

St Mary's Woburn – Fabric Report – 2016-2017

We are fortunate that the overall fabric of St Mary's Church is in good order. The church is an imposing building that is admired and appreciated by many. Like all properties of its age it must be maintained and enhanced so that it can be used by current and future generations as a place of worship with a historical interest and significance. We are grateful to Woburn Estate who maintain the fabric of the building, and mow the grass to the south of it.

Over the past twelve months we have endeavoured to ensure that repairs where necessary have been made and that ideas and suggestions for improvements have been considered and carried out where finances have allowed. There have been several projects during the year, which has been an exceptional one in terms of expenditure.

- **Architect**

The Church Architect, Bruce Deacon retired in 2015. Following interviews, a new architect - Adrian Ringrose Dip Arch BA Arch RIBA of Stimpson Walton Bond in Northampton was appointed in May 2016 to carry out the Quinquennial Inspection in 2018.

- **Sound System**

The sound system that was installed in 2013 has been a great improvement. However, the number of events requesting recorded music is on the increase, and while the system was good for the spoken word, there was considerable distortion of music. An upgrade to it was undertaken in December at a cost of £7000.

- **Bells**

The rehunging of the bells was completed in May, and a service of dedication conducted by the Bishop of St Albans held on Saturday 14th at which the generosity of Professor Angela Newing who funded the work was recognised.

- **Louvres in the Bell Tower**

During the work to the bells, it was noticed that jackdaws were entering the bell chamber through the louvres and excrement was damaging the frame and working parts. Bedford Estate kindly organised and funded substantial netting over the louvres which prevents avian access while being invisible with the naked eye from ground level

- **Ringling Room**

The Bell ringing room and the stairs to it from the ground floor were repainted, greatly improving the ambiance of the room itself and access to it.

- **Church Surrounds**

The contract with Oakleaf Garden Maintenance continues. This ensures that those parts of the church grounds not looked after by Bedford Estates continue to be kept in a respectable condition.

- **Notice Board**

The noticeboard facing onto Park Street which was rotten has been replaced with a new one of identical design.

- **Graveyard**

Woburn PCC is responsible for the upkeep of the Graveyard behind the Heritage Centre in the High Street. The graveyard is maintained to a high standard by a small group of dedicated volunteers. A review of equipment was undertaken in 2016. An obsolete ride-on mower was sold and replaced with one kindly donated by Mr John Bradly . The other equipment was professionally serviced by ATM in Woburn Sands, and a grant received from Woburn Parish Council.

The trees overhanging Woburn School playground were pollarded back

A contract was entered into with Chris Leah of C & R Pest Management to control the moles.

- **The Old Parsonage**

This house (previously Christopher Sykes Antiques) was sold in January. The previous owner enjoyed informal and long standing agreement of access and parking over land owned by St Mary's which had never been formalised. The selling agents were made aware that there is no right of access over the entrance to the graveyard from Bedford Street. They acknowledged this and any potential purchasers were informed.

- **Lighting**

Lights were installed at the servery end in the crypt to make the entrance more welcoming.

- **Kitchen Equipment**

Repairs were undertaken to the dishwasher and smoke alarm. However the equipment that was installed when the crypt was converted in 2000 is now showing signs of age and a contingency should be made in the 2018 budget for upgrading.

- **Alter Frontals**

A regime of repairs has been overseen by Bob and Angela Franklin throughout the year.

