



## Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia

### Quinquennial Inspections - Advice Note for Parishes

#### Importance of Quinquennial Inspections

Parishes have a duty of care to keep their building(s) in a good state of repair, as well-cared for buildings are a part of our patrimony, to be passed on to the next generation. Poorly maintained buildings and sites are demoralising for priests, parishioners and members of the visiting public. Neglected buildings can encourage antisocial behaviour within our communities. This can lead to unnecessary expenditure and in some instances, insurances being invalid. Parishes have not only a moral obligation to persons using the properties, but a statutory and contractual responsibility to keep them in good order.

The best way to mitigate risk is through regular Quinquennial Inspections (QI), allowing the parish to manage the on-going repair and maintenance of buildings by acting on the recommendations of the inspector. All parishes should undertake a regular QI (five yearly intervals) for all operational buildings including the presbytery occupied by the parish priest; with resulting recommendations acted on as soon as possible. QIs provide the evidence of the 'need' for the works when applying for faculty and grants.

The QI should be overseen under the close direction of the Parish Priest and his Finance Committee, however, if required, the Historic Churches Support Officer can help support the parish through this process.

The QI will categorise the works required and will give an estimate of the costs of rectifying any defects identified. This allows for improved budgeting by anticipating what future works are required and what the likely costs will be.

Although the QI is a valuable tool in the management and maintenance of parish building(s), it is only an aid and should be used in addition to regular, routine maintenance. The QI will also help identify other necessary documentation required for successful building management and importantly, legal compliance (see **Appendix C** Pre-Inspection Checklist). These additional documents are required to be kept up-to-date as part of the management of parish building(s).

As always, "the more you put in the more you get out" – good preparation and involvement in the process by the Parish Priest and his parishioners will ensure the best results from the inspecting surveyor. The Quinquennial Inspection Report should be a 'living document' that is reviewed and acted at regular intervals throughout the year.

The Diocese advises establishing a Maintenance Plan to aid with building management. Please contact the Historic Churches Support Officer for advice and guidance in this process.

## Commissioning a Quinquennial Inspection

In an effort to ensure continuity of quality, content and effective identification of defects, the **QI Specification Document** has been created to help inspectors to produce QIs in a coherent format that is useful to both the Parish and the Diocese. The Specification Document is a useful document for the parish to read through before seeking to appoint an individual/company to inspect their buildings. A list of suitably qualified inspectors that have agreed for their details to be shared is in **Appendix A** of this document. If you want to use a professional that is not on this list then please contact the Historic Churches Support Officer for advice on whether they are suitably qualified.

Ask several architects / surveyors to tender for the work. As part of the tendering process ask for their fee structure for managing any works which are identified in the QI. The QI is independent from any future works and you are not obliged to use the same surveyor to manage any future works. However, using the same surveyor will allow for continuity between the survey and works. When you have identified your preferred two surveyors, you could ask them to visit your parish and meet with them in person, as they are likely to be the people that will manage any works arising from the QI. It is key that you are comfortable working with them.

The QI Specification Document outlines how the report should be formatted and information required, and must be passed onto the inspecting surveyor before any inspection takes place along with the information and documents outlined in the Pre-Inspection Checklist (**Appendix C**). Please fill this in as accurately as possible and return to the inspecting surveyor (as misinterpreted information will lead to delays). It is also a helpful tool in collating or identifying additional inspections and services as part of the overall management of parish building(s).

## Using your Quinquennial Inspection

The QI will guide you on maintenance and repair works required to the parish building(s) and the accompanying Summary Spreadsheet will list all the works with indicative costs for resolving the highlighted issues. It should be used as a 'living document' that is referred to throughout its lifespan and works programmed over the five years.

The following rating system will be used when describing each component:

Existing Condition Rating:

**Grade A** – Good, performing as intended and operating efficiently

**Grade B** – Satisfactory, performing as intended but exhibiting minor deterioration

**Grade C** – Poor, exhibiting major defects and/or not operating as intended

**Grade D** – Bad, life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure

## Priority Grading

**Priority 1** – Urgent works that will prevent immediate closure of premises and/or address and immediate high risk to the H&S of occupants and/or remedy a serious breach of legislation

**Priority 2** - Essential work required within 2 years that will prevent serious deterioration of the fabric or services and/or address a medium risk to the H&S of occupants and/or remedy a minor breach of legislation

**Priority 3** – Desirable work required within 3-5 years that will prevent deterioration of the fabric or services

**Priority 4** – Long term work required outside the five year period that will prevent the deterioration of the fabric and services.

The priority of the repairs will refer to the actual defect; its condition; and the urgency - not to the convenience of dispensing with a repair at the same time as working on another repair. However, it is often more sensible and economic to group repairs together to lower costs and time. For example, if scaffold is required, then carrying out all the repairs at the same time, whether they are urgent or not, rather than revisit with additional scaffold in five years' time could be a more appropriate way to manage the works. The Working at Height (WAH) column of the Summary Spreadsheet will help to identify these works)

Once the parish has reviewed the QI, start planning for the works as soon as possible. The process of identifying the works, through to the implementation of repair takes time. In the first instance, a Schedule of Works will be required before it can go out to tender; obtaining the relevant permissions; thinking about potential grant funding (where appropriate); agreeing a start date, can take many months. The Historic Churches Support Officer can help with this, but remember, if you are working with the inspecting surveyor on developing the project, you will need to check what their fees will be.

Alongside repair works ensure that an ongoing maintenance schedule is in place for all works marked 'M' within the QI report. These works will be required on an ongoing basis. Consider whether the tasks can be safely undertaken by parish volunteers or if there is a cost involved that needs to be budgeted for. For support in setting up a maintenance plan contact the Historic Churches Support Officer.

To encourage regular review of your Quinquennial Inspection each parish should return a completed copy of the Quinquennial Reporting Form (**Appendix B**) to the Historic Churches Support Officer on an annual basis. This will be shared with the Diocesan Buildings Sub-Committee and used to help to support the parish in dealing with the issues identified in the QI including helping to identify sources of external funding.

## Funding the Works Identified in Your Quinquennial Inspection

Ensure that your surveyor is always clear about what the fee will be for any additional work outside of the QI, any cost estimates and where additional professional and/or other fees are to be charged, and if relevant, the position regarding VAT (reclaimable or otherwise) which should be confirmed as part of their terms of engagement.

The parish should not incur any unexpected costs – be up front and open with the surveyor.

**Financial Approval:** Any work that exceeds £5,000 (including fees and VAT) must have the approval of the Diocesan Buildings Sub-Committee. A Parish Project Approval Form should be completed and submitted along with the relevant documents. Remember, a minimum of three quotes will be required, which can be sought by the inspector (probably for a fee) or the parish.

**Grants:** In some instances, grant funding may be available to support the works. The earlier the parish have the project planned and costed, the more time is available to consider funding. Please bear in mind that grants come and go and you may have to wait for a suitable grant to become available. For information on grant funding, please contact the Historic Churches Support Officer.

If you have a listed church don't forget to apply for the equivalent of all VAT spent on works and repairs to the church - <http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/index-2.html>. Again, the Historic Churches Support Officer can help with this if required.

## Getting Permission for Works Identified in your Quinquennial Inspection

It is important to ensure that the correct permissions are obtained before any works start. Starting to plan works soon after you receive the QI will reduce the potential for works to be 'held up'. Permissions are an important part of the building works process: Their function is to ensure that the building(s) maintain their character; will remain structurally safe; and no additional damage is incurred, while aiding maintenance, repair and potential change. The different permissions are explained below:

### Faculty

This applies to any works undertaken on a listed church building used for ecclesiastical purposes.

The application should be submitted to the Diocesan 'Historic Churches Committee'. The Diocese operates under the ecclesiastical exemption in accordance with the Bishops Conference's *Directory on the Ecclesiastical Exemption from Listed Building Consent*. This bestows upon the Diocese the responsibility of handling changes and affording protection to church buildings which removes the need for churches within the Diocese to apply for listed building consent for works to listed church buildings.

If changes are planned to the church building are 'like for like' repair then you may not need a Faculty. Please check with the Historic Churches Support Officer or the Secretary of the Historic Churches Committee.

## Planning Permission & Building Regulation Approvals

As well as preparing specifications for works, your architect should deal with planning and building regulation applications and any other consents required from public authorities. Check with your architect as to whether they have included these applications as part of their fee. It is often easiest to ask your architect to apply for these permissions, as they will have the required information to hand.

Any non “like for like” repairs or alterations to a nationally listed presbytery or other listed **non-church** building will require a separate “Listed Building Consent” from the planning authority. This is a free application and should be determined within 8 weeks.

Ordinarily, “like for like” repairs will not require planning permission or building regulation approval. In some circumstances, materials used in repair may need to be different and so this will require discussion and permission. If planning permission is required a decision can take up to 8 weeks. In addition, particular works of repair, such as re-tiling a whole roof area, may require building regulation approval in connection with meeting current building standards. When planning works you should discuss with your architect or contractors the permissions required and if in doubt check with the Historic Churches Support Officer.

Having these discussions early on in the process will avoid delay in works or potential costly changes to the proposed designs and capital works. If there is uncertainty as to whether the building comes under the Faculty system or the local authority, then contact the Historic Churches Support Officer for clarification.

## Contacts and Useful Resources

Eloise Limmer – Historic Churches Support Officer  
[historicchurches@rcdea.org.uk](mailto:historicchurches@rcdea.org.uk) 07904 803577

Cedric Burton – Secretary to the Historic Churches Committee  
[sechcc@rcdea.org.uk](mailto:sechcc@rcdea.org.uk)

Deacon James Hurst – Chair of the Diocesan Buildings Sub-Committee  
[jamesghurst@outlook.com](mailto:jamesghurst@outlook.com)

## Useful websites:

Useful sources of information about the history of your parish buildings are:

- **Taking Stock** – a record of the historical and architectural importance of every Catholic Church - <https://taking-stock.org.uk/diocese/east-anglia/>
- **National Heritage List for England** – listing all nationally protected historic buildings - <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>

Information on maintenance:

- **Historic England** – advice on best practice <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/places-of-worship/maintenance/>

- **Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings** – maintenance toolkit  
<https://www.spab.org.uk/campaigning/maintenance-co-operatives-project/mcp-fim-resources/>
- **Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings** – simple maintenance calendar  
<https://www.spab.org.uk/sites/default/files/SPAB-FiM-maintenance-calendar.pdf>
- **National Churches Trust** – maintenance plan template  
<https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/regular-maintenance/maintenance-checklists-and-plans>

## Appendices

**Appendix A** – List of Qualified Professionals

**Appendix B** – Quinquennial reporting form

**Appendix C** – Pre-inspection checklist

## Appendix A

### List of Qualified Professionals

Please note that this is a list of AABC accredited architects that work within the geographical area of the Diocese who have agreed for their contact details to be included. If you wish to engage an alternative professional please contact the Historic Churches Support Officer to discuss whether they are suitably qualified for the role ([historicchurches@rcdea.org.uk](mailto:historicchurches@rcdea.org.uk)).

- Suzi Pendlebury – Caroe Architecture [suzi.pendlebury@caroe.biz](mailto:suzi.pendlebury@caroe.biz) (Cambridge)
- Jeremy Lander - [jeremy.da.lander@gmail.com](mailto:jeremy.da.lander@gmail.com) (Cambridge)
- Patricia Forero-Senior - The Architect Studio - [hello@the-architect-studio.co.uk](mailto:hello@the-architect-studio.co.uk) (Cambridge)
- Ruth Brennan Architecture - [info@ruthbrennanarchitecture.co.uk](mailto:info@ruthbrennanarchitecture.co.uk) (Norwich)
- Ruth Blackman – Birdsall Swash & Blackman - [ruth@birdsallswashblackman.co.uk](mailto:ruth@birdsallswashblackman.co.uk) (Kings Lynn)
- Paul Kings - Kings & Dunne - [office@kingsdunne.co.uk](mailto:office@kingsdunne.co.uk) (Norwich)
- Purcell [info@purcelluk.com](mailto:info@purcelluk.com) (Norwich, Cambridge, Colchester)
- Ashley Courtney Architect - [ac@ashleycourtney.co.uk](mailto:ac@ashleycourtney.co.uk) (Cambridge)
- Nicholas Warns [info@nicholaswarns.com](mailto:info@nicholaswarns.com) (Norwich)
- Henry Freeland – Freeland Rees Roberts [hf@frrarchitects.co.uk](mailto:hf@frrarchitects.co.uk) (Cambridge)

## Appendix B – Quinquennial Reporting Form

Please complete this form annually and return to the Historic Churches Support Officer by email ([historicchurches@rcdea.org.uk](mailto:historicchurches@rcdea.org.uk)) and retain a copy of the completed form in your parish files

Parish

Property

Date of Quinquennial Inspection Report

The following items of work have been attended to:

QI reference	Action	Date completed (month/year)	Cost (£)

The following items of work are scheduled:

QI reference	Action	Date scheduled (month/year)	Estimated cost

Signature of Parish Priest or Priest in Charge

Date



## Appendix C – Pre-inspection checklist

**Parishes should complete this checklist** and pass the information and copies of the relevant documents to the appointed inspector prior to the inspection date. If any information or documents are missing the parish should address this where the item is relevant to their site to ensure the proper administration of parish buildings.

### **Important compliance documents – should be easily accessible and reviewed regularly**

- Health and Safety Risk Assessment
- Insurance Report
- Fire Risk Assessment
- Asbestos Survey and Asbestos Alterations Log
- Legionella Risk Assessment
- Disability Access Audit

### **Site information**

- Site Plan
- Legal information – Deeds, Rights of Way, Tenancy Agreements etc
- Previous Quinquennial Inspection Reports and Condition Surveys
- List of works undertaken since last Quinquennial Inspection
- Measured surveys (if available)
- Structural reports (if available)
- Archaeological or ecological reports (if available)
- Inventory of fixtures and fittings (if available)
- History of the church including historic photos or drawings
- Access and car parking information
- Heritage protections – Listed Building, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas etc
- Persistent defects eg. Damp or cracking
- Access points – make sure keys are available for all areas and access equipment is in good state of repair and safe to use
- Information about any bespoke features of the building

The next page contains a table of all the regular inspections, certifications and servicing requirements that are required. If a specific item is not relevant to your parish please enter N/A, otherwise please provide the date of the most recent test, service or inspection.

Test/Service Requirement	Frequency	Date of last test, service or inspection
<b>FIRE</b>		
Fire detection systems	Six monthly service	
Fire extinguishers	Annual certification	
Lightning protection system	11 month inspection	
Chimney swept	Annually	
Emergency lighting	Six monthly service	
<b>ASBESTOS</b>		
Asbestos register	Annual inspection	
<b>SERVICES</b>		
Gas safety checks	Annual certification	
Oil heating safety checks	Annual certification	
Electrical installation condition report	Five yearly certification	
Portable appliance testing	12-24 month inspection	
Air conditioning / fridge compression units <small>(where installed)</small>	Annual servicing	
<b>SECURITY</b>		
Security system	Six monthly servicing	
CCTV system	Annual servicing	
Electric gates, shutters or bollards	Annual servicing	
<b>ACCESS</b>		
Ladder inspection	Annual safety inspection	
Roof access	Annual certification	
Lifting equipment	Annual servicing	
Lifts	Six monthly servicing	
<b>ACCESSIBILITY</b>		
Hearing loop test	Annual servicing	
<b>FEATURES</b> <small>(where applicable)</small>		
Servicing of organ	Regular intervals	
Servicing of clock	Regular intervals	
Servicing of bells	Regular intervals	
<b>EXTERIOR</b>		
Lead Forensic Marker Registration	Annual registration – five yearly reapplication	
Tree risk assessment	Five yearly inspection	
Grave stone topple test	Annual inspection	
Gutter clearance	6-12 months	
Drain clearance and inspection	6-12 months	