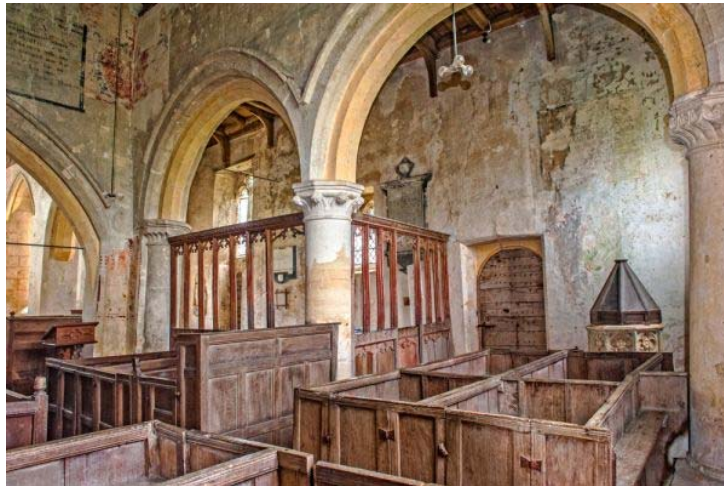


May 4th 2023

INGLESHAM. ST JOHN THE BAPTIST'S. CHURCH PLAN



Part A - [Current Report](#)

The report current at the time of first issue summarises known activity at the church, stakeholders, trends, site resources and results in hand.

Part B - [Consultation](#)

Open consultation findings summarise notes provided by survey recipients in reaction to Part A, the current report and specifies community planning meeting details.

Part C - [Community Recommendations](#)

Community recommendations include the full resolutions set at the community planning meeting.

Part D - [Action Plan](#)

The action plan splits tasks agreed at and implied by the community recommendations.

Part A - Current Report

Church Introduction & Statement of Significance

St John the Baptist Church in Inglesham, Swindon, Wiltshire, England, has Anglo-Saxon origins but most of the current structure was built around 1205. Much of the church has not changed since the medieval era. It is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade I listed building. It was declared redundant on 1 April 1980 and was vested in the Trust on 28 October 1981.

The church is just above the surrounding water meadows next to the confluence of the River Thames, River Coln and the Thames and Severn Canal. St John's was a particular favourite of John Betjeman; an English poet, writer and broadcaster who was a founding member of the Victorian Society and Poets Laureate. Richard Taylor presenter of BBC Four's *Churches: How To Read Them* picked Inglesham as his favourite of the hundreds of churches he visited for the television programme, saying "It was a totally unassuming building, sat in the middle of the countryside. But, despite its humble appearance, inside, this church told the story of over 1,000 years of religious history – from Anglo-Saxon carvings on one wall, to medieval wall paintings on another and then passages from the Bible etched elsewhere from the Reformation". The programme also presented resistance by a local artist, William Morris, a founder of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings against Victorian redevelopment, as a story of local campaigning in the 1880s.

Much of the fabric of the building is from the 13th century, but includes remains of an earlier church on the site. The interior includes wall paintings spanning over 600 years and often one on top of the other up to seven layers thick. There is also a carving of the Mother and Child, which dates from the Anglo-Saxon era. Until 1910 the carving was on the outside of the church attached to the south wall and used as a sundial. There are also historic box pews, pulpit and memorials.

The churches location down a small, sparsely populated lane off the fast flowing A road from Highworth to Lechlade, keeps it somewhat hidden to most passersby, apart from walkers of the Thames path, and those intending to visit the church.

The church has unfortunately been the victim of several crimes over the past decade including several donation box thefts, minor vandalism, and a significant theft of lead roofing from the North aisle roof in 2018.

Current use (bookings) & voluntary activity

As arguably one of the most historically significant buildings in the CCTs portfolio, the use of St John's for community and third party activities has always been somewhat limited and only taken on with great care and consideration taken to the impact of use on the building.

There are occasional services and a couple of fundraising concerts have been held. There have also been several requests for filming in the church over the past decade but not many have come to fruition.

St John's church is fortunate to benefit from the support of a small but dedicated local team of volunteers. Voluntary activity undertaken by this group includes

- Supporting the organisation of a Christmas Carol service, and other occasional services.
- Regular conservation cleaning

- Running occasional fundraising concerts and events.
- Remittance of wall safe and service funds.
- Ad hoc reporting of building change
- Volunteers also wrote and produced a new Walk around Guide for the church in 2017.

Collection Review

Open Churches Policy status: Open+
Local Community Officer: Rachel Whitty
Closest Church Classification: Open
Classification outstanding items: Volunteers provide regular stewarding - high days and holidays, weekends. Commercial opportunities available e.g. Champing.

Visitor nos. 2016/ 17 (est): 11,463
Visitor nos. 2017/18 (est): 8,664
Visitor nos. 2018/19 (est): 9,375
Current project: None
Cleaning schedule: Before use
Welcome table: Present. New walk around guide in 2017.
Keyholder role: Fulfilled
Key representative role: Fulfilled (remittances, CCT liaison, maintenance reporting)
Area volunteer role: None
Fundraising roles: None formal
Stewardship roles: No stewards although tours available if requested
Research, interp & talks role: None formal.
Accessibility details: Provided via website
CCT silver plaque: Installed, good condition
CCT information board: Not installed. Scheduled to receive one.
Oak post: Not installed. One has been requested.
CCT freestanding board: Installed.
Wall safe poster: Installed, current
CCT A board: Provided
Gift Aid envelopes: Provided
Visitor book: Provided
Building services: Electric lighting and sockets
Parking: None formal. Spaces on road.
Organ: Reed player organ
Churchyard: Not owned by CCT, maintained by PCC and volunteers
Ringable bells: 2. Hung in open cote for swing-chiming.

Pews:	Yes.
Fire rated capacity:	110
Seating capacity:	76
Site plan:	Available
Roof alarm:	None
CCTV:	Uninstalled
Individual item security measures:	Uninstalled
Nearby attractions:	
Public transport:	
Social media presence:	None.
Images on CCT website:	One of three
Regular feature parish news:	Unsure
Services per year:	1
CofE support for services:	Unsure
Christmas memory tree:	No.
Tea Party:	No.
Historic Church Tour:	No
Heritage Open Days:	No
Ride & Stride:	No
Champing:	No.
Retail:	No.
Risk assessment general:	Current
Risk assessment fire:	Current
COSHH listing:	Current
Portable appliance listing:	Current
Security Audit:	2015
Children's explorer cart:	No.
Children's trail:	No.

Conservation reports

Condition Report:	
Repairs liability:	£446,00

Annualised maintenance: £2,200.24

Maintenance Liability (Exclusive of VAT):	£1,275.00
- Path pointing	£450.00
- Feramenta repairs	£500.00
- High level bulbs	£75.00
- Loose cover flashings	£250.00
Repair Liability:	
• Short term:	£6,500.00
- Improvements in weather protection	£6,500.00
• Medium term:	£7,500.00
- Inspect all of the drainage system and redecorate and repair the RWG	£7,500.00
• Long term:	£432,000.00
Based on option 4 of the cost plan: Nave and Chancel re-tiled and Aisle roofs repaired in Terne coated stainless steel.	
- Strip and recover roofs	£230,000.00
- Strip inspect and recover porch stone tile roof	£12,000.00
- Wall paintings conservation	£190,000.00
• Desirable:	£

All cost figures are estimates, exclusive of VAT and professional fees

Income, Expenditure & Balances

Income

2019-2020

Box Collections	1,218
General Donations	5,035
Gift Aid Income	-
LPWS	278

Income 2018-2019:	£4696
Wall safe 2018-2019 (incl. above):	£1268
Income 2017-2018:	£30,018
Wall safe 2017-2018: (incl. above):	£1245
Income 2016-2017:	£935
Wall safe 2016-2017: (incl. above):	£77

Expenditure

Conservation expenditure '18/'19:	£4926
Maintenance expenditure '18/'19:	£32,200
Maintenance expenditure '17/'18:	£2062
Electricity '18/'19:	£78
Electricity '17/'18:	£45

Balances

Restricted Balance Report Jul '19	£27864.59
Income less expenditure '18/'19	-£32,508
Income less ann. maint.'18/'19:	£2,495.76

Local Community Officer's Summary

Arguably one of the most significant churches in the CCTs portfolio, Inglesham St John the Baptists is quite famous and beloved locally and nationally, with thousands of visitors from all of the country and the world visiting each year. Recent improvements to the Thames walking pathway has encouraged more visitors to the church.

The church benefits from the voluntary support of several local residents, who form an informal volunteer team and enable operations of the church, including organising occasional events and services, cleaning, emptying the wall safe and site inspections, and much more besides.

The church suffered a devastating theft of lead roofing in 2017. Within 24 hours of discovering the loss, CCT had put a temporary roof covering in place (paid for by CCTs emergency fund) to protect the interior of the church, but unfortunately some water damage to the interior walls had already occurred.

At a later date the North and South aisle roofs were covered three layers of mineral felt at a cost of £8700 thanks to two generous private donations. This roof has a ten year maximum lifespan.

The majority of the staining resulting from the leaks from the temporary plastic roof on the internal walls has been removed but some staining over wallpaintings has been left in situ as this could not be removed without removing/ damaging the historic paint beneath.

The staining on the Anglo Saxon Madonna and child sculpture has been removed.

Two meetings were organised at the church following the theft to involve the local community and as such there is fair local awareness and support.

There is a good audience development / research paper written by Rowena Tulloch in 2014 which, and an interpretation draft paper written by Rowena Riley in 2018, both of which will help inform any new interpretation at the church. Volunteers produced a walk around guide in 2017 and printing was again funded by a generous private donor.

In 2020 an online audio guide for the church was produced, based on 2017s walk around guide. There is no other visitor interpretation available at St John's and it is felt this is needed given the architectural significance of the building and contents, and complexity of the wall paintings.

CCT staff produced and submitted a project plan for St John the Baptist's as part of the 2019 – 2024 strategy, but as the church is not within the CCTs Top 15 priorities this project has not been taken forward. The project outline follows below:

What the project will involve and deliver

Fitting a new permanent sheet metal roof and installation of roof alarm at cost of £432K

- 1) Decision to be made on what kind of / scope of the repair to the roof.
- 2) Specification preparation by term consultant.
- 3) Tendering of roof repair contract.
- 4) Scaffolding and roof repairs.
- 5) Craft Skills training whilst making repairs.

Consolidation of wall paintings which have been damaged, are liable to be damaged by the lead theft / roof repairs. To achieve this we will;

-
- 1) Commission a Conservators Report
 - 2) Cleaning work relating to tannin staining
 - 3) Design, production and installation of interpretative materials illustrating and describing the process of conservation, methods and basis for philosophical decisions, as information for visitors interested in conservation approaches.

Improve the visitor experience by designing, producing and installing new visitor interpretation of historically significant wall paintings. In conjunction with the volunteer team we will;

- 1) Identify interpretation themes
- 2) Write an interpretation brief and tender interpretation contract.
- 3) Manage the production of interpretation and installation in the church.

Enter into communications with Kelmscott Manor to see if a more formal partnership can be established to generate additional income, visitors and community support for the church.

- 1) Identify nominated staff / volunteer contact at Kelmscott
- 2) Identify shared aims and joint objectives.

Project Goals

- Raising £432,000 for repairing the roof and protecting / conserving the wall paintings and contents at risk of damage.
- A new permanent sheet metal roof installed and the building is watertight. Further damage to the wall paintings is prevented by end 2024.
- Increased average donation per visitor by improving interpretation and investigating ways to enable coinless giving.
- Installation of suitable preventative measures to ensure the future security of the building and contents.
- A working partnership and memorandum of understanding with neighbouring Kelmscott Manor, who regularly take groups of visitors to the church informally.
- A team of volunteers able to welcome and lead groups of visitors in tours of the church at least 4 times a year.
- Host a series of fundraising specialist lectures at the church.
- Raise the international profile of the church by showing off the conservation works
- Ensuring sustainability of volunteer team

In lieu of this project going forward, it is hoped that new ideas for using the church, and potential supporters might emerge as part of the church planning consultation process.

Part B - Consultation (Interim Round September 2020)

Summary of consultation responses received by end August 2020

*Following distribution of fifteen questions through our standard church plan questionnaire in summer 2020 to existing Churches Conservation Trust correspondents, (together with an invitation for correspondents to share the survey and associated Church Plan Part A), **no response** was received for **Inglesham, St John the Baptist's** by the deadline of **August 30th**.*

The response received was from a respondent writing in a **[no response]** capacity, who confirmed that their responses related to **St John the Baptist's, Inglesham**.

In addressing the question of *a perfect outcome for our work together at the church* the respondent indicated **[no response]**

In writing about challenges anticipated in respect of repair liabilities and running costs, the respondent indicates **[no response]**

Thinking about local life away from the church, in relation to other community projects or activities which might combine with our work to protect the church for the future, the respondent indicated **[no response]**

Considering if increased use of the church might benefit the community, or if increased use might benefit the church itself, the respondent indicated **[no response]**

In relation to identifying conservation priorities for the church, the respondent provided **[no response]**

Regarding priorities, opportunities or ideas for fundraising the respondent noted **[no response]**. In respect of means for initiating fundraising activity, the respondent gave **[no response]**. The respondent also indicated that they would **[no response]** be available to participate in fundraising activity.

In seeking respondents' participation in a future group discussion regarding church planning the respondent indicated **[no response]**.

In answering our final, open question about any additional church matters not covered in other areas of the survey, the respondent indicated **[no response]**.

In addition to responses fielded through the questionnaire, a further **[no response]** respondents wrote back to their Local Community Officer, expressing the following perspectives:

Nil

Part C - Community Recommendations (to follow meetings scheduled for October 2020 - January 2021 ahead of final report April 2021).

No records of previous meetings from 2020-2023 could be located.

Summary of meeting held on May 4th in the church between Rachel Whitty Local Community Officer and the 2 main volunteers referred to as A1 and B1.

RW welcomed both the volunteers to the meeting and thanked for sparing the time to meet. RW had already met with A1 on a previous maintenance visit and was pleased to have finally met with B1. RW thanked them for their hard work and support of the church and the volunteers who helped with the cleaning. RW also thanked B1 for emptying the wall safe and to both for reporting the recent maintenance issues with the door and the electricity which Conservation were dealing with. A1 mentioned that they had invited another key volunteer but unfortunately they were not able to attend due to work commitments. RW hoped that she would be able to meet this volunteer at the next Church Plan meeting and/or the Parish Meeting that A1 had kindly invited her to speak at in October.

RW was also pleased have been able to attend the Carol Service in December and meet many members of the community. RW updated the volunteers on the email exchanges regarding a potential donor to help with replacing the temporary roof repair after the lead theft and would keep them posted with any further developments. A1 and B1 were pleased to hear that there might be some progress and expressed concerns on how to raise the profile of the church within the community. The church was a bit out on a limb from the main houses and the focus tended to be on Highworth. A1 felt that the small group who supported the church were somewhat volunteered out and previous efforts/events had not been supported by the wider community. RW suggested putting something in the Parish Newsletter might help such as call out for volunteers and displaying a poster in the church porch. Also RW being able to speak at the next Parish Meeting would draw attention to the church. RW was also able to share that funding had been made available from Historic England to stabilise the wall paintings and publicity from that would be useful to raise the profile of the church too.

Actions – short term-

- **Keep volunteers updated with potential major donor for the roof replacement**

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- **Send Volunteer poster for display and “advert” for Parish Newsletter.**
 - **Update volunteers with wall painting stabilisation project**

The discussion moved to work through the detail of the latest Church plan document.

RW explained that all the figures in the current document were due to be updated and it was hoped that this would be completed by the next Church plan meeting. RW shared with the group the latest electricity and wall safe figures. B1 expressed concern as they had paid in at least £300 including the money from the Carol Service and there was no record of this. B1 explained that it was getting more difficult to pay monies in with the lack of banks in the local area and had been driving to Witney to pay the cash in. On this occasion they had paid the money into their own bank account and transferred to it the CCT with an accompanying email to Finance.

RW requested that B1 forwarded the email so that be investigated and rectified.

Action – short term B1 to send email details of back deposits to RW

The location of the wall safe was discussed as it was some distance from the welcome table and after a botched attempt to break into it had been repaired but it did not look great. RW suggested that more overt signage could be displayed to ask for donations and would send out what was currently available including creating a QR code for the roof project. Electronic card readers were discussed and as Inglesham had good signals for 4G on both Vodaphone and Three networks it would be a good candidate to consider for the forthcoming rollout of payment devices.

Action – short term RW – issue wall safe posters, QR code and ensure Inglesham a priority on project list for card payment devices.

Other fundraising opportunities were discussed including selling postcards/prints and greeting cards especially with the number of visitors at the church.

A1 showed the watercolour by a local artist of the church now deceased. RW wondered if the family might be happy for it to be used for prints/greeting cards. A1 agreed to follow up that.

Action – A1 to follow up usage of watercolour for potential postcards/greeting cards

The group also discussed potential use of the church for events and forge the church’s connection with William Morris to Kelmscott Manor where there were loads of volunteers. RW

had approached Kelmscott at the end of last year but needed to chase this as there would be great potential for leaflet sharing/events/exhibitions and volunteers.

Action – RW to follow up collaboration with Kelmscott Manor

The meeting concluded with action points being agreed and A1 handing RW only written record of burials etc at Inglesham for digitisation and upload onto website. (medium term action)

The next meeting is planned for September/October

Part D - Action Plan (Interim Plan September 2020)

The action plan below has been written post the *interim edition* of the church plan and a first full edition of the church plan published at the end of March 2021.

Community Actions

Short term actions (to end September 2023)

- Advise LCO of Parish Newsletter details and meeting dates
- Advise LCO of monies paid in so missing entries can be rectified
- Investigate whether painting of Church by local artist could be used as postcards/prints/greeting cards for sale
- Contact Lechlade Art Society to offer church for painting/drawing classes/workshops

Medium term actions (to end March 2024)

- Investigate suitability of church for concerts or other uses, and of promotion to prospective local audiences.
- Consider use of the church as gallery space, offering local artists and makers a chance to mount exhibitions, or providing community groups and educational establishments with a suitable venue for temporary displays
- Consider the suitability of the site for Champing

Long term actions (to end September 2024)

Actions complete (to end May 2023)

- Review CCT Cleaning Churches standard and report

Local Community Officer Actions

Short term actions (to end September 2023)

- Keep volunteers updated with potential major donor for the roof replacement
- Send Volunteer poster for display and “advert” for Parish Newsletter.
- Update volunteers with wall painting stabilisation project
- Issue wall safe posters, QR code and ensure Inglesham a priority on project list for card payment devices.
- Follow up on collaboration with Kelmscott Manor and William Morris connection

Medium term actions (to end March 2024)

-
- Attend PC meeting
 - Digitise typed Parish Records for upload onto website
 - Consider adding video directions to the church for prospective visitors' information
 - Investigate suitability of church for concerts or other uses, and of promotion to prospective local audiences.
 - Consider use of the church as gallery space, offering local artists and makers a chance to mount exhibitions, or providing community groups and educational establishments with a suitable venue for temporary displays
 - Consider the suitability of the site for Champing

Long term actions (to end September 2024)

Actions complete (to end May 2023)

- Distribution Part A reports for each church to all existing correspondents, together with survey
- Receive, anonymise and collate survey responses and add to Church Plan Part B
- Resolve initial findings, conclusions and recommendations based on Part A & B, expressed as short, medium and long-term actions Publish Part A, B & D as Interim Church Plan to colleagues by end September 2020
- Undertake staff consultation against Interim Church Plan by end November 2020
- By end November 2020 review colleagues' feedback regarding updates to church plan part A, to include
 - Conservation interpretations
 - Presentation improvements
 - Champing data
- Complete community audit to identify additional survey respondents and participants in face-to-face or digital meetings by end November 2020
- Repeat survey for additional respondents by end January 2021
- Agree dates for face-to-face or digital community meetings by end January 2021
- Resolve updated findings, conclusions and recommendations based on Part A, B & C expressed as short, medium and long-term actions for each site (Part D)
- Publish Church Plan Version '2021-22'
- Continue to remind CCT Colleagues about the importance of the proposed project, detailed in the LCO summary.
- Review potential for promoting availability of secure parking outside church
- Review church web page to ensure clear directions available for all visitors
- Share CCT Cleaning Churches standard and report
- Approach Benjamin Dry cellist in case of availability and interest in concert Summer 2021

CCT Actions Other

Short term actions (to end March 2021)

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- Provide interpretation of maintenance and repair plans to further explain anticipated costs described in part A above.

Medium term actions (to end March 2022)

Long term actions (to end March 2024)

Actions complete (to end May 2023)

Appendix 1: Summer 2020 Questionnaire

1. This is the first of fourteen questions in the survey - thank you in advance for working through each one. First of all, we need to know if you're completing the survey on behalf of an organisation or writing in a personal capacity (If you're writing on behalf of an organisation, please use the text box to let us know which one. Thank you!)
2. Which church are you writing about? (Don't worry, you can complete additional questionnaires for other sites if you like!) Please state the location and dedication, as in 'Sapperton, St. Kenelm's'. Thank you.
3. People are involved with our sites in so many different ways. In your own words, please describe your relationship with the church building.
4. Some people are actively involved at the churches we look after together. If you're part of this group, tell us about your involvement. Cleaning, attending services and fundraising are just a few of the most frequent activities we share, but we'd appreciate as much detail as you might be happy to provide.
5. In your own words, and having reviewed 'Part A' of our church plan (sent to you by email with the invitation to this questionnaire), please describe a perfect outcome for our work together at the church. What would you like to see happen in terms of community involvement and other use of the building?
6. Bearing in mind the repair liabilities and running costs described in the report you've read, what challenges do you anticipate for a sustainable future at your church?
7. Thinking about local life away from the church, which other community projects or activities are you aware of that could combine with our work to protect the church for the future?
8. Here are two questions together... Could increased use of the church benefit the community? How would this increased use benefit the church itself?
9. What do you think are the most important conservation priorities at your church? For each or all of these priorities, please also let us know about any ideas you have for addressing them.

-
10. Income and expenditure for the church is detailed in 'Part A' of the report we sent you. Addressing conservation priorities will entail finding new ways to raise funds. Tell us about any ideas or opportunities you have identified for raising additional income at the church.

 11. What do you think might be the best ways to get started with any fundraising activities you have suggested?

 12. If you don't already, would you be interested and available to take part in future fundraising activity?

 13. Almost done! We'd like to invite you to join us in a group discussion about the church later this year, either in person or through 'phone / video conference. Would you be willing to join the discussion?

 14. Last question! Is there anything else you'd like to share about your interest in the church which we haven't asked you already? Otherwise, thank you again so much for reflecting on the future of the church through your answers.

