

## “What to do...?”

### **A real welcome**

- a water bowl for dogs in the porch; a boot scraper for walkers; welcoming tubs of flowers by the door; perhaps provide tea/coffee/squash and biscuits for visitors to help themselves.

### **A place for prayer**

- provide prayers for people to use; have slips of paper for prayer requests and put them in a book once a week; where used, keep sanctuary lamps lit to create an atmosphere of prayer.

### **A place for children**

- provide a table and chairs for children and paper and crayons for them to draw with; have displays of children's work; provide books and soft toys.

### **Signs and texts**

- to give simple explanations of the meaning of the font, pulpit, lectern etc, and of significant areas.

### **Cards and Sales**

- have guide books, postcards, and low-cost souvenirs and cards for sale (which often attract people to the Church), leaflets and books on Christian belief, and information about local events.

### **Display boards**

- photographs showing “who's who” in the church community; pictures of charity and mission work supported; diagram of Mission Partnership/Deanery/Archdeaconry/Diocese.

### **A place for community events**

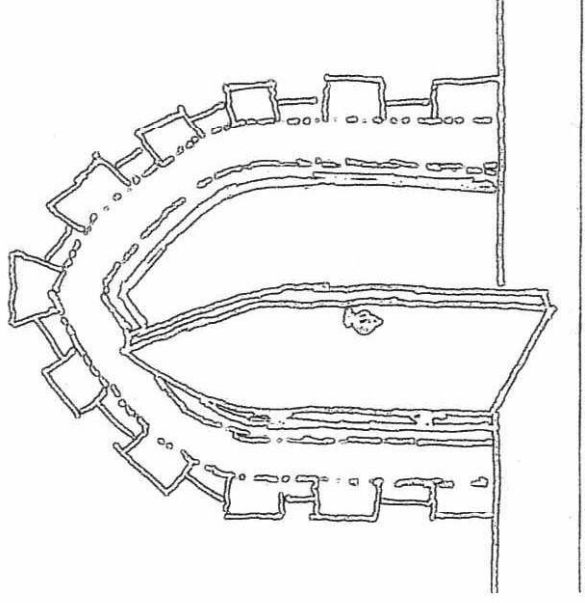
- make the church available for concerts, plays and art exhibitions etc., and consider adapting the building for multi-purpose use, with provision of toilets, kitchen etc.

**FURTHER INFORMATION FROM** [www.ecclesiastical.com](http://www.ecclesiastical.com)  
click on 'insurance' followed by 'church insurance'

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Leaflet devised by Canon Philip Norwood on behalf of the Gartree Mission Partnership. Further copies available from:  
**LeicesterShire Historic Churches Trust, 20 Gumley Road,  
Smeeton Westerby, Leicester LE8 0LT. Email:  
chairman@lhct.org.uk**

# OPEN CHURCHES



## **Why and How to Open your Church daily or regularly**

**The circumstances of each of our churches are different, but many of the suggestions in this leaflet may be relevant to your church**

## “Why....?”

### **Churches witness to God's love for the world**

*Churches often have a spire or tower saying to all, “God is here!” If they then fail to welcome visitors, that provides a false witness.*

### **Churches were built for the whole community**

*To keep them closed to all but a few on restricted occasions says that they belong to a chosen few only.*

### **Churches are a sign of the Kingdom of God**

*What a variety of opportunities we have to share the Gospel message inside and outside our church buildings!*

### **Church buildings can be ‘wayside shrines’**

*Whether there is a regular service or not, churches can still provide an opportunity for people to meet with God in a special way.*

### **Information**

*Churches are often the main sources of information about the life of the local area.*

### **Maintenance**

*Problems that need to be dealt with are spotted more easily in Churches that are regularly open. Fewer people need to hold keys to the church.*

### **Insurance**

*Insurance companies often encourage churches to be open during daylight hours. It can be less expensive to replace stolen items than to repair damage caused by break-ins; and having the possibility of people calling in at any time can deter thieves. Churches can sometimes be insured for 24-hour opening for an additional charge.*

**Contact your church insurers to discuss what pattern of opening might be appropriate for your church.**

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## “How...?”

### **Have a small team of people**

*- to take turns opening and closing the church; to check daily on cleanliness and tidiness; to keep posters up-to-date; to empty wall boxes; to provide things visitors need. Perhaps investigate the possibility of timed automatic locking and unlocking. Set up a reporting system so that people who open, close or check your church on their own report to a partner or colleague once this has been done.*

### **Arrange duty times**

*- so that cleaners and flower arrangers etc. are around at various rather than predictable times.*

### **Have good quality signs**

*- to the Church; for parking; offering a welcome; advertising services and events; giving telephone numbers for the keyholder(s) to cover times when the church has to be closed. A sign that says “CHURCH OPEN” can deter thieves who cannot be sure that no-one is around. An “A-frame” sign which can be put out and put away is useful.*

### **Install security lights**

*- lights for the main entrance and path; lights to come on by sensor inside the building; if necessary, consider CCTV.*

### **Protect valuable items**

*- lock away all precious crosses, candlesticks etc. and replace them with wooden ones; mark valuables with security code or Smart Water; photograph all valuable items; chain valuable pieces of furniture; inhibit loaded vehicles from driving away from the door. If you have a safe or box for donations, take advice regarding their security.*

### **Safety first**

*- hide or lock away all matches, lighters, scissors, sharp knives, etc.*

### **Access for people with a disability**

*- assess paths, steps, rails, light levels etc. with various needs in mind.*

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