

2026 QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION REPORT

CHURCH OF ST. MARY, WHORLTON

(Ref: 2601)

Diocese of Durham
Archdeaconry of Auckland
Deanery of Barnard Castle



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Date of Report: 21st February 2026

Date of Inspection and weather conditions:

12th February 2025 : Cold and raining.

(Date of previous Report: April 2021 by George Stastny)

1. Executive Summary of General Condition

The building has long suffered from dampness owing to a combination of its location in a hollow, defective rainwater pipes and drainage. The latter were improved in 2025 but it will be several years until the fabric dries out sufficiently to be noticeable. Timber flooring in contact with masonry is still saturated, and water was seen on top of the tiles in the Chancel.

Increased controllable ventilation should be considered during dry weather to speed up the drying of the interior.

Wet ground conditions have caused severe erosion of masonry and mortar above plinth level. This should now be repointed to reduce unnecessary water ingress.

2. Previous Report.**2.1 Work completed since previous report**

2021

Bellcote cleared of bird debris.

2022

Louvres wired.

External doors oiled.

An earth rod installed.

Floor tiles re-bedded.

Mosaic panels restored.

Reredos masonry painted.

Aisle bulbs replaced with LED.

Heating clock replaced.

Gutters cleaned.

2023

RWP and soakaway replaced, gap pointed east side.

Asbestos seal checked.

Churchyard tidied.

Organ tuned.

Gutters cleaned.

2024

Louvres wired.

RWPs repaired and re-painted.

2025

Gullies, drains and soakaways replaced.

Bells inspected.

PAT carried out.

Latch bolt to main door.

2.2 Work outstanding from the previous report:

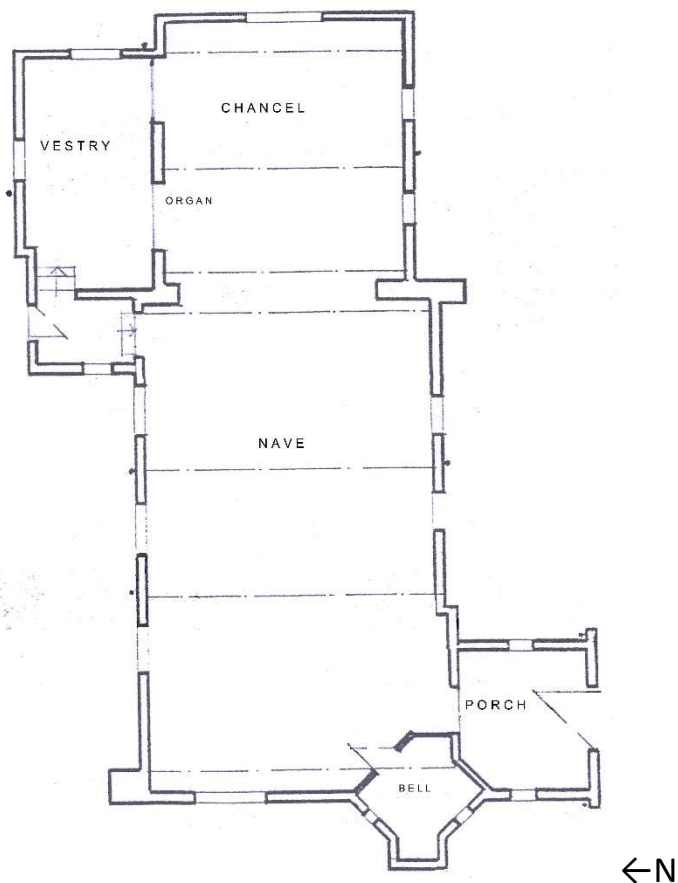
1. Remove moss from roofs.
2. Repair plaster and re-paint internally.
3. Improve ventilation.
4. Ascertain where responsibility lay for repair in churchyard.
5. Repoint external masonry.
6. Monitor roof spread.
7. Reinstall ventilation grille.
8. Protect glazing.
9. Improve ventilation below Vestry floor.
10. Damp-proof external walls.
11. Provide removable ramps.

2.3 Log Book was available for inspection

3. Brief Description of the building

A small unlisted church on the site of an earlier Norman Chapel of ease, comprising aisled Nave and Chancel with north Vestry, south Porch and west Bellcote. In local buff coloured sandstone beneath Westmorland slate roofs. All windows are decorated with stained glass, by both Clayton and Bell, and William Warrington of London. Consecrated by Robert First Bishop of Cape Town 13.05.1853. Seating capacity: 150.

4. Plan of the church



5. Statutory Listing

The church not listed but is within the Whorlton Conservation Area.

6. Maintenance Responsibility

We are informed that the churchyard is maintained by Durham County Council..

7. Specific Limitations of the Report

For General Limitations see also Appendix 1; Explanatory Notes

The inspections were visual and non-destructive. Those parts of the structure which were not exposed or inaccessible have not been inspected and it is not possible to report that any such part of the building is free from defect.

Access was gained to gutter level, otherwise inspections were made from ground level.

The following parts were inaccessible and excluded from the inspection:

1. Bellcote
2. Concealed spaces at wall heads
3. Below-floor ducts.
4. Organ.

Drainage and electricity have not been tested.

This report has been prepared for the purpose of the Care of Churches Measure 2020. Contents may be disclosed to other professional advisors but it is **not** intended as a specification for repair works, and no responsibility is accepted for a third party. When the PCC is ready to proceed with any of the recommended repairs the Inspecting Architect should be asked to prepare a Schedule of Work and a Specification on which DAC consent, and quotations from suitably qualified contractors can be sought.

Where information has been supplied to the Inspector this is assumed to be correct.

8. Carbon reduction targets

The General Synod has committed to a carbon reduction target of Net Zero by 2030 and has issued the 'Practical Path to Net Zero Carbon' (PPNZC) to show how this might be achieved. They have created an 'Energy Footprint Tool' which can be used to establish the church's carbon footprint as part of the Online Parish Returns System. By inputting your most recent energy bills you will be able to calculate the amount of carbon produced, and receive helpful tips to reduce carbon omissions.

9-13. Schedule of Repairs with priority and budget cost.

The following categories denote urgency of work:

A - Urgent, requiring immediate attention

B - Requires attention within 12 months

C - Requires attention within 2 years

D - Requires attention within 5 years

E - Desirable improvement with no timescale

X - Further investigation is necessary.

(M) - Routine maintenance which can be carried out without professional advice or a Faculty.

Please note that the estimates given below are approximate and based upon prices at the time of the Report but exclude the cost of scaffolding and VAT. Some items may be dependent upon further investigation, on who carries out the work, on how much is commissioned at one time, and whether any is done voluntarily. The PCC is advised to have full specifications prepared by the quinquennial architect and to obtain firm quotations from reputable tradesmen familiar with church conservation work.

ITEMS INSPECTED :

9. EXTERNAL ELEMENTS

- 9.1 Roofs
- 9.2 Rainwater goods and disposal systems
- 9.3 Bellcotes, parapets, chimneys and verge upstands
- 9.4 Walling and pointing
- 9.5 External doors
- 9.6 Windows
- 9.7 Below ground drainage

10. INTERNAL ELEMENTS

- 10.1 Tower/spire
- 10.2 Clock, bells and frame
- 10.3 Roof and ceiling voids and ventilation
- 10.4 Bats and other protected species
- 10.5 Roof structures and ceilings
- 10.6 Upper floors, balconies and access stairways
- 10.7 Ground floor
- 10.8 Partitions, screens and internal doors
- 10.9 Internal wall finishes
- 10.10 Monuments, tombs, plaques etc.
- 10.11 Vestry
- 10.12 Fittings, fixtures, furniture and moveable articles
- 10.13 Organ
- 10.14 Accessibility
- 10.15 Cellar

11. SERVICES

- 11.1 Electrical installation
- 11.2 Water installation
- 11.3 Gas installation
- 11.4 Oil installation
- 11.5 Heating installation
- 11.6 Insulation and air leakage
- 11.7 Sound system
- 11.8 Fire Precautions
- 11.9 Lightning protection
- 11.10 Asbestos

12. CHURCHYARD

- 12.1 Buildings within the curtilage
- 12.2 Ruins maintained by the PCC
- 12.3 Monuments, tombs and vaults
- 12.4 Boundary walls, fences, railings and gates
- 12.5 Hardstanding areas
- 12.6 Grassed areas
- 12.7 Notice board
- 12.8 External Lighting



13. TREES

- 13.1 Identification of tree preservation orders
- 13.2 General health of trees/safety concerns
- 13.3 Impact on nearby walls and buildings



Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
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9. EXTERNAL ELEMENTS

9.1 Roofs

1.	Westmorland slate roofs south side intact apart from slipped and broken slates around chimney and Porch valley, and against Chancel abutments.	Repair slates.	A(M)	100	
2.	North faces are covered in moss which could be concealing slate problems.	Remove moss.	B(M)	300	
3.	Vestry roof is below the recommended pitch for slate roofs and is in poor condition with cocked eaves courses.	Inspect and repair as necessary.	B(M)	100	
4.	Stone ridges intact.				
5.	Abutment flashings and mortared fillets to copings intact.				


9.2 Rainwater goods and disposal systems

1.	Cast iron gutters and rainwater pipes were refurbished in 2025 and are in good condition except for corrosion of (oversized) RWP on Vestry. Single plastic RWP to east in good condition.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	
2.	Offset on east side of Porch is loose.	Secure with copper wire.	B(M)	30	






Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
3.	Gutter joint north side of Nave at west end is leaking.	Dismantle joint and re-seal.	B(M)	80	
4.	Several gutters have conifer needle accumulation which is blocking outlets.	Clear gullies twice annually.	A(M)	120	
5.	Blocked hopper head.	Clear	A(M)	Incl.	
6.	Accumulated debris below RWP outlets.	Clean RWP outlets twice annually.	A(M)	30	
		Consider trimming RWPs to leave 40mm gap to gate.	E	100	







9.3 Bellcotes, parapets, chimneys and verge upstands


1.	Bellcote is mainly ashlar masonry in good condition except for 2No. slipped slate louvres.	Repair when access is available.	E	100
2.	Gable copings are in good condition except for eroded mortar, particularly on west gable.	Prepare and repoint.	C	200
3.	4No. ornate stone foliate cross finials in good condition except for slight erosion on Chancel east gable and repair of previous crack on Nave east gable.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-

Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
4.	Tiered square stone chimney stack in reasonable condition except for several deeply eroded stones. Redundant and without pot; said to be capped.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	

9.4 Walling and pointing

1.	Sandstone coursed rubble with ashlar dressings is generally in good condition except for localised severe erosion, and efflorescence especially at low level.	Monitor stone erosion over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	  
2.	East gable between plinth and string course is eroded with extensive efflorescence and remains of render coat above.	Prepare and re-render.	D	2000	
3.	Porch arch soffit and below eaves west side are severely eroded.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	

Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
					
4.	Eroded mortar in several locations.	Prepare and repoint.	D	2500	
5.	Slight movement visible over window head Nave north & Chancel south.	Prepare and repoint.	D	1000	
					
6.	Eroded jamb blocks at Vestry door.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	
7.	Broken iron ventilators allow vermin to enter.	Restrict access.	B	200	

Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
9.5 External doors					
1.	Mesh covered iron gates at Porch are in reasonable condition but are ineffective owing to gap at head.	Infill using stiff wire.	C	200	
2.	Pine framed ledge and brace door to Vestry in reasonable condition except for woodworm infestation in jamb.	Treat with insecticide.	A(M)	30	

9.6 Windows

1. Windows are stained glass and generally in reasonable condition except where stated:

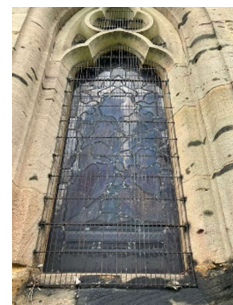
2. I
Triple light

3. sII
Single light, corroding grille.

Monitor over
quinquennial period.

D(M)

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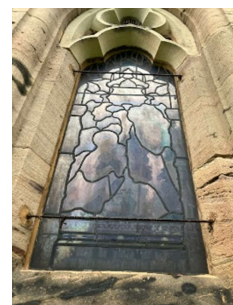







4. sIII
Single light, corroded grille with only saddles remaining.

Remove saddles.

C

60




Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
5.	sIV Double light, cracked jamb block.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	
6.	sV Double light, loose grille.	Secure grille.	B(M)	30	
7.	sVI Yellowed polycarbonate in eroded surround.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	
8.	sVII Clear polycarbonate with crack.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	
9.	sVIII & sIX Small lancets to bellcote.				
10.	nII Double light with heavily mortared jambs.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	
11.	nIII Single light, slight bowing and loose mortar fillets.	Replace mortar fillets.	B	60	
12.	nIV Double light with rusting external saddles.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	

Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
13.	nV Double light.				
14.	nVI Double light, eroding mullion.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	
15.	W Four-light with grilles, bowing in several places; fair condition.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	

9.7 Below ground drainage





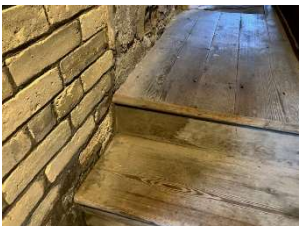

1. Drainage to soakaways adjacent north and east boundaries, all renewed 2025 to drainage cages except for Chancel east renewed a few years previously to rubble soakaway. Ground beginning to dry out adjacent church.

Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
10. INTERNAL ELEMENTS					
10.1 Bellcote					
1.	Recent inspection refers to loose joist being unsafe so not inspected.	Secure joist.	B(M)	60	
10.2 Clock, bells and frame					
1.	Pair of ornate Samuel Smith bells (1715), 17½ inches and 18¾ inches; re-hung C20. Recorded in good condition by Diocesan Bell Advisor (05.10.25).	Swing through a small arc only.			
10.3 Roof and ceiling voids and ventilation – none present.					
10.4 Bats and other protected species:		-none present			
10.5 Roof structures and ceilings					
1.	Nave has 4No. braced collar trusses with 2No. pairs of heavy purlins, eaves and ridge plates, and rafters: all stained black with painted plaster between. Paint is peeling owing to high humidity.	Re-paint plaster when walls and floor have dried out.	D	3000	
2.	Chancel has 3No braced collar trusses with pair of heavy purlins, eaves and ridge plates, and rafters: all stained black with painted plaster between. Paint is in good condition.				
3.	Vestry has wide pine boards fixed to underside of rafters in good condition with no dampness visible.				

Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
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10.6 Upper floors, balconies and access stairways – none present

10.7 Ground floor






1.	Flush pine platform each side of tiled central aisle in reasonable condition though saturated against the solid edges south side of Nave and in Chancel.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	 
2.	Geometric tiles in Chancel and 2No. stone steps upto Sanctuary are wet on surface.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	
3.	Nave has several loose tiles which are breaking where unsupported.	Prepare and re-set loose tiles to prevent further breakage.	B	200	
4.	Vestry has pine boards and steps in reasonable condition though damp patches on steps and in northeast corner.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	 

Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
10.8 Partitions, screens and internal doors					
1.	Nave has pair of arched pine framed, ledge and brace doors in reasonable condition, though with loose draught seal.	Replace draught seal.	E(M)	30	
2.	Vestry has pine framed, ledge and brace doors in excellent condition.				
3.	Chancel has pair of oak lightweight secret panel doors opening to Vestry; in good condition.				
4.	Bellcote has ledge pine door in good condition.				

10.9 Internal wall finishes

1.	Nave and Chancel have painted plaster generally in good condition except where efflorescence and black mould forming.	Monitor over quinquennial period as building dries out.	D(M)	-	
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Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
2.	Unpainted brickwork in Vestry is suffering from efflorescence.	Monitor over quinquennial period as building dries out.	D(M)	-	
3.	Cracked joints over both Vestry doors and arched opening.	Rake out and repoint.	E	500	 
4.	Pine boards below dado in Nave appear in good condition except where missing section south side at west end.	Replace missing boards and stain to match.	E	1000	
5.	Porch has eroded stonework and efflorescence.	Monitor over quinquennial period as building dries out	D(M)	-	
6.	Gold tiled and mosaic reredos in good condition except for where painted masonry is damaged by efflorescence, and shaft is loose after repair of a long term defective rainwater pipe.	Re-fix shaft. Prepare and repaint when dried out.	B D	200 400	

Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
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10.10 Monuments, Plaques etc.					
1.	2No. brass plaques in good condition.				
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10.11 Vestry					
1.	Large Vestry in lean-to but much space lost to replacement organ.				
2.	Blocked fireplace in reasonable condition though hearth eroded owing to ring damp, and chimney has been removed above slate level.				
3.	Timber chest of drawers and chair in reasonable condition.				
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10.12 Fittings, fixtures, furniture and moveable articles					
1.	All items in good condition unless stated.				
2.	Oak altar table, balustered Sanctuary rail, memorial chair, stall and side table.				
3.	Built-in seat in Sanctuary recess.				
4.	Stone pulpit with 4No. steps, retrospective brass rail deflects.				
5.	Pine fleur-de-lis pews in reasonable condition.				
6.	Large octagonal stone font with drained lead bowl and steps.				
7.	Painted hymn book cupboard and open shelves.				





Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
10.13 Organ					
1.	Replacement decorated pipe organ by Harrison & Harrison of Durham, installed 1876, extends into the Vestry.				
2.	Last serviced 09.2023.				
3.	Said to function though recent inspection advises repairs to steps and pedals.	Fundraise for repairs.	B(M)	?	

10.14 Accessibility					
1.	Level access from road into porch where there is 1No. step up into Nave, 1No. step up to Chancel, 2No. to Sanctuary, 2No. down and 3No. up to Vestry.				
2.	No ramp.	Provide a temporary ramp.	C(M)	200	
3.	No hearing loop installed.				

10.15 Cellar					
1.	Former furnace chamber below aisle in Nave with pair of heavy iron doors.				
2.	Small brick-lined chamber with Grundy furnace and iron ladder intact. Damp floor, ventilation through ducts beneath floor.				

Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
11. SERVICES					
11.1 Electrical Installation					
1.	Overhead supply onto Vestry with sheathed cables from northeast.				
2.	Wiring and fuses from 1980s.				
3.	Recent meter replacement, several metal boxes rusting owing to dampness.				
4.	Last test 15.11.21	Commission a new test.	B(M)	500	
11.2 Water installation – none present.					
11.3 Gas installation – none present.					
11.4 Oil installation – none present.					
11.5 Heating installation					
1.	Combination of electric tubular heaters on pew backs, portable infra-red heaters and panel heaters in Chancel.				
11.6 Insulation and air leakage					
1.	No insulation seen.				
3.	Air leakage low to moderate.	Increase controllable ventilation during dry weather after commissioning a report.	B	?	

Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
11.7 Sound system					
1.	Sound equipment located below pulpit though rarely used.				
11.8 Fire precautions					
2.	2Kg CO ₂ extinguishers in Vestry and 9.5L water t entrance.				
3.	Last inspection 04.2025.	Commission inspection.	A(M)	100	
11.9 Lightning protection					
11.10 Asbestos					
1.	Sign on blower box indicating asbestos within.				
2.	Informed of an asbestos survey from 2013 which highlighted presence in organ blower, which has subsequently been tape up and warning sign put in place.	Consider removal of asbestos.	E	?	

Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
12. CHURCHYARD					
12.1 Buildings within the curtilage – none.					
12.2 Ruins maintained by the PCC – none.					
12.3 Monuments, tombs and vaults -					
1.	Grade II listed font from previous church located south of Porch.				
2.	Many leaning headstones though only single cross west of Porch is becoming unstable.	Lay flat or straighten.	C	?	
3.	Chest tomb has loose blocks.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	
12.4 Boundary walls, railings, fencing, hedging and gates					
1.	Low west wall leaning outwards with loose stones and copings.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	
2.	Low south wall has 2No. large cracks near trees.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	

Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
3.	Low east wall has loose copings south end and mortared grave edges north end.	Re-set loose copings.	D	300	
4.	Low north wall and stone gate tower with fixed oak door.				
5.	Northwest has tiled oak lychgate over ashlar stone plinth; all in good condition, with weathered pair of oak gates.	Repair and re-oil gates.	B	200	

12.5 Hardstanding areas

1. Macadam path upto Porch in good condition.

12.6 Grassed areas

1. Grass all kept short with few weeds.

12.7 Notice Board

1. Memorial board (1975) previously repaired now with rotten timber, though still serviceable.

Consider replacement during quinquennial period.

D 1000



Reference	Condition	Action	Priority	Cost£	Photograph
13. TREES					
13.1 Identification of trees with preservation orders					
1.	Conservation Area Status means that all trees are protected.				
13.2 General health of trees and safety concerns					
1.	Large conifer south of lychgate, 4No. large redwood to south boundary, holly, yew and conifers to east and north boundaries. All appear to be in good condition.				
13.3 Impact of trees on nearby walls and buildings					
1.	Redwood trees are lifting sections of the south boundary wall causing it to crack.	Monitor over quinquennial period.	D(M)	-	
2.	Needles from the conifers block the gutters, RWP and gullies.	Clean out twice annually.	A(M)	100	

Appendix 1: Explanatory Notes for PCCs

- a) The need for a Faculty The inclusion of an item of work in a Quinquennial Report does not remove the need to seek permission before it is carried out. A Faculty or Archdeacon's consent will normally be required (with the exception of some minor maintenance items).
- b) General limitations of the Quinquennial Report The Quinquennial Report is a *summary report only* as required by the Inspection of Churches Measure. It is restricted to the condition of the building and its defects and is not a specification for the execution of any necessary repair work and should not be used as such. The Professional Adviser is normally willing to advise the PCC on implementing the recommendations and will, if so requested, prepare a specification, seek tenders and oversee the repairs.
- Woodwork or other parts of the building that are covered, unexposed or inaccessible will not normally be inspected in a Quinquennial Inspection. The Adviser cannot therefore report that any such part is free from defect. The report may include the recommendation that certain areas are opened up for inspection.
- Further specific limitations on access etc. may be noted in the Report text.
- c) Annual Inspections by the Church Wardens Although the Inspection of Churches Measure requires the Church to be inspected every five years, it should be realised that serious trouble may develop in between surveys if minor defects are left unattended. Churchwardens are required by the Care of Churches Measure 2018 to make an annual inspection of the fabric and furnishings of the Church and to prepare a report for consideration by the meeting of the PCC before the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. Guidance on these inspections and statutory responsibilities can be found on the Churchcare website.
- d) Rainwater gutters and downpipes One of the most common causes of damage in Churches is the blockage of the rainwater gutters and downpipes. The PCC are strongly advised to either clean out gutters and downpipes at least once a year, or enter into a contract with a local builder for the cleaning.
- e) Insurance cover The PCC are reminded that insurance cover should be index linked so that adequate cover is maintained against inflation of building costs. Contact should be made with the insurance company to ensure that insurance cover is adequate.
- f) Electrical installation Any electrical equipment should be tested at least once every quinquennium in accordance with IEE Regulations, and a resistance and earth continuity test should be obtained on all circuits. The engineer's test report should be kept with the Church Log Book. Inspections carried out by the Professional Adviser will normally be based on a visual inspection of the main switchboard and certain sections of the wiring selected at random, without the use of instruments.

g) Lightning conductor Any lightning conductor should be tested every quinquennium in accordance with the current British Standard by a competent engineer and the record of the test results and condition should be kept with the Church Log Book.

h) Heating installation A proper examination and test should be made of the heating installation by a qualified engineer each summer before the heating season begins, and the report should be kept in the Church Log Book.

j) Fire extinguishers A minimum of two water type fire extinguishers (sited adjacent to each exit) should be provided and in addition special extinguishers for the organ and boiler house. Large Churches will require more extinguishers and, as a general rule, one water extinguisher should be provided for every 250 square metres of floor area. All extinguishers should be inspected annually by a competent engineer to ensure that they are in good working order. Further advice can be obtained from the fire prevention officer of the local fire brigade and from insurers. A summary of the recommendations is as follows:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Type of extinguisher</u>
General areas	Water (one per 250m ²)
Organ	CO ₂
Boiler House	
Solid fuel boiler	Water
Gas fired boiler	Dry powder
Oil boiler	Foam (or dry powder if electricity on)

Further advice is available on the Churchcare website.

k) Asbestos It is a duty of the PCC to ensure that an assessment is made of the church to establish whether asbestos is, or is liable to be present. Further advice is available on the Churchcare website.

l) Equality Act The PCC should understand their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. Further advice is available on the Churchcare website.

m) Protected species The PCC should be aware of their responsibility where bats and other protected species are present in the church buildings. Further advice is available on the Churchcare website