

THE CHURCH, SUTTON MALLET

CHURCH PLAN



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Introduction

The Churches Conservations Trust' s strategy is to empower and support communities to care for historic places of worship, for the benefit of all. A sustainable CCT church is well used by its community(ies), generates sufficient funds for the maintenance that keeps it in a good state of repair and is able to raise funds for specific repair and improvement projects. Local Community Officers facilitate this through their work with the community to co-create Church Plans.

Church plans are a living document which combines information on the church' s history, significance, maintenance and repair needs and the current use of the church, with feedback and recommendations from the community, and concludes with an action plan setting out agreed short, medium and long term goals to support the sustainable use and care of the church.

Part A - Current Report

Church Introduction & Statement of Significance

Sutton Mallet Church in the village of Sutton Mallet, Somerset, was built in 1827 incorporating elements of a 15th-century church on the site. It is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade II listed building.

The village is on Sedgemoor on the Somerset Levels, at the foot of the Polden Hills. The old church which dated from the medieval period provided a landmark for anyone crossing the moor. Deterioration of the fabric of the church was reported in the 16th and 17th centuries and services were only held infrequently in the 18th and 19th.

The current church was built between 1827 and 1829 by Richard Carver of Taunton adjoining the old tower. Although the rebuilding was in a Georgian style remnants from the earlier church were reused including a mediaeval window which was incorporated into the small apse, and the 17th-century altar rails were reused.

The Gothic tower includes two 17th-century bells, one from 1607 by R. Purdue and another of 1657 by Robert Austen. When the church was rebuilt the tower was not adequately fixed to the rest of the church, meaning that, by 2008, 6 metres (20 ft) long diagonal stainless steel ties needed to be inserted to prevent further deterioration.

The church was vested with the Churches Conservation Trust on 1 November 1987.

Current use (bookings) & voluntary activity

The Church at Sutton Mallet currently has permission from The Church of England for up to six Sunday services each year, plus an unlimited number of occasional services. In 2023 the church hosted one musical concert and a Harvest and Christmas service. The churchyard is not CCT owned.

CCT are extremely grateful to local residents and keyholders and the incumbent, for their support, and for the events and services they organise at the church.

Voluntary activity undertaken by local community members includes:

- Ad hoc cleaning when necessary
- Planning and delivery of all services
- Biannual site inspection forms & collecting visitor numbers
- Electric meter readings

The Local Community Officer completes regular mandatory checks and actions such as regular Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) checks, visual electrical inspections, Fire Risk assessments and Building and General Risk Assessments. In addition the church also receives two maintenance visits per year from CCTs specialist maintenance contractor, and detailed Condition Reports from the allocated Architect.

Church Information

General Information:	
Open Churches Policy status:	Open (unlocked/locked daily)
Local Community Officer:	Marie Leverett
Current projects:	None
Parking:	Limited, 2/3 spaces on road parking in front of church
Building services:	Electric lighting
Churchyard:	Not CCT owned
Ringable bells:	Yes (chiming)
Organ:	2x Harmoniums which are both unplayable
Volunteering:	
Keyholder role:	Fulfilled
Area Volunteer role:	Surplus to requirements
Key representative role:	Fulfilled
Fundraising roles:	New group potentially fulfilling this role
Stewardship/events roles:	New group potentially fulfilling this role
Research, interp & talks role:	Vacant and necessary
Cleaning schedule:	Nothing formal, ad hoc cleaning as required
CCT Items:	
CCT silver plaque:	Installed
CCT information board:	Not installed
Oak post:	Not installed, not needed
CCT freestanding board:	Not installed
Wall safe poster:	Installed
CCT A board:	Not currently – LCO to provide in 2024
Gift Aid envelopes:	Provided
Visitor book:	Provided
Welcome table:	Maintains stock of current leaflets (note unavailability of future leaflets for re-stock)
Children’s explorer cart:	No
Children’s trail:	No
Tourism/Marketing:	
Nearby attractions:	Glastonbury, Clark’s Village, Bridgwater

Social media presence:	Nil
Images on CCT website:	Three
Regular feature parish news:	Not at present
Events/Activity:	
Services per year:	2-3+ (Christmas, Harvest, Easter +)
Christmas memory tree:	Not currently
Heritage Open Days:	Not currently
Ride & Stride:	Not currently
Champing:	Not currently
Retail:	Not currently
Health and Safety:	
Fire rated capacity:	60 (could be increased slightly with door stewards)
Seating capacity:	104
Site plan:	Available
Roof alarm:	Not installed
CCTV:	Not installed
Individual item security measures:	Not installed
Accessibility details:	Provided via CCT website
Risk assessment general:	Current
Risk assessment fire:	Current
COSHH listing:	Current
Portable appliance listing:	Current
Pews:	Sound, no defects
Security Audit	Current

Conservation reports

<p>Annualised maintenance costs (Exclusive of VAT): Annualised maintenance costs express the total costs of church maintenance divided by 25 years. Every forecasted cost which relates to the maintenance of this church over a period of 25 years is included. Any anticipated repairs are excluded. A list of typical maintenance tasks for any historic church, forecast over the period, is available to view at Appendix 2.</p>	£2,574.44
<p>Routine maintenance costs (Per annum and exclusive of VAT): Total cost of two maintenance visits per year exclusive of any additional maintenance items included above. A list of the maintenance tasks included in the twice-annual maintenance visits is available to view at appendix 3.</p>	£579.60
<p>Other maintenance costs total (Exclusive of VAT): Additional maintenance needs discovered during twice-yearly maintenance visits, costed and listed individually below.</p>	£9,310.00
- Minor roof repairs inc weathervane	£3,260.00
- Rainwater goods	£4,500.00

- Glazing repairs	£500.00
- Bell support steelwork and repair crack	£600.00
- Porch ceiling and staircase repairs	£450.00
Total short term repairs: Small scale items of limited cost which could be fulfilled with minimal fundraising.	None
Total medium term repairs: More expensive needs such as roof repairs and tower repairs which may require more involved fundraising and grant applications.	None
Total long term repairs: Items which are known to require works in the longer term but which are not essential in the near future.	None
Total desirable repairs: Repairs which are not essential to the conservation health of the church but which might improve aesthetics or usability of the building.	None
All cost figures are estimates, exclusive of VAT and professional fees. VAT is charged at 20% of the total costs and can sometimes be recovered. Professional fees vary, but are either charged at an hourly rate or as a percentage of the total project cost. These are usually charged only on larger or more complex projects.	

Income, Expenditure & Balances

Income

Year	Wall Safe	Service	Services		Events	Third Party	Total
2022/23	£0			-			£0
2021/22	£9						£9
2020/21	£9						£9
2019/20	£52						£52
2018/19	£135						£135
2017/18	£0						£50
2016/17	£0						£369

Visitors

Year	Visitor Numbers	Wall safe income per visitor
2022-23	1,160	£0
2021-22	91	£0.10
2020-21	Data not collected	
2019-20	778	£0.07
2018-19	1,063	£0.13
2017-18	1,443	£0

2016-17	2,208	£0
2015-16	1,730	£0.05

Expenditure

Total spend since vesting (non maintenance): £119,723

Year	Conservation (repair)	Maintenance expenditure	Utilities
2022-23	£0	£780	-£42
2021-22	£0	£1,296	£69
2020-21	£0	£242	£63
2019-20	£0	£482	£67
2018-19	£0	£483	£66
2017-18	£0	£486	£62
2016-17	£0	£737	£75
2015-16	£3,180	£3,180	£62

Balances

The restricted balance is the amount of money which has been covenanted or restricted for expenditure at the church. Any expenditure needs to match the terms of the covenant under which the money was donated, for example, a term expressing that a donation is intended for roof repairs only.

Restricted Balance Report Jul 2019 £0.01

Income less expenditure 2022/23 - £780

(Income from all sources, minus maintenance and conservation expenditure)

Income less annualised maintenance 2022/23 - £2,574

(Income from all sources, minus the annualised maintenance cost, as shown in the Conservation Report section above)

Local Community Officer' s Summary

This extremely pretty Somerset church benefits from generous support from a small number of active individuals, and a supportive incumbent. Additional members of the community support the church well but less regularly through attendance at services and events.

Someone has recently come forward to help with emptying the wall safe and completing basic building condition checks twice a year which is great news. There is also an active group planning a flower festival for 2024 and a project to repaint the porch. There is currently a large gap between the existing income and the annualised maintenance costs, so fundraising events are very welcome and renewed interest in using the church as a community space is something the CCT really supports.

Additional promotion of existing and upcoming services and events via the Parish newsletter and at parish council meetings, on the CCT website, in CCT newsletters and in other locations would be useful in increasing visitor numbers and donations.

A volunteer who could focus on history and interpretation would be very welcome so tours of the church could be offered for events such as Heritage Open Days, enriching the visitor experience further.

The Church might also benefit from a CCT noticeboard and insert for the porch, upon which site specific health and safety and historical information, and details about upcoming events and local information.

Part B - September 2020 Survey

Summary of consultation responses received

*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 The Church at Sutton Mallet** by the deadline of **21 September**. View the survey questions as Appendix 1.*

Part C - Community Recommendations

Community Meeting 1: 14th July 2023

Attending: Local Community Officer (LCO) and 3 members of the community

Items discussed were:

1. Services and Events

Currently at least 2 or 3 services takes place each year but no other events take place at the church which would help towards the annualised maintenance costs. MO is a musician and suggested that his band could have a concert to raise money for the CCT. The LCO also brought up the idea of Heritage Open Days (national free festival of heritage, also known as HODs) as a good opportunity to bring new visitors into the church. HODs has to offer something different to the norm so to be listed would need to offer something like tours, activities, tea and cakes or have items on display which are not normally available to view.

2. Maintenance Issues

The issue of cracks in the gallery was discussed. There are multiple cracks at the East and West ends of the church but particularly in the gallery. They have been there for a while but appear to have recently worsened. The Estates Officer has suggested drawing a line (in pencil) with a ruler across the crack and measuring it along the line and making a note of the width and date measured. This will ascertain whether movement is still happening.

BR pointed out that there is no connection to the earth outside.

The issue of wifi was discussed and MO will pass on an email address to the LCO re a company installing wifi in the area at the moment.

Community Meeting 2: 2nd Feb 2024

Attending: Local Community Officer (LCO) and 8 members of the community

Items discussed were:

1. Events

There was a lot of energy amongst the group for organising events and activities at the church and using it more as a community space. A flower festival was suggested, possibly for June, as a

fundraiser for the church/CCT. Other ideas were a cheese and wine evening, poetry event, exhibition and possibly a walk as part of the CCT's walking festival (LCO to send more info on this).

2. Maintenance

There are several areas in the church raised as needing attention. The chancel arch is flaking and the porch is in quite a poor state. There was some interest in the community in painting the porch themselves if there was support from conservation to do this. The LCO introduced the idea of Community Initiative Projects which are a way for communities to raise money for things they feel are important but which are not necessarily CCT priorities. The LCO explained that raising funds to help us with our general maintenance costs would be hugely appreciated (annualised maintenance costs at Sutton Mallet Church are £2574).

Part D - Action Plan

Community Actions

Short Term Actions (to end July 2024)

- Community to progress plans for flower festival
- Community welcome to progress plans for repainting porch (see below – send outline of workplan)

Actions complete

- MO to help organise a fundraising concert – done: took place Sept 2023
- MO to help with monitoring the cracks – done: no widening of cracks in past year.
- Possible Heritage Open Days history tours? – it was decided to leave this for 2023 & focus on concert

Local Community Officer Actions

Short Term Actions (to end July 2024)

- Get CCT A board to Sutton Mallet Church
- Get wall safe key cut for MO
- Send more info on CCT's walking festival
- Ask conservation re the community repainting the porch (see below)

Actions complete

- Ask conservation re the community repainting the porch – done: there is general support for this. No specific brand of paint or colour was mentioned by conservation as a type which must be used. To progress this, if the community submit an outline work plan (this can be short – just a side of A4 is fine) outlining what type of paint and what colour is being proposed, how they would go about carrying out the work and what timeframe/date they are looking at, the LCO will give to conservation for final approval.
- To arrange meeting with MO re concert and possible HODs event in September – done: concert held in Sept 23
- To re send survey within Church plan to people at the meeting – on hold (survey being created internally)

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- Ask Estates Officer re connection to the earth outside – done
 - Contact company installing wifi in the area re helping at Sutton Mallet church – on hold (after progressing this at a different church there were a lot of ongoing costs involved which made this idea not currently viable. If the church was more heavily used it's something to look at in future)

Long term actions (suggested by previous LCO – need to be looked at during future Church Plan meeting)

- Consider means for increasing additional public interest, footfall and consequent donations
- Review methods for promoting church to historical, archaeological or ecological societies, and inclusion in local heritage trails or walking/cycling routes.
- Identify means and suitability of the sponsored Christmas Memory Tree initiative
- Consider potential for introduction of venue to prospective new participants for events, hires, group visits etc
- Investigate participation in Ride & Stride scheme
- Investigate musicians, artists, theatre companies or poets who might wish to use the church
- Review methods for promoting church to location agents, wedding companies etc
- Discuss potential for regular church related features, parish newsletter and inclusion of church updates in parish council meetings

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.

Appendix 2: Typical Maintenance Tasks Forecast - 25 Years

The list below gives examples of items that CCT needs to maintain in its churches. Some items on this list will not relate to this church but give guidance as to the typical items we cover. These estimations are based on the cost in 2020, please note we are not able to predict inflation costs and therefore these are not included.

A specific report is created for each church every nine years by an experienced and trained building inspector. This details the repair needs of the building and lists the repairs required according to their priority. Please contact your Local Community Officer if you wish to see this report.

Item	Method & Purpose	Cycle /Yrs	Estimated Cost per visit (present day levels)	Cumulative Estimated Total Cost After 25 Years (2020 values)
Drains, rodding	Below-ground drains can be blocked by debris which stops the rain water dispersing properly and potentially leading to water backing up and overflowing. To prevent this they require rodding and cleaning even ten years.	1	£ 39.00	£ 975.00
Soakaways, inspection and clearance of silt build-up	Soakaways consist of a large pit filled with gravel of varying sizes which act as a filter to allow rainwater to slowly seep into the surrounding ground. Over time material carried into the soakaway in the rain water fills in the gaps and slows the rate of dispersal which can lead to water backing up and potentially damaging or even flooding the church	10	£ 600.00	£ 1,500.00
Mansafe hatchway system	Man safe systems are steel cables or anchor points which are fixed to the roofs of churches to allow people to safely access and work on the roof. As these systems are used for safety it is a legal requirement that they are tested every year for loose fittings or damaged cables.	1	£ 360.00	£ 9,000.00
Lightning conductor testing	Lightning conductors are required to be checked every three years to make sure that they are still performing correctly and will be able to disperse a lightning strike effectively. Metal thefts have often targeted lightning conductors and they may need replacing.	3	£ 480.00	£ 4,000.00
Organ maintenance	Organs are complex machines built using numerous natural materials which can be damaged by moisture, heat and animal attack. It is recommended that organs are checked every year to carry out minor repairs and to be re-tuned as required. Regular servicing can also reduce the likelihood of large unexpected repair bills.	1	£ 140.00	£ 3,500.00
Fire extinguisher inspection	Fire extinguishers servicing checks that the fire extinguishers are functional and maintaining adequate pressure for use in an emergency. Note the CCT only provides fire extinguisher in churches which are either stewarded, used for Champing™ or have significant timber items.	1	£ 166.00	£ 4,150.00
Electrical periodic inspection testing	Electrical tests ensure that the electrical system of the church is both safe and fully functioning. The test will check all elements of the system and highlight any concerns.	5	£ 350.00	£ 1,750.00
Replacement of electrical fittings	As items are highlighted as faulty through periodic testing and maintenance visits they will need to be replaced.	15	£ 1,500.00	£ 2,500.00

Replacement of lamps	General wear and tear - Bulbs require regular replacement. Note LED bulbs will be used where possible	2	£ 250.00	£ 3,125.00
Heating installation, servicing	Annual servicing of the heating system to ensure the efficiency and safe working order of the boiler etc.	1	£ 384.00	£ 9,600.00
Roof alarm, servicing	Roof alarms require annual servicing to check that the system is in good working order and to replace minor parts such as the batteries in sensors.	1	£ 316.80	£ 7,920.00
Rainwater goods, redecoration	All external rainwater Goods (RWG) require redecoration as they are in exposed locations and are exposed to significant amounts of water. The redecoration significantly extends the lifespan of the RWGs and ensures that they are working correctly and are securely fixed in position.	7	£ 1,560.00	£ 5,571.43
Internal & external ironwork redecoration	Redecorating the ironwork prolongs the life of the item and improves the aesthetic of the church. The redecoration of ironwork also provides a good opportunity to inspect the item for damage.	7	£ 1,500.00	£ 5,357.14
External joinery, redecoration	Redecorating external joinery prolongs the life of the item and improves the aesthetic of the church. The redecoration of ironwork also provides a very good opportunity to inspect the item for damage.	7	£ 1,875.00	£ 6,696.43
Window repairs	Minor repairs to the windows such as broken panes of glass, replacement of glazing bars, mortar repairs or lead work repairs are important to exclude the weather and birds and other animals.	5	£ 350.00	£ 1,750.00
Bell maintenance	Bells require ad hoc inspection and minor maintenance to fixtures and fittings	5	£ 235.00	£ 1,175.00
Condition inspection report, all specialists	We have a 9 yearly architect or surveyors inspection plan. When the survey is undertaken all elements of the church will be inspected and a prioritised plan for all required repairs will be created.	9	£ 450.00	£ 1,250.00
Roof overhaul	Roofs require constant minor maintenance with a major overhaul every seven years	7	£ 2,500.00	£ 8,928.57
Clock maintenance	An annual service of the clock with minor repairs and checks to ensure good timekeeping	1	£ 140.00	£ 3,500.00
Tree inspection	A five yearly inspection of all the trees in the churchyards we are responsible for to check for defects and enable us to plan for any required works.	5	£ 225.00	£ 1,125.00
Churchyard maintenance	Grass cutting and minor trimming of plants and bushes etc.	0.5	£ 200.00	£ 10,000.00
Overheads	Office costs to support maintenance planning etc.	1	£ 20.00	£ 500.00
Staff Costs	Staff costs incurred in preparing the required inspections and reports	1	£ 97.00	£ 2,425.00

The **total cost over 25 years** for this example of a typical church is **£107,598.57** (exc. VAT)
The **average yearly cost** for this example of a typical church is **£4303.94** (exc VAT)

Appendix 3: Typical Maintenance Tasks Forecast - (Twice-Annual Maintenance Visits)

Item	Method & Purpose
Gutters, downpipes and gully clearance	Gutters, hoppers and downpipes are easily blocked by leaves and debris both windborne and dropped by birds which can lead to overflowing and water damage to the building.
Roof, inspection & replacing slipped/missing slates/tiles	Over time some slates/tiles or the pegs/nails which hold them will reach the end of their useful lifespan. When this happens it will allow slates to move from their correct position which can let rain in to the building and potentially poses a risk to visitors as the slate/tiles can fall.
Vegetation, control of growth	Overgrown vegetation against walls and buildings can hold moisture against the building potentially causing damage and some plant species are invasive. Vegetation can also obscure the building hiding potential damage and can provide shelter for vermin such as mice.
Tower stairs & boiler room steps, sweeping	Leaves and other debris can build up on steps which could lead to accidents if people slip. Regular sweeping reduces the risk for potential accidents.
Principal steps and paths, clearance	Leaves and other debris can build up on steps which could lead to accidents if people slip. This is especially the case for churches with trees in the area. Regular sweeping of the steps reduces the risk for potential accidents.
Wall Safe, servicing	Servicing of the wall safe helps to ensure that the donations can be easily collected and also checks to ensure that there hasn't been an attempt to steal from the safe.

Appendix 4: Typical Champing™ Arrangements and Related Income

Champing™ is the exclusive overnight hire of a church to visitors. Camp beds and chairs are set up inside the church, along with tea making provisions, battery lighting, and cushions and blankets to give guests a cosy stay.

Guests book online through the Champing™ website www.champing.co.uk and these bookings are related to local contacts so everyone knows when visitors are staying. A local member of staff sets out equipment for the night and removes all gear each morning. Guests have exclusive access to the church between 6.00 p.m. until 10.00 a.m. so visitors can enjoy the church during the day.

Champers don't expect much in the way of facilities and understand that these are ancient buildings. For most churches we've installed eco-loos either inside or outside in wooden cabins. We don't allow candles but provide battery lanterns and fairy lights. As most of our churches don't have heating we only operate Champing™ between the end of March and the end of October, and we recommend Champers bring warm sleeping bags and extra blankets. We also supply bedding and breakfasts but this option isn't available at all churches. Most Champers will eat out locally or may bring their own picnic.

For those churches without electricity we provide a gas camping stove and we also provide amply bottled water for Champers and all visitors to use.

Typically Champers are couples and families. Some of our churches are large enough to welcome groups of up to 16 people. We are dog-friendly, and child-friendly. Many Champers appreciate the history, architecture, and unique features of their surroundings, and come to learn about the building and its locale through this unique accommodation. We offer those staying for the first time a free CCT membership so they can learn more about our work and consider support for The Trust after their visit.

You can evaluate typical income which derives from Champing™ in the table below.

Church	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Langport, Somerset	£10,472.40	£2,765.60	£3,809.94	£3,128.00	£20,175.94
Emborough, Somerset		£2,024.30	£1,378.49	£2,625.00	£6,027.79
Chiselhampton, Oxfordshire	£10,156.29	£2,696.40	£5,864.11	£1,705.00	£20,421.80
Wolfhamcote, Warwickshire		£3,001.00	£2,213.77	£1,624.00	£6,838.77
Holme Lacy, Herefordshire		£4,368.80	£4,758.55	£1,004.00	£10,131.35
TOTAL	£20,628.69	£14,856.10	£18,024.86	£10,086.00	£63,595.65