The Slab Jigsaw

Week 9 – report of work for disabled access, toilet and kitchen – 3rd May – 6th May

Excellent progress has been made on work outside and inside of the church this week. The following has been achieved during this short week due to the Bank Holiday, but Jacko, our village plasterer worked all day on Saturday to skim the inside of the toilet.

✔ Continuing the work on the approach up to the porch from last week, the stone slabs were re-laid in exactly the same order as they were taken up. Work started on laying them down on a bed of mortar to form a slight ramp up to the porch step.



Due to the extreme weight of some of these large pieces of stone, extra hands were needed such that four men were

required to take a corner each in order to gently place the slabs in just the right position.



While Jon mixed and barrowed a constant supply of mortar, the slabs were set down, carefully followed by Doug who grouted the joints between each stone.



The last small slab was ceremonially set down by Ian to form the final piece of the jigsaw.





One of the additional tasks to make the path complete was to tie in the existing path up to the graveyard with the new path. Doug laid two small slabs and concreted a joint in the same style as the existing path.



Another consequence of raising the path is the need to also lift the adjoining grass so that it will be the same height as the new path. This will be accomplished with new turf.

A further issue is the consequential reduced height of the wooden bench that is dedicated to Hector Woodward. This will be released from its concrete footings and built up such that the seat is 46cm above the path.

✔ The flaking lime render was removed on the low wall in the porch where the new armoured cable is to be channelled. Once the cable is hidden in the groove, the wall will be re-skimmed with fresh lime mortar.



✔ The new worktops, sink and solid oak kitchen units were delivered on Tuesday and stacked in the church adjacent to the bell tower. The hole for the sink in the longest worktop was already partly cut out to avoid cracking and will need to be completely
removed and the edges finished before assembling the sink underneath.



✔ Meanwhile, inside the church, Derek and John continued with the plumbing. The new water heater was positioned on the corner wall where it will be enclosed in one of the kitchen units. This unit was adapted to accommodate the 45 degree angled wall.



✔ The pipework for the cold water supply to the heater and kitchen sink taps was fitted with all the associated joints and bends. The hot supply and waste was also attached to the wall and fed through to the area behind the toilet. Simultaneously, the water supply and waste to the hand basin in the toilet were fitted. Final wooden linings were fitted to the openings behind the toilet in readiness for plastering.



✔ Sound insulation was cut and fitted between the timbers of the ceiling and walls of the toilet cubicle. The outside walls will be clad in oak faced plywood with solid oak tracery, but only after the plastering has been accomplished.



✔ Saturday saw Jacko from Overend Barn skimming the

plasterboard in the toilet cubicle.



It was decided to bury the time capsule in a niche between the toilet and kitchen. This will not hold up progress around the lift well and will mean all evidence of the work, including these weekly reviews, can be included up to the final day.

Access to the church will continue to be closed during next week while internal work continues.

John Pinch
7 May 2022

News from the Village Hall

New additions by the Village Hall

Firstly, The New Bench erected this morning behind the Village Hall in the amenity area in memory of the late Tony Wannell who did so much for our Hall. (His wife Margaret in the photo)



Also, The new Litter Bin erected this morning next to the Bus shelter in The Street

Gradients and Gravel

Week 8 – report of work for disabled access, toilet and kitchen 25th April – 29th April

Progress was made both inside and outside of the church this week. The following has been achieved during the five working days of the week:

✔ Having now repositioned the front steps it was clear that all of the stone slabs leading from the gates to the porch will need to be lifted and re-laid higher to accommodate the new landing level by the gate posts and incline slightly up to the porch such that there will be no step to negotiate when entering the porch.





Jon and Doug carefully lifted each stone slab, marked them with a letter and a plan made of their positions so that they could be re-laid in exactly the same order.



Jon and Doug barrowed Type 1 stone chippings from a delivery by the roadside and laid to form a slight gradient up to the porch threshold. A laser was used to confirm the incline angle. The gravel was finally compressed with a vibrating plate before the slabs will be relaid next week.

✔ The remainder of the gravel was deposited on the ramp and again compacted ready for the slabs to be laid on top.



✔ Meanwhile, inside the church, Will inserted a damp proof membrane in the lift well before the sub floor was laid. A laser was used to confirm the precise depth such that reclaimed tiles could be laid to match the existing floor level, on top of a lime screed. A plastic conduit was first positioned adjacent to the existing church wall to carry the electric cables that are necessary for the lift and to take power to the lights on the ramp outside.







Once the mix had cured, Will laid new concrete blocks to form the retaining walls around
the lift enclosure.



✔ Armoured electric cable was threaded through a small, drilled hole in the stone wall adjacent to the steps up to the parvis room, to take the wire through the porch to the outside. The cable will be hidden in a groove cut into the bottom of the wall in the porch and then secured in place with lime mortar. At the same time, the flaking render on the lower walls of the porch will be removed and re-skimmed with lime mortar.

Although not in the original specification, this is one of the additional jobs that will make a tremendous improvement to the fabric and aesthetics of the church. Similar additional work will be undertaken in the kitchen area where the walls are in very poor condition.



Discussions were had regarding the plumbing and supply of hot water to both the kitchen sink and hand basin in the toilet. Derek has kindly agreed to source all the plumbing fittings and we hope to begin the installation next week. The main water heater was fixed in position ready for enclosing in one of the kitchen cupboards that are to be delivered on Tuesday next week.

Jacko, the plasterer who lives in the village, came on Thursday to inspect the plasterboard that Derek and myself had fixed onto the interior of the toilet cubicle stud work. Not being builders by trade, we were both relieved to hear him comment that he had ‘seen much worse’!

Jacko hopes to skim the walls and ceilings next Saturday, after which, the final electrical fix can take place that will include securing the switches, sockets, alarm cord, ventilator and water heater over the basin.

Access to the church will continue to be closed during the week while internal work continues, but evensong will still take place on Sunday.

John Pinch
29 April 2022

Moving the Steps

Yet more progress was made outside of the church this week. The following has been achieved during the four working days of the week:

✔ The week started with the repositioning of the stone steps to make space for the new disabled ramp.





The two lower steps were fixed in place and the restraining concrete block walls were
constructed before laying the upper treads.







By the end of the week all five treads had been replaced. The original steps had slightly sunk over time such that they were tilting backwards. This had the unfortunate result of holding any rainfall at the back of the treads. Having now repositioned the steps correctly has consequently increased

the overall height slightly, causing the top step to be higher than the path.

The path was to have been raised slightly anyway to form a slight ramp up to the porch entrance, but it has meant that the bottom hinges for the gates will need to be removed and positioned higher.





✔ Meanwhile inside, Derek continued fixing two layers of plasterboard to the rear walls of the toilet cubicle, which

will eventually be skimmed with plaster.



✔ Simon Beisly, the electrician, began the first fix this week, which included locating
wiring for the sockets and switches in both the toilet and kitchen areas.



It has been suggested that a time capsule be buried behind the retaining walls around the lift area. Recommendations have been received as to what the capsule should contain.

Access to the church will continue to be closed while internal work continues.

John Pinch
23 April 2022

A Path on an Arc

This week continues to see real progress outside of the church. The following has been achieved during the four working days of last week:

✔ Concrete was mixed on site and poured into the three spaces between the shuttering that was installed at the end of last week. The three sections are to accommodate the incline, which will form the edging to the disabled ramp.



✔ A more accurate arc was plotted on the new concrete foundations to form the building line for a double wall comprising concrete blocks at the back and solid dressed stone for the facing.



✔ A row of concrete blocks were laid on the curve on top of the concrete that will serve to hold back the earth between the new wall and the existing church boundary wall. More concrete will be poured into the gap after the concrete blocks have cured
to underpin the existing church wall, because the foundations are insignificant.

✔ Dressed Cotswold stone blocks were laid in front of and tied into the concrete blocks to form the final facing of the wall. A small return (corner) was created to finish off the wall where it meets the tarmac path up to Church Cottage.



✔ More clay at the abutment with the road was removed with the digger to provide a wider parking space for a hearse or disabled vehicle. This area will be dug down 20cm lower than the road, and filled with Type One (gravel) to form a base for tarmac, which will extend the width of the road.



The area inside the back of the church was cleared to provide access for the Easter Sunday service via the west entrance door.

John Pinch
18 April 2022

No Mow May

A Plantlife Initiative

No Mow May is exactly what it sounds – not mowing your lawn during the month of May. It is an initiative started by the charity Plantlife back in 2019. In the UK it is supported by organisations as diverse as the National Trust , Yeo Valley

Organic and more locally Wotton Area CAN . Already it has spread to the USA and Canada.

Why join in?

As Gardens Illustrated reported, there is strong evidence for rethinking our mowing habits:

- 97% of British wildflower meadows have disappeared since the 1930s
- many pollinating insects are in decline in the UK
- on average each square kilometre lost 11 species of bee and hoverfly between 1980 and 2013

but…

Plantlife's citizen science experiments show that mowing less can lead to a tenfold increase in the nectar available to pollinators and a much more interesting lawn.

Leave it longer for longer

There isn't really anything special about May – ideally Plantlife would like us to mow only monthly all summer to give short grass plants like daisies and white clover chance to flower. We should even let the odd patch go unmown to encourage plants such as oxeye daisy, field scabious and knapweed.

In 2020, I enjoyed a purple carpet of self heal so I'm trying again this year. Though I will cheat a bit by keeping a narrow strip round the edge short so the general effect is intentional not neglected.

Now for the science bit …

You can register for Plantlife's Every Flower Counts survey https://www.plantlife.org.uk/everyflowercounts/ which runs

from 22nd to 31st May. By doing so you help them calculate our National Nectar Score and monitor trends. It's fun for children and educational for anyone who, like me, is no botanist.

We can make a difference

There are 15 million gardens in the UK so a high take-up could make a substantial difference to pollinators

… and give us more time to do something we really enjoy!

Kath

The Truth is out there….somewhere

I was SO happy!

In the last eNews, I wrote that I was interested to hear how people get their news. How do you know it's impartial and that the facts are correct. Having asked this question, I was SO happy when I had a reply.

"That's a really good question and one that's very relevant in todays mad world. I'd be interested in the results too. Our primary source of news remains the BBC, although we tend to consume it via the web-site these days, rather than the 10 o'clock news, to allow us time to process the seriously upsetting stuff before trying to go to sleep. You'd like to think that the BBC is a fair and impartial source but on the odd occasion when they've run a story where I have some

knowledge of the subject, we've found their impartiality and accuracy to be lacking a little.

On that basis, we now have a digital subscription to the Daly Telegraph as well, and we try try and use that to get a balanced picture of whats going on in the world.

*Neither of us do **Facebook**, and we would not believe any news received via that medium because of the interest filtering and lack of editing on their part, and we're also not on **Instagram**, **Twitter** or similar social media.*

*I'm still a member of **LinkedIn**, which I always saw as the professional end of the social media spectrum, but I'm seeing changes there that are moving it away from the professional and more towards the political/trivial interest end of the spectrum, so I would not trust any news stories on that site any more unless I personally knew the author or had worked with the company in question.*

All of which is sorry state of affairs really."

My Problem

The letter above more or less highlights my own problem with the news and also the greater problem we seem to face in believing what we are told.

For instance **TEN** times (the last time was this week) the ***Prime Minister has stood up in Parliament and claimed that there are more people in work now than there were before the pandemic began***. However the Official ONS figures show that are 600,000 fewer. A fall of 1.1%

This is just one instance (x10) from just one person shows how little truth means today. Are we now so happy that we all accept mis-facts from our leaders?

Free Speech is a precious thing and something we should never

take for granted. However, I think that the Freedom to speak should be backed up with the necessity to prove your facts.

For example, a Sunday Newspaper said that a MP was distracting others by crossing and uncrossing her legs and mentions "un-named sources". However, when asked to meet the Speaker of the House regarding these "sources" the Editor refused to meet him in order to protect them. So once again we have a totally unsubstantiated story. Can this right? To publish with no fear of having to prove whether it is true.

Elsewhere in the world, we now have a ***Mr Trump owing a platform called "Truth"*** and a ***Mr Musk owning "Twitter"***. Two people who are prone to…slightly exaggerate

My Answer

In short, I wish I had one. I struggle to find News that is Truthful and unbiased. We have just been through a Pandemic where untold people died because they believed the "Truth" forwarded to them by a friend on WhatsApp or "Facebook".

However I have, along with 18,000 others, ***signed the petition*** to send a message to MP's that they are here to lead us, not mislead us.

In the end, I think that the answer lies with us. Me and You. Every time we receive a WhatsApp, a Facebook post or Instagram Post we have to question whether it is true or untrue. Don't take it for granted. We MUST reply to those spreading untruths. The same for those in power. Question their "facts" and don't let them repeat untruths again and again.

"If you repeat a lie often enough, it becomes truth"– unknown

For those interested in my own

sources.

- ***The Times*** – Subscription
- ***The Guardian*** – Subscription
- ***The Telegraph*** – Subscription
- ***Bloomberg***
- ***Politico*** – Good for Polls
- ***UK-ICE*** – Interesting articles
- ***Vox***
- ***BBC*** – Of Course
- ***Google News*** – Surprisingly good
- Also at present follow certain Russian Youtubers.

Richard. 29 April 2022

Your comments are always welcome.