

The Southwell & Nottingham Diocese

# open churches project



# welcome

guidelines for  
open churches



[nottsopenchurches.org.uk](http://nottsopenchurches.org.uk)

heritage learning welcome



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# guidelines for open churches

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# tourism & sacredness can they co-exist?

Churches are places of faith. That is why they were built, to worship God and to draw people closer to God. When visitors come into a church, for whatever reason - interest in its history or architecture, simple curiosity, a place out of the rain, or as a wedding guest – an opportunity is presented to plant or nurture small seeds of faith, to stimulate growth in spiritual awareness or exploration.

Did you know that visiting heritage sites is one of the most popular pastimes in the country? 35 million visits are made to parish churches every year. In 2006, 86% of the population visited a church. Four out of the top five visited historic sites in the year 2000 were churches.

When welcoming people to your church, it is vital to remember that people are entering a special place, a living place and a place of prayer. Although there are many similarities between churches and other heritage attractions, the spiritual significance of a church should not be ignored. People usually expect it to be something of a sanctuary and a place where they can find peace and tranquillity.

Thinking about who will visit and why will help you to make visits welcoming and enjoyable, which in turn will encourage visitors to come back!

## Who will visit, why and what do they want?

Most churches are visited by people other than their regular worshipping congregation. Churches welcome strangers at weddings, baptisms and funerals. People from the local community may come to 'civic' services of different kinds. Some churches attract many tourists. A great number of these visitors never attend regular church services and may not understand Christianity.

Thinking about the type of people who might want to visit your church will help you to make sure that their visit is a welcoming and pleasant one. Visitors who have an enjoyable experience are likely to return and bring friends.

### Who will visit?

- People of all ages
- All nationalities (have you visited a church or religious building on holiday?)
- Local members of the community, their family and friends
- Casual visitors looking for a quiet place
- School, college and university groups
- Tourists - local, national or international
- Local history societies and special interest groups such as family history researchers, artists, photographers, architects
- Walkers and cyclists
- People attending an event or exhibition (or looking for a venue to hold one)

## Every church can convey three important messages to those who visit it:

1. "The people of this place are glad you are here. This place is for you."
2. "This is not just a beautiful building; it is a sacred space; however you may understand the word sacred."
3. "This church is alive, loved and used regularly by people who are committed to following the way of Christ."

Congregations need to seriously consider the impression that their church building makes on a casual visitor.

Try standing at the entrance and putting yourself in the shoes of a non-churchgoing stranger...

Does it seem like a museum, confirming prejudices about the church, as an out of date and irrelevant institution?

Does it feel dingy and unused? Or clinical and soulless?

Or does it feel alive and active, with a special sense of sacredness, which may inspire the 'why' and 'what' questions?

When a visitor enters a church do they feel genuinely welcome? A feeling of being welcomed is not in itself going to plant seeds of faith. However, the absence of welcome, or a tainted welcome, will almost certainly have the opposite effect.

A visit to one church is unlikely to be a life changing experience, though that is possible. Visiting several churches over a period of time may have a cumulative effect, favourable or unfavourable, regarding the places, the people who worship in them, and the faith they hold. Every church has a responsibility to consider its own image and how it contributes to the whole picture.

# first impressions

## welcoming visitors

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### There are a few things that can be done to give a positive first impression and make visitors feel welcome.

The outside of your church is very important as this is the first area a visitor will see.

#### Have you got...?

- A welcome sign displayed near all entrances, letting people know your church is open for visitors. Vinyl banners are available from the Open Churches Project for display each time you are open.
- A clean and tidy notice board with times of regular services, opening, and any upcoming events.
- A panel giving a short history of your site and community displayed near to the entrance. (Check whether your church is on the Church History Project website: <http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk>)
- A clean and tidy doorway and porch, perhaps with a simple flower arrangement.
- A cared for churchyard/ outside area. (Some churches have set up a 'club' of people who meet one morning a week to clean and tidy the building, inside and out. This is a good way of getting the community involved.)

Once the visitor is inside, there are more ways to make your church more welcoming:

- Light the entrance porch and other dark areas (use energy saving bulbs if you wish). Make sure light switches inside the church are easy to find and clearly labelled. Or you could invest in sensor lighting that will come on as the door opens.

- Print notices in a clear and reasonably sized font. Use plain English.
- Consider playing soft, appropriate music.
- Have well presented, easily visible, welcome literature and guides available (see our section on literature).
- Offer material for people with a visual disability.
- Have well signed accessibility for wheelchairs.
- Have friendly stewards/ welcomers/ guides on duty if possible who can greet visitors and answer questions.
- Make copies of the parish magazine available to take or buy.
- Have a photo board of people involved in your activities and events.
- Offer means of making a free cup of coffee.
- Make sure the church is clean and tidy with ladders, hoovers, buckets and mops stored out of the way.
- Leave a dog bowl of water outside the door.
- Display a 'Thank you for visiting' sign on the exit door or 'Peace be with you' (or similar) on the back of external notice board.

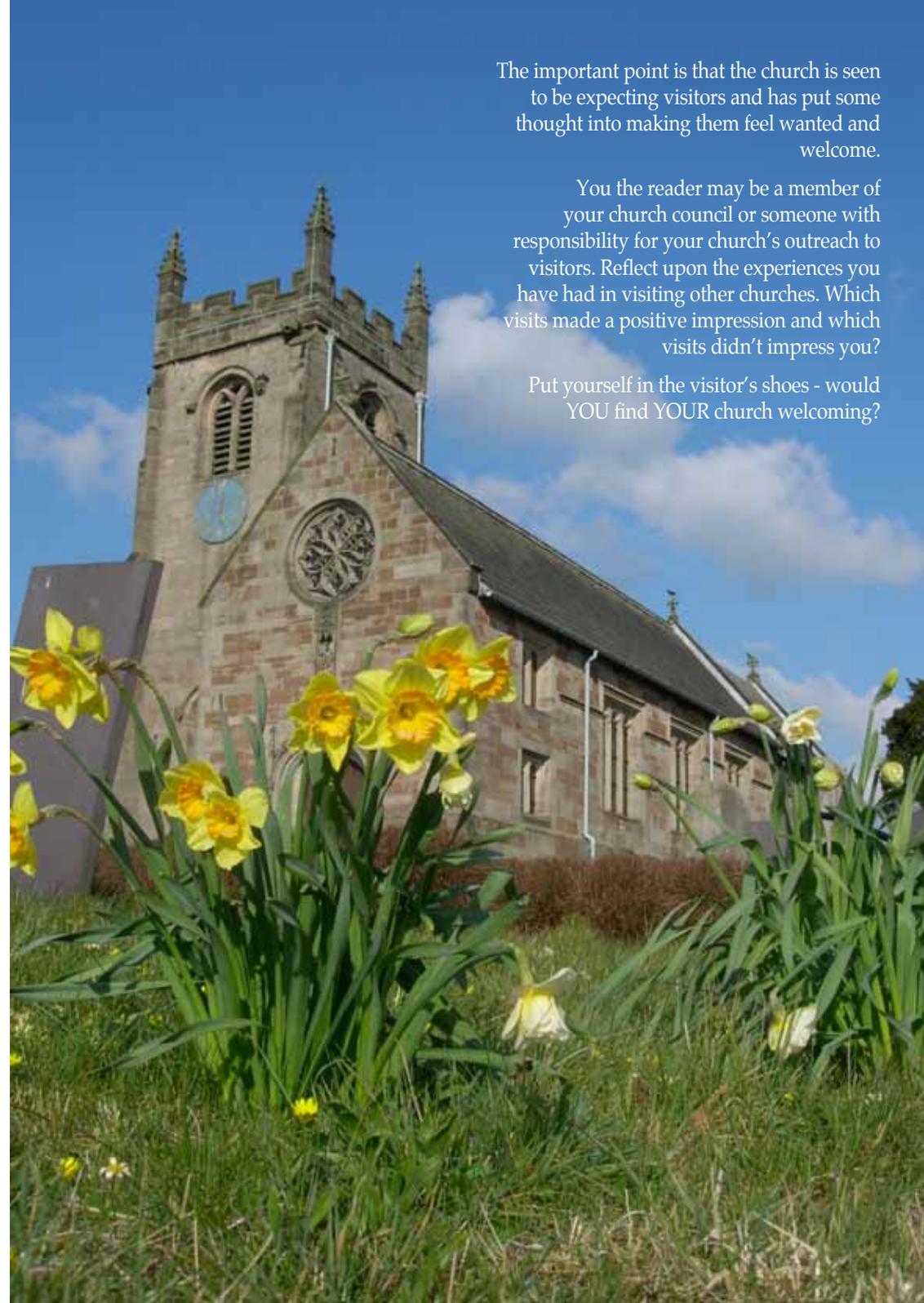
#### Try to avoid

- Instant requests for money immediately inside the door. A better alternative may be to provide a box on the way out saying "Thank you for visiting; you may like to contribute/ donate..."

The important point is that the church is seen to be expecting visitors and has put some thought into making them feel wanted and welcome.

You the reader may be a member of your church council or someone with responsibility for your church's outreach to visitors. Reflect upon the experiences you have had in visiting other churches. Which visits made a positive impression and which visits didn't impress you?

Put yourself in the visitor's shoes - would YOU find YOUR church welcoming?



# conveying the right message

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OPEN CHURCHES

## “This church is a sacred space.”

When a regular worshipper enters a church building it instantly feels sacred because it is associated with personal memories of worship and prayer and significant spiritual moments. For some visitors this may or may not be so.

Some churches are particularly blessed in their setting, architecture and artefacts. Even the most unfamiliar of tourists are likely to experience these as ‘special’ places, producing a sense of awe and wonder and peace. Congregations need to ask whether their church building differs from other ancient and beautiful places – does it offer an explicitly spiritual experience?

### Good Ideas...

- A simple prayer at the door, clearly displayed
- An overall sense of stillness and simplicity
- A quiet chapel/corner with icons, candles or carvings as a focus
- Easily visible and attractive prayer cards/ leaflets, books of meditations, bibles – in pews and significant spots.
- Candles available to light, (on metal stands, planted in sand, or tealights placed among pebbles), with appropriate prayers nearby.
- Prayer pools offer an imaginative alternative. A pebble, for the person, is immersed in a bowl of water representing God’s all surrounding love

- Sympathetic lighting in special places
- Prayer request books, boards or trees, with an explanation of how the prayers will be included in the church’s worship.
- Leaflet describing a reflective prayer walk round the church.

Quietness, rich symbolism and appropriate well-thought out words are the best helps to prayer and spiritual reflection, for believer and unbeliever alike. “This church is alive and loved and used regularly by an active Christian community.”

To be a Christian is to belong to a body of people who live in the way of Jesus Christ. They worship together, care for each other, and are concerned to help their neighbour, in the parish and wider world. They are active, not passive, in their faith. How might this be conveyed to the casual visitor?

### Good Ideas...

- Well ordered and up to date notice boards
- Photos of PCC, Parish events . . .
- Clear indication of how to contact members of the clergy
- Well presented displays showing current children’s work in church and schools
- Children’s corner which is attractive and looks welcoming and useable
- Displays showing activities of Mothers’ Union or other parish organisations
- Parish magazines which are not just about ‘church’ events
- Mission Statement on display



The average visitor will not notice the details; *impressions* matter. Impressions may be of an inward looking community, or of a cherished building where things happen, and people work and pray for those in all kinds of need.

- Publicity for varied kinds of social events, church and community
- Signs that there are ways in which the congregation may learn more about their faith
- Opportunities to borrow books
- Information about charities/ voluntary organisations/helping agencies
- Signs of working with other churches and the local community
- Up to date displays about Mission links and work with peace and justice agencies
- Fair Trade displays
- Loose-leaf ring binders recording recent flower festivals, exhibitions, details of charities supported . . .
- Well-kept churchyard

The average visitor will not notice the details. Impressions matter. Impressions may be of an inward looking community, or of a cherished building where things happen, and people work and pray for those in all kinds of need.

“This church speaks of our Christian faith.”

#### How do we do this?

Visitors provide an important opportunity for the church to present the Christian faith to those outside its regular congregation. We do not need to go OUT to these people; they have voluntarily come IN.

A casual visitor may not stop to buy a book, but a poster or leaflet may catch their eye.

#### Good Ideas...

- Display clear information about Christian discipleship
- Display clear information telling the story of Christianity
- Ask the congregation what they believe about God and the church. Print the results (artistically / imaginatively) and display on a board near the font – headed ‘This is our faith’ or similar
- Create displays at Christmas/Easter about the meaning of these festivals
- Create a display of the Beatitudes with accompanying photographs showing how this community lives them out
- Display signs beside the font, pulpit, altar etc. describing their purpose, without using technical religious language – add good photographs
- Give clear information about the meaning of marriage and baptism and about who to contact to enquire about these
- Show how Churches work together in this place

#### Try to avoid

- Assuming that everyone understands the ‘churchy’ language which is familiar to regular worshippers

In a secular age it is a real challenge to present the truths of the Christian faith using comprehensible language and imagery.

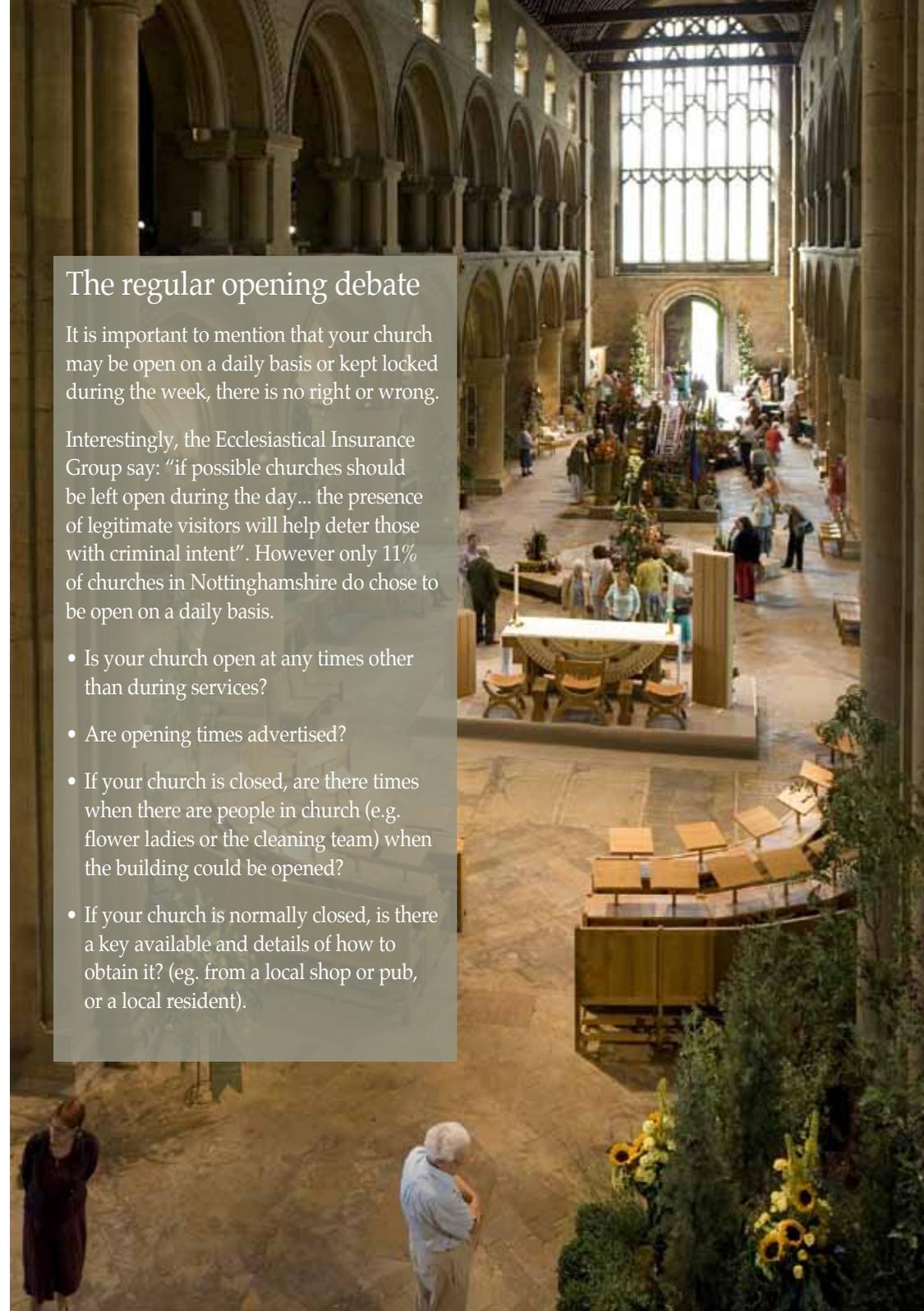
Of course we should seek to impress and inspire visitors with the fascinating history and beautiful architecture of our churches, but is also important that we should seek to engage them in the faith for which our churches were built.

### The regular opening debate

It is important to mention that your church may be open on a daily basis or kept locked during the week, there is no right or wrong.

Interestingly, the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group say: “if possible churches should be left open during the day... the presence of legitimate visitors will help deter those with criminal intent”. However only 11% of churches in Nottinghamshire do chose to be open on a daily basis.

- Is your church open at any times other than during services?
- Are opening times advertised?
- If your church is closed, are there times when there are people in church (e.g. flower ladies or the cleaning team) when the building could be opened?
- If your church is normally closed, is there a key available and details of how to obtain it? (eg. from a local shop or pub, or a local resident).



# welcomers guides & stewards

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Whatever name you give to them, your welcomers/guides/stewards may be the first and lasting impression in a visitor's memory.

"Tourism in England needs welcomers and guides with vision, to help show visitors how to start looking for the treasures that our ancient faith sites contain"

"A good guide can make a church come alive, and make it even more interesting for visitors"

Church welcomers come from many backgrounds. You do not need to be an academic, a history or architectural expert to be a successful welcomer and to enjoy meeting visitors. But it helps if you are a 'people person', in other words:

- That you like meeting people.
- That you are a good communicator, curious and interested in people.
- That you are confident about standing up in front of a group of people – you will be talking to visitors of all ages, backgrounds and cultures.
- That you are able to LISTEN as well as talk. You will need to find out what visitors want from their visit, and may learn something from a visitor that you can use on future tours.
- That you have a sense of humour – this will come in handy on lots of occasions!

## It also helps:

- If you are reasonably fit, you could be standing and walking for long periods.
- If you are flexible, adaptable and able to think quickly.
- If you are knowledgeable about your church. You can use a file for detailed information, and if you don't know the answer to a question, you could take the visitor's contact details and get back to them.

If you were 'press-ganged' into doing the job, or are worried about it and are not sleeping, DON'T DO IT!

The most important thing to do is make all visitors feel welcome and relaxed in your building.

- Smile, say hello and welcome.
- Offer your services, and any written information.
- Let people know what their options are for exploring.
- Pass the time of day, but do give visitors the time and space to make their own decisions.

Visiting a church can be intimidating for some people. They could be visiting for a variety of reasons. Welcomers need to be sensitive to people's feelings and needs.

## Working in pairs can be useful.

- If you are expecting lots of visitors it can stop queues building up.
- One person can spend more time with a particular group without it affecting other visitors.
- If a visitor has special needs, one person can go off to fetch any equipment needed without leaving anyone feeling abandoned.

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Make sure your welcomers/guides are easily identifiable so that visitors know who to go to with any questions - perhaps by a badge, sash or uniform.

There are many ways to explore a church. Be aware that visitors will have different preferences.

- Some people like to browse around a building on their own, perhaps with a leaflet explaining some of the interesting details.
- Other people will enjoy the experience more if they are accompanied by a knowledgeable guide.
- If possible allow people to choose how they would like to explore.

Try not to make assumptions about what a visitor knows or understands. Someone who has been attending the same church for 50 years may not know the significance of a particular carving right next to their favourite seat, whilst an Asian teenager may have studied church architecture at school or college.

## When a visitor approaches you with a question or comment:

- Stop talking to other welcomers/guides
- Concentrate
- Don't carry on with other tasks
- Listen to the speaker's tone of voice
- Watch for visual clues
- Listen with an open mind
- Listen all the way through
- Give feedback
- Summarise key points

OPEN CHURCHES

If possible, be prepared with a few facts about your church's history. You may not be asked, but it is worth knowing key dates, interesting facts, and unique points about your church.



# events & exhibitions

## etc...

Open Churches Weekends tend to be more successful for you and the visitor if you do more than just be open. Experience shows that events, exhibitions and if possible refreshments, can generate more interest and draw more visitors.

### Some other points to think about:

- If you are about to start a restoration project or have one on-going, please tell people about it. Have a mini exhibition explaining what is going on, with income and expenditure shown as well. Donations may well be forthcoming for this.
- Have a rota of welcomers in your church if possible. You may feel that there should be 2 people on duty together for safety.
- Provide information about your church and its artefacts in a short leaflet for visitors. Alternatively put up information on signs near to objects. The Open Churches Project Officer can help you with this, her contact details appear at the end of this booklet.
- Provide information about your locality - shops, pubs, garages, bed and breakfasts etc.
- Ideas for exhibitions and events can also be discussed with the Open Churches Project Officer.
- Try to keep accurate visitor numbers.

Some possible ideas for events and exhibitions:

### Exhibitions:

- Photos of the church/village (new and old)
- Information on local History and local notable people

- Vestments (Clergy often have lovely examples)
- Archives/parish records
- Local school work – they may have done art/craft, science or maths projects based on the church
- Church's links with overseas
- Arts and crafts
- Textiles and handicraft (banners, altar cloths, hassocks)
- The church year and festivals
- Memorials – outside and inside
- Brasses
- Wall Paintings
- How to "read" your church & churchyard – particularly any stories linked to faith

### Activities:

- Church and churchyard trails – involving your church and others
- Activities for children – quizzes, I Spy, dressing up, puzzles, how to design and build a church

### Events:

**(Family friendly events are particularly popular)**

- Musical concerts, recitals or demonstrations – choral, orchestral, brass, jazz, church bells
- Plays, pageants and medieval mysteries
- Plant and flower shows
- Farmers Markets and other produce
- Artist or crafts person in residence



## CHECK LIST

### For when organising a special event

Not all of these points will be applicable to your event, but you may like to...

Appoint a planning team in advance

Decide a theme if appropriate

If appropriate, book VIPs, speakers, etc

Speakers – prepare speeches!

Budget – set it and keep to it

Fix venue

Fix date

If appropriate, prepare the guest list and invitations. Include any media – press, TV, etc.

Prepare and issue press releases

Arrange catering

Fix deadlines for printing

Book photographers

Prepare your tour and guides

Think about layout and toilet facilities etc

Think about how your guests will arrive – do they need directions or information about public transport?

Car parking

Have a wet-weather plan – what could go wrong? How will we cope?

Mementos, souvenirs, etc



# literature

A church does not need to provide lots of literature for visitors. But it is worth bearing in mind that most tourist attractions, such as castles, museums and gardens offer well-produced guides and information leaflets. Visitors to churches may have expectations that something of this kind will be available.

## Guidelines for home-produced material:

- Seek out parish skills in computer based design
- Clear hand-written posters are very acceptable
- Check periodically that signs are not becoming dog-eared
- Photocopying must be well done i.e. not smudged or lopsided
- Use an accessible font size in all printed material, and also provide large print versions
- Remember that black print on yellow paper is a help for those with a visual handicap or dyslexia

## Welcome boards and leaflets

- Must be immediately obvious when a visitor comes through the door
- Keep them simple and not too wordy - use well-spaced layout
- Add a human touch - 'enjoy your visit' or 'thank you for coming'
- Include a short prayer, and end with a prayer for the visitor – perhaps a Celtic blessing or simply 'Peace be with you'

## Church Guides

- Larger churches may have guidebooks for sale, black- and-white or coloured.
- Consider also having a simpler free leaflet or portable board

- A folded A4 sheet can include a brief history and a church plan – but, do not overload with information – 'white space' makes for easy reading

## Explanatory signs and history boards

- As above, be very aware of clear layout
- Do not use church 'jargon' without explanation e.g. sacrament, liturgy...

## Special features

Make the most of stories about special people or events connected with your church. Visitors like stories – they add a human touch. Provide leaflets or boards which are not too technical – just 'tell the tale'.

## Children's guides

- Keep these short, interactive and informative
- Work with the Open Churches Project or your local school to get the level right; children's own ideas are often best

Lots of information is available on our website [www.nottsoopenchurches.org.uk/education](http://www.nottsoopenchurches.org.uk/education)

## Notice boards

Well presented material, clearly thought out with the needs of visitors in mind, gives an image of a church which is part of the modern world and respectful of those who come through its door.

## Consider...

- If your church is large enough, might you have space to provide a video presentation of church life?
- Providing tapes or DVDs of sermons or talks
- If your church has a website remember to draw attention to it in any literature

Remember – the Open Churches Project officer can help you with all of these things. Her contact details are at the back of this booklet.



# publicity

## Before the open day(s) you may want to think about:

- Leafletting everyone in the village
- Putting details in the Parish Magazine
- Putting information in local shops, pubs, B&B's, doctor and dentist waiting rooms etc.
- Checking that your local Tourist Information Point or Centre is displaying the Open Churches Weekends guide booklets
- Poster sizes: A3 or A4-sized are available for advertising and A5-sized are available for leaflets (see the back of this booklet for contact details)
- Vinyl banners (one per church) are also available free of charge
- Use of your local websites – Information will be on the Diocesan and Open Churches Project ones – you may like to link to these

<http://www.dioceseofsouthwell.co.uk/OpenChurchesProject.html>

[www.nottsoopenchurches.org.uk](http://www.nottsoopenchurches.org.uk)

- Putting information specific to your church's events in the local paper's Events Supplement. You will need to contact the paper at least ten days in advance of the publication date.

## Diocesan publicity will be in:

- C magazine
- Diocesan website
- Local Radio
- Nottingham Evening Post and other media via a press release, which will also be available on our website for you to copy and paste from for your own publicity
- The guidebooklets will be available from all Tourist Information Centres, libraries and other tourist/leisure attractions in Nottinghamshire
- And of course our websites

## Diocesan publications include...

### C The Magazine

Connecting people and parishes

C Magazine is a quarterly A4 full-colour magazine which is distributed out to churches across the Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham. Following its launch in March 2002, the magazine has gone from strength to strength.

C is all about making connections - connections between people and parishes and with our local communities. It aims to explore faith issues through personal stories and offer churches a resource which can be used as a talking point for those outside the church.

Each issue contains a page of deanery stories and a gallery of photos from around the churches, along with features and stories, reviews and a what's on page for the coming three months.



For highlights of the last few editions, see the links at [southwell.anglican.org/c\\_magazine.html](http://southwell.anglican.org/c_magazine.html)

For details on how to get your own subscription, send an e-mail to [cmagazine@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:cmagazine@southwell.anglican.org)

If your church wants to order copies of C Magazine (minimum 5 copies per quarter) contact Nicola Marsh for an order form on 01636 817219 or 01636 817219, or email [nicola@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:nicola@southwell.anglican.org)

## Nifty Notes

Nifty Notes is a monthly digest with news and information for parishes.

Download the latest version at [southwell.anglican.org/news\\_nifty\\_notes.html](http://southwell.anglican.org/news_nifty_notes.html)

You can request a supply of hard copies for your parish by contacting Nicola Marsh on 01636 817219 or 01636 817219, or email [nicola@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:nicola@southwell.anglican.org)



# writing a press/news release

## what to do

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- A release should read like a news story, not a letter or a report. A news story demands five facts: Who? What? Where? When? Why?
- The first paragraph is vital. Its impact decides whether the reader will continue with the rest of your story. A useful tip is that many of the “five Ws” as possible should be included in the first paragraph.
- Interest created with the introduction must be retained throughout the story. So use your imagination as you develop the facts.
- The second paragraph should draw out the implications of your opening statement. This may explain how it happened, or often what happens next.
- The third paragraph should then contain detailed information – facts and figures. Begin to amplify the story.
- Subsequent paragraphs can then expand on the information and comment on the implications. These must be placed in descending order of importance as the news release will be cut from the bottom up.
- Use a quote. This makes the story come alive by expressing personality or strong opinion.
- Choose a simple headline that sums up the main point of the story.
- Type your release neatly with a large margin either side to allow the sub-editor to make notes if they wish. At the bottom of the last paragraph type “ENDS”.
- If you are posting the press release (as opposed to emailing it) use standard A4 paper. Make sure the name of the organisation is clearly printed at the top of the first page and that, at the end, you give a contact name and telephone number(s).
- Type at the top, in large letters, “NEWS RELEASE”, date it and indicate when the information can be published – “For immediate use” or “Embargoed\* until (time and date)” – type these at the top of all pages. (\*An embargo is an instruction not to publish before a specific time and date.)
- Always try to keep your news release on one page: two pages should only be an occasional breaking of the rules. If you have a lot to say, get the main points into the news release and spell out the whole story on a longer information sheet to go with it. News editors receive hundreds of news releases every week. If yours is not to end up in the wastepaper bin, keep it short.
- When you have sent your news release be prepared for a phone call or visit from a reporter – so be available. Think out what further information you are willing to disclose. Follow up with a phone call if they fail to contact you.

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Information from xyz  
Contact name  
Address  
Telephone number

use logo if appropriate

**PRESS RELEASE**

Release date  
Word count

**HEADLINE**

Attention-grabbing first paragraph.

Then begin to draw out the implications of the opening statement.

Amplify the points made in the opening statement in order of importance.

Tie up any loose ends.

ENDS

For further information contact:  
Name, organisation, telephone number

# accessibility and health & safety

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There are nine million people with a disability in the UK and they should not be excluded. We have legal responsibilities to them under the Disability Discrimination Act.

There is also a strong business case for attracting disabled visitors.

## Health & Safety

All churches should have a health and safety policy. This policy should consider staff, volunteers and visitors.

Old buildings can be minefields of potential health and safety hazards. They are buildings whose shape, size and floor levels may have been changed several times through the centuries.

## Think about...

### Lighting:

- Some old buildings are quite dark.
- Light switches may not be easy to find.
- In exceptional cases, the lighting scheme may not be up to required standards.

## Aisles & pews:

- Spaces between rows of benches can be inadequate for wheelchair users.
- Wheelchair users will also have problems if seating areas are on platforms.

## Uneven floor:

Floor levels may be uneven due to graves and gravestones settling. In churches, there are usually steps between porch and nave, nave and chancel, and chancel and sanctuary. These need white edging strips. Carpeting, particularly patterned carpets, on floors and steps can hide steps. Where practical you should use ramps to overcome the problem of floor levels, for older visitors and those with wheelchairs or push chairs.

## Tower visits:

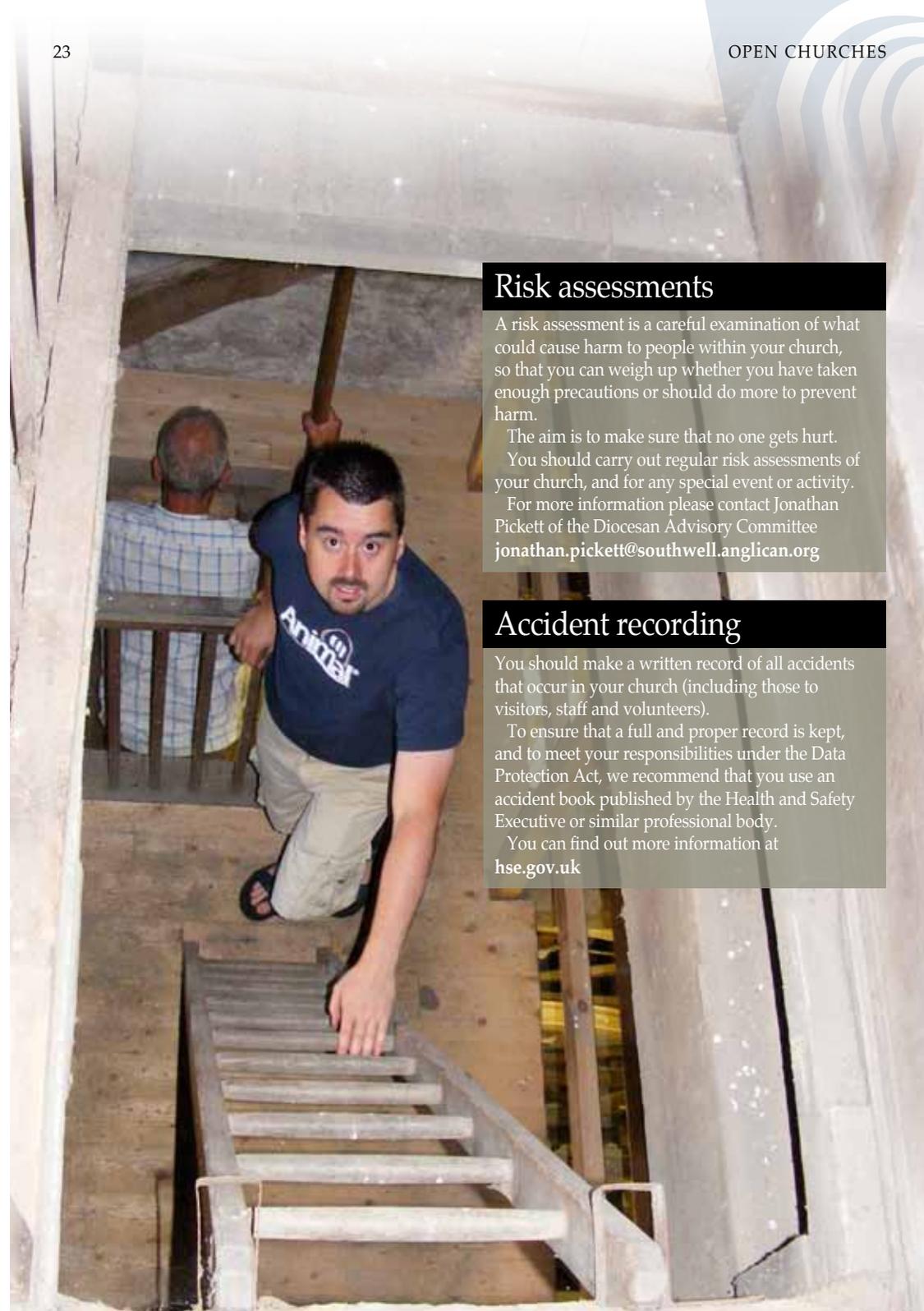
- If your church has a tower, consider carefully whether to allow tower tours.
- The difficulties these raise are numerous. Guidance is available via our website.

## Churchyards & outside space:

- Visitors will also visit the churchyard, where there are also risks. Are gravestones secure? Is the grass cut, so that trip hazards can be seen? Has moss gathered on paths, making them slippery?

Your site should be checked regularly and risk assessments completed. This will identify risks and help you to take action to overcome them.

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## Risk assessments

A risk assessment is a careful examination of what could cause harm to people within your church, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm.

The aim is to make sure that no one gets hurt.

You should carry out regular risk assessments of your church, and for any special event or activity.

For more information please contact Jonathan Pickett of the Diocesan Advisory Committee [jonathan.pickett@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:jonathan.pickett@southwell.anglican.org)

## Accident recording

You should make a written record of all accidents that occur in your church (including those to visitors, staff and volunteers).

To ensure that a full and proper record is kept, and to meet your responsibilities under the Data Protection Act, we recommend that you use an accident book published by the Health and Safety Executive or similar professional body.

You can find out more information at [hse.gov.uk](http://hse.gov.uk)

# literature

Thanks to Heritage Lottery Funding, the Open Churches Project can provide guide leaflets free of charge to those churches whose research has been completed as part of the Church History Project. Completed research can be found at:

<http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk>

For some examples of leaflets see:

[nottsopenchurches.org.uk/tourism-churchguides.html](http://nottsopenchurches.org.uk/tourism-churchguides.html)

To discuss your church's requirements contact Heather Sirrel at the address at the end of this booklet.



# trail leaflets

The Open Churches Project has also published various 'trail' leaflets linking together churches with a common theme.

## Robin Hood Churches Trail

Our first in the series was inspired by the 2010 film starring Russell Crowe- the Robin Hood Trail connects the churches of Nottinghamshire that have a reported link with the legends!

## Medieval Stained Glass Trail

Our trail leaflets aim to cover a wide range of popular or specialist themes. The second in the series looks at churches in Nottinghamshire that have medieval stained glass.

## The Old Great North Road Trail

This trail looks at churches along the route of the Great North Road – once the main route from London to Edinburgh. We explore 19 churches from Balderton and Newark right up to Bawtry and Austerfield on the border of South Yorkshire and Nottinghamshire.



Coming soon...

## Mining Heritage Trail

Looking at Nottinghamshire's coalfield churches.

...and many more...



Are you fascinated by church history?  
Could you help us bring church heritage to life?

**The Southwell & Nottingham Diocese  
Church History Project would like to  
hear from you!**

Churches are a valuable part of our heritage, being both significant guides to British architecture and important focal points within our communities.

The Church History Project was set up in 1998 by the Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham in conjunction with the University of Nottingham to provide an accurate historical and archaeological record for each church and church site within the Diocese. The recent award of a Heritage Lottery Grant has enabled this work to expand into both education and tourism.

The Church History Project is looking for volunteers to help research the 314+ churches in the Diocese as part of the project.

**To get involved, or for more information about this exciting and innovative project please contact:**

Heather Sirrel, Church History Project  
Dunham House, 8 West Gate Southwell, Notts, NG25 0JL

07736 286 056

**Heather.Sirrel@southwell.anglican.org**

Full training and support will be given.

**nottsopenchurches.org.uk**



## contacts and resources

The Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham's Open Churches Project seeks to support and help parishes in their outreach to visitors.

Contact:

Heather Sirrel

email: [heather.sirrel@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:heather.sirrel@southwell.anglican.org)

phone: 01636 817 223 or 07736 286 056

or write to her at Dunham House, 8 Westgate, Southwell, NG25 0JL

Make sure your church is represented on our website!

You can also download copies of all the leaflets we produce.

**[nottsopenchurches.org.uk](http://nottsopenchurches.org.uk)**

The Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham's website also has a section on Tourism:

**<http://www.dioceseofsouthwell.couk.com/OpenChurchesProject.html>**

The Open Churches Project comes under the umbrella of the Church History Project:

**<http://southwellchurches.history.nottingham.ac.uk>**

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Nottinghamshire has over 350 historic church buildings. The Church of England recognises the importance of these wonderful buildings to Nottinghamshire's tourism and is pursuing a number of initiatives to make them more accessible to tourists, pilgrims and local people.

This booklet provides some practical and simple suggestions for open churches.

Some are very obvious; others might be new to you... some are only relevant in particular situations.

They are all offered to stimulate your thinking. All buildings and parish situations are different. The imaginative possibilities are endless.

For more information see [nottsoopenchurches.org.uk](http://nottsoopenchurches.org.uk) or contact:

Heather Sirrel  
Open Churches Project  
[Heather.Sirrel@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:Heather.Sirrel@southwell.anglican.org)

Dunham House  
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heritage learning welcome



The University of  
**Nottingham**

