



ALL SAINTS, THORNTON HOUGH

Quinquennial Inspection

Chambers Conservation Ltd, May 2026 – Issue 2

Contents

1.0	Introductory Information
2.0	General Notes
3.0	Exterior:
3.1	Walls
3.2	Foundations
3.3	Doors, Porches and Windows
3.4	Rainwater Goods and Disposal System
3.5	Parapets and Upstand Walls
3.6	External Iron and Wood
3.7	Roof Coverings
3.8	Tower, Spire or Bell Cote
4.0	Interior
4.1	Interior of Towers and Spires
4.2	Roof Structures and Ceilings
4.3	Upper Floors, Balconies and Stairways
4.4	Internal Partitions and Doors
4.5	Ground Floor Structure and Timber Platforms
4.6	Internal Decorations and Plaster
4.7	Glazing and Ventilation
4.8	Fittings and Furniture including Organ
4.9	Monuments
4.10	Toilets, Kitchens, Vestries etc.
5.0	Services
5.1	Heating Systems
5.2	Electrical Systems
5.3	Water and Gas Services
6.0	Other Issues
6.1	Fire Precaution
6.2	Lightning Conductors
6.3	Security Installations and Measures
6.4	Health and Safety
6.5	Disabled Provision and Access
6.6	Presence of Bats
6.7	Documentation
7.0	Churchyards and Ancillary Buildings and Structure

- 7.1 Condition of Churchyard
- 7.2 Ruins or Buildings within the Churchyard
- 7.3 Monuments, Tombs and Vaults
- 7.4 Boundary Walls, Lych-Gate and Fencing
- 7.5 Paths, Steps and Areas of Hard-Standing
- 7.6 Trees and Shrubs
- 7.7 Miscellaneous items
- 8.0 Recommendations
- 9.0 Recommendations on the Maintenance and Care
- 10.0 Recommendations on Further Detailed Investigations:
- 11.0 Reducing the Carbon Footprint
- 12.0 Explanatory Notes, Advice and Guidance



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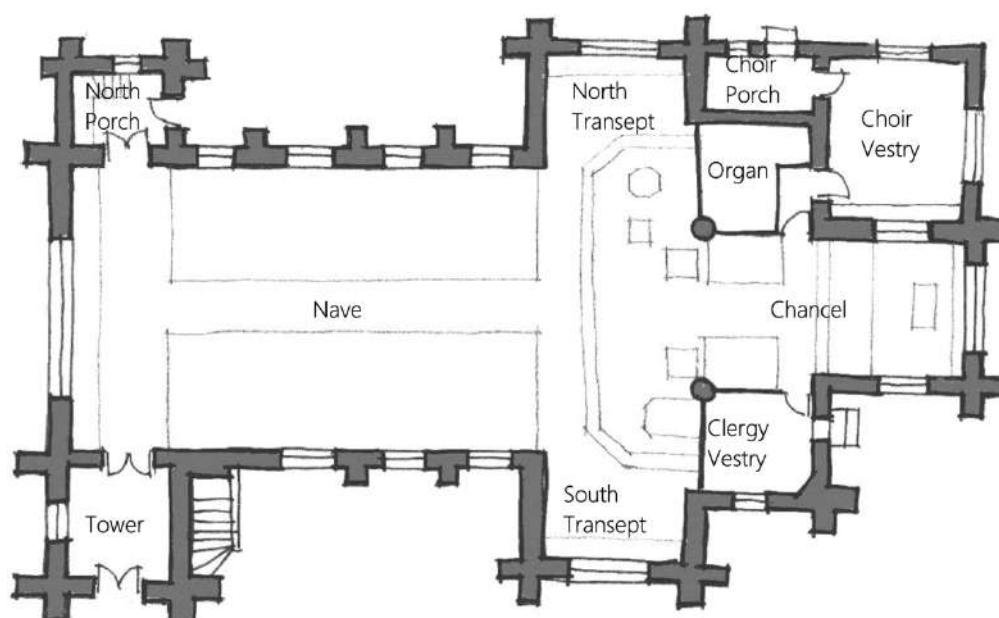
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1.0 Introductory Information

- 1.1 This report is the record of the quinquennial inspection undertaken at the Church of All Saints, Thornton Hough, within the Archdeaconry and Diocese of Chester.
- 1.2 The inspection has been undertaken by Jennifer Chambers of Chambers Conservation Ltd, Mercury House Tattenhall, Chester CH3 9PX, telephone 07484 133270 and email jennifer@chambersconservation.com.
- 1.3 The inspection was carried out on 12th May 2026. Later visits were made on 26th May to use the drone and 22nd June to see the inside of the tower. The previous inspection was by Mark Pearce of Kepczyk Pearce Sanderson in October 2020. The weather was mixed on the morning of the inspection and had also been varied in the previous week. Information regarding work undertaken in the last quinquennium and maintenance regimes was provided by church warden June Allcock and Rev Vicky Barrett.
- 1.4 A sketch plan of church is included below (from the previous Kepczyk Pearce Sanderson report):



- 1.5 All Saints is an attractive building within the beautiful model village of Thornton Hough, which was largely formed as we see it today, first by Joseph Hirst and then by the Lever family who also created the nearby Port Sunlight Village. The church has a separate hall within its grounds.
- 1.6 The church and its grounds are in the heart of the village, and it is highly prominent, with views to it on all sides. It has a small car park, but it also benefits from on-street parking.
- 1.7 The church is grade II listed and is within a Conservation Area (where there are numerous other listed buildings). The listed building description is as follows:

BEBINGTON RABY ROAD SJ 3080 (south-east side) Thornton Hough 16/244 Church of All Saints

G.V. II

Church. 1867. By Kirk and Sons for J. Hirst. Rock-faced stone with ashlar dressings, slate roof with tile ridge. Nave, south west tower, north west porch, transepts, chancel, north organ loft and south vestry. 4-bay nave has Lombard frieze and 2-light windows with Geometrical tracery between gabled buttresses. Tower has angle buttresses, entrance of 2 orders; 2-light windows with shafts; 5-face clock above; top cornice and broach spire with pinnacles, gabled lucarnes of 2 lights, 2 further tiers of lucarnes.

West end of nave has 5-light window. North gabled porch, lancet with trefoil over and return entrance. Transepts have 3-light windows and spherical triangle windows above. Chancel has 3-light east window with 2-light window to north and south. Vestry has east entrance under gable, south cusped lancet. Organ loft has window of 3 cusped lights. Interior has arch-braced roof. Chancel arch with flanking segmental-pointed arches on round columns. Chancel has scissor-truss roof, corbelled transverse arch to sanctuary. Reredos has relief of Last Supper with flanking quatrefoils with relief carvings. C20 stalls and pulpit. Wall memorial to J. Hirst, the founder, died 1874 in south transept; cusped gabled panel. Some C19 stained glass, most is C20.

Listing NGR: SJ3051880885

- 1.8 As stated in the listed building description, the building dates from 1867 and was built for Joseph Hirst. The church appears today in a similar fashion to its original form (particularly externally), with the exception of changes including the following:

- Organ built (1912)
- West window (1920s) - in memory of those who gave their lives during the first world war*
- Removal of west end gallery – understood to be in the 1920s to facilitate the installation of the window
- The altar was given in memory of H.A. Bull (Vicar from 1898) who died in 1935
- Addition of choir vestry – date unknown but map evidence suggests post-war
- Automation of clock (date unknown)
- Font moved to front of nave (1989)
- Vicarage sold off and a new boundary on the west side added. Car park added. School converted to church hall. (Date unknown)
- North chancel window installed in 2003*
- The organ was completely refurbished in 2013

* Only the east window was original to the 1867/8 construction - the remaining windows were of cathedral tinted rolled plate with richly stained margins

- 1.9 All Saints is constructed sandstone which has a greatly varied colour and texture – the main walling is roughly hewn red stone and buff ashlar is used for the contrasting dressings. The slated roof is of a very steep pitch and at the eaves there are decorative bespoke cast iron gutters. The height of the church and status as a local landmark is enhanced further by the proudly positioned tower, which is topped by a tall spire.
- 1.10 The church has a fairly traditional cruciform plan – with small additions for the tower, clergy vestry and organ, followed by the later infilling of the north-east corner to form the choir vestry in the mid-20th century. The church hall is on the north-west corner of the site – this houses fairly modern WC and kitchen facilities as well as meeting / recreation spaces.
- 1.11 All Saints caters to a reasonable extent for people with disabilities. More information can be found in section 6.5 of this document.



2.0 General Notes:

- 2.1 The report follows the standard format given by the diocese. The inspection was made from ground level with all rooms viewed. There was not considered to be any need for ladder access as the nature of any problems were readily visible. No items of furniture or finishes such as carpets were moved.
- 2.2 This report is restricted to the general condition of the building and its defects. Where necessary, it will make recommendations for further advice.
- 2.3 Major items not inspected are listed as follows:
 - The mechanical, heating and electrical equipment were not tested.
 - The organ was not tested or inspected
- 2.4 Repairs, alterations, additions or demolitions carried out since the last inspection (recorded in the logbook folder in the church):
 - Two sections of boundary wall repaired after collapse (March 2022 and Sept 2025).
 - Refurbishment of the bell hammer and mechanism (March 2026)
 - Maintenance works to cedar tree (July and Nov 2024)
 - Replacement notice boards (December 2023)
 - Levelling of slabs to main entrance off road, removing old stub to former gate (Oct 2024)
 - Repair to face of decorative stone to south side of tower, above door (Oct 2024)
 - New basin in clergy vestry (April 2024)
 - Tower / spire repairs using a steeplejack company (July 2024)
- 2.5 All Saints is a fine building and is in generally good condition, without many significant defects, mostly thanks to a good level of regular inspection and maintenance. However, the church now has the difficult task of balancing the needs of heating the congregation following the failure of the boilers and carrying out complex repairs / maintenance to items such as the cast iron guttering.

3.0 Exterior

3.1 Walls:

- 3.1.1 The church appears to be well-built in rough-faced sandstone with smooth ashlar dressings, which is generally in good condition. The walls have high buttresses with gabled caps. Window and doors openings are mostly gothic-arched. There is tracery to most windows of varying complexity and there are hoodmoulds to most openings.
- 3.1.2 Generally, there has been quite a bit of repair works undertaken in recent decades, some of which is not of the character / type that would be considered acceptable / beneficial now – for instance bright red mortar is used, which is very hard, and will cause long-term damage to the face of the stone.
- 3.1.3 The church must allow for repointing / stonemasonry work to be undertaken as a minimum every five years to limit further degradation. It is vital that this is only undertaken by an experienced stonemason, who must be highly experienced in using lime mortars without cement. Any work carried out on this basis would likely be a waste of money and may cause more issues / expenditure further down the line. The priorities for pointing should be considered alongside a conservation architect with consideration given to the funding available and degree of high-level access possible.
- 3.1.4 Work / needed with / issues noted with regards to specific areas:
- North porch: Minor open joints to the plinth and the monoderm red mortar is cracking slightly. Open joints to the top of the apex stone of the parapet coping. Generally, condition appears slightly improved, as masonry previous described as being saturated. Whilst some staining remains, there is little evidence of long-term wetness.
 - North nave: Pointing generally intact, except a few open joints nearer the base. Some staining but seems drier than previous report.
 - North transept (similar to previous report): open mortar joints to the plinth and algae staining around the downpipe. Again, dry at the time of the inspection, so damage / staining probably historic. The apex stone to the coping is leaning inwards slightly with an open joint beneath – this may have been caused by expanding ironwork. The mortar joint under the coping is generally recessed. Patch pointing at high level would be beneficial when high level access available.
 - Organ chamber transept (similar to previous report): Appears generally sound where visible from ground level / drone (it is largely obscured at ground level by the choir vestry) – the main exception is the open joints around the apex stone, again. When high level access available, its condition should be checked further.
 - Choir vestry: the mortar, together with dampness from the downpipe and roof is causing the saturation of the stonework and its gradual degradation. This will be worsened by it being shaded and north-facing. Visually, the pointing is failing dramatically in appearance, although this is largely the superficial later mortar falling away. This area should be a priority for repointing after rainwater goods issues are fixed (included elsewhere).
 - Chancel, north elevation: Seen only above the choir vestry roof via drone (or ladder). Staining around short section of downpipe suggesting long-term water on the stonework, possibly leaking from the short lead pipe going from the gutter to the hopper. This does not seem to have caused damage at present, however.
 - Chancel, east elevation: The coping stones remain quite irregular, with mortar missing from both the underside and face. The apex stone also remains higher, implying there might be rusting metalwork securing it, although this has not worsened. The pointing is cracked but intact, except to the base and occasionally at higher level, e.g. around the kneelers.
 - Chancel south elevation: Mortar generally cracking but no major issues
 - Clergy vestry: Open mortar joints under the coping but otherwise pointing in fair condition (despite being hard and modern). At the apex of the gable is a chimney flue that has for some time been temporarily repaired with flashband.

- South transept: Again, the pointing is cracked but generally in fair condition, except under the coping. There is still staining to the corbelling beneath the guttering to the west side (but not apparently wet)
- Nave south elevation: Again, the mortar is cracked but otherwise intact, generally except open joints noted at the base. The church wisely keeps the vents serving the under-pew voids clear. Staining under the gutter to the corner abutment with the transept is slightly better to previously. Equally, the staining around the west cast iron downpipe is improved.
- Nave west elevation: The copings appear to be in fair condition. Some damage was noted to the stone string detail at the edges.
- Nave east elevation (high level): Viewed only from drone. Salting and algae growth to left hand side in line with chancel ridge, possibly indicting water getting in under parapet coping. This area should be monitored, particularly for internal leaks.

3.1.5 As discussed in more detail above, the church should make preparations for repointing and repair work to copings etc as part of a package for high-level works to the rainwater goods etc.



North porch and north nave elevations



North transept



North transept - issues at apex stone and loose vent



Choir vestry



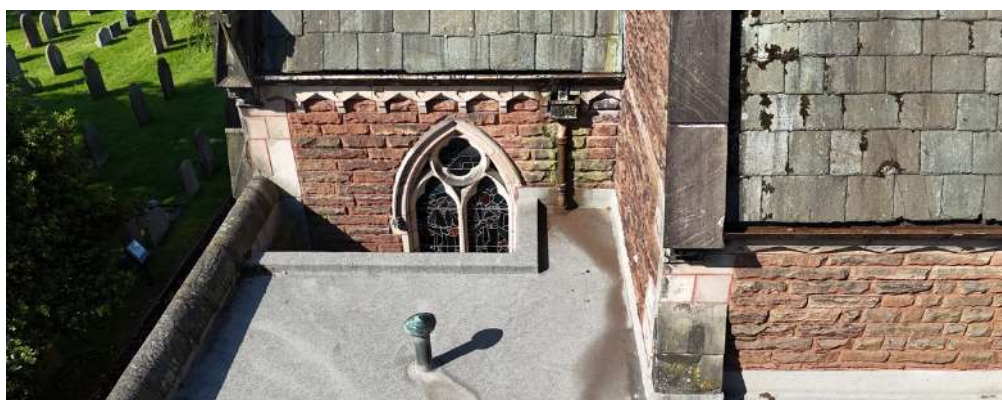
Choir vestry failing pointing and east side



Choir vestry failing pointing on east side and deterioration around outlet



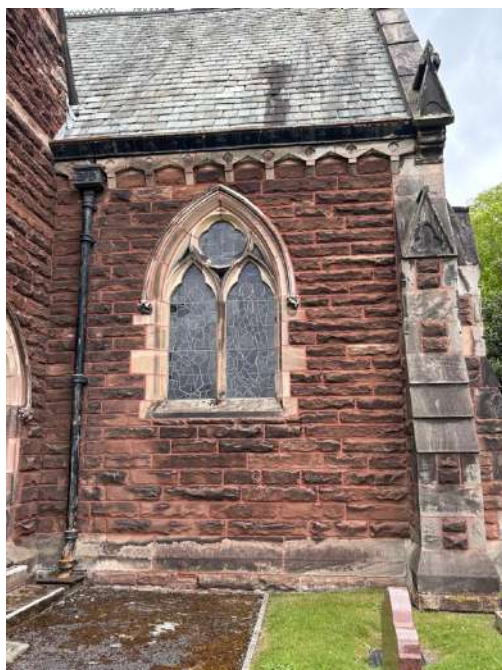
East nave and organ chamber transept gables viewed from a drone



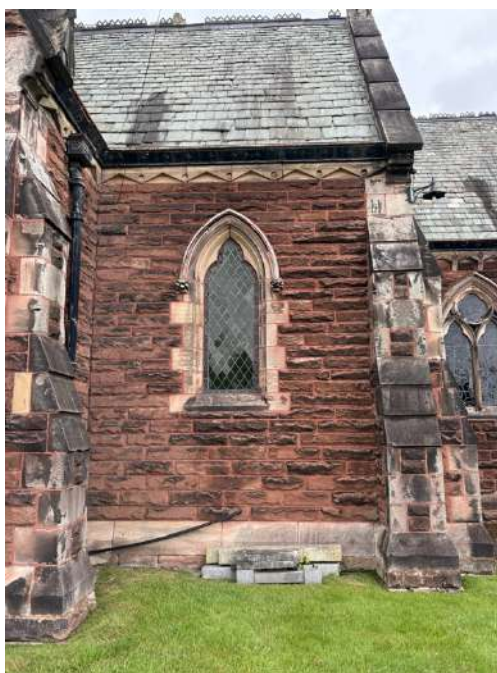
North side of chancel viewed above the choir vestry



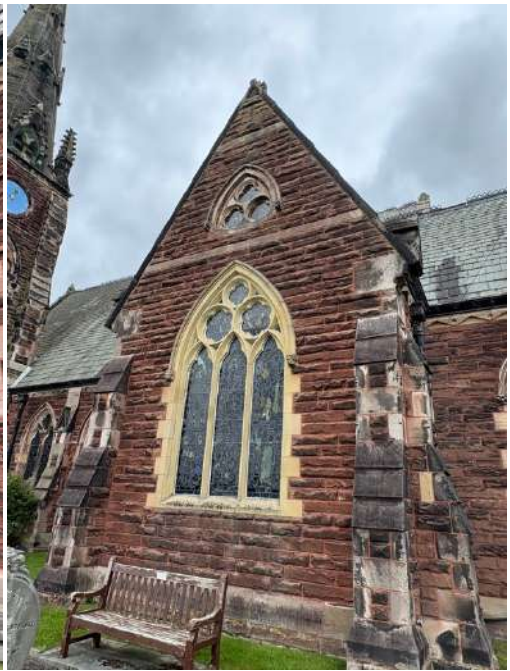
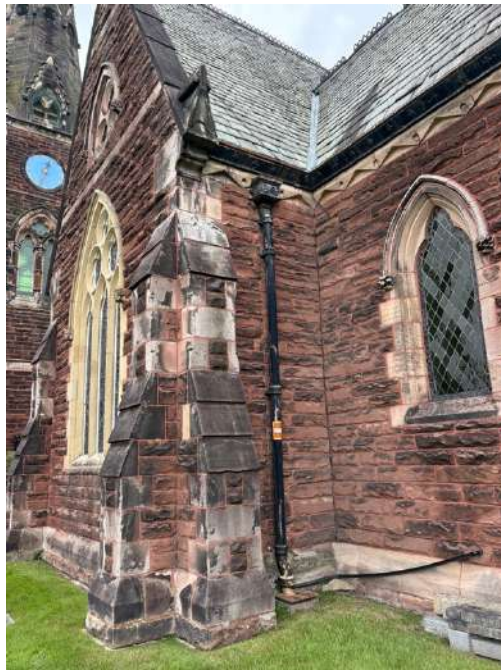
Chancel east side



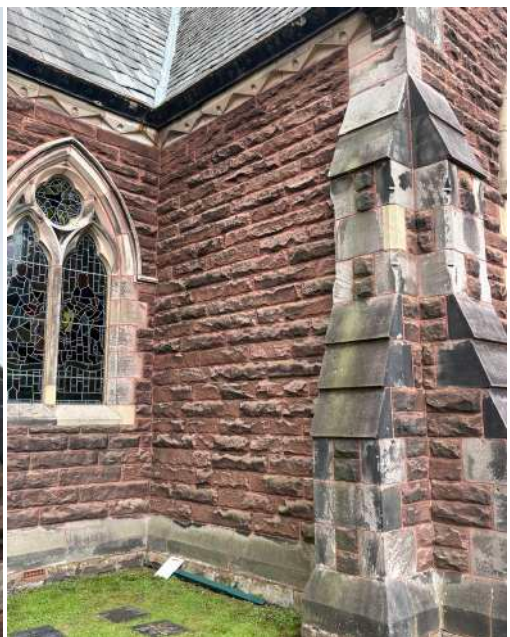
Chancel south and vestry east elevations



Vestry chimney and south elevation



South transept east and south sides



South transept gable apex stone and west side



South nave elevation



West nave elevation

3.2 Foundations:

- 3.2.1 From a visual inspection around the perimeter of the church, no indication was found of any structural movement that may indicate a concern with the foundations or an underground problem.

3.3 Doors, Porches and Windows:

- 3.3.1 Notes on the church's doors as follows:

- Tower south door (main entrance): Vertically boarded with highly decorative strap hinges. Deep ornate carved stone archway. Door sound. Staining to stone from modern coloured mortar.
- Vestry door: Vertically boarded with highly decorative strap hinges. Ornate carved stone archway. Door sound. No handrail to steps.
- Choir vestry door: Flat lintel boarded door-less decoration to strap hinges but nonetheless attractive. Door sound. No handrail to steps.
- North door: Vertically boarded with highly decorative strap hinges. Deep ornate carved stone archway (slightly less so than south side). Door not tested but previously reported to snag on floor.



South main tower door and vestry door



Choir vestry door and north porch door

3.3.2 Notes on the church's porches as follows:

- South porch – at the base of the tower, forming the main entrance to the church. The area is a welcoming space and includes free-standing noticeboards. It also has a vertical ladder leading to the tower (which is wisely protected by locked doors at lower level) and a bell rope loosely tied to the wall. The floor has large clay tiles, which are generally sound, although the pointing is failing slightly. Walls are exposed sandstone and are generally in good condition – one exception is the north wall, which has an old stepped crack (not of current concern).
- North porch (also known as the flower vestry): this space is not well used, other than primarily for storage of cleaning equipment and by the vergers. It has a stone flagged floor and exposed stonework to the walls. The ceiling is modern and relatively crude, but this is not important with the existing level of usage. There is a stair from this area leading to an upper storage room (mentioned elsewhere). The previous report highlighted water staining to the junction of the north and east walls – this seems to have improved. The external door is a designated emergency exit, so it is important that the space is kept as clear as possible.



South porch



North porch

3.3.3 Notes on the church's windows as follows:

- North nave – attractive stained-glass windows protected externally with polycarbonate. Whilst it is good that the tracery remains unobscured, the polycarbonate is not yellowing and seems to be partially ventilated, there is an increasing amount of debris gathering between the two surfaces. It is strongly suggested that the polycarbonate is temporarily removed and the window carefully cleaned (and checked) before refixing.
- North transept – window protected with copper wire guard. The bottom does not fit well and is a result pulling away – this should be refixed.
- Choir vestry north – mullion to the double window previously noted to be eroding – this has not worsened significantly.
- Chancel east – triple window protected by a copper wire guard. Open mortar joint to the cill.
- South transept, south – window tracery fairly modern
- Nave south, right-hand window - various stone replacement in recent decades (including half of cill and base of mullion).
- Nave south, centre window – later mullion
- Nave south, left-hand window -cracked cill, although this has not worsened.
- Nave west – later replacement to bases of mullions.
- Nave east and west (high-level) – small triangular windows with cast iron opening lights – these should be redecorated whenever high-level access permits.

3.3.4 Generally, the windows would benefit for checking closely every five years, removing and refixing any guarding after gently cleaning the windows. External metalwork (such as opening hoppers) should be redecorated.

3.3.5 Also, window stonework should be a priority for pointing of open joints (as water penetrating is more likely to cause damage), but this must be undertaken by an experienced stonemason only.



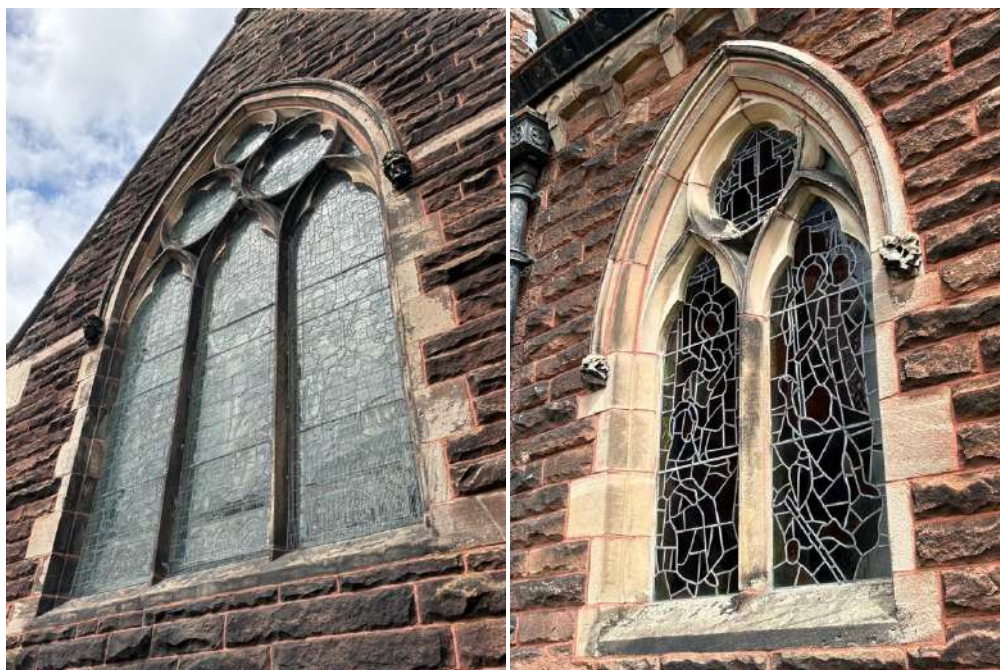
North nave windows and dirt / debris behind polycarbonate



North transept, north window



Choir vestry, north window



Chancel east and south windows



Nave south elevation window – cracked cill

3.4 Rainwater Goods and Disposal System:

- 3.4.1 The rainwater goods on All Saint's Church are a particularly special feature, and a substantial number of the units are original to its construction. However, they are also the cause of a number of problems and one of the main priorities for action. Guttering and downpipes are cast iron (with occasional lead joining sections) and would have probably been made 'bespoke' for the building. The gutters sit on a projecting eaves detail – there fortunately appears to be a lead flashing underneath. However, the extent of staining and damage to stonework beneath the gutters shows how vulnerable a detail this is. The gutters are largely clear of debris but are rusting, indicating that they have not had any substantial repair or maintenance in recent years. It is vital that a largescale project is planned, which would entail the temporary removal, professional de-rusting of and then redecoration of rainwater goods, resealing joins and checking / adjusting falls. Some units will need replacement, which in the case of the gutters, would entail specialist casting. Grant funding would be needed to support this work.
- 3.4.2 Whilst the majority of this work is at high level and would require scaffolding, there are sections of downpipe needing attention at low level – this work could be undertaken separately as an interim task.

3.4.3 Notes on the specific rainwater goods are as follows:

- North porch, west side – gutter and downpipe corroding. Downpipe presumed to be a later replacement to an earlier square section. Twigs in hopper requiring removal.
- North porch, west side – gutter a later replacement without decoration. In previous inspection reported to be failing badly at both ends and saturating masonry but somewhat better now.
- North nave – guttering all thought to be a later replacement. Previously reported to failing over the first buttress from the west and at the connection to the north porch, but now again seems better. The joints are critical, however and the guttering would still need overhauling.
- North transept, west side - guttering and downpipe all thought to be a later replacement. Original hopper. No current issues detected, but evidence of previous issues.
- North transept, east side – guttering assumed original but heavy corroded. Outlet previously described as failing and plant growth in gutter – there is still some vegetation in the gutter which requires removal and staining around the pipe which suggests a previously blocked hopper or leaking outset – this should be checked.
- Organ chamber north side – guttering thought to be later as plain. Heavily corroded. Possibly leaking at left-hand end as very stained underneath – check in heavy rain or with hose pipe.
- Organ chamber south side – lead valley gutter seen via a drone. This is narrow and would not meet lead-working guidance but it was not blocked at the time of the inspection.
- Chancel north side – seen via drone - gutter remains heavily corroded and mostly later replacement. Hopper previously described as blocked but now appears clear – downpipe section very corroded, however.
- Choir vestry – downpipes serving flat roof – both have considerable issues but are decorative and attractive in their own right, having particularly decorative hoppers and brackets. The north pipe is unfixed at the base and requires a new bracket. It was also probably blocked at the time of the inspection, as judged by the amount of dampness and staining – it is important that this is cleared. The gulley itself was clear. The east facing pipe was cracked and requires replacement, alongside some of the decorative brackets.
- The choir vestry east downpipe leads from a deep gulley behind the parapet – this was clear at the time of the inspection but would be very prone to blocking.
- Chancel south side – thought to be original. Some corrosion but in fair condition.
- Clergy vestry – north side – lead valley gutter – not viewed.
- Clergy vestry – south side – decorative cast iron gutter which has some corrosion but otherwise in fair condition but decoration poor to downpipe.
- South transept east side – short section of presumably original guttering with circular downpipe. Decoration in poor condition to downpipe. Query lead chute where it enters hopper split.
- South transept west elevation – again probably original. Significant corrosion where it connects to nave, but staining presumed to be historic therefore joint probably re-sealed.
- Nave south – guttering probably original which is not very level but apparently not leaking. The hopper was blocked with twigs, however and the downpipe is in poor decorative order (the church has reported this to regularly overflow, so this is important to be cleared)
- Valley gutter between nave and tower – some debris gathered – this should ideally be cleared. This is very important if the south nave leak is current, in which case in person, high level checking should be carried out, e.g. by cherry picker or steeplejack.

3.4.4 Curing routine checks identified problems in May, the church identified some drainage issues. Local firm, Hattons, were subsequently engaged to inspect the drains around the church, parish hall and Hirst Cottage. They identified a number of issues; collapsed gullies, root damage, fractured and misaligned hoppers. Remedial works to the drains around the church and parish hall were completed. Hattons advised that the majority of these drains flowed to a drainage system - the exception being the three gullies taking rainwater from the roof of Hirst Cottage,

which required further work. It is likely that an improved drain will be established by linking it to an existing manhole at the rear of the cottage.



North porch rainwater goods



North transept – west side



Organ transept south and north transept east sides



Choir vestry downpipes on north and east sides



Choir vestry east- cracked downpipe and outlet into hopper



Gutter and short downpipe serving the organ and north transepts.



Vallet gutter between the organ transept and chancel



Lead gutter between the tower and south nave roof

3.5 Parapets and Upstand Walls:

- 3.5.1 Notes included elsewhere.

3.6 External Iron and Wood, including Condition of Paintwork:

- 3.6.1 See separate notes elsewhere.

3.7 Roof Coverings:

- 3.7.1 The church has a Westmorland slate roof laid to diminishing courses. Ridges generally have decorative blue-grey clay tiles. The original ridge tiles are extensively failing – although this is generally only concerns the ornamentation. A short length to the nave has been replaced with non-matching fleur-de-lys tiles and those on the south transept are plain.
- 3.7.2 The roof is in moderate condition – there are many lead tabs indicating ‘temporary’ repairs. These in isolation are not usually a problem but grouped together would leave the roof weaker and would start to indicate a greater need for urgent reroofing. The church can probably

continue patching the roof for some time longer, although it is coming to the end of its life. Given the steepness of the roofs, it is important to monitor the number of slates requiring repair as falling slates would be a much greater risk than other churches.

3.7.3 It is not suggested to undertake largescale reroofing in the next 5 years as the rainwater goods and heating are greater priorities, but this is something that will need to be considered in 10 or so years. It is important to keep up to date with interim repairs, and the church must budget for this.

3.7.4 Issues with regards to individual slopes are noted as follows:

- North porch, west side – 1 slipping slate requiring repair when high level access available. Decoration lost to 4-5 ridge tiles
- North porch, east side – a few slates out of alignment, possibly slipping. Monitor.
- North nave – Generally same as previously – a number of cracked slates and lead tabs indicating temporary repairs. 1 slipping slate that should be monitored until repair possible.
- North transept west – As previously – some build-up of moss and old temporary repairs, but otherwise generally sound.
- North transept east – As previously – Around 10 temporary repairs and some cracked / chipped / slightly dislodged slates noted. Some ridge pointing missing. Otherwise in fair condition.
- Organ chamber north - Around 5 temporary repairs and some slightly dislodged slates noted. A fair amount of moss build-up. Ridge later (plain) but sound.
- Organ chamber south (viewed only from drone) - slates appear intact, although there are quite a few temporary repairs. Flashing to wall abutment appears a little crude – it would be worth checking up close when high level access available.
- Chancel north - around 5 slates with temporary repairs plus others which are chipped. Roof generally appears uneven and there is quite a lot of moss to the top rows and left-hand side. Ridge in poor condition. The condition of this roof should be monitored.
- Clergy vestry north (viewed only from drone) – Condition relatively poor. Whilst not seen up close, the uneven nature of the slates is clear. This may mean poor fixings and future lost slates more likely. Close-up check recommended when high level access available. Ridge tiles in poor condition – around half broken.
- Clergy vestry south - Condition relatively poor. Around 15 temporary repairs. One large slate slipping (requires refixing). Others dislodged / chipped. Lead to valley possible cracked – up close check recommended. Monitor roof.
- South transept east side – Roof slope appears uneven and there a quite a large number of temporary repairs, particularly near the valley gutter shared with the clergy vestry roof. There are large gaps under the ridge tiles – this is presumably caused by birds or bats, therefore no action currently advised but it is important to monitor it for water ingress. Some damage to a few ridge tiles.
- South transept west side – As previously - Generally better than the east side but still a number of temporary repairs.
- Nave south – Condition relatively poor, but apparently not worse than 5 years ago. Roof repairs reportedly carried out 10 years ago following water ingress. Lead and copper tabs over roof (20 or so) – there is a bad patch of current damage halfway up, approx. 1m in from south transept abutment – it is important that this is dealt with, together with a slipping slate at the bottom. There are quite a few damaged slates on the roof.

3.7.5 The church has reported having previously has leaks on or near the column next to the organ – this is likely to correspond to the valley gutter between the organ transept and the north side of the nave. This should be monitored further and action taken if it happens again.



North porch – west and east slopes



North nave



North transept



Organ chamber



Chancel roof



Clergy vestry roof



South transept roof



South nave roof



Flat roof over choir vestry

3.8 Tower, Spire or Bell Cote:

- 3.8.1 The tower is located at the south-west corner of the building, marking the main entrance. It is constructed of red sandstone and has a tall spire.
- 3.8.2 Notes on the external fabric of the main body of the tower are as follows:
- East side – Open joists to window cill and right-hand buttress. Slight degradation to surface of stone.
 - North side – Small section, seen above nave roof. Generally sound – some failure of surface to stones on buttresses.
 - West side – Crack to cill of window (not worsened since last report). Some degradation to clock surround and face itself.
 - South side – Recent repair over door. Minor open joints. Algae to right-hand of window. Whilst there is similar degree of wear / failure to the surface of the stone on this side compared to the other exposed elevations (east and west), the impact (i.e. health and safety risk) of falling masonry is higher, being over the main door, therefore it is especially

important to monitor at least from ground level for any changes.



East and south sides of the tower



East side



North side



North-west corner



North-west corner



West side



South side

- 3.8.3 The spire is in generally fair condition but is prone to plant growth in places and is subject to being used by birds for perching / nesting which further encourages the vegetation and to a lesser extent wear and tear.
- 3.8.4 The lower section of the spire was inspected and a number of repairs carried out by a steeplejack company High Life in July 2024. This included plant removal, some basic patch pointing, removal of loose stones and resealing grilles to some of the openings. They recommended that they carry out a full high-level survey the following year – this has not yet happened – it would be wise to consider this in the next 12 months or so (together with a similar exercise of general plant and debris removal and patch pointing).
- 3.8.5 Matters concerning the spire in this inspection were noted as follows:
- Two areas of plant growth on the middle lucarnes to the north and north-east sides. These should be removed (with roots treated) in the next year or two
 - The stone is generally quite stained and has algae and lichen growth, which is not a major concern.
 - Mortar joints are often recessed but not generally open, with a few minor exceptions.
 - The cross at the top of the spire appears to be cast iron and it is intact and upright.
- 3.8.6 There are quite a few missing detailed elements including fleur-de-lys motifs on top of the lucarnes. None of these missing elements are thought to have occurred recently but drone footage will enable more thorough comparisons in future. It is clear that many may have been purposefully removed during an earlier repair scheme where they were replaced by simpler carved elements.



Plant growth on the north and north-east sides



South-west corner



South side – at the base of the louvred opening can be seen the damaged stone, from which a loose section was removed during the recent steeplejack inspection.

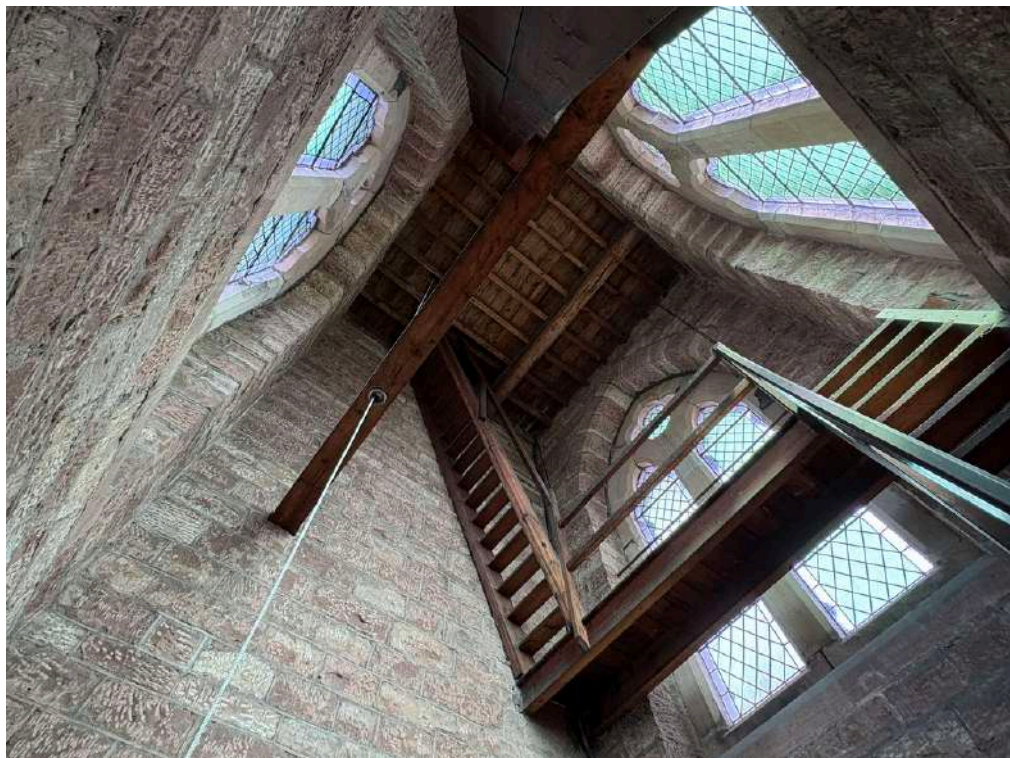
4.0 Interior

4.1 Interior of Towers & Spires:

- 4.1.1 The interior of the tower is accessed from the south porch. There is a vertical ladder in the corner of the room that is secured with a locked door / shutter.
- 4.1.2 This ladder leads to the sounding chamber – this is a very tall space. The top of the ladder from ground level has timber enclosure and further door.
- 4.1.3 On the floor there is an old redundant water tank and adjacent an also unused door that would have originally led to a gallery at the west end of the nave.
- 4.1.4 On the east wall there is a stepped crack which has been pointed and had tell tales fitted – there is no recent sign of change, and it was reported to be stable at the last inspection.
- 4.1.5 Generally, the space is clean and dry and in good condition (fewer dead flies than previously noted). About halfway up the space a new timber beam has been put in across the space with a hole through it to act as a guide to the bell rope.
- 4.1.6 From floor level there are two relatively modern ladders / steep flights of steps, with an intermediate narrow landing to reach the clock chamber. With care, this is a fairly safe

arrangement to provide access to the upper level to a person with experience in using ladders and a head for heights!

- 4.1.7 The clock chamber is a much smaller space, but it was dry and relatively clean. The clock mechanism (which is regularly serviced and driven by an electric motor) is housed in a timber cover. No problems were reported.
- 4.1.8 A few dead flies were noted in this space but apparently a lot less than previously and not a number to cause concern. An old crack was noted on one of the walls. There is a short leader leading from this space to the bell and interior of the spire via a small hatch. This hatch is awkward to use – fortunately access is not often needed, but if felt to be too problematic, then altering / widening it would be recommended.
- 4.1.9 The floor within the spire interior is lead covered and the bell frame is sat on it. The original bell wheel is redundant and instead the vell is struck mechanically – this would have meant a lot less movement in the tower, which may have contributed to the earlier cracking. The bell hammer was recently replaced – it had previously not been usable for a while – initially jamming then sheering off.
- 4.1.10 It is possible from this level to see right up in the spire, although due to light levels, the presence of various cross beams and the sheer scale, inspection was inevitably limited. From what can be seen, the stonework is in reasonable condition without substantial damage. There is quite a bit of hard pointing, but this is not currently causing a major problem. Whilst there is some stone / mortar bed is on the floor, it is not a great quantity considering the size of the space.
- 4.1.11 The various openings appear secure with intact mesh. The stone slab louvres are generally sound as far as could be seen. Some of the stonework around the lower openings was noted to be eroding and this should be monitored but not considered an immediate concern.



Interior of the sounding chamber



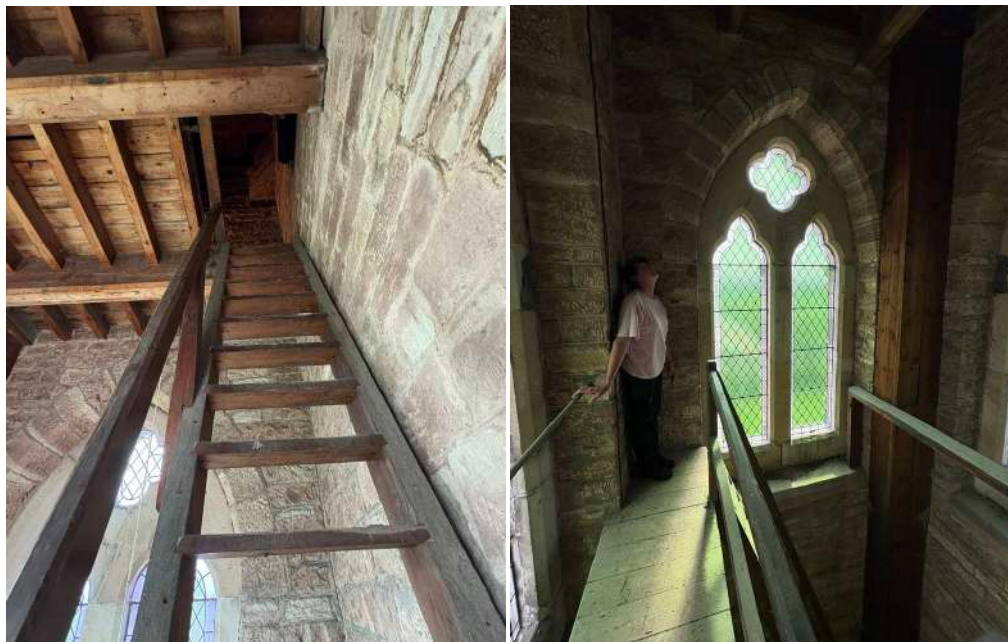
Sounding chamber – access point and old crack on wall



Sounding chamber – redundant tank and door to old gallery level



Ceiling of sounding chamber



Ladder to clock chamber and intermediate landing



Clock chamber



Clock chamber



Clock chamber



Interior of spire / bell



Interior of spire



Interior of spire



4.2 Roof Structures & Ceilings:

- 4.2.1 The ceiling is one of the most impressive features of the church due to its height, uninterrupted span and quality of detailing. Within the nave, the trusses are supported on wall mounted corbel brackets, the hammer beams have carved faces at their bases, and the trusses have carved decoration above and below their principal members. The uppermost section of the trusses is hidden behind a horizontal ceiling section (this void cannot be inspected). Rafters are exposed and the ceiling has an attractive diagonally boarded finish.
- 4.2.2 The chancel and transept scissor-braced trusses are tighter spaced and also act as rafters – their multifaceted lower edge forms the appearance of an almost semicircular vaulted ceiling.
- 4.2.3 There are carved timber bosses on or near the centre line of the ceilings.
- 4.2.4 The condition of the ceilings is generally very good. The previous inspection noted staining in the nave over the purlin from the third bay from the west end on the south side which at the time corresponded to recent water ingress. This is still visible and the church still reports very occasional slight leaks here. The boarding is also stained with the first two bays at the west end on the south side (where the nave abuts the tower) – whilst no leaks were noted, this seems more noticeable than described 5 years ago, therefore this needs to be monitored and action taken if needed.



Nave and chancel ceilings



Transept ceiling and staining to the south side of the nave

4.3 Upper Floors, Balconies and Stairways:

4.3.1 The upper levels of the tower are already noted.

4.3.2 The church has an unusual additional first floor space above the north porch, which is used for storage. The stair is narrow but otherwise easy to use, given its limited use. No issues were noted



Stair and storage above the north porch

4.4 Internal Partitions and Doors:

- 4.4.1 The internal doors are all in good condition with no defects noted. The doorways and adjacent panelling to the clergy and choir vestry entrances are simple but well-made. The door to the north porch has elaborate diagonal bracing and decorative ironmongery on its inner face. The internal door between the nave and south porch is modern and fully glazed.



Vestry and choir vestry / organ transept panelling / doors



North and south porch inner doors

4.5 Ground Floor Structure and Timber Platforms:

- 4.5.1 The nave floor is almost all level – the area under the pews is flush with that of the aisles. Most areas are carpeted, with the exception of the pewed areas, which have a vinyl / lino finish over

(presumably) timber boards. Some of the pewed floor areas were slightly springy, but this is not of current concern. Cast iron grates are exposed to the edges of the centre aisle.

- 4.5.2 The chancel floor is two steps higher than the nave. The dais is a modern extension. The carpet extends all the way into the sanctuary and therefore very little of the floor can be seen.
- 4.5.3 The join between the extended dais and original chancel floor was slightly raised – this should be monitored in case it worsens and becomes a trip hazard.
- 4.5.4 Previously noted was that the floorboards (under the carpet) to the south side adjacent to the west end of the choir stalls was particularly spongy and loose – this was not detected on this occasion.



Flooring – front of nave / dais steps



Chancel and entrance area

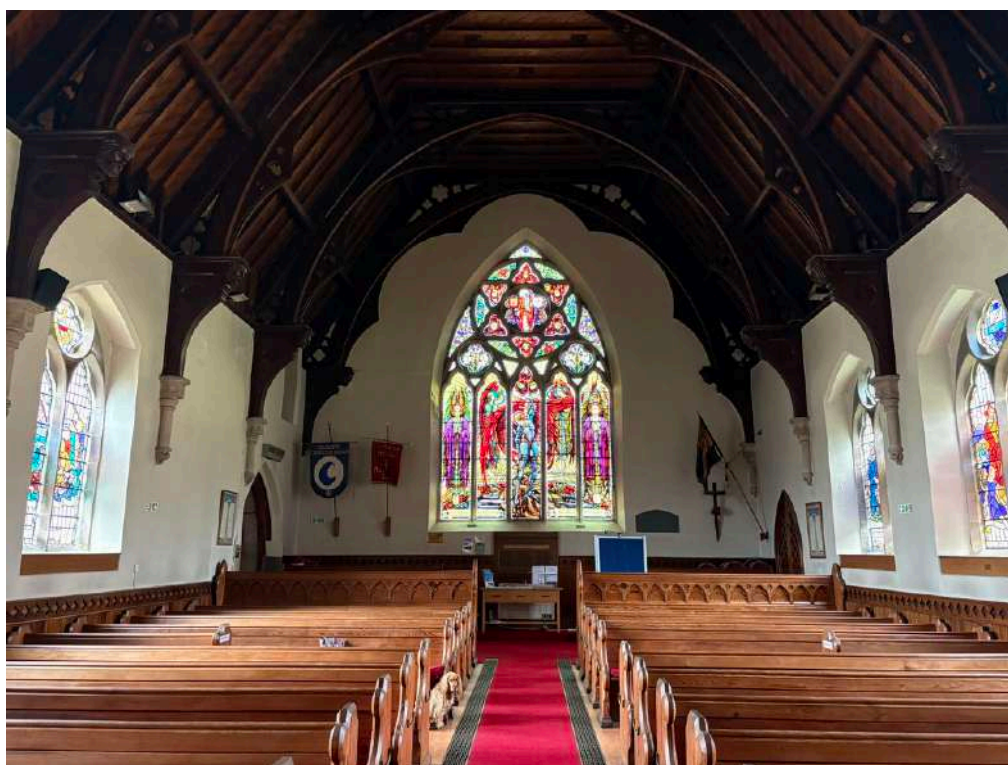


Aisle and pew flooring

4.6 Internal Decorations and Plaster:

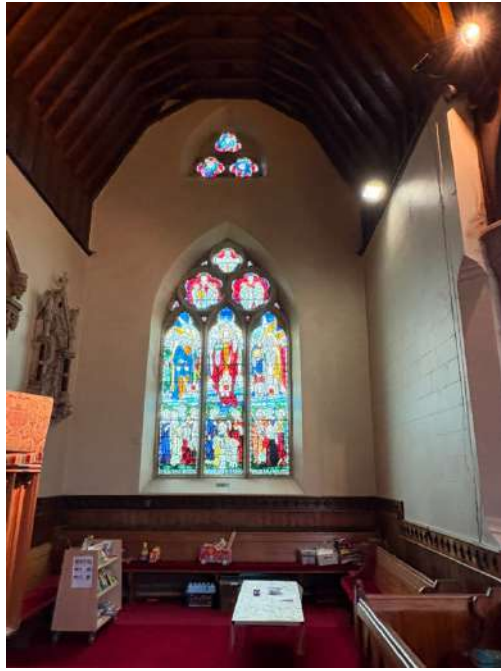
4.6.1 The internal walls are plastered and generally scored to imitate stonework. Where issues are noted below, it is worth leaving areas to dry fully for a year or more before considering repainting or plaster repair:

- Nave - Water staining remains to second bay from the west on the south side (from the tower abutment gutter (area of ceiling too as previously described)).
- South transept - Slight water staining and blistering to the corner of the south transept (noted in previous inspection). This has obviously been a long-standing issue as the plaster has clearly been renewed preciously. (External signs do not seem to indicate this is a current issue, so this could be redecorated after a short period of further monitoring. Slight cracks were noted, but these are not of concern currently.
- Chancel – slight cracking note – not of current concern. Slight staining to rear of chancel arch. There is an oak partition forming the wall to the clergy vestry – this has a small extension vertically which is not quite of the same high quality as the original fabric.
- North transept – no significant issues





South wall



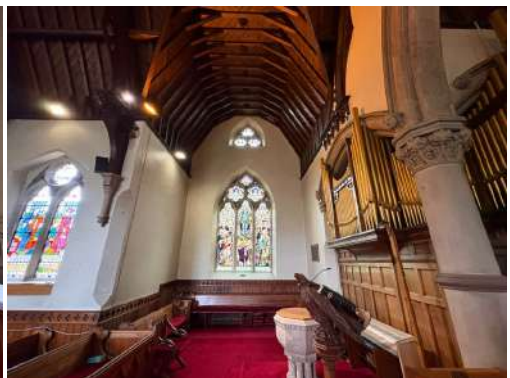
South transept



Chancel south and east sides



Chancel north side and north transept





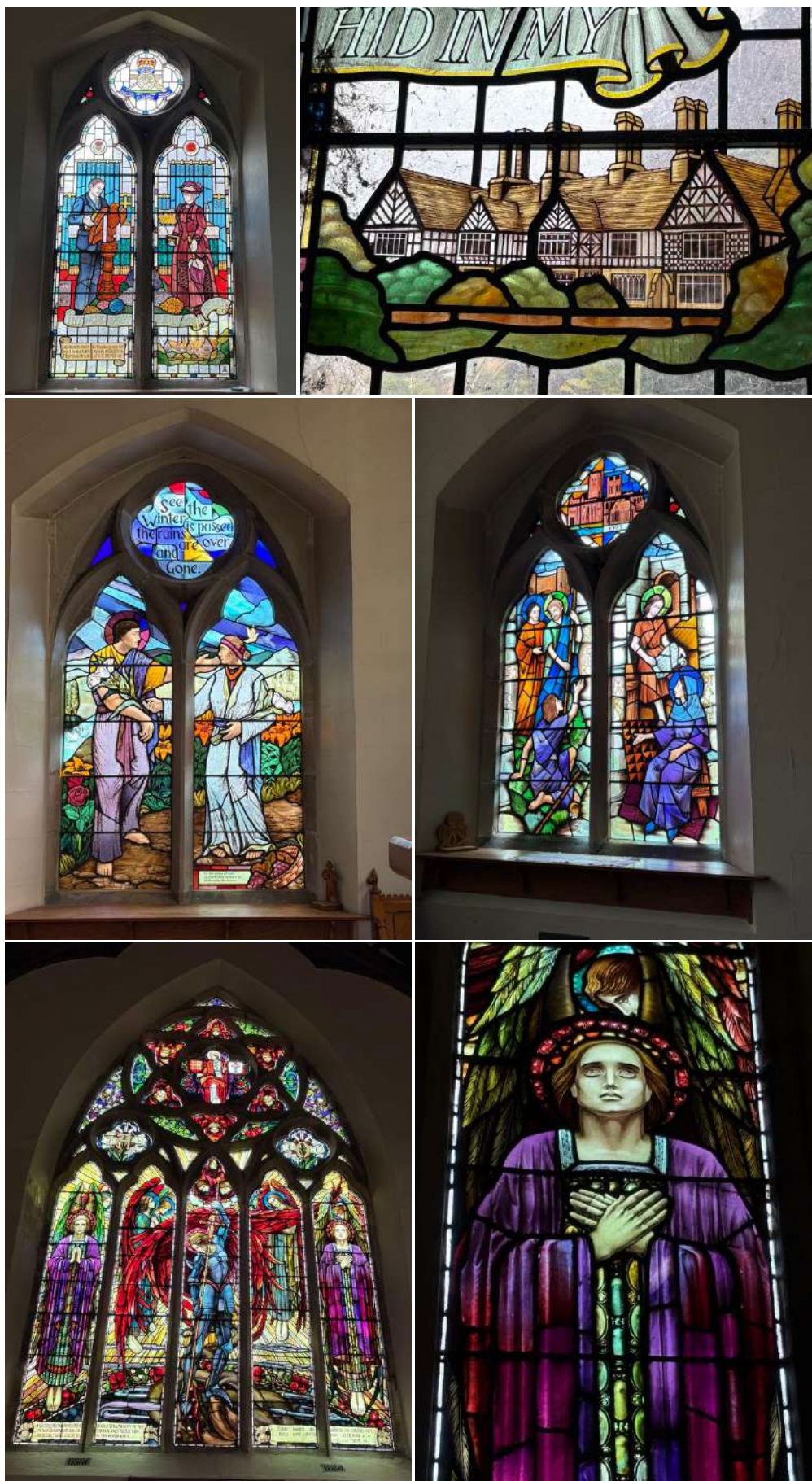
North side of nave and general view looking towards the west end

4.7 Glazing and Ventilation:

- 4.7.1 The glazing in All Saint's Church is impressive – the windows throughout the nave, porch, transepts and chancel are of stained glass and these have a delightfully contrasting range of styles and designs. Their dates cover a wide period with the most recent being 1997. The west window, which is a tribute to those lost in the Great War, is particularly impressive and the local references in many of those in the nave are fascinating and unusual. They are of good quality, and their condition is fairly good – a few minor cracked quarries were noted, but this is not of concern, currently.
- 4.7.2 Many of the windows would benefit from being professionally cleaned (as mentioned already) – whilst this happens a thorough inspection would be beneficial.
- 4.7.3 The church has reported occasional dampness around the Robert Evans window. There is no immediate evidence of the cause, but this should be monitored and recorded further – e.g. photographed when it happens (wind-driven rain?)
- 4.7.4 The choir and clergy vestry have slightly simpler leaded lights.



Nave window



4.8 Fittings and Furniture, including Organ:

- 4.8.1 The fixtures and fittings again reflect the high quality of craftsmanship of the rest of the church, but, like the windows, have a variety of styles.
- 4.8.2 The reredos is particularly of note – it is of Carne stone and is carved to depict the Last Supper. It has a small degree of old (previously recorded) damage – e.g. to the chalice held by the angel to the right of the central scene – this is held on with blu-tac.
- 4.8.3 The altar rail is from the 1930s (like the altar) and has a beautifully designed sliding section.
- 4.8.4 The organ is understood to be in good working order – it is tuned twice a year.
- 4.8.5 No other issues were noted or reported.



Reredos – the broken chalice is seen in the final picture



Organ and choir stalls



Altar and altar rail



Choir stalls and pews



20th century pulpit, lectern and font

4.9 Monuments:

- 4.9.1 There are a number of memorials around the church (as well as various inscriptions on windows etc). Again, they are very stylistically varied. No problems were noted or reported.



Memorials

4.10 Toilets, Kitchens, Vestries etc.

- 4.10.1 The clergy vestry has painted plaster walls – like the main body of the church, these are scored to imitate stonework. A new sink has been installed recently. Its external door is not used. The decoration within this space is in fairly good order and unlike many other vestries, it is a usable and relative well-used space. It has a modern suspended ceiling, which means that the void above cannot be easily checked.
- 4.10.2 The choir vestry has painted plaster walls – it had a musty smell at the time of the inspection presumably as a result of the dampness of the external walls (discussed elsewhere). It is still used for the choir as well as for counting the collection. Slight cracking was noted to the plasterwork. To the small porch / corridor leading to the external door (at the rear of the organ), the plasterwork was blistering / damaged at low level – this corresponds directly to the problematic area externally around the downpipe. Once the external areas are dealt with properly, this area will probably need replastering. In the meantime, internal doors should perhaps be left open to encourage ventilation and drying out of the space.
- 4.10.3 The space behind the organ is used for storage. The paint to the walls was blistering slightly and there is minor cracking.
- 4.10.4 The church hall is on the rear corner of the site and would have presumably been constructed around the same time to be a school or Sunday school. Internally it has been extensively modernised. It includes a relatively large hall, a smaller hall / function space, an office and print room. It has a large a modern kitchen, which would be useful for supporting various functions. It has an accessible WC – this would not quite meet modern size standards, but it is a useful space for many. The church should be reminded, however, that the items stored in in (stools, sanitary bin etc) would be in the way of a wheelchair. It is important that wardens etc are aware of this and the items quickly moved if needed.

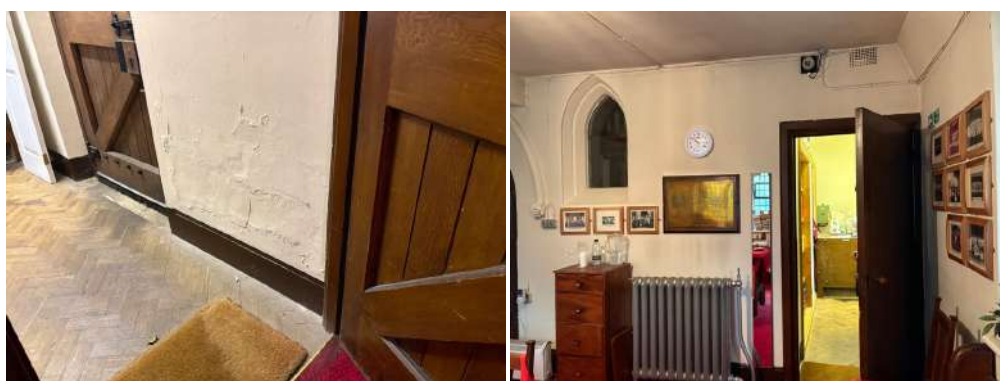
- 4.10.5 During the past 5 years, the church experienced problems with the ceiling of the church hall but repairs have been made. No further issues were reported.



Clergy vestry



Choir vestry



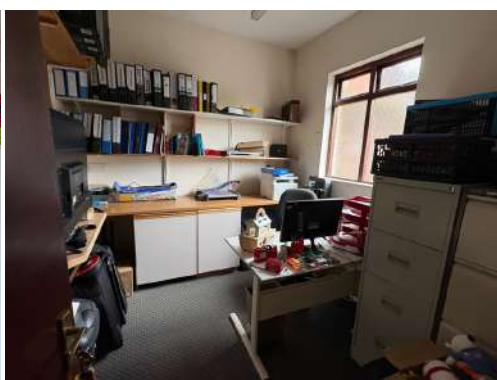
Choir vestry



Choir vestry



Church hall – main hall and office



Church hall – accessible WC and kitchen



5.0 Services

5.1 Heating systems:

- 5.1.1 The church had been experiencing issues for a while with the existing system – the final working boiler failed at Christmas 2025. Since that time, heating has not been functioning since despite attempts at repair. Each of the three boilers has now failed and parts are not available.
- 5.1.2 At the time of the inspection, the church had commissioned an independent heating report – it had recommended a hybrid system, but the church had not found this to be affordable, particularly in the light of other repairs that were needed to the building. Other options raised, such as infra-red heating or pew heaters, were not viable do to the configuration of the church.

[Between the time of the inspection and issue of the report, the church has applied for an interim faculty, and the DAC has recommended approval for a replacement gas boiler].

- 5.1.3 The church has been taking regular heat and humidity readings which will be useful in proving the need or otherwise for background or higher levels of general heating. The vestry has reportedly become more damp as a result of the heating failure – papers and robes have become musty smelling. Also, doors have been sticking. It is suggested that running a dehumidifier is a fairly economical way of making improvements to internal moisture levels (particular to smaller spaces) whilst awaiting repairs to the heating system and building fabric.
- 5.1.4 The existing (now redundant) gas boilers are housed in the boiler room, which is accessed from steps in the corner externally between the south tower and nave wall. As access is needed frequently, the steps are wisely kept swept. The space itself is relatively clean, dry and spacious.



Existing boiler room and flues above the existing steps

5.2 Electrical systems:

- 5.2.1 The electrical systems were last tested in June 2022. Meters and distribution boards are in a cupboard in the south porch. Cabling and sockets seem generally modern.

5.3 Water and Gas Services.

- 5.3.1 Prior to its failure, the boiler was serviced annually (last in November 2025) – the safety of the gas installation should have been checked at this time.
- 5.3.2 No problems were reported or noted with regards to the water supply. Water enters the building at the west end and supplies the north porch (flower vestry) and the clergy vestry.

6.0 Other Issues

6.1 Fire Precautions:

- 6.1.1 The church has its own fire escape policies / procedures (including Fire Risk for both the church and parish hall) – during services the north porch door is unbolted so it can be used as a fire escape if needed. It is important that this continues to be adhered to – otherwise proper escape ironmongery would be needed, which could somewhat spoil the character of the door.
- 6.1.2 Fire extinguishers were last serviced in November 2025

6.2 Lightning Conductors:

- 6.2.1 The lightning conductor is checked every 2 ½ years – most recently the week before the inspection (May 2026). This is important, given the height of the spire.

6.3 Security Installations and Measures:

- 6.3.1 No security issues reported in recent years

6.4 Health and Safety:

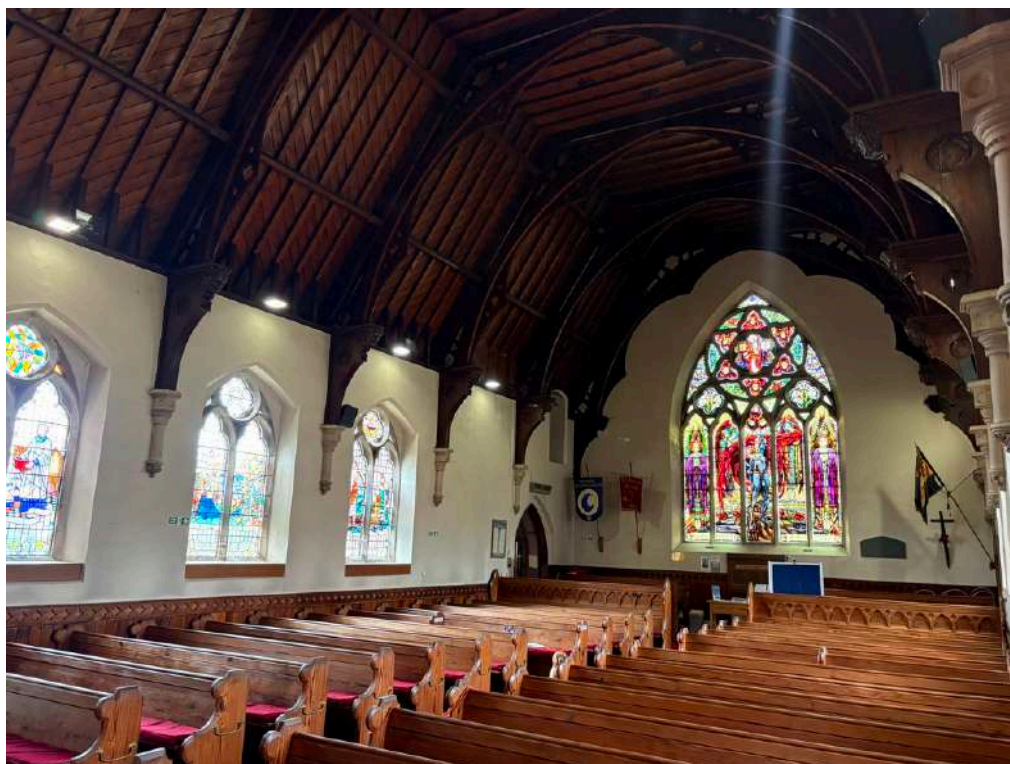
- 6.4.1 The church diligently considers health and safety matters – for example with its strict policies regarding tower access. No significant health and safety concerns were noted, although monitoring, maintaining and where necessary repairing the fabric at high level is critical, otherwise there could be a risk of masonry or slates falling near people, particularly near the main south entrance.
- 6.4.2 There is not thought to be an asbestos survey for the building – this is likely to be needed for any major works.

6.5 Disabled Provision and Access

- 6.5.1 The church has relatively good provision for access by people with disabilities as thresholds are level between the car parking area and nave. Within the nave, there are two area where shortened pews have been swapped for longer ones, which leaves a gap for wheelchairs within the heart of the seating area. The accessible WC in the hall is a fairly good and useful facility but longer term it may be ideal to have a fully compliant toilet in the main body of the church.

6.6 Presence of Bats

- 6.6.1 The church does not see bats and there is no evidence inside the main space. However, probable bat droppings were found in the tower. The church should factor in the likely presence of bats if preparing for any major roof works.



7.0 Churchyards and Ancillary Buildings and Structure

7.1 Condition of Churchyard

- 7.1.1 The church has moderately large grounds – the churchyard wraps around the main church building on all sides but to the north and west sides the consecrated area is narrower and the space further from the building is used for the car park, a small lawn, driveway and the Church Hall. To the south and east sides, the graveyard is quite a bit higher than the road that wraps around it – the grass is level with the top of the retaining wall.
- 7.1.2 The maintenance within the church yard is very good and generally the condition reflects this level of care, however, the two recent collapses to sections of the boundary wall shown that investment of (inevitably limited) funds on repairs has not prioritised the churchyard – this is something that is both understandable and seen throughout the diocese.

7.2 Ruins or Buildings within the Churchyard

- 7.2.1 No ruins in the churchyard.
- 7.2.2 The Church Hall and adjoining house were not inspected in detail but are in fairly good condition with no major defects noted or reported.

7.3 Monuments, Tombs and Vaults

- 7.3.1 The monuments / headstones were not inspected in detail – the church does their own regular checks. No major concerns noted.

7.4 Boundary Walls, Lych-Gate and Fencing

- 7.4.1 Notes on the boundary treatments:
 - Main entrance on south side: Overthrow requires redecoration. Areas of damage to gate

piers – these seem currently stable but should be monitored as work may be needed in years to come.

- South boundary wall: Cracking to wall section under noticeboard – monitor regularly, particularly after heavy rain. Stonework to wall under yew hedges adjacent very eroded and again needs monitoring. Also requiring checks are areas of a minor lean / open joints and a more eroded area approx. 10m from the corner.
- To the Church Road boundary, the first section of wall is slightly bulging at the top.
- Under the large Cedar tree is the area of the wall that was rebuilt following the most recent collapse -it includes a new foundation, blockwork inner leaf and drainage. The church had been actively monitoring the state of the bowed section of boundary wall and identified that this had significantly deteriorated in January 2025 due to the bad weather. A faculty had been submitted for its repair but after months of information gathering, expert input and research, the church was in the 28 day public notice period in September 2025 when the wall collapsed, resulting in a more complex scheme of rebuilding – e.g. necessitating a complete road closure.
- On the northern side are two further sets of gate-posts – one for a pedestrian and one for a vehicle entrance. No issues were noted. The walling to the part is lower, and generally less vulnerable, although a section nearer the church hall also collapsed and needed rebuilding.

- 7.4.2 It is important that the church allows funds for the routine patch pointing and repair of the boundary wall.

7.5 Paths, Steps and Areas of Hard-Standing

- 7.5.1 Paths are a mix of asphalt and concrete slabs.

- 7.5.2 Whilst generally well maintained, some of the paths are very slightly uneven with some vegetation growing. There are some cracking and moss to the less used asphalted paths. These should be checked regularly to avoid trip hazards and kept as clear as possible to avoid the surfaces worsening.

- 7.5.3 The steps are generally sound – the southern gate recently benefited from having trip hazards removed (by levelling slabs and removing a redundant gate stub)

- 7.5.4 The asphalted car park and driveway are in good condition.

7.6 Trees and Shrubs

- 7.6.1 The church's trees are professionally inspected every 5 years.

- 7.6.2 The trees are a particular feature of the churchyard and contribute to the character of the wider conservation area. The carefully clipped yews on the front boundary and large cedar tree on the east side are of particular note – the church should be commended for the work they put in to maintain them.



South side of churchyard



Car park and north-west corner of the church



Looking towards the Church Hall



Southern entrance



Damage to southern gateposts





Areas of cracked and eroded wall



Area of minor lean and open joints (left) and more significant erosion



Church Road boundary wall – the right-hand photo shows the rebuilt section





Northern boundary – the final photo shows a further section rebuilt in the quinquennium



Paths to north and east sides



Cedar tree and bin storage area / top of boiler room steps



Main entrance paths from car park and road



Memorials / burials areas to the west and north-west of the building

7.7 Miscellaneous items

- 7.7.1 The church owns and leases out Hirst cottage, which is part of the grounds. The church has recently carried out roof repairs to this house.

8.0 Recommendations

- 8.1.1 In accordance with diocese guidance, works of repair required to the church are listed, in order of priority, under the following headings:
- A: Urgent works requiring immediate attention
 - B: Requires attention within 12 months
 - C: Requires attention within 18-24 months
 - D: Requires attention within the quinquennial period
 - E: A desirable improvement with no timescale
 - M: Routine items of maintenance
- 8.1.2 The report states state for each item (1) whether the works require professional supervision or might safely be entrusted to unskilled labour and (2) a broad cost where this is practicable.

9.0 Recommendations on the Maintenance and Care

- 9.1.1 The church should be commended for its immaculate record keeping and maintenance programme.
- 9.1.2 The church is clearly making good efforts to undertake regular maintenance on the building fabric, but the height and configuration of the original construction provide challenges. It is advised that the church regularly uses the steeplejack for maintenance to the tower and spire and continues to engage the roofing company for other high-level repairs.
- 9.1.3 Funding for repairs is inevitably limited, therefore it is often necessary to delay repairs – with this in mind, the monitoring of issues of limited-moderate levels of concern has frequently been recommended in this report. This will entail the church keeping a regular eye from ground level. Photographing is very useful to show things have not changed. If there are concerns that an issue is worsening, then the architect should be consulted and work may be necessary. Generally, however, careful monitoring will mean that work can be delayed and therefore repairs can be grouped together or funded through grants etc.

10.0 Recommendations on Further Detailed Investigations:

- 10.1.1 Generally discussed elsewhere, but the church should start in earnest working towards a package of repairs and renovation to the rainwater goods. Also important is pushing forward with the underground drainage investigation / works.

11.0 Reducing the Carbon Footprint

- 11.1.1 It is very important that every church reduces their carbon footprint and joins the overall Church of England push towards carbon net-zero in 2030. However, there are real challenges in doing so. For All Saints, the recent heating failure has led to a difficult decision to replace the boilers with a new, more efficient gas boiler, instead of opting for a more radical change to an electric system. The reasons behind this are complicated but fundamentally the very large cost needed for an alternative system would mean that other vital works (e.g. to the rainwater goods) would not be possible.
- 11.1.2 Recent studies have shown how important the condition of a building is for both its thermal performance and the comfort of its occupant – this must therefore be a priority at Thornton Hough, removing any causes of walls or ceilings becoming saturated.
- 11.1.3 Also important will be ways of keeping people warm whilst heating the whole building slightly less, e.g. heated pew pads or even blankets.
- 11.1.4 The church should also commit to undertake further small but nonetheless incrementally beneficial improvements such as replacing further lights with LEDs or using dehumidifiers / ventilation instead of relying on more energy intensive heating when the building is not in use.

12.0 Any Explanatory Notes, Advice and Guidance

- 12.1.1 The table on the following pages provides some very approximate costings – these are to help establish priorities and timescales only. Costs would vary considerably depending on if they are grouped together, the availability of high-level access and who undertakes the work.

Ref		Description	Priority	Approximate cost					Undertake unskilled?	Professional Supervision?	Implication if deferred
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030+			
1	3.1.3	Regular general (at least 5 yearly) repointing work and basic stonework repair	D		£12,500				No	Yes	Condition worsens and repair costs more. Internal water ingress and dampness.
2	3.1.4	Choir vestry repointing	D		£5,000				No	Yes	Condition worsens and repair costs more. Internal water ingress and dampness.
3	3.1.4-5	High level repointing / stonework repair to parapets etc (during rainwater goods works?)	D		£7,500				No	Yes	Condition worsens and repair costs more. Internal water ingress and dampness.
3	3.3.3	Polycarbonate temporarily removed from windows and stained glass professionally cleaned. Refix north transept window guard. Check condition of windows close-up.	D			£1,000			No	No	Poor appearance from both in and out. Condition issues may be missed.
4	3.4.1	Overhaul of high level rainwater goods	C		£50,000				No	Yes	Condition worsens and repair costs more. Internal water ingress and dampness. Original decorative rainwater goods may be lost
5	3.4.2	Repair / overhaul of lower-level rainwater goods (e.g. choir vestry)	C	£1,000					No	Yes	Condition worsens and repair costs more. Internal water ingress and dampness. Original decorative rainwater goods may be lost
6	3.4.3	Nave south hopper - clear	B	£250					No	No	Water damage / ingress
7	3.4.4	Replacement soakaway / drains	D		£10,000				No	Yes	Water ingress / damage

Ref		Description	Priority	Approximate cost					Undertake unskilled?	Professional Supervision?	Implication if deferred
				2026	2027	2028	2029	2030+			
8	3.7.3	Interim roof repairs (e.g. to clergy vestry south and south nave)	B	£750	£750	£750	£750	£750	No	No	Internal leaks and damage
9	3.8.4	Further steeplejack work	D			£3,500			No	Yes	Damage to spire. Health and safety risks.
10	5.1.2	Replacement boiler(s)	B	£20,000					No	No	Poor comfort and potential risk to building fabric. Loss of congregation.
11	7.4.2	Regular patch pointing / repair of boundary wall	D				£1,500		No	No*	Risk of further damage or collapse

- A: Urgent works requiring immediate attention
- B: Requires attention within 12 months
- C: Requires attention within 18-24 months
- D: Requires attention within the quinquennial period
- E: A desirable improvement with no timescale
- M: Routine items of maintenance

* No professional supervision but a good specialist contractor needed (e.g. stonemason) and an agreed general specification from a conservation architect (e.g. mortar type) before works start.