

Supporting Documentation

Witton St Helen – Replacement of organ

Note to parish

This bundle includes all the supporting documentation to your faculty application as required under Rule 5.5 of the Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 2022.

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Caroline Hilton, DAC Secretary



30 March 2023

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

Background:

The current organ suffered serious water damage.

During 2022 a number of organ specialists inspected the organ with a view to quoting prices for repair. Ecclesiastical insurance also sent their own organ experts.

There was a common thread in feedback from both those organ builders that St Helen's instructed and Ecclesiastical expert.

The feedback was that whilst the water damaged parts could be repaired the actual organ was of low quality and would require significant additional expenditure. St Helen's was guided to explore replacement with a second hand instrument.

Plan.

A replacement organ has been identified and a respected organ builder has fully investigated this second hand instrument and has also confirmed that it can be re located within the existing organ frame. This means that there will be no physical alterations to the external visible aspects of the current organ case. The only visible change will be to the small playing console.

The identified instrument is a redundant 1931 3 manual Compton Pipe Organ at present in the Antiochian Orthodox Church of St Dunstan of Canterbury, Parkstone, Dorset.

The organ holds a BIOS Organ of Historic Importance (Grade 1) Certificate and the organ will no longer be on the BIOS Historic Organs at Risk Register.

St Helen's Church are excited about acquiring this organ of national importance.

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

HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

The history and architecture of St Helen's Church, Witton, Northwich are described in detail in several published works. These include *Old Cheshire Churches* (Richards, 1947), *The Buildings of England: Cheshire* (Pevsner et al, 2011) and various publications on Cheshire Churches by Fred H Crossley (1937 – 42). Detailed information is also set out in two church guides – *Historical Notes and Records of the Parish Church (St Helen's) Northwich* (Weston 1908) and *An Illustrated History of Northwich Parish and Church* (Harries and Lynch, 1981). More detailed information is held in the Cheshire Record Office. The basic facts are as follows.

St Helen's was originally established as a chapel of ease to St Mary and All Saints, Great Budworth. The date of its establishment is not known, but the earliest fabric surviving on site dates from the mid-fourteenth century. (There are three small carved heads at the western end of the south arcade which appear to be of earlier date but their provenance is not documented). At this time the parish of Great Budworth contained seventeen townships, a cluster of which was based on salt production at the confluence of the rivers Dane and Weaver. Of these the largest was Witton (Wich-tun, literally Salt-town). Witton is situated on elevated ground above the flood plain of the Dane and Weaver and was the residential quarter. The smaller enclave of Northwich (originally simply Wich – saltworks) was located around the Dane and Weaver bridges on ground which is still liable to flooding, and largely consisted of brine pits and salt houses. St Helen's ceased to be a chapel of ease on 7th August 1900 when the new parish of St Helen Witton was formed. Whilst the name Witton persists, St Helen's has been known as Northwich Parish Church for several centuries.

THE CHURCHYARD

The church and churchyard are sited on an elevated spur of ground which falls away to the west and north (on early maps the steep descent to the west is called Church Hill). The early setting was of open fields and glebe land, and the churchyard itself was slightly less than one acre in extent. As the surrounding district grew there was considerable pressure for burials, and church records describe the ground around the church being progressively mounded up, followed by later levelling works.

In 1557 Sir John Deane's Grammar School was established. The school was originally housed in a timber framed building on the southern edge of the churchyard. In 1773 this building was replaced by a five bay stone building on the eastern edge of the churchyard. Probably at about this time a vicarage and vicarage gardens were developed on the glebe land to the south. In 1760 a broad walk lined by a lime avenue was created across the churchyard running from east to west. This tree-lined walk, called Church Walk, continued beyond the churchyard to the west for some 500 metres into the centre of a rapidly expanding Northwich. A baluster sundial was placed by the south porch in 1800. In the mid-nineteenth century many of the lime trees were reported to be dying due to smoke pollution.

Pressure for burials from the mid-eighteenth century resulted in several enlargements of the churchyard, achieved by taking in surrounding glebe land and by purchasing private property. This included the relocation of Sir John Deane's Grammar School to a site on the western side of Northwich in 1869. The cleared site of the school was incorporated into the churchyard which by this time had increased in area to three and a half acres. A low sandstone ashlar boundary wall defines this larger churchyard on its western and southern edges. In about 1890 a taller rock-faced sandstone wall was constructed along the northern and eastern boundaries. The churchyard is crossed by a footpath running roughly centrally on an east-west alignment, and descending to the west via a short flight of steps. The eastern end of this footpath accessed off Church Road provides vehicular access to the churchyard. From this central footpath two footpaths run off to the southern boundary and to the north-eastern corner of the churchyard where a memorial lych-gate was erected in 1916.

The enlarged churchyard still did not satisfy the demand for burial space. Accordingly the vicarage, vicarage gardens and adjoining glebe land were acquired by the recently formed Northwich District Council which laid out a new cemetery. Northwich Town Cemetery was formally opened in 1890. The vicarage moved temporarily to Witton House to the south. From about 1900 the land to the east of the churchyard was developed for housing and eventually a house at the northern end of Church Road was acquired as a vicarage. This remains today as St Helen's Vicarage.

St Helen's is a closed churchyard and is maintained by Northwich Town Council. With one exception burials ceased in the 1960's. There is a variety of grave markers including chest tombs, pedestal tombs, ledger stones, upright headstones, kerbs, crosses and a small number of obelisks. Most of these markers are in various stages of decay, ranging from unevenly settled markers to broken and fragmentary stones. Many upright stones have been laid flat for safety reasons. Footpaths and areas of hard standing are paved with re-sited ledger stones, many of which were overlaid with asphalt in 1902. It is clear that there was a campaign of graver marker clearance in the nineteenth century, as all of the markers which are in place are nineteenth and twentieth century whereas all of the stones used for paving are eighteenth century.

An engraving of the church and churchyard was made in about 1800. This and photographs from the period 1860 – 1960 show the churchyard to have had a generally open character. On its prominent site the church and its tall tower would have been a very significant feature in the local townscape. However, the setting of the church and churchyard was radically and adversely changed in 1970 by the construction of a new dual-carriageway road called Chester Way, immediately to the north. In stark contrast to the urban grain of the area, this dual carriageway was laid out according to contemporary highway principles. It sits on a large earth embankment which descends in serpentine form from the high ground to the east down to the river crossings, masking the church hill. The road makes pedestrian movement from the town centre to the church very difficult. Planners at the time must have been aware of this radical change in setting, and sought to screen the view of the road from the church by carrying out extensive tree planting. This has had the effect of screening the view of the church from the town and thereby compounding its new isolation. This planting is unmanaged and despite some limited tree-felling is now so overgrown that in the summer months only the tower top is visible from the town. The isolated character has led to the churchyard being used for anti-social activities and efforts are constantly made to control these.

THE CHURCH BUILDING

The fourteenth century sandstone ashlar church comprised a nave with aisles, a three-bay chancel beyond a chancel arch and a western tower. In the late fifteenth century a campaign of enlargement and remodelling commenced and continued over a period of about fifty years. This began by widening the nave – the north arcade was dismantled and re-erected four feet to the north. The north aisle was lengthened to the east and the original chancel arch used to add an extra bay to the north arcade. Above the arcades a clerestorey was built. The south aisle was lengthened by the creation of a new eastern chapel (previously the Chapel of the Cross and now the Lady Chapel) and the chancel was rebuilt. This new chancel was based on the choir at Lichfield Cathedral, having a polygonal east end, and the chancel walls were raised to the height of the nave clerestorey. New oak-pannelled roofs were constructed, that over nave and chancel being continuous. A south porch was built and the tower increased in height. All of this work was complete by 1540.

The overall appearance is late Perpendicular. The wall tops and tower are battlemented. The tower is fine, with very good carved bands containing animal heads and floral motifs; it may originally have had pinnacles.

The church lost most of its fixtures, monuments and stained glass during the Reformation and Civil Wars and also in the 1840s. In 1736 a South Gallery was installed to provide increased capacity. This was followed by a North Gallery in 1757. The galleries were removed in 1841. In 1861 the eastern end of the chancel was rebuilt as a result of subsidence.

Between 1882 and 1884 a major scheme of extension and reordering was carried out under the direction of architects Paley and Austin. The pews and stone floors were removed, sub-floor heating ducts installed and a new suspended timber and sandstone floor provided. The north aisle was increased in width involving the construction of a new north wall and aisle roof, and a new two-storey vestry constructed at the north east corner of the church. Internal plaster and limewash finishes were removed. New chancel fittings and furniture completed these works. At the beginning of the twentieth century a new font was placed beneath the tower. The original font remains by the south door.

The church originally had a peal of six bells, increased to eight in 1877. The earliest reference to bells in the Church Warden's Accounts is in 1692. Four bells are dated 1712, one 1852, two 1877 with one undated. All eight bells were recast and re-hung in 1910.

St Helen's has some excellent nineteenth and twentieth century stained glass. The polygonal east end has a suite of windows installed by Wailes of Newcastle in 1863 depicting scenes from the Life of Jesus. The east and south windows of the Lady Chapel are by Kempe, installed in 1910, and the theme is the Cross. The remaining windows along the south wall are all by Kempe or Kempe and Company, respectively themed and dated Children (1910), God Will Provide (1903), Deliverance (1903), and the Gate of Heaven (1908). The west window of the south aisle is by Wailes (1891) and the theme is Resurrection. The west window under the tower is by Alexander Gibbs (about 1876) and the theme is Works of Mercy. There is one stained glass window in the north aisle. This is the Millennium window (therefore 2000), designed with the help of pupils from Church Walk Primary School on the theme of Oscar Wilde's story The Selfish Giant, and made by Lightfoot and Company of Manchester.

St Helen's pipe organ was originally constructed c. 1870 – 1880 by Young and Son of Manchester and is listed (NO 4353) on the National Pipe Organ Register.

WITTON CHURCH WALK CHURCH OF ENGLAND AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

St Helens was instrumental in the establishment of the town's National School in 1813. Various buildings in the town were used, and in 1895 a Boy's School was built just outside the western boundary of the churchyard. Known as Church Walk School this became a mixed church aided primary school. The 1895 building was replaced by a new school building which opened in 2005.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Building

St Helen's Church is listed Grade I on the Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. The exterior of the church is somewhat severe and smoke-blackened by historic salt and other industries in Northwich. This severe exterior masks the richness of the

interior which is light and spacious. The glory of the church is the magnificent oak panelled roof with its wonderful carved and gilded bosses. The stained glass and continuity of nave and chancel add to the impressiveness of the interior. Overall the building is of high architectural and historic significance. In terms of specific elements the sixteenth century and earlier fabric together with nineteenth and early twentieth century stained glass are of high significance. The remaining nineteenth and early twentieth century fabric is of moderate significance.

The Churchyard

St Helen's churchyard lies within Northwich Conservation Area and the baluster sundial is listed Grade II. This is the largest open space in the town centre, but the scattering of broken and dilapidated grave markers give the churchyard a forlorn appearance. The tree planting intended to screen the adjacent dual carriageway is unmanaged and has become overgrown. This has created a sense of physical and visual isolation from the town. However, the role of the churchyard as the immediate setting of St Helen's Church and until recent years the burial place of the local community merits moderate to high significance.

The pattern of use

For more than five hundred years St Helen's has been the spiritual focus of life in Northwich and Witton. There is an active and committed congregation which places a high value on the church. Worship includes a regular Sunday Club but this does not have any proper place to meet. While attendance at Sunday worship has declined significantly over the last fifty years the local community regards St Helen's as 'our parish church'. Baptisms and funerals take place pretty well on a weekly basis. The church is the venue for major civic events ranging from the Service of Remembrance in November to the annual Civic Service of the town administration and on these occasions the church seats more than three hundred people with no space to spare. Local schools use the church regularly for church assemblies and other special services and to support their R.E. curriculum. The Family Worker from Witton Church Walk School uses the church to host parenting programmes, and other local providers use the church for special events. The absence of pews means that the spacious nave and aisles are very flexible. Seating can be moved or re-arranged quickly to permit a wide range of activities. There is a regular pattern of social use and a growing pattern of cultural activities, although these are severely restricted due to the lack of catering, adequate toilet and car parking facilities. In addition, the churchyard is seldom used other than as a pedestrian shortcut because of its forlorn appearance and anti-social activity. These and other deficiencies are explained more fully in the Statement of Need. Taking all of these points into consideration we believe that St Helen's is of high social significance.



The Parish Church of St. Helen, Witton,
Serving Christ, Serving the Community

c/o 73 Carlton Road
Northwich
Cheshire
CW9 5PW

6th February 2023

Faculty 2023-081765 – ST HELEN'S ORGAN

Statement of significance

The current organ at St Helen's

St Helen's church is a grade 1 listed building. In 1888 a new north aisle and vestries were constructed to the design of Paley and Austin. The old organ, which had been sited in a gallery (removed), was completely rebuilt by Charles Whiteley of Chester and a new case was provided to the design of Paley and Austin. Two brass plates on the organ are inscribed "To the glory of God and in loving memory of William Wood Blake of Winnington in this parish and of Margaret Alsager his wife, this organ case was dedicated by their daughter E.M.A. S. AD 1888" and "The carved work on this organ case was completed in loving memory of Eliza Margaret Alsager Spens by her husband and only child L.T.S. M.E.M.s. AD 1890".

In 1962 the organ was in poor condition and it was not considered worth restoring. Most of the action, the bellows and soundboards were burned and the metal pipes melted down. A new organ was assembled behind the Paley and Austin case by Charles Smethurst. Smethurst was active during the 1960s in the north-east of England and Northern Ireland with a work-shop based in Manchester. He does not seem to be regarded as amongst the best organ builders. As an historic musical instrument the significance of the organ is considered to be modest.

The organ case was designed by Paley and Austin as an integral part of their design for the new north aisle. Paley and Austin were based in Lancaster and the practice is regarded as one of the greatest Victorian practices in England (see 'The Architecture of Sharpe, Paley and Austin' by Geoff Brandwood, published by English Heritage in 2012). Given the grade 1 listed status of the building (which includes fittings and fixtures) and the architectural credentials of Paley and Austin the organ case is considered to be high national cultural significance.

Statement of Need

Organ music is an essential element in worship at St Helen's. The church employs a salaried organist who plays at most services including weddings and funerals. Sunday services are preceded by an organ voluntary and end with a second voluntary. Sometimes the congregation remains seated at the end of the service to listen to the voluntary. Four hymns are usually sung during the service. Worship would be hugely diminished without high quality organ accompaniment. The organist works hard to produce the music he does from the current instrument. He estimates that some 80% of the original potential of the instrument has been lost due to age and damage. The provision of a high quality organ is therefore seen as essential to the ongoing mission of St Helen's.

Gordon Atkinson
Church Warden

Edwards & Co.

Pipe Organs

Report on the pipe organ at St. Helen's Church Northwich after water damage to the swell chamber

History of the swell organ damage and repairs to date.

Located between the passage from the choir vestry to the church, the ceiling from the passageway is the floor to the swell organ and constructed of wood, the pipes along this passage are the ones that the water ran onto.

We received notification that water had got into the swell organ and was dripping down onto the pipes and chest to the side of the organ.

We attended the following day to assess the damage and to see where the water had come in from as the main organ itself was covered in protective sheeting.

We inspected to see where the water had entered and found that it had run down the stone wall that is at the back of the swell organ and where the floor of the swell organ meets with the wall. The water had run along the floor and over the edge onto and into some of the pipes and chest, below there are large pipes with some smaller pipes behind and others underneath, (these have now been fixed).

We cleared up any standing water and removed the swell shutters to allow the air to circulate and help the drying out process. At this stage access to the back was not possible due to the number of large pipes in the way.

Had the swell floor not had a good seal to the wall the effect could have been a lot worse as underneath is where there are a lot of electrical fuse boards and controls for the church electrics

We came back a few days later to re-assess the damage, at this stage we removed the larger pipes restricting our access into the back of the swell organ and stored them temporarily in the vestry.

After removing the pipes mentioned we were clearly able to see where the problem was located. We decided to block off the wind supply to the swell bellows allowing the rest of the organ to be used (apart from a few pipes below on a separate chest)

The main problems were as follows:

Wind trunks were leaking air.

Parts of the leather on the wind reservoirs was loose.

Leather had come off under the main chest wind bars. (Main problem which could be costly to fix).

Main chest stops sliders had become totally stuck.

Trumpet stop magnets and pallets were damp and wet with mould starting to appear.

Trumpet bass chest, most pallets were stuck.

Open Diapason bass / string bass chest most pallets were stuck.

Chest with pipes along the passage had stuck pallets.

The humidity levels in the organ were extremely high, we felt that before any further assessments or work carried out on the organ we needed more time to let everything slowly dry out naturally

We inspected the organ a few weeks later, there was progress in the natural drying out process. At this stage we decided to let the air re-enter the wind reservoirs (commonly incorrectly called bellows) and repaired the loose leather successfully enabling us to re assess the progress as all the parts of the swell organ are fed wind by the swell wind reservoirs at this stage many parts were not ready to be fed permanently with air we blocked the wind trunks from the wind reservoir.

The initial problems and their progress

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Wind trunks were leaking (some repaired)

Parts of the leather on the wind reservoirs were loose (repaired)

Leather had come off under the main chest bars (Still early days ,however it looked better than expected checks carried out indicated that it was not as bad as first thought).

The main chest stop slides were completely stuck,(some had freed up, one was still totally stuck and the another stiff. hopefully these will rectify themselves) If this does not improve there may be a need to remove fifty pipes to access the slide that is totally stuck. It may have had water on it as it is the closest to the wall which is still wet. This is far better than having to remove all the pipes in the swell organ.

Trumpet stop magnets and pallets were damp and wet, (mostly dried out and mould brushed off).

Trumpet bass chest, most pallets were stuck. (We removed the face board and rectified this problem)

Open Diapason string bass, were stuck (some of these pallets were easier than others which need looking at, the location of this chest is along the wall which has not fully dried out)

Chest with pipes along the passage had stuck pallets. (We worked on this problem and managed to get as many going as possible. New disc pallets are required to several of the pallets this would not be expensive repairs.)

Humidity has reduced slightly however still high in some enclosed areas, also within the chests

On our latest visit to repair a cypher (separate note sounding by itself) we had restricted access to the organ due to construction work being carried out in the church along with wet paint near the organ. The cypher was not a problem caused by water damage it was in fact dust and debris that had gone into the pipe and mechanism caused by the construction work taking place.

To summarise:

The water damage is not as significant as we first anticipated and has started to dry out throughout at a slow and steady pace.



5 August 2022

Parish Church of St. Helen, Witton, Northwich.

Further to our recent inspection visit, we report the following:

1870-80	New organ by Alexander Young & Son, Manchester	
1960s	Rebuilt by Charles Smethurst, Manchester	
1988	C&O, new piston action and transmission	DWOB
1990	New Choir 2ft chest (2 ² / ₃ & 1 ¹ / ₃)	DWOB
1995	Cleaning following damage by contractor	DWOB
1999	Water damage repairs to Great and Pedal	DWOB
2004	Last tuning by DWOB	

Organ

Located in a chamber at the northeast end of the church, speaking towards the south, there is a semi-detached console which was new when the organ was rebuilt by Smethurst. The interior of the instrument has been extensively reordered so that everything that speaks is above impost level apart from the Pedal basses and Great Double unit.

Casework

Polished dark oak, generally in good order. All the front pipes are unpainted zinc and are non-speaking apart from the 16ft chest that runs along the passageway towards the vestry area.

Console

Polished dark oak, generally in good order. No roll top or glass doors, just a heavy duty material cover which once had a sprung loaded roller that no longer works. 45° angled jambs with individual blackwood inserts. Ivory drawstop heads, machine engraved, black for flues and red for reeds and couplers etc. KA style keyboards with ivory naturals and ebony sharps with very little dishing and yellowing, regulation of dept and springing acceptable. Refurbished and new contacts fitted by DWOB in 1988, KA thumb piston units with standard spacing.

30 note R/C pedalboard with toe springing - D under D 31¹/₂ drop, 11in. to sharp. Non-standard measurement with general wear and tear from C¹ to C²⁵ with some sideways play. KA toe piston units mounted on ramps.

Balanced Swell & Choir expression pedals, although Choir no longer in use, covered in rubber cloth. Generally ok.

Electrics

Taylor TMS900 note switching system and piston capture system (one level of memory) fitted by DWOB in 1988. PVC sheathed cables throughout. KA mini drawstop units fitted with reed switches and magnetic toggle.

The organ has suffered substantial water damage sometime between the last tuning visit in December 2021 and earlier this year. Edwards and Co of Chester have removed some of the Swell Trumpet 16, 8 & 4 unit bass note pipes (1-24) along with the Swell Diapason basses and Choir Clarinet. All are neatly stored in the lower section of the organ, and the wind supply to the entire Swell division has been temporarily blanked off. The church has been led to believe the reasoning behind this action was to allow a natural drying process.

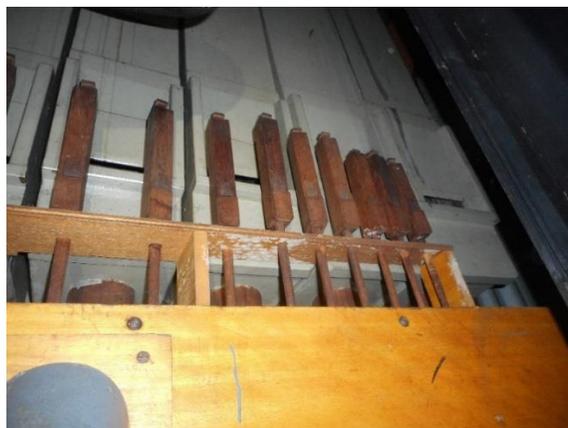
This is not the first time that the organ has sustained water damage and there is a large temporary tarpaulin covering most of the inside of the instrument.

In short, the following parts have suffered water damage and all require workshop restoration.

- Swell 9 stop slider soundboard
- Swell 16, 8 & 4 Trumpet unit chests (three chests – 85 notes in total)
- Both Swell Single-rise reservoirs
- Swell Tremulant
- Swell drawstop machine (9 movements)
- Choir 6 stop slider soundboard
- Choir drawstop machine (6 movements)
- Pedal single-rise reservoir
- Great Double and Open II side front chest (73 notes)
- Tuning slides and stopper leatherwork



Side front pipes showing blanked off notes



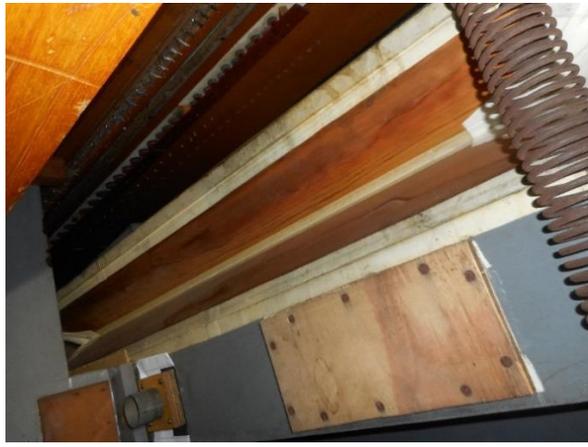
Mold on underside of Bourdon rackboard

Rusted tuning slides, water spots, mold



Water damaged leatherwork





Emergency soundboard bleed holes and glue reaction to water



Internal mold and leatherwork damage



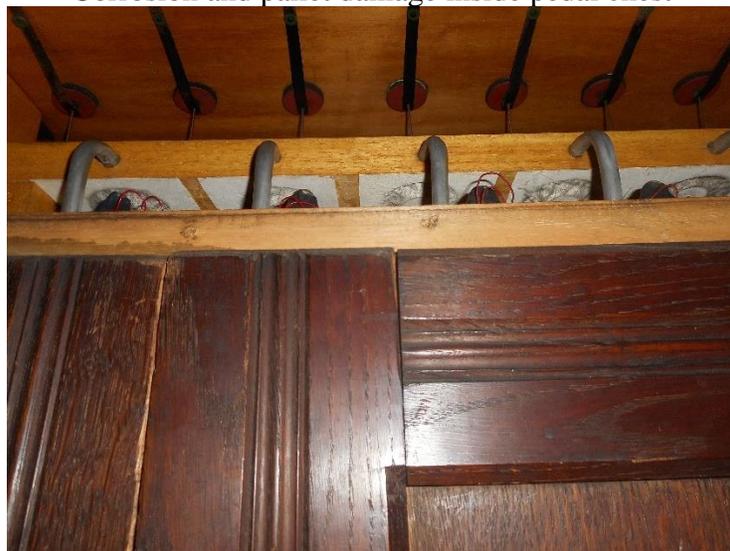
Water damaged key action



Corroded tuning slides



Corrosion and pallet damage inside pedal chest





Previously removed pipework



Water marks on chest

Chamber ceiling water marks





Heavily watermarked rackboards



To rectify the problems all affected parts need to be returned to the workshop for attention, the cost of which would be £87,080.00 plus vat.

David Wells



5 August 2022

St Helen, Witton

SPECIFICATION of Work and Quotation for the repair of recent water damage to the organ:

Work Already Undertaken. Organ examined, parts opened up to assess damage.

NB If dismantling reveals further damage in the organ space, it will be reported to the Client immediately. No work will be undertaken on any such items without further instructions from the Client.

PREPARATORY WORK

The pipework from the manual soundboards removed and packed for transport to the workshops. The drawstop machines to the Choir and Swell soundboards disconnected from the sliders, removed and passed out of the organ. The conveyancing for off-notes removed from upperboards, the wind-trunks disconnected. The rack-boards and reed stays removed and packed for transport to the workshops.

The low voltage electric cables to the Choir and Swell primary actions disconnected. The upper-boards lifted, the slides removed, secured and packed for transport. The Choir and Swell soundboards lifted and passed out of the organ; upper-boards refitted; soundboards and associated parts secured and packed for transport to factory.

The organ space carefully cleaned in the area where water has fallen.

SOUNDBOARDS The Swell and Choir soundboards stripped down, the pallets, bar coverings, wind-bars and pallet guide-pins removed; the corrupted animal glue cleaned out from the bar channels; any table splits pegged and, where hammer testing indicates, bars screwed to the tables; the bar channels reflooded with new hot glue, the bars and tables cleaned up, the table splits filled, the tables and bars trued up; new internal and external bar coverings fitted to replace those damaged by water; the damaged pallet coverings stripped off, the pallets trued up and recovered in new felt and leather; new phosphor bronze guide-pins fitted to replace those damaged by water or removal, the pallets relaid and new pallet springs and pull-down wires fitted to replace those damaged or corroded by water, the upperboards and slides cleaned off and trued up, the upper-boards refitted with new screws to replace those rusted by water, damaged bedding on the faceboards replaced and new face-board screws fitted to replace those rusted by water.

The damaged pallet motors stripped of their leather coverings, motor boards cleaned off and any damaged hinges replaced; motors recovered and rebedded. Damaged primary action purses stripped off and recovered in new leather. Valve chambers opened up and disc valves examined, damaged valves removed and replaced by new. Wirework cleaned up, damaged buttons and cloth washers replaced. The valves refitted and their working distances reset.

The Great soundboard opened up *in situ* for general inspection and repairs. Damaged pallet coverings stripped off, pallets trued up and recovered in new felt and leather; new phosphor bronze guide-pins fitted to replace those damaged by water or removal, the pallets relaid and new pallet springs and pull-down wires fitted to replace those damaged or corroded by water. Moving surfaces repolished, pull-down wires adjusted for correct pallet movement. The rackboards and soundboard woodwork cleaned off to remove water stains.

PIPEWORK cleaned to remove waterborne dust and debris, rusted tuning slides replaced. Wooden joints checked for soundness, damaged stopper leather replaced as necessary.

Water stains removed from top surfaces of rails and other fittings. The disconnected wind trunks examined and any water damaged flange bedding and strapping replaced, woodwork cleaned off.

DRAWSTOP MACHINES The Swell and Choir drawstop machines removed to the workshop, stripped down, wells cleaned out, damaged leather pans and primary purses replaced, as necessary.

TREMULANT. The Swell tremulant device stripped down for remaking; the primary action releathered, the main motor stripped of worn leather, the motor boards cleaned up, new hinges fitted, new ribs cut and leathered, the motor releathered. The main pallet cleaned off and recovered in felt and leather. The device re-assembled, tested and refitted in the organ, the beats reset.

SIDE FRONT PIPE CHEST removed for workshop overhaul. Damaged internal pallet motors removed for re-leathering, leather stripped from motors; motors releathered, rebedded and refitted, damaged movements stripped and releathered, the valves cleaned off and reset. Action re-assembled, movements regulated and tested.

BELLOWSWORK The two Swell, and the Pedal, singer-rise reservoirs disconnected, removed to the workshop and stripped down for remaking; water damaged leather removed from the well, ribs, floating-frame and topboard, ribs cleaned off, trued up and releathered; the well patched and resized, reservoir rim rebedded and ribs relaid, floating frame refitted and top set of ribs relaid; top refitted to ribs, new gussets and corner pieces fitted, top panels rebedded. The reservoirs returned to the organ, disconnected wind trunks examined and any water damaged flange bedding and strapping replaced, woodwork cleaned off, trunking re-fitted and correct pressure set.

The Swell & Choir soundboards lifted back into the organ and refitted on their rails, the action cables reconnected, the trunking refitted. The soundboard sliders and the drawstop machines reattached, upperboards refitted, conveyancing and off-notes reconnected; rackboards and reed stays refitted.

The pipes replaced in position and fine-tuned to leave organ in condition prior to damage by water.

PRICE

at current (2022) figures

Eighty-seven Thousand and Eighty Pounds

£87,080.00

excluding vat

PROPOSED terms of payment

10% of Contract price deposit with order

20% of Contract price on commencement of work

60% of Contract price at intervals during progress of work

Balance with any agreed extra costs within thirty days of final invoice

CONDITIONS (where applicable)

(UK)

1. **VALIDITY** This estimate is submitted on the basis of current costs of materials, wages, overheads et cetera and is valid until 31 December 2022 after which the figures may be subject to review.

2. **VAT** All figures are exclusive of v.a.t. which will be charged in accordance with current Customs and Excise directives. Recovery of any V.A.T. under the LPW Grant Scheme to be the task of the client.

3. **PERMISSIONS** The Client shall obtain all Faculties, Licences, Consents or Permissions necessary for the timely execution of the work. The Client shall be responsible for any costs incurred in the acquisition of the said permissions. The Client shall provide written evidence of the same if requested to do so by the builder.

4. **DURATION** Whilst the Company will try to ensure that any forecast completion dates are met, time will not be of the essence of the contract and the Company will not accept any responsibility for delays and any consequential loss.

5. **EXTENT** This estimate covers all repairs and renewals that could be ascertained as necessary during the inspection of the Organ. Should it be found on dismantling and opening up the Instrument that additional work is necessary then the client will be notified. No additional work will be undertaken without the client's consent.

6. **EXCLUSION** Unless specifically referred to the blowing apparatus and any mains

operated equipment are excluded from this estimate. Likewise, any preparation of the site involving builders' work, and any provision of scaffolding, lifting hoist, and ladders, plumbing and electrical work is excluded from the estimate. No treatment or repair of wood-worm damage beyond simple application of fluid.

7. **DISCARDED MATERIAL** All material removed from the organ and not re-incorporated to be disposed of by the Company.

8. **INSPECTION** Every facility will be given to clients and their advisers to inspect the work during its progress both on site and at the factory.

9. **COPYRIGHT** No technical detail from our specification and estimate shall be used for the purpose of a competitive specification and estimate.

10. **INSURANCE** Clients should inform their Insurers before work on the organ is begun, and cover should be obtained against damage to or theft of parts lying dismantled in the building. Organ parts returned for overhaul will be fully covered whilst in transit and at the factory.

11. **THE** Company reserves the right to alter the details, but not the effect, of the works described above.

For and on behalf of
DAVID WELLS ORGAN BUILDERS LTD

Dr John P. Rowntree, *Ph.D, M.Ed., ARCM, ARSCM, LLM, FASC, Adv. Dip. Ed., Accredited Member of the Association of Independent Organ Advisers Director of the Choir and Organist, Douai Abbey*

A Report regarding the Organ in the Parish Church of St Helen, Witton, Northwich

As instructed, I visited the church of St Helen, Witton, Northwich, on Monday, September 26th, 2022, in order to assess damage to the organ resulting from an ingress of water.

St Helen's is a Grade I Listed Building of remarkable quality, dating back some 650 years and described by Pevsner as the *Oldest and most beautiful building in Northwich*.

There is reference to a gallery and organ being installed in 1767. The gallery appears to have been between the nave and chancel. There appears to be no information as to the maker or origins of this organ in the gallery. The organ was re-sited in the tower in 1841.

The well-known firm of Lancashire architects Paley and Austin were involved in rebuilding the north aisle and vestry from 1883-1886. As part of this work provision was made to place the organ (presumably that which had been in the gallery and then the tower) at the east end of the north aisle – the position of the present organ. This must have happened between 1883 and 1888.

By 1888 the organ had been rebuilt by Whiteley of Chester. The organ had tubular pneumatic action, which failed.

In 1889 Alexander Young of Manchester replaced the tubular pneumatic action with tracker and provided an *en-fenetre* console in 1889.

The finely carved organ case, currently in the church, was new in 1888 and 'the carved work' was completed in 1889.

The organ case and the carved screens surrounding the area are said to be typical of the work of Hubert Austin in the 1880's. This would seem highly likely as Paley and Austin were responsible for the north aisle and recess for the organ.

The organ was re-built and enlarged in the 1960's by Smethurst, a Manchester builder. Since then, work on the organ has been undertaken from 1988 to 2004 by David Wells, of Liverpool. At this stage it is unclear as to the origins of the pipework currently in the organ. The semi-detached console, seemingly from the 1960's, is not of the same quality as the fine case and is crudely placed against the carved casework.



The case showing the semi-detached console.

The current stop-list is appended.

At the present time much of the organ is malfunctioning, due to water damage, and while parts of the Great, Choir and Pedal organs are useable, within the individual stops numerous notes are not sounding. There is plastic sheeting covering above the organ and parts within the interior of the organ. Parts and pipes from the upper section of the organ appear to have been removed following the ingress of water and are now stored in the base of the organ.

I was able to make an external inspection of parts of the organ, but there was no safe means of access to the upper parts of the organ. Despite not being able to access all parts of the organ the overall extent of water damage was clear.

The report of David Wells is exemplary and the photographic record of the damage is clear in his report. From my inspection of the accessible areas of the organ and surrounding fabric I can confirm the accuracy of the photos of watermarks, damage to soundboards, the presence of mould, damage to wooden pipes and clear damage to leather- work on reservoirs. There are rusted tuning slides. This condition of the tuning slides may have been caused by the recent water ingress by my opinion is that it has probably developed over a much longer period of time.

The estimate of Wells for repair of the organ, £87,080, plus VAT if applicable, is in my view appropriate but I am of the opinion that it would be wise to allow a contingency figure of around 10%, especially in relation to the Great Organ windchest. I not convinced that repairing this significant part of the organ in situ will prove the best course of action.

The present organ has 47 stops, a number of these are 'extensions and borrows'. The condition of the organ was such it was not possible to be certain as to the extent of such borrows but the number of ranks of pipes appears to be about 30. At the present time the volatile cost of materials, metal, especially tin, timber, electronic parts, and also labour costs, make it difficult to be precise as to the cost of a new organ of around 30 ranks but as a rough guide the figure is likely to be in excess of £20,000 per rank, giving a figure of at least £500,000.

This inevitably raises the question of the quality and value of the present organ. In my opinion the organ is a much worked over instrument. A fully detailed survey of the pipework might show some remaining ranks from early periods, perhaps Whiteley. As it stands at the present it appears essentially by Smethurst, a local builder who would not be considered of the first rank. It is not an organ of especial quality.

As mentioned, the organ has fine case, which is essentially a discrete object. As far as I could see the case appeared to be unaffected by the water ingress. The space behind this case, or façade, currently occupied by the present organ, is considerable. With the closure of many churches in Britain there are fine organs available and it might well be in the interests of the St Helen's to consider installing such an organ within the confines of the present case. Such a course of action could be seen as far more appropriate than repairing the present organ. Financially it could be more in the region of the estimate for repairs than replacement with a new organ. It could be that an organ utilising the existing organ case remains in its present position, or even re-located, within what is a very spacious church. I would be happy to comment further in this area if it were thought helpful and appropriate.

Dr John Rowntree
October 10th 2022

(Specification below)

Specification The Organ St Helen, Witton, Northwich,

C. Smethurst 1960's with alterations by D Wells

Pedal	Key action	Stop action	Compass-low C	Compass-high f1	Keys 30
1	Open Wood				16
2	Open Metal				16
3	Bourdon				16
4	Quint				10 2/3
5	Principal				8
6	Bass Flute				8
7	Fifteenth				4
8	Flute				4
9	Double Trumpet				16
10	Trombone				16
11	Tromba				8
12	Trumpet				4
Choir	Key action	Stop action	Compass-low C	Compass-high c4	Keys 61
13	Violin Diapason				8
14	Gedact				8
15	Gemshorn				4
16	Flute				4
17	Nazard				2 2/3
18	Octave Dulcet				2
19	Larigot				1 1/3
20	Clarinet				8
21	Trombone				16
22	Tromba				8
23	Tromba				4
24	Tremulant				
Great	Key action	Stop action	Compass-low C	Compass-high c4	Keys 61
25	Double Open Diapason				16

	26	Large Open Diapason		8
	27	Small Open Diapason		8
	28	Clarabella		8
	29	Dulciana		8
	30	Octave		4
	31	Harmonic Flute		4
	32	Twelfth		2 2/3
	33	Super Octave		2
	34	Tierce		1 3/5
	35	Mixture		III
	36	Tromba		8
Swell		Key action	Stop action	Compass-low C
				Compass-high c4
				Keys 61 Enclosed
	37	Violin Diapason		8
	38	Lieblich Flute		8
	39	Viol di Gamba		8
	40	Voix Celeste		8
	41	Principal		4
	42	Twelfth		2 2/3
	43	Fifteenth		2
	44	TwentySecond		1
	45	Double Trumpet		16
	46	Trumpet		8
	47	Oboe		8
	48	Octave Trumpet		4
	49	Tremulant		

Detached Console

Couplers

Swell to Pedal
 Swell to Great
 Swell to Choir
 Swell octave
 Swell suboctave
 Swell unison off
 Choir to Great
 Choir to Pedal
 Choir octave
 Choir suboctave

Choir unison off
Great to Pedal

Accessories

6 thumb pistons to each manual
thumb pistons for sw-pd, sw-gt, gt-pd, ch-pd
6 toe pistons each to Swell and Pedal
toe piston for gt-pd
Great and Pedal combinations coupled

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2nd December 2022

The Vicar and Churchwardens,
The Parish Church of St Helen,
Witton,
Northwich.

Dear Sirs/Mesdames,

The Parish Church of St Helen, Witton, Northwich. The Organ; a Short History and Report.

Thank you for inviting me to inspect the organ on the 18th November and for your hospitality. Following our inspection and subsequent tuning I have the pleasure of submitting this initial report.

Firstly it is important to look at the history of the organ as a timeline as this gives us an understanding as to its present specification, displacement, condition and the way forward.

History

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 1767 | The first organ is recorded in the church mounted on a gallery between the chancel and the nave. The builder's name is not recorded. |
| 1804 - 1815 | Unspecified work carried out by I. Schultz of London. |
| 1817 | More unspecified work carried out by R. Bradbury of Manchester. |
| 1841 | The organ was moved from the chancel gallery and rebuilt under the tower most probably on another gallery. There is no record of who carried out the work. |
| 1857 – 1862 | Additional work carried out by John Whieldon. |
| 1862 | Subsequent work carried out by Walter Rushworth. |
| 1867 | Organ cleaned and repaired by Ernest Wadsworth of Manchester. |

- 1888 The organ comprising of a Great organ, short compass Swell organ and presumably a Pedal organ consisting of 18 stops was completely rebuilt by Charles Whiteley of Chester in a new oak case using pneumatic actions playable from a detached console.
- 1889 It is not specified where the detached console was situated but evidently the action was not successful, either by the pneumatic time lag between console and actions or poor action design. In view of this the actions were replaced with a new tracker action and the console was placed within the case “en fenetre” by Alexander Young of Manchester
- 1902 Alexander Young added some couplers and five speaking stops (This would have been the Choir).
- 1962 Charles Smethurst of Manchester radically rebuilt the organ utilising some of the old instrument, pipes and chests from other organs and some new pipework and chests. The semi-detached console was new.
- 1989 Following smoke damage within the organ the actions were overhauled and certain tonal and structural alterations were made. The Choir was removed from the Choir box and lifted to its present elevated position. New microprocessor controls for the coupler / unit action were fitted along with a capture piston system and new drawstop solenoids. At this time some tonal revision was undertaken i.e. the two rank Great Mixture was replaced by a three rank Sharp Mixture and a Tierce stop was added to the same department. The Choir Octave Dulcet 2’ was also added.

Report

General Condition

Water damage

Substantial water ingress has badly damaged parts of the organ rendering some unusable notably the Swell department. The Swell 16’ reed and Diapason basses and the Choir Clarinet rank have been removed but are stored tidily within the organ case; it is thought that the church were led to believe that this would assist the drying out process. The wind trunks to the Swell soundboard and off note chests have been blanked off. It is not possible to detect whether the glued joints of the wooden pipes or the stopper leathers have been compromised without the removal of the ranks but this must be considered. The steel tuning slides have rusted and require replacement.

The Great Diapason no. 2 chests are situated to the right of the organ along the passageway to the vestry; the basses form a side case with the trebles at floor level behind the bass chest. Many of these pipes have been blanked off due to the water damage.

In all the following parts of the instrument that require removal to the works for restoration are as follows:-

Two Swell and one Pedal wind regulators
Swell Tremulant.
Swell soundboard.
Three Swell Trumpet unit chests.
Swell and Choir drawstop machines.
Tuning slides and stoppers.
The Choir soundboard.
Great Open Diapason No.2 chests.

There is also evidence of mould which has grown in places as things have dried out; this and other cleaning issues can be dealt with in situ.

I would estimate the cost to rectify the water damage to be in the region of:-
£85,000.00 + VAT.

Displacement and Access

The entire organ is enclosed in a handsome oak case which in its original format would have been symmetrical but during the 1962 rebuild it was extended to the right to accommodate the enlarged Swell organ. All case pipes are for display purposes only and are silent.

The Swell is to the right of the organ facing west, the Great is at the front of the organ facing south and the Choir is behind the Great. The Choir 2' chest and the Great/Choir Tromba are across the back of the organ behind the Choir. The Small Great Open Diapason 16' and 8' unit is to the right of the organ along the passage to the vestry and the Large Open Diapason bottom octave is at the front behind the case display pipes. The Pedal Trombone bottom octave and Bourdon are inside the case down the left hand side and the Pedal Open Wood bass chest is across the back of the organ with the trebles in front. All three manual departments are at approximately impost level whilst the Pedal is at varying levels according to pipe length.

Normally the various manual departments of an organ are set out on a skeletal frame with braced, vertical posts supporting horizontal rails. This gives an open framework which allows the best possible access to all parts of the instrument. In this case there is a large empty space behind the console which was once the Choir box on which the Great and Choir sit on short legs. This creates difficulty in accessing the Great and Choir actions.

As far as sound egress is concerned the layout is good as all manual pipework is above impost level but entering the instrument for tuning and maintenance is not easy. Access is gained by the removal of several Small Open Diapason pipes in the vestry passage following which a ladder has to be introduced for a vertical climb to pipe level. Once at that height one would expect to see a comprehensive series of walkways to all departments and pipe chests for tuning but there is not; indeed moving from the Choir to the Swell is a precarious procedure along a 4" beam. In all safety is an issue whilst tuning.

Winding

The wind is provided by a BOB X10 blower unit which is in good order. Wind is distributed to the various chests and soundboards via a series of wind trunks and regulators or reservoirs.

The layout of the wind distribution appears not to have been planned but added to as various parts of the organ were installed. This is not conducive to stable winding.

The Tromba is shared between the Great and Choir at several pitches and each stop knob is blanked off with masking tape. These were tried and were working however the winding to the chests is not stable giving a fast vibrato effect making the unit unusable.

A tuning visit is always a good indicator of condition and tone as each pipe is listened to individually at close quarters. Organ pipes are voiced at a certain pressure; any deviation from the “voiced pressure” can affect the tone adversely. The Great pipework is almost on the verge of “overblowing” which produces a hard tone: this suggests that the wind pressures may have been increased at some time.

Soundboards and Pipe Chests

The Swell and Choir soundboards, Swell Open Diapason and the Swell Trumpet chests are in need of restoration as previously mentioned. The Great and all other unit chests appear to be in working order.

The Swell box is not a complete enclosure and comprises of a shuttered front and right hand side. The church walls and ceiling provide the top, back and left hand side.

Pipework

All pipework, apart from the stopped, wooden pipes and those with tuning slides affected by the water, are in good condition. There is pipework from various builders and sources including Wadsworth, Whiteley, and Young, hardly surprising when we look at the instrument’s timeline. The last rebuild by Smethurst introduced pipework from other sources.

The general tone however is compromised with the poor winding and the use of pipes from various sources without the re-voicing of all to blend and harmonise together.

Actions and Console

All soundboard and pipe chest actions are either electro-pneumatic or direct electric; all those not affected by water damage appear to be in serviceable condition.

The console is “semi detached” and was new in 1962. The keyboards and pedalboard by Kimber Allen and are in reasonable condition. Wiring between the console and organ is in PVC covered cable and is neatly routed.

In 1989 the original relay coupler and piston actions were replaced with Taylor micro processors; the drawstop solenoids would have been replaced at the same time. The processors are now 33 years old and are no longer manufactured by this company therefore replacing these should be considered.

Conclusion

Major work is required to restore the sections of the organ damaged by water and whereas this would rectify issues with the Swell and Choir it would not address the other problems described above which would require considerable further investment in the region of £75,000.00 + VAT. With such amount of expenditure it raises the question is the present organ worthy of the investment? Realistically the answer is no.

In a perfect world the solution would be to build a new organ of a similar size but as the cost would be prohibitive the only sensible option would be to locate an organ of good pedigree with a complete specification and transplant it behind the present case.

If I can help in any other way please do not hesitate to call me.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

Philip A. Cartwright MISOB.

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5th January 2023

The Vicar and Churchwardens,
The Parish Church of St Helen,
Witton,
Northwich.

Dear Sirs/Mesdames,

The Parish Church of St Helen, Witton, Northwich. The Organ.

We met on the 18th of November last year along with Fr Andrew Mannings to discuss the way forward with the organ at St Helen's. My subsequent report of the 5th of December details the reasons (musical, financial and practical) why a suitable redundant replacement instrument would be the best option.

With this in mind I visited The Orthodox Church of St Dunstan of Canterbury, Parkstone in Poole, Dorset, on the 19th December to inspect the redundant organ therein. The instrument was built in 1931 by the renowned London organ builders, John Compton Organ Co. Ltd. This organ could be considered to be the "little brother" of the famous organ at Downside Abbey, also built by Compton in the same year.

Unfortunately the Parkstone organ has been silent from 2004 when the detached console was disconnected from the organ and the blower was electrically isolated. As a result I invited Mr Alan Goulding (an organ building colleague who used to tune the organ), Mr Geoffrey Morgan FRCO (Organist Emeritus, Christchurch Priory, who has played this organ many times) and Mr Tim Trenchard (an organ builder specialising in Compton who tunes and maintains the Compton organs in Downside Abbey and Bournemouth Pavilion) for their views and opinions.

We inspected the organ closely and were all in agreement that the instrument is in its original state, is in good condition and would be too good an opportunity to miss. The quality of the construction and pipework (both in making and tone) is superb.

As a result I would heartily recommend this instrument as a replacement to the existing organ at St Helen's.

Regarding a lead time: once all necessary permissions have been granted I would expect the time lapse from removal of the old organ to the finishing of the Compton organ to be in the region of seven months.

If I can be of any further help please contact me.

With kindest regards,

Yours faithfully,

Philip A. Cartwright MISOB.

Specifcation of the 1931 John Compton Organ at St Dunstan's, Parkstone.

Pedal

1/ Sub Bourdon	32	B
2/ Sub Quint	21 1/3	B
3/ Open Wood	16	A
4/ Great Bass	16	O,D
5/ Sub Bass	16	B
6/ Bourdon	16	F
7/ Quint	10 2/3	B
8/ Octave Wood	8	A

Choir

18/ Bourdon	16	F
19/ Double Dulciana	16	F,G
20/ Gedeckt	8	F
21/ Viola da Gamba	8	K
22/ Dulciana	8	G
23/ Vox Angelica	8 (T.C)	H,G
24/ Lieblich Flute	4	F
25/ Dulcet	4	G

9/ Flute	8	B	26/ Vox Angelica	4	H,G
10/ Echo Flute	4	F	27/ Nazard	2 2/3	F
11/ Super Octave	4	A	28/ Twelfth	2 2/3	G
12/ Flute	4	B	29/ Flautina	2	F
13/ Cornet	V	D,K,I	30/ Dulcet Fifteenth	2	G
14/ Harmonics of 32'	IX	B.A	31/ Tierce	1 1/3	I
15/ Bombarde	16	N	32/ Dulcet Nineteenth	1 1/3	G
16/ Trombone	16	M	33/ Dulcet Twenty Second	1	G
17/ Tromba	8	N	34/ Clarinet	8	F,I,J
			35/ Musette	8	G,I,J
			36/ Hautboy	8	L
			37/ Hautboy	4	L
			38/ Tremulant		

Bombarde

39/ Sub Diapason	16	O,C
40/ First Diapason	8	C
41/ Octave Diapason	4	C
42/ Plein Jeu	V	D
43/ Double Tromba	16	N
44/ Tromba	8	N
45/ Octave Tromba	4	N
46/ Trombone	16	M
47/ Trumpet	8	M
48/ Clarion	4	M

Swell

65/ Contra Viola	16 (T.C)	K
66/ Second Diapason	8	D
67/ Viola da Gamba	8	K
68/ Hohl Flute	8	E
69/ Dulciana	8	G,H
70/ Viola	4	K
71/ Open Flute	4	E
72/ Quint	2 2/3	K
73/ Doublette	2	K
74/ Larigot	1 1/3	K
75/ Octavin	1	K
76/ Bassoon	16 (T.C)	L
77/ Hautboy	8	L
78/ Hautboy	4	L
79/ Trombone	16	M
80/ Trumpet	8	M
81/ Clarion	4	M
82/ Tremulant		

Great

49/ Double Open Diapason	16	O,D
50/ Bourdon	16	F
51/ First Diapason	8	C
52/ Second Diapason	8	D
53/ Hohl Flute	8	E
54/ Gedeckt	8	F
55/ Dulciana	8	G
56/ Octave	4	D
57/ Open Flute	4	E
58/ Dulcet	4	G
59/ Twelfth	2 2/3	D
60/ Super Octave	2	D
61/ Fifteenth	2	G
62/ Cornet	V	I,D,G
63/ Tromba	8	N
64/ Octave Tromba	4	N

Couplers

Swell to Great
Swell to Choir
Bombarde to Great
Choir to Great
Swell to Pedal
Great to Pedal
Bombarde to Pedal
Choir to Pedal

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18th January 2023

The Vicar and Churchwardens,
The Parish Church of St Helen,
Witton,
Northwich.

Dear Sirs/Mesdames,

**The Parish Church of St Helen, Witton, Northwich.
The Proposed Installation of the Compton Organ from St Dunstan's Church,
Parkstone.**

Thank you for your email request regarding the total project cost to install the Compton organ in St Helen's and subsequent annual tuning and maintenance costs.

Firstly it is important to emphasise the quality and significance of the Compton organ.

The organ was built in 1931, the "little brother" of the revered 142 stop Downside Abbey. They were built alongside each other when John Compton was at the height of his powers.

The organ holds a BIOS Grade 1 Historic Organ Certificate (these are not easily obtained) and speaks volumes regarding the quality and importance of the instrument. At present it is also on the BIOS list of "Historic Organs at Risk" register. If St Helen's were to "save" this organ the church will have achieved something very special which would be applauded throughout the organ world.

The quality and provenance of the instrument alone make it an organ of national reputation but there is also a strong connection to the composer and organist Percy Whitlock (1903 – 1946) and the BBC. This was one of his favourite instruments and he broadcasted from the Parkstone console six times, all of which were recorded by the BBC (some recordings still survive). He gave his final recital on this organ just six weeks before his premature death.

The "Whitlock" connection and the importance is such that the finest organists will be drawn to St Helen's; it will be a real asset to the church.

Once the organ is removed from St Dunstan's it will be completely restored. St Helen's would be installing what is essentially a new organ. Once completed it will require no major work or expenditure for around thirty five years and will come with a ten year guarantee providing the tuning and maintenance remains with the organ builder.

The total cost of the project from removal of the organ from Parkstone, its restoration and installation in St Helen's would be £106,500.00 (One Hundred and Six Thousand, Five Hundred Pounds) plus VAT.

An important comparison is that the cost of a brand new organ of the same specification would come in around £950,000.00 (Nine Hundred and Fifty Thousand Pounds) plus VAT.

The annual cost of tuning and maintaining the newly installed organ would come in at £930.00; three visits each at £310.00 plus VAT.

I believe that Ecclesiastical Insurance has offered to pay the sum quoted by David Wells Organ Builders of £87,000.00 so a further investment of £19,000.00 would be worthy and sound indeed.

A full work schedule and quotation will follow when required.

If I can be of any further help please contact me.

With kindest regards,

Yours faithfully,

Philip A. Cartwright MISOB.

Specification of the 1931 John Compton Organ at St Dunstan's, Parkstone.

Pedal

1/ Sub Bourdon	32	B
2/ Sub Quint	21 1/3	B
3/ Open Wood	16	A
4/ Great Bass	16	O,D
5/ Sub Bass	16	B
6/ Bourdon	16	F
7/ Quint	10 2/3	B
8/ Octave Wood	8	A
9/ Flute	8	B
10/ Echo Flute	4	F
11/ Super Octave	4	A
12/ Flute	4	B
13/ Cornet	V	D,K,I
14/ Harmonics of 32'	IX	B.A
15/ Bombarde	16	N
16/ Trombone	16	M
17/ Tromba	8	N

Bombarde

39/ Sub Diapason	16	O,C
40/ First Diapason	8	C
41/ Octave Diapason	4	C
42/ Plein Jeu	V	D
43/ Double Tromba	16	N
44/ Tromba	8	N
45/ Octave Tromba	4	N
46/ Trombone	16	M
47/ Trumpet	8	M
48/ Clarion	4	M

Swell

65/ Contra Viola	16 (T.C)	K
66/ Second Diapason	8	D
67/ Viola da Gamba	8	K
68/ Hohl Flute	8	E
69/ Dulciana	8	G,H
70/ Viola	4	K
71/ Open Flute	4	E
72/ Quint	2 2/3	K
73/ Doublette	2	K
74/ Larigot	1 1/3	K
75/ Octavin	1	K
76/ Bassoon	16 (T.C)	L
77/ Hautboy	8	L
78/ Hautboy	4	L
79/ Trombone	16	M

Choir

18/ Bourdon	16	F
19/ Double Dulciana	16	F,G
20/ Gedeckt	8	F
21/ Viola da Gamba	8	K
22/ Dulciana	8	G
23/ Vox Angelica	8 (T.C)	H,G
24/ Lieblich Flute	4	F
25/ Dulcet	4	G
26/ Vox Angelica	4	H,G
27/ Nazard	2 2/3	F
28/ Twelfth	2 2/3	G
29/ Flautina	2	F
30/ Dulcet Fifteenth	2	G
31/ Tierce	1 1/3	I
32/ Dulcet Nineteenth	1 1/3	G
33/ Dulcet Twenty Second	1	G
34/ Clarinet	8	F,I,J
35/ Musette	8	G,I,J
36/ Hautboy	8	L
37/ Hautboy	4	L
38/ Tremulant		

Great

49/ Double Open Diapason	16	O,D
50/ Bourdon	16	F
51/ First Diapason	8	C
52/ Second Diapason	8	D
53/ Hohl Flute	8	E
54/ Gedeckt	8	F
55/ Dulciana	8	G
56/ Octave	4	D
57/ Open Flute	4	E
58/ Dulcet	4	G
59/ Twelfth	2 2/3	D
60/ Super Octave	2	D
61/ Fifteenth	2	G
62/ Cornet	V	I,D,G
63/ Tromba	8	N
64/ Octave Tromba	4	N

Couplers

Swell to Great
Swell to Choir
Bombarde to Great
Choir to Great
Swell to Pedal
Great to Pedal
Bombarde to Pedal
Choir to Pedal

80/ Trumpet	8	M
81/ Clarion	4	M
82/ Tremulant		

Witton St Helen – Replacement of pipe organ

Attachments are listed according to the numbering on the supporting documents list

- [Attachments in blue are included within the proposals section](#)
- *Attachments in black italics are superseded and not included within the application*

Date	Message
<p>24/04/2022</p> <p>To: Gordon Atkinson From: Mike Edwards of Edwards & Co</p>	<p>please find attached our report regarding the situation on the swell organ at St. Helens church.</p> <p>Should you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us.</p>
<p>24/09/2022</p> <p>To: David Wells From: Andrew Mannings</p>	<p>I am sorry to trouble you, but I am hoping that you might be able to help me with this:</p> <p>I received an email and a follow up telephone call last night from Dr John Rowntree enquiring if I knew anything about an organ in Northwich that had water damage?</p> <p>Unfortunately it seemed Dr Rowntree was having some technical difficulty with I.T. and couldn't for the moment access his records but it seems as if the organ concerned may well be at St Helen Witton, Northwich. Dr Rowntree said that DWOB had given the church an estimate for repairs about a year ago. He has been called in to "assess the situation by the loss adjusters."</p> <p>I wonder whether you might be able to help me with some background on this as unfortunately I know nothing about it, and I guess that probably means the Chester DAC Office will know nothing about it either.</p> <p>Hope I am not being too much of a nuisance.</p>
<p>26/09/2022</p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: Gordon Atkinson</p> <p>With attachment</p>	<p>This was the report from Edwards - you will spot the lack of dates.</p> <p>4) Report on the swell organ water damage, of Edwards & Co</p> <p><i>With email above of 24 April 2022 from Edwards & Co</i></p>
<p>26/09/2022</p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: Gordon Atkinson</p> <p>With attachments</p>	<p>Thanks for your call, please find report attached.</p> <p>5) Report of David Wells Organ Builders Ltd dated 5 August 2022</p> <p>6) Specification and Quotation of David Wells Organ Builders dated 5 August 2022</p>
<p>07/11/2022</p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: Gordon Atkinson</p>	<p>Our Church organ suffered water damage, an event which initially occurred as far back as 2019. As a result we had major repairs carried out on the vestry roof.</p> <p>I won't try to explain the whole story but eventually we have finalised our claim with Ecclesiastical Insurance who are willing to fund a fixed maximum cost to either repair the current organ or replace it. Ecclesiastical have guided us to take advice from a Dr Rowntree who is an organ expert that Ecclesiastical use.</p>

	<p>Our plan is to take time to seek advice and to then evaluate various options recommended to us.</p> <p>At some point we will need to raise a faculty. I would be grateful for your advice - should we start to draft a faculty even though we don't yet know what our final option will be or do we just wait.</p> <p>Also does Chester Diocese have a local organ expert and if yes are you able to pass on their contact details please.</p>
<p>08/11/2022</p> <p>To: Gordon Atkinson From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>Please could you forward Dr Rowntree's report, and I will ask the Diocesan Organ Adviser to contact you?</p> <p>I don't think you need to start a faculty until you have an idea what you want to do, but it would be helpful for the DAC to understand what happened, what the insurers have recommended and what your options are I've added this to the agenda for next weeks meeting, so it would be good to start working all this out</p>
<p>08/11/2022</p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: Gordon Atkinson</p> <p>With attachment</p>	<p>Please see report attached. I will keep you posted as we progress.</p> <p>7) Report of Dr John P Rowntree dated 10 October 2022</p>
<p>18/11/2022</p> <p>Informal advice from DAC minutes of 18 November 2022 meeting</p>	<p>The Committee <u>RESOLVED</u> to offer the following informal advice:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. It would await further updates as to what the parish may propose following their meeting and advice from the Organ Adviser.
<p>01/03/2023</p> <p>To: Gordon Atkinson From: Caroline Hilton</p>	<p>I am writing to let you know that at its meeting of 17 February 2023 the DAC considered the proposed replacement of the pipe organ, and the Committee resolved, <i>subject to the parish submitting a faculty application</i>, to recommend the scheme.</p> <p>This means once you have submitted a faculty application on the Online Faculty System I will be able to raise the Notification of Advice so that you can go on to display the public notices.</p> <p>If you have any queries please do let me know.</p>