



ST MARY'S CHURCH, NORTH HUISH

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 Mary's Church in North Huish, Devon, was built in the 14th century. It is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade I listed building.

Although some parts of the church are 14th century, the south aisle is 15th century. A rector was recorded in 1308 and the reconstruction of the church was dedicated in 1336 by Bishop John Grandisson. The building also underwent extensive renovation in the 19th century.

The 2 stage west tower has buttresses on each corner. The ringing stage is reached by a polygonal stair turret on the north side. The tower is surmounted by an octagonal recessed spire.

The interior includes early screens and the moulded octagonal granite font is dated 1662, but the rest of the furnishings, polygonal wooden pulpit and wall tablets are Victorian. There are no bells - they were taken down after the church closed in 1993 and given to Salcombe Church.

St Mary's was declared redundant on 1 March 1993, and vested with the Churches Conservation Trust on 10 August 1998.

Current use (bookings) & voluntary activity

St Mary'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 had an active programme of annual services pre Covid, with a Carol Service, Rogation Service and Armistice Day Service, and the church has hosted a wedding blessing and a funeral. The churchyard (not CCT owned) is well maintained and has a water tap.

The church benefits hugely from very generous care and support from a number of active community members, and additional members of the community support the church well, but less regularly through cleaning sessions and attendance at events. CCT are extremely grateful for the support of these community members.

Voluntary activity undertaken includes:

- Looking after the keys
- Ad hoc unlocking/locking when required
- Ad hoc cleaning days prior to services and events
- Remittance of wall safe income
- Planning and delivery of all bookings including services
- Ad hoc reporting of building change

The Local Community Officer (LCO) also carries out biannual site inspections and 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. In addition the church also receives two maintenance visits per year from CCTs specialist maintenance contractor and detailed Condition Reports from the allocated Architect.

Church Information

Open Churches Policy status:	Open
Local Community Officer:	Marie Leverett
Current project:	Community Initiative Project – electrics extension
Cleaning schedule:	No formal schedule, but volunteers clean the church as needed
Welcome table:	Maintains stock of current leaflets (NB unavailability of future leaflets for re-stock)
Keyholder role:	Fulfilled
Key representative role:	Fulfilled (remittances, CCT liaison, volunteer Management, cleaning, maintenance reporting)
Area volunteer role:	Vacant
Fundraising roles:	Vacant and necessary
Stewardship roles:	Surplus to requirements
Research, interp & talks role:	Vacant and necessary
Accessibility details:	Provided via CCT website
CCT silver plaque:	Installed
CCT information board:	Not installed (for affix to noticeboard)
Oak post:	Not installed, not needed
CCT freestanding board:	Installed (broken)
Wall safe poster:	Installed, not current
CCT A board:	Not installed
Gift Aid envelopes:	Provided
Visitor book:	Installed
Building services:	Electric lighting

Parking:	Very limited, space for 1 car opposite church yard
Organ:	Not present
Churchyard:	Not owned by CCT, currently closed (but this may change for existing family plots)
Ringable bells:	There are no bells at North Huish
Pews:	Sound, no defects
Fire rated capacity:	170 (with both doors opened)
Seating capacity:	170
Site plan:	Available
Roof alarm:	Uninstalled
CCTV:	Uninstalled
Individual item security measures:	Uninstalled
Nearby attractions:	Dartmoor National Park, Buckfast Abbey, Pennywell Farm, and other nearby CCT churches: Torbryan, West Ogwell, Revelstoke and Princetown.
Social media presence:	Events at North Huish are advertised on the Diptford Facebook page, and the Three Rivers Mission Community Website (3rivers.org.uk)
Images on CCT website:	One of three
Regular feature parish news:	Not known
Services per year:	None at present (previously 3 per year)
CofE support for services:	Yes
Christmas memory tree:	No
Tea Party:	No
Heritage Open Days:	No
Ride & Stride:	No
Champing:	No. For further information, please see Champing introduction and typical church income at appendix 4.
Retail:	No, possible
Risk assessment general:	Current
Risk assessment fire:	Current
COSHH listing:	Current
Portable appliance listing:	Current
Security Audit:	Current
Children's explorer cart:	No, surplus to requirements

Children's trail:	No
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Conservation reports

Annualised maintenance costs (Exclusive of VAT): Annualised maintenance costs express the total costs of church maintenance divided by 25 years. Every forecasted cost which relates to the maintenance of this church over a period of 25 years is included. Any anticipated repairs are excluded. A list of typical maintenance tasks for any historic church, forecast over the period, is available to view at Appendix 2.	£5,238.44
Routine maintenance costs: (Per annum and exclusive of VAT): These are included in the annualised maintenance costs and are the total cost of two maintenance visits per year. A list of the typical maintenance tasks for any historic church included in the twice-annual maintenance visits is available to view at Appendix 3.	£1,152.00
Other maintenance costs total (Exclusive of VAT): Additional maintenance needs discovered during twice-yearly maintenance visits (costed and listed individually below).	£2,750.00
- Remove bird debris	£750.00
- Assess the condition of the hanging slates	£250.00
- Replace the missing stone in the upper section of the spire	£1,750.00
Total short term repairs: Small scale items of limited cost which could be fulfilled with minimal fundraising (costed and listed individually below).	£3,050.00
- Roof repairs	£3,050.00
Total medium term repairs: More expensive needs such as roof repairs and tower repairs which may require more involved fundraising and grant applications (costed and listed individually below).	£25,700.00
- Windows - stonework and glazing	£10,700.00
- Plaster repairs	£15,000.00
Total long term repairs: Items which are known to require works in the longer term but which are not essential in the near future (costed and listed individually below).	£96,500.00
- Tower repairs and repointing	£90,000.00
- Conservators report on monuments	£2,500.00
- Repair of monuments	£4,000.00

Total desirable repairs: Repairs which are not essential to the conservation health of the church but which might improve aesthetics or usability of the building.	None
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

North Huish		Church Code: NHU				
Visitors	Number of visitors	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
		1,181	1,601	726	84	0
	Site Wallsafe per Visitor	0.00	0.02	0.03	1.22	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	0	35	20	97	167
	Contactless Donations	0	0	0	0	0
	Text Giving	0	0	0	6	0
	Service Collection	250	0	0	0	0
	Service Fees	0	0	0	0	0
	Donations	322	220	27	0	0
	Events	600	600	0	0	0
	Third Party Hire	0	0	0	0	0
	Earned	0	0	0	0	0
	Grant	0	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0
Total	1,172	855	47	103	167	
Expenditure	Total Conservation spend since Vesting (non maintenance)	544,309				
		2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
	Conservation	0	94	14,919	160,696	0
	Maintenance	1,180	1,193	1,915	1,123	5,252
	Electricity	204	86	34	60	62
	Gas	0	0	0	0	0
	Water	0	0	0	0	0
	Other	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	1,384	1,372	16,868	161,879	5,314
	Income less Maintenance	-7	-338	-1,868	-1,020	-5,085
	Income less Expenditure	-212	-517	-16,821	-161,776	-5,147
		Restricted Donation As of 1st April 2025				
		6,810				

NB:

2021/2 conservation spend includes income from the **Heritage Stimulus Fund**

North Huish Electrics Project: This project was a Community Initiative Project completed on 19/11/2024 at a cost of £622.80 (raised by the community). In 2023-4, £200 was paid in by the community (showing under 'Donations'). In 2024-5 £122.80 was paid in under Donations and £300 paid in under Events by the community.

Income less annualised maintenance 2024/25 - £4066

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

Local Community Officer' s Summary

St Mary' s has quite a high annualised maintenance cost, partly due to the damp conditions at the church, and there is currently a large gap between the existing income and the annualised maintenance costs.

Services did not restart at St Mary' s post-Covid, which used to bring in footfall and donations, but there is currently an active group organising coffee mornings and events at the church which are bringing in much needed income towards the annualised maintenance costs as well as increasing visitor numbers. The community are currently starting a Community Initiative Project fundraiser to improve the electrics so events are easier to hold. An informal partnership with a local landowner has helped with parking for community events which has been a huge help since parking outside the church is very limited.

Other activities which could be considered to help raise funds for St Mary' s are musical concerts, poetry evenings, theatre performances, lecture or speaker events, clothes swaps, bake sales, art or photography exhibitions, craft skills events, plant and seed sales/swaps etc. The CCT are happy to help with promotion of events on the website, newsletters and local social media channels.

There are also possibilities for the church being used by location agents for filming and photography, and weddings or blessings would also be possible depending upon Archbishops Special Licenses being obtained.

Additional marketing of the Church could focus on local historical, archaeological, ecological or other relevant special interest societies with an interest in the local area. Voluntary effort towards research and interpretation products could encourage these kinds of bookings with tours of the site and details about its architecture and history (eg for Heritage Open Day to encourage donations or ticketed special events during the Summer), at the same time as enriching the visitor experience further. The Church could also be promoted through inclusion on local walking and cycling routes or heritage trails.

The site has a lot of open floor space for alternative use and stunning views from the porch across the countryside, so it could be considered as a venue for Champing (camping overnight in historic churches). However, the lack of toilet facilities make this challenging. Additional revenue could derive from promotion of local, sympathetic businesses seeking to promote services and products through signage at the church.

The Church would benefit from a freestanding CCT noticeboard and insert, upon which site specific health and safety and historical information, and details about upcoming events and local information could be displayed.

In October 2021 St Mary' s received a grant from the Government' s Culture Recovery Fund towards urgent repairs. The funding was used to repoint the stonework to the spire to ensure that St Mary' s remains watertight. This award was part of the wider Culture Recovery Fund which has already funded repairs at 26 of CCTs churches across England. The second round of funding made grants available to a further 13 churches across the country, of which St Mary' s Church was one.

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), **one** response was received for **St Mary's Church, North Huish**. However during later discussions under Part C, it was confirmed that the Church Plan was discussed by three key holders, and the survey responses reflected the opinions of these **three** key holders.

The response received was from someone writing in a **personal capacity**, rather than on behalf of an organisation, and where they gave more than one answer to questions this is reflected 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 respondent indicated the following:

- A greater range of community activities: 1 person

In writing about challenges anticipated in respect of repair liabilities and running costs, the respondent indicated that **the challenges they anticipated for a sustainable future at the church included:**

- Needs improvements in facilities to enable activities and events to take place, eg lighting, moving the electrical sockets out of the very damp tower to more suitable locations, a compostable toilet and hand washing facilities: 1 person
- Water would need to be plumbed into the church (there is a tap in the churchyard): 1 person
- Raising money and attracting the younger generation will be very challenging with the current lack of facilities: 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**, the respondent stated the following:

- North Huish is a small village without any community projects or activities except for those at the church: 1 person

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

- The building needs to be used more but the lack of facilities is restrictive: 1 person
- More community events could increase volunteers and involvement: 1 person

In relation to identifying **the most important conservation priorities for the Church**, the respondent stated:

- The water penetration on windows on the south side, which contributes to the damp as can be seen by the water marks: 1 person

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

- More community events: 1 person

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

-
- More community events: 1 person

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

- Yes: 0 people
- No: 0 people
- Already take part in fundraising activity: 1 person

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

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

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

- No answer/skipped question: 1 person

In addition to responses fielded through the questionnaire, a further **1** respondents wrote back to their Local Community Officer, expressing the following perspectives:

- Amendments and updates to the site specific information in Part A. These points will be amended accordingly before this Interim Church Plan is published and distributed.

Part C - Community Recommendations

Summary of community consultation meeting

Invitations to attend a consultation meeting to discuss the Church Plan, along with a Doodle Poll link to canvass availability and arrange a meeting date and time, were sent to all North Huish contacts on 22 December 2021.

Meeting 1: A Consultation Meeting was held by telephone with the following attendees:
The Local Community Officer, LCO
Respondent A, Volunteer

The following points were discussed:

- Respondent A confirmed that prior to completing the September survey they discussed the Church Plan document with two other local key holders who agreed with their comments. Therefore the comments returned on the survey represent the opinions of not just themselves, but also of the other two key holders as well.
Action: LCO to update Part B to reflect this.
- Respondent A confirmed that there were no services in any churches of the Parish this year, including North Huish, because of Covid-19.

Key conservation priorities:

- Respondent A expressed that they felt the following were the key conservation priorities at the church:
 1. Stopping the water from coming through the wooden floor in the tower into the belfry, and repairing the wooden floor. They are concerned about someone (CCT staff or contractors) falling through the rotten floor, and it is a long drop down on to concrete floor.
 2. Stopping the water from coming in around the windows on the South side.
 3. Repairing the falling plaster above the main door. This has got considerably worse, and gives a bad first impression of the church to visitors.
- Respondent A requested for the repair costs associated with any churchyard repairs be removed from the Church Plan.

Fundraising and events:

- Respondent A felt that the following were priorities in order to be able to run successful events at the church:
 - Working electrics at the very least (ideally moving the electrics to a drier area, and adding some additional sockets):
Currently:
 - It is not clear whether the electrics work;
 - Electrics are under the tower where the water pours in;
 - There are only 2 double sockets, one of which is in the wettest area under the tower, and extension cables have to be run throughout the church to power the keyboard, speakers and tea urn for services;
 - Volunteers are unable to clean the church at the moment as there are a lot of dead wasps and flies (an annual problem), bird debris and bat droppings. The safest way to clean these up is with the Henry Hoover; but without electricity they are unable to clean the church, and so can't have services or events.
- Hot water/water and a small electric water heater and a sink (necessary for washing hands and crockery etc; especially in during Covid times):

Currently:

- The volunteers have to bring water to the church in flasks (there is a tap in the churchyard but they are not sure it is drinking water, so it has to be boiled really well; they have never had a bill for the water, and there is no drainage).
- Volunteers have to take the dirty crockery home and wash it up there, which is risky when Covid could be a concern.
- If serving food after events people need to be able to wash their hands for food hygiene.
- A light fitting in the belfry as this is where the choir get ready before the Carol Service.
- Respondent A is realistic and realises that water and a sink are not things which can be achieved and installed quickly, and they feel that the electricians are the priority.

Respondent A feels fundraising options are hampered by:

- Lack of parking as only space for 1 car (using the neighbour's drive might be possible if prearranged)
- Lack of electric means it is not possible to clean the church
- Lack of water for hot drinks, washing facilities for crockery and hands
- Lack of a toilet (even if they had a compost toilet there is no drainage to empty it, and they feel they would still need hot water, especially if serving food)

But that the following are possible:

- There is space for a temporary portaloo in the churchyard (by the lych gate or where the seat is under the tower) for special events.
- The Parish have a small fridge that can be borrowed and set up a couple of days before to store milk, cream etc in (as long as the electric is working).
- There is crockery and a tablecloth in the vestry and Diptford has an urn.
- A resident nearby did offer their house as a venue for the supper after the Carol Service. This was before the pandemic, but might still be a possibility.

Potential for additional church services:

- It is hard to say whether an additional service would be possible. The incumbent has 7 active churches plus North Huish, so Respondent A thinks he might cut back on services rather than add more.
- Respondent A is also unsure about whether the Carol Service will continue.

Champing:

- Champing could be considered, but there is no pub in the village, and there is no drainage onsite for the compost toilet to be emptied into. Working electricians would also be needed.

Promotion of events:

Respondent A confirmed that they currently advertise events:

- In the Parish newsletter (email and print)
- On mission community website
- On posters in various places
- In the local South Hams paper and on their website

Other successful events locally:

-
- Many events are already taking place in nearby churches, so it's important not to duplicate or clash with established events at other churches. These are:
 - Daffodil Festival
 - Jigsaw Festival
 - Festival of Angels
 - Christmas Tree festival
 - Flower festival
 - Soup lunches at the churches (popular with the older residents who like the communal element)
 - Cream teas in the summer
 - Diptford has a fete
 - Strawberry Fayre
 - Flower show
 - Harvest meals
 - The local Women's Institute help with the Jigsaw Festival and Festival of Angels, but would be unlikely to come to North Huish

Concluding thoughts:

Respondent A feels that:

- The improvements to the facilities must be done to enable events to take place and fundraising to happen.
- If the church looks cared for (and is able to be cleaned - using electrics) people are more likely to visit again and donate money. It is currently covered in bat droppings and dead flies/wasps, is damp, has a rotten door, and the plaster is falling down. It is not inviting.
- Respondent A requested that the the costs associated with the churchyard and tomb repairs be removed from the Conservation Reports section as these are the responsibility of the PCC and not CCT.

LCO would like to express her thanks to the attendee for their time.

Actions from the meeting:

- **LCO** to update the information sheet (visitor guide) with the new CCT logo and send Respondent A some extra copies
- **LCO** to highlight to the Estate Officer that the porch door is rotten and has two holes in it, the falling plaster above the door is getting worse, and the key holders' request for working electrics.
- **LCO** to clarify ownership of the churchyard and discuss removing the churchyard costs from the Conservation Reports section with CCT colleagues.

Meeting 2: A Consultation Meeting was held by Zoom on **11 January 2022** at 14:00 with the following attendees:

The Local Community Officer (LCO)

Estates Manager (EM)

Respondent A, Volunteer

LCO introduced EM to Respondent A, and EM explained his role.

Actions from previous meeting

LCO updated on the actions from the previous meeting (detailed below):

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- **LCO** to update the information sheet (visitor guide) with the new CCT logo and send Respondent A some extra copies: This has not yet been completed, so this will be carried over. **Action not complete, carried over**
 - **LCO** to highlight to the Estate Manager that the porch door is rotten and has two holes in it, that the falling plaster above the door is getting worse, and the key holders' request for working electricians: LCO confirmed that these issues have been reported to Conservation colleagues. **Action complete**
 - **LCO** to clarify ownership of the churchyard and discuss removing the churchyard costs from the Conservation Reports section with CCT colleagues: LCO has discussed the issue of the ownership of the churchyard with Conservation colleagues. There had been previous confusion around this as the Land Registry plans showed the churchyard as belonging to CCT, however the Church Commissioners have confirmed this is incorrect, and that only the church itself was vested with CCT. Therefore the costs relating to the churchyard have been removed from this Church Plan document. **Action complete**

Heritage Stimulus Fund grant

LCO explained that St Mary's has been awarded a grant from the second round of the Heritage Stimulus Fund, which is part of the Culture Recovery Fund funded by the Government and administered at arms length by Historic England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The Culture Recovery Fund is designed to secure the future of Britain's museums, galleries, theatres, independent cinemas, heritage sites and music venues with emergency grants and loans.

In the first Heritage Stimulus Fund round 26 CCT churches across the country received grants, including Langport, Somerset, in the LCOs patch which received £8,000 for new gutters and improvements to drainage. In this second round an additional 13 CCT churches received grants, of which St Mary's Church is one.

The EM explained more details about the grant, confirming that St Mary's has been awarded £122,022 to spend on repairs to keep the worst of the water out of the church. This money covers 80% of the total cost for the project of £152,528.

The EM confirmed that the grant money will be spent on:

- Repointing the tower and spire where the majority of the water is coming in
- Repointing the parapet and repairing the coping stones and lead work
- Fixing the louvres and fitting new bird mesh to keep the birds out of the tower
- Clearing the drains
- Repairing the timber floors in the tower and improving the ladders
- Repairing the fly mesh around the windows, and tidying up the external pointing along the South side
- Internal plastering to the south aisle and main entrance: The plaster above the main door and above the South window has been repaired. This wall will also be redecorated and relime-washed.
- Replacing the consumer unit and sockets: The consumer unit has been replaced, new waterproof electrical sockets have been installed, and the electricians work again.
- Improvements to, and redecoration of, the rainwater goods: The old gutters have already been removed and the new ones will be painted grey.
- Clearing out the old boiler house: This has been completed, and the steps are now a lot less slippery.

EO confirmed that the aim is to complete all the work by the end of this financial year, however there is some flexibility on this deadline as the work will be weather dependent. **Action: LCO** to send some

information about the grant and the repairs to Respondent A for inclusion in the Parish newsletter by 21 January.

Respondent A informed EO that there are some items and bits of the original stonework stored in the vestry that the contractors might be able to reuse and refix. **Action: Respondent A** to drop their spare set of keys into the church for the contractors' use.

LCO explained that as the grant will pay for 80% of the total cost of the work CCT has paid for the remaining 20% from its reserves, however we are looking to fundraise to help cover the cost of this 20%. A way for people to donate online specifically to support St Mary's Church at North Huish has been set up at www.visitchurches.org.uk/NH.

The possibility for local fundraising was discussed and Respondent A explained that service capacity is very difficult at the moment. The incumbent is covering 7 parishes, and it is already hard to cover and run the existing services, so it would be very difficult to put on any additional services.

The possibility of Champing at the site had been briefly discussed previously, and Respondent A confirmed that they would be willing for the Champing team to consider the church as a possible Champing church as a source of income from the church. **Action: LCO** to email the Champing team to propose North Huish for consideration as a possible future Champing church to see what they say.

Respondent A also suggested registering the church for a Royal Mail postcode, as this would make it easier for people to find the church. This would be particularly useful if it was to be used for Champing. **Action: LCO** to register the missing postcode with Royal Mail.

Respondent A also confirmed that the PCC has begun the process of applying to close the churchyard at North Huish, and that there would be a planned power cut in the area on Monday 17 January. **Action: LCO** to email the Maintenance Contractors to let them know about the upcoming power cut.

The EM confirmed that he would be on site in a couple of weeks time and he invited LCO and Respondent A to meet him to find out more about the repairs and to look through the vestry. **Action: EM** to let LCO know when he will be at North Huish and LCO will let Respondent A know.

Actions from the meeting:

- **LCO** to update the information sheet (visitor guide) with the new CCT logo and send Respondent A some extra copies.
- **Respondent A** to drop their spare set of keys into the church for the contractors' use.
- **LCO** to send some information about the grant and the repairs to Respondent A for inclusion in the Parish newsletter by 21 January.
- **LCO** to email the Champing team to propose North Huish for consideration as a possible future Champing church to see what they say.
- **LCO** to email the Maintenance Contractors to let them know about an upcoming planned power cut in the area.
- **LCO** to register the missing postcode with Royal Mail.
- **EM** to let LCO know when he will be at North Huish and LCO will let Respondent A know.

Summary of Community Meeting 3: 23rd May 2023

Attending: Local Community Officer & 5 members of the community

1. Events

The community have organised a couple of events recently (a coffee morning on April 1st and a spring celebration on May 14th) which were well attended and supported. A local quarry owner has been allowing cars to park on their land which has been a huge help in aiding events to go ahead successfully. The group successfully advertised their events in the parish magazine, in leaflets and on social media and had lots of new visitors. C1 thinks there may be other people locally who would be interested in organising events at St Mary's. There is no village hall in North Huish or Avonwick (2 miles away) so St Mary's is a great space for community events (although there are no toilets). The money raised from these events have been a big help in fundraising for the annualised maintenance costs for St Mary's.

C3 needs keys to the church returning from the Estates Manager – they live locally and find it useful to have keys to help run events.

2. Services

Before Covid there were 3 services a year at St Mary's (rogation, armistice and Carols by Candlelight which had up to 180 visitors) taken by the incumbent. In 2019 the services stopped due to Covid and haven't been given approval to restart from the PCC. It seems like this is due to pressure on staff and resources within the parish and there is no rural dean at the current time. If the situation changes the local community at North Huish would like to resume services at St Mary's (up to six Sunday services each year, plus an unlimited number of occasional services are permitted at CCT churches with the approval of the local incumbent or priest in charge).

3. Maintenance Issues

C2 raised the issue of woodworm in the vestry. They want to try and get rid of the woodworm ridden items to stop it spreading. The LCO advised that for clearly modern items the group can remove them if there is agreement from all interested parties that they are not wanted or needed. For historic items (such as wooden bosses) advice would need to be sought from the Estates Manager.

The south door into the porch won't close and needs repairing. C2 mentioned a local craftsperson/carpenter who may be able to help. The LCO advised that there is unlikely to be funds available within the CCT for this repair work since the tower leak takes priority but will seek advice from the EM.

There is an ongoing problem with a leak in the tower which the LCO will also seek advice from the EM about.

Summary of Community Meeting 4: 19th Oct 2023

Attending: Local Community Officer & 15 members of the community

1. Events

Some of the group have organised a short Act of Remembrance for the local community at 10.50 on Armistice Day, 11th November, followed by tea and coffee being served. There is also a Carols by Candlelight on 10th December at 4pm at North Huish Church which will raise funds for the CCT. North Huish hand bells and a local folk group will be coming. Other ideas which were raised as possible future events were a memory sharing session about how things have changed and a display on the history of North Huish, sharing

photographs. The idea of setting up a North Huish Community Group Facebook group to help publicise events was raised.

2. Electrics

A Community Initiative Project (CIP) to extend the electrics provision at St Mary's has been submitted to the CCT and approved internally. Community initiative projects are initiatives for conservation, repair and adaptation work, or an activity with a direct physical impact on the historic fabric, proposed by a group interested in using and / or conserving their church. The CCT can support the project with advice but rely on the community to raise the funds.

3. Other

The difficulty in reading the monuments was raised, since they are up high above eye level. The idea of translating them and having a copy in the church was raised.

Concerns around the idea of headstones being removed and laid flat was raised (something occasionally done in other churchyards). The churchyard is not owned by the CCT so this is outside the CCT's control. It was not something the LCO was aware of as a possibility at St Mary's.

Update: The North Huish Electrics Project was a successful Community Initiative Project completed on 19/11/2024 at a cost of £622.80 (raised by the community). The electrics were extended from the tower and alongside the north side of the nave with an extra plug socket added in the north transept. The community were joint winners of the 2024 CCT Marsh Volunteer Awards for Fundraising Achievement.

Summary of Meeting: 8th Aug 2025

The LCO met with two CCT volunteers at North Huish church. Discussions were had around: the **Marsh Award money** which the community group are planning to spend on events (crockery and spot lights); a **possible project** to give better access to the tower base for setting up a table for events (more thought will be given to this before considering a Community Initiative Project); potentially advertising for **help with cleaning** the church; **the porch door** and the poor state it is in; the **entrance mat** which is curling and needs replacing; changes needed to **the website page** for North Huish church to make it more accurate; **upcoming events:** Harvest Lunch, Remembrance event and carols on 7th December.

Part D - Action Plan

Community Actions

Short Term Actions (to end Feb 2025)

- Look up mat size and type needed for entrance to replace curling mat
- Contact local carpenter to get second quote for porch door
- Consider Restless site for cleaning help (or ask LCO to do this if preferred)

Medium Term Actions

-
- Consider community initiative project to improve access to tower for events (still very much at discussion stage)

Actions complete

- C to organise storage of the historic wooden bosses following advice from the EM.
- C to lead on progressing the CIP electrics project with advice from the CCT.
- J to work on monument transcription for visitors and also suggested leaving a couple of old bibles in the church (on hold).
- M to set up Facebook group for the local community to keep in touch about events and activities at St Marys.

Local Community Officer Actions

Short Term Actions (to end Feb 2025)

- Purchase mat needed at entrance to replace existing one (curling)
- Update website with changes to Facilities info (no running water now) and volunteering (cleaner needed)

Medium Term Actions

Actions complete

- The LCO would be interested in coming along if the group organise another community event in order to meet more people in the local community – (the LCO came along to the summer celebration event).
- LCO to ask Estates Manager (EM) to post keys to C3 and to get advice on the woodworm and door – done. The EM has advised that the wooden bosses should be stored in newspaper lined plastic tubs with the lids kept ajar. If possible the very badly woodworm damaged ones and the mildly damaged ones should be kept separate. The group will need to check every couple of weeks initially for mould. If mould appears a different plan will need to be made (e.g. wire shelving). The EM thinks that the work done to rainwater goods in the vestry should help with moisture content and should reduce the woodworm problem. The EM has asked that next time it rains heavily it would be useful if one of the group could take some photos which might help more accurately identify the source of the leak.
- Support the CIP electrics project progress.

Local Community Officer & Community Medium/Long term actions (discussed with previous LCO – look at during next Church Plan meeting)

- Investigate options for recruiting additional volunteers and community members, particularly for organising events, activities and services, and for general fundraising
- Consider means for increasing additional public interest, footfall and consequent donations
- Investigate potential for scheduled cleaning days

-
- Review methods for promoting church to historical, archaeological or ecological societies, and inclusion in local heritage trails or walking/cycling routes.
 - Consider potential for introduction of venue to prospective new participants for events, hires, group visits etc
 - Investigate musicians, artists, theatre companies or poets who might wish to use the church
 - Discuss potential for regular church related features, parish newsletter and inclusion of church updates in parish council meetings
 - Complete a Community Audit for North Huish
 - Review church web page to ensure clear directions and parking information is available for all visitors
 - Review methods for promoting church to location agents, wedding companies etc

CCT Actions Other

Short term actions

- None as yet

Actions complete

- 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

These are typical costs so some may not be relevant to this church. The annualised maintenance costs for St Mary's, North Huish (see Conservation Report in Part A) are worked out depending on which items in this task list apply.

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
TOTAL (Excluding VAT)	Typical Maintenance Tasks Forecast over 25 Years			£107,598.57
TOTAL (Excluding VAT) / 25 years	Annualised maintenance costs express the total costs of church maintenance divided by 25 years.			£4,303.94

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