

Creating the perfect welcome

For people who love church buildings





ExploreChurches

Why now?

Before Covid19 the big travel trends were:

- experiences
- travel like a local

Now:

- live like a tourist
- get more out of less travel
- sustainable, responsible travel
- positive stories
- virtual content

This presents us with opportunities!



A 'with Covid' world

Churches will start to reopen, probably in a staged way.

We have time to think about the opportunities that new trends in travel might offer:

- epitome of local
- we already know our communities
- domestic tourism will see a boom
- people want positive stories
- virtual tourism will

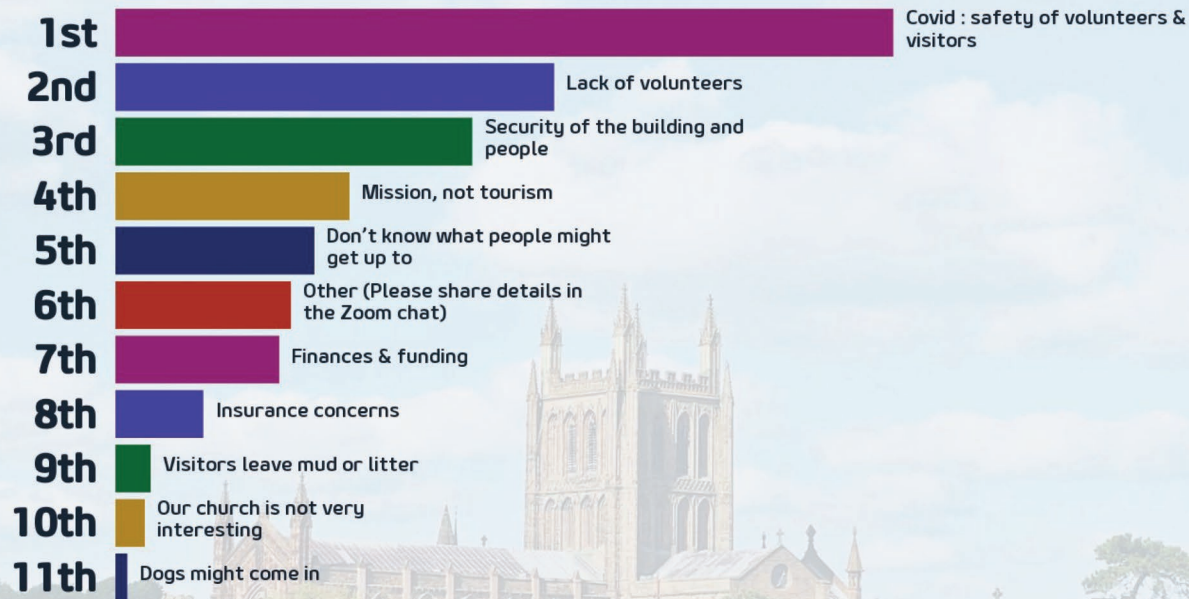
Get some of the practicalities in place:

- in response to Covid19
- things we should have been doing anyway



Is your church open?

What are the biggest barriers preventing you from opening?





Ecclesiastical Insurance

The digital elephant in the room...



Things to do now

Your online presence:

- are you on ExploreChurches?
- visit your website like a stranger
- make sure essential details are on your website;
including address and opening times (when appropriate)
- claim your google map entry
- refine your social media channel descriptions

Your online content:

- could you create a virtual tour
- short videos
- photos
- stories



Materials you could plan and prepare at home:

- a welcome board
- signage
- new ways for prayer
- QR codes
- interpretation leaflets, panels
- visitor books
- requests for donations, including online giving

Addressing safety:

- be honest about what you are doing
- be honest about what you expect
- share your message everywhere





Things to do later

Finding your church

- is the church address on your website and other materials
- are their directions
- is the church easy to find when approaching
- is it visible from afar?
- is it out of the village or town
- on a bus route
- on a footpath
- accessible by car
- easy parking



Access for all

Access is not just about wheelchairs:

- might also be a parent with a pushchair
- people with sight or hearing difficulties
- try and think holistically

Be aware of:

- parking
- 'reserved for church use' signs
- spaces for disabled visitors
- roadside parking
- signage from public car parks
- ease for wheelchairs, pushchairs
- steps, ramps and rails



Arriving, outside

Outside is the first area a visitor will see. Think about how you can make a great impression:

- welcome sign
 - days and times when you are open
 - noticeboard with service times, activities and events
 - contact details
 - history of your church and community
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- does not have to be costly
 - keep it simple
 - make sure information is accurate and kept up to date



Churchyard or garden

Your churchyard or garden is a wonderful space and is probably used by huge numbers of people.

- does it look cared for
- are your paths safe, not slippery etc
- are grassed areas accessible, leaving areas long for wildlife is fine but ensure visited graves be accessed
- is seating clean
- is your churchyard well lit, especially paths
- make sure the space is litter free

For inspiration and ideas for managing or interpreting your churchyard visit Caring for Gods Acre:

<https://www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/>



Porch or entrance

- clean and tidy doorway and porch
- welcome notice
- free from litter and leaves
- ensure well lit
- check steps, hand rails and anything else that could help with mobility issues
- tidy noticeboards
- keyholder and other contact information
- could you have an open door?
- could you provide a dog bowl with water?



Arriving, inside

Many ways to make your church or chapel more welcoming:

- clean and tidy
- smell, polish and incense
- play soft music
- lighting
- refreshment area

For any noticeboards or interpretation:

- keep up to date
- clear and well sized fonts
- use plain language
- use English and Welsh : most visitors will speak English
- clear photos



Welcome

- make sure that all your best or most important features are easy to find and see
- tidy any clutter
- visitor desk or designated area for information
- keep it tidy and relevant
- include leaflets about local attractions and they will display yours
- visitors book and pen
- guide book, leaflet or displays
- children's area and activities for a variety of ages and interests



Meeting visitors

You do not need to be an expert!

- make all people feel welcome
- smile
- be easily identified as a guide
- offer your services
- let people chose how they wish to explore
- give visitors space to explore
- be sensitive to visitors needs
- work in pairs
- do not assume



Spiritual guidance

Visitors come for many reasons, or may not articulate why they have come.

- churches are sacred spaces
- visitors have a variety of needs
- quiet area for prayer, Lady Chapel
- prayer cards
- stones, pebble prayer bowl
- candles
- bibles and other books, for all ages
- prayer tree, prayer requests
- contact details



Health & safety

You must have a health & safety policy, and it should include consideration for visitors.

- churches have many hazards
- lighting
- aisles and pews
- uneven floors
- tower visits
- churchyard and outside space

There will be particular health & safety considerations around Covid-19.

- talk to your diocese / church organisation
- check advice from Ecclesiastical Insurance



And finally...

Don't forget:

- always have a donation box
- Gift Aid envelopes
- online or digital giving
- opportunity to become a 'Friend'
- opportunity to become a volunteer
- information about events and activities
- count visitors to special events and activities

ENJOY YOUR VISITORS



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ExploreChurches:

www.explorechurches.org

ExploreChurches tourism update signup:

email sarah.crossland@nationalchurchestrust.org

National Churches Trust website:

www.nationalchurchestrust.org

House of Good:

<https://www.houseofgood.nationalchurchestrust.org/>

Visit Britain visitor site:

<https://www.visitbritain.com/gb/en>

Visit Britain corporate site and insights:

<https://www.visitbritain.org/>



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Covid19 advice:

NCT Covid19 building advice:

<https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/news/grants-and-looking-after-your-church>

NCT Covid19 opinion poll:

<https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/news/churches-and-covid-19-opinion-poll>

Ecclesiastical Covid19 guidance:

<https://www.ecclesiastical.com/church/coronavirus/>



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Ecclesiastical links:

Guidance on opening your churches

<https://www.ecclesiastical.com/documents/open-churches-guidance.pdf>

Guidance on running events in church buildings

<https://www.ecclesiastical.com/risk-management/church-events/>

Our Fundraising Hub

<https://www.ecclesiastical.com/church/fundraising/>



Keep in touch

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