

# **Faith in Maintenance**

## **Third year Evaluation Report March 2009 – January 2010**

Prepared for the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings by

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March 2010

# Introduction

This is the third of a series of external evaluation reports that contributes to the overall review and evaluation of the Faith in Maintenance (FiM) Project and covers the period March 2009 – January 2010. The project is managed by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings and runs from April 2007 – February 2012.

The external evaluator's role is to provide external scrutiny, validation, and evaluation against the aims of the project, and make recommendations for development and future action. The external evaluation reports are produced by Oakmere Solutions Ltd and complement the annual reports produced by the project team.

The report is structured as follows:

- ❖ Faith in Maintenance Project aims
- ❖ Project activities
- ❖ Evaluation Methodology
- ❖ Data
- ❖ Key Findings
- ❖ Summary
- ❖ Recommendations

## Faith in Maintenance Project Aims

The external evaluation of Faith in Maintenance seeks to assess the achievements of the Faith in Maintenance project against its aims and targets. These are:

- ❖ Project aim 1: Deliver a maintenance training course appropriate to the needs of volunteers who care for historic buildings used as places of worship in England and Wales;
- ❖ Project aim 2: Devise an effective support system in order to provide readily and freely accessible information across the range of media to assist volunteers in the care of the fabric of places of worship and their contents;
- ❖ Project aim 3: Reach as many and as diverse a range of volunteers as possible;
- ❖ Project aim 4: Raise awareness generally of the need for places of worship to receive regular, basic routine maintenance in order to save historic fabric and money;

- ❖ Project aim 5: Encourage greater understanding of the history and interest of historic places of worship and their importance and value to the sense of national identity and to their local and wider communities;
- ❖ Project aim 6: Enhance the skills expertise and personal development of volunteers and thereby to increase their interest and enjoyment of their duties and tasks and improve the quality of their volunteering experience; and
- ❖ Project aim 7: Promote the philosophy espoused by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings with its emphasis on daily care, conservative repair and the use of traditional materials.

## Project Activities

The Faith in Maintenance project involves a number of activities:

- delivery of a standard **one-day training course** aimed at volunteers who maintain places of worship. Attendance at the course is free of charge;
- production of a **Faith in Maintenance Handbook** which includes advice and tips on maintaining historic buildings which is provided free to course attendees and is available to purchase ;
- a **maintenance calendar** provided free to course attendees;
- a **web site** including a **discussion forum**;
- a telephone **technical advice help-line** for one to one support;
- monthly **email bulletin**;
- a **DVD** on maintenance of places of worship.

In addition special events to introduce young people to the maintenance of historic buildings are planned.

## Evaluation Methodology

Project external evaluation is carried out by:

- ❖ Analysis of data gathered by the FiM team through the booking process and pre and post-course questionnaires. A pre-course questionnaire is completed by participants at the beginning of the training day. It gathers data on confidence levels, attitudes, current maintenance practice, and expectations of the training event. The post-course questionnaire is completed by participants at the conclusion of the training day and records levels of confidence, skills and understanding of maintenance, attitudes and future intentions. Both questionnaires use a combination of structured and unstructured questions generating quantitative and qualitative data.

- ❖ Follow up telephone interviews undertaken by the external evaluator with a sample of course participants. These interviews explore the longer-term impact of the training day on participants and on their maintenance of places of worship.
- ❖ Site visits which inform case studies of practice

## Review of responses to 2008-09 recommendations

The 2008-09 evaluation report made a number of recommendations all of which the team has responded to:

- Promote and demonstrate the website during the training day and encourage use of the interactive forum. The team felt that the training day was already too crowded to include a demonstration of the website. However participants continue to be encouraged to use the website during the day. The interactive forum did not prove attractive to participants and has been taken off line. However, its function has largely been replaced by the email bulletin which is proving very popular.
- Wider promotion of the DVD. 23,000 copies of the DVD have been distributed to a very wide range of stakeholders. Local diocesan leaders have been encouraged to use them in training events and the team has created a webpage suggesting how this might be done at <http://www.spabfim.org.uk/pages/dvd.html>. This has a link to a page containing ideas for group discussion.
- Increase use of the technical help line, including setting up an email link for enquiries. The team set up a technical advice email service as an additional way for volunteers to submit enquiries ([advice@spabfim.org.uk](mailto:advice@spabfim.org.uk)). The details of the technical help line and the new email address are printed on the course programme given to delegates and are promoted to volunteers during the introductory PowerPoint presentation. Use of the technical help line and examples of the type of advice that can provide are also drawn to delegates' attention at various points during the training course. However use of this service remain low and the steering group suspect that people are finding the answers to their questions on the website or in the Good Maintenance Guide and therefore do not need to contact the help line.
- Clarification of the experience level of the target audience for the training days. A new FAQ page has been added to the course section of the website. This information is also printed on the reverse of course fliers. The wording and presentation of the course programme has also been altered to make it easier to understand what the sessions are about and that it is aimed at an introductory level. Informal feedback from Diocesan Advisory Committee secretaries has suggested that these changes have been very helpful.

- Course promotion to widen the range and diversity of participants. The team have undertaken a wide range of development work with other faith sectors and have offered dedicated training days. Course promotion continues through conference presentations, stakeholder engagement and marketing devises such as new publicity postcards to be circulated in 2010 featuring faith in maintenance key message – stave off decay by daily care – as well as the website address and contact details. The reverse will feature ‘top ten maintenance tips’. Media promotion opportunities will continue to be sought out

Specific work has been undertaken to build up activities with young people by working with other organisations and the education sector which is already having an impact with several training days booked for 2010.

- A plan to reach targets of participants. The team plan to reach a further 2,500 participants before the end of the project. This will give a total of 5,000 participants reached over the course of the project. Plans are to run up to 35 courses each year in 2010 and 2011. In addition the project leader also delivered seminars and lectures that reach a wider range of stakeholders – an estimated 500 people - to promote the Faith in Maintenance message.
- Consideration of follow on and in depth courses for previous participants. The project steering group considered this idea but concluded that there was little more that could be delivered that would not stray into the field of repair rather than maintenance. The steering group was keen to retain the project focus on providing basic maintenance training for volunteers and to achieve the stretching targets before the end of the project.

However in an attempt to address the desire for further learning the team has created a page on the website signposting volunteers towards other organisations which provide training in a variety of conservation skills.

This can be found at

[http://www.spabfim.org.uk/pages/training\\_courses.html](http://www.spabfim.org.uk/pages/training_courses.html).

## Evaluation of 2009-2010 project outcomes

From March 2009 – January 2010, 31 training courses, involving 1008 participants, were delivered in England and Wales. Pre course and post course feedback forms were received from 821 people – a response rate of 81%

The data that informs this report is drawn from:

- Quantitative data from analysis of all pre and post course feedback forms;
- Qualitative data from a sample of pre and post course feedback forms. The sample comprised data from 25% (8) training courses attended by 199 participants;
- Telephone interviews with 20 participants randomly selected from the full range of participants; and
- Discussions with participants carried out during 3 site visits.

Quotations in the report are taken from the questionnaires, telephone interviews and site visits and are used with permission to illustrate participants' views.

### Key Findings:

Evaluation has been carried out against what the project aims to achieve. To avoid unnecessary duplication, project aims 4 and 7 are evaluated together.

**Project aim 1: Deliver a maintenance training course appropriate to the needs of volunteers who care for historic buildings used as places of worship in England and Wales.**

#### **Participant expectations**

Before the course, participants were asked what they wanted to get out of the course and many gave more than one response. These responses fall into 11 broad categories as follows:

**Chart 1: Participant expectations**

Topic	Number of responses	% of total responses (rounded)	Findings 2009
Advice and tips on maintenance	116	56%	55%
General access to information	22	11%	14%
Knowing where to get further advice and contacts	22	11%	
Increased understanding of legal, health and safety or other requirements for example from English Heritage/the DAC	13	6%	6%
Getting help from and how to work with Specialists	7	3%	7%
Increased confidence	6	3%	6%
Advice on role (as churchwarden etc)	6	3%	
To learn from others	5	3%	3%
Find out about general architectural features of historic places of worship and how to preserve them	4	2%	3%
Advice on grants and funding	3	1%	4%
How to be an advocate for the building and its upkeep	3	1%	3%
TOTAL	207	100%	100%

Getting advice and information on how to carry out maintenance was cited in 67% of responses as the main expectation for the course. While, the overall findings are in line with those in 2009, additional categories emerged. These include participants coming on the course expecting to find out how to get further advice and contacts and to get advice on their role as a churchwarden or member of a fabric committee. All eleven areas of expectation were covered by either the course content or in its delivery approach.

Participant responses suggest that there is a high level of awareness of the need to maintain church buildings and participants want guidance on how to be more systematic, what specific problems to look for, and what early actions to take to avoid large-scale repairs.

“Guidance on taking a more organised approach to the question of maintenance and follow up actions. Help with prioritising the tasks to be tackled. Ideas on galvanising architects” *Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Elham*

“Guidance as to how to adopt a more ordered approach to church maintenance. Help to identify possible problems at an early stage” *Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Ely*

“Advice in helping to encourage the church to apply proper proactive inspections and maintenance schedules. Identify better financial planning, fundraising etc. How to better cover health and safety issues” *Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Slimbridge*

As previous evaluations reported, participants also have specific and personal motivations for attending the training:

“I attended because I was a new church warden” *Interview with Shepshed participant*

“Better understanding of my role as chairman of the fabric committee and churchwarden” *Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Elham*

“Confidence in knowing what to look for in maintaining the building” *Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Aston*

“How to get other church members to be interested in the historical and artistic significance of the building rather than afraid of its maintenance” *Pre-course questionnaire from participant, North Creake*

The opportunity to network with their peers and learn from their experience remains an important part of the learning experience. This is a typical response:

“To gain experience by listening to others”. *Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Slimbridge*

However, experienced volunteers are realistic in what may be achievable in their parishes and many are very aware of the constraints under which they work:

“Ideas for small interventions that can save money later (church maintenance budget VERY small)” *Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Betchworth*

Responses suggest that training and induction for churchwardens is not organised in a systematic or effective manner. Many had not had handover guidance from previous church wardens and had not attended any training:

“I attended the event because I had not attended any courses since becoming a church warden. I wanted to check I was doing everything correctly” *Interview with Ely participant*



## Perceptions of the course

After attending the course, all 821 participants found the course either 'very useful' (82%) or 'useful' (15%), and some 97% of participants said they got what they wanted from the course:

*"Very interesting and enjoyable day. I learned a lot. Post-course questionnaire from participant, Betchworth*

Many participants identified the value of the course for all those involved in church maintenance and were keen for more to attend. These are typical responses:

*"Excellent day and presentation. All wardens/site managers should attend" Post-course questionnaire from participant, Elham*

*"Excellent in all respects. Should be mandatory for those churchwardens with responsibility for places of worship that are listed" Post-course questionnaire from participant, Betchworth*

*"Hope this will be available for all churchwardens every three years" Post-course questionnaire from participant, Betchworth*

*"I wish we could ensure all elders attend such courses" Post-course questionnaire from participant, Llanvaches*

For many participants the course exceeded their expectations:

*"Despite my misgivings about being out of my depth being a woman amongst many men, I enjoyed the day and found it to be very helpful. I leave more confident. I know more about how to access help" Post-course questionnaire from participant, Aston*

*"I nearly didn't come but am so pleased I did." Post-course questionnaire from participant, Aston*

*"An excellent use of time" Post-course questionnaire from participant, Ely*

The training day deliberately sets out to be reassuring, to demystify maintenance and to engender a 'can do' approach inspiring confidence in participants:

*"Sara was very reassuring. I already feel more confident and less stressed" Post-course questionnaire from participant, Ely*

*"The speakers were excellent and so interesting. I really feel inspired. What a lot of responsibilities we have. I do feel supported and now know who to call for advice." Post-course questionnaire from participant, Ely*

As in last year's report, some participants had suggestions for follow up workshops:

“Excellent introduction to the subject. It would be good to have a follow-up in a year or so, perhaps on brasses/monuments/woodwork” *Post-course questionnaire from participant, Elham*

### The most useful part of course

Participants were asked to identify which aspect of the course they found the most useful, and their responses generated the following list:

**Chart 2: Most useful aspects of the course**

Most useful aspect of the course	Number of times mentioned	% of mentions (rounded)	Findings 2009
Learning about specific potential problems and remedies and how to prioritise	60	33%	16%
Everything	35	19%	13%
Visit to the church and practical fault spotting	27	15%	17%
Finding out how to get further advice	12	6%	6%
Learning from each others' problems and solutions	9	5%	5%
Advice on how to carry out systematic inspection and close observation	9	5%	11%
Presentations	7	4%	10%
Guidance from experts	7	4%	7%
Health and safety tips	6	3%	3%
Session on use of lime	4	2%	<1%
The combination of theory and practice	3	2%	3%
Information on grants, funding and VAT	2	1%	2%
Guidance on how to create records using log book and photos	2	1%	2%
Checklist, calendar, website and handbook	1	<1%	3%
How to work with architects/surveyors	0		1%
Cleaning tips	0	0	<1%
TOTAL	184	100%	100%

For most participants, the most useful aspects of the course were information about potential problems how to spot them and what to do about them:

“Information on what to look for. Advice on treating/painting walls” *Post-course questionnaire from participant, Llanvaches*

As in last year's report, participants also valued the opportunity to work with and learn from each other, highlighting the isolated and seemingly unsupported position that volunteers caring for church buildings find themselves in:

“Meeting other like minded people with similar and even different problems”. *Post-course questionnaire from participant, New West End Synagogue*

“Knowing help is out there” *Post-course questionnaire from participant, Betchworth*

Participants value an educational experience that was well planned and expertly delivered by a leader who is empathetic and can engage and inspire them. Many participants have a lack of confidence in their ability and experience to carry out maintenance and the mixture of practical and theoretical learning is particularly successful in meeting the needs of this audience:

“Everything was useful – serious but with a sense of humour”. *Post-course questionnaire from participant, Elham*

“It was easy to listen to and understand. A very well constructed course” *Post-course questionnaire from participant, Ely*

Participants continued to appreciate course materials and the introduction to the web site that they anticipated using in the future.

### **Participants' confidence**

The course is designed to build confidence and develop awareness of maintenance amongst participants. To evaluate this aspect, participants assess their confidence across the following five specific domains before and after attendance:

- ❖ Identifying maintenance issues;
- ❖ Taking action on maintenance problems;
- ❖ Seeking professional advice;
- ❖ Assessing health and safety risks; and
- ❖ Assessing the history and significance of the place of worship.

Analysis of responses shows that participants joined the course with high levels of general confidence: 17% of participants were very confident; 62% quite confident with only 21% not feeling confident. These proportions mirror those reported by the last two years' participants.

While general confidence was high on joining the course, there was some small variability across the five domains with participants feeling least confident in knowing what to do about maintenance problems when they encountered them and most confident in seeking professional advice (Charts 3 – 7 below). These are the same two areas as last year.

Even though participants were generally confident at the beginning of the course, 74% said they felt more confident by the end of the course. This compares well with similar percentages in 2008 (80%) and 2007 (73%). This area was followed up in the telephone interviews and here all interviewees (20) confirmed that they felt more confident in dealing with maintenance and in carrying out their churchwarden role as a direct result of attending the course:

“I feel more confident to do my job” *Interview with Slimbridge participant*

**Chart 3: Confidence in identifying maintenance issues**

		How confident do you feel in identifying maintenance issues or problems in your building?					
Year	Number of responses	Pre course			Post course		
		Very confident	Quite confident	Not confident	More confident	Less confident	About the same
2007	62	8	46	8	52	0	10
		13%	74%	13%	84%	0%	16%
2008	713*	103	447	158	646	2	54
		15%	63%	22%	92%	<0%	8%
2009	821*	122	504	185	711	35	60
		15%	62%	23%	88%	4%	7%

**Chart 4: Confidence in taking action on maintenance problems**

		How confident do you feel in knowing what to do about maintenance problems when you find them?					
Year	Number of responses	Pre course			Post course		
		Very confident	Quite confident	Not confident	More confident	Less confident	About the same
2007	61	4	40	17	47	0	14
		6%	66%	28%	77%	0%	23%
2008	713*	75	418	213	600	3	97
		11%	59%	30%	86%	<0%	14%
2009	821*	94	452	266	678	30	99
		12%	56%	32%	84%	4%	12%

**Chart 5: Confidence in seeking professional advice**

		How confident do you feel in seeking advice from architects or building surveyors?					
Year	Number of responses	Pre course			Post course		
		Very confident	Quite confident	Not confident	More confident	Less confident	About the same
2007	62	25	28	9	40	1	21
		40%	45%	15%	65%	2%	34%
2008	713*	218	377	111	514	5	181
		31%	53%	16%	73%	<0%	26%
2009	821*	265	410	136	564	28	216
		33%	50%	17%	70%	3%	27%

**Chart 6: Confidence in assessing health and safety risks**

		How confident do you feel in assessing health and safety risks?					
Year	Number of responses	Pre course			Post course		
		Very confident	Quite confident	Not confident	More confident	Less confident	About the same
2007	62	9	34	19	43	0	19
		15%	55%	31%	69%	0%	31%
2008	713*	101	442	162	464	6	221
		14%	63%	23%	67%	<1%	32%
2009	821*	131	482	195	492	33	278
		16%	60%	24%	61%	4%	35%

**Chart 7: Confidence in assessing the history and significance of the place of worship**

		How confident do you feel in assessing the history and significance of your place of worship?					
Year	Number of responses	Pre course			Post course		
		Very confident	Quite confident	Not confident	More confident	Less confident	About the same
2009	821*	163	489	156	537	37	231
		20%	61%	19%	67%	4%	29%

\*Numbers do not add to 713 or 821 as not all participants answered each question

Project aim 2: Devise an effective support system that provides readily and freely accessible information across the range of media to assist volunteers in the care of the fabric of places of worship and their contents.

Evidence demonstrates that the project is providing additional resources and support for participants and the training day is enabling participants to find and use these resources. Nearly all participants, 98%, agreed that they knew where to get more help or guidance about maintenance after the course. This is an improvement on both previous years' outcomes where 89% agreed. Improved confidence in knowing where to find further advice and guidance was often reported as a positive outcome of attendance on the course both in the immediate post-course qualitative feedback and in follow up interviews. Many participants work as individuals or small groups and their responses suggest that for the most part they feel unsupported. Providing access to advice and guidance is thus particularly important as cited in the following typical response to being asked what was the most useful part of the course:

*“Knowing where to go and who to ask for advice” Post-course questionnaire from participant, North Creake*

The **handbook**, **maintenance calendar** and **checklist** provide accessible and practical resources that are being used by participants. 6% of participants identified using the website, handbook or checklist as a specific action to be carried out after the course. All interviewees (20) report using them since attending the course and finding them very helpful:

*“The handbook shows what to look out for and I have used it in planning my annual inspections. I have used the checklist and have selected the bits appropriate to me” Interview with Ely participant*

*“The handbook is a great resource and so too the website which we have looked at today” email from participants, Sheriff Hutton*

The website, [www.spabfim.org.uk](http://www.spabfim.org.uk) is an excellent resource which is valued by participants. In follow up interviews, 40% said that they had used the Faith in Maintenance website after the course. Visits to the website continue to increase year on year (see chart 7 below).

**Chart 7: Web site visits**

	<b>1 July 2007 to 31 December 2007</b>	<b>1 July 2009 to 31 December 2009</b>
Visits	3,403	7,794
Total page views	14,604	24,120
Average page views	4.29	3.09
Average time on site	3.32	2.17

The reduction in page views and time on site may be due to improved site organisation and to repeat visitors who are familiar with the site and able to navigate more quickly.

The team plan to use the web site to host an on-line survey to capture views on maintenance from those who have attended the training days. The site is used to publicise the **monthly email bulletin service** that was introduced in January 2008. This service is proving popular and the number of subscribers has nearly doubled from 179 at the end of 2008 to 336 at the end of 2009. This is a good innovation and is working better than the original online forum.

A new email link was established during the year to the **technical support help line**, which generated nine enquiries. Many more contacts were made by telephone to the help line, which provides advice on specific maintenance issues, and participants value this service. Details of the technical support service feature on the project website and in every issue of the e-bulletin.

The **DVD** that was launched at the end of 2008 is proving to be a very popular resource. 30,000 copies were made and 23,000 copies have been widely distributed to a range of recipients including all Anglican diocese in England and Wales; 6 of the 22 Roman Catholic dioceses in England and Wales; United Reform Church synods; Methodist Church; Baptist Union Corporation; Quakers; Jewish Heritage UK; English Heritage and the National Churches Trust. The remaining copies will be distributed over the remaining years of the project. Here is an unsolicited response from a recipient:

“We have recently received a copy of your Maintenance DVD which I have to say is brilliant. So much so that we are arranging for PCC's of the three churches our vicar is the Incumbent of to get together and watch it. We can identify with so much, but it is important that others see just how we can work together to put things right.” *Slapton Holy Cross, Leighton Buzzard, email to FiM*

These high quality, accessible support materials and tools provide an important element of the legacy of this project and are valued and used by participants.

**Project aim 3: Reach as many and as diverse a range of volunteers as possible**

The scale of operation continues to increase year on year.

#### **Chart 8: Growth in number of courses and participants**

Year	Number of courses	Number of participants
2007	18	607
2008	26	857
2009	31	1008

Chart 8 shows the increase in both the number of courses and participants. One course in 2009 had to be postponed which, if offered, is likely to have seen



the project reach its annual target of 1,050 participants. Plans are now in place to reach 2,500 participants during the last two years of the project.

Participants continue to reflect the general demography of the churchwarden volunteering community with 91% of participants in the 50-65+-age range. 16% of participants were disabled and 98% were of white background. These proportions have remained in similar proportions for the three years of the programme.

The team continue to work closely with a wide range of faith organisations to encourage attendance at the training events and as well as an increase in courses and participants, the project has been able to involve people from a wider range faith backgrounds. 8% of participants (67 people) were from faith backgrounds outside the Church of England as were nine out of 31 host organisations. Four specific sessions were delivered for the Methodist and United Reform Churches and one further dedicated session for the Jewish Community. These were deemed very successful by participants but were attended by lower than usual numbers because there are fewer churches in each area and therefore fewer volunteers.

This year a workshop was offered for young people involved in Cathedral Camps. A good deal of preparatory work has gone into generating interest from other groups of young people and this is now beginning to have an impact. A number of consortia of schools and colleges offering the new Construction and the Built Environment (CBE) diplomas across England have expressed an interest in holding a workshop during 2010. The Faith in Maintenance Project Director has developed a detailed workshop training plan linked to the outcomes of the CBE curriculum and has piloted this through a workshop attended by students from the Bridgwater consortium on 29 January 2010. A further five workshops with other consortia have been booked for 2010. Through working with teachers as well as students, the project is raising awareness of the maintenance and conservation needs of historic buildings in general, and places of worship in particular, with a new generation of construction professionals. This is very significant progress on the situation a year ago and represents a more sustainable and potentially a more effective way of working with young people and their teachers than offering one-off events.

Developing contacts and generating interest with wider faith groups and developing specific provision for young people has proved to be very time consuming. The team have continued to build trust and interest in Faith in Maintenance with a wider community and significant progress has been made this year that provides a good platform for next year's work. The five events planned for young people and teaching staff on the new CBE diploma are likely to have a long lasting impact on the delivery of that curriculum.



Project aim 4: Raise awareness of the need for places of worship to receive regular and basic routine maintenance in order to save historic fabric and money.

Project aim 7: Promote the philosophy espoused by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings with its emphasis on daily care conservative repair and the use of traditional materials

When joining the course, all 821 participants felt that maintenance of places of worship was either 'very' or 'quite' important. This mirrors the response of the previous two years. Participants were asked whether their place of maintenance was currently well maintained and 661 (85%) were able to say that it was.

### Types of maintenance tasks carried out by participants

Responsibility for maintaining places of worship continues to be the responsibility of a small band of volunteers. The way that maintenance is organised and carried out varies. In the majority of cases volunteers carry out tasks themselves. In some cases participants organised maintenance work carried out by other people including contracting with specialist firms. The range of tasks carried out is very wide ranging as listed below:

**Chart 9: Maintenance tasks carried out by volunteers**

Maintenance tasks carried out by volunteers	Number of times mentioned	% of mentions (rounded)	2009 findings
Cleaning gutters, gulleys and down pipes	92	18%	15%
Grounds maintenance including weeding, grass cutting, clearing ivy from walls and checking gravestones.	75	15%	11%
Monitoring and inspection of the building and grounds including gas and electric safety checks and lightening conductor checks	59	11%	10%
Cleaning including window cleaning, removing graffiti	48	9%	6%
Painting and decorating (including fences, interior and exterior windows and walls)	38	7%	8%
Minor repairs	37	7%	8%
Changing light bulbs	24	5%	5%
General clearing and tidying up including sweeping, weeding and cleaning paths	13	2%	4%
All aspects of maintenance	13	2%	3%

Heating maintenance including annual boiler check	13	2%		3%
Carpentry and woodwork including windows, pews memorial plaques and notice boards	12	2%		2%
Organising repair and maintenance	11	2%		3%
Maintaining fire extinguishers and alarms	11	2%		1%
Repairing roofs and paving	10	2%		3%
Clearing drains	10	2%		5%
Maintaining bell tower, bells, bell stays and flagpole	8	2%		2%
Oiling door and window locks	7	2%		2%
Plumbing including changing washers, maintenance of toilets and kitchens	6	1%		2%
Window and wall repair	6	1%		1%
Minor electric work	5	<1%		3%
Carrying out routine dry rot/woodworm treatment	4	<1%		1%
Clock maintenance	4	<1%		<1%
Pest control including removing bird and bat droppings	3	<1%		1%
Plasterwork repair	1	<1%		2%
Maintaining sound system	1	<1%		<1%
TOTAL	511	100%		100%

While only 3% (13) participants reported being responsible for all maintenance, the comprehensive lists above suggests that the majority of maintenance tasks are carried out by volunteers, leaving some specialist areas, such as electrical safety checks which have to be certified by qualified electricians and structural repairs to be carried out by professionals.

“Everything except electrical work. From complete roof repairs to underground drainage” *Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Elham*

“Repair and replacement of broken or defective items. Carrying out health and safety checks. Arranging contractors to do major items including specialists where necessary.” *Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Betchworth*

Not all volunteers who help maintain places of worship are drawn from the faith community. The wider community values Church buildings and many parishes can call on a wide range of individuals for support:

“Small church - small community - small congregation – but lots of people involved – big team of mowers for instance and one chap who

has offered to help me sort out the financial management - who do not necessarily come to church and not directly from the core of the church”  
*Interview with participant, Goldhanger case study*

Energy awareness is more prominent this year with two participants specifically mentioning that they were energy aware:

“Regular safety checks on lighting/fire protection etc. energy monitoring”  
*Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Betchworth*

“Our people take great pride in maintaining the old boiler but it does break down a lot and costs a lot of money to repair and run. With the price of energy likely to increase I am eager not to maintain something that is not cost effective in the long run” *Interview with participant, Cambridge*

As in previous reports, volunteer roles are varied, some carrying out maintenance, some carrying out regular inspections and then specifying maintenance plans; some organising or contracting with others to carry out work. Maintenance was typically carried out by a combination of volunteers, and specialist contractors:

“{Maintenance is carried out by} in house work plus selected professionals” *Pre-course questionnaire from participant, NWES*

It is volunteers however who carry out the greatest amount of maintenance, although they may not recognise their contribution. For example in the case below a participant who explained that maintenance is carried out as follows:

“Minor maintenance – myself or a friend. Major maintenance - reliable contractor who is certified” *Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Elham*

also described the range of maintenance tasks that they carried out as:

“Clear gutters, clear drain covers, change bulbs and tubes, fix leaking taps, check crash bars on fire doors, oil hinges” *Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Elham*

When asked who carries out maintenance, many participants reported having access to very small teams:

“Myself and Mike, churchwarden” *Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Elham*

“Elderly caretaker and myself” *Pre-course questionnaire from participant, NWES*

“Me” *Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Ely*

In some cases, possibly reflecting small parishes and an elderly congregation, responsibility for caring for the church building fell to the fittest:

*“Those who are capable” Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Llanvaches*

The management of maintenance varied widely from settings in which there were clear structures and process in place to very ad hoc arrangements

*“Group of volunteers under churchwarden’s direction. Contractors where necessary” Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Betchworth*

*“Random people, uncoordinated” Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Slimbridge*

In some cases no one takes responsibility for maintenance:

*“Not currently appointed” Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Ely*

*“No-one in particular. Grounds maintained by volunteers” Pre-course questionnaire from participant, Ely*

Responsibility for maintaining places of worship increasingly includes putting in place policies and other legal requirements for safety, and child protection.

## **Keeping Records**

Participants were asked how they recorded their maintenance activities. 9% kept no record, an improvement on last year when 18% of respondents kept no records of maintenance.

The course continues to place particular emphasis on the importance of record keeping and at the end of the course 92% of participants said they would make more use of a log book. A few participants were planning to use a camera to make visual records of maintenance problems and solutions. Using a range of recording methods is likely to improve the quality and usefulness of records. Good advice on record keeping is available on the web site.

## **Participant intentions after attending the course**

In the post-course questionnaires, participants were asked to respond to a number of statements about their learning and likely behaviours following the course. Asked whether they had learned something that they would definitely use in maintaining their place of worship, 565 people (70%) ‘strongly agreed’ and 236 people (29%) ‘tended to agree’. Asked whether they felt more motivated to maintain their place of worship, 497 people (62%) ‘strongly agreed’ and 280 people (35%) ‘tended to agree’ with 2 people strongly disagreeing.

Two additional questions were included this year. The first asked whether participants would ensure that an annual inspection of their place of worship

was carried out, 573 people (72%) 'strongly agreed' and 216 people (27%) 'tended to agree' with 2 people strongly disagreeing. The second asked whether they will ensure that rainwater goods are cleared of debris at least once every year, 623 (78%) 'strongly agreed' and 164 (21%) 'tended to agree'.

These findings are in line with last year and continue to indicate the positive intentions of participants and provide a strong indication that the course is having an impact on participants. In follow up interviews all participants reported they were using the knowledge and skills they had developed during the training day and that they had put in place all their intended actions. They also reported changes in their general behaviours including being more maintenance aware. Three people had taken their interest further by attending further training courses.

"I have been on a dry stone walling course which may be put into use on our boundary wall" *Interview with participant Dewsbury Minster*

Participants were asked to identify two things they had learned on the course that they would put into practice immediately. These were:

**Chart 10: Actions to be carried out post-course**

Actions	Number of times mentioned	% of mentions (rounded)	2009 findings
Carry out regular close inspection, particularly in wet weather	83	28%	19%
Use log book to record maintenance	46	15%	18%
Clear out drains and rainwater systems	34	11%	19%
Put a maintenance schedule in place	20	7%	1%
Use the course handbook, checklist and website	17	6%	2%
Take action to keep the building breathing, including clearing ground from base of wall	17	6%	8%
Use appropriate materials, eg lime when carrying out repairs	16	5%	<1%
Get professional advice when needed	12	4%	2%
Make checks on specific areas eg lightning conductor, roof, electrics, walls	11	3%	4%
Cascade course information to others	11	3%	2%
Use a camera to record tasks	7	2%	3%
Take quick action on minor issues	7	2%	2%
Build close working relationship with architect/surveyor	5	2%	4%
Do a fire risk assessment and safety check	4	1%	2%
Set up working parties/maintenance team	4	1%	<1%

Revise cleaning schedule	3	1%	
Use binoculars, torch and mirrors to identify hidden problems	3	1%	2%
Prepare policy documents – health and safety, statement of significance	2	<1%	1%
Be systematic in maintenance	2	<1%	2%
Apply for a grant	2	<1%	<1%
Take immediate action after inspection	1	<1%	2%
Cut back ivy and other vegetation and remove moss	1	<1%	1%
Repaint specific items	1	<1%	1%
Ensure they worked safely	0		1%
Reuse instead of replacing	0		1%
Buy and use appropriate clothing and equipment, eg metal ladder	0		1%
Clear rubbish	0		<1%
TOTAL	298	100%	100%

The three most mentioned actions – regular inspections; keeping buildings dry, and keeping records are the same as last year, which suggests that key messages about good maintenance have been understood. Two areas have seen an increase in the number of mentions – putting into place a regular maintenance schedule (7% compared to 1% last year) and using the handbook, checklist and website (6% compared to 2% last year). This may reflect more emphasis in the course on these two areas or highlight the use being made of supplementary materials to support the course content.

Many actions were specific, practical and likely to have an immediate effect “stop the brasses being polished so often and the floors washed” (*Post-course questionnaire from participant, Elham*); while others were about better management and organisation of inspection and maintenance “Install and carry out a maintenance schedule. Involve the team in helping” (*Post-course questionnaire from participant, Aston*). For others it was about prompting them to be more ‘maintenance aware’. “When I came on the SPAB course lots of triggers went off - I wonder what we do about the valley gutter??” (*Interview with participant Goldhanger cast study*).

Participants’ intended actions suggest that the conservation message continues to come through strongly in the course content. Several participants mentioned the importance of replacing like for like, using sympathetic materials and not being overly zealous in cleaning.

**Project aim 5: Encourage greater understanding of the history and interest of historic places of worship and their importance and value to the sense of national identity and to their local and wider communities.**

Feedback suggests that people join the course with high levels of confidence in their ability to assess the history and significance of their place of worship (81%

very or quite confident, see Chart 7 on page 11). Chart 1 on page 5 indicates that only 2% (4 people) explicitly cited finding out about general architectural features of historic places of worship and how to preserve them as a motivator for attending the course. For the last two years more emphasis has been placed in course content on the importance of establishing the significance of the building before making decisions on any maintenance programme. Following the course 96% of participants said that they felt either more confident or about the same in assessing significance.

All telephone interviewees (20) said that their understanding of historic buildings had increased; the following were typical responses:

“It gave me a better understanding of not just the history but the actual materials used in a building and how it can be maintained properly”  
*Interview with Wellesbourne participant*

“As a result of the course I now know what to look for” *Interview with Shepshed participant*

One participant took her interest further and started to work for the National Trust – “(the course) has made me see things through different eyes” *Interview with Wellesbourne participant*

**Project aim 6: Enhance the skills, expertise and personal development of volunteers and thereby to increase their interest and enjoyment of their duties and tasks and improve the quality of their volunteering experience.**

80% of interviewees reported that attending the course had made them a better volunteer.

“My actions are better directed. I feel more likely to do the right thing.”  
*Interview with Risca participant*

“It has made me get on and do things I didn’t know how to before as there was no proper handover or guidance from previous churchwardens” *Interview with Ely participant*

The training day enjoys very high levels of participant satisfaction - 99% of attendees said that they got what they wanted from attending the course. There were many instances of unsolicited thanks for the quality of the experience, for example:

“An extremely interesting and useful day. The “Places of Worship in context” was quite inspiring. The more practical bits were very helpful”  
*Post-course questionnaire from participant, North Creake*



The isolated nature of the work that these volunteers carry out is apparent in the importance ascribed to the social aspect of the training day as well as the opportunity to learn and share practice:

“It was great to meet other churchwardens and get to know each other”  
*Post-course questionnaire from participant, Ely*

“It has been a very well run day. Excellent leadership and most instructive and informative” *Post-course questionnaire from participant, Betchworth*

Participants reported that confidence in their ability to carry out their stewardship tasks was enhanced by attending the course as shown in Charts 3-6. Often this was achieved by learning something new but in other instances it was by thinking differently:

“We learnt a lot and came away feeling that church maintenance is not the burden we often feel it is but rather something to be proud of. Plus that window that doesn’t quite close? Don’t worry about the draught - just think about the ventilation!” *Post course email from participants Wellesbourne*

Many recognised the value in implementing what they had learned on the course both to benefit their church buildings and also to ensure good management of scarce resources:

“Thank you for giving us the encouragement and the know how of what we need to do. Thanks to you, I am now better informed to do my job as churchwarden and our church building hopefully will benefit.”  
*Email from participant, Sheriff Hutton*

“A real eye opener; churches would save a lot of money if more people attended this.” *Email from participant Higham Ferrers*

As in previous years, feedback identifies the very wide range of tasks that volunteers carry out and the significant responsibility they have as custodians of places of worship and the often poor training and support provided locally.

Presenting the case for maintenance can be difficult when faced with other competing priorities as in this example:

“I found out that nobody kept any records and no-one was allowed to look at the logbook. I collected information about the gutters but they didn’t want to go ahead and do what needed to be done and that is why I resigned. I thought it more important to deal with the gutters and others wanted work done on the toilets and the kitchen” *Interview with Participant, Slimbridge*



## Impact of the Faith in Maintenance project

There is growing evidence that the course and its associated resources and support mechanisms are having a positive impact on volunteers and on the church buildings they look after. All participants identify two actions to carry out after attending the course and follow up interviews and case study visits have found that 95% of these actions were duly carried out. In addition follow up interviews found that 80%(16) participants had carried out other additional maintenance on their building prompted by attending the course.

“Cleared out the treasury. Have moved things away from the walls. Cleared out old gas lamps. The grass is now cut weekly due to a new rota” *Interview with Ely participant*

“Inspired by the course, I checked today the gullies to our soak ways and removed a great deal of silt that stopped them working properly.”  
*Email form participant, Wingerworth*

The course is also prompting more thought and action about how to record inspection and maintenance more effectively and ensure more efficient future handovers to new churchwardens:

“If churchwarden or others moved away it has occurred to me that we need to have some maintenance checklist/log – not in too onerous way - so that when someone new has to come in they can pick it up and know what’s what. I think there is value in this and I have thought that we have a quinquennial soon and that would be a good time to start.” *Interview with participant, Goldhanger case study*

“Maintenance is now logged on a large white board before it is transferred into the maintenance book. More people remember to use the white board” *Interview with participant, Wellesbourne*

All interviewees felt that attending the course had improved the way they maintained their building and were using course resources to be more systematic:

“By using the plan from the handbook” *Interview with Ely participant*

“I was given a checklist which I now pass on and is used by others. I am aware of the need for regular maintenance” *Interview with Slimbridge participant*

“I am implementing a regular schedule of inspections and I am trying to keep on top of problems before they become major problems” *Interview with Dewsbury participant*

Attending the course is raising awareness of how to be more organised in carrying out maintenance and organising regular inspections. In many cases,

these messages are being spread to other volunteers enabling conservation messages to reach a wider audience:

“I had concerns that this was going to go over my head but came away with some clear messages and practical checklists that will greatly help me both in my role as warden of my own parish church as well as in my half-time employment running the office and liaising with the wardens of my neighbouring (larger and more historic) parish. I do hope you continue to run these and shall enthusiastically recommend these to colleagues in our deanery when we next meet.” *Email feedback from participant, West Chiltington*

“The course opened up a lot of avenues and thought processes to help take us forward. We have set up policies and procedures so if we are not around someone else can pick it up. We have identified our priorities, what we have got to do, what can wait and what we have got to fund raise for – all that was influenced by the course.” *Interview with participant, Tiptree case study*

Feedback suggests that attending the course has long-term personal impacts on volunteers who use the skills, knowledge and confidence gained to deliver improved benefits for their parishes:

“I gained confidence and competence through the SPAB course to think further about refurbishing the toilets to comply with DDA. We wanted to refurbish these but now had the confidence to challenge original quotes. I was able to project manage this and bring in skilled labourers in the parish to do the work for £5,000, saving £15,000.” *Interview with participant, Tiptree case study*

“I have written up a complete health and safety manual which is being circulated to PCC members for comment” *Interview with participant, Ely*

The course is reaching volunteers who have wide-ranging roles in parish life and whether or not they are involved in maintenance, the course is helping them carry out their duties:

“ I do not have the primary responsibility for the building but I am involved in the finance committee and I have to approve the spends as part of my job and I now feel better armed to make those decisions” *Interview with Cambridge participant*

It is apparent that participants are using what they have learned on the day to question how inspection and maintenance is organised and delivered in their parish and coming up with new solutions including some wide ranging restructuring of parish committees:

{we started a} Working Plan a year ago as a result of setting up a fabric committee, we advertise it and 20-30 people turn up and tidy up the flower beds, paint lines etc. Has the fabric committee had a big effect

on maintenance – yes it has, it has pioneered a view that people with commitment and skills can have a big impact on church life – we now have a social committee, one looking at worship, a management committee to run the extension on a quasi-business basis. Committee structure has made a difference and is welcomed by the clergy” *Interview with participant, Tiptree case study*

Understanding how building professionals such as architects and surveyors work and feeling empowered to question and challenge in order to get best value for their place of worship was an outcome for some:

“We had got nothing from our previous architect and so after attending the course, we appointed a new surveyor who is interested in historic buildings and he has produced a thorough report and analysis of what needs to be done with the building, including a schedule of works in priority order “ *Interview with participant, Dunmow case study*

## Summary

The Faith in Maintenance project continues to meet its project aims. Participants value the training days and report lasting benefits from what they have learned. Participants continue to be complimentary about the content of the training and the delivery style of the leader whose expertise is valued. The mix of presentations and practical site-based activities meet the needs of participants.

Participants are leaving the training better prepared and more confident to carry out regular inspections and maintain their places of worship. The intentions they identify on the training day are subsequently implemented leading to immediate improvement in the maintenance of their places of worship. There is growing evidence that improved practices continue with more attention given to recording inspection and maintenance, regular inspection schedules, better organisation of maintenance, and better relationships with building professionals.

Attendance on the training day is reinforcing participants’ volunteering by building their confidence and providing much needed support.

The project has created an impressive group of course support materials including a maintenance handbook, inspection checklist, annual inspection calendar, website, e-bulletin and DVD. These are all valued by participants and being regularly used.

There is evidence that the project is having a longer-term impact on both participants and on the maintenance of places of worship. Follow up interviews with participants and site visits confirmed that the course not only prompted immediate improvements to practice but has also encouraged participants to take more ownership of the way their church building is managed. It is clear from previous years’ research that participants carry out a wide range of

activities and these now appear to be better coordinated and informed by best practice.

The churchwarden workforce is made up of volunteers with the majority working in pairs or small groups to look after a church or group of churches. Many report having received no training for the job, although some were 'inducted' by previous post holders. The research suggests that this volunteer workforce is very keen to have better training and support to carry out its duties, and has enthusiastically embraced the SPAB training. This does raise questions about how the training needs of this workforce will be supported after this project ends.

Many participants made comments about the value of having access to repeat training and for new recruits to experience this training as standard. Many participants intended to go back to their parish and cascade what they had learned to others, spreading the maintenance message. However, in some instances, particularly when it comes to decisions about how to allocate scarce parish budgets, maintenance was low on the list of priorities. This suggests that wider groups of decision makers, for example Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) may benefit from more awareness raising about the value of maintaining their buildings. As one participant put it:

“If you want to carry on worshiping in a building such as this, it has a cost implication and are you willing to pay this amount of money?”  
*Interview with participant, Cambridge*

## Recommendations

Three years into a 5-year project, there is little more to be suggested to improve either the content or delivery of the training days. Previous recommendations have been addressed, participant satisfaction is impressive and there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that good maintenance practice is sustained post course. The project's associated support materials are in place, and are being used and valued by participants. There remains more work to do on engaging with a wider range of participants and plans are in place to do this during 2010.

Future development of the project should now focus on securing the legacy of the project. Areas to be considered include:

- How the team might work with others to continue to raise awareness of maintenance at a senior leadership level with faith authorities
- How the team might work with local church authorities to embed training on building maintenance within local management structures, for example for Parochial Church Councils.
- How the team might work with others to influence the production and delivery of a standard training programme for all church wardens

- How the training day for young people on the Construction and Built Environment Diploma can be developed and reported to be available in the future as a teaching resource
- How the website and associated course materials can be sustained after the project

Subsequent external evaluations will focus on this issue of legacy. In particular during 2010-11 discussions will take place with the project team to identify and report on the sustainability of the project work and how its key benefits can be continued in the future.