

BUILDING FAITH IN OUR FUTURE

KEY FACTS

- A 2005 survey showed that **86 per cent** of the population had visited a church building or place of worship in the previous twelve months, for reasons ranging from participating in worship to attending concerts or simply wanting a quiet space. This confirmed the levels recorded in 2003.
- The 2005 survey showed that **38%** of the population think the central taxation, local taxation, the National Lottery or English Heritage are primarily responsible for funding maintenance of church buildings. Asked who should be primarily responsible, the respondents naming those four sources rose to **46%**.
- **Forty-five per cent** of the country's Grade I listed buildings are maintained by the Church of England. These churches and cathedrals are largely supported by the efforts and financial support of local communities. Often, they are the focus of community life and service.
- In total, some **12,200** of the Church of England's **16,000** buildings are listed by the government as being of special architectural or historic interest.
- Three cathedrals are World Heritage Sites: Durham Castle and Cathedral, Canterbury Cathedral, St Augustine's Abbey & St Martin's Church, and Westminster Abbey and St Margaret's Church.
- Every year, around **12.5 million** people visit Church of England cathedrals, including **300,000** pupils on school visits. Three of England's top five historic 'visitor attractions' are York Minister, Canterbury Cathedral and Westminster Abbey.
- In 2003, Church of England parishes spent nearly **£101m** on major church repairs. In answer to a question included as part of the annual Parish Returns, parishes estimated that repairs still needed to their churches came to **£372.8 million** of which **£323.1 million (87%)** was for listed churches. In the same year, the major sources of funding came to less than 40%. Therefore 60% was raised by local fund-raising.
- English Heritage grants have effectively remained level since 1995. Had English Heritage been able to maintain its contribution to church repairs in real terms at its highest level of 1995 (when £14m was offered in grant), it would now be offering £19.5m.
- Church of England churches along with other faith groups make a huge contribution to social action in their local communities. Within all the nine English Regions, surveys have been carried out to map the size and range of this contribution. A 2005 study of the economic impact of faith communities produced on behalf of the Northwest Regional Development Agency estimated that faith communities in the Northwest generates £94.9 million. This is made up the estimated economic value of 45,667 faith volunteers contributing c.8.1 million hours of social and health care and working in regeneration initiatives (equivalent to 4,815 FTE jobs) applying a wage rate of £7.50

per hour, premises made available by faith groups for use of local community groups, and day visitor expenditure generated by faith tourism which also supported 215 FTE jobs.

- Church buildings in particular are a valuable resource to their communities. The North West 2005 study estimated that the 1,385 premises made available to local communities by faith communities in the Northwest generated £811,472 per annum. A 2004 survey carried out in Brighton and Hove found that out of the 55 community buildings identified by the survey as essential to the provision of over 300 community projects and services offered by faith communities, 47 were church buildings and halls provided by the churches themselves.
- A survey commissioned by the Association of English Cathedrals and English Heritage found that visitors to cathedrals generate £91million in spend per annum and directly support 2600 jobs. This increases to £150 million in spend in the local economies within which they are located if it includes their procurement spend, their impact on visitor spend and associated multiplier effects. From 2005 they will **receive** only £1 million per annum in repair grants – but currently **spend** £11 million annually on repairs and maintenance.
- Although, there has not yet been any research to determine the benefits to local economies of visitors to parish churches, we are starting to see that initiatives set up to promote church tourism do have a positive effect on numbers of visitors. The North Yorkshire Church Tourism initiative which ran for three years and in that time increased the number of annual visitors to the 285 participating places of worship by 120%. Total number of visitors recorded for the year 2004/5 was 203,952.

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