

Holy Trinity Church Ash Priors

Sunday, 12 September 2021

Re-opening Safely Summer 2021 Project Report for Ash Priors Village, the Rector and Benefice, the Diocese of Bath & Wells, DCMS Heritage Fund.

Aims

We needed to plan our change from the challenging times of lockdown and social distancing, to our normal activities. We want to provide support for our village community and the wider public to allow mutual help and spiritual strength. Welcome, safety and evolution were our intent.

Inputs

The PCC, Benefice team and villagers gave freely of their time and expertise in the consultation and planning. Many also supplied physical help. The scope of the work increased greatly with the receipt of a grant from the government Dept of DCMS, administered by the Heritage Fund for the first part of the work.

Process

Visually, the most obvious work was to open the stuck West Door and refurbish the flooring enabling it to be fully opened for the first time in years. New nonslip conservation-compatible carpet was laid in the bell tower and access aisles. A draught proof, fire proof curtain was made by volunteers. The utilities were inspected and serviced. Fire precautions and asbestos status were assessed. The gutters and downpipes were restored or repaired. Regular focused cleaning was undertaken and PPE was provided. The routine maintenance was undertaken; slates replaced, flashings refixed, loose mortar was patch pointed, drains were cleaned, the churchyard was tidied and mowed, the hedges trimmed back, churchyard walls assessed for safety. The grant also provided for assistance with the running costs during the opening phase and recovery of the financial losses from lack of collections and activities.

Outputs

Now we have a structurally safe building, easily accessible with excellent ventilation and one way system. We now have no unusual concerns about fire, electrical or air quality safety. We have addressed issues concerning energy conservation. We have a working fire exit; the bell ringers have an open area; worshippers and visitors are able use the whole building in a sustainable way.

Treasurer

Dr Simon Harrison, Park Gate Lodge, Ash Priors, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 3NF

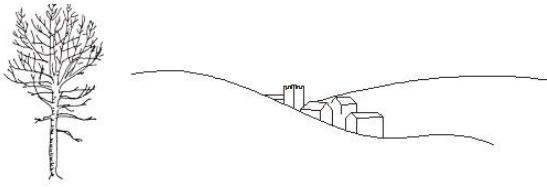
01823 432 122

srbharrison@me.com

An Excepted Charity

HMRC Charity No XN53301

Jun 2014



We have been able to offer Covid secure employment to local tradesmen while more usual domestic work was difficult. We have dealt with listed concerns raised by the Church Architect in her quinquennial inspection. We have a sound system suitable for outdoor services and events, and a serviced and tuned organ indoors. Small financial support for internal organisations (children, bells, churchyard, flowers) have shown how they are valued. The building was reopened, with appropriate safeguards in place, for the spiritual and mental wellbeing of villagers and visitors as soon as government guidelines allowed. We have adopted the governments COVID-19 Winter Plan for services over the next six months.

Evaluation

Short term evaluation over a full annual cycle of observance (year 1) relies on counting ‘bums on seats’; the frequency of services is back to normal and there are new faces. Churchwardens conduct an annual survey of attendance numbers. Plate collections seem larger than previously. There are new donors by regular banking orders and the donation box in the wall (not an income source but a measure of casual visitors) are increased. The list of jobs recommended by the Architect has been ticked off.

Medium term (years 2-5) evaluation involves maintaining these assessments. The Architect will conduct a full inspection in 2025. Annual reports of Governance & Finance will be continued to the Parish and Diocese.

Long term spiritual service and pastoral outreach are immeasurable by us. We hope future generations will look back and be grateful to Holy Trinity Church, Ash Priors, her servants and benefactors.

Outcomes

The biggest change as a result of the labours over this summer is that there is only small change from pre-Covid. The Church and its purpose have continued as it has for the past 900 years bringing stable shape and comfort to the village. Old faces are returning and new faces are being seen at public services and in private contemplation. ‘A framework to support the purpose’.

The choir has returned to the stalls with a new member. New bellringers have joined the team in a safe, fire protected ventilated bell tower; new skills are being learned by a new generation. The flower group has blossomed under a new leader with new members, and have started new projects around the church and in the village. Community activities for this autumn include a ‘lockdown arts & crafts’ exhibition as well as the usual harvest lunch. The benefice newsletter is now weekly and has increased cooperation between the Parishes in the Diocese. A new ‘Hedgerow Chaplain’ has started walks bringing the Church outside. Walkers have now returned to visiting the Church on their route and adding their coppers to the alms box.

Treasurer

Dr Simon Harrison, Park Gate Lodge, Ash Priors, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 3NF

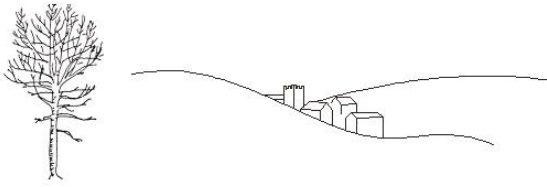
01823 432 122

srbharrison@me.com

An Excepted Charity

HMRC Charity No XN53301

Jun 2014



Reaching out to the village and allowing them to come back to the building has resulted in opportunities for socialising, and giving thanks either communally or individually.

Assumptions

The assumption is made that providing safe stable unprejudiced structure, physical and administrative, will allow and encourage the people under that umbrella to pursue their aims.

External Factors

We are very grateful to those who have participated in this venture and those who have facilitated it. Since the underlying reasoning for these works is to pursue the safe stable unprejudiced support for the community, as it has done in it's own way for centuries, the external factors that may affect our village over the years are beyond the scope of this report.

Treasurer

Dr Simon Harrison, Park Gate Lodge, Ash Priors, Taunton, Somerset, TA4 3NF

01823 432 122

srbharrison@me.com

An Excepted Charity

HMRC Charity No XN53301

Jun 2014