

Open for Visitors Awards 2023

Please read these guidelines carefully.

You can find the form to submit your entry here:

<https://zealous.co/nationalchurcheistrust/opportunity/Open-For-Visitors-Awards-2023/>

The closing date is 23 July 2023.

We believe that churches, chapels and meeting house should be open to explore.

They are remarkable sacred spaces, they are treasure houses of heritage, history and community. We want visitors to be surprised as they gaze open-mouthed at their surroundings, and inspired by engaging stories, themes and trails. Churches should help decode their art and architecture, reveal their hidden histories and show inspiring journeys of discovery.

Opening your door to visitors is one of the easiest things you can do.

Most churches, chapels and meeting houses were built to be at the heart of their communities, to be busy and used by all. There is a resurgence of interest in local history, and a growing number of people are visiting churches to discover the history of local communities. Welcoming visitors and helping them discover your church can help them discover your mission of welcome and hospitality.

We promote churches as places to visit through our website and projects working in partnership with national and regional tourism organisations. We tell churches' stories and weave them into geographic trails. Find out more about what we can do for your church here:

<https://www.nationalchurcheistrust.org/explore/your-church>

We had some wonderful submissions, and brilliant winners in 2022. For inspiration, see them here:

<https://www.nationalchurcheistrust.org/impact/awards/winners-2022>

<https://www.nationalchurcheistrust.org/impact/awards/finalists-2022>

We will award one winner in each of the four home nations, plus an overall winner.

Entry requirements

Any church, chapel or meeting house may be nominated. This will enable us to celebrate the geographic spread of great work that is going on across the UK.



You need to be able to tell us how you create a wonderful welcome. Do they tell their stories in an evocatively engaging way, offer everyone a cuppa and cake, decode their architectural heritage, lead group tours, open for everyone passing, welcome school groups or something else?

You don't need to be open every day, or have volunteers on hand. Many churches create a warm welcome with little financial cost. We can't wait to hear about what your church does!

Submission and judging process for all awards

- You will need to start your submission with a title and a brief description.
- You will need to upload at least 5 images on the submission page, and can add a description to each if you wish.
- Then, to apply you will need to complete the detailed submission form.
- You will be able to upload a video.
- You will be able to amend your submission up until the closing date.

Below are the questions, so that you can prepare your answers offline.

Some questions are mandatory (marked with an asterisk), others are not. Some have a word limit, which is listed here.

Most of the questions relate specifically to this award. But there are some general questions about your church at the end. These help us to get an impression of your ethos, we will also use them if you agree to be considered for the Church of the Year.

Church of the Year

We, together with our partners, want to see amazing churches that are open and available for use.

We realise it's sometimes hard to raise yourself up and say that what you do is wonderful. But, churches, chapels and meeting houses across the UK do brilliant things, and using the name 'Church of the Year' helps us to shed light on that.

Vibrant and valued churches are open for worship and well supported, have effective maintenance and engage well with volunteers. They offer a warm welcome to visitors, offer great spaces for community activities, and tell their stories in brilliant ways. This is what makes churches sustainable. You might not be there yet, but we want to hear how you are doing.

If you would like your church to be considered for 'Church of the Year' please tell us what makes your church special.



Questions

- Name of church or chapel * (15 word limit)
 - Address of church or chapel * (50 word limit)
 - Postcode of church or chapel * (5 word limit)

 - Name phone number and email address of a second contact at the church * (75 word limit)
 - Denomination * (5 word limit)

 - Is the building listed. If so, please state the grade * (5 word limit)
-

This section is about your tourism activity specifically.

Why is being open important to you?

* (150 word limit)

How often is your church open outside worship? Tell us a bit more than just times; do you simply open the door, or do you have volunteers on hand or open when you have special events?

* (150 word limit)

How many visitors do you receive each year (let us know if this is an estimate)?

* (50 word limit)

Tell us about your location and tourism partnerships. Are you close to a trail or footpath, an attraction, something that draws tourists, or are you in a town centre or remote spot?

* (150 word limit)

How do you create a warm welcome? How do you engage people when they visit?

* (250 word limit)

How do you tell your stories or interpret your heritage?

* (250 word limit)

If you hold events, or specific activities for visitors; what is your star activity?

* (150 word limit)

Tell us about the team of volunteers who help create your welcome to visitors, tell your stories or run events? Have they overcome any issues along the way?

* (150 word limit)

What's the best thing about being involved in welcoming visitors?

* (150 word limit)



How do your activities contribute to the need for environmental sustainability or seek to reduce the building's carbon footprint?

* (150 word limit)

Please tell us anything else about tourism or visitor welcome at your church that you think has not been covered but you would like us to know.

* (150 word limit)

This section is about your church more generally, as we would love to know more about you. It will help us to get a wider picture of your ethos and activities.

Tell us about your church. What's your ethos and what's important to you?

* (150 word limit)

What other activities are you involved in, what difference are you making and what are you most proud of?

* (150 word limit)

Brief description of your building's heritage / architecture

* (150 word limit)

Your building in numbers (include opening times, congregation size, number of services and community activities)

* (150 word limit)

Would you like to be considered for Church of the Year?

* (yes/no)

If yes, please tell us what makes your church special.

* (150 word limit)

