

Shillingstone Church Roof Appeal

Frequently asked questions

Who pays to maintain the church building?

Many people assume that the church receives funding from the Government, or support from a central body, after all we are looking after a very old building that is an important part of our country's history! This isn't the case. In fact, every Anglican church in England is looked after by the people who live in its parish. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) are volunteers who are elected and are responsible for the financial matters, and maintenance of the church buildings, including the parish hall. Every PCC is a charity and the PCC members are its trustees.

How much money does the PCC have?

At 31st December 2023 the PCC had assets of around £200,000 including cash in the bank. This includes what is left of the generous donations received during Phase 1 of the Roof Appeal and what the PCC has put aside for Phase 2 – the Chancel Roof.

Why does the PCC not use all its funds for the roof?

The PCC has to pay for the day-to-day running of the church including insurance, utilities, maintenance plus all associated costs of Shillingstone Church Centre, our parish hall. The PCC as Trustees have to act responsibly with their funds and to ensure they can continue to operate the church into the future so that it will always be here for the community. Having reroofed the collapsed North Aisle we now need to go on and reroof the rest of the church, so we need to keep enough money to deal with any emergencies that might happen and contribute something to the costs of the second phase. The North Aisle roofing cost £110,000. We expect to pay £30,000 for a protective scaffold roof over the Chancel and a further £110,000 for the Chancel roof. We also have to pay 20% VAT on all the roofing costs although we can reclaim it later, but we need to keep enough money to pay it upfront.

What is a Reserves Policy?

A policy stating the minimum the PCC must retain in order to keep on operating. We have calculated and set a reserve of £80,000 based on one year's operating costs and an amount for maintenance for each of our 2 buildings.

Why can't the Diocese pay, or the Church Commissioners

Most of the money the Diocese has is what they collect from Parishes to pay for the salary and housing of the clergy. They also use some of it to pay for the Diocese's staff who provide support to parishes. Their funds are fully-committed to these purposes and indeed they are having to cut their budgets as they have a deficit.

The Church Commissioners pay for the pensions of retired clergy, which is a large obligation, and they also fund Bishops and Cathedrals. They do provide support to Dioceses and parishes in the form of funding for mission projects and help for areas of deprivation but they do not pay grants to individual parishes. Some people feel they should do more to support the rural church but we are currently not able to get any funds from them.

Why did the PCC put solar panels on the Rectory if work is needed on the Church?

The PCC didn't do this or pay for it. We don't own the Rectory, it belongs to the Diocese. The Diocese paid for solar panels on the Rectory as part of its building maintenance and environmental policies. We did not even know that the panels were going to be installed until we saw the scaffolding going up and we asked the family renting the Rectory.

Will The Reddaway Trustees give a donation for the roof?

Many of you will know that The Reddaway Fund funded the purchase and conversion of Shillingstone Church Centre. The Trustees believe it right to ensure that they keep sufficient money to pay for any major maintenance to the Church Centre. Notwithstanding that they generously gave a grant of £20,000 for Phase 1 of the church roof appeal for which we are extremely grateful.

How can I be sure my donation will only be spent on the roof?

We've set up a Roof Fund in our accounts. Your donations will be restricted to the roof project. We have to have our books independently examined each year to ensure that we follow accounting rules and deal properly with money including donations.

I don't come to church; why should I donate for the roof?

The church belongs to the whole community whether or not they attend church. Anyone who lives in the village can be baptised, marry or be buried, whether or not they attend church services. Maintaining this beautiful and historic building dating to the early 1100s benefits not just to church attenders but everyone who values our heritage, whose ancestors have ever attended the church who enjoy visiting it or seeing it as they walk; or who just want to pop in for a quiet moment for prayer, solitude or reflection.

I can hardly afford to pay my own bills, let alone give money away.

We understand that many people are facing financial difficulties at this time. We will be grateful to anyone who can donate no matter what the amount is. By giving even a small amount that you can afford you are part of preserving heritage for future generations. If you are struggling with the cost of living, we encourage you to seek advice from CAP, who can help with financial management <https://capuk.org/>

I'd like to help but I don't want to make a donation. Can I give my time or lend a hand another way?

We need to deliver leaflets house to house, to run fundraising events, to create social media posts and get items into the local press as well as sharing the appeal with friends, family and any former village residents and school pupils. If you can help with any of that it will be very welcome.

What will you do if you raise more money than needed?

We will go back donors to discuss whether they would like their donation refunded, or whether they would allow it to be used for further repairs to the church.

What will you do if you don't get enough money?

We will keep on trying to raise money and applying for grants until we can ensure the church is safe.

Can I visit the church and see the problem for myself?

The Church is open every day from 9am to 4pm (5pm in Summer). You will be very welcome to visit and will find a display about the roof problem.

If you have a question that hasn't been answered please email: powellanne@btinternet.com