

May 2023

IMBER. ST GILES'. 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 Giles' Church in the deserted village of Imber, Wiltshire, England, was built in the late 13th or early 14th century. It is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a Grade I listed building. It was declared redundant on 1 November 2002, and was vested in the Trust on 14 September 2005.

The church was built of dressed limestone in the late 13th century, replacing a church which had stood on the site since the 12th century. The tower with its five pinnacles and the north and south aisles followed in the 14th century. Extensive rebuilding was undertaken in the 19th century. The church no longer has its pews or other fittings; the remains of medieval paintings can still be seen on the walls, including a set of 17th-century bell ringing changes painted on the north wall of the tower.

The village is part of the British Army's training grounds on the Salisbury Plain. The entire civilian population was evicted in 1943 to provide an exercise area for American troops preparing for the invasion of Europe during the Second World War. After the war, villagers were not allowed to return to their homes, so the church's font was moved to Brixton Deverill, the pulpit to Winterbourne Earls, the pews to Churchdown, and two effigies, the royal arms, communion table and medieval stained glass to Edington Priory. The village, which is still classed as an urban entity, remains under the control of the Ministry of Defence despite several attempts by former residents to return. Non-military access is limited to a few days a year. Unlike the rest of the parish, St Giles's church and its graveyard remained in the hands of the Diocese of Salisbury, although access to them was and is controlled by the Ministry of Defence.

The civil parish of Imber was eventually incorporated into neighbouring Heytesbury, to the south, while for Church of England purposes the ecclesiastical parish of Imber was incorporated into the parish of Edington, to the north.

Current use (bookings) & voluntary activity

Public access to Imber is granted for up to 50 days in each year, however, as a rule the number of days granted falls well short of the maximum. Public notices are posted on the Ministry of Defence website and in the local press. Access is usually granted during the Easter and Christmas/New Year periods; also, during August. The military training programme will dictate dates of public access in any one year.

A team of volunteers (not registered with CCT), led by a registered CCT volunteer, organize the open days which includes; liaising with the MOD regarding access, setting up the church, welcoming visitors, sourcing and selling refreshments and merchandise, media and marketing, management of the volunteers group, and much more besides.

Collection Review

Open Churches Policy status:	<i>Partnership 3</i>
Local Community Officer:	<i>Rachel Whitty</i>
Closest Church Classification:	<i>Partnership 3</i>
Classification outstanding items:	<i>Volunteers provide visitor welcome and basic site management e.g. wall safe collection, cleaning, visitor no. collection, CCT to provide volunteer induction and training, and supports recruitment, Open Church policy applies.</i>
Visitor nos. 2016/ 17 (est):	<i>13861</i>
Visitor nos. 2017/18 (est):	<i>17946</i>
Visitor nos. 2018/19 (est):	<i>12950</i>
Current project:	<i>None</i>
Cleaning schedule:	<i>Regular before use by volunteer team</i>
Welcome table:	<i>Present. New walk around guide, up to date leaflets.</i>
Keyholder role:	<i>Fulfilled</i>
Key representative role:	<i>Fulfilled (remittances, fundraising, CCT liaison, volunteer / friends group management, maintenance reporting)</i>
Area volunteer role:	<i>None</i>
Fundraising roles:	<i>Fulfilled</i>
Stewardship roles:	<i>Fulfilled, but not CCT registered.</i>
Research, interp & talks role:	<i>Fulfilled, but not CCT registered / supported.</i>
Accessibility details:	<i>Provided via website</i>
CCT silver plaque:	<i>Installed, good condition</i>
CCT information board:	<i>Not installed.</i>
Oak post:	<i>Not installed.</i>
CCT freestanding board:	<i>Provided</i>
Wall safe poster:	<i>Installed, current</i>
CCT A board:	<i>Provided</i>
Gift Aid envelopes:	<i>Provided</i>
Visitor book:	<i>Provided</i>
Building services:	<i>Electricity provided by a petrol generator for Open Days. No heating. Portaloo's hired for Open Days.</i>

Parking:	<i>During open days there are spaces for approx 15 cars on the roadside and more in the overflow field. Sufficient for most situations.</i>
Organ:	<i>None</i>
Churchyard:	<i>Not owned by CCT, maintained by PCC and volunteers within the Friends group.</i>
Ringable bells:	<i>Yes.</i>
Pews:	<i>2 original pews. 4 other pews which need to be removed as surplus to requirement (The church has about 200 stacking chairs)</i>
Fire rated capacity:	<i>100</i>
Seating capacity:	<i>Not determined</i>
Site plan:	<i>Available</i>
Roof alarm:	<i>None</i>
CCTV:	<i>Uninstalled</i>
Individual item security measures:	<i>Uninstalled</i>
Nearby attractions:	<i>Warminster and Salisbury and associated attractions.</i>
Public transport:	<i>The Imber bus is run on special occasions!</i>
Social media presence:	<i>Volunteer run Facebook account.</i>
Images on CCT website:	<i>One of three</i>
Regular feature parish news:	<i>Unsure</i>
Services per year:	<i>1. Remembrance. Also usually a secular festival of carols.</i>
CofE support for services:	<i>Yes</i>
Christmas memory tree:	<i>No.</i>
Tea Party:	<i>No.</i>
Historic Church Tour:	<i>No</i>
Heritage Open Days:	<i>No</i>
Ride & Stride:	<i>No</i>
Champing:	<i>No.</i>
Retail:	<i>Yes, the friends group sell various merchandise and refreshments</i>
Risk assessment general:	<i>Current</i>
Risk assessment fire:	<i>Current</i>
COSHH listing:	<i>Current</i>
Portable appliance listing:	<i>Current</i>
Security Audit:	<i>2015</i>

Children's explorer cart: *No.*
Children's trail: *No. Though there is usually an Easter egg hunt.*

Conservation reports

Condition Report:

Repairs liability: £17,750
Annualised maintenance: £4,096.44

- **Short term:** **£7,700.00**
 - Repoint lead flashing mortar to gutters and tower roof. £1,200.00
 - Redecorate RWG and gully repairs £6,500.00

- **Medium term:** **£8,950.00**
 - Reduce ground level at north end £8,500.00
 - Redecorate ironwork on W door £450.00

- **Long term:** **£1,100.00**
 - Replace jamb to tower roof door. £1,100.00

- **Desirable:** **£**

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

Income, Expenditure & Balances

Income

Box Collections	- 2,000	- 259	total 2,259
Events		- 4,741	- 4,741
General Donations	- 1,000		- 1,000

Income 2018-2019:	£14,000
Wall safe 2018-2019 (incl. above):	£4701
Income 2017-2018:	£11027
Wall safe 2017-2018: (incl. above):	£2780
Income 2016-2017:	£8030
Wall safe 2016-2017: (incl. above):	£2467

Expenditure

Conservation expenditure '18/'19:	£0
Maintenance expenditure '18/'19:	£548

Maintenance expenditure '17/'18: £0

Electricity '18/'19: £0 (*The Friends bring their own petrol generator for open days*)

Electricity '17/'18: £0 (*The Friends bring their own petrol generator for open days*)

Balances

Restricted Balance Report Jul '19	£0
Income less expenditure '18/'19	£13452
Income less ann. maint.'18/'19:	£9903.56

Local Community Officer's Summary

Imber St Giles' is certainly one of the most unique and interesting churches in the CCT portfolio, and an unusual and unexpected success story in its own right, following adoption by a Volunteer Team Leader and successful Friends group. The church brings in a fantastic amount of income for the CCT and presently more than covers its own costs. Visitors from all over the world flock to the church during the course of its limited open days, and have a fabulous experience in doing so.

However from CCTs perspective there are a few concerns and elements which may be improved upon.

Firstly, it is recognized that the current operations of the church are highly dependent on one lead volunteer and as such there is a risk of overburdening said volunteer and lack of longevity / continuity of operations should the leaders ability to run the church and friends group change. The volunteer leader has built up a huge list of contacts, procedures, processes and documentation relating to the running of the Imber Open Days, which it would be difficult for anyone else to take on at this point. It seems that a plan for continuity of site opening / operation would be a useful investment at this stage.

Communications to the CCT from the Team Leader and the Friends Group are excellent and very reliable. However, the CCT currently does not have the ability to communicate with the majority of people who volunteer at the church during the open days (as they are not registered volunteers) and this poses a risk in terms of insurance and health and safety on the friends groups behalf, which the CCT would like to help address. The inability for the CCT to communicate with the Friends Group members and stewards also means that the CCTs representation at Imber St Giles is resting solely with the two registered volunteers within the group.

It is difficult to see how operations could be improved at Imber in terms of fundraising. However the LCO will continue to encourage representation of the CCT at this largely "Friends owned" church.

For the time being I suggest that the Church Planning process needs to be endorsed and led by the volunteer Friends Group, rather than the CCT. If CCT try to enforce this new approach we

run the risk of damaging what is currently a very positive relationship and situation for the CCT at Imber St Giles’.

Summary of interactions with lead volunteer for Imber (A1) and RW LCO October 2022 to May 2023

RW met with A1 in November 2022 at the church to carry out a maintenance check and help prepare the church for the Remembrance Day Service.

RW was invited to attend the Christmas Carol Service and was able to introduce herself to many the Friends Group and volunteers that were there, the local incumbent and Lord Hendy was had been instrumental in setting up the Imber Bus Days. RW was able to thank them all personally for their hard work and support at Imber and the staggering amounts raised over such limited access days. RW hoped to be able to meet up with the Friends Group in the summer.

RW has regular email updates and now on Friends email group as pasted below and will be updating the church plan to reflect more up to date figures by September 2023.

Dates confirmed with the usual caveat and as will be posted on the imberchurch.org.uk website later today. BTW. Have you all seen the new website?:

Easter: Good Friday (7th) - Easter Sunday (9th) April. Church open 1100 hours (11 am) - 1600 hours (4 pm) Easter Monday (10th April) Church open 1000 hours (10 am) - 1500 hours (3 pm) Church closes promptly at 1500 hours (3 pm) to allow preparation for concert. NB. earlier opening time to compensate for this.

*Easter Monday 10th April Music for Awhile: The Genius of Bach. Suites, Sonatas & Solos. The concert commences at 1800 hours (6 pm) Doors open 1715 hours (5.15 pm) **Andrew: You have the poster for this but just to check that Tickets (£20.00 each) - under 18's free but still require a ticket, are available from: imberconcerttickets@gmail.com***

Saturday 19th August all day. This will be a bus only day and is in addition to the normal quota of public access days granted by the Ministry of Defence. Please visit: imberbus.org for details. The church will be open 1000 hours (10 am) until 18 hours (6 pm)

August Bank Holiday Weekend. Friday 25th - Monday 28th August. Church open 1000 (10 am) - 1600 hours (4 pm)

Remembrance Service Saturday 11th November. 1050 hours (10.50 am). Escorted Convoy from Warminster Vedette Post (VP2) departing 1020 hours (10.20 am). Details nearer the time.

Festival of Carols. Saturday 16th December 1430 hours (2.30 pm) Details nearer the time.

Post Christmas Church Open Days. Friday 29th December - Monday 1st January 2024. 1100 hours (11 am) - 1600 hours (4 pm).