

# The Methodist Property Office - Resourcing Mission

## Quinquennial Inspections

### 1. Introduction

The Methodist Church has for many years required the regular inspection of all Model Trust property on a five yearly (hence 'quinquennial') basis. These notes are intended to help property committees, property stewards and others who care for church property.

Please read this leaflet with that on 'appointment of quinquennial inspectors', and you may also find it helpful to look at other information leaflets: see the references section at the end of this leaflet. You may wish to check our web site [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk) from time to time as we regularly add new or revised information.

**QI** stands for quinquennial inspector, and **QQ** for quinquennial inspection survey/report.

Standing Order 952 requires the circuit meeting to arrange for the QQ to be carried out by professionally qualified persons, for all local and circuit property (for the full wording, see section 9 below). Some circuits appoint one QI for all their property, others consider there are benefits in appointing several QIs, in order to ensure a range of expertise and a competitive element.

### 2. The temptation to avoid the issue

The neglect of church buildings, or the avoidance of QQs, on the basis of "we'd rather not know" or "we cannot afford either the cost of the survey fee or the works", is not reasonable stewardship. Ignoring known defects, neglecting adequate maintenance and failing to deal with necessary repairs are irresponsible, and, more importantly, are a breach of managing trustees' obligations.

Problems should be faced up to and every effort made to find adequate financial resources; a considerable variety of grants are available, and our funding section are always happy to offer help. The Methodist Church has a continuing responsibility for the care and maintenance of the fabric and contents of Methodist property.

### 3 The purpose of QQs and reports

The object of a QQ is to ensure the early detection of deterioration or defects so that prompt action can be taken, thus avoiding later and more costly expense, eg replacing timbers affected by dry rot, or much more drastically, total demolition. A brief inspection, particularly if carried out by someone without adequate training and experience, may mean that the very defects that the scheme ought to establish in fact go undetected.

Many church buildings constitute a significant part of the country's heritage. Some are "listed" or in conservation areas and many more have architectural or historic merit. Many new churches are innovative and significant, both architecturally and theologically. It is important that these buildings are properly maintained for future generations.

The QQ represents a valuable contribution to the care of a building and a continuing record of the condition of the building, the importance of which should not be minimised.

#### **4. Selection and appointment of Quinquennial Inspectors**

Please see the separate information leaflet 'Appointment of Quinquennial Inspectors'.

Churches are special buildings and therefore QQs need to be undertaken by professionally qualified persons who are expert in the care of church buildings, and who have a good working knowledge of construction and repair techniques. They need to have a sensitivity, understanding and appreciation of the qualities of design for all periods of art and architecture.

#### **5. Church members carrying out work**

We fully realise the enormous value of voluntary property work carried out by church members. In such instances, volunteers are acting on behalf of the managing trustees and should be covered by the church's normal insurance policy. It is, however, always worth checking the policy wording, and if necessary obtaining additional cover - Methodist Insurance (tel 0161 833 9696) are always prepared to discuss the situation.

Clearly, it is always unwise for church members to undertake anything other than simple, straightforward work unless they have suitable training. For instance, work above ceilings, at high level, from a tall ladder or scaffold or on roofs, requires specialist training and expertise. Do remember that it is also a legal requirement to have a suitable risk assessment in place.

#### **6. Content of the report**

6.1 A first report will be more detailed than subsequent reports prepared by the same QI. Generally a report will include preliminary information, including particulars of the site and the buildings, and may include some description of the building and its history. The main part of the report should cover such matters as works since the last inspection; the general condition of the building; a summary of repairs needed; and recommendations for further detailed or specialist inspections. The QQ may well be set out in a typical layout, as given below. The QQ should also cover such matters as furnishings, monuments, the heating system, the electrical installation, the lightning protection installation, sanitary facilities, fire precautions, security, disabled access and external areas and boundaries.

6.2 It is sometimes argued that the building and its condition is well known locally and that only a minimum report is necessary. However, the QQ is not just for those acquainted with the building. Several managing trustees may not be particularly familiar with the "out of the way" parts of their building. The report may also have to be read and be understandable by those who are not familiar with the building, perhaps officers from the local authority or national amenity societies.

Sketch layouts can be helpful, but measured drawings are not required. Photographs – particularly of areas not normally visible – can be very useful.

The QQ must not be regarded as a specification for repairs, although the QI may be asked subsequently to arrange for the works to be carried out.

#### **7. Standard limitation/disclaimer clauses**

It is normal for any survey to note various exclusions or limitations. There are good reasons for this, and some are required by the QI's professional indemnity insurance policy. The following are typical clauses which will often appear:

- The inspection will normally be made from ground level, floor level(s), a 3-metre ladder and other readily accessible positions. The inspection will be purely visual and, unless otherwise stated, no enclosed spaces, hidden timbers or inaccessible parts will be opened

up for inspection. The report may indicate that further or more detailed investigations are necessary.

- Parts of the structure which are inaccessible, enclosed or covered will not be inspected.
- Ladders and attendance are to be provided, and the arrangements and cost for this will be met by the local church.

## 8. After the report

Managing trustees have the responsibility for taking all necessary action to deal with matters indicated in the quinquennial inspection report, even when the required expenditure may seem to be discouraging or prohibitive.

The QI will usually be willing to meet the managing trustees to discuss the findings of the QQ, and to agree any further work that may be necessary. Insensitive repairs and alterations can all too easily destroy the character of the premises and inappropriate technical solutions, or the use of unsuitable materials, may prove to be unsatisfactory and costly in the final analysis. Churches are special buildings which require care by specially trained professional advisers.

Instructions should be given to the QI if further investigations are to be undertaken; or if the QI is to prepare information about further repairs. Such instructions will result in additional charges. If the inspector is instructed to prepare a specification of works, to invite tenders and to inspect work in progress; then professional fees will have to be negotiated, plus expenses and VAT.

It will also usually be necessary for the managing trustees and the circuit to submit the Property Office Schedule 1 (Schedule 2 for a manse) to obtain formal approval for the proposed work. For some schemes a 'minor works' schedule may be suitable, and the district will be able to give approval. If the building is Listed or in a Conservation Area, statutory consents will be required and any work must be submitted to the Property Office for comment.

Property Schedules are distributed every year, and the various on the schedules should be checked for current information and guidance.

## 9. Wording of Standing orders

**Quinquennial Inspections.** *(1) In relation to all local property the Circuit Meeting shall arrange for an inspection, which shall include an inspection for timber decay, at least once every five years by professionally qualified persons, who shall report to the Church Council and the Circuit meeting with recommendations as to any work required. The Circuit Meeting shall ensure that any further investigatory inspections shown to be necessary in the initial inspection report are carried out if the managing trustees have not acted.*

*(2) In relation to circuit property the Circuit Meeting shall arrange for an inspection, which shall include an inspection for timber decay, at least once every five years by professionally qualified persons, who shall report to the Circuit Meeting, the circuit stewards and, in the case of manses, the district Manses Committee, with recommendations as to any work required. The district Manses Committee shall ensure that any further investigatory inspections shown to be necessary in the initial inspection report are carried out if the managing trustees have not acted.*

*(3) The Circuit meeting shall ensure that every inspector engaged to carry out an inspection under this Standing Order is an architect or building surveyor or has some other appropriate professional qualification and is adequately covered by professional indemnity insurance against any liability arising out of the inspection.*

## 10. Before the inspection

The Circuit should notify managing trustees to carry out the following prior to the QI:

- The managing trustees are required to maintain a log book containing previous quinquennial inspection reports, details of repairs and other relevant information, and this needs to be made available to the inspector (a blank log-book can be downloaded from our web site).
- The managing trustees should inform the QI of any rights of way, light or air and give details of building defects or problems during the last five years (including damage from storms, vandalism or fire).
- The managing trustees should ensure that the necessary keys are provided, and that access to all areas is provided, including that to voids in roofs, sub-floors etc, and their location should be brought to the attention of the QI.
- The report may indicate that further or more detailed investigations are necessary.
- The submission of a copy of the QI is a condition of the approval of any building scheme and may also be a requirement of any grant application.
- QIs are required for all Model Trust property including all churches, halls, graveyards etc, all manses or other housing and all property which is rented to third parties.

## 11. Typical Layout for a QQ of a chapel or ancillary property

The following is a typical layout, although other arrangements are acceptable. In particular, a 'room-by-room' description may sometimes be more appropriate:

### A. Premises identification

(In an initial survey, a more detailed description may be provided)

### B. Repair works or new works since last inspection (summary)

### C. Detailed condition of the several parts of the building

C.1 general structure (externally and internally)

#### EXTERNAL FABRIC

- C.2 walls
- C.3 roof coverings, chimney stacks and flues
- C.4 rainwater disposal system
- C.5 doors and windows
- C.6 metalwork, woodwork and paintwork
- C.7 tower, spire, bells and frames

#### INTERNAL FABRIC

- C.8 roof structures
- C.9 walls, partitions and ceilings
- C.10 doors, windows, woodwork and fittings
- C.11 internal decorations
- C.12 floors, stairways and balconies

#### OTHER

- C.13 furniture and fittings
- C.14 monuments
- C.15 bats

- C.16 accessibility (eg, Disability Discrimination Act work)
- C.17 health and safety (including asbestos)
- C.18 insulation & energy efficiency

#### SERVICES

- C.19 heating system and ventilation
- C.20 electrical installation
- C.21 lightning conductor
- C.22 sanitary facilities and drainage
- C.23 fire precautions
- C.24 security

#### GROUNDS

- C.25 including boundaries, paths, trees, car parking and graves

#### **D. Items requiring further detailed or specialist investigation**

#### **E. Works of repair in order of priority**

- E.1 of utmost urgency
- E.2 essential within the next twelve months
- E.3 essential within the next five years
- E.4 advisable

The following typical clauses may be included:

- The inspection will normally be made from ground level, floor level(s), a 3-metre ladder and other readily accessible positions. The inspection will be purely visual and, unless otherwise stated, no enclosed spaces, hidden timbers or inaccessible parts will be opened up for inspection.
- The electrical installation should be tested every quinquennium by an NICEIC registered electrician
- Any lightning conductor should be tested every quinquennium.
- The comments on the heating system are based upon a superficial examination of the system and its general condition. An examination and test should be made by a qualified engineer, each summer before the heating season begins. Managing trustees could consider arranging an inspection and maintenance contract.
- This is a summary report only, as required by Standing Orders; it is not a specification for the execution of the work and must not be used as such. Professional advice should be obtained in determining appropriate repair work
- Managing trustees are strongly advised to enter into an annual contract with a local builder for the cleaning-out of the gutters and downpipes twice a year.
- It should be realised that serious trouble may develop in between QQs if minor defects are left unattended. It is strongly recommended that the managing trustees should make a careful inspection of the fabric at least once a year and arrange for immediate attention to such minor matters as displaced slates and leaking pipes. Such an inspection is necessary for the preparation of Schedule A at the Autumn Church Council Meeting.
- The managing trustees are reminded that insurance cover should be index-linked, so that adequate cover is maintained against inflation of building costs. It is important to ensure that the sum insured is adequate. Methodist Insurance is able to offer guidance as to the appropriate level of cover or alternatively a professional valuation should be made.

## **12. Quinquennial inspection of manse, other housing or property**

The following is a typical layout, although other arrangements are acceptable. In particular, a 'room-by-room' description may sometimes be more appropriate:

### **A. Premises Identification**

(In an initial survey, a more detailed description may be provided)

### **B. Repair works or new works since last inspection (summary)**

### **C. Detailed condition of the several parts of the building**

C.1 general structure (externally and internally)

#### EXTERNAL FABRIC

- C.2 walls
- C.3 roof coverings, chimney stacks and flues
- C.4 rainwater disposal system
- C.5 doors and windows
- C.6 metalwork, woodwork and paintwork

#### INTERNAL FABRIC

- C.7 roof structures
- C.8 walls, partitions and ceilings
- C.9 doors, windows, woodwork and fittings
- C.10 decorations
- C.11 floors and staircases
- C.12 insulation & energy efficiency

#### SERVICES

- C.13 heating system and room ventilation
- C.14 electrical installation
- C.15 sanitary facilities and drainage
- C.16 security
- C.17 fire precautions
- C.18 accessibility (disabled access)

#### GROUNDS AND OUTBUILDINGS

- C.19 external areas including trees & boundaries
- C.20 garage
- C.21 other outbuildings

### **D. Items requiring further detailed or specialist investigation**

### **E. Works of repair in order of priority**

- E.1 of utmost urgency
- E.2 essential within the next twelve months
- E.3 essential within the next five years
- E.4 advisable

**The following are standard clauses applicable to all QIs, and which are also included on the relevant schedules (eg, E & G):**

- The inspection will normally be made from ground level, floor level(s), a 3-metre ladder and other readily accessible positions. The inspection will be purely visual and, unless otherwise stated, no enclosed spaces, hidden timbers or inaccessible parts will be opened up for inspection.

- The electrical installation should be tested every quinquennium by an NICEIC registered electrician
- The comments on the heating system are based upon a superficial examination of the system and its general condition. An examination and test should be made by a qualified engineer, each summer before the heating season begins. Managing trustees could consider arranging an inspection and maintenance contract.
- This is a summary report only, as required by Standing Orders; it is not a specification for the execution of the work and must not be used as such. Professional advice should be obtained in determining appropriate repair work
- Managing trustees are strongly advised to enter into an annual contract with a local builder for the cleaning-out of the gutters and downpipes twice a year.
- It should be realised that serious trouble may develop in between QQs if minor defects are left unattended. It is strongly recommended that the managing trustees should make a careful inspection of the fabric at least once a year and arrange for immediate attention to such minor matters as displaced slates and leaking pipes. Such an inspection is necessary for the preparation of Schedule A at the Autumn Church Council Meeting.
- The managing trustees are reminded that insurance cover should be index-linked, so that adequate cover is maintained against inflation of building costs. It is important to ensure that the sum insured is adequate. Methodist Insurance is able to offer guidance as to the appropriate level of cover or alternatively a professional valuation should be made.

### **13. Circulation of the QI report**

**Chapels or ancillary property:** three copies of the report and Schedule 'G' are to be sent to the Circuit Property Secretary, who will send one set to the local Property Secretary and one set to the District Property Secretary.

**Manses or other housing:** three copies of the report and Schedule 'E' are to be sent to the Circuit Manse Property Secretary who will send one set to the Circuit Steward and one set to the District Manses Committee Secretary.

A copy of the report should be kept in the appropriate log book.

### **14. Further specialist testing or inspections**

The QI may recommend further inspections or specialist testing of other services. The managing trustees should ensure that such recommendations are carried out, the cost of which will be additional to the cost of the QQ.

### **15. Subsequent action by the church**

Managing trustees have the responsibility for taking all necessary action recommended in the QQ, and the QI will usually be willing to meet the trustees to discuss the position. If further work is required, or the preparation of drawings and specifications etc, then an appropriate fee needs to be agreed. The proposals may then need to be submitted on a schedule 1 as a property scheme.

## 16. Subsequent action by the circuit

It is the duty of the circuit through the Circuit Property Secretary to monitor the managing trustees' response to the QQ, and to bring to the attention of the circuit and the District Synod any serious cases where the church seems unable to take appropriate action. The district in consultation with the circuit will then approach the managing trustees to determine the best course of action.

## 17. References

Please see our information leaflets on the Methodist web site: [www.methodist.org.uk/rm](http://www.methodist.org.uk/rm)

These include:

*Appointment of quinquennial inspectors*

*New to property – a brief introduction for property stewards*

*Manses: their valuation, acquisition & disposal*

*Electrical services –inspection and testing*

*Asbestos*

*Guidance on commissioning artwork*

*Property Points*