**What is maintenance?**

Maintenance is carrying out planned work on a regular basis to slow the rate at which a building decays. All building materials decay over time but planned maintenance extends the life of the materials and the building, protecting its historic features. Examples of good regular maintenance include clearing blockages from rainwater goods and drains, removing plants growing up a building or making sure a tower/roof is birdproof before nesting starts.

Repair is work done to restore something that is damaged, faulty or worn back to a good condition. It deals with the decay/damage that can be reduced through good maintenance.

Some repairs are small, some large. Where possible, good maintenance and regular small repairs that preserve as much historic fabric as possible are preferable to larger scale interventions which require major replacement of fabric. They also tend to cost less!

**Why is maintenance important?**

* It helps preserve as much of the historic material and character of a building as possible by avoiding the need for more dramatic repairs/replacement of materials
* It extends the lifespan of materials or elements of the church
* It contributes to a well-cared for and welcoming church
* It is cost effective: Fixing a leaking gutter is easier and cheaper than repairing the damage to a building structure that can be caused by water ingress. It is also easier to set aside a small amount of money for regular maintenance and small repairs than it is to find funds for a major repair project once a building has already deteriorated.
* It is the first step towards making your church more energy efficient – a well maintained church is more efficient than a damp church with a leaking roof.

**Can it be fun?**

**Yes!** Although some work will need to be carried out by a professional contractor, there are a good number of simple maintenance tasks that can be carried out by volunteers. This can be a great way of engaging the church and wider community – especially if you are able to work together, the weather is kind, and plenty of tea and cake are available! Examples of routine tasks that can be undertaken by volunteers might be:

* Carefully removing plant growth from the base of walls and drainage channels
* Removing leaves/other debris from easily accessible rainwater goods, drains and gulleys round the building and checking these are running clearly
* Using a checklist to inspect the interior and exterior of the building and record any findings

Do not carry out any work you cannot do safely, and risk assess if using ladders or working at any height. Leave this work for a suitable contractor – you’ve done an important job just in identifying a task that needs doing and passing it on to the right person.