

## ST MARY'S CHURCH – FLINT WALL

### Issue

1. Concerns about the current condition of the flint wall around the old Church yard at St Mary's Church. There are signs of recent deterioration to the wall raising questions about what, if any, remedial works may be required.

### Proposal

2. The Parish Council is asked to agree to undertake a suitable survey of the flint wall to get a qualified view of its structural integrity and recommendations for remedial repairs and suggested timing of those repairs.

### Background

3. St Mary's is a Grade 1 listed building. The wall is not listed separately but according to Historic England should be treated in same way as the building;

*“Any object or structure fixed to the principal building or buildings and any object or structure within the curtilage of the building, which, although not fixed to the building, forms part of the land and has done so since before 1st July, 1948 is by law to be treated as part of the listed building.”*

4. The wall surrounds the “Closed” graveyard. As such it was handed over to the Parish Council who are thus responsible for its maintenance. Section 215 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires that where ‘a churchyard has been closed by an Order in Council the parochial church council shall maintain it by keeping it in decent order and its wall and fences in good repair.’ This obligation is also placed on to parish or district councils.
5. The section of wall on Church Hill from the small gate heading down towards Ham Lane has a number of cracks in it. There are signs of fairly modern pointing having fallen out in recent months. Some recent photographs of cracks in the wall are attached.
6. There is a concern that the cracks have been caused by, or made worse by, vibrations from heavy lorries. Brown's have been using the route daily for dozens of their vehicles travelling to and from Lower Stoneham Farm but there are many other lorries too. The volume of traffic from all vehicles along the road has increased significantly since the onset of the roadworks at Earwig Corner. There is no signage advising long and heavy vehicles that the road is unsuitable for them. We have mentioned our concerns about the effect of this traffic to East Sussex Highways but proving that vibrations are the cause of the cracking will be difficult.
7. I have been in touch with St Mary's PCC (Parochial Church Council) who share our concerns about the condition of the wall. The Diocesan Architect undertook a survey of the wall in 2008 and subsequent repairs were undertaken later that year, at the Parish Council's expense. There has been no work on the wall since that time.

8. Given the recent apparent deterioration in the wall's condition it would seem prudent to undertake a professional evaluation of and gain an understanding about what, if any, remedial works may be needed in order to avoid having to undertake major works, which would be extremely costly.

**Financial Implications**

9. Lewes District Council have confirmed that we can use CIL funding to pay for a survey of the wall. We currently have £1,800 of unallocated CIL and so it is proposed to use some of this to cover the cost of a survey which we imagine will be in the region of £750. We will report back to the Parish Council with the results of that survey for a decision about undertaking any remedial repairs.
10. Do Councillors agree to commission a professional survey of the wall?

**Cllr Sarah Phillips**  
**21 June 2021**

**PHOTOGRAPHS OF SOME OF THE CRACKS IN THE CHURCH WALL**



Pointing which had fallen out of the wall.

