

Quinquennial Inspection Report

Church of St John the Evangelist

Chopwell

Diocese - Durham

Archdeaconry – Sunderland



Report prepared by:

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Date of report: 9 October 2025

Ref: 25022/5

Executive summary

There are a number of concerns (many raised in the previous two reports) which need attention.

Roofs and rainwater goods:

The ridge has open perpend joints and missing bedding which will allow water to track into the building. Localised repointing is needed to prevent this. There are a number of missing, slipped and rotated slates. Re-fixing is needed as soon as possible to prevent water ingress. Due to the frequency of missing and slipped slates over the last 10 years indicates that the nails are rusting and further ongoing repairs are likely. It is therefore recommended that the church is re-slatted, ideally within the next 5 years. The gutters on the north side are blocked with vegetation and need cleaning. The decoration to the rainwater goods is in poor condition and a number of the gutters have leaking joints. Re-caulking joints and redecoration is needed. The broken swan neck on the south Nave downpipe requires prompt replacement.

Bellcote:

The bush growing from the apex coping (reported at the last inspection) has been removed but the coping is raised (probably due to the roots of the bush which need removal) and needs re-bedding to prevent water ingress.

External walls:

The water tabling to the gable walls has open perpend joints causing water penetration. This is particularly noticeable on the east gable wall of the Lady Chapel where water penetration has resulted in peeling paint. Repointing of water tabling is essential to prevent further damage. The joints to the window masonry are receding and could result in dampness. Raking out and repointing the external window masonry is recommended. There are also some open perpend joints in the buttresses and in the plinth masonry which need repointing. Some of the stone faces are delaminating in places due to frost action on the soft stone. These should be monitored for further deterioration.

Windows and external doors:

The window glazing (clear, coloured and stained glass), leading and ferramenta are generally in good condition. However the upper sections of the three light east window to the Chancel are bowing slightly due to expansion of the leadwork. This should be monitored for any leakage. The external doors need redecoration to maintain their condition and longevity.

Ceilings:

The boarded and painted ceilings to the Chapel and Organ Chamber are in poor condition with peeling paint. This is thought to be due to damp timbers from roof leaks. The cause of the damp needs investigation and appropriate actions taken. The timber boards may well be rotten and therefore in need of replacement prior to any decoration. The Chancel ceiling would benefit from redecoration.

Walls finishes:

The previous outbreak of dry rot in the floor and wainscot panelling to the NE corner of the Nave appears to have been eradicated and replacement of the missing wainscoting and plaster is recommended. The walls of the Nave and Chancel are rather drab and would benefit from re-decoration. The wall finish in the Lady Chapel is in very poor condition with peeling paint. Redeclaration is needed. However bringing the central heating system back into operation is needed to dry out the building prior to redecoration.

Floors:

Some of the floor boards at the rear of the Nave have been replaced due to woodworm attack. The remaining floors should be monitored as a precaution. It is desirable for carpets to be fitted at the front and rear of the Nave, funds permitting.

Disabled access and provision:

Access from the main gate to the church entrance is restricted by steep ramps. The secondary gate provides gentler gradients but there are three steps into the building by the front door preventing access by wheelchair users. The PCC are advised to consider installing some form of permanent ramped access. There is no toilet in the church and it is recommended that the PCC consider installing an accessible toilet for the benefit of all users of the church.

Services:

The oil-fired central boiler has broken down since the last inspection and portable Calor gas heaters have been used. These don't provide adequate thermal comfort levels and will give off water vapour which will be contributing to the dampness of the building. It is recommended that the boiler is replaced or an alternative heating system (possible electric) is considered. The hot tap to the kitchen sink appears to be redundant and consideration should be given to providing an instantaneous hot water unit.

Lightning conduction system:

The last 3m of down-tape have been replaced in PCV sheathed cable. This cable is unlikely to have sufficient capacity to cope with a lightning strike. It is therefore recommended that a lightning conduction specialist be engaged to provide a permanent repair and at the same time test the system.

Churchyard:

The west pedestrian gate has been removed since the previous inspection. Re-instatement is desirable, funds permitting. The secondary gate needs cleaning and re-oiling. Some of the paths are uneven due to tree roots – this should be monitored and the paths re-levelled if needed.

Grants:

The recommendations for re-roofing of the church, level access scheme, accessible toilet and new heating system etc. are likely to be costly. These items are therefore listed in category E ('a desirable improvement with no timescale'). However the PCC are encouraged to seek grant funding.

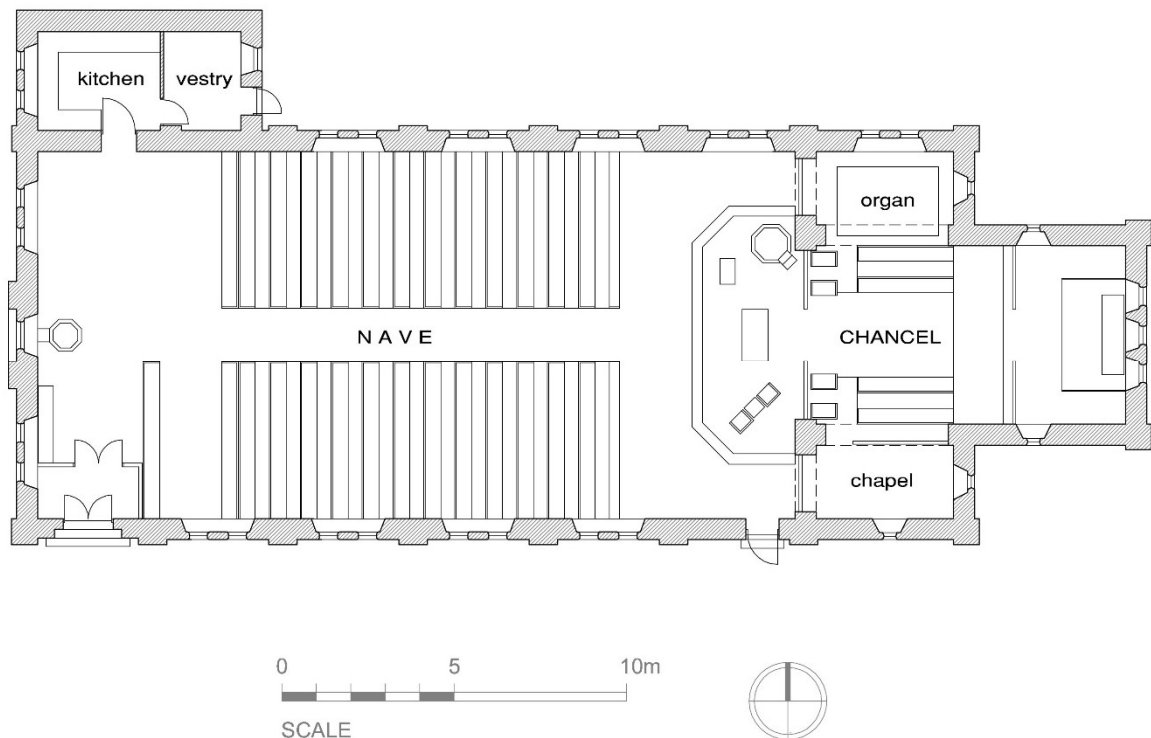
Brief description and history

The church was constructed in 1907-09 to designs by architects Hicks and Charlewood. The church was built largely by voluntary local labour, with the foreman recruiting a team of masons as the sole paid workers. The Clerk of Works was the Colliery Manager, and the stonemasons from the colliery quarried the stone in their spare time, transporting it using colliery vehicles.

The church comprises a Nave with no side Aisles and a Chancel. A Kitchen and Vestry are located to the north west of the Nave. An Organ Chamber and Chapel are located respectively on the north and south sides of the Chancel. There is no porch but a small lobby inside the main door located in the south west corner.

The Nave and Chancel are unified under a single roof with the roof slopes encompassing the Kitchen and Vestry. The roofs are finished in regular coursed Welsh slate. The west gable of the Nave encompasses a bell turret housing a single bell. External walls are constructed in uncoursed rectangular blocks of sneaked golden sandstone with ashlar dressings to windows, water tabling, buttress cappings etc. The tall round headed lancet windows largely have plain coloured glass in rectangular leading but the Nave west gable and Chancel east gable windows have attractive stained-glass designs.

Floor plan



Work carried out since the previous report

Slating repairs
Removal of bush from bellcote
Repair of bell mechanism/ replacement of bell rope
Electrical rewiring, new emergency lighting, new lighting in kitchen, vestry & Chancel (2025)
Fire fighting equipment serviced annually

Listing grade

This church building is unlisted.

Limitations of the report

The inspection was carried out from ground level. The inspection was purely visual. Concealed and inaccessible spaces (e.g. sub floors and roof voids etc.) were not inspected. The below ground drainage was not inspected. The inspecting architect cannot state that these areas are free from defect.

The mechanical and electrical systems were not tested and the inspector cannot state that they are free from defect. The PCC are advised to have the heating system checked by a heating engineer annually and the electrical systems tested every five years.

This is a summary report; it is not a specification for the execution of the work and must not be used as such. The professional adviser is willing to advise the PCC on implementing the recommendations and will, if so requested, prepare a specification, seek tenders and oversee the repairs. The PCC is advised to seek on-going advice from the professional adviser on problems with the building. Contact should be made with the insurance company to ensure that cover is adequate. The repairs recommended in the report may be subject to approval from the Archdeacon or Faculty. Early contact with the DAC secretary is recommended to establish the approvals needed before implementing any repairs.

The Report

Category scale

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

F – Requires monitoring

M – Routine maintenance. This can be done without professional advice or a faculty.

1.0 Exterior:

1.1 Roof coverings		
Condition 	During the inspection the following were noted:- - localised missing bedding to ridge stones - localised open perpend joints to ridge stones - 2No missing slates on north slope (Nave) – see photo - 1No slipped slates on north slope (Chancel) - 2No missing slates on south slope (Chancel) - 2No rotated slates on south slope (Chancel) - many slates with broken corners - many slates have been replaced - verge pointing breaking away by Vestry roof - rafter feet in need of decoration to prevent rot - vegetation to Boiler House roof Organ pump roofs	
Repair needs  Boiler House roof	The church has suffered in recent years from a number of slipped/ missing slates. Slating repairs have been undertaken regularly. This indicates that the nail fixings are rusting and further ongoing repairs are likely. It is therefore recommended that the church roofs be re-slatted (ideally within the quinquennium). In the short term, repairs to the above items should be made. The vegetation build up on the flat roof of the Boiler House need clearing. It is recommended that a flashing is fitted between the Boiler House roof and the adjacent wall to prevent water ingress and dampness in the Kitchen.	D/E B M C

1.2 Rainwater goods and disposal systems		
Condition	The cast iron gutters on the north side are blocked with vegetation. Some of the gutters have leaking joints and many of the joints in the downpipes are open. The joints to both gutters and downpipes need re-caulking. There is a broken swan to one of the downpipes to the Nave (south side). The gutters and rainwater pipes are badly in need of cleaning and redecoration.	

1.5 External walling		
Condition	The external walling is generally in fair condition but defects were noted as follows:- <u>Kitchen</u> There is some cracking of the mortar joints to the kneeler stone. It is recommended that the kneeler stone is re-bedded and pointed. <u>Nave</u> West gable - some delamination of stone faces due to frost action South wall - some open joints in general walling, buttresses and plinth <u>Chancel</u> South, north and east walls - some localised delamination of the stone faces. This should be monitored. <u>Organ Chamber</u> NE corner – some brown staining possibly due to iron deposits in the stone.	
Repair needs	Re-pointing of open joints in plinths, buttresses etc. Monitoring of delaminating stone faces. Re-pointing of kneeler to Vestry west gable.	C F C

1.6 External doors and surrounds		
Condition / repair needs	The external timber doors on the south side would benefit from redecoration during the quinquennium to prevent rot. The door to the Organ Pump House is in poor condition with rotten boarding, broken lock and rusting hinges. However see note in 2.9. The metal Boiler House door is rusting towards the bottom. Rubbing down and redecoration are recommended.	D B

1.7 Windows:		
Condition / repair needs	<u>Generally:</u> Externally many of the bed joints to the window jambs and some perpend joints to the cills have open joints which require raking out and re-pointing. Internally the masonry to the window reveals and some cills is friable and crumbling in a number of places. This should be monitored. The leading, clear glass, coloured glass, stained glass and saddlebars are generally in fair condition throughout the church.	C F

	<u>Chancel East window:</u> The upper sections are bowing as mentioned in the previous QI reports but they do not appear to have deteriorated any further. <u>Nave south window (by priest's door):</u> The polycarbonate outer cover is very cloudy. Replacement in a UV resistant polycarbonate cover is recommended.	E
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2.0 Interior:

2.1 Presence of bats etc.		
Comments	Access was not gained to the roof void and the inspector cannot state whether bats are roosting in the void.	

2.2 Roof structures, ceilings		
Condition/ repair needs  Ceiling over Chancel  Ceiling over Lady Chapel	<u>Roof void:</u> As access was not gained to the roof voids over the Chancel and Nave. The inspector cannot state that this area is free from defect. It is recommended that these voids are inspected periodically and any concerns should be raised with the architect. <u>Nave:</u> The timber boarded panelled ceiling and exposed part of the trusses appear to be in fair condition. <u>Chancel:</u> The decoration to the segmental timber boarded ceiling is in poor condition. Redecoration is needed. <u>Lady Chapel and Organ Chamber:</u> The decoration to the boarded ceilings is peeling (and thought to be rotten) due to damp from leaks. The cause of the damp ingress should be investigated and resolved. Following this the ceiling boards should be replaced and decorated. <u>Kitchen and Vestry:</u> The varnished pine boarded ceilings appear to be in fair condition.	D B D

2.3 Partitions, screens, panelling, doors		
Condition/ repair needs	<u>Partitions:</u> The partition between the Vestry and Kitchen and that between the Chancel and Lady Chapel appear to be in satisfactory condition.	

	<u>Screens:</u> The glazed screens to the Porch are in fair condition. <u>Panelling:</u> The wainscot panelling has been removed adjacent to the Priests door in the Nave due to a past outbreak of dry rot. Ideally replacement panelling should be fitted. <u>Doors:</u> The flush door to the Vestry is in fair condition but there is no lever handle or lock. These should be considered for safety and security. It was noted that the lobby doors in the Porch have been removed. Reinstatement or providing a curtain is recommended to prevent draughts and heat loss.	E D E
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2.4 Floors, platforms, pews	The floor finishes were not lifted and inspecting architect cannot state that the floors beneath are free from defect.	
Condition / repair needs 	<u>Chancel:</u> The encaustic tiles to the sanctuary and the pine boarding to the floor below the choir stalls are in fair condition. The carpets appear to be in fair condition. <u>Lady Chapel:</u> This has been re-floored in oriented strand board (OSB) and chipboard. This is unsightly and consideration should be given to replacing it in t and g softwood boarding. <u>Nave:</u> The pine boarded flooring by the pew areas are in fair condition along with the pews. The original timber floor on the front south side of the Nave has been removed and replaced in concrete without a floor finish. This looks unsightly and fitting a carpet is recommended. The carpet at the front of the Nave has been removed revealing small areas of beetle attack. These areas are understood to have been treated. Replacement of the carpet is desirable. A section of floor boarding at the rear of the rear of the Nave was replaced in 2017 after beetle attack was found below the previous carpet finish. Fitting a carpet is desirable. <u>Vestry & Kitchen:</u> The concrete floor to the kitchen and Vestry have wood effect vinyl sheet floor and carpet tiles finishes respectively. The vestry carpet tiles are in poor condition. Consideration should be given to replacing them.	E E E E

2.5 Internal wall finishes	Wainscot panelling to window cill level of the Nave. Plastered and painted above the wainscot panelling.	
Condition	The decoration to the walls in the Nave and Chancel are discoloured and drab. There are some stains on the west wall of the Nave due to past water ingress from the roof to gable wall junction. There are some settlement cracks at high level below the ceiling to the north and south walls of the Chancel and flaking paint to the window soffits.	
Repair needs	A scheme of redecoration is recommended but see note in 4.1 regarding the heating system.	E

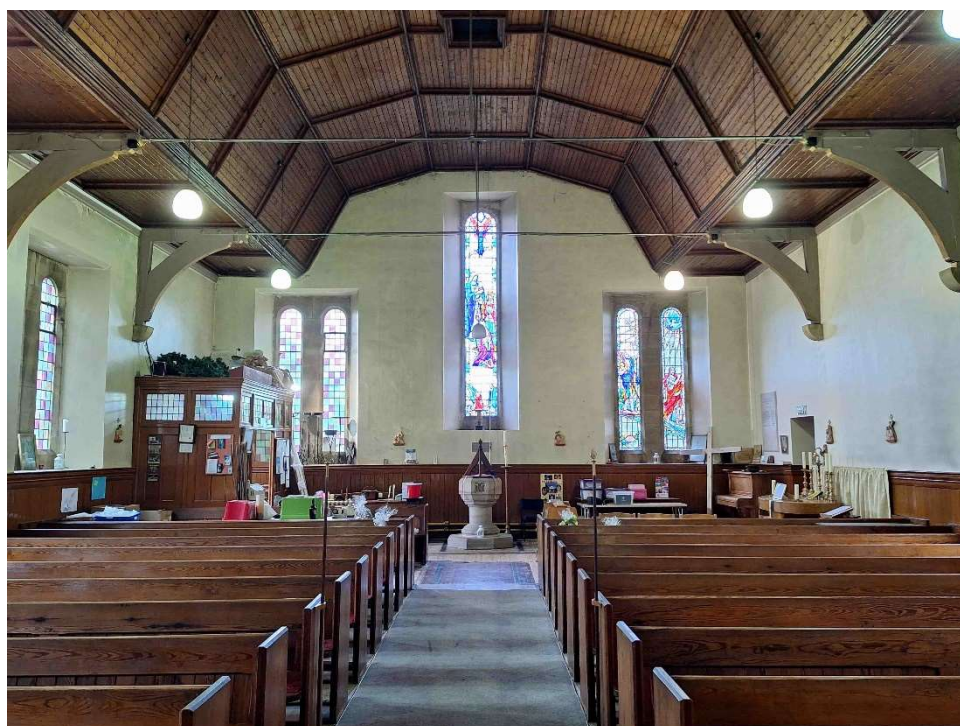
2.6 Vestry, kitchen and toilet		
Condition/ repair needs	Vestry - the plaster is very uneven and the paintwork in poor condition. (See recommendation in 1.1 for fitting flashings to the flat roof/wall junction to prevent water ingress). Redecoration is recommended once remedial action has been taken and the walls are sufficiently dry. Kitchen – has a range of base and wall units together with a sink and drainer and is functional. There is no toilet on the premises and the PCC should consider installing a wheelchair accessible one, perhaps funded via grants.	E E

2.7 Disabled access and provision		
Comments	Access from the main road to the church is via a steep ramp. The section nearest the road probably too steep for wheelchair users. The footpath from the secondary gate on the NE side of the church affords a gentler gradient though the gate is somewhat narrow. There are three steps into the church from the footpath presenting a barrier to wheelchair users. Consideration should be given to improving accessibility at the entrance via ramps, perhaps via grant funding. See note in 2.6 regarding toilet provision.	E

2.8 Fittings, fixtures, furniture and moveable articles		
Condition	<u>Font:</u> Octagonal stone bowl and pedestal with carved oak cover. The outer edges of the stone bowl are chipped in places. <u>Pulpit:</u> Semi octagonal stone base and finely carved oak sides. Carpeted steps and floor. All in good condition. <u>Rood screen:</u> Finely carved oak – in good condition.	

	<u>Nave altar, lectern and chairs:</u> Oak framed altar; finely carved oak lectern and chairs – all in good condition. <u>Chancel altar:</u> (see photo) Oak framed with some painted and gilded detail in good condition. <u>Reredos and war memorial:</u> (see photo) In carved oak, some gilding to the reredos. All in good condition.	
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2.9 Organ		
Condition 	The organ dates from 1936 and was constructed by Nelson and Co. of Durham. A permanent replacement internal blower unit was fitted in 2010 to replace a temporary one. The external organ blower chamber is now redundant and the structure could now be removed. The organ is not working and will be costly to overhaul.	E



View from front of Nave

3.0 Churchyard and environs:

3.1 Paths, drives and access		
Condition	The tarmac footpath from the main entrance gate is in fair condition though there is some breaking down of the surface in places. The concrete paths to the south, west and north of the church are cracked and uneven in places.	
Repair needs	Monitoring the tarmac surface for further deterioration is needed. The concrete paths should also be monitored deterioration in the cracks and levels.	F

3.2 Gates and fences		
Condition & repair needs	The oak pedestrian gate by the main entrance has been removed since the 2020 report. It is recommended that the gates are reinstated. The secondary entrance gate on the SE boundary has missing battens and the gate posts are showing signs of rot. The repairs to the gate followed by cleaning and re-oiling of the gate and gate posts are needed. The open chestnut paling fence on the south boundary is in fair condition.	E C

3.3 Boundary walls		
Condition / repair needs	The stone retaining wall to the south boundary is bulging adjacent to the tree near the entrance gate. This doesn't seem any worse than in 2020 but should be monitored. One of the stones in the RH entrance walling (former lych-gate) is split right through and would best be replaced. There are some settlement cracks in the LH entrance walling (former lych-gate) which should be monitored.	F D F

3.4 Churchyard		
Condition	The churchyard is closed and maintained by the local authority.	
Maintenance needs	The grass is cut regularly in the growing season.	

3.5 Trees		
Comments	There are a considerable number of mature trees in the churchyard. The condition of the trees was not examined due to their number and the inspector cannot state that they are free from defect. None of the trees had branches overhanging the church but the effect of tree roots near the church should be monitored.	

4.0 Services, installations and other matters:

4.1 Heating		
Condition/ repair needs	The church was heated via an oil-fired boiler serving large bore pipework and radiators but this has broken down since the 2020 inspection. Portable Calor gas heaters are now used. A wall mounted electric heater is fitted in the kitchen. It is recommended that the boiler is replaced or an electric heating system (under pew heaters, electric radiators or overhead infra-red heaters) is considered.	D/E
4.2 Electrical		
Condition / comments	Pendant lighting fittings with fluorescent bulbs in circular bowl diffusers are installed in the Nave; 2No LED floodlights are installed in the Chancel; suspended tungsten filament bulbs are located in the Chapel; fluorescent lights are fitted in the kitchen and Vestry. Electrical re-wiring was carried out in 2025 including a separate power supply to the sump pump in the Boiler House. A wall mounted convector heater was fitted in the kitchen.	
4.4 Water supply		
Comments/ repair needs	Mains cold water is provided to the kitchen where a sink and drainer are fitted. The hot tap to the kitchen sink is redundant. Consideration should be given to installing an electric instantaneous hot water heater.	E
4.5 Fire protection		
Comments	Fire-fighting equipment is provided and serviced on an annual basis.	
4.6 Lightning Protection	The church has a lightning conduction system fitted to the bell cote with a single down tape on the west wall of the Nave.	
Comments	The lowest section of the copper down tape (3m from ground) was stolen some time ago and has been replaced with pvc sheathed cable. It is unlikely that the replacement cable has sufficient capacity to cope with a lightning strike. It is recommended that a lightning conduction specialist be engaged to provide a permanent repair and at the same time test the system.	B

5.0 Summary of repairs

Category scale

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

F – Requires monitoring during the quinquennial period

M – Routine maintenance. This can be done without professional advice or a faculty

Category	Comment	Broad Budget Costs (excl VAT and fees)
A	Replacement of broken swan neck to Nave south downpipe (1.1)	£400
B	Slating repairs (1.1)	£1,000 +
B	Cleaning, redecoration and caulking of rainwater goods (1.2)	£1,000 +
B	Lift/re-bed lifting section of Bellcote coping (1.3)*	£1,500
B	Re-pointing of open joints in water-tabling and gable cross base (1.4)	£750 +
B	Refit flashing to kneeler over Kitchen; repoint verge over Vestry (1.4)	£500
B	Remove rust/ decorate Boiler House door (1.6)	DIY
B	Investigate and cure damp to Lady Chapel roof and ceiling (2.2)	?
B	Permanent repair/ testing of lightning conduction down-tape (4.6)	£750
C	Fit flashing to Boiler House roof/wall upstand (1.1)	£500
C	Re-pointing of open joints to plinths, buttresses etc. (1.5)	£500
C	Re-bedding of kneeler stone to kitchen west gable (1.5)	£250
C	Re-pointing of bed joints to window jambs and perpend joints to cills (1.7)	£500
C	Repair and re-oil secondary entrance gate (3.2)	£100 or DIY
D	Re-decoration of external doors (1.6)	£350
D	Redecorate Lady Chapel and Organ Chamber ceilings (2.2)	£1,500 - £2,500
D	Fitting lock and lever handle to Vestry door (2.3)	£200
D	Redecorate Chancel ceiling (2.2)	£2,500
D	Replace spilt stone to entrance gate pillar (3.3)	£350
D/E	Re-slating of roofs (1.1)	£100,000
D/E	Consider electric heating or replacement of oil-fired boiler (4.1)	£20k+
E	Consider replacing polycarbonate cover to window by Priest's door (1.7)	£500
E	Replace wainscot panelling by Priest's door (2.3)	£750
E	Consider replacing missing porch lobby doors/ fit thick curtain (2.3)	?
E	Consider replacing OSB board with timber boards to Lady C floor (2.4)	£250
E	Consider fitting carpets at front of Nave (2.4)	£2,500
E	Consider fitting carpet at rear of Nave (2.4)	£1,500
E	Consider replacing Vestry carpet (2.4)	£900
E	Consider redecorating Nave, Chancel and Chapel walls faces (2.5)	£20,000 +
E	Consider re-decorating Vestry walls (2.6)	£450
E	Consider installing an accessible toilet (2.6)	£50,000 +
E	Consider improving access to main entrance (2.7)	£5,000 +
E	Consider removal of redundant external organ chamber housing (2.9)	£1,500
E	Consider replacing timber gate by pedestrian entrance (3.2)	£900
E	Consider fitting an instantaneous hot water unit (4.4)	£500
F	Monitor delaminating stone faces (1.5) & crumbling window masonry (1.7)	-
F	Monitor tarmac drive and footpaths for further deterioration (3.1)	-
F	Monitor bulging retaining wall by main entrance (3.3)	-
F	Monitor settlement cracks to walling by former lych-gate (3.3)	-
M	Remove vegetation to flat roof over boiler house (1.1)	DIY
M	Clean vegetation from gutters & gullies/ remove from soakaways (1.2)	DIY

6.0 Maintenance recommendations and general advice

Accessibility and disabled people

The Equality Act 2010 bans unfair treatment and helps achieve equal opportunities in the workplace and wider society. Duties under the Act are placed on 'service providers', which include churches and the service they provide for worship and wider activities either in the church or a church hall. The PCC should ensure that they have understood their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Further details and guidance are available at http://www.churchcare.co.uk/images/Accessibility_Sept2017

Asbestos

A suitable and sufficient assessment should be made as to whether asbestos is or is liable to be present in the premises. The assessment has not been covered by this report and it is the duty of the PCC to ensure that this has been or is carried out.

Bats and other protected species

The PCC should be aware of its responsibilities where protected species are present in a church. Guidance can be found on <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/churches/guidance-advice/looking-after-your-church/bats>

Electrical Installation

Any electrical installation should be tested at least every five years in accordance with the recommendations of the Church Buildings Council. The inspection and testing should be carried out in accordance with IEE Regulations, latest edition, and an inspection certificate obtained in every case. The certificate should be kept with the Church Logbook.

Fire extinguishers

Obtain advice from Local Fire Prevention Officer on the correct type and location. Enter into a contract for annual maintenance with the supplier.

Heating Installation

A proper examination and test should be made of the heating system by a qualified engineer each summer before the heating season begins, and the report kept with the Church Logbook.

Health and Safety

Overall responsibility for the health and safety of the church and churchyard lies with the Incumbent and PCC. This report may identify areas of risk as part of the inspection, but this does not equate to a thorough and complete risk assessment by the PCC of the building and churchyard.

Insurances

Ensure adequate cover is maintained for the full cost of re-building and replacement of contents and ensure this is index linked to cover inflation.

Lightning Protection

Any lightning conductor should be tested at least every five years in accordance with the current British Standard by a competent engineer. The record of the test results and conditions should be kept with the Church Logbook.

Maintenance and restoration of church bells

This guidance is given by the Church Buildings Council to all parochial church councils. From 1st January 2016, it will be possible to carry out a range of works to bells without a faculty: see List A and List B in Schedule 1 to the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015. Carrying out works in List A or List B is subject to conditions set out in the list. It is a condition of carrying out any works to bells under List A or List B that regard is had to this guidance. Additionally, in the case of List B works, the approval of the archdeacon must be obtained before they are carried out and the archdeacon may apply additional conditions. Further information can be found on http://www.churchcare.co.uk/images/Guidance_Notes/Bells.pdf

Organ

Enter into an annual contract for maintenance and tuning.

Painting rainwater goods

Paint cast iron rainwater goods every five years min. Scrape and wire brush to remove rust. Apply primer/undercoat. Topcoat with 2 coats gloss paint. Use bituminous paint on inside of gutters.

Pointing of masonry

Must be done under the direction of the Church Architect who will advise on the correct mortar mix and method of application. (NB the wrong mortar mix can do more harm than good).

Plasterwork

Loose plaster is a problem in many churches and can be dangerous if large sections fall off the walls or plaster and lath ceilings. Loose sections are not always visible and sometimes can only be identified by tapping. It is advisable to check suspect areas from ladders where possible.

Rainwater disposal systems

Rainwater goods include the gutters and downpipes which are key to the survival of a church building. Together with a watertight roof, they ensure that rainwater is directed safely away from the building. As water is the greatest cause of damage to buildings, it is vital to keep these elements well maintained. Clean out gutters and gullies twice per year – late spring, late – autumn after leaves have fallen. See Church Care website under http://www.churchcare.co.uk/images/Guidance_Notes/Rainwater.pdf

Roof coverings

A roof keeps out water and prevents the deterioration of the building and its contents. It needs to be carefully maintained in order to retain its weatherproof properties. Check frequently and repair as necessary. See Church Care website under http://www.churchcare.co.uk/images/Roofs_August_2016.pdf

Sustainable buildings

A quinquennial inspection is a good opportunity for a PCC to reflect on the sustainability of the building and its use. This may include adapting the building to allow greater community use, considering how to increase resilience in the face of predicted changes to the climate, as well as increasing energy efficiency and considering other environmental issues. See Appendix for 'a Practical Path to "Net Zero Carbon" for our churches'.

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A practical path to “net zero carbon” for our churches

These recommendations aim to help churches reduce their energy use and associated carbon emissions. They are based on the findings of our church energy audit programme and input from a range of professionals in the field.

NOTE: Many of the suggestions below require faculty; please seek input early on. If the church interior is of historic, artistic, architectural or artistic interest, seek professional & DAC advice first, before making changes; stabilising the environment for these interiors is important to minimise cycles of treatment, with their inherent carbon cost.

A. Where do we start?

These are actions that nearly all churches can benefit from, even low occupancy churches used only on a Sunday. They are relatively easy, with relatively fast pay back. They are a good place for churches to start, when trying to move towards ‘net zero’.

The building itself:

- A1. Maintain the roof and gutters, to prevent damp entering the building and warm air escaping.
- A2. Fix any broken window panes* and make sure opening windows shut tightly, to reduce heat loss.
- A3. Insulate around heating pipes to direct heat where you want it; this may allow other sources of heat to be reduced in this area.
- A4. If draughts from doors are problematic, draught-proof the gaps* or put up a door-curtain*.
- A5. Consider using rugs/floor-coverings (with breathable backings) and cushions on/around the pews/chairs.

Heating and lighting:

- A6. Switch to 100% renewable electricity, for example through Parish Buying’s energy basket, and “green” gas.
- A7. Match heating settings better to usage, so you only run the heating when necessary*.
- A8. If you have water-filled radiators, try turning-off the heating 15 minutes before the service ends; for most churches this allows the heating system to continue to radiate residual warmth*.
- A9. If you have radiators, add a glycol based “anti-freeze” to your radiator system and review your frost setting.
- A10. Replace lightbulbs with LEDs, where simple replacement is possible.
- A11. Replace floodlights with new LED units.
- A12. If you have internet connection, install a HIVE- or NEST-type heating controller, to better control heating.
- A13. If your current appliances fail, then replace with A+++ appliances.

People and policies:

- A14. Complete the Energy Footprint Tool each year, as part of your Parish Return, & communicate the results.
- A15. Create an Energy Champion who monitors bills and encourages people to turn things off when not needed.
- A16. Write an energy efficiency procurement policy; commit to renewable electricity & A+++ rated appliances.
- A17. Consider moving PCC meetings elsewhere during cold months, rather than running the church heating.

Offset the rest:

- A18. For most low usage “Sunday” churches, once they have taken steps like these, their remaining non-renewable energy use will be very small. For the majority, all they need to do now to be “net zero” is offset the small remaining amount of energy through [Climate Stewards](#) or other reputable schemes.
- A19. Also, think about your church grounds. Is there an area where you could let vegetation or a tree grow?

B. Where do we go next?

These are actions with a reasonably fast pay back for a church with medium energy usage, used a few times a week. Perhaps half of churches should consider them. Most actions cost more than the ones above, and/or require more time and thought. Some require some specialist advice and/or installers. They are often good next steps for those churches with the time and resources to move on further towards ‘net zero’.

The building itself:

- B1. If you have an uninsulated, easy-to-access roof void, consult with your QI about insulating the loft*.
- B2. If you have problematic draughts from your door, and a door curtain wouldn’t work, consult with your QI about installing a glazed door within your porch, or even a draught-lobby*.
- B3. Consider creating one or more smaller (separately heatable) spaces for smaller events.
- B4. Consider fabric wall-hangings or panels, with an air gap behind, as a barrier between people and cold walls.

Heating and lighting:

- B5. Learn how your building heats/cool and the link to comfort, by using data loggers (with good guidance).
- B6. Improve your heating zones and controls, so you only warm the areas you are using.
- B7. Install TRVs on radiators in meeting rooms & offices, to allow you to control them individually.