

Church Maintenance: Your Guide to Care

November & December Maintenance Tips

With the end of daylight savings time and the colder, wetter months now firmly taking hold, it is important that your church is prepared for these adverse conditions. Regular inspections of your church and keeping on top of routine maintenance tasks can help minimise the problems which can arise from this type of weather.

Preparing for colder and wetter conditions

In preparation for the colder climate, you should aim to check that your frost and snow protection is in place and in good condition. This should include inspecting snowboards (if you have them) to make sure they are fitted correctly and do not show signs of damage. It should also involve looking at your church's building services: have your heating system serviced by a qualified professional (if you have not already done so this year) and check all exposed water tanks, water pipes, heating pipes and oil feed pipes for cracks or leaks. To help protect against frost, it would be good to make sure your pipes are well-lagged (insulated) and that your frost thermostat is working.

As part of your preparation, you should also aim to have all the gutters, hoppers and downpipes cleared of leaves and debris once most of the leaves have fallen from surrounding trees. Ideally, this should be done before icy conditions arise, as any blockages can cause trapped water to freeze, which may result in your pipes bursting. Drains and gullies should also be cleared at the same time to prevent leaves, debris and silt clogging up underground drainage.

Responding to adverse weather conditions

If frost, ice, or snow materialises, you should increase your inspections to make sure that no problems have arisen due to the extreme conditions. This should include making sure water tanks, water pipes, heating pipes, and oil feed pipes have not burst. Rainwater goods should also be checked to make sure they have not burst due to trapped water freezing.

Stormy conditions can also increase the risk of harm to your church building. In the event of a storm, you should complete additional checks of your church building and churchyard. This should include looking for hazards like fallen trees and loose building fabric. You should also make sure that your building is watertight. You can do this by checking that your roof and windows are not damaged. In some instances, storms can also result in structural failure. You should therefore check to see if existing cracks have worsened or if new cracks have formed.

Checking your church's fire safety procedures and equipment

With Christmas approaching, you should aim to check your fire safety procedures and equipment before you host events and have candlelight services. This should include servicing your fire extinguishers, checking your smoke alarms are working and reviewing your fire risk assessment.

Permissions

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

If you identify a repair need, please contact a member of the Church Buildings Team for advice on whether permission is needed.

Need support?

If you would like any advice on church maintenance, or have any repairs you need help with planning, please do not hesitate to contact a member of the team for assistance. You can contact us via the Church Buildings Team email, churches@cofe-worcester.org.uk.