

DIOCESE OF YORK: SCHEME FOR THE INSPECTION OF CHURCHES

Introduction

Under the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018 (the “Measure”) every diocese is required to have a scheme providing for the inspection of every church or relevant building in the diocese at least once every five years. The scheme must contain the provisions set out in Section 45 of the Measure.

The scheme

1. This scheme (the “Scheme”) was established by the Diocesan Synod by a resolution of 29th September 2020 and it supersedes all previous schemes. It comes into operation with immediate effect.
2. The Scheme shall be administered through the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (the “DAC”). All correspondence concerning matters dealt with under the Scheme should be addressed to the DAC Secretary.
3. The fees for the inspection of churches in the Diocese under the terms of this Scheme shall be paid by the Parochial Church Council of each parish in accordance with the following terms of this Scheme. The fees are set by the Diocese and reviewed annually.
4. Nothing in this Scheme affects the legal responsibility of every PCC for the proper care of each church under its authority, and its duty to apply for a Faculty or for permission under Schedule 1 of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015 (as amended) before any work is commissioned.
5. All parish churches in the Diocese, as well as all other consecrated churches and chapels and buildings licensed for public worship, which are required to be inspected under the Measure, shall be inspected at least once in any five-year period (“the Quinquennial Inspection”) under this Scheme. For the avoidance of doubt, where a Quinquennial Inspection has taken place under a previous Diocesan Scheme the five-year period shall commence from the date of that previous inspection.
6. The Archdeacon has the power to ensure the inspection of every church in the diocese once in every five years, as laid down in section 47 of the Measure. Where necessary, the Diocese may initially fund the aforementioned inspection.

The scope and contents of the report

7. The Quinquennial Inspection shall be completed in accordance with the current guidance of the Church Buildings Council (“CBC”). There is an interactive report template within the Church Heritage Record entry for each church. The DAC recommends that this template is used, although

reports submitted in a similar digital format which is compliant with the Scheme and the accompanying CBC guidance will be accepted.

8. The structure and content of the Quinquennial Inspection Report shall follow the recommendations set out in the CBC guidance.
9. The report shall summarise the works needed in the following categories:
 - 1 - Urgent, requiring immediate attention
 - 2 - Requires attention within 12 months
 - 3 - Requires attention within the next 12 – 24 months
 - 4 - Requires attention within the quinquennial period
 - 5 - A desirable improvement with no timescale (as agreed with the PCC)

Any items of maintenance or minor repairs within these timescales may fall under Schedule 1 of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015 (as amended), i.e. under List A or B, and the Inspector must indicate if he/she considers this to be the case. All other matters will require faculty permission.

Good quality photographs of items requiring attention must be included within the body of the text.

10. Broad indicative costs within the bands set out in the CBC guidance and template for all such works will be given, to enable the PCC to understand the level of funding which is likely to be necessary. When considering executing such works, PCCs may need to get accurate costings from a Quantity Surveyor.

Appointing and reviewing the Inspector

11. Advice on appointing a new inspecting professional can be found in the CBC Guidance. The DAC Secretary holds a register with details of current Quinquennial Inspectors within the Diocese and can offer advice on the appointment process. A suitably experienced and, where appropriate, accredited professional who is not presently on the register can be employed as a Quinquennial Inspector, but the PCC must seek approval from the DAC before making an appointment.
12. The DAC strongly encourages parishes to periodically review the appointment of their Quinquennial Inspector in a competitive tendering process, and the most appropriate time would be when the next inspection is due. Reviewing the appointment does not imply that the PCC must change their inspector, but offers the opportunity to reflect on whether the PCC is receiving good quality service and best value, and has a good relationship with the inspector.
13. Many parishes find that there is advantage in renewing an appointment, as an ongoing relationship with an experienced inspector who fully understands the building and its ongoing needs, and has a good relationship with the PCC and Churchwardens, is invaluable.

Appointing for project work recommended in the report

14. It is for the PCC to decide who to commission to undertake any project work identified in the report, for which a separate agreement would be needed. If the PCC wishes to carry out any publicly funded works which require tendering (where fees are over £10,000) under the supervision of the Inspector without a further tendering process, it will need to be able to demonstrate that the Inspector was appointed or re-appointed (see 12 above) within the last 5 years through a competitive tendering process.

Duties and responsibilities of the PCC, Inspector, DAC and Archdeacon

15. All Quinquennial Inspectors shall be responsible for entering into and maintaining adequate and appropriate Professional Indemnity Insurance cover, and shall provide written evidence thereof.
16. A person who is appointed as a Quinquennial Inspector shall enter into an agreement with the PCC of the church (or body acting on their behalf) which they are to inspect. The DAC Secretary can provide advice if requested.
17. Agreement of the fee to be charged, including the preparation and issue of the Report, shall be included in the contract between the PCC (the client) and the Quinquennial Inspector (the service provider) before the inspection takes place. If the inspection necessitates additional professional services, access provision, or work which necessitates a higher fee, additional contracts or a variation must be entered into by the PCC and the Quinquennial Inspector before the inspection takes place.
18. Within three months of making the inspection, the Quinquennial Inspector shall send copies of the report in digital format to the relevant Archdeacon, the PCC of the parish in which the church is situated, the Incumbent or Priest in Charge, and to the DAC Secretary. The report will be uploaded to the Church Heritage Record by the diocesan Church Buildings Department, if it has not been compiled on the template there.
19. The DAC Secretary is responsible, as per the Measure, for keeping a register of those buildings which are covered by the Scheme, containing details of the current Quinquennial Inspector and dates of inspection. The PCC Secretary shall inform the DAC Secretary of the date of the inspection. If the PCC finds it difficult to agree a date with the Quinquennial Inspector they should consult the DAC Secretary who will offer support.
20. Nothing in this Scheme shall affect the powers of an Archdeacon to ensure the inspection of every church in their archdeaconry once in every five years, as set out in section 47 of the Measure.
21. In order to provide for the cost of inspections and the works recommended in the report, every PCC should budget for the report and fabric repairs. They should not, however, use the report as a specification for such works.

Interpretation and Amendment of the Scheme

22. Any questions which arise concerning the interpretation of this Scheme shall be referred to the Registrar, whose decision shall be binding.
23. This Scheme shall be subject to amendment only by means of a formal motion, presented after due notice to the Diocesan Synod, and approved by it.