

The logo for National Churches Trust is centered on a solid red background. It features the words "NATIONAL" and "CHURCHES" stacked vertically in a large, bold, white, sans-serif font. A thin white horizontal line is positioned directly below the word "CHURCHES". Below this line, the word "TRUST" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. The entire text is contained within a faint, thin white circular outline.

**NATIONAL
CHURCHES**

TRUST



**CREATING
THE
PERFECT
WELCOME**





WELCOME

We want to keep brilliant churches open and in use

Yours for good.

THE NATIONAL CHURCHES TRUST

Sustaining church buildings:

- Providing grants for repairs, maintenance, facilities
- Advice, guidance and training

Inspiring support for church buildings:

- Communicate the value of churches
- Grow our Friends and supporters and raise funds
- **Grow the number of visitors to churches**

nationalchurchestrust.org/about-us

We don't just want to increase the number of visitors : we want those visitors to have a positive impact on churches and communities.



**Why should
we
welcome
visitors**



WHAT IS TOURISM WORTH

- 122 million overnight stays in England, 1.39 billion day visits
- [visitbritain.org/quarterly-data-uk-area](https://www.visitbritain.org/quarterly-data-uk-area)
- [visitbritain.org/gb-day-visits-survey-latest-results](https://www.visitbritain.org/gb-day-visits-survey-latest-results)

Why is this relevant to churches:

- Heritage is one of the biggest drivers of tourism day visits and growing
- Heritage sites contribute over £16 billion
- **More people visit heritage sites than attend football matches**

Offering an experience:

- Every church is **unique**
- Over 40,000 and over 10,000 of medieval origin
- All offer a **warm welcome**, most are **free** and have great cake



MINISTRY OF WELCOME

The Christian ethos is to be hospitable.

Hebrews 13:2 : Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares

More than just heritage or tourism:

- Bring the life of your church into your welcome and stories
- Offering a consistent welcome to all (services or not)

A recent study by the Diocese of St Albans found that only around 9% of people who attend a service for the first time go back. What could happen if 15% returned, or 25%.



HOW MANY PEOPLE VISIT CHURCHES

40 million
estimated visits to
churches per year
VisitBritain

55% of day trips include a
visit to a cathedral or
church
VisitEngland

many visits to churches do
involve local overnight stays,
and that they take place as
part of a trip involving other
activities
Churches Conservation Trust

each parish church
typically receives around
700-4,000 visitors each
year
*Trevor Cooper,
Ecclesiological Society*

visitors to churches, not including
accommodation costs, must generate at
least £350 million per year
Churches Tourism Association

17 million visits to 45
cathedrals and 52
places of worship
*Northwest Multi Faith
Tourism*

WHY NOW

Before Covid19 the big travel trends were:

- Experiences
- **Travel like a local**, the road less travelled
nationalchurchestrust.org/explore/do/experience

Post Covid19:

- Live like a tourist
- Getting more out of less travel
- **Sustainable and responsible travel**
- Virtual content
- Continuing a boom in holidays in the UK

This presents us with opportunities!



WHERE ARE YOU NOW

Is your church open?

Do you use any of these as an excuse to stay closed?

- Worried about **security**
- Church is for **mission**, not tourism
- Can't **afford** to keep it open all the time
- Not enough **people** to man it
- Our church is not very **interesting**
- People will leave mud and litter
- Dogs might come in
- You don't know **what people might get up to**



**What can
we offer
visitors**



A definition of welcome :

**To salute with kindness, as a newcomer;
to receive and entertain hospitably and
cheerfully; as, to welcome a visitor; to
welcome a new idea.**

Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do.

So throw off the bowlines, sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails.

Explore. Dream. Discover.

: Mark Twain

FAR REACHING BENEFITS

Churches are places of worship BUT, they are so much more as well.

Your church has huge benefit to your local community and beyond. From foodbanks to credit unions, churches across the UK provide a growing list of essential services.

Income raised from tourism can help power these services.

We know that people are sometimes reluctant to ask for help, or to reach out to their local church if they aren't a member. The welcome you develop for visitors will also bring in local people.

houseofgood.nationalchurchestrust.org/



Practical tips and tricks, for now and later

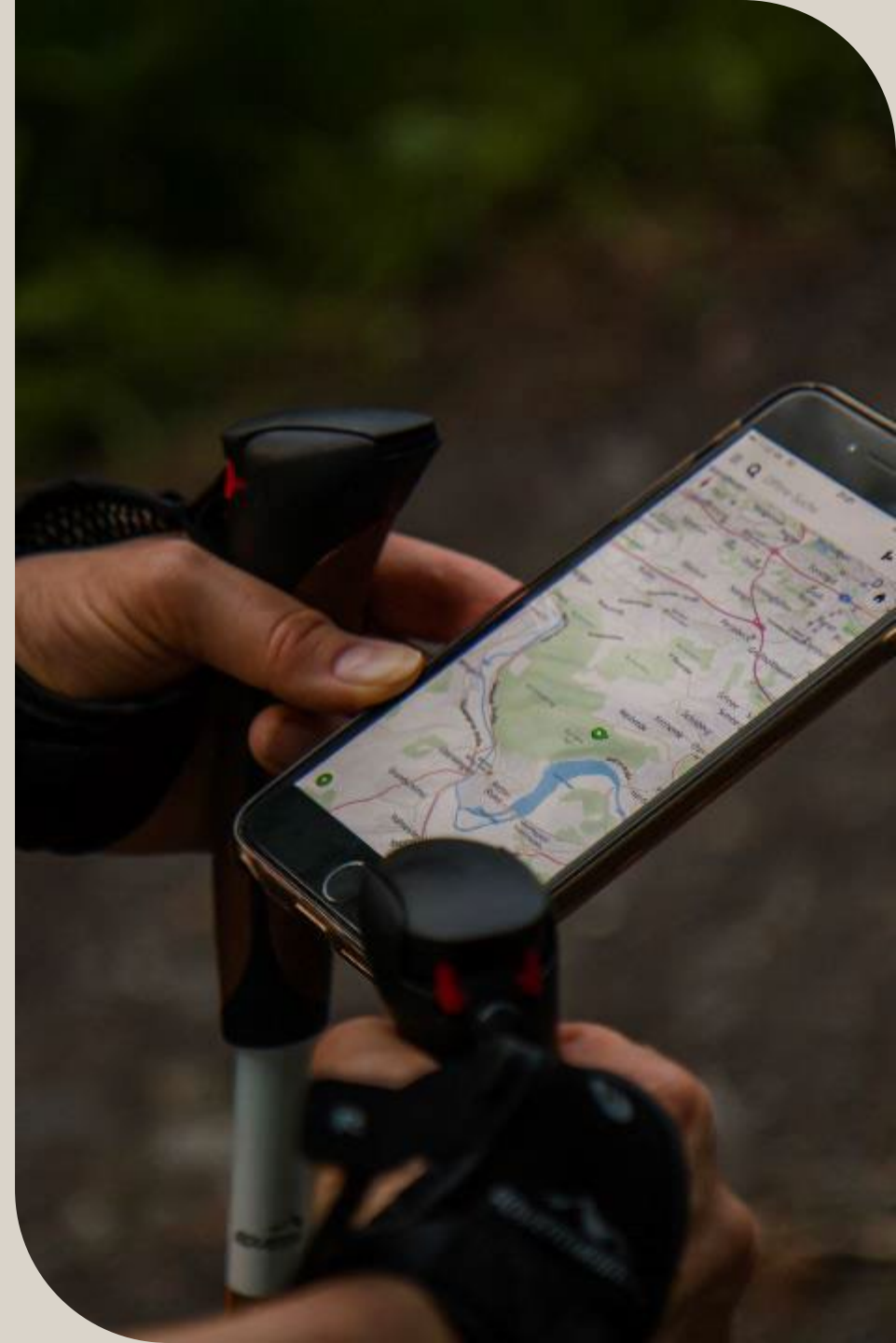


BEFORE ARRIVING

Your welcome starts before a visitor gets anywhere near your church:

- **70%** of travellers research places to visit on their smartphone
- Ideas, inspiration, content, reviews and more

- Your website
- Your social media
- Your presence elsewhere
- **Your content**



YOUR WEBSITE & SOCIALS

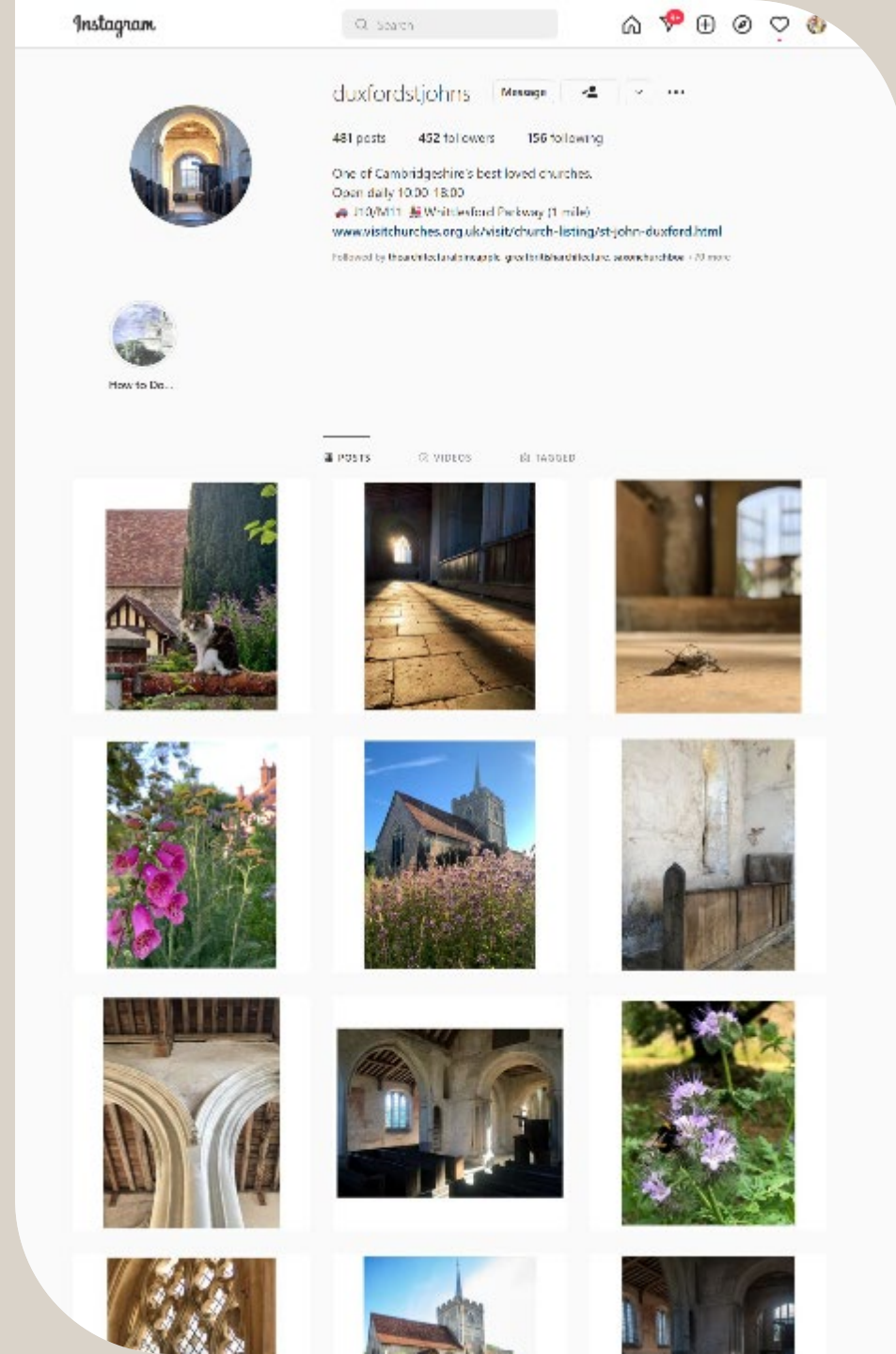
Visit your website like a stranger.

Make sure essential details are there:

- **Address** and directions (if complicated)
- Opening times (when appropriate)

Social media:

- Refine channel descriptions
- Encourage and support **wider use** by volunteers
- Be personal and **personable**
- Beat the algorithms by sharing
- Use to **engage** with others, take part in weekly days and use #hashtags
- Learn from folks who do it brilliantly



OTHER WEBSITES & SOCIALS

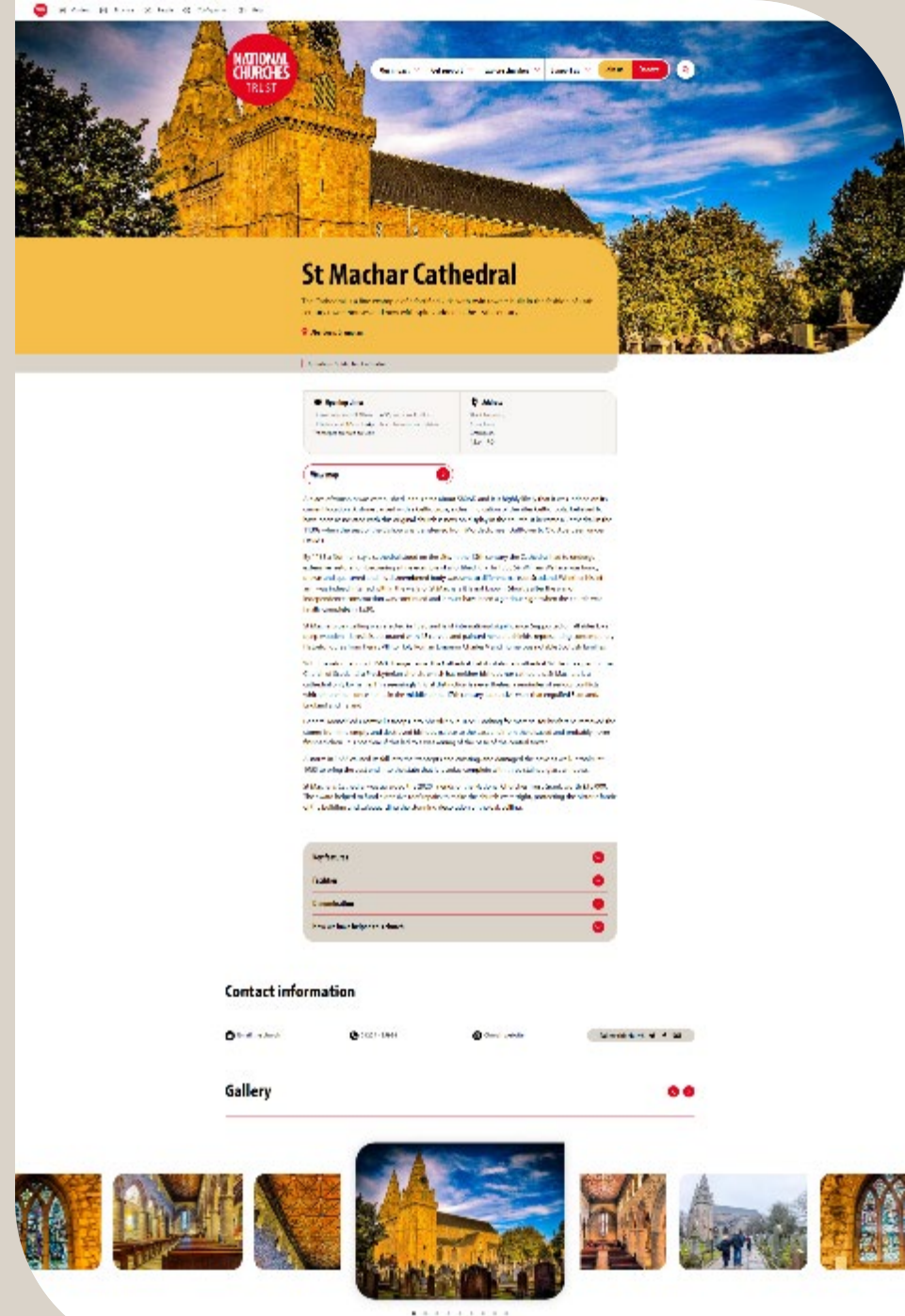
Check and claim or update your information on other sites.

Always use tags on socials to encourage sharing.

- Are you on **our website**?
- Claim your **Google Maps** entry, upload some photos and respond to reviews and comments
- Claim your **TripAdvisor** and other review site listings

Search for your church on Britain Express, historic churches trust site, tourism sites and social media. Share where you are listed or great comments!

nationalchurchestrust.org/explore/your-church/promote



YOUR CONTENT

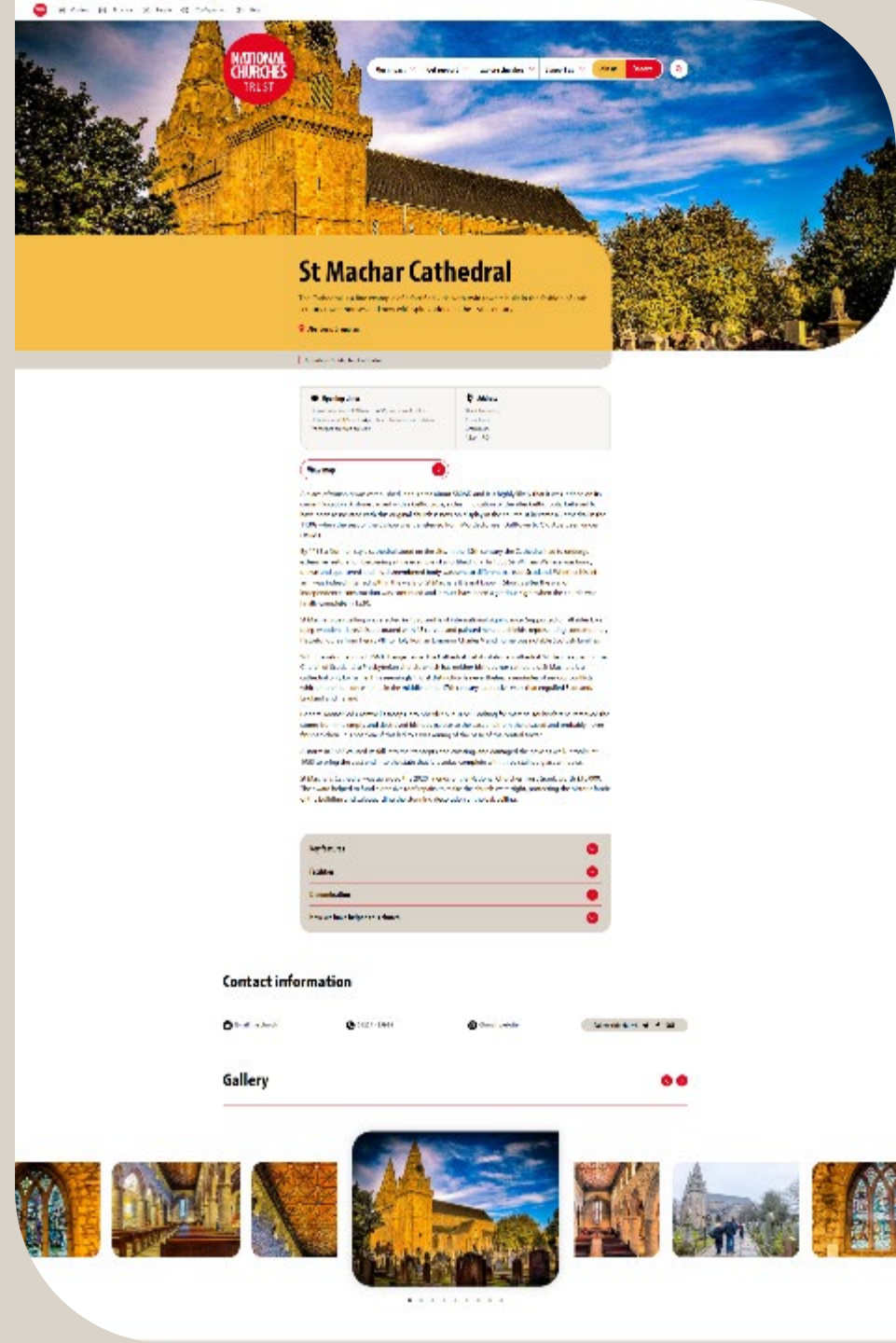
How and what people engage with online changes over time.

How people access that content changes too; including what devices they use and where they are.

Think about boosting your online content:

- Could you create a virtual tour
- Short videos
- Photos
- Stories

instant
video readable
inspiration
information pictures clarity
easy navigation up to date



ARRIVING, OUTSIDE

Finding your church:

- Is the church easy to find when approaching
- On a bus route or a **footpath**, is their **signage**
- Accessible by car , easy parking

Outside is the first area a visitor will see, how can you make it welcoming?

- **Welcome sign** with days and times when you are open
- Noticeboard with service times, activities, events and contact details
- History of your **church** and **community**

Remember:

- Keep it **simple**, doesn't have to be complicated or costly
- Make sure information is **accurate** and kept **up to date**



ACCESS FOR ALL

Access is **not just about wheelchairs**:

- Might also be a parent with a pushchair
- People with sight or hearing difficulties
- Try and think **holistically**

Be aware of:

- '**Reserved** for church use' signs
- Spaces for disabled visitors
- Roadside parking
- **Signage** from public car parks
- Ease for wheelchairs, pushchairs
- Steps, ramps and rails



CHURCHYARD OR GARDEN

Your churchyard or garden is a wonderful space and is probably used by huge numbers of people.

- Does it look cared for
- Are your paths safe, not slippery etc
- Are grassed areas accessible, leaving areas long for wildlife is fine but Ensure visited graves be accessed
- Is seating clean
- Is your churchyard well lit, especially paths
- Make sure the space is litter free

For inspiration and ideas for managing or interpreting your churchyard visit

Caring for Gods Acre:

caringforgodsacre.org.uk/



PORCH OR ENTRANCE

- Clean and tidy doorway and porch
- Welcome notice
- Free from litter and leaves
- Ensure well lit
- Check steps, hand rails and anything else that could help with access
- Tidy noticeboards
- Keyholder and other contact information

- Could you have an open door?
- Could you provide a dog bowl with water?



ARRIVING, INSIDE

- A **welcome** board and signage
- Visitor desk or designated area for information
- Guide book, leaflet or displays
- Story telling leaflets, panels
- QR codes
- Children's area and activities for a variety of ages and interests
- Visitor book AND PEN
- Requests for **donations**, including online giving
- **Refreshment** area



SHOW OFF YOUR BEST SIDE

Think about the senses:

- Clean and **tidy**
- **Smell**; polish and incense
- Play soft **music**
- **Lighting**; automatic lights or point out where the lights are if needed

Make sure that all your best or most important features are:

- Easy to find
- Easy to see
- Brilliant to **photograph**

Tidy any clutter!



MEETING VISITORS

You do not need to be an expert!

- Make all people feel welcome
- Smile
- Be easily identified as a guide
- Offer your services
- Let people chose how they wish to explore
- Give visitors space to explore
- Be sensitive to visitors needs
- Work in pairs
- Do not make assumptions



SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

Visitors come for many reasons, or may not articulate why they have come.

- Churches are sacred spaces
- Visitors have a variety of needs
- Quiet area for prayer, Lady Chapel
- Prayer cards
- Stones, pebble prayer bowl
- Candles
- Bibles and other books, for all ages
- Prayer tree, prayer requests
- Contact details



HEALTH & SAFETY

You must have a health & safety policy, and it should include consideration for visitors.

- Churches have many hazards
- Lighting
- Aisles and pews
- Uneven floors
- Tower visits
- Churchyard and outside space

Check advice from Ecclesiastical Insurance and when they are next doing a training session for us:

ecclesiastical.com/church/

nationalchurcheistrust.org/get-support/training



COUNT YOUR VISITORS

Visitor numbers are important for you and us:

- Help us to **promote the value and love of churches** to the tourism industry, government and others
- Help you to **apply for funding**, prove your engagement

#GreatChurchVisitorCount

- Be a part of the project
- Email us to get involved

nationalchurchestrust.org/explore/promote/visitor-count



AND FINALLY

Don't forget:

- Always have a donation box
- Gift Aid envelopes
- Online or digital giving

Share:

- Opportunity to become a 'Friend'
- Opportunity to become a volunteer
- Information about events and activities





MORE INFORMATION



University Church
Oxford

ECCLESIASTICAL LINKS

[Benefact Trust](#)

Open Churches

[Open Churches | Risk Management](#)

Fire Guidance

[Church Fire Safety Risk Assessment](#)

[Safe Use of Candles](#)

Health & Safety

[Health and Safety Guidance for Churches](#)

[Church Health & Safety Policy](#)

[Managing Safety at Your Church](#)

Automatic Time Locks

[Automatic door time Locks](#)

Church safes

[Purchase and installation of safes](#)

Security, Smartwater & metal theft

[Theft of Metal Advice for Churches](#)

[The National Property Register, for Gadgets, Bicycles & More \(immobilise.com\)](#)

Roof Protection Systems

[Church Roof Protection Systems](#)

Slips & Trips

[Church Slips & Trips](#)

People on Premises

[People on Church Premises](#)

Fundraising & digital giving

[Church Fundraising Hub](#)

[Fundraising Webinars](#)

NATIONAL CHURCHES TRUST LINKS

[National Churches Trust](#)

Get support

[Grants](#)

[Buildings and maintenance](#)

[Specialist Skills Directory](#)

[Training](#)

[National Church Awards](#)

Membership

[Become a Friend](#)

[Church membership](#)

Explore churches

[Great days out visiting churches](#)



CONTACT DETAILS

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