

# **The Welcome Audit of your church**

## **“I believe in God the Welcomer”**

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***“Christian Welcome is not just about being nice to visitors, it is about incorporating new people into the Body of Christ”***

Do you agree with this statement? Write your own statement of what you think welcome means. How a newcomer and visitor would feel. How would you like them to have gone away from the church different from the moment they came?

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Even though many people come to churches – how are they drawn into more than just a historical monument but into a living Christian community?

### **Becoming a stranger**

The only way to know how a stranger feels is to become one  
Try visiting a betting shop,

***First  
impressions  
leave lasting  
impressions***

## **A Welcoming Church Exterior**

### **Finding the church**

- Signposts
- Church trails
- Brown Signs

### **Action to take!**

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### **Approaching the Church**

- Parking
- First impressions
- Church Notice Board
  - How attractive and welcoming is it?
  - Beware negative signs – e.g. No parking here, No entry
  - Are your service times made simple + outcomes? (e.g. BCP and CW are “in-house” and mean nothing)
  - Are the contact details displayed, name, address, phone number (academic qualifications not necessary)?
  - What about “outcomes” of the experience?
  - Is there information for disabled people?

### **Action to take!**

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### **Churchyard**

- Often more important than the church for people
- Are paths neat and in good order?
- How neat is the churchyard? Does it say “We care” or “We neglect”?

### **Action to take!**

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## **A Welcoming Church Interior**

### **What is the building saying about itself?**

- What are the impressions created by architecture furnishings and fittings, light, smell etc?
  - A museum?
  - A holy place?
  - A homely place?
  - A forsaken place?

**Mission Statement of  
a pub in Finedon**  
***"Your next visit  
is our success"***

### **What is the building saying about its life and family?**

- Do they care for the building?
- Is the feudal system alive and well?
- Mission Statements and other sentiments
- Magazine available, weekly newsletters, good news stories
- Displays of Sunday School material
- Material *for* children (as opposed to material *about* children to make adults go "ahhhhh")
- Pictures of people - photos of minister/stewards, etc
- Do we really need to know how much it is to bury ashes?
- Out of date notices and "In-house" notices?
- Is there a place to pray, candles lit, lights on, music playing, flowers?

### **Action to take!**

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### **What does our building say about God?**

- Is He central or peripheral?
- Is He given a chance to engage with visitors?
- Is it made easy for those who come in and pray? How and where?
- Is there any devotional literature, suitable for the visitor?
- What "atmosphere" is or could be created?

### **Action to take!**

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### **What does our building say about money?**

Is it mentioned at every turn?

Does the place look as if money is in short supply or unimportant?

**Action to take!**

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What does our building say about Disability, Comfort, Ambience, and Safety?

## **A Welcoming Church Member**

*“consider others better than yourselves”* Philippians 2:3

### Before the service

- As this is a ministry, why not gather to pray a prayer together
- Whose job is it to welcome people to the church? Are they the best people?
- Do sides persons think of themselves as “ministers of welcome”?
- When is their job over? When the service begins or when the last person leaves?
- What about some people welcoming, whilst other worry about books?
- Do we know where to direct people – especially children and disabled
- What about loos? – clearly marked – on the service paper?
- Where do welcomers stand? Inside or out?
- Good questions to ask: *“have you been to Wesley often before?”* is better than *“are you new”*
- Introduce yourself to people
- What happens to late comers? How long are you hanging around at the back? Do you need a piece of felt on the latch or the door?

### During the service

- Introduction to the service – why not just give a warm welcome, rather than highlight visitors (after all we are all visitors!)
- Welcomers should be willing to sit with others not just their friends
- To introduce and gently guide through the service if people are struggling

### After the service

- How are they welcomed before and afterwards?
- How are we sensitive to different people’s needs?
- How do we find out about people and follow them up?
- Do we have information on the activities of the church as well as its history?
- Invite them for coffee, which means escorting them over, getting them coffee and chatting to them and introducing them to others who may have similar interests

### After Sunday

- What about a follow up visit? How can this be organised? A small group of people who call round within about 10 days.
- In an average church, there may be up to 10% of people who have either never come, not come for ages, or are passing through.
- Do you have a welcome pack with a flavour of the life of the community?

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**Action to take!**
