Rotting Floorboards Report
St Gregory's Church, Sileby

Paul from ACE Damp Proofing, Mountsorrel visited the church on Wednesday, 1 April and offered his professional advice free of charge. (I had 3 other quotes to come and examine the issue ranging from £108+VAT to £690+VAT)

A problem was recently discovered in the floor of the church which sags considerably when walked on between the pews in the central one third of the nave on both sides of the aisle.
On removing the top vinyl flooring sections, a layer of rotting plywood was discovered and beneath that the original oak/maple floorboards were very weak and flaky and had lost most of their original strength.
This is a common presentation of dry rot which is the result of moisture build up under the floor caused by inadequate ventilation.
Our initial inspection suggests that the beams carrying the floorboards have not been affected – but this can be better ascertained when more floorboards are removed.

Remedial action outside:

It is important to deal with the external causes of the internal dampness before dealing with the floor itself.
Work should start at the highest ground level point at the east end of the church to reduce all water seepage ingress.
<u>Price estimates below are for materials only.</u>

1. Repair broken gutter draining neighbour's garage/workshop roof - north east corner to ensure there is no overflow at any point (gutter bracket £6)

2. Connect downpipe from the roof to the offset gulley below – clean silt and rubbish from gulley (approx. £15)

3. Clear all rubbish and plant/moss growth around the building especially from north corner

4.Clear all guttering of grass and blockages

5. Check all water is draining from gutters into down pipes

6. Ensure all downpipes flow correctly into designated gullies/drains or away from church building

7. Dig new drain connection in house garden from downpipe

8. Fix extension pipes to each side of porch (maybe box in to protect from children standing on them) – (pipes approx. £10 for 2)

9. Repair all broken gullies (approx. £10 each)

10. Fully expose all air bricks around the building – 4 holes deep

11. Clear all air bricks fully – both from outside and inside

12. Ensure air bricks protected from accumulating silt and leaves etc.,

13. Consider replacing air bricks with modern plastic ones which give 50% more efficient ventilation (approx. £5 each + installation charge – not easy)

14. Repoint lower level of outer wall where the mortar has been washed out by excessive water flow (£20-£50 per square metre)

Remedial action inside:

Damp walls need replastering with specialist renovating plaster containing high proportion of concrete (Limelight, Dryzone – approx. £35 for 25kg)

1. Take up nave carpet and store for replacement
2. Remove all benches to side chapel
3. Vinyl floor to be removed completely – joists and wood floor must be allowed to breathe
4. All plywood to be removed completely
5. All affected soft wood – skirtings and floorboards to be removed
6. All air bricks to be cleaned out from the inside
7. All dwarf sleeper walls supporting the floor should have ventilation bricks
8. All accessible wood to be cleaned and treated with appropriate fungicide
9. All accessible dwarf sleeper walls to be treated with appropriate fungicide (Lignum Biocide £20/l for £125 square metres
10. Consider installing underfloor ventilator fan (approx. £150)
11. New floor to be laid:

    Either - tongue and groove floorboards (cost of materials approx. £1500) – these can be varnished to provide final floor surface

    Or - special panel 5 moisture resistant tongue and groove chip board flooring, glue all joints and screw down (cost of materials approx. £300) and replace vinyl flooring on top
12. New skirtings to be affixed – quantity to be ascertained (approx. £10/3m)

The ideal time to do the work is early summer, to give the underfloor area sufficient time to dry out before replacing floorboards. Presently 50% of the Church front pews are unsuable, including the ones fallowed due to Covid19 restrictions. The exploratory work to ascertain the extent of the rotting – currently estimated at 48m2, can only be done once the pews have been moved and at least 12 m2 of flooring removed.

We have spoken to CIS (Catholic Insurance Service) with whom all Catholic Churches in England are insured. Dry rot is usually regarded as the result of poor maintenance and is generally not claimable. However, they have sent a claim form for us to return for their consideration.