

Your Church's Quinquennial Inspection



What is a Quinquennial Inspection?

Every consecrated Church building is required by the Inspection of Churches Measure to be inspected by "a qualified person" - in other words, an architect or chartered building surveyor - every five years.

After his/her inspection, the inspector produces a report, **the Quinquennial Inspection Report**.

Copies of this are sent to the Diocesan Advisory Committee Secretary, the Archdeacon, the Incumbent, and the Secretary of the PCC.

The Quinquennial Inspection Report

This should be a general report on the Church, concentrating in particular on its state of maintenance and repair, written as far as possible in non-technical language, so that the incumbent, Churchwardens, and members of the PCC can understand what work needs to be done to keep the building in good order. In most cases it includes a list of work that should be done within the next five years, arranged in order of priority.

It is important to understand that **the Quinquennial Inspection is not intended to be a full Survey**; this would be impossibly expensive for the parish, as it would demand a great deal of the architect or surveyor's time; it is also thought to be unnecessary as the inspection is carried out every five years.

It should not, on the other hand, be a perfunctory list of problems and remedies. Rather it should aim to give a rounded "portrait" of the condition of the Church.

In addition to the fabric of the Church, the inspection will should include specially valuable or vulnerable articles belonging to the Church, ruins in the Churchyard which have been designated as outstanding by the Council for British Archaeology and the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England, and trees in the Churchyard which are subject to tree preservation orders. (In practice, all trees in Churchyards which are in conservation areas should also be covered).

The Quinquennial Inspection Report is not a specification, that is to say, it is not a document written by the architect or surveyor and addressed to a builder or other contractor, telling him what work is to be done and how he is to do it; many reports contain a sentence stating clearly that this is not a specification and should not be used

as one; in any event, the Report should not be used by the parish in place of a specification.

It is important to remember that the inclusion of an item in the Quinquennial Inspection Report does not exempt the parish from the requirements of the Faculty Jurisdiction - a Faculty is still required, and the Diocesan Advisory Committee will need to be consulted in every such case.

The 'Designated Professional'

The choice of architect or the building surveyor rests with the parish. The Diocese has a list of persons approved to carry out quinquennial inspections and architects and building surveyors not already on the list can apply to be approved to the list. Those accepted to the list are known to have a broad experience in Church conservation and repair.

A parish may prefer to choose someone who is not on the List, in that case, the individual must apply to the Diocese for inclusion on the list and the application will be reviewed by the DAC and a recommendation to accept or not, will be made and communicated to all parties.

A professional's experience in dealing with several Churches is a factor that will qualify for appointment to the List. Many Architects and building surveyors become members of the Ecclesiastical Architects' and Surveyors' Association, which provides an educated forum for the exchange of information on all aspects of a Church architect's work.

Although, of course, some inspectors may delegate to an assistant some of the work which is carried out subsequent to a quinquennial inspection, the appointment to a Church is personal to the individual rather than to a firm. Reports must therefore be signed by the designated professional, who remains personally responsible for the Church.

The Parish and its Inspector

It is important that a good and close relationship should be developed between the parish and its inspector who should be seen as an impartial and independent professional adviser.

The parish should trust the inspector to recommend only what is necessary or beneficial; the inspector should be able to trust the parish to carry out his recommendations in a proper manner. It is therefore most desirable (as already happens in many cases) that the inspector should be invited to attend a meeting of the PCC after submitting his report. It rests, of course, with the PCC to invite him/her; but, if they are diffident about doing so, he/she should give them some encouragement.

Some inspectors include the fee for attending a meeting of the PCC in their charge for the Quinquennial Inspection; others will charge a fee for their attendance; this point should be made clear before the visit.

The parish should use its inspector, and his/her accumulated knowledge and skill, in a creative way, as aids to the preservation and enhancement of their Church.

It is the responsibility of the PCC to ensure that Churches are inspected every five years. In practice, the DAC secretary will remind PCCs that an inspection is due. If it becomes seriously overdue, this will be a matter for the Archdeacon.

What Happens Next?

Fees

One church differs greatly from another church in size and complexity, and consequently there is no set scale of fees. The PCC will have to negotiate a fee as it is its responsibility to pay the fee for the Quinquennial Inspection.

Quinquennial Inspection Reports

Quinquennial Inspection Reports vary greatly in their presentation, however, all will follow the Guideline prepared by the Diocese and will include a section on repairs required during the quinquennium.

Faculties

Inspectors, incumbents, and churchwardens, should be aware of the need to obtain a Faculty for all but the smallest and routine work on the church building, its contents, and its surroundings. They should be familiar with the General Directions of the Chancellor of the Diocese.

The Diocesan Advisory Committee is happy to give advice to the parishes and their inspector at an early stage, as well as when a Faculty is applied for.

There is another leaflet in this series - **What to do now you've received your Quinquennial Inspection Report.**

Appointing an Architect or Surveyor for work to the Church building

A parish may commission any architect or surveyor to undertake work on their Church building. That person need not be the same individual who carries out the quinquennial inspection. However, it is important to ensure that the chosen professional has the requisite experience to undertake work to churches. The PCC is responsible for the payment of fees for commissioned services.