

Developing Church Tourism

# A Tour Guide's

## Ten Top Tips

for making your visitors  
feel welcome!

© presenter penny platts



**To introduce myself - Penny Platts**

**Herefordshire Tour Guide  
& Hereford Cathedral Guide**

**+**

**Churchwarden in a small rural church**

**So can see situation from both sides:**

**the welcome visitors may expect  
& the problems fulfilling those expectations!**



# *Aims of this workshop*

- **To help you take a fresh look at your church building and see its potential**
- **To discover what other people are doing**
- **To help build a network of contacts for support and information**

## **Discussion time**

A chance to **share** your  
creative solutions with others



# Any Questions?

❖ Please put them in **'CHAT'**

❖ **Answers at the end**



# 1. How do Visitors find your church?

❖ 'A Church Near You' [www.achurchnearyou.com](http://www.achurchnearyou.com)

the C of E's tool for people to find the nearest church to them - with the features that they might require e.g.:

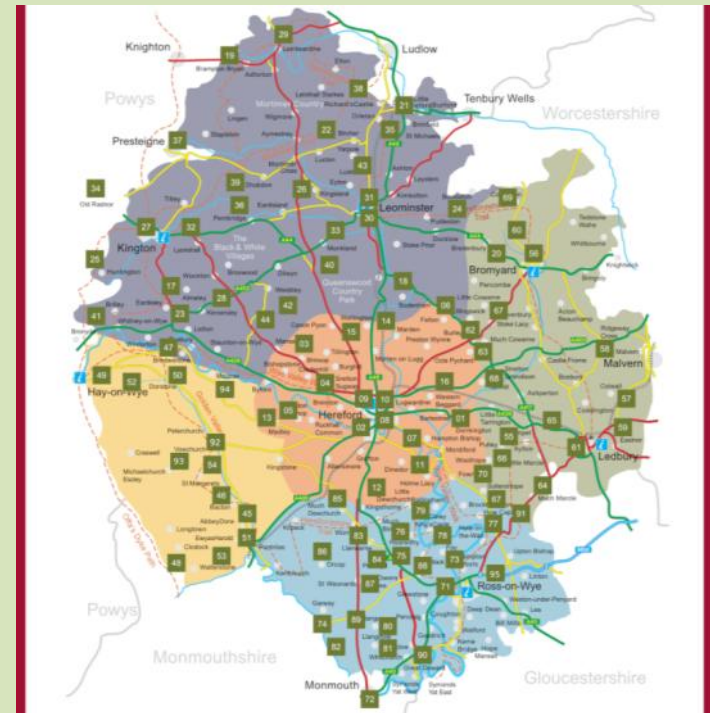
*Food Bank ? / Alpha course? / Beautiful stained glass windows for wedding photos?*

The **vicar** of each church can now approve **up to five people** to edit each profile.



# 1. How do Visitors find your church?

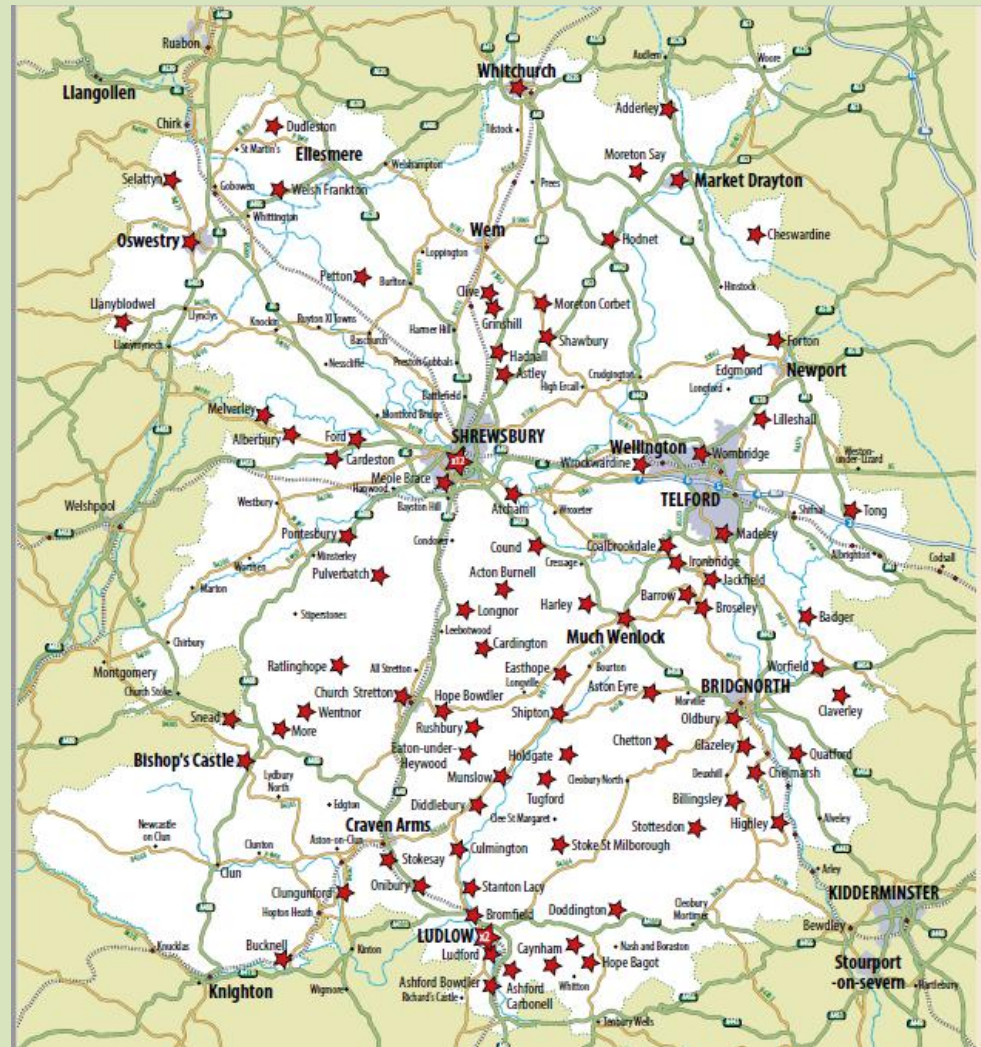
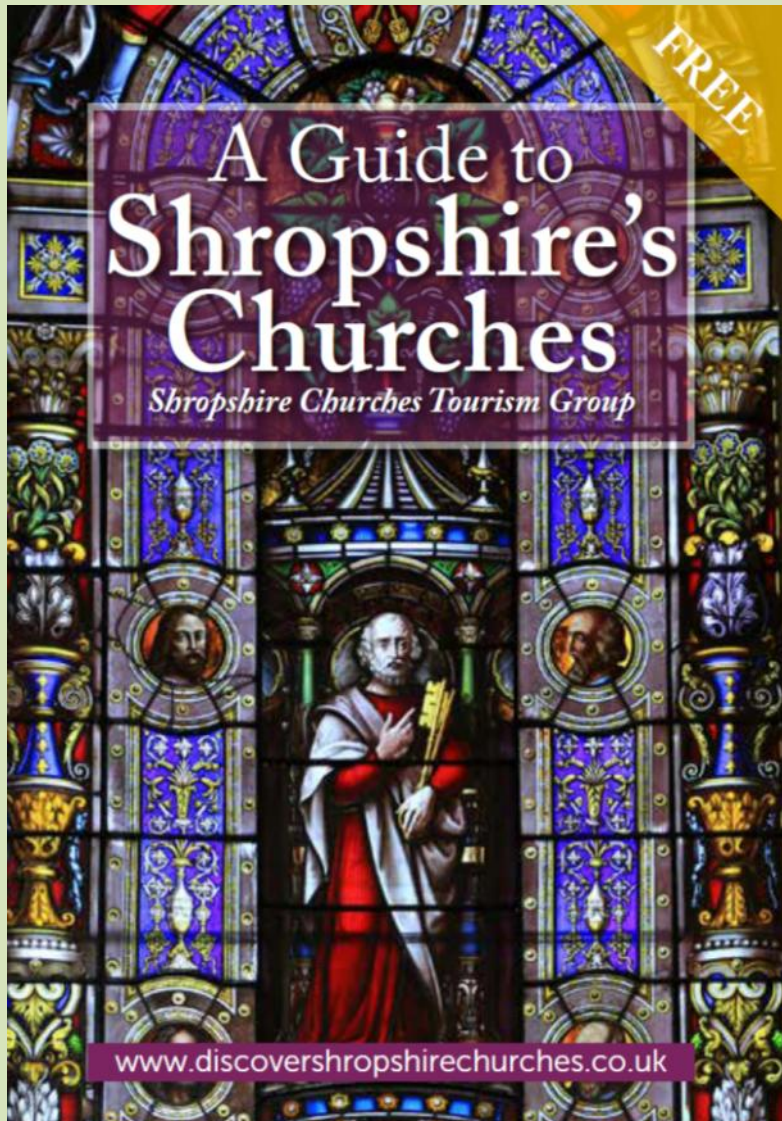
## ❖ Local churches tourism websites:



[www.visitherefordshirechurches.co.uk](http://www.visitherefordshirechurches.co.uk)



# 1. How do visitors find your church?





## Claverley All Saints

Grade I listed. Features in Jenkins' 1000 Best Churches. Late 11th and early 12th century with Saxon remains. Stunning early 13th century wall paintings.



## Stottesdon Font

The intricately carved stone font is a treasure (created c.1138) by the legendary **Hereford School of Romanesque Sculpture**.



# 1. *How do visitors find your church?*

## **Specialist Trails** in the locality

- ❖ Norman Romanesque sculpture
- ❖ Victorian churches
- ❖ Special Stained Glass



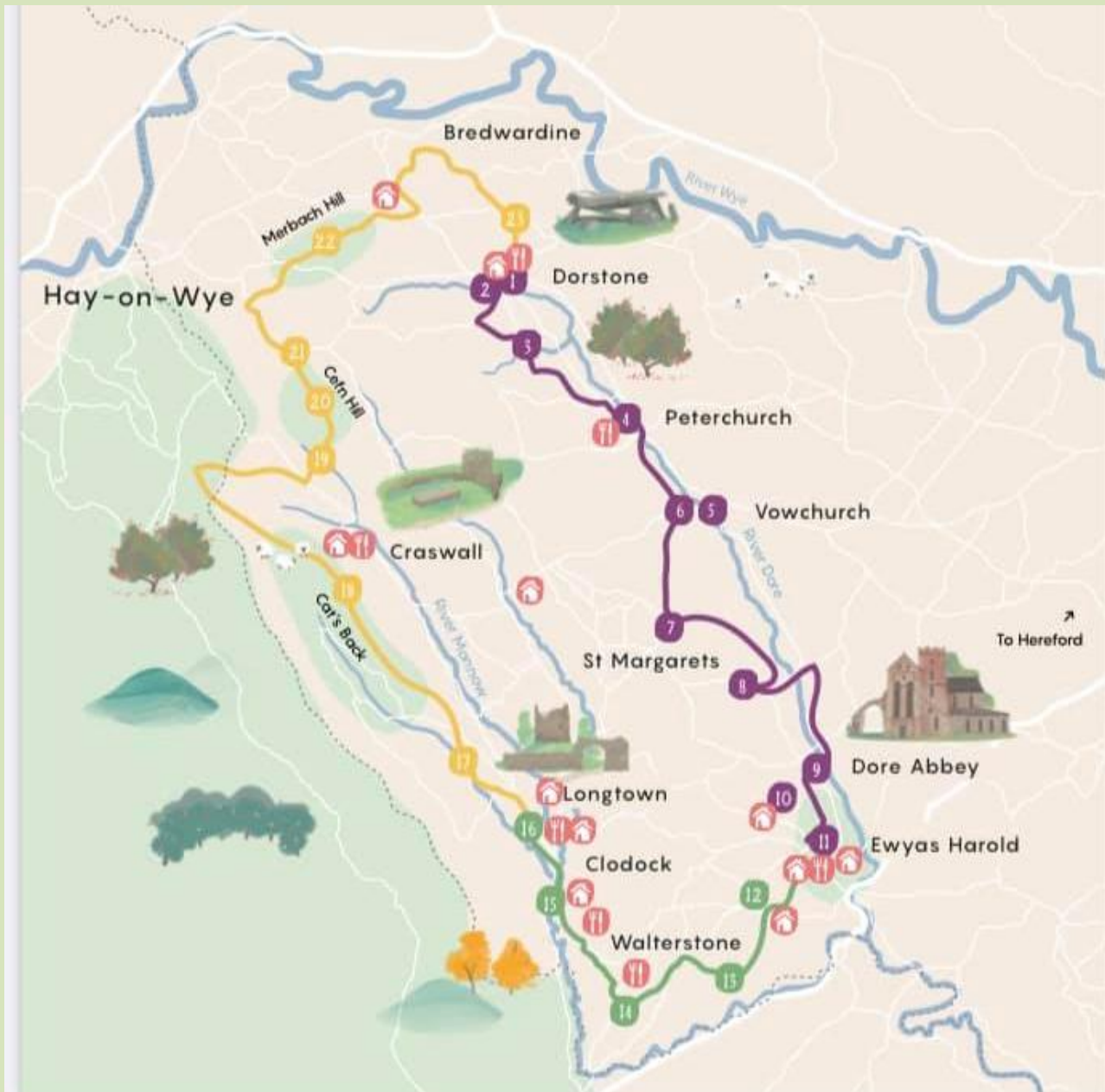
1. How do Visitors find your church?

Target Bell Ringers!





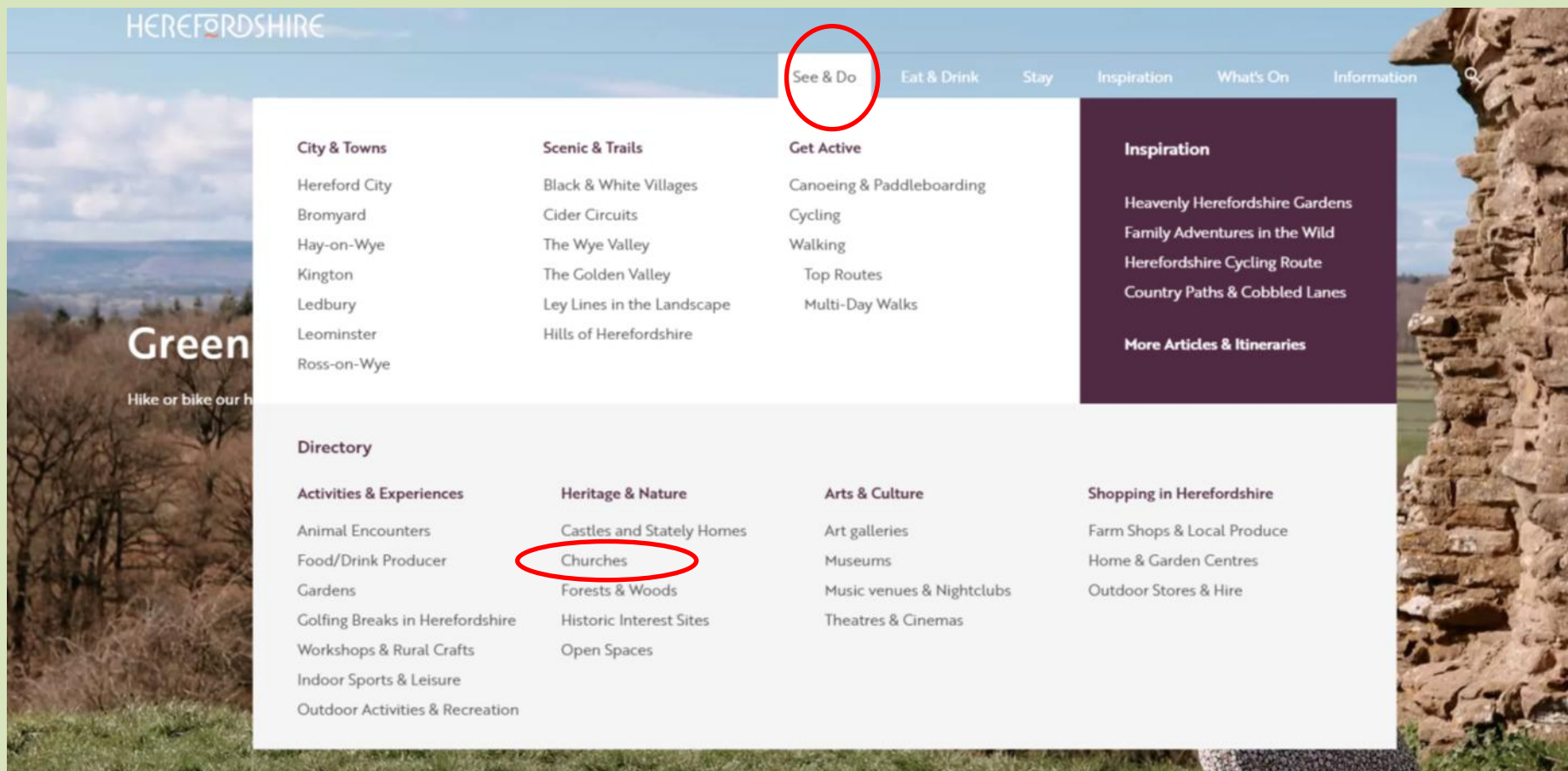
# ❖ Pilgrimage Walks /Historic Trails





# 1. How do Visitors find your church?

❖ [www.visitherefordshire.co.uk](http://www.visitherefordshire.co.uk)





# 1. How Do Visitors find your church?

List

Map

Business name

All locations

Accessible

Dogs Welcome



**Richards Castle St Bartholomew Church & 11th Century Castle**

Perched high above the village, next to one of the early 'marcher castles' built to defend the Anglo-Welsh border.

[Read More →](#)



**Rotherwas Chapel**

The family chapel of the Roman Catholic Bodenham family.

[Read More →](#)



**St Michael and All Angels, Moccas**

A Grade I listed gem built of local tufa stone, an almost unchanged Norman church set in a very beautiful rural setting.

[Read More →](#)



# 1. How do Visitors find your church?

## ❖ Develop your own website:

- Wix
- SimpleSite
- Wordpress

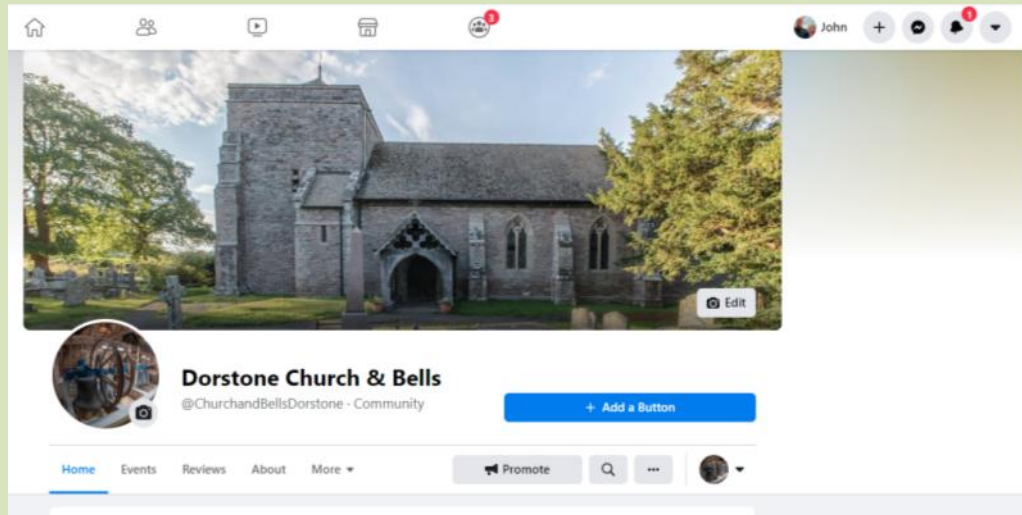
[www.dorstonechurch.org](http://www.dorstonechurch.org)





# 1. How do Visitors find your church?

❖ Facebook - You Tube/Instagram/WhatsApp/TikTok



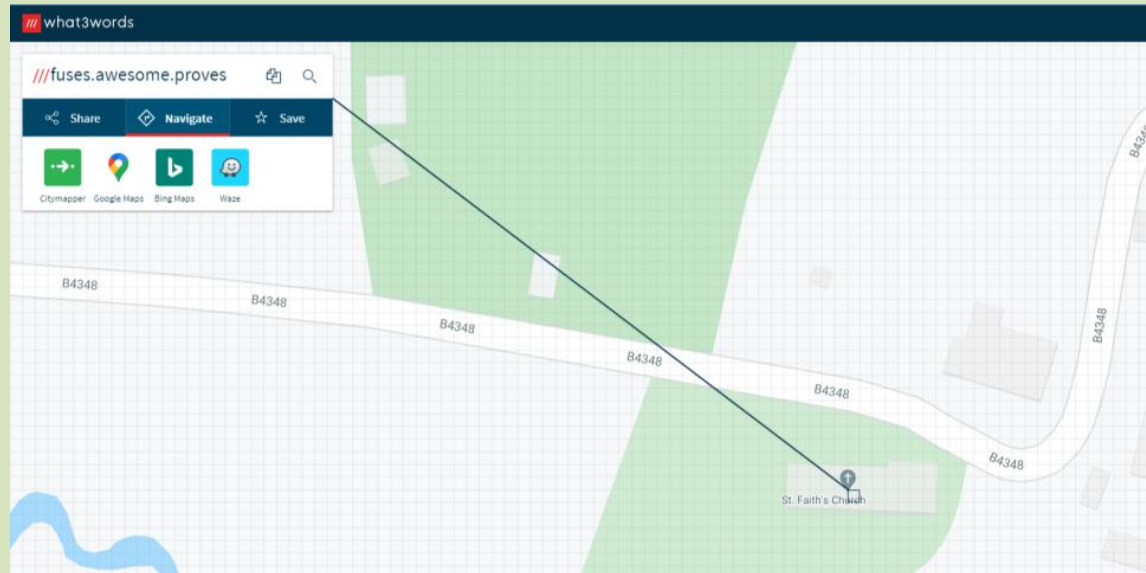
- easy to update instantly
- quick advertising for special events
- publicise services so visitors can attend



# 1. How do Visitors find your church?

## ❖ Exact Location

- Post code
- Map reference
- 'what3words' Every 3 metre square of the world has been given a unique combination of **three words**. Used for e-commerce and delivery, navigation, emergencies and more.





2a. Is there clear signage?





## 2b. Where can they park?





### 3. What do they see on the way to the entrance?

❖ How does the churchyard look?





### 3. What do they see on the way to the entrance?

❖ Is there a bench to sit on?





Essential  
'facilities'!





## 4. What information is in the porch?

- ❖ For **Emergency Services**:  
postcode / map ref. & What3Words
- ❖ Where can you find a phone signal?
- ❖ Broadband/Wifi password
- ❖ Is the information kept up-to-date?



## 4. What information is in the porch?

❖ Defibrillator location





#### 4. What information is in the porch?





## 4. What information is in the porch?

- ❖ Opening hours
- ❖ Who is the contact for the key?
- ❖ **people** info — Rector/CHW/Tower Captain



YES - this church is OPEN

YES - this is a working church where people gather seeking to know God better

YES - you are welcome to come in, have a hot drink, say a prayer or just be still

YES - muddy boots and paws (on a lead) are no problem

YES - is God's word to you



## 5. Is access to the building safe for all?





## 6. Is the interior clean and tidy?

❖ Dead flowers – my pet hate!!





## 6. Is the interior clean and tidy?

- ❖ 'clutter'
- ❖ cobwebs
- ❖ dirty floors & windowsills
- ❖ old chairs
- ❖ mouldy hymn books








 **Prayer Tree**  
Please use cards in box  
on the table



 THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND



## 7. Where do they find Church History?

### ❖ Paper booklet?

- ✓ source of income
- ✓ can take them home
- ✓ do not need hi-tech phone



## 7. Where do they find Church History?

### ❖ Paper booklet?

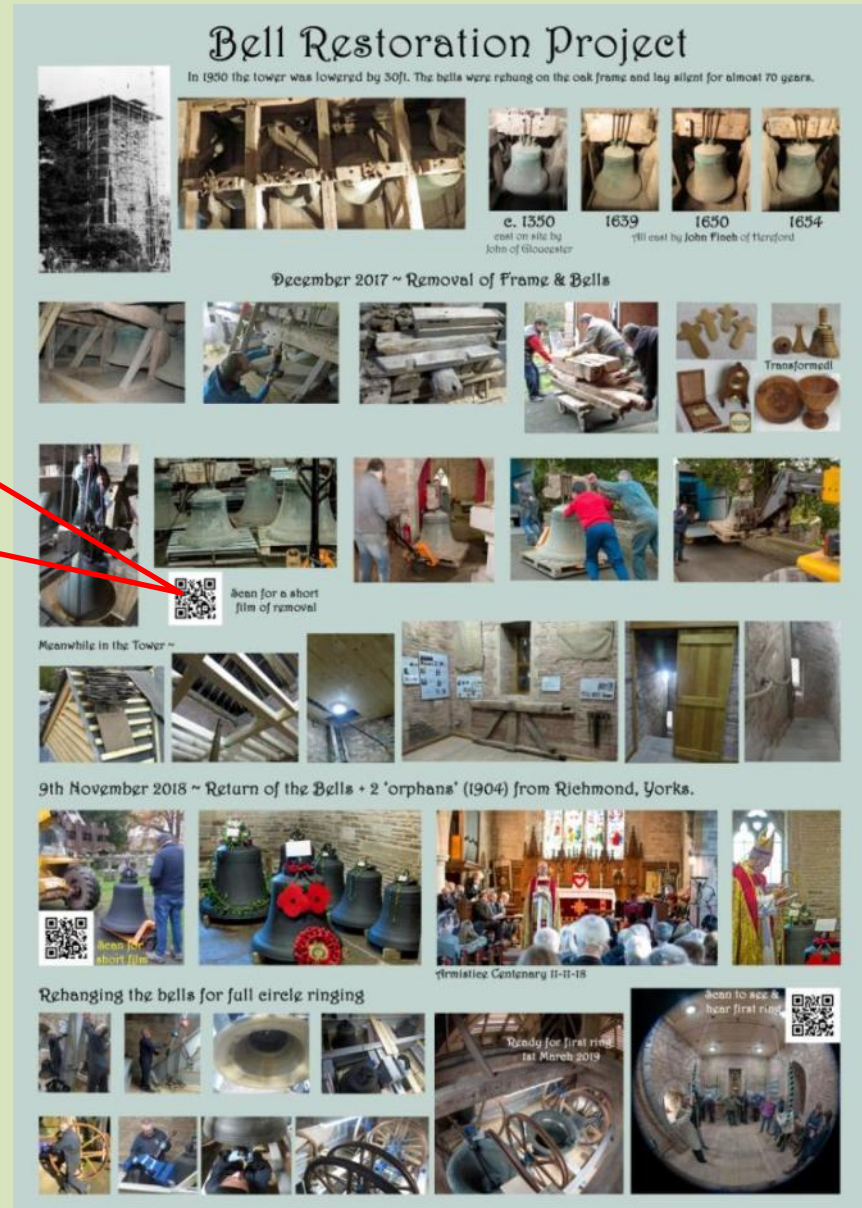
- X costly to print small numbers
- X not easily updated
- X limited information
- X few illustrations
- X often poor quality
- X soon look tatty



# 7. Where do they find Church History?



printed boards  
£66 (Vistaprint)  
easels - £16  
+ QR codes





Dorstone Ringers - first ring on new bells



## 7. Where do they find Church History?

- ❖ Highlight the **people** of the past – make it interesting – not just dates of bits of stone and wood!
- ❖ Info. on tombs/by stained glass etc.



## HOW OLD IS BREDWARDINE CHURCH?

Nobody really knows!

It is clearly very old and the fact that it is built on a circular mound on top of a hill suggests that this has been a site for worship and burial since before the Christian era. It is likely that there was a Christian place of worship here from some time Christianity reached these islands. It is also likely that this was probably that such an early Church would have been of timber construction and that therefore no visible remains can be seen today. There are a number of features indicating that the Nave is largely of Norman construction. There are other pointers suggesting that parts are older in date. The 'Herringbone' masonry low down at the West end of the North Wall is one. In the Chancel the design of the door with its deeply pointed arch is another. Recently an expert has pointed out that some of the masonry, particularly at the corners, has been laid with its grain in the vertical plane rather than horizontally. In his opinion this indicates a pre-Norman date.



The rounded arch of a typical Norman window



The design of the Chancel door with the deeply pointed arch of the top is believed to indicate a pre-Norman date.



The 'Herringbone' masonry in the lower part of the north wall of the Nave

## Why is it such an odd shape?

It is unlikely that it is because the masons made a mistake! Again nobody really knows but there are a number of theories.

1. That it was deliberate and represents Christ's head resting at an angle as he was dying on the Cross. A number of Churches exhibit this feature but they are of 'vertical' plan with 'Transoms' in the North and South of the structure. There is no evidence of the existence of such conversions at Bredwardine.
2. That the Nave and Chancel were built at different times and the discrepancy is due to the changes in the direction of 'magnetic North' over the intervening years.
3. That the existence of underground water or some other geological anomaly made it necessary to depart from a straight line.
4. It has recently been suggested that in early times the Church was a 'Minster' of the Welsh Church from whence Priests went out to minister to other smaller communities in the area and that what is now the Chancel was the place of worship and that the site of the present Nave was another building, perhaps where the priest lived, and that later the two were combined to form a larger Church.

## Why are some of the walls so out of vertical?

This is usually said to be because the Welsh priest Owain Glendower blew the Church up with explosives during his campaign against the English in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. It has not been possible to find any positive indication that this was the case. However despite the fact that Owain was married to a relative of Sir Roger Vaughan, whose effigy rests in the Chancel of this Church, Sir Roger was a staunch supporter of the English King and this may have prompted Owain to try and destroy his Church.

It is noticeable that it is only the walls on the South side that are severely out of plumb, normally the force of an explosion is felt in all directions and would be expected to show damage in all directions. It is also possible that the presence of underground water or other ground weakness in the South side of the Church caused an instability resulting in an explosion having greater effect.

Perhaps there was no explosion and the movement of the walls has been caused by some instability in the mound upon which the Church was built.

## Why is the North door sealed?

It is said that when a newly built or altered Church was consecrated it was the custom for those assembled in the Church to drive the Devil out of the North door and then seal it up so that he could not get back in. The result arch in the middle of this door suggests that it is of Norman origin.

## What is a 'Sheela na gig'?

On the inner side of this doorway is a carved and weathered figure. The somewhat strange carving is similar to that found on many old Irish churches particularly in Ireland. Little is known about its origin but it is believed to be an ancient fertility symbol. Ancient carved timber can get 'Sheela na gig' into Google where many theories can be found.



Exterior of the North Door

## THE REV FRANCIS KILVERT & HIS FAMOUS DIARY



The house where Francis Kilvert lived from 1887 to 1907



The house where Francis Kilvert lived from 1887 to 1907



Francis Kilvert

In the 1880s, the Rev Francis Kilvert, a young man of letters, was appointed to the post of curate at the parish church of St. Andrew, Brecon. It was during this time that he wrote his famous diary, which is now a classic of English literature. The diary is a collection of 100 short, vivid, and often humorous sketches of the life and people of the Brecon area. It is a masterpiece of English prose, and it is one of the most important works of the late 19th century. The diary is a collection of 100 short, vivid, and often humorous sketches of the life and people of the Brecon area. It is a masterpiece of English prose, and it is one of the most important works of the late 19th century.

THE REV FRANCIS KILVERT M.A.  
THE DIARY  
1887-1907  
EDITED BY HENRIETTA L. GUY  
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
J. R. KELLY  
Doubleday Publishing Company

Exploring  
Kilvert Country  
Chris Barber



This display was compiled by Chris Barber, the author of 'Exploring Kilvert Country' which provides a very full introduction to the area associated with the Rev Francis Kilvert.

Published by Brecon Books, Exploring Kilvert Country is available in paperback or hardcover, or as a CD-ROM.

Brecon Books 01870 602114



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For more information visit the Society Website  
www.kilvertcountry.co.uk



## SMALMAN MONUMENT



Francis Smalman (1565 – 1633) of Kinnersley Castle and Letton, was an MP in 1621 under the reign of James I and again under the reign of Charles I in 1626.

This fine alabaster and black marble monument was erected

by his son, William, in 1635 and is dedicated to William's parents Francis and Susan. William (b 1615) was also a politician, becoming an MP in the Short Parliament of 1640.

Susan Clark was Francis' second wife and the mother of William. It was also her second marriage.


The monument depicts the couple facing each other beneath a canopy with drapes and trumpet-bearing cherubs. Beneath are depicted their children by both of their marriages. Underneath the monument is also a brass plaque to William Leviot, former priest, who died in 1421.

Francis reputedly acquired Kinnersley Castle around 1616 from the son of Roger Vaughan. The monument is described as "a very fine piece" and "the sculpturally best of any group" by Sir Nikolaus Pevsner in his book on Herefordshire buildings.

We are currently in the process of raising funds towards repairing and supporting the monument to ensure it does not collapse.



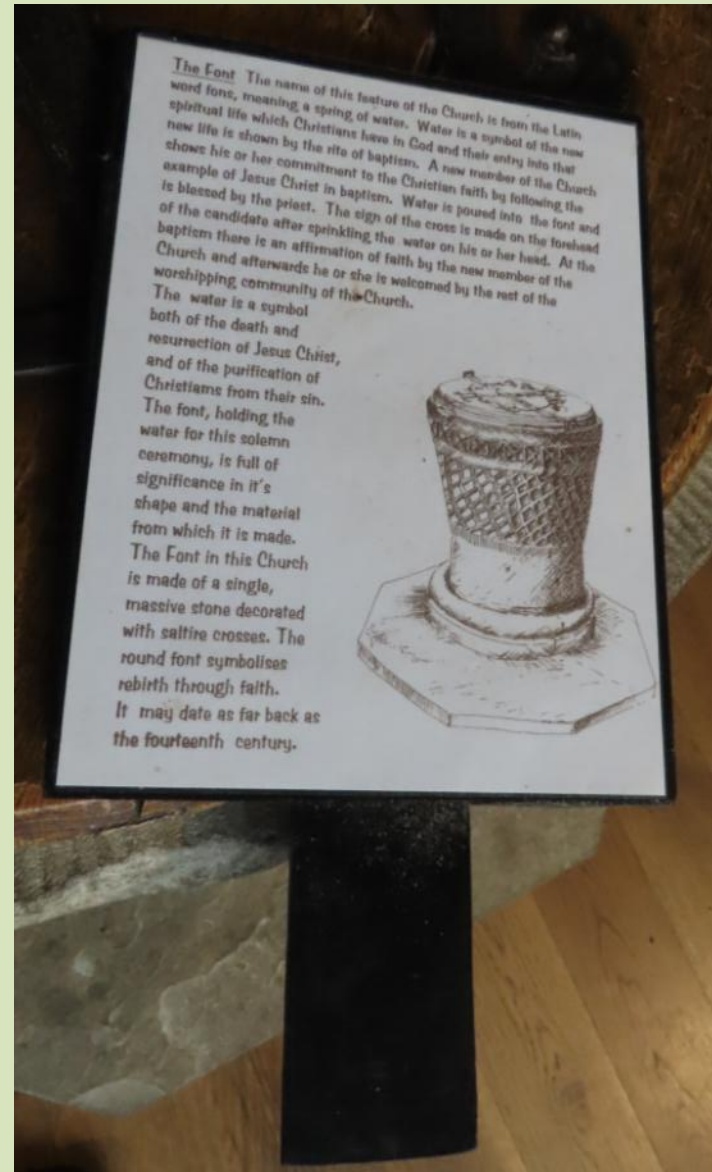




SIR ROGER  
VAUGHAN  
Killed defending  
Henry V at the  
Battle of  
Agincourt. 1415.



## Hand-held boards





Watch out  
for typos!!



This elaborate stained glass window was erected as a memorial to the Rev. Newton Hand Dickenson Newton who was Vicar of the Church from 1830 to 1853



## 8. Do you offer 'hospitality'?



❖ Who will check this?





## 9. Is there LOCAL information?

- ❖ nearest shop / PO
- ❖ nearest Pharmacy
- ❖ nearest towns
- ❖ pubs - phone/website
- ❖ local cafes
- ❖ B&Bs
- ❖ places of interest or Open Gardens



## 10. What Souvenirs + how to pay??

**Ideas** - what could you offer?

- ❖ bookmarks and prayer cards
- ❖ cards of church interior/exterior
- ❖ plants
- ❖ homemade jams and chutneys
- ❖ Walking Routes





# Security?







## 10. What Souvenirs + how to pay??

Use the wall safe

or

**Credit/ Debit card machine**

no Wi-Fi needed

power source required

secured to a table



# Encouraging Donations

❖ **Gift Aid** declaration for gifts - £30+

❖ **Join the Parish Giving Scheme**  
Regular income even without services

[www.parishgiving.org.uk/parishes/how-it-works/](http://www.parishgiving.org.uk/parishes/how-it-works/)



Thank you for watching!

Now it's your turn - **Question Time**

❖ Questions in **'CHAT'**

❖ Open discussion

Please share your experience with us.