

St Mary the Virgin

RESTORATION AND RENEWAL



PHASE ONE – THE ROOFS

The Restoration and Renewal Project is in two main phases. Phase one is the repair of the roofs: the lead and the stonework. We are making good progress. With the help of our advisory architect, Mr Bartosch, we have received three quotations, and we expect the cost of the repairs to all three roofs, the two transepts and the nave, will be about £200,000. We have applied for a faculty from the Diocese, and this has now been granted.

The next stage, of course, is to raise the money! We have two lines of attack. We have approached English Heritage for a grant, and we are more confident that we shall gain some

support from them this time round. However, it will be some time before we hear for certain one way or the other.

We are also approaching suitable trusts, and Bishop Bill is using his considerable experience to spearhead this first stage of the Appeal. In many cases we must wait for the trustee bodies to meet before we know if they will support us and to what extent. However, we have received two contributions, one a major one, and have had firm promises of support from another trust.

Also, even before the Appeal is launched a number of generous friends have already made contributions.

The Appeal is on the move!

What can you do?

If you have skills that can be used in this project, let us know!

- Do you have an interest in local history? We shall need to consult the County and Diocesan records to find out as much as we can about the Church.
- Do you have experience in marketing, or fund-raising or graphic design? There will be brochures and flyers to produce.
- Would you have the time and efficiency to help us to keep our paper work in order, especially when the full Appeal is launched?
- Do you have skills and experience with buildings?
- Do you know any trusts or donors that we might approach?
- Is there anything that we haven't thought of that you could do?

Please let us know!

Timings

We hope to appoint the architect in September, so that the feasibility study can be completed early in the new year.

The beginning of next year should see the start of Phase 1, the roofs, and the launch of the Appeal.

If the necessary money can be raised, the roofs could be completed by sometime in 2010, and we could be beginning on Phase 2, the refurbishment of the interior.

PHASE TWO - THE INTERIOR

While the main focus of our work has been on Phase One, we have not neglected the next stage, the re-ordering of the interior so that it is well suited to our needs in the 21st century.

Finding the architect

We have engaged in a great deal of consultation. We have met with three distinguished church architects. They have all expressed great interest in the project, regarding St Mary's as a magnificent building with which they would very much like to be involved. Our next step is to choose between them, and we shall embark on a process to do this in the autumn.

If appointed, they would each carry out a feasibility study, to identify the historical and archaeological characteristics of St Mary's, as well as the needs of the Church as a living body, seeking to do God's will in Witney. At the end of this process, which might take about three months, the chosen architect would come up with an initial proposal, and it would then be up to the Team Council to decide whether to accept it. The likelihood would be, of course, that after all the consultation what they proposed and what we wanted would come together.

What are we looking for

The brief that we have given the architects includes the need for:

- a new floor with underfloor heating;

- a reconsideration of the way that the church is used for worship—the location of the altar and font, the nature of the congregational seating, where the organ and the choir are best positioned;
- the restoration of the chancel so that it can be used as a chapel;
- the need for a proper parish office and vestries;
- the wish to use the church for both the performing and the visual arts;
- to order the Church as a place of prayer and pilgrimage
- the upgrading of our facilities for hospitality and meeting.

Above all, we are looking for the 'wow factor', for something that says: this is a sacred place where God is worshipped, where the world is welcomed and transformed.

It's a challenging brief!



The Project Committee

BILL DOWN

was Bishop of Bermuda, and has enormous experience of fund raising. He is Chairman of the Appeal.

DAVID EXHAM

is a parish Lay Minister and Chairman of St Mary's DCC. He chairs the committee.

KATE LOCKWOOD

worships at Holy Trinity and is on the Team Council. She is the committee's secretary

JEREMY LEWIS

worships at Hailey. His career was in finance. and he is the Appeal treasurer.

STEVE HOLBOROUGH

is a Parish Churchwarden. He has been Town Mayor and member of the local Councils and will strengthen our liaison with the local community.

FRANCIS NEWENHAM

was Parish Churchwarden, and is now our expert on the fabric of St Mary's.

We have adopted Sir Francis Drake's great prayer for the Project and the Appeal

O Lord God, when you give to your servants to endeavour any great matter, grant us also to know that it is not the beginning, but the continuing of the same until is thoroughly finished, which yields the true glory; through him who for the finishing of his work laid down his life, our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Amen