

# BUILDING ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

for

Parish Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Built:	
Listed:	
Conservation Area Status:	
Date of latest Quinquennial:	
Quinquennial Architect:	

Please take a few moments to complete these annual costs of the church building only as accurately as you can. The treasurer will be able to provide this information.

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£</b>
Water	
Gas	
Electricity	
Oil	
Insurance	
Routine maintenance	
Minor repairs	
Planned major repairs from last QQI	
Unexpected major repairs	
Staff costs	
<b>Income</b>	<b>£</b>
Fees from occasional offices	
Rental income from church building	
Restricted donations for upkeep of church	
Friends group income	

# BUILDING ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Welcome to this building assessment framework.

Our Diocese of Liverpool is home to a wide range of churches. We have glorious mediaeval churches, beautiful Victorian buildings and multi-purpose modern churches. We also have churches that are less glorious, not so beautiful, less functional perhaps but well loved by their congregations and often highly valued by their communities.

Each of our churches presents us with two key challenges. The first is the challenge of being a base for both worship and mission in the 21st Century; that is what our churches are for. The second is the on-going challenge of maintaining and repairing the fabric of the building which has been bequeathed to us. Some of our churches are well suited for the worship and mission needs of the 21st century, some could be and, perhaps, some are not. Some of our churches are sustainable, some could be made sustainable and again, perhaps some cannot.

The aim of this simple survey is to help a small group of clergy and lay leaders to have a full, creative and open discussion about their church building in the light of these two challenges. It is really important to be clear about this at the outset for two reasons.

First, it may surprise you to know that in the Diocese of Liverpool we spend something around £5.5 million a year on maintaining and repairing our church buildings, roughly £24,000 per church - and that excludes our graveyards. (In 2013 this was £4 million of unrestricted and £1.5 million of restricted monies). That is an awful lot of money, almost as much as we spend on the clergy who serve our parishes. We need to be confident that what we spend on our second challenge, maintaining our buildings, is also an investment in the first challenge, worship and mission.

Second, in many, many cases our church buildings and their heritage help us to grow and thrive and we want to affirm that. However, sometimes our church buildings are less suited to worship and mission in the 21st century church and we need to take steps to develop them. And, occasionally, our buildings are a hindrance to mission, draining finance and the energy of our committed volunteers. We sometimes need to think creatively about other options.

So from time to time we need a robust conversation about our church buildings. This survey is intended simply to help start this conversation amongst those charged with care of their church building and the mission of God in their parish.

Peter Bradley

Ricky Panter

## BEFORE YOU START

Some 'light touch' preparation will help make the most of the time you give to this Survey:

- gather a few background details and financial data, readily available from the treasurer, and complete the tables on the inside front cover
- review the Quinquennial Review Form (QRF) which accompanied the Building Survey. The QRF summarises the recommendations of the church's last Quinquennial Inspection (QQI), the estimated costs of that work and the notes by the church on progress made to date. Check and if necessary bring this form up to date.

## HOW TO USE THIS SURVEY

This 'self-assessment' survey is a discussion starter and how you use it is entirely up to you. The bottom line is this: do what you need to do to take the issue seriously in your own context. Hopefully discussing these questions will give some pointers towards a more enriching and productive future.

So in one church this may be an evening discussion for a small group of clergy and lay leaders. In another it may be the main or even the sole item at a PCC or the focus of a church council away day. The discussion is unlikely to be fruitful if squeezed into half an hour in a packed PCC agenda.

In each section of the survey there is an initial statement of an 'ideal', which expresses what we might like our buildings to be and do. So, for example, section 6 states, "Our church has the facilities required to support and strengthen our life together as part of the Body of Christ". So how does your church building match up?

For each question, you are asked first to rate the ideal statement according to how well it describes your church building, on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means you completely DISAGREE with the statement and 7 indicates that you completely AGREE with it.

Then, together, reflect on the discussion questions. Please be as open and honest as possible. If upon reflection you feel you need to adjust your score, do so, then sum up the reason for choosing the final score in one sentence.

## WHICH BUILDINGS?

The purpose of this survey is to help assess the contribution specifically of the church building to the life, worship, ministry and mission of the church. Of course, our churches vary considerably. Sometimes the church is the only building the congregation has. In other cases church halls are physically attached to the church and offer easy access to kitchen and toilet facilities and to rooms large and small for a range of church activities. In other cases the church hall is a separate building. This may be close and convenient, it may be on the other side of a main road or occasionally further away. Meanwhile some modern buildings are a single unit with a worship area sharing the same roof as a hall and other rooms and facilities.

When completing this survey think about what works for you. If the church and hall are a single building or have easy, weatherproof access between them then you may well treat all your buildings as a single unit. If a church hall or rooms are entirely separate then please answer the questions with regard to the church building alone.

### 1. A building in which we as the people of God can worship Him

Launching point: On a range of 1 – 7 (1 = completely disagree, 7 = completely agree)  
how do you rate the following statement...

**“Our church is a great place in which to worship God”.** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Questions:

- a. Does the building provide a worshipping congregation with a sense of the presence of God?
- b. Does the building encourage flexibility and freedom of expression in the worship of God?
- c. Can the building cater for worship by groups of different sizes and adopting different approaches to worship?

Having discussed this aspect of the building do you need to revise your Launching point score?

Final Score	Why did you award this score?

### 2. A building which is welcoming to visitors and newcomers

Launching point: On a range of 1 – 7 (1 = completely disagree, 7 = completely agree)  
how do you rate the following statement...

**“Our church presents an open and inviting appearance to those who don’t regularly attend our services or activities”.** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Questions:

- a. Are the main entry points into the building clearly marked?
- b. Are the signs around the church attractive, up-to-date and welcoming?
- c. Is the building itself heated, lit and ventilated to a standard that visitors might justifiably expect?

Having discussed this aspect of the building do you need to revise your Launching point score?

Final Score	Why did you award this score?

### 3. A building which is well-positioned within the parish and local community

Launching point: On a range of 1 – 7 (1 = completely disagree, 7 = completely agree)  
how do you rate the following statement...

**“Our church is well-located for our own people and for mission to the surrounding area”.**  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Questions:

- a. Is the building well-located in terms of the main centres of population?
- b. Is the building well-located in relation to shops, workplaces and public facilities within the parish?
- c. Is the building easy to find by people coming for the first time?

Having discussed this aspect of the building do you need to revise your Launching point score?

Final Score	Why did you award this score?

**4. A building which is easy to get to**

Launching point: On a range of 1 – 7 (1 = completely disagree, 7 = completely agree)  
 how do you rate the following statement...

**“Our church is easy to access by both private and public transport”.** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Questions:

- a. Is the walking route to the building safe, clear and well lit?
- b. Is the building within easy reach of local bus routes and/or train stations?
- c. Is adequate parking space available nearby without causing a nuisance to local residents?

Having discussed this aspect of the building do you need to revise your Launching point score?

Final Score	Why did you award this score?

**5. A building which speaks well of the Christian faith**

Launching point: On a range of 1 – 7 (1= completely disagree, 7 = completely agree)  
 how do you rate the following statement...

**“Our church looks good and appropriately honours the God we worship”.** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Questions:

- a. Does the building appear well-used and well-cared for?
- b. Is the appearance of the building at least of the standard that one might expect of public buildings generally?
- c. Does the appearance of the building and its grounds give the right ‘message’ to visitors and passers-by?

Having discussed this aspect of the building do you need to revise your Launching point score?

Final Score	Why did you award this score?

**6. A building which provides the facilities we need to grow and develop as the people of God**

Launching point: On a range of 1 – 7 (1 = completely disagree, 7 = completely agree)  
 how do you rate the following statement...

**“Our church has the facilities required to support and strengthen our life together as part of the Body of Christ”.** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Questions:

- a. Does the building provide a range of rooms and spaces for formal and informal gatherings, both during a service and mid-week?
- b. Does the building allow a congregation to meet informally following a service?
- c. Does the building provide a range of rooms and facilities to cater for different age groups?

Having discussed this aspect of the building do you need to revise your Launching point score?

Final Score	Why did you award this score?

## 7. A building which is appropriately sized for now and the future

Launching point: On a range of 1 – 7 (1 = completely disagree, 7 = completely agree)  
how do you rate the following statement...

**“Our church is the right size to meet both our current needs and our hopes for the next ten years”.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Questions:

- Does the building happily accommodate our church’s current range of activities?
- Would the premises be able to cater for future numerical growth in the congregation and the church’s mid-week programme or is the building too large, too unwieldy?
- Do the church grounds allow the possibility of future expansion or re-development?

Having discussed this aspect of the building do you need to revise your Launching point score?

Final Score	Why did you award this score?

## 8. A building which can be easily maintained and is not an excessive drain financially

Launching point: On a range of 1 – 7 (1 = completely disagree, 7 = completely agree)  
how do you rate the following statement...

**“The cost of upkeep of our church premises is within acceptable limits and is sustainable for the future”.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Questions:

- Are we spending what we consider to be a reasonable proportion of our church income on maintaining and repairing the basic fabric of the building?
- Are building-related issues a minor or major preoccupation in the running of the church?
- Would we be able to make and afford alterations to meet a rise in expectations from those who use our church building?

Having discussed this aspect of the building do you need to revise your Launching point score?

Final Score	Why did you award this score?

## 9. A building which is accessible to all members of the community

Launching point: On a range of 1 – 7 (1 = completely disagree, 7 = completely agree)  
how do you rate the following statement...

**“Our building is accessible to all members of the community”.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Questions:

- Is there a step-free level access route with hand-rails from the street to the building?
- Thinking about facilities such as toilets and kitchen, are they designed and positioned so that people of all ages and abilities can use them?
- Does the building support worship which is fully inclusive and accessible to everyone (eg. good sound system, induction loop, space for wheelchairs)?
- Are there facilities for baby changing and a safe children’s play area?

Having discussed this aspect of the building do you need to revise your Launching point score?

Final Score	Why did you award this score?

**10. A building which engenders pride and service**

Launching point: On a range of 1 – 7 (1 = completely disagree, 7 = completely agree) how do you rate the following statement...

**“As a congregation we are proud of our church building and happy to give our time and money to support and maintain it”.**    1   2   3   4   5   6   7

Questions:

- a. Do the people who regularly attend the church have a strong sense of identity and commitment to it?
- b. Are there appropriate opportunities for people to serve and contribute to the maintenance of the building?
- c. Is it easy to enlist volunteers who will provide practical help in the cleaning and general upkeep of the church?

Having discussed this aspect of the building do you need to revise your Launching point score?

Final Score	Why did you award this score?

SCORING

Total up your scores from the above “Launching Point” questions here:

Question	Score
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
TOTAL	

Now, to get to your final score, you need to make some adjustments in order to highlight the most serious issues which need to be addressed.

- If you have five or more questions scoring 4 points, deduct ten points from the total score.
- For each question scoring 3 points, deduct one point from the total score.
- For each question scoring 2 points, deduct three points from the final score.
- For each question scoring 1 point, deduct five points from the final score.

*Example: Suppose your scores for the questions were 4, 6, 2, 1, 3, 4, 7, 3, 2, 6. The score in the TOTAL box above will be the sum of these (38) but, as the scores included a 1, two 2s and a 3 you now need to deduct twelve points (5+3+3+1) from that total giving a Final Score of 26.*

TOTAL	
DEDUCTED	
FINAL SCORE	



## INTERPRETING THE RESULTS AND DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

Score	Comments
Below 0	You need to think very seriously about whether this building can ever adequately meet the needs of a 21st Century worshipping community, and start considering options for an alternative.
0 - 14	Without major adaptations this building may be unsuitable for continued use as a church. You need to think about whether resources are available to carry out these adaptations and maybe start the conversation about alternatives.
15 - 29	This is really the minimum acceptable standard in the 21st Century. There are major issues to address and NOW is the time to start doing so if you haven't already.
30 - 44	The building is adequate for current use but probably requires some improvement. Is there a particular area, such as accessibility or flexibility, where it has scored particularly badly? If so, this is the concern to address.
45 - 59	This is a good, fit-for-purpose building but it may need some work to keep it that way. How can you improve it even further? Develop a long-term strategy for future use and adaptation if you haven't already got one.
60 - 70	Congratulations! Your church building is well-maintained, fit-for-purpose and a credit to you. Keep up the good work! Why not consider using your experience to assist a struggling church nearby?

As a group, now take some time to reflect upon the summary of your score above and take a little time before you finish to reflect upon these questions which will help you test how robust you feel your score might be.

1. Does the score summary above reflect the feel of your conversation and the opinions expressed?
2. If we do nothing beyond simple, routine maintenance of our church building how will things look in another ten years?
3. How confident are you that the running costs of our building can be met for the next 10 or even 20 years?
4. Does the cost of capital repairs in our latest Quinquennial Inspection report pose a significant financial challenge to us?

A final question will help you 'think outside the box'. You will be familiar with that discussion starter question, "if our house was on fire and people and animals were safe, what three things would you want to rescue?" It's a question which helps us explore what really matters to us.

So why not explore this question at the end of your discussion:

**"Our church probably won't burn down today or tomorrow, but if we were offered the chance of a completely fresh start what would we do?"**

## AND FINALLY

In the light of your discussions please take a few moments to agree and record the next steps you might make:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

## WHAT NEXT?

We hope you found this building assessment survey helpful. We hope that it has enabled you to have an honest conversation about your church building. It may be that the survey has revealed some needs to address or got you thinking about opportunities to explore further.

- If you need help on the maintenance of your building there is plenty of practical advice in the buildings section of our diocesan website at [www.liverpool.anglican.org/Buildings](http://www.liverpool.anglican.org/Buildings) and at the excellent [www.churchcare.co.uk](http://www.churchcare.co.uk) which also lists sources of grant funding.
- If you would like support and advice on buildings maintenance or on the Quinquennial Inspection please talk to our Buildings Officer, Tom Beesley (0151 705 2180).
- Why not find out what other churches have done with their buildings? There are some case studies on the diocesan website and many more stories in the diocese so ask around and perhaps visit some churches to see what may be possible for your church.
- If you have ideas then please do extend this local conversation to include your archdeacon or other members of the Diocesan staff at St James' House. They will be very happy to think through with you how your building can be used to develop sustainable ministry and mission in your parish. The person to contact is our Heritage Officer, Ian Simpson (0151 705 2127).
- If your discussion suggests you need to do some work on the church which may require a faculty do seek advice from the DAC. The DAC is very happy to discuss options and wants to hear from churches as early in the process as possible as this can save everyone time and money.
- Do talk to your archdeacon about any opportunities and possible implications of making changes if your church is a Listed building or is listed as a 'Heritage Asset' by the local authority.
- If you think that establishing a Friends group in support of the church is a way forward or if you want to discuss the financial situation in the church please do have an early discussion with the Resources Department (0151 705 2180) at St James' House.

## CONTACT DETAILS

**Ian Simpson - Heritage Support Officer** 0151 705 2127  
ian.simpson@liverpool.anglican.org

**Tom Beesley - Buildings Advisor** 0151 705 2174  
tom.beesley@liverpool.anglican.org

**Chris Leggett - DAC Secretary** 0151 705 2122  
chris.leggett@liverpool.anglican.org

