

NATIONAL MAINTENANCE WEEK

17 - 24 November 2017



When was the last time you took a good look at your property?

MAINTENANCE MATTERS - SMALL STEPS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

National Maintenance Week is a gentle reminder to anyone who cares for a property to identify minor problems and potential flash points that might need attention before winter sets in. Whatever the age, condition or purpose of a property, good and regular maintenance can play a role in its future.

The national drive to promote the value of good, regular maintenance always takes place at the end of November. The annual campaign is organised by the UK's oldest conservation body, SPAB (the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings). It's a message that's relevant to home owners and to anyone who cares for a property, regardless of its age.

'Stave off decay by daily care...prop a perilous wall...mend a leaky roof'

SPAB's founder William Morris, 1877.

Small steps can make a big difference. Leaky gutters, blocked drains, slipped tiles and mystery patches of damp can present as minor issues and are easy to ignore. These issues won't rectify themselves though and usually only get worse. Spending just a few minutes removing weeds and debris, or spending a small amount on mending a leaky gutter can save property owners from having to undertake more costly, intrusive works at a later date.

If you think your property is in need of more than just routine maintenance though then you may be eligible for a grant. Please visit our website for further information - www.lancaster.gov.uk/viewforeric.



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MAINTENANCE MATTERS!

DO!

- Take care at all times, wear protective gloves if necessary and if in doubt always seek help from a professional.
- Take a few moments to check the state of your roof for slipped or missing tiles.
- Look for blocked downpipes (best done during heavy rain to see water coming from any leaky joints – in dry weather look for stained brickwork).
- Every autumn, clear any plants, leaves and silt from gutters, hopperheads, flat roofs and drainage channels. It's a good idea to do this in spring too to deal with anything that might have found its way into the wrong place.
- Check ground level gullies and drains to make sure they are clear of debris like leaves, twigs and general rubbish - have them cleaned out if necessary.
- Remove potentially damaging vegetation from behind downpipes by cutting back or removing the plant altogether and then use a hand mirror to look behind rainwater pipes as splits and cracks in old cast iron and aluminium often occur here and are not easily noticed.
- Fit bird/leaf guards to the tops of soil pipes and rainwater outlets to prevent blockages.
- Have gutters re-fixed if they are sloping the wrong way or discharging water onto the wall. If sections are beyond repair, make sure that replacements are made of the same material as the originals (on older houses, this is sometimes lead, but more usually cast iron).
- Regular painting of cast iron is essential to prevent rust – and keeps your property looking good!

DON'T!

- Undertake routine maintenance work at high level unless you are accompanied and have suitable equipment.

AND FINALLY...

If you'd like to learn more about looking after buildings, please visit **Morecambe Library**. There are various SPAB pamphlets available covering repointing, controlling damp and working with lime, as well as more comprehensive books covering the repair of historic buildings and looking after old houses. In addition, you may wish to join us for **practical traditional skills workshops** - please visit the skills and training page at www.lancaster.gov.uk/viewforeric for further information.

