

6. PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

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Amendments

August 2013. 6.3 Website added for locating building surveyors.

February 2016 Appendices 6B & 6C: annual testing of lightning conductors required.

Energy conservation with cavity wall insulation and condensing gas boilers.

6.4 Record Keeping

It is good practice for all parishes to keep an inventory with photographs of all moveable items belonging to the church. These should be valued and revised annually. A Property Maintenance Record should also be kept, which details any work of maintenance, alteration, addition, removal or repair. This book should be made available at fabric inspections to give an accurate record to the surveyor.

The Parish Finance Committee should include a person with the relevant expertise to assist the parish priest with building maintenance, and in liaising with the surveyor and any builders used.

6.5 Preparing for Inspection

The surveyor should consult with the parish on the following matters before his/her arrival:

Ladders - Ladders with attendant labour should be provided to give access to all roofs and gutters externally, and to reach roof structures internally. It is normally easiest to ask a builder to provide these at a particular time.

Keys - All places normally kept locked should be open for the inspection.

Record Books - The Property Maintenance Record should be available.

Leakages - Notes should be made of any recent leaks that have occurred, or any other defects which need to be investigated more thoroughly.

Bells - Where there are bells, these should be rung down.

Proposed Works - The surveyor should be informed of any alterations being contemplated to the fabric or fittings, as these may affect the recommended priorities in the report. (Any structural alterations, or major repairs, will, of course, need to be approved in the normal manner through the Diocesan Finance Committee).

The surveyor will welcome a short discussion with the Parish priest and/or the appointed member of the Parish Finance Committee. Thereafter, the surveyor should be left free to get on with the inspection.

6.6 Inspection Report

It should be a general report on the church and its furnishings concentrating in particular on its state of maintenance and repair. It should be written as far as possible in non-technical language, so that the parish priest and members of the Parish Finance Committee can understand what work needs to be done to keep the building in good order. In most cases, the Report will include a list of works that should be done within the next five years, arranged in order of priority with an indication of cost. The Quinquennial Inspection is NOT intended to be a full survey which would be expensive for the parish, and demanding a great deal of time. It is also thought to be unnecessary as the Inspection is carried out every five years. A suggested form that the report should take is given in Appendix 6A attached.

It should not, on the other hand, be a perfunctory list of problems and remedies. Rather it should aim to give a rounded 'portrait' of the church and its contents.

The Quinquennial Inspection Report is not a specification – that is to say, it is not a document written by the professional and addressed to a builder or other contractor, telling him what work is to be done and how s/he should do it.

6.6 Inspection Report - continued

In these days of the computer, some professionals may be tempted to overload their reports with routine matter, repeated from church to church and from quinquennium to quinquennium; such information may well be useful to the parish, but if it is not, it should be excluded.

Quinquennial Inspection Reports vary greatly in the elaborateness of their presentation. While photographs – especially those of particular defects in inaccessible places – may be helpful to the Parish Finance Committee, their inclusion should not be allowed to increase unduly the cost of the Report.

The inclusion of an item in the Quinquennial Inspection Report does not exempt the parish from referring expenditure over £7,500 to the Diocesan Finance Committee for approval.

In addition to the inspection of the building's fabric, the surveyor should arrange for inspections of the gas heating systems and appliances by a Gas Safe registered contractor and the electrical wiring and lighting by a NICEIC registered electrician. The inspection of the gas heating systems should be part of an annual maintenance contract. From May 2004, all churches, halls and preferably presbyteries should be surveyed for asbestos; for details see PAM Section 13 "Health & Safety".

The surveyor should issue his/her report to the parish priest, and to send a copy (both hard by post & soft by email) direct to the Vicar General.

6.7 Action to be taken

The parish, through the parish priest, and the Parish Finance Committee, will be responsible for the carrying out of repairs, and budgeting for their costs. Expenditure in excess of £7,500 requires the prior approval of the Diocesan Finance Committee.

6.8 Routine Maintenance

A routine maintenance programme is recommended for cleaning out all the valleys, gutters, drainpipes, gullies and drainage channels at least twice a year. A suggested programme is attached – Appendix 6B. Regular checks between quinquennial inspections will minimise the risk of problems developing – see Appendix 6C. A separate set of recommendations to prevent damage by frost is contained in Appendix 6D.

Parishes are recommended to use a reputable local builder on a regular basis, rather than a variety of operatives. The builder can then liaise with the person in the parish who is responsible for maintenance of the buildings, and probably deal with the work required following the surveyor's report. A good builder used consistently even though he might prove to be more expensive than casual people could be a great asset to a parish. Nonetheless, every few years competitive quotes should be obtained to ensure that charges are reasonable. The parish should be aware of the Health & Safety CDM. Regulations. (see Section 7 on "Building and Repair Projects").

6.9 Listed Buildings

The particular responsibility for the maintenance of listed buildings must be emphasised. For all work other than repairs on a like-for-like basis an application has to be made to the Historic Churches Committee for listed churches or churches in conservation areas. For all other listed buildings (including presbyteries and halls) parishes must apply to the local planning authority for listed building consent. For a more detailed description of the functions of the Historic Churches Committee see Section 7 on "Buildings and Repair Projects".

1. General Condition of the fabric.

1. Main walls, inside and out, including notes on settlement, pointing, dampness, and condition of plaster internally.
2. Tower and Spire
3. Windows, glazing and ventilation. Louvres, doors and ironmongery.
4. Bells and bell frame, clocks etc. A general note on their condition and stability. The moving parts of bells, including ropes, should fall outside the scope of the quinquennial report. The Tower Captain should check the moving parts of the bells annually, and his report should be kept with the Property Repair Record.
5. Lightning conductor (tested by specialist contractor).
6. Roofs, structure and covering – the condition of the coverings, flashings and pointing, the state of the timbers, including the presence of fungal rot or woodborers.
7. Rainwater gutters, downpipes and disposal systems.
8. Soils and waste water drainage systems, and ground gutter systems.
9. Interior, including partitions, walls, ceilings, doors, stairs, etc.
10. Floors and galleries.
11. Fixtures and fittings.
12. Gas heating system, including boiler, flue and fuel storage. Installations and appliances (tested by CORGI registered contractor).
13. Electrical installation and lighting (tested by NICEIC registered electrician).
14. Asbestos survey
15. Decorative condition inside and out.
16. Sanitary accommodation and its suitability.
17. Fire protection and security (tested by special contractor).
18. Access for the disabled.
19. Health and Safety at Work issues, including glazing.
20. Works of Art, memorials, tombstones, statues, etc.
21. Boundary walls, including fences, gates, paths and trees.
22. The grounds surrounding the church, including car parks.
23. Other matters not already covered.

Note: Note 14:- Pressure vessels for heating/water supply need an annual check by a specialist contractor.

1. General Condition of the fabric.

Works of Repair

In order of priority, by the following definitions with indications of cost:

- A Of utmost urgency
- B Essential, within the next 12 months
- C Essential, within the quinquennial
- D Eventual, ie. desirable in the future, repairs, renewals, and redecoration

Recommendations

With regard to the care of the building and its maintenance.

Limitations of the survey

Any limitations of the survey should be stated in the appropriate section, eg. Sealed roof spaces, boarded floors, foundations etc. which are impossible to inspect. Recommendations can be made for opening up areas if it is considered necessary.

The parish priest is reminded that the report is not a specification of works, and that, should it be decided to put any work in hand, further instructions must be given to the surveyor.

The report should bear the signature of the surveyor and be dated.

CALENDAR OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ITEMS OF PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

January	Visually check gutters, rainwater downpipes, gullies and roofs.
February	Visually check roofs. Clear any concealed valleys in roofs. Test all smoke detectors.
March	Test all portable electrical appliances.
April	Remove all ivy and other vegetation from walls. Spray weedkiller around base of church on paths.
May	Check roofs of church for insect attack; check all timber and furniture and treat if necessary.
June	Check electrical installation and carry out necessary maintenance.
July	Remove any weeds that have grown round the base of the church and its walls.
August	Check heating and carry out annual maintenance. Check fire extinguishers and maintain. Check all smoke detectors.
September	Visually check gutters, downpipes and gullies. Annual check of gas installations and appliances by CORGI Registered contractor.
October	Rod drains. Inspect roofs for leaks.
November	Oil all locks and hinges. Check boundary walls, gates and trees. Test gutters, rainwater pipes and gullies, by flushing with water.
December	Visually check all gutters, downpipes and gullies.
Annually	Test lightning conductor
Every 2/3 years	Clean down all internal decorated surfaces.
Every 5 years	Test electrical installations Redecorate external wood and metal work.
Every 7 years	Internal decoration.

Regular checks of various parts of the building and prompt maintenance can pay dividends in preventing potentially more serious and costly repairs. The following check list is not intended to be definitive or full comprehensive, but is intended to be a simple, easy to follow maintenance guide.

Roof

- ® Roof slopes and coverings, for example tiles, slates – particularly after severe weather conditions, check for slipped, cracked or badly damaged tiles/slates.
- ® Cement pointing at the roof edges. Make sure that this is kept in good condition.
- ® Remove lichen and other moss growth from tiles/slates if this becomes heavy. Care is required as old clay tiles can be damaged by shaling.
- ® Flat roofs, normally covered in felt or metal are prone to defects. Felt in particular has a limited life. Whenever possible, try to avoid walking or standing ladders on flat roofs as the coverings can be very easily damaged.
- ® Check flashings and valley gutters or hidden gutters for blockages and leaks. Valley gutters are particularly prone to defects and should be cleaned out at regular intervals.
- ® Make sure that the chippings to flat roofs remain evenly laid and clear away any heavy moss or lichen growth as this can retain moisture.
- ® Keep chimney pots and cowls in good order and ensure that the brickwork cement joints are in good condition.
- ® Gutters often become blocked with leaves, weeds or debris and should be cleaned out on a regular basis. Replace or repair any missing or defective sections immediately in order to protect the property.

Loft

- ® Check for bird ingress or wasps nests. In very rare cases where bats are found, remember that they are a protected species. Obtain specialist advice.
- ® Check condition of water storage tanks and pipework and ensure they are properly covered and lagged.

Walls

- ® Dampness can penetrate through defective mortar joints or hairline cracks in the rendering. Although very fine surface cracks may appear insignificant, it is always sensible to fill them to be on the safe side.
- ® Ensure that the cement mortar around the waste pipes is in good condition.
- ® Use a pliable waterproof mastic sealant to close up any gaps around the window or door frames.
- ® Never bridge a damp course by building up external paving levels or garden borders. A sensible guide is to keep external levels at two brick courses below damp course level, or inside floor level.

- ® Never render walls down to external ground level as this is likely to bridge any damp-proof course. Always finish the rendering in a properly formed bell cast.
- ® Water may get behind poor rendering which could lead to dampness. Any cracked or loose areas or rendering should be repaired or replaced.
- ® Remove ivy or other climbing plants in particular from walls and gutters. Such plants can damage stone/brickwork and retain moisture in the wall.
- ® Do not allow any sub-ground floor air bricks to become blocked. Failure to do so will prevent adequate air flow and could lead to decay.
- ® Check water downpipes for splits or leaky joints.

External Woodwork

- ® Paint/restain window frames and other joinery at regular intervals.
- ® Periodically check window and door frames and repair any timbers affected by wet rot. Regular painting will help avoid the timber becoming rot affected.
- ® Replace broken or damaged sash cords or window latches.
- ® Renew cracked or broken panes of glass and replace missing or loose putties before redecoration.

Electrics, Heating and Plumbing

- ® The electrical installation should be checked by a qualified NICEIC electrician at least every five years as the system can deteriorate with age and regulations are being constantly updated.
- ® Take qualified advice before making any alteration to the electrical wiring system.
- ® Lightning conductors must be tested annually to appropriate British Standard
- ® Locate external and internal stop cocks in the event of an emergency.
- ® Check the plumbing pipework and waste pipes for joint leaks and from time to time clean out bath, sink and wash basin traps. Reseal joints around shower bases and other appliances.
- ® Clean through overflow pipes from water tanks or cisterns.
- ® Arrange for central heating boilers, water heaters and heating appliances to be regularly serviced to maximise efficiency. For gas appliances: must be a Gas Safe Registered contractor.
- ® Clear blocked soakaways or gulleys. Blockages in a drainage system may be cleared by rodding or pressure hosing.
- ® All fire extinguishers should be tested annually by a specialist contractor.
- ® All smoke detectors should be tested at least twice annually.
- ® All portable appliances should be tested annually by a qualified tester.

- ® Shrubs and trees can be damaging to the fabric of the property and so their growth needs to be restricted. Keep soil, trees and shrubs away from outside walls wherever possible.
- ® Cut back any wall climbing plants as they can damage walls and can encourage damp penetration.
- ® Sheds and fences should be treated with timber preservative every three to four years.

Energy Conservation

- ® The thermal efficiency of your property can often be improved at relatively modest cost. These measures can often result in an improved internal environment, reduced carbon dioxide emissions and lower fuel bills. Such measures include:
 - Draught exclusion to windows and external doors.
 - Proper insulation of hot water cylinders and lagging of water pipes.
 - Check the loft insulation is thick enough, but make sure that gaps are left at the eaves to allow sufficient ventilation at the roof space and remove from below water storage tanks. Consider installing cavity wall insulation.
 - Ensure the heating controls are effective, e.g. consider the use of automatic time clock controls, thermostatic radiator valves, thermostatic cylinder controls etc. Consider changing to a condensing gas boiler.
 - Double or secondary glazing of windows. Under latest Building Regulations (April 2002) replacement windows (domestic and commercial) are controlled either by the local authority Building Regulation Department, or under the FENSA scheme as a Replacement Window Registered Member.

Damage caused to water systems, and consequent damage to building structures and contents, by prolonged exposure to low temperatures can be considerable, and inconvenient. Prevention costs very little, and the following hints will be of value:

1. Know the position of your mains and other stop taps and label them wherever possible.
2. Do not allow taps to drip, especially if your building has external waste pipes. Have the taps re-washed or re-packed.
3. Protect the ends of overflow pipes against draughts.
4. Turn off and drain down external water taps. If the building is to be unoccupied for some time, drain down the entire central heating and water supply systems.
5. Insulate any pipework externally, in roof spaces, or mounted on the inside face of external walls. Insulate cold water storage tanks, but make sure that any roof space insulation does not go underneath such tanks.
6. Where it is impractical to insulate pipes and they do not receive adequate heating, consider using an electrically heated tape controlled by a frost-stat.
7. Keep central heating ticking over if a building is unoccupied. Keep the pump running overnight when the boiler is switched off.
8. Remember that insulation materials cannot guarantee freedom from freezing under all conditions, and neither is it possible to completely drain any water system. It is therefore sensible to keep a special watch on a building's services when a thaw occurs, or a system is being refilled.
9. If a burst occurs, and a large quantity of water has been released, consult your surveyor since the damage may go beyond decoration and finishes, and may have affected the structural qualities of certain materials (notably man-made timber boards used in flooring).
10. Consider whether an insurance claim would be appropriate. Consult the Diocesan Finance Office if advice is required.