



Welcome to **December's** email bulletin. We thought we would end the year with our **top ten maintenance tips**. Simple regular maintenance is the best way to ensure the long term survival of any building so here are ten suggestions for tasks that you should carry out each year to keep your place of worship in good condition:

**1. Rainwater goods:** Check gutters and downpipes for blockages and leaks. This is best done during heavy rain to see if there is water spilling out from faulty joints.

**2. Roofs:** Loose or missing slates and tiles may mean that water is getting into roof timbers. Putting back a loose or missing slate or tile is much cheaper than repairing or replacing roof timbers.

**3. Junctions:** Holes, splits and other defects in metal flashings may not be obvious but can let water seep through and cause dampness internally.

**4. Walls:** Check mortar joints and render coatings for signs of decay. Repairs should be carried out in materials compatible with the building. In older structures, mortars and renders are likely to be based on lime, not cement.

**5. Ground levels:** Avoid any build up of earth at the base of walls as this may trap moisture or breach a damp proof course and cause decay.

**6. Ventilation:** Make sure that any air grilles and ventilators are kept clear. Open windows on dry days to let moisture escape from the building.

**7. Gullies:** Check that gullies and drains are cleared of debris so that they can carry water away quickly and efficiently.

**8. Plants:** Shrubs and bushes can enhance buildings but consider removing trees or climbing plants if there is evidence that they are damaging walls or blocking gutters and drains.

**9. Services:** Check heating systems and plumbing for leaks and ensure that pipes are lagged to avoid bursts in winter. Electrical and gas installations should be inspected regularly.

**10. Safety:** Employ a reputable professional builder if you are in any doubt about whether you can carry out maintenance work safely.

Although we have now reached the end of the Faith in Maintenance project we plan to continue the monthly e-bulletin service next year with a new format so watch this space! You can also view an illustrated version of this bulletin [online](#).

## Need more help?

If you have any questions about maintenance or repair issues contact our [Technical Helpline](#) for advice and guidance. This service is normally available on **Fridays** between **11am and 6pm** on **0207 456 0916**. Alternatively you can email your questions to [advice@spabfim.org.uk](mailto:advice@spabfim.org.uk). Copies of the SPAB's range of Technical Pamphlets and Information Sheets are available to purchase from our [online bookshop](#).

## Historic Churches - Conservation guide now available free online!

Published annually by Cathedral Communications and now in its 18<sup>th</sup> year, *Historic Churches* is designed for those who care for the UK's ecclesiastical heritage, providing a wealth of practical advice and information from acknowledged experts and experienced conservators. Articles in the latest edition include sustainability issues, with guidance from English Heritage on the installation of solar photovoltaic panels on historic church buildings, and a review of fabric-friendly heating solutions. [Read Historic Churches online](#).

## New English Heritage guidance - Caring for Historic Graveyard and Cemetery Monuments

New technical guidance has been published for the conservation of monuments, memorials and sculptural elements within churchyards, burial grounds, or cemeteries: [Caring for Historic Graveyard and Cemetery Monuments](#). It describes best practice for the assessment, planning and implementation of conservation work to monuments as well as legal frameworks and statutory duties.

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*Stave off decay by daily care ~ William Morris 1877*

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