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A Church For The Future

Scotland's 4000 church buildings undoubtedly form an important part of our country's heritage and tradition. However, they provide more than just a backdrop to the skyline of our villages, towns and cities. Indeed churches continue to provide valuable voluntary community services on a scale which no other organisation can match. Church buildings are a huge concern for every denomination as maintenance and running costs spiral rapidly out of reach. Congregation decline is just one of a number of issues contributing to the problem of surplus buildings. There are almost double the number of buildings as are required, which is a legacy dating back to denominational unions and, before that, Reformation times. Population shift in our urban and rural areas has also resulted in many buildings which are simply in the wrong place. The most effective strategy available is to increase their occupancy, in particular through exploring partnerships with other local service providers. The ambition should be to make churches the real community facilities they were always intended to be. This guidebook is intended for use by congregations to highlight the different issues church buildings are faced with along with the strategies available to us for tackling them. It is supplemented by a host of case studies representing a wide range of situations of differing scale to inspire and equip us to look forward with hope.