

Issue Ongoing concern about the state of the All Saints wall facing the High Street.



Correspondence from All Saints – 1 August 2025

The southern section of the churchyard wall at Melbourn is currently in a state of disrepair.

Following the closure of the churchyard in 1901, responsibility for maintaining the churchyard, including its trees and boundary walls, was assumed by the Parish Council. The Parochial Church Council (PCC) has invited the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) to visit the site and provide guidance on appropriate repair methods.

The section of wall under consideration measures approximately 11 metres in length and is situated between an early twentieth-century construction to the west and an area of yellow brickwork at the eastern end. It is our view that both adjoining sections are in satisfactory condition and do not require intervention. The portion identified for repair appears to have been constructed and patched at different times, utilising a variety of materials, including numerous types and colours of brick. Additionally, there are small flint patches present; however, these seem to be 'modern' repairs executed with cementitious mortar of substandard quality.

Following discussions with the Diocesan Advisory Committee, The PCC propose that the damaged section be reconstructed using yellow brick to match the east end. To enhance the transition to the modern bricks at the west end, the addition of a buttress as a visual marker is recommended. Most of the existing coping stones can be retained and reused.

As Chair of the PCC, I am writing to formally request that the Parish Council commission a structural engineer to assess the condition of the wall and prepare a comprehensive scheme for its repair.

The churchyard remains the property of the church; therefore, any repairs or alterations require Faculty approval. Applications for such consent should be submitted through me as the Incumbent of the Parish of Melbourn.

Office responded raising concerns over previous talks with the Conservation Officer and asking if any funding would be available through Parochial Church Council (PCC) or Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC).

Yes, we do have some access to grants that could be considered to apply for the wall to be fixed, but we would need the Parish Council's permission to start approaching those options. If you're happy for me to look at this – like we did when we had the damage to the wall at the rear of the church back in March this year – then please let me know as I can get some quotes done for the repair.

We could engage a structural engineer to report on the wall, but we would need to seek the cost of that back through the PC.

We hope that we can work together to get this sorted as quickly as possible. Sadly I am in the same situation at Meldreth!

Actions so far

- Office contacted the Shared Prosperity Fund to enquire if this project would be eligible to apply for the 'Improving The High Street Grant' from South Cambridgeshire District Council – confirmation received that the project would be eligible [Improving the High Street grant \(open\) - South Cambs District Council](#)

- Previous advice from the Conservation Officer:

The wall is considered curtilage listed to the church which is grade II listed. Rebuilding sections of the wall would therefore require planning permission, as it would be more work than could be considered a repair. Listed building approval would be dealt with by the DAC.*

The section of wall in question shows evidence of centuries of repair with different brick types and flint. The variety of materials generally add to the character of the area, although some repairs are unsympathetic both visually and technically. There is clear evidence of failure, particularly where flint has blown and the wall is bowing. There is no evidence of imminent structural failure however.

My preference would be to salvage as many existing bricks as possible, and include them in a section when the wall is rebuilt. My suggestion for the main brick type is the Cambridgeshire stocks seen to the right hand side, which are more in keeping with the village than the modern red bricks off to the left. Reclaimed bricks might be an option. Lime mortar with a flush joint should be used. Reinstating the stone copings to supplement the existing ones will be necessary.

The application will need drawings of the wall, including any new structure behind the brickwork – e.g. concrete foundations. The general approach to rebuilding should be set out in a method statement, including sketches or annotated photos if possible. The more information included, the less chance of conditions being added to the permission. We might, for example, request a sample panel is built first.

- Concern over graves behind the wall – would need further investigation as to who would be responsible for costs associated with any exhumation and reburial.
- Multiple quotes will be required – PCC or the Parish Council can lead on this. It looks as if all costs will be the responsibility of the Parish Council (either found via funding, asset management reserves or possibly insurance)
- Asked for confirmation of responsibility of Parish Council in the maintenance of the closed churchyard – Office have not yet found evidence of handover – have requested evidence from All Saints.

Consideration

- Council to consider next actions.
- Define lead for gathering quotes
- Consider funding options.