



DIOCESE OF
GLOUCESTER

Open to all



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Introduction

'For I was a stranger and you welcomed me...' Matthew 25.35

'Practise hospitality' Romans 12.13

'Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some have entertained angels unawares' Hebrews 13.2

'Let all who come be welcomed as if they were Christ himself' Rule of St Benedict

The Church is called to be a community of hospitality, responding generously to the welcome God gives to us in Jesus Christ.

This audit has been produced to help churches develop their ministry and mission through reviewing the welcome they provide. It covers a wide spectrum and has been produced as a 'first stop' tool to get you thinking and reflecting on your priorities. At its heart is a desire that our communities and visitors should experience all of our churches as:

- welcoming places
- sacred places
- life-giving places

After completion of this audit further resources are available if churches would like to review a particular area in more detail.

So whether you want to attract more tourists, make the church more welcoming to children and young people, improve disability access or reassess your communications, this audit is designed to help you review the welcome your church provides.

Marking system

Each section of this audit has a number of statements. You need to score each statement using the scoring system below.

Score each statement as follows

- Score 5 (High) if you think this aspect of your church is excellent
- Score 4 (Medium to high) if you think this aspect of your church is good
- Score 3 (Medium) if you think this aspect of your church is satisfactory
- Score 2 (Medium to low) if you think this aspect of your church is poor
- Score 1 (Low) if you think this aspect of the church is very unsatisfactory

There is also some room for you to make comments, but you may want to use extra paper to jot down ideas, thoughts and suggestions that come to you as you go through the areas.

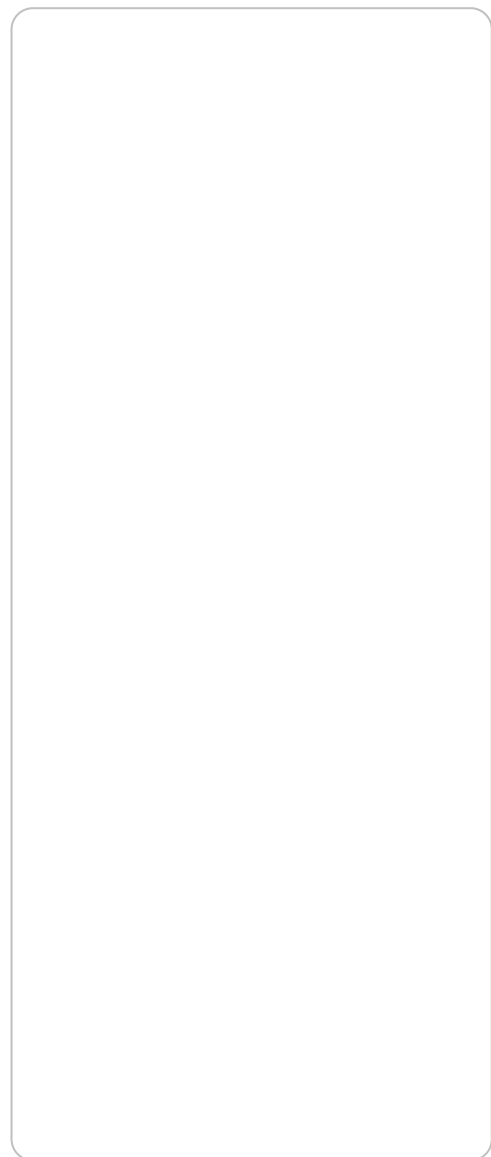
The audit has been organised into six categories and we would encourage you to go through each area to ensure your whole church provides a positive welcome.

Outside the Church	
Access	Score
We have completed a disability audit for the church.	
We have wheelchair access into the church.	
We provide handrails in necessary areas.	
Those with physical disabilities can access most of the church.	
Edges of steps are marked appropriately.	
Access routes are adequately lit.	
Parking	
We have designated parking areas.	
We have parking spaces allocated for disabled drivers and people with young children.	
We communicate where safe and adequate parking is available near and around the church on our noticeboards.	
Signs	
Signs lead people to the church from parking areas, public transport areas and walking routes.	
We have official road signs to the church.	
We signpost the nearest toilets.	
Signs are all appropriately lit.	
Welcome in the churchyard	
Grassed areas are tidy and litter free.	



Comments

Pathways are smooth and pothole free.	
We have adequate illumination of footpaths and steps.	
We have a team to maintain the churchyard, clear the litter, check the stability of the gravestones and manage the churchyard.	
We provide seating in the churchyard.	
We provide a map of the churchyard and its interesting historical headstones, written in a way that is accessible to all, including children.	
We attend quickly to anything that could be hazardous.	
We have created a spiritual garden in part of the churchyard using Biblical, sensory and healing plants with an explanation of their significance.	
We have a noticeboard in the churchyard, displaying policies and regulations. It also communicates any news to those who visit the churchyard regularly and is a source of information for the wider community.	



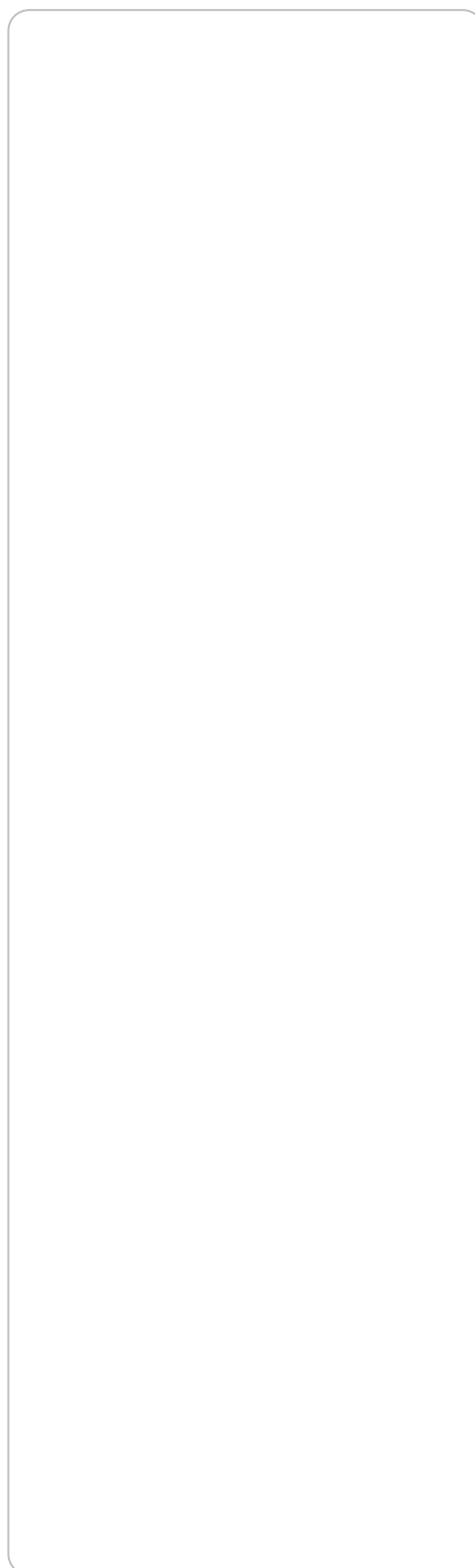
Inside the Building

Welcome in the porch	Score
The church is always open.	
There is a rota for the responsibility of opening and closing the church.	
There is an automatic door opening and closing device.	
There is a welcome sign outside the door.	
The welcome notice makes it clear young people and children are welcome.	
When the church is not open there is a sign stating this with opening hours and contact numbers.	
There is a 'thank you for visiting' sign, inside on the door.	
The porch is clean.	
There is a porch noticeboard.	
The noticeboard is tidy, up to date, has clergy/laity contact details and information about the church.	
There is a visitors' book, which we encourage people to fill in.	
The entrance porch is used to highlight and celebrate the involvement of the church in schools and community projects and other partnerships.	
Meeting/greeting /services	
Greeters are available to welcome people into church.	
All church officers have a name badge.	



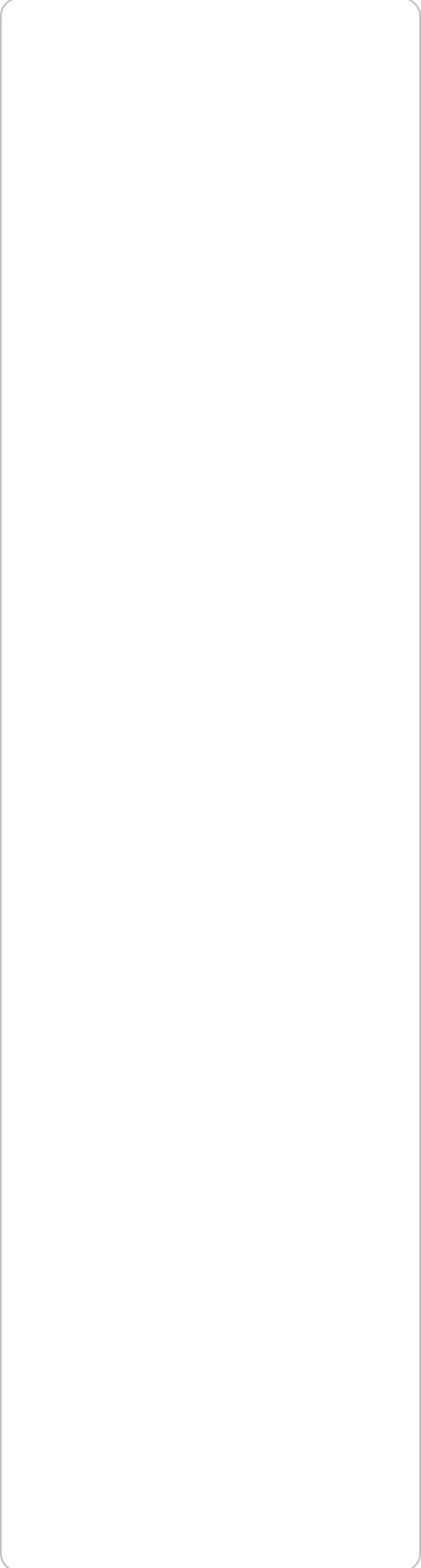
Comments

There is a 'church watch team' during the day to keep an eye on the church, but also to welcome visitors.	
Sidesmen and women are available during busy services and events.	
Training and clear instructions are provided for welcome volunteers and sidesmen.	
A special welcome pack is available to visitors with up to date information about the church, with upcoming events and services.	
There is a welcome pack suitable for children.	
A guidebook of the church is provided (free or at a small cost).	
Music can be played when the church is open to visitors.	
A clear sign making visitors aware of the church's position on taking photographs and filming is clear to see.	
Welcoming to children and young people	
All members of the church who have contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults have up to date CRB checks. ¹	
The PCC has agreed and implemented a statement for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.	
You have a children's zone that is well maintained and looks inviting.	
The church provides a visible welcome to all young people, not just very young children.	



¹ For more information about safeguarding children and young people visit <http://www.gloucester.anglican.org/resources/childp/>

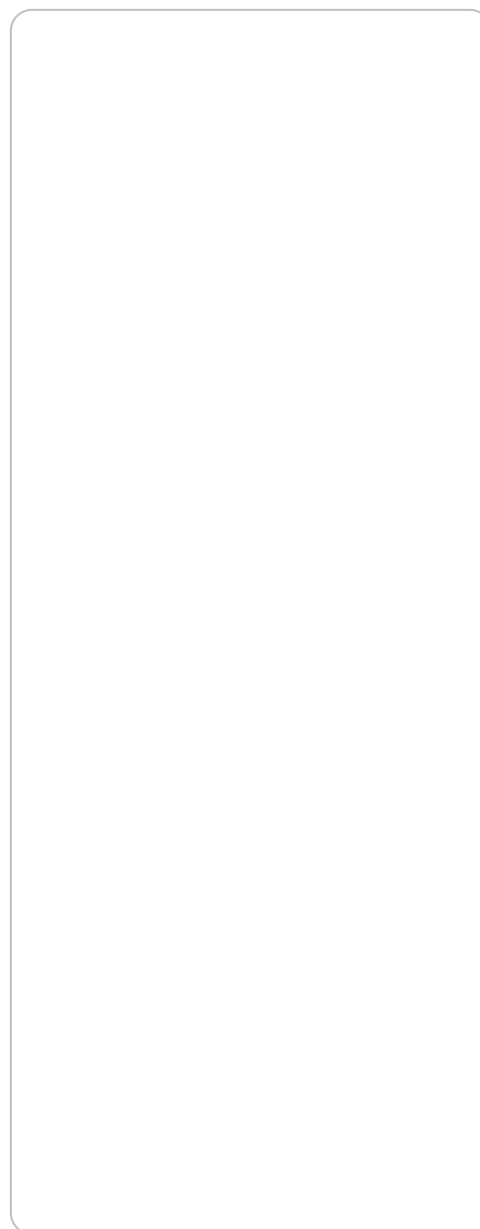
We use the Quality in Youth Work Initiative (QIYW) to support the church's work with young people. Contact the Diocesan Youth Officer for more information.	
Resources are provided for children and young people, e.g. children's tour, toys, colour corner, children's Bibles.	
Our church does not frown upon any noise children may make.	
Links with local schools and children/youth groups are celebrated and promoted in church.	
Spiritual guidance	
A simple prayer is displayed at the entrance.	
Christian books are provided.	
A user-friendly Bible is available.	
Prayer cards (guided prayers) 'for when I am happy, sad, etc, are available.	
Information sheets with things to look for in church with interpretation – or a card/picture by each item e.g. explaining use of a font for baptism/christening. Ensure that these explanations or interpretations cater for children and those with special requirements.	
Free gospels available to take away.	
Space(s) for prayer are provided with access to a Bible, a book/cards of prayers, candles and a sand tray/votive stand (for fire safety issues you could consider having a large and attractive bowl of water in to which people are invited to place pebbles as a sign of the person they are remembering being immersed in God's love).	



We provide kneelers or prayer stool/desk.	
A cross/icon/stain glass window/religious picture is evident in the prayer area.	
An explanation of what Christians believe is available.	
We have a supply of current leaflets about opportunities for the congregation to learn about their faith.	
We have displays of mission or overseas aid schemes in which the church participates to show we are a world church'.	
We produce a pilgrimage guide inviting people to ponder their own spiritual journey as they explore the building. These are accessible to everyone, including children and young people.	
We have simple displays of the church and local community stating what they do and showing a prayer specifically for them.	
We display photographs of the church at worship to show it is an active church. These show a representative sample of the community, including children.	
We create and display an album of the faith stories of people connected with the church.	
We create displays e.g. at Christmas and Easter about the meaning of these festivals.	
Invitations to worship	
We provide an A4/A5 poster with service information every month.	
We take care to inform visitors (and regulars) if a service is being held in another church in the benefice on a particular Sunday and give directions	

for how to get there.	
We welcome visitors' children to our Sunday and weekday children's activities – but we are sensitive that on a first visit children may well prefer to stay with their family.	
We ensure that our worship is accessible to children and young people and see them as active participants in services.	
Life events (baptisms, weddings and funerals)	
Information is available on these key services.	
Any fees are communicated as part of the service planning.	
Welcoming volunteers and sidesmen are prepared for these services.	
Church information, leaflets, service times and contact details are made available to the congregation as they come into or leave the church.	
Anniversary cards, Christmas cards etc are sent to the families after the service/event.	
Recognisable hymns and readings are used when the congregation are not churchgoers.	
Policies on video and photography have been clearly communicated.	
We provide appropriate follow-up sessions after major life events.	
Housekeeping/cleaning	
Repairs such as broken windows, missing lights and graffiti are attended to quickly. (A quick response to these items shows that the church community cares for its place of worship and it will discourage further damage and vandalism. Do you have a repair logbook for items that need attention?	

The church is suitably heated.	
We de-clutter the church on a frequent basis.	
There is appropriate lighting in the church.	
We use lighting to draw attention to particular aspects of the church.	
We have a timer switch for lighting.	
We have a rota to ensure lights and heating are turned off and on when necessary.	
We have a cleaning rota, with instructions on what needs to be done. This is built around services and when the church is open to visitors.	
The church is kept clean, which includes regular cleaning of brass and silver.	
Cleaners have the right materials/ equipment to do the jobs.	
Simple tasks such as rubbish collecting are always done.	
We provide rubbish bins, including recycling bins.	

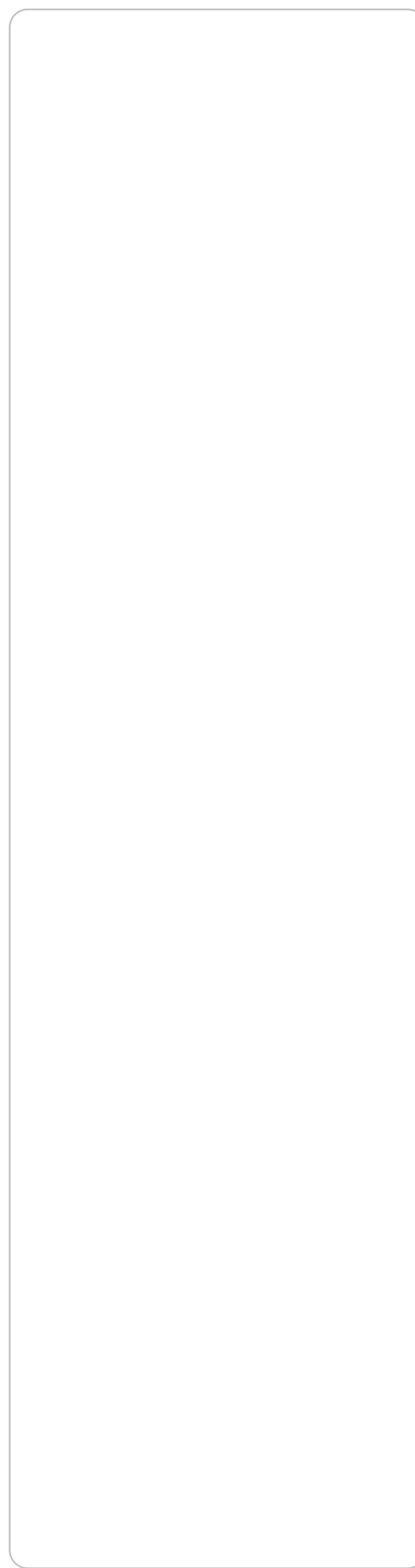


Communication	
Noticeboards	Score
Noticeboards are prominently positioned and clearly visible.	
We have a noticeboard officer who looks after the noticeboards and information.	
The noticeboard displays no out of date information.	
Displays are tidy.	
Literature is laminated if necessary.	
Literature on the noticeboard communicates our vision and priorities.	
Noticeboards are in good condition.	
Paper publications/literature	
We follow the Diocesan Communications Officer's (DCO's) printed publication guide.	
We prioritise our communications	
The church logo/style is used on all publications to ensure a consistent identity is communicated.	
<p>Before we produce any publications we ask ourselves</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • do we really need this publication, or can the message be conveyed through existing channels? • who are we trying to reach, and what do they need to know? • how does this publication fit in with wider publicity and communication? • do we have the funding and resources to see the project through? • will we need several mediums, e.g. a leaflet with accompanying posters? • will we need to employ external printers or designers? 	



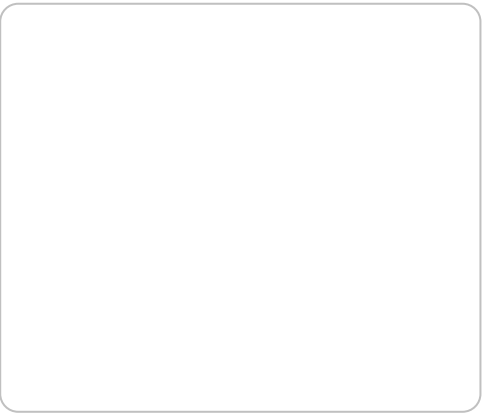
Comments

We always agree a distribution plan.	
We have specific officers who produce church publications.	
We have publications professionally printed if we produce large amounts.	
Paper/card is always determined on the use of the publication, e.g. suitable to be posted, to be displayed in stands.	
We take into consideration those with disabilities.	
We communicate our priorities through all our publications.	
Our messages are coordinated and consistent.	
Our publications are easy to access.	
Our publications are easy to read and written in the correct style and tone for the targeted audience, including children where appropriate.	
We promote our publications.	
We display and distribute Diocese of Gloucester publications, i.e. <i>inspires</i> , <i>Our Diocese of Gloucester Bulletin</i> .	
Our publications are available in a number of places, including the local schools.	
Electronic communications	
We have a parish/benefice website which is kept up to date.	
We prioritise and plan the messages on the website.	
Our church logo/style is used on the website.	
The website is easy to navigate.	



We have links to the diocesan website, C of E national website and 'A Church Near You'.	
We have links to our partner organisations and vice versa.	
We cater for those interested in the history and fabric of the church.	
Photos are relevant and of a good standard.	
The wording is easy to read and understandable.	
Our church is part of internet chat rooms such as Facebook and Twitter to communicate with young people.	
In the wider community	
We have relations with the local radio, television and press.	
We have contact with schools, prisons, local pubs and other organisations.	
We advertise events and services etc. in communities through our contacts.	
We hold outdoor events, processions, concerts etc.	
We hold community activities in the church and church hall.	
We work with others ecumenically.	
Listening	
We encourage feedback from the congregation through meetings and feedback forms.	
We have a blog on our website.	
We have a contact email address for any complaints, concerns or queries.	
We receive prayer requests.	

<p>We listen to our wider community by using the simple diocesan questionnaire (speak to DCO for questionnaire).</p>	
<p>We communicate well internally with church officers, volunteers and clergy through meetings and briefings.</p>	
<p>All feedback is fed back to the PCC for action.</p>	



Tourism	
Welcoming to tourists	Score
We provide church information in foreign languages.	
We sell gifts which include postcards and books on the church and local area.	
We produce leaflets and information aimed specifically at the tourism audience, e.g. where is the nearest shop, pub and bed and breakfast.	
We run special tours for visitors.	
We have specially trained guides for visiting groups, including guides who have experience of working with young people.	
We provide tea and coffee.	
Walkers	
We provide a bowl of water for dogs.	
Muddy boots are not an issue.	
We welcome walkers to rest in the church.	



Comments

Donations	
	Score
We avoid a request for donations being the first thing a visitor sees – (a better alternative may be to provide a box on the way out with a notice saying “ <i>Thank you for visiting, you may like to contribute...</i> ”).	
We provide Gift Aid envelopes so extra income may be gained from donations	
We communicate how individual donations make a difference to our church – what will they go towards i.e. fabric, clergy, mission, youth etc.	
We provide the visitor with literature about the church for no charge e.g. a simple information leaflet about the church.	
We have a clear tariff notice for refreshments and gifts, again communicating where the donations will be spent. (<i>Note: Gift Aid cannot be claimed on anything sold or when a donation has been received in return for goods/benefit</i>).	



Comments

Security	
	Score
We use Smartwater to protect items and display the appropriate sign.	
We keep valuables locked away	
We control the issuing of keys and gather them back when people retire from posts/roles.	
We have CCTV in entrances and other key areas.	
We have a 'church watch' team.	
We maintain a photographic record of church property.	
We regularly empty our donation box.	
We consider the safety of those collecting the cash and banking it.	



Comments

What next?

When you have completed the audit, you will have a good idea of your church's strongest and weakest areas. It may have also stimulated some ideas for your church to implement. The weakest scoring statements will be the areas that you should act on, but you probably won't be able to achieve everything due to financial constraints and limited time and people resources. Because of this you need to prioritise which actions need to be taken. To help you do this, we have provided some points which we would encourage you to follow:

- If you would like to look at a particular area of this audit in more detail, you can contact the diocese for further resources. For example, you may want to complete a more detailed spiritual/worship audit, or speak to an officer(s) to gain advice and support
- Agree a project team or officer who will lead and drive the actions you decide on
- Make a list of your priorities/actions, remembering what is realistic for your church
- Think through your funding, how much money you will need and where it will come from?
- Sort your priorities/actions into a timetable with a timescale. It's a good idea to plan what needs to be done immediately, in the medium and long term. A six month plan is a good starting point. Having deadlines is a great motivator. This will be your main plan which you can constantly refer back to
- Then for each priority/action, you may need a more detailed plan, separate from your main timetable. For example, an action may be to build a new footpath, which would be on your main timetable, but then you will need to detail how you will do this, i.e. agreeing a budget, phoning contactors etc.
- Remember to keep communicating what's happening to your congregation and to the wider community
- Ensure your project team constantly reviews your plan and timetable

Resources and contacts

Web links

Searching for information and ideas on the web can be very helpful. Here are a few sites that should get you started:

Diocese of Gloucester www.gloucester.anglican.org

'Church Near You'

National church

There are some excellent web sites, which can help people on a journey of exploration. Consider advertising the following addresses:

- www.uk.alpha.org
- www.e-mmaus.org.uk
- www.rejesus.co.uk
- www.christianityexplored.com
- www.christianity.org.uk
- www.cofe.anglican.org/faith

Churches Tourism Association

www.churchestourism.info

Ecclesiastical Insurance Group

www.ecclesiastical.com Tel 0845 777 3322 Email: churches@eigmail.com

Hidden Britain Centres

www.hidden-britain.co.uk

Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) Web Access Centre

www.rnib.org.uk

Green audit kit

www.greenauditkit.org

Disability Issues

www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/RightsAndObligations/DisabilityRights

Church security

www.nationalchurchwatch.com

Church care

www.churchcare.co.uk

A website to help parish magazine editors

www.parishpump.co.uk

Open Churches Network

www.openchurchnetwork.co.uk

Churches Tourism Association

www.churchestourismassociation.info

National Churches Trust

www.nationalchurchestrust.org

Friends of Friendless Churches

www.friendsoffriendlesschurches.org.uk

Performing Rights Society

PRS requirements should be checked thoroughly especially if you plan to play music in church. See www.prsformusic.com

Churchyard management

info@cfga.fsnet.co.uk

Access Issues

Widening the Eye of the Needle – publication by the Council for the Care of Churches, available from Church House Bookshop – priced £10.95.

Tel: 0207 898 1300.

Helpful documents and leaflets on approaches to considering access for disabled people and on audits and training from Through the Roof, Global House, Ashley Avenue, Epsom, Surrey. KT18 5AD www.throughtheroof.org

Church Action on Disability, PO Box 10918, Birmingham. B29 6WF. Email coordinator@chaduk.org.

In respect of a process of assessing reasonableness more detailed advice on the audit process and responsibilities under DDA is available from the Council for the Care of Churches (CCC) and the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England (CFCE), available free of charge from the CFCE, Church House, Great Smith Street, London. SW1P 3NZ. A longer version of this paper is available in the Churchwarden's Yearbook.

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1995*-a Code of Practice has been produced to accompany the Act and both this and the Act itself are available on the website of the Disability Rights Commission (www.drc-gb.org) or they can be purchased from The Stationery Office (0207 8739090).

Other useful contacts include:

Council for the Care of Churches, Church House, Great Smith Street, London. SW1P 3NZ.

The Gloucester Diocese DAC, Church House, College Green, Gloucester
GL1 2LY. Telephone: 01452 410022

Your local District Council Access Officer

'Churches for All' is a badging scheme for churches. It helps people with disabilities to know whether they will be able to attend and take part in the services and meetings of the church, or more specifically in the case of visitors, how accessible the building is.

'Through the Roof', an organisation that equips and trains churches to be inclusive of disabled people and administers this scheme. More details can be obtained by contacting 0137 273 7045 or info@churchesforall.org

Useful Reading

Church Tourism: A Study of Lincoln Diocese by Louise Samouille (Editor) Report on behalf of the Church Tourism Network, 1996.

Churches and their Visitors by Roger Suddard (Editor), Diocese of Bradford, 1982.

Open for you: the Church, the Visitor and the Gospel by Paul Bond. A practical manual to encourage local congregations to look at every aspect of their building and suggest ways of meeting visitors' needs, from ensuring comfort to providing a quiet place for prayer, and making the Christian faith fully accessible. ISBN 10-1853117145 Published by Canterbury Press, Norwich.

Places of Worship Security Manual (2002) by Nick Tolson. ISBN 0-904631-12-5. Published by Berkswell Publishing Co. Ltd.

Rural Mission (2002) by Leslie Francis and Jeremy Martineau. A parish workbook for developing the mission of the rural church ISBN 0-9540766-1-3 Published by Acora,

Rural Visitors (2001) by Leslie Francis and Jeremy Martineau. A parish workbook for welcoming visitors to the country church ISBN 0-9540766-0-5 Published by Acora, Arthur Rank Centre.

Safe and Sound? (1996) *A guide to church security* ISBN 0-7151-7569-6 Published by Church House Publishing for the Council for the Care of Churches.

The Church Explorer's Handbook (2005) by Clive Fewins. A guide to looking at churches and their contents ISBN 1-85311-622-X Published by Canterbury Press Norwich.

Working as One Body by MD Turnbull. Church House Publishing, 1995.



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