

*'A beginning and not the end  
for the parish church?'*-  
Revisited

Richard Halsey

*Trustee, Friends of Friendless Churches*

1951 *The Preservation of our Churches* a report commissioned by the Church Assembly found £4 million 'extra parochial cost' was needed to address the backlog of repairs

1953 Government Historic Building grants – but not churches;  
*Historic Churches Preservation Trust* (HCPT) founded;  
six county trusts in existence

1968 Pastoral Measure

1969 *Redundant Churches Fund* (RCF) – from 1994 called the  
*Churches Conservation Trust* (CCT)

1971/3 Research pursued by the CofE into the need for church grants established the cost at £1 million p.a. at 1973 prices

1975 Government accepted the need to establish a grant scheme for places of worship in use (except cathedrals)

1975 European Architectural Heritage Year; SAVE founded

1977 *Change and Decay, The Future of our Churches*

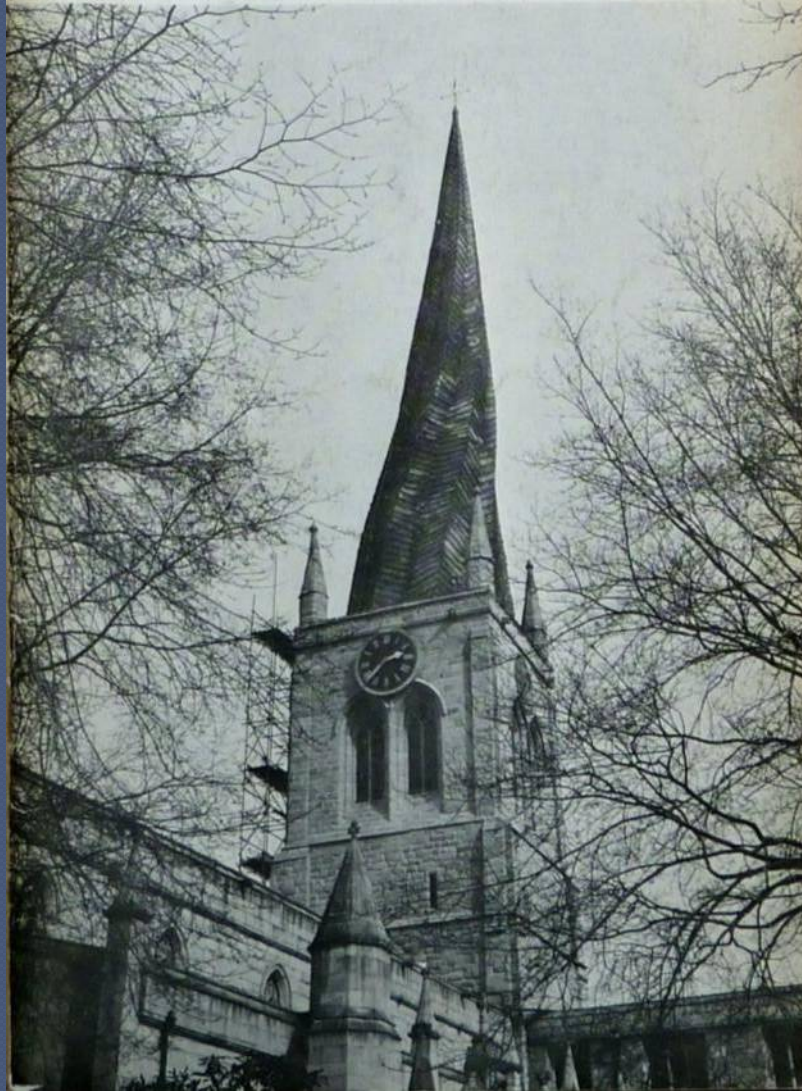
V&A exhibition and book by Sir Roy Strong, Marcus Binney and Peter Burman

1977 Introduction of State Aid; £2.75 million budget 1977-9

1984 *English Heritage* (EH) is created and takes over the Places of Worship in Use grant scheme

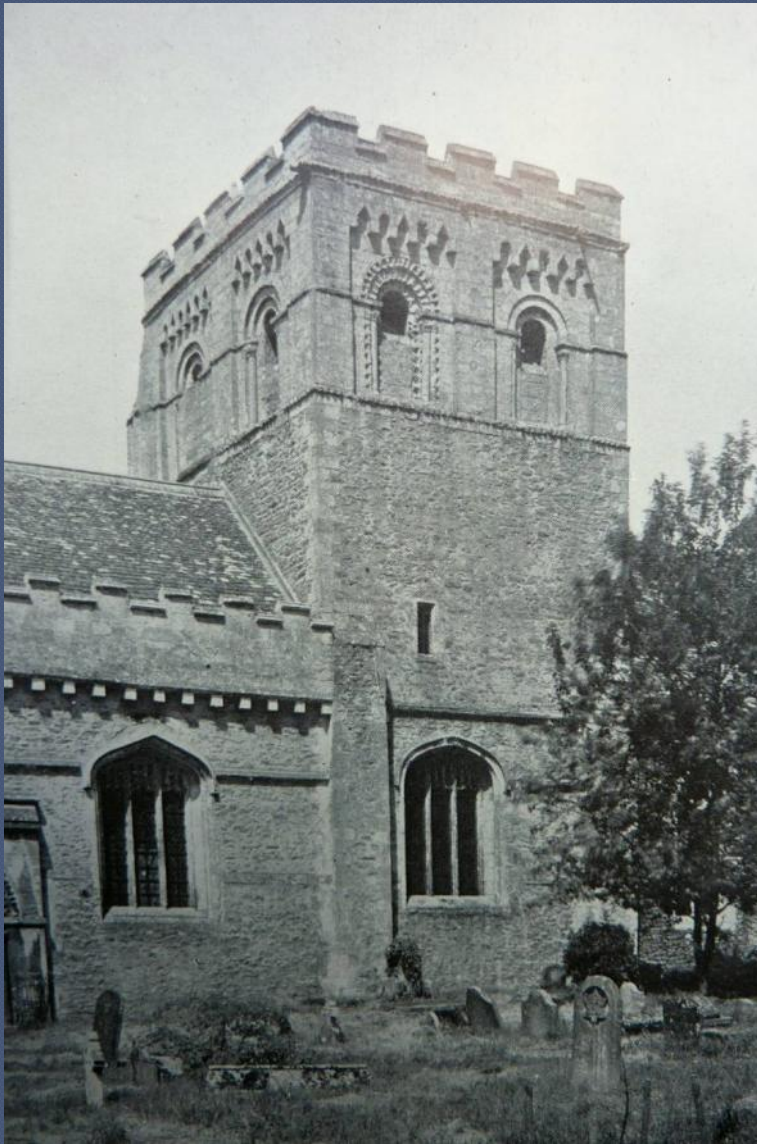
Historic Buildings  
Council for England

*Regulating*  
**Report**  
1977/78



The Duke of Grafton (*left*)  
and Dr Ron Brunskill, 1991





Iffley, Oxfordshire



Ickleton, Cambs.,

*Original clunch window  
renewed in Clipsham limestone*



1995 The *Heritage Lottery Fund* (HLF) gives grants to churches

1998 EH/HLF Joint Scheme for Places of Worship in Use

2001 Listed Places of Worship Scheme (LPoW) – grant to refund VAT

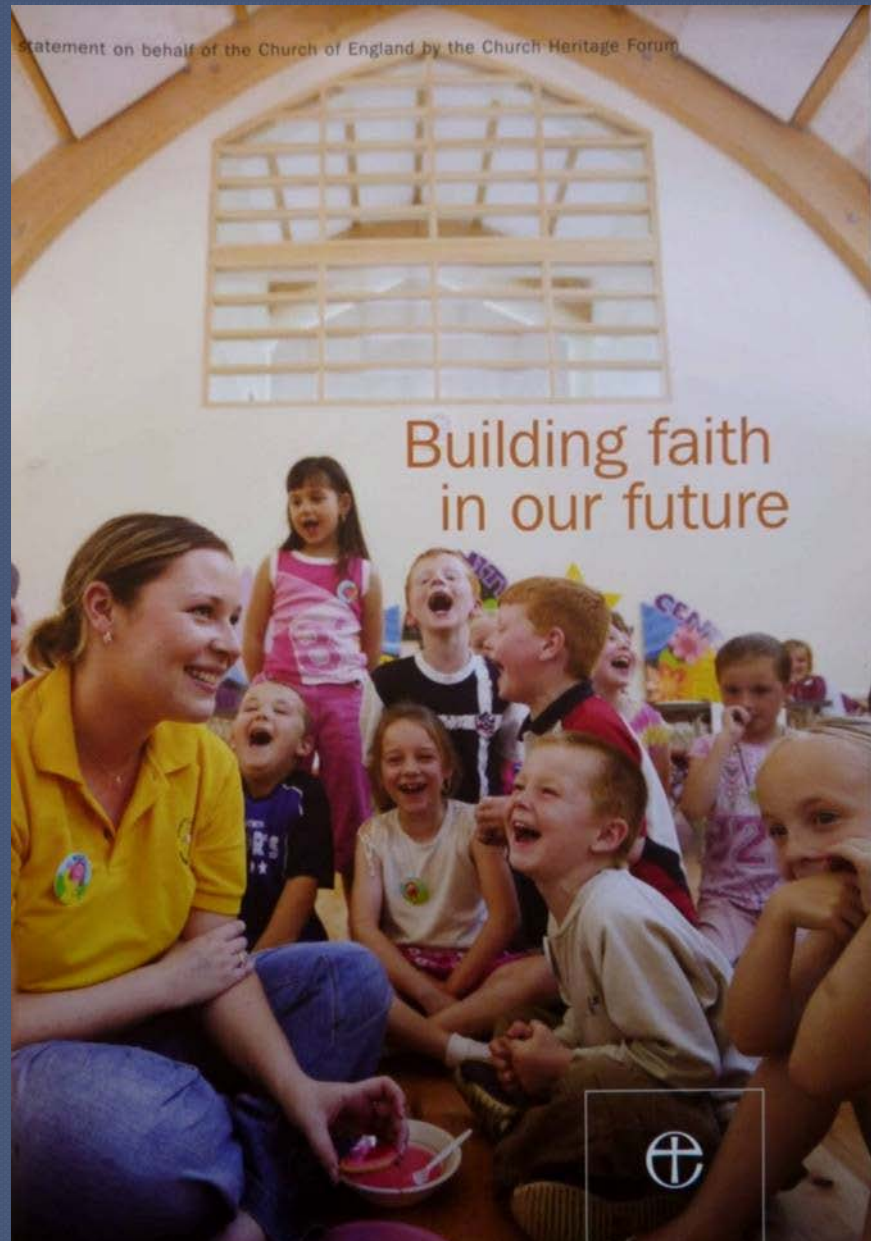
2002 Repair Grants for Places of Worship in use (RGPoW)

2004

Statement on behalf of the  
Church of England, by the  
Church Heritage Forum

*(a grouping of all CofE  
departments involved with  
church buildings)*

Endorsed by General Synod  
2003





“It is increasingly recognised that church buildings are a precious resource and can play a vital role in their communities. A church building can provide space for meetings and activities, offer volunteer help for projects and fulfil the Church's aim of serving the community. While church buildings will need careful assessment, they have potential for hosting a wider range of activities.

Many churches have opened their doors for community projects, cafés, concerts, exhibitions and essential services such as post offices, while still remaining primarily places of worship. Such extended and additional uses provide a sense of community, revive the church building itself, attract new visitors and tourists and can regenerate whole neighbourhoods. The church building itself benefits from more frequent use, regular heating and additional funds and volunteers.”

2004 *How do we keep our Parish Churches?* (Trevor Cooper, Ecclesiological Society)

2007 EH *Inspired!* campaign  
National Churches Trust (NCT) launched

2010 EH *Caring for Places of Worship* initiative

2011 Following Government cuts, EH withdraws future funding from the RGPoW and the HLF makes up the annual sum to £25 million for the UK

2013-17 HLF Grants for Places of Worship scheme

2015-6 Government funds £55 million Roof Repair Fund for listed UK PoWs (except cathedrals) through the NHMF

2015 CofE Church Buildings Review (chaired by John Inge, Bishop of Worcester)

2017 - HLF (now NLHF) grant aids places of worship through their open programmes

2017 Taylor Review; Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals reports to Chancellor of the Exchequer and DCMS

2018-20 Taylor Review pilots in Greater Manchester and Suffolk (HE) 136 PoW received £1M in Minor Repair Grants

2020-22 Culture Recovery Fund

'aimed at sustaining cultural institutions and specialist craft and building trades'

2022 Church Commissioners' £11 million Buildings for Mission Fund (2023-5), its 'overall objective is to help parishes keep their churches open and sustainable'

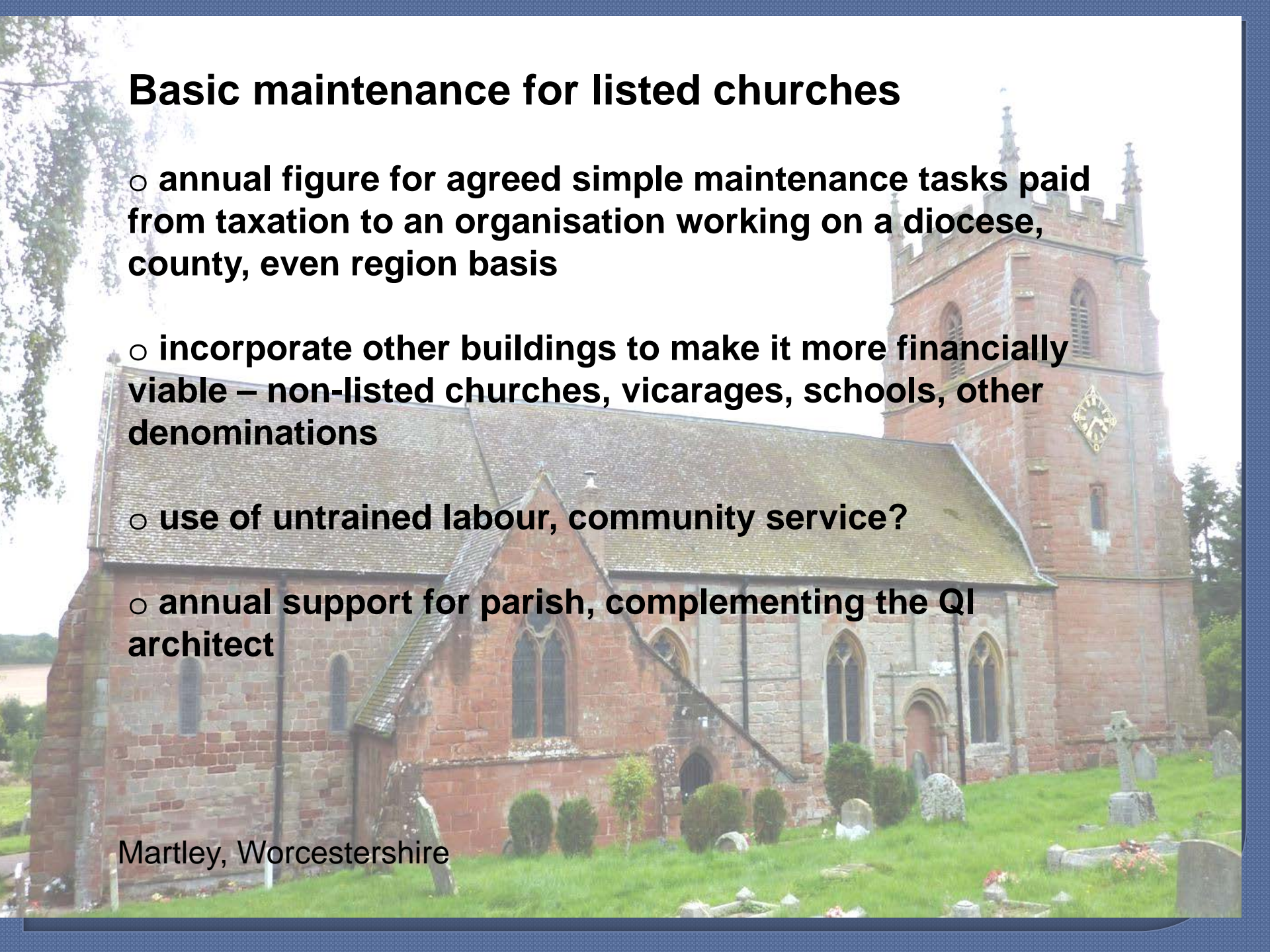
- diocesan CBSO posts, including 6 apprentices
- £6.2 million Minor Repairs and Improvements Grant fund



# Basic maintenance for listed churches

- annual figure for agreed simple maintenance tasks paid from taxation to an organisation working on a diocese, county, even region basis
- incorporate other buildings to make it more financially viable – non-listed churches, vicarages, schools, other denominations
- use of untrained labour, community service?
- annual support for parish, complementing the QI architect

Martley, Worcestershire



2007-12 Faith in Maintenance (SPAB) funded by HLF, EH, Dulverton and Pilgrim Trusts. *Continued as*  
2013-17 Maintenance Co-operatives Project (SPAB), funded by HLF  
SPAB will organise a FiM-style event for a modest fee

Guidance on NCT and other websites. NCT Small and Medium grants

Diocesan support staff include maintenance calendars and tips in their newsletters etc.

HE research suggests that if work identified as 'urgent' in a QI is not done within two years, then the cost rises by 20%

*Might Parish Councils consider funding basic maintenance on places of worship? Larger PCs might have their own staff already? Church Tax?*

*Work programmes coordinated with CCT, EH or within diocese(s)?*





## Diocesan Board of Finance

- ❖ experienced in the management of voluntary groups
  - ❖ local
  - ❖ already responsible for the maintenance of parsonages
  - ❖ church remains in the orbit of the Church of England
  - ❖ can remain consecrated and controlled by the DAC
- 
- *no culture of funding repairs or maintenance of churches*
  - *would require new funding streams*
  - *grant givers would need to recognise the new role*
  - *not thought independent enough by locals?*



## Diocese of Norwich; Diocesan Churches Trust

£50,000 from the All Churches Trust to launch this initiative and get it established.

*'a limited number of church buildings to be leased to it and which will hold them on behalf of their local community. In practical terms this will mean that the church is still available for occasional services and will continue to have a basic level of insurance and maintenance. This will enable such a church to come back into regular use in a way which would be almost impossible if the building was formally closed and declared redundant.'*

Currently 14 parish churches and the 4 STANTA churches, closed since 1940 and in the middle of the MoD training area.

## Churches Conservation Trust?

- ❖ established, well known
- ❖ has adequate legal powers
- ❖ only for redundant CofE churches
- ❖ national charity
- ❖ can give grants to churches in the care of the DBF

- *arm of government?*
- *national vs regional?*
- *different funding sources?*
- *revolving or 'holding' trust?*

Burrough Green, Cambridgeshire



CCT now has 357 churches in its care, about two are added each year, but their DCMS grant is diminishing, requiring more income generating activity and fund-raising

15 communities outside the Trust were 'supported' in 2022-3 with guidance on re-use and repair, a useful source of income for CCT

*Vehicle for a 'subscription fund' with tax advantages as created by President Macron in France? Requirement for community use*

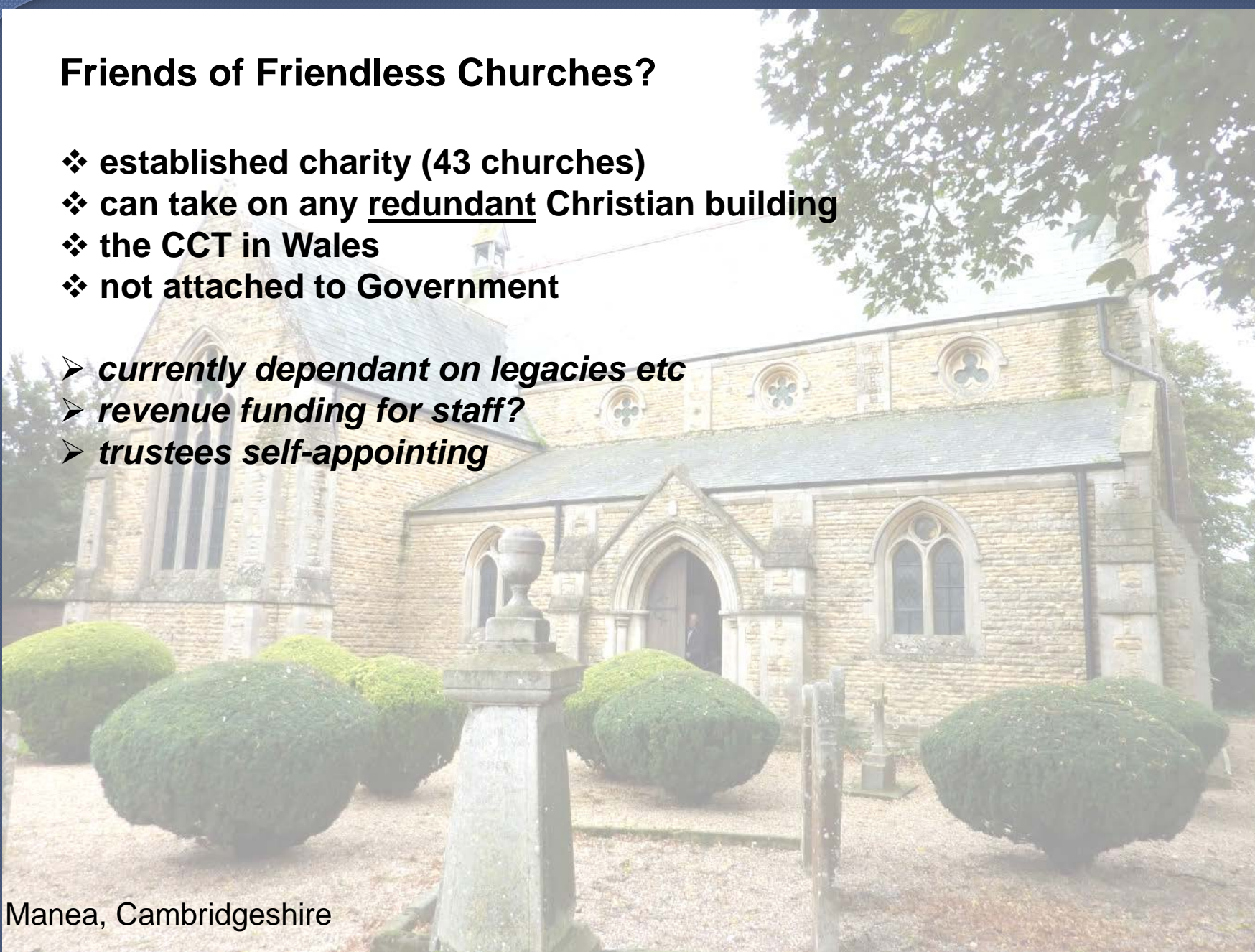
*(Exists already in NCT with Grant Aid?)*



## Friends of Friendless Churches?

- ❖ established charity (43 churches)
  - ❖ can take on any redundant Christian building
  - ❖ the CCT in Wales
  - ❖ not attached to Government
- 
- *currently dependant on legacies etc*
  - *revenue funding for staff?*
  - *trustees self-appointing*

Manea, Cambridgeshire



The Friends now have 63 churches and 1 chapel in their care, freehold or on long lease from the Church Commissioners or Church in Wales.

Half are in Wales where FoFC is effectively the CCT, but with only informal financial arrangements with the Church in Wales and Cadw. The latter's budget has been cut by nearly 30% from April 2024.

FoFC remains dependant on legacies and donations, but the Cultural Recovery Fund enabled it to complete major repairs at most of its English churches

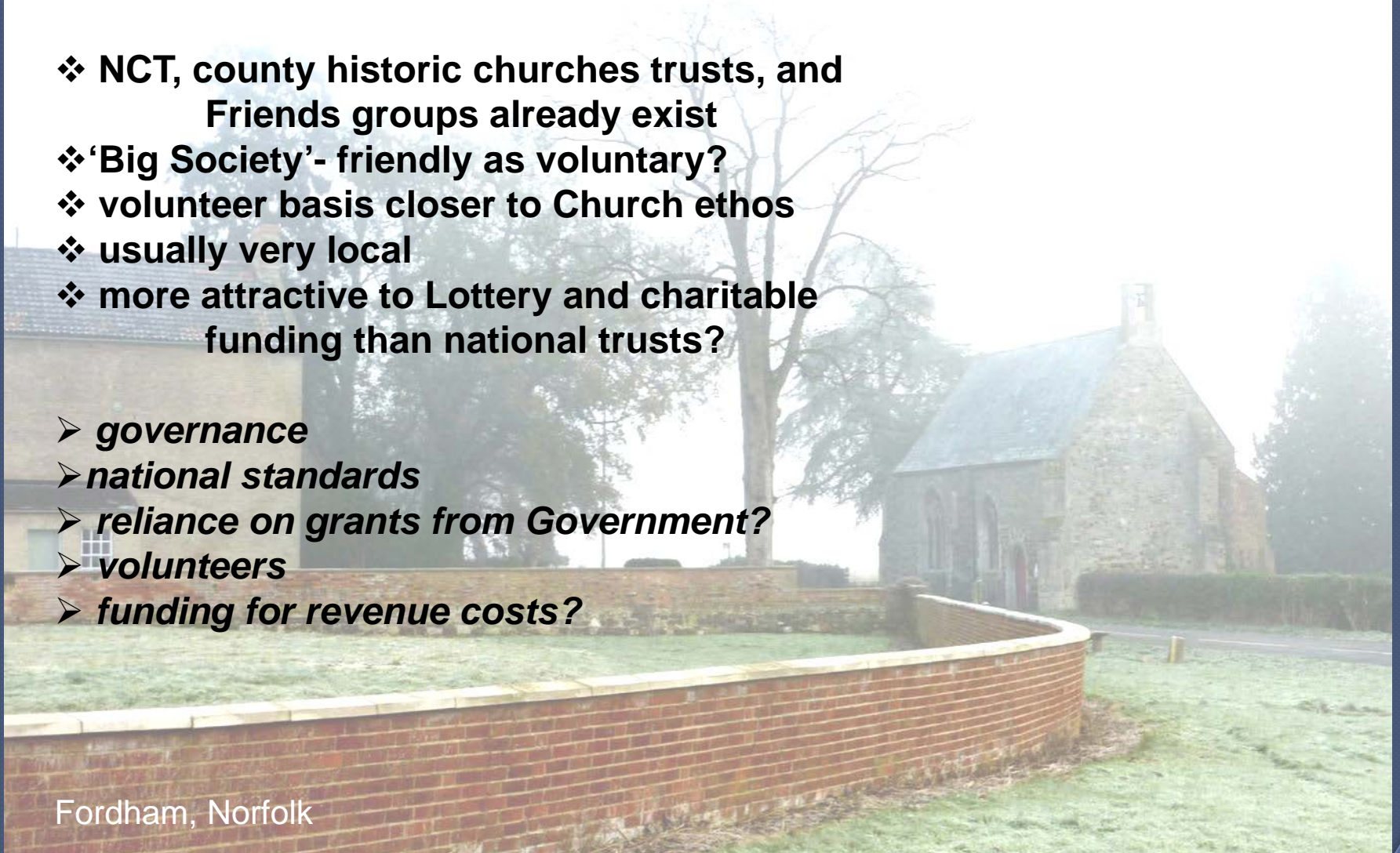
A recent major donation has enabled the recruitment of a Volunteer Coordinator (Maggie Goodall) to work with the many volunteers needed to open, maintain and increase use of FoFC buildings



## Independent charitable trust(s)?

- ❖ NCT, county historic churches trusts, and Friends groups already exist
  - ❖ 'Big Society'- friendly as voluntary?
  - ❖ volunteer basis closer to Church ethos
  - ❖ usually very local
  - ❖ more attractive to Lottery and charitable funding than national trusts?
- 
- *governance*
  - *national standards*
  - *reliance on grants from Government?*
  - *volunteers*
  - *funding for revenue costs?*

Fordham, Norfolk





Increased interest in having Festival or Pilgrimage churches as an option for less used churches has been marked. Most dioceses have pursued a 'Mission Action Plan' process for structural re-organisation, often including the option of removing parish status and its legal requirements to allow a struggling congregation to consider their future within a larger grouping.

As the Diocese of Exeter's Growing the Rural Church project states *A Festival Church is one which is purposefully set aside as fallow. Its church members need time to rest.*

£1 million funding from the Church Commissioners in 2016.

Diocese of Lincoln Time to Change Together 2019-24. Of its 615 churches in 158 benefices, 26 opted for closure, 175 for becoming a Festival church but 286 'Community Church'

Diocese of Leicester Shaped by God Together 2020-26 to create 20-25 Minster Communities that include schools and community groups as well as parishes. No decisions yet on buildings

# NATIONAL CHURCHES --- TRUST



**Cherish: One Year In**

**Beatrice Prosser-Snelling**  
**Interim Director of Church Engagement**  
[Beatrice.prosser@nationalchurchestrust.org](mailto:Beatrice.prosser@nationalchurchestrust.org)

# CHERISH



- £1.9 million National Lottery Heritage Fund grant
- To run until 2026
- 3 dedicated support officers based in Scotland, North West England and Wales/Cymru
- A range of training, resources and mentoring
- Grants between £500 and £10,000 for maintenance and repairs



# BASELINES 2022

- 35 applications for £10,000 or less received from Cherish places
- 37 grants of £10,000 or less awarded to Cherish places
- Grant offers predominantly made to Anglican traditions
- Percentage of our total awards to Cherish places in 2020-2022 was consistently lower than the percentage of places of worship in those areas
- Negligible visits to churches in Cherish area





# VISITS & TRAINING

- A total of 97 church visits from September 2023 – March 2024
- 44 in Scotland, 29 in Wales and 24 in NW England
- Mainly around support and advice, some to support grants applications and some to talk about tourism/income generation
- In person and online training sessions – over 100 attendees so far



# GRANTS

- 50 Cherish applications so far, half of which are from Anglican churches
- 30 from NW England, 10 from Wales, 10 from Scotland
- In the first two rounds, 54% of applications were eligible
- Majority of applicants are in urban or suburban settings
- 12 awards have been made so far – 24 of the 50 applications are going to our next Grants Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> July
- Total awards made so far = £96,728
- Average grant size = £8,060





# WINS SO FAR

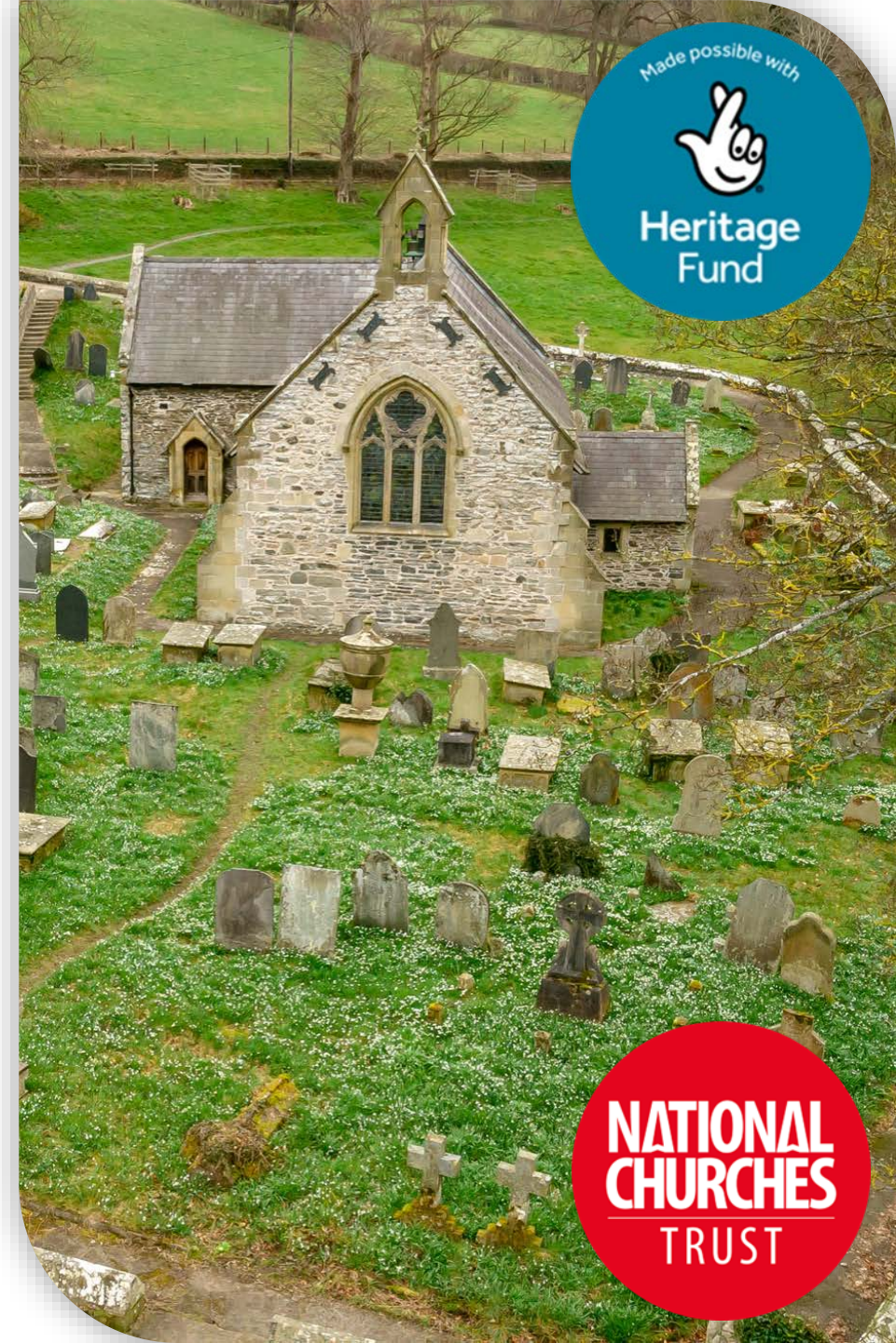
- New partnerships/new ground broken
- Deeper relationships with a larger number of churches
- Small interventions leading to significant outcomes
- Morale in churches we have had contact with
- Recruitment of new skills into National Churches Trust, and growth of our team
- National Churches Trust strengthening itself as a UK wide charity





# CHALLENGES SO FAR

- Lower applications from Wales/Cymru and Scotland
- Understanding how church visits affect engagement with the rest of the Cherish programme
- Our grants criteria acting as a barrier to application
- Our grants timetables putting us 'in competition with ourselves'
- Elements that are harder to start due to being a third party e.g. mentoring, visitor counters
- Comms/PR/marketing support for our approach
- Cherish eligible churches who'd rather not take lottery money find it hard to get a regular grant from us



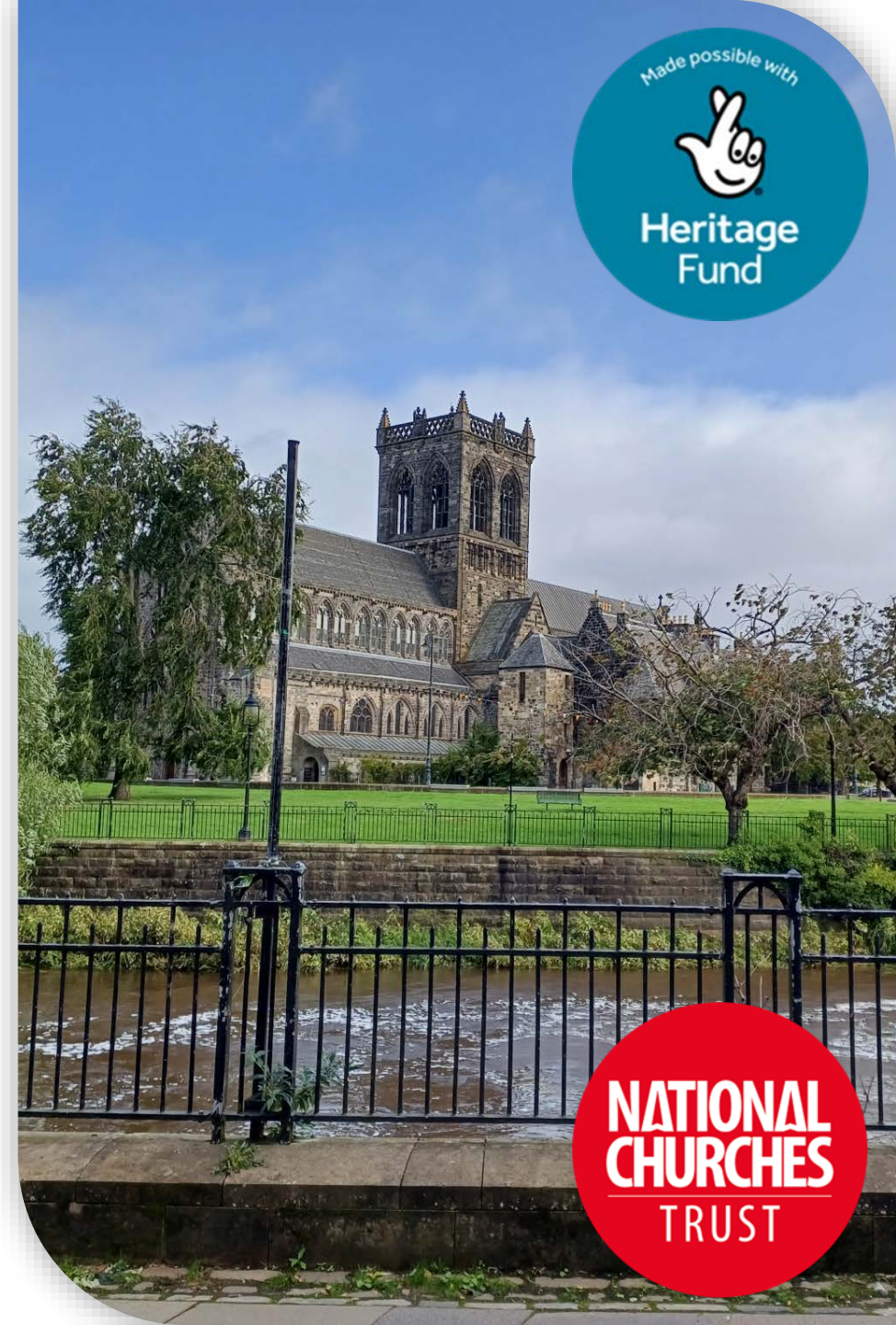


# WHATS NEXT?

- Mentoring
- Film and photography
- Case studies
- Events
- Legacy and future projects

Cherish is being delivered thanks to National Lottery players

*Photos: Ioan Said, Karen Hind, Matthew Maries*



# **Making music and churches – a match made in heaven?**

**SUPPORTING AND CHAMPIONING  
LEISURE-TIME MUSIC**

# Who/what is Making Music

**UK association for leisure-time music, with  
4,000+ music groups in membership**

54% vocal groups of all kinds: choral societies,  
community choirs, gospel choirs etc.

36% instrumental groups: orchestras, brass bands,  
ukulele groups, jazz ensembles, folk groups...

10% are (volunteer) promoters, presenting  
professional musicians/small ensembles



## More about our members

- According to 2008 data, we represent 30% of all such groups (total approx. 13,500)
- Groups are in every corner of the UK; if there is a church, there is likely also a music group
- Music groups are generally self-organised by a committee (of volunteers from participants)
- 76% have annual turnover below £14.5k
- Average number of participants: 62

## **Music group activity**

Typically, groups meet weekly to practise together.

Most groups perform 3-6 times a year.

Groups are generally by and for their local community.

Usually, they are led by a music professional, and may engage many others, e.g. as soloists (instruments or singers), accompanists, etc.

# What does Making Music do?

1. Practical support – e.g. insurance scheme, charity registration service, 200+ resources, team to consult
2. Connections: member meetings (peer learning), experts (online events), opportunities (e.g. broadcasts)
3. Voice of the sector: e.g. Covid, tax relief for choirs, #MakeSpaceForMusic



## What spaces do members use?

Top 3 types of spaces for music groups **TO MEET REGULARLY** are

- churches/ church halls (54%)
- schools and other educational establishments (21%)
- community or village halls (15%)

These are used by 90% of groups

Others include: Other Local Authority owned space, cultural venue (not LA owned), private club/hall (social club, scout hut), residences (private home, care home, prison)

## What spaces do members use?

Top 5 types of spaces for music groups **TO STAGE PERFORMANCES** (public events)

- churches/ church halls (62%)
- Open air (8%)
- Cultural venue (not Local Authority run, e.g. theatre, arts centre) (7%)
- Community or village hall (6%)
- Local authority venue (6%)

These are used by 89% of groups. Noticeable that churches feature even more strongly as performance spaces than they do as rehearsal spaces; and that none of the other types of performance spaces even comes near in terms of use.

## **Challenges 1&2: Availability, Cost**

Church hall mergers and closures - Church of Scotland streamlining

Local Authority owned closures

Replaced and refurbished community spaces for that are not specced for music activity

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Hire costs rising because of energy price rises, staffing costs (caretakers etc)

Difficult to raise participation fees: cost of living crisis is affecting groups' participants; inclusion and access concerns



## **Challenge 3&4: Size, Facilities**

Large Halls - groups of 50+ (our average)

Storage facilities on site

Public transport links and parking (centre driving or parking restrictions, e.g. ULEZ)

Disabled access

Heating and ventilation

Lots of chairs

Enough toilets (and accessible)

Kitchen / Café / Water

## **Challenge 5: musical needs**

Acoustics - Acoustic design of new/refurbished spaces for music making

Choral music written for churches - needs right resonance to sound right - notes able to ring to the end

Storage - Large instruments, music stands, sheet music, staging / risers

Piano / Organ on site - For groups that use venue's piano or organ; fewer of these available

Access for practice - When instruments are stored on site (e.g. steel pan)

## Why music groups like churches

- Churches are everywhere! Having somewhere hyperlocal to meet regularly is really important
- Churches are large! A whole symphony orchestra, a 200+ community choir need space
- Churches are affordable! Groups are usually small charities trying to be open to all, keeping subscriptions to their activity as low as possible and with an ethos of community service - just like churches of course
  - An aside: how music groups fund themselves



## More reasons to like churches

- Churches are beautiful! Even those who don't attend for worship often admire these buildings, their architecture, their pivotal place in the local community and are happy to contribute to their upkeep through hire fees
- Churches have the right acoustics! Many built before the microphone, so usually well suited to (choral) music/unamplified voice; and often better than new-builds not specified for music (and shorter reverb)

## And even more reasons...

- Churches often still have organs, or a piano For concerts a definite plus, also useful for choirs using accompaniment
- Churches are mostly free-standing buildings; noise is therefore generally not an issue for the neighbours; useful for 'louder' music groups (brass bands, steel pans, orchestras)
- Churches are always open: a selling point if practise means access to stored instruments, or bookings for gigs mean access to pick up/return

- Ventilation/heating! In Covid, a large volume space and draftiness were an asset, but generally rehearsing or attending a concert in the freezing cold for 2 hours is quite hard
- Toilets... Are there enough? A rehearsal or concert are 2hrs+, and your church seats 100s of people, and there is one break/interval....
- Physical accessibility 20% of the population, and 1 in 2 of retirement age have a physical impairment - is your church accessible to them?



Presented by Thorsten Dreyer, Programme Manager for Greater London Authority's Culture and Community Spaces at Risk programme, which supports organisations at immediate risk of losing the space they operate from (at a Making Music event).

GLA have [free resources available to anyone](#) (useful also to non-London spaces)

These resources were used by one London church to fund a refurbishment and repurposing of their church building, to run alongside its worship timetable. Funding came from National Lottery Heritage, i.e. they did not bucket shake - there is funding out there available to apply for.

<https://www.stmaryswalthamstow.org/hire/>

## Music groups as hirers

So why could or should you consider hiring your churches to music groups - what's in it for you?

- These groups are long-term; most have been around for decades, they meet regularly week in week out, for years and years - they are a reliable source of income
- They are worry-free for you: generally, they are small charities, well run, sustainable, and supported by Making Music with the necessary practical tools, e.g. insurance, compliance, template policies etc.

## And more benefits for you

- These groups' participants and organisers are from your community - they can be useful for you in many ways: supporting your church by joining your committee, providing musical accompaniment for events and fundraisers, connecting you more closely locally
- And they are good for your reputation: research shows the positive impact of music groups on the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities; that's the job of places of worship too, so there is synergy and positive message reinforcement here

## WHAT ARE LEISURE-TIME MUSIC GROUPS?

These hobby musicians come together in their leisure-time to make or present music. They also run these groups which are **EVERYWHERE**.

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SINGING GROUPS



INSTRUMENTAL GROUPS



CONCERT PROMOTERS

### WHO'S IN YOUR AREA?

Use the Find a Group Tool  
[makingmusic.org.uk/resources/find-a-group-list](https://makingmusic.org.uk/resources/find-a-group-list)

## THESE TENANTS ARE

### LONG-TERM

Most music groups meet weekly, all year round, and operate for decades.

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### WORRY FREE

Reliable and well-run, most are small charities supported by Making Music to be compliant with regulations and financially resilient.

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### USEFUL

They are your local community, could attend other activity in the building, volunteer for you. They bring the skills and connections of their day jobs.


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### GOOD FOR YOUR REPUTATION

Evidence shows their health and wellbeing, place-making and economic benefits. Play your part by letting to a music group!



# Is my **SPACE** right for **MUSIC**?



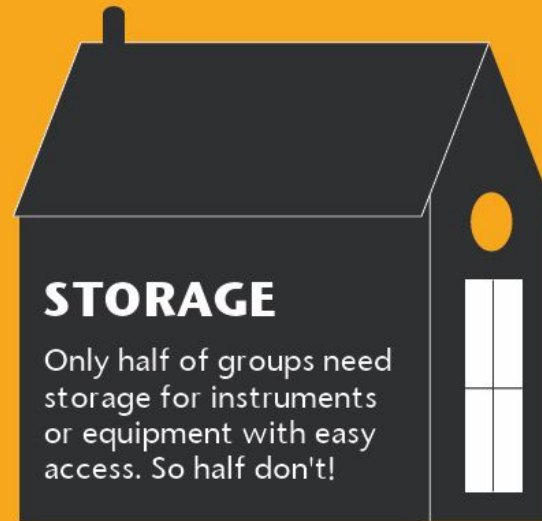
**SIZE**

Groups can be 20 to 140. Whatever your space, there's a music group to fit.



**NOISE**

Most groups are acoustic, and not all of them are loud!



**STORAGE**

Only half of groups need storage for instruments or equipment with easy access. So half don't!



**ACCESSIBILITY**

Many groups have participants with access needs and all strive to be inclusive. So highlight any accessibility of your facilities.



**PRICE**

Groups don't expect you to let at a loss. But do consider reduced rates for community groups, and they will repay you with the many benefits they bring.

## How do I find a music group?

- Search our [Find-a-Group tool](#) on our website
- Your local authority website may have a listing of local groups
- Is there a local online forum?
- Local media
- Social media

## How can we work together?

We understand historic religious buildings have challenges including frailty of the building fabric, funding, running the space with volunteers.

We want to work with building owners and managers to find solutions - we need and can help each other!

See our campaign [#MakeSpaceForMusic](#) for more information and resources

## How can we work together?

[#MakeSpaceForMusic](#) seeks to raise awareness of the crucial role of hyperlocal physical infrastructure with policymakers

We are working with [Creative Lives](#) (which champions community and volunteer-led creative activity of all kinds, not just music)

As part of this we have convened a [Community Spaces Forum](#) (which includes the HRBA) to meet twice a year, sharing issues and solutions



Is there a way that information about buildings for hire can be made available centrally?  
(Thinking from a user's point of view - easier to for them to remember where to look, and for us to signpost them.)

Is there a way you as a network or other networks in the room can provide support to your buildings in terms of hiring out? In the way that, for instance, the [Schools Enterprise Association](#) do.

Making Music, the UK association for  
leisure-time music

[www.makingmusic.org.uk](http://www.makingmusic.org.uk)

Contact [info@makingmusic.org.uk](mailto:info@makingmusic.org.uk)

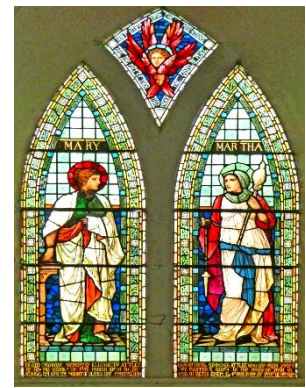
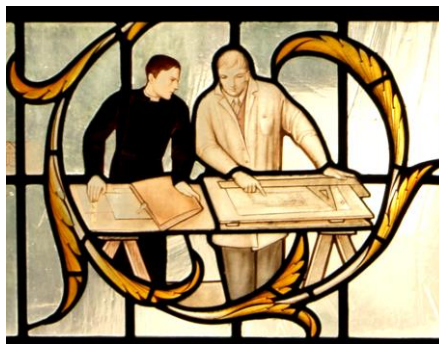
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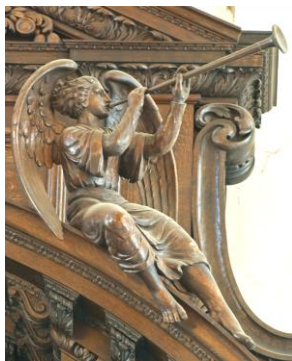
## 50 Years of Church Recording

Liz Chalmers, a long-standing church recorder and a trustee of Church Recording Society, gave a resumé of the history of church recording from its inception in the aftermath of an exhibition of Victorian Church Art at the V&A, through its growth over 50 years and production of over 2,000 Church Records across the UK. For 46 years church recording was a volunteering arm of NADFAS / The Arts Society but 2020 saw the establishment of Church Recording Society as an independent charity and umbrella for church recording groups across England and Scotland.

She continued with a light-hearted presentation of what makes church recording so special as groups research, photograph and gather together, in effect, the collective memory of the parish. She showed images of busy recording sessions and examples of the people who become part of the story and some of the beautiful items which are included.



And finally a Record Presentation, a moment to celebrate in the church.



For more information about church recording, see Church Recording Society's website [churchrecordingsociety.org.uk](http://churchrecordingsociety.org.uk)