

PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARK WITH ST PAUL DARLINGTON

DIOCESE OF DURHAM

ARCHDEACONRY OF AUCKLAND

QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION REPORT 2017



Report prepared by:

Christopher J Blackburn BA BArch (Hons) RIBA SCA EASA
Director/ Specialist conservation architect

Christopher J Blackburn RIBA Architect Ltd
Burnside House
Shaftoe Crescent
Hexham
Northumberland
NE46 3DS

Tel. No: (01434) 600454
E-Mail: chris@christopherblackburn-architect.co.uk

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CONTENTS

1.0 Brief history and description

2.0 Work carried out since the last quinquennial report.

3.0 General condition/ executive summary

4.0 External

- 4.1. Roof covering
- 4.2. Rainwater goods, above and below ground drainage
- 4.3. Bell Tower
- 4.4. Upstand walling and copings
- 4.5. External walling
- 4.6. Windows
- 4.7. External Doors

5.0 Internal

- 5.1. Roof voids and ceilings
- 5.2. Internal doors, door furniture, screens
- 5.3. Floors and floor finishes
- 5.4. Internal walls and wall finishes
- 5.5. Fittings, fixtures and furniture and movable articles
- 5.6. Vestry
- 5.7. Organs and other musical instruments

6.0 Services installations

- 6.1. Electrical installation
- 6.2. Heating installation
- 6.3. Water supply
- 6.4. Lightning conduction system
- 6.5. Fire precautions

7.0 Disabled access provision and access

8.0 Welfare, health and safety

9.0 Bats

10.0 Curtilage

- 10.1. Pavings
- 10.2. Grassed areas
- 10.3. Boundary fences and gates
- 10.4. Trees and shrubs

11.0 Recommendations

12.0 Advice to the PCC

Appendix – selected photos taken during the inspection

1.0. BRIEF HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION:

The Church was designed by architect G E Charlewood of Newcastle upon Tyne and constructed in 1958. It consists of a nave and side aisles with structural arcades; choir/sanctuary; gallery chapel; clergy/choir vestries; organ chamber; south west porch with tower over; underground boiler house. The construction is composed of brick walls and pitched slated roofs.

The church is situated on the junction of North Road and The Leas and surrounded on the west and south sides by shrub planting and grassed areas. A large specimen Monkey Puzzle (Araucaria Araucaria) tree stands on the south side and the boundary on the western and southern frontages is defined by a timber paling fence. A church hall is located on the North side of the church.

2.0. WORK CARRIED OUT SINCE THE LAST QUINQUENNIAL REPORT:

2012 Repairs and maintenance to security alarm system

2013 Rose window cleaned
South boundary fence replaced
Repairs to roof incl. lead valleys

2014 Lightning conduction system tested and repaired
Repairs and maintenance to security alarm system
Boiler house wall reconstructed
Boiler house gate replaced
Lights 2No spots replaced

2015 Repairs to damp gable wall
Maintenance to lighting and security alarm system
New programmer fitted to boiler
Redesign of Vestry garden
Outside lights replaced
New retaining wall to east boundary
New sump pump fitted to Boiler House
5 year electrical test
New external LED lights

2016 New radiator fitted to toilet
New toilet and basin fitted off Choir Vestry
New vinyl floor to toilet off Choir Vestry
Cast iron gutters replaced with PVC
New water boiler installed to kitchen off Choir Vestry
3No new electric sockets fitted

2017 Boiler pump etc. replaced
New outside light fitted
Choir Vestry redecorated
Outside light replaced
Boiler replaced

Annually
Fire extinguishers tested
Boiler serviced
Portable electrical appliances tested
Hedges trimmed

3.0. GENERAL CONDITION / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Church is generally in good condition, both externally and internally and there are no major concerns. A significant amount of maintenance work has been done since the last inspection including the fitting of a new boiler, sump pump, boiler room gates, replacement of gutters etc. etc.

However attention is needed to the following areas:-

Roofs – two or three missing slates require replacement. There are a number of slipped slates especially in the valley gutter above the Organ Chamber. A damp patch has appeared on the east wall of the Chancel beneath the ceiling. This is thought to be caused by open joints and poor bedding of the gable copings. The mortar to a number of the verges is poor – localised raking out and repointing is needed.

External walls – there is some spalling of brickwork at low level which requires monitoring for possible replacement of affected bricks. The pointing between the concrete window surrounds and the adjacent brickwork is cracked and there are open joints allowing water penetration. These should be raked out and pointed up.

Windows – the metal frames to the Vestries, Baptistery south window and Tower east windows are in need of re-decoration. Replacement of discoloured polycarbonate covers to the Chapel and Sanctuary windows should be considered.

External doors – the inner Porch doors are slightly twisted against each other and adjustment is required. Redecoration of all external doors (especially the Boiler House) is needed.

Internal doors & screens - the north Lobby inner door is catching on the floor and needs adjustment. The glazed screens in the Chapel have only 3-4mm thick glass which does not appear to be of a safety grade. Fitting a film to allow safe breakage should any one fall against the glass should be considered for safety reasons.

Floor finishes – The wood block floors are becoming de-bonded in a number of places. A programme of lifting and relaying the blocks is recommended. The bare screeds in the North Lobby and the steps and landing by the Choir Vestry would benefit from a floor finish.

Sanitaryware – the toilet off the Clergy Vestry still has the original wc pan and high level cistern. The pan is badly crazed and replacement with a modern close coupled dual flush toilet is recommended for hygiene and water economy reasons.

Externals – while some levelling of pavings to the west and south sides took place in 2012 there is still some unevenness. Further adjustments are recommended for safety reasons. Redecoration of external fencing is recommended during the quinquennium.

Disabled access - the two steps by the main entrance are a barrier to wheelchair users and while portable ramps have been used, a more permanent arrangement by creating a gentle ramp in the pavings should be considered. This will benefit all users of the building.

Energy efficiency – the church was built in the mid 1950's and the external envelope has minimal insulation. Consideration should be given to improving the thermal performance by use of cavity wall insulation and possibly insulation boards fitted between the rafters together with loft insulation above ceilings in the Vestries etc. Grants may be available for this work.

4.0. EXTERNAL:

4.1. Roof coverings:

Priority
Ref.
See 11.0

| | | |
|---------------------|--|---|
| Ridges | The ridges have been re-pointed piecemeal over the years but appear to be sound. | |
| Slates | The slating is generally in reasonable condition. However attention is required in number of locations. There are two missing slates and 1No slipped slate on the Nave south slope. There are 3No slipped slates in the westernmost valley over the Organ Chamber roof. A replacement slate has been fitted to the south slope of the Chancel roof but the size is too small. A number of slates have broken corners caused by wind chatter. These should be monitored. The worst affected should ideally be replaced. | B |
| Leadwork | The lead valley gutters, lead apron and abutment flashings etc. appear in good condition. However the deep apron flashing by the east gable to the kitchen/toilet is lifting and needs to be fixed with lead clips to prevent rainwater ingress. | B |
| Verges | The verge pointing is cracked and breaking away in places. The worst affected areas should be raked out and repointed. These include the Choir Vestry, above the disabled toilet, Organ Chamber. | B |
| Eaves | The exposed rafter feet, timber soffit and fascias have been redecorated since the last inspection. It is recommended that they are redecorated every five years to protect against damp penetration. | M |
| Boiler House | The soffit of the concrete roof is in poor condition through past damp penetration. It is strongly recommended that the roof is protected with a waterproof finish to prevent further water ingress. Bituminous felt, asphalt or PVC membrane would be suitable. | B |

4.2. Rainwater goods, above and below ground drainage:

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| Generally | The original cast iron gutters were replaced in PVC in 2016. The original cast iron circular down pipes remain. | |
| Gutters | In good condition. These should be cleared of leaves etc. bi-annually. | |
| Downpipes | Some of the downpipes are rusting at the collars, swan necks and brackets. The rust should be removed by wire brushing followed by priming of bare areas and then redecoration. | M |
| Gullies | A number of gullies are blocked on the north side. It is recommended that the gullies are cleared twice a year. | M |
| Above ground drainage | The decoration to the SVP by the Utility area is badly flaking. It is recommended that all loose and unsound material is removed prior to redecoration. | M |
| Below ground drainage | The manhole covers were not lifted and the drains were not inspected. The inspector cannot state that these areas are free from defect. | |

4.3. Bell Tower:

| | | |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Roof | The slating to the Bell Tower appears to be in fair condition. | |
| Rainwater goods | Comments as 4.2 above. | M |
| Louvres | The timber louvres appear to have been redecorated since the last inspection and are in fair condition. Redecoration every five years is recommended to protect the timber. | |
| Brickwork | The brickwork in generally in fair condition but some faces of the low level bricks are spalling due to frost action. This should be monitored. | M |
| Interior | Access was not gained to the bell chamber or roof void. The inspector cannot state that these areas are free from defect. | |

4.4. Upstand walling and copings:

| | | |
|----------------|---|--------|
| Copings | The gable copings to the Chancel east gable and Nave east gable have open joints which require repointing. This is thought to be the cause of water ingress and flaking paint to the Chancel east wall at high level below the ceiling. The bedding to the Nave east gable copings is breaking away on the west side above the flashing and the pointing between the copings is open. Re-bedding and repointing is needed. | B B |
|----------------|---|--------|

4.5. External walling:

| | | |
|------------------|--|---|
| Generally | The brickwork is generally in fair condition and pointing is solid. Some of the brickwork at low level below the DPC has spalling faces. These bricks should be monitored for possible future replacement. | M |
| Tower | There is a hairline crack in the lintel of the lower window on the east elevation. It is recommended that this is monitored for further movement. | M |

4.6. Windows:

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|---|
| Stone dressings | The cast stone surrounds have open joints in places. The vertical pointing between the stone jambs and the adjacent brickwork is loose in places. In other locations the pointing has dropped out completely. Raking out and re-pointing is recommended in these locations. | B |
| Framing | The metal frames to the windows are generally in fair condition given their age. However they are in need of re-decoration especially those to the Vestries and Toilets etc. | B |
| Leadwork | The leadwork generally appears to be in sound condition throughout. | |
| Glass | The glass appears to be in good condition throughout. | |
| Protective glazing | The new polycarbonate covers to the lower windows on the south side of the Nave remain in good condition. However the older polycarbonate covers to the rose window to the Chapel and rectangular Sanctuary window are discoloured. Replacement should be considered. | E |

4.7. External Doors:

The external doors are in fair structural and decorative condition. Re-decoration is recommended within the quinquennium to preserve their appearance and weather proofing. D

The Porch inner door leafs are twisted against each other and require adjustment. C

The boiler house door is badly in need of sanding down and re-varnishing. C

5.0. INTERNAL:

5.1. Roof voids and ceilings:

Roof voids The roof voids over the Vestries were not inspected. The inspector cannot state that these areas are free from defect.

Plastered ceilings The plasterboard and skim ceilings to the Chapel, Baptistry, Side Aisles, Passage, Vestries and Toilets etc are generally in good structural and decorative condition throughout.

Boarded ceilings The open trusses, exposed purlins and rafters and boarded ceilings over the Chancel and Nave appear to be in good structural and decorative condition.

Sanctuary The pentagonal plastered and painted ceiling is in good condition.

5.2. Internal doors, door furniture and screens

The internal doors comprise oak framed, ledged and construction and are generally in good structural and decorative condition. Ironmongery is appropriate for use.

The internal door to the lobby from the North door is catching on the screed as reported at the last inspection. The bottom of the door would best be shaved to overcome this. C

The glazed screen to the Chapel has very thin glass (3mm) and no safety glass markings as reported at the last inspection. Consideration to fitting a safety film (to allow for safe breakage) is recommended. D

5.3. Floors and floor finishes:

Porch: The concrete floor is in fair condition

Baptistry The parquet flooring is in fair condition

**Nave/
Side Aisles** The parquet flooring has been stained in the north aisle. Consideration should be given to continuing this throughout the rest of the Nave and South Aisle. Any loose blocks should first be re-bedded. E

Chancel The parquet flooring is loose in places. Re-bedding is recommended. D

| | | |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| Sanctuary | Again there are loose wood blocks. Re-bedding is recommended. | D |
| Vestries | The maple parquet flooring is in fair condition throughout. However the blocks are loose in places. Re-bedding is recommended. | D |
| Toilets | The vinyl flooring is generally satisfactory. | |
| Passages | The lobby by the north door comprises a bare screed. Consideration could be given to providing a vinyl floor finish. | E |
| | The surface of the concrete screed by the top landing by the Choir Vestry is looking worn and the bottom step is chipped. Consideration should be given to providing a protective vinyl finish to the steps and upper landing. | E |
| Chapel & stairs | The carpeted finish is in good condition. The substrate was not examined. | |

5.4. Internal walls and wall finishes:

| | | |
|-----------------------|--|------------|
| External walls | The plastered and painted external walls are generally in good decorative condition with the exception of the following:- a) Accessible toilet - discoloured marks on west wall. b) Chancel – some flaking paint below ceiling on East gable wall. This is thought to be associated with poor bedding and open joints in the gable copings – see 4.4. Once the leak is fixed and the damp has dried out the flaking paint should be removed and the wall redecorated. | D D |
| Brick piers | The fair faced brickwork piers in the Nave are in good condition. | |
| Internal walls | The plaster and decoration are generally in good condition. | |

5.5. Fittings, fixtures & furniture & movable articles :

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Sanctuary altar | Oak framed table with fabric frontal. | |
| Choir stalls & Nave pews | Oak Chancel choir stalls and reading desks. Oak pews in Nave. 3No pews at the rear of the north side have been removed to form a children's area. The PCC are considering removing the rear pews on the south side to create more social space. | |
| Pulpit | Stone base and steps. Octagonal oak panelled pulpit. There is a crack in the base which should be monitored. | M |
| Font | Stone font with hardwood cover. | |
| Chapel altar | Oak reredos and altar, communion rail and wainscoting to west wall. All the above fittings and fixtures are in good condition. | |

5.6 Organs and other musical instruments :

The organ was manufactured by Kingsway in 1946. Previously the organ was at St James Church, Hartlepool where it was rebuilt. The organ has been serviced and tuned but is understood to have a number of defects. The PCC have looked into the cost of the repairs and would be in excess of £80,000. This is prohibitively expensive unless some organ repair grant were available.

E

6.0 SERVICES INSTALLATIONS:

6.1. Electrical installation :

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Generally | This report is based upon a visual inspection without the use of instruments. It is understood that the church was re-wired in 2009. A full electrical test took place in 2015. An electrician has attended to replacement bulbs and fittings as required. Portable appliance testing has taken place annually. |
| Mains | The fuse board and consumer unit are located in the accessible toilet. The consumer unit is of a modern type with miniature circuit breakers. |
| Power | Power sockets are distributed throughout the building. A new socket was fitted in the Warden's Vestry in 2010 |
| Lighting | The lighting comprises ceiling mounted fluorescent batten fittings in the Vestries; fluorescent bulbs in metal chandeliers in the Nave and Chancel; ceiling mounted fittings in the Baptistry; wall mounted floodlights in the Sanctuary; ceiling mounted fittings with circular glass diffusers in the Side Aisles and Vestry corridor; recessed down-lighters and spot lights in the Chapel. Lighting fittings are considered appropriate for use and appear to give adequate levels of illumination. |
| Sound system | A new sound system was installed in 2013. It was not tested but is understood to provide good sound reinforcement. An induction loop system is also installed. |
| Security Alarm | A security alarm is installed and it is serviced annually. |

6.2. Heating installation :

The gas fired boiler fitted in 2010 was replaced with a new boiler in September 2017 as the heating engineer could not get parts for the older one. It is hoped that the new boiler will have a much longer life than the previous one. The Boiler House sump pump fitted in 2010 was replaced with a new pump in 2015.

The heating system is understood to provide reasonable levels of thermal comfort although insulation levels of the external envelope are minimal by current standards. Consideration may be given to injecting the external wall cavities with insulation and possibly fitting plasterboard faced insulation boards between the rafters in the Nave, Chancel and Chapel and providing some loft insulation above the ceilings in the Vestries etc. NB Grants may be available for this work – contact Diocesan Office for advice.

E

6.3. Water supply:

A mains cold water service is provided to sinks, basins and toilets, while instantaneous hot water units are provided to basins and sinks.

6.4. Lightning conduction system:

It is recommended that the lightning conduction system is tested at least every 5 years by a specialist. The system was last tested in 2014 when some repairs were undertaken.

6.5. Fire-fighting equipment:

The fire extinguishers are located in the boiler house, at the rear of the Nave near the entrance, in the passage by the Choir Vestry, on the staircase to the Chapel.

The fire extinguishers are serviced on an annual basis.

7.0 DISABLED ACCESS AND PROVISION:

The building is generally accessible to wheelchair users and to the ambulant disabled.

There are two steps into the building at the main entrance and a single step from the Nave to the Chancel. Consideration should be given to providing level access into by the formation of a shallow ramp from the Porch to the public footpath. E

The main entrance door and double lobby door give sufficient width for wheelchair users to pass through. There is sufficient space in the Nave for wheelchair manoeuvring and for sitting.

See comments in 8.0 below regarding accessible toilet provision.

8.0 WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY:

There is an accessible toilet to the north west corner of the building which is in good condition and is well equipped to current standards.

There are self-contained toilets to the Clergy Vestry and Choir Vestry. The original wc pan and high level cistern to the Choir Vestry was replaced in 2016 with a modern close coupled toilet but the original wc pan and HL cistern to the Clergy Vestry remains. The pan is badly crazed and therefore unhygienic. The wc should also be replaced with a modern close coupled toilet (ideally with a dual flush cistern) which would also be more water efficient. D

See comments in 7.0 above regarding level access.

9.0 BATS:

It is not known whether bats roost in the roof or tower. However it should be noted that bats are a protected species and should not be disturbed. (See section 12 – advice to PCC)

10.0 CURTILAGE:

10.1. Paved areas :

Although some precast concrete paving flags were levelled in 2012 there is still some unevenness and raised edges on the south and west sides of the church. These still pose a tripping hazard and further levelling is recommended for safety reasons. C

The tarmac drive and play areas are in fair condition.

See 7.0 for comments on adjusting the pavings by the main entrance to create level access for wheelchair users.

10.2. Grassed areas :

The grassed areas on the west and south side of the church are well maintained.

10.3. Boundary fences and gates etc:

Fences The timber boarded fencing on the north boundary and the post type fencing on the east boundary would benefit from re-decoration during the quinquennium. The shiplap fencing to the Vicarage boundary and the paling fencing on the west and south boundaries would also benefit from re-decoration during the quinquennium. M

Gates The wrought iron gate on the west boundary and the metal security gates to the Hall grounds are in reasonable structural and decorative condition. However re-decoration is recommended during the quinquennium to maintain weather protection. M

10.4. Trees and shrubs:

Trees The monkey puzzle, yew, fir and beech trees appear to be healthy and not causing any problems with over-hanging branches though tree roots may be the cause of the unevenness in the paving flags.

Shrubs The shrubs and flower beds are kept in a tidy condition.

11.0. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Category scale

A – Urgent, requiring immediate attention

B – Requires attention within 12 months

C - Requires attention within the next 18-24 months

D – Requires attention within the quinquennial period

E – A desirable improvement with no timescale

M – Routine maintenance (i.e. clearing leaves from a gutter). This can be done without professional advice or a faculty

| Category | Action item | Estimated cost (£) (excl. VAT) |
|----------|---|-----------------------------------|
| A | None | |
| B | Roof slate repairs (4.1) | 500 |
| B | Fitting of lead clips to lead flashing to Choir Vestry Kitchen/Toilet gable (4.1) | 100 |
| B | Raking out and repointing to damaged verges (4.1) | 500 |
| B | Fit waterproof finish to Boiler House roof (4.1) | 300 |
| B | Re-pointing/re-bedding of Chancel and Nave east gable copings (4.4) | 750 |
| B | Re-pointing of stone dressings to windows (4.6) | 300 |
| B | Re-decoration of metal windows (4.6) | 300 |
| C | Sand and re-varnish Boiler House external door (4.7) | 75 |
| C | Adjustment of Porch inner doors (5.2) | 75 |
| C | Adjust Lobby inner door (5.2) | 75 |
| C | Levelling of pavings on west and south access paths (10.1) | 300 |
| D | Redecoration of external doors (4.7) | 500 |
| D | Fitting safety film to thin glass to Chapel glazed screens (5.2) | 500 |
| D | Re-bedding of loose parquet floor blocks to Chancel, Sanctuary, Vestries (5.2) | 300 |
| D | Make good flaking paint / redecorate east wall of Chancel (5.4) | 300 |
| D | Redecorate disabled toilet (5.4) | DIY |
| D | Replace crazed wc pan and cistern to Vicar's toilet with modern version (8.0) | 750 |
| E | Consideration to fitting new over-glazing to Chapel & Sanctuary windows (4.6) | 2,500 |
| E | Consider sanding and re-varnishing Nave and South Aisle wood block floor (5.3) | 2,500 |
| E | Consider vinyl floor finish to Choir Vestry landing & steps (5.3) | 300 |
| E | Consider overhaul/repairs to organ (5.6) | 80,000 |
| E | Consider improving the thermal performance of the building envelope (6.2) | 15,000 |
| E | Consider providing a level access to the main entrance (7.0) | 5,000 |
| M | Clearing leaves from gutters (4.2) | DIY |
| M | Downpipes - removal of rust pockets, followed by redecoration (4.2) | DIY |
| M | Unblocking of rainwater gullies (4.2) | DIY |
| M | SVP – removal of flaking paint; redecoration (4.2) | DIY |
| M | Tower walls low level - monitor spalling brickwork (4.5) | - |
| M | Tower – monitor hairline crack to cill (4.5) | - |
| M | Pulpit stone base – monitor crack (5.5) | - |
| M | Decorate timber fencing (10.3) | £300 |
| M | Decorate metal gates (10.3) | £200 |

12.0. ADVICE TO THE PCC:

Rainwater disposal systems

Clean out gutters and gullies twice per year – late spring, late – Autumn after leaves have fallen.

Painting rainwater goods

Paint cast iron rainwater goods every five years min.
Scrape and wire brush to remove rust.
Apply primer/undercoat.
Top coat with 2 coats gloss paint.
Use bituminous paint on inside of gutters.

Ironwork to Towers and Belfries

Paint similarly every five years except for bronze bells.

Roof coverings

Check frequency and repair as necessary.

Pointing of masonry

Must be done under the direction of the Church Architect who will advise on the correct mortar mix and method of application. (NB the wrong mortar mix can do more harm than good).

Plasterwork

Loose plaster is a problem in many churches and can be dangerous if large sections fall off the walls or plaster and lath ceilings. Loose sections are not always visible and sometimes can only be identified by tapping. It is advisable to check suspect areas from ladders where possible.

Fire extinguishers

Obtain advice from Local Fire Prevention Officer on the correct type and location.
Fire Safety Advice can be found at www.churchcare.co.uk/building.php?CDE
Enter into a contract for annual maintenance with the supplier.

Electrical Installation

Any electrical installation should be tested at least every five years in accordance with the recommendations of the Church Buildings Council. The inspection and testing should be carried out in accordance with IEE Regulations, Guidance Note No. 3, and an inspection certificate obtained in every case. The certificate should be kept with the church log book. For further details including who is qualified to undertake the inspection please see www.churchcare.co.uk/building.php?CDT

Lightning Protection

Any lightning conductor should be tested at least every five years in accordance with the current British Standard by a competent engineer. The record of the test results and conditions should be kept with the Church Log Book.

Heating Installation

A proper examination and test should be made of the heating system by a qualified engineer each summer before the heating season begins, and the report kept with the Church Log Book.

Organ

Enter into an annual contract for maintenance and tuning.

Asbestos

A suitable and sufficient assessment should be made as to whether asbestos is or is liable to be present in the premises. Further details on making an assessment are available on www.churchcare.co.uk/building.php?CDA. The assessment has not been covered by this report and it is the duty of the PCC to ensure that this has been, or is carried out.

Disability Discrimination Act

The PCC should ensure that they have understood their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Further details and guidance are available at www.churchcare.co.uk/legal.php?GL.

Health and Safety

Overall responsibility for the health and safety of the church and churchyard lies with the Incumbent and PCC. This report may identify areas of risk as part of the inspection but this does not equate to a thorough and complete risk assessment by the PCC of the building and churchyard.

Bats and other protected species

The PCC should be aware of its responsibilities where protected species are present in a church. Guidance can be found on www.churchcare.co.uk

Sustainable buildings

A quinquennial inspection is a good opportunity for a PCC to reflect on the sustainability of the building and its use. This may include adapting the building to allow greater community use, considering how to increase resilience in the face of predicted changes to the climate, as well as increasing energy efficiency and considering other environmental issues. Further guidance is available on www.churchcare.co.uk and www.shrinkingthefootprint.cofe.anglican.org.

Insurances

Ensure adequate cover is maintained for the full cost of re-building and replacement of contents and ensure this is index linked to cover inflation.

**Christopher J Blackburn RIBA Architect Ltd**

Burnside House, Shaftoe Crescent, Hexham, Northumberland, NE46 3DS
T (01434) 600454 | M 07543 272451
www.christopherblackburn-architect.co.uk

APPENDIX - Selected photographs taken during the inspection



Flaking paint to metal windows



Chancel East wall – flaking paint through leak



Loose wood block flooring



Bare & deteriorating concrete floor finish



Crazed wc pan



Stepped access/ uneven flags