

## MAINTENANCE PLANS

### Guidance for PCCs



All buildings, from the humblest garden shed to the tallest modern skyscraper, need regular maintenance in some form or other.

The more regular maintenance that we are able to carry out then the less money has to be spent correcting problems and replacing elements.

A maintenance plan is an excellent way of working out what tasks need doing when and by whom.

**“Stave off decay by daily care.”** *William Morris*  
When setting up the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877.

### Maintenance

Maintenance can be split into two categories: **Preventative**, which reduces the probability of decay, and **Corrective**, in which decayed material is renewed. For instance, keeping timber in good decorative order to help to protect the wood from rotting is Preventative, whereas renewing rotten timber is Corrective. In this example, preventative maintenance, i.e. keeping the paintwork in good order, is still required after the corrective maintenance has been carried out.

Preventative maintenance is usually cheaper than Corrective maintenance, although the reality is that we will end up carrying out both types of maintenance on our church building. However, the more preventative maintenance that can be carried out the better as this helps to prolong the life of building elements and avoid costly repairs. Keeping buildings in good condition helps to save energy, and the materials needed to repair them. We are also acting as good stewards as our buildings are in our care and trust for the next generation.

### What is the purpose of a Maintenance Plan?

A maintenance plan helps to identify those parts of the building where preventative maintenance should be carried out and when we should be doing this.

They enable congregations to systematically and regularly check their buildings and attend to problems as the need arises. Once a maintenance plan has been written it can be periodically reviewed and adapted as the need arises. It also means that valuable knowledge is not lost when office holder change/people move away etc.

Many churches need financial support from Grant Awarding Bodies to carry out repairs and some of these bodies like to see evidence that the church has a regular maintenance plan in place before they will commit funds.

### How do we produce a Maintenance Plan? What does it need to include?

Although every building is unique, there are so many common elements that a readily available template can easily be tailored to your particular church, so you don't have to start from scratch. There are examples online which can be used and adapted to your situation – see next page.

## Maintenance Plan Templates

Good, free, examples can be found on the [National Churches Trust](#) website (see under [Regular Maintenance](#)) or from the [SPAB](#) website (see under [campaigning](#)). It should be possible to adapt one of these to suit your church.

The Church Buildings Council produce a [Calendar of Care](#) which highlights what tasks should be done in which months. This is really helpful when filling out which tasks should be done in which months.

### How do we choose between a basic and a more detailed maintenance plan?

Overall, the complexity of the maintenance plan should reflect the complexity of the building. Bear in mind who is going to be using it and that a basic plan which is regularly used is far better than a complex one that is ignored.

#### 1. Basic Maintenance Plan template from National Churches Trust

This is available on the National Churches Trust website and can be downloaded as a Word version.

Frequency	Task	Responsibility	Date
<b>Weekly</b>	Check for faulty lighting internally	Eg. Churchwarden	Eg. Every Tuesday
	Safety check all areas	Churchwarden	
	Clean interior of church	Churchwarden	
<b>Monthly</b>	Check the building externally for any maintenance required eg broken or slipped tiles, leaking outside tap etc	Churchwarden	
	Check the interior for any damage to the fabric	Churchwarden	
	Risk assess all areas internally and externally	Churchwarden	
<b>Twice Yearly</b>	Inspect roof area from ground, and after every storm	Churchwarden	
	Check the rainwater goods for any signs of leaks, blockage or damage, and after every storm	Churchwarden	
	Clear rainwater goods of debris and ensure overflows are clear. Rod if necessary.	Contractor	
	Check and clear all gullies and drains	Contractor	
<b>Yearly</b>	Inspect leaded light windows and report any problems	Churchwarden	
	PAT test all portable electronic equipment	Contractor	
	Service the oil boiler	Contractor	
	Remove any vegetation from external walls and repoint as necessary	Contractor	
	Check trees for dead branches and report any problems	Churchwarden	
	Check lightning protection system and report any issues (LPS should be checked by a contractor every 2.5 years.)	Churchwarden	
<b>Five-yearly</b>	Quinquennial Inspection to be undertaken	Architect	
	Electrical inspection to be completed and complete any related advisories	Contractor	
<b>Fabric meetings</b>	The Fabric Committee to meet at least three times per year to discuss possible improvements to the environment, to review the maintenance plan, and discuss any major work that needs to be completed eg as advised in the recent Quinquennial Inspection Report or suggested by the PCC members		

Examples of how you could tailor this to your own church:

- Remove any items that don't apply and/or change to suit what you have e.g. boiler fuel
- Enter specific year against when the Quinquennial Inspection and Electric Inspection are due or were last carried out. Similarly, against yearly items, add the month.
- Add the name of contractor previously used, in the responsibility column.
- Add a column next to 'date' so as to log when it was last carried out and by whom.
- It might be that the roofs could be safely inspected from the tower or bell chamber, instead of from the ground.
- If your building has particularly problematic area(s) make sure that these are included on the maintenance plan.

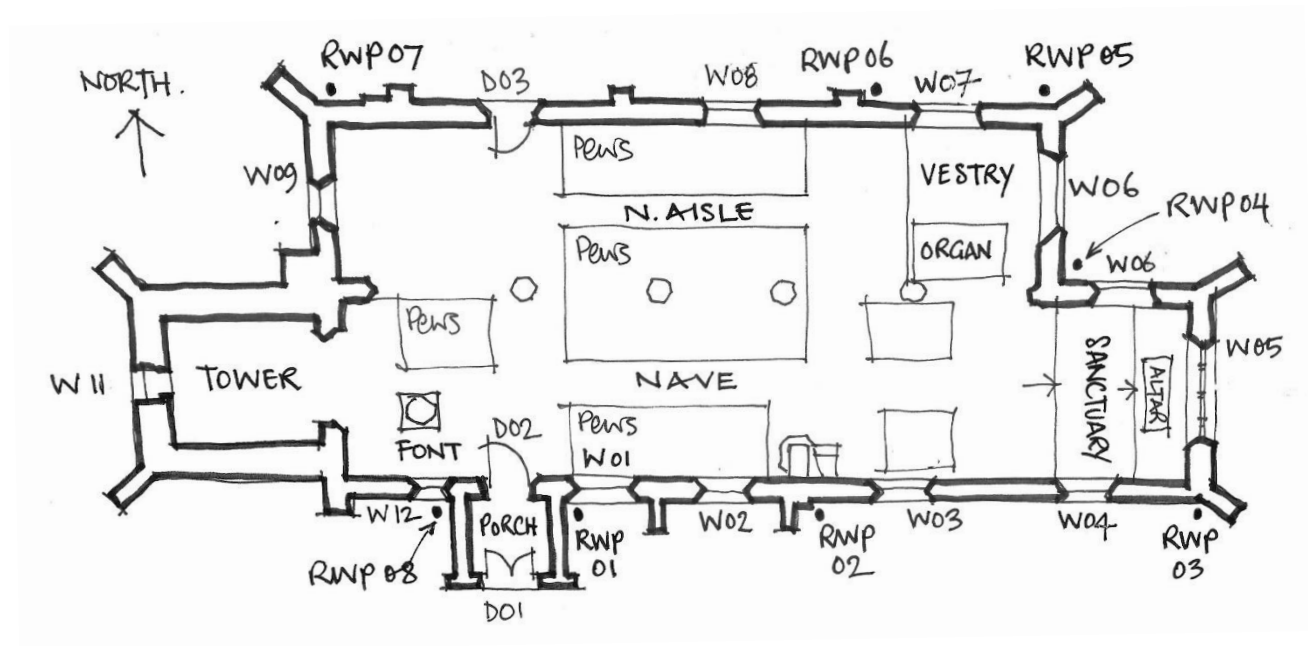
## 2. Detailed Maintenance Plans

Both the National Churches Trust and the SPAB have more detailed versions – see links above.

If these are too complex and detailed, one option would be to adapt the basic template and here are some examples of how it could be expanded:

- Schedule out areas and items to be checked, so that instead of 'all areas' as in the above example, they are all listed e.g. Nave, Chancel, Lady Chapel, Vestry, Organ Chamber, Porch etc.
- Using a plan, perhaps from the QI along with the same numbering system used in that, list all of the windows, doors and rainwater pipes (RWP's).

In this way, items are specifically looked at and checked. You could include notes e.g. RWP 08 prone to blocking



### Example of a marked up Sketch Plan of a church.

*Note that the Doors, Windows and Rainwater pipes all have references and these match the numbering system used in the QI.  
It might be possible to simply reproduce the plan from the QI.*

## Drawings and Photographs

These should accompany the maintenance plan wherever possible

- Include a sketch plan – as above. In this way, items can easily and consistently be identified and referenced.
- The different elevations of the building could be photographed and annotated using the references on the above plan. These photographs would then form part of the maintenance plan.
- Photographs are an excellent way of recording and tracking problems

## Carrying Out Maintenance: Amateur v Professional Tasks

Some tasks, particularly those at low level can often be carried out by volunteer help, for example, clearing leaves from gullies and drainage channels. Other tasks such as accessing roofs and gutter clearance are best left to professionals who have appropriate access equipment and insurance in place and are used to working at height. When you have completed your maintenance plan, it should be clear what tasks need to be carried out, by whom and when.

Establishing a culture of volunteering can be very beneficial in the community and is a great way to involve people in their heritage. It may be that people would be prepared to help out with a church working party but who wouldn't wish to come to church on a Sunday.

Taking out a regular contract with local builder or similar for gutter clearance and other tasks that volunteers cannot undertake is likely to be money well spent.

## Quinquennial Inspections (QI)

These are carried out every five years by a Professional Inspector and provide a health check of your church building. The QI may identify that expensive and essential works are necessary but this doesn't mean that regular maintenance should be stopped until these works can be afforded.

A good QI should also help you to understand if there are particular areas where problems regularly occur, especially ones that are out of sight which need monitoring. A good example could be valley gutters where the roofs come down into a 'V' and collect leaves. Unless areas such as these are regularly cleared, gutters become blocked and water leaks into church and/or starts to cause rot in the roof fabric etc.

Any problems such as these should be highlighted in your maintenance plan so that you pay particular attention to them.

## Where to get further help and advice

Your Quinquennial Inspector and/or the Church Buildings Team can provide help and advice.

Historic Churches Support Officer: Mr Simon Headley 07398 639326 [simon.headley1@leccofe.org](mailto:simon.headley1@leccofe.org)

And from the Diocesan website [www.leicester.anglican.org](http://www.leicester.anglican.org)

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