

## **St.Michael & All Angels Church, Great Edstone**

### **Update on repairs /July 2025**

Our builders have made good progress with repairs to the roof and removal of cladding from the tower to facilitate renewal of rotten timber and inspection of the bells and bell frame. The church architect has thus been able to examine this area at close quarters - something not previously possible because of the unsafe tower floor. This inspection has confirmed we are , as anticipated, faced with additional repairs and thereby increased costs above earlier estimates. It is prudent this work be undertaken now, rather than left, when it would be more costly and involve further disruption to use of the church.

**The roof.** Unsurprisingly, removal of damaged and slipped slates to the north slope has revealed rotten laths beneath and decayed felting. This is especially noticeable at the junction of the north and east walls which is where most of the damaged plaster/render inside is visible. Small areas have seen new sections of laths cut in and slates replaced with copper nails. The east wall parapet has been exposed and lead flashing inserted to deter further water penetration. Work progresses on the rest of the north slope, and the ridge, before moving on to the south slope. Where possible, slates are re-used . It is, however, now abundantly clear these repairs to the roof will only extend it's life by (at best) 5 to 10 years before complete re-roofing becomes necessary. Think, in today's terms ,of something in the order of £70K when that happens.

**The tower.** Deterioration is evident to parts of the cladding and louvres. New cedar will be used where required and fixed with stainless steel nails. The timber louvres on the south and west faces will be replaced. When the southern louvres are off this will allow access to see the condition of the tower floor and determine whether only re-flooring is needed or re-joisting as well.

**The bells and bell frame.** The pictures attached tell the story. The basic structure of the frame is in oak and appears sound. However, diagonal timber braces are decaying from the underside , thereby weakening support, and will be replaced in

oak .The two bells are each hung on three U shaped support hangers which are badly corroded. (The bell on the north side appears to have later hangers.) This will require



new hangers to be fabricated in stainless steel. In order to obtain a profile (good match), one of the newer hangers will be removed and used as a template.





The cedar timber for the turret will be laid on a breathable membrane and then the entire structure sprayed with clear preservative. This should ensure the tower and bell frame remains stable for many years to come. Replacement of the tower floor (and possibly joists) will follow so that regular inspection of bells, bell frame and tower structure can take place in future. And provide a secure ceiling over the vestry and rear of the church.

The cost of additional work cannot be quantified until we know, for example, the price for the replacement bell hangers and exactly how much new timber /slates will be required. All of this does, though, highlight the need for regular fundraising to maintain the fabric of the building. The proposed Friends of Great Edstone Church charity, when established, should greatly assist here.

*Nicholas Andrews.*

*ashgarth@icloud.com*

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(Photographs courtesy of Ric Blenkarn- Architect)