

## Churchwarden's Annual Report on the fabric of St Paul's Church 2022

There has not been a lot of changes made to the church fabric during 2022, although that was not for the want of trying. We continued to try and get someone to repair the roof covering on the north and south aisles, but have not been able to find anyone to act as the main contractor (the firm providing the covering will only act in the capacity of a sub-contractor). We have also failed to repair the damage to the north aisle parapet. The only quote received was judged as extortionate by our architect, who advised delaying the repair until we are doing other work on the roof. This will have to be seriously considered during 2023.

We were able to celebrate the restoration of the fire damage, that occurred the previous year, with a special service of re-dedication, with the Bishop of Reading, in March. This also included the official unveiling of the new icon at the front of the north aisle.

Later in the year, thanks to the efforts of Mary Cassidy and Jan Norbury, the fire damaged cover for the altar was replaced with a new red cover. Jan was also able to provide similar covers for the other altars, and a new curtain on the flower and cleaners cupboard.

We still appear to be getting some ingress of water under the flashing on the edge of the Walter Chapel roof, but there is significantly less plaster falling from the area. We expect this to be resolved in early 2023.

During 2022 our architect Richard Oxley retired, so we have had to appoint a new architect in preparation for the Quinquennial Inspection that we will be required to carry out this year. The new Architect will also be taking control of both the roof and the lighting projects. We will also be looking at schedule of work still outstanding from the previous Inspection as well as anything revealed from this year's Inspection. This means that 2023 could see us spending quite a significant sum on the church fabric.

Aside from the building work, we are still managing to provide the live streaming of most of our regular services as well as some funerals and weddings. This has fallen into a regular pattern for our Sunday morning 9:30 at St Paul's, with a team of 4 taking turns to run the operation each Sunday (we would always welcome anyone that is interested to join the team). We generally have 20 to 30 viewers online for these regular services with around 70-100 viewing the recording in the week after the service. On the technology side we have also installed a Bluetooth receiver to allow the clergy to provide music for occasional services directly from their mobile phones or tablets, without the need for cumbersome leads, or for someone to be in the vestry to press buttons.

Finally, Security; as you are all probably aware, after a number of incidents in church, pre-pandemic, where items were moved or removed we installed a CCTV camera which recorded anyone coming into church and walking up the nave. This proved invaluable in identifying the arsonist in 2021. We enhanced that with another camera pointing towards the main door to improve the coverage. This helped identify a group of boys who were causing minor damage in church on a number of occasions (this has stopped following intervention by the police). After we had restored the fire damage last year, we decided to further improve the areas we are able to monitor by installing a camera to cover the altar and choir area, where most of the damage had occurred. We also reviewed the usage policy and based on that we have avoided certain areas where people may want to pray privately, and also scheduled the cameras to not record during services. A CCTV policy document is posted on the noticeboard and on our website, giving further information on usage.

*Peter Wells, Churchwarden February 2023*