

St.MARGARET'S CHURCH ORGAN RESTORATION MANAGING COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Annual Report Year Ending April 2007

Background

Some time ago in 1999 John Winn undertook a detailed report on the state of the Elliot organ in our church. He concluded that with no immediate repairs being apparently necessary and with twice yearly tuning and maintenance we should be able to get by for another 10-15 years before any major repairs might need to be considered. At the time he considered any grant for restoration would only cover about 80% of the total cost.

Since that time however the general state of the organ has deteriorated to such an extent that, in late 2003 Michael Latham told us that it was no longer possible to correct the problems just by 'plastering over the cracks' and that we should seriously consider getting the organ properly restored, (especially since the financial climate for getting restoration grants had improved considerably since 1999). He advised getting in touch with Martin Goetze and Dominic Gwynn, whom he considered were the best organ restorers in the country for our historic organ, and who were one of those recommended in John Winn's 1999 report (Harrison & Harrison being the other restorer).

The PCC also received a letter from Michael Chapman, strongly suggesting that we should look into arranging an inspection of the church organ for asbestos contamination, at the earliest opportunity. Since it also appeared that some repair work to the organ had been overdue for some time, it was then agreed to set up the Organ Sub-Committee to discuss the matter and present a proposal at the next PCC meeting in November 2004.

The PCC have asked for two separate inspections to be undertaken by Harrison & Harrison and Gwynn & Goetze (see above – the two organ restorers referred to John Winn's earlier report). Both have submitted restoration reports and quotations for our consideration, and both estimates are in the order of £150,000 including VAT.

Progress this year

The DAC has given our church approval for either scheme. We will need to display notices on our board declaring our intentions.

Nicholas Thistlewaite has offered his services as our organ advisor for our fund-raising applications, which will be paid out of the total funds.

I have made initial funding application enquires to six funding grant bodies. The outcomes are as follows:-

- * Council for the Care of Churches – positive, have received application form. They require DAC approval.
- * The Pilling Trust Fund – Rejected.
- * The Diapason Trust – No response.
- * Foundation Sports Arts – positive, have received application form.
- * Arts Council England – Rejected, suggested trying Heritage Lottery Fund

* National Heritage – positive, sent application form for November selection. They also require DAC approval.

As a result of these initial funding enquiries (and a request from the DAC), the Council for the Care of Churches visited our Church on 7th September 2005 to undertake their own inspection of the Elliot organ in our church and to discuss our views on the restoration. The feedback given during this visit was positive.

Before going ahead with formal applications to the funding organisations, Nicholas Thistlewaite has requested that the sub-committee obtain letters of appreciation and recommendation from Leicester Grammar School and other organisations (e.g. Fiori Musicali) detailing their enthusiasm for our proceeding with the restoration of our Elliot organ here at St.Margaret's Church, Crick.

Such letters of appreciation have now been received and we are now obtaining up to date quotations from each of the organ builders, ready for submitting our applications.

Progress seems to be very slow, looking back over the last two years, but at least we can be thankful that we are making some progress. Hopefully during the coming year we will soon see a plan of action crystallising.