



Discover Churches

Hidden Stories, Open Doors

Welcome to the **Discover Churches – Hidden Stories, Open Doors** Brand for the work arising out of the Virtuous Circles Project - Sustainable Tourism for Sustainable Churches.

This will be increasingly important in helping to raise the capacity, resilience and sustainability of churches, post the coronavirus restrictions, to attract additional donations to churches through offering engaging Hidden Stories, Open Doors involvement for the day, or short stay visitors in the locality.

One of the aims of Discover Churches, a Heritage Lottery Funded project, is to share actions and ideas for the mutual benefit of SCTG and HCTG members, new members or emerging church tourism groups in other areas.

In recent months we have seen the world and our lives transform at an astonishing pace. Disruption to social, business and cultural life, and digital transformation have meant that we have all needed to think differently to embrace changes and innovation that will support success.

A valuable asset of the project is dedicated funding to allow us design workshops that:

- Encourage curiosity about new ways of doing things
- Inspire and empower
- Encourage the sharing of knowledge, values and experiences to foster the capacity of everyone involved with welcoming visitors to their church.

Based on the responses from the members survey carried out earlier this year below is a list of the mentoring opportunities for you to participate in from the comfort of your home. Yes, you can 'pick and choose'. To start with, workshops will be **short and focused** via Zoom, and as coronavirus restrictions are lifted move towards a more 'blended' approach to include 'best practice' visits.

We would love to see you and as many other volunteers from your church as possible at each workshop. Online sessions can be repeated to meet requirements.

How to book

Workshops bookable via Eventbrite. Free to HCTG & SCTG Members and £20 for non-members.

HCTG, c/o Leintwardine House, Leintwardine, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 0LB

Resilient Heritage Lottery funded Project. Sustainable Tourism for Sustainable Churches.



Workshops & Facilitators

1. Why do people visit churches?

Wednesday 18th November 10:30 – 12 noon

90 minutes online

Facilitated by the **National Churches Trust**, and led by Sarah Crossland who has experience of working with 'Welcome Host', 'Welcome to the Church', and 'Taking England to the World'. This workshop will explore **what is church tourism, why people visit churches** as well as **the importance of being open**, including input from Ecclesiastical Insurance.

[BOOK HERE](#)

2. Creating the perfect welcome

Friday 20th November 10:30 – 12 noon

Facilitated by the **National Churches Trust** and include input from Ecclesiastical Insurance. The workshop will explore what **makes visitors feel welcome**, satisfied and happy when visiting a church? **Provide ideas** on how to create a welcoming and secure environment for new visitors.

90 minutes online

3. Footfalls and the effect of visitors on your church building

Wednesday 25th November 10:30 – 12 noon

Facilitated by the **National Churches Trust** the workshop will explore why is it **important for people to visit your church, describe the impact visitors** have on the conservation of your church building, but also the **benefit of having visitors to help pay for ongoing repairs and maintenance.**

90 minutes online

4. Every church has its own story to tell.

Wednesday 2nd December 10:30 – 12 noon

Facilitated by **Communications and Marketing professional Dominic Harbour** who has a wide range of experience of working with museums, galleries, charities and cultural organisations including Hereford Cathedral and Pershore Abbey. This workshop will help **you find and develop the story of your church and to capture the interest of your church visitor.**

** Although you can book as little or as many of the workshops as required, we advise that to enable you to get the best from the workshops, numbers 4, 5 & 6 should be completed together **

90 minutes online

5. Using interpretation to showcase the story of your church

Monday 7th December 10:30 – 12 noon

Facilitated by **Dominic Harbour** this workshop will follow on 'Finding the Stories'. **Using your church story**, how would this be **best for the visitor** to find out all about your church? The **importance of using interpretation** and **what to include, with traditional and digital interpretation.**

90 minutes online

6. How do visitors find out about visiting your church?

Wednesday 9th December 10:30 – 12 noon

Facilitated by **Dominic Harbour** this workshop will look at traditional methods of marketing material such as advertising in newspapers and parish magazines, but also using online and digital marketing to encourage different markets.

90 minutes online.

7. Why should churches use Social Media?

Wednesday 6th January 10:30 – 12 noon

Facilitated by the **National Churches Trust** This workshop will explain the benefits of using Social Media – What is Twitter, Facebook & Instagram and how can it help your church?

90 minutes online.

8. How to use Social Media

90 minutes online.

Wednesday 13th January 10:30 – 12 noon

Facilitated by Countryside

9. Telling your Christian story

Monday 18th January – Time TBC

60 minutes online.

10. Developing Trails and Experiences or How to create your own church trail?

February - Date TBC

Facilitated by Liz Hill, Church Tourism Officer, this workshop will showcase the work completed on a variety of trails and experiences in Herefordshire and Shropshire as part of the Discover Churches project. The workshop will also explain how churches and communities can develop and create their own trail.

90 minutes online.

11. Connecting with the local community

February - Date TBC

Facilitated by Countryside this workshop will enable you think about local businesses and organisations and how your church can work together with the community to increase visitor numbers and donations.

90 minutes online.

12. Welcoming groups and larger parties to your church

February - Date TBC

How can you encourage and manage group visitors? This workshop will be a visit to a National Trust or English Heritage property that demonstrates best practice for welcoming groups either by coach, car, bicycle or on foot. Both National Trust & English Heritage have been welcoming group visitors for many years and are able to explain how they welcome groups to their properties.

Half Day in Person Visit to a local **NT** or **EH** property Spring 2021

Further Workshops and Information

- Welcome Host from Quality in Tourism for 2021.
- Explore Churches '[Taking Great Photos](#)' will be shared on our You Tube Channel once up and running.