



An introduction to the maintenance checklist by Barbara and Karen, Fabric Support Officers for the Taylor Review Pilot

While working on the Taylor Review Pilot, we had the pleasure of meeting the dedicated volunteers and incumbents who care for some of the many magnificent places of worship in the two Pilot areas of Suffolk and Greater Manchester.

This gave us the opportunity to record the extensive work you undertake to keep these special places in a good state of repair. It highlighted the importance of the role of the ‘on the ground’ carers of these heritage treasures. Through our work and the ‘Stitch in Time’ maintenance workshops, we were able to emphasise the value of maintenance and minor repairs and, with the help of a checklist, formalise the work people are doing. Using a checklist creates a record of tasks and actions which can be shared amongst current and new volunteers.

Some places of worship already had a maintenance checklist that they use alongside the building inspection report and logbook. In these cases, the places of worship are able to plan ahead to ensure that all areas of the building are looked at regularly, and tasks undertaken in a timely manner to prevent large scale damage. Where no maintenance checklist existed, we worked with churches to complete a checklist that suited their place of worship. This often formalised work already being carried out.

We have provided a checklist template which was tested by some of the Taylor Review Pilot participants. It can be easily changed to work for your building and reflect the team and funds available.

We found that volunteers who worked with a template were aware that early and regular observations are crucial to reducing repair costs. They understood that financial constraints may delay some works, but checking areas regularly and monitoring issues allowed them to share information with their advisor and discuss the best course of action.

Our maintenance checklist template notes that a professional advisor should be consulted in some instances. It is important for places of worship to fully understand and record regular inspections necessary for the services within their buildings. Also, to understand when consent from a governing body may be needed, and when to take advice.

In some cases, the emphasis on maintenance and repair allowed members of the congregation and the wider community to highlight changes they had noticed. This may have been cleaners noting some signs of beetle infestation, or gardeners noting a roof slate on the ground. Everybody involved with your place of worship can play an important part in looking after it. Their input is easier when a formal checklist is in place.

We spoke often with volunteers about the importance of ensuring the roof covering, leadwork and rainwater goods were all intact and working properly. Water penetration can cause extensive damage if left unchecked. Many voiced concerns about the cost of maintaining these elements, such as clearing high level gutters, but saw the value of identifying and dealing with an issue early or allowing time to save up or apply for funding to address it.

Although the pilot has now ended, we hope that places of worship will continue to plan their maintenance and recognise the volunteers and employees. Their actions, no matter how small, keep these important buildings in a good, safe state of repair.

Barbara and Karen

Useful links

Denominational advice:

Church of England guidance

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings>

The Catholic Church

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/our-work/patrimony/care-of-churches/>

The Methodist Church

<https://www.methodist.org.uk/for-churches/property/maintenance/>

The Baptist Church

https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220733/Church_Buildings_Ownership.aspx

The United Reformed Church

<https://urc.org.uk/images/S811%20v2010.pdf>

General Maintenance advice:

Historic England

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/places-of-worship/maintenance>

National Churches Trust

www.nationalchurchestrust.org/caring-your-building/regular-maintenance

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

www.spab.org.uk/campaigning/maintenance-co-operatives-project/mcp-fim-resources

Information on technical services:

Advice on lightning protection

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/lightning-protection/>

Advice on building services

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/building-services-engineering/maintaining-building-services/>

Advice on legionella

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/legionnaires/>

Advice on providing disabled access to historic buildings

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/easy-access-to-historic-buildings/>

Further research on maintenance:

Historic England The Value of Maintenance

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/value-of-maintenance/>