

St Osmund Church Update September 2025

In addition to making improvements to St Osmund's Church with new lighting, an electric heating system and an extension for a toilet, it is essential that the Church's fabric is maintained to ensure that it will support these improvements and maintain the structure of the church in the long term. As a historic building, the church was constructed using traditional techniques including breathable walls, with lime cements and plasters, allowing natural evaporation of water.

However, over the past century, repointing and plaster repairs have been undertaken with modern Portland cements and internal painting with modern vinyl paints. These materials don't allow ready evaporation of water. Therefore, any rainwater penetration and rising damp has been slow to disperse and has resulted in damp patches around the church.

A company was asked to investigate this problem whilst the church was closed during June. Outside, they found areas that required repointing with lime cement and limited areas where guttering will need adjustment. In addition, there is a need for improved run-off of surface water from the down pipes and from the French drains around the base of the church. Further investigation of this drainage is being undertaken. Several areas of gravel have been removed from around the French drains, revealing old clay pipes at the base of the drains. There are two areas where the pipes run away from the church to possible soakaway sites. A firm will be attending over the summer to investigate the condition of the existing drainage to advise how this may be improved.

Inside, they confirmed the presence and extent of modern plaster repairs and modern paint finishes. These will need to be removed and replaced with traditional breathable materials to allow any water vapour to evaporate. It is planned that the work on the Church's interior will be done as part of the redecoration that will be necessary following the installation of the new lighting and heating systems. The work on the external walls is part of long-term maintenance. These recommended repairs should help protect the fabric of the church from water damage over the next 50 years or more.

Melbury Osmond PCC