

Diocese of Durham

## Belmont, St. Mary Magdalene

*Inspection of Churches Measure 1955  
Care of Churches & Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 2022*

### Quinquennial Report

On the architect's inspection of

**25<sup>th</sup> March 2025**

Archdeaconry of Durham  
Deanery of Durham  
Grade II listed – Not in a Conservation Area

Incumbent – In Vacancy



Report prepared by

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## REVISION A – *First Issue*

Dates of inspection – 25/03/2025  
Weather – Dry and bright

Date of report – April 2025  
Date of previous report – February 2020

### PART ONE

#### 1. Inspection notes

- 1.1 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 and tower roof level. 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. None of the services were tested. Damp meters were not used.
- 1.2 It is not obvious that there are any asbestos containing materials in the church, however it could still be found in such things as 20<sup>th</sup> century additions or pipe lagging. This report is not a survey under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. If the PCC determines that a survey is required following their own assessment, a specialist contractor should be approached. The parish should make themselves familiar with the guidance provided to parishes by the HSE through The Church of England website.
- 1.3 We must stress that we have not carried out any investigation to determine whether any high alumina cement was used during the construction of the building inspected and we are therefore unable to report that the building is free from risk in this respect. In view of the possible potential danger connected with high alumina cement we strongly recommend that the appropriate investigations, inspections, and tests be carried out immediately by a suitably qualified engineer.

#### 2. Brief description

**Address** – St. Mary Magdalene, Broomside Lane, Belmont, Durham, DH1 2QW.

The church is attributed to the Victorian architect William Butterfield, with the original construction completed in 1857 and subsequent additions made thereafter. It is a predominantly single-storey structure of stone masonry, topped with a pitched timber-framed roof finished in slate. The internal walls are largely plastered and painted. The layout is straightforward: an aisle-less nave with a west-end narthex, and a choir and sanctuary located at the east. A lean-to extension along the north elevation accommodates both lower and upper vestries, the latter housing the organ chamber. Below the upper vestry sits the boiler house. A WC is integrated within the entrance porch.

St Mary Magdalene Church occupies a prominent, elevated site at the junction of High Street and Broomside Lane in Belmont, near Durham. The plot is enclosed by stone boundary walls with dressed copings and is surrounded by a mix of residential and commercial development. High Street runs along the northern edge, with Broomside Lane to the south; residential areas lie to the east, and the road junction marks the western boundary. Vehicular access is limited, with pedestrian routes from both main roads. The sloping site is well planted with mature trees, enhancing its setting. The war memorial, originally sited within the graveyard, was relocated in 2009 to a position just beyond the northern boundary wall, to the northeast of the site.



### 3. Listing Description

#### 3.1 Church

*BELMONT BROOMSIDE LANE NZ 34 SW (North side) 7/11 Church of St. 10/5/67 Mary Magdalene GV II*

*Parish church. 1857 by William Butterfield. Minor late C19 alterations; 1901 vestry by C.H. Fowler.*

*Coursed squared rubble with ashlar dressings; plinth to vestry. Welsh slate roof with decorative ridge tiles. 4-bay nave with north porch; 2-bay chancel with north organ chamber and vestry. Steps up to boarded north door, with leaf-decorated strap hinges, in deeply-moulded 2-centred-arched surround, under wood-bracketed catslide roof.*

*Ovolo-moulded cusped ogee tracery in windows, mostly 2-light, with alternate-block surrounds and sloping sills. South-west nave window more elaborate and with dripmould. Decorated 3-light east window has beakhead-stopped dripmould; west window has plate tracery with 3 ogee-headed lights. Short buttresses, and continuous stepped sill string, to chancel, vestry and north nave.*

*Interior: painted plaster with ashlar dressings; arch-braced roof with collars and short king-posts, having 2 tiers of thin wood arches between each collar and apex, and bolted arch braces; tension rods stirrup-fastened to king-posts. Deep dripmould over high chamfered chancel arch with inner ovolo-moulded arch on shafts with fillets. Similar dripmould to vestry door. Ovolo-moulded window surrounds with double-chamfered sill steps.*

*1892 reredos by Butterfield. Early C20 pews by Thompson of Masham. Chancel panelling with traceried arch over sedilia.*

*East window dated and signed 1923 by W. Glasby London.*

*Listing NGR: NZ3039743615*

#### 3.2 War Memorial

*Belmont War Memorial, originally erected in the churchyard on the north side of St Mary Magdalene Church, was unveiled and dedicated on 11 November 1919 by the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Durham. It was provided by Emley and Sons of Newcastle at a cost of £184. In commemoration of 60 local servicemen who died during the First World War, the details of*

27 men who died in the Second World War were added in 1947 with two new pillars: the additions at that time were proved by Messrs John Lowe and Sons at a cost of £180, unveiled and dedicated by the Vicar, Reverend Pickles, on Remembrance Sunday.

Following the formation of the Friends of Belmont War Memorial, the lettering was re-gilded in 2008 with financial support including a grant from War Memorials Trust. In 2009 the memorial was moved c100m to its current location on the verge on the eastern side of the High Street, opposite Blue House. A new epitaph was added along with one name, and the memorial was re-dedicated at an ecumenical service by the Venerable Ian Jagger, Archdeacon of Durham.

*DESCRIPTION:* The memorial stands on the eastern side of High Street. It is set back from the road in a paved area\*. It comprises a tall obelisk, square on plan, in red Peterhead granite enclosed by a low, rectangular kerb. Four red granite pedestals with sandstone caps stand at the corners of the enclosure. The rear pedestals are raised on three-stepped bases; the front, on two-stepped bases.

The obelisk rises from a pedimented plinth that stands on a three-stage base. The principal dedicatory inscription, in gilded lettering, on the front face of the upper stage of the base reads *IN EVER GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF/ THE MEN OF THIS PARISH/ WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES FOR/ KING AND COUNTRY IN THE GREAT WAR/ 1914 – 1919./ THIS MONUMENT ERECTED/ BY PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION/ MORS JANUA VITAE.*

The 60 names of the First World War fallen are inscribed on three sides of the plinth. The front face of the kerb is inscribed *WHEN YOU GO HOME TELL THEM OF US AND SAY/ FOR YOUR TOMORROW WE GAVE OUR TODAY.* The two pedestals to the rear of the enclosure have 1939- 1945 carved into the front face of each cap; names of the fallen from the Second World War are inscribed on the front face of each pedestal. The pedestal to the front of the enclosure on the left has *OTHER CONFLICTS* carved into its cap; the front face of this pedestal is inscribed with the name of a soldier who died in Iraq in 2007.

*SUBSIDIARY FEATURES:* In front of the memorial, close to the pavement, is a small red granite stone\* inscribed *BELMONT WAR MEMORIAL/ WAS MOVED TO THIS LOCATION IN 2009/ THANKS TO THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF/ COUNTY DURHAM ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST,/ BELMONT PARISH COUNCIL,/ DURHAM CITY AND COUNTY COUNCILLORS,/ BELMONT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION AND/ RESIDENTS OF THE PARISH OF BELMONT/ FRIENDS OF BELMONT WAR MEMORIAL.*

\* Pursuant to S.1 (5A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 it is declared that these aforementioned features are not of special architectural or historic interest.



#### 4. Previous Inspections

This is the author's first inspection; however, the previous 2020 report has been obtained and was conducted by Mr David Beaumont, RIBA, AABC who conducted the previous three inspections. Mr Beaumont accompanied the new inspector on this visit for continuity.

#### 5. Recent recorded works

The logbook was up to date and recorded works completed, including routine testing. Some certificates were present, others were on the notice board and some were missing at the time of inspection.

Dates	Works Description	By Whom
2020	Repair of lower vestry roof – slates	Robert Anderson
2020	Repairs to AV system	Clockwork Audio
2021	Handrail fitted in Nave	Bob Anderson
2021	Lightning conductor test failed, and repairs commissioned	Harrison Lightning
2021	Boiler Serviced	SC Heat
2022	Replacement of church lighting with LED	Russell Electrics
2022	New noticeboards	R Anderson
2023	Repair, painting and renewal of handrail at chancel steps	R Anderson
2023	Improvements to toilet and kitchenette	R Anderson
2023	Decoration of porch and pulpit area	R Anderson

#### 6. Summary of condition

The Church has, since the last QI, carried out a pleasant refurbishment of the WC facilities and the small kitchenette off the Narthex. No major alterations have been made other than this, as major stonework and pointing improvement were carried out in the previous quinquennial period.

##### 6.1 Structure

- 6.1.1 The building is located on a wooded and sloping site and is founded on clay. Previously reported movement to the east gable and west gable was recorded in 2007, at which time the east window tracery was repaired.
- 6.1.2 During the 2018 LPOW repair works, a structural engineer assessed the east gable. Following their recommendations, a tie rod was installed at the arch springing points, along with bed joint reinforcement. The whole east gable, like the west was repointed in lime and there are no obvious signs of current movement to either gable.
- 6.1.3 The lime pointing works continue to be beneficial to accommodate the minor flexing of the structure as a consequence of minor ground movement caused by the sloping site, clay ground and many trees. Internally there is some very minor cracking to plaster finishes and some small cracks externally but nothing significant, the new inspector will monitor this over the coming quinquennials and be able to provide a more definitive summary of any progressive movement.

- 6.1.4 The nave has tie rods which appear original, the structural engineer requested that the chancel be monitored for any signs of further movement, as it might be necessary to install tie rods if movement is evident. This is most likely to be detected externally at the kneelers, to see if there's cracking caused by roof spread. None was seen at this QI but should be continuously monitored.

## 6.2 Roofs

- 6.2.1 Ridged roofs with Welsh blue slates and stone water tables at the gables It is likely that this is the original 1850's slating and therefore seeing failures due to nail fatigue. There have been patch repairs in the past and the PCC report that it is on their radar to look into replacement, this could be combined with a scheme to insulate and house solar panels (if permissions can be obtained). As part of the 2015 LPOW works the ornamental ridges were renewed.
- 6.2.2 The west gable finial cross appears to have a slight lean to the west and some minor cracking beneath, though not to the rear. At the soonest possibility this would benefit from a closer inspection either with roof ladders if replacing tiles or a cherry picker.

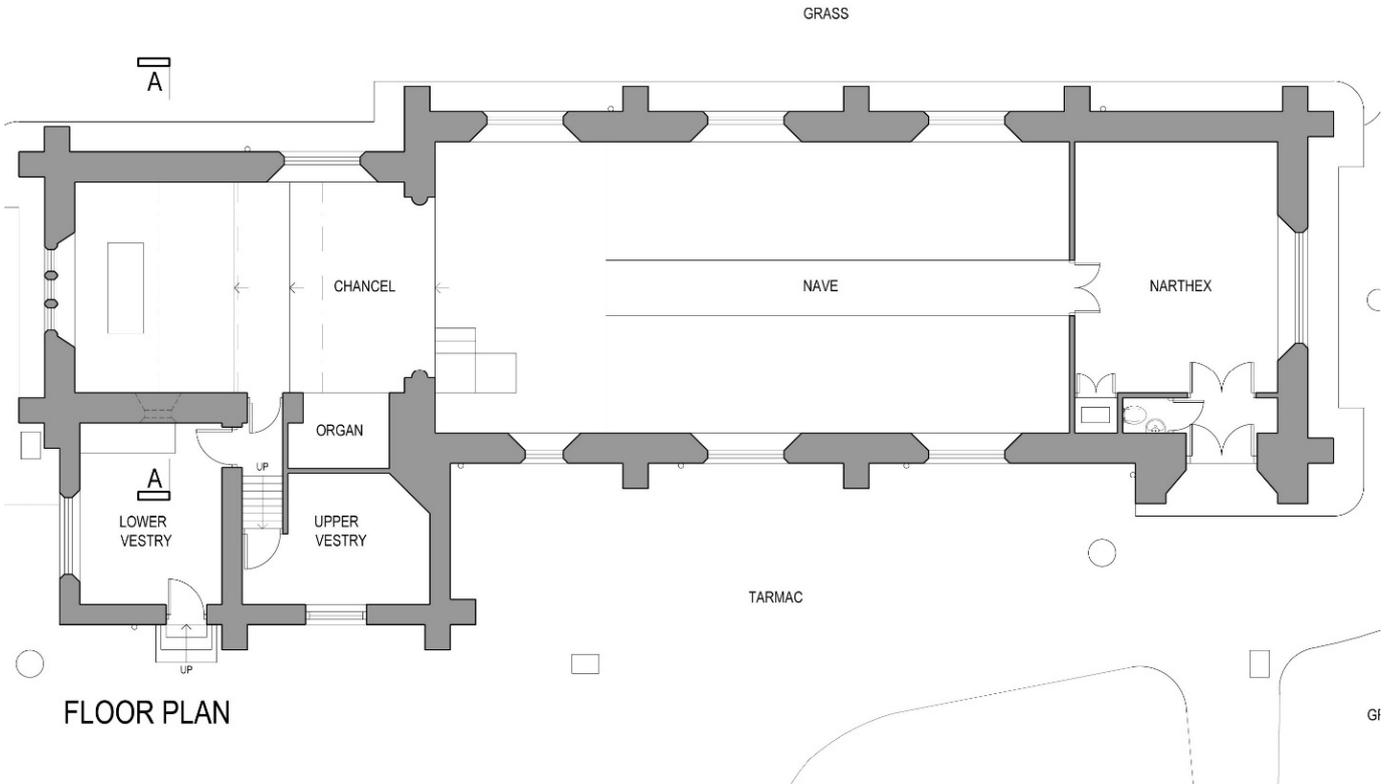
## 6.3 Rainwater Goods

- 6.3.1 The nave and chancel are in cast iron gutters and downpipes, and these were renewed as part of the 2015 LPOW works alongside a new surface water drainage system installed underground to the south side connecting into the existing system. The porch has plastic gutters to cast iron downpipes.
- 6.3.2 The box valley gutter adjacent the chancel has caused significant damage to the stone internally due to a past leak, although this is now believed to be resolved, this may be a temporary measure therefore a permanent fix should be scheduled into upcoming roof works.

## 6.4 Walls

- 6.4.1 The external walls saw improvement in 2015, with stone replacements, and repointing to the gables and the bottom sections of the walls. The remaining upper stonework is all cement pointed and when funds allow this should be re-pointed in lime. There are one or two stones that could be replaced if other works were being carried out.
- 6.4.2 The concrete perimeter at the base of the walls was removed and gravel margin installed to reduce the chance of ground water against the base of the walls, this has improved the situation but should be monitored to ensure water is well drained from the area.

Plan of the church (Courtesy of Beaumont Brown Architects - NTS)



## PART TWO

- 7. ROOF COVERINGS** – Steeply pitched roofs with terracotta ridges (which were re-bedded in 2015), stone water table at the east gable, and Welsh blue slates. It is likely that this is the original 1850's slating and has signs of nail fatigue. It has been patch repaired in the past and continues to need continual repair. No current leaks reported.

### South Elevation

#### 7.1 Nave

- 7.1.1 Ridge – Ornamental ridge cresting ok, the tiles adjacent to the ridge are slightly lifted and uneven.
- 7.1.2 West abutment – Pointed verge ok, the finial has a slight lean to the west, there is a little cracking evident to the top of the west gable (discussed in section 9.12). It is believed that the finial still appears to have a good seating as seen from ground level and the mortar to the rear and base is not cracked, though it would be best to be checked at close proximity.
- 7.1.3 East abutment – Pointed verge ok, although the overhang of the slate is slightly too short on both gables, causing pointing to be slightly messy.
- 7.1.4 General roofing – two or three slipped and cracked slates. Two missing to the top right-hand side.



Figure 1 - South Nave



Figure 2a- Finial

#### 7.2 Chancel:

- 7.2.1 Ridge – Slightly more ornate ridge cresting, all ok.
- 7.2.2 West abutment to the Nave– Pointed over in cement with lead soakers and flashing, some slight cracking half way down.
- 7.2.3 East abutment to gable water table – large step with lead flashing, one piece is lifting slightly and the pointing to the underside of the water table is breaking up. Finial appears ok.
- 7.2.4 General roofing – slating has some chips and an area close to the nave has had silicone repairs in in the past, believed to be more than 20 years ago.



Figure 3 - Chancel East Abutment

### North Elevation

- 7.3 **Chancel** – As per the south, limited view however there appears to be some slipped slates behind the chimney. Valley to the transept, all needs inspecting from high level.
- 7.4 **Choir Vestry (North Slope):**
- 7.4.1 Ridge – Roll top ridge tiles look bedded ok, gaps between but very difficult to fill.
- 7.4.2 East abutment into water table – lead flashing appears ok.
- 7.4.3 West abutment – into transept with lead flashing and all appears ok.
- 7.4.4 General roofing – Slating looks generally ok, some moss to surface.



Figure 4 - Northern roofs (vestry in foreground)

7.5 **Vestry (South Slope)** not visible from ground level, contains a hidden box valley that should be inspected regularly, the PCC provided some photos from a previous inspection, and it has reportedly seen some temporary patching works recently due to leak, as discussed further in section 15.4.1.

7.6 **Transept (East Slope):**

- 7.6.1 Ridge – Ornamental ridge cresting, as per the chancel.
- 7.6.2 South abutment – To lead valley gutter, steep valley gutter adjoining chancel, looks ok as far as can be seen.
- 7.6.3 North abutment – Is pointed verge with some cracking but looks sound.
- 7.6.4 General – Slating looks ok but has moss.
- 7.6.5 Chimney – The masonry should be checked at closer proximity, appears to be some open joints. It is unknown if the chimney is capped or active. The abutment flashings appear ok.

7.7 **Transept (West Side):**

- 7.7.1 Ridge – Bedding ok.
- 7.7.2 North abutment – Pointed verge ok.
- 7.7.3 South abutment – To chancel in lead valley, only the lower section can be seen, appears to have a hidden section abutting the Nave.

7.8 **Nave North Slope:**

- 7.8.1 Ridge – Ok.
- 7.8.2 East abutment – To pointed verge, not able to be inspected.
- 7.8.3 West abutment – Pointed verge in good condition, slight cracking to top beneath finial, this should be monitored closely.
- 7.8.4 General roofing – Slating generally all looking sound, a couple of chipped slates and moss growing at the joints.

**8. RAINWATER GOODS** - Cast-iron half round with circular downpipes which have seen various periods of renewal. Plastic gutters to porch. Rainwater goods are inspected annually by a roofing contractor. The gulleys tend to be inspected by the church wardens as these are low level.

8.1 **Southside** – Rusted joints at the top of the downpipes, there is grass growing from one joint and the downpipe is loose to the east end of the Nave.

8.2 **Northside** – The nave appears to have possible leaks at the joints to the cast iron gutters.

8.3 The **porch** guttering is in plastic and has an unusual arrangement discharging to the east side. Not an ideal arrangement aesthetically, but appears to work ok. The original downpipe remains, and is loose, it appears the end is siliconed on.

8.4 **Transept east** appears ok. **Transept west** looks ok but the hopper at the junction appears to have bird nesting materials in it.

8.5 All the downpipes now go into salt glaze **gulleys** with concrete margins to capture the splash, they all appear to be ok. All have metal grids which appear ok and prevent leaves entering the drainage.

8.6 The **gutter brackets** mostly look original and some are broken, leaving only a horizontal element, these appear to still be supporting the gutters.

8.7 **Downpipes** have anti-splash shoes and all appear ok, some require lead wedging to bottom joints as they are currently loose.



*Figure 5 - West Transept downpipe and hip*

**9. WALLS** – semi-coursed sandstone. Everything below the string course was re-pointed in NHL 3.5 St Astier lime in 2018, along with some stone replacements. The pointing is still a little soft, though possibly too hard in places. The upper parts remain in cement and would benefit from replacement in lime, a hot lime mix would be most appropriate though there may be a lack of skill locally.

9.1 There were reportedly past issues with damp at low level which appear to have been mostly addressed by the low-level concrete path removal and re-pointing.

9.2 **South Nave** has a 2mm crack to the west end, there is a cement tell-tale here and has not changed since the last inspection. If this area was re-pointed in lime it would greatly aid monitoring any future movement. There are three holes in a stone to the base, which looks to be for ventilation, this is mirrored on the north side. The tracery of the easternmost window has a crack at the shoulder radiating upwards and at the cill. Another minor crack to the right of this window above the buttress. All appear historic but should be monitored.



*Figure 6 - Crack monitor at S Nave*

9.3 **East end of Nave** (above chancel) – Just below the apex the verge pointing has come away. The lightning conductor tape runs down this elevation. The gutter may be falling back to this corner as the walling at lower level is a little green.

9.4 **South Chancel** – Slight open joint on the tracery but no change since the last inspection. There is slight erosion to some of the stones, but not requiring any action currently. There is a slight crack to the upper east end near an old red wall plug, this requires monitoring. There are two former cracks on this elevation which have been re-pointed in the past but don't appear to have any additional movement.



Figure 7 – E Nave pointing at verge



Figure 8 - South Chancel crack near wall plug & new pointing



Figure 9 – North Chancel crack

9.5 **Eastside Chancel** – No evidence of cracking at all now to the gable. The stainless-steel rod inserted at the springing point of the arch to prevent spread appears to be working well, no movement evident and the polycarbonate covering looks good. There is a wide joint at the window apex, a sign of the past movement but no further evidence of this opening up. There are minor open joints at the base of the buttresses. All of the joints of the tracery appear to have been re-pointed in lime.

9.6 **East vestry** – All ok, the central joint of the window cill is slightly eroded. The area behind the downpipe and hopper is stained, suggesting there could be issues with water overflowing here. The apex has a timber block infilling a hole, a little warped but still intact.

9.7 **North Vestry** – This wasn't part of the repoint works as the condition was good. Some open joints at low level, open joints to the tracery dressings and open joints to the steps.

9.8 **Chancel North (high level)** – Very little visibility, however there is a crack to the east end which appears historic but should be inspected closely when the gutter is, and would benefit from re-pointing to allow movement to be more readily monitored.

## 9.9 Transept –

9.9.1 **Eastside** – Slight breaking up of cementitious patch over the vestry where there is a hint of a crack but no change since last QI.

9.9.2 **Northside** – Cementitious over-pointing, has had cracking in the past to the left of the bell as reported at the last inspection, no change, as per the crack below the window, there is no progressive movement to note currently. Plate tracery looks ok some minor historic loss of mortar to apex joint. The galvanized guards also look ok. Above it is a large bell which has a metal cage to it, this has a rusted cage with rudimentary access panel. The bell reportedly hasn't been inspected in some time-

see section 11.1 for recommendation. Two small lancets below look ok. Some minor open joints on the buttress.

- 9.9.3 **Westside** - Some wear to the stonework in the corner where there was a leaking downpipe, no replacement needed just yet, but it should be re-pointed behind the downpipe. There is one eroded stone to the right of the door to the boiler room which would benefit from a plastic repair with lime mortar.



*Figure 10 - W Transept area for repair*

- 9.10 **Nave** – There is a large area of cement pointing here above the string course, and the string course itself has some open joints and is stained green. The lime pointing below the string course has slightly over-hardened and the salts appear to be showing through the stonework.

- 9.11 **Porch** - The lower levels of this have been repointed, upper levels look ok. The arch moulding at low level has had some indented stone repairs in the past. There has been past repointing of the apex of the entrance arch where it has dropped in the past, now stained black but ok other than the aesthetics.

- 9.12 **West Nave** - This whole elevation was repointed and all looks ok. Monitor any movement at apex as per item 7.1.2.



*Figure 9 - Salts on stones*



*Figure 12 - movement to porch arch*



*Figure 13 - west gable*

## 10. EXTERNAL WINDOWS & DOORS

- 10.1 The **glass** is guarded by galvanized mesh to all elevations except the east and west windows, which are polycarbonate.

- 10.1.1 The **east** polycarbonate was replaced in 2007 and the west in 2018. Some of the galvanized mesh to the east vestry is now rusting.
- 10.1.2 **North vestry** - Slightly rusting metal grille to the windows. Glass is obscured diamond leaded pattern, looks ok.
- 10.1.3 **North nave** - Three windows, two of which are twin light plate tracery, the other is a single light plate tracery and they are all ok. They have galvanized mesh guarding.
- 10.1.4 **West** Plate tracery is ok this had new clear polycarbonate added to it by Chris Chesney and this looks ok other than some dust and cobwebs behind.

10.2**Doors** - The external doors are generally in good condition. The boiler room door has some wear to the base and rusting grilles.

## 11. EXTERNAL METALWORK, WOODWORK & PAINTWORK

11.1 **Bells:** One bell, part recessed within the north transept within an opening in the upper vestry. It is tolled for services and housed within a wire cage guarding. No recent checks have been carried out and therefore recommended within the next 12 months that the bell, headstock and mechanism is closely inspected.

11.2 The **porch** roof is supported from two timber brackets with corbels set into the wall. All appears ok. A simple metal handrail with twisted spindles sits at the entrance steps and is quite sturdy.



Figure 14 - bell & wire cage

## 12. BASEMENTS AND ORGAN BLOWER ROOM

### 12.1 Boiler Room

12.1.1**Ceiling** – Brick barrel vault, appears ok, no change from last inspection.

12.2 **Walls** – Stone walls, some deep recesses to the pointing joints and loss of plaster at low level but reasonably sound.

12.3 **Floor** – Cracked stone but all sound, there is a sunken pit to the south side, the base of which could not be inspected.

12.4 **General** – The room is dry and contains the three Vaillant boilers expansion vessel and pump, also houses the distribution board. A door leads to the blower room and there is some bits of lumber that could do with being cleared away..



Figure 15 – Boiler room 3No boilers



Figure 16 – dropped floor level



Figure 17 – incoming 3-phase

## INTERNAL FABRIC

### 13. ROOF STRUCTURE & CEILINGS



Figure 18 – Nave

13.1 **Nave** - Seven bay trussed ceiling with tie rods, the common rafters are underdrawn with boarding. The lower part of the ceiling showing ghosts of rafters behind, indicating heat loss through ceiling. Slight hairline cracking to some of the surface suggesting it might be plaster and lath. Decoration is looking dated, there is also some bloom on the painted timber work and mildew on the blade of the truss. The tie rods all appear ok.

13.2 **Chancel** - Trussed roof, similar to the nave but without the tie rods. Additionally, the upper section is painted in dark blue. The lower section in white is also showing some ghosting on the decoration. Additional decorative detail over the sanctuary, where there is slightly more bloom on the decorative timbers.



Figure 19 – Chancel Bloom

13.3 **GF Vicar's Vestry** – Boarded timber, slight gaps between. No access to hatch to inspect the void to the upper section. There was damp to the top of the cupboard on the southern wall due to valley above, this is now dry (see item 15.4.1 for more information).

13.4 **Office** – As per the ground floor Vestry, open boarded with slight gaps. The area above the office was inspected from an unsupported ladder, therefore a minimal visual was gained, this is open boarded timber with rafters and looks generally ok, one area which is assumed to be a build up of cobwebs best to be cleared off to check condition.

### 14. CHANCEL ARCH, ARCADES & MASONRY STRUCTURE



Figure 20 – arched doorway

14.1 **Office** – Slight crack to the lancet arched doorway from chancel to lobby but no changes to report here.

14.2 **Nave** – There is a historic crack to the north above the porch but the previous inspector noted there was no change in this since his last inspection, the new inspector will monitor in the future.

14.3 **Chancel Arch** – Generally ok, there is a minor crack at the apex to the chancel side which should be monitored but not currently of concern. There is some slight wear to the bases which have had some cement repairs in the past.

14.4 **Chancel** – there is a slight open joint to the south window, just monitor for the time being.

## 15. PLASTER & DECORATION



Figure 21 – Porch

15.1 **Porch** - Redecorated porch that used to have damp at low level, has an Artex type of coating now, which seems to have covered issues. There are salts showing back through at low level near the entrance doors.

15.2 **Narthex** - Recently refurbished as part of the LPOW works with new information boards. And freshly decorated.

15.3 **Nave** - Redecorated in late 2010's and in good condition. The lower parts behind the skirting heater units are a little rough, but as previously noted difficult to access and not too visible. Still air at the apex of this space is causing a little condensation on the gable wall above the Narthex. Areas which have salts forming on the mortar to the south side and on the stone to the north don't appear damp internally which is a good sign that the re-pointing is working effectively.



Figure 22 – Chancel stone damage

15.4 **Chancel** - reportedly redecorated, but there are two areas of water staining to either side of the chancel arch at high level, this could be from condensation. A large organ recess masks the arch behind the pipes, but seemingly ok. The lower sections are covered with timber panelling.

15.4.1 There is an area to the north side, below the lancet where the face of the stone has delaminated and there is some severe stone erosion which has appeared since the last inspection. This is thought to be due to a leak in the box valley behind, which has reportedly now been fixed but this should be checked by a professional heritage roofer as it is believed the fix may be temporary.

15.5 **GF Vicar's Vestry** - Walls are painted with exposed stone to the window reveals, which have just lost a little bit of face on the stonework.

15.6 **Office** - mostly screened by built-in furniture, appears ok, top of window cuts into this space.

## 16. PARTITIONS, SCREENS, DOORS & PANELING

16.1 **Porch** - Pair of entrance doors, heavy boarded with decorative band and gudgeons, all ok, but quite heavy to open. Leading to a pair of part glazed doors with panelling leading into the narthex ok.

16.2 **W.C.** - nicely refurbished, simple fitments and freshly decorated walls.

16.3 **Tea Kitchen** - Recently refurbished with stainless steel units and extractor fan.

16.4 **Narthex** - Pair of narrow glazed doors to the nave, these are not closing very well and need easing.

16.5 **Chancel** - Oak panelling reredos. Altar, altar rail, and choir stalls all by Thompsons of Kilburn. The pews, also by Thompson also match the choir in style.

16.6 **Office** - Lock missing on the door which isn't held back.

16.7 **GF Vicar's Vestry** - Lobby door leading into the room is ok, as is the external door.

**17. VENTILATION** - Other than the floor ventilation discussed in section 19 there is no ventilation within the church, no hoppers to windows apart from one in lower vestry which is not openable. Condensation is therefore likely to be a persistent issue.

**18. GLASS** - The majority of the glass in the window is clear within diamond leaded panes apart from gables and one other which has pictorial glass. All the lead comes and saddle bars are in good condition.



*Figure 23 – Upper office glass*

18.1 **Nave** - Plate tracery windows, all clear glazed with diamond leaded patterns, apart from pictorial glass to the west gable windows and one to the south-east nave, all in good condition.

18.2 **Chancel** - The pectoral east gable window condition is in good condition. The north and south windows are ok.

18.3 **Office** - there is a broken pane to the northern transept window just below the tracery.

## 19. FLOORS, STAIRS, RAILS

19.1 **Nave** - Timber pew platforms almost level (approx. 15mm step) with the carpeted solid circulation areas. There is a step up to the chancel arch in a suspended timber floor. Ventilation beneath the pew platforms and to the chancel is unknown, further research in this respect may be prudent, but there doesn't appear to be excessive bounce in the floors. There are surface vents to both sides of the pew platforms, approximately in line with the external vents.

19.2 **Office & Vestry** - The ground floor is solid with a carpeted finish, now aged. Granite stair up to an office formed at first floor within the north transept, also carpeted. The upper vestry floor has a dip centrally which could cause a trip hazard.

19.3 **Chancel** - A combination of suspended timber and white and pink marble at the sanctuary, there are some loose tiles behind the altar and to the south choir stalls alongside some minor undulation up to the altar on the north side. Ideally the tiles should be fixed to avoid any possible trip hazards.

19.4 **Organ loft** - slightly uneven floorboards.

## 20. MONUMENTS, BRASSES, FURNISHINGS, ORGAN & CLOCK - See Appendix A for more details

20.1 **Organ** - Pipe organ contained within the chancel which was overhauled in 2013 and reportedly in good condition, regularly played and has annual tuning.

20.2 **Office & Vicar Vestry** - Fitted cupboards, some look to have been removed since the last inspection. Some old fashioned cup boarding remains and various bits of lumber.

20.3 The **communion Rail** is twisted

**21. HEATING** - system installed in 2010, comprising of three Vaillant boilers serving new copper service pipe work and white floor mounted skirting radiators, apart from the Vicar's Vestry which contains a nice heritage radiator. Last test record within logbook is from 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022.

21.1 **Gas meter:** located in boiler house. Service enters from the west side of the church.

21.2 The PCC report that two of the three boilers require replacement as they were repaired recently but are reportedly now increasingly difficult to get parts for.

## 22. ELECTRICAL

22.1 Underground service (three phase) to the main consumer unit in boiler room There is a sub-consumer unit in the kitchenette.

22.2 Last inspection unknown as no report contained within the logbook. There is a date on the consumer unit stating the next test may be due 25/08/26 suggesting a test may have been carried out in August 2021 but no record of such.

22.3 **Lighting:** replaced on the whole with LED fittings in 2022. Upper office area still has fluorescent strip lights and unknown if vestry strip light has been changed to LED.

22.4 **Sound system:** comprehensively renewed in 2016 and repaired in 2020 made up of lapel mics, lectern mics and handheld mics with the speakers in the narthex and nave, the facility to play CD's and a sound loop. An audio-visual system is installed consisting of a large TV on swinging bracket and monitor.

22.5 **PAT:** no test report within the logbook.

## 23. LIGHTNING CONDUCTOR:

23.1 Single down tape on the south east corner of the nave gable, the tape itself wanders a little on the gable but may well be satisfactory, the certificate in the log book recommends the next test be carried out in October 2022 and there is no evidence of such testing being carried out.

## 24. WATER & SANITARY FACILITIES

24.1 **Water:** service comes into the boiler house and serves the W.C. and tea kitchen at the west end. There is no meter.

24.2 **Foul drainage:** connected to underground system shared with the Parish Hall. Drainage was inspected from ground level only. No testing of the drainage installation has been undertaken.

24.3 **Surface Water Drainage:** new south underground piped drainage into the shared combined Parish Hall and Church system.

24.4 The kitchenette has a standalone kettle and a fridge built-in at high-level.

24.5 **W.C.** – simple arrangement with clean basic fittings, a little too small to be accessible and no assistance rails fitted, but otherwise satisfactory.

## 25. FIRE PRECAUTIONS

25.1 The PCC should carry out or arrange a Fire Risk Assessment in accordance with latest Regulatory Reform (Fire) Order 2006 (details available via the DAC, the local Fire Officer and/or the internet).

25.2 Fire extinguishers noted as below. All tested in August 2024.

Number	Location	Type	Capacity
1	Narthex	Foam	6 litre
2	Pulpit	Foam	3 litre
3	Lower vestry	Water	3 litre
4	Lower vestry	Foam	6 litre
5	Upper vestry	Hydro spray	3 litre
6	Organ	unknown	unknown
7	Boiler house	Carbon dioxide	2 kg

## 26. SECURITY & SAFETY

- 26.1 **Asbestos:** There is no formal asbestos audit within the logbook and there maybe asbestos in the boiler room and possibly at the pipe organ. It is recommended the PCC carry out appropriate checks if any areas are to be modified.
- 26.2 **H & S policy:** created in 2018 and now at its fifth edition, issued in 2023. A copy of the report is available in the Narthex.
- 26.3 **Insurance:** The church is insured by the Ecclesiastical. All general and individual recommendations from the insurer should be followed.

## 27. ACCESSIBILITY

- 27.1 **Access for the Disabled:** The PCC has a resolution in place which addresses the requirements of the Discrimination Against Disabled Act. This should be continually updated and kept available within the church.
- 27.2 **Wheelchair access:** there is a ramped access from the road, not complaint due to steepness. However, wheelchair users generally arrive by car and are dropped off at the porch where there are steps, so a portable ramp is employed. There is then level access throughout the rest of the church to the chancel steps, communion is often brought to those in wheelchairs. Two areas for wheelchairs have been created by the removal of pews midway along the nave.

## 28. CHURCHYARD, BOUNDARIES, SIGNS, PATHS, TREES

- 28.1 **Churchyard:** is closed and responsibility for maintenance lies with the PCC who operate an informal wildlife management scheme. A new tarmac drive and path to the south, all in good condition. The graveyard has a number of gravestones and memorials which are in varying condition, some laid down, these should be regularly checked by the PCC for stability.
- 28.2 **Trees:** a large number of mature trees, under the care of Durham Council. Reportedly last Inspected 2018, though only documentation from 2016 sits within the logbook. Unknown if the trees are subject to a tree preservation order- but likely. Last works done by the Local Authority are of a heavy trim and ivy removal though they should be encouraged to undertake another inspection as there are branches which could affect the church. It is noted that the shading of such trees could affect the PCC's desires for solar panels.
- 28.3 The site is bounded by a retaining stone wall which have some open joints to copings and walling- particularly at the inside east wall to houses. Ivy beginning to take hold again. There is a mid century post box built into the wall which is a nice feature.
- 28.4 **Westside:** Gates are trapped in tarmac; they are slightly rusting and would benefit from re-decoration. The gates are no longer on their original piers and are now on separate steel columns, the original pintle on the south side is beginning to expand and will break the stone eventually. The pier caps and piers are ok they are a bit worn, open joints to some of the copings.
- 28.5 **Southside:** Halfway along is a metal gate rusted into position now and has lost its bottom pin, not operational. The walling is generally ok, more erosion near to street name plaques. DCC should be reminded that any works should be carried out with lime mortar.
- 28.6 **East Walls:** Backing onto the neighbouring properties. There are the occasional areas of missed pointing or deep open joints, though evidence of some areas of re-pointing. Some large trees very close to this boundary wall.
- 28.7 **Northside:** On the outside facing eastern wall by the War Memorial there is a hole and a chipped coping. Some open joints to the coping. Metal gate on its hinges but rusting and trapped by the raised level of the tarmac.



Figure 24 - Access from North



Figure 25 - Main vehicular access



Figure 26 - Post box in boundary wall

## 29. ARCHAEOLOGY

No archaeological information is available; it is suggested that if any works are to be carried out to the church paths or grounds that the county archeologist be consulted prior to starting.

## 30. ECOLOGY

30.1 **Bats:** None reported. No surveys are available, should any works be carried out which will affect roofs a suitably qualified ecologist should be appointed.

## 31. SUSTAINABILITY

31.1 The PCC have carried out their assessment on the DAC's carbon footprint tool and are encouraged to follow the recommendations provided in 'A practical guide to help your church reach net zero carbon'. The PCC are already looking into the possibility of incorporating renewable energy technologies in the near future.



*Figure 27 - South Graveyard*

## PART THREE

### Summary of repairs in order of priority

	Comment	Item ref	Budget
<b>Category 1 - Urgent, requiring immediate attention.</b>			
1	Maintain asbestos record	26.1	£0 -£1,999
1	Instruct electrical inspection and carry out any required repairs	22	
1	Lightning conductor test – keep certificate in logbook	23	
1	PAT: Carry out annual test.	22.5	
<b>Category 2- Requires attention within 12 months.</b>			
2	Bells: Carry out check of bell and mechanism.	11.1	£2,000 - £9,999
2	Carry out closer inspection of W Finial when repairing slates – Report to QI	7.1.2, 9.12	
2	Fix slates at Nave	7.1.4	
2	Chancel: refix abutment flashing, check the siliconed slates	7.2,	
2	Choir Vestry: inspect box gutter and hidden vestry slating, provide more permanent repair to box valley if required.	7.5, 15.4.1	
2	N Chancel: look over chancel slating and at west side of chimney	7.5, 7.6.5	
<b>Category 3- Requires attention within the next 12-24 months.</b>			
3	Narthex: ease doors to nave	16.4	£0 -£1,999
3	Clean cobwebs from roof of attic space (Transept)	13.4	
3	Prepare for boiler or heating system replacement	21	
<b>Category 4- Requires attention within the quinquennial period.</b>			
4	Walls: when funds allow to continue replacing cement pointing with lime	9	£0 -£1,999
4	Monitor cracks for any progression	9.2, 14	
4	Re-point below verge on the Nave east gable	9.3	
4	Decorate external gates and ease	28	
4	Office: level floor	19.2	
4	Inspect underfloor ventilation in Nave	19.1	
<b>Category 5- A desirable improvement with no timescale.</b>			
5	Release/ Re-set gates and remove original pintle	28.4	£0 -£1,999
5	Prepare for energy efficiency improvements	31	
5	Improve ventilation to avoid condensation (particularly if insulation to be added)	17	
<b>Advice &amp; routine maintenance.</b> This can mostly be done without professional advice or a faculty.			
	Complete and maintain the Logbook		
	Keep the gutters and gullies clear		
	Arboriculturist to monitor trees close to church and boundaries		
	Ensure all graves are checked regularly for safety		
	DCC to maintain boundary wall and re-point with lime mortar		

#### AREAS NOT INSPECTED (The following list may not be exhaustive)

- Under floor voids (where present)
- Organ Pipework
- covered timbers
- concealed gutters
- no services tested.

## APPENDIX 1

### Fittings, Fixtures, Furniture & Moveable Objects

(list from 2002 inspection, revised in 2013 and 2020 by D Beaumont and in 2025 by S Harrison)

- a** High altar: integral rear screen and altar. Altar of oak consisting of 3 bays, the centre divides into 3 archways of cusped fretwork, adjacent plain. Screen behind altar of oak consisting of 9 bays, centre 3 corresponding to altar bays. Three centre bays higher than adjacent bays (which are plain). The middle bay subdivides into 3 panels of vertical fretwork.
- b** North chancel screen: of oak consisting of 8 bays.
- c** South chancel screen: of oak, with two openings, the left hand side opening is an arch, to the right a large nook, in front of which the screen forms a 3 bay arched opening. The central bay is the largest with decorative cusped arched tracery.
- d** Communion rail of oak: Consisting of 6 bays, central pair of bays. Six vertical fretwork panels between remaining bays.
- e** Narthex partition screen: of oak (formerly rood screen). Nine bays, with cusped tracery, fretwork archways. Central bays forms the entrance way. The adjacent bays have lower panels subdivided into two by decorative cusped arches.
- f** Font: stone, square base surmounted by an eight sided font base. Lead lining of basin forms decorative cap running round top of font. The corners to the font have round circular cross symbols carved into them. The font lid is made out of 4 planks held together by iron brackets with a central iron ring handle.  
Replaced by square panelled portable font, date unknown.
- g** Porch entrance doorway: of oak.  
Door to narthex: Four bays, two central bays forming a glass doorway, leafing outwards side bays subdivided on the left into ten panels and centre right five panels.
- h** Bookcase: of oak. Base formed by two different bases. The base to the right has a central partition to its three levels of bookshelves.  
The bookshelves have two sliding cabinet doors, composed of two bays each. Above the bookcase are four levels of open bookshelves with two partitions forming three bays.
- i** Entrance table: of beech.
- j** Small offering table: steel legs.
- k** Mothers Union banner bearing the cross of St Cuthbert at east end of south wall of the nave.
- l** Organ: of oak. Recessed organ bay case console of oak. Case consisting of 3 parts, the base has 7 plain bays. Central screen forming 7 decorative cusped tracery arches. The organ is topped by decorative organ pipes.
- m** Choir stalls: of oak. Four rows of choir stalls, two on either side of chancel.
- n** Lectern: of oak (portable): hexagonal sided based and column, supporting a square reading top.
- o** New font (portable): of oak, copy of pulpit style. Four sides subdivided into four panels inset with cusped lantern arches. Turned round wood font cover. Ceramic baptism bowl.
- p** Piano: upright piano and stool.
- q** Vicar's seat: of oak (portable). Vicar's kneeler of simple design: base for kneeling and supporting a prayer book stand.
- r** Pulpit: of oak. Horseshoe shaped. Six sided, one of which is half as wide as remaining five. Four of the sides are sub-divided into four panels with inlaid cusped lantern arches.
- s** Deacon's chairs: two, lacquered.

- t** Pews: 28 rows of pews, 14 on either side of nave. Front row has an oak kneeler sub divided into 9 bays with decorative tracery. Each pew subdivides into 4 bays.
- Plaques  
(list from 2002 inspection)
- a** Organ - screen: brass plaque reading "To the Glory of God & in the Memory of Louisa Carling the Choir Stalls & Organ Screen in this Chancel are Dedicated 9<sup>th</sup> November 1993".
- b** Partition screen: brass plaque reading "to the Glory of God this screen was Erected in Commemoration of the Jubilee of this Church 1857-1907 Dedicated by Handle Bishop of Durham June 1<sup>st</sup> 1901"
- c** South Aisle, Stain glass window: Engraving reading "To the Glory Of God And in Loving Memory of Edwin Frances Chapman, Vicar of this Parish from 1880 to 1921, and of Isabella, his Wife, who died December 9<sup>th</sup> 1919".
- d** New font: brass plaque reading "To the Memory of Harry Ayre, a Loyal Servant of God in this Church".
- e** South pew kneeler: engraving reading "To the Memory of the Rev Bertrand Howe Braford, Vicar of this Parish 1951 - 1953".
- f** South stalls 1-16: engravings reading:
1. In Memory of Charlotte Lowe
  2. In Memory of George & Margaret Gray.
  3. In Memory of Matthew Aden Robson.
  4. In Memory of Richard Swinburn.
  5. In Memory of John George & Mary Hannah Codling
  6. The Gift of Charles & Catherine Lowe.
  7. In Memory of Stanley Robinson.
  8. In Memory of William Gray Morrow.
  9. The Gift of Daisy Gertrude Allison.
  10. The Gift of John Rosalind Gray.
  11. In the Memory of Agnes McIntyre
  12. The Gift of Jasper & Jane Blakey.
  13. In Memory of William Gilroy Cook.
- g** North pews: engraving reading "The pews on this side of the Nave were the Gift of Leighton & Emma Rames".
- h** West stained glass window: the west window, on the theme of baptism, drawing upon an oration by St Gregory Nesenzen was made by Elders Walker Milligan to a design by L.C. Evetts. It replaced a window of 1895 given in memory of Rachel Jane Brownlees. Donation in Memory of, or bequest, by John Codling, Wilfred Hart, John Heckels & Gladys Whyley made this possible, thanks be to God.
- i** Entrance table: brass plaque reading "In Memory of Hector Batmills T Priestly"
- j** Entrance casement: engraving reading "in Memory of Charles William Lowe, Church Warden of this Parish 1954 - 1957".

## Advice to the PCC

- This is a summary report; it is not a specification for the execution of the work and must not be used as such.
- The professional adviser is willing to advise the PCC on implementing the recommendations and will if so requested prepare a specification, seek tenders and oversee the repairs.
- The PCC is advised to seek ongoing advice from the professional adviser on problems with the building.
- Contact with the insurance company to ensure that cover is adequate.
- The repairs recommended in the report will (with the exception of some minor maintenance items) be subject to the faculty jurisdiction. Guidance on whether particular work is subject to faculty can be obtained from the DAC.
- **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.

• **Fire Safety Advice** can be found at <https://www.firesafe.org.uk/places-of-religious-worship/>  
<https://www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/church-fire-articles/>

- **Electrical Installation**

Any electrical installation should be tested at least every five years in accordance with the recommendations of the Church Buildings Council. The inspection and testing should be carried out in accordance with IEE Regulations, Guidance Note No. 3 and an inspection certificate obtained in every case. The certificate should be kept with the Church Log Book.

- **Heating Installation**

A proper examination and test should be made of the heating system by a qualified engineer each summer before the heating season begins, and the report kept with the Church Log Book

- **Lightning Protection**

Any lightning conductor should be tested at least every five years in accordance with the current British Standard by a competent engineer. The record of the test results and conditions should be kept with the Church Log Book.

- **Asbestos**

A suitable and sufficient assessment should be made as to whether asbestos is or is liable to be present in the premises. Further details on making an assessment are available on <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/churches/guidance-advice/looking-after-your-church/health-safety-security/asbestos>

- **Equality Act**

The PCC should ensure that they have understood their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Further details and guidance are available at <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/churches/open-sustainable/welcoming-people/accessibility> .

- **Health and Safety**

Overall responsibility for the health and safety of the church and churchyard lies with the incumbent and PCC. This report may identify areas of risk as part of the inspection but this does not equate to a thorough and complete risk assessment by the PCC of the building and churchyard.

- **Bats and other protected species**

The PCC should be aware of its responsibilities where protected species are present in a church. Guidance can be found at: <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint/taking-action/wildlife/bats>

- **Sustainable buildings**

A quinquennial inspection is a good opportunity for a PCC to reflect on the sustainability of the building and its use. This may include adapting the building to allow greater community use, considering how to increase resilience in the face of predicted changes to the climate, as well as increasing energy efficiency and considering other environmental issues. Further guidance is available on <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/churches/open-sustainable> and <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/shrinking-the-footprint>