

Inspired!

A FUTURE FOR HISTORIC PLACES OF WORSHIP

SEPTEMBER 2007

The *Inspired!* campaign was launched in May 2006 to help secure a sustainable future for England's historic places of worship. Supported by all the denominations with listed places of worship in their care, the campaign was initially aimed at influencing the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), due to be announced in autumn 2006. Now that the CSR has been postponed to autumn 2007 we wanted to tell you about what has happened since the launch and some of our future plans.

Gordon Brown's last Budget

We were heartened by Gordon Brown's comments in his last Budget as Chancellor, that in the run up to the CSR he would be working with the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport to "examine the help the Government can give to the churches and heritage buildings that are at the heart of so many communities." We hope that these discussions will produce the resources needed to implement the solutions put forward in *Inspired!*

Parliamentary support

We have been extremely grateful for the tremendous parliamentary support the campaign has received. There have been debates in both Houses and several questions and letters to Ministers and to Sir Stuart Bell, the Second Church Estates Commissioner. We have also had the opportunity to address the All-Party Parliamentary Groups on Arts and Heritage and Historic Churches and Chapels on the campaign. Many parliamentarians also sent the supportive *Inspired!* postcard to the Chancellor. By the end of 2006, a total of 2,925 postcards had been sent to the Treasury.



Thanks to the kind sponsorship of Roberta Blackman-Woods MP (above, with English Heritage chief executive Simon Thurley) we were able to have an exhibition in the Upper Waiting Hall of Parliament in the last week of June, 2007. In the same week, in partnership with the Churches Conservation Trust, we took parliamentarians on a tour of three churches in the London constituency of Frank Dobson, the Chair of the All-Party Group on Historic Churches. We were delighted to be accompanied by the Bishop of London. By visiting just three churches in one small area we were able to give a vivid demonstration of the range of

challenges that face churches and other places of worship.

Fabric Needs Survey

The *Inspired!* booklet gave the highlights of the Fabric Needs Survey of 2005, which concluded that £925 million needed to be spent on essential repairs to listed places of worship over the next five years. Since the campaign's launch we have added to that study by looking at a group of 30 non-Anglican listed places of worship in West Yorkshire, which confirmed that places of worship of all denominations face a similar scale of repair costs. The results of this survey will be available on the English Heritage *Inspired!* website.

Places of worship in need

We are working with the Church of England to develop a statistical means of identifying those places of worship most likely to need external support. This will enable English Heritage and others to make the most effective use of their resources. We hope to do something similar with other denominations, enabling us to build up a national picture and then to target our resources at the most needy areas.



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Taking Stock

Taking Stock is a programme of historical audits of churches, conducted in partnership with dioceses or equivalent bodies. The resulting reports provide an authoritative and objective evaluation of the historical significance, current condition and adaptability of listed and unlisted church buildings that can be integrated into diocesan strategic planning. This sort of information is vital in areas where the pastoral situation means there is pressure either to close churches or adapt them for wider uses.

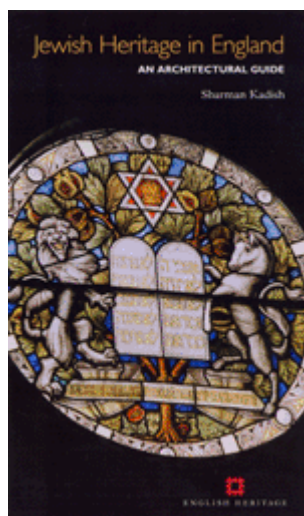


St Anthony of Padua, Rye, which was identified as a potential new listing as a result of the Taking Stock survey in the Catholic diocese of Arundel and Brighton.

The survey of the Catholic diocese of Portsmouth has been completed recently (with 50% funding from English Heritage) and a further six surveys are either under way or are under discussion. These include the first *Taking Stock* audits of Church of England buildings and the first inter-denominational survey. Expansion of the programme has been limited by a lack of people with the right mix of academic and heritage management skills, so a training course is being run at Oxford in February 2008, to introduce the methodology to a

wider circle of professionals in the sector.

New publications



Jewish Heritage in England, written by Sharman Kadish, Director of Jewish Heritage UK and published by English Heritage.

Following the success of *Jewish Heritage in England* and *A Glimpse of Heaven (Catholic Churches in England and Wales)*, which both came out in 2006, we are preparing for publication two volumes in the *Religion and Place* series, exploring the history of places of worship in the cities of Liverpool and Leeds.

Support officers

We have consulted widely on the solutions put forward at the launch of *Inspired!* and have found that the idea of support officers to advise congregations has been particularly well-received. There are already some support officers in post, but we hope to be able to significantly extend our funding for such posts in the near future, subject to the outcome of the CSR.

HELM

Another aim of *Inspired!* - which complements the Church of England's *Building faith in our future* - is to highlight the

importance of places of worship in their communities, and to improve awareness in local and regional government of the problems and the potential of places of worship. The *Historic Environment - Local Management (HELM)* programme aims to build capacity in local authorities by means of a website, regional seminars and a network of Historic Environment Champions. Through HELM, we will be running four seminars early in 2008 on the theme of 'Changing Churches', emphasising the role local government can play in their protection and use. For details see www.helm.org.uk.

National Churches Trust

In June 2007 came the welcome news of a new charity, called the National Churches Trust, created by the Historic Churches Preservation Trust. As well as raising more funds for repair projects, the new Trust will be a source of advice to congregations of all denominations on the use, management and funding of their buildings. The Cumbrian Churches Partnership, a collaboration between the new Trust and the Churches Conservation Trust, is to be warmly welcomed as a possible model for delivering some of the *Inspired!* solutions. A small professional team will support congregations and build partnerships between churches and other local organisations. If successful, it is hoped that the ideas developed can be extended to other parts of the country.

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