

## **PROPERTY CONVENOR'S REPORT 2023/24: DAVID ROWE**

### **CHURCH AND NURSERY**

#### **Storm Damage**

At the 2023 AGM one year ago, the first signs of damage were being noticed to the decoration to the East wall of the Side Chapel. The notorious Storm Babet had delivered particularly heavy and persistent rain driven by a strong Easterly wind. The external elevation to that particular part of our building became very wet and moisture penetrated the stonework and caused the damage to the plasterwork and paint finish. The damage became more severe throughout the winter period as the moisture continued to affect the internal finishings.

Our architect advised seeking an expert opinion from a stone mason in St. Andrews, who advised a programme of work to rake out the pointing to that elevation and re-pointing in a lime based mortar and applying a clear waterproofing agent to the stone. The quote for the external work including scaffolding was approx. £8400 including VAT.

Our Rector contacted our building's insurer, the Ecclesiastical Insurance Co. (EIC) who, in early February, sent a loss adjuster who agreed with the stonemason's conclusion and then arranged for a specialist loss adjuster/surveyor to assess the work required for the internal restitution. At this point the original assessor suggested that the storm damage would be covered by our policy.

No decision from the insurance company was forthcoming. We never received any feedback from the internal repair expert which was then followed by a succession of different people, either directly employed by the insurance company or by their agents, becoming involved but frustratingly no definitive decision being made as to whether all the work or any of the work would be covered by the insurance.

Eventually in early autumn we were informed that only the work to the interior would be covered. We requested that the insurers be responsible for organising the necessary work but they insisted that the external work be completed before they were prepared to commence any work to the inside decoration.

Unfortunately, the long delay means trying to arrange for the original stonemason or indeed any alternative firm to carry out the necessary work is proving difficult.

#### **Electrical Installation safety testing**

A full electrical condition report was required, which involves an electrical engineer to inspect every aspect of the building's electrical installation. This was carried out during the first half of this year and a small amount of remedial work was dealt with resulting in a Certificate of Satisfaction.

Replacement porch lights have been recently installed.

## **Routine Maintenance**

Annual fire extinguisher testing and replacing where necessary has taken place

Twice yearly fire alarm inspection by specialist installer has taken place.

## **Roof repair**

A steplejack was employed for two days to inspect the roof and replace or refix any loose slates. His general opinion was that the roof is in a good state of health, having refixed a few slipped slates. He cleaned all the gutters which were in a poor state and secured a length of gutter that had become loose. He was unable to spend much time on the Southern slope to the side aisle roof and it is intended that he return when he gets the chance.

## **Gateway repair**

The side gate entrance from Queen Street has been repaired by a stonemason. This was paid for by the contractor, responsible for damage when working on the telephone exchange.

## **Garden**

Volunteers continue to keep the Garden of Remembrance tidy and a long-neglected hedge is being reduced in height at the back of church next to the railway line. This will improve access to the rear of the building and allow more natural light into the nursery areas.

## **Solar Installation**

A good news story, I believe, is we have had a full year since installing the solar panels. The congregation may be interested to hear how our solar panels are performing.

It's over a year since the installation was completed and we have been benefitting from using energy directly from the panels and from the batteries. Since this Spring, when the new electricity meter was eventually installed we have benefitted by exporting power back into the National Grid and getting paid for it.

In summary, since fitting our solar installation the following figures apply to our Electricity Consumption and Generation.

Total Power generated by our solar panels	14,700 kWh	
Total energy used from our panels	8,500 kWh	58%
Total energy exported to Nat. Grid	6,200 kWh	42%
Total energy imported from Nat. Grid	3,500 kWh	

In conclusion we have been able to use nearly 60% of our generated energy, which is the biggest saving as we would be paying 30p+ per kWh from the grid. We appear to have bought in 3500kWh in the 14 months. In comparison, from our bills for a previous year we were invoiced for approximately 10,000 kWh of electricity for 12 months.

In addition to the direct savings above, British Gas, our electricity supplier, paid us £382 in July and another £352 this month for exporting energy back to the grid.

Our contribution to environment, according to the app that produces the above data, St. Mary's has saved 10.41 tons of CO<sub>2</sub>

or the equivalent of planting 172 trees

or the equivalent of saving 5.22 tons of coal.

## **NURSERY**

The nursery has funded and carried out some work to refurbish an area to provide an improved baby changing environment and upgraded their entrance door with a remote video-controlled entry system. They have also enhanced the small courtyard play area with screening and planting.

## **RECTORY**

The Rector has arranged for any small items to be dealt with and paid for from the Rectory Fund.

Some bathroom floor tiling needs to be addressed in the very near future.

A paving contractor has been approached to improve the stepped access to the front door and to refix loose slabs on some steps but has not knowingly made an appearance at the time of preparing this report, but he has been reminded.

David Rowe  
21 November 2024