

GutterClear

Further Information Pack

November 2007 : issue 1



**At last, looking
after your
Church just
became easier!**

This Information Pack contains more detailed information about GutterClear, the new scheme for clearing the gutters and downpipes of Churches and other all other places of worship in the Gloucestershire area.

please note: as the scheme is entering its pilot phase, there may be some changes to the details described in this information pack.

In this Information pack:

- Why the Scheme was set up
- How the Scheme works
- How much will it cost?
- How can I get further details?

Why the scheme was set up

GutterClear has been set up to make it easy to bring the full benefits of routine maintenance to churches in the Diocese of Gloucester. (In this information pack, we have used the term “church” to denote all places of worship of all faiths and denominations, to whom the scheme is open).

Experience here and elsewhere shows that church communities are put to enormous – and avoidable - expense to repair defects in their buildings which could have been prevented by routine basic maintenance. The more distinguished the building, the greater the expense. Gutters and downpipes are among the most important building elements that have to be kept clear of obstructions.

The Diocese of Gloucester has nearly 400 parish churches that are some of the most glorious historic buildings in Britain. Many are six hundred years old or more and have been the focus of Christian worship, and of the communities in which they stand, for generations. Equally, the area has a rich heritage of non-conformist chapels and there are also synagogues and mosques, all with their own unique contribution to the area.

A single mature tree can shed 200,000 leaves in a year – and all it takes is a handful of these, with perhaps a few twigs, a dead pigeon or a tennis ball, to cause an obstruction leading to water penetration causing tens of thousands of pounds to repair.

So it makes sense to do whatever we can to keep these vital elements of our church buildings functioning efficiently.

Routine care is getting more difficult ... so we need to find new solutions

Unfortunately, it is becoming more and more difficult to do this. There are at least three factors.

The first is the growing impact of health & safety legislation, which now requires a higher level of organisation, risk assessment and bet-



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
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ter safety measures, particularly if the work involves working at height. Churches are not exempt from these requirements.

Secondly, some congregations report that it is difficult to get building contractors to carry out routine maintenance work, as they can usually obtain more profitable repair work elsewhere.

Thirdly, some congregations say they are less able to find members who can climb staircases and ladders to carry out routine maintenance tasks.

GutterClear overcomes these problems by providing a simple, no-frills service which addresses two of the most important, and vulnerable, elements of the building: gutters and downpipes.



Mobile access platforms simply access to gutters

This service will save church communities tens of thousands of pounds within a short time, since a major cause of disrepair will have been removed, leaving them better able to carry out their ministry, free of the burden of unplanned major repair bills.

How the GutterClear scheme works

The basic idea is that the Diocese organises a contractor to be available to visit your church and clean out its gutters and downpipes.

Getting a Quotation

First, if you tell GutterClear that you would like a quotation, we will arrange this. The contractor will contact you to make a preliminary visit to the church to assess how long the work will take to carry out, what the access arrangements are and whether there are any unusual health & safety issues.

There is no charge for obtaining the quotation, but we hope that you will request one only if you are seriously considering joining the scheme.

If you accept the quotation, you are asked to sign a simple agreement with the Diocese (a draft is attached at Annex 2).

Other Buildings

You can ask for a quotation for a visit to other buildings, such as a church hall. It will often make sense for the contractor to visit this at the same time as the church.

The Visit

If you accept the quotation, the contractor will make contact with you to arrange access for the maintenance visit, to agree a date and time. The work is likely to take about half a day, including travelling time, setting up and removing everything later.

It is important that the agreed time is adhered to and communicated to all the key people – for example, the priest and keyholders - so that access is straightforward and time is not wasted finding someone to open a door or gate.

If there are any last-minute changes it is vital that these are communicated to the contractor: for example, if a funeral service is arranged, it may be necessary to rearrange the time.

The contractors may use powered access platforms – sometimes called “cherry pickers” – to gain access to the gutters and downpipes.

They make access very straightforward and are very safe in operation, but of course they do have to be brought close to the church and the route for this will be carefully planned.

What the Contractor does

During the visit, the contractor will inspect and clean out all the gutters and downpipes of your church. His workmen will take digital photographs of the condition of the gutters and downpipes “before” and “after” the work, and make a note of what they have done on a checklist form. The workmen will show your keyholder the photographs and ask him or her to sign a simple

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acknowledgement that the work has, to the best of his/her belief, been done.

They will also note any obvious other defects they see, but it is important to note that this is not a professional inspection, but merely a mechanism for reporting defects which would be obvious to anyone.

In fact, we encourage churches to co-ordinate the visit of the contractor with one from their architect, so that he or she can gain access to otherwise inaccessible places and see what the condition is – notably gutters, after they have been cleaned.

The scope of the work is set out in Annex 1.

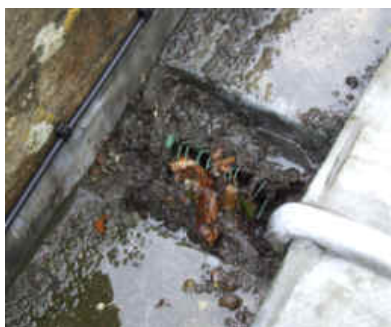
What the Visit doesn't do

It is important to note that the visit is just to ensure that the gutters and drainpipes are clear.

What the contractor does **not** do is:

- repair damaged gutters or downpipes, or replace any that are missing
- do any other repairs such as replacing missing tiles
- deal with blocked underground drains
- remove moss or overhanging vegetation;
- conduct a professional survey; or
- anything else not within the specification.

What the contractor does do, however, is report any obvious defects he sees on the checklist form, so that you are made aware of it and can deal with it – for example by consulting your architect or getting a quotation for repairs.



A handful of leaves is all it takes to cause a blockage, which can cause extensive damage

After the Visit

After the visit, the photographs and checklist will be sent to you and your architect, along with the bill, which you then pay.

How much will it Cost?

The Contractor will give you an individual quotation. This will be based on how long it will take him to do the work, which in turn is based on factors such as:

- the size of your church
- the complexity of its roofs and gutters
- how easy they are to access; and
- how far he has to come to do the work

Once he has given you a quotation, the bill will remain the same for the foreseeable future, subject only to inflation and anything else affecting how long it takes to do the work – for example, changes to access.

It is up to you how often you want the contractor to visit: clearly, the charge will be the same each time. You may need more than one visit a year if, for example, your church experiences heavy leaf falls onto its roofs and gutters.

We expect that the contractor's charges for an average rural church in Gloucestershire will be of the order of £250 plus VAT.

VAT

VAT is payable on the bill, at 17.5%. If your church is a listed historic building, then it is possible to get a grant equivalent to the VAT payable on the bill, via the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme. The web site with information on how this works is at:

<http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk/>

Applications have to be made for reimbursement of VAT in a minimum amount of £1,000 and this sum will normally be far more than the VAT on the cost of the maintenance visit, but the VAT can be aggregated with that paid on other work.

How much will it save?

This is difficult to estimate, but the Diocese of London found that every £1 spent on well-planned preventative maintenance can save more than £20 or more in repair bills, within five years.

For this reason the Diocese of London has also set up a gutter maintenance scheme, and



Vegetation growing out of gutters is a sign of poor maintenance practice

details can be found at: www.london-anglican.org.uk/gutters

The scheme is a natural partner of the “**Faith in Maintenance**” courses being run by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB). Further details of these (free) courses for volunteers concerned with the care of places of worship can be found at: <http://www.spabfim.org.uk>

English Heritage’s web site is at: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk>

Contact the Organiser of the scheme, Jason Gillard, by any of the methods below.

In addition, you can ask for a quotation or join an e-mail newsletter list via the “contact us” page our web site.

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Mobile: 07766 126530
Email: jagillard@glosdioc.org.uk

Web site: <http://www.gutterclear.org>

Maintain our Heritage

GutterClear has been set up by the Diocese of Gloucester in association with Maintain our Heritage.

Maintain is a not-for-profit organisation set up by a group of conservation-minded architects, surveyors, lawyers and others, not merely to campaign for better maintenance of historic buildings, but also to put these ideals into practice.

Further information on Maintain is on its web site, at: <http://www.maintainourheritage.co.uk>

Maintain conducted a trial historic building inspection and repair service in and around Bath in 2002/3, and several churches in the Diocese took this up.

In 2005, it carried out market research among churchwardens in the Diocese to see whether there was support for a simplified service, with encouraging results, and following private fundraising efforts and a successful approach to English Heritage for support, the GutterClear scheme was born.

Protection of adjacent surfaces & fabric of building

1. The contractor will:
 - 1.1. protect ground, wall and roof surfaces where access equipment bears;
 - 1.2. fill/rake over any tyre tracks, indentations from plant tracks, ladder feet etc; and
 - 1.3. make good any damage caused to the building fabric sustained as a result of the works.

Maintenance work

2. The contractor will:
 - 2.1. take digital photographs of the elements listed in para 3.2 below before and after completing the works. The photographs will show accurately on them the date on which they were taken;
 - 2.2. clean out all eaves, parapet and valley gutters, clean debris off flat roofs, clean rainwater hoppers/sumps/interceptors ("rainwater goods"), collect debris and dispose of it in compliance with all applicable legislation, so as to leave the rainwater goods so far as practicable capable of conducting rainwater efficiently through them;
 - 2.3. clean out rainwater gullies, catch pits and inspection chambers connected to rain water systems. Open, clean and reseal rodding eyes;
 - 2.4. rod rainwater drainage systems, including grates at ground level but not any part of any drainage system which is underground; and
 - 2.5. test, as far as is practicable, the functioning of the rainwater goods listed in this section to conduct water after clearance of obvious obstructions.

Checklist Report

3. On completion of the work, the Contractor will complete a report in a format supplied by the Diocese, and forward it electronically to the Diocese within [7] days of the work, together with the photographs taken. The report will indicate the following:
 - 3.1. whether blockages/obstructions were found and removed; list any obstructions not removed and the reasons for non-removal indicating their position on the building by means of a sketch plan; and
 - 3.2. any obviously apparent defects observed during the visit, notably missing/broken roof tiles, slates or other roof coverings, loose/missing flashings, flashings and creasings, broken /loose/missing eaves fascia boards, soffits or rainwater goods, or any other such defects or blockages observed to elements outside the scope of this specification, notably underground drains.

Departure

4. The contractor will leave the site in a clean and tidy condition.
5. The Contractor will obtain the signature of a responsible person at the site using pro-forma to be provided by the Diocese certifying that to the best of the knowledge and belief of the signatory, the works have been carried out and that the site has been left in an acceptable condition. This form is to accompany any invoices. Failure to do so will result in delayed/non payment.

Dear [Name]

Agreement for GutterClear Maintenance Visit

I am writing to you to set out the terms on which we, the Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance, have agreed to provide, and your parish/ Church has agreed to receive, a "GutterClear" maintenance visit. If you accept these terms and conditions, please sign and return the attached copy of this letter.

Our Obligations to You

We will provide you with a maintenance visit to carry out the Work, as set out in the Specification, in a regular, diligent and competent manner, in accordance with the Contract and all applicable legislation. We will do this by using a contractor whom we have selected using reasonable skill and care.

We will take reasonable steps to ensure that the contractor performs his obligations under our contract,

Your Obligations to Us

You agree:

1. to nominate one or more responsible person(s) with whom we can communicate to make arrangements for any preliminary visit and for the maintenance visit;
2. to provide us with all information reasonably necessary to make these visits efficient, safe and effective. In particular, to comply with Health & Safety legislation, you agree to provide us in advance with any risk assessment you may have carried out on your building, and any other information in your possession (and reasonably obtainable) about the site or the work which is relevant to ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of anyone engaged in providing the services under this agreement or anyone else likely to be affected by them;
3. to provide access to the buildings, including any parts of the building necessary

for access to the roof, gutters and down-pipes, for our contractor at the agreed time and for the agreed period, for any preliminary visit, for the maintenance visit and any subsequent visit to rectify any defective work or damage;

4. to notify us and the contractor as soon as possible of any circumstances rendering any visit inappropriate, for example because of a funeral service,
5. to notify us within [21 days] of any change in the name or contact details of the person nominated under paragraph [1]
6. to sign and return to the contractor the acknowledgement of the maintenance visit after the visit is complete;
7. to give us information to monitor the success of the scheme, for example, about your previous maintenance practices;
8. to co-operate with us in making routine checks on the quality of work done, by providing information on the contractor's visits and access to us for the purpose of carrying quality assurance inspections;
9. to pay the agreed sum(s) within [21 days] of receipt of an invoice; [VAT agency arrangements].

Other Terms & Conditions

We reserve the right to make a change to the price if the visit is rendered significantly more complex or longer in duration as a result of changes to the access arrangements to the churchyard or immediate environs.

yours sincerely

[Signed]

for and on behalf of the Gloucester Diocesan Board of Finance

Signed

for and on behalf of the PCC/Church