

# 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
  
- 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](http://www.explorechurches.org)

ExploreChurches tourism update signup:

email [sarah.crossland@nationalchurchestrust.org](mailto:sarah.crossland@nationalchurchestrust.org)

National Churches Trust website:

[www.nationalchurchestrust.org](http://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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