

Guidance note

Maintenance of Brasses



General

- Maintain the church roof and gutters to help ensure a dry environmental condition as far as possible. This will reduce corrosion.
- Avoid putting candlesticks and flower containers where they may drop wax or water onto brasses.
- Cover brasses with banqueting roll where they are at risk from bat droppings. Always use a permeable cover that will allow the brass to 'breathe'.
- As there may be little change in the appearance of church brasses between annual inspections, keep long-term records including photographs to help to identify any changes, noting any scratches and other damage.

Cleaning

- Sensitively discourage those cleaning the church from polishing brasses to a 'military' shine. This can cause irreversible blurring of the design.
- Regular dusting is preferable to frequent polishing. Dust lightly with a clean, soft, lint-free cloth or a very soft bristle brush, taking care not to scratch the surface.
- The brass can be cleaned occasionally with a paraffin rag, with an occasional application of micro-crystalline wax, which helps resist corrosive elements.
- Be cautious about removing tarnish or thick layers of corrosion. Chemical products to dissolve the tarnish are not suitable. Liquid polishes containing powder abrasives are not recommended as the abrasive will wear away the

design and the powder can accumulate in crevices where it will attract moisture and encourage further corrosion.

- Remove traces of old candlewax with a wooden or plastic spatula, never a sharp implement.
- Consult an accredited metal conservator for the best cleaning methods for significant pieces.

Floor brasses

- Attempt to route church users away from walking where the most important brasses are placed.
- Plan the placing and regular moving of furniture to avoid important brasses. Make contractors aware of them when planning special events.
- If the brasses are not protected by their position they should be adequately



covered by felt or some other very soft material. It may be necessary to cover this in turn with a heavier carpet.

- But avoid permanent fitted carpet, as this will make inspection and appreciation of the brasses difficult.
- Avoid coarse matting, which can accumulate grit and dirt.
- Avoid rubber-backed matting, which will encourage damp.

Wall brasses

- Protect brasses attached to walls from rising damp.
- Avoid using iron fixings and direct contact with lime plaster where possible.

