



**THE DIOCESE
OF SHEFFIELD**

Renewed | Released | Rejuvenated

WHY MAINTENANCE?

Introduction

Across a lot of advice and guidance the Church Buildings team provide on the net zero carbon strategy of the Church of England, one aspect takes precedent over every thing else in the early push towards this goal, maintenance. Many people may be wondering why maintenance is placed on a pedestal above everything else we can do to achieve net zero.

This guidance will explain why regular maintenance is so important for our churches, it will explain the importance of maintenance from three main perspectives, net zero, minimising disruption and finances. This guidance has been produced with the findings from both the Church Buildings and Resourcing Churches teams at the Diocese of Sheffield and Historic England on the benefits of regular maintenance.

Net Zero

A lack of maintenance can lead to many building defects, damp can be caused by blocked rainwater goods, heat can be lost quickly through draughty doors.

Findings from the Church of England state that on average a total of 84% of the energy used by churches was for heating. Therefore, one of the most important things we can do to achieve net zero is improving the heat efficiency of our churches. One of the first ways we can achieve this is through maintenance.

A damp building is a cold building. If your building is damp then it is cold, which means you need to expend more energy to keep it warm than if it wasn't damp. This can be avoided by regular maintenance checks on both rainwater goods and the roof, to prevent the leaking of water both onto the walls and into the church.

When you are heating your church heat retention is a very important aspect. If your church does not retain heat very well, then you will have to heat it for longer and more intensely to keep the building warm when in use. Heat loss can be primarily caused by draughts through windows and doors that are ill maintained, as well as uninsulated roof spaces. Windows and doors that have regular maintenance where cracks and holes are checked for to make sure that there are no draughts lead to more effective heat retention. While roof insulation could be useful in retaining heat it should be noted that it is not appropriate for all roofs.

In essence, if a building is not made colder from damp and losing heat through draughts, you do not need to expend as much energy in heating a building. Heat efficiency is a vital first step on the road to zero carbon, this can only be achieved with regular and satisfactory maintenance.

Minimising Disruption

With the day to day running of a church and people attending on a regular basis it is imperative that there is minimal disruption to attendance and regular services. Maintenance is key to minimising disruption to your church. A good example of this is maintaining rainwater goods, if you do not upkeep with regular maintenance and monitoring eventually the rainwater goods will fail. This will lead to water overflowing from the drainage and on to the wall which will start to cause damp. The damp will lead to internal plaster falling off the wall and the need for extensive wall repair. The church will be disrupted by the plaster which lead to a decreased capacity for attendance, the extensive wall repair will require internal and external scaffolding which will also be a disruption to service, mission and worship for a prolonged period.

Compare this to minimal, short term, external disruption that will be experienced from cleaning the rainwater goods out twice a year. You may need a contractor to work on a ladder for a day twice a year on the outside of the church to clean the rainwater goods out, but this is a miniscule disruption compared to what could happen without this simple, regular maintenance.

Finances

Extensive research has been conducted on the link between maintenance and cost by both the Diocese and Historic England. The results are clear, if regular maintenance is not carried out, the cost of church upkeep rises substantially. The findings of research have concluded that delaying maintenance rose costs by 17% and adds 25% to the cost of repair to remedy the consequential damage of delaying maintenance.

Take roofs for an example, it may cost £800 to hire a contractor to inspect a roof, clean gutters and make minor repairs. But if this regular maintenance is not carried out and roof defects go unnoticed over a prolonged period of time, then eventually the entire roof may need replacing, one roof slope alone on a Victorian church can cost **£250,000**. It also feeds into minimising disruption as this is a much longer and intrusive project for a church and its congregation.

While you may lament spending the money to tackle smaller jobs, it decreases the risk of having to spend large amounts of money on bigger problems in the future. What sounds better to spend, £800 or £250,000?

Why Maintenance?

This is the question asked in the title of this document. The answer to it is simple, maintenance helps to reach our goal of net zero, it helps to minimise disruption to your church and its congregation, and it minimises the financial outgoings of your PCC on repairs to the church.

With regular maintenance your churches will be more manageable, so you can focus more on mission and community projects, adding to the longevity of your church as a place of worship and community.

The founder of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB), William Morris, said about maintenance '*stave off decay by daily care*'. These words were spoken in 1877 and still ring true today.

If you maintain your church, it and the community and congregation that surrounds it will survive long into the future. 54yujh