**St Mary the Virgin, Furneux Pelham**

**Statement of Need**

In June 2019 over a Saturday and Sunday night all the lead was stolen from the Nave and North Aisle Roofs, together with most of the lead from the South Aisle and South Chapel Roofs. The building stands in the middle of the village overlooked by numerous properties, on the Sunday night a noise caused a neighbour to put on some lights and the thieves (who had returned a second time) were disturbed and fled. The theft of lead was noticed at the Sunday morning service – the Rector and PCC didn’t expect the thieves to return the next evening. The PCC had, prior to the theft, investigated a roof alarm but the village has very poor mobile telephone coverage and any roof alarm cannot be guaranteed to work 24/7, so a decision was pending. The annual running costs would have added to the difficult financial situation (the church is currently receiving a pastoral aid grant to assist in paying the Parish Share).

All roofs now have a temporary covering but after a very wet and windy start to 2020 the building is suffering from leaks, the roof timbers and the internal lime plaster is now getting damaged. The roofs of the Nave, North and South Aisles and South Chapel were as per the last substantial rebuilding in the 15th century and in the 1930’s were re-covered with lead sheets. These lead sheets were larger in size than today’s recommended size and the North Aisle Roof has been repaired many times, the lead lasting a much shorter time than expected. The North Aisle Roof, after fund raising and a stewardship appeal, was completely re-laid with lead in the last quarter 2018. (Maybe the thieves saw this work in progress and saw an opportunity). These roofs and the Tower Roof are all listed in the 2017 quinquennial as needing to be replaced over the coming years.

The insurance pay out from this theft was approximately £8,500; to replace in lead will cost £225,000 and stainless steel £190,000 both excluding VAT (The VAT must first be paid and is then possibly recoverable), but this means at least £225,000 is needed. Over the last thirty years this small village has raised in excess of £200,000 to maintain and modernise the building. Works included a kitchen / toilet extension, new heating, complete refurbishment of the South Chapel, removal of the tower sulphur stained brick chimney, tower re-rendering and decorating, complete re-wiring, re-lighting, purchase and re-laying of handmade floor tiles, plus a new sloping entrance path and some other improvements.

After meetings and discussions with the congregation and villagers and bearing in mind the substantial efforts by villagers over the last thirty years to maintain and modernise this building, the PCC became aware that the community will not support yet another major fund raising or stewardship campaign. Even if the villagers had agreed to help it would, based on previous experience, take another thirty years to raise sufficient funds to replace all roofs with the preferred material.

The PCC appreciates the preferred and best solution is considered to be replacing with lead. However, in deference to the probable objections from those authorities, the PCC have no option - with the interior lime plaster and roof timbers getting damaged also with limited finances - but to investigate alternatives.

The PCC sought advice from Barker Associates' RICS certified Historic Building Professionals as to what viable alternatives were available. They provided the supplementary feasibility reports, which should be reviewed with these statements.

The proposal approved by the PCC is the following:

* Nave – a nominal increase in roof pitch to accommodate a permanent slate roof finish, as already used on the kitchen extension.
* North Aisle – removal of all remaining lead (except flashings) and replacement with high performance felt.
* South Aisle – removal of all remaining lead (except flashings) and replacement with high performance felt, including essential timber repairs to the parapet gutter.
* Chapel – removal of remaining lead to the north side, retention of lead to the south side and parapet gutters. Replacement in high performance felt.

The felt to be used has a 20 year manufacturer guarantee to provide peace of mind to the PCC that a durable solution is installed.

We will have sufficient funds to do the work as described (through fundraising and the remaining monies from a now obsolete Friends restoration account), as soon as approval and circumstances permit. This will give our successors a longer period of time and the opportunity to raise funds for a better and more permanent solution for the felt roofs.

The PCC and their architect together have formulated this proposal and appreciate we need, bearing in mind the financial situation and deterioration of the building, a realistic and achievable approach to move forward, if this building is to be saved and thus usable for future generations. Without an urgent reroofing we anticipate the building to continue to deteriorate to the point it may well not be able to be used and open to the public for worship or mission.

April 2020