

Introduction to church tourism

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 are reopening, 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 continue to be a 'thing'

Get some of the practicalities in place:

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



What can we offer visitors



Every church is unique

There are over 40,000 Christian places of worship

- over 10,000 faith sites of medieval origin
 - all are different
 - all with a unique story to tell
 - all have a unique experience to offer
 - all offer a warm welcome
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- most are free
 - some have great cake!
 - some even have wifi



Whatever it is you love...
churches have it!





Why should we welcome visitors

Is your church open?

What are the biggest issues for you?



Is your church open?

Do you use any of these as a reason to be closed?

Our replies are taken from Diocese of Liverpool advice.

- worried about security
- church is for mission, not tourism
- can't afford to keep it open all the time
- not enough people to man it
- our church is not very interesting
- people will leave mud and litter
- dogs might come in
- you don't know what people might get up to

Why should you open your church?



How many visit churches?

40 million
estimated visits
to churches per
year

VisitBritain

17 million visits to 45
cathedrals and 52
places of worship
*Northwest Multi Faith
Tourism*

55% of day trips
include a visit to a
cathedral or
church

VisitEngland

each parish
church typically
receives around
700-4,000
visitors each year

*Trevor Cooper,
Ecclesiological Society*

most visits to churches do
involve local overnight stays,
and that they take place as
part of a trip involving other
complementary leisure
activities

Churches Conservation Trust

visitors to churches, not including
accommodation costs, must generate at least
£350 million per year

Churches Tourism Association

#GreatChurchVisitorCount

Be a part of the figures.

- digital counters
- manual counts at events / activities
- visit books

Email us to get involved!



What is tourism worth?

- 122 million overnight stays in England
- 1.39 billion day visits
- heritage is one of the biggest drivers of tourism day visits
- more people visit heritage sites than attend football matches

In Herefordshire & Shropshire (2019):

- number of visits 330,940 (+24.78%)
- total expenditure £116.14 m (+18.93%)
- average length of stay 6.23 nights (-6.03%)
- average spend per visit £351 (-4.67%)



Claim your share

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines, sail away from the safe harbor.

Catch the trade winds in your sails.

Explore. Dream. Discover.

Mark Twain

'Without publicity there can be no public support, and without public support every nation must decay'.

Benjamin Disraeli

'It is an ancient need to be told stories. But the story needs a great storyteller'.

Alan Rickman

We want you to benefit!

Develop a sustainable income from tourism by creating unique and bookable Experiences for groups.



Wider benefits

Churches are places of worship

BUT, they are so much more as well

Your church has huge benefit to your local community and beyond. From foodbanks to credit unions, churches across the UK provide a growing list of essential services.

Income raised from tourism can help power these services.

We know that people are sometimes reluctant to ask for help, or to reach out to their local church if they aren't a member.

The welcome you develop for visitors will also bring in local people.

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





An exciting time ahead

What next

ExploreChurches : list your church

Further training sessions

Welcome:

- first impressions, arriving, meeting visitors, spiritual guidance, health & safety, donations and technology

Footfalls:

- potential impact of visitors, positive and negative



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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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Herefordshire & Shropshire:

HCTG membership:

<https://www.visitherefordshirechurches.co.uk/membership-documents/>

SCTG membership:

<https://www.discovershropshirechurches.co.uk/membership/>

Discover Churches training:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/discover-churches-31639443549>

Visit Herefordshire:

<https://www.visitherefordshire.co.uk/>

Visit Shropshire:

<https://www.visitshropshire.co.uk/>



Keep in touch

Sarah Crossland

Church Tourism Manager

sarah.crossland@nationalchurchestrust.org

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