

Supporting Documentation

Little Leigh St Michael - Reredos conservation

Note to parish

This bundle includes all the supporting documentation to your faculty application as required under Rule 5.5 of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015.

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Caroline Hilton, DAC Secretary



13 July 2022

We petition the Court for a faculty to authorise the following-

Please describe the works or other proposals for which a faculty is sought in the way recommended by the Diocesan Advisory Committee in its Notification of Advice.

SCHEDULE OF WORKS OR PROPOSALS

The proposal is for work to conserve the reredos in the church. this has suffered damage over the years and needs to be stabilised and cleaned.

The arcading around the reredos also needs some minor repointing work.

Copies of the Standard Information Form and any drawings, plans, specifications, photographs or other documents showing the proposals must be provided with this petition.

Statement of significance

St Michael and All Angels is a Grade 11 listed church in the village of Little Leigh in Cheshire. It was designed by the church architect Edmund Kirby and built in pressed red brick with extensive terracotta ornamentation. The church is in generally good structural condition.

The interior features a moulded reredos of the Last Supper which is thought to be of terracotta. It is surrounded by an elaborate terracotta enframement with a large rose window.

The church was consecrated on 19 June 1879. It is surrounded by an extensive graveyard which is still open.

The church is in active use with services taking place each Sunday.

The reredos and its surround are a special feature of St Michael's. All of the bricks and terracotta used in its construction were manufacture by the Northwich firm of Jabez Thompson making it a significant part of the industrial heritage of the area. The firm was an important employer in the area until its closure in 1922. Many buildings in the Northwich area are built of brick from this company.

The reredos itself is based on Leonardo da Vinci's 'Last Supper.' It is made of moulded material which is believed to be terracotta.

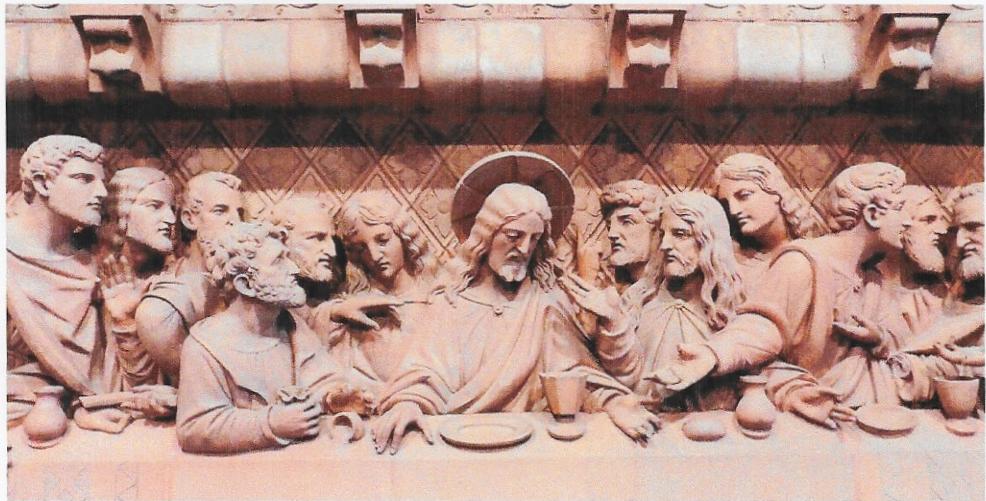
Over the years, the reredos has suffered some minor damage – a hand and some fingers have been broken off. Otherwise the reredos appears to be stable.

Statement of needs

Over the years, the reredos has suffered some minor damage – a hand and some fingers have been broken off. Otherwise the reredos appears to be stable. There are some minor cracks to the arcading around the reredos itself.

The detail of the work recommended is given in the Conservator's report.

The aim is to stabilise and clean the reredos to preserve it for the future.

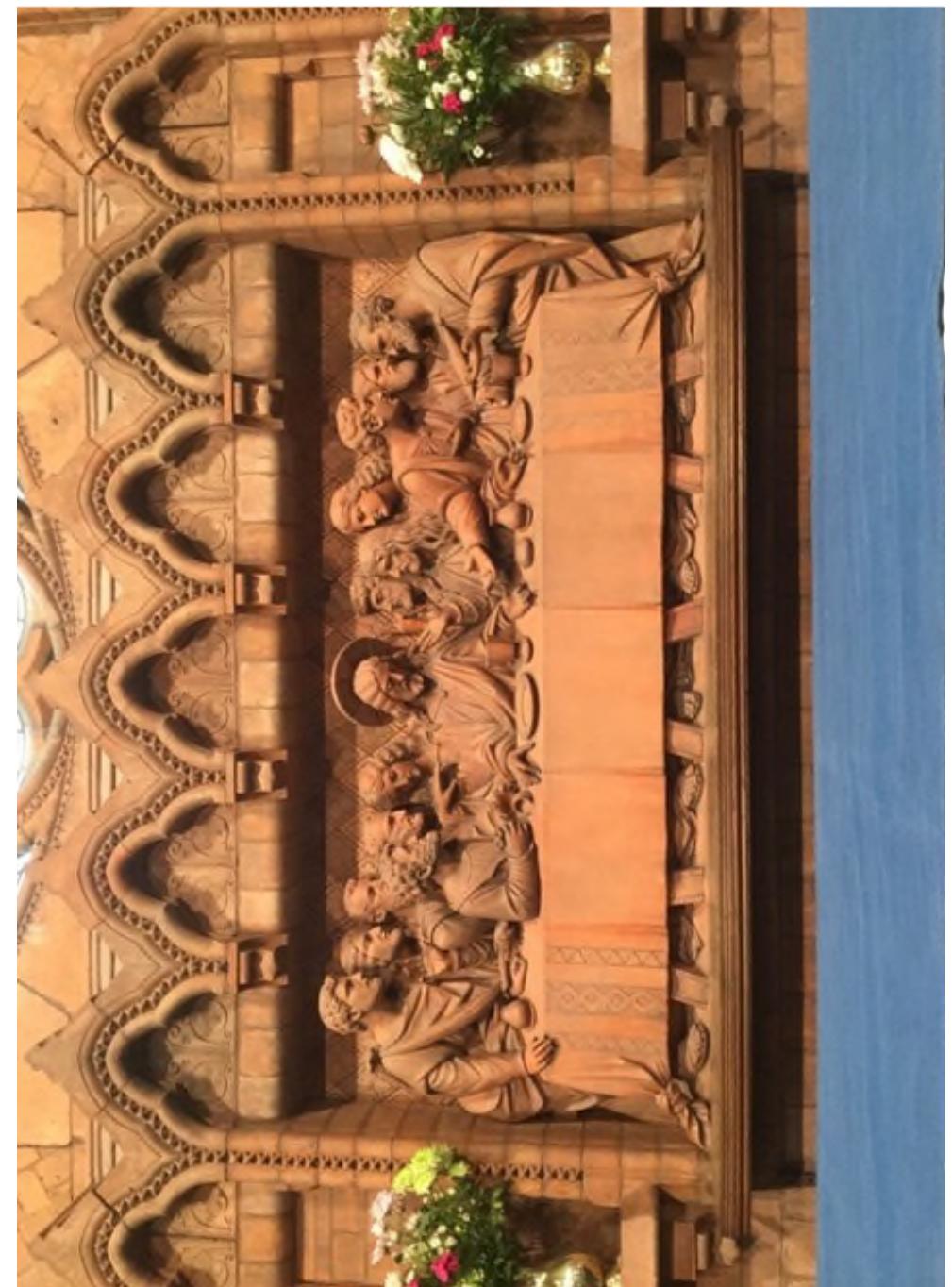


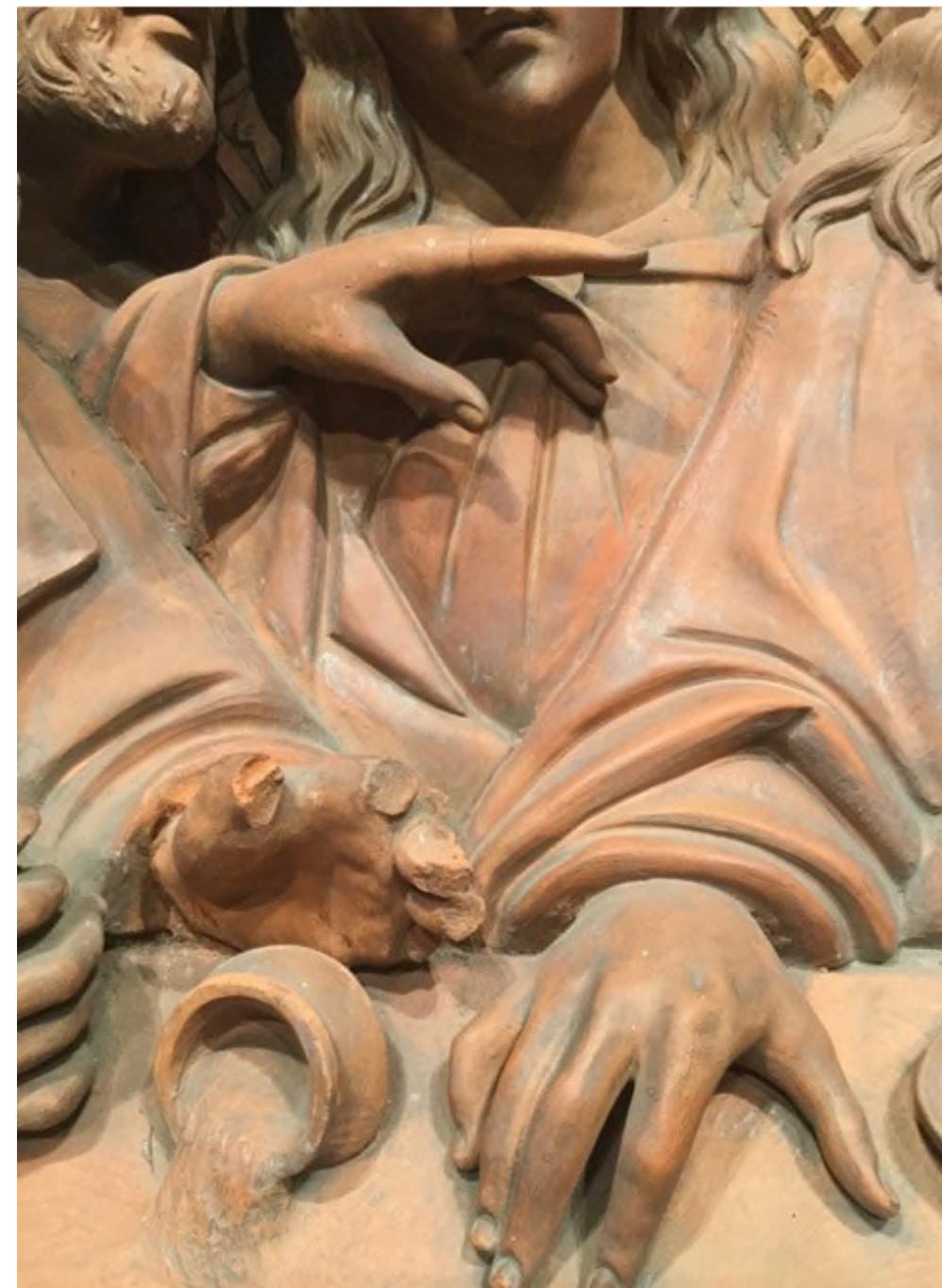
Jabez Thompson made the terracotta reredos for the Church.

The bricks, made of pressed red terracotta were provided by the Northwich firm of Jabez Thompson (brick and ornamental terracotta manufacturers.)

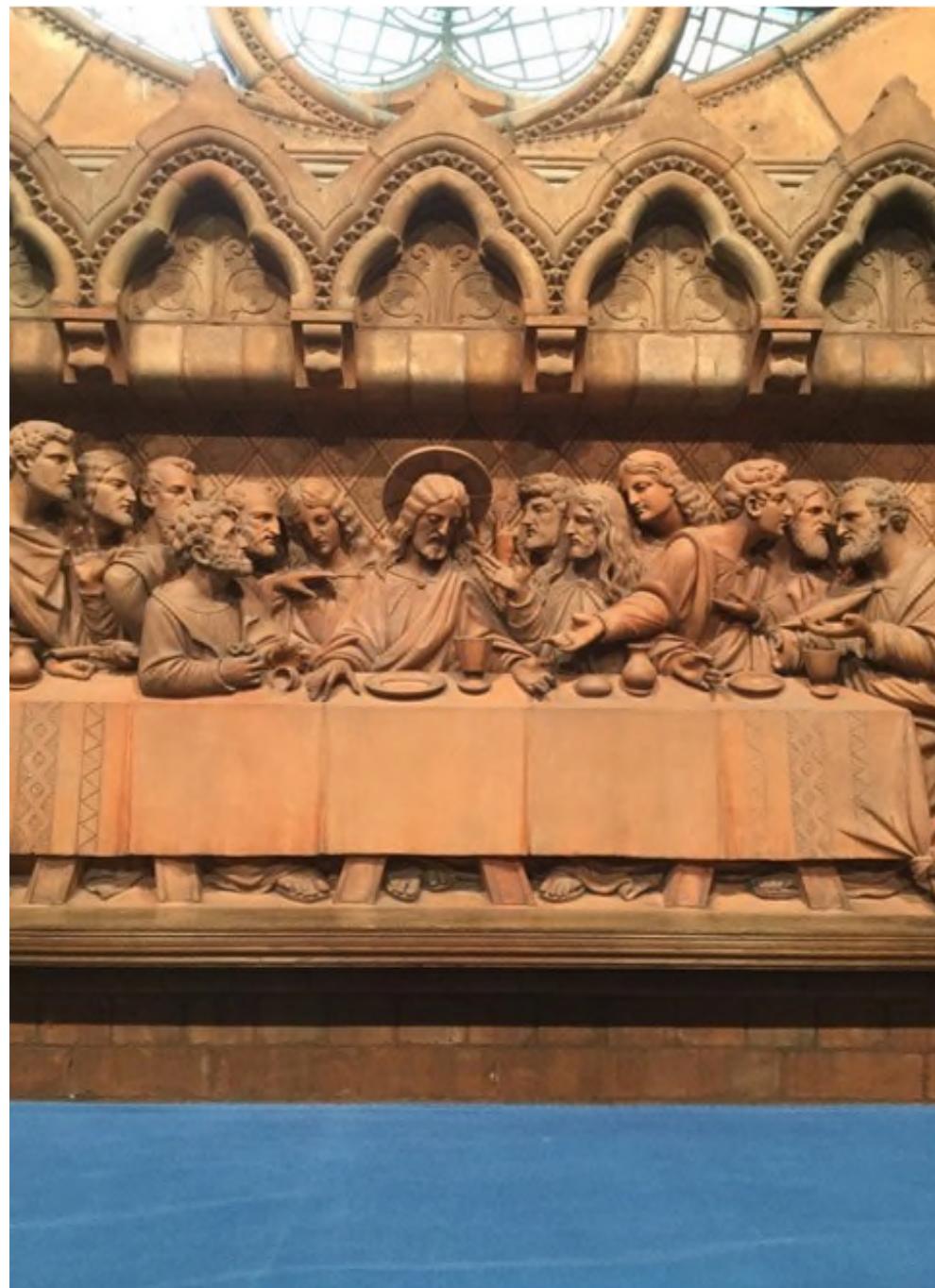
They had brick works at Witton Hall and on the Manchester Road in Northwich, producing common, fine and moulded bricks. Jabez, himself, specialised in ornamental pieces and panels, he produced the magnificent terracotta *alto reodos* (*a carved or painted screen behind the altar*) depicting the last supper as painted by Leonardo Da Vinci, above the communion table in the Chancel (*the space around the altar*) of the Church.

2.



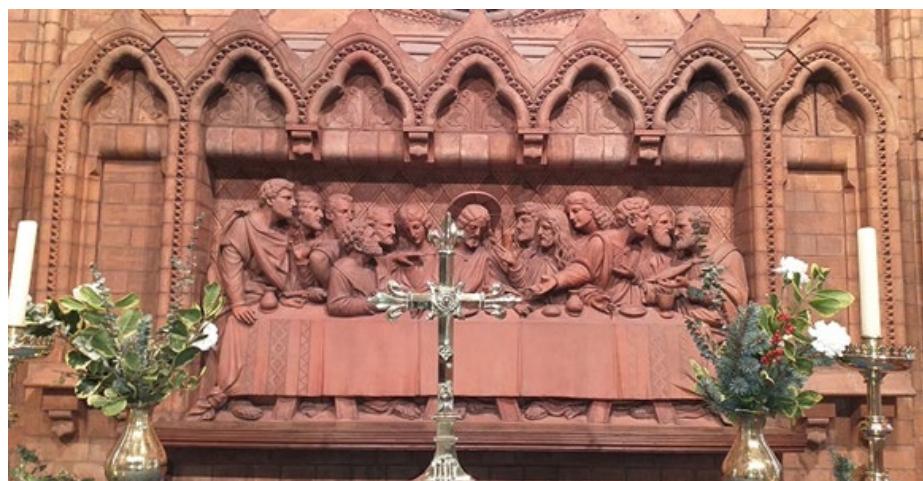






Conservation Report

Terracotta Reredos of The Last Supper Church of St. Michaels and All Angels, Little Leigh, Cheshire



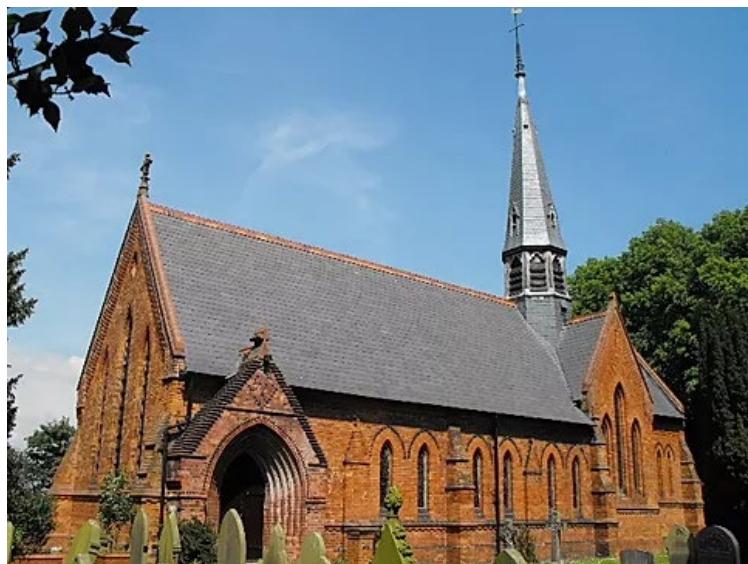
Prepared by Lynne Edge ACR

Edge Conservation-Restoration Services,
The Well Barn, Little Crosby Road,
Little Crosby Village, Liverpool L23 4TS
0151 924 0447
www.edgeconservation-restoration.com

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Church of St. Michaels and All Angels, Little Leigh, Church Road



History

In the parish of Great Budworth, an ancient chapel of ease in Little Leigh was fully rebuilt in 1712. The west end of the chapel was used as the village school until a separate building was completed in 1840. The old chapel stood in what is now the churchyard. The new church of St. Michaels and All Angels was built in 1879.

Architecture

The Church was designed by the Liverpool architect, Edmund Kirby and built in 1878-9 by the Hartford contractor, Richard Becket. Its design is Gothic revival style and is a Grade II listed building.

Exterior: The church is of orange brick and terracotta with a Welsh slate roof pierced with an orange tile ridge. It has a 4-bay nave, short transepts, 1-bay chancel, south porch and spire at the crossing. Bays of nave are divided alternately by buttresses and triangular headed pilasters. The gabled porch on the left end has projecting coping blocks, brick bands and a multi-rebated and moulded 2-centred arched doorway with a nail head decorated band above. Pairs of lancets are present in the other bays with gauged heads and nail head bands. A triple lancet is present in the crossing and a trio of lancets in the chancel. There are angle buttresses to the east end, which have a giant moulded arch with a band of trefoil headed blind arcading below a rose window. This has 6 trefoils and a central sexfoil. All detailing is in moulded and decorated terracotta. There is a triple lancet in the west end. The spire is a giant fleche with wooden louvred cinquefoil headed bell openings on each face. Lucarnes, lead finial and a weathercock.

Interior: Entry is directly into nave. There is brick and terracotta throughout. There is an ornate cornice, a wagon roof and multi-rebated reveals to the windows. The chancel arch is simple and there is a similar narrower arch to the raised sanctuary. The terracotta reredos of the 'Last Supper' by Jabez Thompson , with a gothic blind arcading also in terracotta is present behind the altar. There is a 3-seat sedilia with a lancet above each seat.

The Terracotta Reredos by Jabez Thompson

Description:

The 'Last Supper' Reredos is based on Leonardo da Vinci's (1452-1519) famous painting of the 'Last Supper'. The reredos panel is 1985mm long, 915mm high and 140mm deep (maximum depth of the relief). It shows Jesus Christ in the centre, with the 12 apostles on either side of him.



The panel was made by the brickworks company of Jabez Thompson. It would have firstly been modelled and sculpted in clay and then accurate moulds taken from this clay panel. Then terracotta would have been pressed into these moulds and once leather hard fired to approximately 1000 – 1100 °C. The whole panel would have been made up of several individual moulds.

This reredos was mentioned in the Northwich Guardian report of the church's consecration by the Bishop of Chester on 19 June 1879, so it has been part of the church from its beginning and it was paid for by Sir Gilbert and Lady Greenall. The brickworks company had always produced common, fine and moulded bricks but Jabez Thompson expanded the works and specialised in such terracotta panels and ornamental pieces.

Condition:



For the purposes of this report, each figure of the reredos has been given a reference number between 1-13. These numbers run from left to right when viewing the panel face-on.

Similarly, the 5 sections of the tablecloth have been given references A – E running left to right

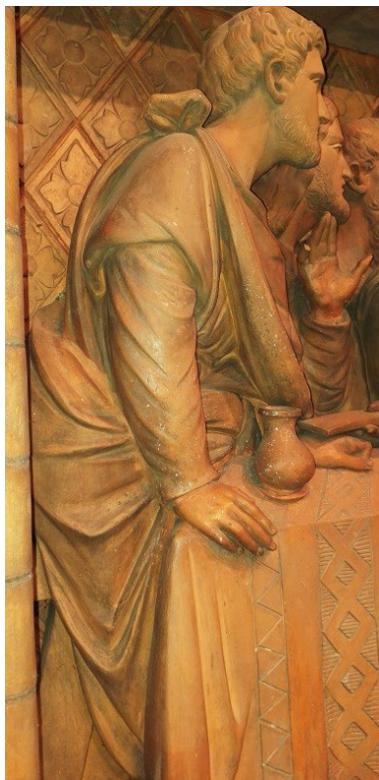
Fig 1 → Fig.13

Tablecloth Sections

A → E

Condition cont.

Figures 1 & 2



Overall, both figures are in good structural condition. The figures and surrounding areas are dusty and ingrained with dirt. There are several splatters of paint on their surface.

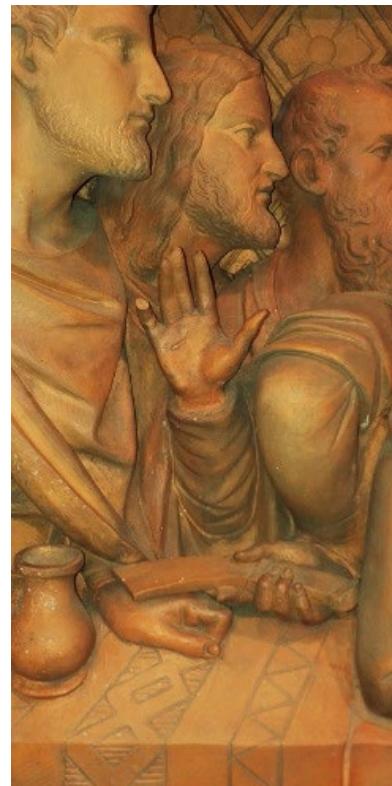
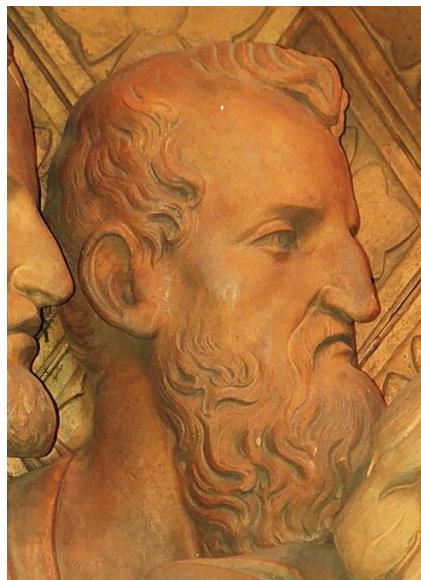
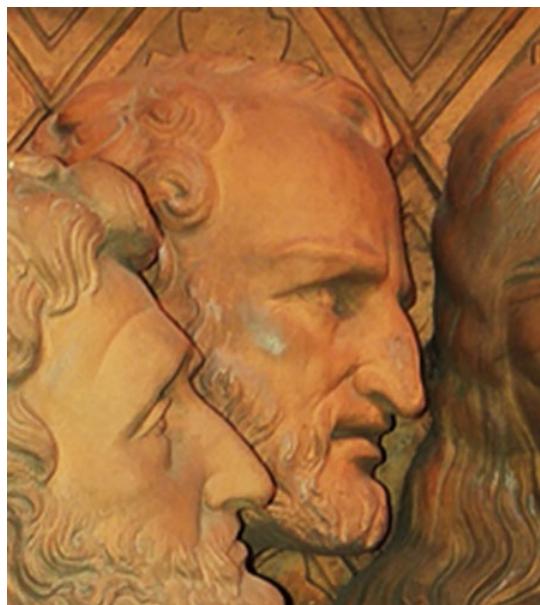


Figure 3



The head, shoulder and arm of the figure are in good structural condition, but it is very dirty/dusty and with dirt/dust accumulated in the surrounding areas. There are several splatters of paint on the surface. The top section of the little finger on the proper right hand is missing and the break area is ingrained with dirt.

Figure 4



The head and arm of the figure are in good condition. The proper left hand has previously been damaged and repaired; the forefinger has been broken and re-bonded; the repair appears to be stable. The figure and surrounding areas are dusty and ingrained with dirt.



Figure 5

The majority of the figure, except for the proper left hand is in good condition. The proper left hand has previously been broken at the wrist and repaired. The adhesive to this area has the appearance of an epoxy resin and is excess and unsightly. Although unsightly, there is no movement in this join and so it is relatively stable. All the fingers and the thumb have been damaged and are missing. The figure and surrounding areas are dusty and ingrained with dirt.

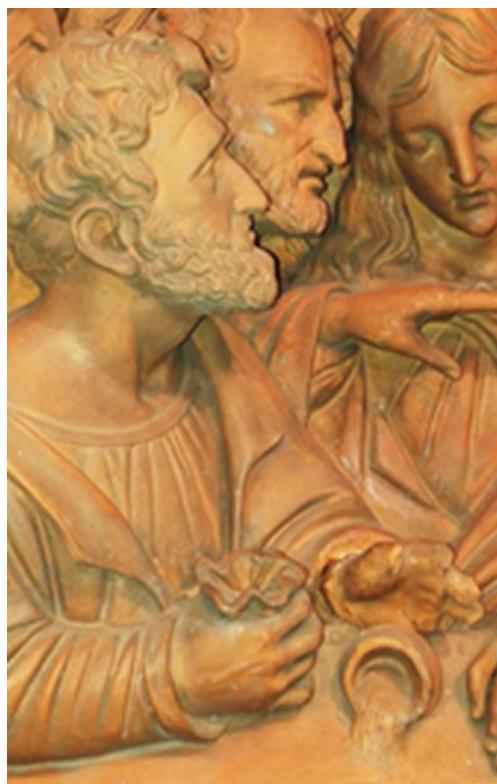


Figure 6



Overall the head, neck and shoulders of the figure are in good structural condition. Its proper right hand, that lies holding an implement between figures 1 & 4, has previously been damaged; the wrist has been broken and repaired with an adhesive that has the appearance of an epoxy adhesive. There are substantial residues of this adhesive around the join area. There is movement in this join, and it is unstable and requires attention. The figure and surrounding areas are dusty and ingrained with dirt. There are several splatters of paint on the surface.

Figure 7

The figure is in fairly good structural condition. Three fingers of the proper left hand have been damaged and are missing. There are three small chips to the front edge of the chalice. The figure, break edges and surrounding areas are dusty and ingrained with dirt.

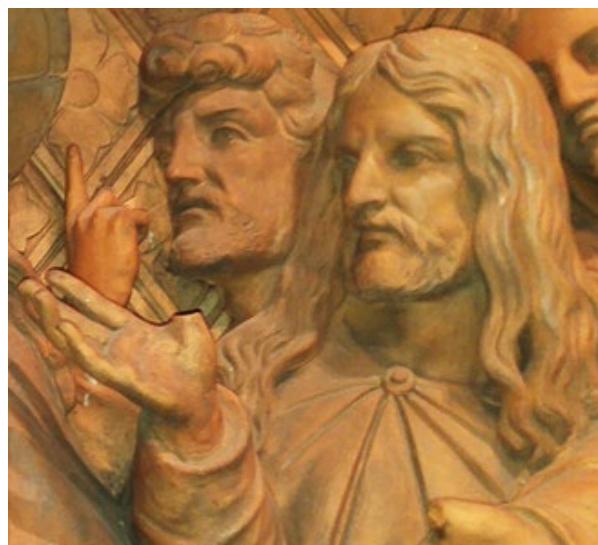


Figure 8



Overall the figure is in good structural condition. The figure and surrounding areas are dusty and ingrained with dirt. There are several splatters of paint on the surface.

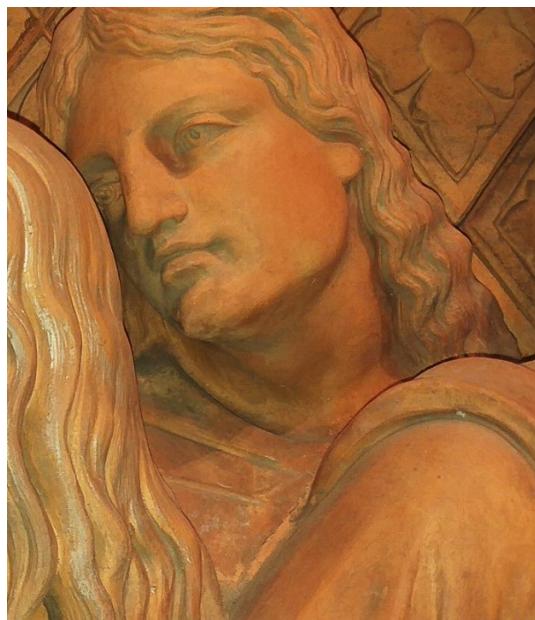
Figure 9



The figure is in fairly good condition. The thumb of the proper right hand has been damaged and is missing. The forefinger and little finger of the proper left hand have been damaged and are missing. The thumb of the proper left hand has previously been broken and repaired; one re-bonded break.



Figure 10



Overall the figure is in good structural condition. The figure and surrounding areas are dusty and ingrained with dirt. There are several splatters of paint on the surface.

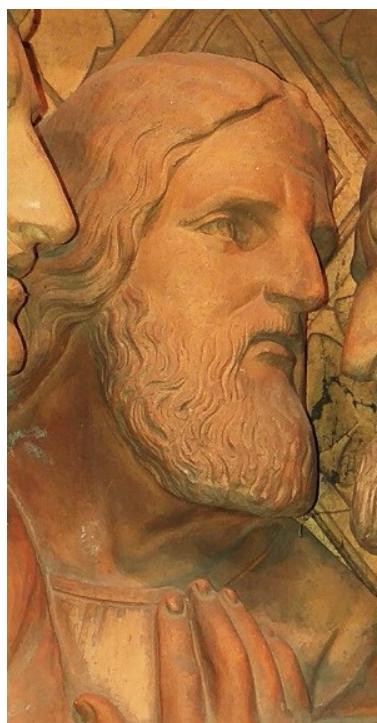
Figure 11



The majority of the figure other than one of its hands is in good structural condition. The thumb of the proper right hand is damaged and missing and the tip of the third finger on this hand is also missing. There is a fine crack that runs along the junction of the proper left sleeve and the adjacent robe of figure 13. Overall the figure, break edges and surrounding areas are dusty and ingrained with dirt. There are several areas of splatters of paint on the surface.



Figure 12

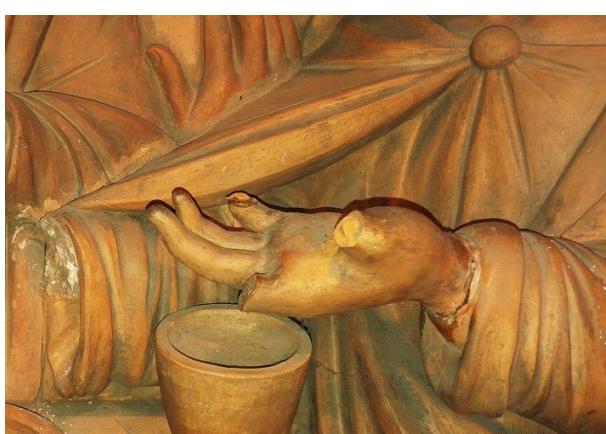


Overall the figure is in good structural condition. The figure and surrounding areas are dusty and ingrained with dirt. There are several splatters of paint on the surface.

Figure 13



The figure is in poor structural condition. The proper right hand is missing. There is a previous repair to the proper left hand; a repair to the wrist; the thumb, forefinger and little finger have been damaged and are missing. There are adhesive residues, which have the appearance of epoxy resin, around the wrist. A crack runs around the neck, which is open by approximately 1mm. When gently tapping either side, this crack sounded unstable. Overall the figure, break edges and surrounding areas are dusty and ingrained with dirt.



Tablecloth

There are several areas of surface abrasion on sections A and B. There is a fine crack that runs up from the bottom edge of section B. Fine cracks are present to the proper bottom left corner of section D, both top corners and the proper left corner of section E. The surface and crevices of these sections are dusty and ingrained with dirt and there are also several splatters of paint present.



A

B



C

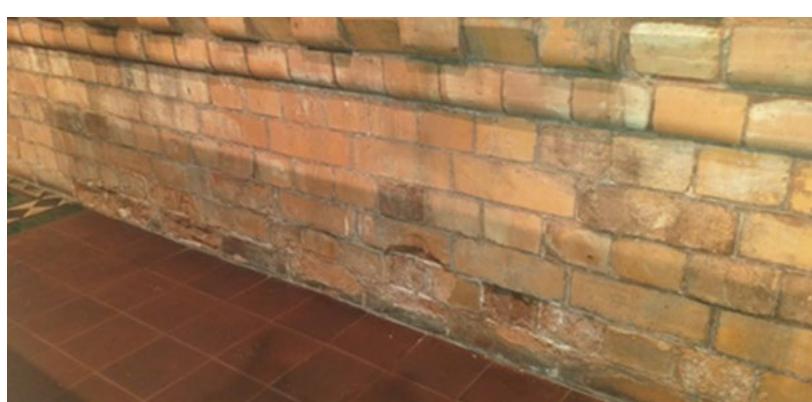
D



E

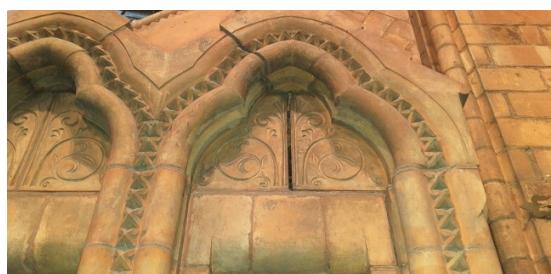
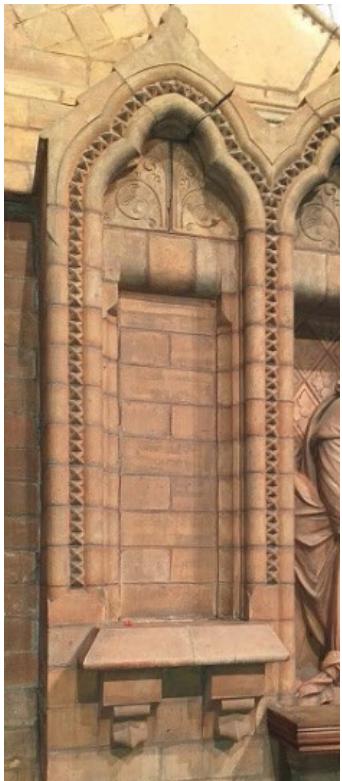
The Brickwork Below the Terracotta Relief

There is a fair degree of salt damage to the lower courses of the bricks . Delamination is present, as too is salt efflorescence.



The Arcading

There are several areas of the arcading where the mortar is absent/is lost



From: Stuart Mallett mallettmasonry@googlemail.com
Subject: Reredos repointing.
Date: 13 Apr 2022 at 16:34:00
To: Collette Jones revcmj@me.com

Dear Collette

Graham has asked me to contact you regarding the remedial work needed to the cracked joints in the reredos.

The cost of the repairs would be £370.00 + Vat.

Regards

Stuart



MALLETT STONEMASONRY LTD

STONECARVING & RESTORATION

Web site - mallettmasonry.co.uk

Please note every piece of natural stone is unique in its grain and overall appearance so we cannot guarantee its exact look.

This email and any attachments to it are confidential and intended only for the use and attention of the named addressee. It may contain private and confidential information. If you are not the intended recipient please inform the sender immediately and destroy this email. You must not use, copy, distribute or take action upon it or any part of it. We take reasonable precautions to safeguard emails but cannot guarantee that they and any attachments are virus free or compatible with your systems. We cannot be held responsible or liable in respect of viruses or other problems arising. Please note all quotations, estimates and orders provided by Mallett Stonemasonry Ltd are subject to our terms and conditions, a copy of which is available on request.

18th June 2022

Caroline Hilton, DAC caroline.hilton@chester.anglican.org

c.c.

The Rev'd. Collette Jones revcmj@me.com

Dear Caroline,

LITTLE LEIGH, ST. MICHAEL; REREDOS POINTING

Following completion of the external reporting. The old settlement cracks internally are to be carefully filled with NHL 3.5:1:1 mortar and this is to be well compacted and finished smooth with the adjacent surfaces. A 'red' mineral dye is to be added, to be compatible with the mortar, to ensure that the pointing 'blends-in' with the terracotta.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Holland

Reply to: info@grahamhollandassociates.co.uk

Little Leigh St Michael – Conservation of reredos – Email correspondence with parish
Attachments are listed according to the numbering on the supporting documents list

- **Attachments in blue are included within the proposals section**
- **Attachments in green are included within the consultation section**
- Attachments in black italics are superseded or duplicated and do not form part of the application

Date	Message
11/06/2019	<p>To: Caroline Hilton From: Collette Jones</p> <p>With attachment</p> <p>Further to our telephone conversation earlier today this is picture of the terracotta reredos which a member of the congregation wishes to have restored. Most of it is intact but the tips of some fingers have been lost over the years. Let me know if you need more pictures.</p> <p>It is my understanding that any conservation/restoration work would require permission via the DAC - List B or faculty - and that the work would need to be under the supervision of the church architect. Is my understanding correct?</p> <p>I would be very grateful for any advice you are able to give me.</p> <p>4) Photograph of reredos with text</p>
12/06/2019	<p>To: Collette Jones From: Caroline Hilton</p> <p>Thank you for sending the photo and information regarding the reredos. However, it would be very helpful if you could provide some further photos of the reredos that show it both in its entirety and more close up so we can see more detailed views of the damaged areas. I can then send these to the Church Buildings Council when I ask for their advice regarding the suitable approach to repair and conservation. I have looked at the list of grants offered by the Church Buildings Council on their website and I cannot see any grants that this work would obviously fit into. However when I contact them I'll enquire further, and I'll also enquire with the Church Buildings Missioner Emily Allen about any possible grants that may be applicable for this type of work.</p> <p>Further to our telephone conversation I confirm any proposal for conservation/restoration work would need to be put to the DAC, and having thought further about this I do very much think this would need faculty permission (rather than List B). The proposed scheme of work would need to be reviewed by a DAC panel architect and the DAC's Artefacts Adviser, as part of the process of it being considered by the DAC.</p>
12/06/2019	<p>To: Caroline Hilton From: Collette Jones</p> <p>Thank you for your helpful email. Later this week I will go to St Michael's to take some more photos to send to you.</p>
17/06/2019	<p>To: Caroline Hilton From: Collette Jones</p> <p>I hope these will help.</p> <p>5) Additional photographs of reredos</p>

With attachments	
10/07/2019 To: Collette Jones From: Katy Purvis With attachment	<p>We have received the reply below from the Church Buildings Council regarding your lovely reredos.</p> <p>The upshot is that they recommend you engage a conservator to report on the condition of the reredos, and assess whether it needs steps to conserve it rather than actively restore by reconstruction. The CBC encourage you to apply for a grant from them towards the cost of a report, and any resulting conservation, which is good news.</p> <p>Please let us know if we can do anything else to help. Emily may be able to help further with grants.</p> <p>The reredos is a beautiful thing, I will have to come and see it properly</p> <p><i>Email of CBC dated 10/07/2019 as listed in consultation correspondence</i></p>
10/07/2019 To: Collette Jones From: Emily Allen	This is the one I mentioned when we spoke a week or two ago, for us to discuss when we meet; looking forward to it
10/07/2019 To: Katy Purvis From: Collette Jones	<p>Thanks for this.</p> <p>I have already been talking to Emily about this and we are meeting at St Michael's on Tuesday to discuss this. I will forward the information to her so that she is kept in the loop before the meeting.</p> <p>Thanks for the help - I'll keep you posted.</p>
10/02/2020 To: Katy Purvis From: Collette Jones With attachment	<p>As discussed.</p> <p><i>6) Conservation Report of Edge Conservation-Restoration Services Terracotta Reredos of The Last Supper</i></p>
16/04/2020 To: Collette Jones From: Katy Purvis	<p>I am writing to let you know that at its virtual meeting of 27 March 2020 to 03 April 2020, the DAC considered the proposals for the conservation work to the reredos, and resolved, subject to formal application, to recommend the scheme.</p> <p>This means that when the formal application is submitted, we will be in a position to issue the Notification of Advice and Public Notice. The current guidance, available on the Chester Diocese website, at https://www.chester.anglican.org/news/display-of-public-notices-for-faculty-petitions.php, is that any new public notices should not be displayed until after the current lockdown is lifted. We will let you know if that guidance is updated.</p>
07/08/2020	I write further to Katy's email below regarding the proposal for the reredos. Its just a note to say that if you create your faculty application

<p>To: Collette Jones From: Caroline Hilton</p>	<p>on the Online Faculty System, we can progress the application by raising the Notification of Advice and public notices for display (as the proposals have already been recommended by the DAC subject to receipt of the formal application).</p> <p>The guidance regarding public notices has been updated since Katy's message in April. Public notices can now be displayed, the currently requirement being for them to be displayed outside the church and on the church's website. The revised guidance on the Chester diocese website can be seen here: https://www.chester.anglican.org/news/display-of-public-notices-for-faculty-petitions.php.</p> <p>If you have any queries please do let me know.</p>
<p>05/01/2021 To: Collette Jones From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>I'm just checking outstanding faculty applications, and wanted to remind you that the reredos conservation work was recommended subject to formal application back in April, so if you or one of your churchwardens have time to do the online application, we can progress it for you.</p>
<p>05/01/2021 To: Katy Purvis From: Collette Jones</p>	<p>I hadn't forgotten about this project but our finances have taken a hit this year. Once we have looked at our end of year accounts we will be in a better position to decide when to go ahead.</p>
<p>01/02/2022 To: Katy Purvis From: Collette Jones</p>	<p>Form now completed.</p> <p>You emailed about the work on the reredos at Little Leigh. I am waiting for a reply from the conservation firm about it. I have asked if they are still willing to do the work and if their quote needs updating. We have the funds available now. I hope I'll be able to submit a faculty before too long.</p>

Little Leigh St Michael – Conservation of reredos – correspondence with consultees

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- **Attachments in green are included within the consultation section**
- Attachments in black italics are superseded or duplicated and do not form part of the application

Date	Message
09/07/2019 To: Church Buildings Council From: Caroline Hilton With attachment	<p>I am writing regarding the proposed restoration of a red pressed terracotta reredos depicting The Last Supper as painted by Leonardo da Vinci. It was made by Jabez Thompson at his brickworks firm in Northwich (manufacturer of brick and ornamental terracotta).</p> <p>The parish have enquired about its restoration, advising that it is intact but some finger tips have been lost over the years. The vicar asked if we know of any conservators who would be suitable for such work. I have checked the Conservation Register under specialism in working in terracotta and found a number of names (although none based in the north west). I was just wondering if you knew of any particular conservators that you would recommend for this type of work, or any general advice about how the parish should approach this.</p> <p>Please see the attached e-mail from the parish which contains a number of photographs showing the current condition and damaged parts of the reredos.</p> <p>The church is Grade 2 listed, and was built in 1879 to a design by Edmund Kirby.</p> <p>I'd be very grateful for any thoughts on this.</p> <p><i>Photographs of reredos as listed in proposals section</i></p>
10/07/2019 To: Caroline Hilton From: Church Buildings Council	<p>As you know, Janet forwarded your message to me. I hope I can be of help. The Jabez Thompson reredos is indeed very interesting and worthy of attention.</p> <p>Unfortunately we cannot recommend specific conservators; looking on the Conservation Register for accredited conservators is indeed the right thing to do and I am sure that most would travel to site to inspect the monument.</p> <p>The first thing would be to have the reredos inspected by a conservator to see whether there is any active deterioration. Is the monument otherwise stable and in good condition? A thorough survey of the monument and its condition would be the first step in its conservation.</p> <p>We can offer some grants towards conservation reports, and we would encourage the parish to consider applying for one. More</p>

	<p>information can be found on the Churchcare website, or by contacting our Conservation Grants Administrator, John Webster (john.webster@churchofengland.org). If the reredos is found to be in poor condition and conservation work is required, they can of course also apply to us for a grant for its conservation.</p> <p>The loss of fingers and hands usually falls into the realm of restoration, not conservation. If the reredos is otherwise stable and in good condition then we would not normally recommend their reconstruction.</p>

Recommendations for Treatment

Overall, the terracotta would benefit from a dry surface clean.

Although there are numerous missing fingers and thumbs across the whole panel, their loss does not create any instability. To reconstruct these areas would be to improve the aesthetic only and therefore would fall within the realms of full restoration, which is not appropriate in this instance.

The majority of the old repairs, although unsightly appear to be stable in most areas, other than in Figure 6, the neck of Figure 13 and fine cracks noted relating to figure 12 and the tablecloth, require attention.

Details of treatment are as follows:

Cleaning

This would involve, firstly removing the surface dust using a soft brush alongside a vacuum cleaner. Then a Smoke Sponge (vulcanised rubber) would be used to remove more stubborn areas of dust and dirt.

Consolidation

The wrist of Figure 6 requires attention as the old repair is not stable. The simplest intervention would involve consolidation of this area with a 7-10% solution of Paraloid B72 (ethylmethacrylate copolymer) in acetone, followed by filling of any chips with a 15% solution of Paraloid B72 in acetone/IMS and micro balloons, and then retouching.

The running cracks present to Figure 13, Figure 12 and the tablecloth require consolidation , which would involve infusing the cracks with a 7-10% solution of Paraloid B72 in acetone, using a micro pipette or a syringe.

Cost Estimate for Remedial Conservation

• 3 days @ £300 p/d (incl materials) for one conservator	£900.00
• Conservation treatment report	£50.00
• Mileage	<u>£96.00</u>
Total Cost Estimate :	<u>£1,046.00</u>

(vat n/a)

Additional Recommendations

It is advised that investigations are made, and relative advice given for the treatment of the brickwork below the terracotta panel from the church architect and suitable builder. They will be able to identify the cause of the brick delamination and salt efflorescence. It is important that this is given attention and remedied to halt further delamination, salt migration and movement of the bricks.

Additionally, the missing areas of mortar to the arcading require filling in order to maintain structural stability.

**Parish of Aston by Sutton, Little Leigh and Lower Whitley
Parochial Church Council Meeting
Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 22 February 2022 at 7:30pm in
Little Leigh Village Hall**

Attendees: Revd Collette Jones, Melanie Barber, Barbara Horton, Margaret Davies, Robert Houghton, Irene Peers, Darren Walter, Rob Hancock Jacky Hancock, Philip Littlemore, Karen Sandiford, Heather Ashley, Anne Stock, Susan Kirkland

1. **Apologies:** Joan Sears, Anne Antrobus, Jean Davies
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** on 29 November 2021- agreed and signed
3. **Matters Arising from the Minutes** - none
4. **Reports** from the Three Churches for the Annual Report – covering 2021

St Peter's – Jacky Hancock

Although national guidelines allowed for places of worship to be open from the beginning of 2021, we started the year with St Peters again closed due to the high number of Covid cases in Halton and Cheshire West. On Easter Sunday, 4th April, we re-opened and have luckily remained so, albeit with a smaller congregation due to the reluctance of some parishioners to return to inside gatherings.

Services have remained concise and no refreshments have been served in order to minimise risk.

Attendance averages about 10-12 people.

Church Building & Grounds - Actions taken

Organ & clock regularly serviced, with general maintenance, although our organist has retired from playing.

Warden's Risk Assessment completed in both Church & Churchyard with particular emphasis on stability of monuments

Woodworm activity kept under review with problem areas treated as identified.

Ongoing professional garden maintenance in graveyard.

Some minor re-pointing identified when gutters cleaned – to be addressed in Spring 2022, along with re-painting of downpipes

Quinquennial Inspection carried out March 2021, with no major issues reported. Recommendations to continue to monitor internal cracks, extent of dampness and any new worm activity

Church Hall - Actions taken

Roof was surveyed in December and gutters cleared. Some further work required in Spring 2022 to ensure no further leaks, but roof was pronounced basically sound.

All wood panelling on outside of Hall was repainted by a local resident, with only costs being the paint.

Rental of the hall has started again with local groups, businesses and birthdays etc being held.

Fund raising /social activities

Following the Harvest Service, all food items were donated to Halton Foodbank. The Church collection point is now active again, with a further donation being made at Christmas. These amounted to over 100Kg of food (300 meals).

2 very successful Coffee Mornings with Craft Stalls held in the Church Hall, resulting in over £900 being raised. Planning to hold one per month.

Warden's Gift Day was delayed until October and although there were minimal visitors to the church, a total of almost £5,000 was raised helped by the stark realities laid out in the Gift Day Letter.

Craft and Chat resumed in November and will continue on a fortnightly basis.

We hope to have the Hall car park re-surfaced as an "inconvenience gift" thanks to Network Rail, who are using the field behind the hall as a temporary work site.

St Michael's – Susan Kirkland

Services – The Harvest service in September and Carol service in December were well attended.

Fund raising – Cream tea in August raised £600 for Church Funds and the Christmas Fayre in December was well attended and raised over £700. Thanks to all those who worked so hard to make these events a success.

Grazing Agreement – details in previous minutes but an annual donation to Church funds from Mrs Holden in return for grazing horses on the field adjacent to the graveyard.

Maintenance – Community Payback Team continue to maintain the Churchyard and visitors have commented on the high standard reached.

St Luke's – Darren Walter

Services - The church re-opened with masks and a somewhat depleted weekly congregation. There was considerable residual anxiety around COVID and we hope that our numbers will recover. Christmas celebrations took place with a successful Christingle with the schoolchildren and their parents at the beginning of December and Lessons & Carols and Crib services just before Christmas. This year St Luke's hosted the midnight mass on Christmas Eve.

Fund raising - As anticipated, the Church Garden Party was not able to happen. We chose to innovate for the Harvest and, instead of the traditional after Service lunch, we were able to run a very successful afternoon tea on the Saturday before. There was clearly an appetite in our community to begin to return to social interaction, but caution was still evident.

As we do each year, we would like to recognise the efforts of our volunteers who provide the flowers for the church and service the cleaning rota. The clearing of the leaf litter from our churchyard was particularly well provided this year with new and dynamic villagers joining the fray. It was a quick and slick operation this year; thank you to them all!

Maintenance - The gates to the Memorial Garden at the back of the church have been replaced through a gift. The noticeboard beside the Lych Gate has begun to show its age and running repairs on hinges have just been completed.

We regret to report that we experienced the need to access our buildings insurance twice this year.

At the end of March, during a spell of particularly windy weather, a tree in a garden adjacent to the churchyard was blown down, damaging the border fence and the coving stones and wall above the vestry. The damage was relatively limited and was repaired without significant leakage into the building. The excess was covered by the owner of the tree; we recognise and appreciate the drive and momentum of our Vicar in initiating and overseeing the repairs.

We experienced a minor lead theft in September. The scale of the damage was relatively limited. The repair work has been covered by insurance.

Sale of the Church School building – slow progress but have determined that the Department for Education should be the responsible body for authorising the sale. Clifford Straw continues to pursue the approval and we await the next step. Whilst frustrating, we need a plan for the building and must continue to follow the legal path to enable a sale. The building itself has needed some repair work to the woodwork around the door which has been addressed and paid for by the current tenant. We are grateful for his collaborative approach to this property.

The supporting charity, **Friends of St Luke's** (FOSL), made a decision to close during this year. The introduction of bank charges for charities meant that the relatively small holding would be gradually drained for relatively little financial throughput. The original purpose in establishing the charity was felt to be no longer necessary and the residual funds were transferred to the Church account and ringfenced for building and fabric purposes.

We are entering 2022. After 2 years of social contact restrictions, the situation is easing, and people are beginning to meet together again. Hymns are being sung again and some of the vulnerable members of our congregation are returning. We are cautious but hope that we can have a successful Lent and Easter period and then properly plan for a Garden Party (scheduled not to clash with the Jubilee celebrations), and a return to a more normal social calendar. Our church funds need a boost!

5. **Financial Reports** and Accounts from the Three Churches for the Annual Report – covering 2021

Collette thanked St Peter's and St Michael's for copies of their unaudited financial accounts. At the time of the meeting Collette had yet to see any accounts from St Luke's and would appreciate sight of them in the very near future.

St Peter's – Rob Hancock

Little to add to previous Treasurers Reports. Year end 2021 we held virtually identical balances to those at the end of 2020. (£10334 in current a/c, Savings A/C £2142, Restoration c/a £251 Restoration Savings £13344.97)

Please note though, St Peters balances have reduced by £8,000 since year end 2019, reflecting the impact of the pandemic.

Attendance, collections and cost of heating / maintenance bills remain a challenge. £4,500 insurance premium will be due again in June.

Looking to the positives, monthly coffee mornings in the church hall have started again and hopefully their success will continue. We have also seen a reasonable increase in the number of lets of the church hall

Another Gift Day will be arranged later in the year and our tax reclaim should reflect the increased giving in 2021. We live to fight another day!

St Michael's – Barbara Horton

For 2021	Total Income	£15344
	Total Expenditure	£14305
	Overall gain of	£1039

Total assets stand at £19423 (Current a/c £8432, Restricted funds £5179 plus boiler fund and ongoing maintenance fund)

St Luke's – Darren Walter

Current a/c stands as £23528 including a large donation and a transfer from Friends of St Luke's ringfenced for improvements works/toilet fund.

Business Reserve - £3901.

CCLA small stable investment with interest received quarterly

Parish Account – Collette Jones (via Joan Sears)

£1174 in Parish A/c

Parish Share is £2322 per month

Vicar expenses were increased in September from £80-£120 in September – this has been paid by Aston and Little Leigh but still outstanding from Lower Whitley. Collette to chase up Whitley's overdue contributions.

Proposed increase to £160 for Vicar expenses from April. Unanimously agreed given rising cost of living.

6. Reredos work at Little Leigh

As we received a grant for the conservation report we need to complete the work or repay the grant. Covid19 has impacted on the timing of the work but the conservator is still willing to carry out the cleaning and stabilising of the stonework. All in favour of Collette putting in motion the necessary application for a Faculty and bring to the next meeting. The Quinquennial report for St Michael's is due and will probably highlight work required on stabilising the wall surrounding the Reredos.

7. Lead theft at Lower Whitley – confirmatory faculty

An immediate interim faculty was granted to get the replacement of the lead underway but now the work is completed a retrospective faculty is required. The following resolution was read

The PCC of Aston by Sutton, Little Leigh and Lower Whitley approves the work proposed for the repair of the lead at St Luke's Church Lower Whitley.

Proposed by Darren Walter. Seconded by Irene Peers. Unanimously agreed.

8. Pilgrim Porch Project

To be erected at the West door at Chester Cathedral. A bronze surround with 3m high glass doors etched with designs sent in from each church in the diocese.
Collette has sent in photos and information from the Parish as follows
St Peter's – wood carvings
St Michael's – sample from the Reredos
St Luke's – wood carving from roof beams

Project due to be completed for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June

9. Safeguarding

Bishop Julie is the lead and currently ministers and lay ministers are being asked to update their training. Safeguarding officers are likely to be next to update training and it is possible that all Churchwardens will need to complete in the future.
Training is now online and needs to be completed every 3 years.
The past case review report is due to be released shortly and is expected to be comprehensive.

10. Living in Love and Faith

Collette summarised this latest initiative and the availability of a six week course for anyone interested. The PCC had a considered discussion on the main areas and were all decided that we should always aim to be inclusive and welcome everyone into our Churches. We did not feel the need to embark on an outside course at this time.

11. Forthcoming events

Diocese Everyday Faith for Gt Budworth and Middlewich Deaneries on 17th March 7.30pm
Hartford

Collette proposed a combined service on Sunday 4th June to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee followed by refreshments. Venue to be confirmed

12. Date of next meeting

22nd March for a short meeting to confirm audited accounts and finalise Churchwardens reports
APCM on 10th May
Collette to confirm venues

13. Any other business

The protocol for removing seasonal flowers/ wreaths from graves was brought up. Always a sensitive issue but agreed that it was reasonable to remove weather damaged/depleted arrangements being mindful of those who had placed them there.
Agreed that the 'post box' could be removed from outside St Michael's – Collette to confirm with Church House the necessary arrangements needed.

The meeting closed with the Grace at 8.45pm