



Property Matters

Please pass to your property representative

The Newsletter from Grants Loans and Property Committee
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Rainwater goods & drainage

Regular maintenance on our church buildings and manse rainwater goods and drainage is the first step in ensuring that our buildings remain water-tight during the autumn and winter months.

As trees begin to lose their leaves gutters and downpipes get blocked and cause rainwater to leak onto the outside of walls and in some cases cause internal water ingress.



Other areas that need to be considered are valley and parapet gutters that are hidden from view. Maintenance of these areas is often more difficult but should not be overlooked.

If rainwater is allowed to flow down the outside of walls this can cause deterioration of the brick or stonework and pointing, particularly during the winter months, and in extreme cases will cause plaster to 'blow' off the internal surfaces of walls.

Rainwater that is allowed to enter the building at roof level will have a devastating effect on plaster and timber and could lead to fungal and insect infestations.



Gullies should be checked regularly and any leaves or other debris removed before it becomes an issue.

Drains must also be checked to ensure that they are free flowing, as they are only effective if they are clear and allow rainwater and waste-water to flow away from the building.

Drains that become blocked or start to leak will affect the surrounding ground and could lead to damp problems or subsidence, which in turn will lead to heavy maintenance bills.

All these problems will be costly to deal with and many can be avoided by having cyclical maintenance in place. It is recommended that any high level work is carried out by competent contractors who have the necessary indemnity insurances and carry out a risk assessment before starting the work.

The Synod provides an annual inspection pro-forma in the form of a simple tick-check list. This can be used by local churches to identify any building maintenance and repair issues before they become a problem.

For more information contact David Skipp. contact details on page 2.



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Very often the first impression that most people get of any church is the condition of church notice boards.

A lively church will probably have two notice boards. One that tells passers-by detail about service times and provides contact numbers and another that acts as a wayside pulpit.

Have a look at your notice boards next time you pass-by or approach your own church building and check their condition.

If you need new notice boards try contacting either:

www.churchnoticeboards.co.uk/

or

www.cpo-online.org.uk

Gas servicing of church appliances

We realise that local churches are already aware of the need to have an annual service of gas installations and appliances within manse and other residential property. This follows the legislation set out within the Gas-Safe Register, where the engineer carrying out the service and check should be a 'Gas Safe Register' approved engineer and provide landlords with a gas safety certificate (CP12). Further advice on this is provided on the Gas Safe website:

www.gassaferegister.co.uk



For church and hall buildings the legislation is not so clear. The engineer must still be on the Gas Safe Register but is also required to have further qualifications for dealing with installations of a commercial size.

Always check that the engineer:

1. Carries an up to date 'Gas Safe' registration card
2. Is qualified to work on the particular appliances and pipe work installed within your church buildings.
3. Explains fully the work to be carried out in order to make the installation safe and compliant and provides the necessary safety certificates upon completion.

Lease reminder!

Just by way of reminder, and following a number of difficult lease situations over the summer months, the GLPC ask that churches carefully consider the need for a lease when hiring church premises to third parties.

There is a danger that an arrangement which is recorded or understood between the church and the third party user to be a Hiring Agreement or Licence may turn out on close scrutiny to be a Lease. If this is so, the user is likely to be a business tenant, which has significant implication. In this context "business" has a very wide meaning, and includes charities and other not-for-profit activities. A business tenant is entitled by law to renewal of the lease or compensation in lieu of renewal.

It should be noted that pre-schools, nurseries and playgroups will usually need to have a lease in place due to the amount of use of the premises.

Before signing on the dotted line check the Thames North Trust guidance notes, or contact the Trust Officer (Fergus Urquhart) or David Skipp.



If your church building is listed have a look at the English Heritage guide 'Caring for Places of Worship'

For a free copy visit:

www.english-heritage.org.uk/power

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Large print copies of this newsletter are available from Synod Office.

Further Website's that may be of use are:

<http://www.methodist.org.uk>

<http://www.churchcare.co.uk>