Caring for your church

&

Working with your architect or surveyor

David Bevan
Historic Church Buildings Support Officer
Caring for your church
Churches are fantastic for all sorts of reasons
Many are the oldest building in a place
Most have at least one WOW factor
We have inherited them from people who built and cared for them over centuries
We should pass them on in good condition to future generations

My dearest dust, could not thy hasty day
Afford thy drowsy patience leave to stay
One hour longer, so that we might either
Have sat up or gone to bed together?
But materials do wear out

Churches are graded very bad, poor, fair and good

All churches need programmes of repair

Historic buildings behave differently – as sponges not barriers

Patterns of use, heating and ventilation can cause damp and damage

Other harmful changes include rising ground, poor and blocked drains, hard repair materials
Many modern churches in diocese Garden Cities, New Towns and other 20th century development

Modern buildings are barriers not sponges e.g. damp proof courses introduced from Victorian times

Generally better condition than historic churches

But problems with some modern construction and materials e.g. reinforced concrete
Inspection and maintenance

‘A stitch in time saves nine’ – prevention is better than cure

Lack of inspection and maintenance can result in great damage and high costs

Lack of maintenance means that serious problems are masked

Inspections allow you to call in and brief your architect/surveyor
What’s going on?
Maintaining the envelope/outside of the church and its ability to shed water
Making sure that water is moving down and away from the building
Inspection and maintenance – the churchwarden and volunteers’ role

Understanding the building and how it works

Making regular checks and doing basic maintenance

Inspecting in the rain – does the water get away?

Clearing channels and gulleys

Clearing low gutters, hoppers and downpipes if safe (advice from Ecclesiastical, DAC, SPAB)

Observing cracks and fallen beetles

Checking the movement of gravestones twice a year
Inspection and maintenance – the contractor’s role

Twice yearly – November and May
ideal – a regular
arrangement/contract

Clearing all of rainwater disposal
system including high level valleys,
gutters, hoppers, downpipes and
possibly drains

Making a record and flagging up
other problems

Carrying out minor repairs at the same
time?

Other specialist surveys – below ground
drains, electrics, portable appliances (PAT),
asbestos, trees etc.
Past events

Church Maintenance Workshop for St Albans Parishes

Regular maintenance and how parishes and volunteers should go about it

14 April 2018 – St Andrews Church, Kimbolton Road, Bedford MK40 2PF

Programme and presentations by James Innerdale (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings) – Introduction, Maintenance, Managing Maintenance and Baseline Survey and Maintenance Plans

For information on SPAB’s Faith in Maintenance and Maintenance Co-operatives Project click here
And coming up ...

A workshop on maintenance by contractors planned for October/November

More information on maintenance to be added to our website www.stalbans.anglican.org under Church Buildings/Fundraising and Grants
Working with your architect or surveyor
Working with your professional adviser

The church architect/surveyor must have full conservation expertise and experience for historic churches.

The DAC has a list of approved professional advisers for quinquennial (five year) inspections and reports.

Continuity and an established relationship have many benefits.

But you may have a new type of project or want a change for another reason.
Selecting your professional adviser

- What do you want your adviser to do – QI report, HLF application, a project etc.?
- Set clear criteria for selection
- Shortlist and interview three
- Ask for relevant references and examples of work e.g. QI reports for similar churches
- Ask for a detailed fee proposal
- Choose someone who doesn’t have to travel too far
- Choose someone you can get on with
- Select on Best Value not cost alone
Quinquennial inspections and reports

You need to give your professional adviser your log book and other information

You need to provide good access

Qi inspection reports –

Identify condition and repairs needed, plus surveys, access improvements and maintenance

Identify priorities and timescales

Reports follow a similar format but have differences
Your Quinquennial Inspection Report should –

- Be understandable – it is written for you!
- Not be too long and dense or too short and superficial
- Summarise the condition and repair/maintenance needs in a few paragraphs
- Give a clear direction – including priorities, urgency and further investigation
- Include photos of condition and repair areas
Your Quinquennial Inspection Report should also –

- Have a table of priority actions and a table of maintenance actions including those specific to your church

- Give approximate costings or bands of costings – *being encouraged*

- Include charts which show the spread of actions and (preferably) costs over say five years

- Be able to support grant bids

- Offer to meet you once you’ve read and discussed the report

Note – new QI model in summer
Once you’ve read and discussed the QI report at the PCC –

- Poor yourself a stiff drink ... then a second one ... but don’t be overwhelmed

- Meet your church architect/surveyor – make use of your adviser and don’t be afraid to ask questions

- Work together to develop a practical package of achievable, fundable priorities – I will help come up with a package which could get grant aid

Note:

- The QI report is not the detailed specification that you would need to get quotes from and instruct contractors to do the work (and get faculty approval)

- Your architect/surveyor should handle that but specifications and further surveys/investigations could be funded by a grant and carried out later

- The QI report may be enough to make grant applications
Organising your projects

- Your professional advisors help turn your ideas into a scheme
- Your architect/surveyor will have a key role in managing a project on your behalf including - selection, procurement and co-ordination of contractors and specialists; advising on and handling consultations, permissions etc.
- Your advisor has the professional knowledge and experience but you are the client and in charge!
- Keep engaged through the process, ask questions and challenge and decide as necessary
You won’t have taken all this in ...

So get in touch

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