

An aerial photograph of a large, historic brick church building. The church features a prominent tall brick steeple and a complex roof structure with multiple gables and chimneys. The roof is covered in grey tiles. The building is surrounded by a well-maintained green lawn and some trees. In the background, another brick building is visible. The overall scene is bright and clear, suggesting a sunny day.

We raised
the roof!

Phase One
completed
& paid for

Thanks to the
generosity of
our parishioners

Olton Friary Church Roof Report September 2023

Thanks to the generosity and hard work of people in the Friary parish, Phase One (the emergency phase) of the roof repair works of our Friary church has now been completed, well within the predicted budget and has all been paid for.

Older parishioners will recall the great fire of Olton in 1970 when half the church was burnt down, and was out of commission for 2 years.

The silver lining of that great tragedy was that the roof of the church nave was completely renewed, and half a century later is still mostly in a fair condition.



The Great Fire of Olton 1970

But the parts of the roof not renewed in 1970 were the **(i)** Lady Chapel, **(ii)** the Choir Chapel, **(iii)** the Sanctuary and **(iv)** the sacristy. These roofs, now 100 years old, have deteriorated badly in recent years.

Last year there serious leaks in all 4 areas, most dangerously in the sacristy, where rainwater dripped onto the fuse boxes, threatening short circuits and/or a fire. So doing nothing was not an option.

With advice from the Diocese and some specialist Architects, we commissioned a serious roof survey that showed major faults in the older roofs (built 1924) but also some weaknesses in the 1970 roof.

So Oliver Architects planned repair work in two phases. Phase one (now complete) was emergency repair work on the older deteriorating roofs. Phase two (not urgent) to take place in a couple of years or so.

James Conservation a Solihull historic buildings firm provided the most competitive tender and so work began in April, and finished in June.



Besides repairs to leaks attention was given to failing stonework and rainwater goods

Fr Biju & statue of Our Lady 30 feet above the carpark

***The cost estimate in January** for the repairs was around £158,000

***The good news today** is that the total bill amounted to £134,026 a saving of around £24,000

***The reason?** There was no need to use the planned contingency fund, as no serious unforeseen problems emerged during the work.

People in the parish were very generous. Individual donations raised well over $\frac{2}{3}$ of the total. And some families each gave £1,000 or more.

Summary of donations and costs	
Donations - Gift Aided	£ 53,411
Donations - Non Gift Aid	£ 24,446
Fund raising events & occasional collections	£ 18,658
External Grants Received	£ 22,121
Other Collections from Parish	£ 2,572
<i>Estimated Gift Aid from Donations</i>	£ 13,353
Total	£ 134,561
Church Roof Repair Costs	£ 134,026
Heartfelt thanks and congratulations to everybody!	

Fr. Biju Antony
Parish Priest

Steve Bradley
Parish Finance

Graine McCabe
Parish Secretary

The fundraising events & special collections raised a sixth of the total, and special outside grants raised another sixth.

Our fundraising group put on a staggering 42 events to help raise the roof. These ranged from classical concerts to Bingo nights to cinema. Besides raising funds the events made an enormous contribution to community spirit within the parish. A wonderful achievement.

Scaffolding had the biggest daily impact for most people, so we owe much to our parish Health & Safety team volunteers who watched over the car park at busy times and in all weathers, and kept people safe.

A sincere and heartfelt thanks to all who helped. Your tremendous support, generosity, and prayers all contributed to this amazing feat.



Some tiles were saved in order to be recycled for Phase Two.

The statue of Our Lady facing St. Bernards Rd was cleaned and repaired. Some small stone work repairs were also effected.

What remains to be done? For the time being we have done all the important work that required immediate attention

Phase Two, to be considered in a couple of years or so, is over the nave.

Roof area is slightly larger but the failings are much less serious.

But the urgent work (Phase One) has been done.

Deo Gratias!

