

The Quinquennial Report



16,000 buildings. One resource



The Quinquennial Report is one of the key documents which assists the Parochial Church Council (PCC) in the care and repair of a church building, for which it is legally responsible.

It gives a snapshot of the repair needs of the building, and lists the repairs required according to their priority. It is also read by the DAC, the archdeacon and by any grant-giving bodies which the PCC approaches.

Legal framework: The Inspection of Churches Measure 1955

Each Diocesan synod must establish a scheme for the inspection and a report on the parish churches in the diocese (and other buildings that have been consecrated or are licensed for public worship) by professional advisers approved by the DAC.

Trees in the churchyard protected by a Tree Preservation Order are also to be included in the inspection.

Schemes vary from diocese to diocese, so obtain details of your diocese's scheme from the DAC Secretary.

The archdeacon can arrange for an inspection where one has not been carried out and for the inspection to cover extra matters of interest beyond the fabric if necessary; your DAC Secretary will inform you if this applies in your case.

Appointment of a professional adviser

The appointment of a professional adviser is made by each PCC. The DAC will be able to give advice on the procedure it adopts for approving appointments, such as the use of an 'approved list'.

It is important that a professional adviser's training and experience in building conservation matches up with

the problems presented in looking after the church in question.

The DAC may have suggestions on possible candidates.

Procurement

In light of new Procurement rules, PCC's should interview 3 candidates through a formal competitive appointment process.

The appointment of a professional adviser is always of an individual, not a firm.

Fees vary from diocese to diocese; in some the inspection cost is paid centrally by the Diocesan Board of Finance, in others it is paid direct by the PCC.



Again the DAC will be able to advise on arrangements within the Diocese.

If fees are borne by the PCC plan ahead by putting aside money each year to cover them.

Preparing for the inspection

Before the inspection, it is useful for the PCC to have thought about the following issues:

- Agreed the fee with the professional adviser, if not set centrally by the Diocese;
- Agree any special access arrangements, ladders to inspect the roof, additional labour etc.
- If the right ladders are not available on site, a builder should be asked to provide them for the inspection day. Provide whatever help the adviser will need with the ladders.
- Access to roofs for the inspection also gives a good opportunity for the gutters to be cleaned.
- Keys should be readily available for all parts of the building normally kept locked.
- Bells should be down on the day of the inspection. The ringers should be asked to

report on any problems with the ring.

- The professional adviser will need to see the terrier and inventory, the log book, and any other paperwork relevant to the building.
- Keep your professional adviser up to date with any initiatives in relation to energy saving and other environmental issues.

Complementary reports

It is sensible for these tests to be done before the professional adviser's inspection, so the results can be included in the main report.

- **Electrics** - It is normal practice for the electrical system to be tested every five years by an electrician who is a member of the NICEIC or the ECA.
- **Lightning conductor** to be tested by a suitable specialist.
- An energy review every few years can assist you with carbon management.
- An arboricultural report prior to the quinquennial inspection may be sensible.

The survey and report

The survey carried out by your professional adviser will cover:

- the repair of the building
- maintenance
- sustainability
- safety of the structure
- unsafe floors
- access

It will recommend further specialist reports, such as a test of the lightning conductor and report on trees in the churchyard, where necessary and should be written to a standard template found [here](#).

The report is mostly read by people without technical knowledge, so the analysis and language should be as accessible as possible.

Photographs should be used where desirable, for instance to illustrate and record the extent of decay, or to guide parishes on regular maintenance. Photographs can either be included in the first column of the tabular format, or set out in an Appendix.

The quinquennial system assumes that the adviser will access all parts of the building such as internal and external roofs where it is reasonably possible and sensible to do so.

The report will state any limitations of the survey, such





as areas where it was not possible to gain access, and make recommendations for any further investigation. The completed report should be sent to the incumbent, PCC secretary, archdeacon and DAC Secretary, preferably electronically or on a disk.

Follow-up

When the report is received, it is important for the incumbent, churchwardens and PCC to read the report and understand its recommendations.

The report is designed to be a thorough and complete assessment of the condition of the building and its report, and can therefore be a lengthy document. It is very useful for the PCC to walk round the building going through the recommendations.

The professional adviser should be willing to meet to go through the recommendations initially.

Each part of the building is described and an assessment given of the repair needs. Where action is needed, the report gives this on a scale from A to E according to the urgency of the repair:

A - Urgent, requiring immediate attention

B - Requires attention within 12 months

C - Requires attention within the next 18 - 24 months

D - Requires attention within the quinquennial period

E - A desirable improvement with no timescale

M - routine items of maintenance

Any items under category A cover urgent repair needs of the building or the safety of its users. The professional

adviser is likely to mention these at the time of the inspection and give guidance on how the problems can be addressed.

The report is not a specification of work, and most repair items will require professional advice either from the professional adviser, or an architect/surveyor of comparable experience.

Once the PCC is able to put the works in hand, therefore, it is normal practice to instruct the professional adviser, through a separate contract, to prepare a specification and seek tenders from builders of suitable experience.

The implementation of all items within the report will require a faculty, except items of maintenance or those that are included on the diocesan

list of matters that can be implemented without a faculty; the DAC Secretary will be able to advise on this.

Professional advisers should be seen as the 'family GP' as far as the care of the church is concerned. Where any problem arises with the fabric, parishes should not hesitate to get in touch.

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