

■ Restoration of historic village church carried out 'in the nick of time'

Repairs save the chancel

Restoration work on a historic church was carried out "in the nick of time".

BY STAFF REPORTER

Repairs to the chancel of St Paul's, in Woodhouse Eaves, began last year, thanks to a £100,000 Heritage Lottery Fund grant, local donors and charitable funding.

A church spokesman said: "During the course of the work, it became increasingly obvious the damage to the chancel and vestry walls was more extensive than we realised, and that the repairs have been carried out in the nick of time.

"Daylight was visible through the very thick stone wall of the chancel as temporary filling materials were cleared out in the area of the biggest crack.

"However, the works are now in their final stages and soon anyone visiting the church will be able to see our new and secure building, but with very little evidence at all that the work ever took place."

Work to prevent subsidence was carried out by boring through the walls and inserting steel pole anchors.

Stainless steel straps to the main body of the church are now supporting the wooden beams of the chancel roof.

The spokesman said during the repair work the church was filled with dust and mould began growing in the chancel walls following water damage



LOTTERY FUNDING: St Paul's, Woodhouse Eaves

sustained during the drilling of the channels

The chancel is now slowly drying out.

The spokesman said: "Great care has been taken to retain and improve the craftsmanship of the original structure of the church.

"Replacement sandstone blocks have been hand-carved by a stonemason and traditional lime plaster has been used to fill the deficits on the interior walls.

"The horse-hair of the original 19th century plaster has been replaced with 21st century synthetic fibre to hold the lime together.

"The repointing outside the church was with mortar colour-matched to the original and the roof tiles were replaced

using copper nails, just like the originals.

"Portland limestone with shell forms visible in it has been used to extend the chancel forward to enable the installation of a wheelchair-friendly ramp.

"The mosaic-style tiling to the

chancel floor has been extended using Victorian tiles rescued from the original church floor."

An exhibition about the church, which was built in 1837, will run for three months from June.

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