

St Leonard's Sheepstor

Restoration and Development Project

Newsletter: 3 Works Starting

1. Well Sheepstor looks very different. You cannot miss it. It is all as if a Christo and Jean – Claude installation had been set up in a Dartmoor Valley. Why did we not think of going after an Arts Council grant?
2. For those of you who find this even more incomprehensible than our usual narratives the plain prose version is:
 - a. Scaffolding has gone up round the tower and church over the last 2 weeks,
 - b. It's topped by a rolled steel roof,
 - c. And the top half of the tower is swathed in plastic sheeting.
(Google Christo and Jean- Claude if you are still confused).
3. Actually one reason why we did not go for an Arts Council grant is that the cladding was all a bit of a surprise. We had understood the scaffolding was to be open. We now need to check the access is sufficient for the bats.
4. The drive up to the Lych gate is slightly messed up but less than we had feared. This will be tidied up at the end of the project.
5. The scaffolders thought they were in clover with the village hall available and thanks to Kay's warnings we gather they have been cleaner than we think the builders boss thought possible, though we gather there may have been some improvised wet clothes drying which given the weather may have been wrong but was perhaps understandable.
6. Proper builders start on site Thursday 3 March. Exactly how things will run depends on what they find but roughly speaking:
 - a. This week they will strip the old tower roof
 - b. Week 2 will see masons on site cutting out the old pointing and repointing the inside of the tower parapet;
 - c. Carpenters will join the team at some stage to repair as needed the boards under the tower roof. They will also rebuild the frame for the valley gutter so it is wider and has a steeper fall.
 - d. The carpenter team will also fix the new guttering while they are on site.

- e. Then it's back to the roofing gang to fix the new leadwork and slates
 - f. Before some final pointing is done.
7. Target date for the end of building work is still end of April. Of course it's all a bit weather dependent but less so now given the temporary roof.
 8. Keep an eye open for the new hopper to collect water from the nave roof between the tower and the South Aisle West wall. We think we have set a precedent by getting the Diocese to agree to us using a stainless steel fabrication rather than wood or cast iron. Historical, we hear you ask? They did not have cast iron in the C15th either. It will be black outside to match the gutters but honest unpainted inside. It will even have a modest gargoye as an overflow. (Don't get too excited: we said modest. we might have said puritan.)
 9. We have also had the floorboards up this week between the pews. Is there an old crypt underneath? No. Under the wooden floors there is a void of about 2 feet with hard dry ground underneath. The slate flags sit on stone walls. Is difficult to tell but there is probably hollow space between. There are air vents in front of the church and behind and a fine draught running under the floor!
 10. Our next Newsletter will be asking for funds. We did warn you!

Caroline Jennings and Richard Bayly
Churchwardens
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