

Looking after our parish buildings

Premises Planning Group

With the prospect of being able to reopen our buildings (in gradual stages) for services, activities and events from April 2021 we are now planning ahead so reopening can happen as smoothly as possible with the resources available. The Premises Planning Group is an essential part of this process so that we can:

- work towards a range and variety of activities and events in Holy Trinity, St Mary's and the Trinity Centre offering safe hospitality and care for all users and visitors;
- help to build good relationships with and between user groups (parish and wider community), encouraging links/connections as and when appropriate;
- work towards maintaining an appropriate level of income (fees, lettings, donations).

2020 began with a very full parish diary for Holy Trinity Church and the Trinity Centre. We were also looking forward to welcoming back regular groups and some new activities and events at St Mary's following completion of the re-ordering project and an exploratory parish visit to St Mary de Crypt in Gloucester.

Activities and events continued as normal until mid-March when all activity in our buildings was suspended and events cancelled for the first lockdown. When the first lockdown eased we were much encouraged by the number of activities and events that still took place in our buildings, creatively adapting to the new regulations. In June Holy Trinity opened with church sitters for individual prayer and both St Mary's and Holy Trinity opened for Heritage Open Days. Regular opening of our churches continued for the rest of the year. Alcoholics Anonymous resumed their meetings in the Trinity Centre in July and Street Angels also resumed their activities using St Mary's as their base. In September Holy Trinity chorister rehearsals and the Theatre schools returned along with other 'socially distanced' activities and meetings including Saturday Coffee once a month. Hennessey-Brown Music organised some concerts, two with a live audience and some recorded or livestreamed in Holy Trinity while Guildford Jazz held two concerts with a live audience in St Mary's. Before Christmas we were delighted to welcome a number of schools and charities to both churches to record their carol services.

Booking enquiries for all our premises have continued throughout the year during lockdowns and we are confident that activities and events in all our buildings will resume as soon as it is safe to do so. The new facilities at St Mary's and new sound system at Holy Trinity will benefit the wide variety of people that come into our church buildings. We continue to support 'home-grown' parish activities and to build on our relationships with numerous community groups, long-standing and new.

In 2020 the Parish Office Managers and Property Manager reviewed the booking system and procedures to ensure compliance with regulations and make our buildings as safe as possible for all users when lockdown was eased. An updated procedure with new electronic booking forms, terms and conditions of use and a COVID-19 risk assessment were approved by the PCC in September. Every event or activity that takes place in our buildings is expected to comply with the current safety regulations and is carefully planned and risk assessed working closely with the Office and Property Manager. Where applicable fees have been reduced to reflect the reduced capacity of our buildings and to make the event or activity financially viable.

Special thanks must go to Robert Munro, Property Manager (who joined us in January following Ken Fuller's retirement) and cleaners, Carol Barnes and Helen Greatley, for enabling us to offer safe hospitality and care to all who have used our buildings throughout the year.

Corinne Jones

Buildings

With one exception, no major new capital projects commenced in 2020, but the year saw the completion and further progress in a number of areas.

Holy Trinity Church

During the second autumn lock-down DM Systems installed a new Sound and Audio-Visual system, and Organ Camera system, the only new project that commenced in 2020. This was fully operational by the end of the year. Heritage Information Boards required by the Heritage Lottery Fund when the two sets of High Street steps were rebuilt were delivered in the year and will be erected in the upper church yard.

St Mary's

Despite the lockdown from March onwards, with the permission of the Archdeacon, the major re-ordering project begun in 2018 was completed providing a new entrance and toilets, replacement heating system with underfloor and perimeter radiators, re-aligned drive way, new kitchen and new meeting room. With funds still available for the project a budget of £35,000 was set for a range of additional items covering fittings and equipment which will mainly be incurred in 2021.

Trinity Centre

Following correspondence with Guildford Borough Council, a Conservation Area Planning Application was made to replace all the west windows in the Trinity Centre. This was rejected, partly due to a discussion relating to the three windows previously permitted in 2018 all looking different because they had not been completed. These three windows have now been completed, and a revised Planning Application will be made in 2021.

Angus McIntosh

HTSM bellringing

A year of very restricted ringing during which we managed:

- 25 Sunday services. Of these, 17 were rung under guidance on coronavirus restrictions which allowed only four ringers (or five with a family bubble) into the ringing chambers.
- Service ringing for the ordination of Rev Tom Pote.
- A single bell was rung for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services.
- 9 Wednesday practices.
- 1 quarter peal rung for an evensong.
- 0 full peals.
- 1 visiting band (ringers from Glasgow and Inveraray).
- 9.5 hours of general maintenance on the bell fittings.
- Whilst we could not fully ring to commemorate the significant anniversaries, the tenor bells at Holy Trinity and St Mary were tolled for VE Day, and at Holy Trinity for VJ Day and Remembrance Sunday.
 - Note, for VE Day, tenor bells were rung at 3pm to form a line of ringing from St Nicolas, St Mary, Holy Trinity and up to Merrow and West Clandon.

The St Mary's bell rehang and frame strengthening project was successfully completed at the start of 2020. The bells now 'go' significantly better and are a pleasure to ring. When we can return to 'normal' ringing, there is still some clearing up and much dusting down to be completed in the ringing chamber. However, we can now ring secure in the knowledge that the bell frame is no longer moving in all directions!

We have now started investigating a major project for Holy Trinity tower. The bells have long been known for their difficulty to handle, being so heavy and located so high in the tower. Even for the most experienced ringers, the bells are a challenge to strike well. The offer of a major grant has kick-started this project into life and we have appointed a project manager with expertise in architecture and historical projects to oversee the investigations. Fundraising plans are at an early stage and we will advise more once discussions have been undertaken with the PCC, DAC and beyond.

Michael Bryant

Holy Trinity Eco Church Group

Many of the practical projects we intended to undertake in 2020, building on the work we undertook and recognised by an Eco Church Silver Award in 2019, came to a halt as soon as the pandemic was declared along with three periods of lockdown during 2020-21. This affected planned activities such as collaboration with Guildford environmental and climate groups, and the annual lecture. Some socially distanced conservation work was done in the churchyard. The research, design and manufacture of two new interpretive panels was completed and these will be installed in the coming months. The projects planned for 2020-21 will be revisited and actioned in the coming year.

David Uzzell