



— Diocese of —
Hereford

Proclaiming Christ ✦ Growing Disciples

Why do people visit?



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- Spiritual places
- Places of gathering
- Places of ritual
- Places of remembering
- Places to give thanks
- Places to grieve



- Places of mystery
- Places of culture
- Places of memory
- Places of art
- Places of craftsmanship



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Why do people visit?

- Holy and spiritual places where local people 'expect' to encounter something - God, peace, beauty, craftsmanship, art.
- People in the community encounter churches in a whole range of ways.
- Places of gathering and ritual – births, life events, death.....
- Important to local community: sense of place, sense of ownership and the depository of local and collective memory.
- Becoming increasingly more important to visitors and tourists.



What are the numbers?



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

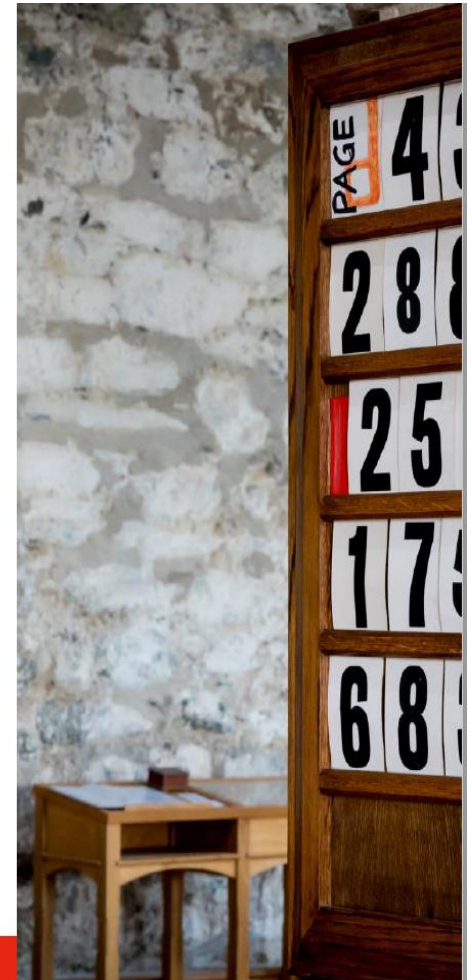
What is tourism worth?

- 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%)





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First Principles - Get the door open.

'It is better that a few things are stolen from our churches, than the worshipping community steal a whole church from it's people'

'A locked church is an oxymoron'

The church is not a private members club – unless there are very specific reasons why a church should be locked (and there are few) – then it should be open. Daily!



'The closure of the church building meant that we were unable to welcome those people, who need a quiet place for prayer and reflection. These are often people, of all ages, who are grieving over the death of someone who has left a huge gap in their lives.'



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Tourism and Visitors.

- Church buildings are part of the Tourism and Visitor Economy and they contribute to the economic prosperity of an area.
- Engage intentionally and professionally in tourism – is there a local tourism association or a local church tourism group? What can you do for free? (Explore Churches <https://www.explorechurches.org/>)
- Are there any free resources or training available?
- Engage with something national: Build your confidence, don't reinvent the wheel. <https://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/>
- Visit Britain: <https://www.visitbritain.org>
- Churches Visitor and Tourism Association: <http://cvta.org.uk/>





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Tourism and Visitors: Look around you.....

- Is there a local TIC or heritage centre who would take some of your brochures?
- Are you near to a B&B or other visitor attraction? Go and say hello, take some leaflets.
- Is there a countywide Tourism Organisation or Destination Management Plan – local economic development department should be able to tell you. Can you work with them?
- Is there a Heritage Action Zone project in your area? Is there a cultural consortium?



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Visitor welcome – what do people see when they arrive?

- Welcome sign?
- Family activities?
- Welcome and walkers tables?
- Jams and pickles?
- Local produce?
- Good Interpretation?
- Chance to give?
- Cobwebs, dirt and bat-crap?



Walkers and cyclists are welcome to use our facilities. A small donation would be appreciated to help the upkeep of our church. There is a box in the wall to the left of the front door. Thank you.



Tourism and Visitors.



Make interpretation as professional as it can be.

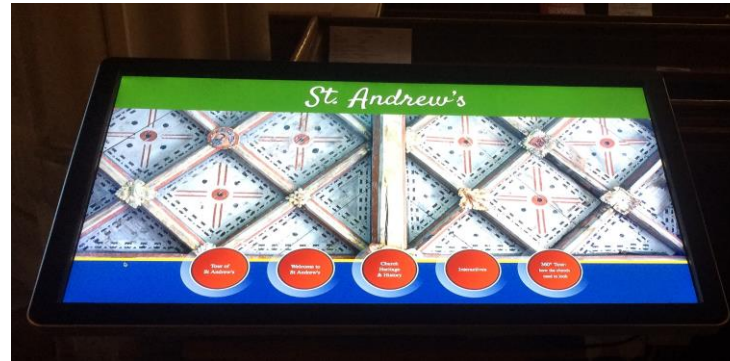
Keep it fresh and keep it current.



Tourism and Visitors.



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Consider different types of interpretation and visitor engagement.



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Prayer Stations and Votive Candles



Low cost, simple intervention
Safe – no fire.





- Low cost interventions – book exchanges, toy swaps – but keep it tidy!
- Draws people into the church building.
- Makes people feel welcome.
- Ability to develop other wrap around activities.



Think about income generation and make it easy for people to give.

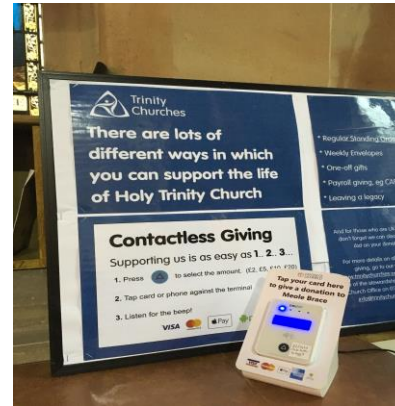


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Create income generating ideas and then provide easy ways to pay.

Piggy back onto local events and activities – scarecrow weekend, flower festivals, open gardens

Invest in Contactless.



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How to attract Visitors



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Is there someone in your community who could.....

- Develop social media platforms?
- Help create a web presence – your own or get you onto other sites such as Explore churches.
- Could anyone help you keep the church building open and welcoming?
- Help with locking and unlocking?
- Could anyone help you intentionally engage in tourism such as another nearby tourism business?
- Are there local people who could help with maintenance?
- Are there local people who would happy to help with activities?



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How to attract visitors

Could your church be used as a film set?
The next Bridgerton maybe?



Creative England or even your local
Economic Development team may be able to guide you.

<https://applications.creativeengland.co.uk/assets/public/resource/58.pdf>

<https://www.filminginengland.co.uk/locations/>



Current Funding Climate

- Post Covid funding climate is very challenging.
- Most funding is focussed on post Covid economic and community recovery and mostly activity based – particularly around economic stimulation or social action, or in the case of NLHF, heritage activity.
- Indications are that there is very little capital for repairs and major projects.
- What are the small scale interventions or activities that you can attract funding for?





What can we do next? (Post pandemic)

- Open with a good visitor welcome.
- Casual Space hire
- Food, drink and hospitality
- Heritage open days
- Talks and Lectures
- Tours and Trails and Pilgrim routes
- Churchyard activities
- Music and arts events
- Food Assemblies/produce sales
- Arts events
- Clubs and Societies
- Messy church
- Visitor attractions
- Quiet spaces
- Book swap
- Jams and preserves
- Local crafts

- **Community Café**
- **Lunch clubs**
- **Libraries**
- **Clubs and Training**
- **Arts and Music Events**
- **Credit Unions and foodbanks**
- **Markets and fairs.**
- **Pop up restaurants**
- **Performance space**
- **Mother and Toddler Groups**

- **Village Halls/Meeting Space**
- **Community Shops**
- **Parish Offices**
- **Shared space with other organisations**
- **Champing and holiday accommodation.**
- **Housing**
- **Shared Space (ecumenical or community)**
- **Heritage Centres**
- **Tourist Information Centres**
- **Children's Centres**
- **Post offices**
- **Soft play areas**
- **Internet cafes and digital hubs**



Mission and Mortar: Church Buildings:



Questions



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