

Church Organ Project

The Parochial church Council (PCC) Growth Action Plan 1 (2010) identified the fundamental need to ensure that quality music can continue to be provided at Saint Oswald's to support worship and all users of the church.

The PCC recognised the increasing risk of quality music not being provided due to the lack of availability of organists. There are a greater number of pianists available who might play the organ but the existing "tracker" action makes the instrument difficult for them to play.

Some members of congregations perceive the organ as difficult to hear when quiet music is played.

No major work beyond routine tuning and maintenance has been undertaken for about forty years. During this time the church has been re-roofed and the walls, tower and windows have been completely refurbished. The organ has remained in-situ during these works, and has been protected as far as possible, but there has been the inevitable ingress of extraordinary amounts of dust.

The PCC has explored many options to ensure that quality music remains available for all users of the church in the longer term. The PCC has determined that the optimum solution, taking account of the necessity to support the Grade 1 Listing of the interior of the church, is to refurbish the existing organ and to include a self-play facility which will allow music to be recorded and then played back through the pipes if an organist is not available. The proposed works will also include general cleaning and refurbishment of organ; improvement of sound so that the organ can be heard throughout the church when soft or quiet music is required and introduction of modern playing aids. These works are intended to ensure mechanical reliability and general availability of the organ for decades to come.

The proposed works do not alter or affect the appearance or setting of the organ in the Grade 1 Listed church interior.

Quotations have been received for the proposed works and the total estimated cost of the project including the hire of an equivalent, temporary digital organ for use while the pipe organ is not available is £60,000. The PCC currently holds £49,000 of funding from generous bequests and donations made specifically for maintenance of the organ and enhancement of church music. There is a shortfall in funding of £11,000 and the PCC invites donations to cover this amount. Please contact PCC Treasurer Colin Gidman, Heron's Way, 13 Maltkiln Road, Plumley, Knutsford WA16 0TS. Tel 01565 722313 if you are able to help with a donation.

The works are currently programmed to start in June 2015 with a construction period of 14 weeks. The PCC has decided that, in order for the project to proceed to programme, any shortfall in funding remaining at the start date will be met from the limited funding available in the General Restoration Account.

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