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Diocesan Advisory Committee
for the Care of Churches

A PCC Guide to Quinquennial Inspections

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Introduction

This guidance note provides an overview of the Quinquennial Inspection process to support and enable congregations and PCCs to get the most out of their report.

The Church of England runs the Quinquennial Inspection scheme to ensure that no structural or building conservation problems creep up on a PCC without being noticed

Every five years (or quinquennium) a Quinquennial Inspector must undertake a thorough inspection of the church building, inside and out and including any extensions, and everything else within the boundary (or curtilage) of the church property. This will provide an accurate assessment of the condition of the building that will allow the PCC to plan what works need to be undertaken and see if additional resources (grants, etc) will be required to make that possible.

The Report is intended to be a tool that helps PCCs to look after their buildings by asking a Professional Adviser who understands buildings and how they work to look at its condition and make recommendations about which areas may need to be attended to. In part, this will spot any areas needing immediate or medium-term attention with the aim of helping the PCC to intervene early to minimise any damage and to avoid the need for significant repairs becoming necessary.

The recommendations set out how soon this work needs to be undertaken so that the PCC can plan those works and undertake any fundraising that might be necessary.

The Archdeacons will look at the Report and its recommendations to see which PCCs would benefit from additional support and assistance from the Church Buildings Team.

The Inspector

Who can carry out the Inspection?

The PCC is responsible for selecting and appointing its own Quinquennial Inspector to undertake the inspection.

The suitability of a particular person to carry out an inspection depends on a number of factors including; the listing grade of church building that is being inspected, whether the individual is on *The Mailing list of Potential Inspectors* held by the diocese and then whether the conservation accreditation and experience that they have is appropriate for the grading of church that is being inspected.

There are several different options for the process of appointing an Inspector. Full details of how to appoint an Inspector is set out in a separate document - *A PCC Guide to the process of appointing a Quinquennial Inspector or Professional Adviser* (www.leicester.anglican.org/quinnquennial-inspections/)

Before making the appointment, the PCC should seek advice from the DAC Secretary.

When the PCC has made an appointment, please let the DAC Secretary know: -

- a) The details of the person engaged to carry out the QI
- b) The date of the Inspection

so that the records for the church can be updated.

What instructions do the PCC need give the Inspector?

The PCC will need to instruct the inspector to:

- a) Follow *The Diocesan Scheme for Quinquennial Inspection of Churches* for presenting the report. This is available at www.leicester.anglican.org/quinquennial-inspections/
- b) Produce the Quinquennial Inspection Report **within 2 months** of the date of the inspection

Preparing for the Inspection Day

Ahead of the Inspection taking place

The PCC will need to complete *The QI Checklist*. This available at www.leicester.anglican.org/quinquennial-inspections/ The inspector will go through the list with the PCC's representative on the day of the inspection.

In particular the PCC will need to commission the following reports if they are out of date (i.e. over 5 years old);

- An Electrical System Condition Test and Report by a NICEIC, ECA or NAPIT Registered Electrician
- A test of the Lightning Conductor (if one has been installed)
- A report on the health of the trees in the churchyard*

*If the Churchyard has been closed by Order in Privy Council, the responsibility for maintenance passed to the local authority and the PCC should ask the local authority to undertake the inspection of the trees. The PCC can check the status of their churchyard at [\(weblink\)](#)

In addition, The PCC should:

- Ensure that their policies concerning Asbestos etc as listed on the Checklist in the Diocesan Scheme have been reviewed within the last 12 months and are up-to-date
- Make a list of any defects that have come to light since the last inspection and hand this list to the Inspector together with the last QI Report in advance of the inspection

On the inspection day

It is particularly important that if access to certain parts of the church was unavailable at the last time of the last inspection then this should be remedied this time around.

- Make sure that all keys are available (including towers and vestries) as access to all parts of the building is necessary
- It is the PCC's responsibility to provide safe ladders if needed. If additional help to move ladders is essential then this is also the responsibility of the PCC, but in certain cases it may be that the services of a local builder may be more appropriate to assist with providing access, particularly if the church does not possess suitable equipment.

- Be prepared to go around with the Inspector and show them such features as trapdoors or inspection chamber covers
- Think about any security risks that may arise while the inspection is in progress, and take steps to prevent any difficulties due to open doors and windows
- Make sure that the bells are rung down
- Make sure that the church Log Book, Terrier and Inventory are available, together with details of recent repair or maintenance works undertaken since the last inspection, and any heating, electrical and lighting, and safety systems checks (see *The QI Checklist*)

The inspection of even the smallest church is likely to take at least half a day, so the offer of a hot drink and access to a WC, if there is not one in the church, would be welcomed

The QI Report

Who pays for it?

The PCC commissions and pays for the report as it is primarily for their benefit.

How do we know what should be in the QI?

The Report should be in a fixed format and should follow the set of headings laid out in Appendix 1 of the Diocesan Scheme sets out the format of the report, the headings and the type of information to be included.

A building plan should be included together with photographs of any problem areas referred to in the report along with details of the works undertaken since the last QI and completed copies of the Checklists appended at the end of the Diocesan Scheme.

The Report must cover all the areas listed and prioritise the repairs needed under the following categories: -

1. Urgent (i.e. requiring immediate attention)
2. Requires attention within 12 months
3. Requires attention within the next 18 - 24 months
4. Requires attention within the quinquennial period
5. A desirable improvement with no timescale

The report should also give broad budget costs, but the Inspector is not required to include detailed quotes for the work within this report. The figures included are only to give the PCC an indication of the scale of the works.

What happens if the report does not comply with the Scheme?

As the PCC has instructed the Inspector to produce a Report that complies with the Scheme, The PCC should return the Report to the Architect if the Report fails to comply with the Scheme. The PCC should only pay the fee once the Report has been amended so it does comply with the Scheme.

What does a good QIR look like?

It is worth noting that even when reports do comply with the Scheme, how Reports are presented varies between inspectors with some formats being more helpful and user-friendly

than others.

A good Report is engaging and well written, using plain, simple and understandable English. It highlights and explains the problems identified, their possible cause and potential impact, severity, together with possible actions to be taken.

Photographs are taken of the various parts of the building, particularly problem areas. It is really helpful to the reader if these are placed alongside the text at the relevant point to illustrate the point being made, rather than being collected together in an appendix at the back of the Report.

The best reports take you on a guided tour around the church and show you what condition the building is in on the way.

Who gets a copy of the Report?

The Inspector should

- produce two copies of the Report for the PCC Secretary – one for the churchwardens on behalf of the PCC and one for the incumbent
- Email **One copy** to the DAC Secretary

The DAC Secretary will then

- send a copy to the relevant Archdeacon.
- Upload the report to the Church Heritage Record (CHR) part of the OFS
- if the churchyard has been closed for the purposes of burials by an Order in Privy Council, then a copy will be sent to the Conservation Officer of the local authority with responsibility for the maintenance of the churchyard

The Historic Church Support Officer also reviews each report. This is so that the Archdeacons and Church Buildings Team are able to see which places might benefit from further support and assistance from the Church Buildings Team.

Repair works arising from the Report recommendations

Can we use the report as a specification for the works?

The purpose of the report is to identify where work is needed but is NOT a specification nor should it be used as one.

PCC should consult with their Professional Adviser when they plan to undertake repairs. This is because proper specifications for work are needed to ensure that the correct and appropriate materials are being used. A detailed specification also enables competitive estimates/tenders to be obtained from contractors. The PCC will have to agree a separate fee with the professional adviser for this work.

Cost of repairs – who pays?

It is the PCC's responsibility to pay for the recommended repairs set out in the QI Report, including the professional adviser's fees, unless the local authority is responsible for the maintenance of the churchyard, in which case the local authority is also responsible for the cost of any works to trees, paths, memorials and walls (except to the church building and its services (i.e. electrics, gas supply, drainage system)).

What about VAT?

The VAT charged on works to listed church buildings (including professional fees) can be reclaimed **in full** through the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. (<http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>).

We don't have much money; how do we work out which repairs to do?

Ask your Inspector for further guidance as to which repairs would provide the most positive impact with the funds available. Remaining repairs could then be ranked accordingly.

It is probably best if you arrange to meet with your Inspector to review the Report as this provides the opportunity for such a discussion.

It may be that the repair works need further support from grant awarding bodies. The Diocesan Church Building Team is happy to provide further guidance as to how to go about this and where to apply.

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Permissions for repairs

Different types of permissions are needed depending on the exact nature of the works:

- For a limited range of works no permission is required (List A)
- The Archdeacon has the authority to authorise certain works (List B)
- Any other proposed works, not specifically identified within the List A or List B will require a DAC Notification of Advice and a Faculty from the Chancellor – unless the works are covered by a Chancellor's Additional Matters Order

The current Minor works List A and List B are available at

<https://www.leicester.anglican.org/faculties/>.

In addition, The DAC Secretary also sends out the Lists to incumbents and churchwardens with the letter that acknowledges the receipt of the Report. Details of the works covered by the Additional Matters Orders are included at the end of document containing Lists A & B.

The Lists are updated from time to time as the legislation is revised, so please ensure you have the correct version. The latest version came into effect on 1 July 2022.

Please consult the DAC Secretary if you need any clarification on what is required.

Applications need to be made via the Online Faculty System (OFS) (<https://cofeportal.org/>) supported by the appropriate documentation as set out in the submissions document, which is available on the website www.leicester.anglican.org/dac/faculties.

Please contact DAC Secretary for advice if you are concerned that works are needed urgently on health and safety grounds. In certain cases, the Chancellor may be prepared to grant an Interim Faculty to allow works to be done quickly.

Although there is no legal requirement to log works included in List A through the OFS, the Archdeacons and the DAC Secretary strongly encourage PCCs to do so that the Log Book feature of the OFS is as complete as possible.

Trees in Churchyards

Lists A and B set out which works to trees can be carried out and with what permissions. All works should be logged and/or applied for through the OFS.

PCCs may find the Church Buildings Council guidance concerning trees in churchyards helpful. This guidance can be found at www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/trees

In between inspections

What should we do before the next QI?

- Draw up a plan to tackle the items identified in the report especially those in the urgent category – don't simply pick out the items that the PCC can afford. Where appropriate, give consideration as to how the repairs might be grouped together to make sensible projects and possibly funded (see above).
- If the PCC does not already have one, develop a maintenance plan.
- Understand what items of basic maintenance needs to be done, especially if there are inherent problem. e.g. gullies that block easily due to the trees nearby.
- Establish a local culture of volunteer maintenance where possible and/or practical. Volunteer help at low level is still valuable even if high level access is needed by a specialist e.g. builder with suitable ladders and insurance.
- Take out a regular contract with local builder or similar for gutter clearance which is highly recommended.

The PCC's Inspector may well be happy to advise on the above.

.... And the next Quinquennial Inspection!

The Churchwardens should keep a record of when the next QI is due. However, The DAC Secretary will send a reminder to the PCC at the beginning of the calendar year in which it is due. Early in that year, the Quinquennial Inspector will need to be appointed. The PCC should arrange a date for the Inspection once the necessary Electrical Condition Report has been obtained.

Glossary of terms used in this document

AABC Architect Accredited in Building Conservation

CHR Church Heritage Record

DAC Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches.

Diocesan Scheme This sets out what the QIR should contain

The Mailing List of Potential Inspectors

The DAC Secretary holds a Register of Professional advisers currently available to undertake QIs within the Diocese, together with their contact details, experience and conservation accreditation

NLHF National Lottery Heritage Fund

OFS Online Faculty System

PCC Parochial Church Council – for the purposes of this document is used as an umbrella term to include District Church Councils (DCCs)

Quinquennium A period of 5 years

QI Quinquennial Inspection. An inspection of the condition of a building, carried out at 5 yearly intervals

QIR Quinquennial Inspection Report. Report produced after the Inspection. This has to follow a set format approved at Diocesan Synod, see 'Diocesan Scheme'

RIBA Royal Institute of British Architects

RIBA/SCA A specialist conservation architect with authoritative knowledge of conservation practice and extensive experience of working with historic buildings. This is the highest grade of conservation accreditation within the RIBA scheme

RIBA/CA A conservation architect who has in-depth knowledge and experience of working with historic buildings

RICS Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors