

STATEMENT OF NEED
ST MARY'S CHURCH WEDMORE
ORGAN REMEDIAL WORKS 2025



In The Isle of Wedmore Benefice

Diocese of Bath and Wells, Archdeaconry of Wells, Rural Deanery of Abridge

Grid reference: ST434479

Postcode: BS28 4AA

What3words: elated.romantics.bespoke (Outer South Porch Door)

The church is listed by DCMS as **Grade 1** under reference 1262159.

The Church of England Church Heritage Record number is 601016.

The church is in the civil district of Sedgemoor and the County of Somerset.

This document was completed in January 2024

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AIM

To undertake remedial work and remove features installed without Faculty or PCC permission in the re-building of the organ undertaken by Michael Farley in 2008. These works being undertaken to get this otherwise fine organ into better playing order.

BACKGROUND RELATING TO THE ORGAN

A barrel Organ led singing for 30 years before a new organ with 642 pipes was commissioned from, and designed by, Henry ‘Father’ Willis and was situated against the west wall of the Nave in a singers gallery which obliterated the west window and was opened at a special service in 1862.

However in the 1880 restoration of the church it was moved into the North Transept as part of a significant re-ordering of the Church. This move was undertaken by Father Willis but it was noted that in the process it was discovered several pipes of the clarionet stop were missing.

By 1912 the organ was deemed to have deteriorated considerably so tenders were sought and that of Father Willia considered too high, ultimately Bishop and Co were employed to clean and repair the organ and this included :

- A new radiating pedal board and pneumatic action for the tracker action on the pedals
- Alteration of the swell keys
- Installation of a full compass Dulciana (8ft 54 pipes) to replace the old 12th stop.
- Enlargement of the swell box and sound boards with addition of two stops (Oboe and Echo Gamba
- The addition of a Bourdon(16ft.30 pipes) to pedal organ.

By 1926 the organ was pronounced to be in decay and later in 1935 it gave serious trouble and the instrument became very noisy to operate but nevertheless for lack of funds was kept going

St Mary's Wedmore – Statement of Need

for another 12 years. What became known as the Danial repair was undertaken with the intention of retaining as much of the Willis concept and tradition as possible and included:

- The conversion of the organ into an electro-pneumatic instrument;
- Re-building of the swell box; alterations to the tonal scheme ;
- Extension of the manual compass from 'F' to 'C';
- Significantly the movement of the Console to South Transept.
-

This work was completed in 1948

Subsequent cleaning took place but it was not until 2004 that it was recognized that a re-build was necessary and a faculty was granted as follows:

SCHEDULE

Description of Works or Proposals
and any conditions attached
to the faculty

Overhaul, modernisation and repair of the Father Willis organ in accordance with two letters from Michael Farley dated 9 June 2004 and 18 January 2006. It is proposed to add a solo trumpet and replace the existing stop key with a draw stop console.

This faculty issues upon condition that:-

- (1) The DAC organ advisor approves a detailed schedule of work with specifications of components and cables.
- (2) The church architect is consulted about the works and prepares drawings for works to the casework and the movement of the Swell organ northwards for approval by the DAC.
- (3) (i) No electrical contractor shall be engaged unless he is enrolled with the NICEIC.
(ii) The electrical works shall be carried out in accordance with the advice given in the leaflet "Wiring of Churches" issued by the Council for the Care of Churches.
(iii) The electrical works shall be carried out in compliance with, and tested to the standard of, the current IEE Regulations (BS 7671) with the certificate of testing being entered

Unfortunately Michael Farley went well beyond the approved specification adding and adapting parts without consulting the then newly appointed Diocesan Organ Adviser. In retrospect Ray Willis (the Organ Adviser) acknowledges that he should have insisted that Farley reverse the unauthorized changes and some of these have been the cause of dissatisfaction with the functioning and playing of the organ ever since.

This has occasioned a review of the organ by highly respected Organ Builder Lance Foy after consultation over a couple of years with Ray Willis – this has led to the work now proposed and for which a faculty is sought.

Of particular note is fact that the congregation have been blessed by the arrival in their number of a number of notable professional musicians of national and

international standing and these have uplifted services and musical performances to a significant extent.

These musicians have noticed the shortcomings of the Organ as have visiting organists further convincing the PCC of the need for these works.

SPECIFIC WORKS for which a Faculty is being sought

- Remove one bass pipe from the swell box for metal shop repair, the mitre has collapsed.
- Remove the Pedal Trombone twelve note chest and pipes.
- Reposition one of the chests back to its original position making room for reasonable access and maintenance following removal of the Trombone chest this will be possible to
- The wind supply to the pedal Open chests re directed and the wind pressure lowered to an acceptable level. The upper chests re winded from the main bellows.
- Remove the auxiliary blower and remake the wind supply from the main roller pallet, inclusive of any new trunking. Redundant holes plated.
- The winding of the pedal Bourdon chests examined, trunks re made and refitted if required. The pedal section tuned and regulated.

This is being regarded as stage 1 of remedial works as Lance Foy has counselled a few changes only at this stage to bring the organ back into playable order with any further necessary works being established after the impact of these works is experienced.

COST & FUNDING

A quotation for the above works has been obtained from Lance Foy in the sum of £5,400 plus VAT.

The PCC has available sufficient monies in the Organ & Amenities Accounts to meet these costs

GENERAL INFORMATION NOT SPECIFIC TO THE APPLICATION

St Mary's Church is the Parish Church of the rural village of Wedmore and apart from during the period of the COVID restrictions has been open daily during daylight hours for private prayer and for many visitors. A church has been on this site since at least the 9th Century and the present building is primarily 15th Century but with some sections 13th Century.

Until 2019 the parish consisted of 900 dwellings. Since 2019 there has been a 10% increase in the number of homes despite house prices which are considered to be amongst the most expensive in Somerset. It is pleasing that a number of residents from the new estates have recently joined the congregation.

The age profile of residents has changed significantly since the last census with affluent younger families moving into the parish, in addition to those retiring to what is a very active village.

Children under 13 attend the local First School and Hugh Sexey Middle School in Blackford and then progress to Kings of Wessex Academy in Cheddar, but a significant number attend local private schools.

Apart from new houses there are wide range of local shops, cafes and pubs.

In the Isle of Wedmore Benefice there are three other churches:-

- Allerton
- Holy Trinity Blackford
- Christ Church Theale

The Vicar The Rev Preb Richard Neill has been in office for nearly 14 years

WORSHIP

Worship Pattern. The pattern of worship has remained consistent over the last twenty years with services at 10.30am every Sunday morning, 6.00 p.m. most Sunday evenings plus an 8am BCP Communion Service once a month with a current pattern of:

1 st Sunday	Café Church (re-started October 2021)
2 nd Sunday	Holy Communion
3 rd Sunday	8.00am BCP Communion & 10.30am Morning Praise
4 th Sunday	Holy Communion
5 th Sunday	Rotational Combined Holy Communion service in one of the Benefice Churches
1 st - 3 rd Sundays	'Start The Week', an evening Meditative Service

Attendance. Average Sunday attendance is:

- Under 18's 0
- 18 years to 64 years 20
- 65 years + 25

Messy Church is proving increasingly popular and takes place on Saturdays once a month during the winter having recommenced post the Covid pandemic.

At present we have an area in the south west corner of the Church dedicated for children, this area is in need of updating.

Wednesday Morning Holy Communion Service average lay attendance is 12 adults.

Facebook Live Morning Prayer which began during 'lockdown' continues to attract a regular 'live' and 'later' congregation; while worship of one of the Benefice Services is also on YouTube every Sunday and has been of use to some elderly members of the congregation who have not returned to personal attendance.

Special and Festival Services are very well supported by the village with 2023 numbers:

• Easter Sunday	110 adults	20 children
• Harvest Festival	80 adults	5 children
• Remembrance	200 adults	80 children
• Christingle	200 adults	150 children
• Carol Service	192 adults	12 children

A growing Bible Study group meets weekly as does the choir for rehearsal. There are 68 people of the Church Electoral roll.

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

Every month during normal times a Saturday Coffee morning is extremely popular and is often overflowing with customers because it can only be held in the warm Lady Chapel in winter months due to problems heating the cold church nave. The Lady Chapel becomes congested and servers have to be very careful when serving hot drinks.

The Lady Chapel is also used by the Little Lambs Group for mothers, babies and toddlers every Tuesday who meet in cramped conditions. It is the same for the Tea Set which is a group of elderly people who mainly live alone and meet on one Friday monthly.

Schools. In normal times pupils from Wedmore First School visit to learn about the history of the Church and to appreciate the architecture. The school also uses the church for Harvest, Christmas and Easter services. The Vicar is active in First, Middle and Senior schools leading assemblies and are also on the Board of Governors.

Use of the Building by Community Organisations. Wedmore Theatre Club and Wedmore Opera are very active and use the church for large performances and

the Annual Wedmore Arts Festival holds events for its larger audiences in the Church. Concerts by visiting choirs/music groups also take place, plus occasional organ recitals on the organ which was originally built by Father Willis and has been augmented later by more recent electronic enhancements.

Finally it should be mentioned that Faculties for Heating and Re-ordering the Nave have been granted and work is to be implemented in 2025 rendering the Nave much more suitable for Concerts and other events.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

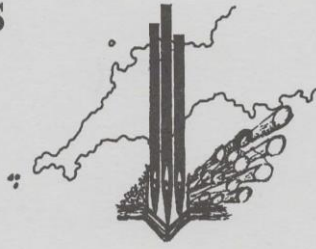
The Diocesan Organ Adviser will no doubt note the involvement of Ray Willis throughout the last 12 years in guiding the church in seeking a remedy to the unfortunate impacts of the unauthorized works in the 2008 re-ordering and our efforts to restore the instrument to as near the Father Willis design as possible.

In consequence the PCC request a Faculty to enable it to complete these works in 2025.

APPENDIX

LANCE FOY ORGANS

Lance Foy LTCL LLCM
Christopher Foy
Julie Foy
Organ Builders



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St Mary's Wedmore The Organ

Dear Wedmore friends.

Further to our recent visit to see a way forward with some remedial work to get the instrument into better playing order we have pleasure in setting out our report and estimate.

The organ is a very good resourceful instrument, with some historic features and quality pipe work that has seen many alterations and additions, in fact too many so it is a little difficult to see how we might reverse or modify previous changes to better effect. We would urge caution in not trying to do too much at once, so with our estimate we have concentrated on a few basic changes or adaptations to make better sense of the instrument.

You will require a faculty for any work carried out on the organ. The organ advisor to the Diocese may want to visit and give an opinion on any proposed works.

Estimate for stage one remedial works

Remove one bass pipe from the swell box for metal shop repair, the mitre has collapsed.

Remove the Pedal Trombone twelve note chest and pipes, Liam suggested there might be some storage space somewhere within the Church. (Any dismantled or unused parts or pipes will remain the property of the PCC)

The two main Pedal Open chests are sited too close together giving no room for access. With the removal of the Trombone chest it would be possible to reposition one of the chests back to its original position making room for reasonable access and maintenance. Allowance made for re-made trunking and stays.

The wind supply to the pedal Open chests re directed and the wind pressure lowered to an acceptable level. The upper chests re wound from the main bellows.

Hopefully we can remove the auxiliary blower and remake the wind supply from the main roller pallet, inclusive of any new trunking. Redundant holes plated.

The winding of the pedal Bourdon chests examined, trunks re made and refitted if required. The pedal section tuned and regulated.

The above carried out for the sum of **£ 5, 400.00** plus vat. Terms of payment 10% with order, balance on completion

The work is priced for 2025. Please note there is an experimental aspect to this work but we are reasonably sure of our way forward

Unauthorised Pipes installed by Michael Farley in 2008



Pipes to the left unable to be tuned as consequence of Pipes above.

