

May 2023

CLAPTON IN GORDANO. ST MICHAEL'S.



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

The Church of St Michael in Clapton in Gordano, Somerset, England, dates from the 13th century and is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade I listed building. It was vested in the Trust on 1 June 1995.

St Michael's closed in 1995 but due to its architectural interest was adopted by the Trust, however occasional services are still held throughout the year.

The 12th-century tympanum is the oldest visible part of the church to have survived, however the majority of the building is from the 13th century.

Inside are reredos and benches, a 14th-century font and a late 17th-century monument. The 13th-century oak screen in the church originally divided the Great Hall and the Buttery in the adjacent Court House.

The first record of the church is an agreement dated 1226 between William, son of Arthur de Clopton and Richard of Keynsham Abbey.

Current use (bookings) & voluntary activity

St Michael's is fortunate to benefit from the support of a well-established and organised volunteer friends group. Voluntary activity undertaken by this group includes

- Fundraising for group activities and building improvements and adaptations, including installing new lighting in 2019.
- Management of the volunteer friends group including organising group meetings, AGMs and fundraising for the groups' activities.

Running several services and other secular events each year. Including: Gordano Open Days (Part of Heritage Open Days) in September. Easter, Harvest, Christmas and Remembrance services

- Remittance of wall safe and service funds
- Regular conservation cleaning
- Opening the church to visitors
- Planning and delivery of all bookings including services.
- Ad hoc reporting of building change
- Liaison with the CCT over several recent major projects, including the 2019 lighting installation, adaptation to the side chapel and wall painting conservation.

Collection Review

Open Churches Policy status:	Partnership
Local Community Officer:	Rachel Whitty
Closest Church Classification:	Open
Classification outstanding items:	
Visitor nos. 2016/ 17 (est):	1973
Visitor nos. 2017/18 (est):	2054
Visitor nos. 2018/19 (est):	2062
Current project:	None
Cleaning schedule:	Regular cleaning by volunteers
Welcome table:	Present. Well stocked with leaflets and a walk around guide.
Keyholder role:	Fulfilled.
Key representative role:	Fulfilled (remittances, CCT liaison, volunteer / friends group management, maintenance reporting)
Area volunteer role:	None
Fundraising roles:	None formal, though the Friends do raise a lot of money.
Stewardship roles:	No stewards although tours available if requested
Research, interp & talks role:	None formal.
Accessibility details:	Provided via website
CCT silver plaque:	Installed, poor condition
CCT information board:	Not installed.
Oak post:	Not installed.
CCT freestanding board:	Provided.
Wall safe poster:	Installed, current
CCT A board:	Provided
Gift Aid envelopes:	Provided
Visitor book:	Provided
Building services:	Electric lights and sockets. Water supply to the churchyard.
Parking:	Off road earth / gravel car park with spaces for 8 cars approx.

Organ:	Electronic organ owned by Friends.
Churchyard: within the Friends group.	Not owned by CCT, maintained by PCC and volunteers
Ringable bells:	6. Rung full-circle
Pews:	Yes.
Fire rated capacity:	190
Seating capacity:	Not determined
Site plan:	Available
Roof alarm:	Installed in 2019.
CCTV:	Uninstalled
Individual item security measures:	Uninstalled
Nearby attractions:	Bristol and Weston Super-Mare.
Public transport:	
Social media presence:	None.
Images on CCT website:	One of three
Regular feature parish news:	Occasional. Via volunteers
Services per year:	3 - 4
CofE support for services:	Yes
Christmas memory tree:	No.
Tea Party:	No.
Historic Church Tour:	No
Heritage Open Days:	Yes
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: £135,000

Annualised maintenance: £4,096.44

• Short term:	£20,000.00
- RWG	£5,000.00
- Roof repairs	£9,000.00
- Repoint chimney masonry	£6,000.00
• Medium term:	£85,000.00
- Repointing of tower and nave	£80,000.00
- Repairs/alterations to pews and platforms	£2,000.00
- Repair and ventilate dado at tower base	£3,000.00
• Long term:	£
- Repair to plaster in chancel and nave	£30,000.00
- North chapel decoration and plaster repair	£15,000.00
• Desirable:	£

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

Income, Expenditure & Balances

Income

Income 2019 – 2020:	£93
Wall safe 2018-2019 (incl. above):	£93
Income 2018-2019:	£648
Wall safe 2018-2019 (incl. above):	£148
Income 2017-2018:	£95
Wall safe 2017-2018: (incl. above):	£0
Income 2016-2017:	£161
Wall safe 2016-2017: (incl. above):	£146

Expenditure

Conservation expenditure '18/'19:	£0
Maintenance expenditure '18/'19:	£3544
Maintenance expenditure '17/'18:	£512
Electricity '18/'19:	£1
Electricity '17/'18:	£339

Balances

Restricted Balance Report Jul '19	£0
Income less expenditure '18/'19	-£2897
Income less ann. maint.'18/'19:	-£3448.44

Local Community Officer's Summary

Situated conveniently between the populous areas of Bristol and Weston Super-mare, St Michaels is a large and well serviced church building, which is much used and loved by its local community.

St Michael's is fortunate to benefit from the support of a well-established and organised volunteer friends group who have invested, and continue to invest a great deal of money, time and effort into improving the building for community use. This includes most recently a new lighting installation in 2019, adaptation to the side chapel for community use, through the installation of a tempered glass screen, and wall painting conservation several years ago. The Friends are currently in discussion with the CCT over the installation of a new toilet and kitchenette / servery, which would both make the building more attractive to use for the local community.

The large financial contributions the friends group make through paying for these works directly mean that they are not reflected in the CCTs annual income and expenditure reports, or indeed this document. Importantly this means that their fundraising efforts are not acknowledged or celebrated properly by the CCT. Remedying this should be made a priority, and could be at least partly achieved by the friends group sharing copies of their annual accounts with the CCT.

Certainly the church would be contributing over and above the annualised maintenance costs if 2019s expenditure on lighting were taken into account.

Some clarity should be sought over how the Friends group treats income from services and other events held at the church. For instance there were 3 services and 1 wedding in 2019/20, none of which showed on CCTs income report.

The church is currently some way off meeting CCTs "Open Church" policy. Improved opening (currently Open on Sundays, 10:30 – 17:00, June to September) could increase visitor numbers. A team of volunteer stewards (occasional) and improved interpretation (currently CCT Walk around guide and a few laminated sheets) could provide a better visitor experience and increase donations per head.

New ideas for use and potential supporters might emerge from the church planning process, but any community consultation should only be attempted in strict coordination with the Friends group so as not to disturb this currently positive relationship.

Update 12 August 2020. The church currently remains closed to visitors due to an issue with cleaning bat droppings. One member of their team recently became ill after coming into contact with bat droppings during cleaning, so they are proceeding with due caution.

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), **one response** was received for **Clapton in Gordano, St Michael's** by the deadline of **August 30th**.*

The response received was from a respondent writing **on behalf of the Friends of St Michael's**, who confirmed that their responses related to **St Michael's, Clapton in Gordano**.

In addressing the question of *a perfect outcome for our work together at the church* the respondent indicated **5 services a year, 1 summer concert, weddings (when permitted) funerals and 1 parish council meeting per annum**.

In writing about challenges anticipated in respect of repair liabilities and running costs, the respondent indicates **Aside from this effects of covid 19, the thorough cleaning and disinfecting of the building from bat droppings. The permission to erect a basic kitchen servery would also benefit us**.

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 **We have only a public house and a church in our village. We were to hold a summer concert in the grounds of the pub, to raise money for the church, but this was cancelled due to the virus issues**.

Considering if increased use of the church might benefit the community, or if increased use might benefit the church itself, the respondent indicated **Many patrons of the church come from villages around the area, the summer concert does attract these folk. We also advertise our services at this time so this increases the gathering size. The general feelings of the visitors is a warm and friendly church**.

In relation to identifying conservation priorities for the church, the respondent provided **As the building is quite remote we were concerned about theft of the roofing lead. But the CCT has funded and installed an alarm system. That's good for us. Apart from the permission to install a kitchen servery and proper toilet facilities, both of which will go a long way in a more hospitable welcome to visitors**.

Regarding priorities, opportunities or ideas for fundraising the respondent noted **These were discussed at the CCT conference in Birmingham, last Jan. But Covid. 19 has scuppered these**. In respect of means for initiating fundraising activity, the respondent said **We can only think of this after we sort out the in house bat issue, and thus start services and the use of the church**. The respondent also indicated that they **already take part in fundraising activity for CCT at the church**

In seeking respondents' participation in a future group discussion regarding church planning the respondent indicated **They'd be happy to meet**.

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).

Note to cover telephone discussion between Ed McGregor (EM) CCT Local Community Officer and Chairman of the Friends of St Nicholas'. (referred to as A) 20 Jan 2021

A notes receipt of EM's invitation to schedule an online discussion of the church plan. A explains that the Friends are content with the feedback given in the survey above, forming Part B of this document, and with EM's contribution through Part A of the church plan.

A notes that during this period of lockdown and Covid-19 restrictions the friends group has gone into a kind of hibernation and there are no further comments or actions arising which haven't already been noted in the Church Plan. A repeats that they will continue to open the church for private worship on Sundays but have had to postpone or cancel all other events and activities for the foreseeable future.

A reflects that the Friends of St Michael's would like to continue to offer to pay for ongoing maintenance works at the church, to be discussed and confirmed with the CCT at an appropriate time. EM thanks for this kind offer.

EM adds that he has been notified that another of the Friends would be unable to attend an online meeting due to poor internet signal at his home.

EM suggests that they schedule a further discussion around the church plan when lockdown restrictions are eased and when the Friends of St Michael's are operational once more.

Note to cover interactions - telephone conversations/text/email messages with Friends Chair 2022/23

1.RW Local Community Officer and Chair November 29th 2022

Email response to 'phone conversation:

Many thanks for taking the time to call me today.

I was so pleased to have made contact and it was great to hear all the wonderful things that have been happening at Clapton-in-Gordano over the years. I would be interested to hear more about the bell ringing too when we meet up.

Good to know when the Carol Service is being held, please let me know if you would like to me to post it on the CCT website. Just to confirm , it's Sunday December 11th at 3pm ? If you could also let me know the name of the Vicar that would be much appreciated so I can check our records are up to date, thank you.

I am very keen to arrange a meet up with the local community in early January. If you could spread the word and please feel free to share my contact details with the Friends Group, that would be much appreciated. As I said I can be flexible on dates and times (the only commitment I have as I write this is on Saturday January 7th where I am meeting up with the volunteers at Idmiston near Salisbury.)

2. RW also emailed Friends Group email address to connect then with the Uphill Bellringers 09/02/23 – unfortunately no response received.

- **Meeting up** : I had a call with your Chair back in December and we spoke about me coming over to meet up at the Black Horse. I am keen to introduce myself to the Friends Group, hear what plans you have for St Michael's this year and how I can support you. I was wondering if you had a Friends Group Meeting coming up soon that maybe I could join, please ? As an alternative, I would be happy to meet up with key members and on a Saturday if that makes life easier. I could do Saturday February 18th or the 25th or Tuesday February 21st or Wednesday 22nd. Please let me know.
- **Bells** : I have cc'd in one of the bellringers from St Nicholas' at Uphill who is very keen to have a chat with you along with fellow bell-ringer Sue (and both fantastic volunteers to boot) regarding the work carried out to restore the bells at St Michael's. The bells at Uphill need a fair bit of restoration, they have had a quote to carry out the work and wondered if you would be happy to share how you went about getting your bells restored.

3. RW to join meeting at local pub with Friends Group post Christmas date to be advised.

- Chair advised Head of Region that meeting had gone ahead but they were struggling with numbers post covid.
4. RW carried out maintenance check in April and left comment in the visitors' book complimenting how beautifully the church had been decorated for Easter.
 5. A 'phone message was left by the Chair to advise that AGM was coming up. RW sent a message back on May 12th and then a follow up on May 19th to request to attend AGM but was advised AGM had happened on May 15th and there had been a poor response to Church matters
 6. RW to arrange a follow up call with Chair and set up a face to face meeting hopefully in July, in conjunction with bell-ringers from Uphill.

Part D - Action Plan (Interim Plan September 2020)

The action plan below has been written post the *interim edition* of the church plan, published at the end of **September 2020** and a first full edition of the church plan to be published at the end of March 2021.

Community Actions

Short term actions (to end September 2023)

- Agree a date for a face-to-face meeting
- Review CCT Cleaning Churches standard and report
- Consider the possibility of more regular opening of the church, in line with CCTs Open churches Policy.
- Provide CCT with more accurate written accounts of the Friends Group's activity, in particular their expenditure (and gifts in kind) on the building, so that this can be recognised by CCT
- Provide CCT with a written statement addressing how income from services at the church are held / treated

Medium term actions (to end March 2024)

- Investigate suitability of church for concerts or other uses, and of promotion to prospective local audiences.
- Develop more detailed plans for the proposed servery, for CCT to analyse and comment on.
- Consider the suitability of the site for Champing

Long term actions (to end September 2024)

Actions complete (to end May 2023)

None

Local Community Officer Actions

Short term actions (to end of September 2023)

- Organise a face to face meeting with Chair and Friends Group
- Advise how services and events need to be booked
- Share CCT Cleaning Churches standard and report

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- Consider the production of an online audio guide for the church to address the lack of printed interpretation.
 - Consider how the Friend's groups recent spending on the building and Gifts in kind can be properly acknowledged by CCT and reflected in against our income targets.
 - Seek clarity from the Friends Group over how income from services at the church are held / treated.
 - Consider seeking a formal partnership agreement between the Friends Group and CCT.

Medium term actions (to end March 2024)

- 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'

- Review potential for promoting availability of secure parking outside church
- Review church web page to ensure clear directions available for all visitors
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CCT Actions Other

Short term actions (to end September 2023)

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

Medium term actions (to end March 2024)

Long term actions (to end September 2024)

Actions complete (to end May 2023)

None

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.

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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.

