



Community Assets & Opens Spaces Committee

Wednesday 9 September 2026

Agenda Item 5 – Church Clock and Turret Ownership and Proposed Restoration

Background

The Parish Council has been asked to consider funding towards the redecoration of the clock turret and dormers. An estimate has been received for the works, with the cost attributable to repainting the clock turret being approximately £140, together with a proposed proportion of the associated additional works.

However, there is currently uncertainty regarding ownership of the clock turret.

The Parish Council is understood to have responsibility and ownership of the clock mechanism itself, but there is no confirmed documentary evidence at present establishing that the Parish Council owns the turret or is responsible for its maintenance.

Ownership

Correspondence with Nick Orman, Treasurer of Wroughton & Wichelstowe PCC, suggests that further investigation may be required. It has been suggested that the earliest Parish Council minutes, particularly those from around 1898, should be examined for any agreement between the Parish Council and the Wiltshire County Council Education Committee. The building was reportedly extended and the clock turret constructed during this period.

If no relevant information is found in the early minutes, the Education Committee Minutes could also be reviewed. A further potential source is the documentation and minutes relating to 1964, when the PCC is understood to have purchased the property.

“The short answer is that I don’t know who owns it. The answer to the question where you can find out more information is that I would start looking in your earliest minutes (around 1898) for an agreement between the council and the Wiltshire County Council Education Committee. If you can’t find it there then the Education Committee Minutes. The Building was extended (doubled in size) at that time and the clock turret was built at that time. Alternatively there may be something in the minutes for 1964 when the PCC purchased the property. “

At present, therefore, the ownership position of the turret has not been established.

Recommendation

Given the uncertainty over ownership and responsibility for the turret, it is recommended that the Parish Council refrain from committing public funds towards repair or redecoration of the clock turret at this stage, until its legal ownership and maintenance responsibilities have been established.

The Committee is asked to consider whether it wishes to:

- A) Investigate the ownership of the clock turret further, including reviewing the relevant historical Parish Council and Education Committee minutes and the 1964 property purchase documentation; or
- B) Accept that the Parish Council's responsibility is limited to the clock itself, and therefore not pursue further investigation or commit funding towards the turret.
- C) Should the Church wish to apply to the Parish Council for a grant towards the cost of the works, it is encouraged to do so through the Parish Council's normal grant application process.

A decision on the proposed redecoration expenditure should be deferred until the above position has been clarified.