

Church Maintenance: A Year of Care

Planning for A Year of Care

As the start of 2025 is now underway, it is a perfect time to start thinking about the care of your church building for the upcoming year. Routine inspections, regular preventative maintenance work and minor repairs can all help to identify and tackle problems before they develop into significant and costly issues.

A clear maintenance plan, outlining what types of maintenance and inspections need to be completed during the year, who will do the work, and when each task should be conducted, will help ensure that you keep on top of routine checks and repairs. While this may seem like a daunting or unnecessary task, following a well-thought-out maintenance plan will help mitigate costly major repairs and allow your PCC to budget for any professional fees.

Creating a Maintenance Plan

If it is your first time creating a maintenance plan, there are plenty of helpful resources available online which can help you get started. The [‘Faith in Maintenance Calendar’](#) provided by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) and the Church Buildings Council’s [‘Calendar of Care’](#) provide useful checklists of what you should be doing each month in terms of maintenance and inspections. The National Churches Trust also has an easily editable [Maintenance Plan](#) template which allows you to assign when you will be doing specific maintenance tasks, make notes on what you saw during inspections and record how much repairs cost. As your building will have its own set of needs, you may find it beneficial to follow or adapt these templates as required to build a plan that works best for your church. Some churches have found it useful to alter this template to make the quarterly columns monthly so that it is easier to follow the advice provided by SPAB and ChurchCare.

Carrying Out Maintenance

While planning your maintenance works for the year, you will find many tasks that can be completed by members of the congregation or local community. There are several useful resources you can use to learn what to look out for during an inspection. SPAB has created a useful video series called ‘How to Maintain Church...’ which explores how to assess roofs, rainwater goods, exteriors, interiors and building services. SPAB’s ‘Maintenance for Faith Buildings’ webinar, available on the Diocese of Worcester’s [website](#), also provides useful advice on what to look out for during inspections and tips for how to carry out maintenance. A range of other guidance about maintenance can also be found on the [National Churches Trust](#), [SPAB](#), and [Historic England](#) websites. These websites provide helpful tips on checks and tasks you should be completing, what you should do if you find a problem and what equipment you may need.

While it is possible to complete some maintenance tasks yourself, you should always consider whether there are any risks before completing any work. If you feel unsafe completing a task, or it requires technical knowledge, you should hire a trained professional to carry out the work. If you do not already know an accredited professional you can approach, we suggest contacting churches in nearby parishes for recommendations.

Undertaking maintenance can also be a really good way of engaging your wider community in the care of their parish church: we often hear positive stories of churches organising a maintenance day one Saturday morning (with the lure of good coffee and bacon butties), perhaps encouraging the parents of the local school to help through offering kids activities. If you do this, don't forget to take photos (with consent) and bank them for potential funding bids to show community engagement!

Maintenance Tips for the Next Couple of Months

With the winter months upon us, you should make sure that you are monitoring your church for serious damage to the building. Poor weather conditions such as ice, snow and wind can cause major problems for churches. To mitigate the likelihood of serious problems arising, we suggest you conduct regular checks to see if any parts of your church have deteriorated after adverse weather. This should include looking for frost damage to the roof, rainwater goods, external pipes and tanks, alongside checking for wind damage after storms. In the event of snow, you should also aim to clear any snow from your roof parapet and valley gutters to make sure that melt water does not create damp internally. However, with this type of weather posing a potential health and safety risk, you should not carry this out if you feel unsafe.

In addition to monitoring your church for any serious damage during harsh weather, we also suggest you make sure that windows, roofs and towers are bird-proof. You should do this before nesting season begins, ideally in February. However, it is important that you do not disturb any bats while doing so.

Minor Repairs and Improvements Grant Fund

If you identify any minor repairs that need completing, you should consider applying for our Minor Repairs and Improvements Grant Fund. More information about this can be found at <https://www.cofe-worcester.org.uk/parish-support/church-buildings/funding/> (note that the current final date for applying to this fund is 31 May 2025, but we hope that it will continue in the future, subject to further allocation from the national church).

Need Support?

If you would like any advice on how you should start going about completing your inspections and maintenance tasks, or have any repair needs you need help with planning, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the team for assistance. You can contact us via the Church Buildings Team email, churches@cofe-worcester.org.uk.