

The Strategic Action Plan for Historic Places of Worship in Wales

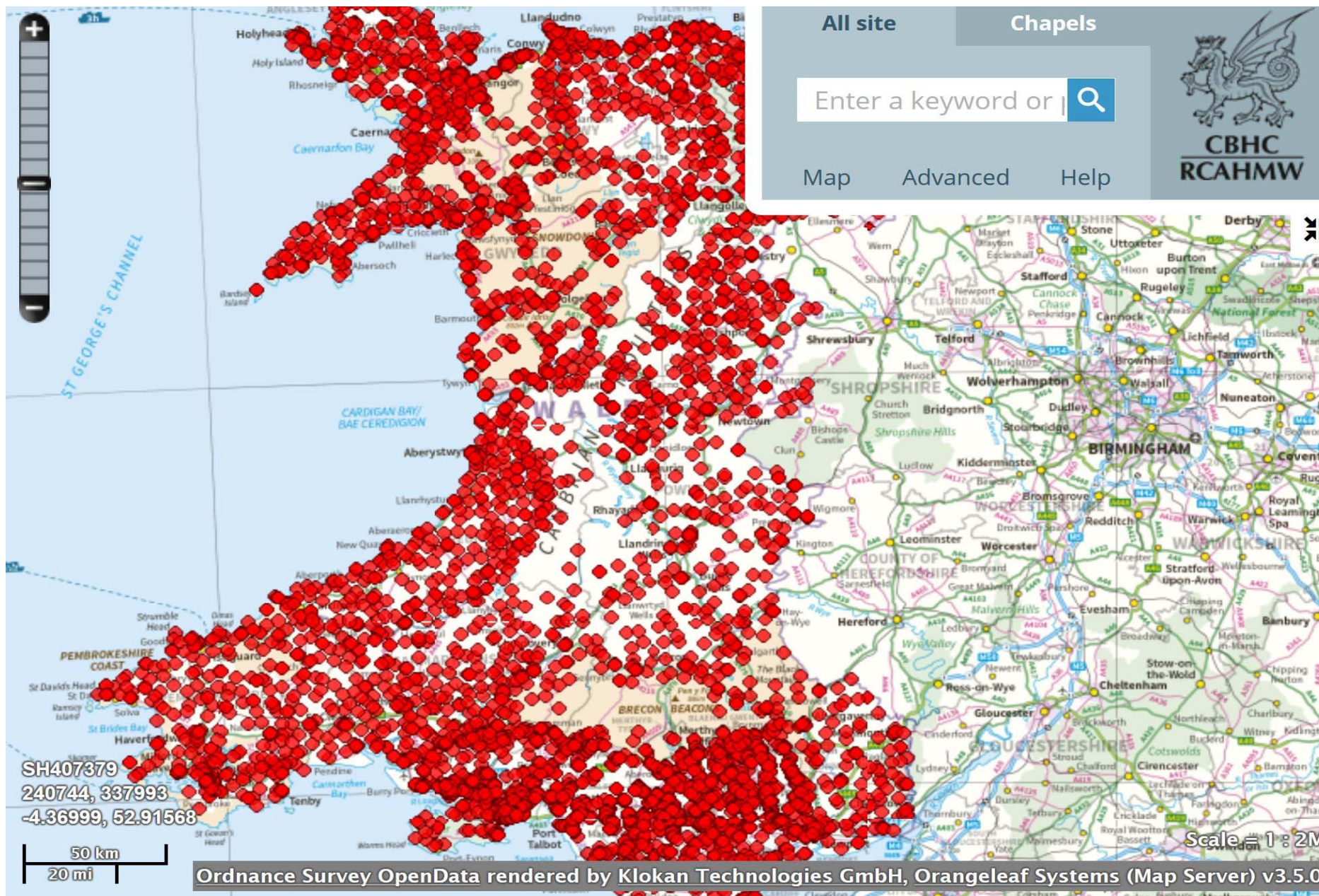
**Christopher Catling, Chair of the Welsh Historic Places of Worship
Forum**

The size of the resource

Wales has 30,020 listed buildings:

- Grade 1: 488
- Grade II*: 2,104
- Grade II: 27, 428

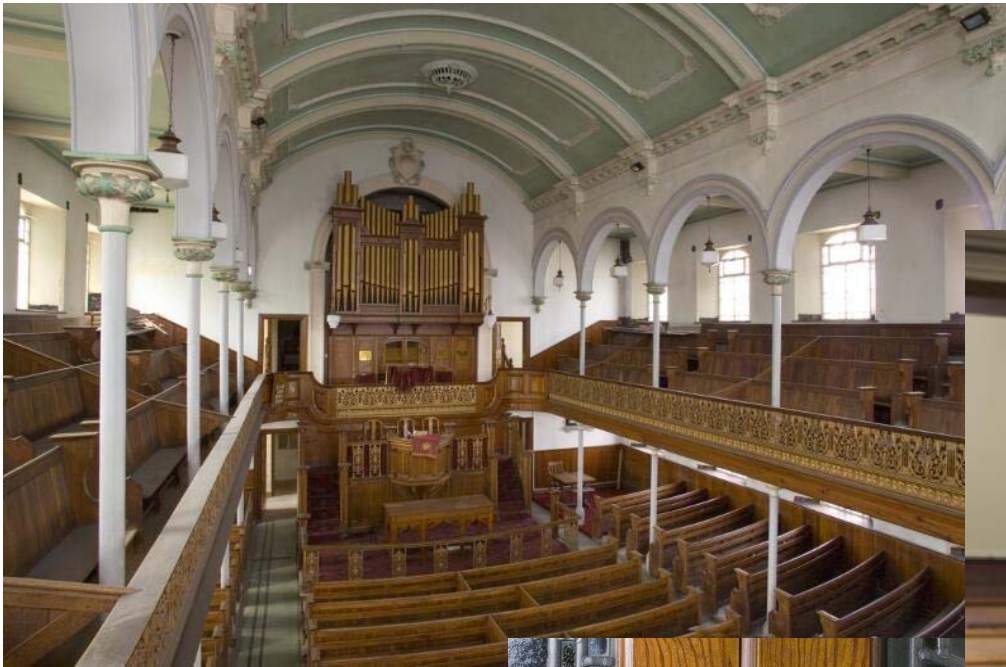
Of these, 3,000 (10 per cent) are places of worship, but most of these are Grade 1 or II*. For example, 44 per cent of the Grade 1 buildings (214 out of 488) are places of worship.



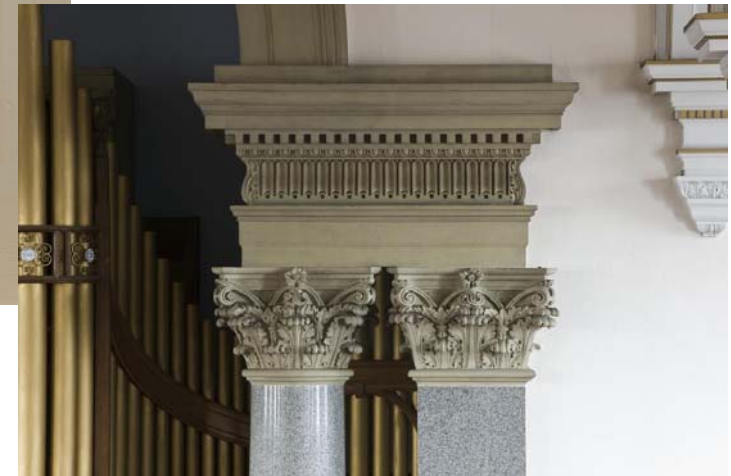
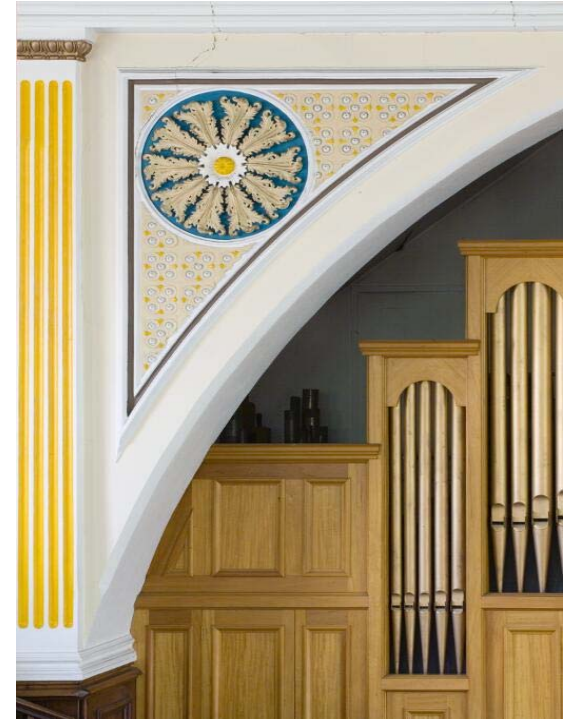


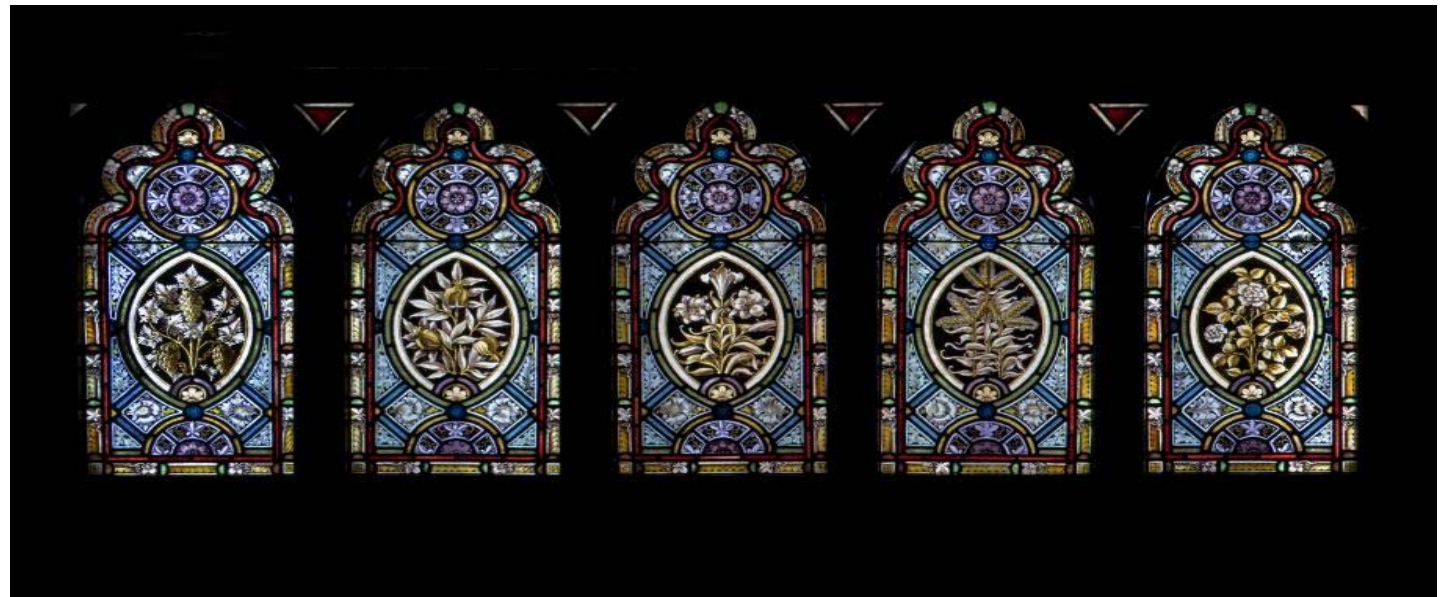
















Forum membership

- Baptist Union of Wales
- Catholic Church in Wales
- Cadw, Welsh Government
- Church in Wales
- Congregational Federation
- Visit Wales
- Quakers
- RCAHMW
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- IHBC
- Heritage Alliance / Historic Religious Buildings Alliance
- Islamic Trust (Muslim Council of Wales)
- Jewish Trust (Jewish Leadership Council)
- Local Authority Conservation Officers
- Methodist Church
- National Churches Trust
- Presbyterian Church in Wales
- Prince's Regeneration Trust
- Evangelical Alliance
- Unitarians in Wales
- United Reformed Church
- Wales Council for Voluntary Action
- Wales Heritage Group
- Welsh Archaeological Trusts
- Churches Legislative Advisory Service
- National Trust
- Landmark Trust
- Churches Together in Wales
- Salvation Army
- Ancient Monuments Society
- DACs
- Union of Welsh Independents

Strategic objectives

- Develop a 'one stop shop' to signpost information for those responsible for places of worship.
- Share best-practice; examples of successful congregation-led projects.
- Establish a 'people' database to support congregations and help them identify the expertise they need – architects, project managers, mentors, congregations who have been through the process and found solutions.
- Explore the provision of hands-on support for congregations in the form of development officers.
- Encourage congregations to undertake an audit of their current building stock to help identify important historic assets; and assess the condition of their buildings.

Strategic objectives

- Produce guidance to support congregations in marketing the building for other community uses, including guidance on potential funding support.
- Provide guidance on engaging local communities in securing sustainable solutions for buildings.
- Create a tool kit for options appraisals to assist in the consideration of future uses for a building.
- Disseminate guidance and training materials produced by Visit Wales to encourage faith tourism, pilgrimage and visitor access to places of worship.
- Encourage participation in the annual Open Doors programme.

Barriers

- Talking shop – lack of follow-up action
- Resistance to digital communications combined with poor Wifi coverage in rural Wales
- Language – the additional costs of a bi-lingual Wales; many chapel congregations are Welsh speaking
- Independent congregations; no central authority
- Sanctaidd never got off the ground
- We have no money.

Sanctaidd objectives

- Provide support and training in caring for Welsh places of worship
- Raise money for Welsh places of worship, and make grants
- Increase public understanding and appreciation of Welsh places of worship, and raise their profile (eg within the education system)
- Promote Welsh places of worship to visitors
- Inform and influence policy makers and opinion formers in the Welsh Government and its agencies, the National Assembly for Wales, the media and other stakeholders
- Act as a conduit for knowledge sharing amongst those who have a concern for the future of Welsh places of worship.

Sanctaid objectives

- Develop an information base about the needs of the sector including key buildings at risk to help inform decision makers
- Develop a web portal to effectively link information to help those caring for places of worship linked to developing and promoting training events and opportunities
- Develop new fundraising initiatives to lever money from new sources e.g. legacy campaign
- Develop a national fundraising event to engage the wider public (cf the NCT's annual Ride+Stride Event)
- Create a national calendar of events linking to Open Doors and other initiatives.

The challenge

- Persuade non-conformist and dissenting congregations that their places of worship do have heritage value
- Persuade them that this is something to be proud of and celebrate
- Persuade them to open the doors to faith tourists, pilgrims, walkers, historians – don't keep it to yourselves!