

Open & Sustainable - Church Building Checklist

Church buildings stand at the heart of many of our communities, shaping both the place and the communities they serve. As populations, work and lifestyles have shifted, people's spiritual lives and the ways they worship have evolved, and what people need from our church buildings has changed. **Rural Churches for Everyone** (RCfE) has produced new resources, based upon recent national research and work across 35 of our rural churches, to help PCCs and church communities, whatever their context, to think of their church buildings in new ways and thereby develop plans leading to longer term sustainability.

The resources of the RCfE project are being compiled into a 'toolkit' for PCCs, which defines the approach, along with supporting videos, helpful tools and templates for a group of churches to develop their own sustainability plans appropriate for their contexts. One of the key resources developed is the **Open & Sustainable 101 Checklist** which is enclosed below.

The RCfE project is based upon a foundation of collaboration both within and across our church communities. Accordingly the checklist will, ideally, be completed as a group of churches (this could be through a shared PCC, a benefice, a DDG or any other informal grouping). If possible, each church should be assessed by a group including people who know the church well, mixed with PCC members from a different church or individuals who do not know the church well. The checklist has been developed using the Church Buildings Council 'Open and Sustainable' criteria (more detail about this is included on the checklist document below). During the RCfE project, the checklist was used as part of a wider process, and you may wish to give some thought to the four stages used by RCfE and consider whether they would be relevant to you:

1. Creating a shared understanding – visiting, and listening to, PCCs and at each of the churches, giving an opportunity to talk openly about the issues and opportunities each place is experiencing;
2. Becoming more 'Open and Sustainable' – open discussions intended to bring the members of all the PCCs together to explore the shared strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for their church buildings and to think about the issues and demographics of the group of churches in a wider context. **The 101 Checklist can be used at this point in the process.**
3. Developing an Action Plan – based on the results of the 101 Checklist.
4. Advocacy and delivery – looking for support from the diocese, partners and community to deliver the Action Plan.

As the project draws to a close, all the project resources, tools and templates are being packaged up and made available to all, including PCCs and DDGs. They can be found [here](#) on our diocesan website. Please check back regularly as new resources are released or [sign-up](#) to be notified when they are all available.

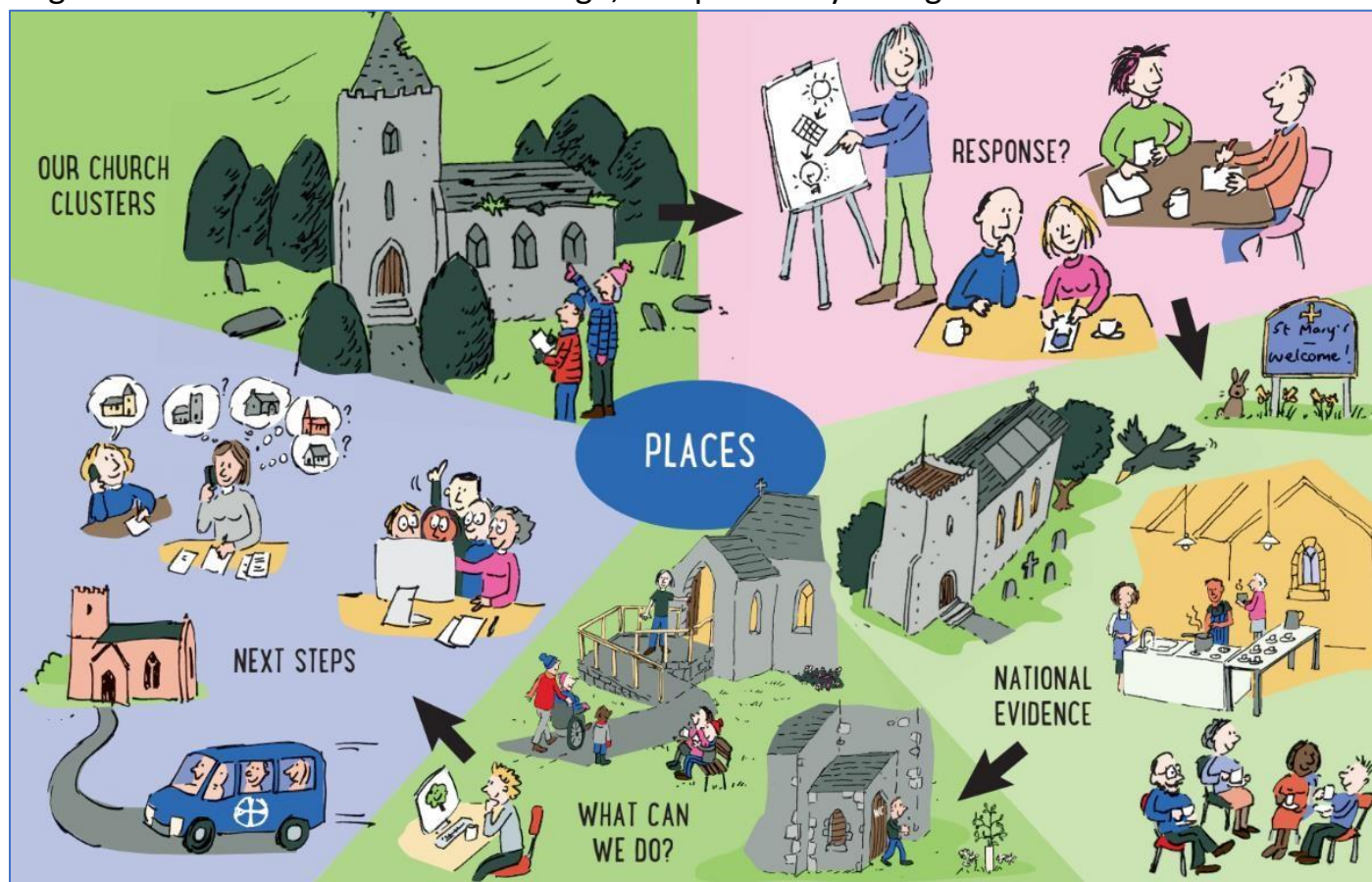
Open & Sustainable 101

A checklist for your church

This checklist will help you assess how 'open and sustainable' your church building is today, and then help you to make a plan of action to help it thrive in the future.

The Church Buildings Council want all retained church buildings to be both open and sustainable. They encourage each diocese to conduct a 'traffic light' review every 5 years to identify where PCCs need support to manage their church buildings.

There are many requirements, toolkits and research reports published that are designed to improve how church buildings are used and cared for. Thanks to funding from National Lottery players, Rural Churches for Everyone has been able to condense these into this single checklist for PCCs to work through, independently or together with their benefice.



This checklist has 101 questions, covering the church interior, the churchyard, the approach from the pavement, online, and the PCC. Each question is linked to one of the criteria the Church Buildings Council have created which describe the features of an Open and Sustainable church. Your answers will show what help, investment and attention your church needs to have a thriving future within its community.

The Church Buildings Council has created eight Open & Sustainable criteria (O&S criteria)¹ to describe a thriving church building.

OPEN:

- O1 Open for prayer and for visitors during normal working or daylight hours; if this is not possible, there will be clear information about opening times, services and where a key can be found
- O2 Open in the sense of providing a welcoming atmosphere for all, including those of other faiths or none, and regardless of their initial reason for visiting
- O3 Open for partnership, where appropriate, with community and commercial interests, and for cultural uses (including tourism and education)
- O4 Open in the sense of providing wherever possible good access and modern amenities

SUSTAINABLE:

- S1 Environmentally sustainable, striving to meet our goals set out in our Environment Programme, and to protect and enhance the ecological value of our buildings and churchyard
- S2 Sustainable in the true sense of conservation, which is “the responsible management of change”, preserving the heritage value of our churches and churchyards while seeking to enhance and reveal their significance and use
- S3 Socially sustainable, by providing a resource which is accessible and attractive to large sections of the community, and therefore able to draw on this social capital
- S4 Economically sustainable, in terms of covering the costs of mission, social outreach, and maintenance, while maintaining healthy reserves

The questions in this checklist help you work out which criteria your PCC are already doing well, what is a low priority for you, what you need to research further, and what is a high priority action for your church to achieve in the next 5 years.

- The ‘yes/complete’ score is your baseline today.
- The ‘No/low priority’ is things which your PCC chooses not to do in the next 5 years
- The ‘Within 5 years’ and ‘need research’ scores indicate your potential to improve.

Please answer every question - honestly! Many rural churches are struggling and need help to survive. PCCs need to make a realistic assessment of each church building so they can focus their capacity and ask for appropriate help.

Print out these questions and take them to your church and PCC.

They will help you see your familiar church building with fresh eyes.



RCfE Open and Sustainable 101 Checklist



About your church

What is the name of your church?

Are the people completing this form the PCC, churchwardens, clergy, community, or other?

Date(s) checklist completed:

Part A – Approach to your church

Start in the street outside your churchyard gate.

Answer the questions as you move towards the church entrance or porch.

	O&S criteria	Yes/complete	No/low priority	Within 5 years	Need Research
Is the church unlocked every day during daylight/working hours?	O1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there information about opening hours that can be read from outside your gate?	O1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there clear information about how to get the key if it is locked?	O1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there clear information about services, including times, style, pictures, etc?	O1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your churchyard entrance look welcoming from the roadside, can people easily see what's beyond the gate?	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you explicitly invite everyone to come in, saying that this church building welcomes people of all faiths and none, regardless of their reason for visiting?	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have notices at all the gates showcasing any special features of your church as non-religious reasons people might want to venture in? e.g. spot the red squirrels in our churchyard, discover the history of our famous person, shelter inside while you eat your sandwiches, refill your water bottle, use our easy-access loo, rest & reflect in the cool tranquillity of our building, let your kids try out our acoustics	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all signs, doors, gates and noticeboards in good repair?	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the routes into the church accessible for wheelchairs, walkers and prams?	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there handrails & benches placed to help those with restricted mobility if needed?	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do the gates and doors open and close easily?	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the main routes into the church appropriately lit?	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a warm welcome message at the church door encouraging people to enter?	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are noticeboards tidy and up to date, with visitor notices to the fore, contact details for clergy, local services (such as local doctors, vets, police, dentists), and information about organisations people seeking sanctuary might need?	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there information for people who have suffered bereavement or are experiencing anxiety, abuse, debt, lack of food or shelter, or have safeguarding concerns?	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where needed, do you have a special message on the door, e.g. to keep closed to stop swallows getting trapped, or to give it a shove in a certain spot? (tick yes if n/a)	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the wording on your signs and notices friendly and simple to understand and is the writing easy to read?	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part B – Inside your church

	O&S criteria	Yes/complete	No/low priority	Within 5 years	Need Research
Move inside your church building.					
Spend a while noticing how other people (visitors, colleagues, etc) are using and experiencing the building and its spaces.					
On entering, does your church feel, smell, sound and look good?	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the entrance way bright enough for people to see their footing?	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the edges of steps marked for safety, where appropriate?	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the lights automatic, or is it easy to see how to turn them on & off?	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it obvious that this place is loved and used by the wider local community, e.g. are there pictures of recent public events, entries in the visitor book, candles to light?	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there an obvious area or items which children are encouraged to use at any time (not just during services)?	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there engaging activities which adult visitors are invited to participate in, e.g. add to a cairn of stones, use binoculars to look at windows, puzzle trail leaflet?	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there somewhere visitors can leave requests for prayer, and do you have a way of showing that requests have been prayed for?	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you encourage secular people to return (e.g. tell them about your snowdrops in spring, the regular groups or courses that meet in the church, upcoming events)?	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you host cultural events, guided walks and tours, educational talks, or similar?	O3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you tell visitors about other activities or businesses in the locality, e.g. a walking trail, café, historic site, or nature trail?	O3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it easy for visitors to see what you offer, e.g. shelter, solace, toilets, drinking water, etc for everyone (and their dogs)?	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have an easy access toilet that is open to the general public?	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have baby changing facility that is open to the general public?	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When refreshments are on offer are they fresh, clean, and easily replenished?	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you encourage church users and visitors to minimise resource use (e.g. notices about turning off taps and lights, provide reusable mugs & plates)	S1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you share the heritage of your building with visitors? e.g. children's clue trail, stories about historic objects or carvings, history or architecture leaflet or paddle.	S2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your church building an engaging 'memory keeper' for your communities?	S2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your visitor book easy to find with a working pen?	S3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a suggestions box or a question you'd like your visitors to answer?	S3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your church building attractive to and easy to use by a wide range of people (consider different ages, abilities, income levels, life stages)?	S3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can you tell if there are community activities which your church invests in (e.g. toddler group & café just after school drop-off, mental health group who need a place to eat their lunch, conservation, food bank collection point)?	S3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you identified communities of interest who might want to use or discover your church and its heritage (e.g. historic person, veterans rehabilitation, pilgrims, people seeking respite or sanctuary, naturalists)?	S3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a bank card donation point inside your church?	S4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Part C – Your Churchyard and land

Go back outside your church building and consider your churchyard, both closed and open sections.

	O&S criteria	Yes/complete	No/low priority	Within 5 years	Need Research
Is your church building well maintained? – look for areas of damp walls, broken or missing slates, missing flashings, blocked gutters, broken windows, draughty openings, and poor pointing	S2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the watering, compost and refuse areas obvious for people tending graves?	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are all areas free of litter?	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are paths kept clear of overgrown hedges and slippery leaves or moss?	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is churchyard seating well positioned to allow people to find it easily, sit comfortably, enjoy the best views and sunshine, and have tranquillity?	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you provide habitats and food for wildlife on your church building and land (e.g. bird, bat, bug and hedgehog boxes, nectar rich and fruiting plants, pond, bird and red squirrel feeders, etc)	S1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you leave areas of wildflowers and seed heads, mowing long grass once a year?	S1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you increased native trees, shrubs and flowers on your land?	S1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you avoid using harmful chemicals (pesticide, herbicides or fertilisers)?	S1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you undertake wildlife surveys (at least annual) on your land to monitor wildlife?	S1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you participate in a wildlife conservation scheme for your churchyard? (e.g. 'Caring for God's Acre' ² , local wildlife trust ³ , 'Churches Count On Nature' ⁴)	S1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a plan of your graveyard which is easily accessible to visitors to your church? Have you considered registering with the National Burial Grounds Survey ⁵ ?	S2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If your churchyard is well managed and rich in heritage and wildlife, is it registered with the Burial Grounds to Inspire programme ⁶ ?	S3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you grow fruit or vegetables on your church land or in planters to share for community consumption ⁷ or with your local food bank?	S3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you actively encourage people to spend time in your churchyard (e.g. wildlife watching, meditation, picnicking, resting, genealogy, playing, dog walking)?	S3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you explain to parishioners what you are doing and why, explain what help you'd like, and encourage them to join in?	S3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Part D – Your Church Online

Most people now look online before visiting somewhere new. They also are influenced by other people's opinions they read online.

Find your church webpage on 'A Church Near You'.

Find your church page on your own church, benefice or deanery website.

Find your church page on social media (e.g. facebook or instagram).

	O&S criteria	Yes/complete	No/low priority	Within 5 years	Need Research
On 'A Church Near You' does your church's page have clear and accurate information about your church opening times, services (including times, styles, pictures), how to get the key when the church is locked, links to your church's own website and social media?	O1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the church have it's own webpage (or part of a benefice or deanery website) that is up to date, accurate, easy to navigate and uses friendly language?	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
On your church's webpage and social media is there accurate information about:					
- your church opening times, services (including times, styles, pictures), how to get the key when the church is locked	O1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- directions, with a map, postcode and a www.what3words.com location	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- details of where to park and a www.what3words.com location	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- accessibility information (steps, slopes, ramps, distances, steepness, rails, etc.), so that people know what to expect and can plan their visit?	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- the amenities that people can access inside your church (WC, water refills, etc)?	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- events and activities you have planned	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you sharing your social media posts on local community pages and discussions?	S3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your newsletter or magazine online and shared with local people?	S3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your church included in local and regional tourism 'places to visit' guides e.g. Visit Northumberland, AONB and National Park visitor guides and websites, etc.	O3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your website invite community, commercial and cultural interests to enquire about using the building, e.g. for band rehearsals, amateur dramatics, talks, etc?	O3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there up to date information about your church on popular platforms, e.g. google maps ⁸ , Explore Churches ⁹ , Small Pilgrim Places ¹⁰ , Trip Advisor ¹¹ , Apple Maps ¹² , Wikipedia ¹³ , etc	O4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it easy for visitors to your website to find out how they can support your work in your community with their time, ideas, reflections, skills or money?	S3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it easy for people to donate money online to support your church?	S4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Part E – Your PCC, Churchwardens, Clergy and volunteers

Missional and management activity for you to consider	O&S criteria	Yes/complete	No/low priority	Within 5 years	Need Research
Do you give a welcome pack to new residents and visitors (e.g. via Tourist information centres, B&B and hotel customers)?	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are printed copies of your newsletter magazine distributed to all households in your parish and available in local shops and venues?	O2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do educational groups use your church building and grounds for non-religious activities, e.g. history, wildlife, art and design, performances, adult ed?	O3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your church building regularly used by different community groups, e.g. toddlers, WI, adult learning, health walk groups, addiction support, food bank, etc?	O3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you considered your parishioners needs (see Coop Wellbeing Index ¹⁴) when prioritising who to invite to use your building and grounds?	O3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your church host commercial services (e.g. post office, podiatrist, café, brewery, community bank, music teachers, slimming world, champing)?	O3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your church have a stakeholder role on or input into local committees (e.g. parish councils, health board, community partnerships, local resilience forum)?	O3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you work with local businesses to support church bookings like weddings etc?	O3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has your PCC completed the Energy Footprint Tool ¹⁵ for your church building and reported through the annual parish returns system?	S1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has your PCC completed the CoFE Environment Programme ¹⁶ 'Practical Path to Net Zero Carbon' checklist for your church, and collated your actions?	S1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you taken steps to improve your energy efficiency? – Low energy appliances and lightbulbs, minimising draughts, movement sensors on lights, etc?	S1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your electricity supply 100% renewable and do you offset your carbon emissions?	S1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your church have an Eco Church Award ¹⁷ ?	S1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have the Aspire Award ¹⁸ ?	S2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a comprehensive Statement of Significance ¹⁹ for your church?	S2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you completed the SPAB 'Faith in Maintenance' Baseline Survey ²⁰ and generated a maintenance plan for your building?	S2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do your PCC members work collaboratively in your deanery to share workloads?	S2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your church a member of any relevant groups within the Diocese or Deanery, e.g. Diocese Eco Champions or Deanery working groups?	S2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has your church community worked through the Growing Good Toolkit ²² ?	S3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your church registered as a 'Place of Wellbeing' (TCT) ²³ , or Warm Hub (CAN) ²⁴ ?	S3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you paid your latest parish share in full?	S4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will you be able to pay your next parish share in full?	S4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will your existing funds pay for all maintenance raised in your QQI report?	S4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will your current funds pay for your current mission and social outreach?	S4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have at least 6 months of running costs in your reserves?	S4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have funds to make the priority changes you have identified through the RCfE suggested appraisals, toolkits and checklists?	S4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your church buy services jointly with others? E.g. book-keeping, energy, QQI	S4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Will your reserves fund the aspirational changes you have identified?	S4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have an income generation and fundraising plan to make up any shortfall?	S4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

How to score:

Use the following answer grids to calculate your current and potential scores and ratings.

CURRENT SCORE:

1. After you have answered all of the questions, tally up the total number of boxes ticked 'yes/complete' for each of the eight Open and Sustainable criteria (coded O1-4 and S1-4 in the column next to the tick boxes)
2. Total up your tallies for each row and write them in the 'CURRENT SCORE' column
3. For each total, divide by the number in the '# of Qs' column for that row, then multiply by the weighting factor and then by 100 to get a percentage. Write your answer in the '%' column. Total up all the % scores.

POTENTIAL SCORE:

4. Tally up the total number of boxes ticked 'Within 5 years' and 'Need research' for each of the eight criteria.
5. Total your tally for each row and write them in the 'ASPIRATIONAL SCORE' column
6. Add your CURRENT SCORE to your ASPIRATIONAL SCORE to get your POTENTIAL SCORE for each row
7. For each POTENTIAL SCORE, divide by the figure in the '# of Qs' column, then multiply by the weighting factor and then by 100 to get a percentage. Write your answer in the % column. Total your % scores.

TRAFFIC LIGHT RATINGS:

8. Take your total for your current % score, divide by 8 (the number of criteria), and use the table below to identify which threshold your score lies within. **DO NOT WORRY** if you score is low. This is not a sign of failure, but an indication of how much help you need to become both open and sustainable within 5 years.
9. Take your total potential % score, divide by 8, and use the same thresholds to identify what difference your aspirational actions could make.

O&S % score	Traffic light rating	Suggested Actions
Below 30%	BLACK	PCC to contact Archdeacon who will triage for further support and discussion as appropriate
30% - 49%	RED	PCC seek external help (e.g. Transforming Communities Together, Plunkett, Churches Conservation Trust, etc.)
50% - 74%	AMBER	PCC work with other churches in their benefice or deanery to share expertise, capacity and workload
Above 75%	GREEN	PCC may have small improvements they wish to make, but might also consider helping other churches in the Deanery or benefice which are struggling

What should PCCs prioritise?

Once you have calculated your current percentages for each criteria, you can identify the areas where you could most beneficially focus your planning. Use the questions you answered 'within 5 years' or 'need research' to guide you. If you have chosen to work in a cluster of churches, you should compare your planned actions with theirs to see if you could work together to achieve your aspirations. Maybe you have already done one of their actions and they could benefit from your experience. Perhaps you both need to research similar items, so could share the job and discuss your findings. Also think about completing toolkits together, joint buying of services, or creating a team of volunteers who come together to do maintenance work at all your church buildings each autumn and spring.

Identifying next steps for: (name of your church)

Checklist completed by:

Date completed:

Date of PCC meeting:

Date of Deanery meeting:

CURRENT SCORE Answer Grid

	Criteria	Tally for 'yes'	CURRENT SCORE	# of Qs (divide by)	Weighting (times by)	Current % (x 100)
Open: unlocked	O1			÷ 6	x 0.4	
Open: welcoming	O2			÷ 19	x 1	
Open: partnership	O3			÷ 10	x 1	
Open: accessible	O4			÷ 20	x 1	
Environmental	S1			÷ 12	x 0.8	
Conservation	S2			÷ 9	x 0.8	
Social	S3			÷ 14	x 1	
Economical	S4			÷ 11	x 1	
TOTAL =						

POTENTIAL SCORE Answer Grid

Criteria	Tally for 'Within 5 years' & 'Need research'	ASPIRATIONAL SCORE	Current score	POTENTIAL SCORE	# of Qs (divide by)	Weighting (times by)	Potential % (x 100)
O1			+	=	÷ 6	x 0.4	
O2			+	=	÷ 19	x 1	
O3			+	=	÷ 10	x 1	
O4			+	=	÷ 20	x 1	
S1			+	=	÷ 12	x 0.8	
S2			+	=	÷ 9	x 0.8	
S3			+	=	÷ 14	x 1	
S4			+	=	÷ 11	x 1	
TOTAL =							

CURRENT & POTENTIAL TRAFFIC LIGHT RATINGS (black, red, amber or green)

Current % total =	÷ 7 =	Rating =	Potential % total =	÷ 7 =	Rating =
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Aspirational Actions for the next 5 years:

Criteria	Our Priority Actions for the next 18 months	Actions we need to research

Endnotes of references and useful links

Printable copies of this Checklist: <https://www.newcastle.anglican.org/ruralchurchesforeveryone>

1 <https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/sharing-your-building-and-finding>

Useful links for managing your churchyard

- 2 Caring for God's Acre: www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk
- 3 Find your local wildlife trust: www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-trusts
- 4 Churches Count On Nature: www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/churches-count-on-nature-faqs/
- 5 National Burial Grounds Survey: <https://agintl.org/burial-ground-management-survey/>
- 6 Burial Grounds to Inspire: www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk/burial-grounds-to-inspire
- 7 Grow food for your community: www.incredibleedible.org.uk/

Useful links for promoting your church online

- 8 Google Maps <https://support.google.com/maps/answer/6320846>
- 9 Explore Churches: www.nationalchurchestrust.org/explore
- 10 Small Pilgrim Places Network: www.smallpilgrimplaces.org/pages/thinking-of-listing.php
- 11 Trip Advisor: www.tripadvisor.co.uk/CreateListing.html
- 12 Apple Maps: <https://register.apple.com/placesonmaps/>
- 13 Wikipedia: www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:Introduction

Search for and post on relevant Facebook groups: e.g. Church crawling, Northumberland historic churches, etc

Useful links for PCCs, Church Wardens, Clergy and volunteers

- 14 Coop Community Wellbeing Index: <https://communitywellbeing.coop.co.uk/>
- 15 CofE Energy Footprint Tool: www.churchofengland.org/about/policy-and-thinking/our-views/environmentand-climate-change/about-our-environment/energy-footprint-tool#na
- 16 CofE Environment Programme 'Practical Path to Net Zero Carbon' Checklist: www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/net-zero-carbon-church/practical-path-net-zero-carbon-churches
- 17 Eco Church Award: www.ecochurch.arocha.org.uk/
- 18 Aspire Award for Church governance: <https://www.newcastle.anglican.org/mission-ministrydiscipleship/mission-ministry/rural-ministry/aspire-award/>
- 19 Statements of Significance: www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-churchbuildings/statements-significance-and-needs
- 20 SPAB Faith in Maintenance Baseline Survey: www.spab.org.uk/campaigning/maintenance-co-operativesproject/mcp-fim-resources
- 21 GRA:CE Project Growing Good toolkit & report: www.growing-good.org.uk/
- 22 Transforming Communities Together Places of Wellbeing: www.tct-tynetotweed.org/initiatives/places-of-wellbeing
- 23 Community Action Northumberland Warm Hubs: www.ca-north.org.uk/supporting-individuals/warm-hubs