

St Mary's, Wavendon Churchwardens Report 2024-5

Two major structural works were undertaken during the year and are currently almost complete. Firstly, we were very surprised when coping stones on the edge of the roof on the south east corner of the church fell down. By God's grace nobody was injured. Our architect examined the damage and quickly drew up a specification and scheme of work for remedial action. He also identified that the same stones on the north east roof were unsound. We immediately embarked on a fund-raising exercise for an initial estimated cost of between £10,000 and £12,000. We sought quotes and accepted one from MFL Conservation Ltd. Work was delayed as the right type of stone had to be located, ordered and shaped. The work to replace the stone slabs on the SE roof and secure the slabs on the NE roof was completed very quickly in March 2025. They did a terrific job with very little disruption to church life. They reviewed similar stone slabs on other gable ends of the roof and advised that they are sound at present. The total cost at £10,825 (inc VAT) was within budget. We are extremely grateful to members of the congregation for your generous financial support for the majority of the cost of this work. We also received grants and donations to help with the cost.



The second major piece of structural work is the Garden of Rest on the eastern side of the church. This is a collaboration with MK Council who are funding and managing the project. Within the parameters of the Council's budget we have been able to influence the design of the Garden. Progress was disappointingly slow in 2024 but has quickly moved forward in the first months of 2025. Firstly two seats were installed at either end of the Garden. Then the two standing stones were installed. With each stone weighing three tons this was a major piece of engineering and gardening in order to allow heavy machinery to cross the churchyard. Unfortunately there was some disruption to the Rectory garden; but not too much damage in the churchyard. Within the last few days the resin path has been laid. There is still some finishing work to be done: tidying, planting and cutting the grass.

We are conscious that other areas of the church and churchyard need some attention. Part of the wall facing the road has seriously deteriorated and needs to be sensitively and appropriately repaired using the correct materials. This will be repaired in the short term. There are several large trees in the churchyard and we will shortly commission a tree survey with a view to substantially cutting back those that have just grown too big and are, or will shortly be, in a dangerous condition. We have also been made aware that bits of stone have fallen off the south side of the tower. We are obtaining a quote to remedy this.

We are extremely grateful for the support of so many of our congregation. Over 40 people help out with our services in various essential roles. We really do value your help which makes our role much easier. Towards the end of 2024 we undertook a review of the talents of the congregation in order to engage with as many people as possible in God's work at St Mary's and in our community. The response was terrific and we are still working through the many kind offers of help.

We were delighted to welcome Alison as our Curate during the year. She regularly attends our weekly events and has preached at a number of services. She has been incredible at getting to know us all and remember all our names!

Finally, but not least, we must express our grateful thanks to Matt and Alise for the tremendous amount of work that they do for us all. We can see for ourselves their leadership in services, their pastoral care and the online Daily Inspiration. But there is a great deal that they do that is not visible to most of us. On 22 August Matt will embark on a three month sabbatical; this is well earned and long overdue. During this time both he and Alise will disappear from our view but not from our thoughts and prayers. But our life at St Mary's will continue. Planning is at an early stage at present and we will give more details later in the year.

We both thank you all for your support and fellowship over the past year; it has been a real pleasure to serve you. We would both be delighted to continue as Churchwardens for another year with the agreement and support of church members.