Wales Faith Tourism Action Plan
Faith Tourism Action Plan

Introduction

Wales is rightly proud of its iconic ecclesiastical heritage - from Tintern Abbey to Epstein’s Majestas in Llandaff Cathedral - a constant reminder of Wales’ developing culture over the centuries. Wales’ Places of Worship tell of its diverse and fascinating religious history but they also represent a spirituality found in buildings and in the landscape. What elevates a mound of rubble on Twmbarlwm into a place of spiritual significance? Why are the ancient stones of Strata Florida attractive to those seeking tranquillity and peace?

What does Faith Tourism mean in Wales?

Faith groups, primarily within the Christian church, are unique in having a physical presence in almost every community across Wales and are called upon by many people at the most important times in their lives. Their social importance is mirrored in the value of their built heritage and Places of Worship are very often the most architecturally-significant buildings in the landscape or townscape in which they are found. For many communities throughout Wales, it is Places of Worship that gives the hamlets, villages, towns and cities their Sense of Place.

Wales offers the opportunity to experience the full range of Christian and other faiths’ beliefs and practices with an increasingly-grounded understanding of pre-Christian religions. Non-conformity is more visible in Wales than across the border in England within the balance of Christian denominations and the Welsh language has a prominent place within the tapestry of the Christian landscape. It is important to acknowledge the unique or special Welsh identity and ‘Sense of Place’ that the visitor might find when arriving in a Welsh community in terms of its ecclesiastical-built heritage. Tim Hughes sums it up in his book ‘Wales Best 100 Churches’ by identifying that many of the Places of Worship reflect the rural life of Wales from “hendref to hafod” and are often built in strategic locations enabling far-flung farmsteads to come together once a week or once a month – one of the few expressions of a larger sense of community still in evidence today.

In addition to the heritage significance, Wales has the opportunity to feature its religious sites as places that can contribute to the Health and Wellbeing agenda. Selecting Places of Worship to visit on recognised walks (especially the coastal path) can add value to planned and unplanned walks. Encouraging all open Places of Worship to lay some emphasis on the “spiritual” dimension should pose no threat to their core activity, rather it helps to shift the balance from the physical and tangible to the spiritual and intangible. Wales as an entity can present itself as a “gallery” of heritage, culture and spiritual all bound up in the sacred buildings and landscapes. All this is very much in the DNA of Wales and has the potential to draw out the authentic culture from the communities surrounding the individual places – offering excellent examples of a real sense of place.
The Faith Tourism Action Plan for Wales

The Faith Tourism Action Plan will aim to identify ways in which this significant part of our heritage can be enhanced as an attraction to visitors and locals alike. This action plan will focus on developing the faith tourism product as part of the wider visitor experience, although there could be scope to develop the niche religious tourism market where visitors travel for a religious purpose.

This action plan will use a broad interpretation of Faith Tourism under the following definition:

*Faith tourism in Wales refers to places of faith (including the people and narratives connected to them and the landscape that surrounds them), inspiring and enhancing visits to, and within, Wales.*

The faith tourism action plan is written for two key stakeholder groups:

- the tourism sector and related agencies who establish and lead tourism strategies: Visit Wales as the lead agency in relation to the visitor economy in Wales, the Regional Tourism Partnerships (RTPs), Local Authority Tourism Departments, Destination Management Partnerships across Wales, National Parks and other protected areas, Wales Tourism Alliance, Ramblers and other amenity groups, Cadw, RCAHMW, National Museum Wales and other heritage bodies.
- Faith groups, particularly the leaders of the major faiths and interest groups from within the faiths.

A vision for faith tourism in Wales 2020

A vision for faith tourism in Wales should be bold to exploit the full potential of Wales’ Places of Worship for the visitor economy and to exploit the visitor economy for the purpose of sustaining Wales’ Places of Worship. It must be prepared to embrace the spiritual aspects identified in and around places of special sacred interest from a variety of faith traditions. This vision can be encapsulated as follows:

*By 2020 faith tourism is recognised as an integral component of the visitor experience in Wales, adding significant value to the destination offer, contributing to the well-being of the visitor and host community and enhancing local, regional and national ‘Sense of Place’.*

This vision could be achieved by considering the following:

- Identifying why Places of Worship, saints, sacred sites and landscapes play an important part in promoting Wales as a destination
- Recognising that people visit destinations for a variety of reasons and that Places of Worship can be part of the attraction.
- Making Places of Worship and sites of special significance from a spiritual perspective more visible.
- Fully integrating Places of Worship into the destination provision – linking with accommodation providers, transport, catering outlets and other attractions.
- Identifying opportunities for development (entrepreneurship) for the communities through making the heritage explicit for the community and for the visitor
• Sharing best practice (e.g. digital technologies and approaches to interpretation) between communities.
• Widening the appreciation of Places of Worship by faith communities, wider communities and by visitors.
• Encouraging faith communities to raise their expectations of themselves and visitors by adding a creative and active dimension to visits.

The specific actions for achieving the vision for the faith tourism in Wales 2020 are presented under three objectives:

Objective 1: Attract more visitors to Wales’ Places of Worship;
Objective 2: Enhance the quality of the Welsh faith tourism product and the experiences of visitors to Wales’ Places of Worship;
Objective 3: Increase the yield from visitors to Wales’ Places of Worship.

**Visits to Places of worship**

We know that visitors to Wales are increasingly interested in visiting historical attractions and for overseas visitors, visiting historical sites is the most mentioned main reason for visiting Wales. Visit Britain figures show that religious buildings are a huge draw for international visitors to Britain.

Furthermore, places of worship are amongst the most visited visitor attractions in Wales. In 2011, St David’s Cathedral was the 7th most popular free visitor attractions in Wales.

Table 1 - Top five places of worship in Wales, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Visits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St David’s Cathedral</td>
<td>262,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norwegian Church</td>
<td>148,547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brecon Cathedral and Heritage Centre</td>
<td>120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tintern Abbey</td>
<td>69,631</td>
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<tr>
<td>Llandaff Cathedral</td>
<td>40,372</td>
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</table>

Source: Visit Wales Attractions Survey (2011)

Although there is very little published research data about why people visit churches, some unpublished research undertaken amongst visitors to churches in England (Keeling 2000) has shed some light on people’s motivations for visiting churches. These include:

• Spiritual motivations
• Impulse visits – the majority of visits, when passing as part of a day out. For many, visiting a church will be part of another activity relating to the village or the surrounding area. They may be on a walk or cycle ride or visiting other attractions in the area.
• Family connections – relatives may be buried there, or the churches hold special memories of christenings and weddings
• Connections with famous people
• interest in church architecture, often in stained glass or other such features

The profile these visitors appears to be predominantly ABC1, empty nesters and early-retired couples (Keeling, 2000).

Why a Faith Tourism Action Plan?

The new Tourism Strategy (2013) identifies heritage and culture as an area of competitive advantage for Wales and highlights the importance of Wales’ heritage and culture in attracting new visitors to Wales. Both our tangible and intangible heritage tell an informative and entertaining story about Wales that sets us apart from others. Faith Tourism, as a significant part of Wales’ heritage, could feature prominently in the way we promote Wales as a visitor destination, as was recently highlighted in the Welsh Government’s Cultural Tourism Action Plan (2012).

Most faith leaders now acknowledge that they have a part to play in the visitor economy as reflected in the Church in Wales Review Report (2012: 21):

Particularly in our time, when so many people love to visit church buildings, their value is not to be underestimated. If someone visits a small, isolated country church and finds that it is well kept, cared for and clearly prayed in, this is itself a witness. So time and money spent caring for a building should not in principle be regarded as a waste.

It is widely acknowledged that there are various deficits in the faith tourism product in Wales: its quality, its presentation, its marketing and the skills of its stakeholders. The result is that there are potential markets which are currently not catered for and opportunities are lost.

The table overleaf summarises the current strengths and weaknesses of the faith tourism product in Wales.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A long history of religious diversity that differentiates it from its neighbours.</td>
<td>There is no organisation that is adequately funded to drive faith tourism in Wales forward.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-conformity and its impact on societal change, such as after <em>The Great Revival</em> at the turn of the twentieth century.</td>
<td>There is a lack of coherence, cohesion and coordination between many of the faith tourism projects that have emerged in Wales, e.g. pilgrimage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Faith leaders accept the notion of sharing Places of Worship with the visitor.</td>
<td>Many Places of Worship are still closed, or look as if they are closed, to visitors.</td>
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<td>A language and landscape closely intermingled, e.g. the word Llan is reflected in place names across Wales and emphasises religious influences across the centuries.</td>
<td>There is no branding of Open Churches for visitors to indicate the quality of Wales’ faith tourism product.</td>
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<td>‘Thin’ places where the atmosphere is tangibly spiritual (or peaceful, tranquil, healing, depending on your perspective).</td>
<td>The support from both tourism and faith organisations can be characterised as tactical, short-term intermittent and unstructured.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pilgrimage routes throughout Wales are being redeveloped and have potential for connecting faith tourism and the wellbeing agenda. Cadw’s Heritage Tourism Project includes a Heritage Churches Trail in Ceredigion and the Basingwerk-Bardsey Pilgrimage Trail. Obvious routes with development potential include the route used by the Cultural Olympiad from Llanthony to St Davids and the Cistercian Way.</td>
<td>Training materials are currently unaccredited.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Musical traditions - what gospel music does for America, choirs (especially male voice choirs) do for Wales.</td>
<td>There is a paucity of quantitative and qualitative research data on faith tourism in Wales. Currently VW has raw visitor footfall data for only six Places of Worship. More Places of Worship should monitor their visitor numbers. More data is needed on the quality of the visitor experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increasing interest in Holy Wells and related landscapes and the merger of Cymdeithas Ffynnonau Cymru and Wellsprings Fellowship into Ffynnon to preserve, conserve and interpret Wales’ Holy Wells.</td>
<td>The lack of ‘packaged faith tourism products’.</td>
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<td>Growing support from Visit Wales, the RTPs, many unitary and National Park authorities for tourism projects dedicated to, or including, Places of Worship.</td>
<td>Lack of support to Places of Worship which wish to make their records more accessible.</td>
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<td>Faith tourism academics of international renown (e.g. Dr Jonathan Wooding, University of Wales Trinity St David’s and Dr Madeleine Gray, Newport University.</td>
<td>The loss of the Open Churches Day and demand from Places of Worship for this to be reinstated as a weekend in March based around an events programme linked to Wales’s Tourism Week.</td>
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<td>Expertise and resources available for training faith communities to welcome visitors.</td>
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The Open Church Day ran in September for six years. It was discontinued in 2012 because Open Doors seemed a more inclusive project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faith tourism can play a significant role in destination management and marketing. All destinations are served by Places of Worship.</td>
<td>Diminishing resources - all Places of Worship rely heavily on volunteers to survive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places of Worship can contribute to the growth of the local economy in rural areas. They are very often the only (or one of a few) attractions for visitors and can hold visitors in the area for longer.</td>
<td>Effective development of the faith tourism product requires a fully-resourced organisation to ensure the work of the volunteers is effectively harnessed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development of Place of Worship-based social enterprises can provide visitor services.</td>
<td>The accelerating closure of Places of Worship often leaves unsightly disused buildings at the heart of communities to blight urban and rural environments and impact on community self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International links can be made to places where Celtic saints established cradles of education – the universities - in Wales.</td>
<td>A current feasibility study funded by Visit Wales Digital Tourism Business Framework Programme offers Places of Worship the opportunity to be at the forefront of technological developments in the cultural tourism sector (see appendix).</td>
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<td>Developing thematic cultural routes through and between destinations in Wales to minimise duplication and encourage the wider spread of economic and community benefit.</td>
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<td>With an increased emphasis on Sense of Place, Places of Worship are key. They often hold local registers, tell the unfolding stories of communities and particularly in rural locations are the only places that can display a community’s art and heritage collections.</td>
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<td>People are looking for experiences that enhance their wellbeing. Places of Worship and Holy Wells can play a major part in this.</td>
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<td>Places of Worship can become more enterprising by finding new, appropriate uses that would generate income and retain some aspects of the building that might enhance mission and ministry.</td>
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<td>Places of Worship can create a systematic approach and framework within which the opportunities for the future of Wales’ built heritage can be considered in a rational, disciplined and logical manner.</td>
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</table>
There are opportunities to share best practice in relation to product development, marketing, interpretation and visitor management between faith communities.

Since the turn of the new millennium, there has been an intensifying of the support and encouragement to help Places of Worship to open their doors to visitors particularly through the Churches Tourism Network Wales (CTNW). Having opened the doors, the next focus must be on finding ways to encourage and improve the product. Part of this process is exploring ways to widen the range of people and organisations involved in making this happen.

It is at the local level that the stories are to be told. Forming part of the pan-Wales interpretation plan, Cadw's interpretation plans on Chapels Churches and Monastic Landscapes and The Legacy of the Celtic Saints provide a framework to interpret the history, architecture and landscapes associated with Wales' Christian beliefs. In addition, Cadw are in the process of preparing guidance for the conservation, care, conversion and adaptation of places of worship. Working with, and through these organisations and agencies, the Faith tourism product can be interwoven into other aspects of the visitor economy.

In Wrexham, for example, an Open Church Network was established with assistance from European Rural Development funding. Evidence from the projects has shown that whilst Places of Worship are a significant attraction for the visitor to the area, their significance increases when they are integrated into the wider destination. The benefits to the local economy were identified in Wrexham as:

- the project initially worked with 15 Places of Worship.
- in 3 years 64,404 visitors were recorded
- This shows an estimated contribution of £1,683,521 to the economy.

Further best practice examples can be found in the Appendix.
# Chapter 2 Action Plan

## Objective 1: Attract more visitors to Welsh Places of Worship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Possible Lead(s)</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Develop a marque/symbol to indicate that a Place of Worship is open to visitors that can be used as branding on all promotional materials.</td>
<td>A symbol indicating an open Place of Worship - recognisable across Wales</td>
<td>CIW, CTNW, HLF</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Work with the Wales Associations of Visitor Attractions) to combine the best aspects of the VAQAS accreditation scheme into an easy-to-use peer-to-peer Internet-based ‘self help’ scheme linked to the ‘Open Places of Worship’ brand</td>
<td>Places of Worship working to improve the visitor experience</td>
<td>CTNW, VW, WAVA, RTP’s</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Develop promotional content for the Faith Tourism product and integrate faith tourism as a product offer in Visit Wales marketing campaigns</td>
<td>Increased marketing coverage for the faith tourism product</td>
<td>VW, Marketing Area Partnerships, RTPs, Cadw</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research the potential of encouraging more overseas visitors to specific places of worship across Wales. Examples include the Korean Connection at Llanover (pilgrimage site for Korean Christians). Places associated with the Welsh Religious revival of 1904-05 and links with Christianity in the US.</td>
<td>More visitors from overseas to our Places of Worship</td>
<td>Evangelical Alliance (EA)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Further develop the scope of Open Church Day inviting places of worship to open their doors on a specific date.</td>
<td>A date settled for 2013 - with suitable materials for the Places of Worship based upon a theme.</td>
<td>CTNW, CIW, Cadw, Civic Trust, RTPs</td>
<td>S</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Encourage places of worship to network with local tourism businesses, such as pubs, guesthouses, local tour guides, and to join local tourism associations. Encourage Tourism.</td>
<td>Better awareness and word of mouth recommendations</td>
<td>Visit Wales RTPs</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Businesses and Destinations to become better acquainted with the Faith Tourism product of their area</td>
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</table>

### Objective 2: Increase the yield from individual visitors to Welsh Places of Worship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Possible Lead(s)</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 Encourage a greater financial yield from visitors to places of worship and develop a common approach to encourage donations, buy mementos and to visit the area for food, drink, accommodation</td>
<td>Identifying specific Places of Worship reporting increased visitors. Selected local businesses reporting an increase in revenue</td>
<td>EA CIW CTNW Cytun</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Promote innovation through the Encouraging Enterprising Churches scheme which encourages the Places of Worship to maximise the use of their building (see Appendix 1)</td>
<td>A 15% increase on 2012 in the number of Places of Worship submitting ideas</td>
<td>CIW CTNW Ecclesiastical</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Develop “Wales – a Pilgrimage country” by developing more pilgrimage routes– developing links to existing routes (especially the all Wales Coastal Path) as well as reviving ancient routes.</td>
<td>Plans submitted to build on existing routes e.g. <a href="http://www.pilgrims-way-north-wales.org/">http://www.pilgrims-way-north-wales.org/</a> <a href="http://cistercian-way.newport.ac.uk/">http://cistercian-way.newport.ac.uk/</a></td>
<td>Ramblers RTP’s CTNW CCW</td>
<td>M</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Objective 3: Enhance the quality of the Welsh faith tourism product and the experience of visitors to Welsh Places of Worship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Possible Lead(s)</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undertake visitor surveys (qualitative and quantitative) thereby increasing the understanding of current and future demand for Places of Worship as attractions</td>
<td>Raw figures of number of visitors. A range of views about the product</td>
<td>VW RTPs WTA CTNW</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>Benchmark Welsh faith tourism against international best practice by creating links with faith tourism internationally</td>
<td>Understanding of what other countries do that is considered best practice for Wales to adopt</td>
<td>All partners</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development of a “purple badge” for site guides at Wales’ Places of Worship and a suitable welcoming</td>
<td>More homogeneity in the quality of welcome and guiding in Places of Worship</td>
<td>WOTGA HE CTNW</td>
<td>M</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme based on the Valleys Regional Park ambassador scheme thereby improving the visitor experience when a building is staffed or unstaffed.</td>
<td>A greater range of events held in Places of Worship linked to the destination programme of events</td>
<td>RTPs Unitary authorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase the range and quality of events held in places of worship eg the celebration of local Saint's days and to help local faith groups with events management</td>
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<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhance support for genealogy by making records more accessible to support visitors for genealogy</td>
<td>Training for local Places of Worship</td>
<td>CyMAL Local archive services, National Library of Wales RCAHMW Local libraries where relevant</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop a multi-faith guided tour in South Cardiff as an exemplar for other appropriate places in Wales.</td>
<td>A fully resourced multi faith trail in Cardiff</td>
<td>Bay ministers Lightship Cardiff County CRT</td>
<td>S</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Develop faith tourism education programmes in Higher Education Institutions across Wales</td>
<td>A module on faith tourism in a university</td>
<td>HE CIW</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Develop links to the Lleoli Llenyddiaeth/ Locating Literature project to use Places of Worship make Wales’ incomparable literary heritage visible and accessible to visitors</td>
<td>Places of Worship identified as locations for telling the story of Wales’ literary giants</td>
<td>Arts Council People’s Collection Wales, VW Cadw, CTNW CIW and Bangor University</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Encourage the use of digital Technologies in the marketing and interpretation of Places of Worship based on the results of a feasibility study into what digital technology can be used within a place of worship to enhance its interpretation and its marketing</td>
<td>A discrete project developing Digital Interpretation and Marketing of Places of worship</td>
<td>VW People’s Collection HE CTNW</td>
<td>M</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix

THE OPEN CHURCH NETWORK

www.openchurchnetwork.co.uk

The project was conceived by over twenty representatives from churches of various denominations from the Wrexham area who met with members of Wrexham’s Economic Development Department in 2003. Funding was to become available under the EU/WAG scheme to develop rural economies, and it was agreed that if historic churches would open to visitors daily, funds would be made available to make the churches accessible to disabled people; to provide ‘Welcome’, interpretation and notice-boards; professional photographs and promotional materials; high-quality printed information folders; and to pay for a ‘corporate image’ logo and banners for the project. A launch event was held for the project in St Dunawds Church Bangor on Dee.

The first phase incorporated twelve churches and was so successful that a second phase was funded two years later. This second phase included four more churches from the rural Wrexham area; saw the development of a ‘Discovery Trail’ which included the churches in a car/cycle/walking journey around rural Wrexham, also highlighting other points of interest including historical artefacts, and also local businesses. A website was created with information on the churches, and also pages where churches can download information such as events and service times. Some of the churches were provided with video-posters; a national Church Tourism conference was held and very well-attended; the project became an EU Exemplar project. Training sessions for Church Welcomers were organised and an Education Pack developed which had detailed information (photocopiable) on all the churches, bilingually, to be used at relevant key stages by teachers. Each primary and secondary school in Wrexham County Borough received a copy of the pack.

The participating churches benefitted greatly from the funds invested in making the churches accessible to visitors – part of the funding was drawn down through ‘volunteer time’ which consisted of the many hours of time volunteers in the churches had spent working on the project. The number of visitors from tourism, schools and from local residents grew considerably and the estimated value of this increase in visitors via the
STEAM recording mechanism suggested that in the first three years, income from visitors to the churches was £1.63 million.

SACRED SPACE
www.sacredspace.org.uk

Following the success of the Open Church Network project further funding was awarded to a project involving thirteen churchyards in rural Wrexham, the Sacred Space project. Once again using volunteer time for match funding, Sacred Space facilitated recording and publishing (hard copy and on the website) headstone inscriptions where these had not previously been done; a churchyard management plan for each church (with support from Caring for God’s Acre); workshops on trees, flowers, lichens, butterflies, geological heritage of churchyards for people who were interested; site visits to churchyards of interest in other areas; folders with information on all the individual churchyards for visitors; external interpretation panels, and a bilingual workbook for primary school children was devised and printed. Professional photographs were taken and used for the folders as well as on the project website, and used (along with prizewinning photographs submitted in annual ‘Sacred Space’ competitions) in calendars produced by the project. Children were involved in creating wildlife habitats in some churchyards, with a comprehensive collection of identification charts displayed in each church along with species recording books for use by visitors.

Saints and Stones - Pembrokeshire

The Saints and Stones trails have been set up to give both holiday visitors and residents in the county access to the deep spiritual qualities of these ancient places of worship, access to some of its more remote and beautiful corners and thereby to bring some tourist trade to benefit the rural communities.

Pilgrimage and visits to these churches continue all through the year and all the churches are open during daylight hours.

In July 1995, the first Saints and Stones trail was launched by the Bishop of St Davids, Ivor Rees, with the backing of Menter Preseli and the EU leader programme II. There are 44 churches taking part in the programme, opening their doors to all. A trail leaflet and individual leaflets for each church were scripted and designed by members of the group and printed and financed by Menter Preseli.

In 1996 the project received a “Commended” in the Schroder Tourism award. At Eastertide 1998 the ‘Shadow of the Preselis’ trail was launched, In 1999 a third route, ‘The Bishop’s Road’ was begun. This follows the old roads from Llawhaden Bishop’s Palace to St Davids Cathedral.
Since then two further routes, ‘The Haven Way’ and ‘Riverside Route’ have been opened.

**Encouraging Enterprising Churches**

This initiative was set up in 2011/2 by a partnership of CTNW, the Church in Wales and Ecclesiastical Insurance.

The aim was to discover some ideas amongst the Places of Worship in Wales that were Imaginative, Innovative and Inspirational.

A fund of £9000 was made available to be divided up to help the projects that the panel considered best met the criteria above and would also enhance the local and visitor community and *make a difference*.

All submissions were given feedback from an expert panel and a presentation ceremony was held for the 5 winners at which Dan Clayton Jones was the keynote speaker.

**Cadw Interpretation Plans**

**Title: The Legacy of the Celtic Saints**

The plan explores the story of Christianity in Wales from around 400 AD to 1100 AD, which encompasses The Age of the Saints (5th/6th centuries) and the emergence of strong political as well as religious centre from the 7th century. It also identifies the impact that this storyline has had upon Wales’ “history, culture and psyche”.

**The approach**

The plan outlines the history, archaeology and legends associated with the storyline. It states that “interest in the saints, sacred sites and pilgrimage transcends matters of belief. Enjoyment of the tales of saints does not require any profession of faith”.

The whole approach is centred on storytelling. It suggests that a magazine –style approach, potentially illustrated with cartoons (similar to medieval art) should be adopted. People (i.e. the saints themselves and those they came in to contact with) along with the places associated with them, are the key focus for this storyline. It also notes that often these stories are based in legend rather than historically accurate and will need to be interpreted as such to the visitor.

The plan is intended to provide a framework for interpreting this storyline on Wales-wide basis as well as on a local cluster level. Some examples of the cluster approach are included in the document for illustrative purposes. It also reinforces a number of pilgrimage routes that should be interpreted for new audiences, as well as making suggestions for visitor packages related to the storyline.

**Title: Chapels, Churches and Monastic Landscapes of Wales**

The plan provides a framework for interpreting the “history, architecture and landscapes
associated with Wales’ Christian beliefs and practises of worship” from 1100 AD onwards. Amongst the sites associated with this storyline range from great cathedrals and abbeys such as Strata Florida, to the huge number of non-conformist chapels which have added to the character of Welsh towns and villages since the 1850’s.

The approach
The plan contains a useful history of the development of places of worship, and highlights the main characters associated with this storyline. It also includes an audit of a sample of sites.

It suggests that interpretation under this storyline should be presented to visitors through a number of packages:

- Single site – requires on-site interpretation
- Community based – linked to other places in a village or town via a trail or events etc
- Multi-site – a more regional approach to linking up sites, with guided tours and/or a leaflet etc.

In all cases it is suggested that detailed interpretation plans are produced for specific sites; that key holders receive some ‘ambassador’ training; and that signage should be in place. It also recommends a number of avenues for providing advice and support. If you visit the Cadw website you’ll find the plans and the overview documents:

http://cadw.wales.gov.uk/interpretation/interpretationplans/?lang=en

http://cadw.wales.gov.uk/interpretation/guidancenotes/?lang=en

a. Elements of Faith Tourism in Wales

Genealogy – an area of great public interest and continues to grow

Places of Worship can make their registers available to visitors - a longer term initiative could be digitise these. All Inscriptions on Gravestones could be transcribed to add to those already completed by genealogical societies in Montgomeryshire, Brecknock and elsewhere.

These archival collections have relevance both to the history of local communities and to genealogical tourism, and CyMAL would be keen to see that any actions in the Faith Tourism Action Plan relating to genealogy recognise the importance of working in partnership with local archive services, the National Library of Wales, RCAHMW, and local libraries where relevant. By working in partnership in this way local Places of Worship / religious bodies will be able to benefit from the expertise and knowledge of the records within archive
services, while ensuring that the records of relevance to them are professionally managed and preserved for future access. In this respect a useful contact for taking this further would be Archives and Records Council Wales (ARCW), the body which acts as a focus for collaborative working in the archive sector in Wales - the current Chair is Charlotte Hodgson based at Glamorgan Archives who can be contacted via email at CHodgson@cardiff.gov.uk

**RCAHMW**

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (RCAHMW) maintains a chapels database (http://www.rcahmw.gov.uk/HI/ENG/Heritage+of+Wales/Chapels/) as well as information relating to other listed ecclesiastical buildings.

**Events**

Working with CADW by enhancing their events by offering something in the surrounding Places of Worship that can complement the “big” CADW event.

**Grounds**

Wildlife – development in Wales being pursued with Caring for God’s acre.

**Other Faith development**

The development of Quakers in Wales out of congregationalism – (Quakers Yard)

**ISLAM**

The history of Islam in Wales is generally under-researched, but a picture is slowly emerging. The earliest archaeological link between Islam and Wales is a coin struck by King Offa, discovered in Bangor (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Offa_of_Mercia).

The crusades brought a new wave of engagement, mostly cultural, between Muslims abroad and Christians in Wales. Many castles built in Wales after the crusades adopted the style crusaders discovered in the modern world. This architectural revolution also found its way into religious buildings.

The next major point of engagement is during the coal era of Wales. Many Muslims found themselves in Welsh ports after taking temporary jobs on ships, awaiting another vacancy. Some stayed and established mosques, communities and the like. Tiger Bay is particularly important in this regard.

Finally, following the end of British rule over India, many South Asians migrated to Britain seeking employment.
This provides the basis for modern Muslim communities in the UK.

Interesting stories/places to visit.

**Offa's Coin**

**Neath Abbey** - reportedly designed by a Muslim prisoner from the Crusades

**Llanbadrig Church in Anglesey** - one of many Places of Worship renovated by Baron Henry Stanley, a wealthy convert to Islam in the Victorian era. Llanbadrig Church incorporated some Islamic style windows to recognise the donation. [http://www.anglesey-today.com/llanbadrig.html](http://www.anglesey-today.com/llanbadrig.html)

**South Wales Islamic Centre/Noor al-Islam Mosque** - founded by Abdullah Ali al-Hakimi in Cardiff during the 1930s. Part of what is termed the 'Islamic Revival' of Wales,

**Converted Mosques** - some mosques such as Shah Jalal in Cardiff are converted chapels and thus offer an opportunity to see historic Christian buildings used in a new context. Other buildings, such as the Wrexham Mosque, formerly a miner’s institute that was lying derelict for several years, also offer a link to local history. The latter is incorporating a room to act as a museum honouring the miner's in Wrexham.

Characters of Islam in Wales

**Abdullah Ali Hakimi** - a Muslim from the Yemen who lead an Islamic revival in Wales. [http://greenbooked.blogspot.co.uk/2012/01/forgotten-revival.html](http://greenbooked.blogspot.co.uk/2012/01/forgotten-revival.html)

**Abdullah Quilliam** - a lawyer and convert to Islam during the Victorian era. He was very active in Liverpool but also visited Cardiff and Wales to deliver talks. One such talk was an interfaith event between Jews in Wales and Muslims in Wales held at Cardiff University in 1908. The story is a powerful reminder of interfaith relations over 100 years ago.

**Welsh Muslim soldiers** - this is sadly an under researched area, but there were hundreds (if not thousands) of Welsh Muslim soldiers who fought during WW2 and died in service of their country. A visit to Barry Memorial Hall shows dozens of Muslim names amongst
the honoured dead. The armed forces war records show an equally high number of Muslim soldiers who served and died in WW2. Abdullah al-Hakimi's Mosque in Cardiff was also bombed during the blitz, killing several worshippers inside. The stories of these soldiers offer an interesting insight and important reflections for contemporary society.

Other sites to visit:

- South Wales Islamic Centre in Cardiff
- Neath Abbey in Neath
- Barry Memorial Hall in Barry
- Wrexham Islamic Centre

This article on Islam in Wales hopefully contextualises some of these [http://greenbooked.blogspot.co.uk/2010/10/islam-and-wales.html](http://greenbooked.blogspot.co.uk/2010/10/islam-and-wales.html)

Links to overseas

- Korean visitors to Llanover (home of Robert Jermain Thomas, the first Korean Protestant martyr)
- Links from India
- Links to Madagascar (Ceredigion)

Unitarian Story

- “black Spot”

Shrines

- Development of Holywell, Penrhys Pennant Melangell and Cardigan

Retreat Houses

- Llangasty
- Beechwood House
- St Beuno’s Tremeichion

People

- Celtic Saints including Illtyd, Cadoc, Teilo, Winefride, Beuno, Melangell, Padarn
- Thomas Charles (1755–1814), Nonconformist minister
- David Davies (1741–1819) Clergyman and social historian
- Saint David (died 601?), patron saint of Wales
- Christmas Evans (1766–1838), Nonconformist minister
- Saints Philip Evans and John Lloyd, Roman Catholic priests and two of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales
- Gerald of Wales,
- Fr Ignatius
Ann Griffiths (1776–1805), religious poet and hymn-writer

Saint Richard Gwyn (c.1537–1584)

Howell Harris (1714–1773), Methodist minister

William Morgan (Bible translator) (1545–1604), bishop and Welsh translator of the Bible

Evan Roberts (1878–1950), Methodist preacher in the Welsh Revival - Moriah Chapel in Loughor, birthplace of the 1904 revival

John Roberts (Ieuan Gwyllt) (1822–1877), Methodist preacher and hymn-writer

Daniel Rowland (1713–1790), Methodist preacher in the Welsh Revival

William Salesbury (c. 1520–1584?), Welsh translator of the New Testament


William Williams Pantycelyn (1717–1791), hymn-writer

R S Thomas  (29 March 1913 – 25 September 2000)

Themes: “iconic” buildings

Hymn writers

Welsh bible
People and groups with whom this faith tourism action plan has been discussed:

Abdul Azim Ahmed  Muslim Council of Wales.
The Right Reverend Peter Brignall  Bishop of Wrexham.
Canon John Brown  Churches Tourism Association (England).
Siôn Brynach  Accountability Adviser, Governance & Accountability Wales, BBC Trust.
John Coates  Corporate Client Director, Ecclesiastical Insurance Group.
Peter Cole  Strategy Director, Capital Region Tourism.
Sue Cole  Property Officer URC Wales.
Alex Glanville  Head of Property Services, Church in Wales.
Dr Madeleine Gray  Reader in History University of Wales, Newport.
Kevin Griffin  Head of ATLAS Religious Tourism Special Interest Group.
Mike Hayward  Marketing Manager Ecclesiastical Insurance.
Prof Eleri Jones  Associate Dean (Research), Cardiff School of Management, Cardiff Met University.
Philip King  Property Services Adviser, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Cardiff.
Matthew Knight  Business Change Manager, Cardiff University
Robert Lewis  Head of Research, Visit Wales.
Reverend John Morgan  Formerly Synod Moderator of URC Wales and Religious Historian.
The Venerable Philip Morris  Archdeacon of Margam.
Julie Perkins  CADW
Prof Terry Stevens  International Consultant.
Jim Stewart  Public Affairs, Advocacy Officer Evangelical Alliance Wales.
Bob Sylvester  Deputy Director and Head of Field Services, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust
Lucy von Weber  Project Manager, South West Wales Tourism Partnership.
Revd John Wheeler  formerly Moderator Baptist Union of Great Britain.
Dr Jonathan Wooding  University of Wales, Trinity St David.
References

