



ST JAMES' TOWER, UPTON

July 2023 CHURCH PLAN



Part A - Current Report

Part B - Survey

Results of our open survey conducted in Summer and Autumn 2020, canvassing all community contacts for their reaction to Part A. The survey remains [open and available at this location](#). Please feel free to repeat your survey response or complete the survey for the first time.

Part C - Community recommendations

Minutes of any community meetings held to discuss the information available in other parts of the Church Plan.

Part D - Action Plan

Details of any actions agreed through Community Recommendations, assigned to community participants, Churches Conservation Trust staff, or to the Churches Conservation Trust Local Community Officer specifically.

Part A - Current Report

Church Introduction & Statement of Significance

The Old St James's Church is a former church in the village of Upton, Somerset, of which only the tower remains, overlooking Wimbleball Lake. The tower is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade II* listed building.

The church had a square chancel and rectangular nave, which together were 20.12 metres (66.0 ft) long and 3.96 metres (13.0 ft) wide. The only parts of the 14th-century church which remain are from the lowest courses of the nave and chancel, and the tower, which has three stages and was unbuttressed, however a buttress was added to the south east corner in the 19th century. The tower was made safe in 1973.

The current parish church of St James was built in 1870 to replace this church, as it was considered too far from the village.

The bells from the church have been reused elsewhere including one at the St John the Baptist in Pitney, one at Anmer (on the Sandringham Estate in Norfolk) and one in Green Point, New South Wales, Australia.

The church was declared redundant on 4 November 1971, and was vested in the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) on 31 May 1973.

Current use (bookings) & voluntary activity

The site is unusual as only the tower and footprint of the nave remain. The entrance to the chancel area underneath the tower is permanently locked behind a metal gate, and ladders leading up the tower (only accessed for maintenance) can be seen from the nave side of the gate. Due to the current lack of access to the tower, and any other usable covered area, there is no wallsafe or Visitor Book, and also no signage or CCT noticeboard on site. The only interpretation onsite is an old information board attached to the gate to the tower which can no longer be read.

The churchyard is owned by CCT and is grazed upon by the keyholders sheep, which by keeping the grass height down is beneficial for increasing the visibility of the remains of headstones in the churchyard which are possible trip hazards.

The absence of any covered space at the site prevents activities like learning activities, Champing and many other typical events, and as the site is on Exmoor National Park and so is quite exposed to the weather services would only be possible in the warmer, drier months of the year. However its location provides beautiful views across nearby Wimbleball Lake, and it is on local walking routes. Attending an event or a service here in the summer months would be a very unique and atmospheric experience. However unfortunately there are limited options for parking nearby.

This site receives two maintenance visits each year from CCTs specialist maintenance contractor and a detailed Condition report from the allocated Architect. CCT is grateful that the site also benefits from two annual site inspection visits from an Area Volunteer who visits a selection of CCT sites based on and around Exmoor.

In the last 10 years there has been a wedding blessing and three christenings at the site.

Voluntary activity at the site undertaken includes:

- Local residents next to the Tower help care for the site
- Biannual 6 monthly visits and site inspections carried out by the Area Volunteer



Collection Review

Open Churches Policy status:	Open
Local Community Officer:	Marie Leverett
Current project:	None
Cleaning schedule:	None
Welcome table:	None - not possible.
Keyholder role:	Fulfilled
Key representative role:	Fulfilled (CCT liaison, 6 month checks)
Area volunteer role:	Fulfilled
Fundraising roles:	Vacant and necessary
Stewardship roles:	Surplus to requirements
Research, interp & talks role:	Vacant.
Accessibility details:	Provided via CCT website
CCT silver plaque:	None
CCT information board:	Not installed
Oak post:	Not installed - not needed
CCT freestanding board:	Not installed
Wall safe poster:	Not installed
CCT A board:	Not installed
Gift Aid envelopes:	Not provided
Visitor book:	Not installed
Building services:	None
Parking:	Limited, parking in lane opposite
Organ:	None
Churchyard:	CCT owned, grazed by sheep
Ringable bells:	No
Pews:	None
Fire rated capacity:	N/A
Seating capacity:	Not determined (no pews or seating on site, but people could bring their own)

Site plan:	Unavailable
Roof alarm:	None
CCTV:	None - not necessary
Individual item security measures:	None
Nearby attractions:	Wimbleball Lake, walking routes, Exmoor National Park
Social media presence:	None
Images on CCT website:	One
Regular feature parish news:	No
Services per year:	None
CofE support for services:	Not known
Christmas memory tree:	No - not a suitable site for this
Tea Party:	No
Heritage Open Days:	No
Ride & Stride:	No
Champing:	No - not a suitable site for this
Retail:	No - not a suitable site for this
Risk assessment general:	Current
Risk assessment fire:	Current
COSHH listing:	Current
Portable appliance listing:	Current
Security Audit:	Not available
Children's explorer cart:	No - not a suitable site for this
Children's trail:	No - not a suitable site for this

Conservation reports

Annualised maintenance costs (Exclusive of VAT): Annualised maintenance costs express the total costs of church maintenance divided by 25 years. Every cost which relates to maintenance is included except the twice-yearly maintenance visit. Any anticipated repairs are also excluded. A list of typical maintenance tasks for any historic church, forecast over the period, is available to view at appendix 2.	£2,388.44
Routine maintenance costs (Per annum and exclusive of VAT): Total cost of two maintenance visits per year exclusive of any additional maintenance items included above. A list of the maintenance tasks included in the twice-annual maintenance visits is available to view at appendix 3.	£700.80
Total short term repairs: Small scale items of limited cost which could be fulfilled with minimal fundraising.	£1,950.00
- Re-bed loose stones to nave and chancel	£400.00
- Window and glazing repairs	£350.00
- Repairs to steel gates	£800.00
Reset west gate posts	£400.00

<p>Total medium term repairs:</p> <p>More expensive needs such as roof repairs and tower repairs which may require more involved fundraising and grant applications.</p>	None
<p>Total long term repairs:</p> <p>Items which are known to require works in the longer term but which are not essential in the near future.</p>	None
<p>Total desirable repairs:</p> <p>Repairs which are not essential to the conservation health of the church but which might improve aesthetics or usability of the building.</p>	None
<p>All cost figures are estimates, exclusive of VAT and professional fees.</p> <p>VAT is charged at 20% of the total costs and can sometimes be recovered. Professional fees vary, but are either charged at an hourly rate or as a percentage of the total project cost. These are usually charged only on larger or more complex projects.</p>	

Income, Expenditure & Balances

Income

	Wall Safe	Total Income
2022/23	No wall safe	£0
2021/22	No wall safe	£0

2020/21	No wall safe	£0
2019/20	No wall safe	£0
2018/19	No wall safe	£0
2017/18	No wall safe	£0
2016/17	No wall safe	£0

Visitors

		Wall safe income per visitor
2022-23	0 (no visitor book)	£0
2021-22	0 (no visitor book)	£0
2020-21	0 (no visitor book)	£0
2019-20	0 (no visitor book)	£0
2018-19	21	£0
2017-18	0 (no visitor book)	£0
2016-17	0 (no visitor book)	£0
2015-16	0 (no visitor book)	£0

Expenditure

Total spend since vesting (non maintenance): £39,201

	Conservation (repair) expenditure	Maintenance expenditure
2021-22	£0	£868
2020-21	£0	£292
2019-20	£0	£584
2018-19	£0	£584
2017-18	£0	£486
2016-17	£0	£697
2015-16	£795	£795

Balances

The restricted balance is the amount of money which has been covenanted or restricted for expenditure at the church. Any expenditure needs to match the terms of the covenant under which the money was donated, for example, a term expressing that a donation is intended for roof repairs only.

Restricted Balance Report Jul 2019	£0
Income less expenditure 2020/21	- £868

(Income from all sources, minus maintenance and conservation expenditure)

Income less annualised maintenance 2019/20	- £2,388.44
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(Income from all sources, minus the annualised maintenance cost, as shown in the Conservation Report section above)

Local Community Officer's Summary

The limited covered space at the site, along with the exposed location and the weather, is a challenge for putting on events, but outdoor services during the summer might be possible with income from service donations going towards the annualised maintenance costs.

There is currently a lack of signage at the site, and it is not clear that members of the public can access the site. A CCT noticeboard in the Churchyard by the gate would be beneficial to clarify who owns the site, how to access the site, to welcome and encourage visitors, and to display relevant health and safety or historical information. Adding additional interpretation or historical information about the site would be very beneficial, perhaps on the gates to the tower. Voluntary effort towards research and interpretation products could enrich the visitor experience further.

A basic wooden bench could be installed near the tower to encourage people to sit and enjoy the church. However we would need to fundraise for funds to pay for a bench.

The views from the site are very special so there may be ways of promoting the site amongst walking groups, in walking leaflets or on local notice boards such as at Wimbleball Lake or via Exmoor National Park events etc.

Part B - September 2020 Survey

Summary of consultation responses received

Following distribution of fifteen questions through our standard church plan questionnaire in summer 2020 to existing Churches Conservation Trust correspondents, (together with an invitation for correspondents to share the survey and associated Church Plan Part A), **one** response was received for **St James' Tower, Upton**, by the deadline of **31 August**.

The response received was from a respondent writing in a **personal capacity**, rather than on behalf of an organisation, and where they gave more than one answer to questions this is reflected below.

In addressing the question of a **perfect outcome for our work together at the church and what they would like to see happen in terms of community involvement and other use of the building** the respondent indicated the following:

- As only the tower and the footprint of the church survives it is of limited interest to those living locally: 1 person

In writing about challenges anticipated in respect of repair liabilities and running costs, the respondent indicated that **the challenges they anticipated for a sustainable future at the church included:**

- Keeping the site safe: 1 person

Thinking about local life away from the church, when asked **which other community projects or activities might combine with our work to protect the church for the future**, the respondent stated the following:

- Skipped the question: 1 person

Considering **if increased use of the church might benefit the community, or if increased use might benefit the church itself**, the respondent replied:

- Skipped the question: 1 person

In relation to identifying **the most important conservation priorities for the Church**, the respondent stated:

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- Skipped the question: 1 person

Regarding priorities, opportunities or ideas for fundraising, the respondent suggested the following **ideas and opportunities for fundraising** for the church:

- A wall safe and information board/table could be installed in the tower if the ladders could be removed: 1 person

Also when asked what would be the **best ways to get started with the above suggested fundraising** the respondent stated:

- Skipped the question: 1 person

When asked whether they would be **interested and available to take part in future fundraising** the respondent answered accordingly:

- Yes: 1 person
- No: 0 people
- Already take part in fundraising activity: 0 people

In seeking the respondents' **participation in a future group discussion regarding church planning**:

- Available either in person or through digital meetings: 0 people
- Available in person only: 0 people
- Available via phone or digital meetings: 1 person

In answering our final, open question about **any additional church matters not covered in other areas of the survey**, the following response was received:

- Skipped the question: 1 person

In addition to responses fielded through the questionnaire, a further **0** respondents wrote back to their Local Community Officer, expressing the following perspectives: **Nil**

Part C - Community Recommendations

Summary of community consultation meeting 1

A Church Plan meeting was held at Upton St James Tower on Thursday 3rd Aug 2023. Present were the Local Community Officer (LCO), the local incumbent and 3 members of the community (their input added below as C1-4). Items discussed were:

1. Services and Events

Currently only one service every 5 years takes place at Upton St James but the one scheduled for August this year was cancelled due to heavy rain. C1 may rearrange this for this summer. No other events take place at the church which would help towards the annualised maintenance costs. The fact that the church has no sheltered area makes it hard to plan events. There is also no official parking at the site. The site is on a walking route so there are walkers (and cyclists) who visit in the summer and picnic in the field/churchyard.

2. Maintenance Issues

C2 pointed out the large plants/foilage growing out of the tower at a high level. The padlock on the gates to the tower has been changed to a combination lock recently. It would be useful for C2&3 to have the code to clear weeds out of the tower.

3. Maintenance Issues

The LCO discussed what is achievable at the site in terms of improvements for visitors and suggested a bench and information board would make a huge difference to the site. If a QR code was added to the information board it would also help generate some income to help towards annualised maintenance costs. One or more volunteers to help support fundraising events would be a big help.

Part D - Action Plan

Community Actions

Short Term Actions (arising from Meeting 1, Aug 2023)

- C1 to send LCO email for parish magazine so LCO can put a call out for volunteers.

Actions complete

- None as yet.

Local Community Officer Actions

Short Term Actions (arising from Meeting 1, Aug 2023)

- LCO to place a call out for volunteers in the parish magazine – particularly with help to fundraise for a bench and interpretation boards.
- LCO to talk to the Estates Officer (EO) about the vegetation on the tower and the costs to remove it. Also for the combination code for the tower so it can be cleared of weeds.

Actions complete

- None as yet.

Local Community Officer & Community Medium/Long term actions (suggested by previous LCO – look at during next Church Plan meeting)

- Investigate options for recruiting additional volunteers and community members, particularly for organising events, activities and services, and for general fundraising
- Consider means for increasing additional public interest and footfall
- Review methods for promoting church to historical, archaeological or ecological societies, and inclusion in local heritage trails or walking/cycling routes.
- Research the site to create information board about the history of the church (if noticeboard is installed or ladders removed/secured and access is available to under the tower)
- Investigate promotion of the church with Exmoor National Park Authority
- Investigate participation in Ride & Stride scheme
- Discuss potential for regular church related features, parish newsletter and inclusion of church updates in parish council meetings
- Add link to 'Strangely Moved' video to church webpage
- Clarify the best place for visitors arriving by car to park

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- Investigate possibility of installing a noticeboard
 - Investigate feasibility of removing or securing the ladders under the Tower so the Tower could be opened to visitors
 - Review church web page to ensure clear directions, access and parking information is available for all visitors
 - Investigate possibility of installing a wall safe, wall safe poster (text donate) or visitor book under the tower
 - Create information board about the history of the church (if noticeboard is installed or ladders removed/secured and access is available to under the tower or on gates to tower)

CCT Actions Other

Short term actions

- None as yet

Medium term actions

- Investigate possibility of removing or securing the ladders under the Tower so the Tower could be opened to visitors

Long term actions

- None as yet

Actions complete

- None as yet

Appendix 1: Summer 2020 Questionnaire

1. This is the first of fourteen questions in the survey - thank you in advance for working through each one. First of all, we need to know if you're completing the survey on behalf of an organisation or writing in a personal capacity (If you're writing on behalf of an organisation, please use the text box to let us know which one. Thank you!)
2. Which church are you writing about? (Don't worry, you can complete additional questionnaires for other sites if you like!) Please state the location and dedication, as in 'Sapperton, St. Kenelm's'. Thank you.
3. People are involved with our sites in so many different ways. In your own words, please describe your relationship with the church building.
4. Some people are actively involved at the churches we look after together. If you're part of this group, tell us about your involvement. Cleaning, attending services and fundraising are just a few of the most frequent activities we share, but we'd appreciate as much detail as you might be happy to provide.
5. In your own words, and having reviewed 'Part A' of our church plan (sent to you by email with the invitation to this questionnaire), please describe a perfect outcome for our work together at the church.
6. What would you like to see happen in terms of community involvement and other use of the building?
7. Bearing in mind the repair liabilities and running costs described in the report you've read, what challenges do you anticipate for a sustainable future at your church?
8. Thinking about local life away from the church, which other community projects or activities are you aware of that could combine with our work to protect the church for the future?
9. Here are two questions together... Could increased use of the church benefit the community? How would this increased use benefit the church itself?
10. What do you think are the most important conservation priorities at your church? For each or all of these priorities, please also let us know about any ideas you have for addressing them.
11. Income and expenditure for the church is detailed in 'Part A' of the report we sent you. Addressing conservation priorities will entail finding new ways to raise funds. Tell us about any ideas or opportunities you have identified for raising additional income at the church.
12. What do you think might be the best ways to get started with any fundraising activities you have suggested?
13. If you don't already, would you be interested and available to take part in future fundraising activity?
14. Almost done! We'd like to invite you to join us in a group discussion about the church later this year, either in person or through 'phone / video conference. Would you be willing to join the discussion?
15. Last question! Is there anything else you'd like to share about your interest in the church which we haven't asked you already? Otherwise, thank you again so much for reflecting on the future of the church through your answers.



Appendix 2: Typical Maintenance Tasks Forecast - 25 Years (Not Including Twice-Annual Maintenance Visits)

Item	Method & Purpose	Cycle/Yrs	Estimated Cost per visit (present day levels)	Cumulative Estimated Total Cost After 25 Years (2020 values)
Drains, rodding	Below-ground drains can be blocked by debris which stops the rain water dispersing properly and potentially leading to water backing up and overflowing. To prevent this they require rodding and cleaning even ten years.	1	£ 39.00	£ 975.00
Soakaways, inspection and clearance of silt build-up	Soakaways consist of a large pit filled with gravel of varying sizes which act as a filter to allow rainwater to slowly seep into the surrounding ground. Over time material carried into the soakaway in the rain water fills in the gaps and slows the rate of dispersal which can lead to water backing up and potentially damaging or even flooding the church	10	£ 600.00	£ 1,500.00

Mansafe hatchway system	Man safe systems are steel cables or anchor points which are fixed to the roofs of churches to allow people to safely access and work on the roof. As these systems are used for safety it is a legal requirement that they are tested every year for loose fittings or damaged cables.	1	£ 360.00	£ 9,000.00
Lightning conductor testing	Lightning conductors are required to be checked every three years to make sure that they are still performing correctly and will be able to disperse a lightning strike effectively. Metal thefts have often targeted lightning conductors and they may need replacing.	3	£ 480.00	£ 4,000.00
Organ maintenance	Organs are complex machines built using numerous natural materials which can be damaged by moisture, heat and animal attack. It is recommended that organs are checked every year to carry out minor repairs and to be re-tuned as required. Regular servicing can also reduce the likelihood of large unexpected repair bills.	1	£ 140.00	£ 3,500.00

Fire extinguisher inspection	Fire extinguishers servicing checks that the fire extinguishers are functional and maintaining adequate pressure for use in an emergency. Note the CCT only provides fire extinguisher in churches which are either stewarded, used for Champing™ or have significant timber items.	1	£ 166.00	£ 4,150.00
Electrical periodic inspection testing	Electrical tests ensure that the electrical system of the church is both safe and fully functioning. The test will check all elements of the system and highlight any concerns.	5	£ 350.00	£ 1,750.00
Replacement of electrical fittings	As items are highlighted as faulty through periodic testing and maintenance visits they will need to be replaced.	15	£ 1,500.00	£ 2,500.00
Replacement of lamps	General wear and tear - Bulbs require regular replacement. Note LED bulbs will be used where possible	2	£ 250.00	£ 3,125.00
Heating installation, servicing	Annual servicing of the heating system to ensure the efficiency and safe working order of the boiler etc.	1	£ 384.00	£ 9,600.00
Roof alarm, servicing	Roof alarms require annual servicing to check that the system is in good working order and to replace minor parts such as the batteries in sensors.	1	£ 316.80	£ 7,920.00

Rainwater goods, redecoration	All external rainwater Goods (RWG) require redecoration as they are in exposed locations and are exposed to significant amounts of water. The redecoration significantly extends the lifespan of the RWGs and ensures that they are working correctly and are securely fixed in position.	7	£ 1,560.00	£ 5,571.43
Internal & external ironwork redecoration	Redecorating the ironwork prolongs the life of the item and improves the aesthetic of the church. The redecoration of ironwork also provides a good opportunity to inspect the item for damage.	7	£ 1,500.00	£ 5,357.14
External joinery, redecoration	Redecorating external joinery prolongs the life of the item and improves the aesthetic of the church. The redecoration of ironwork also provides a very good opportunity to inspect the item for damage.	7	£ 1,875.00	£ 6,696.43
Window repairs	Minor repairs to the windows such as broken panes of glass, replacement of glazing bars, mortar repairs or lead work repairs are important to exclude the weather and birds and other animals.	5	£ 350.00	£ 1,750.00
Bell maintenance	Bells require ad hoc inspection and minor maintenance to fixtures and fittings	5	£ 235.00	£ 1,175.00

Condition inspection report, all specialists	We have a 9 yearly architect or surveyors inspection plan. When the survey is undertaken all elements of the church will be inspected and a prioritised plan for all required repairs will be created.	9	£ 450.00	£ 1,250.00
Roof overhaul	Roofs require constant minor maintenance with a major overhaul every seven years	7	£ 2,500.00	£ 8,928.57
Clock maintenance	An annual service of the clock with minor repairs and checks to ensure good timekeeping	1	£ 140.00	£ 3,500.00
Tree inspection	A five yearly inspection of all the trees in the churchyards we are responsible for to check for defects and enable us to plan for any required works.	5	£ 225.00	£ 1,125.00
Churchyard maintenance	Grass cutting and minor trimming of plants and bushes etc.	0.5	£ 200.00	£ 10,000.00
Overheads	Office costs to support maintenance planning etc.	1	£ 20.00	£ 500.00
Staff Costs	Staff costs incurred in preparing the required inspections and reports	1	£ 97.00	£ 2,425.00
TOTAL (Excluding VAT)				£107,598.57
TOTAL (Excluding VAT) / 25 years				£4,303.94

Appendix 3: Typical Maintenance Tasks Forecast - (Twice-Annual Maintenance Visits)

Item	Method & Purpose
Gutters, downpipes and gully clearance	Gutters, hoppers and downpipes are easily blocked by leaves and debris both windborne and dropped by birds which can lead to overflowing and water damage to the building.
Roof, inspection & replacing slipped/missing slates/tiles	Over time some slates/tiles or the pegs/nails which hold them will reach the end of their useful lifespan. When this happens it will allow slates to move from their correct position which can let rain in to the building and potentially poses a risk to visitors as the slate/tiles can fall.
Vegetation, control of growth	Overgrown vegetation against walls and buildings can hold moisture against the building potentially causing damage and some plant species are invasive. Vegetation can also obscure the building hiding potential damage and can provide shelter for vermin such as mice.
Tower stairs & boiler room steps, sweeping	Leaves and other debris can build up on steps which could lead to accidents if people slip. Regular sweeping reduces the risk for potential accidents.
Principal steps and paths, clearance	Leaves and other debris can build up on steps which could lead to accidents if people slip. This is especially the case for churches with trees in the area. Regular sweeping of the steps reduces the risk for potential accidents.
Wall Safe, servicing	Servicing of the wall safe helps to ensure that the donations can be easily collected and also checks to ensure that there hasn't been an attempt to steal from the safe.

Appendix 4: Typical Champing™ Arrangements and Related Income

Champing™ is the exclusive overnight hire of a church to visitors. Camp beds and chairs are set up inside the church, along with tea making provisions, battery lighting, and cushions and blankets to give guests a cosy stay.

Guests book online through the Champing™ website www.champing.co.uk and these bookings are related to local contacts so everyone knows when visitors are staying. A local member of staff sets out equipment for the night and removes all gear each morning. Guests have exclusive access to the church between 6.00 p.m. until 10.00 a.m. so visitors can enjoy the church during the day.

Champers don't expect much in the way of facilities and understand that these are ancient buildings. For most churches we've installed eco-loos either inside or outside in wooden cabins. We don't allow candles but provide battery lanterns and fairy lights. As most of our churches don't have heating we only operate Champing™ between the end of March and the end of October, and we recommend Champers bring warm sleeping bags and extra blankets. We also supply bedding and breakfasts but this option isn't available at all churches. Most Champers will eat out locally or may bring their own picnic.

For those churches without electricity we provide a gas camping stove and we also provide amply bottled water for Champers and all visitors to use.

Typically Champers are couples and families. Some of our churches are large enough to welcome groups of up to 16 people. We are dog-friendly, and child-friendly. Many Champers appreciate the history, architecture, and unique features of their surroundings, and come to learn about the building and its locale through this unique accommodation. We offer those staying for the first time a free CCT membership so they can learn more about our work and consider support for The Trust after their visit.

You can evaluate typical income which derives from Champing™ in the table below.

Church	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Langport, Somerset	£10,47	£2,766	£3,810	£3,128	£7,748	£4,938
Emborough, Somerset	/	£2,024	£1,378	£2,625	£5,270	/
Chiselhampton, Oxfordshire	£10,156	£2,696	£5,864	£1,705	/	/
Wolfhamcote, Warwickshire	/	£3,001	£2,214	£1,624	£4,763	£5,924
Holme Lacy, Herefordshire	/	£4,369	£4,759	£1,004	£7,501	£4,144
TOTAL	£20,628	£14,856	£18,025	£10,086	£25,282	£15,006