

**INSPECTION OF CHURCHES MEASURE 1955**

**REPORT**

**upon**

**ST NICHOLAS CHURCH  
MAVESYN RIDWARE**

**in the**

**DIOCESE OF LICHFIELD**

**THE ARCHDEACONRY OF LICHFIELD**



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**February 2021**

St Nicholas Church Mavesyn Ridware  
**Diocese of Lichfield: Archdeaconry of Lichfield**  
**Quinquennial Inspection: February 2021**

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## **Contents**

<b>1</b>	<b>General Introduction</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Externally</b>
2.1.0	Walls
2.2.0	Roofs
2.3.0	Rainwater Goods
2.4.0	Windows
2.5.0	Doors
<b>3</b>	<b>Internally</b>
3.1.0	Roofs/Ceilings
3.2.0	Walls
3.3.0	Floors
<b>4</b>	<b>Fixture and Fittings</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Heating and Electrics</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Paths and Boundaries</b>
<b>7</b>	<b>Security and Facilities</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Summary</b>
	<b>Church Listing</b>
	<b>Appendix A: General Notes</b>

## **1.0.0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

The last quinquennial inspection was carried out by Graham D Holland, architect in October 2009. (This is the only version the PCC have).

With thanks to Church Warden, Neeta Shaw for opening the church, helping with ladder and high level inspections and updating the Architect on recent activities. The Priest in Charge is The Rev'd Ty Leyland. A new Vicar has been appointed to the United Benefice of Kings Bromley, The Ridwares and Yoxall, Rev Jeremy Brading. He will take up residence in Yoxhall in one of two Benefice houses. The other remains in Kings Bromley and is to be rented out by the Diocese.

- 1.01 The church has a rectangular brick nave, of four x three bays, large gothic arched windows, the door to the west: shallow apsidal chancel. Coved plaster ceiling below a slated hipped roof, very pretty decoration in the apse; paved floors, boarded seating. The nave walls have been stripped of plaster revealing rough brickwork.

All of this is a rebuilding on the site of the former nave. To the north, the surviving medieval aisle, known as the 'Trinity Aisle' or the 'Cawarden Chapel' of three bays, an arcade open to the nave. Much lower floor level, ashlar stonework, arch braced rafters, plastered below, slated roof and a lead valley up to the nave.

North west tower rising to parapets, now contains a kitchen lavatory and boiler with the ringing chamber at first floor. Clear glass in the nave tinted diamonds to the chancel, heraldic stained glass in the north aisle.

The nave and chancel are a rebuilding of 1782 and at a higher floor level, the north aisle 13<sup>th</sup> century, the tower late 15<sup>th</sup> century with 19<sup>th</sup> century parapets. Also of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century refurbishing in the nave. Extensive restoration early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, opening up the north aisle which was formally partitioned, and the arcades filled. A guidebook is available, the church is listed Grade I.

There is a large churchyard now extended to the south within stone walls which retain the higher ground well above the original floor level of the aisle.

There is a historically important and well recorded collection of monuments, hatchments, wall shields and general memorabilia.

- 1.02 Works carried out since the last inspection: (last report 2009)

- Handrail installed at west entry.
- Asbestos materials removed following report.
- Renewal of nave hips with tiles following theft.
- New louvers to tower.
- Storm damaged sanctuary southside window restored.
- The church is regularly maintained both in terms of general servicing but also roof repairs of slate replacement.

- 1.03 Planned Works:

- Gutter cleaning.
- Mortar repairs when resources permit.
- Reconstruct and reset east gable cross to north aisle.

- 1.04      The church was reordered in the late 1908's with the installation of the below tower kitchenette and WC facilities, draining to septic tank. Improvements were also made to the north aisle in order to preserve the alabaster memorial stones which were getting wet from ground water. A deep 'dry area' has been created internally and externally. Conditions have dramatically improved, and the memorials remain in good condition.
- 1.05      Text from the last report remains where it is still relevant.
- 1.06      The weather at the time of inspection was mild with sunny spells following period of dry weather.

**2.0.0        EXTERNALLY**

**2.1.0        Roofs**



- 2.1.1        Nave – slated tile, hips to east and west; Lead sheet hips were stolen. These have been replaced with overlapping blue clay tiles (reclaimed.) All remains in a satisfactory condition.

Leadwork valley to north aisle remains clear and in satisfactory condition.

- 2.1.2        Sanctuary– slated, lead hips, again a number of eave slates displaced, generally remains in satisfactory condition.

- 2.1.3        North aisle – steeply pitched, slate and generally firm. Mortar haunching up to parapets loose. Lead ridge patched generally poor but firm. Some loose and misplaced slates require refixing in due course. Exposed timbers appear to be sound.

Tower/Nave Valley gutter to south up to have lead in quite large sections. Remains in satisfactory condition.

- 2.1.4        Tower – stainless steel sheets to lead gutter on north side and open chute. All remains in good condition.

Lead flashings have mastic filled joints which remains in place. Conductor tape and finials to each corner. Remain well fixed.

## 2.2.0 Walls



2.2.1 Generally – loadbearing brick and stone walls to the nave support and tied trussed roof; arch braced in the north aisle. There is minor movement around the sanctuary apse windows with slight cracking internally and externally. Largely due to seasonal temperature changes. The apse is a relatively small structure in terms of mass compared the 'box' nave it is attached to. No action required at present.

There is slight cracking through the large nave windows, the stone cills have split. Minor cracking, though the north aisle windows of some age.

## 2.2.2 North west tower



Generally, rises to bell stage 2 light louvers, crenelated parapets, diagonal buttresses, no pinnacles the east buttresses overhang the west side roof.

Sound but the jointing is poor. Areas are deeply open much is loose and especially to the plinths and details; previous hard cement is exacerbating erosion.

Stones shaling especially west buttresses low and kid level, centre area west and bell stage generally and especially to west and east pock marked stones.

The parapets, cornice and gargoyles appear to be 19<sup>th</sup> century renewal. Eroded joint but sound, open joints in the cornice. Renewed louvre blades, oak. Conductor strip to west.



### 2.2.3 Nave

West – brick Flemish boned centre doorway windows north and south. large single panelled arched openings.

Stone footings and plinth eroded and open jointed and to brickwork immediately above. Local erosion below north window and generally on plinth. Loose header bricks high level centre. The general pointing is in good order except for the top 1.5m which is eroded. Stonework details firm broken cill south and slight splitting to head, an old settlement crack and through. Stone cornice open jointed.

South - four bays windows remains in good condition. All the cills have fractured and cracks are open jointed, the easterly eroded. Erosion low level and to areas below windows. A number of bricks loose and several poor. Window arches open jointed, spalling to west and to east high level west. Open jointed to rear of westerly rainwater pipe and top of plinth brick.

East – to north, south and over the sanctuary apse. Eroded bricks high level south east and north east areas of pointing, poor deeply open jointed high-level centre. Spalling low level. A doorway built up to north east, vertical split to south east.

North – a short return and continues over valley gutter, stained high level below leaded offset dressed tight to wall.

### 2.2.4 Chancel

Apse – five sides, windows to south east and north east faces. General settlement through and cracking the previous repointing. South facet window restored following storm damage satisfactory condition.

### 2.2.5 North aisle

East – gable 3 light window, rack through and below. Generally firm but the jointing is very poor, hard and exacerbating erosion and pulling the adjacent stone faces away, much is loose and now falling away revealing lime mortar and deeply open pockets below. Split stones low level north, shaling south by rainwater pipe. Open joints in window cill and mullions. Slight splitting to mullion.

Gable cap deeply open jointed (loose) copings open jointed to south kneeler stone renewed to north. Hard pointing adjacent, loose to roof flashings. Vent to low level north clear.



North – tomb enclosure protrudes to centre east. Generally firm but jointing poor hard cement repairs and some pointing low level and to tomb. Crack centre below cill – new mis matching stone and cracked cement repair.

Easterly window mullions and cill eroded. Open joints below, cement repairs loose, tracery eroded but firm, very poor 'make up' stones to jambs where the window has been 'cut-in'. west buttresses previously repointed eroding back from joints.

West – a half gable up to the tower, unfenestrated. Stonework sound, areas of patch hard cement pointing causing erosion.

### 2.3.0 Rainwater Goods



- 2.3.1 Pipes and gutters cast iron and generally appear of some age but suffering accumulation of debris. Fibreglass pipe to east reasonably sound but tight to wall. The gutters are generally set on extended brackets which are well below the roofing slate eave. Down pipes generally set on extended brackets which are well below the roofing slate eaves.

Downpipes generally enter ground without gullies. All are cast iron apart from box downpipe at the east end of the main nave/north aisle lead sheet valley gutter.

North aisle – two downpipes north elevation bridge across dry trench at bottom of wall.

Sanctuary apse downpipes on north and south sides.

Nave 2no. downpipes south elevation and 1no. downpipe to east end serving tower/nave lead sheet valley gutter – this appears to be blocked.

Gullies sealed covers to tops on north side. Grille missing east end of valley and choked.



#### **2.4.0 Windows**



Generally, all leaded glazing into stone frames and tracery.

- 2.4.1 Nave – leaded in rectangles in large panels. Some distortions. Internal steel armatures corroded.
- 2.4.2 Chancel – very small, tinted diamonds, distorted severely to south and centre bar corroded. Previously releaded casement to north east iron frame corroded.
- 2.4.3 North aisle – stained glass to east, lated externally. No ventilation, severe distortion. Diamonds to north firm but 'repaired'.
- 2.4.4 Tower – small window to north. Part leaded louvre below. Metal frames to west. All sound.

#### **2.5.0 Doors**



- 2.5.1 Nave west panelled modern applied face hinges. Some shrinkage in panels and joints.

**3.0.0 INTERNALLY**

**3.1.0 Roofs/ceiling**



3.1.1 Nave – plastered. Simple detailed cornice cove and reeded bed mould. Old cracking below paintwork. Generally satisfactory condition.

3.1.2 Sanctuary apse – a plaster vault enlivened with ribs and crocketed ogee arches. Old cracking adjacent to windows and rising into vault.

3.1.3 North aisle – plastered below arch braced rafters. Cracks mid-level to south and west where partition removed.

3.1.4 Tower – plasterboard spalling to nail fixings.

3.1.5 Bell chamber – modern joists and boards. Rusting north-south steel beam.

**3.2.0 Walls**



3.2.1 Nave – stonework rising to brickwork to north over the arcade and above the window arches and reveals. All stripped of original plaster. All remains in good condition.

3.2.2 Tower - patching and stains to west tower wall. Stonework eroded below louvres at high level and to arches in ringing chamber.

### **3.3.0 Floors**



- 3.3.1 Nave below tower – stone paving to walkways.
- 3.3.2 19<sup>th</sup> century ceramic tiling below choir stalls.
- 3.3.3 Sanctuary apse 18<sup>th</sup> century tiling with hard sandstone step edges at nave/sanctuary arch and up to high altar position.
- 3.3.4 North aisle 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century terracotta large format tile – upper section – lower section (technically a crypt chapel) patterned stone slabs are late medieval tiles and alabaster memorial slab stone steps down to the crypt chapel.

### **4.0.0 Fixtures and Fittings**

- 4.1.0 In the north aisle: - there are two recessed tombs with effigies in the north wall. Two chest tombs alabaster and sandstone. Various hatchments previously restored and more to be restored within the north aisle.



- 4.1.1 The church has a fine collection of wall set and painted heraldic shields mounted in the north aisle and west end of the nave.  
There is also a large number of finely crafted alabaster slab memorials of a similar style and craft to those found on memorials etched of brass plate.

- 4.1.2 Seating consists of open pine benches and stalls.



- 4.1.3 There is an oak traceried pulpit and pine lectern. Rails are cast iron with an altar early 18<sup>th</sup> century side table.

- 4.1.4 There is a 12<sup>th</sup> century decorated stone font with sculpture bowl with a heavy oak cover. There is some damage. Possibly recarved Saxon tub font.



- 4.1.5 There is a small chamber organ. Appears to be early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## 5.0.0 Heating and Electrics

### 5.1.0 Heating

Fan assisted radiators from an oil fired boiler. Copper piping. UPVC double bunded oil tank to north of tower close to wall.

### 5.1.1 Electrics

Wired in a mix of PVC sheathed and bare copper MICC and PVC-PVC cable. Note switches and sockets adjacent to sink, must be used with great care.  
last test by Andrews Electrical, Alrewas 27/01/2017 next due 27/01/2022.



Lighting is via 6no. triple pendants in the nave. Various spotlight fittings to north aisle and sanctuary apse. Fluorescent fittings to kitchenette, WC and tower.



## **6.0.0 Security and Facilities**

### **6.1.0 Fire safety**

6.1.1 There are maintained extinguishers. 3 ltr foam kitchenette and pulpit; 2Kg Co2 next to the organ.

### **6.2.0 Facilities for the Disabled**

6.2.1 Access is by step up to west door. Wide aisle and level floor to the altar rail. Potentially wheeled chair accessible lavatory, storage prevents easy access.

6.2.2 A loop system has been fitted.

### **6.3.0 Health and Safety**

6.3.1 Power sockets close to sink are illegal and must be used with care.



6.3.2 Asbestos materials removed from Church.

6.3.3 Lightning protection test has been arranged.

## 7.0.0 Paths and Boundaries



- 7.1.0 Generally extensive and well maintained. There are a number of leaning stones and several damaged tombs with ivy and corroding ironwork. There is a loose slab to south east. Main west pathway is wide, and level made from concrete wide gravel path is laid across the southside of the church. Boundary walls remain stable; however, the south side boundary wall is in poor condition and is failing around the south west corner of the churchyard. Trees and shrubs are well maintained.
- 7.1.1 Various mature trees including a pine and cypress south of the nave, too close? There is an ancient Yew to the east and an oak tree on adjacent land is leaning over the churchyard. Check dead branches.
- 7.1.2 Boundary walls are stonework. Areas to the south becoming poor and deeply open jointed to north. Some patch pointing.
- 7.1.3 Path to west gate is concrete and eroded. Iron gates to west. To the north east poor and corroding.



<b>8.0.0</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>Estimated cost £ ex VAT</b>
<b>8.1</b>	<b>Urgent works requiring immediate attention</b>	
1.	Reconstruct and refix the north aisle east gable wall apex cross which is loose.	
2.	Clear cast iron gutters and downpipes annually. This needs to be undertaken with care.	£1,500
<b>8.2</b>	<b>Works to be carried out within the 18 months</b>	
1.	Reconstruct the corner to the brick and stone boundary wall at the south west corner facing the hall grounds.	£500
<b>8.3</b>	<b>Works to be considered within the Quinquennium</b>	
1.	A phased program of external repointing and repairs to the stonework. North aisle and tower.	£7,500
<b>8.4</b>	<b>Works to be considered beyond the Quinquennium</b>	
1.	General renewal of slate roofs and renew cast iron guttering and downpipes.	£150K
<b>8.5</b>	<b>The future of the fabric</b>	
1.	Renew lead sheet ridge covering to north aisle – refix ridge covering to north aisle – refix ridge slating at same time.	£2,500
2.	Carry out mortar repairs to the south boundary walls. This should be carried out with care and the stone walling is ancient.	£10K
<b>8.6</b>	<b>Archaeological issues</b>	
1.	The churchyard boundary walls are constructed from ancient stonework around the north, south and west sides. Reconstruction should be undertaken with care. Use Natural Hydraulic Lime (NHL) or quick lime mortars.	
<b>8.7</b>	<b>Professional supervision</b>	
	The architect should be consulted over planned works which involve and alteration to the fabric or where major repair work is required/planned.	
	<b>PAT= Portable Appliance Test</b>	
	<b>NHL= Natural Hydraulic Lime</b>	
	<b>NB: All work required at high level must be carried out by a specialist high level access contractor.</b>	



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**MP/JAS /H11  
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Listing Text

SK 01 NE; 6/105

MAVESYN RIDWARE C.P.,

MAVESYN RIDWARE

Church of St Nicholas

27.02.64

GV

I

Parish church. Mainly 1782, with C13 north aisle and C15 tower. C13 and C14 sandstone ashlar and C18 red brick (Flemish bond); slate roofs. Three-bay nave and polygonal apse containing the chancel, and north aisle terminated to the west by the tower.

Tower. Three stages with moulded parapet string, gargoyles and crenelated parapet. The lower stages have rectangular loops with chamfered surrounds; 4-centred belfry openings with cusped Y-tracery and hollowed surround, and hood moulds terminating in heads. South aisle. Pointed east window of three graded lancets. On the south side a lancet and a C15 window of four lights beneath a 4-centred arch. Blocked south door with segmental arch and inserted window. Nave and chancel. 1782. Symmetrical with Gothic elements. Moulded plinth and eaves cornice. Painted windows with hollow-moulded arches springing from moulded imposts, Y-tracery, and small leaded panes. Pointed west doorway with 2-leaf door and pilastered stone surround.

INTERIOR. C13 three-bay north arcade: octagonal columns with moulded capitals and pointed arches of two chamfered orders. Pointed tower arch towards the nave and engaged semi-octagonal columns. Pointed chancel arch of three roll-moulded orders. Dentilled plaster ceiling over nave with multiple roll-moulded order to a central panel. Gothic plaster vault over the chancel with crocketed ogee arches springing from clustered and banded shafts. In the north aisle a C13 piscina and a lancet to the west blocked by the tower. This window is also visible from within the tower: it has a hood mould terminated by grotesque heads. The north aisle has a plaster vault over an arch braced collar roof. FITTINGS. Font of circa 1200 with a wavy band of stiff leaf. Gothic style wooden pulpit of 1895. C18 cast-iron communion rail. Waist high wooden wall panelling around nave and chancel.

MONUMENTS. The entire south aisle is taken up by the Mavesyn Chapel which contains the family monuments. This is at a lower level than the nave. Around the walls are alabaster panels beneath cusped arches on clustered columns. They are incised with the effigies of medieval ancestors but are actually late C18 or early C19, for they are not recorded by Stebbing Shaw in his engravings of the chancel (1785). Also three small alabaster reliefs depicting battles fought by Mavesyns, of similar date. Two chest tombs, both with incised alabaster slabs. In the centre, Sir Robert Mavesyn died 1403 at the battle of Shrewsbury with an C18/C19 effigy. At the east end Thomas Cawarden, died 1593, and his wife Anne. On the floor at the east end are incised slabs to David Cardon, died 1557, and wife; John Cordon, died 1485, and wife; John Cordon, died 1477; and Hugh Davenport, died 1473. In the north wall are two recesses containing recumbent effigies, both knights, one C13, the other early C14. Also in the chapel are a shield and pieces of armour, and the walls are covered with heraldic shields, some of which are blank. In the nave is a C17 tablet containing two brasses and a tablet to William Robinson, died 1771, with an obelisk and draped urn above. Stained glass. East window of Mavesyn chancel is dated 1870. It depicts former Mavesyns and heraldic shields.

Listed Grade I as a complete example of a late C18 church rebuilding including a very rare late C18 and early C19 conversion of a medieval aisle to the former church into a family chapel with neo-medieval fittings and monuments.

Listing NGR: SK0815916873

## **APPENDIX A : General Notes**

### **A Scope of the report**

This report is based on the findings of an inspection made from the ground and from other readily accessible points of access (and from ladders provided by the parish to selected areas) to comply with the diocesan scheme under the Inspection of Churches Measure 1995.

It is emphasised that the inspection has been purely visual and that no enclosed spaces or inaccessible parts such as boarded floors, roof spaces, or hidden timbers at the wall heads have been opened for inspection. Any part, which may require further investigation, is referred to in the appropriate section of this report.

This report is made in good faith to the best of our ability, but it is a condition of making it that we will not be liable for loss or damage (if any) suffered as a result of anything contained in or omitted from the report whether arising from negligence or any other cause.

We have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure, which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible, and we are therefore unable to report that any such part of the property is free from defect.

THIS REPORT IS NOT A SPECIFICATION AND MUST NOT BE USED FOR INSTRUCTIONS TO A BUILDER IN CONNECTION WITH THE REPAIRS MENTIONED. The Architect can prepare a formal specification and the work should be carried out under his full supervision.

### **B Faculties**

The PCC is reminded that faculty will be required for repairs and major works in accordance with the new legal requirements in force from 1 March 1993. These are laid down in the Care of churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991 and the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2000. The Diocesan Registrar or the secretary of the Diocesan Advisory Committee will give advice as to the need for a Faculty.

### **C Electrical Installation**

Any electrical installation for lighting, power or electrical heating should be tested every five years (except as recommended in this report) by a competent electrical engineer or the electricity board. The insulation and earth continuity test reports should be kept in the church Logbook.

A certificate of inspection from a competent electrician (one who is approved contractors and registered with the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting NICEIC or the Institute of Electrical Engineers IEE or National Association of Professional Inspectors and Testers NAPIT or ELECSA) is required to be issued every five years. The comments in this report are made upon a visual inspection, made without instruments, of the main switchboard and of sections of wiring selected at random. Electrical installations for lighting and heating and other circuits should be installed and maintained in accordance with the current regulations which are in force.

Portable appliances must be subject to a PAT test and certified as safe by a qualified electrician annually.

### **D Heating Apparatus**

Where no specialist's current report is available the remarks in this report are based upon a superficial examination of the general condition of the installation in relation to fire hazards and sightliness. A proper examination and the test of the heating apparatus should be made by a qualified engineer each summer, prior to the start of the heating season, and a report kept in the Church Logbook. **Gas Heating Engineers to be Registered Gas Safe (a national accreditation system)**; the general contractor plumber must be a member of the

Institute of Plumbers and Heating Engineers and to have water mark accreditation and be registered 'Gas Safe'.

#### **E Lightning Conductors**

As a defective conductor may attract lightning the lightning conductor should be tested every two years in accordance with the relevant British Standard Code of Practice by a competent electrical engineer and the report kept in the Church Logbook.

Conductors on lofty spires and other inaccessible positions should be closely examined every 3-4 years, particularly the contact between the tape and the vane or finial rod. If the conductor tape has no test clamp, one should be installed above ground level.

#### **F Gutters, Downpipes and Gullies**

The Parochial Church Council is strongly advised to ensure that all gutters and down pipes are checked and cleaned out as found necessary twice a year.

#### **G Church Logbook**

Canon G.13 requires every Parochial Church Council to keep a Church Log Book. It can be of great assistance to the church-inspecting Architect. All repairs, however minor, and routine inspections and tests should be entered, together with the names of all contractors specialist sub-contractors employed. Any alterations to furniture and fittings should also be recorded therein.

Although the measure requires the church to be inspected by an Architect every five years, it should be realised that serious trouble may develop in between these surveys if minor defects are left unattended. It is strongly recommended that the churchwardens should make, or cause to be made, a careful inspection of the fabric at least once a year, and arrange for immediate attention to such minor matters as displaced slates or leaking pipes. Guidance may be had from the pamphlet 'How to look after your church' obtainable from church House Bookshop, Great Smith Street, London SW1.

The PCC are reminded that insurance cover should be index-linked so that adequate cover is maintained against inflation of building costs. It is of course important to ensure that the basic sum insured is adequate at inception of the index linking, as this will deal only with future inflation. The Ecclesiastical Insurance Group Plc will send a regional surveyor without charge to offer guidance on an appropriate level of the sum to be insured.

#### **H Security**

Churches have become targets for vandals, thieves and arsonists and steps have to be taken to combat their attacks. The PCC is strongly recommended to obtain pamphlets etc under the heading of 'church Protection' from the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group plc, Beaufort House, Brunswick Road, Gloucester GL1 1JZ (01452 528533).

#### **J Disabled Access**

The PCC should take measures to provide safe access for those who are not fully able. Advice should be sort from the Diocesan Advisory Committee or from the Council for the Care of the churches in this regard.

#### **K Electrical Appliances**

The PCC should ensure that it conforms to current Health and Safety Regulations.

Portable Electrical Appliances in Churches

Introduction

Electricity can be the cause of accidents and fires within churches and places of worship. Some serious accidents involving electricity can be fatal and fires can be started by faulty

electrical equipment or wiring. Whilst the permanent wiring and electrical equipment installed in churches is inspected on a Quinquennial basis or when major alterations to the electrical system are to be made, portable electrical appliances such as electric fires, kitchen appliances, video or music equipment, vacuum cleaners or any other appliance brought in on a temporary or semi-permanent basis still pose a risk and must be tested in accordance with the provisions of the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989. The term "portable appliance" can be used for most pieces of equipment that are fitted with a mains plug, usually 13 Amp mains plug.

In addition to the danger posed by electric shock, some appliances such as heaters and stage lighting give off heat and can be a further cause of electricity-related fires if they are not used correctly. Heat can also be produced by overloaded sockets or wiring, through damaged electrical cabling or equipment or a loose connection.

#### Electrical Portable Appliance Testing (PAT)

Portable appliances should be tested and inspected routinely. The requirements of the Regulations include in addition to a visual test, a test that ensures the electrical integrity of the appliance. This can only be performed using equipment designed specifically for that purpose and will require the services of a suitably qualified person, perhaps the engineer who normally carries out the church's Quinquennial Electrical Test.

It is often assumed that Portable Appliance Testing should be completed annually but the frequency of the will depend on the type of equipment and where it is used. The testing should certainly form a part of any Quinquennial test.

Each appliance should be numbered and labelled together with the date of the test and its next due testing date akin to motor vehicle MOT Testing. It would also be good practice to have a nominated member of the PCC with responsibility for checking labelling as well as initiating action. It is important that a written record of the introduction of any portable appliance into the church should be kept together with the dates of its testing and records of maintenance or repairs.

A notice should be displayed in a suitable place warning that untested appliances must not be used in the church.

Extension Leads are often used to enable an appliance to be used some distance from a mains outlet but these should be avoided if possible. These extensions and cables must also undergo a Portable Appliance Test. Additional length of cable should not be added on to the flexible cord of appliances and, because of the risk of overloading sockets, do not use multi-socket adapters.

With all electrical equipment, follow the manufacturer's guidance and instructions and use the equipment only for its intended purpose. Don't trail cables where they could be a trip hazard, near water or near equipment that gets hot and make sure that ventilation holes are kept free of obstruction.

## **L Asbestos**

#### Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002

The principal feature of the regulations that affect churches is the duty to manage asbestos in non-domestic premises, which comes into force on 21 May 2004.

The regulations place a duty on persons having control of non-domestic premises to make a suitable and sufficient assessment as to whether asbestos is or is liable to be present in the premises. In making the assessment:

- Steps that reasonable in the circumstances shall be taken.

- The condition of any asbestos which is, or has been assumed to be, present in the premises shall be considered.
- Account must be taken of building plans and of relevant information and the age of the premises.
- Parts of the premises which are reasonably accessible shall be inspected.
- The assessment must be reviewed if there is reason to suspect that the assessment is no longer valid, or if there has been a significant change in the premises.

Under the new regulations there are three types of survey, as follows:

1. Type 1 surveys are primarily for visually identifying, labelling and marking up plans showing the location of asbestos containing materials (ACM) and/or materials suspected of containing asbestos (if in doubt assume it contains asbestos) Also assessing its condition where possible.
2. Type 2 surveys allow for sampling and testing of materials. It would be expected that this type to be done in isolated areas (identified in the type 1 survey) that may be subject some maintenance or other minor works or where the condition of the material is in question.
3. Type 3 surveys should be carried out before any major refurbishment or demolition and would usually involve some degree of destructive inspection to access all areas where asbestos may be present.

Where the assessment shows that asbestos is or is liable to be in the premises:

- A determination of the risk from that asbestos must be made.
- A written plan identifying the parts of the premises concerned must be prepared.
- The measures to be taken for managing the risk must be prepared.
- The measures specified in the plan shall be adequate for monitoring condition, ensuring proper maintenance or removal, ensuring that information about the location and condition of asbestos is provided to every person liable to disturb it, and to the emergency services. The duty holder must record the measures taken to implement the plan; and review it at regular intervals.

The Council for the Care of churches have published an advisory note that can be obtained from: The Council for the Care of churches, church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ.

#### Work at Height Regulations

Work at Height Regulations 2004 recommend a three step approach to reduce risk:-

- If you can avoid the need to work at height, then do so.
- Where you can't avoid working at height, then you must take steps to prevent falls by working from a safe place and by selecting the most suitable equipment.
- If there is any remaining risk of a fall you should take steps to mitigate the effect, for example by using fall arrest equipment.

Vertical ladders guidance

In the last year there have been a number of accidents involving falls from height in churches, including two fatalities where volunteers fell from vertical ladders in the bell tower. The Health and safety Executive advise that it is good practice, and very strongly recommended that people working as volunteers are given the same level of protection as employees.

The following advice is provided to assist parishes.

All work at height must be risk assessed, taking into account the nature of the task, the age and capacity of the volunteer, as well as the layout of the building and any unusual features.

The use of fixed ladders as a means of access between floors should only be considered where a conventional staircase cannot be accommodated and their use is considered safe, based on risk assessment.

Ladders should be maintained in a good state of repair and securely fixed in position. Rungs should be firmly secured in a horizontal position and provide a good foothold. They should extend at least 1.1 meters above any floor accessed by the ladder. Where ladders pass through floors, the size of the opening should be as small as practical, fenced and a gate provided where necessary to prevent falls.

Where possible, safety hoops or a permanently fixed fall arrest system should be fitted to the ladder, as determined appropriate from risk assessment. If hoops are installed they should start at a height of 2.5 metres from the bottom of the ladder and be spaced at a maximum of 900mm intervals. The top hoop should be in line with the top of any fencing on the floor served by the ladder.

Expert advice on work at height related issues is available from Ecclesiastical Risk Service Ltd (a company in the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group) or other suppliers who have no connection with the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group. If you wish to contact Ecclesiastical Risk Services Ltd their contact details are as follows:

Tel: 0845 602 4065 Email: [ers\\_ltd@eigmail.com](mailto:ers_ltd@eigmail.com)

## **M Bells**

### **Entry of Birds into the Bell Chamber**

Many church towers seem to have a problem with birds (usually pigeons or jackdaws) entering the bell chamber over some considerable time. Apart from being unpleasant and smelly there is a serious risk from psittacosis, which can be fatal. Facemasks should be worn when clearing out the bell chamber.

### **Wind Blown Rain and Snow**

Many towers have large, louvered openings on each side of the tower or spire and quite often the bells are positioned directly behind these louvers. The louvers are intended to let the sound of the bells out whilst providing a degree of weather protection and maintaining ventilation.

However, windblown rain and snow often remains a problem which can to varying degrees, accelerate decay in timber or metal bell frames, their support grillage, the bell chamber floor and even the structural stability of a timber spire.

### **Artificial Lighting**

A good source of artificial lighting in the bell chamber is an important safety matter. It is not unknown for a bell to fall from the raised position causing serious injury, even death, to an unsuspecting person entering a dark bell chamber. It is important to check that bells are not in the raised position before entering the bell chamber.



#### Tower Access

This is another important safety issue relating specifically to worn or dust-laden tower steps (timber or masonry) and trap doors.

#### The Bell Installation

Bell installations are generally very reliable needing little maintenance. However, very few bell ringers are either skilled or enthusiastic about keeping their bells in top class order.

The Quinquennial inspection represents an excellent opportunity for any obvious defects in the bell installation to be brought to light. It is important that the architect or surveyor is mindful of this fact when carrying out an inspection.

### Checklist for the Quinquennial Inspection

In summary, the following points should be addressed when carrying out an inspection of a church with bells:-

1. Are birds getting into the tower or nesting within the louver openings?
2. Is there a problem with wind blow rain?
3. Is there safe access within the tower to the bells (and onto the tower roof/parapet)?
4. Is there good artificial lighting in the bell chamber?
5. Is the bell chamber floor clear of dust and debris?
6. Does the metal bell frame need painting or the timber frame treating?
7. Is a more thorough inspection necessary (either by the DAC Bells Adviser or by a professional bell hanger)?

## N SAFETY OF MEMORIALS IN CHURCHYARDS

### DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR PROCEDURE

#### General guidance:-

1. The parish should not hide behind the fact that the family of the deceased has the ownership of the grave and primary responsibility for it, nor that it is a closed churchyard. The PCC has a duty to the public to maintain the churchyard in a safe condition which must not be ignored.
2. If a parish has any concerns or queries they should consult the Registrar or Archdeacon.

#### PCC Responsibility

3. All gravestones, tombs and vaults should be inspected at least annually by a Churchwarden or person nominated by the PCC and a record of the inspection maintained. Each stone should be physically handled to check for loose mountings, disintegrating mortar or undue spalling caused by age or frost, thus rendering the stonework unsafe. However, persons carrying out the inspection should take care to push the stone away rather than pull it towards them. The stone must be sufficiently secure so that it would not topple over if someone held onto it to help themselves up if they had knelt down to read the inscription. It is not expected that every memorial stone will be vertical – if one is leaning but meets the above test no remedial action is necessary. (This advice is in line with that of the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group October 2004).
4. If any stones need attention the families of the deceased should be contacted.

5. If any stones are in a dangerous condition they should be roped off immediately and laid flat at the earliest opportunity after consultation with the Archdeacon and notifying the Registrar and contacting the families if possible. The work is best done professionally but whether being done professionally or by volunteers the Insurance Company must be informed and their advice followed. A confirmatory faculty must then be applied for within 3 months.
6. If there are stones which are not imminently dangerous but are a cause for concern and the PCC think they should be laid flat than a faculty must be applied for.

Either in the confirmatory faculty or initial faculty for laying flat or in a separate additional faculty to be submitted within 12 months of the issue of the first faculty the PCC must submit their proposals for the long term future of the memorials. Where ever possible the memorials should be reinstated to maintain the character of the churchyard and the setting of the listed church.

### **Local Authority Responsibilities**

7. The local Authority has the authority under Health and Safety Legislation, which over-rides everything else, to make safe a memorial stone by laying it flat if they consider it to be imminently dangerous. However a confirmatory faculty is required. If a Parish or families of the deceased are concerned about the action taken by the Local Authority, they must contact the Local Authority concerned.

In a closed churchyard where the Local Authority has taken over responsibility for maintenance it is also responsible for the inspection of and safety of memorials. A faculty is required for this and the DAC will expect the procedure to include the following. Otherwise conditions will be imposed on the faculty.

- Publicity prior to the inspection by notices in the churchyard and in the press.
- Prior to the safety testing, a survey of the memorials shall be carried out by the Local Authority Conservation Officer and/or the Church Architect to identify memorials of special local, historic, artistic or architectural significance. If any identified in this way are found to be unsafe they should be cordoned off pending advice from the church architect and/or conservation officer on how to make them safe and/or reinstate them.
- A visual check and hand test prior to a mechanical test if this is thought to be essential. Ecclesiastical advises that hand tests only are sufficient to meet their insurance cover.
- Unsafe memorials should be cordoned off immediately and warning notices posted. If imminently dangerous a temporary support can be provided or the memorial could be laid flat as a last resort.
- Every effort shall be made to ensure that any memorial which has been staked or laid flat shall be restored to its original condition in order to maintain the character of the churchyard and the setting of the church.
- Family members should be contacted where possible and advised to arrange with monumental mason to reinstate or remove memorial.
- If families of the deceased cannot be located or are unwilling to carry out the reinstatement of the unsafe memorials then a faculty application must be submitted within 12 months of the date of the faculty being granted to reinstate, lay flat or remove the memorial.

8. Some memorials may be listed in their own right and if so, listed building consent (confirmatory or otherwise) from local Authority will be required for any action taken to make safe or for remedial work.

## **P Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005**

Why has fire safety legislation been changed?

The government was concerned that:

- a number of building and outdoor events open to the public were not covered by existing legislation and those using them might be exposed to uncontrolled hazards;
- fire safety legislation was fragmented giving rise to differing requirements; there were complaints that these conflicted with each other and caused extra expense in time and money to provide fire safety.

### **The principal changes:**

1. The new legislation – the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 – applies to all buildings other than single domestic dwellings and a few other limited exceptions.
2. Compliance with the new legislation covers all responsibilities for fire safety under Health and Safety, the Licensing Act 2003 and any other legislative requirement.
3. All persons – working (including volunteers), visitors or members of the public in the premises must be taken into account.
4. The principal means of compliance is by 'Fire Risk Assessment' of each individual building – Fire Certificates are no longer used.
5. The local Fire and Rescue Service is the sole 'enforcing authority' for church buildings and outdoor events except those taking place in sports stadia.
6. For each building or site there must be an appointed 'Responsible Person' who carries out the Fire Risk Assessment and oversees the conduct of fire safety measures. They should appoint one or more 'Competent Persons' who assist them in the day to day implementation and monitoring of fire safety matters.

The Churches Main Committee (CMC) also has a booklet entitled 'Fire Precautions Guide' at £2 including P & P. This has been updated to take account of the new legislation. Contact the CMC at [www.cmainc.org.uk](http://www.cmainc.org.uk) or 020 7898 187

### **When do we need to comply?**

It is not necessary to have fully complied by the date of coming into operation of the revised regulations (1 October 2006). Parishes should move quickly with the management changes to appoint the 'Responsible' and 'Competent' Persons and a date by which you expect to carry out the 'Fire Risk Assessment'.

I would advise this/these appointment(s) should be made at the next available PCC and the consideration of the regulation requirements and action points should be fully recorded in your PCC Minutes to show compliance with the legislation.

The legislation requires 'reasonable and practicable' fire safety precautions to be taken. The DCLG Guides give what they consider to be reasonable and practicable requirements, but in the end, it would be for the courts to decide on what is considered 'reasonable and practicable' for any building or site.

### **Conducting a fire risk assessment**

If a church has someone with experience of similar procedures in health and safety, or who is an architect, building surveyor or fire officer, it should be possible for such a person to

carry out the assessment without further assistance. They should either be appointed as the 'Responsible Person' or as a 'Competent Person'.

Small churches and halls should be straightforward to assess. If the PCC consider their building(s) to be complex it may be necessary to employ a third party to carry out or assist with the assessment. Care should be taken to see that properly qualified people are employed. These may be:

- the church architect or surveyor who conducts the Quinquennial survey;
- a corporate member of the Institution of Fire Engineers;
- a person holding a degree in Fire Safety Engineering;
- a company specializing in conducting Risk Assessments.

Where a third party is involved, they need to be accompanied round the building by the churchwardens, priest or other person with a good knowledge of how the building is used throughout the year.

Beware – There is already evidence that smaller workplaces and charitable bodies are being approached by unscrupulous persons making false claims about 'Risk Assessments' under the new legislation. This is either with the intention of making money or possibly as a means of access to the building for later criminal intentions. A basic check is to ask about registration with one of the appropriate professional bodies and for a sample of a previous risk assessment and evidence of public liability insurance to be supplied.

### **Historic church buildings**

Most of the guides above have a short appendix which acknowledges that older and listed buildings may not be capable of physical alteration to the same degree as newer buildings. Allowance can be made for this by the elimination of risks or by better management of the risks present.

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