

St Mary's Church Polstead

Fabric, Goods and Ornaments Report for 2009-10

Building

St Mary's Church building remains in generally good structural condition and in an excellent state of decoration.

Side aisle roof timbers

The condition of the side aisle ceiling roof timbers remains under careful review. Tell tales installed at the most critical point of the most seriously damaged beam in the North aisle have shown no sign of movement. Subject to further advice from our architect and structural engineers, the best course may be to postpone action on this apparently long standing situation until significant funds are available.

Bell tower ladder

A solution to the problems of acceptable access to the bell tower and roof is under consideration. Discussions about the provision of better fixed ladders are taking place with Ecclesiastical Insurance.

Wall paintings

We hope that it will shortly be possible to commission the recommended conservation work on the wall paintings, including the area discovered during redecoration, with financial help from the Friends.

Washing up facility

Planning is under way for the provision of a washing up facility adjacent to the Rector's vestry. Detailed plans are being developed, in consultation with our architect, by Jim Sephton and Brian Orriss for consideration by the PCC prior to the preparation of a formal specification on which to base a faculty application.

Churchyard

The main activity during the year has been concerned with the churchyard, where urgent action was required due to restricted space for further burials. The following works were financed by grants from the Friends of Polstead Church totalling £23,880.50 (during 2009 and early 2010).

Extension of churchyard

The Suffolk Archaeological Team carried out a full excavation of the area that would be used for graves in the extension of the churchyard during June, in order to ensure that no archaeological evidence was lost. A full report is awaited. The main discovery was two ancient pots which were, most unusually, unbroken.

Fencing

Estate fencing was erected by Kevin King, following completion of the excavation, around the area of the extension, to match the existing fencing. The opportunity was also taken to renew the existing estate fencing, the supports of which had rusted through, with the aid of a generous donation from Toby Owles and the very kind gift of a new kissing gate by Kevin King.

Churchyard wall

The North wall of the churchyard, which had become badly dilapidated, was expertly repaired by John Presley (who looks after the walls in the Abbey Gardens in Bury) during the autumn.

Path to South door

Consideration is being given to work to improve wheelchair access to the South door, once water and drainage works for the proposed washing up area have been completed. This would be followed, as funds permitted, by resurfacing of the approach path.

Maintenance

The Parish Council is kindly continuing to assist us with grass cutting in the churchyard. The Bury St Edmunds Probation Service continues to carry out other maintenance and grass cutting to a very high standard without charge.

Goods and Ornaments

An oak bookcase on castors was purchased in November for the storage of hymn books and prayer books more conveniently and tidily.

Maggie Solomon is very kindly designing and creating a pair of special kneelers for use by couples during marriage services.

Terrier and Inventory

The Terrier and Inventory is fully up to date and is open for inspection at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

Anne Lewis
Bill Wigglesworth

Churchwardens

14 April 2010