

Buildings Report (6-monthly) January 2023**Intruder Alarms**

After some initial teething problems, the Intruder alarm system implemented last summer is now fully functional. The key holding company have responded promptly to two callouts which proved to be false alarms, the cause of which has been rectified and should not recur.

Safety Risk Assessments and Inspections

All building, fire, electrical, gas, asbestos, and legionella risk assessments have been reviewed for 2022 – 2023 and all annual and periodic inspections are up to date. New Fire Risk Assessments for all our manned buildings have been organized and will take place later this month.

The SafetyNest system has been expanded to cover weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual maintenance and monitoring activities. Current gas safety, electrical safety and other certificates have been uploaded for ease of reference, monitoring, and audit. I have also been working on sorting out a number of issues with the system so that it more tailored to the Council needs, and working with colleagues on aspects that they are not so confident.

The 10- and 30-year plans for building maintenance have been reviewed in October 2022, with less urgent works postponed until at least the 2023-24 budget year. As part of the review, I redesigned the 10-year spreadsheet to allow for annual costs and then scheduled maintenance work/costs to be separated to allow a more realistic and manageable view.

Doggetts Barn

A woodworm assessment report is required for this building, Church house, and Rickards Hall. One inspection has taken place, indicating that remedial works should be considered. The infestation is currently at a low level, and may not be significant in the short term. Further reports to garner a second opinion have been considered at a cost of at least £345. Once the situation with the woodworm is decided, the building can also be scheduled for redecoration – this has been on the 10-year plan, and is outstanding for 3-years.

Rickards Hall

The guttering at the rear of the property has been found to be beyond repair, and has caused some damage to the interior decoration. New guttering will be installed this year to prevent further damage before redecoration.

There is also damp damage to the wall in the corner (where the tables are stored). This will require a repair and potentially removing of plaster and replastering.

The fire exit doors in the main hall have swollen, probably because of the extreme wet weather we have experienced recently. This is causing them to jam and needs to be rectified. Once the surface of the wood has dried out sufficiently, the doors can be adjusted to ease the problem in the short term, with a review to plan to resolve the issue permanently in the early spring.

Church House

The cracks in the ceiling plasterwork on the first floor have been inspected and found to be only surface deep. Quotes for the work required have been sought from companies who specialise in historic and listed buildings, but none have submitted so far due to their long waiting lists. It is expected that the situation should be improved before the end of January, and this project can progress.

Cemetery Depot

The depot has suffered occasional electrical problems, one of which caused a false intruder alarm indication. The fault was eventually traced to a faulty lighting circuit and resolved, but a further investigation into the quality of the electricians is probably wise even though the building has a current NICEIC certificate. This will be carried out by a qualified engineer shortly.

Sports Pavilion

The specification for the replacement of the windows and installation of shutters has been drawn up and will be placed on the “contract finders” website once they have been reviewed by the rugby club. This is expected to take place next week. This project was in the maintenance plans, but a successful CIL bid will now fund the costs.

Market Yard Toilets

Since fitting overnight mortice security locks to the doors there has been no further instances of vandalism. Although, there has been damage to a couple of locks which have needed replacing and broken toilet seats

The hot water system has been renewed and now provides hot water on demand to all cubicles and the service room. One cubical is temporarily out of action due to a broken cistern which is due to be replaced imminently. The other cisterns are all of a similar type and may not be robust enough in a public setting so advice will be sought to see if they should also be replaced.

The toilet drains are often blocked and the groundstaff have been unblocking. This may be something that will require a professional service/flushing of the pipes. The old toilets had similar issues and it had been hoped that the new design would resolve this, but the sewage pipes are old and not helped when inappropriate waste is put down the toilets.

Mowshurst Barn

A new lock has been fitted in house by our ground staff at a significant saving over the locksmith quote, and the building is now secure.

The above summarises the current main areas of focus. Other duties have included some minor DIY repairs across the buildings, researching and contracting traders who are increasing slower at responding.

Martin Leach