



Devon Historic Churches Day incorporating Ride+Stride for Churches



SUPPORTING DEVON'S HERITAGE

MAY 2018

“Devon's churches have been a focal part of life in the county for centuries, providing both a spiritual and a physical focus for the communities they serve. They are an important part of the landscape and of our natural heritage.

With your help we can ensure that they remain so.” (<http://www.devonhistoricchurches.co.uk/>)

Historically the September sponsored event did not fare well in Devon and the county raised around £10,000 a year, a useful amount but at the lower end of income in comparison with other trusts around the country. Judith Kauntze arrived at the Trust in 2000. She quickly turned this situation around into an average income of £50,000 a year through reinventing the day as Devon Historic Churches Day. This is a day when churches open and can do anything they like to raise money and awareness. The sponsored event still takes place as part of it and churches all over the county now participate.

Judith stresses that the event is very much a team effort. She is sharing the steps that she took to change the event in this case study. These steps are shared here so that trusts might see one practical way of bringing change or introducing new activities.

NB: In Devon, combining the annual sponsored event with a wider call to action works. This may not be the case elsewhere. Before making any change or pursuing a new endeavour, your trust would need to carry out research before making a decision. Your trust might consider having an Open Day on another day of the year, or combining it or pursuing completely different models. The traditional model of Ride+Stride for Churches still works effectively in many areas of the country and there appears to be scope for greater participation amongst traditional audiences.

On arrival

I took on the role of DHCT Fundraising/marketing Trustee and County Organiser for the 'Bike Ride' as it was then known in 2000.

The average income from this event was then c £10k. Once 50% was returned to relevant parishes, printing/postage/admin deducted it only left c £3k for grants. In those days the average church grant was £250.

Now

As a result of all these initiatives and increased funding from major donations/legacies yielding vital income from our investments our average grant is now £2,500. Income has plateaued at £50,000 per year.

My great frustration is that it is stuck at this amount. I would really like to raise £100k....looking at parish support particularly only 30% of parishes actively send in funds although 50% open their doors. Try as I might I seem unable to improve on this.....but I will keep trying! I am also amazed some 18 years later that people STILL say they can't support us because they are too old to ride a bike or walk miles. This can be very frustrating.

Market research

I undertook research on the 'target market' profile and it became immediately clear that we needed to broaden the opportunities for fundraising. I was told from almost every direction 'we are too old to ride bikes or walk miles'. Given Devon's geography – very rural and hilly with churches/communities distant from each other – and a population profile which was mainly elderly/retired this certainly explained their reluctance. The target supporter base also seemed to be almost entirely focused on parish congregations and I believed we needed to broaden the fundraising appeal to the wider world who wanted to preserve our churches but not necessarily attend services.

Concept

So I created the concept of the Devon Historic Churches Day – “a day when we celebrate our glorious Christian architectural heritage, and raise vital funds for their preservation for the future.” Since events around the country started to draw on the brand provided by the National Churches Trust to help with local promotion, we include 'incorporating the national Ride+Stride event' – maintaining access to any support nationally and to be part of any promotional opportunities.

Promotion

I write ad hoc articles in Devon Life (Devon's major magazine) and Western Morning News.

All the publicity material made clear that supporters could do whatever they wished 'the important thing was to do something'. I also reviewed the publicity material and created a number of focused forms to fill various promotional/guidance/accounting requirements.

Show Poster with suggestions. Also new Poster Template for this year. Pop up Banners.

Banners for churches.

Also created the Guide to Open and Supporting Churches – a copy of which is provided – AND everything is also included on our website for ease of access to everyone.

During this period I also completely revamped our website from the basic piece of headed notepaper to something which I hope generates wider support and additional legacies. The website needs regular updating but it is a vital tool. LOGO – new, reflect important aspects.

DHCT's February Newsletter featuring fundraising fun/works achieved with funds. Keeps profile up during 'down time'.

Ensuring cover

Reviewed DHCT insurance cover with Ecclesiastical to reflect concept.

Rapid results

Our total raised from this event went immediately from £10k to £20k and then swiftly onto £40k and now is regularly close to £50k.

What next?

Keep trying and developing. But also need to explore and social media/marketing

Saturday 10th September 2016

FORM E

DEVON HISTORIC CHURCHES DAY



In aid of the

DEVON
HISTORIC
CHURCHES
TRUST

www.devonhistoricchurches.co.uk
Charity Registration Number 265594

Have a fun day out visiting our glorious churches and chapels. Send us a donation or gain sponsorship for an activity. Organise or support a local event. Help us to raise vital funds to save Devon's churches for future generations.

Full details of local events and how to take part from
County Organiser Judith Kauntze: Tel 01884 860 322
E: judith.kauntze@btinternet.com

Events Secretary Claire Sherlock: Tel 01626 835 820
E: contact@devonhistoricchurches.co.uk

INCORPORATING THE NATIONAL



Grateful thanks are given to the National Churches Trust for their support with this event