

National Church Awards 2025

This year, the National Church Awards are celebrating the dedication, care and impact of the people who care for the UK's wonderful church buildings and who share them with others. We have the chance to celebrate these awards at a very special event in an incredible location this Autumn. To help us make the most of this opportunity and draw attention to the vital contribution that volunteers make to keeping churches open, we have combined our core categories for this year.

Church & Community Volunteers Awards

In partnership with Marsh Charitable Trust

We know that behind every thriving church, chapel or meeting house is a team of passionate volunteers. Across the UK, these individuals take extraordinary care of their buildings – preserving their heritage, opening their doors to visitors, and creating spaces that serve and strengthen communities.

The essential role of volunteers in conservation and maintenance often goes unseen. These awards shine a light on the people whose behind-the-scenes efforts keep churches alive, not just as beautiful historic buildings, but as vibrant, welcoming places for all.

Opening your doors may seem like a small act, but it sends a powerful message: this place is for everyone. By inviting people in, you help them connect with the stories, architecture and history held within your walls, and you raise awareness of the ongoing need for care and support. Whether it's through guided tours, open days, or simply a warm welcome, every act of hospitality matters.

But churches are much more than historic sites. From foodbanks to warm hubs, community cafés to support groups, they are lifelines for many, offering vital services and bringing people together. We've long seen how churches can foster resilience, connection and hope.

These awards celebrate the volunteers who make all this possible. They highlight how community use and care go hand in hand. How events and activities can build momentum for repair projects, and how well-maintained buildings, in turn, create space for even more to happen. By recognising this work, we aim to honour the human stories at the heart of every church's past, present and future.

These awards celebrate the amazing efforts of volunteers who help churches thrive in three ways:

- by caring for and conserving the fabric of the building
- by using the space to serve local communities through events, services, and support
- by opening their doors and sharing their stories with visitors.

Whether you're offering a warm welcome, maintaining historic spaces, or turning your building into a hub of local activity, we want to hear about the difference you're making.

Volunteers from any church, chapel or meeting house can be nominated for these awards. We want to celebrate the geographic spread of the great work that exists in caring for churches across the UK.

You just need to be able to tell us about the people involved, the fantastic things you do and the difference that it makes. Your nomination will be reviewed by an expert panel.

We will award one winner in each of the four UK nations.



Timeline

- Submit your nomination by Thursday 31 July 2025
 - We will be announcing the results at an event in London on Tuesday 21 October 2025
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Making a nomination

You can find the form to submit your nomination here:

<https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/church-community-volunteers-award>

We recommend that you prepare your nomination in a separate document before copying and pasting it into the online form. This will help you to make best use of the character limits for each question, whilst ensuring you tell us everything you want us to know.

You will need to email at least 5 images.

- If possible, please rename them with the name of your church; this will help us to match them to your entry
- Please include photos of your team at work, or of the activities that your good work enables
- You can also send a link to a film, if you have one
- Please email them to sarah.crossland@nationalchurchestrust.org

You will receive an email with a link to enable you to amend your nomination 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).
- Some character 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

The Church of the Year award is the pinnacle award at the National Church Awards that celebrates a church that fulfils its potential and makes a mark on its community and beyond. It should be a shining example of a sustainable church – one that is relevant, looked after, in good repair, in use and open for all.

We know that it can be hard to put yourself forward and recognise your own achievements. But churches across the UK are doing remarkable things every day - and using 'Church of the Year' helps us celebrate and share those successes.

A vibrant and valued church is more than a building. It's a place that welcomes people in, supports worship and community life, has a committed team behind it, and is actively cared for. It tells its story with pride, opens its doors with warmth, and offers space for a wide range of activity. That's what sustainability looks like, and whether you're already there or still on the journey, we want to hear your story.

The winner for our Church of the Year is chosen from the winners of our other awards.



Questions

About the church, chapel or meeting house

- Name of church or chapel * (50 character limit)
- Address of church or chapel * (150 character limit)
- Postcode of church or chapel * (15 character limit)
- Denomination * (50 character limit)
- Is the building listed. If so, please state the grade * (50 character limit)
- Is the building on the Heritage at Risk Register *

Contact details for the main and second contact for this nomination

- First contact name * (50 character limit)
- Phone number * (50 character limit)
- Email address * (50 character limit)
- Second contact name * (50 character limit)
- Phone number * (50 character limit)
- Email address * (50 character limit)

About your team

- Tell us about the team of volunteers you'd like to nominate * (1500 character limit)
- How do you encourage people to get involved and engage * (750 character limit)
- What is your star community activity, what are you most proud of * (250 character limit)
- What other activities are you involved in * (250 character limit)
- What issues have the team faced and overcome along the way * (250 character limit)
- What's the best thing about being involved as a volunteer * (750 character limit)

Your impact

- What difference does the team and their work make to your church and community * (1500 character limit)
- How has what you do helped to keep your church open and sustainable * (750 character limit)
- How do your activities contribute to the need for environmental sustainability or seek to reduce the building's carbon footprint * (750 character limit)
- Please tell us anything else about your volunteers, community engagement, maintenance or tourism that you think has not been covered but you would like us to know * (750 word limit)

About your church, chapel or meeting house

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

- What makes your church special * (750 character limit)
- What's your ethos and what's important to you * (750 character limit)
- What kind of activities are you involved in, what difference are you making and what are you most proud of * (750 character limit)
- How do you encourage people to get involved and engage in your activities * (750 character limit)
- Brief description of your building's heritage / architecture * (750 character limit)
- Your building in numbers (include opening times, congregation size, number of services, community activities, and visitors) * (750 character limit)

