



Reverend David Parry  
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## **Conwy St Benedict Church**

Dear Reverend Parry

Following our tuning and inspection visit on 29<sup>th</sup> June, we have pleasure in reporting on the organ's condition.

The Organ was built by Charles Whiteley of Chester for Victoria Road Chapel, Wrexham. At some point in history the instrument was moved to Aberconwy School and subsequently moved to St Benedict's. It has mechanical key and stop action to its single manual of 54 notes, and is a lovely example of Whiteley's work.

Originally foot blown, an electric blower has been fitted at some point but most, if not all, of the original mechanical blowing apparatus is stored inside the organ under the reservoir.

It would appear that nothing has been done to the instrument other than routine tuning and maintenance for some considerable time although some new buttons and cloths have been fitted, probably during one of the relocations. The organ is playable but there are ongoing problems with the original bar coverings becoming detached in places, from time to time, and requiring re-gluing and patching. There were slight runnings detected in the treble regions on both the Open and Principal.

The pitch of the organ is slightly sharp, A448 @ 66F, but this may be able to be brought slightly closer to concert pitch during a general Clean and Overhaul.

Mention was made of relocating the instrument, which also offers a most cost effective way of attending to repairs, and there are several potential sites for moving the organ elsewhere within the Church:

1. Keep the organ at the west end but turn it around ninety degrees against the north wall.
2. Move it into the north transept.
3. The possibility of it fitting in the recess on the north side near the crossing.

In short, this instrument is a rare, and lovely, example of a Charles Whiteley Chamber Organ and is well worth preserving. It is adequately sized in both appearance and power for its current location but the time is fast approaching for serious consideration with regard to essential repair/restorative work.

Moving the organ to another site within the church without attending to the various issues outlined would cost in the region of £6,000 plus vat, however many would regard this as a missed opportunity.

To dismantle the organ in its entirety, perform a general Clean and Overhaul to the whole organ, with full restoration of the soundboard, releather the reservoir, and install the organ in a new position in Church, would cost in the region of £37,000 plus vat. This is inclusive of all costs of transport, accommodation etc. and would leave the organ in first class playing order for the next 50 years and more.

Although I would put a full loss value of £125,000 on this organ, there is little market indeed for re-selling organs, even rare ones like this. Should there be someone interested in buying it, I'd have thought no more than a few thousand pounds.

Yours sincerely,

*David Wells*