

# Preparing for your Quinquennial Inspection

Actions to take before the  
inspection day and information to  
help you prepare.

June 2021

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## THE QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION

We hope you will find this guide to preparing for your Quinquennial Inspection useful. It extrapolates some of the information provided by the Church Buildings Council.

The purpose of the quinquennial inspection is to provide a snapshot in time of the condition of the church building. Think of your inspecting architect as a family GP and the inspection as a periodic health check.

It is not a detailed inspection of the condition of any specific elements or areas of the church (which would be required to provide a detailed diagnostics for a particular problem), and it is a visual inspection only.

### THE SURVEY AND REPORT

The Quinquennial Inspection Report shall include:

- reference to previous Quinquennial Inspection reports, which are deemed to form part of subsequent reports, these to be provided by the PCC to the Inspector
- photographs of the exterior and the interior of the building (typically defects which may not be easily seen due to location etc.)
- a simple plan of the building
- The survey carried out by your Quinquennial Inspector will cover:
  - any necessary repair of the building
  - maintenance deficits and reference to maintenance plans which may exist.

- safety of the structure and floors
- access issues
- environmental sustainability (eg lighting, heating, rainwater goods)
- trees in the churchyard if they are protected by a Tree Preservation Order, in a Conservation Area, or on the Gazetteer of ancient, veteran and notable trees; or any tree impacting on the building
- ruined structures in the churchyard
- moveable items of high value or significance (which may be identified in the Statement of Significance and/or by the Archdeacon)

The inspector should use their professional judgement in bringing other matters of concern to the attention of the PCC, for example problems with paths, public rights of way, utilities, serious issues concerning the boundary walls, lych-gates and other structures within the curtilage, and monuments.

The inspection will generally be carried out from ground level. The quinquennial system assumes that the Inspector will inspect all parts of the building including roof voids and roofs where these are visible and safely accessible. It will state any limitations of the survey, such as areas where it was not possible to gain access, and make recommendations for any further investigation.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Inspector will include a number of recommendations which are ranked in order of priority or identify items of routine maintenance or requiring further (or specialist) investigation.

You should aim to carry out the recommended works/changes/investigations within the timeframes indicated as the timeframes indicate the risk of defects worsening and becoming more expensive to repair or other complications developing. It is appreciated that funds are not always in place and that you may need to apply for grant funding.

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## PREPARING FOR YOUR INSPECTION

### Important:

Please review this section to familiarise yourself with what will happen on the day. It is important that arrangements are in place so that the inspection is not delayed and that all areas may be inspected.

If safe and unobstructed access is not possible to an area, it will not be inspected on the day. If you wish for the area to be inspected you will need to agree a separate inspection at our standard call-out or hourly rate. This will be a charge to the PCC, not your Diocese.

### ADVANCE PREPARATION

- Identify a person who will be available on site throughout the inspection day** (assume 9am to 7pm unless agreed otherwise. Agree in advance with your Inspector who will be available for this role. Their presence is for safety reasons and to offer assistance with ladders, hatches etc..)
- Check the church diary** for conflicting events and uses (e.g. play groups etc.). Let your Inspector know about them in advance and confirm that they can be accommodated.
- Bells should be down** on the day of the inspection. The ringers should be asked to report on any problems with the ring.
- Check that tuning/log books for musical instruments and clocks are available.** Ask the people who help look after these items to report any problems or concerns.

- Make sure that all keys and access codes etc. are available** for use on the day, including the safe.
- Audit your environmental sustainability.** (e.g. complete the Practical Path to Net Zero worksheet from Church Care and send it to your inspector in advance.)
- Check that the log book, inventory and terrier are up-to-date and available.** If a copy is kept in electronic form, ideally, send them to your Inspector in advance
- Check that reports and tests listed below are available** and, ideally, send them to your Inspector in advance..
- Check that safe access to all areas is available** as described below. Arrange for ladders and builder's attendance if required, this may be a good opportunity to arrange gutter clearance.

### REPORTS AND TESTS

It is sensible for these reports or tests to be done before the Quinquennial Inspector's inspection, so the results can be included in the main report. All such reports should be provided in advance of the visit by the PCC to the Inspector.

- all recent specialist reports**, including a Statement of Significance and/or Conservation Management Plan if such exist.
- all recent written test reports** on asbestos and the electrical, fire protection and lightning systems.
- arboricultural and ecological reports** (eg, bats or other protected or rare species).
- Assessments and policies** concerning health and safety, fire risk etc..

## SAFE ACCESS

Safe access is essential for the inspection (and indeed for maintenance access). Your inspector will determine if they are comfortable with the access arrangements in place on the day.

Use of ladders for access for inspection should comply with the Work at Height Regulations 2005. Guidance for this is published by the HSE and includes Safe Use of Ladders and Stepladders and Working at Height: A Brief Guide. This applies not only for the Quinquennial Inspection but also for routine maintenance.

For further advice regarding the safety of those involved in routine maintenance of churches, refer to the ChurchCare website.

Selected key points are included here as follows:

- It is strongly recommended that nobody - this includes your professional adviser and church wardens - should climb vertical ladders over 3m in height which have not been fitted with hoops or a fall arrest system.
- All ladders must be sound safe and securely fixed. 'Footing' of ladders by a second person is considered a last resort.
- Hatches should have counterweights.
- There should be ladder extensions of about 1m or handholds beyond the plane of the hatch/parapet/roof to assist in getting on and off the ladder.

### Preparing access for the inspection

The inspection will be carried out from ground level and other vantage points at high level which can be accessed safely (in the opinion of the Inspector)

Consider the following:

#### 1. Is safe access to high-level vantage points possible via existing stairs and fixed ladders?

**Yes** Check that the routes are clear and that the Inspector is informed of any residual hazards. (e.g. unprotected drops and bird guano etc.).

**No** Are suitable *metal* ladders available at the church and can assistance be

provided? If no, organise builder's attendance with suitable ladders and speak to your inspector in advance of the inspection to discuss the arrangements and confirm that the access will be suitable.

#### 2. Do you have the necessary keys etc. for access?

**Yes** Ensure you know which ones fit each lock and that they are available on the day.

**No** Find them!

#### 3. Are all hatches fitted with a counter-weight and can they be opened from floor level?

**Yes** Test them in advance of the inspection.

**No** Speak to your inspector in advance of the inspection to discuss the arrangements and confirm that access to the areas beyond will be possible.

#### 4. Are there any enclosed spaces or areas which might be used by rodents, birds or any other vermin?

**Yes** Speak to your inspector in advance of the inspection to discuss the arrangements and confirm that access to the areas will be possible.

**No** Check to confirm that this is not the case.

#### 5. Are there any known issues with anti-social behaviour or drug use (e.g. needles)?

**Yes** Speak to your inspector in advance of the inspection to discuss the arrangements and confirm that access to the areas will be possible.

**No** Check to confirm that this is not the case.