



Saving Historic Churches

Annual Review 2019-20



Memorial brass at St Mary's Church, Fordwich, Kent

Saving historic churches together

Annual Review 2019-20

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Front cover: St Peter's,
Tickencote, Rutland
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Just before the Great Lockdown I visited three CCT churches in Suffolk. These places bear eloquent witness to the range and complexity of the buildings in our care. St Mary's, Bungay, is in the centre of this lovely town – spacious, light and beautifully maintained. All Saints', Ellough, is lonely and austere. St Andrew's, Covehithe, is still used for worship but CCT is responsible for the ruins of a once much larger church, perilously close to the ever-invading sea. All three of these very different churches bear the scars of history. Plague, State-sponsored vandalism, and over-energetic Victorian restoration have all left their mark. Yet the churches survive in our care. I am sometimes awed by the responsibility of the task charged to the Trust and all our supporters and staff. People are at the heart of all we do, but the buildings also speak for themselves.

Last year we celebrated the 50th anniversary of CCT. One of the highlight events was the Great National Steeple Chase. This involved our Chief Executive paying a visit to 50 of our churches in 50 hours using whatever transport he could lay his hands on. I am grateful to our many members and supporters who got involved with that and helped to raise valuable funds.

I remain very grateful to the Church Commissioners for their continuing interest and support. Our sponsoring Government Department, DCMS, has also been of invaluable help. My thanks go to the National Lottery Heritage Fund and to all the people and Trusts whose generosity enables us to do our important work. It would be invidious to name private donors. I thank them and all those who have donated money from legacies.

Our two major National Lottery-funded projects started work on site at Holy Trinity, Sunderland, and St Swithun's in Worcester. As I write, work has been suspended because of COVID-19, but it will resume to provide clear evidence of the social and economic value of what we do.

Last year we took on three new churches: The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Hemington; St Peter's, Tickencote; and St Nicholas', Withernsea. I am acutely aware that as our collection of these beautiful places continues to grow, so do the demands on our resources and staff and our invaluable volunteers.

These are difficult times. But I am confident that CCT's strategy – which is based on community involvement above all – will deliver lasting and good outcomes for us and for the historic places which we love and need to maintain and keep open.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Ainsworth'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line at the end.

Peter Ainsworth
CCT Chairman



This year saw us implement our new strategy. Year one of a strategy is always an exciting and nervous time as the organisation works out the niggles and pinch points of a new staff structure and a new way of working. Given all the change that CCT has gone through, it is wonderful to see how much we achieved in our 50th anniversary year.

In the first year of the strategy, we put a great deal of effort into how we best support communities and volunteers and we have made great progress. We had just begun year two of the strategy when COVID-19 struck and this was a great test of the resilience of CCT. Much of the groundwork that we have laid in 2019–20 has been extremely useful during lockdown and the subsequent period of social distancing that we have borne.

The year 2019–20 was a time of celebration, with events taking place all over the country as people came together to honour the achievements that have been made in the 50 years of CCT's existence. I am extremely grateful for all the volunteers, communities, classic car owners and helicopter pilots, police launches, police officers (who decided not to arrest us after all in the middle of the night outside one of our churches) who transported me around the country to achieve visiting 50 churches in 50 hours. We travelled from Dorset to Cumbria and Newcastle to London via the most amazing collection of churches. We had bagpipes in Worcester, champagne in Macclesfield with the Mayor at midnight, very large bats in Suffolk and many more adventures. The single most important lesson that this re-enforced was how much local people love their historic places of worship. People came out to meet us at all hours of the day and night as they are proud of their heritage and their churches. It was an inspiration.

Our 50th year also saw us hold a garden party in the grounds of Lambeth Palace to thank our sponsors, donors, funders, volunteers and staff for all they do to help protect our collection of churches. We showcased theatre and music as well as the all-important conservation work that we undertake, under blazing sunshine and with plenty of cake.

In the light of COVID-19, our historic churches face a, perhaps, more uncertain future. CCT is working tirelessly to use our skills, resources and infrastructure to best support communities to use and love as well as open their churches.

We continue to work with the Quakers in Norfolk and are in partnership with the Historic Chapels Trust (HCT) and Historic England to make sure that their collection of chapels has a viable future. None of what we do would be possible without the support of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), the Church Commissioners and all of those people across England who love their historic church.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Aiers'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Peter Aiers
CCT Chief Executive

Celebrating 50 years

In 2019, the Churches Conservation Trust turned 50. Since 1969 we have developed well beyond our initial purpose of merely saving church buildings; today our approach is to find new uses that give these spaces a fresh lease of life.

Our historic churches are vested in us by the Church Commissioners of the Church of England, repairing the damage from sometimes years of neglect, and working with local communities to bring them to life again. Our vision is for historic churches to be enjoyed by everyone as places of heritage, culture, spirituality and beauty and for the significant contribution they make to communities, society and the economy.

We operate the third largest heritage estate in charitable ownership in the UK. All of the churches in the collection are listed, mostly Grade I and II*, and some are Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Our churches attract almost 2 million visitors a year and this unique collection includes irreplaceable examples of architecture, archaeology and art from 1,000 years of history.

The 1960s were a challenging time for historic churches, with such buildings sometimes seen as an impediment to progress rather than a benefit to society, and many falling into disrepair and threatened with demolition. No formal mechanism existed for caring

for churches where parishes felt they could no longer afford to keep going. If it hadn't been for the commitment of local communities and national campaigners such as Ivor Bulmer-Thomas, many of these historic churches might have been lost forever.

The Churches Conservation Trust was originally established in 1969 as the Redundant Churches Fund, a unique partnership of church, state and charity which was the result of tireless campaigning by a pioneering group of 1960s church heritage enthusiasts. The Trust came into being via the Church of England's Pastoral Measure of 1968, approved via Parliament, including the Redundant Churches and Other Religious Buildings Act 1969, which was meant to 'authorize the making of grants to the redundant Churches Fund [and] exclude...the demolition of redundant places of public worship'.

We owe a significant debt to our first Chairman, Ivor Bulmer-Thomas (Chairman 1969–1976), a former Member of Parliament, journalist and Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Bulmer-Thomas

had already been instrumental in the establishment of CCT's sister charity, The Friends of Friendless Churches, in 1957 before he decided to throw his weight behind the establishment of the Redundant Churches Fund. In 1994, we were renamed The Churches Conservation Trust, and today we look after 356 historic churches and continue to take on more each year.

Our first church

Our first church, St Peter's at Edlington, in the coalfields of South Yorkshire, came into our care in 1971. By that time, the church had had its roof and windows removed in an attempt to turn it into a ruin. St Peter's is a Grade I listed medieval church in a disadvantaged area with few other historic or community buildings. Since then, it has become a valued community and arts building, regularly used by local schools and colleges.



St Peter's Church, Edlington, South Yorkshire

Churches we are saving

The last three months of 2019 saw three new churches come into the care of CCT, each bringing a unique piece of history to our collection and new repair projects to undertake.

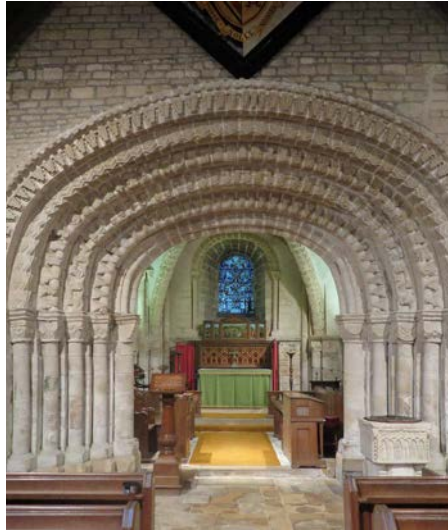


St Mary the Virgin, Hemington, Somerset

St Mary's Church in Hemington was our first new church to come into our care in 2019. St Mary's was built by the Normans and extended and altered up to Victorian times, including a heavy restoration in 1859 by Sir George Gilbert Scott. Externally it has 'hunky punks', otherwise known as traditional local stone gargoyles, plus a Somerset-style perpendicular tower and a gold-leaf weathervane designed to represent Halley's Comet.

The interior of the church is full of amazing and intricate features such as a tiny stone hedgehog which awaits visitors near the vestry, fragments of wall paintings, columns which still retain their original medieval paint, an ancient Saxon stone horse's head sculpture reused as a corbel, and many more unique details.

St Mary's is a fascinating and much-loved church. However, as the congregation dwindled, the decision was made to vest the church in CCT. The church has been very well cared for by the local community but needs repair work to ensure its future. The church was closed while a project costing over £300,000 got underway to completely reroof the building and overhaul all the gutters and rainwater goods to ensure that the building is watertight.



St Peter's Church, Tickencote, Rutland

This Grade I listed church dates back to the 12th century but was significantly altered in 1792. This was when it was restored with funds from Eliza Wingfield, of the local Wingfield family, under architect Samuel Pepys Cockerell, the great-great nephew of diarist Samuel Pepys and a former Surveyor of the Fabric of St Paul's Cathedral.

Once inside, the church's most notable feature is its grand multi-layered Norman arch, built between 1130 and 1150. In his book *England's Thousand Best Churches*, Sir Simon Jenkins describes it as 'the great arch of Tickencote ... like a peacock's tail, comprising every motif of Norman art'. The fourth layer has two crowned heads in it which are thought to represent King Stephen and Queen Matilda, rival claimants to the English throne during 'the Anarchy', an 18-year civil war that extended from 1135 to 1153.

CCT has four main aims for St Peter's: to make the church structurally safe and sound; repair the structural roof timber; to weather-proof the church, which has succumbed to serious problems with damp; and to ensure that the church can be open for use and enjoyed by the local community and the wider public. The cost for repairing St Peter's will be in the region of £255,000.



St Nicholas' Church, Withernsea, East Yorkshire

The Grade II* 15th-century St Nicholas' Church can be found in the small seaside town of Withernsea in East Yorkshire, about 20 miles from Hull, making it CCT's first East Yorkshire church.

After Withernsea's original 12th-century church of St Mary's was destroyed by the sea in the 15th century, permission was granted to build a new church further inland dedicated to St Nicholas, the patron saint of seafarers.

St Nicholas' Church was consecrated in 1488; however, by 1575 the church was in a state of decay, eventually losing its roof to a violent storm in 1609 and subsequently falling into ruin.

The church's outlook improved in 1855 with the arrival of the railway, as the directors of the Hull and Holderness Railway Company decided to lead a restoration of the church. It was last used for worship in 2013.

Repair works at St Nicholas' will focus on making the church safe and weather-tight, so that it can be opened to visitors. This will include reroofing with new Welsh slate, stabilising the masonry (including the pinnacles) and work to the base of the church to prevent damp.

Recent achievements



L-R: Revd Sally Hitchiner, Sue Wilkinson, Peter Stanford, Nick Berry & Sir Simon Jenkins

at stalls run by members of the Fundraising, Volunteering & Community, Conservation, Learning & Participation, Champing™ and Regeneration teams.

Of particular interest was the Volunteering & Community stall, who gathered people's best memories of CCT and CCT churches. On a similar note, a video showcasing the history of CCT and the achievements of the last 50 years was enjoyed by many in the marquee.

Guests were entertained throughout the afternoon by Circomedia, St Bartholomew's Choir and This is My Theatre. Each of these companies are based at or perform in CCT churches, illustrating the diverse and innovative uses historic churches have in the 21st century. As well as providing spectacular entertainment, each of these groups embody CCT's mission to empower communities to save and use historic places of worship.

Debate at the V&A

Who should be responsible for the care of historic churches? hosted at the V&A and sponsored by Ecclesiastical Insurance

On 3 September we welcomed a panel of four notable figures to take part in our 50th anniversary debate, hosted at the Victoria and Albert Museum's lecture theatre and chaired by Sue Wilkinson, Vice Chair of Trustees for the Churches Conservation Trust.

Our four panellists were Sir Simon Jenkins, CCT Trustee and accomplished broadcaster, journalist and author; Reverend Sally Hitchiner, Associate Vicar for Ministry at St Martin-in-the-Fields and member of the General Synod; Nick Berry, founding director of OMI Architects and Peter Stanford, award-winning writer and broadcaster.

The debate raised many interesting case studies and examples of how historic churches are being cared for currently, as well as insightful comments on how successful projects could be replicated.

The debate was closed by CCT Chief Executive, Peter Aiers, who

encouraged the audience to use and love their local historic parish church for activities and events that bring local communities together. The debate was followed by a drinks reception in the beautiful Silver Galleries, during which the audience and panellists mingled and continued the discussion.



Lambeth Palace Garden Party

As part of CCT's 50th anniversary celebrations, over 200 supporters attended our Garden Party at Lambeth Palace, the home of the Archbishop of Canterbury, on Thursday 23 July. This event concluded a successful two-day Trustees' Tour in the South East region. The sunny weather showcased the impressive gardens of Lambeth Palace in all their glory, with guests invited to explore the venue while enjoying a sparkling afternoon tea. We were honoured to be joined by representatives from the Department of Culture, Media & Sport who support the vital work of CCT.

Guests were also invited to learn more about current CCT projects



Above: This Is My Theatre
Below: Circomedia performing





The Great National Steeple Chase finished at St Mary's Church in Edlesborough, Buckinghamshire

The Great National Steeple Chase

To mark CCT's 50th anniversary, our Chief Executive, Peter Aiers, decided to take on a challenge the likes of which the heritage world has never seen before.

From 25 to 27 July, Peter raced across the country to visit 50 churches in just 50 hours. The challenge, named The Great National Steeple Chase, celebrated our half century milestone and fundraised to fight the problem of heritage crime, which affects so many historic churches.

The 1,021.8 mile journey took Peter through Dorset, Wiltshire, Bristol, Shropshire, Cheshire, Lancashire, Cumbria, Northumberland, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire.

Peter was warmly welcomed on his challenge by people across the country with poetry, cake, tea and donations. Members of circus school Circomedia gave Peter a lesson on how to ride a unicycle in St Paul's, Bristol, and the local fire brigade lent a hand with a lightbulb change at St Saviour's in Tetbury. A bagpiper piped Peter out of St Swithun's, Worcester, and the Mayor of Macclesfield and members of the Roe-naissance project at Christ Church, Macclesfield, gave Peter a midnight champagne reception.

The Friends of St Werburgh's in Warburton came out to celebrate Peter's visit to their special timber-frame church at 2.30am and bacon sandwiches, made by Victoria

Collison-Owen, Director of Historic Churches Scotland, were enjoyed at Vale of Lune at 5am! Bells and pizza were appreciated at King's Lynn during the challenge's second evening, while the organ at All Saints' Church in Cambridge was brought to life for a spooky early morning performance as the journey entered its final hours.

While much fun was had on the journey, there was a serious message behind the challenge. Across the nation, churches face lead theft, vandalism, damage to irreplaceable stained glass and are targeted for the precious historical artefacts they hold. We are particularly grateful to our major sponsor, E-Bound AVX Ltd, who supplied many of the vehicles, a great deal of company time and donated to the challenge as well. E-Bound is the UK's only dedicated provider of church roof alarm systems, which are key to protecting churches across the country from heritage crime.

Peter and the Steeple Chase crew made it to the final stop of the journey at St Mary's Church in Edlesborough, Buckinghamshire, with time to spare on Saturday morning, coming in under the time limit at 48.5 hours. The Friends of St Mary's laid on a splendid reception at the finish line, with bells ringing as Peter cycled up the hill and into the church.

Thank you to all the volunteers and sponsors who got involved with The Great National Steeple Chase. Without your support this challenge would not have been able to raise nearly £30,000. This event demonstrated the enormous interest in historic churches among communities across the country – communities that CCT aims to empower to care for these important buildings.



Arriving in style in York



Peter signed each visitor book

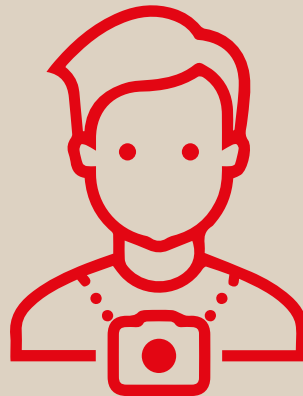
Key figures for 2019-2020

To read a full copy of our statutory accounts, go to visitchurches.org.uk/accounts

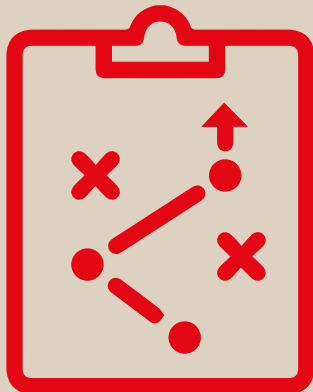


2,023
members

1.7 million
visitors to our churches



1,800
volunteers



Implemented
the new strategy



Raised

£21,050 for our annual appeal for St Peter's, Sudbury



Regeneration
Team

worked with 95 community groups
(growing from 69 the previous year)



Legacies

provided £129,000 of unrestricted income



88% of expenditure

is spent on frontline projects



Reached out

we have now deployed 15 Local Community Officers across our regions

Champing™

we welcomed over 1000 Champers, generating £67,000 worth of revenue



Learning

as part of the Heritage Schools Programme, we have delivered 119 schools learning sessions



9 historic church tours

with 195 attendees in total

Outstanding contributions from our volunteers

Volunteers from across the country were recognised at our National Volunteer and Community Day, in February, which was held at Carrs Lane Church and Conference Centre in Birmingham and supported by the Marsh Christian Trust.

The seven award categories recognised those who had made an outstanding contribution to their local church and community, illustrating the astonishing range of activities and events that take place across our 356 churches.

Volunteer of the year for the South East: Bob Wyard, Oxhey Chapel, Oxhey, Hertfordshire

Bob has cared for Oxhey Chapel for nearly 20 years and his passion for and commitment to the building are plain to see. He is a fount of knowledge about the history of the chapel and is generous in sharing this knowledge with others, with an engaging and enthusiastic manner that brings stories from the past to life. As well as acting as the local key holder and organising open days for the community, in 2019 he kindly organised and funded an upgrade to the forecourt to improve the appearance of the chapel's frontage.

Volunteer of the year for the West: Rosemary Harvey, St Mary's Church, Shipton Sollars, Gloucestershire

Rosemary catalyses positive change at the churches she finds. Just in the last year, at two sites which have been without support for years, her intervention has led to communities of neighbours and groups interested in using the site for future events. Rosemary also always finds a way to make her team feel looked after too, either by supporting staff initiatives or by helping local residents accomplish the best they can at a church.

Volunteer of the year for the North: Bill Dove, Holy Trinity Church, Sunderland, Tyne & Wear

Bill has been caring for the church for 31 years now; no job is too big or too small for him! He plants flowers in spring and summer, empties our water tanks twice weekly, cleans up, gives talks and tours, buys the refreshments,



replaces broken windows and arranges flowers for local people to commemorate occasions. Watching over Holy Trinity from his flat, he comes out in all weathers, at all times of the day and night.

Volunteer Team of the Year: Friends of St Wilfrid's, Church Norton, West Sussex

Even though this little chapel can seat a maximum of 35 people, the Friends of St Wilfrid's have a programme of events that encourages visitors, old and new, to come and experience. The chapel is opened every day, cleaned and always decorated with fresh flowers. Welcoming over 18,400 visitors in the last year has generated over £3,000 for CCT funds.

Fundraising Volunteer of the Year: Judi Moran & Ros Rowley, Church of the Holy Cross, Burley, Rutland

Judi and Ros have been fundraising for a very special 346-year-old clock by James Knibbs to be repaired. Together with the rest of the group they hosted a very successful fundraising concert where they raised £2,600. The group have run many events in the past and have enticed local people to give generous donations, not being afraid to 'make that ask' and in just a few months have raised £6,000 to repair the clock.

Digital Volunteer of the Year: Stuart McLaren, St Augustine's, Norwich, Norfolk and James Wilding, Wiltshire Area Volunteer

Stuart has volunteered mostly single-handedly at St Augustine's for around

20 years and has a real in-depth knowledge of the church and its history. Harnessing the power of social media, Stuart has created a Facebook page for the church with the aim of encouraging local residents to learn about their local historic church and, more importantly, to get involved!

James has produced three online audio guides for churches in Wiltshire (All Saints' Church in Alton Priors, the Church of St Margaret of Antioch in Leigh Delamere and St Mary's Church in Old Dilton), making a free virtual tour of the building accessible to anyone. He has also set up several geocaches and used Google Maps to signpost visitors to other nearby CCT churches.

Young Volunteer of the Year: James Giles, St John on the Wall, Bristol

James completed his Duke of Edinburgh award with us at St John on the Wall, acting as a Visitor Welcome Volunteer, with the support of his mother, Nicola. James joined our team of regular volunteers in opening the church to visitors on weekends between October 2018 and May 2019, allowing hundreds of visitors to see this beautiful building.

Each award winner was presented with a certificate alongside £500 from the Marsh Christian Trust, whose continued generosity makes these awards possible.

MARSH
Christian Trust

Regeneration update



Plaster-molded cherub at St Swithun's Church in Worcester
© Andy Marshall

Sound & Art at St Swithun's

Work continues on site at St Swithun's, Worcester to transform the space into a centre for heritage, arts and learning.

Although the project encountered delays to the start of the construction phase, work has been progressing with major elements of the build programme in place. With the completion of the internal scaffolding structure, it was possible to get within touching distance of the plaster ceiling. For the first time in decades, close inspection of the wonderful plaster-molded cherubs that adorn the ceiling of St Swithun's Church could be undertaken. It was discovered, quite alarmingly, that they had been strapped to the ceiling using wire. This gave the impression that the cherubs were wearing blindfolds.

To install the under-floor heating system, the gravestones on the floor of the church needed to be lifted to enable excavation. This led to the discovery of a number of brick-lined box tombs (probably family tombs), some brick barrel vaults with high status individual burials within, and a Victorian coffin-shaped tomb. An archaeologist kept a watching brief on the site as the tombs became exposed.

Seventeen Nineteen: A new use venue, a celebration of the past, a hub of the present and the foundations for the future.

Our two heritage construction apprentices, Kane and Tyler, continue to thrive under the expert guidance of Historic Property Restoration. They are growing in confidence and have a real passion for heritage skills.

Our craft skills programme (funded by Allchurches Trust) has exceeded all our expectations. Children and young people, families, schools and colleges, professionals and aspiring builders have all had the chance to participate in various workshops and attend hard-hat tours.

Interpretation in the space has been co-created with local people and artists and will help us retell the stories of Old Sunderland in a fun and immersive way. Community and partnership engagement has started to take shape under the guidance of our Participation and Engagement Officer, Lily Daniels.



Work gets underway at Holy Trinity, Sunderland
© Mike Veitch

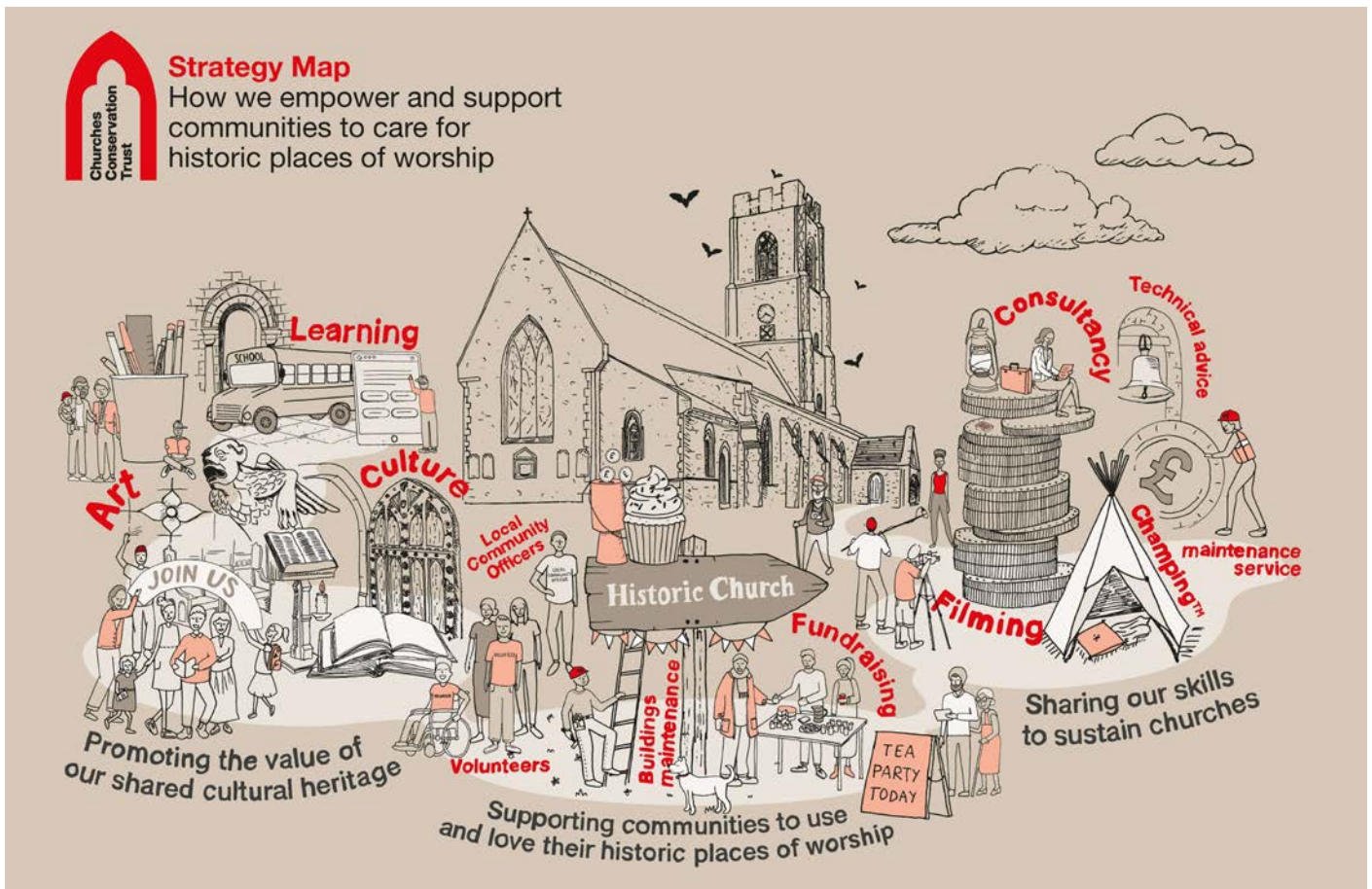
Taylor Review Pilot

The Regeneration Team was appointed by Historic England between September 2018 and March 2020, to run workshops for the Taylor Review Pilot, a project funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. A total of 16 workshops took place. The aim of the Pilot was to test some of the recommendations of the 2017 Taylor Review: Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals, and to provide free support and advice for listed places of worship of all faiths and denominations.

As part of the workshops, 170 places of worship/communities were engaged. The workshops have enabled community groups to feel more confident about undertaking regular maintenance to their listed places of worship. The workshops are helping faith groups engage with wider communities and build mutually beneficial partnerships.

A final Taylor Review Pilot evaluation report will be released at the end of 2020, along with a set of digital resources collated from the workshops.

Our new strategy



In 2019 we launched our five-year strategy which saw the creation of a new staff structure to deliver the new objectives.

Much of the year has focused on developing new ways of working whilst still delivering the repair and conservation of our church buildings, our major projects, fundraising and celebrating our 50th anniversary.

We have now deployed 15 Local Community Officers across our regions to support communities and volunteers to use and love their historic churches. This, along with the conservation and maintenance of our church buildings, is the mainstay of our work.

The strategy will focus on ultimately raising funds to repair and maintain our buildings and to secure investment to help communities open up the doors and run events for all to attend. The more people who love these buildings and feel that they are an important local asset, the more chance there is that people will contribute financially.

The strategy in action

Our regional teams have been busy creating stronger relationships with communities and volunteers across England. The new Local Community Officers have been working hand in hand with other teams across CCT to ensure that we are providing the best support we can to communities. We are not able to function without the support and commitment of communities and volunteers around the churches in our collection.

This is my Theatre has been working with us for over three years, providing a variety of performances in many of our churches around the south east. Performances have included *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The theatre group have delighted church-packed audiences with humour, drama and excitement.

Our national fundraising team supports fundraising in the regions, runs direct membership and donor support programmes and leads on national appeals with Trusts and Foundations. The 2019 Annual Appeal was dedicated to supporting the regeneration project of St Peter's, Sudbury, and generated £21,050.



Our conservation team has shifted from being a regional team to a national team, so that we can shift resources around the country as required by our priority Top 15 projects. Great progress has been made on the delivery of the maintenance programme of routine work and small urgent repairs. The team has also been developing frameworks and toolkits to enable Friends and volunteer groups to manage and deliver locally-led projects according to best practice, safely and within the law.

We have continued to share our skills with other organisations and, following a successful bid for three-year funding from Historic England, we have continued to support the administration of the Historic Chapels Trust as well as guide its cultural shift in line with the agreed strategy.

Learning and interpretation are key elements to our work and through funding from the Department for Education, via Historic England, we have continued to support three Heritage Learning Officers who work with schools, families and communities to bring people into our church buildings. The learning programme has been running for eight years now, allowing us to build relationships with schools, teachers and learning networks as well as providing popular family learning programmes on our major footfall sites.

The prime purpose of the 2019–24 strategy is to shape CCT into a supportive infrastructure which can help communities across England practically care for their historic places of worship. Historic churches are buildings that help to define the country and the places where they stand. They are a direct link to where we have come from and are of immense cultural significance.



'Stonework and Selfies' – a workshop held at St Peter's Church, Northampton as part of Art UK's Sculpture Around You project

A year in the life of CCT

April 2019

CCT's Regeneration team travelled to Denmark to share their community-led approach to regeneration. The team shared much valuable practical experience with groups keen to explore new ways of caring for rural churches. While in Denmark, the team also worked with aspiring architects at the Aarhus School of Architecture, hosting a workshop on sustainable uses for rural places of worship.

May 2019

Four CCT churches were featured in an eight-part BBC series called *Walks of Life*. The series, presented by Mehreen Baig and JB Gill, explored the fascinating cultural and spiritual narratives found throughout the Great British countryside – including churches! Each episode focused on a different area of the British Isles and included the CCT churches of Cooling, Wroxeter, Princetown and Shrewsbury.



A medieval woodcarver at Battlefield

June 2019

St Mary's Church, Edlesborough, otherwise known as 'The Church on the Hill' hosted another popular 'Edlefest' festival in June. The music festival had sell-out nights for the first time and featured the iconic Chris Difford, co-founder of the rock band Squeeze.

CCT staff shared stories of how our wonderful volunteers have been helping us for #NationalVolunteersWeek ranging from opening churches, hosting events to fundraising and cleaning.



Eid at All Souls, Bolton, Greater Manchester



CAMRA Beer Festival at Shrewsbury



Edlefest at St Mary's Church, Edlesborough, Buckinghamshire

July 2019

As part of the Battle of Shrewsbury historical re-enactment weekend, over 400 people visited the Church of St Mary Magdalene, Battlefield, in Shropshire. Thanks to funding from Art UK, visitors to the church were able to listen to medieval music, talk to a medieval woodcarver and have a go at soap carving.

In July, the CAMRA Beer Festival was held at St Mary's Church Shrewsbury. Three local brewers produced a special beer called 'Window', which was sold to raise funds for the vandalised 16th century window that was smashed earlier in the year during a break-in.

August 2019

On Saturday 17 August, All Souls' Church, Bolton, held its first major event in partnership with All Souls' café provider Cinnamon Bean, welcoming over 700 visitors. The family fun day celebrating Eid in the redeveloped church saw the building filled with food, including a BBQ outside, a Makers' Market and children's activities.

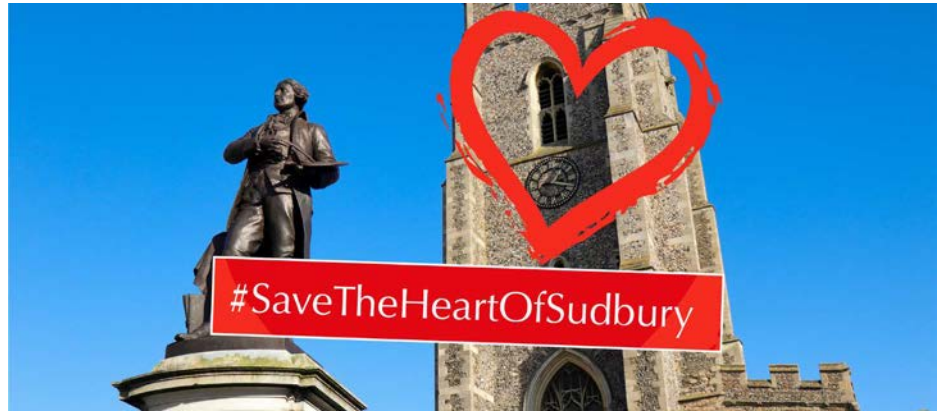
September 2019

On 3 September we welcomed guests to take part in a special debate in the lecture theatre of The V&A to celebrate our 50th Anniversary and to address the question of 'Who should be responsible for the care of historic churches?' We were delighted to be joined by Sir Simon Jenkins, writer and broadcaster and Trustee of CCT, who led the debate, following an introduction from Director of the V&A Dr Tristram Hunt.



October 2019

The project at Holy Trinity Church, Sunderland launched a new brand and became Seventeen Nineteen: 'Sharing Sunderland's hidden stories to spark creativity, curiosity and new connections.' The exciting new look and brand colours sought inspiration from the architecture of the building and historic paint schemes. The project team worked with Newcastle-based brand consultants, Precept to find a new name and brand identity as the church enters a new phase of its history.



November 2019

CCT held its first Heritage Crime Forum in Worcestershire, in partnership with West Mercia Police. The day served to provide a toolkit in the fight against heritage crime, and reminded everyone of the value of getting to know the communities around their churches, meeting local PCs and PCSOs, and contacting scrap metal dealers immediately after any thefts.

December 2019

The candle-lit carol service at St Margaret's in Catmore, Berkshire, has become so popular that for the first time, two services led by the vicar took place back-to-back. This allowed everyone the opportunity to celebrate in comfort.



January 2020

CCT's Regeneration team continued to deliver workshops as part of the Taylor Review Pilot, a project funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

February 2020

A crowdfunding appeal was launched on 14 February, asking people to 'send love to St Peter's, Sudbury.' The aim of the appeal was to work towards securing match funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund as part of a project to repair and conserve the historic fabric of the church and regenerate the building as a community venue.



Gizmo the Gargoyle

March 2020

World Book Day was celebrated on 5 March, with the culmination of a 6-month project at St Nicholas' Chapel, King's Lynn. The Literacy Project saw 130 Key Stage 2, local school children take part in creative writing sessions, storytelling and illustration workshops. The project was funded by Arts Council England via Creative Arts East's PEACH cultural education partnership.

Our new children and families characters, Gizmo and friends, were launched in early March and will be appearing at CCT sites around England, welcoming families and signposting to child-appropriate activities and events.



Thank you to our sponsors and donors

The Trust wishes to record its thanks for the continuing help and support it receives that enables it to do its work across its 356 churches. The list below notes the Trust's sponsors (who provide its Statutory Grant), the Trusts and Foundations, Friends of Churches, other organisations and individuals that, in the year, gave generously to the Trust. We are also grateful to those who would like their support to remain anonymous.

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Gifts in wills play an important and much valued part in supporting the work of the Trust. We would like to thank the following named donors and those who wish to remain anonymous for pledging a gift for the Trust in their wills:

Christopher Anderson
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In Memoriam

CCT gratefully acknowledges all legacy gifts received and gifts made in memory of:

Sarah Daniels

Who we are

The Churches Conservation Trust is the national charity protecting historic churches at risk. Since 1969, we have played a unique role in national life. Without our work, 356 historic churches might have disappeared entirely and, with them irreplaceable architecture, art and archaeology spanning over 1,000 years of history.

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