

ALL SAINTS HERTFORD

APCM APRIL 2024

FABRIC REPORT

Heating

Our heating system is designed to run on 2 gas boilers. The oldest one has not worked for some time and is not repairable. The newer (ie only 20 years old!) is having increasing problems and we have been plagued by outtages (usually at the worst time, e.g. for Bishop Jane's installation!). We recently appointed LH Cook to repair and service the boiler. They also do the heating for The Castle. They have recently replaced our boiler's ignition system and carried out a service. Whilst the boiler is now working, the large pump failed in 2024 and has had to be replaced. In addition the valves in the high up water tanks have had to be replaced. Altogether, in 2023 we spent £2,800 on repairs and in 2024 so far, another £5,600, We are on borrowed time and we are looking at replacing the boilers.

During 2023 the Church of England decreed that no new gas boilers could be fitted in a church without a faculty (ie planning), in order to ensure that all alternatives for a cleaner heating system were examined in each case.

We have consulted Tom Abraham, the Diocesan Net Zero Carbon Officer who has visited us. Apparently, we are near the top of the list of churches with high emissions! He has asked us to consider electric heating, either in the form of pew heaters or infra-red heaters. Pew heaters as a primary source of heat were recommended in the Energy Audit we had carried out last year, but are only really suitable in specific small areas, and would be a negative if we wanted to replace the pews to make the building better for community use. In the energy audit, the costs of using pew heaters as a primary source was put at £42,000 before upgrading the electricity supply.

New, more efficient wall mounted gas boilers could be fitted, and the old boilers removed for about £18,000 plus VAT (LH Cook have quoted for this) but there are 40 metres of asbestos lagging around the pipes in the boiler room which would have to be professionally removed at a cost in excess of £14,000, so the total cost would be £32,000 plus VAT. The LH Cook quote includes relagging the pipes. It is unclear whether this expense would fall within "repairs" for getting a grant to cover the VAT cost (over £6,000) from the Listed Places of Worship scheme.

A couple of electrical heating design and fit firms have been suggested by Tom Abraham and we asked them both to assess whether infra-red heating would be feasible in our building and at what likely costs (including running). One has visited and taken 100 scans of the church to see what would be needed. We would need the infra-red panels within new chandeliers which would have to be in the centre aisle, supported by panels on the walls and in the Chancel and Vestry. Because infra-red heats people and not the space, the organ would have to run cold, which is problematic. The cost estimate runs out at over £160,000 including irrecoverable

VAT. If gas boilers are the only practical way forward, the faculty process is not quick, although the Archdeacon will support an expedited application given the importance of this issue. Hopefully the existing boiler will last, but a decision on the way forward is needed by June if we are to avoid going through another winter with only one working boiler.

Window damage and CCTV

Following the vandalism to the windows, repairs have been carried out and we received £12,700 from insurers. With donations, this covered the costs of repair.

Insurers have asked for our proposals to enhance the security of the building and were told that we would look at installing CCTV cameras. We have obtained two quotes from firms on the DAC list.

We have requested a faculty for a 16-camera set up covering the whole church.. We will install wi-fi as part of the contract. The total costs is £7,500 and we are awaiting approval to go ahead.

Contactless donation system

Our donation tablet broke down before Christmas and couldn't be upgraded. It was free on a promotion when introduced 5 years ago, but we have had to purchase a new machine at a cost of £470.

Quinquennial Inspection

The Quinquennial was completed at a cost of £1,260. The only urgent, Category 1 item in the Quinquennial is the need to investigate the leaks in the South Aisle roof. We have asked our architect to make suitable arrangements for an investigation to be carried out. Other items noted during the inspection are being dealt with by our amazing working party, to whom we say a huge thank you!

Janet Bird

Verity Tranter

21 April 2024