

Cross-reference to PRN 661- Listed Buildings.

1 In October 1994 Synod adopted a scheme for the regular survey of church property. The scheme was devised to help local churches to carry out their 'duty of care' for their buildings in a responsible manner.

2 If a church is a 'listed building' there is a legal requirement to carry out a building survey every five years. Churches in this category should check with their Area Secretary who will advise contact with the Secretary of the Listed Building Advisory Committee, (LBAC). When a survey has been made of a listed building a copy of the report must be sent to the Secretary of the LBAC. Churches in conservation areas must ensure all their buildings receive regular professional surveys at intervals of not more than five years. A report in the latter case should be retained by the church for future reference.

3 A property survey should be undertaken by a professional Architect or Surveyor approved by the Synod Resources Committee. This is important because the firms approved carry current professional indemnity insurance cover which specifically includes the services being offered to churches. The firms can be expected to exercise reasonable skill and care in conformity with the normal skill of their profession. A professional opinion is sought regarding the state of the property from many different aspects. The person conducting the survey may note defects for which s/he cannot provide a professional opinion and s/he may request further specialist surveys to be carried out. For example, if cracks are found in walls, a request for a structural survey of the relevant area may be made. A list of firms approved by the Synod Resources Committee and the 'Appendix' indicating the content of a property survey is available from the District Secretaries and the Synod office.

4 The Synod undertakes to pay half the cost of surveys carried out within this programme provided they are undertaken by one of the firms on the list. This subsidy will NOT be paid for surveys made by non-listed surveyors unless prior agreement has been made with the Synod Property Consultant.

5 At the appropriate time the Area Secretary will provide the church for which a survey is required with a copy of the 'Appendix' which lists what the content of the report should be and the format it should take. The Area Secretary will indicate the year in which a survey is required; they will also have access to the latest list of surveyors nearest to the church concerned, although a church is free to appoint any surveyor from the approved list.

6 The church must then decide which firm it wishes to invite to tender for the survey and having done so, **should make contact with the firm direct and obtain an estimate for the professional fees involved.** The church should then notify the Area Secretary of name of the firm selected. As a matter of courtesy, churches are asked to ensure all tenders whether accepted or not are acknowledged in writing.

7 In inviting and responding to invitations to tender for surveys, any special requirements regarding access and the provision of suitable ladders should be agreed before the appointment of the firm to conduct

the survey is made. Also, the attendance of the surveyor at an Elders' or Church meeting to discuss the report should also be agreed.

8The church should make arrangements for the Church Secretary or 'an appointed person' to attend and represent the church at the time the survey is undertaken. This is to ensure full access is available and provide information about previous surveys and/or repair works recently carried out. Keys and information about access points, meters and manhole positions should be available.

9The survey should include all buildings but NOT the manse. Manses are dealt with separately; see the guidelines on Manse Policy.

10The survey should be such that it can be made from the ground level, readily accessible roof areas, galleries, under-floor areas, cellars, include moisture meters and information/readings. Binoculars may be used for the inspection of spires, tall towers or gables, but if used the report should identify the specific areas and features surveyed in this way.

11The report should include all aspects of the building(s), in line with the Appendix referred to previously in paragraphs 3 and 5. The document whilst not exhaustive is comprehensive and if followed will greatly enhance the likelihood of a successful survey. Specifically it should refer to any areas which have not, or could not have been inspected. If the surveyor considers it is important that any such areas should be inspected or that further exploratory work is required, this should be indicated and the reasons given. Also, some indication of what additional fees would be involved should be given, including the cost of builders' work where appropriate.

12Sketches, proportionally correct although not measured drawings, indicating the general layout of the building will be prepared by the surveyor and included with, and annotated to enable cross-referencing, with the text of the report. Photographs may be provided by the surveyor where it is considered essential to clarify the report and to establish the current state of specific conditions and or defects for monitoring purposes.

13In respect to the above, if plans of the property are in existence it would be helpful if they could be made available to the surveyor. A copy of the previous survey report should also be made available.

14The surveyor will NOT be responsible for reporting on services such as electric, central heating, fire precautions or church organs although s/he may make general comment where it is felt to be appropriate. Surveys in relation to these matters should be carried out by specialists on a regular basis and are financially excluded from the scheme. Any such reports which are available should be shown to the surveyor as there may well be wider structural and building matters involved.

15A specification covering the repair of defects will not be provided by the surveyor unless the church subsequently requests this and establishes the additional fees involved.

16The surveyor should be asked to provide three copies of the report, four if the church is a listed building, for distribution as follows: to the Church Secretary, the

Area Secretary, the Synod Property Consultant and the Secretary of the LBAC, if applicable.

17 A copy of the fee account invoice when received; should be sent along with a copy of the survey report by the church to the Synod Treasurer, who will forward a cheque for 50% of the amount involved. The church will be responsible for the payment of the account in full to the surveyor.

18 It is the churches responsibility to take such action as is necessary to deal with the matters raised in the report. The surveyor's recommendations should be scrutinized with the greatest care and the required work prioritised.

19 If situations of danger or risk of personal injury have been identified the churches Insurance Company should be informed and advised what action the church proposes to take and when. This is important to ensure the insurance cover both as regards the buildings themselves and in respect of public liability is not jeopardised. Other work should be undertaken according to its urgency and the availability of funds. The District Council must also be advised of the situation.

20 Most insurance companies will look favourably on legitimate claims, though if the work required is the result of neglect they might question the validity of the claim. District Councils should raise the matter of action and progress made at future Council meetings and, because surveys are no longer linked to pastoral consultations, a monitoring scheme should be put in place.

21 If previously arranged, the surveyor will be prepared to attend an Elders' meeting or a church meeting to explain the report. In such cases it will be more than useful to invite a representative of the District Council to be present.

22 In relation to potential problems from asbestos in church buildings whether it is blue or white asbestos, if a specialist asbestos survey is required to determine whether a substance is asbestos or not and how it may be removed, the Synod will refund 50% of the cost of the specialist survey. The cost of any corrective work remains with the church.

23 Any queries regarding the implementation of these guidelines or other questions about surveys should be addressed to the Synod Property Consultant.