

Notes from meeting with Jennifer Leadbetter, Heritage and Conservation Officer at North Warwickshire Council, with regard to Holy Trinity Church, Hartshill, Nuneaton Church Project, 17th July 2024

Attendees Nick Blamire Brown, Nick Miles (chair), Jeff Robinson, Sue Foster (scribe), apologies Stacy Nelson.

Nick began the meeting by explaining to Jennifer our aim which is to make our Church a comfortable space for worship and occasional concerts, assemblies etc. Comfort includes being sufficiently warm and having a visually appealing environment. We also need to consider the preservation of the Church building and the Church of England's commitment to a net zero carbon church by 2030.

Jennifer told us that, as Holy Trinity is only Grade 2 listed, it is not under the remit of Historic England and so we don't have to worry about any restrictions that they might apply.

Heating

Jennifer reiterated many of the points which were made in the document which we recently read https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/Heating_principles.pdf

Space heating to 18 degrees C. or higher is often aimed for, but is expensive, doesn't always make people comfortable, and can be environmentally unsustainable

Jennifer said that localised heating and fabrics which retain heat was the way forward. Examples include pew heaters and heated cushions for heating. For retaining heat, examples are pew cushions and floor coverings.

However, Jennifer also said that a building should be kept at a minimum of 12 degrees to prevent freeze thaw.

Damp

If you are near to a cold surface, you feel colder. Damp walls feel colder. Therefore, you need to keep the fabric of the building dry.

Blocked gutters are a major cause of damp. Therefore, they need to be cleared twice a year. Also, due to climate change and increased intensity of rainfall, many gutters and drainpipes which were installed years ago are too small and may therefore need replacing.

On her tour round the church Jennifer identified a number of defects with our downpipes and drainage.

Jennifer also suggested that the paint which is on the walls may not be the best according to current thinking. It could be removed and replaced with lime wash or other alternatives.

Windows

All of the windows are buckling. The last estimate to replace the iron bars was 15 years ago and it was £3,000 per window. Jennifer suggested that the window repairs could be one at a time and perhaps people would be prepared to 'adopt' a window.

Jennifer also said that we should consider secondary glazing on the inside of the windows for thermal comfort.

Insulation in the loft space

Jeff said that the insulation in the loft above the Church was removed several years ago at the behest of the Diocese. Nobody remembers why. (According to Bob Cretney's booklet "What House will ye build me", it was installed with the new heating system in 1991.) Jennifer said in her subsequent email "BTW I would be keen to know more about

the restrictions on the replacement of insulation in the roof space should you be able to find out more information on the matter.”

Solar panels

Jennifer suggested that we should do an energy consumption survey to see to what extent solar panels would reduce our costs.

Nick M. commented that, even if solar panels were not sufficient to meet our energy requirements, they would reduce our bills. Also, if solar panels generate enough electricity to exceed our energy requirements, there may be the potential to sell some to the community centre.

Jennifer took a look at the Church roof.



She said that before proceeding too far down this route, we should get some solar panel people in to take a look. Jennifer is dubious that solar panels could be fitted to the Church roof due to its steep pitch and the amount of vegetation (on the trees.) Jeff asked “what about photovoltaic tiles” but Jennifer said they are very expensive.

However, Jennifer also looked at the Community Centre roof.



She thought that there was potential for solar panels to be fitted here.

Things To Do

Jennifer suggested that we monitor the temperature and humidity in the church.