

CHURCHWARDENS' FABRIC REPORT

Year ending 31 December 2008

1. General.

The Fabric Group met five times during the year 2008; one of the meetings (6 Nov 08) was used entirely for replacing defective light bulbs. The intention expressed at the last APCM for the group to meet at monthly intervals has not been achieved because of the other commitments of members. The fabric of the church building and structure seems to be sound, but will be assessed properly by the Church Architect at the Quinquennial Inspection in 2009. The Centenary Centre roof valley did not flood at all in the autumn, due in large part to regular intervention for clearing of gutters and down pipes.

2. Church Heating.

The updated heating failed to meet expectations when the first cold weather of the autumn arrived, and two visits were needed by the Niche engineer to put it right. Thereafter, the system performed satisfactorily and, it seems, without affecting the tuning of the organ too much. There have been no further adverse comments on the appearance of the white louvers; the Architect's opinion at the Quinquennial Inspection will be of interest.

3. Sound System.

The sound system has evolved considerably during the year; at one time, three different sub-systems were operating in parallel. The specification for a new system is being refined and will be presented for DAC approval.

4. Church Lighting.

Opinion has been growing that the lighting in the church needs to be improved and brought up to date to give brighter illumination at the Nave Altar dais and Choir; the existing quartz halogen fittings are no longer in stock. Also, the temporary lighting fitted in the side aisles for the Millennium Links exhibition seven years ago has proved its usefulness and needs to be incorporated properly. To update the lighting and to install modern controls for a more flexible system will need a major project and funding, but will attract lower priority than other current schemes, notably the Organ Replacement and Sound System update.

5. Churchyards.

'Make Hay' days have once again proved effective in keeping control of the vegetation at St Mary's churchyard; all four sections were strimmed during the summer. The management of vegetation at Portfield All Saints, however, has not been satisfactory. Frequent complaints are made by relatives of those buried there and it is clear that the vegetation is not being held in check. The initiative for using the remaining space for re-interring remains displaced from the Pancras re-development has been delayed for 18 months because of the impact of the economic downturn on building development.