

Project Management Report to PCC

September 2026 – covering July and August

The major building project has moved forward significantly over the summer. What began as a broad ambition to tackle the urgent roof works alongside accessibility, heating and internal reordering is now becoming a much more clearly defined and costed scheme.

We now have a working quantity-surveyor estimate of approximately £1.6 million plus VAT for the construction works, of which around £1.2 million relates to the roof and associated timber repairs. Professional fees, surveys, contingency and some other project costs sit outside that figure. The scale is substantial, but having a realistic cost base is an important step: it allows us to plan properly, consider phasing and approach major funders with a much more credible proposition.

Places of Worship Renewal Fund

In July we heard the outcome of our Expression of Interest to the Places of Worship Renewal Fund.

Because of exceptionally high demand, St Peter's was not invited to submit a full application in Round 1. However, Historic England confirmed that our application will be carried forward automatically into Round 2, expected in September, without the need for a fresh Expression of Interest.

Although the delay was disappointing, the important point is that the application remains live. We are now waiting for Historic England to contact us about the next stage.

Project development and professional work

Several important strands of the project have now been completed or substantially advanced.

The roof-specific Statements of Need and Significance have been prepared and shared with the DAC. Acoustic work has also progressed, helping to clarify the future approach to sound, while the quantity surveyor's work has given us a much clearer cost base for the scheme.

There has been a change within the architectural team following Ben Downie's retirement, while Julia Cameron's AABC accreditation provides important continuity for the conservation aspects of the project.

The ecological work required for the project has also become clearer. Having established that we are not eligible for the free survey route originally investigated, quotations have been sought from suitably qualified consultants, particularly in relation to bats.

Heating

The heating work has also become more concrete. A specialist consultant has visited the church during the summer, at a particularly useful point given the leak and significant corrosion discovered in parts of the existing pipework.

This is helping us separate two related questions: what needs to be done to keep the current system safely and sensibly operating in the short term, and what heating solution should form part of the eventual reordering.

That distinction should help us avoid unnecessary expenditure on a failing system while still dealing properly with immediate problems.

Fundraising and finance

The likely cost of the whole scheme means that no single funding source will be sufficient. The eventual package is likely to involve substantial external grant funding alongside fundraising within and beyond St Peter's.

A key part of the summer's work has therefore been to make the project increasingly fundable: clearer scope, professional input, more realistic costs and progress on the permissions and surveys that major funders will expect to see.

This autumn's wider stewardship work is primarily about strengthening St Peter's ordinary giving rather than launching the capital appeal. A more developed fundraising strategy for the building project will follow as the project itself and the external funding position become clearer.

A further application to the Mission Opportunity Fund has also been submitted.

Looking ahead

The immediate priorities are to respond to the next stage of the Renewal Fund process, continue developing the roof and reordering proposals with the professional team, follow through the heating advice and ecological work, refine the cost plan, and begin shaping the next stage of the fundraising strategy.

Taken together, the work over the summer represents substantial progress. We now have a clearer scheme, a realistic working cost, stronger professional input, greater clarity around surveys and permissions, and a live route into major external funding.

There remains a considerable distance to travel, but the project is now much better defined, much more credible, and much better positioned for fundraising and delivery than it was at the beginning of the summer.