

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
DIOCESE OF
WORCESTER



Kingdom People
love • compassion • justice • freedom

Caring for Your Church

Introduction to Church Building Maintenance

Produced for the Church Buildings Team's Maintenance Workshop
on 23rd July 2025

What is Maintenance?

Maintenance is the routine work required to keep the fabric of a building in good condition.

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) has defined it as comprising of three principal tasks:





Looking

What does ‘looking’ comprise of?

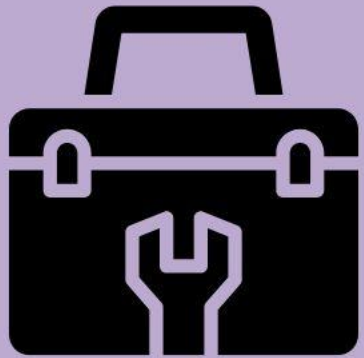
- Inspecting the building to assess the condition.
- Recording any problems.
- Monitoring areas of concern to see if the problems are getting worse.
- Seeking advice if repairs are deemed necessary.



Planning

What does ‘planning’ comprise of?

- Creating a maintenance plan to schedule what tasks need doing, when tasks are going to be carried out, and by who.
- Creating an asset management plan to account for the costs of tasks.
- Budgeting for planned maintenance repairs.



Doing

What does ‘doing’ comprise of?

- Carrying out routine maintenance tasks. For instance, the regular clearing of below ground drainage and above ground rainwater goods.
- Completing necessary checks to make sure your church is safe. For instance, getting professionals to check the safety of your lightning conductor, fire extinguishers, and electrical circuits.
- Repairing problems identified in inspections or recommended on your Quinquennial Inspection Report.

Why is Maintenance Important?

John Ruskin, in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1848), wrote:

‘The principle of modern times is to neglect buildings first and to restore them afterwards. Take proper care of your monuments and you not need to restore them.’

William Morris, founder of Society of the Protection of Ancient Buildings, in SPAB’s 1877 *Manifesto* spoke of the need to:

‘Stave off decay by daily care’

Why is Maintenance Important?

There are six main reasons why church maintenance is important today.



Saving Money

- By keeping on top of smaller maintenance tasks and completing stitch-in-time repairs, you will help mitigate larger, more costly, repairs.
- Historic England's 2019 study, 'The Value of Maintenance', indicated that acting on small repairs now could save 15-20% of costs in future.

Preserving Heritage

- Churches are among some of our oldest buildings and have served communities for many generations.
- They provide a tangible link to our past and are often a physical reminder of local and national history.
- Completing routine maintenance and small-scale repairs helps preserve the historic heritage by retaining the original components and fabric.

Improving Your Church's Welcome

- The church building and its churchyard is the first impression that someone has of your church, and if it is not well maintained, it could inadvertently be dissuading people from coming in.
- To help encourage people to visit your church, and support with your mission, it is crucial to make sure your church's overall appearance is positive.

Safety

- Proper church maintenance is vital in ensuring that your building remains safe for you to continue your mission and ministry.
- By doing regular checks, tasks, tests and repairs, you are making sure that the church remains open to your congregation and wider community.

More Sustainable and Eco Friendly

- By doing smaller maintenance tasks and keeping your church in good condition, you are saving on energy, and the materials need to do major repairs.
- By keeping your church in a good condition, you are making your church more energy efficient and sustainable.

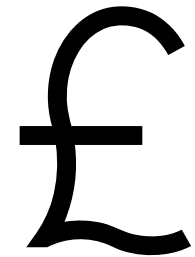
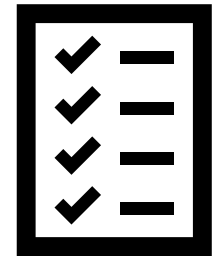
Community Involvement

- Church maintenance is a great way to involve people from the local community to become involved with caring for the church and to appreciate its unique heritage.
- Churches are physical assets of the parish. Parochial Church Councils should utilise the skills of the local community to help with maintenance tasks and raise money for repairs.

PCCs Planning for Maintenance

Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) are legally responsible for the **‘care, maintenance, preservation and insurance of the fabric of the church and the goods and ornaments thereof’** and the churchyard (or the area around the church if you don’t have a churchyard).

Planning for maintenance is a crucial part of helping the PCC allocate resources and ensure that you are upholding your legal responsibilities.



Planning for A Year of Care

To help plan for a year of care, you should aim to:

Create a Building
Management Plan

Undertake a Baseline
Survey

Regularly inspect your church, other
buildings, and churchyard. Keep
records of what you do and anything
you need to monitor

Create a fabric fund and budget
for maintenance tasks and
repairs

What is a Building Maintenance Plan?

- A Building Maintenance Plan is designed to simplify planning maintenance by helping you establish what tasks need completing, when they should be done, and by who.
- They should ideally be updated at the start of each year.
- A good maintenance plan should also account for any costs involved to help you budget for routine maintenance and minor repairs. However, this may be done in a separate Asset Management Plan.

Maintenance Plan Template

MAINTENANCE CO-OPERATIVES PROJECT

ACTION/PRIORITY	MAINTENANCE TASK	RESPONSIBILITY	FREQUENCY	COST	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
E.G.	Red / B	Clear gullies	Vol / Prof / Cont													
Rooflopes																
1																
2																
3																
4																
5																
6																
7																
8																
9																
External Walls																
A																
B																
C																
D																
E																
F																
G																
H																
I																
Gutters & Downpipes, Gullies, Drains & ground levels																
A																
B																
C																
D																
E																
F																
G																
H																

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SPAB's 'Maintenance Plan' PDF Template

1.1 Roofs

Ref	Building Element	Maintenance Task	Person best placed to do the task	Suggested frequency	Annual Cost £	Q1 Jan to Mar	Q2 Apr to Jun	Q3 Jul to Sep	Q4 Oct to Dec	Note: Observation and date	Note: Action and date	Comments
1.1.1	Roof areas generally	Inspect roof coverings from the ground and accessible high points. Note any loss / damage / heavy moss. Is a defect the cause of internal dampness / leaks?	Volunteer if appropriate and/or contractor if necessary	After stormy weather twice per year								
1.1.2	Slate / tile roofs and vertical cladding	Inspect for cracked, displaced or broken slates / roof tiles. Note the need for repairs* and options to repair / replace to match existing materials	* Contractor	Annually								
1.1.3	Sheet metal roofs and cladding	Inspect the condition of the panels, joints and clips. Note the need for repairs* and undertake temporary repair of splits	* Contractor	Annually								

The National Churches Trust
'Maintenance Plan' Word Template

What should a Building Maintenance Plan look like?

Building Maintenance Plan should aim to:

- Identify routine maintenance tasks.
- Identify who is responsible for the task.
- How often things need to be done.
- The estimated cost.
- You should aim to have an annual plan, with the tasks delegated monthly.
- You should also aim to have one that covers several years to account for tasks that do not need to be carried out annually (for instance clearing soakaways).

Building Maintenance Plan Templates

1.1 Roofs

Ref	Building Element	Maintenance Task	Person best placed to do the task	Suggested frequency	Annual Cost £	Q1 Jan to Mar	Q2 Apr to Jun	Q3 Jul to Sep	Q4 Oct to Dec	Note: Observation and date	Note: Action and date	Comments
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The National Churches Trust Maintenance Plan Word Template

Maintenance Plan Template

MAINTENANCE
CO-OPERATIVES
SPAB PROJECT

ACTION/PRIORITY	MAINTENANCE TASK	RESPONSIBILITY	FREQUENCY	COST	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
E.G.	Red / B Clear gullies	Vol /Prof / Cont														
Roofslopes																
1																
2																
3																
4																
5																
6																
7																
8																
9																
External Walls																
A																
B																
C																
D																
E																
F																
G																
H																
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SPAB's Maintenance Plan PDF Template

Website Links:

The National Churches Trust Maintenance Plan Template - www.nationalchurchestrust.org/get-support/buildings-maintenance/regular-maintenance

SPAB's Maintenance Plan Template - www.spab.org.uk/sites/default/files/HB22_Maintenance_Plan_Template.pdf

Using Your Church's Quinquennial Inspection Report to Help Plan Maintenance

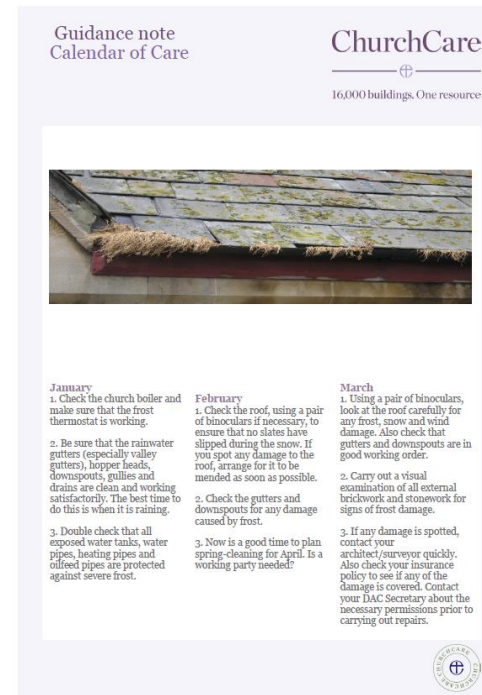
The Quinquennial Inspection Report (QIR) produced by your Inspecting Architect is a key document which can assist Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) in the care and repair of their church building.

The report provides an overview of the current repair needs of the building and lists the repairs required according to their priority which can help inform your maintenance plan.

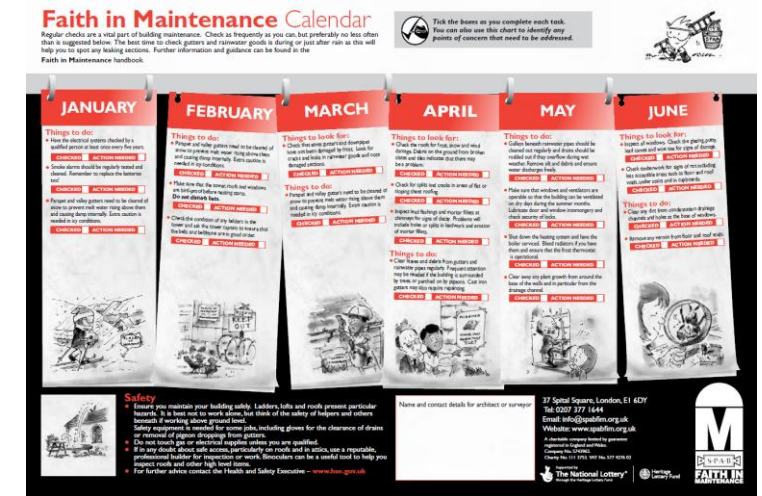
An inspection should be completed every 5 years and will help the PCC form the basis of what type of work is required and also facilitate financial planning.

Maintenance Calendars

- Knowing what maintenance tasks you need to schedule, who should do the tasks, and when can be difficult if not done before.
- ChurchCare and SPAB both have free maintenance calendars which provide suggestions on when each task should be done each month.



ChurchCare's 'Calendar of Care'



SPABs 'Faith in Maintenance Calendar'

Website Links:

ChurchCare 'Calendar of Care' - www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-12/CCB_Calendar-of-Care_Aug-2016.pdf

SPABs 'Faith in Maintenance Calendar' - www.spab.org.uk/sites/default/files/SPAB-FiM-maintenance-calendar.pdf

Inspecting the Condition of your Church

- Regular checks of your building and churchyard are crucial to making sure that everything is in good condition and that it is safe.
- Each week you should aim to walk around your church (inside and outside) and your churchyard to make sure that it is safe and there are no obvious signs of damage, theft, or failure.
- In the event of stormy or extreme weather, these checks should also be more regular.
- Throughout the year, you should aim to conduct more in-depth inspections and do some routine maintenance tasks identified in the maintenance calendars.
- Each year, you should aim to complete a baseline survey. This will allow you to measure any changes to the fabric and identify areas you need to monitor or repair.

What is a Baseline Survey?

To help assess the condition of your church and measure changes to areas of concern over time, you should aim to complete a baseline survey.

SPAB have a useful 'Baseline Survey' template designed to make completing the survey as easy as possible. It includes clear instructions of what you should be doing and prompts of what to look out for.

The same template should be used each year to help define a baseline level for checks throughout the year and to monitor any problem areas.

Gutters & Downpipes, Gulleys, Drains & Ground Levels									
On the roof or floor plan give each external wall a letter to which the columns below refer and answer the									
Gutter / downpipe wall		A		B		C			
Type of gutter and downpipe if known	C=cast iron/P=plastic/L lead/O=other	C	P	C	P	C	P	C	P
		L	O	L	O	L	O	L	O
1) Are any of the gutters blocked?	B	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yr	N/
		N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/	N/
2) Is there staining below gutters & behind downpipes suggesting blocked or damaged sections?	B	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yr	N/
		N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/	N/
3) Are the gutleys blocked by leaves or debris?	B	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yr	N/
		N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/	N/
4) Does water drain away slowly from gullies after rainfall, suggesting blocked or damaged drain runs?	B	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yr	N/
		N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/	N/
5) Are there any loose fixings?	C	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yr	N/
		N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/	N/
6) Are paint finishes peeling or flaking or signs of corrosion?	C	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yr	N/
		N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/	N/
7) Is there evidence of overflow from the downpipes and after rainfall?	C	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yr	N/
		N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/	N/
8) Is there excessive moss or plant growth at the base of the wall or to the joints of ground gutters?	C	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yr	N/
		N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/	N/
9) Are there signs that high ground levels are contributing to damp in the building?	C	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yr	N/
		N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/	N/
10) Are any air bricks or vent grilles obstructed by vegetation or raised ground levels?	D	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yr	N/
		N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/A	N/V	N/	N/
SUMMARY OF CONDITION		G	F	G	F	G	F	G	F
G=good/F=fair/P=poor/VP=very poor		P	VP	P	VP	P	VP	P	VP
If you have answered YES, Action/Priority as follows RED=B (within 12 months) / Any ORANGE=C (18 to									
ACTION / PRIORITY		B	C	D	M	B	C	D	M
		B	C	D	M	B	C	D	M

SPABs 'Baseline Survey'

Who can help with Church Maintenance Tasks?

Your
Congregation

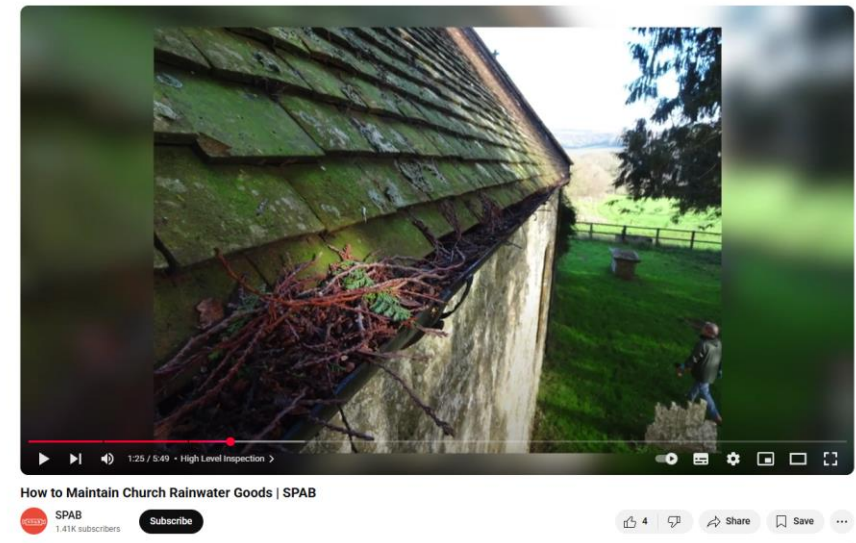
Local Community
Volunteers

Local
Tradespersons

Qualified / Accredited
Professionals

Assessing Your Church

- Knowing what to look out for when inspecting your church can be difficult if it is your first time completing an investigation.
- SPAB have produced a useful series of videos which can help you understand what you should be looking out for when inspecting your building:
 - ‘How to Maintain Church Roofs’
 - ‘How to Maintain Church Rainwater Goods’
 - ‘How to Maintain Church Exteriors’
 - ‘How to Maintain Church Interiors’
 - ‘How to Maintain Church Building Services’



What Funding is Available for Church Maintenance?

Unfortunately, routine maintenance tasks are not generally covered.

There are some grants available for fabric repairs :

National Funders:

- National Churches Trust - Medium Grants
- National Churches Trust – Large Grants
- The Wolfson Foundation – Wolfson Fabric Repair Grants (for Grade I or II* churches)
- Benefact Trust

Local Funders:

- Rowland's Trust
- Droitwich Preservation Trust
- WA Cadbury Trust
- Laslett's Hinton Charity
- Worcestershire and Dudley Historic Churches Trust

Budgeting for Maintenance and Minor Repairs

- To complete routine maintenance and repairs, it is necessary for the PCC to budget accordingly.
- You may find it useful to create an Asset Management Plan (AMP) at the start of each year to help establish what funds the church need to allocate for these tasks.
- By creating an AMP, or factoring the costs into your Building Maintenance Plan, you will be able to understand if you need to fundraise or look for grants.
- By staying on top of maintenance and budgeting for these smaller, routine, tasks, you will help mitigate problems turning into much more costly repair items.

CHURCHILL
PROJECT
PREPARE
PLANNING
PROCESSING

EXAMPLE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN (AMP)

By combining real tasks and costs of Regular Maintenance with projected tasks and costs of Capital Repairs, Improvements & New Works, the AMP produces annual and long term budgets for the building, enabling both preventative maintenance and saving for large capital items.

	KNOWN CYCLE	COST per CYCLE	ANNUAL COST	Year Intervals										COST over 30 YEARS
				2	5	10	15	20	25	30	other			
REGULAR MAINTENANCE														
Clean Gutters and Downpipes	3 months	200	800											24,000
Clean Gullies and drains	3 months	50	200											6,000
Boiler Service	annual	200	200											6,000
Ventilation Service	annual	200	200											6,000
Portable Electric Appliances Test	annual	125	125											3,750
Vermin and Rodent Control	3 months	70	280											8,400
Cleaning window glass	2 yr	500	250	*										7,500
Lightning Conductor Test	2 yr	100	50	*										1,500
Fire Extinguisher Test/replacement	annual	150	150		*	*	*	*	*	*	*			4,500
Electrical Installation Test	5 yr	3,000	600		*	*	*	*	*	*	*			18,000
Painting Exterior metal/wood	5 yr	5,000	1,000		*	*	*	*	*	*	*			30,000
Churchyard Grass-mower service, fuel	annual	300	300											9,000
Churchyard Landscape/Trees	annual	500	500											15,000
Churchyard walls pointing & clear ivy	5 yr	1,000	200		*	*	*	*	*	*	*			6,000
Repainting Various Areas	2 yr	3,000	1,500	*										45,000
Total			6,355											190,650

CAPITAL REPAIRS				When work will be required										
Churchyard Paths	10 yr	5,000	500		*	*	*	*	*	*	*			15,000
Felt roofs to boiler roof and organ loft	20 yr	10,000	666			*	*	*	*	*	*			20,000
Repair/replace window feramenta	as & when	3,000	300			*	*	*	*	*	*			9,000
North Aisle Mullions	100+ yr	25,000	834			*	*	*	*	*	*			25,000
Pinnacles to tower	100+ yr	60,000	2,000			*	*	*	*	*	*			60,000
High Level Internal Cleaning	10 yr	3,000	300		*	*	*	*	*	*	*			9,000
Lead Roofs patch repair	10 yr	3,000	300		*	*	*	*	*	*	*			9,000
Lead roof replace (100 years old)	150 yr	150,000	3,000									50		90,000
Electric Lighting upgrade	25 yr	25,000	833							*				25,000
Electric Power upgrade	25yr	15,000	500							*				15,000
Heating & Boiler upgrade	25 yr	35,000	1,166							*				35,000
Kitchen & Toilets upgrade	15 yr	12,000	800				*	*	*	*	*			24,000
Ventilation System Replace	20 yr	18,000	600					*	*	*	*			18,000
Total			11,799											354,000

IMPROVEMENTS & NEW WORKS				Project Target Completion										
Fire Alarm & Emergency lights install	one off	18,000	3,600		*	*	*	*	*	*	*			
Re-ordering, new rooms & office	one off	130,000	13,000		*	*	*	*	*	*	*			
New Mower	one off	500	100		*	*	*	*	*	*	*			
Total			16,700											

AMP annual total (£) to be raised: 34,854

Church of England's Asset Management Plan Template

What Permission is Needed for Maintenance?

Although many maintenance tasks can be completed without List B or a Faculty, general repairs and minor changes normally require permission.

List A -

Many maintenance tasks which do not involve repair or replacement of material can be completed without permission. These would be classed as List A.

Examples of List A tasks include:

- Clearing debris from rainwater goods, gullies and drains.
- Installing bat boxes in churchyards.

List B -

General like-for-like repairs require List B permission.

Examples of List B tasks include:

- Repointing masonry.
- Stonework and brickwork repairs.
- Having surfaces professionally cleaned (such as walls, flooring, or stained glass) with anything other than a cloth (such as strong chemicals).
- Repainting internal walls.
- Replacing failed rainwater goods.
- Updating lighting.

Faculty -

A Faculty is needed when there is a need to change a material for replacement, if the work is substantial in nature, or if the part of the church is of historical significance.

Examples of Faculty tasks include:

- Changing the material of fabric during repairs (such as flashings or rainwater goods).
- Substantial areas of masonry repointing or stonework repairs.
- Installing a new toilet or kitchenette.

Why is Acquiring Permission Important?

Obtaining permission is crucial in allowing the diocese to ensure that any repairs that are being carried out will not actually harm the building further.

Prevent Damage to Fabric

Permission allows the diocese to:

- Understand that the work is being carried out by an appropriately qualified person.
- Establish if any materials used to clean or repair a part of a church could accidentally damage the fabric.
- Understand the scale of the works.

Examples of Damaging Fabric

- Cleaning a wall with a chemical solution could harm a wall painting hidden beneath the plaster.
- Repointing with cement, instead of lime mortar, could lead to problems with damp and lead to deterioration in the future.
- Repainting in inappropriate paint can cause paint to flake and plaster to fall.

Statutory Obligation

The Diocese of Worcester has a legal obligation to uphold the Ecclesiastical Exemption Order 2018.

For this reason, any repairs or changes made to a church without permission will result in the PCC having to pay the cost of a Faculty.

Planning for A Year of Care

There are plenty of resources and templates available on the internet to help you plan and undertake church and churchyard maintenance.



The following organisations have a number of free resources available on their websites:

- The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB).
- ChurchCare by the Church Buildings Council.
- Historic England.
- The National Churches Trust.

Full List of Resources:

- **The National Churches Trust's Maintenance Plan Template** - www.nationalchurchestrust.org/get-support/buildings-maintenance/regular-maintenance
- **SPAB's Maintenance Plan Template** - www.spab.org.uk/sites/default/files/HB22_Maintenance_Plan_Template.pdf
- **ChurchCare's 'Calendar of Care'** - www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-12/CCB_Calendar-of-Care_Aug-2016.pdf
- **SPAB's 'Faith in Maintenance Calendar'** - www.spab.org.uk/sites/default/files/SPAB-FiM-maintenance-calendar.pdf
- **SPAB's 'Baseline Survey' Template** - <https://www.spab.org.uk/content/baseline-survey-template>
- **Church of England's Asset Management Plan** - https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2018-12/ChurchBuild_Asset-management-plan_Template.xls

Full List of Resources:

- **Historic England** - <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/caring-for-heritage/places-of-worship/maintenance/>
- **National Churches Trust** - <https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/get-support/buildings-maintenance/regular-maintenance>
- **SPAB's 'Maintenance Matters'** - <https://www.spab.org.uk/campaigning/maintenance-matters>
- **SPAB's 'Maintenance 'Co-operatives Resources'** - <https://www.spab.org.uk/campaigning/maintenance-co-operatives-project/mcp-fim-resources>
- **SPAB's YouTube Videos:**
 - [How to Maintain Church Roofs | SPABs](#)
 - [How to Maintain Church Rainwater Goods | SPAB](#)
 - [How to Maintain Church Exteriors | SPAB](#)
 - [How to Maintain Church Interiors | SPAB](#)
 - [How to Maintain Church Building Services | SPAB](#)