

Our wonderful 1882 Hill and Sons organ was creaking at the seams. With only cleaning and relatively minor tonal adjustments and the addition of a trumpet stop over the last 130 years, it needed some fairly major attention and cleaning.



The work included:

- Cleaning: about every 20 years or so this is needed as flies and dust settle within the pipes, dulling their sound and either stopping them working completely or partially;
- Electrics: the mechanisms installed in 1993 were worn out and need replacement;
- Refurbishment of the “action”: the rods, levers, wires and pivots which transfer the movement of the keys into an action that lets air into the pipes to let them sound.
- Couplers: these enable one keyboard to be played from another or additional notes to be played at the same time and needed renovation;
- The soundboards: (the pipes sit on these) also needed major renovation after 130 years of work, the result will be a far lighter touch at the keyboards;
- The Swell Box: half the pipes in the organ are enclosed in a box; the shutters did not open sufficiently to let enough sound out;
- Pipework: some pipes needed replacing for both the sound to improve and to enable a better lead from the instrument;
- Wind trunking changes: some pipes fitted in 1993 are not fed with sufficient air, making them sound out of tune (particularly when the couplers are made to work properly);
- The bellows: having worked without attention for 130 years, the leather which allows them to expand and contract, feeding air under pressure to the soundboards, was very brittle and likely to fail at any time;
- The Trumpet: it had become dreadfully raucous, unreliable and largely unusable needing a total rebuild and re-voicing so that it blends properly with the rest of the instrument;
- Increasing the volume of the instrument: the organ was built into a stone chamber with little thought of supporting a large congregation; minor (largely unnoticeable) changes to the casework surrounding the instrument will allow its sound to escape better into the church.



A report was commissioned from the Diocesan Organ Adviser (Paul Hale) which itemized and outlined the work necessary. He recommended appropriate organ builders and tenders were sought from them. The PCC has chosen Clevedon Organs (UK) Ltd., of Worcestershire. Faculty (the Church of England's legal authority to carry out the work) was granted.

The first major fundraising event took place in December 2017 with regular events having been held since.

Grants were applied for and we were delighted to receive £40,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This came with certain conditions which pushed the costs up to over £80,000 but this still leaves us in a very strong position. The conditions oblige us to record every step of the restoration on film and even publish a book so we can share the whole experience and what we learn with schools and the community - something we wanted to do anyway!



*The organ is a very important part of the worship in our church. Not only is it used every Sunday for worship but it is used for weddings, funerals, civic and Remembrance services. It is a key part of assisting the congregation to sing. Many people across the community are very thankful that it was there when they needed music for special services. By careful restoration, it will be available into the future.*