

PCC Update on Church repairs for Annual Parish meeting 2021

Caroline Boswell updated the Parish Council on events following the very successful launch of the All Saints, Hulcott, Church and Community Regeneration Project at the Crib Service held on Christmas Eve 2019. Shortly afterwards, as we know, COVID hit and all plans to hold various community events and church services had to be quelled. At the same time, the major potential future bid process to obtain a large grant from National Lottery Heritage (to remedy the serious structural issues of All Saints) was put on hold.

Caroline became aware of the potential of specific COVID-related emergency grant funding being advertised by Historic England for urgent works required to heritage buildings at risk (which All Saints is, now being on the Historic England Risk Register for listed buildings, All Saints being Grade II* listed). Work then began, liaising closely with the All Saints Chartered Surveyor and Structural Engineer, to develop an Expression of Interest (EOI) in the grant. This EOI was successful and we were invited to submit a comprehensive Full Application, complete with details of the work required plus submission of at least 3 contractors tenders for each element of work. Our bid totalling expenditure of just under £30,000 was successful. Historic England would only fund this expenditure ex VAT, the VAT element for us to reclaim back from the Listed Places of Worship Grant. The total funding, therefore, from Historic England is £24,592.05.

Details of the urgent works required are as follows:

1. Urgent minor repairs and maintenance required to the external fabric of the church
 - a. Repairs to roofs and associated leadwork (missing tiles and lead patch repairs)
 - b. Gutter maintenance
 - c. Minor repairs to the Belfry (replace and repair bird guards and holes)
 - d. Minor repointing repairs to the masonry
2. Project Development works
 - a. Investigations to gather information from surveys (Drainage Survey, Crack and Movement monitoring, laser scan survey, ecological survey (bats))
 - b. Investigation work and reports to inform the extent of the repairs
 - c. Above information to be fed into associated specifications and drawings

The laser scan survey took place on 7th January 2021, shortly followed by the installation of crack monitoring pins and tell-tales, plus initial surveys and photographs by a Chartered Survey company. Since then, one follow-up visit has taken place by same company and this will be followed by 7 further visits covering the full 4 seasons of 2021.

The Drain Survey took place last week and the contractor was able to flush out the drainage system and locate and remove associated debris and tree roots now enabling free water passage into the moat. It is hoped that this will help prevent further flooding inside the church building itself.

Also, last week, the building contractor was able to begin the works listed above in 1 a. to d. This was also attended by the ecologists to ensure no harm to the bats. It is

understood that the remainder of the works will be completed 25th March, 2021, with the erection of scaffolding to access the higher roof elevations for tile replacement, this also to be attended by the ecologists.

In addition, the grant covers the professional fees of both the Chartered Surveyor (Lead consultant) and the Structural Engineer, for their tender specifications, works direction and supervision.

This work is just the beginning of a programme related to All Saints, Hulcott, Church and Community Regeneration Project, as was previously presented to the Parish Council, but it is a good start in terms of investigations into what remedies will be needed in the future to stabilise the building structure. There will need to be further large bids for funding to enable this work to take place, but that is not for now. Once COVID restrictions are lifted, we will be able to organise fund raising events in the village and reclaim some kind of normality to previously successful Hulcott events.'