



Dedham Church Organ Group Report and Proposal

March 2020

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Dedham: St Mary the Virgin

Organ Group Report

Introduction

In the summer of 2018 following Mr Antony Watson's article in the Parish Magazine, an Organ Group was formed with the specific remit to explore all the options for a solution to the problem of our ailing Hill organ, and to make a recommendation based on their findings to the PCC.

The group consisted of Mr Antony Watson, Director of Music, Mrs Lynne Al-Sad, Mrs Caro McShane, Mrs Sarah Oakley, Mrs Margaret Kitson who became secretary and Mr Richard Hopkins, chairman, appointed by Rev Wilson. Due to pressure of work Mr Richard Hopkins has played no part since January 2019.

Recommendation

It is the unanimous decision of the Organ Group that a fine pipe organ with a good pedigree from a redundant church be obtained, for refurbishment and installation in Dedham Church, maintaining the current configuration.

Project Information

No one should underestimate the enormity and complexity of the task given to the Organ Group by the PCC, nor the amount of research and man hours it has taken. Organs whether they be pipe or digital are extremely complex and take time to understand.

The group consulted widely for both pipe and digital options.

Those consulted were: -

Dr David Frostick - DAC Organ Adviser and Voicer

Canon Nicholas Thistlethwaite - leading Independent Organ Consultant

David Mason - Chairman Viscount Organs

Andrew Caskie - Managing Director Nicholson & Co Ltd.

Geoff McMahan - Managing Director Mander Organs Ltd

Andrew Reid - Managing Director Harrison & Harrison Ltd

Philip Prior - Professional musician including organ accompanist and lately Director of Music Coggeshall Church

Peter Lee - Professional musician specialising in organs, Director of Music Eye Parish Church and formerly Director of Music at East Harling Church

Andrew Stevens - our current independent organ builder

Paul Arkwright - Managing Director Allen Organs

Richard Copeland - Consultant Church Organ World

Rob Hann - Lead for Waltham Abbey Organ Project.

The Existing Organ

In 1975, our Hill Pipe Organ of 1875 was moved to its present location by Bishops of Ipswich. The instrument was rebuilt and reduced from a 3 manual to a 2 manual and a new console added.

In 1995 a new solid static transmission system was added. With these alterations, the organ is no longer an historic organ.

Unless there are electrical problems, the organ will not suddenly stop, but will become more unreliable and difficult to maintain.

Initially it was thought the organ could be restored, but on conclusive advice, it has reached the end of its natural life and is not worth restoring.

The following 3 options became the only options

1 A new or largely new pipe organ

2 A fine pipe instrument from another church.

3 A digital replacement

Pipe Organ Comparison Chart

Company Name	Proposal	Cost Excluding VAT	Quotation expiry date	Exclusions	All Other Important Information
Mander Organs Ltd	To provide a 23 stops organ in accordance with the details and exclusion on the proposal dated 10 May 2019	£338,415	31 December 2020	1 Board & Lodging & provision of working conditions for staff engaged on site dismantling, installation and tonal finishing as per HMRC & IBO/GMB union working rules agreement 2 VAT 3 Scaffolding, hoists or lifting gear 4 Any building work. 5 Work requiring a qualified electrician 6 Work relating to dangerous substances e.g. asbestos 7 Down time 8 Any other unforeseen problems	See separate sheet for detailed pipe organ exclusion notes
Nicholson & Co Ltd	To replace the present instrument with a wholly new or largely new instrument as per the proposal and exclusions of 8 January 2020	£240,000	31 December 2020	As above	As above
Nicholson & Co Ltd	To build a new organ at the east end on the floor of the church reusing the best of the existing pipework with a new detached console as per the proposal and exclusions of January 2020	£315,000	31 December 2020	As above	As above
Nicholson & Co Ltd	To relocate and rebuild the 1902 Binns organ from Mossparish Church to St Mary's Dedham as per the proposal and exclusions of March 2020	£176,287 Optional Additions £12,128 removal of Dedham organ £3,971 mobile platform Total £192,386	31 December 2020	As above plus Transport cost between Glasgow, workshop and Dedham Making good area around console or pipe work in Glasgow Scaffold, hoist or lifting gear in Glasgow Skips for disposal of existing organ	As above
Harrison & Harrison Ltd	To build a new organ in the current case, reusing the best of the existing pipework as described in their proposal and exclusions of 29 January 2020	£356,150	31 December 2020	As above plus Transport costs between the church and their workshop Blower refurbishment	As above

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To relocate the Binns organ from Harvest Church, formerly Mossparish Parish Church, to St Mary's Dedham - March 2020

Makers Name	Digital Organ	Costing including VAT	Price Information	Exclusions	All Other Important Information
Copeman Hart	3 manual 50 draw stops with 59 ranks. Bespoke purpose-built organ Minimum 27 speakers	Console £85,000 24 Speakers + 3 Woofers £20,265 - £35,264 Total Cost £110,00 - £120,264	Prices as of 13 February 2020 Price rise likely in 2020	1 Removal and disposal of existing pipe organ 2 VAT 3 Scaffolding, hoist and lifting gear as required 4 Any building work as a result of removal or installation of the organ 5 Work requiring a qualified electrician 6 Transmission cable	See separate sheet for detailed digital organ exclusion notes
Viscount Organs	3 manual 49 speaking draw stops Bespoke purpose-built organ 20 external speakers and 2 sub bass speakers	Around £100,000 Costs will vary depending on the value of the £ to the €	Price as of 13 February 2020	As above	As above
Allen Organs	G230 standard instrument with 4 speakers and 2 bass cabinet speakers. Draw stops & other identified extras costed	£50,325.00	Prices valid until 20 April 2020	As above	As above
Allen Organs	G340 standard instrument with 4 speakers and 2 bass cabinet speakers. Drawstops & other identified extras.	£58,115.00	Prices valid until 20 April 2020	As above	As above

A New or Largely New Pipe Organ

For practical purposes, the Organ Group recommendation would be to retain the current organ configuration.

The 3 companies approached for design quotations were Mander Organs Ltd, Nicholson & Co Ltd, and Harrison and Harrison Ltd. -all IBO accredited.

Timings & Procedures: - Every organ builder has an order book and work is based on a first come first served basis. To procure a place in the queue, a contract must be signed at which point a fee is paid, usually 10%. From this point there is no going back, the church is committed. No further monies are paid until the work has started; the remaining balance being paid in instalments over the work schedule.

The current indications are that work would begin in approx. 2½ - 3 years' time.

Costings are time limited until end of December 2020 and are subject to annual increment, based on the rate of inflation. Over the last 10 or more years, this has averaged out to a rate increase of 3.25% on a year on year basis.

VAT is payable on an invoice by invoice basis and should be able to be reclaimed providing the work fall into the strict criteria for reclaiming the VAT issued by HMRC and in line with the Listed Places of Worship Scheme:- e.g. console must be fixed to the church floor and not on a moving platform as at present - a console costs in the region of at least £50,000 + VAT.

Health & Safety: - The weight and weight distribution of a new or reconditioned organ must be accurately calculated to ensure the existing platform is strong enough, or if not, strengthened if required. This requires the services of a structural engineer.

The issue of asbestos or other hazardous materials has been raised although it is not thought to be present.

Organ Adviser and Project Management

The Organ Group have been advised that this is essential to have an organ adviser to oversee the project, with costs typically 5%. Several names have been recommended.

An independent organ adviser is appointed by and on behalf of the PCC only. Most larger projects (say £200,000 upwards) tend to have one, but smaller projects tend not.

An adviser can provide:

- Independent advice.
- Give the PCC confidence that what the organ builder is saying is true.
- Raise concern to the PCC if the organ builder is not performing well and help to deal with that.
- Help the PCC to understand wider implications of any decisions that are required during the course of the work.

<https://www.aioa.org.uk/services/service3.php>

For avoidance of doubt, this is a different role from the Diocesan Organ Adviser. The DOA's role is to advise the DAC on faculty matters concerning organs in their diocese, and not to advise churches. However, most DOAs like to offer at least outline help to churches themselves.

A project manager is also essential, though this could be a member or members of the church management team. He/she oversees the day to day management ensuring all the elements are in place at the correct time, i.e. Health and Safety Regulations are adhered to liaises with the Wardens and Rev Wilson regarding church closure signing of time sheets etc.

In total the project is estimated to take between 6- 9 months, during which the church has no organ.

If available, companies may provide a digital replacement, free or at peppercorn rent. Alternatively, the church can elect to hire a digital organ, an example of such costing is £750.00 + VAT for installation+ £75.00 +VAT per week to hire.

Advantages

All the materials are new apart from some pipework

The specification is tailor made

Disadvantages

The sound the instrument will not be known until the organ is finished and installed

Very expensive

More expensive than a fine pipe organ with a good pedigree from a redundant church. It will not last any longer than a fine pipe organ from a redundant Church

None of the existing instrument recycled other than perhaps a few pipes.

6-9 months with no organ and disruption to the normal activities of the church.

A fine pipe organ with a good pedigree from a redundant church be obtained for refurbishment and installation in Dedham Church

The Organ Group are in total agreement.

This is the best option and our unanimous recommendation to the PCC.

Of the 3 companies chosen, only Nicholson offered this as a more affordable option, although Harrison & Harrison had also considered this. Following a meeting with Philip Prior and discussions with Andrew Stevens, Peter Lee and Andrew Caskie this option now seems the most viable. East Harling Church and Eye Parish Churches have very successfully done this type of project, overseen by Peter Lee, currently Director of Music at Eye Parish Church.

In choosing such an instrument the following must be considered: -

- 1 A fine Edwardian or Victorian Organ of good pedigree.
- 2 The sound of the instrument in its current position.
- 3 The condition of the instrument and the expected renovation costs.
- 4 Will it fit into the current organ loft?
- 5 Does it have the correct configuration for our needs i.e. detached console etc.

Currently, this type of project has gained popularity: -

- 1 It is much cheaper.
- 2 It reuses the parts already there- recycles and breathes new life into an old instrument.
3. The sound is the same as before.
- 4 Preserving an historic organ made by one of the finest organ builders of the day.
- 5 Installing an historic organ back in the church.
- 6 The final value of the organ is greater than the money spent.
- 7 The cost of procuring the instrument is minimal.
8. An indefinite lifetime if properly maintained.
9. The Church is not faced with months of disruption as is the case with a new organ.
- 10 Much easier project for the church to manage.
- 11 The amount of time without an organ is minimised.

There is an abundance of redundant pipe organs available.

To find an organ that will meet our needs, which has a detached console, no speaking façade pipes, in good condition which will fit into our organ case is not going to be easy.

One possible contender has been identified by Nicholson which is available from Harvest Church, formerly Mossbank Parish Church Glasgow.

Binns Organ from Harvest Church, formerly Mossspark Parish Church Glasgow

This organ was made in 1902 by James Joseph Binns of Leeds. Pre - 1913 was the firm's best period of manufacture - and the instrument comes with a fine pedigree and is the correct configuration for Dedham Church.

The organ received minor modifications in 1953 by Henry Willis & Sons one of the world's renowned organ builders. Whilst the instrument is generally in fine condition, it will need restoring and electrifying.

The group have made contact with Harvest Church to express a possible interest. Nicholson have returned to Dedham Church to take measurements and ascertain whether this instrument would be suitable, and to prepare a report and proposal including a quotation. The organ will fit into existing organ loft.

Costings

For the work as stated in their quotation £176,287 + VAT

Optional additions to include removal of present Dedham organ £12,128

Optional addition to place the console on a mobile platform £3,971

TOTAL £192,386

Exclusion

Dismantling Glasgow Organ. Board & Lodging Approx.	£2,250
Installation at Dedham Board & Lodging Approx.	£5,400
Dismantling Dedham Organ. Board & Lodging Approx.	£2,250
Transportation costs	£3,300 - £4,000
Electrics Approx.	£3,000
Harvest Church Glasgow Approx.	£1,500
TOTAL	£17,700 - £18,400
+ scaffolding + skips	

Nicholson costs	£192,386
Exclusion costs	£17,700 - £18,4000

Grand Total	£210,086 - £210,786
VAT+ scaffolding + skips	

Before making any decision, it is vitally important Mr Watson plays the instrument to assess its tonality.

This is a huge decision and we must take advice from Mr Watson and other professionals to ensure we get the correct instrument.

Electrician to enable assessment of the tonal qualities of organ with a view to perhaps purchase		Liaison between Dedham & Harvest Church Glasgow	
Removal of Organ in Glasgow	Nicholson	Dedham PCC responsible to seek agreement with Church in Glasgow to dismantle and remove the organ	Included in proposal price £176,287
Scaffolding, lift and hoist gear		Dedham to fund	
Electrician		Dedham to fund	Approx. cost £1,500
All associated work to make good from removal of organ		Dedham to fund	Approx. cost £1,500
Man - nights in Glasgow	Reqd. for Nicholson staff	Dedham to fund	Approx. £2,250
Transport organ to Malvern	Removal lorry Nicholson to arrange	Dedham to fund	Approx. cost £1,800-£2,000
Expected date to start restoration	Nicholson to store organ		Late 2022
Work on restoration as per proposal	Nicholson	Payments by instalments as per contract	6 months Completion around June 2023
Transport organ to Dedham	Removal lorry - Nicholson to arrange	Dedham to fund	Approx. cost £1,500-£2,000
Removal of Dedham Organ	Nicholson	Dedham to fund	£12,128
Skip Hire	Dedham	Dedham to fund	
Installation as per proposal	Nicholson		Included in proposal Completed about August 2023
Man- nights for removal of organ + installation etc	Reqd. for Nicholson staff	Dedham to fund	Removal Approx. £2,250 Installation Approx. £5,400
Scaffolding lift and hoist gear	Dedham	Dedham to fund	
Electrician	Dedham	Dedham to fund	Approx. cost £1,500
Any structural work including strengthening the organ platform		Dedham to fund	
Tonal finishing & pipework tuning and a settling down	Nicholson	Payment by instalments and final payment	Included in proposal

Digital Organ Comparison Chart

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Detailed Digital Organ Exclusion Notes

1. Removal and Disposal of existing pipe organ. This is in the region of £8,000 - £12,000+ VAT + scaffolding. This figure is a guide price and not a firm quote.
2. VAT is payable on all digital organs and is not reclaimable. VAT may be reclaimable on some parts of the project under the Listed Places of Worship Scheme.
3. Scaffolding, hoists or lifting gear. The companies do have some scaffolding, but it is not known if this enough for the installation of the speakers. This will not be known until a survey is done by a chosen company. Any additional scaffolding is the responsibility of the church, having liaised with the organ company as to their precise requirements. Equipment must conform to Health & Safety Regulations.
4. Any building work necessary for the project.
5. Work of a qualified electrician is the responsibility of the church and to ensure one is available on the date requested by the contractor – expected time duration approx. 1 day and payment by the church to the individual.
6. Transmission cable.
7. Health & Safety issues as regards working with dangerous substances and asbestos – responsibility of the church.
8. Any other unforeseen problems that arise during the project.

Digital Organ

An offer has been made to the PCC to procure funding for a digital instrument of £80,000-£100,000, available until 2025.

There is a huge range of sizes, specifications, speakers (quality and number required) and costs.

A new console in the current position, transmission cable and speakers would be installed. To create as near an authentic sound as possible, the speakers would be located in the current organ case, behind the façade pipes.

As with a pipe organ, calculations would need to be made regarding weights and suitability/strength of the platform, and a survey regarding hazardous materials (asbestos etc).

A church the size of Dedham will require an instrument of considerable size and volume, with at least 20 high-quality speakers.

Life expectancy – widely different reports ranging from 20-30 years. Manufacturer warranty for parts – 10 years is the norm. The first components to experience problems are the speakers, which degrade from the outset, and do not particularly suit the cold and high levels of humidity found in old churches. High and low notes are also reported as being particularly problematical.

Acoustic qualities – the sound quality of digital instruments is generally inferior to the pipe organ sound they try to replicate. The sound is 'sampled' i.e. computer generated and is often synthetic in quality. It is said that the average congregation member will not be able to tell the difference, but it has been reported that with such instruments, there have been problems with reduced congregations who have become 'bored' with the sound. It has been reported that choirs have issues with singing in tune. From personal experience, Mr Antony Watson has found that distortion of the sound at high volume renders the sound very unpleasant.

Trial instruments – the Organ Group believe that each company approached should, (subject to the relevant temporary faculty from the DAC) be invited to install a trial instrument, on well publicised dates each lasting several weeks, in order that the congregation be given the opportunity to express their views. A substantial scaffolding gantry would be required to elevate the speakers to as near to the organ gallery as possible, (cost of scaffolding unknown).

Viscount Organs will charge £600 + VAT + Scaffolding

Allen Organs £200 per week + VAT with 2 speakers up front near the console (though not likely to give a true sense of the sound that will eventually come from the organ loft.

Copeman Hart – to be discussed, but generally no charge.

Organ construction – building the organ takes between 3-6 months depending on the company.

Installation - typically 2 days, once the organ loft has been cleared.

A percentage of the money is paid when the contract is signed with the remainder when installation is complete.

Advantages

Cheaper to buy.

Opportunity to hear before purchase.

Less impact on the building during installation.

Largely maintenance free, though with annual service required, and software updates.

Disadvantages

More expensive to run.

Generally poorer sound quality compared to a well-maintained pipe organ.

Problems regarding degradation of speakers, and potentially outdated electronics.

Reported short life expectancy compared to a Pipe Organ.

VAT is payable on digital organs and is not redeemable.

The Organist's Perspective

Given the modest financial remuneration available to organists, one of the major factors in retaining and recruiting organists of any calibre is the availability of a fine instrument to play.

It is important to enjoy the many hours of rehearsal and practice needed to sustain the life of a busy parish church with a choral tradition, and a busy wedding schedule. This is unlikely to be provided with the provision of a digital instrument.

It is also difficult to imagine that such an instrument would attract potential recitalists, resulting in the loss of potential revenue for concerts/recitals.

As previously stated, the current Director of Music, Mr Antony Watson is opposed to such an instrument.

This option is therefore NOT recommended by the Organ Group.

Fundraising Ideas

This is not part our remit, but we had thoughts as a group. These are broad brush headings

Friends of Dedham Church

Members on the electoral roll

a one-off donation or standing order scheme - there is a precedent for this with the friends and the tower steps. Also established practice within many Churches in fund raising projects.

Tourism - visitors to the church

Local shops

Local business and corporate sponsors

School

Fund raising events

Grants and charities & trusts

Parish Council and other local groups

Sponsorship e.g. sponsor a pipe

Advert in national organ magazine about the project and how to sponsor including sponsor a pipe.

Dedham Massachusetts

Secure websites including secure banking, Just Giving

A robust fund-raising plan specifically aimed at raising a considerable amount of money be drawn up.

A new group would be formed specifically for this purpose