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CROSSING THE THRESHOLD

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO DEVELOPING YOUR PLACE OF WORSHIP FOR WIDER COMMUNITY USE AND MANAGING A SUCCESSFUL BUILDING PROJECT





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This is an updated and expanded edition of the Diocese of Hereford's 2013 toolkit entitled 'Crossing the Threshold' (first published 2009).

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Allchurches Trust is one of the UK's largest charitable trusts. We give grants to churches, schools and other charities working at the heart of local community life so that they can directly help those most in need. In 2016, we gave a total of £13.2 million to projects all over the UK and Eire, particularly in deprived areas. We helped to restore and facilitate wider community use of churches and cathedrals of all denominations and we supported churches and charities addressing poverty, isolation, homelessness, youth unemployment and prisoner rehabilitation. Our money comes from our ownership of the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group, which grants a significant proportion of its profits to Allchurches so that we can donate this money independently to good causes, helping to change people's lives for the better.

www.allchurches.co.uk

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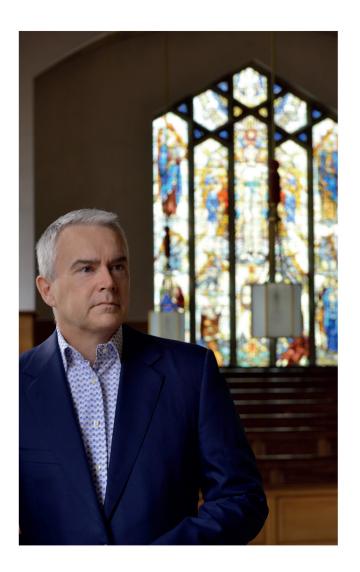








WELCOME



The United Kingdom's churches, chapels and meeting houses are a unique part of our national story. At the heart of communities in cities, towns and villages, they are a veritable treasure trove of architecture, history and faith.

Although we hear much about declining numbers of people attending church services, church buildings remain a tremendous national asset, much loved by the public.

According to the results of a December 2016 ComRes poll on church heritage, more than four in five Britons (83%) agree that the UK's churches are an important part of the UK's heritage and history. 80% agree that churches are important for society as they provide a space in which community activities can take place.

Many places of worship are kept alive by volunteers. Together with clergy and professional advisors, they work tirelessly to ensure that places of worship are well maintained and secure for the future. It is testament to their commitment that so many church buildings continue to survive.

'Crossing the Threshold' is an invaluable resource which will be of great use to anyone undertaking major renovations and also for congregations looking for new ways to place their church or chapel at the heart of their local community.

With vision, planning and, of course, funding, churches and chapels can find new ways of being of service to people, thereby continuing to play a vital role in the life and well being of local communities.

They may be historic buildings. But churches and chapels can be part of our future, too.

Hursman

Huw Edwards, Broadcaster and Journalist and Vice-President of the National Churches Trust

WELCOME 4

Huw Edwards, Broadcaster and Journalist and Vice President of the National Churches Trust

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Rt Revd Dr John Inge, Lead Bishop on Cathedral and Church Buildings, Church of England

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FURTHER INFORMATION

Advice on where you can find more information on all aspects of developing a community project and managing a building project.



If you are starting a major project, you must form a group (which could be called a committee/project board/management group/ working or development group) with the necessary range of skills and knowledge to undertake the project using the appropriate professional help when necessary. Ideally, you will need people with project management, business and financial skills, and also a good Chairperson and Secretary to run the group and undertake all the necessary administration.

(Hereafter, we will refer to this group as the Group.)

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

The Group will largely be made up of representatives from the church (preferably including members of the PCC/Trustees). Your architect should have copies of any minutes and papers generated by the Group, but it may not be a good use of his/her time if he/she were to attend every meeting – and may well be costly to you in the long run. If you have a project manager, it may be useful for them to attend, but again, it depends on the nature of their contract and how much this may cost. You may, depending on the project, also wish to invite members of the community or from partner organisations to join the Group. This will also emphasise the message that this is a **community project**, rather than a church project.

The larger your community project team, the better, so long as everyone's tasks are clear. It is far easier for ten people to find a little bit of free time on a regular basis and **share the load** than it is for two people to find a lot of free time.

BEING PROFESSIONAL

Your Group needs to act and behave in a professional manner at all times. Potential funders and supporters, including your local community, will need to see that it is a professionally run group that is capable of managing a project from development through to completion and beyond. The Heritage Lottery Fund's application form for its larger grant programmes specifically asks what expertise and experience your project group has which is relevant to your application.

Your organisation will need to be properly constituted and funders will expect to see how important documents, such as a business plan and other documentation have been produced, discussed and approved by reading the minutes of meetings. All of these will have to be produced to a professional standard, because if you are going to be asking for funding from public funders and local people, you will need to provide the evidence that you have developed a well thought out, workable and sustainable project.

If your project is creating a new use for the church building, then under certain circumstances that new activity may best be run by a new body with its own distinct legal existence; and if so, you should consider whether to set up the new body earlier rather than later, as funders may require this. See Chapter 4 for details.

CASE STUDY

ST. LEONARDS, YARPOLE, DIOCESE OF HEREFORD, COFE

The church website is at: www.yarpole.com
The shop website is at: www.yarpole.com/index.php/yarpole-community-shop
Population: 700 (2011 Census)

St Leonard's, Grade II*, is at the centre of a small rural village which is very much off the beaten track.

The 2005 **parish plan** identified two issues, first that the shop which had closed in 2004, was central to the community and secondly that the church was underused. The community, determined to hold on to their community run shop and post office, worked with the church to secure a permanent home at the west end of the church.

An exhibition of the proposals was put up in church as a way of getting people used to the idea of using it for secular use. A very carefully structured questionnaire, overseen by the County Council, asking people what they would like to use the church for, was sent to every household. A third responded of which 85% were broadly in favour of extended community use.

An extensive programme of re-ordering was undertaken and now St Leonard's provides premises for the shop, post office, café, flexible community space and numerous community activities. The Victorian side aisle houses the toilets and vestry.

Raising the £240k required and obtaining the necessary permissions proved the two most challenging aspects.

The Yarpole Community Shop Association Ltd was set up in 2005, as an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS). The shop is a stand-alone business and independent of the PCC.

A Community Shares Scheme was set up to help fund the shop. Shares were bought by 236 members for £10 each. These shares are still valid and the number of shareholders has grown to 322.

This is a project where there has been a lot of thought around the sharing of sacred and community space. Initial thoughts that a division should be created between the secular space and the sacred place have evolved into thinking about how the 'sacred space' can be integrated into a cohesive whole with the nave

St Leonards Building Management Group (BMG) (the inclusive management committee which represents all the users – the shop, the café etc.) has taken full responsibility for all aspects of running the building. The BMG is a sub-committee of the PCC. They also currently manage the café through a part-time manager who reports to the BMG, but that too ultimately could become a separate entity along with whatever else is developed on behalf of the community.

The project took nearly 5 years and on 1st October 2009, Yarpole Village Shop became the first full time community shop to operate within a church. It is open 7 days a week and much of the day-to-day work is carried out by 45 unpaid volunteers.

TOP TIPS -Q-

- Whether you have set up a delegated sub-group or a new separately constituted community group, ensure that representatives from the PCC/Church Committee and/or clergy are included within your group.
- Just because your project may use the church building, it doesn't mean that someone from the clergy must chair group meetings.
 Clearly though, the clergy and PCC must be supportive of the project and the community group!
- Establish some **terms of reference** between the community group and the church as soon as possible. It prevents later problems arising that could impact on the project.

CHAPTER 4 CHECKLIST 🖺

Have you decided how to manage your building/project in the future? Will you be a sub-committee to the PCC or establish yourselves as a separately constituted group?

Have you fully researched the different models of governance and sought the best advice so that you are able to decide which one is best for your project?

FURTHER RESOURCES 🔍

The **ChurchCare** website is maintained by the **Church of England**'s Cathedral and Church Buildings Division, but is a comprehensive resource for anyone managing a church building.

A key part of ChurchCare is the section called Open and Sustainable Churches. This aims to help churches select the right legal and funding model to develop their building for uses beyond the primary role of worship; these could be community activities, cultural events or even commercial activities.

www.churchcare.co.uk/churches/open-sustainable

Section 68 of the **Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 Code of Practice** is entitled Wider Use of Part or Parts of a Church Building:
A Guide to Section 68 of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011 and can be found here: www.churchofengland.org/clergy-office-holders/pastoralandclosedchurches/mpm2011code.aspx

The **Charity Commission** provides detailed guidance on setting up and running a charity. You don't have to be a charity to benefit from reading this information which is freely available on the website. **www.charitycommission.gov.uk**

The **Heritage Lottery Fun**d recently commissioned and published research looking at whether social enterprise can be an effective method to assist the sustainability of rural places of worship. www.hlf.org.uk/about-us/research-evaluation/research

The **Plunkett Foundation** helps rural communities to set up and run community-owned shops and other community-owned rural services. They also offer advice on governance. **www.plunkett.co.uk**