

8 a) Closed Churchyard Report

Grass-cutting

On 2nd December, Cllr Soanes and I met contractor Richard Hartley to review this year's cut and discuss that for next year. Afterwards, Richard removed further thatch from the area to the south of the church. In 2025 the cut will be undertaken in September, in a suitable weather window, using a flail mower, the thatch collected and available for collection/delivery on a single day. Therefore, other parish organisations and if there is surplus, residents will need to be ready to accept/collect seed thatch on that day which will be advised in advance. Richard has also agreed to cut the verge between the churchyard wall and the highway at no additional cost above his original quote. We agreed that the clerk would issue formal written instructions nearer the time and I suggest this is by 31st July 2025.

Shed roof

The roof of the shed in the closed churchyard which houses equipment to maintain the churchyard was replaced by parish council volunteers on the 28th November. The cost of materials was met from one of the Gardemau trusts.

South-west entrance gateposts replacement

Replacement posts have been delivered and are currently being seasoned and will require some finishing. Replacement should take place before the summer, dependent on the weather and being able to assemble appropriate voluntary help, which will include lifting gear to remove the existing posts and lift the new ones into place.

Table tomb

Earlier this year the table tomb located between the main door of St Mary's and the road was made safe by laying down the tomb end which had become detached and was in danger of falling. With this, council's responsibility for public safety had been discharged as far as the tomb is concerned. The PCC is keen to see the tomb restored, which will require external funding in the absence of the descendants of the deceased being traced and willing to pay for restoration. In turn this requires a cost estimate. To assist the PCC, the clerk contacted local stone masons for a quotation, without success. Similarly, to date it is understood that the PCC has been unsuccessful. Further deterioration of the tomb may again render it as a risk to the public. Therefore, it is recommended that councillors continue to monitor the tomb, but do nothing further unless public risk returns, with any other actions the preserve of the PCC.

Churchyard wall

This is covered separately under item 8 b)