

MAINTENANCE CO-OPERATIVES S·P·A·B PROJECT



Maintenance Co-operative

Tool Kit

Welcome to the Maintenance Co-operatives Project!

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) is delighted to invite you to our nationwide network of volunteers who are helping to preserve some of England's most historic places of worship. This project has been set up with one important aim in mind: to connect, encourage and support people who care for, or who would like to help care for their local places of worship. Together with your dedicated local Project Officer, this toolkit will give you everything you need to join or set up a Maintenance Co-operative in your area.



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“Stave off decay by daily care”

William Morris

SPAB Founder William Morris understood how vital caring for historic buildings is to their future when he uttered these words back in 1877. Today we understand that every £1 ‘saved’ by not carrying out preventative maintenance at places of worship will likely cost at least £20 in repairs within five years¹.

This is where our Maintenance Co-operatives step in. Each co-operative is made up of a group of local volunteers who carry out a programme of planned preventative maintenance, essentially stopping decay before it starts. The co-operatives form a network across England, which allows volunteers to work together sharing ideas, resources and good practice.

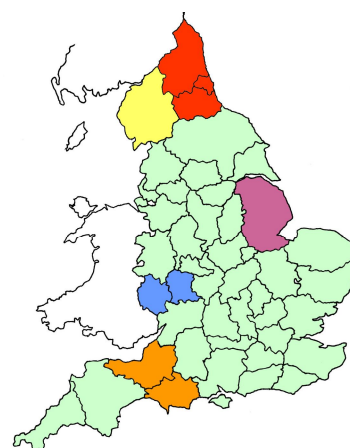
Each co-operative receives a free tailored training programme designed to meet local needs and interests. The programmes cover everything from carrying out building condition surveys and writing a maintenance plan to hands-on activities such as dealing with damp.

The project targets five key areas of the country:

- Cumbria
- The North East
- Lincolnshire
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire
- Dorset and Somerset

As well as setting up Maintenance Co-operatives in each of these areas, the scheme also provides a wealth of educational resources in print and online. These will guide you through how to tell when maintenance needs to be carried out and how best to go about it when it does.

To explain a bit more, here are some of the questions we are most commonly asked about the project:



What is a Maintenance Co-operative?

A Maintenance Co-operative is a group of volunteers who are trained to spot maintenance problems and carry out basic preventative maintenance tasks. These activities will prevent small issues from becoming big problems. The co-operatives can work together across a number of local places of worship, and anyone can get involved, whether you already worship or work at one of the buildings taking part or simply have an interest in local heritage and are keen to help. The places of worship don't have to be old or listed to benefit from a Maintenance Co-operative and they can be of any faith.

How do they work?

The wardens, steward and volunteers who come together as a Co-op are supported and encouraged by the SPAB to carry out a programme of planned preventative maintenance at their buildings, essentially stopping decay before it starts. The way in which a Co-op group works should reflect the needs and interests of its members. They do not have to follow any particular structure, therefore, and can organise themselves in the way that best suits them.

Co-operatives who are already working together, however, tend to follow one of the following formats:

- The group is simply a network of people who meet up at local events.
- The group has regular meetings, usually quarterly, which include training, skills sharing talks, working parties and the opportunity to share information / chat over a cup of tea.
- In addition to regular meetings and/or training, some groups also share equipment and skills, helping each other to undertake maintenance work jointly as a group.

¹www.GutterClear.org, 2014

What do they do?

Being involved in a Maintenance Co-operative doesn't mean that wardens and stewards will be asked to do anything more than they should already be doing. It simply provides them with the tools to be able to undertake preventative maintenance more confidently, and extra volunteers to lend a hand.

Training and activities

Each co-operative receives a free tailored training programme designed to meet local needs and interests. This can cover anything from hands-on activities such as dealing with damp, to welcoming visitors and project management.

Once a group is formed, key training sessions/events will usually include:

- A **Launch day** to celebrate the group coming together, with hands-on activities and information for potential new volunteers (optional)
- A follow-on **Maintenance training day**, which will include training on how to undertake a baseline
- **Condition survey**. This can be either a Faith in Maintenance day course, or a day with the SPABMCP technical advisor
- **Baseline surveys** of each of the places of worship involved in the group
- **Development of maintenance plans** for each of the buildings that have been surveyed

What is preventative maintenance?

Preventative maintenance is a set of simple but effective tasks which are carried out throughout the year to help prevent the big expensive problems from creeping up. These might include walking round the building with a pair of binoculars and one of our survey sheets to spot problems such as slipped tiles, blocked drains and damp patches, or you could find yourself tackling overgrown plants or learning how to protect water pipes from frost. If your building has a Quinquennial Survey, these annual activities can be tailored to complement it.

Why should I join?

Joining a Maintenance Co-operative is a great way to get together and meet other people who face the same challenges with their building as you. It's also an excellent way to pool resources and save money – co-operatives can jointly hire equipment that is needed at several buildings at once. Having extra volunteers reduces the pressure on congregations and church wardens. And that's not to mention the expert training you'll receive.

What are the goals of the Project?

In short, to protect places of worship from falling into disrepair. It aims to do this by:

- Creating a series of locally-based networks – local Maintenance Co-operatives – to share good maintenance practice and help the people responsible for places of worship to take good care of their buildings.
- Educating churchwardens, fabric officers, property stewards and other volunteers responsible for the care of places of worship to the point where they can confidently look after day-to-day maintenance issues themselves.
- Supporting the recruitment of new volunteers to help look after historic places of worship.
- Sharing good maintenance practice with the wider community – both locally and nationally.



How did the Maintenance Co-operative Project come about?

The scheme is the successor to the SPAB's HLF-backed Faith in Maintenance project which ran for 5 years between 2007 and 2012. It was a huge success and delivered 150 training courses to around 5,000 volunteers who learned all about caring for their local historic places of worship.

This new project also builds on the success of the SPAB's National Maintenance Week campaign. Every year at the end of November a dedicated week shines a spotlight on the importance of preventative maintenance. This project will open the week a new conference and networking event where people from across the country can meet and share best practice.

How is the project funded?

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) awarded a grant of £907,400 towards the total project cost of £1,202,050, which enabled the three-year project to start in the winter of 2013. The project is also supported by a number of national and local partners including English Heritage, the Arthur Rank Centre, the Churches Conservation Trust, the National Churches Trust and the War Memorials Trust, the Churches Trust for Cumbria, Inspired North East, the Avon & Somerset Probation Trust and the Heritage Trust for Lincolnshire.

How to use the Toolkit

The Toolkit contains documents and guides that are designed to help you to set-up and run a Maintenance Co-operative. These documents should be helpful to you, not all Maintenance Co-operatives will be the same, so you can pick the ones that suit you and if necessary edit them to suit your needs.