

ST MARTIN' S CHURCH, EXETER

CHURCH PLAN



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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 community(ies), 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 goals to support the sustainable use and care of the church.

Part A - Current Report

Church Introduction & Statement of Significance

St Martin's Church in Cathedral Close, Exeter, Devon, England was built in the 15th century, and is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade I listed building. The church is one of the oldest buildings in the city, and was once one of six churches clustered in the cathedral's shadow.

It is built of Heavitree stone and has slate roofs. The chancel arch is thought to be the oldest part of the building, and may date from the previous church on the site which was consecrated on 6 July 1065 by Bishop Leofric, the same bishop who founded the cathedral in Exeter. There are traces of Anglo-Saxon long-and-short work high in the south-east corner of the nave. The tower was added in 1675.

The interior contains 17th and 18th century monuments, reredos and altar rails, some of which were brought from the nearby St Paul's, which was demolished in 1936. The south window contains a few fragments of medieval glass. At the west end is a panelled gallery with the painted arms of Bishop Trelawny (1688–1707) and the City of Exeter, both flanking the royal coat of arms.

The font is plain and octagonal but on its north side, attached to the stem, has a small subsidiary bowl (very occasionally found on other English fonts) and may have been to hold the chrism used in medieval baptism. There are a number of good wall monuments; some of these come from St Paul's Church, Exeter (demolished in 1936). The most impressive is to Philip Hooper (d 1715; chancel north) which has him kneeling in a mighty wig at a desk with a pile of books in an architectural surround. The other significant monuments are to Judith Wakeman (d 1643), Edward Seaward (1703), John Codrington (d 1801) and Eliza Mortimer (d 1826).

The church occupies an important position in the north-east angle of the cathedral close. The site is a highly constricted one, so much so that when the tower came to be added it was built on land belonging to the dean and chapter of the cathedral and rent was charged for this occupancy until 1931. Having escaped both Victorian refurbishing and the Second World War bombing that severely damaged

many other Exeter churches, it is probably the most important and complete church in the centre of Exeter. St Martin's was vested with the Churches Conservation Trust on 1 August 1995.

Current use (bookings) & voluntary activity

St Martin's Church currently has permission from The Church of England for up to six Sunday services each year, plus an unlimited number of occasional services. The Church's position on Cathedral Green is beneficial in attracting additional visitors, and makes it a good central location to be used for events, as access via public transport is easy and there is plenty of car parking nearby. However its location does mean that the Church must be opened daily and cannot be left open in the evenings due to anti-social behaviour in the area. The churchyard, which is actually a small paved courtyard, generates additional income for CCT through being rented to a local cafe to provide extra outside seating for their customers.

In the past few years the Church has hosted theatre shows, art exhibitions, public consultations, lecture series, musical performances, and occasional evensongs, and each year Cards for Good Causes set up a pop up shop in the church from October to December selling charity Christmas cards, wrapping paper and gifts. In 2016 a partnership between CCT, Trafalgar escorted tours and the University of Exeter Chapel Choir was established to provide weekly private candle-lit concerts in the Church for Trafalgar Tour groups throughout the summer. This was a very successful arrangement, and there was a small but very supportive team of volunteers who led these events for three years. Unfortunately these concerts finished at the end of the 2019 season, but CCT remains grateful to the team of volunteers and to the University of Exeter Chapel Choir with whom we still have close links with.

The Church benefits hugely from the dedication of the main keyholder, as well as the support of a long standing volunteer and the local incumbent, and CCT is extremely grateful for their ongoing support. More recently new volunteers interested in supporting historic tours and supporting events have got involved and the CCT is making links with other locals arts and cultural organisations.

Voluntary activity undertaken by local residents includes:

- Daily unlocking and locking
- Meeting with long and short term hirers to hand over keys as necessary
- Ad hoc cleaning
- Remittance of wall safe and service funds
- Ad hoc reporting of building changes

The LCO also completes regular mandatory checks and actions including regular Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) checks, visual electrical inspections, Fire Risk assessments and Building and General Risk Assessments at St Martin's. In addition the church also receives two maintenance visits per year from CCT's specialist maintenance contractor, a detailed Condition report from the allocated Architect and regular electrical inspections.

Church Information

General Information:	
Open Churches Policy status:	Open (unlocked/locked daily)
Local Community Officer:	Marie Leverett
Current projects:	None
Parking:	Church in pedestrianised area of city but plenty of car parks within walking distance
Building services:	Electric lighting, electric storage heating and water tap in porch (capped)
Churchyard:	Paved courtyard owned by CCT, rented to a local cafe
Ringable bells:	Yes
Organ:	Present, unplayable
Volunteering:	
Keyholder role:	Fulfilled
Area Volunteer role:	Surplus to requirements
Key representative role:	Fulfilled
Fundraising roles:	Vacant and necessary
Stewardship/events roles:	Vacant and necessary
Research, interp & talks role:	Vacant and necessary
Cleaning schedule:	Nothing formal, ad hoc cleaning as required
CCT Items:	
CCT silver plaque:	Installed
CCT information board:	Installed
Oak post:	Not installed, not needed
CCT freestanding board:	Yes Installed
Wall safe poster:	Installed
CCT A board:	Yes
Gift Aid envelopes:	Provided
Visitor book:	Provided
Welcome table:	Maintains stock of current leaflets and walkaround guide (note unavailability of future leaflets and guide for restock)
Children' s explorer cart:	No
Children' s trail:	No
Tourism/Marketing:	
Nearby attractions:	Exeter Cathedral, Devon & Exeter Institution, Underground Passages, Exeter Quayside, Exeter City Centre, Royal Albert

	Memorial Museum, Powderham Castle, Exmouth
Social media presence:	Yes CCT led: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61560549186221
Church page on CCT website:	St Martin's Church, Exeter, Devon The Churches Conservation Trust
Regular feature parish news:	Not at present
Events/Activity:	
Services per year:	1
Christmas memory tree:	Not currently
Heritage Open Days:	Not currently
Ride & Stride:	Not currently
Champing:	No, not possible due to location. For further information, please see Champing introduction and typical church income at appendix 4.
Retail:	Not currently
Health and Safety:	
Fire rated capacity:	60
Seating capacity:	60 (but one pew currently not usable)
Site plan:	Unavailable
Individual item security measures:	Uninstalled
Accessibility details:	Provided via CCT website
Risk assessment general:	Current
Risk assessment fire:	Current
COSHH listing:	Current
Portable appliance listing:	Current
Pews:	Mostly sound, but currently one damaged unusable one
Security Audit	Current

Conservation reports

<p>Annualised maintenance costs (Exclusive of VAT):</p> <p>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.</p>	£4,494.44*
<p>Routine maintenance costs (Per annum and exclusive of VAT):</p> <p>Total cost of two maintenance visits per year exclusive of any additional maintenance items included above. A list of the maintenance tasks included in the twice-annual maintenance visits is available to view at appendix 3.</p>	£1,140
<p>Other maintenance costs total (Exclusive of VAT):</p> <p>Additional maintenance needs discovered during twice-yearly maintenance visits, costed and listed individually below.</p>	£225
- Investigate biological growth	£125
- Repair wobbly pew	£100
<p>Total short term repairs:</p> <p>Small scale items of limited cost which could be fulfilled with minimal fundraising, costed and listed individually below.</p>	£18,050
- Rainwater goods	£6,500
- Structural engineers report into the cracking around the porch etc	£1,550
- Conservation of polychrome decoration	£2,500
- Repointing and repairs to Heavitree stone	£5,500
- Armorial Cartouche	£2,000
<p>Total medium term repairs:</p> <p>More expensive needs such as roof repairs and tower repairs which may require more involved fundraising and grant applications, costed and listed individually below.</p>	£57,000
- Clean and limewash south and west windows	£10,000
- Repairs to flooring (inc pews)	£47,000
<p>Total long term repairs:</p>	£127,500

Items which are known to require works in the longer term but which are not essential in the near future, costed and listed individually below.	
- Comprehensive repairs to chancel and nave roofs; slating, roof carpentry, ceiling construction and plasterwork, all beneath overall canopy.	£100,000
- Sheltercoat tower	£15,000
- Bell repairs	£12,500
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, costed and listed individually below.	£24,700
- Health and Safety works to stairs, hatches etc	£10,200
- Redecorate ceilings	£12,000.00
- Conservators report on remaining monuments	£2,500.00
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

Exeter St Martin		Church Code: EXE				
Visitors	Number of visitors	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
		14,402	16,113	4,837	11,754	0
	Site Wallsafe per Visitor	0.10	0.07	0.33	0.09	0.00
	Trust Wallsafe per Visitor	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.19	0.00
Income						
		2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
	Box Collections	506	965	1,592	1,078	81
	Contactless Donations	884	214	0	0	0
	Text Giving	19	9	0	0	0
	Service Collection	359	0	40	120	0
	Service Fees	250	0	0	0	0
	Donations	178	63	148	1,151	0
	Events	289	0	0	0	0
	Third Party Hire	4,783	3,500	3,582	2,435	644
	Earned	137	0	0	0	0
	Grant	0	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	7,406	4,751	5,362	4,785	725
Expenditure						
	Total Conservation spend since Vesting (non maintenance)	287,415				
		2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
	Conservation	209	0	0	0	993
	Maintenance	1,497	1,294	1,185	1,924	1,100
	Electricity	718	738	1,502	80	816
	Gas	0	0	0	0	0
	Water	723	665	588	574	579
	Other	816	863	0	0	0
	Total	3,963	3,560	3,275	2,578	3,489
	Income less Maintenance	5,909	3,457	4,177	2,861	-375
	Income less Expenditure	3,442	1,191	2,086	2,207	-2,764
	Restricted Donation As of 1st April 2025	0				



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Trust**

NB: Exeter St Martins also has a caretaker who opens/closes each day at c.£1250/year

Income less annualised maintenance 2024-5

£2911

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

Local Community Officer' s Summary

This pretty and popular city centre church benefits from its city centre location and attracts very significant visitor numbers and wall safe donations, however the visitor numbers have reduced in the last few years. Although declining visitor numbers is a trend nationally across a lot of our sites, at St Martin' s it could be linked to the effect of the scaffolding, and fewer open businesses, on Cathedral Green as a result of the Royal Clarence hotel fire in 2016. The Trafalgar concerts also contributed a lot to the wall safe donations, but these stopped in 2019 having a knock on effect on donations. St Martin' s is one of our new sites for a contactless donation machine which may help increase donations.

St Martin' s is opened daily but is currently underused and has much potential for use either by the community or for third party hire. Currently one church service happens each year and the church is booked ad-hoc for musical events, as well as each October-December by Cards for Good Causes. Over the last year new events and activities have been trialled with the support of some new volunteers and community supporters. This includes concerts, history tours and artist events.

Considering its city centre location St Martin' s benefits from only a very small but supportive group of volunteers and keyholders. It would be good to develop a team of people to organise events and activities, or to attract additional hirers of the church. The volunteer role of Events Coordinator at Bristol churches, which are in similar city centre locations, has been very successful and this could be an approach to recruit someone at Exeter.

CCT would be keen to continue the existing partnership with the University of Exeter Chapel Choir, although there is less capacity within CCT now to actively seek out high level commercial partnerships. It is possible that this is something an Events Coordinator volunteer could progress.

Currently (as of autumn 2025) the small group of volunteers has grown slightly and its possible that a Friends group will form. The LCO and volunteers are looking into ideas for developing the use of the gallery as a cultural or hire space. A research phase is currently underway to understand how the gallery and church could be used by community and cultural groups in future with a view to potentially a project longer term. There are no toilets or running water at St Martins which makes it hard to currently be an attractive hire proposition. The gallery would also need improvements to make it a safe space if it were to be opened to visitors.

Part B - Consultation (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), **three** responses were received for **St Martin' s Church, Exeter**, by the deadline of **31 August**.*

All three responses received were from people writing in a personal capacity, rather than on behalf of an organisation. Some people gave more than one answer to questions and this is reflected in the responses below.

In addressing the question of a **perfect outcome for our work together at the church and what they would like to see happen in terms of community involvement and other use of the building** the respondents indicated the following:

- Would like to see the Trafalgar Tour/University of Exeter Chapel Choir concerts take place again: 2 people
- Use of the church for other activities eg lectures, private concerts: 1 person
- Include the Church on the Exeter Red Coat Tours itinerary: 1 person
- Amplification needed for some events: 1 person
- Inclusion in a heritage trail or with Heritage Open Day talks and activities: 1 person

In writing about challenges anticipated in respect of repair liabilities and running costs, respondents indicated that **the challenges they anticipated for a sustainable future at St Martin' s included:**

- Financial: 1 person
- Results of current social distancing: 1 person
- Building too cold to host events over winter, heating is poor: 1 person
- Lack of space and kitchen makes serving hot food/drinks difficult: 1 person
- Other church buildings in city centre are more appropriate for weddings: 1 person
-

Effect of the building work the Royal Clarence Hotel fire and hopeful things will improve when the building work is completed: 1 person

- Narrow entrance and passageway to the church: 1 person
- Difficulty of encouraging people to do more than just look in through the door: 1 person

Thinking about local life away from the church, when asked **which other community projects or activities might combine with our work to protect the church for the future**, respondents stated the following:

- None: 1 person
- Increasing links with Exeter Cathedral and Devon & Exeter Institution: 1 person
- Offering the church as a meeting place for other denominations or nationalities: 1 person
-

Considering **if increased use of the church might benefit the community, or if increased use might benefit the church itself**, respondents replied:

- Yes: 1 person
 - If more community events took place at the church and these resulted in increased donations/ticket sales: 1
- No: 1 person
- Other: 1 person
 - Competing with many other similar buildings in Exeter

In relation to identifying **the most important conservation priorities for St Martin' s Church**, respondents stated:

- Repair the broken pew: 1 person
- Queried if it was worthwhile repairing the bells: 1 person
- None/not stated: 1 person
-

Regarding priorities, opportunities or ideas for fundraising, respondents suggested the following **ideas and opportunities for fundraising** for the church:

- None/no answer/skipped question: 2 people
- More chargeable community events: 1 person
 - Increasing links with Exeter Cathedral and Devon & Exeter Institution: 1 person
- Use of the church for other activities eg lectures, private concerts: 1 person
-

Also when asked what would be the **best ways to get started with the above suggested fundraising** respondents stated:

- None/no answer/skipped question: 1 person
- Approach local organisations who might use the building: 1 person
- Difficulty of competing with other local organisations and charities, and of protecting buildings not being the highest priority currently: 1 people

When asked whether they would be **interested and available to take part in future fundraising** respondents answered accordingly:

- Yes: 1 person
- No: 1 person
- Already take part in fundraising activity: 1 person

In seeking respondents' **participation in a future group discussion regarding church planning**:

- Available either in person or through digital meetings: 0 people
- Available in person only: 1 person
- Available via phone or digital meetings: 1 person

In answering our final, open question about **any additional church matters not covered in other areas of the survey**, the following responses were received:

- None/no answer/skipped question: 1 person
- Acknowledgement of the difficult time all churches face currently: 1 person

In addition to responses fielded through the questionnaire, a further **2** respondents wrote back to their Local Community Officer, expressing the following perspectives:

- Corrections to elements of the Church Plan: 1 person
 - Positive feedback for the Church Plan document itself and appreciation that we are working on ways to secure the church's future: 1 person
- Suggestion of hiring the gallery space out as an artists studio: 1 person

Part C - Community Recommendations

Community Meeting: 28th Jan 2021

Attending: Local Community Officer and 1 member of the community

Other organisations to investigate partnerships with:

- Respondent A suggested linking up with Devon & Exeter Institution and Exeter Cathedral for events and information sharing. Respondent A has given LCO contact details for staff at these organisations.

Barriers to expanding the usage of the building:

- Respondent A feels that the dampness and the mould in the church are barriers to wider usage of the church, and could cause health problems if the gallery was rented out to an artist without any action being taken to address these issues.

Priorities for the building:

- Respondent A feels that improving the heating should be a priority as it would help with the mould issues, and would enable the building to be used more often during the colder months of the year.

Plaster cartouche:

- Respondent A has provided contact details for the Librarian and Cathedral Archaeologist who might be able to help with information and research about the plaster cartouche.

Increasing donations:

- Respondent A queried whether more could be done to highlight the wall safe as it is quite tucked away and visitors often walk past it without noticing it.

Daily opening:

- Respondent A kindly offered to help out with some of the unlocking and locking of the church.

Community Meeting: 9th June 2023

Attending: Local Community Officer and 1 member of the community

Items discussed were:

1. Events/Fundraisers

There currently isn't much activity which brings in an income towards the annualised maintenance costs at St Martins. P explained that Trafalgar Tours previously brought groups to St Martins for weekly concerts which brought in a good amount of income over a 4 year period. This arrangement stopped in

2019 and there have not been many bookings post covid. P suggested a putting a sign up asking if people would like to rent the space for events.

2. Volunteers

Currently P is the only volunteer at St Martins and their involvement related to supporting the tour concerts. The problems with getting a community around St Martins was discussed since it is right in the city centre and surrounded by historic buildings, many of which are active community spaces and have their own volunteers and supporters. P enjoyed helping with events and is happy to get back involved on this basis if the opportunity arises. A small team of volunteers who could help with cleaning, researching and sharing the history of St Martins or organising fundraisers for the CCT is needed.

Stakeholder Meetings: Summer 2023

With: InExeter, Exeter Cathedral Archaeologist, Exeter Cathedral Learning Team, Incumbent

Various meetings were held over summer 2023 between the LCO and local organisations to consider how we could collaborate. Items discussed:

InExeter may be able to support with volunteer recruitment.

Incumbent pointed out the increasingly poor state of the roof following the fall of the pinnacle from Mol's coffee house under the previous owners. It was suggested we highlight wedding blessings since they don't need a special license. The use of the gallery space for an artist in residence or similar was also discussed and it was questioned whether the organ (unplayable) could be removed to create more space.

Exeter Cathedral Learning team are interested in linking up for school visits and family events.

Community Meeting: 9th Feb 2024

Attending: Local Community Officer and 3 members of the community

Items discussed were:

1. Events/activities/fundraisers

The idea of another arrangement like the one with Trafalgar Tours weekly concerts being re-started again was discussed. Currently the LCO has reached a dead end with this.

The idea of the gallery being used by an artist was discussed. It's a fantastic space and could be a wonderful site for a creative person.

A contactless giving machine was installed in the church in January. Donations in the wall safe have reduced so it would be good to know how much has been donated via the machine.

2. Volunteers

The LCO is having a stall at Exeter Cathedral Volunteer Fayre in March to promote St Martin's and create a bit more interest in being involved there. Ideas were shared on what to have on the stall.

Community Meeting: 16th April 2024

Attending: Local Community Officer and 6 members of the community

Items discussed were:

1. Events/Fundraisers

The LCO explained that St Martin's is in a great location in the heart of the city but is underused by the community at the moment with very little activity to encourage more people to use and care for the church, bring in visitors or fundraise. It would be great to create more interest in St Martin's as a community and concert space as well as potentially offering guided tours/open days.

A date of 15th June was pencilled in to trial offering some sort of history tour to visitors. Another open day may happen during Heritage Open Days.

Community Meeting: 31st Jan 2025

Attending: Local Community Officer and 6 members of the community

Items discussed were:

1. Events/Fundraisers

There were a lot of new events and activities at the church last year.

This year the group would like to build on the sorts of events and activities which worked well and trial another couple of things. Events discussed were:

- March cultural event with the Durds
- Easter and Christmas concerts with Tess and the D'Urbervilles
- Literary themed event on June 8th to tie in with Celebration of CCT Churches and the Exeter City of Literature book fair on Cathedral Green. Possibly involving a general introduction to the CCT and short talks on local writers. Could be in partnership with the Devonshire Association.
- Art in St Martins – the artists will be back displaying their work
- History Open Days – no specific dates were discussed but hopefully ad hoc days over the summer. It's the 960th year since the church was consecrated in July so possibly something around that.
- Heritage Open Days – this year it's an architecture theme. Ideas discussed were possibly a display. Possibly a hub for what's happening over HODs (if there was enough stewards to support this). Possibly a performance space.
- Exhibition space – the idea of trialling St Martins as an exhibition space was discussed.

2. New ways of using the church

Different ideas around future use of the church and potential improvements were discussed:

The idea of **lighting** which could be activated by visitors to make it more welcoming/less gloomy. At this stage it has been floated as an idea but the LCO explained there is no way to currently make this happen except as part of a project.

Improving the look of the church through **planters/micro gardens** in the mini spaces outside the church was discussed. The concept of an 'eco church' was raised – is this something relevant to St Martins?

Gallery – various ideas have been raised in discussions with volunteers/stakeholders at St Martins over the last two years about possible future use of the gallery space. A volunteer has been supporting the LCO with advertising the gallery as a potential usable space in order to garner interest in it. A future project could focus on making the gallery (and St Martins) more usable to groups as a creative space but it was agreed it's important to gauge interest in it first. In January 2025 the LCO and a volunteer met with Exeter City of Literature to discuss possible use of the gallery as a creative space for writers. It's possible that it could be trialled in this way to get feedback on whether it could be a useful, usable space either as it is now or with improvements (e.g. sink, toilets, making the gallery attractive and safe for visitors) as part of a future project. Input is also being gathered by other potential users of the space and will continue to be gathered as research.

Office – could this space be used more if it was tidied up?

Partnerships – this was discussed as being key to success. Making links with other heritage and arts organisations can help unlock opportunities and support networks.

Vision – the idea of creating a two page *Vision for St Martins* to cover the next CCT strategy period (starts April 2025) was discussed. It could cover things which could be achieved without any interventions needed and things which are possible with fundraising.

3. Conservation

A few volunteers had read the 2011 architects inspection report and the 2018 bell report. There is concern around minor interventions being needed to improve the church and prevent deterioration. The idea of a day being booked in to both tidy the office space and also to look at what needs doing (e.g. creating ventilation by re-opening windows currently closed off) was discussed.

It was realised recently that St Martins has a boxed in water tap in the porch. CCT are paying for the connection but it was raised that we may be paying too much for the connection as it is not used or connected to a sink/toilet.

Someone approached the LCO about a WW1 memorial from St Pauls (demolished Exeter church) and whether it could be homed at St Martins. At this stage the CCT is unable to accept it and LCO will suggest other avenues the owner could try locally to have it homed.

Community Meeting: 15th May 2025

Attending: Local Community Officer and 3 members of the community

A meeting was held to talk about plans for the upcoming **Celebrate Your CCT Church Week** in June with the group holding open days on the 8th (10:00-16:00), 9th (10:30-14:30), 14th (14:30-17:00) and 15th (10:30-16:00) June. It was decided to display 6-8 books from St Martins (possibly different ones each day) which are not normally available to the public. The volunteers would like to reprint copies of the folded A4 leaflet walkaround guide for the open days so more discussion was had around how this could be achieved.

A catalogue of the books (mainly bibles) relating to St Martins has recently been carried out by volunteers and the future of the books was discussed. More research will be carried out on possible solutions as to their future as they are not currently stored in a satisfactory way.

Community Meeting: 2nd July 2025

Attending: Local Community Officer and 4 members of the community

A meeting was held to discuss plans by a core group of volunteers to put in an application for a **development/viability project** at St Martins to develop underused spaces (e.g gallery, vestry, tower room, porch). The project has been called: *Exeter St Martin's: Transforming Spaces for its Second Millennium*. One suggestion was the Heritage Revival Fund (run by the Architectural Heritage Fund) and the group plan to enquire to see if it is considered by the AHF to be a good fit. Another possibility suggested by CCT is the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

It was raised that further input from conservation is needed about whether the building is in a fit state to be developed. Does any work need to be done before any development work takes place as there isn't a recent condition report.

Also discussed were future dates for history **open days** (see dates in 'community actions' below), a fundraiser music event in September (14th September 1-4pm – an experiment with drop in music and tea/coffee) creating a **Vision for St Martins**, how the group should be constituted, and a possible flyer about St Martins to put around town.

A follow up meeting is planned for **Friday 1st August at 10am**.

Update: outside of this meeting the LCO has been in discussions with the two artists who helped set up *Art in St Martins* and recently won the CCT's Creativity Award for their drawings and input into the new spotter boards in St Martins. They have suggested an **Artist in Residence scheme trial** for 2026 and drafted a proposal. Next steps would be for the LCO to draw up a Memorandum of Understanding for the artists and take further steps to plan this.

Community Meeting: 1st Aug 2025

Attending: Local Community Officer, Conservation Project Manager and 4 members of the community

A meeting was held to further discuss plans to put in an application for a **development/viability project** at St Martins. An enquiry to the AHF's Heritage Revival Fund has been made so the project viability phase will be discussed further at the next meeting once we hear back.

A lot of work has already been carried out to survey visitors and stakeholders re their thoughts on St Martins, its current use and potential. Additional stakeholders were suggested at the meeting and the idea of a community consultation session over Heritage Open Days was discussed (date/time tbc).

There was a discussion around fitting any capital works around **conservation/maintenance needs**. The CPM will aim to appoint an architect who can carry out an up to date report. It is hoped that the future of the historic books relating to St Martins could also form part of a development project.

The next meeting is planned for **Friday 5th Sept 10am**.

Update: outside of this meeting the LCO has been in discussion with a musician re a poetry and music afternoon as a fundraiser for the CCT on **14th Sept 12-4pm**.

Community Meeting: 5th Sept 2025

Attending: Local Community Officer and 2 members of the community

A meeting was held with two St Martins volunteers to discuss the **development/viability project** and other upcoming plans.

Development/Viability Project

An enquiry to the AHF's Heritage Revival Fund was made and the *Exeter St Martin's: Transforming Spaces for its Second Millennium* project was not considered a close enough match to progress. Therefore the group will aim to progress plans for an options appraisal style investigation by a local architect to develop a plan for the underused spaces (via other grant funding), backed up by the research on building use and ideas being gathered by R.

Thoughts around the gallery were considered again and discussions were had around whether it could be a good place to display the books during open days. No decision was reached around this. Ideas are still ongoing around using this space for an artist/writer in residence and trials could be held around this during 2026.

Using the tower for events was discussed but no decision was made around how it could be used as safety and practicality needs to be considered.

Friends Group

There is interest in setting up a Friends of St Martins charity to enable the group to apply for small grants for smaller projects at the church. This will be considered further over the winter and mentioned as an idea to other supporters and visitors during open days to see if more interest can be generated.

Community events for 2026

It was decided that expanding the Open Day offering, especially when there are fairs on Cathedral Green, was a good use of time as it has been identified in the research by R that no visitors surveyed during July 2025 had planned to visit. Hence just by opening the doors and welcoming people in footfall (and donations) dramatically increase. It will therefore be necessary to get more volunteers involved. More ideas for events will be discussed at the next meeting (date tbc).

Other

It is hoped that there will be an artist in residence in spring.

It was noted that the area at the base of the tower works as a meeting space for around 6 people to sit around a table.

It was decided to refocus the book sale area into a reading corner area so people can relax in the church.

Community Meeting: 5th Sept 2025

Attending: Local Community Officer and 4 members of the community

A meeting was held at St Martins to discuss the **development/viability project** (volunteers are looking into alternative grant options), a **possible Friends Group** (a draft constitution to be sent to the CCT to check) and other upcoming events and plans.

Events

There will be two St Martins fundraising concerts on December 23rd (Tess & the D'Urbervilles choir and an afternoon concert) with ticketing being trialed. It is hoped to expand the open days in 2026 (maybe April – September) as they are very successful in getting people into the church and engaging with it as a space and learning about its history.

The LCO will be meeting artists in December to discuss an artist in residence or Art in St Martins week in 2026.

Gallery and Organ

A local organ restorer visited the gallery organ just before the meeting. The organ is not one of quality or historic value but it might be possible for a restoration project with volunteers to take place as an learning opportunity. It was agreed by volunteers that it would be nice for the organ to be played rather than taking up space on the gallery to no purpose. As it is not a significant organ and of a smaller size it would be acceptable for it to be played by amateurs as well so could also be a good learning tool once it is fixed.

A writer visited the gallery just before the meeting and is hopefully trialing it as a writing space for a few sessions in January 2026.

Part D - Action Plan

Community Actions

Short Term Actions (to end April 2026)

- DV to look into a local architect who could carry out a feasibility/options appraisal study into developing underused spaces at St Martins as part of the *Exeter St Martin's: Transforming Spaces for its Second Millennium* project.
- DV, P (and LCO) to think about funding opportunities for the investigative phase.
- Looking into the details of setting up a Friends Group – DV sending CCT a draft constitution

Medium Term Actions (to end April 2027)

- DV & P to carry on investigations into the book catalogue's future
- All to consider using the gallery for an artist/writer in residence – open to opportunities for a trial
- R to continue gathering research on how the church could be used by local groups/organisations and getting feedback on it's usability, with the support of the LCO (**update**: a summary of visitor conversations from June 2025 has been created and more input is being sought from stakeholders).
- DV to look into an Eco church and planter type ideas for St Martins
- S & LCO to liaise re a two page Vision for St Martins to cover the next strategy period and to get input from other interested volunteers/supporters of St Martins (**update**: R has created *A Vision*)

for *St Martins* Aug 2025 which has been circulated for comment. A strategy on which concepts to focus on will follow)

Actions complete

- R to ask Apple store re volunteering on socials
- DV & P to sand and revarnish noticeboard
- DV & P to refocus the book sale area into a reading corner area so people can relax in the church.
- Supporting Music and Poetry afternoon on Sept 14th 2025
- DV, P & S to discuss ideas for literary themed event on June 8th and Heritage Open Days event (**update:** June event went ahead, an open day is planned for 26th July and HODs events planned: open days for 15th(including a guided walk in the afternoon by an artist), 17th and 21st Sept 2025)
- DV to look into ideas around using St Martin's as an exhibition space
- P to introduce caretaker of St Martins to R
- DV to enquire with AHF re a development project under the Heritage Revival Fund
- DV to fill in a Community Initiative Project form for the CCT to get approval for a development phase prior to any capital works
- R to contact CCT's Volunteering Manager to ask re setting up a Friends Group
- DV & P to liaise re any other history open afternoons in 2025
- T & LCO to liaise re possible concert dates for Easter and Christmas (**update:** Easter not progressed, concert planned for 23rd Dec 2025)
- DV & LCO to organise date to tidy up and create inventory of office space. Also to note small changes needed to improve care of St Martins (**update:** an inventory now created 2025).
- DN & LCO to liaise re dates for March event 2025
- DV & P to discuss content for the 'tours' on 15th June and feedback to group
- Consider event during Heritage Open Days 2025
- DN to feedback re concert idea for summer 2025

Local Community Officer Actions

Short Term Actions (to end April 2026)

- Progress the idea of a learning project to restore the organ if this could be done at no (or low) cost (**Update:** conservation colleagues have been consulted and there is general support for the idea)
- Ask existing volunteers re volunteers for church clean Dec 23rd morning and event support, gallery clean early January.
- LCO (with DV and P) to think about funding opportunities for the investigative phase of the *Exeter St Martin's: Transforming Spaces for its Second Millennium* project.
- LCO to ask Exeter Heritage Partnership re volunteer welcome guides for 2026 April-September. Also contact EHP re social media volunteer
- Share draft *Vision for St Martins* and viability/development project with stakeholders including Exeter Heritage Partnership (EHP)
- Get further input from conservation about whether the building is in a fit state to be developed. Does any work need to be done before any development work takes place. (**update:** Conservation Project Manager planning to attend next meeting. An architect will be asked to carry out a report)

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- T & LCO to liaise re possible concert dates for Easter and Christmas (**update:** date set for 23rd Dec 2025)
 - Investigate costs of tap in porch and whether CCT paying too much for this (**update:** water tested, awaiting result).
 - Find out how many CCT members live in area and whether we can engage them for events or see if they would like to volunteer.
 - Contact Devon Historic Churches Trust re possible links.
 - Follow up re WW1 memorial from St Pauls church

Medium Term Actions (to end April 2027)

- Draw up a Memorandum of Understanding for the Artist in Residence trial (Update: having discussions in Dec 2025 with artists)
- Investigate use of the gallery space for an artist in residence or similar and investigate whether the organ (unplayable) could be removed to create more space (under discussion – possible project to reuse spaces in St Martins under development. Research on using space in progress. Currently considered no need to investigate removing organ unless a strong reason emerges, and as of Oct 2025 a local organ player may support a project to restore the organ with volunteers)
- S & LCO to liaise re a two page Vision for St Martins to cover the next strategy period and to get input from other interested volunteers/supporters of St Martins. (**update:** Vision completed by R in draft form Aug 2025 and a strategy on which concepts to focus on will follow)

Long term actions (to end April 2028)

- Investigate suitability of church for exhibitions, concerts and use as gallery space
- Investigate musicians, artists, theatre companies or poets who might wish to use the church
- Consider potential for introduction of venue to prospective new participants for events, hires, group visits etc
- Review prioritisation of and means for repair / conservation works as outlined in the conservation report in Section A.

Actions complete

- LCO to ask conservation about volunteers sanding and revarnishing noticeboard (update: done and advice on doing this given to volunteers)
- Look into open afternoons during 2026 which coincide with partners on Exeter Cathedral Green (update: trialed open afternoon on a Wednesday, same day as D&EI)
- Supporting Music and Poetry afternoon on Sept 14th 2025 – make signs for door and refreshments
- Find out re CCT holding fund for church small expenses to negate the necessity of a Friends type bank account (for reprinting leaflets etc) (**update:** this is not something we can offer atm)
- Add planned events up to end Sept 2025 to website and Heritage Open Days (**update:** all done)
- Give R details of further stakeholders to contact
- Ask whether asbestos survey needed if the gallery space is used (asbestos in organ). (**update:** conservation consider it safe as the asbestos will not be disturbed)
- Contact incumbent re thoughts on the book catalogue (July 2025)
- Bring collection CCT bucket, tablecloth and bunting to the church for the June events (May 2025)
- LCO to contact conservation team re opening windows to create ventilation and also to get the more recent buildings report.

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- DV & LCO to organise date to tidy up and create inventory of office space. Also to note small changes needed to improve care of St Martins.
 - DN & LCO to liaise re dates for March event
 - LCO to see how much was donated via the contactless card machine – (update April 24: £90 was donated in January but the contactless device was stolen from the machine in February along with the plug and lead so there was no machine at St Martins for several months).
 - Highlight to CCT’s conservation team the increasingly poor state of the damaged roof – roof being fixed April 2024
 - Work with Exeter Cathedral Learning team and CCT’s Heritage Learning Officer on a plan to link up for school visits and family events – under discussion
 - Investigate options for recruiting additional volunteers and community members, particularly for research about the Church or the cartouche, for fundraising, and for organising events, lectures, Heritage Open Day events, new high level commercial partnerships similar to the previous partnership with Trafalgar Tours etc
 - Contact Trafalgar tours to enquire about restarting the concerts at St Martins and investigate other tour companies who may need a similar arrangement. (Update July 23 - Contacted Trafalgar Tours – no response)
 - Create a sign asking if people would like to use the church for events – done
 - Link up with other heritage organisations in the vicinity. (Update July 23 - The LCO has contacted the D&EI and Exeter Cathedral events team re meeting up/working collaboratively).

CCT Actions Other

Short term actions

- None as yet

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)	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 **£4303.94** (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 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	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Langport, Somerset	£10,472.40	£2,765.60	£3,809.94	£3,128.00	£20,175.94
Emborough, Somerset		£2,024.30	£1,378.49	£2,625.00	£6,027.79
Chiselhampton, Oxfordshire	£10,156.29	£2,696.40	£5,864.11	£1,705.00	£20,421.80
Wolfhamcote, Warwickshire		£3,001.00	£2,213.77	£1,624.00	£6,838.77
Holme Lacy, Herefordshire		£4,368.80	£4,758.55	£1,004.00	£10,131.35
TOTAL	£20,628.69	£14,856.10	£18,024.86	£10,086.00	£63,595.65