.00 | £3,380.00 | £0.00 | £3,380.00 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Income by Category (2023 – 2024)** | | |
| **Category** | **Value** |  |
| General Donations | £1,505.00 | R |
| Service Collection | £204.52 | U |
| Parochial Services Fees | £100.00 | U |
| Box Collections | £19.83 | U |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Restricted Funds\*** | | | |
| Opening Balance  01-Apr-2023 | Income | Expenditure | Closing Balance  31-Mar-2024 |
| £7,197.51 | £1,505.00 | £3,380.00 | £5,322.51 |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditure by Category (2023 – 2024)** | | |
| **Category** | **Value** |  |
| Planned Maintenance | £2,380.00 | R |
| Repairs - EE and NV | £400.00 | R |
| Routine Maintenance | £390.00 | R |
| Routine Churchyard Maintenance | £210.00 | R |

**Balances (2023 – 2024)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Income less maintenance / conservation expenditure | - £ 1,550.65 |
| Income less annual maintenance costs | - £ 3,257.09 |
| Restricted balance\* | £ 5,322.51 |

**\*** Restricted funds are restricted or covenanted for expenditure at this church.Restricted funds without a covenant will be used for maintenance of the building fabric.

Covenanted funds (those donated for a specific purpose such as roof repairs) must be spent according to the terms of this covenant and are not shown in these figures.

## Local Community Officer’s Summary

St Mary’s Chute Forest is a little visited, but much-loved church in this quiet part of Wiltshire. Built in 1875 by J. L Pearson who went on to build Truro Cathedral. He also built the parish church of Chute St Nicholas about two miles away. It has thick brick walls and is extremely dark inside. The tall spire is visible from a distance above clustering yew trees.

Until recently this church was locked and the keyholder hard to locate, so it had spectacularly low visitor figures. These have started to rise since the door is now open 24 hours.

The church has a significant bat population. About 10 years ago there was some enthusiasm from the community in running a wildlife project in the church and churchyard, including a bat survey, but this has fallen by the wayside. Until 2021 the CCT paid a contractor to conduct a twice yearly cut of grass and hedges in the churchyard – an expenditure which we were forced to drop in 2021. The local community petitioned the CCT to be able to take some of the proceeds from the annual service to pay for upkeep of the churchyard and this was agreed to.

St Mary’s is fortunate to have the patronage of a local donor, who has given very generous restricted donations to the church for the past 17 years.

St Mary’s inspires generous support from a relatively small number of visitors each year, the maximum number of visits limited perhaps by the limited options for parking, and poor signposting to the church. The addition of video-directions on the church webpage might encourage additional visits over time, all of which would be certain to encounter a well-presented church thanks to the continuing and dedicated care of its volunteers who visit to clean regularly.

Improved signage to the church (currently a “historic church” fingerpost) could increase visitor numbers. A team of volunteer stewards (occasional) and improved interpretation (currently a laminated copy of the old Redundant Churches branded CCT guidebook) could provide a better visitor experience and increase donations per head.

The availability of an electrical supply could enable flexible use of the interior for occasional performances, especially where any such would be of interest to local residents from nearby residential centres, or where audiences of sufficient number might be able to walk to the venue from other parts of the village.

# Part B - September 2020 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* ***Chute Forest, St Mary’s*** *by the deadline of* ***August 30th****.*

The response received was from a respondent writing in a **[no response]** capacity, who confirmed that their responses related to **St. Mary’s, Chute Forest.**

In addressing the question of *a perfect outcome for our work together at the church* the respondent indicated **[no response]**

In writing about challenges anticipated in respect of repair liabilities and running costs, the respondent indicates **[no response]**

Thinking about local life away from the church, in relation to other community projects or activities which might combine with our work to protect the church for the future, the respondent indicated **[no response]**

Considering if increased use of the church might benefit the community, or if increased use might benefit the church itself, the respondent indicated **[no response]**

In relation to identifying conservation priorities for the church, the respondent provided **[no response]**

Regarding priorities, opportunities or ideas for fundraising the respondent noted **[no response].** In respect of means for initiating fundraising activity, the respondent gave **[no response].** The respondent also indicated that they would **[no response]** be available to participate in fundraising activity.

In seeking respondents’ participation in a future group discussion regarding church planning the respondent indicated **[no response].**

In answering our final, open question about any additional church matters not covered in other areas of the survey, the respondent indicated **[no response].**

In addition to responses fielded through the questionnaire, a further **[no response]** respondents wrote back to their Local Community Officer, expressing the following perspectives:

**Nil**

## Part C - Community Recommendations

### Community Meeting 4 Thursday 25th February 2025

Present:

CCT: Philippa Wood (Local Community Officer, LCO); James Routledge (Estates Officer, EO)

3 Members of the Community (referred to hereafter as MF, AO, and KH for safeguarding purposes)

LCO and EO arrived on site early to look at building and discuss Community Initiative Project (CIP) titled Power and Glory. MF, AO and KH joined at 2pm, being welcomed by the CCT staff.

* MF mentioned uncertainty over the date and designer of the east window, concerned it has been misattributed.
* As EO had to leave shortly after the meeting began, the conversation began with questions regarding the CIP and maintenance at the church.
* The meeting opened with a discussion of the ongoing CIP to discuss funding, with LCO to the church stating that no central CCT funding would be available for the Power and Glory project due to the need to prioritise conservation works but that she had potential fundraising avenues to discuss later in the meeting after the EO has departed.
* AO responded by saying that without CCT funds the project was unlikely to proceed.
* KH requested information on further conservation priorities. The LCO referred this to the EO, who stated that immediate priorities at this church were:
  + Roof repairs (ridge tiles, nave and spire)
  + Guttering
  + Tree maintenance
* MF asked whether the churchyard could be mowed more frequently, with KH citing health and safety and conservation concerns alongside aesthetic impact of brambles over the graves.
  + AO informed that he has a contact who could mow the churchyard for £200 a day
  + MF stated his unhappiness that his donations are not being used to pay for this; and that he has spoken to Greg Pickup on the matter
* MF stated that the church’s restricted funds currently contain donations from him:
  + £6,000 in total restricted funds
  + £2,000 of this specifically for the CIP
* KH raised the matter of the annual service on 8th June, stating that the graveyard will be tidied for this and the church clean. It was noted that heavy work such as removing brambles would need to be done before this as they would be too much for the volunteers attending.
* MF raised the question of the clock, asking how much of it was still intact. LCO unable to answer, but asked EO whether the new maintenance contractor would be able to look at it on site and assess its condition.
* AO raised the question of a tree in the churchyard leaning toward the church, which the tree surgeon felt was too dead to climb.

\*\* EO had to leave the meeting \*\*

* LCO discussed 2023/24 income and expenditure at the church
  + Community raised concerns about high maintenance expenditure. LCO informed that the new maintenance contract would cost £1235.52 for two visits a year, including small repairs undertaken during those visits.
  + Community would like to be kept more informed of when maintenance visits will be carried out and what work is undertaken during them.
* LCO ran through the Community Action Plan from the previous meeting in February 2023:
  + Access
    - KH stated that following the discovery of a 1970s document specifying that the church did not have vehicular access via the track the community does not plan to pursue this
    - KH is still investigating the potential to use a strip of land on the neighbouring field for access. (Revisiting this topic after the meeting the LCO suggested approaching the farmer to enquire into whether a friendly arrangement for occasional events might be possible or if it might be able to occasionally lease that strip, rather than looking at an outright purchase)
  + Plan potential flower festival and local history exhibition
    - Now planned for 2025 to tie in with the annual service, moved to 8th June this year to tie in with the church’s 150th anniversary
    - KH is planning a flower festival for the 7th / 8th June 2025 with a flower display representing the months of the year in each of the twelve windows
    - KH also planning a history display around the history of St Mary’s and of Chute Forest to coincide with this event.
    - Event is now planned to raise awareness of the push to get lighting and electricity in the church, and to fundraise to further this. Chute Choir had agreed to sing at the annual service but will need power for a keyboard to be able to do so.
      * Access and electricity were noted to be key issues in putting on events.
      * LCO mentioned that some funders such as the Aviva Community Fund will match donations rather than giving a grant, and that this might be worth considering. Details provided to AO
      * LCO ran through some other funding possibilities, stating that the Wiltshire Council’s Local Area Board grants were probably the best fit for the CIP project, but that funders such as the Screwfix foundation and Wiltshire Community Fund would also be worth enquiring with.
        + AO asked LCO how long application forms would be; LCO answered that most would be very short.
        + AO asked who would submit the application; PW answered that some could be submitted by the community but some would need to go through the CCT. LCO specified that she has limited time for writing applications due to the size of this region, and that the community’s knowledge of the church and local area were essential for a strong bid.
        + KH asked whether any grant-funded equipment would belong to the CCT – LCO assured her that any equipment thus provided would never be removed from the site regardless of who submitted the bid.
      * AO reiterated that he didn’t feel the project would go ahead without CCT funding as he has given a lot of time to it so far and doesn’t feel he can write funding bids as well. KH agreed that her full-time work would not allow her time to do fundraising applications either
        + LCO gave information on funding providers to AO and left the matter with the community for further thought and discussion.
        + KH asked LCO to enquire about the Council grant; agreed.
        + MF noted that LCO had not mentioned Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust.
        + AO expressed frustration over the amount of time taken to reach this point in the CIP process. LCO apologised for the fact that expectations of central CCT funding had not been picked up from the initial project enquiry forms and that the discussion had therefore been prolonged.
        + LCO discussed the potential to downsize the project, instead purchasing a battery that could be charged in a community member’s house and brought in to connect to lighting / a keyboard / amplifier with extension cables

AO concerned about practicalities of bringing a heavy battery back and forth on the mud track

Logistics of installing lighting using this means would still need to be considered. AO concerned about health and safety of community installing lights and cabling.

* + Generator purchase
    - LCO asked what the key reasons were for moving away from the generator plan to the solar powered battery plan
      * Sustainability and storage/movement of fuel given lack of vehicular access key reasons for this
    - LCO asked about existing lights on wall that were previously powered by a long extension cable from a nearby property
      * Lights are no longer functional, and were not fit for purpose
      * Still potential to run a cable across from another property, and this could be a fallback if the project cannot go ahead, but the light sources would still need to be considered in the absence of the existing units.
      * KH commented that getting current into the church was relatively easy, but that getting wiring in is difficult.
      * LCO mentioned small LED spotlights at Alton Priors that are powered in a similar way during the Music for Awhile events, suggesting that perhaps a conversation with the volunteer at that site may help at this one. LCO also mentioned that solar panels to provide electricity there have proven disappointing in output.

LCO to ask EO how one would look at installing cost-effective LED lighting in a conservation-friendly manner at Chute Forest, and how this was project-managed at Alton Priors

* + Restoration of church clock on tower (long term)
    - LCO asked community if they still wished to pursue this; answer is currently negative
  + Purchase of field in front of church for access and parking
    - KH still considering this, but only for the strip of the field on the other side of the hedge from the existing track
* LCO ran through the LCO Action Plan from the previous meeting in February 2023:
  + LCO mentioned intended community audit and asked whether the community knew if this had been carried out; this still appears to be outstanding.
  + LCO noted that the padlock on the offertory box had been replaced but that Gift Aid envelopes would still be an issue; to raise with manager and Estates Officer.
  + LCO informed community that CCT website update is expected in April, and that information will then be updated as mentioned in the 2023 plan.
  + LCO will circulate financial report and maintenance costs with Church Plan after this meeting.
  + LCO to continue offering support with promotional materials as in 2023 plan.
* Final discussion ran over outcoming actions regarding the CIP project:
  + Community to discuss information raised in meeting and come up with an action plan.
  + KH to plan for community fundraising at annual service and flower festival.
  + LCO to enquire with Wiltshire Council regarding the Local Area Board grant scheme.
* Meeting concluded. While leaving the churchyard LCO informed the community that she and EO had looked at the gate at the Northern corner of the graveyard before the meeting and that this was still a priority for repair. KH informed LCO that previous quotes had been extremely high, hence the work had not been done.

### Community Meeting 3 Tuesday 7th February 2023

Attended by Rachel Whitty LCO and Meriel O’Dowd Conservation Project Manager (CPM) plus 3 supporters for the Church, referred to as D1, E1 and F1 in the notes.

RW welcomed the group and was pleased to be meeting in person after many email exchanges over Chute, restricted donation discussions and proposed works in the churchyard.

The group met in the Churchyard as the first part of the Church Plan meeting was to work through the condition report with the CPM and agree the detail of upcoming tree works in the Churchyard.

The CPM lead the group through the details of the condition report so that it was clear what the short, medium and long term priorities for maintenance and repair at Chute Forest were. This would help the group to consider where they could focus fundraising efforts and how to share this knowledge more widely across the community at Chute.

The group discussed the outline of tree works including the felling of the yews which were impacting the light coming into the church and contributing to an alarming increase of moss accumulation on the roof. There were other trees which were in turn creating issues for family gravestones and the laurel hedge was obscuring church was it was almost impossible to see from the road. The group agreed that the churchyard was looking much unloved. The group welcomed the scheduling of the works which would be paid for out of the restricted funds for Chute. The main concern for the works to happen was the limited access to the church which would be either through adjacent fields on private land or via the permissive path from the main road. There were also concerns raised over the impact of wet weather to the works which could turn the churchyard, fields and permissive path into a mud bath. D1 kindly agreed to act as a liaison with the farmer who owned the adjacent fields and to the occupants of the house next to the entrance gate of the permissive path to ensure that they would be aware of the dates of the works and that access would not be an issue for the tree surgeon. It was also agreed that the wood cut down would chipped in situ to limit excessive movement of equipment and any branches suitable for kindling or woodturning projects such as Cherry would be stacked neatly for the community to use.

The group were happy with the scope of works discussed and were keen for them to start as soon as possible. It was hoped that the works would commence towards the end of March and D1 would act as the main contact with the tree surgeon in conjunction with the CCT Estates Officer and LCO.

There was also a discussion about restoring the clock to bring a focal point to the Church**.**

**Action: Long Term-It was agreed that this could be considered as a long term action as there were other priorities to focus on first.**

RW explained the process for the next part of the meeting was to work through the previous actions listed on the Church Plan, and agree to close them off or carry them forward, discuss potential fundraising ideas and discuss any on-going maintenance issues. The aim at the end would be to capture these ideas into short, medium and long term actions.

RW noted that the figures in the current Church Plan required updating so would be used a guide for this meeting. Once more up to date figures were available, the Church Plan would be amended accordingly and recirculated to the group.

**Action Short Term : RW to action for next Church Plan meeting planned for September.**

RW also updated the group on the West Region focus for the coming year and wider updates on the CCT, the new CEO and the strategy.

The group turned their focus on the interior of the church.

It was agreed that the current donation box, an offertory box with a padlock was not fit for purpose. It was not possible to fit any gift aid envelopes into the slot and the key was missing. RW had searched for the key in the Bristol Office but not avail.

**Action –Short Term- RW to speak to EO about in the first instance replacing the padlock and to consider a suitable alternative.**

All agreed that the acoustics inside the church were excellent and the issue of reconnecting the electricity was discussed. Solar panels were discussed but these could be costly and not generate enough power to sustain a concert, for example. An alternative to consider which was raised by F1 was a second hand diesel generator as they had found it to be a very economical and satisfactory solution. It was also raised that as there was no village hall/community hub in Chute so St Mary’s with electricity could be considered as a good meeting venue.

**Action: Medium Term-** **It was agreed that this could be explored as an option by F1 to bring back to the group as a potential community initiative project.**

The group decided to continue the meeting inside one of the group’s house as it was getting very cold in the church.

An open discussion took place around how to relaunch the church post the churchyard works. The annual service was mentioned and it was thought it would be taking place in late June.

It was agreed that if the works were completed in time, a “soft launch “could be considered around the Coronation such as a picnic with tea and cakes**.**

**Action – Short Term- F1 agreed to co-ordinate and suggested that this would be a good opportunity to recruit volunteers for a cleaning rota.**

If that was successful then there was a potential plan for a Flower Festival later in the year and a local history exhibition. RW also mentioned that a war artist was planning exhibitions in Hampshire Churches and as Chute was so near the border, then there might an opportunity to collaborate and have them exhibit in Chute**.**

**Action – Short Term - RW to contact fellow LCO who covers Hampshire Churches and share contact details with the group.**

A more long term discussion took place around access to the church in general especially around the permissive path and the group were keen to explore the possibility through crowd funding to buy the field in front of the Church for vehicular access and a car park.

**Action – Medium Term: The group agreed to discuss how to progress this.**

**The meeting concluded with RW summarising the agreed action points with the group. It was agreed that the group would reconvene in about 6 months to review progress.**

### Community Meeting 2 Wednesday 8th September 2021

**Attending: Ed McGregor (Local Community Officer) et al. 3 Participants – referred to as A1, B1 and C1**

A1 expresses that electricity installation is not feasible due to budgetary constraints. A1 is one of the church wardens so fulfils the note in the last meeting about better engagement of PCC. He explains the financial situation of the PCC with very limited budgets, but reiterates that the PCC is supportive in principle of the church and can enhance this support with better messages in the active parish church community and also in St Mary’s Notice board. A1 offers to print and install new notice if EM can draft.

EM to update CCT church page as hire info and lighting is incorrect.

EM to pursue urgently dropped branch in churchyard

EM to improve directions to the church on CCT website.

EM to send A1 6 footpath markers.

EM notes that the transparency of the maintenance expenditure has not been received from CPM / EO

B1 expresses concern that they have not had any maintenance contractor visits for the past two years at least. Refer to minutes from last meeting whereby A1 and B1 should be added to maintenance contractor visits contact list.

B1 asks about a very small temporary installation of solar panel and battery. EM gives approval for this to be explored with approval from EO. B1 to progress and send ideas to EM.

A1 expresses interest in walking routes, no solid action though.

C1 notes that he’s been given a copy of the first sermon at the church and is working on a transcription of it.

A1 reflects that church planning is a valuable process in terms of reminding the local community members of the relevance of the church and keeping a log of actions which need doing.

### Community Meeting 1 Wednesday 20th January 2021

**Attending: Ed McGregor (Local Community Officer) etc al.**

A adds a written suggestion for inclusion to the Church Plan prior to the meeting. *Adding electricity would be very helpful to the proposed actions, but would require a significant capital investment. The proposed actions would be adversely affected by reduced churchyard maintenance. Engaging St Nicolas’ PCC in this planning process would help, as would occasional articles in The Chute Chronicle.*

A explained the relationship with the Church wardens at St Mary’s.

A has just finished his term as church warden. The church council are striving to recruit new members. B will resume as church warden for a year.

A notes he did not fill in the survey back in August and suggests perhaps re-circulating it. EM shares that the church plan is indeed intended to be shared and circulated on an ongoing basis, with the hope of engendering further support from the community.

A expresses the desire to increase the level of income locally in order to support CCT in sustaining the churchyard and church.

A notes that the church is difficult to find and improving directions for visitors would be a positive step.

B asks what exactly the CCT would like the local congregation to do to support the church. EM refers to the income and expenditure section of the church plan.

B and A note that they are not aware of any recent maintenance expenditure at the church. EM acknowledges that maintenance costs should be shared more transparently.AO asks for clarification on the annualised maintenance figure. EM to seek this for inclusion in the next edition of the church plan.

A notes that EMs current main contact might not be the best in terms of sharing contractors visits. EM notes that A and B will be added to the maintenance contractors visiting contact list.

B notes that they have paid a contractor in the past to mow the churchyard. EM Thanks for this contribution.

B asks if community use and events are actually encouraged and EM responds positively.

A notes some of the restrictions relating to use of the building for exhibitions given the fixed pews.

B asks about the possibility of installing an electricity supply. This might enable more community use of the church because it is currently too dark to hold any events or exhibitions. It is considered that this would be prohibitively expensive. A notes that a generator was brought in for a wedding several years ago. EM to investigate and potentially obtain quotes for a suitable generator / solar system.

A asked clarity around exactly how the CCT would like the parish to contribute with case studies and examples.

B notes the annual service, which they hope will continue.

B suggests a walking route to take in the church which they could advertise in the local newspaper. B offers to investigate this.

B explains the non-availability of a village hall for Chute Forest and so the church could provide some facility in this way.

EM to update signage in the external noticeboard, to provide a more welcoming greeting. .

A agrees that St Mary’s wouldn’t be a good site for champing.

A notes that St Mary’s Chute forest is not on the current priority list for the PCC. A to see if it can be added.

# Part D - Action Plan

## Community Actions

### Short term actions (to end June 2025)

* Organise cleaning and churchyard day before annual service
* Organise annual service and send booking form and risk assessment to LCO
* Plan flower festival and local history exhibition

### Medium term actions (to end June 2026)

* Let LCO know whether you’d be willing to give monthly tours of the church and crypt
* Send LCO information on any tasks / activities you’d be interested in doing (potential for training if needed)
* Consider ways of encouraging community giving for community projects
* Consider additional community-run events that would work in the space (e.g. choral evensong, services, choirs, organ recitals, concerts etc.)
* Work with CCT staff to fundraise for Crypt project and raise aware of conservation need
* Talk to visitors about opportunities to volunteer and the need to increase opening hours

### Long term actions (to end January 2028)

* Investigate use of field in front of church

## Local Community Officer Actions

### Short term actions (to end June 2025)

* Update church plan with financial information and conservation needs:
  + After February 2025 meeting
  + After year-end figures become available
* Investigate provenance of East Window
* Follow up the following questions with Estates Officer and report to community:
  + churchyard maintenance
  + clock
  + dead tree in churchyard
  + ideas for simplification of lighting system that could make this more affordable
* Enquire with Graeme Morrison at Wiltshire Council re: Local Area Board grant
* Look into potential for funding from Wiltshire Historic Churches Trust
* Share CCT Cleaning Churches standard and report
* Ensure key community members are kept informed of maintenance visits and works undertaken

### Medium term actions (to end June 2026)

* Work with the group to complete a community audit to identify additional survey respondents and participants in face-to-face or digital meetings.
* Identify solution to current donation box’s inability to fit gift aid envelopes with Estates Officer.
* Review church web page to ensure clear directions available for all visitors and information is accurate.

### Long term actions (to end January 2028)

* + Support volunteers with suitable display posters for external noticeboard and on information on Church web page to promote suitability of church for concerts or other uses, and of promotion to prospective local audiences including churchyard works.

### Actions complete (to end of February 2025)

* Replace padlock on offertory box
* Distribution Part A reports for each church to all existing correspondents, together with survey
* Receive, anonymise and collate survey responses and add to Church Plan Part B
* Resolve initial findings, conclusions and recommendations based on Part A & B, expressed as short, medium and long-term actions
* Publish Part A, B & D as Interim Church Plan to colleagues by end September 2020
* Undertake staff consultation against Interim Church Plan by end November 2020
* By end November 2020 review colleagues’ feedback regarding updates to church plan part A, to include
  + Conservation interpretations
  + Presentation improvements
  + Champing data
* Repeat survey for additional respondents by end January 2021
* Agree dates for face-to-face or digital community meetings by end January 2021
* Resolve updated findings, conclusions and recommendations based on Part A, B & C expressed as short, medium and long-term actions for each site (Part D)
* Publish Church Plan Version ‘2021-22’
* EM to investigate and potentially obtain quotes for a suitable generator / solar system.
* EM to pursue urgently dropped branch in churchyard

## CCT Actions Other

### Short term actions (to end March 2022)

* Provide interpretation of maintenance and repair plans to further explain anticipated costs described in part A above.

### Medium term actions (to end March 2023)

**Long term actions (to end March 2024)**

**Actions complete (to end September 2021)**

# Appendix 1: Summer 2020 Questionnaire

1. 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!)
2. 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.
3. People are involved with our sites in so many different ways. In your own words, please describe your relationship with the church building.
4. 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.
5. 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?
6. 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?
7. 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?
8. Here are two questions together... Could increased use of the church benefit the community? How would this increased use benefit the church itself?
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. What do you think might be the best ways to get started with any fundraising activities you have suggested?
12. If you don't already, would you be interested and available to take part in future fundraising activity?
13. 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?
14. 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 - 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)** | **25 Years Cumulative Est. Cost (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 |
| Man-safe 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 |
| 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 |
| 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 |
| 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 |
| TOTAL (Excluding VAT) | |  | £107,598.57 | |
| TOTAL (Excluding VAT) / 25 years | |  | £4,303.94 | |

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# 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. |

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# 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 amply 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 | 2020 | 2019 | 2018 | 2017 | Total |
| Langport, Somerset | £3,128.00 | £3,809.94 | £2,765.60 | £10,472.40 | £20,175.94 |
| Emborough, Somerset | £2,625.00 | £1,378.49 | £2,024.30 | - | £6,027.79 |
| Chiselhampton, Oxfordshire | £1,705.00 | £5,864.11 | £2,696.40 | £10,156.29 | £20,421.80 |
| Wolfhamcote, Warwickshire | £1,624.00 | £2,213.77 | £3,001.00 | - | £6,838.77 |
| Holme Lacy, Herefordshire | £1,004.00 | £4,758.55 | £4,368.80 | - | £10,131.35 |
| TOTAL | £10,086.00 | £18,024.86 | £14,856.10 | £20,628.69 | £63,595.65 |