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Church of St John the Evangelist

KIRK MERRINGTON

Diocese of Durham

Quinquennial Inspection Report March 2020

St John the Evangelist

Inspection of Churches Measure 1955

(Current version)

Architects Report inspected 29th September and 28th October 2025

Archdeaconry of Auckland

Deanery of Auckland

Incumbent: Rev'd Barbara Hilton

Inspection Architect

J M White BA(Hons) PG Dip RIBA

This Report has been prepared on the basis of the 'Model Diocesan Scheme' recommendations for inspecting Parish Churches as published in 1995 by the Council for the Care of Churches ' CCC' in conjunction with the Ecclesiastical Architects & Surveyors Association 'EASA'.

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Recommendations

Where work is recommended a code number in brackets is entered in the right-hand side page margin to indicate the priority as follows:

(1) Urgent works requiring immediate attention.

(2) Work recommended to be carried out during the next 12 months.

(3) Work recommended to be carried out during the Quinquennial period.

(4) Work needing consideration beyond the Quinquennial period.

(5) Work required to improve energy efficiency of the structures and services.

(6) Work required to improve accessibility.

1.0 Background and General

1.1 The Church of St John is situated to the southeast of the village of Kirk Merrington in the County of Durham, and is located near the centre of its site, which is about 2 acres in area.

1.2 Ordnance Survey Map reference NZ 263 315.

1.3 **General Description of the Church**

1.4 The original building dates from the 11th Century but in 1840 it was demolished and the present building constructed with the original stone and completed in 1850.

1.5 The Church comprises a Chancel, Nave and north Transept. To the west of the Nave there is a gallery, access to which is by a timber stair. The organ is located in the north Transept.

1.6 The entrance porch is to the west end of the south wall, and the clergy Vestry is off the entrance vestibule on the north side. An accessible toilet has been installed to the west of the entrance lobby.

1.7 There is a very dominant squarely proportioned Tower which is located over the middle third of the Nave and unusually not over the crossing of the Nave and north Transept, as previously recorded. Access to this Tower is by a spiral stone staircase with an external door. Before the rebuilding of the Church, the parapet wall was castellated with a group of three ornamental pinnacles at each corner. The Tower serves as a landmark for many miles around.

1.8 The walls of the Church are of stone, plastered internally.

1.9 The roofs over the Nave and north Transept are steeply pitched and covered with Westmorland slates. The roofs to the Chancel and Tower are flat pitched and covered with terne coated stainless steel (original lead coverings were stolen and replaced during 2016) and lead respectively.

1.10 Internally there is a central walkway with pews on either side. The floor underneath the pews is of boarding on joists and raised slightly above walkway level. The walkway is of stone flags.

1.11 Heating is by means of a low-pressure hot water installation served by a gas boiler located in the Vestry.

1.12 Artificial lighting is by means of electricity from the mains.

1.13 The oak Chancel screen is of very fine Cosin style in excellent condition.

1.14 The Churchyard is enclosed by stonewalls and contains a mixture of trees. There is a new burial ground at the east end of the Churchyard with enclosing wall and fence with access gate. The main Churchyard

shown on the location plan is closed and maintained by the Local Authority.

1.15 The Church is described in N Pevsner's The Buildings of England: County Durham Volume 1983' as:

> ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, standing on a high ridge. 1850-1 by G Pickering (GR), a copy of its predecessor, which was one of the most interesting Norman Churches in the county, surrounded by a vallum of 7142-3. Tripartite, with aisle less Nave, central crossing Tower with twin bell-openings, and aisle less Chancel of the same length as the Nave. In 1850 a further Chancel was added. The crossing Tower rests on arches with pier-responds. Three-order S portal into the Nave. Inside, the most interesting thing is the SCREEN, of typical Cosin forms, c. 1660-70 (cf. Bishop Auckland). (The Church belonged to Darlington Dean and Chapter). The sections above the dado are divided by balusters and have cusped leaf tracery. Above them runs a broad acanthus frieze, and on this is a crude version of the cresting on the Sedgefield Chancel panelling with cherubs' head on the brackets. Of the same date and style, the CHANCEL STALLS, independent of the screen, with poppyheads and garlands at the ends, and the COMMUNION RAIL with slim balusters and poppyhead ends. The Altar, like medieval ones, still placed a few feet away from the E wall.

1.16 The Church is Grade II* Listed status; a copy of the history status is attached to this report.

1.17 An Archaeological Assessment of the Church has been carried out by Peter F. Ryder dated June 1999, 21 pages, copies are held by the Diocese. A copy has been forwarded to the Church.

1.18 There are no Tree Preservation Orders or Ancient Monuments attached to the Church.

1.19 The Church is in a Conservation Area.

2.0 Scope of Report

2.1 All areas accessible were inspected from ground level, unfortunately on this occasion due to high winds it was not possible to obtain a view of the pitched and stainless-steel roof areas from the Tower roof. Floor voids were not opened up for inspection or carpets lifted. High-level internal wall areas and roof timbers were not accessible for close inspection. Binoculars were used for roof inspections externally. Access onto the Chancel roof was not possible as ladders were not available.

2.2 The weather at the time of the surveys was dry and bright, but high winds prevented safe inspection from above of the Chancel roof.

2.3 There were no roof voids in the Church as construction is open to the underside of the roof boarding.

2.4 Although manhole covers were visible no drains were checked.

2.5 See appendix 'c in this report for a fuller description of the report limitations.

3.0 Works Carried out Since Previous Report

3.1 The Church Log Book confirms that the following works have been undertaken since the last quinquennial inspection.

3.2

15/03/20	Roof alarm service	E Bound AVX	£463.20
April 2020	Clean gutters	Foster Brothers	
10/06/20	Repairs to microphone	Damascus RD	£45.10
04/10/20	Roof alarm service	E Bound AVX	£181.20
11/10/20	Organ repairs	Harrison & Harrison	£168.30
06/12/20	Replace 3no. power sockets	Lightfoots	£211.20
08/02/21	Boiler maintenance	DP Plumbing	£120.00
17/03/21	PAT test	Damascus RD	£92.50
06/05/21	Roof alarm maintenance	E Bound AVX	£415.20
27/09/21	Boiler repair	DP Plumbing	
27/09/21	Electrical maintenance, clean radiators and repairs	Lightfoots	
Oct 2021	Alarm maintenance	E Bound AVX	
08/10/21	Annual service of fire extinguishers	H E Wooley	
29/10/21	Repair and repoint sloping stone roof over tower stair	Foster Builders	£3140.00
16/11/21	Strip and re-slate Nave north side west of tower	Foster Builders	£2740.00
13/02/23	Check Tower electrics replace lamps and bulkhead	Lightfoot	£242.90
31/05/23	Annual service fire extinguishers	HE Wooley	£59.10
04/10/23	Annual inspection of roof alarm, new modem	E Bound AVX	£821.44
14/12/23	Remove loose paint/plaster north wall or transept	Foster Brothers	£390.00
14/12/23	Repoint east wall of north transept	Foster Brothers	£4160.00
2023	Churchyard maintenance	Ian Liddle	£907.20
23/02/24	Replace carpets inc. breathable underlay	AS Carpets	£6195.00

02/07/24	Clean Tower roof and roof repairs	Foster Brothers	£460.00
25/07/24	Replace 6 LED tower lights	Lightfoots	£727.20
26/07/24	Boiler service	Geoff Robinson	£32.00
29/08/24	Service fire extinguishers	HE Wooley	£34.80
19/12/24	Electrical inspection and repair Church lighting	Lightfoots	£2844.00
03/01/25	Clean gutters, gulleys and parapet	Foster Brothers	£140
06/01/25	Supply and install thermocouple, boiler	Geoff Robinson	£72.00
24/07/25	Repair notice board	Foster Brothers	£120.00

3.3 The Church Log book is a comprehensive record of works carried out during the previous quinquennium. It is obvious that a significant amount of work has been carried out during the last quinquennium to the benefit of the Church. It is important that the Church wardens continue to maintain a comprehensive record of works/services carried out within the Church log book.

4.0 General Condition of Church

4.1 The Church continues to be sound structurally and well maintained over the last quinquennium, the interior is well maintained and is a pleasing Church for worship.

4.2 A significant number of repairs/improvements have been made during last Quinquennium as listed in the Log Book.

4.3 The Chancel roof was not inspected at close quarters, but all coverings were replaced in 2016. The roof could not be viewed during this inspection as ladders were not available, and the winds were too strong to safely view from the Tower roof.

4.4 Tower roof outlet has been installed with mesh to prevent bird nesting, and this has so far been successful.

4.5 This report also covers items where continuing repair and annual maintenance are required and are listed elsewhere.

4.6 The lightening conductor system has been upgraded in accordance with standards.

4.7 The new Chancel roof continues to be protected by an infrared alarm system.

4.8 The major work undertaken during the last Quinquennium was the replacement of carpets and electrical upgrades. Along with a significant amount of masonry repair/repointing as recommended in the 2020 quinquennial inspection report.

External Inspection

5.0 Roof Coverings

5.1 Tower Roof: The roof was re-leaded between 1989/94 and is still in excellent condition. The southern brace on the centre mast has been replaced and painted during the last quinquennium.

Redecoration to the centre metal post and braces will be required in the Quinquennium period. 3

There would appear to be a piece of redundant fabricated steelwork laid upon the lead roof, which if redundant should be removed. 2

5.2 Gallery/Vestry/Western Nave: A high level steeply pitched roof with west gable and table stones. The east side abuts the Tower. Coverings are Westmorland slates in diminishing courses with flashings to the tower abutments. The stone ridge tiles in satisfactory condition. North and south slopes are generally in good condition with some previous repairs noticeable.

5.3 Eastern Nave: High level steeply pitched roof with gable and table stones at east end. The west side abuts the Tower. Westmorland slates are laid in diminishing courses with flashings to Tower abutments. The stone ridge tiles in satisfactory condition. The roof generally is showing signs of ageing with a number of repaired and replaced slates. The south slopes have the majority of repairs being the exposed side to prevailing winds. A lead cover flashing has been installed to the southern abutment to the Tower as recommended previously by the inspecting Architect.

5.4 Chancel: The roof was re-leaded in 1986 following lead theft. However, it was stolen again in March 2016 despite the fact that during the last quinquennium the lead roof has had 'smart water identifying liquid to all lead bays on Chancel Roof and display 'smart water' Warning Notice on Building/Notice Board added. Furthermore, the Chancel roof had a fully monitored alarm system in place at the time of the theft.

Following the theft faculty approval was obtained for the replacement of the roof coverings utilising terne coated stainless steel in order reduce the risk of further theft and consequential damage. During the works the arrangement of the gutters, falls and outlets were improved to reduce the risk of future blockages.

No ladders were available for access onto the Chancel roof on the day of inspection, so viewing was restricted from the Tower roof. However, the condition of the roof looked as new, and the gutters appeared to be clean.

5.5 North Transept: This roof is a high level steeply pitched roof with gable and table stones at north end; coverings are Westmorland slates in diminishing courses. The stone ridge tiles in satisfactory

condition. East and west slopes are generally in good condition with some previous repairs noticeable.

2

The east side sloping valley gutter had previously been noted to collect debris at the foot of the gable stones where there is an offset. This must be cleared annually to prevent a build-up and blockage.

The west side drains to a concealed lead abutment gutter to the side of the tower access spiral staircase. This should be inspected and cleared annually to prevent a build-up and blockage, which has been previously experienced. 2

5.6 Spiral Stair Roof: This roof is high level sloping coursed and weathered stonework. The stonework appears to be in generally good condition. This has been repaired and fully repointed with NHL lime: sand mortar, during the last quinquennium.

6.0 Exterior Doors

6.1 The main entrance door is a large single leaf door with arched head of heavy construction. The hinges are sturdy and sound and need occasional grease lubrication. There is no step and access for wheelchairs is satisfactory.

The external boarded surface is stained; the door has been fully redecorated during the last quinquennium and is therefore in good condition.

6.2 There is an external Chancel door on the south side, which is not in use. The boarded door has wide gaps, which would benefit from cover laths to protect the open joints. This has been done during the last quinquennium.

Metal studs and decorative metalwork are satisfactory. It is understood that this door is to be used as an Emergency Exit and as such the following works should be undertaken: -
Fill in keyhole with matching timber and add existing lock block for historic value – done.
Weld finger dowel to latch for lifting operation – done.
Add cast iron pull handle – done.
Decorate step/upstand in white emulsion for safety/visibility. 3
Note/advise Churchwardens and Health & Safety file that this is an Exit Door for Emergency use.
Ensure that there is a flat platform on the exit side of the door leading to safety and an external light is operable.
Install brush strip at threshold to prevent rain ingress and vermin entry.

6.3 The external stair door and frame to the tower is on the north elevation and is in satisfactory condition but requires stain protection and hinge lubrication. 3

7.0 Exterior Windows

7.1 The windows externally are now all protected with polycarbonate secondary sheeting. Except the east end of the Chancel which has external galvanised steel grills. These all appear to be in satisfactory condition.

7.2 The Vestry window is glazed in wire mesh reinforced fibre resin type sheet, which appears to be a temporary measure and is out of keeping with the other windows. When funds allow the window should be re-glazed with leaded lights and have outer protective sheeting to match others. The ventilation has been upgraded as recommended previously by the Heating Maintenance Engineer. 4

7.3 A new stained-glass window had been installed in the east wall of the north Transept adjacent to the organ and in memory of Mr. Backhouse; an organist for many years. The artwork is of St Cecilia in modern style.

7.4 A new stained-glass window has been installed in the west window within the Transept; St Luke in memory of Eric and Edith Stephenson.

8.0 Rainwater Goods and Drainage

8.1 Repairs/replacement gutters to the north Transept appear to be in good working order with no reports of leakage or internal signs of further damp penetration. However, the gulleys on both sides of the north Transept require cleaning out of debris and vegetation annually to prevent a build-up and blockage. 2

8.2 Gullies should be checked annually for discharge to ensure there are no blockages or build-up of water at the wall foundation. 2

8.3 Generally, downpipes discharge into gulleys at ground level and appear to drain away to soakaways. The proximity of trees on the south side may indicate root invasion of the drainpipes below ground level and if this is the case relaying of drains may have to be considered. Initially a CCTV drain survey should be undertaken if gullies/drains are blocked.

8.4 There are no manholes visible in the Churchyard to give access to drains other than those for the "Trench Arch" system, and in the event of drainage having to be opened up; new access points for rodding are recommended.

8.5 An existing drain adjacent to the south entrance had previously been repaired following blockage and root invasion. Other rainwater gullies should be checked following heavy rainfall to ensure water is discharging away from the building.

8.6 A 'Trench Arch' biodegradable soil waste system was installed in the Churchyard with Building Regulation approval; and this has been working without issue.

9.0 External Walls

9.1 South Elevation (From west to east): The entrance porch stonework continues to show deep erosion to part of the arch and jamb reveals. There have been some previous repairs to this stonework in render which ultimately should be replaced in stone, but only when further restoration is required. There are six or seven carved voussoirs which are deeply eroded and will require replacement in due course and preferably within the next 5-10 years or when funds are available. 4

Between the Tower and Chancel to the right-hand side of the eastern most window there are 3 or 4 deep holes in the pointing which should be re-pointed using NHL lime: sand mortar. This has been carried out during the last quinquennium.

At the southeast corner of the Nave there was previously an old metal bracket, which has been removed during the last quinquennium. However, the holes from the now redundant fixings should be re-pointed using NHL lime: sand mortar. This has been carried out during the last quinquennium.

Furthermore, in the same area there is an earlier render repair which has cracked and delaminated which will be allowing water into the masonry structure. The render should be carefully removed; the stone brushed back to a sound surface and then re-pointed using NHL lime: sand mortar. This has been carried out during the last quinquennium.

9.2 East Gable Elevation of Nave: Stonework is generally in good condition and has been repointed during the last quinquennium.

9.3 South Elevation of Chancel: Stonework and pointing is generally in good condition. There are however, a number of eroded stones on this elevation; the degree of erosion should be monitored and stones replaced as necessary or when funds are available. 4

9.4 East Gable of Chancel: There are a number of eroded stones on this elevation; the degree of erosion should be monitored and stones replaced as necessary or when funds are available. 4

9.5 North Elevation of Chancel: The north wall of the Chancel may contain old or original masonry according to Peter Ryders Archaeological Report & the listing description. The upper portion of pointing at the east end was previously eroded and has been repointed during the last quinquennium.

9.6 East Elevation of North Transept: The stonework on this elevation had previously been poorly pointed, with mortar covering the majority of the stone face. The result of which is that moisture become trapped between the stone face and the mortar which increases significantly erosion of the stone. This elevation has been fully repointed during the last quinquennium.

9.7 North Elevation of Transept: Stonework is generally in satisfactory condition.

9.8 West Elevation of Transept: Stonework is generally in good condition.

However, at low level the stonework on this elevation has been poorly pointed, with mortar covering the majority of the stone face. The result of which is that moisture become trapped between the stone face and the mortar which increases significantly erosion of the stone. Consideration should be given to the careful removal of the mortar from the face of the stone, raking out the joints and repointing between the stone faces using NHL lime: sand mortar. Furthermore, there is a movement crack below and right of the window which would benefit being raked out and repointed using NHL lime: sand mortar. 2

9.9 Spiral Stair Enclosure to Tower: Stonework is generally in satisfactory condition.

9.10 North Elevation of Nave: There were previously areas of cement mortar which was causing erosion of adjacent stonework. This has been repointed during the previous quinquennium. However, there are areas of cement mortar to the sides and between the windows which are causing stone erosion these areas should be raked out and repointed using NHL lime: sand mortar. Furthermore, there is a movement crack over the east window which should be raked out and repointed, as above.

9.11 Western Gable Elevation of Nave: There was previously an area of pointing that has eroded to the upper right side of the window this has been carried out during the last quinquennium.

Also, at low level small areas of the stonework on this elevation has been poorly pointed, with mortar covering the majority of the stone face. The result of which is that moisture become trapped between the stone face and the mortar which increases significantly erosion of the stone. Consideration should be given to the careful removal of the mortar from the face of the stone, raking out the joints and repointing between the stone faces using NHL lime: sand mortar. 2

9.12 Tower: The stonework and pointing to the Tower is generally in good condition; except for the pointing in and around the grotesques on all 4 sides of the Tower. This area should be inspected and repointed between the stone faces using NHL lime: sand mortar. Furthermore, there also appears to be movement cracks above the louvred bell chamber openings on the north and south elevations. These should be inspected when access is provided for the works noted above. 2

Internal Inspection

10.0 Roof Structure and Ceilings

10.1 Entrance Lobby: Exposed timber joists over which are timber tongue and groove boards; all are stained and appear in good condition.

10.2 Accessible WC: Has a plastered ceiling with painted finish in good condition.

10.3 Vestry: Has a plastered ceiling with painted finish in good condition.

10.4 Western Nave: 2no. principal arched trusses supporting timber purlins, rafters and sarking boards. All are stained and appear in generally good condition.

10.5 Central Nave (Underside of Tower): Exposed timber joists between which is a timber tongue and groove boarded ceiling; all are stained and appear in good condition.

10.6 Eastern Nave: 2no. principal arched trusses supporting timber purlins, rafters and sarking boards. All are stained and appear in generally good condition.

10.7 Northern Transept: 2no. principal arched trusses supporting timber purlins, rafters and sarking boards. All are stained and appear in generally good condition. Damage from water ingress is noted at south west and north west corners at high level. It is believed that this is from previous now rectified issues. This should be monitored and once dry the damaged finishes should be brushed back and redecorated.

10.8 Chancel: 6no. principal joists which support purlins/ridge, rafters and sarking boards. All are stained but the finish appears to have been damaged by the water ingress in 2016. Consideration should be given to re-decoration. 3

11.0 Internal Doors and Panelling

11.1 The Lobby door leading into the Nave is of large sturdy plank construction in good condition. Hinges should be lubricated periodically.

11.2 The Vestry and toilet door are modern flush style with handles/latches.

11.3 The Nave and Northern Transept have vertical pine dado boarding; all in generally good condition.

12.0 **Ground Floor Structure**

12.1 The entrance lobby floor is stone flagged; some dampness appears to be inherent. The pointing between flags has started to fail, consideration should be given to re-pointing. 3

12.2 The Vestry is carpeted and in good condition.

12.3 The Nave has been fully recarpeted during the last quinquennium with red carpet; in good condition.

12.4 The pews are on raised boarded floors and appear satisfactory.

12.5 The majority of carpet to the Chancel has been removed following the earlier discovery of dampness. The stone flag floor has been drying out through this quinquennium. It is the Architects opinion that the stone flooring in this area should be left exposed to enable the floor to breathe. The stone flags/pointing may need localized repair if they are to be left as exposed. The Architect will advise as necessary. There has been a new carpet runner loose laid in the centre Aisle without underlay, this should be monitored for dampness. The raised timber deck within the Chancel should also be surveyed for moisture content once the stone floor has been allowed to dry out.

12.6 All remaining carpeted floors should be inspected for dampness.

12.7 The timber boarded raised floor in the Nave beyond the Tower is not well supported, following the inspection noted in 12.6 above the condition/support of this area of floor should be investigated.

13.0 Internal Finishes

13.1 Entrance Lobby: Plaster with paint finish in satisfactory condition**.**

13.2 Accessible WC: There was rising damp in the south west corner that previously appeared to have been treated as part of the toilet installation works.

13.3 Vestry: Plaster with paint finish in generally good condition. Although the north wall has flaking paint which should be rubbed down and redecorated.

13.4 Nave North Wall: Plaster with paint finish in generally good condition, containing 3no. stone framed leaded arched head windows; central window is stained glass. There is though a small area of moisture ingress a thigh level. This should be from a previous defect in the stair Tower roof. It should though be monitored. Once dry it should be brushed back and redecorated.

13.5 Nave East Wall: Plaster with paint finish in generally good condition, containing large stone arch to Chancel. However, there are signs of water ingress on the south side of the wall which should be monitored once dry, it should be brushed back and redecorated. 2

13.6 Nave South Wall: Plaster with paint finish in generally good condition, containing 3no. stone framed leaded arched head stained-glass windows. The centre window shows signs of distortion and temporary repairs; consideration should be given to restoration when funds permit. 4

13.7 Nave West Wall: Plaster with paint finish in generally good condition, containing 1no. stone framed leaded arched head window.

13.8 2 No. Cross Walls in Nave Supporting Tower: Both cross walls have plaster with paint finish in generally good condition. Each wall contains a carved semi-circular stone arch supported on carved stone pilasters; all appear in good condition.

13.9 North Transept West Wall: Plaster with paint finish in generally good condition, containing 1no. stone framed leaded arched head stained-glass window, see item 7.4 above.

However, there are signs of water ingress at high level around the masonry which provides access to the Tower, which could be as a result of a gutter fault, it could be a result of earlier leakage but should be investigated/monitored. 2

13.10 North Transept North Wall: Plaster with paint finish in generally good condition. Although there is flaking paint over the organ which should be investigated and redecorated.

13.11 North Transept East Wall: Plaster with paint finish in generally good condition, containing 1no. stone framed leaded arched head stained-glass window, see item 7.3 above.

13.12 North Transept South Wall: Plaster with paint finish in generally good condition. Supported on a carved semi-circular stone arch supported on carved stone pilasters; all appear in good condition.

However, there are signs of water ingress at high level under the eastern slope, it could be a result of earlier leakage but should be investigated/monitored. 2

13.13 Chancel North Wall: Plaster with paint finish in generally good condition.

13.14 Chancel East Wall: Plaster with paint finish in generally good condition, containing a tripartite stone framed leaded window with arched heads; centre pane of which is stained glass.

13.15 Chancel South Wall: Plaster with paint finish in generally good condition, containing 2no. stone framed leaded arched head windows; along with a stone framed timber boarded door.

The stone frame to the door is starting to delaminate, all loose/flaking stone should be carefully removed and the remaining stone brushed back to a sound surface. 2

13.16 Chancel West Wall: Plaster with paint finish in generally good condition. Supported on a carved semi-circular stone arch supported on carved stone pilasters; all appear in good condition.

13.17 Gallery: This is located at the west end of the Nave over the entrance lobby and Vestry with access via an open stair off the Nave.

If is understood this is only used for storage. The gallery has a low barrier at the front edge and is not considered a safe height for public use.

The stair up to the Gallery is steep and has a single side handrail that does not appear to be at a safe height. If the Gallery is brought back into public use the stairs and gallery front should be upgraded for safe use.

It is understood that the PCC are currently investigating a scheme to implement a replacement staircase and a new guard rail to make use of the gallery safe. 3

13.18 Tower Access: Access to the first Tower chamber over the Nave is by stone spiral stair from an external door. The stairs need sweeping of accumulated stone dust/debris. 2

The lighting has been replaced throughout the Tower, during the last quinquennium and is now fully operational following the last QI report. This is a significant improvement.

13.19 First Tower Chamber: From the first Tower chamber floor is a timber ladder up to the Belfry chamber, which is in satisfactory condition, with handrail installed. The ladder was previously flexible because of its span but a midpoint fixing to the adjacent wall was installed during the previous quinquennium and provides much increased stability.

The floor boarding had been renewed and is in excellent condition. The wiring and lighting has been replaced during the last quinquennium and is in good working order.

Settlement cracks had previously been evident on east and west walls, which had been repointed during the previous quinquennium and remain to be tight; and all is in good condition.

13.20 Belfry Chamber: The Belfry chamber has a timber-boarded floor on timber beams and there is a timber bell frame in satisfactory condition.

The bell wheels are damaged and in feeble condition and must not be swung.

There are two bells but only one is rung by clapper, the bell is static. The bell was sounded and appears to be in good condition. Maintain moving parts of bell by lubrication.

The working bell is rung at ground level at RHS of Nave and is in satisfactory condition. The bells were inspected by Mr. Howard Smith on 18/05/2005 who reported that one bell was cracked. The promised report was not seen, and recommendations are awaited. Consider repairs to bring second bell into ringing condition if funds can be found. 4

There are new hardwood timber louvres with stainless steel mesh to the interior faces, which have been manufactured to a good standard by Foster Brothers.

Repointing work that was highlighted in the previous quinquennial report has been undertaken during the last quinquennium; and all remains in good condition; except for a roughly vertical crack above the southern arched opening. This should be monitored and if further movement occurs wardens should inform the Architect. 2

From the belfry chamber floor is a timber ladder up to the roof, which is in satisfactory condition, with handrail installed. The ladder provides access to a bolted door which provides access to the Tower Roof; all of which is in good condition. However, there is a significant beetle infestation around the door; specialist advice should be sought regarding its removal/treatment. 1

14.0 Fittings, Fixtures, Furniture and Moveable Articles

14.1 The pipe organ is located in the north Transept and is made by E Wadsworth of Manchester 1886, has 2 manuals, 15 stops and was rebuilt in 1985 and is now maintained by Harrison & Harrison of Durham and is understood to be in good working order. The organ was locked and could not be inspected. Continue to maintain annually. 2

14.2 The pews are sturdy varnished softwood with fleur-de-lis gable ends, and sound.

14.3 The ancient carved Chancel screen is impressive and continues to be in good condition. The gates require careful handling, and hinges require repair and lubrication to prevent damage. In the Transept the Eden box pew contains four ancient tombstones - accompanying notes give historic details. 2

14.4 In the Chancel carved pews, Altar and Altar rails, also two old decorative chairs are of some antiquity. All these items should be fully insured, photographed and recorded in the Church records/terrier if not already covered.

The period altar rails have woodworm holes in one location, but it is not known if this is active. For safety the affected area should be retreated with recommended fluid. 2

14.5 Pulpit: Softwood timber decorative panelled construction on timber base. The handrail is loose and should be secured. 3

14.6 Font: A memorial to G Holmes, stone bowl on pedestal, has decorative oak lid dated 1937, all in good condition and in use. The font was re-fixed in 2014.

14.7 The safe has been relocated to space under the gallery staircase and is anchored to the concrete floor. The period-carved oak linen

cupboard has now been relocated to the back of the Nave due to re-ordering.

14.8 During the previous quinquennium the cupboards within the Vestry were replaced with fitted units, new worktops and sink unit for flower arranging and other uses; all in good condition.

14.9 An old decorate timber chest which was formerly located in the Chancel is now located at the west end of the Nave.

15.0 Toilets

15.1 An accessible toilet with grab rails was installed in 2009 with a baby change unit added in 2017.

The original installation included a new stainless-steel sink and drainer for flower use. This arrangement has been amended during 2016 such that the flower arranging sink unit etc. is now located in the Vestry which is considered to be significant improvement functionally.

15.2 Incoming electrics are located at the south side with switchgear at high level in a new cupboard.

16.0 Heating Installation

16.1 The former external lean-to boiler house was demolished, and the basement infilled in 1994 by J Marshall & Partner.

16.2 The gas-fired boiler was installed prior to 1989 and is a Clyde Combustion 045 MK2 348,000 Btu's model installed by G Atkinson of Consett. Controls for the boiler are in the Vestry with a remote thermostat located within the Nave.

2

The boiler is now maintained annually by DP Plumbing and Heating/Geoffry Robonson. Continue to maintain.

16.3 There are Dunham Bush convector heaters installed in the Chancel and Nave, and the air filters should be cleaned and fan motors maintained annually. 2

16.4 There are also radiators installed in the Nave, it is understood the heating is adequate and runs satisfactorily.

16.5 It is understood that the PCC have decided during the last quinquennium to maintain the internal temperature at a minimum of 12degC which is welcomed as being good practice.

17.0 Electrical Installation

17.1 The incoming electric cable is underground and rises on the external wall to the left of the entrance door and terminates in the accessible WC off the entrance lobby. The consumer unit is located in the cupboard within the w.c. and is fully labelled.

17.2 In February 2015 R Lightfoot and others upgraded the electrician system and replaced where necessary existing cabling. All existing switchgear was replaced along with lighting units with chandeliers throughout the Nave and Transept. The lighting in the Chancel was replaced with colour changing LED floodlights to highlight the high Alter. All appears to be working well.

17.3 An electrical test was carried out in 19/12/2024 by Lightfoot Electrical of Bishop Auckland. Future tests should be maintained at 5 yearly intervals.

17.4 At the time of the previous QI report, the tower lighting was defective as 3 out of the 4 lights were not working. All lights have been replaced during the last quinquennium, and all are now in working order.

17.5 Lightning Conductor was upgraded in accordance with British Standard in April 2011. Details of test certificate required for Log Book and further test required at 5 yearly intervals. 3

17.6 The audio system was upgraded in May 2011 with 1no. additional roving transmitter.

18.0 Fire Precautions

18.1 Entrance Lobby: 1no. 2kg carbon dioxide extinguisher for electrical appliance fires which is wall mounted; inspection is now due. 1

18.2 Entrance Lobby: 1no. 9 litre water fire extinguisher for wood, paper, textile fires which is wall mounted; inspection is now due. 1

18.3 Nave: 1no. 9 litre water fire extinguisher for wood, paper, textile fires which is wall mounted; inspection is now due. 1

18.4 North Transept: 1no. 2kg carbon dioxide extinguisher for electrical appliance fires which is wall mounted; inspection is now due. 1

19.0 Accessible Provision

19.1 Access to the Church for wheelchair users appears to be satisfactory. At the entrance gate assistance is required to open the closed gates. There are no steps into the Church, which would present problems to wheelchair users.

19.2 The Church should commission and 'Access Audit' under the terms of the Equality Act 2010. 6

20.0 Security

20.1 External doors appear to be adequately locked and there have been no reported break-ins. Other than the theft of the Chancel lead roof coverings in 2016.

20.2 Windows are out of reach and are now fully protected - see 7.1

21.0 Bats

21.1 There are no records of bat roosting within the Church.

Curtilage

22.0 Churchyard and Environs

22.1 The Churchyard is closed, and grass is cut by the Local Authority. Damage has previously been noted to headstones caused by cutting equipment and the Authority's contractors should be advised that more care should be exercised particularly as some of the headstones are ancient and valuable. A new Churchyard located beyond the existing one at the east end has now been consecrated.

22.2 The tarmac path from gate to Church was resurfaced by Sedgefield Borough Council and is in a satisfactory condition.

22.3 There are a variety of established trees: Sycamore, Ash, Holly, Beech, Silver Birch, Alder, and some new planting presumably by the Local Authority. A tree survey is recommended to ensure that the existing stock is safe or in need of any surgery. 3

As the Local Authority are responsible for the closed Churchyard, they should advise and undertake any tree work, but Chancellor approval is needed before any work undertaken.

22.4 Boundary walls to the Churchyard are random rubble stone, some with flat copings, and in satisfactory condition. The south boundary wall adjacent to the road is a partial retaining wall and uneven and bulging in places caused by tree roots. This should be monitored to ensure the walls are secure or repairs undertaken. This is a Local Authority responsibility. 3

22.5 The entrance gates at the west end are metal and in need of redecoration. The hinged gates would benefit with lubrication to keep the gates secure. 2

22.6 The Church Notice Board has been replaced during the last quinquennium.

22.7 The Churchyard seat installed on the north side of the Chancel is in satisfactory condition.

23.0 Log Book

23.1 This was inspected and noted to be an excellent and comprehensive record of maintenance and repairs with details of contractors/suppliers and costs. Continue to record as before.

24.0 Previous Quinquennial Reports

24.1

1969 June	Cordingley & McIntyre
1974 July	AO Lee, Hayton Lee & Braddock
1979 July	AO Lee, Hayton Lee & Braddock
1984 April	AO Lee, Hayton Lee & Braddock
1989 April	AO Lee, Hayton Lee & Braddock

1994 April	JB Kendall, HLB Architects
1999 November	JB Kendall, HLB Architects
2004 November	JB Kendall, HLB Architects
2010 April	JB Kendall, HLD Architects
2015 June	J M White, Padgett White Architects Limited
2020 March	J M White, Padgett White Architects Limited

RECOMMENDATIONS

	URGENT WORKS REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION: Category 1	Item
i)	Belfry Chamber: There is a significant beetle infestation around the door; specialist advice should be sought regarding its removal/ treatment.	13.20
ii)	Entrance Lobby: 1no. 2kg carbon dioxide extinguisher for electrical appliance fires which is wall mounted; inspection is now due.	18.1
iii)	Entrance Lobby: 1no. 9 litre water fire extinguisher for wood, paper, textile fires which is wall mounted; inspection is now due.	18.2
iv)	Nave: 1no. 9 litre water fire extinguisher for wood, paper, textile fires which is wall mounted; inspection is now due.	18.3
v)	North Transept: 1no. 2kg carbon dioxide extinguisher for electrical appliance fires which is wall mounted; inspection is now due.	18.4

Indicative cost for the works in Category 1 would be £ 500.00 excluding VAT and fees.

	WORK RECOMMENDED TO BE CARRIED OUT DURING NEXT 12 MONTHS: Category 2	
vi)	Tower Roof: There would appear to be a piece of redundant fabricated steelwork laid upon the lead roof, which if redundant should be removed.	5.1
vii)	North Transept: The east side sloping valley gutter continues to collect debris at the foot of the gable stones where there is an offset. This must be cleared annually to prevent a build-up and blockage. The west side drains to a concealed lead abutment gutter to the side of the Tower access spiral staircase. This should be inspected and cleared annually to prevent a build-up and blockage, which has been previously experienced.	5.5
viii)	Gullies should be checked annually for discharge to ensure there are no blockages or build-up of water at the wall foundation.	8.2
ix)	West Elevation of Transept: Stonework is generally in good condition. However, at low level the stonework on this elevation has been poorly pointed, with mortar covering the majority of the stone face. The result of which is that moisture become trapped between the stone face and the mortar which increases significantly erosion of the stone. Consideration should be given to the careful removal of the mortar	9.8

	from the face of the stone, raking out the joints and repointing between the stone faces using NHL lime: sand mortar. Furthermore, there is a movement crack below and right of the window which would benefit being raked out and repointed using NHL lime: sand mortar.	
x)	Western Gable Elevation of Nave: At low level small areas of the stonework on this elevation has been poorly pointed, with mortar covering the majority of the stone face. The result of which is that moisture become trapped between the stone face and the mortar which increases significantly erosion of the stone. Consideration should be given to the careful removal of the mortar from the face of the stone, raking out the joints and repointing between the stone faces using NHL lime: sand mortar.	9.11
xi)	Tower: The stonework and pointing to the Tower is generally in good condition; except for the pointing in and around the grotesques on all 4 sides of the Tower. This area should be inspected and repointed between the stone faces using NHL lime: sand mortar. Furthermore, there also appears to be movement cracks above the louvred bell chamber openings on the north and south elevations. These should be inspected when access is provided for the works noted above.	9.12
xii)	Nave East Wall: Plaster with paint finish in generally good condition, containing large stone arch to Chancel. However, there are signs of water ingress under the northern roof slope, it could be a result of earlier leakage but should be investigated/monitored.	13.5
xiii)	North Transept West Wall: There are signs of water ingress at high level around the masonry which provides access to the tower, which could be as a result of a gutter fault, it could be a result of earlier leakage but should be investigated/monitored.	13.9
xiv)	North Transept South Wall: There are signs of water ingress at high level under the eastern slope, it could be a result of earlier leakage but should be investigated/monitored.	13.12
xv)	Chancel South Wall: The stone frame to the door is starting to delaminate, all loose/flaking stone should be carefully removed and the remaining stone brushed back to a sound surface.	13.15
	Tower Access: Access to the first Tower chamber over the Nave is by stone spiral stair from an external door. The stairs need sweeping of accumulated stone dust/debris.	13.18
xvi)	Belfry Chamber: Repointing work that was highlighted in the previous quinquennial report has been undertaken during the last quinquennium; and all remains in good condition; except for a roughly vertical crack above the southern arched opening. This should be monitored and if further movement occurs wardens should inform the Architect.	13.20

xvii)	The pipe organ is located in the north Transept and is made by E Wadsworth of Manchester 1886, has 2 manuals, 15 stops and was rebuilt in 1985 and is now maintained by Harrison & Harrison of Durham and is understood to be in good working order. The organ was locked and could not be inspected. Continue to maintain annually.	14.1
xviii)	The ancient carved Chancel screen is impressive and continues to be in good condition. The gates require careful handling, and hinges require repair and lubrication to prevent damage. In the Transept the Eden box pew contains four ancient tombstones - accompanying notes give historic details.	14.3
xix)	In the Chancel the period, Altar rails have woodworm holes in one location, but it is not known if this is active. For safety the affected area should be retreated with recommended fluid.	14.4
xx)	The gas-fired boiler was installed prior to 1989 and is a Clyde Combustion 045 MK2 348,000 Btu's model installed by G Atkinson of Consett. Controls for the boiler are in the Vestry with a remote thermostat located within the nave. The boiler is now maintained annually by DP Plumbing and Heating. Continue to maintain.	16.2
xxi)	There are Dunham Bush convector heaters installed in the Chancel and Nave, and the air filters should be cleaned and fan motors maintained annually.	16.3
xxii)	The entrance gates at the west end are metal and in need of redecoration. The hinged gates would benefit with lubrication to keep the gates secure.	22.5

Indicative cost for the works in Category 2 would be £ 10,000 excluding VAT and fees.

WORKS RECOMMENDED TO BE CARRIED OUT DURING THE NEXT 5 YEARS: Category 3

xxiii)	Tower Roof: Redecoration to the centre metal post and braces will be required in the quinquennium period.	5.1
xxiv)	There is an external Chancel door on the south side Decorate step/upstand in white emulsion for safety/visibility.	6.2
xxv)	The external stair door and frame to the Tower is on the north elevation and is in satisfactory condition but requires stain protection and hinge lubrication.	6.3
xxvi)	Chancel: 6no. principal joists which support purlins/ridge, rafters and sarking boards. All are stained but the finish appears to have been	10.8

damaged by the water ingress in 2016. Consideration should be given to re-decoration.

xxvii) The entrance lobby floor is stone flagged; some dampness appears to be inherent. The pointing between flags has started to fail, consideration should be given to re-pointing. 12.1

xxviii) Gallery: This is located at the west end of the Nave over the entrance lobby and Vestry with access via an open stair off the Nave. 13.17

If is understood this is only used for storage. The gallery has a low barrier at the front edge and is not considered a safe height for public use.

The stair up to the Gallery is steep and has a single side handrail that does not appear to be at a safe height. If the Gallery is brought back into public use the stairs and gallery front should be upgraded for safe use.

It is understood that the PCC are currently investigating a scheme to implement a replacement staircase and a new guard rail to make use of the gallery safe.

xxix) Pulpit: Softwood timber decorative panelled construction on timber base. The handrail is loose and should be secured. 14.5

xxx) Lightning Conductor was upgraded in accordance with British Standard in April 2011. Details of test certificate required for Log Book and further test required at 5 yearly intervals. 17.5

xxxi) There are a variety of established trees: Sycamore, Ash, Holly, Beech, Silver Birch, Alder, and some new planting presumably by the Local Authority. A tree survey is recommended to ensure that the existing stock is safe or in need of any surgery. 22.3

As the Local Authority are responsible for the closed Churchyard, they should advise and undertake any tree work, but Chancellor approval is needed before any work undertaken.

xxxii) Boundary walls to the Churchyard are random rubble stone, some with flat copings, and in satisfactory condition. The south boundary wall adjacent to the road is a partial retaining wall and uneven and bulging in places caused by tree roots. This should be monitored to ensure the walls are secure or repairs undertaken. This is a Local Authority responsibility. 22.4

Indicative cost for the works in Category 3 would be £12,500 excluding VAT and fees.

WORK TO BE CONSIDERED BEYOND 5 YEARS: Category 4

xxxiii)	The Vestry window is glazed in wire mesh reinforced fibre resin type sheet, which appears to be a temporary measure and is out of keeping with the other windows. When funds allow the window should be re-glazed with leaded lights and have outer protective sheeting to match others. The ventilation has been upgraded as recommended previously by the Heating Maintenance Engineer.	7.2
xxxiv)	South Elevation (From West to East): The entrance porch stonework continues to show deep erosion to part of the arch and jamb reveals. There have been some previous repairs to this stonework in render which ultimately should be replaced in stone, but only when further restoration is required. There are six or seven carved voussoirs which are deeply eroded and will require replacement in due course and preferably within the next 5-10 years or when funds are available.	9.1
xxxv)	South Elevation of Chancel: Stonework and pointing is generally in good condition. There are however, a number of eroded stones on this elevation; the degree of erosion should be monitored and stones replaced as necessary or when funds are available.	9.4
xxxvi)	Nave South Wall: Plaster with paint finish in generally good condition, containing 3no. stone framed leaded arched head stained-glass windows. The centre window shows signs of distortion and temporary repairs; consideration should be given to restoration when funds permit.	13.6
xxxvii)	The working bell is rung at ground level at RHS of Nave and is in satisfactory condition. The bells were inspected by Mr. Howard Smith on 18/05/2005 who reported that one bell was cracked. The promised report was not seen, and recommendations are awaited. Consider repairs to bring second bell into ringing condition if funds can be found.	13.20

Indicative cost for the works in Category 4 would be £7,500 excluding VAT and fees.

WORK RECOMMENDED TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY: Category 5

None

WORK REQUIRED TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY: Category 6

xxxviii)	The Church should commission and 'Access Audit' under the terms of the Equality Act 2010.	19.2

a) General

This report is not a specification for the execution of works and must not be used as such. It is a general report as required by the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955.

The Architect has indicated in it such maintenance items, if any, which may safely be carried out without professional supervision.

Conservation and repair of Churches is a highly specialised subject if work is to be carried out both aesthetically and technically in the best manner, without being wasteful in expenditure. It is, therefore, essential that every care is taken to ensure that no harm is done to the fabric or fittings and when the Parochial Church Council is ready to proceed it should instruct the Architect accordingly, when he will prepare specifications and schedules and arrange for the work to be carried out by an approved Contractor under his direction.

Costs on much of the work or repairing Churches cannot be accurately estimated because the full extent of damage is only revealed as work proceeds, but when the Architect has been instructed to prepare specifications, he can obtain either firm prices or considered approximate estimates, whichever may be appropriate.

The Architect will be glad to help the Parochial Church Council to complete an appeal application to a charitable body if necessary, or to assist in applying for the essential Faculty or Archdeacon's Certification.

b) Priorities

Where work has been specified as being necessary in the preceding pages a code number from 1 to 6, has been inserted in the margin indicating the degree of urgency of the relevant works as follows:

1 Urgent works requiring immediate attention.
2 Work recommended to be carried out during the next 11 months
3 Works recommended to be carried out during the Quinquennial period.
4 Work needed consideration beyond the Quinquennial period.
5 Work required to improve energy efficiency of the structure and services.
6 Work required improving disabled access.

c) Scope of Report

The report is based on the findings of an inspection made from the ground and from other easily accessible points, or from ladders provided by the Parochial Church Council, to comply with the Diocesan Scheme under the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955.

It is emphasised that the inspection has been purely visual and that no enclosed spaces or inaccessible parts, such as boarded floors, roof spaces, or hidden timbers at wall heads have been opened up for inspection. Any part which may require further investigation is referred to in the appropriate section of this report.

d) Cleaning of Gutters etc.

The Parochial Church Council is strongly advised to enter into an annual contract with a local builder for cleaning out the gutters and downpipes twice a year.

e) Pointing and Masonry

Wherever pointing is recommended it is absolutely that the procedure in item (a) of this appendix be adhered to as without proper supervision much harm can be done to the fabric by incorrect use of materials and techniques.

f) Heating Installation
Subject to any comments to the contrary in Section 16.0 of this report, the remarks in this report are based only upon a superficial examination of the general condition of the heating installation, particularly in relation to fire hazards and sightlines.

NB: A proper examination and test should be made of the heating apparatus by a qualified engineer each summer, prior to the start of the heating season and the report of such examination should be kept in the Church log book.

The Parochial Church Council is strongly advised to consider arranging a regular inspection contact.

Wherever practicable, subject to finances, it is recommended that the installation be run at a low setting throughout the week, as distinct from being 'on' during services only, as constant warmth has a beneficial effect on the fabric, fittings and decoration.

g) Electrical Installation
Any electrical installation should be tested every Quinquennium and immediately if not done within the last five years (except as may be otherwise recommended in this report) by a competent electrical engineer or by the supply authority and an insulation resistance and earth continuity test should be obtained on all circuits. The engineer's test report should be kept with the Church log book. Where no recent report or certificate of inspection from a competent electrical engineer (one who is on the list of approved contractors issued by the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting) is available, the comments in this report are based upon a visual inspection made without instruments of the main switchboard and of sections of wiring selected at random. Electrical installation for lighting and heating, and other electrical circuits, should be installed and maintained in accordance with the current editions of the Institution of Electrical Engineers Rules and the more specific recommendations of the Council for the Care of Churches, contained in the publication "The Lighting of Churches".

h) Lightning Conductors
As a defective conductor may attract lightning, the lightning conductor should be tested every Quinquennium in accordance with the British Standard Code of Practice (current edition) by a competent electrical engineer and the record of the test results, conditions and recommendations should be kept with the Church log book.

Conductors on lofty spires and other not readily accessible positions should be closely examined every ten years, particularly the contact between the tape and the vane rod of finial. If the conductor tape is without a test clamp, one should be provided above ground level.

i) Maintenance Between Inspections
Although the measure requires the Church to be inspected by an Architect every five years it should be realised that serious trouble may develop between survey if minor defects such as displaced slates and leaking pipes are left unattended.

j) Fire Insurance

The Parochial Church Council is advised that the fire insurance cover should be periodically reviewed to keep pace with the rising cost of repairs.

At least two Class A fire extinguishers per floor, these should comply with BSEN3 and should be kept in an easily accessible position in the Church, together with an additional extinguisher of the foam of CO_2 (Class B) type where heating apparatus is oil fired, all fire extinguishers should be in a stand or attached to a wall.