

# Divine Inspiration: Unlocking Churches



**A unique and invaluable resource, developed by English Heritage, to enable local churches to make the most of all their building's assets in telling their story, attracting visitors and serving the local community.**

Divine Inspiration began in July 2006 and was funded by English Heritage. It acknowledged that church buildings were held in trust for all people to explore and enjoy, of all ages and any spiritual persuasion. They are full of potential for learning, heritage, activity other than worship, cultural events and are, most importantly, for sharing.



**DIVINE INSPIRATION**  
unlocking  
churches  
in coventry  
& warwickshire

*The Divine Inspiration project has now come to an end, and there is no longer a website associated with it. However, most of the resources and information linked to this article are still available to download at the foot of this page.*

Divine Inspiration encouraged those who were stewards of church buildings to look creatively at how they welcomed visitors to their buildings and to tell better, well researched and more engaging stories to those who made visits.

Divine Inspiration actively supported volunteers in churches as they developed their welcome by offering free training and a forum for networking opportunities. It encouraged churches to assess how they currently used their space and explored how they might share it more widely and creatively with others in their community.

Divine Inspiration widely promoted churches as surprising and interesting places to visit and aimed to give confidence to those who would not normally feel able to enter a church building to do just that. These things are still possible even without the full back-up of the Divine Inspiration project

## *Resources*

The Divine Inspiration toolkit was developed after many years of experience of working with parishes. It is designed to help volunteers in parish churches to create a warmer welcome for those who visit their buildings for all kinds of activities, with practical help on improving signage and writing a better visitor booklet. In addition walking and cycling route leaflets were developed for groups of churches; and help was provided for individual churches to produce good quality visitor information.



## *Ambassadors*

A network of named 'ambassadors' was developed to help make churches in the diocese more accessible and welcoming and share their passion for their church heritage. These individuals were not necessarily members

of the worshipping community but were able and willing to work with those who were. Ambassadors formed part of a forum across the Diocese sharing good practice and ideas. They provided information for the website, and for case studies, and were in regular contact with project officers to share information about events and new work happening in their church and community.

### *Telling your story*

One project challenged parishes to find a novel or quirky story about their church which would encourage visitors to explore it more fully. A wide range was submitted - called 'Holy Histories'. Many concerned a particular individual with connections to the church or an object which could be found there and many were connected with to important moments in history such as the Second World War, or were simply significant in that particular community. All gave a taste of the riches on offer when you start to dig more deeply into the story of a church and its community.

### *Case studies*

[Project planning and management: St Nicholas, Kenilworth](#)

[Working with schools: Engaging Places project](#)

[Telling your story: St Michael, Claverdon](#)

### *Toolkit*

[Divine Inspiration toolkit](#)

