



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

**Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich**

Your Vision

Asking the following five questions may help you to focus more clearly as you try to find answers:

What is the church used for?

- The Sunday service and nothing else
- During the week for coffee mornings or parent/toddler groups
- Lease out the space for community groups during the week
- Annual flower festivals, fetes, or other events
- Occasional or regular concerts and performances
- Regular bell-ringing practice and training of new recruits
- Welcoming visitors during the week whether or not the church is manned
- Baptisms, weddings, funerals

How can it serve the community?

- Social coffee mornings or a local produce market
- Local clubs that could use the building
- Invite someone to do a church or village history workshop
- School children could learn about history or worship
- People could get advice on health and nutrition
- Older people could get advice on what's available to them
- A tourist information point
- A drop-in day for people who might lack self worth elsewhere
- Churchyard discovery days for families
- Helping young people seeking information about their ancestors
- Citizens Advice Bureau in church for face-to-face advice.

What do we need to achieve this?

- Electricity and running water
- More efficient heating
- Access for less abled people
- A kitchen or servery
- A toilet with equal access
- Some flexible space for community activity

It could be all or some of the above but you'll need to:

- Identify a genuine community need for the building which will make it easier to obtain a faculty and for your church to obtain funding to meet your aspirations.
- Think in terms of how many more people would use the building if it had modern facilities, not just how it would benefit Sunday worshippers.
- If you are planning to use the church as a concert venue a couple of times a year, it may be acceptable to occasionally hire in portable loos and to have a small servery installed instead of a fully-equipped kitchen. But if you are prepared to offer services for children or older people, you may need to be more ambitious.
- Find out from the DAC about the practicalities and legalities of how to go about developing your church building.

Who could we ask to help us?

- Write to village or town residents to find out how they would like to see the church building used or if they would attend any service other than Christmas carols
- Ask community groups whether they would like to use the building during the week for a social activity
- Form a Friends Group to help support the church building with fund-raising events
- Seek out skills in the local community, for example, someone to help with a website, help to write a business plan, apply for funding, write a lottery bid or produce a church guide.
- Find a church that has achieved what you aspire to and seek their advice.

What is the future if we stay as we are?

- Small and declining congregation
- No involvement with the wider community
- Fabric falls into decay
- Danger of closure

**Marion Welham, Church Heritage and
Tourism marion.welham@cofesuffolk.org**