



**Churches
Conservation
Trust**

IMBER. ST GILES'

MARCH 2021 CHURCH PLAN



Part A - Current Report

Part B - Survey

Results of our open survey conducted in Summer and Autumn 2020, canvassing all community contacts for their reaction to Part A. The survey remains [open and](#)

[available at this location](#). Please feel free to repeat your survey response or complete the survey for the first time.

Part C - Community Recommendations

Minutes of any community meetings held to discuss the information available in other parts of the Church Plan.

Part D - Action Plan

Details of any actions agreed through Community Recommendations, assigned to community participants, Churches Conservation Trust staff, or to the Churches Conservation Trust Local Community Officer specifically.

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:	Partnership 3
Local Community Officer:	Ed McGregor
Current project:	None
Cleaning schedule:	Regular before use by volunteer team
Welcome table:	Present. New walk around guide, up to date leaflets.
Keyholder role:	Fulfilled
Key representative role:	Fulfilled (remittances, fundraising, CCT liaison, volunteer / friends group management, maintenance reporting)
Area volunteer role:	None
Fundraising roles:	Fulfilled
Stewardship roles:	Fulfilled, but not CCT registered.
Research, interp & talks role:	Fulfilled, but not CCT registered / supported.
Accessibility details:	Provided via website
CCT silver plaque:	Installed, good 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:	Electricity provided by a petrol generator for Open Days. No heating. Portaloo's hired for Open Days.
Parking:	During open days there are spaces for approx 15 cars on the roadside and more in the overflow field. Sufficient for most situations.
Organ:	None
Churchyard:	Not owned by CCT, maintained by PCC and

	volunteers within the Friends group.
Ringable bells:	Yes.
Pews:	2 original pews. 4 other pews which need to be removed as surplus to requirement (The church has about 200 stacking chairs)
Fire rated capacity:	100
Seating capacity:	Not determined
Site plan:	Available
Roof alarm:	None
CCTV:	Uninstalled
Individual item security measures:	Uninstalled
Nearby attractions:	Warminster and Salisbury and associated attractions.
Public transport:	The Imber bus is run on special occasions!
Social media presence:	Volunteer run Facebook account.
Images on CCT website:	One of three
Regular feature parish news:	Unsure
Services per year:	1. Remembrance. Also usually a secular festival of carols.
CofE support for services:	Yes
Christmas memory tree:	No.
Tea Party:	No.
Historic Church Tour:	No
Heritage Open Days:	No
Ride & Stride:	No
Champing:	No. For further information, please see Champing introduction and typical church income at appendix 4.
Retail:	Yes, the friends group sell various merchandise and refreshments
Risk assessment general:	Current
Risk assessment fire:	Current
COSHH listing:	Current
Portable appliance listing:	Current

Security Audit:	2015
Learning and Participation events	No. Though there is usually a childrens Easter egg hunt.
Explorer tags	No.

Conservation reports

<p>Annualised maintenance costs (Exclusive of VAT):</p> <p>Annualised maintenance costs express the total costs of church maintenance divided by 25 years. Every cost which relates to maintenance is included except the twice-yearly maintenance visit. Any anticipated repairs are also excluded. A list of typical maintenance tasks for any historic church, forecast over the period, is available to view at appendix 2.</p>	£4,096.44
<p>Routine maintenance costs (Per annum and exclusive of VAT):</p> <p>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>	£657.60
<p>Other maintenance costs total (Exclusive of VAT):</p> <p>Additional maintenance needs discovered during twice-yearly maintenance visits, costed and listed individually below.</p>	£120.00
- Install padlock hasp and staple on N porch gates instead of chain	£120.00
<p>Total short term repairs:</p> <p>Small scale items of limited cost which could be fulfilled with minimal fundraising.</p>	£7,700.00
- Repoint lead flashing mortar to gutters and tower roof.	£1,200.00
- Redecorate rainwater goods and gully repairs	£6,500.00
<p>Total medium term repairs:</p> <p>More expensive needs such as roof repairs and tower repairs which may require more involved fundraising and grant applications.</p>	£8,950.00
- Reduce ground level at north end	£8,500.00
- Redecorate ironwork on W door	£450.00
<p>Total long term repairs:</p> <p>Items which are known to require works in the longer term but which are not essential in the near future.</p>	£1,100.00

- Replace jamb to tower roof door.	£1,100.00
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.	£0
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

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Wallsafe income	2,649	2,467	2,780	4,701	2,259
Total income	7,058	8,030	11,027	14,000	13,000

Visitors

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Numbers of visitors	20,516	13,861	17,946	12,950	18,587
Wallsafe income per visitor (£)	0.13	0.18	0.15	0.36	0.12

Expenditure

Total expenditure since vesting: £304,750

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Maintenance	456	865	-	548	548
Conservation	456	-	-	-	-

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 '19 £0

Income less expenditure '19/'20 **£12,452**

Income less ann. maint.'19/'20: **£8,903.56**

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 at Imber.

Part B - September 2020 Survey

Summary of consultation responses received by end August 2020

The Church Plan survey was not circulated in August due to justification given in the LCO summary above, and time constraints related to publishing other less complicated church plans.

In addressing the question of *a perfect outcome for our work together at the church* the respondent indicated **[no response]**

In writing about challenges anticipated in respect of repair liabilities and running costs, the respondent indicates **[no response]**

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 **[no response]**

Considering if increased use of the church might benefit the community, or if increased use might benefit the church itself, the respondent indicated **[no response]**

In relation to identifying conservation priorities for the church, the respondent provided **[no response]**

Regarding priorities, opportunities or ideas for fundraising the respondent noted **[no response]**. In respect of means for initiating fundraising activity, the respondent gave **[no response]**. The respondent also indicated that they would **[no response]** be available to participate in fundraising activity.

In seeking respondents' participation in a future group discussion regarding church planning the respondent indicated **[no response]**.

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

Following the survey sent out in summer 2020, an invitation to an online meeting to discuss the church plan was sent to existing Churches Conservation Trust correspondents. No responses were received for St Giles' Imber by the deadline of 8 January 2021.

Part D - Action Plan

Community Actions

Short term actions (to end June 2021)

Medium term actions (to end June 2022)

Long term actions (to end March 2024)

Actions complete (to end March 2021)

Local Community Officer Actions

Short term actions (to end June 2021)

- 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

Medium term actions (to end June 2022)

Long term actions (to end March 2024)

Actions complete (to end March 2021)

- 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
- Approach the lead volunteer at Imber to discuss them adopting the existing Church Planning process.
- 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

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- By end November 2020 review colleagues' feedback regarding updates to church plan part A, to include
 - Conservation interpretations
 - Presentation improvements
 - Champing data
 - 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'

CCT Actions Other

Short term actions (to end June 2021)

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

Medium term actions (to end June 2022)

Long term actions (to end March 2024)

Actions complete (to end March 2021)

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

(Not Including Twice-Annual Maintenance Visits)

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
TOTAL (Excluding VAT)				£107,598.57
TOTAL (Excluding VAT) / 25 years				£4,303.94

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.
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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