

The role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) with regard to the UK's Church Buildings



Case Study of the National Churches Trust
Presented by Michael Hoare – November 2010

Current trends

Current trends in numbers of congregations and ministers suggest that NGOs will have an increasing role to play in the management and finance of church buildings.

The British have a strong tradition of volunteer support for churches but this has tended to be at individual church level and needs to be adapted to the needs of the 21st century.

Current support for UK churches

Anglican churches are managed on an individual (parochial) basis, other denominations on a more portfolio basis. In each case support is provided by:

- Individual Denominations via national and regional (diocesan) structures
- Government agencies funding listed churches:
 - English Heritage.
 - Cadw (in Wales)
 - Historic Scotland
- NGOs

NGOs supporting the Church Buildings open for worship

The National Churches Trust is the only NGO working for all churches across the UK.

There are 36 Regional 'County Churches' Trusts covering the majority of England and Scotland. The National Churches Trust works closely with these Trusts.

A good number of individual churches also have their own Friends' Group, formed of members of the local community.

The primary NGOs supporting Church Building closed for regular worship

Name of NGO	Christian Denomination/s	Coverage	Number of Buildings
Churches Conservation Trust	Anglican	England	342
Historic Chapels Trust	All	England	17
Friends of Friendless Churches	Anglican	England and Wales	39
Scottish Redundant Churches	All	Scotland	5
Welsh Religious Buildings Trust	All	Wales	6

The National Churches Trust was set up in 2007 to provide support for churches of all denominations throughout the British Isles – some 47,000 buildings.

The National Churches Trust provides repair grants:

Up to £2 million per year itself

The County Trusts also provide c.£3million per year in direct grants

The National Churches Trust encourages churches to be used and kept open by

Providing grants specifically for the installation and improvement of facilities

Most Christian denominations in the UK are moving towards additional activities in their places of worship

The National Churches Trust aims to bring further funds to the Church Sector through:

Engaging with the non-church going population via national events such as Ride & Stride which brings in £1.5million p.a.

Cultivating relationships with new Trusts and Foundations

The National Churches Trust aims to provide up-to-date information about churches to demonstrate their needs and benefit to society.

A nationwide online survey of Christian Places of Worship was conducted with McKinsey & Co. in April 2010 to gain a full picture of their repair and maintenance needs, community use and funding.

Findings will be published later this year following an good response

The National Churches Trust aims to make the case for churches better known through:

Improving media coverage. e.g. work with Brunswick Arts (publicity consultants) to support the Ride + Stride event

Investing in IT to develop its existing membership base

The publication of a professional bi-annual magazine

Organising public debates such as that with the Spectator

The National Churches Trust aims to provide support for individual churches themselves by:

Employing a National Support Officer and new website (launching later this year) to provide relevant and current information and advice to churches

Establishing a dedicated helpline for those caring for churches

The NCT aims to provide support for the Regional 'County Trust' Network through:

Providing a dedicated, private website for the County Trusts to encourage emulation and enable the spread of ideas and best practice between Trusts

The initial aim is to ensure the whole country has the support of a local trust

Assisting with their recruitment processes?