

ST EDWARD'S CHURCH, DRINGHOUSES

Fabric Report – May 2025

Looking back at the past year

Internal Church Lighting

With great delight, after a long wait, the new LED internal lighting was installed during August 2024.

This project saw the replacement of our obsolete metal-halide lighting which was costly to run and slow to respond when turned on and off.

The new system is dimmable and responds in a matter of seconds, which is brilliant in services where we wish to dim or extinguish the lights for a period.

Huge thanks are due to Louise Robinson and all others on the team who helped raise the funds for this much-needed project.

In April 2025, a mop-up project took place. The contractor has been back and fitted two additional lights at the east end to 'wash out' the shadows between the 'Holy, holy' lettering and the High Altar. We've also updated the lights in the vestry, bell tower, boiler room and loft to modern, cost-efficient LED fittings.

Obsolete light switches around the church have now been properly blanked or removed.

Quinquennial Inspection

This was conducted on 1st October 2024 by our architect, Louise Priestman.

There were no huge surprises from this, with the main item being the attention needed to the spire and bell tower area – see separate item below.

Other important but less pressing issues include localised external stone repairs and longer-term replacement of the church heating system.

Church Spire & Tower

The spire and tower was inspected earlier in 2025 by an engineer from the company Mason Clark, who determined that better fixings could be installed to tie the spire down to an existing concrete plinth at the base of the bell tower, thus lessening the forces from spire movement on the stonework, especially in windy conditions.

The fiberglass spire has recently been inspected by an expert company in that field. It has been deemed to be in a 'good, sound condition' and still 'fit for purpose'.

Thus, thankfully, the remedial work on the spire and tower does not need to be as radical or costly as first envisaged.

Our architect is currently doing some work before seeking tenders for installation of the metal cables to secure the spire and for remedial work to the stone inside the tower.

Defibrillator

With some help from Ward Funding the defibrillator box has been moved onto the front wall of the Community Hall, so it is more visible and accessible. The previous position round the back dated back to a time before the atrium area was built.

Fire Doors

We are aware that fire doors are still wedged open, when they should not be.

The hall kitchen door has been fitted with door guard equipment, which releases the door when the fire alarm sounds. Discussions are ongoing about fitting other frequently-propped doors with this equipment.

Health & Safety

We are currently working towards appointment of new Health & Safety Officers.

We are fortunate now to have Mike Hewitt on the staff team as caretaker - with his background we are confident that any H&S issues arising would be quickly brought to our attention.

Meeting Room

With thanks to Helen Wren and Linda Sykes, the church meeting room was redecorated during the summer of 2024. A new archive cupboard was built in memory of June Fawcett, a former PCC Secretary.

Stained Glass Windows

Following a visit by York Glaziers Trust, and a most comprehensive report, all provided free of charge, we know that some conservation work would be desirable on a number of the stained glass windows around the church, but at the current time this is cost-prohibitive as would run into thousands of pounds per window.

War Memorial

Following requests from some members of the congregation, cleaning of the memorial was investigated and costs obtained, but work on this has not yet been progressed.

Looking ahead

Internal and External Stonework Repairs

Internal External stonework repairs identified as needed in the 2024 Quinquennial Inspection will need to be carried out at some point in the near future.

These were estimated at circa £31K in the previous QI.

Church Heating System

We've had a recent Heat Loss Survey undertaken.

Our heat loss was measured at 68.5Kw which means that the current boiler at 100Kw is sufficient.

The current gas boiler was installed in 1994 and is getting closer to the end of its life, although we are advised that spare parts are still available.

There are advantages and disadvantages with all potential replacement systems.

In the much longer term, there could be potential to discuss installation of underfloor heating in the church, which we understand would benefit the welfare of our building as well as people.

Currently, we would probably be looking at a gas replacement if the boiler failed and was not repairable.

Loft Space

Revisit the plan to install improved ventilation to remove the possibility of water droplets forming inside.

Church Audio System

We're getting more regular communications from some members of the congregation that they cannot always hear what presiding ministers/preachers/readers etc are saying, often in the chancel, but in other areas too.

Our wireless tie-clip microphones have served well but do suffer from glitches occasionally.

The mixing desk has no spare inputs, so we cannot add any more device for events like Holiday Club etc.

We need to consider reviving the plan to move the tech equipment (as planned before the pandemic) and to invest in an equipment upgrade at the same time.

Livestreaming Sound Quality

We are in the process of procuring some additional resource in an attempt to improve the quality of the sound broadcast on our YouTube channel. While spoken work is usually satisfactory, the same cannot be said for music/singing.