



THE INSTITUTE OF CONSERVATION

21 December 2017

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Dear Dr Joseph Elders,

The Institute of Conservation (Icon) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Cathedral and Church Buildings Division's Consultation on the Quinquennial Inspection System.

### **About Icon**

A membership organisation and charity which brings together those with a passion for the care of cultural heritage. Icon raises awareness of the cultural, social and economic value of caring for heritage and champions high standards of conservation. We represent nearly 3,000 individuals and organisations. Icon's membership incorporates not only professional conservators and heritage scientists, but many others who share a commitment to improving understanding of and access to our cultural heritage. Most of our members are UK-based but many also work internationally. Icon accredits conservators (Accredited Conservator-Restorers) who have reached a proficient level of practice, judgement and ethics across Icon's professional standards which they have to maintain through on-going professional development.

### **Comments on Consultation**

Icon supports the draft guidance for the Quinquennial Inspection System. We commend the requirement for each Parochial Church Council to appoint a Quinquennial Inspector whose training, accreditation and experience in buildings conservation corresponds with the complexity and significance of the church building. We recognise the criteria for accreditation as a positive step for quality assurance in conservation practice.

Church of England churches are an important part of our national heritage, representing almost half of England's Grade 1 Listed Buildings. The conservation of this heritage calls for specific skills and expertise. Professional accreditation guarantees high standards of practice and ethics through rigorous assessment and continuous development. It provides a clear method of sourcing technically capable and experienced professionals. We strongly believe the appointment of such practitioners will assure high quality across Quinquennial Inspections and endow stakeholders with confidence that work is carried out with due diligence and competence. These stakeholders include the Church of England, but also the public, whose continued enjoyment of this important heritage should be the primary driver behind inspections and repairs.

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We are also very pleased that this draft guidance aligns with the 'Requirement for the UK Home Countries Heritage Bodies for the lead professional role on their repair grant schemes to have conservation accreditation' as we see this as a concerted approach to ensuring common professional standards across the UK.

The draft guidance notes state that the Quinquennial Inspector's survey will include assessments of environmental sustainability, ruined structures in the churchyard and moveable items of high value or significance. Accredited Conservator-Restorers have the proven skills and ability to advise on the conservation of these items and contribute to the QI inspections. We would like to draw your attention to Icon's Conservation Register where Icon-Accredited conservators can be found. The Register currently includes accredited conservators available to undertake private work.

We believe that this draft guidance is a positive step towards the accreditation of other professionals dealing with the conservation of church buildings, interiors and artefacts. We look forward to the specification for the work of other heritage professionals to include Icon Accreditation in due course.

I hope these comments will prove useful.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a horizontal line that extends to the right and then curves slightly downwards.

Alison Richmond, Chief Executive