

CHURCH & COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS AWARD 2026

In partnership with Marsh Charitable Trust

Please read these guidelines carefully.

The closing date is Tuesday 11 August at midnight.

We will award one winner in each category and recognise one or two highly commended per category.

You can find more information on the National Churches Trust website:

<https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/impact/awards/volunteers2026>

If you have any questions please contact sarah.crossland@nationalchurchestrust.org

Behind every thriving church, chapel or meeting house is a team of dedicated volunteers. Across the UK, these individuals care for historic buildings, preserve their heritage, welcome visitors, and create spaces that strengthen local communities.

Much of this work happens behind the scenes, but its impact is enormous. From maintaining and conserving church buildings to opening doors and sharing their stories, volunteers help ensure these special places remain vibrant, welcoming and relevant. They host foodbanks, warm hubs, cafés, support groups and countless other activities that bring people together and provide vital support.

These awards celebrate the people whose commitment helps 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, caring for a historic building, or creating opportunities for your community to come together, 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 in all four nations, across the UK.

You will 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 Tuesday 11 August 2025 (midnight)
 - We will judge the entries in September and announce the winners in October/November
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Making a nomination

You can find the form to submit your nomination here:

<https://forms.gle/eU9Wsd1reCSEGp769>

We recommend that you prepare your nomination in a 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.

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.

- Some questions are mandatory (marked with an asterisk).
- Some have character limits, which are listed here.

You will need to email at least five images.

- Please tell us the nomination you are sending in photographs for
- 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

Church of the Year

The Church of the Year award is the highest honour at the National Church Awards. It celebrates a church that fulfils its potential and makes a lasting impact on its community and beyond. It should be a shining example of a sustainable church - well maintained, valued and in use.

We know it can be difficult to recognise your own achievements, but churches across the UK are doing remarkable things every day. By entering, you help us celebrate and share everyone's good work.

A thriving church is more than a building. It is a place that welcomes people, supports worship and community life, is cared for by committed volunteers, and is proud to share its story. Whether you feel you have already achieved this vision or are still working towards it, we want to hear your story.

The Church of the Year winner is selected from the winners of our other award categories.



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)
- What is your star activity, what are you most proud of * (750 character limit)
- What other activities are you involved in * (250 character limit)
- How do you encourage people to get involved * (250 character limit)
- What's the best thing about being involved as a volunteer * (250 character limit)

Your impact

- What difference does the team and their work make * (1500 character limit)
- How has what you do helped to keep your church open and sustainable * (250 character limit)
- How do your activities contribute to the need for environmental sustainability * (250 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 character 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 * (500 character limit)
- What's your ethos and what's important to you * (500 character limit)
- Brief description of your building's heritage / architecture * (500 character limit)
- Your building in numbers (include opening times, congregation size, number of services, community activities, and visitors) * (500 character limit)

