

## **Guideline Leaflet LB06: Looking after your Church Buildings**

This is basic guidance on the continuing care of old buildings. Much of the information is appropriate to any building. Routine maintenance is important, particularly in preserving any historic fabric and features.

This Guideline Leaflet is regularly reviewed and updated. To ensure that you are using the most up to date version, please download the leaflet from the BUGB website at [www.baptist.org.uk/resources](http://www.baptist.org.uk/resources)

The date on which the leaflet was last updated can be found on the download page.

# LB06: Looking after your Church Buildings

## INTRODUCTION

This is one of a series of guides produced by the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee to assist local minister, deacons and elders (usually the Charity Trustees) to understand best practice in the way they look after their listed buildings. Other guides in the series cover the following topics:

LB01	<i>Introducing the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee</i>
LB02	<i>Applying to the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee</i>
LB03	<i>Professional Advisors and Applications to the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee</i>
LB04	<i>Listed Buildings Application Form</i>
LB05	<i>Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme</i>
LB07	<i>Building Materials and External Fittings in Listed Churches</i>
LB08	<i>Furnishings in Listed Church Buildings</i>
LB09	<i>Photographic Recording</i>
PC03	<i>Five Year Inspection Reports – Church Buildings</i>

## ROUTINE MAINTENANCE

The aim of this note is to give basic guidance on the continuing care of old buildings. Much of the information is appropriate to any building in your care, and represents good practice in routine maintenance. Attention to detail is particularly important when dealing with listed buildings. The following are basic recommendations for good practice.

- Get to know the building, its intimate construction details, its history, its heritage significance and how it has developed.
- Watch for early signs of a problem, and put them right before small problems become expensive repairs.
- Plan ahead for routine maintenance with the aid of a detailed inspection report, such as a five year (quinquennial) inspection, undertaken by a surveyor or architect with appropriate expertise. For guidance see leaflet PC03 *Five Year Inspection Reports – Church Buildings*.
- Carry out repairs using materials sympathetic and appropriate to the original building, avoiding the use of cement, for example, in the repair of buildings constructed with lime mortar.
- Ensure that you understand the Health and Safety Legislation as it might affect what you want to do to the building. Make certain that the work is going to be undertaken in a safe manner, by people with the appropriate skills. The Charity Trustees (usually the minister, deacons and elders or Leadership Team) could be held liable for any accident which occurs as a result of an inappropriate instruction. Please refer to our leaflets PC06 *Redeveloping or Building Church Premises – Contract Procurement – The Alternatives*, L10 *Health and Safety and Fire Precautions* and PC05 *Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007*.
- Be cautious of miracle cures and cheap DIY solutions, which may look appealing but are relatively untried in an historic building context. Some modern compounds may be useable for short term emergency repairs but they should not be seen as long term solutions to problems. Care should be taken that the repair is reversible or removable without causing damage to historic fabric. Care should also be taken when using waterproofing material to keep external water out as this can cause internal condensation or sweating which could cause serious rot within the fabric of the building. Do not be put off by being told that the appropriate authentic materials are not available locally. They probably are, but may need hunting down.
- If in any doubt about anything, ask someone else such as your professional advisor or the Local Authority building conservation officer. The Listed Buildings Advisory Committee will try and help if they can but will probably suggest you refer to published guidance.

- If undertaking works, consult the Local Authority and the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee before you do anything which might change the character of the building, the way it looks or its materials. Failure to do this could be expensive later on and may result in having to undo the work especially if unauthorised changes have been made.
- Keep records of everything you do to the building in a log book. It could save time and money the next time you have to tackle a similar problem.

## GETTING TO KNOW THE BUILDING

No amount of expertise can compensate for personal knowledge. We recommend that one of the Charity Trustees be made responsible for the building fabric, and that it be their duty to identify the nature of the materials used in the original construction, and any problem areas of the building such as drains, water-courses, electrics etc. In addition to this, some idea of the local and regional significance of the building should be gained as this will help in assessing the relative importance of, say, the roof coverings, the brickwork in the outer walls, and the internal arrangements, colour schemes, etc.

'Statements of Significance' are becoming more widely requested and are a way of assessing the historic value of the structure, in terms of townscape value, value to the community, in the local heritage, regional significance, or to the national heritage. Listed buildings will almost always be making a valuable contribution at more than one of these levels. The information gathered should be retained in one central place, such as in the front of a log book. This will be useful, not only for routine maintenance, but for compiling of statements of intent, when applying for consent to make alterations.

Archaeological awareness is becoming a requirement particularly on sites with a long history of occupation, or where a chapel has been built on old burial grounds. Archaeological assessments may be needed by Local Authorities or the Listed Buildings Advisory Committee for applications for new works, and it may be appropriate to gain an understanding of the archaeological significance of the site whilst compiling information on the history of a building.

## WATCH FOR EARLY SIGNS OF TROUBLE

Keeping a watchful eye on the building can save time and money. We recommend to churches the following basic pattern of inspections. (If the inspections are done by volunteers ensure that the church takes account of safety and has adequate insurance against accidents.):

### 1 Weekly, or after a storm:

- Walk around the building, checking for missing roof tiles etc, and for signs of leaking gutters and blocked downpipes.
- Check that all windows are sound, open high level windows a little to let fresh air into the building to keep it dry and well aired.
- Look for signs of damp internally at the base of walls, around windows and at corners of ceilings. This may be evidence of water penetration.

### 2 Every April and November:

- Check all gutters and down pipes from ladders, if safe. If there is a need to use a scaffolding tower or cherry picker the cost might be reduced by arranging this jointly with neighbouring churches. Unblock any blocked by vegetation or fallen leaves.
- Check flat roofs for signs of ponding.
- Clear vegetation such as ivy, brambles, and grass away from gullies above ground water courses.
- Check ceilings for signs of bowing plasterwork and fresh cracks.
- Ensure all vents are clear at ground level.
- Check floors for wood dust which might indicate the presence of woodworm especially between April and June when they are most active.

### **3 Annually:**

- Tune the organ and arrange for a brief report on its condition.
- Check enclosed roof spaces, if safe access is available, for signs of water penetration, vermin and woodworm.
- Check and lubricate as applicable any external apparatus.
- Overhaul all door ironmongery, lubricating locks and hinges.
- Check central heating boilers, and all gas appliances, and arrange for inspection by a competent engineer.
- Ensure that any ventilators and air bricks are free from obstruction.
- Examine outside walls for signs of moss growth, lost pointing or cracking and take appropriate remedial action.
- Record any movements photographically, or arrange for monitoring with graduated tell-tales.
- Check internal ceilings and walls for cracking, and consult professional advisor if concerned.
- Wash external paintwork and windows with warm water and soap (not detergent which streaks), and check any ironwork and security shutters for signs of decay.
- Arrange to have all fire fighting equipment checked and upgraded as necessary.
- Inspect boundary walling, fences and gates for signs of decay and repair as necessary.
- Think about the way people with any sort of disability are welcomed and accommodated within the building, in compliance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Ensure that the requirements of the Place of Work Legislation and the church's Health and Safety Policy are complied with, regarding the safety of anyone employed (or volunteering) within the building, which will include the minister and visitors.
- Compile a brief report on the condition of the building for the annual meeting.

### **5 Every five years:**

- Arrange for a Five Year Report (also called a quinquennial inspection) from your surveyor or architect. Please refer to Guidelines Leaflet PC03 *Five Year Inspection Reports – Church Buildings*.
- Arrange for a member of the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC) to test the electrical systems and apparatus and report.
- Review your insurance cover for the building and its contents.
- Check all external paintwork and redecorate if necessary with a compatible paint.
- Treat all stained and oiled woodwork with clear preservative or boiled linseed oil.
- Arrange to rod through any below ground drains serving rainwater down pipes.
- Consider your next five year plan for the building, including routine repairs, budgeting and phasing as part of your mission plan.

## **VAT AND GRANTS**

Ask your professional advisor for guidance or contact the VAT helpline tel: 0845 010 9000.

Various grants and allowances are available.

Please refer to M06 *Grants for Building Work*.

## **CONSTRUCTION AND DESIGN MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS**

All building work has to be undertaken in a way that is inherently safe, and by law the client and the builder together have to show that a safety audit has been undertaken. Any work to a building other than a dwelling which will take longer than five weeks or thirty 'man days' to complete needs to have a proper written health and safety plan produced by a Planning Supervisor.

Please refer to our guidelines leaflet PC05 *Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015* and the L10 *Health and Safety and Fire Precautions*.

## **ECCLESIASTICAL EXEMPTION**

The exemption is a privilege by the government given to churches, which enables them to administer

their own version of the Listed Building Consent. Formal approval is required for any alteration to a listed building whether it is a church or not and this includes structural repairs as well as major alterations, and, in certain circumstances, the choice of paint colours. Whilst routine maintenance works are unlikely to require a formal application for consent, it is always advisable to seek advice from the Local Authority conservation officer. The way we look after our buildings now will determine whether we will be able to retain the exemption.

## **LISTED BUILDING CONSENT AND PLANNING APPROVAL**

Where repairs will make a significant difference to the appearance of a building, listed building consent will usually be required (in addition to any necessary planning and building regulation approvals from the local planning authority). Works requiring listed building consent include demolition or partial demolition or alteration or the removal of internal or external features. Major alterations affecting the external appearance or which increase the height of the building will additionally require planning approval.

## **PLANNING AHEAD**

The Baptist Trust Corporations recommend that a detailed inspection is undertaken of all listed buildings, once every five years. This Five Year Survey (Quinquennial Inspection) is a vital piece of investigative work, which if undertaken with skill, can help with the planning of the work, and identify likely funding requirements, dovetailing in with any major alterations being considered for the building. It is appropriate to have items categorised according to their priority, and for the report to identify which items may be safely undertaken by the local church. An indication of budget costs is essential. A suggested outline of the report is shown in Appendix 3.

## **APPROPRIATE MATERIALS**

The most sympathetic repair to any building will always be those materials closest in nature to the originals. This will include clay tiles for clay tiled roofs, natural slates from an English or Welsh source to repair slate roofs, softwood where softwood was used before, oak for oak, etc. The use of cement is unlikely to be appropriate in buildings built before 1910.

## **APPROPRIATE CONTRACTORS**

Building works, even minor repairs, should be undertaken by a builder or contractor competent and experienced in conservation work. It is very easy to do serious long term damage to fabric of historic buildings by well intentioned repairs using inappropriate materials or techniques.

## **SOURCES OF HELP AND GUIDANCE**

### **HISTORIC ENGLAND (previously English Heritage)**

Historic England is an organisation with important responsibilities to help preserve important heritage buildings.

They offer guidance about maintenance and also have an important role in commenting formally when changes are proposed to a listed building.

Their website is a good source of information and all aspects of good maintenance practice.

<http://www.historicengland.org.uk/>

### **THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS**

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings is an organisation committed to helping to preserve heritage buildings.

They also run training events for those responsible for the care of churches. Many people who have attended a course have found them to be very useful. <http://www.spab.org.uk/>

## LB06 LOOKING AFTER YOUR CHURCH BUILDINGS

**APPENDIX ONE: useful addresses and telephone numbers** (A) Advisory (G) Grants (O) Official

### 1 CHURCH BODIES

**Allchurches Trust Ltd**, Beaufort House, Brunswick Road, Gloucester GL1 1JZ (Tel: 01452 528553) [www.allchurches.co.uk](http://www.allchurches.co.uk) (G)

**Baptist Union Corporation (The)**, Baptist House, PO Box 44, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 8RT (Tel: 01235 517700) [www.baptist.org.uk](http://www.baptist.org.uk) (A)

**Chapels Society (The)**, 1 Newcastle Avenue, Beeston, Nottinghamshire NG9 1BT (Tel: 0115 922 4930) [www.britarch.ac.uk/chapelsoc/index.html](http://www.britarch.ac.uk/chapelsoc/index.html) (A)

**Cathedral Communications Ltd**, High Street, Tisbury, Wiltshire SP3 6HA (Tel: 01747 871717) [www.buildingconservation.com](http://www.buildingconservation.com) (G)

**Church Monuments Society**, c/o The Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0BE (Tel: 020 7738 2965) [www.churchmonumentsociety.org](http://www.churchmonumentsociety.org) (A)

**Churches Main Committee**, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3AZ (Tel: 020 7222 1265) [www.cmainc.org.uk](http://www.cmainc.org.uk) (O)

**Friends of City Churches (The)**, The Church of St Magnus the Martyr, Lower Thames Street, London EC3R 6DN (Tel: 020 7626 1555) [www.london-city-churches.org.uk](http://www.london-city-churches.org.uk) (A)

**Friends of Friendless Churches (The)**, St Ann's Vestry Hall, 2 Church Entry, London EC4V 5HB (Tel: 020 7236 3934) [www.friendsoffriendlesschurches.org.uk](http://www.friendsoffriendlesschurches.org.uk) (G)

**Historic Chapels Trust**, St George's German Lutheran Church, 55 Alie Street, London E1 8EB (Tel: 020 7481 0533) [www.hct.org.uk](http://www.hct.org.uk) (A)

**Institute of British Organ Building**, 13 Ryefields, Thurston, Suffolk IP33 3TD (Tel: 01359 233 433) [www.ibo.co.uk](http://www.ibo.co.uk) (A)

**Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme**, PO Box 609, Newport NP10 8QD (Tel: 0845 601 5945) (G)

**National Churchwatch**, 'Endeavour', 8 Commercial Road, Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 5DH (Tel: 01749 344992) [www.nationalchurchwatch.com](http://www.nationalchurchwatch.com) (A)

### 2 AMENITY SOCIETIES

**Ancient Monuments Society (The)**, St Ann's Vestry Hall, 2 Church Entry, London, EC4V 5HB (Tel: 020 7236 3934) [www.ancientmonumentsociety.org.uk](http://www.ancientmonumentsociety.org.uk) (A)

**Council for British Archaeology (The)**, St Mary's House, 66 Bootham, York, YO30 7BZ (Tel: 01904 671417) [www.britarch.ac.uk](http://www.britarch.ac.uk) (A)

**Georgian Group (The)**, 6 Fitzroy Square, London, W1T 5DX (Tel: 0871 750 2936) [www.georgiangroup.org.uk](http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk) (A)

**Incorporated Society of Organ Builders (The)**, Smithy Steads, Clagg Vale, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 5SQ (Tel: 01422 885846) [www.isob.co.uk](http://www.isob.co.uk) (A)

**Joint Committee of National Amenity Societies**, St Ann's Vestry Hall, 2 Church Entry, London, EC4V 5HB (Tel: 020 7236 3934) [www.jcnas.org.uk](http://www.jcnas.org.uk) (A)

**National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies**, 8 Guildford Street, London, WC1N 1DT (Tel: 020 7430 0730) [www.nadfas.org.uk](http://www.nadfas.org.uk) (A)

**Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (The)**, 37 Spital Square, London E1 6DY (Tel: 020 7377 1644) [www.spab.org.uk](http://www.spab.org.uk) (A)

**Society for Church Archaeology (The)**, 38 Millstream Road, Heighington, Lincolnshire LN4 1TY [www.britarch.ac.uk/socchurcharchaeol](http://www.britarch.ac.uk/socchurcharchaeol)

**Twentieth Century Society (The)**, 70 Cow Cross Street, London EC1M 6BP (Tel: 020 7250 3857) [www.c20society.org.uk](http://www.c20society.org.uk) (A)

**Victorian Society (The)**, 1 Priory Gardens, Bedford Park, London W4 1TT (Tel: 020 8994 1019) [www.victorian-society.org.uk](http://www.victorian-society.org.uk) (A)

### 3 PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

**Ecclesiastical Architects' and Surveyors' Association (EASA)**, Elden Minns and Co Ltd, Chartered Architects/Surveyors, 453 Glossop Road, Sheffield, S10 2PT (Tel: 0114 266 2458) [www.easanet.co.uk](http://www.easanet.co.uk) (A)

**Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors**, 12 Great George Street, London, SW1 3AD (Tel: 0870 333 1600) [www.rics.org](http://www.rics.org) (A)

**Royal Institute of British Architects**, 66 Portland Place, London, W1B 1AD (Tel: 020 7580 5533) [www.architecture.com](http://www.architecture.com) (A)

### 4 OTHERS

**Association for Studies in the Conservation of Historic Buildings (ASCHB)**, 181/2 Macaulay Road, London, SW4 0QX (Tel: 0208 540 3066) (A)

**CADW**, Plas Carew, Unit 5-7 Cefn Coed, Parc Nantgarw, Cardiff CF15 7QQ (Tel: 01443 336000) [www.cadw.wales.gov.uk](http://www.cadw.wales.gov.uk)

**Charities Aid Foundation**, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4TA (Tel: 01732 520001) [www.cafonline.org](http://www.cafonline.org) (A,G)

**Department for Culture, Media and Sport**, 2-4 Cockspur Street, London SW1Y 5DH (Tel: 020 7211 6200) [www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk) (A, O)

**Entrust**, Acre House, 2 Town Square, Sale, Cheshire M33 7WZ (Tel: 0161 972 0044) [www.entrust.org.uk](http://www.entrust.org.uk) (G)

**Heritage Lottery Fund**, 7 Holbein Place, London, SW1W 8NR (Tel: 020 7591 6000) [www.hlf.org.uk](http://www.hlf.org.uk) (A, G)

**Historic England**, 1 Waterhouse Square, 138-142 Holborn, London, EC1N 2ST (Tel: 020 7973 3700) <http://www.historicengland.org.uk/> (A, O, G)

**Historic England (Archives)**, The Engine House, Fire Fly Avenue, Swindon, SN2 2EH (Tel: 01793 414600/414700) <http://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/archive/archive-services/> (A, O)

**Natural England**, 1 East Parade, Sheffield S1 2ET (Tel: 0114 241 8920) [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk) (A, O)

**VAT and the Built Heritage**, [www.vatbuiltheritage.org.uk](http://www.vatbuiltheritage.org.uk) (A)

## **APPENDIX TWO: LOG BOOK**

This is simply a log of all the work which you do to the building. It should contain the following information:

- What work has been undertaken
- Who did the work
- What the work cost
- Whether any professionals were involved, and, if so, who
- What materials were used, and from where they were obtained
- When the work was done
- Who usually looks after the elements of the building which need regular attention (such as the organ, gutters, roofing, electrics)
- Who to call in an emergency

The log book could also contain:

- Photographs of the building both historical, and up to date, dated
- Specifications of the work undertaken
- Other snippets of historical information which come to light, and a list of benefactors
- Details of the organ, and any other instruments owned by the chapel
- An inventory of all loose furniture, with accurate photographs to identify them, should they be stolen or lost
- Recollections from older members of the fellowship of the condition of the buildings in earlier times
- References from other books, local guides and histories of the area, which shed light on the development of the building

## **APPENDIX THREE: CONTENTS OF THE QUINQUENNIAL (FIVE YEAR REPORT) INSPECTION**

This is advisory only, but compliance would greatly assist in ensuring the quality of the inspection and a consistency of approach.

### **Preliminary information:**

- Brief description of building
- Materials used in its construction
- Statement of its heritage significance
- Dates of construction where known
- Archaeological implications (state none if this can be proved to be the case)
- Date of inspection
- Details of the surveyor, other people present
- Weather during the inspection

### **Main report:**

- Limitations
- Dates of previous inspections and by whom surveyed
- Works completed since the previous quinquennial report
- General condition

### **External:**

- Roof coverings
- Rainwater goods and rainwater disposal systems
- Walls, including parapets and upstand walls
- Timber porches, doors and canopies
- Windows



**Internal:**

- Roof structures and ceilings
- Roof and ceiling voids
- Upper floors, balconies, access stairways
- Ground floor structure, timber platforms
- Baptistries
- Cellars, any other spaces below ground level
- Toilets, kitchens, vestries etc
- Partitions, screens, panelling, doors and door furniture
- Internal finishes
- Monuments, plaques etc
- Fittings, fixtures, furniture and moveable articles
- Organs and other musical instruments
- Clocks and their enclosures

**Heat, light, power and drainage**

- Sanitary plumbing generally
- Rainwater disposal below ground
- Heating and other mechanical service installations
- Electrical installations
- Sound system
- Lightning conductor protection
- Fire precautions
- Security systems

**Curtilage:**

- Notice boards
- Churchyard
- Monuments and memorials
- Boundary walls, gates and fencing
- Paved areas
- Trees and shrubs (noting especially any covered by Tree Preservation Orders)

**Miscellaneous**

- Disabled provision and access
- Health and Safety issues
- Bats and vermin
- Woodworm and rot
- Dampness
- Ventilation
- Recommendations, with budget cost summary
- Explanatory notes
- The inspecting surveyor may add caveats to protect themselves. A common and acceptable one would say 'We have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and cannot therefore report that any such part of the property is free from defect.'

Association Trust Company	Contact
<b>Baptist Union Corporation Ltd East Midland Baptist Trust Company Ltd</b>	Baptist Union Corporation Ltd Baptist House PO Box 44 129 Broadway Didcot Oxfordshire OX11 8RT Telephone: 01235 517700
<b>Heart of England Baptist Association</b>	Heart of England Baptist Association BMS Birmingham 24 Weoley Park Road Selly Oak Birmingham B29 6QX Telephone: 0121 472 4986
<b>London Baptist Property Board</b>	London Baptist Association Unit C2 15 Dock Street London E1 8JN Telephone: 020 7692 5592
<b>Yorkshire Baptist Association</b>	17-19 York Place Leeds LS1 2EZ Telephone: 0113 278 4954
<b>West of England Baptist Trust Company Ltd</b>	West of England Baptist Trust Company Ltd Little Stoke Baptist Church Kingsway Little Stoke Bristol BS34 6JW Telephone: 0117 965 8828

This is one of a series of *Guidelines* that are offered as a resource for Baptist ministers and churches. They have been prepared by the Legal and Operations Team and are, of necessity, intended only to give very general advice in relation to the topics covered. These guidelines should not be relied upon as a substitute for obtaining specific and more detailed advice in relation to a particular matter.

The staff in the Legal and Operations Team at Baptist House (or your regional Trust Company) will be very pleased to answer your queries and help in any way possible. It helps us to respond as efficiently as possible to the many churches in trust with us if you write to us and set out your enquiry as simply as possible.

The Legal and Operations Team also support churches that are in trust with the East Midland Baptist Trust Company Limited.

**If your holding trustees are one of the other Baptist Trust Corporations you must contact your own Trust Corporation for further advice. A list of contact details is provided above. If you have private trustees they too should be consulted as appropriate.**

**Contact Address and Registered Office:**

Support Services Team, Baptist Union of Great Britain, Baptist House, PO Box 44,  
129 Broadway, Didcot OX11 8RT

Tel: 01235 517700 Fax: 01235 517715 Email: [legal.ops@baptist.org.uk](mailto:legal.ops@baptist.org.uk)

Website: [www.baptist.org.uk](http://www.baptist.org.uk) Registered CIO with Charity Number: 1181392

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