

The Church Roof Risk & Inspection Guide

A Practical Framework for Vicars, Church Wardens & PCCs

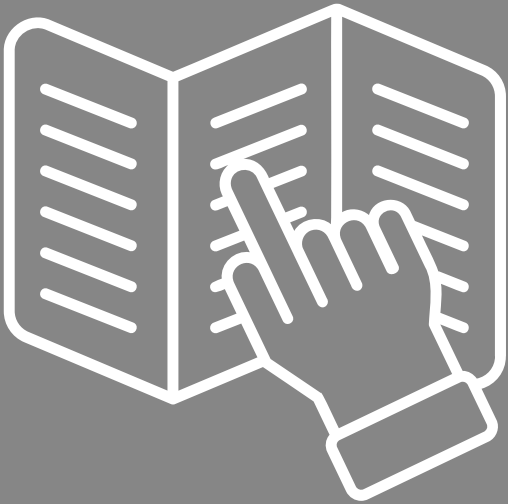
Three Weave - Heritage Aerial Intelligence

www.threeweave.co.uk

Why this Guide Matters

Protecting Your Church Before Small Issues Become Major Costs

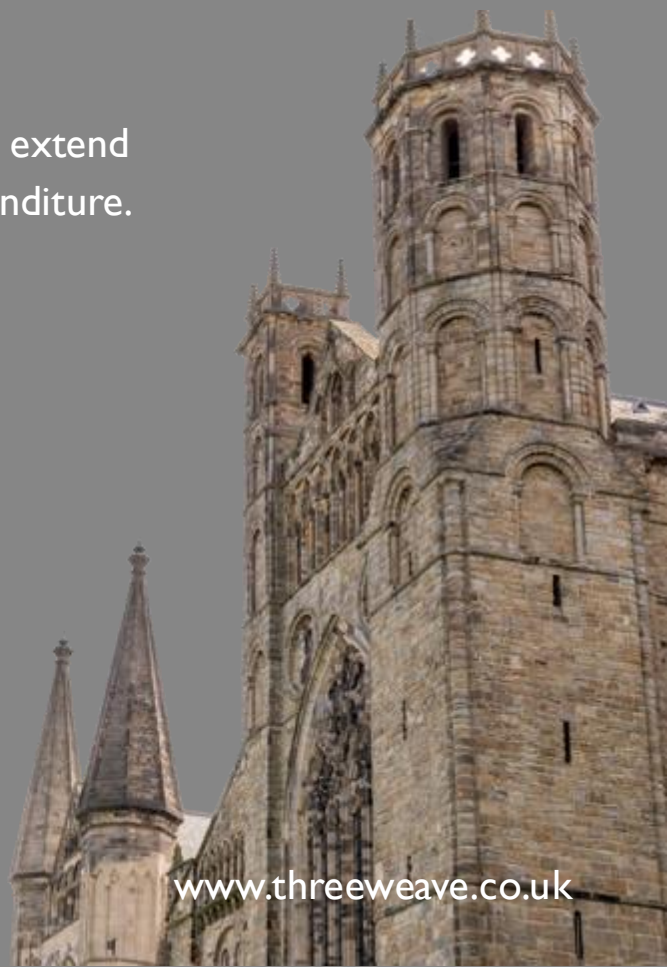
Church roofs are complex, often ageing structures where issues develop out of sight. What appears minor externally can quickly lead to significant internal damage if left unchecked.



This guide has been created to help you:

- Identify visible and hidden risks
- Help prioritise maintenance effectively
- Support informed PCC decision making
- Reduce the likelihood of costly emergency repairs

A proactive approach to inspection can significantly extend the life of your building and reduce long term expenditure.



How to Use This Guide

A Simple - Four Step Approach



Walk & Observe

Review your church externally and internally



Complete Checklist

Tick all issues that apply based on visible signs



Score Your Risk

Use the scoring system to understand overall condition



Plan Next Steps

Refer to recommendations based on your score



Risk Scoring System

Assign a Score to Each Issue Identified

Severity Level	Description	Score
Minor	Early signs, cosmetic, low immediate risk	1
Moderate	Clear deterioration, likely to worsen	2
Severe	Active failure of water ingress	3

Total Score Guide

- 0-10 ➡ Low Risk (monitor regularly)
- 11-20 ➡ Moderate Risk (inspection recommended)
- 21+ ➡ High Risk (urgent action advised)

Checklist: Roof Covering

Tiles, Slates & Lead

☐

Slipped, cracked, or missing tiles / slates

☐

Uneven roof lines or sagging sections

☐

Lead flashing lifting, splitting, or deteriorating

☐

Visible patch repairs or inconsistent materials

Why it matters:

These are primary entry points for water and often the earliest signs of wider deterioration.

Checklist: Gutters & Drainage

☐

Blocked or overgrowing gutters

☐

Vegetation growth in guttering

☐

Broken or misaligned downpipes

☐

Water staining on walls below gutters

Why it matters:

These are primary entry points for water and often the earliest signs of wider deterioration.

Checklist: Hidden High-Risk Areas

☐

Parapet gutters (behind walls) checked

☐

Valley gutters clear and intact

☐

Box gutters functioning correctly

☐

Areas behind towers or spires inspected

Why it matters:

These areas often fail unnoticed and are a leading cause of concealed water ingress.

Checklist: Structural Features

☐

Condition of spire or tower coverings

☐

Ridge lines secure and straight

☐

Chimneys stable with no cracking

☐

Louvres and vents intact and weatherproof

Why it matters:

Failures here can lead to structural risk as well as weather exposure.

Checklist: Internal Warning Signs

☐

Damp patches on ceilings or walls

☐

Peeling paint or plaster

☐

Musty odours in roof spaces

☐

Visible daylight through roof timbers

Why it matters:

Internal signs often indicate the issue is already advanced.

Checklist: Vegetation & Biological Growth

☐

Moss or algae buildup

☐

Plants growing in gutters or joints

☐

Plants establishing in ridgelines

☐

Bird activity causing blockages

Why it matters:

Organic growth retains moisture and accelerates material decay.

Checklist: Previous Repairs

☐

Evidence of temporary repairs

☐

Inconsistent materials used

☐

Lack of recent inspection records

Why it matters:

Short term fixes can mask deeper, unresolved issues.

Checklist: Access & Visibility

☐

Areas unsafe or difficult to inspect

☐

Reliance on scaffolding or cherry picker

☐

Limited visibility from ground level

Why it matters:

If you can't see it, you can't manage it hidden issues often escalate.



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High-Risk Church Areas

Where Problems Most Commonly Occur

Valley junctions
Parapet gutters
Tower to roof connections
Clerestory window lines
Nave roof slopes

Insight: These architectural features are particularly vulnerable due to water flow concentration and complex construction.

Consequence

What Happens If Issues Are Left Unchecked

- Blocked gutters can lead to masonry damage
- Lead failure can result in internal water damage
- Valley failure can sometimes lead to significant structural repair

Early detection can hugely reduce cost and disruption.

Maintenance Planning

Recommended Inspection Frequency

Every 6 months:	Visual internal check
Every Year:	Detailed inspection
After Storms:	Immediate Review



A Smarter Way to Inspect

Traditional inspections can be:
Costly, Time consuming and Limited in visibility

Three Weave provides a different approach using aerial intelligence to deliver:

- Full visibility across complex roof structures
- High resolution imagery for detailed review
- Safer access to difficult or hazardous areas
- Clear, structured insight to support planning and decision making

Next Step: Gain Clarity

If your assessment has highlighted potential risks, the next step is to better understand the condition of your roof particularly in areas that cannot be easily seen from ground level.

Three Weave supports churches by providing clear, reliable visual insight, helping inform maintenance planning and PCC discussions.

Contact:

Three Weave - Heritage Aerial Intelligence

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Protecting heritage buildings through smarter, safer inspection

Disclaimer:

This guide is provided by Three Weave - Heritage Aerial Intelligence for general informational purposes only. Three Weave are specialists in aerial data capture and visual roof intelligence. We are not chartered building surveyors, structural engineers, or roofing contractors, and the information provided within this guide does not constitute a formal survey, structural assessment, or professional diagnosis.

Any observations made using this checklist are intended to support early stage risk identification, preventative maintenance planning, and informed decision making.

Where concerns are identified, it is recommended that advice is sought from appropriately qualified professionals, such as a chartered surveyor or specialist contractor.



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