



**HLF OH-12-12352**  
**St Mary & St Giles Stony Stratford**  
**Willis Pipe Organ Restoration and Reach-out project**

**Quarterly evaluation report for Q7 Oct - Dec 2015**

**Project overview**

Date/ Project element	Oct- Dec 2015	Jan- Mar 2016	Apr- Jun 2016	Jul- Sep 2016	Oct- Dec 2016	Jan- Mar 2017
1. Restore organ & trial						
2. Research & record organ history						
3. Produce learning resources incl DCD						
4. Train volunteer guides						
5. Community Music Programme + organ						
6. Education Programme						
PLUS Fundraising for non-heritage items						

Below we report against each of the active strands of the project on the amended schedule reported last quarter (approved timescale extensions shown in blue).

**Element 1. Restore organ**

We were delighted to be able to announce that the restoration work was completed during December, with only the final few months snagging to be carried out. In addition, all the new non-heritage pipes have been installed, thus completing the Willis III vision for the organ and the new casework has been added, displaying the restored organ to perfection.

The organ has been played during services from 22 November (which appropriately happened to be St Cecilia’s Day - the patron saint of music), and congregations are already delighted with the restored organ and the complete sound available with the additional pipes. Arrangements for managing the snagging are in place with the Organ Book placed on the console for all organists playing to be able to record any concerns or snags. If major issues arise, Brownes will be called to come up, otherwise they will pick up any minor issues in a planned visit. Plans are in place to invite several organists to come and play the instrument to assist in it ‘settling’ and to try out its versatility prior to the first public concerts in April.

## **Element 2. Research & record organ history**

During this period little actual research was carried out, although one brief visit to the archives in Edinburgh was attached to a work trip to pursue more information about the commissioning of the organ in 1882. Sorting of research data and the start of uploading to the website commenced.

## **Element 3. Produce learning resources including DVD**

Sections 1-5 of the DVD are now complete bar some insertions of sound and visuals now the organ is restored. Section 6 is in draft and will be completed after a final recording session on 5 March, so that the full DVD can be launched at the inaugural concerts in April.

Quotes have been obtained for the six **display banners**, and text and visuals are in development, awaiting the finalisation of the history online and the DVD, before being completed. These too will be available at the inaugural concerts.

Once the banners are complete, we will also develop some short **'take away' resources** (history summary and possibly postcards) to be left in the church as reminders of what people have found out about our Willis Pipe organ.

Junior school visit trials were begun in September, with a great deal of learning to be drawn from them. In November two Key Stage 1 visits took place and for all the children, whatever their age and musical knowledge there was a 'wow' factor in seeing the organ and hearing live music and seeing it being played. Everyone clearly enjoyed themselves and the feedback from staff and children emphasised how much they valued the 'hands on' opportunities given. All the children had a chance to sing and play Bell plates which were an added bonus. Invitations are now out to all local primary schools and plans are being developed to work with a pilot secondary school.

## **Volunteers**

Ten new volunteers offered to help this quarter, bringing the total number of new volunteers since the HLF project began to 38, and the total numbers involved to 82. The growing 'Music for All @ SMSG' programme and the completion of the organ restoration are both clearly having a positive impact on volunteer involvement.

David Scrutton stood down after nine years of fundraising and event management, and almost two years as Events Co-ordinator for Music for All @ SMSG. Great thanks were expressed for everything David achieved - including a nearly complete plan for the year ahead! - and we are delighted he will continue as a member of the volunteer team. Succession plans are being developed for Event Management and those aspects of Publicity for which David took responsibility.

## **Publicity**

We continued to promote events via social media (Twitter and Facebook) as well as posters, flyers, the monthly emails to those on our growing email list, parish newsletters and word of mouth. At some events we have tweeted before a performance commenced and blog posts after events are also shared via our social media accounts and occasionally circulated to those on the email list with the forthcoming events digest.

## Project management

**Project management** The Project Team met twice this quarter, in October and November. Good progress was made developing a Venue Tariff and MfA budget to sustain organ maintenance and assist with building restoration and running costs, both of which were approved by the PCC.

**Risk register** A number of risks have been downgraded this quarter due to mitigations. One new 'red' risk (PRS) added. Other red-rated risks concern numbers of volunteers and in particular numbers of leaders and more-involved volunteers; and additional fundraising needed to be done to cover restoration work over budget (see item below).

**Quarterly account** The project budget for restoration has been increased by a total of £10,192 for additional work commissioned by the PCC, which will be raised by SMSG during the remainder of the project so that there is no impact on our HLF funding.

**Fundraising this quarter** from brought in a total of £4,746 from all 'everyday' sources, including events. Since the HLF project started, these sources have raised a total of £25,735, 65% of which came from events, 28% from gifts/gift aid, and the remainder from fees, interest and a small grant. In addition we have been most fortunate to have been given a major gift-aided donation of £15K.

**Lessons learnt** Key lessons learnt this quarter are:

- **Succession planning for all key roles is vital to long term sustainability. We need to put in place clear recruitment, induction, retention and development plans for our volunteers over the coming year so that we can continue to support and grow the range of musical activities that we would like to be able to offer under Music for All @ SMSG.**
- **We can accommodate an orchestra for a concert!**
- **How important and helpful the tariff document is when negotiating bookings.**
- **Personally asking for specific help is more productive and easier to manage than putting out a general notice.**

## Events Programme (without organ) this quarter

### Strand 1: SMSG Programme

We put on and promoted three Third Thursday and one Musical Bite (ukulele workshop) Drop-In events, in addition to our regular Autumn Concert and our third annual Come & Sing day in November, this year featuring the Faure Requiem. In addition we were a key part, as usual of Stony Lights Switch On day, with the Golden Spot tombola to raise funds and the SMSG Church Band to entertain stall holders and their customers.

### Strand 2: SMSG Welcomes Other Promoters

This is a popular season for other promoters wishing to use SMSG as a venue. We were delighted to welcome MK Sinfonia for their first visit - and many of their audience, who were new to SMSG. We were equally delighted to welcome back MK Music Makers, MK Youth Choir and MK Chorale, all of whom now regularly choose to perform here.

## Strand 5: Outreach

Outreach work within and beyond Stony by our band, handbell ringers and singers, goes from strength to strength, with 9 events this quarter: 2 concerts at our local retirement home, 2 residential home visits, 1 performance at a local Flower Club, and 4 sessions of community carol singing.

In addition, members of these groups, together with children from SMSG School, performed at 7 Christmas services and Nativity Plays.

### Events - data

Events results	Oct - Dec 2015	Total in HLF project
Events raising £ for organ fund	12	55
Other events under Music for all @ SMSG	7	37
Total Music for all @ SMSG events	19	92
Performers involved	632	2,169
(of which were school age - since October 2014)	127	341
Audience attendance	1,174	6,366
(of which were school age)	123	465
Helper attendance at events	84	351
Total people engaged	1,890	9,251
Footfall (info for Stony businesses): monthly ave	673	338
New email mailing list addresses	37	127
Total net funds raised for non-heritage work	£4,746 plus £15K donation	£25,735 plus £15K donation plus £3190 (Dec 13-Feb 14 brought into project) total £43,925
Net funds raised for other groups £	£282	£3,170
Volunteers recruited in addition to pre-existing 44	10	82
Social media: @SMSG_Organ: Twitter followers/Tweets sent to date		2007 following, 307 tweets, 468 followers

## **Case studies**

### **Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> October Autumn Concert**

Miserable weather did not deter a large audience from coming to hear the Parish Singers, SMSG Church band, SMSG School Orchestra, Queen Eleanor School Choir, SMSG School Choir and SMSG handbell ringers give the annual autumn concert - with 108 performers (including 50 children) and 200 in the audience the church was packed (the gallery was not yet available). A person in the audience commented that this friendly concert format is the way to encourage children, not only to have a love of music, but also to play an instrument solo or as a group.

### **Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> November Milton Keynes Sinfonia Concert**

Fitting in 63 musicians was quite a task, not to mention 212 in the audience (and with the gallery still unavailable). But as the last people were seated there was stillness before David Knight, the Sinfonia conductor, took his place on the podium. This was the first time a large orchestra had played in SMSG and it was a most magnificent sight and sound. The music of Schubert, Sibelius and Dvorak lifted the spirits and touched the hearts of the audience. A magnificent occasion!

### **Thursday, 19th November. TT@TT SMSG Church Band, featuring SMSG School Orchestra.**

We had 30 in the audience and the youngest member (a toddler) took great interest in the performers, wanting to get as close as possible. He was taken behind the players to see what was going on. This is the second time we have seated the Band and the School Orchestra together. This enables the Band to play with the children for a couple of pieces, for the Orchestra to play on its own, and the children to watch what the Band plays at close quarters. It has been so enjoyable and beneficial for both groups. The Orchestra children were heard to say that they really enjoyed coming and were not at all sorry to be late back to school!

## The quarter in pictures

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### October: Ukulele workshop

34 people came to play the Ukulele at the workshop on 10<sup>th</sup> October and had a wonderful time learning the basics. Friendly interaction via Twitter when advertising the event earlier in the week resulted in a Ukulele shaped cake (coinciding with national cake week) included in the refreshments.

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### November: Come & Sing Faure Requiem

Our third fundraising Come & Sing day was a great success, raising over £2000 for the non-heritage elements, and allowing 150 singers and 50 audience to enjoy an informal performance at the end of the day, with local soprano soloist Claire Turner singing the Pie Jesu, James Wharton cheerfully and capably in charge, Ed Tomlinson at the piano, and a bevy of cake-makers sustaining the singers!

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### December: The organ back in use!

... and looking and sounding like it never has before, with all new pipes installed to fulfil the Willis III vision, and new casework to frame the golden pipes. In use only for services and trial sessions during the final snagging period, it nonetheless raises the spirits of all who hear it!

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