Diocese of Durham

St MICHAEL SULGRAVE

Washington

(19)

Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991

QUINQUENNIAL REPORT

on the architect's inspection on

14 March 2018

Sunderland Archdeaconry

Chester le Street Deanery

an unlisted building

not in a conservation area

Incumbent Revd Julie Wing

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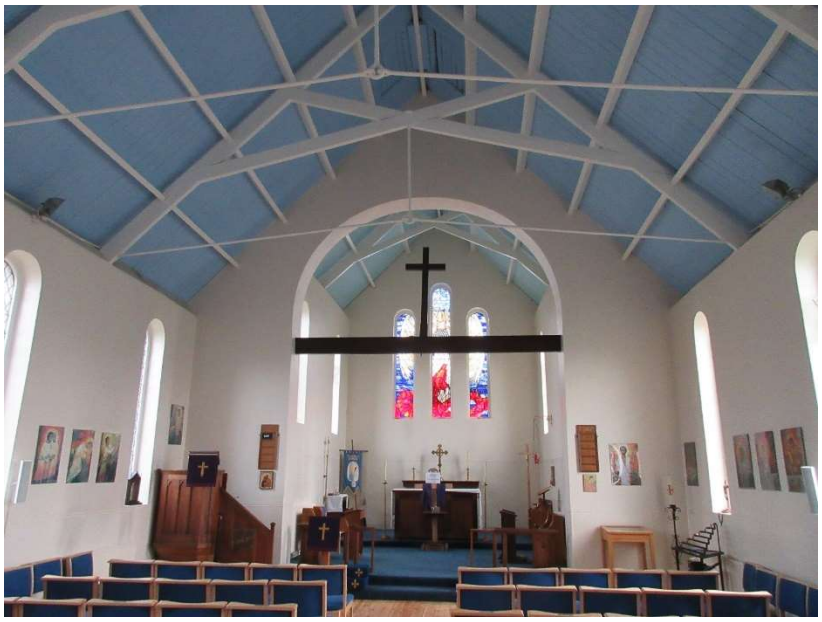


PART ONE

1. I have made a thorough general survey of the condition of the church and grounds. The inspection was such as could readily be made from ground level and ladders. I have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and I am therefore unable to report that any such part is free from defect. The chimney flues were not inspected and none of the services were tested. Damp meters were not used.

2. No material seen is likely to contain asbestos and the history of the church is such that asbestos is unlikely to be present. However this report is an Assessment rather than a Management Survey under the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2012. The PCC may wish to see the guidance on the Church Buildings Council ('ChurchCare') website.
   If a management or demolition survey is required and not previously done, a specialist surveyor should be approached.

Brief description

3. Foundation stone 1904. A simple red brick Nave and narrower Chancel under a continuous welsh slate roof. Altar moved forward to the Sanctuary step and Chancel carpeted. Pews cleared and chairs used. Organ at carpeted W end. N offshot containing an Entrance Lobby, Meeting room/Kitchen and wc. A bricked up lean-to against the S Chancel wall may be a disused wc.

4. Small grounds enclosed by brick garden walls. Public open space to S and E with houses and flats beyond. Terraced houses to E and W. Shops to N.

Recent structural history

5. The Log Book shows significant work since 1997:

1997 – 2002	Plaster cracks filled for monitoring and the church decorated 1998
	Drains at S and SW inspected by CCTV and cleared of roots, drain by wc and connection at boundary renewed
	Two small trees close to Chancel removed
	Bell canopy covered in Nuralite and timbers painted
	Patch pointing at W side of offshot, W and N boundary walls
	Clipped polycarbonate window protection added
	Intruder alarm, induction loop and microphone installed
Since 2002	S Michael stained glass installed in E windows 2003
	Drains rodded, examined and reported sound
	Pews removed, softwood floor sanded and stained, upholstered chairs added
	Accessible wc formed in the former boiler room and wc,
	New kitchen fittings in the Meeting room,
2011	Church redecorated
2012	Chancel recarpeted
since 2012	Slates repaired
	Patch pointing including the tops of some buttresses
	Painting of doors, offshot windows and bargeboards, new glass protection at offshot
	Some lights changed to LEDs

Summary of structural condition

6. Overall the church is well maintained.

7. The Chancel brick walls are tall for their thickness, with limited tying by the roof (unlike the Nave) and are pierced by seven tall lancets. The high return walls between Chancel and Nave are not wide enough to buttress the arch securely. These return walls have rotated outwards slightly, flattening the Chancel arch and distorting the brickwork over the E Nave windows.
Perhaps the timber rood beam was expected to restrain the round brick Chancel arch. Instead the beam pulled out at one end. It appears that some spread happened early and started again later, perhaps due to soil movement caused by drain faults and tree growth. Now appears essentially stable.

8. Since the 2011 redecoration there is no more movement at the beam. Minor cracks (mostly hairline) similar to those sketched in 2007 have reappeared, notably :
- under the Chancel SE window
- horizontally E of the Chancel NE window cill
- under the soffit of the crown of the Chancel arch and a short way up both faces
Overall it appears the building is not moving further but seasonal movement continues to open and close the cracks. See paragraphs 37 - 39.

PART TWO

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTERIOR

Roofs

9. The roofs are welsh slate with timber bargeboards at the gables and eave fascia boards. The Chancel and Nave roof is continuous with a very slight wave in the slates over the Chancel arch, another sign that the Chancel arch has flattened.

10. The **Chancel** and **Nave** roof is fair both sides. At S there is an uneven patch W of the Chancel arch at a former vent or turret, where one slate is slipping and one is on a lead clip. Any future repairs would be better with stiff copper clips not soft lead.

11. The lower **offshot** meets the Nave roof with fair lead valleys and stepped abutment flashings. Offshot slate good. Stepped lead flashings on soakers around the chimney.
At the chimney SW and SE sides the cover flashings are all or part missing. At W a piece of flashing lies in the gutter and a stick is lodged in the remaining leadwork.

Lead cover flashings missing from both S sides of the chimney

Rainwater System, Drainage

12. The gutters are upvc half round bracketed from fascias with downpipes and shoes, mixed black and grey. Most gutters seem sound but blocked by plants at the S ends of both offshot gutters and at the short Nave NW gutter.

W side of offshot – outlet disconnected from gutter and pipe and gutter blocked

13. The offshot W outlet is loose from the gutter and pipe, spilling water into the brickwork.

14. The lower NE Nave pipe has dropped opening a joint at head height and letting water into the brickwork. Pointing around the lower pipe is open and slightly green with algae. Pipe refitting with new pipe clips and repointing of the wall are needed.

15. Earthenware drains with a series of shallow brick manholes around most of the building. The drains pick up the rainwater gullies, the Kitchen waste gully, the wc and a former wc in the now bricked up lean-to against the Chancel S wall. One branch goes E around the Chancel to the S side. The other begins at the Kitchen gully and passes the W end. They join at the middle of the S side and pass out S to a sewer.

16. Past blockage by tree roots is recorded but no present sign of trouble.

17. At random the NW manhole was opened. The brick joints are open letting soil build up in the manhole, part blocking the kitchen gully branch. Rebuilding or internal repointing may be needed in time. Other manholes may be similar.

Walls, Buttresses, Chimney

18. The church walls are solid brickwork with a low plinth and tall buttresses. The offshot appears cavity brickwork. Modern struck cement pointing over the original lime mortar. Slight loss of pointing especially in
the wetter plinths
the top of the Nave NE buttress
around the Nave NE pipe (para 14)
joints in the tops of three S Nave buttresses (with minor plants)

19. The E gable brickwork is good but slightly bellied out from vertical at cill level where some cracking of joints in and below the brick-on-edge cills and of two bricks below the cills.
A cherry tree by the boundary wall is about the recommended 6m away so only in severe drought might also influence the wall's foundation. Two other trees formerly near the gable have been removed.

20. A difficulty is that once a wall is bellied the outer edge of the foundation becomes more highly stressed so movement could continue even after trees are removed. Deep raking and pointing the cracked joints could help trace whether the wall is stable or bellying continues.

21. The brickwork of the other Chancel walls and Nave all appears in good condition. Long standing slight twisting of the E Nave window arches on both sides seems caused by past movement of the Chancel arch. No sign of present movement.

22. The offshot E wall leans out a little, probably pushed by deflection of the truss on the pier between the windows.

23. At the disused chimney the two pots appear well set but brick joints at the top of the stack E side are open. Given both flues are now disused and the chimney need repairs (flashings para 11 and this rebedding of brickwork) an alternative to repair might be to remove the chimney and slate over.

Bellcote, Bell

24. Two stout timber posts bolted to the W gable brickwork support an octagonal timber spirelet covered in Nuralite sheeting with a cross on a metal cap. The painted timbers look mainly sound but in the next five years will need treatment of any decay and repainting.

25. A single bell hangs between the posts, tolled by rope through the roof without weathering where the rope passes through the slate. The rope passes over a bracketed pulley in what may be an altered arrangement.

26. Flashband weatherings between the slates and bell posts have limited life.

Window and Door Openings

27. The church windows have round brick arches and brick on edge cills with added mortar weathering on the cills where water runs off the window glass. Brickwork sound but open cill joints at Chancel E and N and offshot E side.
    The arches and shallow brickwork over them are weak horizontal restraint to the tall wall panels. The offshot openings have stone lintels.

External Iron and Wood

28. Slow corrosion of a small iron cross at the E end of the ridge continues and cannot practically be stopped. It leans slightly to N. If it falls it should be replaced in stainless steel.

29. Painted gable bargeboards and eave fascias fair.

30. The only doors are the pair at the offshot. They are sound raised panel doors with steel sheets outside. Paint sound. The offshot windows are painted vertical sliding sashes in brick rebates and apparently sound though fixed shut.

31. The church window frames are painted timber in brick rebates. Generally fair but paint broken down at the S and W cills. Rot has started at one W end cill.
    The windows cannot be fully painted without removing the protection.

Typical S Nave

decay in a Nave W cill

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERIOR

Roof timbers

32. In church exposed painted trusses, purlins and vertical sarking boards throughout, without apparent defect.

33. In the Chancel a single scissor truss without tie. In the Nave four wider scissor trusses with iron tie rods built into the canted wallheads.
    Patched boards at the Nave ridge near the Chancel show where a former turret or vent stood.

34. In the offshot one scissor truss concealed above ceiling. No visible defect.

Ceilings

35. In the **entrance lobby** flat painted matchboards with water marks near the SE corner.
    At **wc** flat painted plaster, hatch and ceiling decked over for storage. No insulation at hatch and unknown at ceiling where the decking might hide insulation.

36. At the **Kitchen**/**Meeting room** fair flat and sloping painted plasterboard with a high hatch.
    No insulation on the flat ceiling or ply hatch.

Chancel Arch, Plaster, Decoration

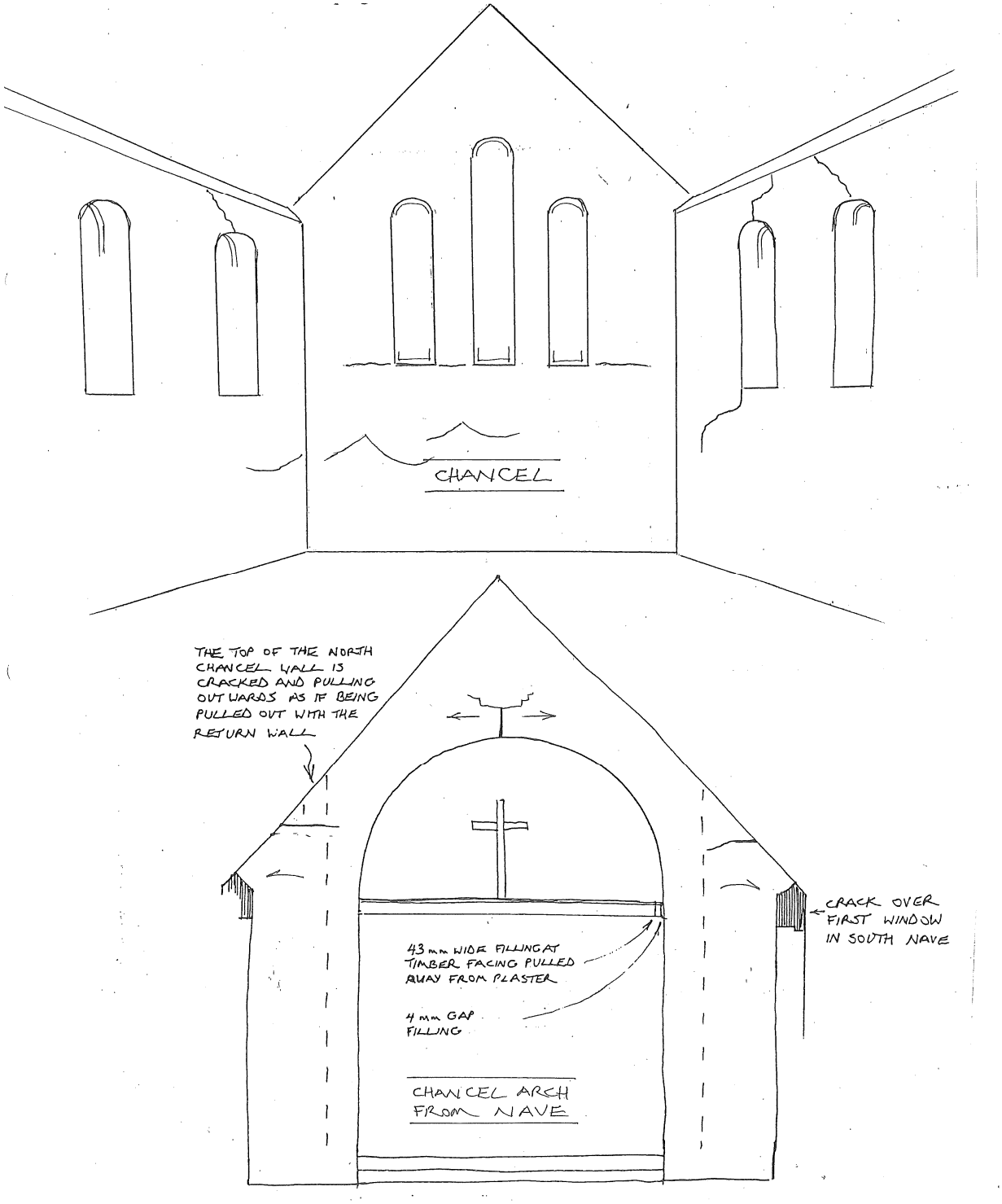
37. A plain round Chancel arch in the plastered brick without embellishment. Below the springs a timber rood beam with dressed mouldings and cross is built into the opening. In the past its S end pulled out of the plaster and a 43mm long infill of the moulding was inserted. In 1997 the infill was found further pulled 4mm out of the plaster. No further movement visible since 1997 or at present.

2012

2018

38. Plaster cracks at the Chancel arch and Chancel windows and walls have been recorded in past reports and have appeared stable since at least 1992. The whole interior was filled and decorated in 2011. Most cracks previously visible have reappeared, suggesting the building is essentially stable but that some parts flex slightly with the seasons.

39. As an aid to future inspections a 2007 record sketch is repeated below with minor additions. A crack over the Chancel SE window has appeared. One further hairline crack between two Chancel cills is added.



CHANCEL MOVEMENT CRACKS 2018 (very similar to 2007)

40. Some plaster at the Chancel N and E walls remains hollow. Otherwise the plaster is in good condition. A dado strip planted on the plaster below the cills may mask a joint between waterproof render and upper plaster. The dark stained rood beam and cross stand out in contrast to the cream paint.

41. A colourful church interior. French and sky blue painted roof boards, cream walls, blue chancel carpet, bright blue chairs.

42. Minor plaster damage at low level in the Lobby.

43. The Kitchen/Meeting room has painted dry lining over walls which were previously seen to be rendered up to cill level and painted brick above. WC all drylined. Tile splashback above the fittings, with cracked grout under the Kitchen tiles.

Partitions, Doors, Screens

44. Modern L shaped freestanding screens at the W end of the Nave in stained pierced softwood to match the organ and to separate corners used as a Vestry and Store.

45. The pair of panelled Nave doors are well grained with brass pulls and an overhead closer on one. The wide gap between the meeting edges may let in draughts and noise.

46. The Kitchen/Meeting room door is stained solid core flush ply with brass levers and overhead closer. The wc door matches without closer. Its indicating lock has a thumbturn inside which is awkward to use, needing the door pulled hard. A paddle lever might be better for disabled use.

Ventilation

47. The subfloor under the whole church appears well ventilated by airbricks in each bay at all sides.

48. Six window hoppers, all disused. The SE Nave hopper lets air in through permanent gaps at the sides, which may be useful. Steel hoppers of this type tend to rust and distort unless very well maintained. The wc is ventilated by a fan controlled by the light.

Glazing, Protection

49. The three E chancel lancets have very vivid modern 'St Michael' coloured glass with saddle bars in the wooden frames.

50. Remaining church glass is white obscure in regular leaded diapers in the timber frames. Good condition but some dirt.

51. In the Kitchen/Meeting room plain single glazing in the small vertical sliding sash windows except cast obscure in the bottom N lights.

52. All church windows have well fitting ventilated clear polycarbonate protection fixed in clips. Sunlight is clouding and surface crazing the S sheets. Dirt and cobwebs in some spaces. Some ferrous clips are beginning to rust.

53. The offshot windows have new polycarbonate protection fixed to the wooden frames.

Floors, Rails

54. In the Chancel a thick carpet on a suspended floor with three steps. An oak communion rail has been altered to have a long mid lift out section. The N rail is a little loose.

55. The Nave floor is good suspended softwood boards, now mainly exposed, sanded and varnished. Its W end is carpeted.

56. Solid uninsulated floors in the offshot. Fitted clean-off carpet in the entrance lobby. Non slip vinyl at the Kitchen/Meeting room and wc, all sound.

Monuments, Brasses, Furnishings, Organ

57. No monuments or brasses except 1937 'Welsh' Mothers Union plaque on pulpit. Brass fronted aumbry in S wall of Chancel.

58. Oak altar with carved patterned framing for front panels. Modern Douglas fir font with stainless steel bowl. Oak 1942 Clarke memorial chair and four original grained chairs.
Credence and tall ornate steel paschal candle stand. Tall beech crucifix, brass cross, two brass altar candle sticks and two wooden floor candle sticks.

59. Sound plain oak pulpit. Modern oak lectern. Chairs in Nave. Vestment cupboard, folding tables and bookshelves at W end.

60. Organ central at W end brought in early1980's after an electrical fire damaged an earlier organ. A two manual organ with tracker action and pitch pine case, rebuilt and installed by H.E.Prested of Durham in 1986 and said to work well. Freestanding blower in the SW vestry corner.

Heating

61. The building is centrally heated by a wall mounted Potterton gas combi boiler hidden in a Kitchen wall cupboard with balanced flue through the Kitchen/Meeting room wall. A large floor standing gas meter. Modern steel panel radiators and copper pipework under the floors. Control by a frostat, timer and portable wireless thermostat.

62. A gas fire at the Kitchen/Meeting room fireplace has been removed and the flue plate taped over.

Electrical

63. A single phase supply with meter and RCD protection high on the offshot N wall. Installation about 25 years old. Concealed wiring except where minitrunking runs along the sloping wallheads to sockets into which lights are plugged.

64. No wiring test report in the Log Book but a sticker at the distribution board says a periodic installation test was done in June 2017 by North Eastern Electrical. Next due June 2022. The report (said to be at Usworth) should be checked and any urgent or necessary recommendations for improvement carried out.

65. Church lighting is by eight E facing floods at wall heads. They are adequate and warm in colour but tend to glare looking W. Switched in pairs across the church which gives some limited control if reduced light is needed in liturgy. Two small spots on the rood beam now LEDs.

66. A fluorescent strip in the Kitchen/Meeting room, a ceiling light at Lobby and a wall light in the wc. An LED flood outside the entry doors has a time clock.

67. Recessed white plastic twin 13A sockets at SE corner of Chancel and SE and NE corners of the Nave, one with a spur used for the pulpit light. In the Meeting room recessed and surface sockets and minitrunking.

68. Two small speakers fed through white minitrunking, an induction loop with amplifier under the pulpit steps.

Lightning Conductor
69. None at this not very prominent building.

Fire Precautions
70. Extinguishers all serviced May 2017 and adequate at this modest building:

Nave	2 kg CO_2
Nave	6 litre foam
Meeting room	2 kg CO_2 and fire blanket

In case of proposal to change note that the insurer EIG advises dry powder extinguishers should be confined to boiler rooms and kitchens because discharge (including accidental and malicious) in church risks serious damage to organs and delicate surfaces due to the powder being corrosive.

Water and Sanitary facilities
71. Double drainer stainless sink and stainless wash basin in the Kitchen/Meeting room, set in a long worktop. Taps fed from the combi boiler.

72. WC and two wash basins, one with lever mixer tap and one with hot and cold percussive taps, both on short hot legs from the combi boiler.

Access and use by people with disabilities
73. From the wide gates good level access by a path which has been raised a little at the door into the building then to the Chancel steps.

74. The wc has a baby change shelf and is wheelchair accessible including handrails and a visible and audible alarm with internal and external resets.

Security
75. The grounds are walled but accessible. The steel sheeted entry doors have a 5 lever mortice deadlock, nightlatch and heavy shootbolts. The vulnerable fanlight is included in the detectors of the modern intruder alarm.

76. A floor safe in the Kitchen/Meeting room. The thick solid room door has its own 5 lever mortice deadlock.

Grounds, boundaries, signs, paths, trees
77. The small grounds are planted as an attractive garden on the E approach with adequate paths. The narrow S and W margins have subsiding concrete flags and slabs, perhaps caused by past root and drain disruption. Paving N and W of the offshot is high to clear high drains. Any repaving should be kept low if possible to keep damp out of the walls.

78. Shrubs at the N boundary and two medium trees to the E including a silver birch. The cherry may be a little close to the E gable.

79. Enclosed all sides by brick walls with piers. The higher W and N walls with half round copings are of fair quality except patches of decayed bricks and joints with some plants both sides. Raking and pointing soon would prolong the life of the bricks.
The other walls are part old with some decay, part modern and sound.

part of the N wall – inside and outside

80. Painted signs fixed to the Chancel gable (out of date) and on the offshot gable.

Archaeology

81. Consultation with the local authority archaeologist indicates that the church and its site are not of archaeological importance.

General comments

82. The lively and attractive interior contrasts with the rather unpromising exterior, despite the attractive garden.

83. The parish is to be commended for its continued good care of the building.

PART THREE

RECOMMENDATIONS in order of priority

For immediate action

Fit new lead cover flashings at SE and SW sides of chimney unless chimney to be demolished	11
Clear gutters and refix outlet and pipe at offshot W side and Nave NE pipe	12, 13, 14
Check any urgent electrical improvements (June 2017 report) have been completed	64

For completion within 18 months

Replace slipping slate at N verge of chancel	10
Rake and point tops of four buttresses, the window cills at E and N Chancel and E of offshot, around Nave NE pipe and under the E gable windows	14, 18, 19, 20, 27
If the chimney is to be kept rebed loose bricks at top of S side	23
Paint window cills at S and W Nave and cut out and repair rot at one W cill	31

For completion within five years

Repaint bargeboards and bell timbers	24, 29
Rake and point open joints in garden walls, replace decayed bricks	79
Obtain a five yearly electrical test report in June 2022	64 and Addendum

Desirable improvements

Add ceiling insulation at Kitchen/Meeting room	36
Correct the painted sign on E gable	80

Recommendations on Maintenance and Care

Clear gutters at least once a year	12
Keep insides of manholes in good repair	17
Keep signs up to date	80

ADDENDUM to the SURVEY REPORT
Required under the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991

PURPOSE OF REPORT This is a general report only, as is required by the Measure. It is **not** a specification for execution of repairs and must not be used as such. The parish is reminded that it will be necessary to obtain either the Archdeacon's permission or a Faculty if it is intended to make repairs for which an architect's specification should be sought. The PCC minutes must record that an application is being made for permission or faculty and a copy of that minute must accompany the application together with a full specification, drawing where appropriate and an estimate of the cost of the work. In any application for grant aid a full specification is always required.

LOGBOOK The parish has a duty under Canon F13(4) to keep a Log Book recording all work carried out on the building. I commend this practice to the PCC. Not only does it help the inspecting architect but it can prove a valuable aid to the parish.

MAINTENANCE Continual vigilance to guard against blockages in gutters and the rainwater system as a whole is needed. Every parish must find for itself a reliable procedure to ensure that gutters, ground gutters, gullies and drains are kept clean. It might be:
maintenance under contract by a local builder or handyman or
maintenance by church working party
Whatever system is adopted the problem remains to remember when to organise the work. Gutters and pipes should be checked at least twice a year. If the Log Book is used as a check list of action every year and kept as an up to date record this will itself act as a reminder.

HEATING INSTALLATION A proper examination and test should be made by a qualified engineer annually **and a written report obtained for the log book**

ELECTRICAL The installation should be tested every five years and immediately if not done within the last five years by a competent electrical engineer, that is a certificate holder of the National Inspection Council of Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC), a member of the Electrical Contractors Association (ECA) or of the National Association of Professional Inspectors and Testers (NAPIT) and a resistance and earth continuity test should be obtained on all circuits. **The test report should be kept with the Log Book**. The present report is based on a visual inspection of the main switchboard and certain random sections of the wiring without the use of instruments.
To check registration with NICEIC and ECA see www.electricalsafetyregister.com

LIGHTNING CONDUCTOR Any lightning conductor should be tested by a competent electrical engineer every five years (in addition to any recommendation in this report) in accordance with the British Standard Code of Practice. Records of the results and condition should be kept with the Log Book. Note that there is no general requirement for a Lightning Conductor.

CHURCH WARDENS' INSPECTION Although the Measure requires the church to be inspected every five years serious trouble may develop in between these surveys if minor defects are left unattended. It is recommended that the wardens should make or have made a careful inspection of the fabric at least once a year and arrange immediate attention to such matters as displaced slates and leaking pipes.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES 'One of the striking characteristics of the Gospel narratives is Jesus' concern for people with disabilities but sadly the Church has, in the past, given little attention to their needs. The design of our buildings has often proved a barrier to those who attend church services' (Chairman of the Church Buildings Council). The PCC are reminded that the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 places a duty on churches to review all practices and facilities and to take all reasonable steps to avoid discrimination against people with disabilities caused by physical features, bearing in mind the limitations often found in historic buildings
Useful advice and audit sheets are to be found in 'Widening the Eye of the Needle' published by the Church Buildings Council 1999 £10.95.

INSURANCE The PCC is advised that insurance cover should be reviewed annually to take account of any rise in the cost of rebuilding.