PLACES OF WORSHIP FABRIC NEEDS SURVEY, 2005

A Report on a survey commissioned by
English Heritage and the Council for the Care of Churches.

Michael Wingate AA Dipl RIBA michael.wingate@zetnet.co.uk

May 2006

1 Introduction

1.1 This report was commissioned by English Heritage and the Council for the Care of Churches in October 2005. It aims to establish the cost of the major repairs which would be needed to bring *all* Church of England (CoE) churches and all other *listed* places of worship in England into good repair and to establish the ongoing maintenance cost of keeping such buildings in good repair.

1.2 The work builds on a similar study conducted by Geoffrey Claridge for the same two organisations in 1994/5 and reviews the same sample of buildings.

1.3 The study makes use of statistical information helpfully provided by the Church of England, in particular the figures from the Parochial Returns of 2003. The interpretation and analysis of those figures are the author's own.

2 Background

2.1 If we are to respond to the well rehearsed problems that congregations face in maintaining historic places of worship, we need to understand the essential foreseeable future costs of putting such places of worship into good repair and the costs of keeping them in that state. Although the definitions of such terms as 'good repair' or 'basic maintenance' might vary, it is felt that it should be possible to establish some basic figures from sampling that would be sufficiently robust to propose further financial and management measures for English Heritage (EH), Government and the denominations to consider.

2.2 In 1994/5, the Council for the Care of Churches (CCC) and EH conducted a *Churches Needs Survey* to inform a campaign to lift the level of funding available for repair grants. It concentrated on churches in the dioceses of Newcastle, Manchester, Gloucester, St Edmundsbury and Portsmouth. Although the majority were listed, the sample deliberately included unlisted churches too, for comparative purposes. However, the subset sample was too small to be of real use. For various reasons, the results were not published

until 1998, by which time the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) had become established and there was a Joint Places of Worship Grant Scheme between EH and HLF. The five Church of England areas chosen for the study were intended to broadly represent the urban/rural/suburban contexts. Cheltenham and Newcastle were included as there were already some reasonably good comparative statistics available from a 1973 study done by the Church of England to make the case for State Aid to the Department of the Environment.

2.3 Although there have been substantial grants available for nearly 30 years, and denominations report signs of growth in previously declining congregations, clergy numbers continue to decline and some parishes are finding the whole process of repairing and maintaining their historic buildings too difficult. It is thought that such situations are increasing in number – though at present there is no comprehensive mechanism for monitoring numbers. Although formal redundancies have not been increasing, there is a perception that many congregations are on the brink of taking such action. By returning to those places of worship in the 1994 survey, it is hoped to understand better to what extent the recommended fabric repairs have been achieved, the reasons if they have not been undertaken and, where they have been done, the sources of support found most useful. Re-examination should also verify the findings of the 1994 Survey.

2.4 A number of organisations look after redundant churches and chapels, primarily as visitor attractions but also housing other non-worship activities. They range from the Churches Conservation Trust with 336 churches, to the Ipswich Historic Churches Trust with just six. Other estates are those of the Friends of Friendless Churches, the Historic Chapels Trust and the Norwich Historic Churches Trust. They all have the preservation of the building as one of their main aims and might therefore be considered to be exemplars for establishing the costs of maintaining such buildings. They have their own budgetary and operational problems that lead to priorities being established, analogous to those faced by the congregations of places of worship in regular use. They ought to provide a good guide to fabric maintenance cost. Further information on maintenance costs is emerging from a pilot study on churches in use in St Edmundsbury Diocese.

---

3 Aims and objectives of the survey

3.1 The overall aims of this study were to establish the current outstanding repair bill for listed places of worship in England and to establish the annual maintenance costs. The equivalent costs were to be established for the unlisted buildings in the survey.

3.2 The earlier survey included a report by Geoffrey Claridge who set out recommended repairs and their costs for each of the sampled buildings for the period 1995–2005. These suggestions were to be re-visited and the progress

against the 1994 advice was to be recorded. Where possible the predicted costs were compared with the costs of the eventual repairs.

3.3 The parishes in the Church of England make annual financial returns and the estimates of outstanding fabric repair costs given in the 2003 returns were compared with the results of the present study.

3.4 An attempt was to be made to estimate the likely cost of repairs to other places of worship, outside the Church of England.

3.5 From all of that an attempt was to be made to create an estimate of the cost of outstanding repairs to listed places of worship in England and that was to be compared with the 1994 estimate.

3.6 An average annual maintenance cost for places of worship was to be established, based on a sample of those no longer in use and held in the care of the estates named in 2.2 above and on the feedback from a maintenance pilot scheme for churches still in use in the Diocese of St Edmundsbury.

---

4 Methodology

4.1 This study is based on a careful look at the circumstances of individual buildings within pre-defined sample areas. The selection of the survey sample areas follows that in the earlier *Churches Needs Survey* (CNS 94). The five areas are based on CoE deaneries and provide a balance of urban, suburban and rural churches. The areas also offer a wide social spread. There is a mix of buildings of all sizes and ages, both listed and unlisted. Within the defined areas every Church of England church is included, but other places of worship are only included if they chose to take part in CNS 94. While efforts were made to cover a range of places of worship with different contexts, the sample is not necessarily statistically representative.

The sample buildings in this present *Places of Worship Fabric Needs Survey* (FNS 05) are those of CNS 94 with the following differences. One church has been dropped from the survey because of its non-parochial circumstances. Still included in this survey are one which has become redundant (St Ignatius, Salford), one which has been sold for development (West Avenue URC, Gosforth) and one which has been demolished (Weaste Lane URC, Weaste, Salford). A few others were on the brink of major changes. It will be seen that insufficient data was available to make assessments for ten of the original sample of 137 buildings where there was not enough time available to make a visit to compensate for the lack of available documentary evidence.

4.2 <u>The sample areas are</u>:

- the Deanery of Petersfield in the Diocese of Portsmouth which includes the market town and the surrounding rural area
- the Deanery of Newcastle Central which extends out northwards from the city centre through Jesmond and Gosforth to the first villages

- the Deaneries of Salford and Eccles in the Diocese of Manchester, a conurbation, but reaching out to the rural fringe at Worsley.
- the Deanery of Cheltenham in the Diocese of Gloucester, including the town centre and the largely suburban areas together with a few of the nearby villages.
- the Deanery of Halesworth in the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, another market town and its surrounding villages.

4.3 Survey questionnaires were prepared by the commissioning team and were received by 128 contacts at the places of worship, typically, in the CoE, a churchwarden. The Secretaries of the Diocesan Advisory Committees helped to provide contact details for this and to chivvy late responders. Responses were received from 49% of the recipients.

The responses to the questions were set out on a spreadsheet for analysis and to help share the information amongst the team. Nick Chapple, the Policy Adviser for Places of Worship at EH, prepared a summary of the responses and this is included here as Appendix D.

4.4 The intention was that this should be a largely desk based review of information, including

- the 1994 survey questionnaire returns
- Geoffrey Claridge's report (CNS 94)
  and his detailed reports and photographs of the individual places of worship
- the latest quinquennial inspection reports (kindly provided by the DAC Secretaries)
- the FNS 05 survey questionnaire responses
- financial details abstracted from the CoE *Parish Finance Returns* for the years 1995-2004
- the answers to the "one-off" questions about fabric repair costs in the 2003 CoE *Parish Finance Returns.* These were made available on a parish by parish basis for the churches in our study areas and as summaries for each diocese.

It was also intended that the review should be backed up with conversations with the churches' inspecting architects and churchwardens. Finally a few visits were to be made to confirm the results of those enquiries.

4.5 However, it was found that some of the critical information for that process was not available, or not available in time. 39% of the quinquennial inspection reports (QIRs) included no cost information and many others had such brief information as to make it impossible to relate the costs to the works recommended. For example, in one diocese the norm was to include a single figure for all works suggested over the quinquennium. Other reports did not set out a possible repair programme, but were simply schedules of defects. The statistical information from the CoE was also not available until well into the progress of this study.

4.6 Brief visits were planned to each of the five study areas. The first trips were arranged to cover carefully selected buildings which would be

representative of different building types and the work of different inspecting architects, and to buildings where CNS 94 had shown that there were particularly difficult problems. On this basis four appointments were made each day to meet one or more representatives, usually churchwardens or a minister. Two things became clear. On the one hand the visits had something of the air of an inquisition in which churchwardens wondered whatever they had done wrong to be selected for a visit, or suffered embarrassment over the non-return of questionnaires. This was an unhappy (but quite unintended) way to treat the very people who willingly work so hard to care for the buildings. On the other hand it became clear that even a very brief visit was extremely helpful to fill in cost data where the documents had not provided it and to check on the progress of repairs advised in CNS 94. Therefore, between the appointments as many other visits as possible were slotted in. On the later trips the absolute minimum of appointments were made so as to cover as much ground as possible. In practice, even when I had not made an appointment, I often met someone at a church who was familiar with the fabric repairs.

4.7 A small digression on the subject of public access to places of worship: the first visits were made in Suffolk where almost every church was open, or where keys were readily available. The next visits were in Manchester where not only were most of the churches locked, but keys were almost never available to borrow – only escorted visits were possible. The Portsmouth churches were generally open, the Newcastle and Cheltenham churches varied. In two cases I was forbidden entry to churches on the grounds that there were children there.

4.8 At the churches, brief notes were taken in a pocket book and a few photographs were taken. Towers were not climbed and ladder access was not sought. The notes in CNS 94 included concise descriptions of the fabric and concise records of a formal survey, but because of the time constraints that example was not followed here. However, the condition was noted against the following checklist which appears in a very few of the FNS 05 notes where there was no QIR available and where a fuller description of the condition was thought to make it easier to understand the suggested repairs.

1 Roofs	8 Plaster & decorations
2 Rainwater Goods	9 Glazing
3 Wall surfaces	10 Floors
4 Wall structure	11 Furnishings
5 Openings & tracery	12 Heating
6 Tower & spire	13 Wiring
7 Roof structure or ceilings	14 Tower interior

As soon as possible afterwards, these notes and some of the photographs were transferred to the word-processed sheets of building notes along with brief details from the documentary sources. A sample of one of these record sheets is included at Appendix C. The notes include background data on the building as well as summarising the work items needed, in a rather imperative style. Costs are put forward and the notes also show whether the assessment of costs is from the QIR or as a result of a visit. Sometimes they

are from both sources. The figures were adjusted to the survey datum of January 2006 using the BCIS All-in Tender Price Index. (This same index was used for all adjustments throughout this report). In nearly every case photographs were included, usually new photographs but sometimes copied, with thanks, from Geoffrey Claridge's work. It must be stressed that the purpose of the notes is to establish overall national values for repairs needed and not to advise parishes on the care of their churches. For guidance on that they should consult their inspecting architects or surveyors and should under no circumstances rely on the suggestions in the FNS 05 notes.

4.9 The basic estimates of repair needs were transferred to the spreadsheet to share around the team.

4.10 A database was then built setting out on four tables:

- the description : area (CoE diocese), FNS reference number, description (dedication and location), the size, the complexity, the denomination, the date, the listing status and any special notes
- the current needs: FNS reference number, minor works, urgent works, medium term works, deferrable works, 5 & 10 year cumulative totals and the responses to the CoE 2003 one-off questions.
- the achievement: the FNS reference numbers, needs assessed at CNS 94, the same adjusted to the Jan 2006 datum, expenditure over 5 years and 9 years, and three "success" indicators
- notes on the quinquennial inspection reports: the FNS reference number, method of presenting estimated costs, inclusion of plans and photographs, architect or surveyor and any notes.

Queries against this database (with a few detours to spreadsheets) provided the information for nearly all of the results given in this report. It is hoped that this database will provide a starting point for any future research into the sample buildings.

---

5 Results

5.1 Recommended repairs and their costs for 1995-2004

5.1.1 The 1994 Churches Needs Survey (CNS 94) has been reviewed and the figures for the necessary repairs to the 137 places of worship in that survey have been tabulated for the degrees of urgency given in the reports:

- minor repairs and maintenance,
- urgent repairs needed within two years,
- repairs needed in the medium term (years three to five)
- repairs which might be deferred beyond five years (taken as being needed within ten years)

5.1.2 From these figures averages have been taken for each degree of urgency and for the cumulative costs over five year and ten year periods.

These are shown, after adjustment for inflation, in chart 1 overleaf, alongside the comparable figures for the present Places of Worship Fabric Needs Survey 2005 (FNS 2005). The cumulative figures for averages over the ten year periods showed that the adjusted CNS 94 figures were around 11% higher than the FNS 05 figures. This might reflect a general improvement in the condition of the buildings after a decade of repairs, but other factors could also be involved. In particular, setting timescales for repairs depends on the personal approach to repair priorities adopted by professional advisors. Please see section 5.3.4 below.

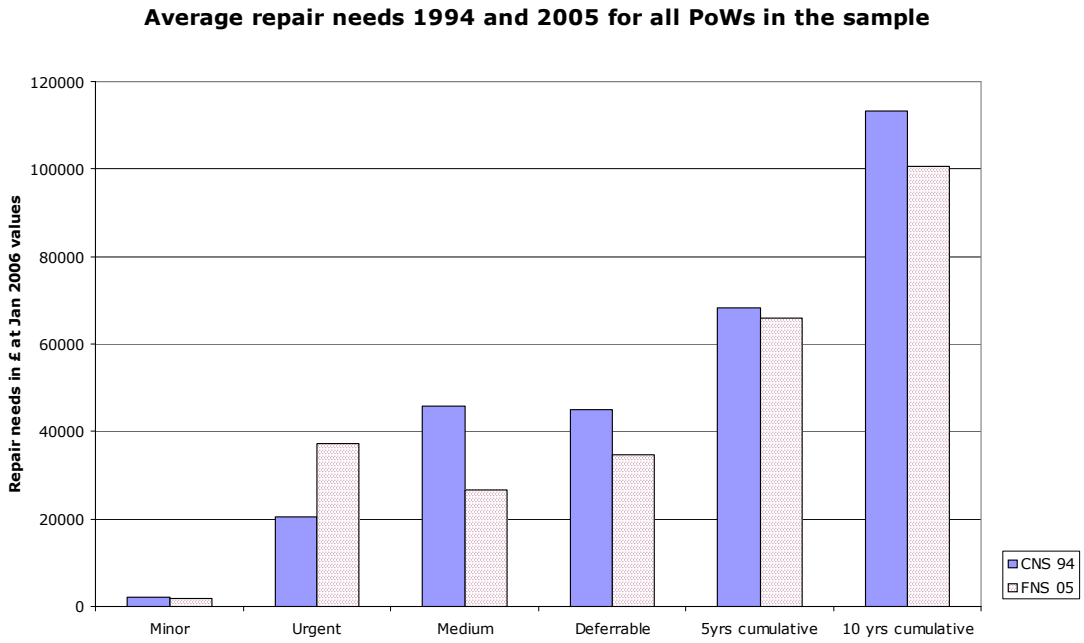

CHART 1

5.2 A review of progress of fabric repairs in 1995-2005 against the 1994 survey expectations.

5.2.1 There is no readily discernible link between the needs identified in the 1994 Churches Needs Survey (CNS 94) and the repairs which were actually carried out in the subsequent years. The assessed needs from CNS 94 were not sent to the parishes as an agenda; the repairs subsequently tackled would have come about through the normal process following quinquennial inspections or by the initiative of the congregation. In some cases a visit for FNS 05 showed that the repairs anticipated in CNS 94 had indeed all been carried out, but in most cases some of the identified work had been done, some had been done in a different way and some was still outstanding. Occasionally the parish had not yet seen any urgency in the work anticipated. Very often other things would have been done as well as some of the CNS 94 repairs. With so many possible outcomes it has not been possible to match them directly to the expectations. Usually the architects and churchwardens have changed over the past ten years and the information about what work has been done is not readily available.

5.2.2 For the Church of England buildings in this survey we have used the annual *Parish Finance Returns* to identify the value of building repairs carried out. An indication of "success" has been judged to be the percentage ratio of expenditure on repairs to the repair costs foreseen in CNS 94. This gives a useful ranking, but can be misleading where the requirements assessed in1994 were very low (in which case quite a modest extra repair leads a very high ranking) or where large repairs have been done for work which was outside the brief of CNS 94, such as rebuilding an organ or major works to the bells. Some works of re-ordering may be caught in the expenditure figure but would not be in the CNS 94 forecast. Many churches will have had significant costs in connection with the Disability Discrimination Act and whilst these are not repair costs they are likely to have been accounted with the repair figures.

5.2.3 The calculation here of the "success" indicator makes no adjustment for inflation or for the fees and VAT which will have been included in the expenditure figures. These are not in the CNS 94 "needs" figures, but a compensation can easily be made by the way the figures are read. The "par" value (that is, just achieving the target) needs to be around 143 instead of 100 for expenditure including fees, VAT and inflation over five years and around 156 for similar expenditure over nine years. When the scores were tabulated anything over 500 was just recorded as 500 since those cases were clearly subject to one or more of the distortions suggested above.

5.2.4 There were 119 Church of England churches in the FNS 05 sample, but a few of these were within parish groupings which effectively combined the expenditure records for two or more churches; allowing for this, there were 103 distinct records. Of these 38 (37%) had a score of over 143 when expenditure from 1995-1999 was compared with the five year target in CNS 94. By 2003 (the latest figures available) 61% of the sample had achieved the CNS 94 five year target and 40% had already achieved the 10 year target. This is shown below in charts 2 and 3.

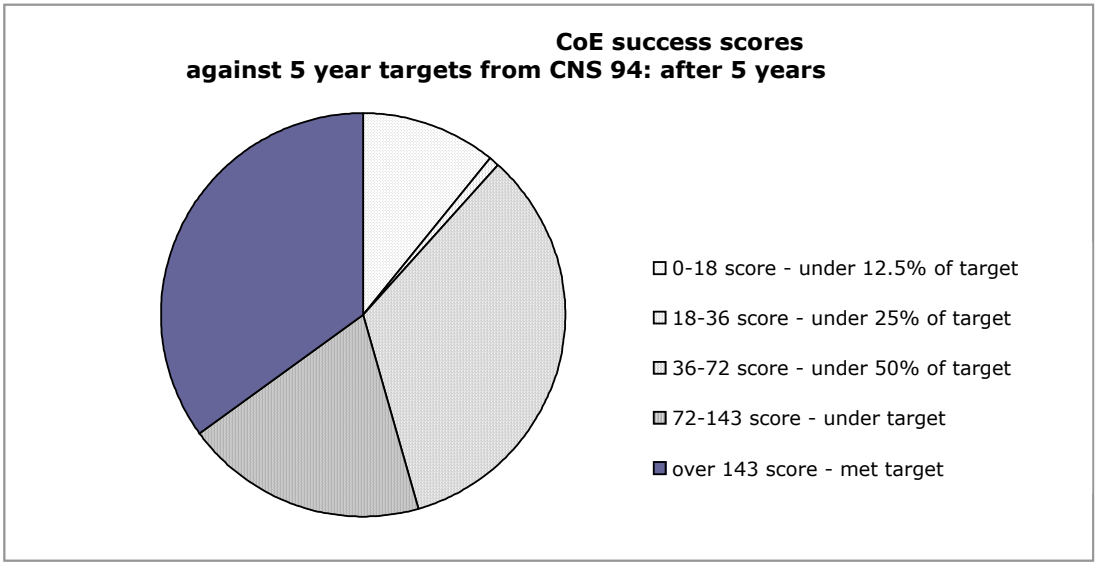

CHART 2

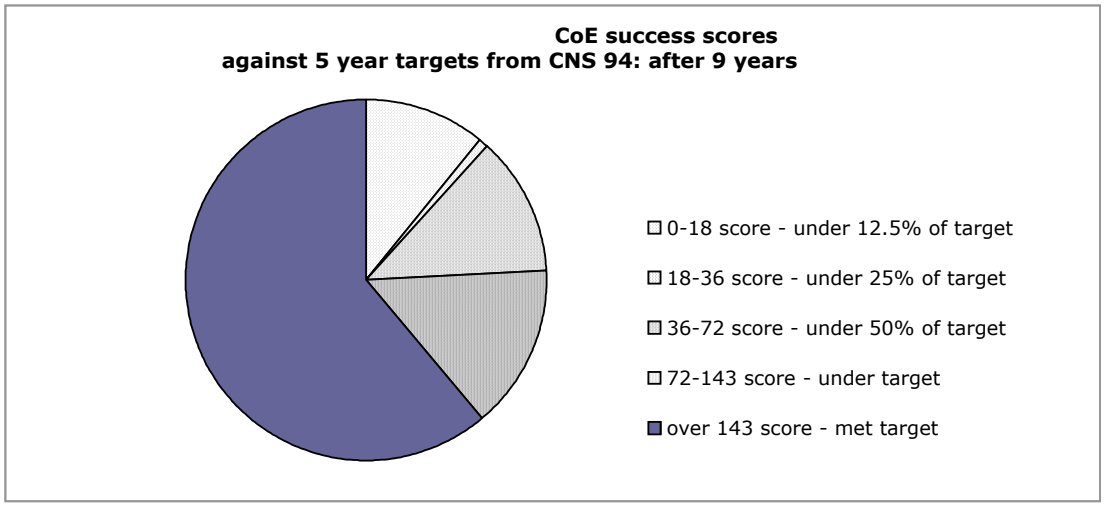

CHART 3

5.2.5 This analysis can highlight churches where disrepair may be a serious problem by looking for those with particularly low scores. Eleven (11%) CoE churches had spent less than one eighth of the expected values of their five-year repair needs, even after nine years. These eleven buildings include those whose future appeared uncertain as well as the one CoE church which has become redundant since 1994. Within the group there are also a few parishes which seem not to have submitted records and it is possible, though unlikely, that there might be some where effective holding repairs have been achieved for negligible cost.

5.2.6 Some of the respondents to the FNS 05 questionnaire noted that the cost of the works done were substantially higher than the figures anticipated in FNS 04. The effect of inflation (measured for this purpose as the rise of an index of building tender prices) means that a building project tendered at £10,000 early in 1995 might now be expected to be tendered at around £17,675 and with fees and VAT that might gross up to over £23,000. One of the criticisms received in the responses to the questionnaire was from a parish which had endured a particularly expensive series of outbreaks of dry rot, but that was an unforeseeable expenditure. Another respondent had spent a breathtakingly large sum repairing a spire, quite beyond what could have been guessed from past experience. However, on the whole, the estimated costs, with appropriate increases for inflation, have been a reliable guide to the actual fabric needs of most of the buildings over a nine year period.

5.3 An estimation (comparable to that in 1994) of repair costs for each studied PoW in the period 2006-2015.

5.3.1 As described at 4.8 above, this report has been developed from the *Building Notes* prepared for each place of worship in the survey. Appendix A, below, sets out in tables the assessed repair needs taken from those notes for each of the buildings in each of the five study areas.

5.3.2 Chart 4, below, shows the average repair needs over ten years for small, medium and large places of worship (listed and unlisted), both CoE and non-conformist, as established in FNS 05. The non-conformist sample was very small and the bar for large non-conformist PoWs represents a single church.

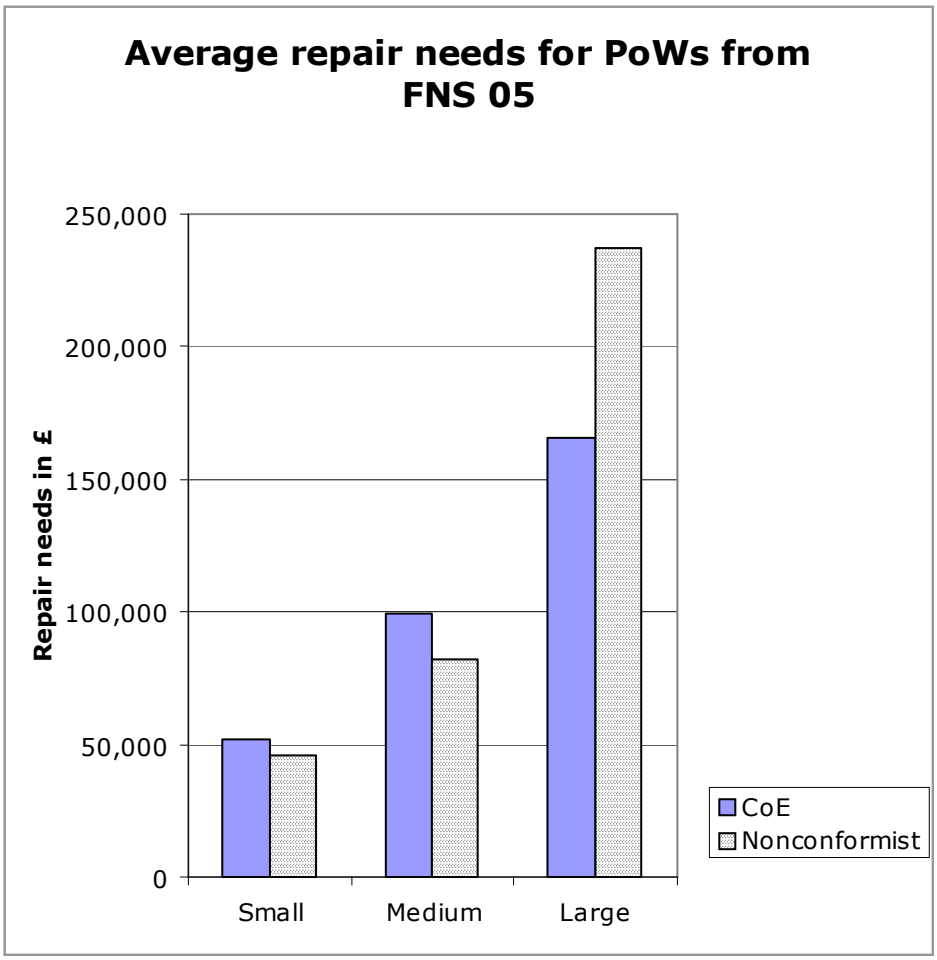

CHART 4

5.3.3 It would be comforting to believe that the current figure for needs would be something like the 1994 figure, less the subsequent repair costs with suitable adjustments for inflation, but unhappily a need for further repairs always emerges over the years. This is particularly so if insufficient attention is paid to the routine care of the buildings, or where the materials used are not robust. There will also be repairs arising from exceptionally severe weather or other unexpected events. In one case a major repair was needed after a vehicle hit the church!

5.3.4 The cost assessments in CNS 94 and FNS 05 have been the judgement of two individuals and must reflect their differences. Claridge CNS 94 often gave a higher degree of urgency to stone replacement than Wingate FNS 05 has done. This reflects Claridge's great experience of essential stone repairs near the south coast and Wingate's later experience of the operation of the EH/HLF grant schemes over the past decade. Grant

money under those schemes has been available for masonry repairs only when the urgency is very great, but we have not yet seen excessive consequential damage caused by deferring masonry works. The other difference is in the priority given to ailing roofs. Claridge would often spot the first signs of serious deterioration of tiled roofs before the quinquennial inspecting architect and would give the re-roofing a high priority based on those early indications. Wingate's experience has been that ailing roofs can often be patched up for quite a few years when funds are not available for major repair and so the priorities he has given them have consequently been rather lower. However, the high priority Wingate gives to the repair of rainwater goods and disposal means that, overall, rather more of the works he foresees are in the highest category, within the next two years rather than in the following three years.

5.4 A comparison between repair cost indicated in the Church of England 2003 parochial returns and the current study.

5.4.1 The parishes of the Church of England are asked to make yearly returns of their expenditure and, as well as the routine questions, each year they may be asked two additional 'one-off' questions. For the year 2003 the one-off questions concerned the cost of outstanding repairs. They were:

- *Based on your most recent quinquennial inspection report, what is the estimated cost of repairs still needed to the church(es) covered by this form?*
- *How much of this estimated cost is for repairs to listed churches?*

The 2003 Parochial Return Questionnaire was the first time that all parishes had been asked to estimate their repair bill still outstanding (in addition to the amount actually spent over the year). The figures provided gave only an incomplete snapshot – not all parishes completed the form and not all that did gave a figure for outstanding repair costs. It is therefore clear that the total of £378.8 million (of which £328.5 million, 87%, was for listed churches) indicated in the returns is a minimum figure.

5.4.2 The average cost of repairs needed for all CoE churches (listed and unlisted) within the study areas is shown by FNS 05 to be £66,377 over the next five years rising to £98,325 over ten years. In only two cases have we suggested that the foreseeable repairs should be carried out over longer periods and the cost of the repairs beyond ten years has not been included.

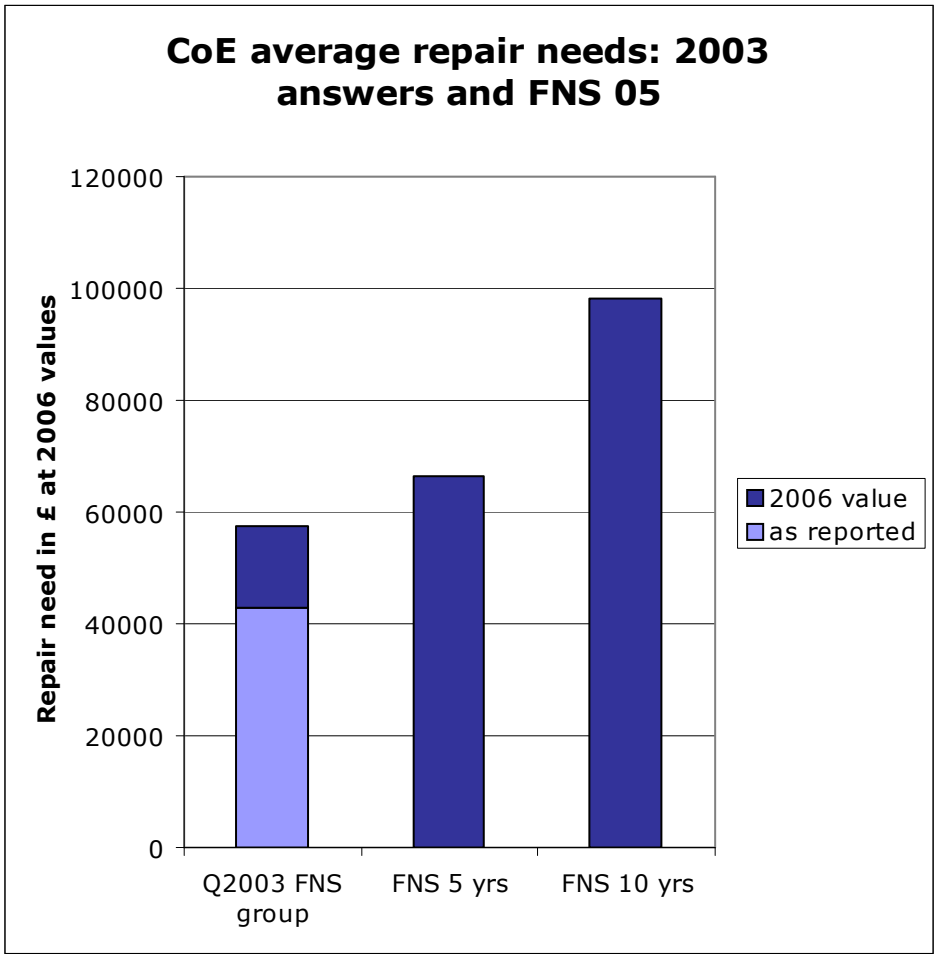

CHART 5

5.4.3 The average repair needs for the same group of churches as revealed by the CoE 2003 questions (Q2003) was £43,015. This would be £57,353 after adjustment to January 2006 values and making allowance for the span of dates of the quinquennial inspection reports (QIRs) current in 2003. This adjusted figure is close to the FNS 05 result for the repairs needed in the first five years (-14%). Only 4% of the QIRs in our sample suggested any figure for the possible cost of works beyond the next five years and so the costs of that work would not emerge from the CoE answers, even when the nature of possible longer term works had been indicated in the QIRs. The FNS 05 forecast for repair needs over *ten* years is 71% higher than the amount which the parishes have foreseen for this group of churches. This is shown above in chart 5.

5.4.4 The chart shows a fair match between the forecasted repairs in the parochial returns for 2003 and the five year assessment in FNS 05 for our sample group of churches, but not a good match for the overall responses for the whole of England. At first sight it may be thought that they are both developed from the quinquennial reports, but in fact the FNS 05 figures were developed largely from the site visits and the general impression was that these were producing higher needs figures than the QIRs.

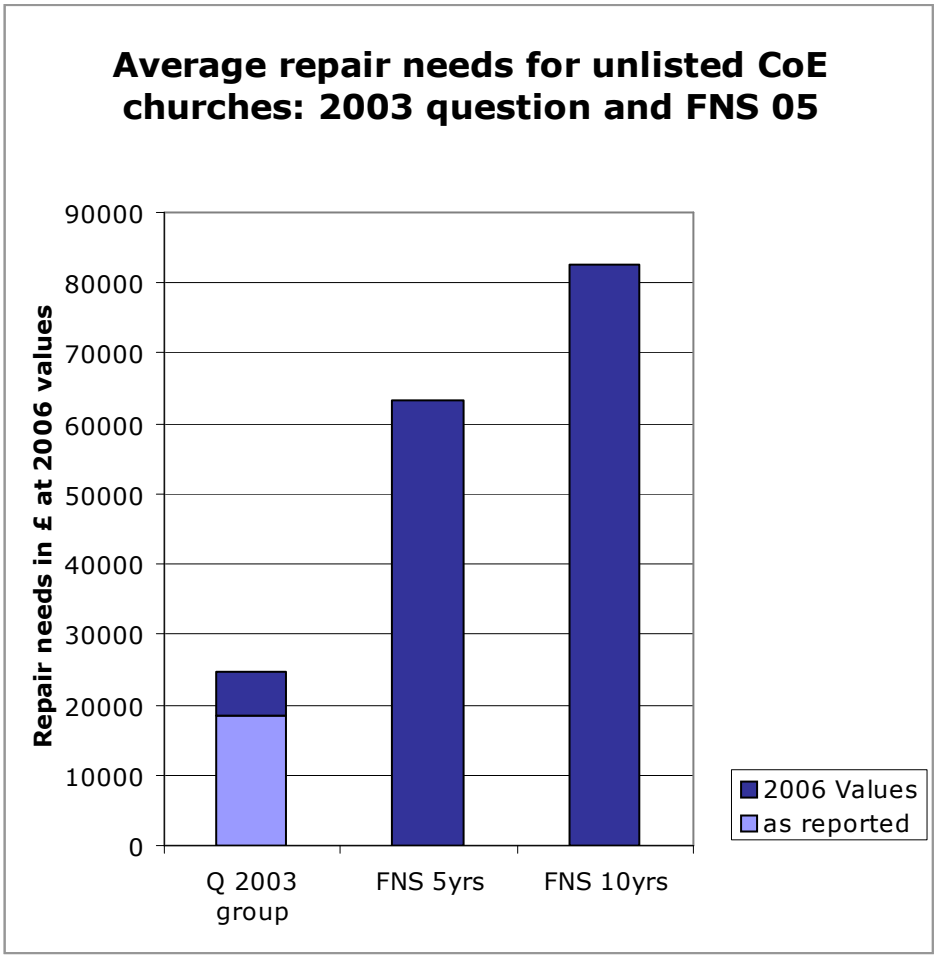

CHART 6

5.4.5 For unlisted churches in the sample group the comparative figures are £18,509 (£24,679 @ Jan 2006 values) foreseen by the parishes and £63,415 over 5 years or £82,690 over 10 years indicated in FNS 05 (see chart 6 above). So the parishes and their quinquennial surveyors felt that the unlisted churches had much lower repair needs than the listed churches – definitely not the conclusion reached in FNS 05. There are two broad categories of unlisted churches, those from the nineteenth and early twentieth century which are essentially of similar traditional construction to the listed buildings of their age, and post-war buildings of modern (relatively untried) construction - 62% of the unlisted CoE churches in our sample were built after 1955. Just as in the housing and commercial sectors we have seen that buildings of that age are not valued highly, often not well maintained and vulnerable to extra problems such as concrete decay, decay of window frames and certain roof coverings. There may be a greater expectation just to patch and mend newer buildings rather than to make radical interventions.

5.5 An estimate of the likely costs of outstanding repairs to other listed places of worship.

5.5.1 The original sample in CNS 94 contained 137 places of worship of which 17 were non-conformist places of worship. One of the latter has since

been demolished and another sold. Only seven buildings in the non-conformist sample were listed buildings – two Roman Catholic churches, four United Reformed Churches and one synagogue. Two of the listed non-conformist buildings were judged to be small, four were of medium size and one was large. No suitable data was obtained in FNS 05 for one of the medium sized Roman Catholic churches so the working sample was of only six buildings. This is an extremely small sample from which to extrapolate to a national total, but it does represent a fair spread of sizes and locations. It does not represent a fair spread of denominations since there were no Baptist or Methodist churches in the sample. Size is possibly more significant than denomination and so a provisional estimate will be made on this sample, but further building studies are needed.

5.5.2 The average 10 year cumulative needs assessed in FNS 05 for this sample was £96,983 of which £71,066 was needed within five years. The 10 year figure is comparable to that for CoE listed churches, but with a slightly higher proportion of the total needed in the first five years.

5.5.3 The overall national figure for the number of listed non-conformist places of worship is the subject of ongoing research by EH, but the current best estimate is around 2,300 buildings still in use, or perhaps rather fewer. The figures would thus scale up to £223 million repairs needed of which £163 million would be needed within the first five years. But, remember, that these figures are based on a very small sample.

5.6 An estimate of the cost of all outstanding repairs to listed places of worship in England, comparable to that created in 1994.

5.6.1 The FNS 05 database contains useful records of 102 listed places of worship. Their average repair needs have been assessed as £98,182 over ten years of which £63,777 will be needed within five years.

5.6.2 There are around 12,200 listed CoE churches and about 2,300 other listed places of worship in England (see above). For the total of around 14,500 listed places of worship still in use the total repair needs are thus estimated to be £1.42 billion of which about £925 million will be needed within the next five years or around £185 million each year.

5.7 An estimation of the average annual maintenance costs for places of worship.

5.7.1 The Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) (formerly the Redundant Churches Fund) was set up to care for architecturally or historically outstanding Church of England churches which are no longer needed for parish use. It cares for 336 churches and aims both to preserve them and to make them accessible to the public. It aims to bring its buildings into good repair as quickly as possible and then exercises high standards of maintenance to keep them in that state. The most recent *Annual Report and*

Accounts shows that for the year ending 31 March 2005 the cost of maintenance was £499,448. In the previous year the figure was £323,160 and the difference is because the later year includes the cost of the cyclical reports on half of the churches. The reporting is, in a sense, a part of the overall maintenance cost, but for the present purpose it will be excluded and the simplest way to do that is just to use the earlier figure. The totals also include the costs of minor repairs costing under £1,000 and of maintenance (mowing) in 80 of the churchyards. An adjusted maintenance cost can be estimated by deducting, say, £250 for each of the churchyards mown and adjusting costs from 4Q03 to 1Q06 on the BCIS index. This gives an average figure of £1,067 at Jan 2006 values. There were 332 churches in that sample.

5.7.2 The Historic Chapels Trust (HCT) operates in a similar way to care for and present redundant chapels and other places of worship from all faiths and denominations except for the Church of England. The Trust has kindly made available to us the yearly summaries of expenditure records on each chapel from 1995/6 to 2004/5. These records are a combination of repair and maintenance costs and from them we have picked out thirteen samples of expenditure on six of the chapels for years in which there appeared to have been no major repair costs. These figures were adjusted up to Jan 2006 values and the average figure was £629 per chapel.

5.7.3.1 The Norwich Historic Churches Trust (NHCT) cares for seventeen redundant medieval churches in that city. It has never had the injection of funds necessary to bring all of the churches quickly into good repair but has had to fund repairs using what grants were available from year to year. Maintenance and establishment costs are financed by commercial rents from the churches. The trust arranges for annual maintenance under two contracts for two groups of churches, with two visits to clean and clear lead gutters, rainwater goods and gullies and to rod drains where that is possible. On one of the two visits the tower roof and outlets are cleared. Eyes and hawsers have been fixed to the buildings for fall-arrest systems to allow safe maintenance access. Incidental repairs are done at an extra cost under a dayworks contract. The contract figure (cleaning and reports) averages out at £175 for the two visits and the annual average spent on the seventeen churches over the past two years, including minor repairs, was £906 at Jan 2006 values, net of VAT. The trust has the advantage that the churches are all very close to one another, but the disadvantage that there are certain landlord-tenant related costs involved. A salaried part time Clerk of Works organises the work.

5.7.3.2 In 1999 Michael Morrison (architect of Purcell Miller Tritton and Partners) and Hugh Ferrier (surveyor) prepared a report for the Norfolk Historic Churches Trust in which the whole operation was reviewed. One section of their report considered the necessary annual maintenance costs including the routine maintenance as above and the testing of apparatus, repair of glass, QIRs and the routine re-painting of external ironwork and woodwork. It assessed this as £1,635 per church and that would be £2,452 at Jan 2006 levels.

5.7.4 The Friends of Friendless Churches (FoFC) care for 19 churches in Wales and 19 in England . Most of the maintenance on the Welsh churches is handled in-house. In England most, but not all, of the churches are covered by maintenance contracts to clean gutters, downpipes and gullies, to refix occasional slipped slates with tingles and to report back on any problems found. Arrangements vary considerably from church to church. Typical costs for routine maintenance are in the region £300 to £400 per year. Three examples were looked up for us. The costs were £282, £210 and £890. The first two were small and simple churches and the third was a much larger church with a substantial tower. The work for the larger church included new rainwater goods on the porch. The approximate cost per church over this sample of three was £491 at Jan 2006 values.

5.7.5 The Diocese of St Edmundsbury has arranged a pilot scheme for maintenance contracts for parish churches (here the sample is of churches still in use). The DAC Secretary had a common specification drawn up and obtained tenders from five experienced contractors to carry out routine tasks and to report any defects found on sixty four volunteer churches. At this stage the scheme is supported with some external grant aid. There are no large churches in the scheme and the tenders range from £195 to £554 (net of VAT) for the individual churches. The average tender was £348 (at 2Q05 values) or about £351 at January 2006 values.

5.7.6 There is quite a wide variation between the figures collected from these various sources, the sample sizes are very uneven and the maintenance definitions vary, but they do all represent actual experiences of maintenance costs for organisations which are trying to achieve high standards with carefully controlled expenditure. Individual parishes would be unlikely to be able to bring such expertise to bear to get such good value for money. Average costs were £351 for the St Edmundsbury pilot scheme, £491 for the small sample from FoFC, £629 for HCT, £906 for NHCT and £1067 for CCT. The simple average for all the churches included in these samples was £941. It is interesting to compare all of these with the study done for NHCT suggesting an expenditure of £2,542 (at Jan 2006 values) should be expected, including testing and inspections and routine painting.

5.7.7 Many parishes are unlikely to have the skills to arrange for work as cost- effectively as this. For the larger buildings, where ladder access is not viable even with fixings for the ladders and for safety harnesses, the routine maintenance costs could be very much higher than the average figures.

6 Summary of conclusions

6.1 Although the sample of buildings in the study was intended to provide a fair cross-section of England's places of worship it was not selected to be statistically representative. Moreover, a larger sample would have been desirable in order to strengthen the findings of the study. Nevertheless on the basis of the work done in FNS 05 the following conclusions have been reached.

6.2 The current outstanding repair bill for listed places of worship has been estimated at around £1.42 billion over ten years.

The annual maintenance tasks for places of worship, once in a fair state of repair, will be similar to those for churches no longer in use, but parishes may not be able to organise the works as cost effectively as the charitable trusts and the one diocese whose work has been examined here. Average costs should be expected in the range £1,000 to £1,500 or around £2,500 if the costs of routine inspections and regular re-painting are included. The cost for larger buildings where ladder access is not viable could be very considerably higher.

6.3 It was not possible to mark off the actual repairs done to places of worship over the past decade against the works which had been suggested in CNS 94, but actual fabric expenditure over five and ten year periods has been compared church by church for CoE churches and set out as indicators of success against the five and ten year targets from the expectations in CNS 94. Only a handful of churches had done very few repairs. By five years 38% had spent the equivalent of their 5 year target. By nine years 61% had passed that mark and 40% had already passed their ten year target. However, these successes cannot be taken to mean that the actual works anticipated were those carried out. In the few cases where the expenditure could be simply related to the forecasts, the repair costs anticipated by CNS 94 (suitably adjusted for inflation and for fees and VAT) were generally about right.

6.4 The figures for anticipated repair costs which emerged from the 2003 Church of England parish finance returns, ***where the parishes had been able to answer the questions*** and after adjustment for inflation, were gratifyingly close to those anticipated for the ***five year*** need assessed in FNS 05 for the individual buildings in the FNS surveys, but that was only 58% of the FNS 05 assessment of repair costs for the full ten year period. A substantial proportion of parishes could not give responses to the one-off questions and so the total of the needs revealed by the responses is well below the estimated total repair need for all CoE churches on the basis of FNS 05.

6.5 From the very small sample of non-conformist places of worship, listed and unlisted, repair needs were established for only nine buildings. (There are

plans to rebuild two others, another has been demolished and another sold to a developer). The average repair needs over the next ten years are £79,833 at Jan 2006 values of which £51,389 will be needed within five years. Further research would be helpful.

6.6 We have established annual maintenance costs for places of worship no longer in use from the figures from 358 churches and chapels in four of the five estates named in clause 2.4 above and also for the 64 churches in a diocesan pilot scheme. The average figure was £941 at Jan 2006 rates.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank the following for their help in the preparation of this report: Nick Chapple (survey coordinator), Ian Forrest and Paul Shurer (building economics), Geoff Dawe (economist), Rebecca Payne (liaison at CoE), Lynda Barley, Sally-Ann Goold and Mike Meur (Research and Statistics Department at CoE). Special thanks are due to Sarah Robinson (Churches Conservation Trust), Colin Pordham and Charles Carus (Norwich Historic Churches Trust), Dr Jennifer Freeman (Historic Chapels Trust), Matthew Saunders (Friends of the Friendless Churches), James Halsall (St Edmundsbury Diocese), Jonathan MacKechnie Jarvis (Gloucester Diocese), Nigel Foxon (Newcastle Diocese) and Christine Hart and Tim Hatton (Manchester Diocese) and Rebecca Williams (Portsmouth Diocese). A great many members of the various parishes and other communities have given many hours of their time in completing the questionnaires and helping at the site visits. One even gave food and shelter for four nights to a stray architect. Many church architects and surveyors have freely given their time answering queries. Geoffrey Claridge must also be thanked for his help and guidance and for permission to re-use some of his photographs.

APPENDICES

A: Repair needs for the buildings in the study, arranged by diocese.

B: Summary notes for each area studied

C: A sample set of building notes on an individual place of worship

D: Notes on the responses to the Fabric Needs Questionnaire

E: Comments on the value of quinquennial inspection reports
