

# Realising the missionary potential of church buildings

## Update on the Church Buildings Campaign

prepared by the Cathedral and Church Buildings Division, Archbishops' Council.

*Building Faith in our Future* was published in October 2004. Its main objectives were:

- to celebrate church buildings and the achievements of volunteers who maintain them;
- to awaken greater understanding of how church buildings contribute to the community;
- to seek partnership to sustain those achievements for the future.

The report contained **29 Key Recommendations** which set out what needed to be done to increase the community use of our church buildings which in turn will sustain them as places of worship. To read the Recommendations go to: <http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/builtheritage/buildingfaith/recommendations.html>

This paper summarises how we have taken forward these recommendations (see recommendation numbers in brackets at the end of the relevant paragraph).

Five years on, it is still true that one of the best solutions, if we want to keep our churches alive as places of worship, is to open up these buildings for the wider use of their communities. By using these buildings to their full potential, they can become a real resource for their local communities. The more relevant they become to these communities, the more they will be valued (and in some cases, this does include direct financial support) and this in turn will help sustain them.

### The Cost of Keeping our Churches in Good Repair:

*The Church of England has responsibility for 16,200 churches in 13,000 parishes of which c.12,200 are listed, 8,400 at grade I or II\* (50% of total) and 3,800 at grade II.*

*Research carried out by English Heritage and ourselves in 2005-6, valued the necessary repairs to all listed places of worship at £925m over the next 5 years or £185m a year. The Church of England is responsible for 85% of all listed places of worship. (Recommendation 4)*

## 1. Current spending and available funding

Our cathedrals and church buildings receive no direct government subsidy, unlike the national museums (in part why some cathedrals have elected to charge entry fees). We continue to welcome the grants made available for repair of historic churches, whilst making the point that these grants are insufficient – (see box above).

**£110 million** is currently being spent on repairs by Church of England parishes on their churches. The major grants givers **English Heritage** and the **Heritage Lottery Fund** together with a few independent trusts currently provide about 35% of this £110m **SO** 65% of what is spent is raised by the churches themselves and their local communities. (This is on top of the money they have to raise for running the church, for ministry and their parish share contributions). Furthermore, this is currently, £75m below what the 2005-6 research estimated needs to be spent.

The funds made available by **English Heritage** and the **Heritage Lottery Fund** under their Joint Repair Scheme for Places of Worship has remained frozen since 2004. We do, however, acknowledge that English Heritage and Heritage Lottery Fund have committed to keeping their contributions at the same level under this scheme at until 2013. We hope that with the passing of the 2012 Olympics more

funds will be available for this essential and oversubscribed grant pot. We have already drawn attention to the demise in 2009 of the end of the ring-fenced English Cathedrals Heritage fund. We also welcome other grants given by the **Heritage Lottery Fund** for community projects within churches. These have largely concentrated on widening access to the heritage and have enabled many community-led projects around writing guides, children's education packs and trails to be undertaken.

We especially welcome the continuation of the **Listed Places of Worship Grants Scheme** and the extension of its scope since April 2004 to the full 17.5% of VAT and since March 2006, to its inclusion of professional fees and repair works to fixtures such as bells, clocks and organs. By the end of December the Scheme had paid out over £100million across the UK, over £75m to Church of England churches. The Scheme is due to come to an end in **March 2011** and, in view of the fact that no provision has been agreed within the EU to allow for the reduction of VAT for repairs to listed places of worship, we will be mounting a campaign over the next year, in partnership with others, to persuade the Government to ensure its continuation.

We also want to show our appreciation to all the other Trusts such as the **National Churches Trust, the County Trusts, the Wolfson Foundation, the Pilgrim Trust** and others for their contributions towards the repair and refurbishment of our churches and cathedrals. (Recommendations 24-29)

*A 2009 survey conducted in November has confirmed previous survey results from the last eight years to reveal that about **85% of the population visit a church building or place of worship each year** for reasons ranging from participating in worship to attending concerts, community events or simply wanting a quiet space.<sup>1</sup>*

Many churches have benefitted from Lottery grants which have helped to fund major improvements to their buildings as well as community activities. About 12 faith groups of which 6 were Church of England churches received large grants under the **Big Lottery Community Buildings Programme**.

However, we have to acknowledge, that in the current climate, it is going to be difficult to obtain a significant increase in funding from these our traditional partners.

## 2. National Recognition

The Cathedral and Church Buildings Division alongside the dioceses and faith forums, have been working to develop new ways of bringing in support and funds to church buildings.

By talking to Government Departments as well as many individual MPs, and other bodies such as RDAs, and Local Authorities over the last five years, we have raised the profile of church buildings in

*“The C of E’s network of 16,000 churches is a ready made social infrastructure that would take billions to replicate. At a time of financial stringency when the green agenda is growing in significance it obviously makes sense to maintain and develop such a significant national asset. Any assistance would of course depend on a proven determination to equip the churches for wider community access but a relatively modest investment could yield large dividends”*  
Rt Hon and Rt Revd Richard Chartres, Bishop of London, introduction to *Churches and Faith Buildings: Realising the Potential*, March 2009.

respect of what they can contribute to their communities. This has created new partnerships and given us increased access and a more ‘level playing field’ in terms of access to existing and new areas of funding. This, in turn, has strengthened the Church’s capacity to develop the use of its buildings for worship and mission to the wider community.

This Government has put considerable resources into building the capacity of the Community and Voluntary Sector to deliver all sorts of public services and Faith Groups are increasingly recognised as a vital part of what has become known as the Third Sector.

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<sup>1</sup> Opinion Research Business (ORB) 2001, 2003, 2005, 2007 and 2009

### 3. Research which maps the contribution of faith groups to their local communities

*Faith communities in Yorkshire and Humber employ the equivalent of 540 full time staff and give 1 million voluntary hours which has an economic replacement value of around £282 million.*<sup>2</sup>

There are now Regional Faith Forums in every English Region. Over the last few years, these Regional Faith Forums often supported by their RDA, and many Dioceses often supported by their local authority have undertaken numerous surveys mapping the contribution of faith groups to social action and the well-being of their local communities. We now have a good body of research that we can point to and which earns us a seat at the various strategic tables at local, regional and national level. (Recommendations 5 & 6)

At a national level, this work culminated in the publishing of *Churches and Faith Buildings: Realising the Potential* (March 2009). This was the work of a working group comprising Ministers and officials from HM Treasury, Department of Communities and Local Government, Office of the Third Sector, Department for Culture, Media and Sport and DEFRA and the Church of England. The main aim was to lead to a greater understanding between Government at all levels and the Church and importantly how each other works. (Recommendation 9)

The report:

- articulated the valuable, and often unrecognised, role our churches, and the networks and buildings which they support, can play as part of the voluntary and charitable sector;
- addressed the issue of “squeamishness” that funding providers may have in allocating public funds to churches;
- identified funding and support for churches that will enable them to adapt their buildings for community use and also to help build on their capacity to engage at local and regional level where most of the funding is now to be found.
- lists the current initiatives and further action points being taken forward by Government Departments and churches, specifically the increased support for Regional Faith Forums, the development of a programme of religious literacy training for local authorities and public agencies; and the updating of the Local Government Association’s 2002 Faith and Community guidance document. (Recommendations 7 and 20)

### 4. Churches at the Heart of Communities and Volunteers

*“The life of the Church goes on because of you”*

Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury in his speech presenting awards to the winners of the Country Life **Unsung Heroes** competition in December 2009.

Churches are increasingly becoming vital partners in building strong communities and becoming a significant part of the community development sector. This is a role that we want to encourage national, regional and local authorities and other bodies to recognise. AND it is a role that we are encouraging our churches to welcome eg: encouraging parishes to fully engage with the development of their local parish/community plans; and dioceses to participate in Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements, and Local Action Groups. And there are an increasing number of area/regional

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<sup>2</sup> *Grace and Generosity: research report on behalf of the Yorkshire and Humber Faiths Forum, June 2009*  
<http://yorkshireandhumberfaiths.org.uk/2009/09/economic-impact-assessment/> Council.

Christian and multi faith groupings as well as individuals at diocesan level already actively participating in LSPs and other local community and voluntary sector networks and alliances. There are more and more examples of churches helping local authorities to deliver key parts of their agendas.

*South Gloucestershire, faith organisations contribute over 4,000 hours of services a week to the community. This is estimated to be worth over £2.5 million a year*

In all this, we rely upon the thousands of **volunteers** who keep our churches alive by maintaining the historic fabric, and also organising and supporting the various activities that take place inside them especially in multi-parish benefices in rural areas. It is important to not only to nurture the current volunteers, but also to ensure that new volunteers are encouraged to take part and that knowledge and skills are passed on.

*Without good people to manage the community facilities, to develop and promote community activities, to undertake outreach, community projects do not succeed.*

Ten Years On— A Review of the Rural Churches in Community Service Programme.

## 5. Why open the doors and share space with the wider community?

*Sharing our buildings can have a positive effect on concentrating resources and generating additional income for church buildings, while returning churches to play – once again – a more central role for the community.*

**Sustainability** can come from increased income and in some instances major financial investment in the building. This has allowed some churches to build up a sinking fund for future repairs. For others it has enabled them to fund more outreach work.

*The Diocese of Worcester's new post is being funded by a combination of funds from English Heritage, Dudley Community Partnership, Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire & Dudley Historic Churches Trust, The Countess of Beauchamp Charitable Trust, and the Diocesan Social Responsibility Fund.*

It is also about **Mission** and providing a needed service to the community. In many cases, offering a home to a service or another organisation and providing volunteers can

be the reason that a service can happen eg: community shop. esp. if the church is the last remaining public space

Since January 2007, there has been an additional mechanism available namely the Pastoral (Amendment) Measure which allows for a lease to be granted under faculty of part of a consecrated church building, provided that taken as a whole the building continues to be used primarily as a place of worship.

NB: We need to remember that there will always be some churches for which there is no possibility of extended use.

## 6. Renewed Partnerships

Partnerships bring a combination of funds, expertise, and increased networks and opportunities.

**English Heritage:** at the end of 2008 English Heritage introduced £1.5 million of new money to part-fund historic buildings support officers for three years to facilitate both maintenance, development schemes within churches and most importantly to build relationships with other bodies which can promote the value of these buildings as well as encourage their wider use. Currently there are five

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<sup>3</sup> June 2009 supported by Faithnetsouthwest and South Gloucestershire Council  
<http://www.southglosfaithforum.org.uk/joomla/index.php>

Support Officers in post, six more are being advertised and a further six are finalising job descriptions. These are spread across dioceses and other bodies such as the Churches Trust for Cumbria and the Diocese of Carlisle and the North West Multi-Faith Tourism Association and involve collaboration with a range of partners.

Over the last three years, English Heritage has worked with the **Dioceses of London, St Edmundsbury and Ipswich and Gloucester** to explore how gutters can be cleared at a price congregations can afford. The three schemes are now being evaluated with a view to detailing the different models and their relative effectiveness.

*The 2005 Parochial Returns found that 44% of churches have toilets and 37% have kitchen facilities. Four years on, the figures are likely to be considerably higher. Such amenities enable churches to host a wide range of community events.*

*All Saints Church, Northampton, Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham where the café in the crypt is now leased and run by a commercial enterprise who invested considerable capital into refurbishing the café area. Has allowed this city centre church to have a more secure future - the local congregation was diminishing as fewer people now live in the city centre – as more people are coming into the building, People now know it is a church – used to think it was the town hall.*

Another good example of partnership is the **Faith in Maintenance** courses put on across the country by the **Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings** supported by Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage and the Church Buildings Council. It has now completed its third year and 76<sup>th</sup> training day helping more than 2,500 volunteers who maintain our historic places of worship.

**The Rural Community Buildings Network** facilitated by DEFRA continues to meet twice a year. This forum brings together those organizations which have responsibility for community buildings eg: ACRE, The Village Halls Forum, The Women's Institute, The Boy Scout and Girl Guides. As well as enabling the sharing of knowledge and collaboration, presentations have been arranged from Government Departments, and other bodies for the purposes of consultation on new legislation and funding programmes.

We are developing our links with **ACRE** (Action with Communities in Rural England). The Rural Community Building Loan Fund has been launched its scope extended from being the Village Hall Fund to include other community buildings such as the church). We are also going to have input into the development of the Community Planning Toolkit being developed by ACRE.

We continue to work with and support **The Churches Tourism Association** which runs a very successful three-day conference every other year and a one-day event alternative years. The major bid made to Heritage Lottery Fund – the ASPIRE project – for funds to support 5 Pathfinder POW Tourism Projects sadly failed, but work is on-going to ensure that the 5 projects still go ahead and provide models for others to learn from.

We are a lead member of **POWLink@Heritage Link** which is an action-oriented national forum designed to strengthen the voice of historic places of worship in national debates. It provides a national forum for liaison and communication between a wide range of organisations with an interest in the future of historic places of worship which will help them to develop a shared vision on the way forward for historic places of worship

*Holy Trinity Smethwick, Diocese of Birmingham: a Funeral Directors, having invested considerable capital to refurbish the vestry area while retaining existing historic features, now leases the space as business premises. Previously closed except for Sunday, people have been coming into the Funeral Director's office and asking to be let into the church. PCC is now planning to open the church during the week. The church and Holy Trinity Funerals are working together to co-fund an outreach councillor whose services will be available for the whole community.*

## 7. New Partnerships

Over the last five years, the development of new partnerships has been key.

There are now about 25 post offices hosted within Church of England churches and church halls. We, in partnership with PO Ltd, the Methodist Church and the United Reformed Church, developed ***Guidelines and Best Practice for the Provision of a Hosted Post Office® Service in Churches and Chapels*** which is available at <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/develop.php?FF>

*Faith in England's Northwest: How Faith Communities Contribute to Social and Economic Wellbeing*, NW Development Agency, September 2009

This research looked at 12 case studies involving faith projects and discovered that each project exists to respond to some sort of need, and their ability to do so is underpinned by: their longstanding presence in the area; their particular local knowledge; and their capacity to tap into wider networks and resources. The research confirmed that most faith groups are rooted in their local communities, trusted and provide a level of continuity and sustained support that is hard for other voluntary organisations to match. <sup>4</sup>

In similar vein, next year CCB and the National Rural Officer are starting discussions with the **Plunkett Foundation** to develop a set of guidelines on setting up a community shop with a church.

We have also been talking to the **Voluntary Arts Network** to raise the profile of churches as good venues for the voluntary theatre, exhibitions. We hope to engage in similar discussions with those who provide support for community film groups.

Local authorities are increasingly realizing the potential of churches to tackle exclusion in both urban and rural areas and also provide for regeneration of an area (recommendations 8 and 10)

## 8. Case Studies

**St Leonard's, Yarpole, Diocese of Hereford (grade II\*)** – an extensive program of re-ordering to accommodate the village community shop, the post office – done under a lease - and a whole range of community activities and events. The PCC worked closely with the village hall and the community to raise the project costs of £240k. Grants were secured from 13 different bodies including £20,000 from the Village Retail Services Association (ViRSA).

**St Peter's, Peterschurch, Diocese of Hereford (grade I)** – initially approached by Herefordshire Council, church is now to host the Golden Valley's Children's Centre and Branch Library. Funding has been received from Advantage West Midlands RRZ Multi Use, Department of Children, Schools and Family and the local authority, Herefordshire Historic Churches Trust, and the Church Urban Fund. Extensive support from Herefordshire Council's regeneration team and two local infrastructure organisations, Hereford Voluntary Action and Community First.

**St Andrew's, South Warnborough, Diocese of Winchester (grade II\*)** - church has been adapted for wider community use by the installation of a discreet kitchen and loo, and a small side extension on the north side of the church. The whole village was consulted, the buildings committee was made up of members of the PC, and the wider community. Local craftsmen were employed and a substantial amount of the labour was undertaken by local volunteers.

**St Bega's, Eskdale Green, Diocese of Carlisle** - following the Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001, a series of changing temporary exhibitions about the local community, its history and topography, were set up to encourage visitors and it has become the Discover Eskdale Centre. An outreach post office opened in the church October 2007.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nwda.co.uk/media-library/publications/communities/faith-in-england-northwest-oct.aspx>

*A survey undertaken by the **Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham** (September 2009) revealed the massive role being played by churches across Nottinghamshire in the care and support of older people. Almost 130 parishes provide a range of activities, befriending and visiting, arranging transport to church and Day Centres. A range of social activities such as Whist Drives, Bingo, Dancing and Cinema. A number are in partnership with other agencies eg: Framework, Age Concern, Help the Aged, CVS, the Police, C.A.B., Women's Institute and with other churches.<sup>5</sup>*

**St Martin in the Bullring, Diocese of Birmingham (grade II\*)** – city centre church which provides a drop-in and advice centre at the west end as well as being a venue for regular concerts and exhibitions.

**St Paul's, Old Ford, Diocese of London (grade II)** – a community building in a deprived area of London offering a community café, a gym for disabled clients, a space for an Into University centre which provides sustained academic support, motivation and encouragement, to young people. Alongside which run a host of community activities.

**St Peter's Church, Liverpool Grove, Walworth, Diocese of Southwark (grade I)**

In an inner-city area of South London close to the Aylesbury Housing Estate. *InSpire* set up in the crypt aims to provide centres of learning, arts and community, where local people can unlock their potential by obtaining new skills, increasing their confidence and developing a sense of community.

**St Leonard's Bilston, Diocese of Lichfield (grade II)** – runs Linkline, from two rooms behind the organ, which is a support service that phones 1500 elderly people every week and provides practical help with shopping, simple DIY jobs, lifts to hospital appointments.

**Holy Trinity, Ripon, Diocese of Ripon and Leeds (grade II)**

In 2003, raised £1.1 million to develop and reorder and refurbish their church (and alongside gave £100,000 to overseas development projects). Crypt and a new accessible entrance created, and a kitchen, and reception area and five meeting rooms – all for hire. Used by many community groups.

A very useful addition to our resources has been the Hereford Diocese Toolkit *A Community Development Approach to the Use of Church Buildings*<sup>6</sup>

## **9. What is the Cathedral and Church Buildings Division doing to support this?**

The Division has been a lead member of the Church of England's *Shrinking the Footprint* initiative which provides resources and guidance for the C of E's churches, cathedrals, schools and clergy homes on best practice for creating sustainable, energy efficient buildings.

In the face of huge increases in **water bills** due to changing charging regimes, the Division played a lead role alongside village halls, the Scouts, and many other sporting, and voluntary and community bodies in running a national campaign and persuading government to legislate to allow water companies to run concessionary schemes.

To mark the fifth anniversary of the launch of Building Faith in our Future, the Division is running a programme over 2010/11 (and beyond) called "*Crossing the Threshold*". This will be a series of capacity building events and resources aimed in the first instance at "training the trainers" within diocesan structures. Some we hope will be open regional events organised by dioceses and other partners which we will support or promote.

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<sup>5</sup> For more information: [http://www.dioceseofsouthwell.couk.com/pr\\_churchrolewitholderpeople.html](http://www.dioceseofsouthwell.couk.com/pr_churchrolewitholderpeople.html)

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.hereford.anglican.org/churchgoers/community\\_partnership\\_and\\_funding/about\\_us\\_and\\_latest\\_news/index.aspx](http://www.hereford.anglican.org/churchgoers/community_partnership_and_funding/about_us_and_latest_news/index.aspx)

The key aim is to offer simple guidance across a range of specialist areas using wherever possible existing frameworks to “*make it easy to get things right*”. We are working together with Ministry and Public Affairs, the Church Urban Fund, the Liturgical Commission and others drawing together the major policy developments of recent years, in particular: Mission Shaped Church; Transforming Worship, and Building Faith (i.e. covering mission, worship and extended uses), as well as changes in heritage protection legislation and heritage/environmental conservation practice.

We maintain the **www.churchcare.co.uk** website which is directed at parishes and provides on-line information on the repair and maintenance of the building; caring for artworks, furnishings and fittings; and churchyard management. In 2007, **Churchcare** was re-launched with a new section on how to develop your church building for wider community use and, most important, the necessary processes and stages that must be worked through. We are currently putting up a range of examples from across the country to show what can be achieved. We continue to update Churchcare with the aim of synthesising the experience of churches who have achieved things and meeting the needs of those just starting the process.

During 2008, we worked with the National Stewardship and Resources Officer as a member of the Funding Working Group to update and improve the 12 funding guides which appear both on **Churchcare** and **Parish Resources**.

We organise twice yearly **Capacity Building Seminars** which provide a forum the basis for a network of consultants and advisers to churches both independent and those based in the dioceses.

## **10. What Still Needs to Be Done?**

There are still barriers and areas where we need to continue to put in effort:

1. There is a still need for more money to adapt and modernise churches (recommendation 11);
2. There is a still lack of understanding of how churches work which can lead to a reluctance to work with churches by secular funding bodies. Churches have always been able to distinguish between worship and activities for the congregation and social outreach into the wider community. They need to be able to explain this better to the outside world.
3. There is a need for churches to become familiar and practised in dealing with secular bodies and accessing funding. We need to encourage and enable more dioceses to engage directly at a strategic level with the local and regional structures within which funding priorities and decisions are made.

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