

BLESSINGS OR BURDENS?



LISTED PLACES OF WORSHIP AND THEIR ROLE IN COMMUNITIES

**A research project by Living Stones
on behalf of
English Heritage**

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ENGLISH HERITAGE

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CONTENTS	PAGE
Executive Summary.	2
A. Introduction – purpose, background and parameters of the study.	4
B. Overview and summary of findings.	10
C. Detailed analysis by location.	17
D. Detailed analysis by user group (Trustees, Congregation etc)	31
E. Discussion of other variants - denominations/faith groups etc.	33
F. Observations on limits and variables due to methodology.	34
G. Conclusions and recommendations.	35
Final Comment	39

NOTE This report is based on the views of Living Stones, the consultant,
and does not necessarily represent English Heritage advice and guidance.

The cover photograph is of the Grade II Church of St John the Evangelist, Bierley, Bradford
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**‘BLESSINGS OR BURDENS?’
LISTED PLACES OF WORSHIP AND THEIR ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY.
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.**

This research project was conducted by Living Stones on behalf of English Heritage. Its purpose is to provide insight into Listed Places of Worship (LPoW), and to inform the launch of the “Caring for Places of Worship” programme, one stream to the “Heritage at Risk” programme.

A number of consultation events were run across England to explore the experiences of those responsible for running listed places of worship, the perceptions of those who use them for both religious and secular purposes, and their role in local communities. These discussions were supplemented by questionnaires and follow up telephone interviews.

Key findings

- ◇ In conducting the research project, it became very quickly apparent that there is an enormous will by many faithful and dedicated volunteers in positions of responsibility to always do what is best for their LPoW, often at great cost to their time and their pocket.

However some feel that they do not have the support they need, either financially or in terms of advice and counsel, and that their best intentions can be frustrated by the bureaucracy, duplication, conflict of interest and inflexibility of those involved in the listed building system. But above all they say that as they look around, at their ageing and diminishing number of colleagues they see neither how this process could continue when they are gone, nor any signs that a new process is being established to replace it.

Other key points to emerge were:

- ◇ Matters associated with built heritage are not a priority for many faith groups, especially outside of the mainstream Christian denominations.
- ◇ Places of Worship are run by the main by volunteers who do not necessarily have the skills and resources to engage fully with the issues around listing.
- ◇ Beyond the mainstream Christian denominations, faith groups seem to have little understanding of the implications or processes of managing a listed place of worship.
- ◇ Many grant-making bodies, including local authorities, operate policies which preclude assisting projects that are viewed as being associated with ‘religious purposes’. There is, therefore, a need for more clarity in the accounting systems of listed places of worship to overcome this obstacle and enable essential built heritage support.
- ◇ English Heritage grants are often key in obtaining funding from other sources.
- ◇ One major complaint is the length of time it takes to get permission to undertake work on listed places of worship and the number of bodies that need to be consulted.
- ◇ Partnerships between Places of Worship and local authorities could be improved, with more frequent communication likely to open up more opportunities for funding and quicker and more effective decisions on listed building consent for the non exempt places of worship.
- ◇ Widening community use is not always the answer to maintaining listed places of worship, especially where there are other alternatives already available and often in a better position to offer a better service.

- ◇ Awareness of public sector funding for running social and community programmes (e.g. regeneration funding) was low with few Places of Worship actively using it .
- ◇ There is confusion about the dual role of English Heritage as both heritage consultant and grant provider, with a misconception that approval of proposed works would automatically be followed by funding assistance for them.

Recommendations :

The principal recommendations contained in the report are:

- More research is needed, in conjunction with the main denominations who are responsible for most LPoWs, specifically to establish the current sustainability of their buildings, and the prognosis for them over the next ten years, which is the likely timescale in which for many the voluntary management resource will drop below a critical level.
- More funding is needed across the sector, and for a wider range of work than at present, aimed at supporting those responsible for maintaining the building and releasing the congregation for other work.
- Measures are needed to clarify the funding streams of LPoWs so that there is sufficient separation and transparency for secular funders to be able to support the costs of building maintenance without feeling that they are contributing to 'religious purposes'. The machinery for this already exists in some denominations.
- In parallel with this, more education is needed to make secular bodies and individuals aware of the realities of the cost of maintaining this vital sector of the built heritage, and that the only way at present to support this is by giving direct to the LPoW.
- Education is also needed to ensure that all owners of LPoWs are aware of the implications of listing, and of the procedures which apply in their particular case if they want to make changes
- There is a need to streamline the approvals process, particularly where a number of different amenity bodies are involved.
- Support is needed for LPoWs whose projects are turned down and where no alternative way to move towards sustainability is apparent.

The report concludes: "The choice seems clear. Whilst interim measures can be put in place to help those who currently care for these buildings, and this study suggests a variety of these, now is the time to plan for when those people are no longer around to do so. Either another system is put into place, drawing on other resources, or it must be accepted that many of these noble (and some not so noble) edifices will be lost to the nation for ever. There does not seem to be another way; continuing the present way would not appear to be an option for much longer."

Living Stones
For English Heritage
May 2010

A: INTRODUCTION

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This research project was conducted by Living Stones on behalf of English Heritage.

Its purpose is to provide insight into Listed Places of Worship, and to inform the launch of the “Caring for Listed Places of Worship” (LPoW) stream to the “Heritage at Risk” (HaR) programme.

The project’s aims are defined as:

- To obtain an understanding of the particular issues facing the managers, users and others associated with Listed Places of Worship, with particular reference to the part they play in the community around them.
- To assess the extent to which the fact that the building is listed has a positive or negative effect on these issues.
- To examine the part played by secular agencies in the management and maintenance of listed places of worship.
- To examine the role of listed places of worship in local communities
- To consider what potential exists for better practice and procedures in terms of providing assistance to those charged with the care of these buildings, by exploring: opportunities for partnership; the need for support and guidance; and the elimination of unnecessary hindrances and obstacles.
- To develop a methodology and toolkit which will enable this consultation exercise to be repeated by other groups.

A number of abbreviations are used throughout this report; the most common are:

EH	English Heritage
HaR	Heritage at Risk
LS	The Living Stones Consultancy
LPoW	Listed Place of Worship
PoW	Place of Worship
PoW@R	Places of Worship at Risk

THE BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The register of listed buildings for England contains almost 375,000 entries, of which nearly 15,000 are Listed Places of Worship. The exact figure is not known, since at any given time some which are listed as being Places of Worship are no longer used as such, and some formerly secular listed buildings, cinemas or schools, for example, are in use as Places of Worship. Of the 9,200 buildings listed in the register as Grade I, around 45% are Places of Worship, mainly English parish churches.

The vast majority of listed places of worship belong to five denominations – the Church of England, Roman Catholic Church, Baptist Union, Methodist Church and United Reformed Church. These five (together with the Church in Wales) currently enjoy “Ecclesiastical Exemption”, that is, the regulation and control of work to their listed structures is administered by their own denomination and not, as in the case of other Listed Place of Worship and most secular listed buildings, by the Local Planning Authority. Other faith groups such as the Quakers and Unitarians have significant numbers of listed buildings, whilst a wide variety of other denominations and faiths use one or more listed buildings, including buildings that formerly belonged to another denomination or faith.

Key Issues facing Places of Worship

The long-term future of many places of worship is threatened by a number of factors, chief amongst them often being dwindling and ageing congregations who are less able to maintain the fabric of buildings. This places greater demands upon the reduced financial resources of central religious bodies and other funding agencies.

At the same time, faith groups and the voluntary sector are being asked to play an increasing role in the delivery of social and public services and community development.

In response to these issues, a number of programmes are being developed to assist places of worship, from grant schemes to support in widening community use of places of worship. These include the English Heritage/HLF Joint Repair Grant Scheme for Places of Worship and the Archbishops’ Council “Building Faith in our Future”.

a) **The English Heritage/HLF Joint Repair Grants for Places of Worship Scheme.**

Since 2002 this scheme has awarded over £100m to ensure the proper repair and well-being of the fabric of over 1,000 listed places of worship, concentrating on key ‘high-level’ repairs to maintain weather-tightness. As such it is an essential component of the overall aim of ensuring the future sustainability of places of worship.

b) **The Archbishops’ Council “Building Faith in our Future” programme.**

Together with the follow-up toolkit “Crossing the Threshold” this is part of a long-term programme aimed at helping churches to develop community links in order to secure the well-being of their buildings. It states:

“It is increasingly recognised that church buildings are a precious resource and can play a vital role in their communities. A church building can provide space for meetings and activities, offer volunteer help for projects and fulfil the Church’s aim of serving the community. While church buildings will need careful assessment, they have potential for hosting a wider range of activities.”

Many churches have opened their doors for community projects, cafés, concerts, exhibitions and essential services such as post offices, while still remaining primarily places of worship. Such extended and additional uses provide a sense of community, revive the church building itself, attract new visitors and tourists and can regenerate whole neighbourhoods. The church building itself benefits from more frequent use, regular heating and additional funds and volunteers.”

Clearly where this is proposed in the case of a Listed Place Of Worship particular considerations need to be borne in mind, and this study aims to provide insights into the particular issues which a church may face, and the particular advantages and disadvantages which listing may bestow.

c) Caring for Places of Worship programme

One of the latest initiatives set up to support places of worship, is English Heritage's Caring for Places of Worship programme. Set up as part of English Heritage "Heritage at Risk" programme, Caring for Places of Worship assess the issues surrounding the sustainability of places of worship, as well as providing an indication of the number of listed places of worship at risk in England. In 2011, places of worship at risk will be added to the Heritage at Risk register, making England the only country in the world to have a comprehensive knowledge of the state of its protected heritage and provide further insights to help save this precious and finite resource for the future.

This current project, by examining a sample of Listed Places of Worship and exploring the critical aspects of listed buildings as they relate to the managing Trustees, users, and wider community, will assist in launching this new initiative.

It will also provide information which should be useful in understanding more about the issues associated with "Building Faith in our Future", and give insight into the experiences of LPoWs who have benefitted from the Joint Places of Worship Repair Scheme.

THE PARAMETERS OF THE STUDY

The study focused on six geographical areas, which were chosen by English Heritage based on a number of criteria including number and type of listed Place of Worship, availability of places of worship at risk data, rural/urban/regional split, known contacts, and willingness to take part in the project.

The term "Place of Worship" (abbreviated in this report as "PoW") is used in recognition that not all faiths refer to their building as "church", and that, within those that do, the word "church" is also used to refer to the worshipping community rather than the building they use.

The areas for study were:

- Suburban Newcastle
- Inner City Birmingham
- Bradford
- Exeter and Dartmoor
- Lincolnshire
- Hastings

The target was to consult with 10 Listed Places of Worship in each area. It was recognised that this choice meant that the case studies would not necessarily be statistically representative, but the selection offered the opportunity to study specifically urban, suburban and rural areas, and to engage with both predominantly Christian and more multi-faith communities.

In each area consultation with a number of different groups was required:

- The trustees of the listed PoW
- The practising congregation
- The wider secular community which uses Listed PoW buildings for non–faith-based activities
- Local Authorities (including Heritage Champions)

The areas of research differed with each group, although it was recognised that in many instances the same issues are relevant to different groups. The main areas for research were:

Trustees of historic PoW

The meaning of historic Places of Worship

- What does the listed PoW building mean to them? How does it impact on worship and other faith based activities?
- How does the PoW building contribute to their role in the local community? Do they get more support/recognition from the local community because the building is historic?
- Who uses their buildings and for what purposes? Is there potential to expand this?
- What makes buildings sustainable?
- What do they see in the future for their PoW?

Support and guidance needed by trustees of historic places of worship

- Explore their existing maintenance processes and experiences (e.g. who has responsibility for it, costs, insurance, timings, whether they have quinquennial inspections)
- What skills are needed to maintain historic PoW and have they access to these skills (e.g. accountancy)
- What would make a difference to their ability to maintain historic PoW (e.g. funding, greater involvement of local community, space, facilities, skills training)
- What issues will you face in the future in terms of maintenance?

The practising congregation

The meaning of historic Places of Worship

- What role does the PoW building play in their lives? Thinking in terms of social networking, information, communication, developing trust, community spirit.
(NOTE: these subject headings were set out by EH. and are defined as :
 - *Social networking : meeting, interacting with and developing relationships with other people who use the LPoW.*
 - *Information : providing and disseminating information concerning the both the LPoW and religion, and public service information.*
 - *Communication: opportunities to interact with other people.*
 - *Developing trust: through meeting with, interacting with and enjoying the support of other people who share the same values.*
 - *Community spirit: through meeting together, sharing faith, supporting and valuing each other, members of faith communities build community spirit.*
 - *Developing faith: through communal worship, teaching received, support and encouragement from the leadership of the PoW.)*
- Does worshipping in a listed PoW positively contribute towards their worship?
- What do they see in the future for their PoW?

The wider secular community which use PoW buildings for non faith based activities

The meaning of historic Places of Worship

- What does the building mean for their group? Are there any alternatives open to them?
- What role does the PoW building play for their group? Thinking in terms of social networking, information, communication, developing trust, community spirit
- What do they need from buildings?

Local Authorities (including heritage champions)

- What role do they see listed PoW playing in their community?
- What further information do they require on the role of PoW
- What do they see in the future for their PoW

Methodology

The methodology used for this survey was developed by Living Stones from initial proposals suggested by English Heritage. The research was conducted by a combination of written questionnaire and face-to-face discussion, with some follow-up by telephone and email.

In total 67 Places of Worship were canvassed across the six nominated areas. Target PoWs were initially selected from a long-list for each region supplied by English Heritage Regional Offices, this being narrowed down by the application of parameters indicated by EH at the project's inception meeting. Thus the aim, for example, of the Bradford survey was to specifically explore the issues with respect to other faiths and non-mainstream Christian PoWs (i.e. those that do not have Ecclesiastical Exemption), the aim for Lincolnshire was to obtain a perspective on rural Places of Worship, and for Birmingham the inner city situation.

The project brief required obtaining the views from 10 PoWs in each area, so, in recognition that there would not be a 100% response to the initial approach, this was expanded to an initial contact list of 12-15 PoWs in each area. In fact the level of response was much less than anticipated, and the total of 67 LPoWs eventually canvassed is from a list of 127 to whom an initial approach was made, a response rate of just over 50% (53%)

The relatively low response rate is itself significant, and is considered to be one of the main findings of the project. It would appear that there are two related reasons for this aspect of the research.

The first is that, unlike most other listed building types (commercial or local authority owned listed premises, for example), Places of Worship by and large have no employed facilities managers or similar positions, and the management of these buildings is carried out entirely by incumbents and volunteers. The second is that these personnel are hard pressed to simply maintain not only the building but the whole life of the church or other religious body to which they belong, and matters pertaining to listing have a very low priority.

This point will be developed later, but it is important to note at this stage that the whole process of management of a large and significant sector of national heritage is in the hands of a small, dedicated but voluntary workforce, who, whilst they do the best they can to fulfil this charge amongst a large range of other duties, do not necessarily have all of the expertise nor do all that is required in the best interests of the building (in many cases they also must raise the funding required) and could, in theory, abandon the cause at any time.

It should also be noted here that the list of those who did not respond includes a not insignificant number of those who agreed to participate, but who never actually managed to organise the return of questionnaires, or of participants who initially confirmed their intention of attending a seminar only to withdraw later because of other, more pressing matters, or matters perceived as being of greater priority. These facts are in themselves indicative of the pressures placed on those with responsibility for LPoWs, from a wide variety of sources.

Each LPoW canvassed was asked to provide written responses from a Trustee or equivalent duty-holder to supply information relating to the background and management of the building. Additionally they were asked to obtain the views of three members of their congregation, and, if applicable, one secular user of the building. In the case of the first tranche of enquiries they were also invited to send representatives to a regional seminar to discuss the issues involved. The poor level of response and the tight timescale of the project meant that subsequent enquiries had to be sent out after the seminar had been held.

The seminars were daytime events, running from 10.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m., and were based around a series of three powerpoint presentations, each followed by small-group discussions (although in some locations low levels of attendance meant that discussion took place with the whole group).

- *'Listing' - What is the status quo of our listed buildings?*
- *'Shaping' - How do our buildings enable and constrain our activities?, and*
- *'Keeping' - How can we ensure the future of our buildings?*

Whilst the two forms of enquiry, seminars and questionnaires, provided some different insights, there was much that was common to the two. What follows is an extraction of the key findings of the survey; these findings are then analysed in more detail, firstly by user group and then by geographical locality, in subsequent sections of this report. The findings are then summarised in a conclusions section.

B OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.

This section summarises the findings of the study; the recommendations made in response to conclusions reached from these findings are set out later in this report.

Congregations value the opportunity to worship in historic places, though they do not necessarily see a benefit in listing

It was very clear from both the responses to the questionnaires and the discussions that 'listing' per se was not considered to be significant; where merit was perceived in the place of worship, what was valued was the whole tradition and heritage, the fact of continuing worship and witness as well as the building's intrinsic qualities.

This coloured particularly the responses from congregations, who may not have been aware that their PoW was listed but found that their surroundings enhanced their worship experience. This distinction is, of course, in some ways artificial since in many cases those very qualities are why the building is listed, but in the context of this survey it is considered significant since the same responses might well apply to a number of PoWs that are not listed, and some listed PoWs might not bestow this experience.

There is a difference in awareness of issues around listing between denominations and faith groups

Some denominations, particularly Anglicans and Roman Catholics, placed higher value on their building than did other, particularly more 'evangelical' streams, for whom worship was more divorced from surroundings. On the whole, Anglican church members seemed to be more aware of the facts and implications surrounding listing than other denominations and faiths; this may be in part due to the more formal structures and hierarchy of the established church.

This last point leads on to another aspect of the survey which was very apparent, namely the large differential in understanding of, or engagement with, the issues, between those faiths and denominations which had an extensive supporting or controlling hierarchy (the Anglican diocesan system, Methodist circuit and central administrative bodies, for example) and those which were left very much to their own devices when it came to matters of listing. This is for the most part reflected in the split between those denominations with ecclesiastical exemption and those without. Nowhere was this more apparent than in Bradford, not least in the almost 100% lack of interest and response from this second group, who were the main target of the survey in that location.

The differences between Exempt and Non Exempt places of worship was most clear in answers to the question '*What procedures do you adopt if you want to make changes to your building?*' Here the replies from Anglican churches invariably referred to the faculty system, and similarly Methodists referred to Connexional approval, Baptists to consulting the Baptist Union and so on, whereas replies from non-exempted LPoWs almost never referred to the need to consult with the Local Authority or obtain listed building consent, instead speaking of 'agreement of church meeting' 'common consent' and, most often simply 'try and obtain the necessary funding'.

Trustees wish to maintain control of their building, but . . .

A clear consensus favoured the current position with over 70% of Trustee respondents agreeing that maintaining their building should be their responsibility, but with the majority of these adding a rider to the effect that this situation should continue in a context of regular and predictable outside funding assistance; the words 'partnership' and joint venture' often being used.

Funding can be complex, with difficulties reported in obtaining funding from secular sources and confusion over the dual role of EH as regulator and grant giver

Funding, not surprisingly, figured highly in the responses. The first point to emerge was the failure to distinguish between the dual roles of EH as both heritage adviser and funding administrator, with a number of responders being clearly surprised and disappointed that EH's approval of their proposals was not automatically followed by EH grant aid. There is an obvious need for more clarity and education on this point.

Some PoWs felt that public sector financial assistance to PoW was often withheld because of 'religious' connotations; as one commentator put it 'political correctness' was often used as an excuse for what he perceived as 'religiophobia'. Two examples were quoted at Hastings. The first was of a town centre church that was approached by the council who wanted to floodlight the church because 'it would look pretty in the town'. This received DAC approval on the basis that the church would not be expected to pay anything, but the view was expressed cynically that 'if the church was falling down behind the floodlighting the council would not care less'. The second example was of a church which for twenty one years has mounted a series of lunchtime concerts (weekly in June, July and August) particularly showcasing and supporting emerging musical talent. These concerts, which attract an average audience of 80-100 each week, are free with a retiring collection to cover costs and a nominal fee paid to performers, whilst all of the organising and running is done voluntarily. The local authority refused a grant from its arts budget on the basis that 'any surplus funds from the venture would go to the church'.

PoW felt this approach was most common amongst local authorities, but is not confined to them; there are many grant-making bodies who will not fund 'religious purposes'. Clearly whilst this situation remains, and unless there is an acceptance that PoW require funding assistance to maintain the national heritage and that this is not funding for, and support of, 'religious purposes', the most well-intentioned efforts of the army of faithful volunteers will be discouraged and undermined.

Limited support for funding to be wholly the responsibility of the state

One aspect of financing which was explored in some detail was where the funding responsibility should lie. The seminar material contrasted the English system with that of Norway, where responsibility for the maintenance of the church is placed with the local authority (a tradition dating back more than a century) but where the result can lead to continual under-funding and delays in carrying out essential maintenance. At one seminar an attendee described his experience of the French system where public sector funding of church building maintenance and repair was apparently carried out on a cyclical basis, over a number of years, with the result that

'if it's your turn to get work done this year it is done but if in two year's time you get a hole in the roof and the water comes rushing in you have to wait until it's your turn again before it's repaired' [Note: this point has not been verified].

The same commentator expressed the view that much goodwill which exists as a result of community responsibility for the building could be lost if that responsibility was transferred.

EH funding is important in pulling in other sources of funding, though some criticisms of it

Certainly the important point was made on more than one occasion that EH funding and endorsement is invaluable in persuading other funders of the authenticity and worthiness of particular proposals.

Concern was expressed at one seminar that EH grant aid was 'means tested', with applicants being required to submit their accounts and then expected to provide a considerable amount of funding from their own finances, but that this did not have regard of running costs and that "we work to build up an account to get work done but then find

that our accounts are then so run down that we have difficulty in maintaining the building once it has been restored". It was also felt that this approach did not fully take into account all the other calls on the finances of the Place of Worship.

Benefits of historic PoW are recognised

Several seminars heard of the benefits accruing from tourism, and in particular heritage trails and heritage open days, and appreciation of both EH and local authorities for the parts they play in organising and promoting these. There was also recognition that the 'heritage factor' is very important in soliciting secular interest in, and support of, LPoWs.

Tensions between PoW and local communities do sometimes exist

There were some examples given of situations where all parties were in agreement on some aspect of reordering of a LPoW only for objections to be raised from within the local community by those who are not directly involved. However this was by no means universal.

The processes around building consent and funding does cause concerns, especially the need to get multiple approvals and receiving differing advice

The processes of building scheme approval and grant application in general caused a great deal of comment. The sympathy of the Newcastle seminar was extended to one attendee whose Victorian church was extensively modified in the 1920s, as a result of which the approval of both the Victorian Society and the Twentieth Century Society, in addition to English Heritage, the DAC and the local authority, were required for building schemes, necessitating, as he put it, 'a perpetual struggle to get all the ducks in a row', with any modification of the proposals suggested by one agency having to be referred back to all the others.

The time taken by this process was a major irritation, with examples being quoted of EH taking three months to reply to a letter, and of officers moving on without apparently leaving any case notes for their successor. This irritation was not confined to EH, there was equal frustration with DACs, SPAB, local authority conservation officers and other amenity bodies. The delays caused by the need for consultation with, and the agreement of, many or all of these bodies were seen as directly affecting the cost and viability of some projects, especially if funding windows were missed as a result. There was a repeated call for the streamlining of this process, even to the extent of wondering whether a 'one-stop shop' was possible.

A related request was for skilled assistance with, or advice on, project management, to ensure that this process was dealt with as efficiently as possible. At Exeter, the experience of the Dartmoor National Park Authority was cited as an example. There the administrators felt so besieged by 'ologists', in other words specialists each with their own particular agenda and different viewpoint, the constant conflict between which was stifling any progress, that they eventually got all of them together to hammer out a joint strategy and 'vision statement'. This set out priorities, key areas, shared objectives and so on, so that individual decisions could be taken in the light of that without constant reference to all the parties. The question was asked whether this could serve as a model for LPoWs, although it was recognised that this was a much more complex situation, especially in its cutting across geographical and regional boundaries, so that, for example, a single DAC might have jurisdiction over LPoWs in a number of local authorities and more than one region of EH.

Lack of dialogue between partners can cause problems

The discussions brought out problems of stalemate, frustration and inaction due to lack of dialogue, lack of flexibility and lack of understanding between parties. One church has

very poor access for wheelchairs and those of limited mobility. All external doors are direct to the pavement, with steps. Four access schemes had been prepared and refused. Now membership is declining partly because of access problems and the church feels neglected and that no one is prepared to help them. The seminars highlighted the importance of dialogue, when a Baptist church, which had spent two years trying to reach approval for the installation of a ramp, managed to resolve some issues in half an hour at the end of a seminar which representatives of all interested parties attended!

Feeling that EH and other parties could provide more support around the listing process rather than just “policing” it

There seems to be a feeling that EH and other agencies associated with the listed building process ‘police’ the system, giving or refusing permission, without offering counsel where permission is turned down, or helping to explore other options. There was also a call for EH to showcase best practice in order to help others. Neither of these last two points was made universally, and examples were given which ran counter to them and evidenced the help given by EH to particular LPoWs.

Calls by some for EH to consider procedures, but also positive experiences of working with EH

There was a clear and sustained call for attention to be given by EH to their own methods and requirements. An example was given in one seminar of a LPoW which made a great effort to gather all parties together for a meeting to discuss some detailed proposals, only for the EH officer to apologise on arrival that he had not had time to read up the case (this, it was pointed out, despite the fact that it had taken him a train journey of some hours to travel there.) An example was also cited of a proposal which was consistently refused by an EH Inspector, but when he retired his successor agreed it. This suggests that there may be some lack of consistency in the application of EH policies amongst the individual case officers concerned, and that clear and consistent guidelines are needed.

There was a request for both consistency and flexibility in the advice given by EH. Some expressed the opinion that listing led to being ‘frozen in time’ though this view was disputed and challenged. Several said that they had not sought EH funding for projects as they had been advised that this would ‘cause a fuss, slow everything down, impose restrictions, and you would be beholden to them for evermore’. So they raised money from other sources and went ahead without involving EH. This point of course is in contrast to that already made above of the benefit of EH funding in encouraging approval and funding from other sources.

Too high standards and principles of repair?

Standards and principles of repair were called into question at one seminar where representatives of a LPoW stated that they had been required to replace masonry, which had been seriously eroded with like-for-like masonry that would simply suffer the same erosion. Resentment was expressed in some seminars at the high standards of materials and workmanship expected, such as the insistence on hand-made bricks. Another constant complaint was the requirement for stolen lead work to be replaced with more lead, as opposed to alternative, less valuable, materials.

Therefore the argument was made that secular society (i.e. agencies other than the building managers) should at least cover any additional costs that occur because of the need to employ a higher grade specification than might otherwise be the case. The point should be acknowledged here, however, that good conservation practice and high standards of materials and workmanship are not, or should not, simply be confined to those situations where listed building controls are able to insist on them.

Two buildings means divided priorities

The repair and maintenance of premises was of particular concern where more than one building is involved. Those responsible for the management of LPoWs spoke of the balancing act where they had both a LPoW, which was only used for a short time on one day a week, and another building, a hall maybe, perhaps on the same site and also within the listed curtilage, which was not viewed as so 'precious' but was in daily use. Whilst their own need is to invest in the upgrading of the more useful building, which serves them as both an income generator and as a community facility, there is often pressure to prioritise spending on the repair and maintenance of the LPoW because of its heritage significance.

Limited examples of partnerships with secular organisations

What was evident was the lack of partnership between LPoWs and potential public sector funders. PoWs generally were not 'in the loop' when it came to, for example, regeneration funding. One seminar felt that religious bodies, even multi-faith groupings, were continually excluded from regeneration bodies, and generally ignored. On the other hand, it was very evident that, for the most part, PoWs themselves were ignorant of the initiatives going on around them, and the opportunities these offered for partnership and development of their premises. It is clear that this is in no small part because the typical volunteer workforce has neither the skills nor the human resources to get involved in partnerships with statutory bodies who have full-time paid professional staff.

Extended use and re-use is not always the answer

A number of factors complicate the argument that extended use is the answer to sustainability. In Lincoln several LPoWs pointed out that their quite small rural communities (less than 1,000 population) also contained a village hall, maybe a scout hut, and perhaps a school. All of these 'competed' for secular use and were much better placed in terms of amenity, since they already had basic facilities (toilets, for example) This meant that not only were they better placed by not being 'burdened' with being listed and requiring complex procedures to effect any change, their presence also severely limited the potential for secular use of the LPoW should any appropriate change be possible. It was clear in other seminars that in some instances the very fact that the PoW is listed discourages its managers from even trying to seek out the potential for extended use. This might be another area where clergy training could be effective. Several seminars considered the wider issues of the number of PoWs present in their area, and the large number of LPoWs struggling for survival. Two points from Birmingham illustrate this aspect. The first noted the difficulties involved in adapting LPoWs to meet cultural mobility, such as where an Anglican church remains in an area which is now mainly Muslim, for example, and whether EH or local authorities could be further involved in facilitating the re-use of these buildings.

Fear for the future

Survival was at the heart of the main concern which surfaced in every location. The overriding issue, expressed time and time again both through questionnaires and comments in seminars, was *"Who will be looking after our building in ten years' time?"*

Whilst the problem of dwindling and ageing congregations is neither specific to LPoWs nor a consequence of listing, it is clear that this is the main risk to the future of the heritage of listed buildings in this country. There are several factors that make this so:

- a) The day-to-day maintenance of LPoWs is almost entirely the province of voluntary labour, and as this declines both in number and ability, the risk to buildings through lack of preventative maintenance increases.

Without a faithful few (who sometimes ignore health and safety guidelines by which professionals are bound), helped by out by local tradespeople who give generously of their time and labours (though often without the necessary skills to ensure the best interests of the building) the well-being of the historic fabric is at increasing risk. A timely installation of 'Flashband' has kept many heritage properties watertight until permanent repairs could be effected, but if the leak had not been noticed or the temporary remedy not applied the building may not have survived.

- b) The financing of the upkeep of LPoWs is largely the result of fundraising by small dedicated congregations, and as these dwindle and costs rise, the funding shortfall is ever widening. Figures included in the seminar presentations gave the annual cost of upkeep of English parish churches as £110m, and this figure excludes much of the minor repair work which is constantly carried out. In 2006 EH estimated the cost of bringing the fabric of all LPoWs into good condition as £925m. The level of EH grant aid across all LPoWs was £22.6m in 2008-9. Almost all of the shortfall has to be found by the local congregation. The prognosis is that costs will rise and grants fall. In conjunction with a diminished capacity to raise funds locally the future for LPoWs could be catastrophic.
- c) There is a perception, almost to the point of resentment, that the continual effort to maintain the fabric, in terms of both human and financial resources, has caused a failure to engage in the church's main purpose of mission. Had this been prioritised some years ago, it might now have resulted in more healthy congregations, more able to sustain the building. As one speaker at Lincoln said 'Time for mission is being sucked out by bricks'.
- d) Congregations are diminishing for several reasons, only one of which is the reduction of interest in personal faith. Cultural mobility also plays its part, with one Bradford vicar noting that his parish was in the poorest 1% of the UK, and that at the 2001 census over 7000 people 'ticked the Muslim box' and 1100 'the Christian one'.
- e) The burden of upkeep is a deterrent to new members. One attendee at a seminar located in a recently reordered LPoW said 'As soon as I walked in here I thought to myself "I would not join this church". It is clear that the cost of upkeep is enormous, and that is not where I want my financial giving to my church to end up'

This is a complex matter but it does highlight the fundamental point with which this section of the report began, that not only the present-day care and management of LPoWs, but also their very future existence, is in the hands of dedicated incumbents and volunteers who recognise, and do their best to fulfil, their responsibilities, but who are hard pressed to simply maintain not just the building but every other aspect of the life of the church or other religious body to which they belong. Not only do matters pertaining to listing have a very low priority in their eyes, there is a real and imminent danger that they will soon be unable to discharge their responsibilities. This aspect encompasses points made earlier about the reluctance of the public and charitable sectors to fund what are perceived as 'religious purposes', and also on the ability of LPoWs to take advantage of opportunities which might be of benefit to their heritage buildings.

The evidence of this survey is that there is an enormous will by many faithful and dedicated volunteers in positions of responsibility to always do what is best for their LPoW, often at great cost to their time and their pocket. However some feel that they do not have the support they need, either financially or in terms of advice and counsel, and that their best intentions can be frustrated by the bureaucracy, duplication, conflict of interest and inflexibility of those involved in the listed building system. But above all they say that as they look around, at their ageing and diminishing colleagues, they see neither how this process could continue when they are gone, nor any signs that a new process is being established to replace it.

C. DETAILED ANALYSIS BY LOCALITY

The brief for the study proposed six geographical locations, selected by EH for a number of reasons. These six areas for study were:

- Inner City Birmingham
- Bradford
- Exeter and Dartmoor
- Hastings
- Lincolnshire
- Suburban Newcastle

The target was to consult with 10 Listed Places of Worship in each area.

The selection process entailed the provision by EH to LS of a 'long list' of some 50 LPoWs for each area, compiled by the EH Regional Offices. LS were then required to narrow this down to the target figure using parameters established at an initial inception meeting. The aim was to make each location a representative sample of a specific mix of LPoWs, thus Bradford, for example, represented the multi-faith dimension; Birmingham the inner-city and Lincoln the rural countryside. These parameters went a long way in narrowing down the long-lists, which in any event were to some extent self-selecting; the 50 LPoWs on the Suburban Newcastle list, for example, ranged as far as Alnwick and Berwick on Tweed.

In the event the poor response to the initial approaches in some regions led to a widening of the target, and there was recognition that this widening process to some extent diluted the original parameters. For instance the very low response from other faiths in Bradford meant that a second wave of mainly mainstream Christian LPoWs was canvassed, thus distorting the original intention of this particular survey.

The following analysis by geographical location is based mainly on the results of the questionnaire surveys since these provide comparative statistical data, but the input into the seminars and follow-up conversations has also been taken into account.

BIRMINGHAM.

The Birmingham seminar was attended by 16 delegates representing six LPoW, All were generally apathetic with regards to listing but acknowledged that listing gave some degree of long-term protection for their building. Delegates were unanimous that listing brings with it red-tape and additional bureaucracy though. None of the delegates used their LPoW itself for community outreach, although several had a hall attached which was used by the community for various activities. Delegates were not aware of the concept of faithful capital, or even social capital, and also did not know how to engage with wider regeneration programmes, and were even unaware that they could. At least one church felt caught in a trap being unable to put on other activities without toilet and kitchen facilities in the first place. However, all delegates felt greatly encouraged by the seminar process and hoped that English Heritage would now take notice of their unique and precarious position.

SAMPLING: Initial contact was made with a total of 15 LPoWs, three of which were found to have closed. All others were sent survey packs. The seminar was attended by a total of 16 delegates. The venue was a significant city-centre synagogue. Questionnaires submission was poor and was followed up by telephone interviews. An additional LPoW was subsequently contacted and provided information in a telephone interview.

FOCUS AND DIVERSITY: The context of the Birmingham survey was a multicultural city centre. There were, however, no LPoWs on the long-list belonging to 'other faiths', except for the host synagogue, one Greek Orthodox, and a Shree Krishna temple.

REPRESENTATION: The seminar comprised two Jewish, five RC, six C of E and one URC delegates. The Conservation Officer and Heritage Champion also attended.

Questionnaires / telephone responses were received from three Anglican LPoWs, two RC, one URC, one Quaker, one Jewish, one Methodist, and the Krishna temple. Feedback was received from the Conservation Officer,

FINDINGS: The main points to emerge from the Birmingham survey were:

1. Considerable apathy with regard to matters concerned with listing across all denominations and faiths canvassed.
2. Responses from Trustees indicated that:
 - a) There was a variety of opinion on the implications of being listed, with comments including
 - 'it brings a sense of relief that such a beautiful piece of architecture cannot be easily swept aside for petty development'
 - 'an additional burden'
 - 'an assured future'
 - 'red tape and financial headaches'
 - b) There was a fairly even division of opinion as to whether listing added value to worship. One valued the fact that 'the listing protects and resists any form of change which may detract from this legacy (of the dramatic high Anglican design of the Oxford Movement)'; whilst another lamented the fact that 'the building is as the Victorians left it and is unsuitable for worship in an ethnically diverse area'. Other views were that it was the quality of the building rather than the 'actual listing' which enhanced worship, that 'young people are put off by old building' and that 'fixed pews restrict wider use'
 - c) None gave examples of ventures which the listing had prevented them from carrying out. Only one saw that listing gave additional opportunities, and this was, in fact, due the building 'lending itself to the big liturgical occasion'
 - d) Two thirds considered that they did get more support from the community because they were listed; examples given were 'local baptisms but sadly few weddings', 'the local community sees it as an oasis of peace in an industrial area' and 'the local community is very helpful'.
 - e) The same two thirds used their buildings for some activities other than worship. Activities included concerts and school assemblies, day centre for the elderly, and a variety of community group meetings involved with subjects as diverse as amnesty international, patchwork class and examinations. One hosted a Buddhist group. At least one had a hall which was used for many of these functions. When they were asked whether they had considered additional extended use, and if so what had prevented it, they cited reasons such as car parking, heating, condition of wooden floor and 'insufficient resources'. There was little response to the question of adequate support to develop community activities. One pays a consultant who takes responsibility for marketing the premises
 - f) Trustees were fairly equally divided on the question of whether there was adequate support and guidance available to help them to maintain their LPoW. Almost all indicated that the single factor which would make the greatest difference to their ability to manage their building was additional funding. Some wanted a reduction in the number of agencies involved.

- e) Many foresaw building problems in the future ('stone facing to front elevation', 'central heating and roof' and 'complete rewire –it is most dangerous'). Some would welcome a shared approach to management, mainly with national/local government and EH.
3. Responses from congregation members showed that:
- a) All but one was aware that their building was listed, and half knew why. Most knew what listing meant.
 - b) All considered that their LPoW played an important part in their lives in respect of worship, and the vast majority also considered that it helped with networking and the development of faith and of community spirit.
 - c) All except one said that worshipping in a listed building contributed positively towards, or added value to, their worship experience, referring to 'the total atmosphere of peace and serenity' 'I am aware of its history' and 'a beautifully proportioned building with a calm atmosphere',
 - d) Half were optimistic about the future, seeing more activities than at present, but some saw no change and two anticipated closure.

Two responses were received from secular users,. Both used the LPoW because of its location and suitability for their purposes, although cost and lack of alternative venue played a part for one. One was not aware that their building was listed, both knew what listing meant. Both felt that the listing added value.

There was only one response from a conservation officer and due to a small response rate is not included here.

BRADFORD

The Bradford seminar was poorly attended, with only three LPoWs represented, plus the Local Authority conservation officer.

Discussion was good and wide-ranging, particularly as the two denominations attending represented opposite ends of the spectrum of LPoW experience, one having ecclesiastical exemption and a large support organisation behind it and the other almost entirely self-sufficient and part of the secular listed building process.

It was helpful that the venue was a former LPoW now converted for use as an arts venue, since this was used by the Conservation Officer as an example of what was possible.

Feedback indicated that much had been learned from the seminar, both from the presentations and from hearing of the experiences of others with a differing viewpoint.

SAMPLING: Initial contact was made with a total of 18 LPoWs, of whom 3 declined to be involved and the other 15 indicated a willingness to be involved, and were sent survey packs. In the event representatives of only two of the initial sampling attended the seminar, and 8 eventually returned questionnaires from some or all of the user groups being surveyed. A subsequent second round of approaches to a further 4 LPoWs, after the seminars had been held, yielded an additional 2 questionnaire responses.

FOCUS AND DIVERSITY: The emphasis of the Bradford sampling was on LPoWs owned and managed by 'other faiths' and 'non-mainstream Christian denominations', in other words those without ecclesiastical exemption. To that end the initial approach included a Sikh temple (in a former Baptist chapel); a mosque (subsequently found to be closed); a synagogue; a Friends Meeting House; Serbian and Ukrainian Orthodox churches, and an evangelical black church (Church of God of Prophecy), as well as representative Catholic, C of E, Methodist and URC churches. The German Protestant Church (Deutsche Evangelische Kirche) was also approached but was found to have closed and the building converted to form the Delius Arts Centre, which was utilised as the venue for the seminar.

The local authority conservation officer and the Bradford Council Heritage Champion were also canvassed.

REPRESENTATION: Only the black and Catholic churches were represented at the seminar, along with the conservation officer, although the use of a converted former LPoW effectively provided an additional viewpoint. Questionnaires from the first round were returned from the Catholic, Anglican, URC and black churches and the synagogue. The second round of enquiries provided feedback from a further Anglican church. No feedback was received from the Heritage Champion.

FINDINGS: The main points to emerge from the Bradford survey were:

1. The almost total lack of response from the other faith and non-mainstream Christian churches is considered significant. There may be language problems here; certainly in the initial discussions with some of these LPoWs it was difficult to explain what was being requested.
2. Only one response was received from a secular user, and a number of Trustee responses made it clear that their LPoW is not used for any purposes other than worship. It would seem, on the basis not only of these returns but of further investigation in recognition of the small size of sample, that beyond the mainstream Anglican and non-conformist Christian churches, there is little secular use of sacred space. In fact one response, from the synagogue, asked, in reply to the question of whether enough help was available to assist secular activities 'But does one want secular activities?'
3. Responses from Trustees indicated that:
 - a) There were differing views as to the implications of being listed, with comments including
 - 'it means we can't/won't demolish it'
 - 'hopefully help in ensuring its survival'
 - 'recognition of historical importance'
 - 'there can be no alterations to meet present day regulations e.g. wheelchair access'
 - b) There was a fairly even division of opinion as to whether listing added value to worship, reflected in the diversity of comments from 'it is a lovely space' to 'it is difficult to heat and costly to insure'
 - c) Half felt that the restrictions imposed by listing had prevented them from doing things they would like to do. Most felt that listing did not 'add value' in terms of how the building might be used; those who did cited tourism and heritage-related activities.
 - d) Most considered that they did not get more support from the community because they were listed; the exception was the synagogue who spoke warmly of the support given by the local Muslim community when they had a 'funding crisis' recently.
 - e) Only two had weekday use, but these (both Anglican) were clearly very active in terms of supporting their community. Where others were asked whether they had considered extended use, and if so what had prevented it, they cited reasons such as 'restrictions due to box pews' and 'little or no space in nave'.
 - f) All but one felt that there was not enough support and guidance available to help them to maintain their LPoW. Most indicated that this support should come in the form of additional funding.
 - g) All LPoWs foresaw problems in the future with securing adequate finances for on-going maintenance (for example: question 'what issues will you face in the future in terms of maintenance?' answer 'funding, funding, funding'). Most anticipated major repairs.

4. Responses from congregation members showed that:
 - a) 75% were aware that their building was listed, but less than 50% knew why, and two-thirds were unsure what listing meant.
 - b) Respondents were unanimous that their LPOW played an important part in their lives in respect of worship, most agreed that it also helped with the development of faith and of community spirit, but less than half said that it had contributed towards social networking, communication or the dissemination of information.
 - c) They were divided fairly equally as to whether or not worshipping in a listed building contributed positively towards, or added value to, their worship experience, and it is in any event clear that it is qualities beyond the architectural heritage that are identified here. As one respondent put it 'The synagogue is beautiful, but it is the spirit of the place that matters'
 - d) Most were optimistic about the future, seeing more activities than at present, but it is considered that in many cases this represents a 'wish-list' rather than an objective look ahead, since it is often in opposition to other remarks made.
5. The single response from a secular user (a charity established by the host Anglican church to develop community activities) confirmed an understanding of the issues surrounding listing and felt that the listing added value.
6. There were no responses from conservation officers/heritage champions, although the conservation officer made a valuable contribution to the seminar.

EXETER

There was a very good turnout for the Exeter seminar, partly due to interest in the venue at Stoke Canon, which has recently undergone a successful redevelopment. Many delegates came from country churches in team parishes where attendances were low, clergy very thinly spread, and resources minimal. Real concerns were expressed about the future of such churches, especially because of the complexity of regulation surrounding listed buildings, lack of funding, and the absence of a new generation ready to take on the tasks of maintenance. Nonetheless there was great affection for listed church buildings and a real desire to care for them properly.

SAMPLING: Initial contact was made with a total of 41 LPOWs, mainly due to the fact that in a number of instances the incumbents contacted were also in charge of several other LPOWs, which they also involved although they were not on the target list. All were sent survey packs.

The seminar was attended by a total of 27 delegates. Interest in the venue, a locally well-known, recently reordered, parish church, was considered to have been instrumental in attracting so many. Questionnaires were received from 21 LPOWs.

FOCUS AND DIVERSITY: The context of the Exeter survey was a mixture of urban and rural West Country England. One notable feature was the fact that many C of E vicars had charge of several (up to five and six) PoWs. Thus it is not possible to say precisely how many LPOWs were represented by the 23 C of E delegates to the seminar. The sample also included 1 Methodist, 1 Jewish, 1 RC and 2 URC.

REPRESENTATION: The seminar delegates comprised one Jewish, one Methodist, two URC and 23 C of E. The mid Devon Heritage Champion attended the afternoon session

Questionnaires were returned from 18 Anglican LPOWs, one Methodist, one URC and one Jewish. This included 34 replies from congregation members. Three replies were received from professional heritage consultants.

FINDINGS: The main points to emerge from the Exeter survey were:

1. Responses from Trustees indicated that:
 - a) There was a wide variety of opinion on the implications of being listed, with comments including
 - 'red tape and expense'
 - 'we are only custodians of it, for future generations'
 - 'proud that our church is recognised as a national asset'
 - 'restrictions on modifying the building for our use and ultimate sale'
 - b) There was a fairly even division of opinion as to whether listing added value to worship. Several stated that the inflexibility imposed by fixed pews restricted non-traditional forms of worship, whilst others conversely appreciated the continuity of worship and that 'standards will be maintained for years to come'
 - c) Half felt that the restrictions imposed by listing had prevented them from doing things they would like to do, such as 'conversion for social activities'. One said that as a result of the restrictions cited above 'more modern services . . . were held in the village hall'. Another commented that 'historic pews are magnificent but uncomfortable'. None considered that listing provided additional opportunities.
 - d) Around 75% considered that they did get more support from the community because they were listed; there being suggestions that this was in no small part because of the PoW's importance to the landscape.
 - e) All used their buildings for some activities other than worship; for the most part these were church-based weekday activities. There as also some use by local community groups, and an internet cafe. Those with little other use ('occasional concerts and coffee mornings') cited inflexibility, for example of pew layout, as preventing more widespread use.
There was little response to the question of whether there was adequate support and guidance available to help them to develop secular uses. One made it clear that this should not be left to the vicar.
 - f) Trustees were fairly equally divided on the question of whether there was adequate support and guidance available to help them to maintain their LPoW. Almost all indicated that the single factor which would make the greatest difference to their ability to manage their building was additional funding.
 - g) Most foresaw building problems in the future ('repair to tower' 'updating heating' 'organ overhaul') and with rising costs, falling numbers and falling incomes. Most would welcome a shared approach to management, mainly with national government but some also with local authorities, especially if led to more certainty of funding.

2. Responses from congregation members showed that:
 - a) All but one were aware that their building was listed, but only a third knew why. Two-thirds knew what listing meant.
 - b) Respondents were unanimous that their LPoW played an important part in their lives in respect of worship, and the vast majority also considered that it helped with the development of faith and of community spirit, social networking, communication or the dissemination of information.
 - c) About 60% said that worshipping in a listed building contributed positively towards, or added value to, their worship experience, referring to 'the aura of peace' 'special atmosphere' and 'the sense of many generations', although some disagreed, with one reply saying 'it is cold, damp and uncomfortable'. And another (a church treasurer) that 'the worry about maintenance, the draughts, the leaks and the pews are distractions'
 - d) Over half were optimistic about the future, seeing more activities than at present, but some feared the reduction in numbers of ordained priests and falling congregation numbers, and that a lack of flexibility was to the detriment of future use.

3. There were nine responses from secular users, representing six LPoWs. The uses ranged from pre school activities to choral societies.
 - a) Most used the LPoW because of its location and suitability for their purposes, although cost and lack of alternative venue played a part for some.
 - b) All but two were aware that their building was listed, and most knew what listing meant.
 - c) All but two felt that the listing added value (the choral societies appreciated the acoustics) and only two felt that it inhibited their use of the building.

4. There were three responses from heritage professionals, one each from a conservation officer, a national Parks Cultural Heritage head, and a heritage consultant.
 - a) They had differing degrees of awareness of their local LPoWs
 - b) They considered that the LPoWs fulfilled the functions of supporting religion, social networking and community spirit.
 - c) They had a more pessimistic view of the outlook for LPoWs than the users, seeing more closures and alternative uses. One feared the loss of ecclesiastical exemption.
 - d) They saw benefit in 'greater and earlier dialogue between LPoW and specialists' and 'more and better information about historic value'.

HASTINGS

The initial response to telephone enquiries was good with 10 churches expressing a willingness to participate. In the event only three churches were represented at the seminar along with the Local Authority Conservation Officer.

Discussion at the seminar was particularly critical of the local authority for the lack of support provided to LPoWs and multi-faith groups in the town, and for the seeming exclusion of the faith sector from regeneration forums. Those who spoke were clearly passionate about, and devoted to, the buildings they represented, and felt that others with an interest in the built heritage should share the responsibility for their care.

In conclusion, however, it was felt that it had been a helpful and informative conversation, and the dialogue between one particular church and the Conservation Officer proved beneficial to a specific project.

SAMPLING: The Hastings long-list of 50 LPoWs was comprised mainly of parish churches, with a small number of several other mainstream Christian denominations. There was a Unitarian chapel but no 'other faiths'. Initial contact was made with a total of 13 LPoWs, focussed on the town centre churches, 12 of which agreed to participate. In the event 3 were represented at the seminar and they were the only ones returning questionnaires. A subsequent round of canvassing of 12 LPoWs, widening the geographical area, yielded two further responses.

FOCUS AND DIVERSITY: The focus of the Hastings survey was on the town centre. The long-list included several LPoWs, which were no longer in use as such.

REPRESENTATION: The seminar delegates comprised 1 C of E and 2 Baptist representatives. Questionnaires were returned from 3 C of E and 2 Baptist churches. One Conservation Officer attended the seminar and two further questionnaires were received from other conservation champions.

FINDINGS: The main points to emerge from the Hastings survey were:

1. Responses from Trustees indicated that:

- a) There was a wide variety of opinion on the implications of being listed, with comments including
 - 'It is a recognition of historical merit'
 - 'it adds to the burden of maintenance and constrains us in solutions'
 - 'unaware it was listed until faculty application to repair organ'
 - 'privilege to be involved in building where Christian worship has taken place for 1000 years'
 - b) Only one felt that listing added value to worship, referring to the 'beautiful background and good acoustics'. Another valued the 'atmosphere and aura' and added that 'historical significance is more important than listed status'
 - c) All except one felt that the restrictions imposed by listing had not prevented them from doing things they would like to do. The exception was where a planned alteration was taking longer because of the need to consult EH. One LPoW had benefitted from a major reordering. One saw benefit in the listing as enabling additional activities, the architecture and acoustics creating a fitting venue for musical events.
 - d) Trustees were divided equally as to whether they did get more support from the community because they were listed; one indicated a "sought-after venue for weddings and reported the local community as saying 'they would regret it if it were lost'
 - e) All used their buildings for some activities other than worship. For one this was just a weekly school assembly. One was home to a sure-start, homeless kitchen and toddler group; others held concerts, recitals and lectures. One instanced the inflexibility of fixed pews ('to which the congregation and EH are attached') as restricting extended use. There was little response to the question of whether there was adequate support and guidance available to help them to develop secular uses. One made it clear that this should not be left to the vicar.
 - f) Most felt that there should be more support and guidance available to help them to maintain their LPoW. This should come from central government, local authority, EH, DAC and should principally take the form of additional funding. Answers to the question 'what would make the biggest difference to your ability to manage your building?' included
 - Better access to funds without strings attached
 - Greater information, guidance and coordination between departments
 - Greater community involvement
 - g) Most envisaged major problems in the future due to ageing fabric, falling numbers, higher insurance and diocesan costs, lack of funds and 'exhaustion and worry from constantly trying to raise money'
2. Responses from congregation members (one C of E, three Baptist) showed that:
 - a) All were aware that their building was listed, only one knew why and all but one was aware what listing meant.
 - b) Respondents were unanimous that their LPoW played an important part in their lives in respect of worship, and the development of faith. Half of them saw benefit in respect of social networking, communication and community spirit.
 - c) Only one (C of E) said that worshipping in a listed building contributed positively towards, or added value to, their worship experience.
 - d) All but one envisaged more use in the future, the other seeing no change.
 3. There were no responses from secular users
 4. There were three responses from heritage professionals
 - a) It was agreed that the buildings fulfilled the functions of supporting religion, social networking and community spirit.
 - b) All three respondents anticipated more closures.

LINCOLNSHIRE.

The focus of the Lincoln seminar was rural places of worship, the only exception being the Methodist chapel in Market Rasen, which is a small market town. Being rural Lincolnshire meant a great predominance of large, Anglican churches.

Over the last few years all Anglican churches in the Lincoln diocese have been encouraged to look at their mission and opportunities to serve their local communities but, of the research sample, the number of churches with significant community use was very low. Many villages have Village Halls, school halls or scout or WI huts, which are for hire, so for the church to extend the use of its building would adversely affect the sustainability of these other buildings. This runs counter to the thinking of Archbishops' Council for the Church of England who see extended use as the way to making Places of Worship sustainable. Market Rasen Methodist Chapel is a community resource but is such a large and difficult building that even with community use it is difficult to meet the day-to-day running costs.

SAMPLING: The Lincolnshire long-list of 50 LPoWs contained 45 C of E churches. Initial contact was made with a total of 13 LPoWs who all agreed to participate. Nine returned questionnaires and six were represented at the seminar.

FOCUS AND DIVERSITY: The focus of the Lincolnshire survey was on rural LPoWs, which is why there was a preponderance of C of E buildings. The long-list was narrowed down to exclude town and city-centre buildings. The eventual sample also included one Methodist and one Quaker.

REPRESENTATION: The seminar delegates comprised C of E, Methodist and Quaker representatives. Questionnaires were returned from 7 Anglican LPoWs, one Methodist and one Quaker. Feedback was received from a conservation officer and a Heritage Champion,

FINDINGS: The main points to emerge from the Lincolnshire survey were:

1. The large number of village halls and other community buildings in relatively small settlements, which restricted the potential for additional use of the LPoW.
2. Responses from Trustees indicated that:
 - a) There was a wide variety of opinion on the implications of being listed, with comments including
 - 'It gives the building prestige which is useful in attracting visitors'
 - 'a sense of continuity but a heavy responsibility to maintain the building'
 - 'it means we need to preserve it for future generations'
 - 'restriction on what can be done and an extra layer of agreement'
 - b) There was a fairly even division of opinion as to whether listing added value to worship. One valued the 'wonderful acoustics' whilst another regretted that worship styles may be constrained and others pointed out that it is the building not the listing that adds value.
 - c) Most felt that the restrictions imposed by listing had not prevented them from doing things they would like to do. Two who did feel restricted referred to the removal of pews and one to the additional cost of works due to the listing. Two thirds considered that listing provided no additional opportunities, although a third pointed to the heritage/tourism links.
 - d) Trustees were divided equally as to whether they did get more support from the community because they were listed; one recognised 'strong support' and another referred to 'preserving the look of the village'.
 - e) All used their buildings for some activities other than worship. For one this was just fundraising activities as they were 'hampered by lack of facilities e.g. toilet'

whilst most hosted concerts, festivals and school visits. One was home to several choral and performing societies as well as a number of community groups. Apart from two instances of 'lack of facilities' the factors which restricted further secular use were not building-related, but a lack of human resources. There was a wide variety of response to the question of whether there was adequate support and guidance available to help them to develop secular uses. One was not aware of what help might be available, some said help was there if required, some said that there was no help, but that this should be provided by the local community, DAC or EH.

There was equal variety on what made their building sustainable, replies including 'use', 'money' and 'human resources'

- f) All but one felt that there was adequate support and guidance available to help them to maintain their LPoW. Answers to the question 'what would make the biggest difference to your ability to manage your building?' included:
 - Funding
 - Greater freedom
 - Greater community involvement
 - Better facilities
 - More volunteers or more time.
 - g) Most did not foresee major building problems in the future but feared rising costs and falling numbers. Trustees were mixed on their views of a shared approach to management, some saying 'certainly not' whilst others would concede control if it put a stop to 'endless fundraising'
3. Responses from congregation members showed that:
 - a) All were aware that their building was listed, all except two knew why and what listing meant.
 - b) Respondents were unanimous that their LPoW played an important part in their lives in respect of worship, and almost all considered that it helped with the development of faith and of community spirit. Around half saw benefit in respect of social networking, communication or the dissemination of information.
 - c) Two thirds said that worshipping in a listed building contributed positively towards, or added value to, their worship experience.
 - d) Over half saw little or no change in the future, with one envisaging their LPoW closing.
 4. There were three responses from secular users, representing two LPoWs, one Methodist and one Quaker. The uses ranged from pre school activities to choral societies.
 - a) Most used the LPoW because of its location and suitability for their purposes, although cost played a part for one.
 - b) All were aware that their building was listed, and knew what listing meant.
 - c) One felt that the listing added value and none that it inhibited their use of the building.
 5. There were two responses from heritage professionals, one each from a conservation officer and a Heritage Champion.
 - c) Neither had awareness of their local LPoWs except when consulted.
 - d) They viewed the outlook for LPoWs as more closures, more alternative uses, and more involvement by the local authority.

NEWCASTLE

The LPoWs researched in Newcastle were a mixture of urban and suburban. Those situated in the city centre often had no members who lived within the parish boundaries, due to people moving out of the city, so the “communities” that they were serving were different - not so much geographically local communities but communities of need or tourists/migrants to the city. One example of communities was “self help” communities, one PoW hosted both Alcoholics Anonymous and Gamblers Anonymous groups, whilst another PoW had many overseas visitors.

All those who attended the seminar recognised the need “to balance the books”. Some had extended the use of their buildings considerably.

SAMPLING: The Newcastle long-list of 50 LPoWs contained 28 C of E, 12 RC and 10 non-conformist churches. There were no LPoWs in the ownership of non-mainstream Christian churches or other faiths. Initial contact was made with a total of 14 LPoWs who agreed to participate. Nine returned questionnaires and four were represented at the seminar.

FOCUS AND DIVERSITY: The focus of the Newcastle survey was on LPoWs in the suburban areas of a large city. This emphasis narrowed down considerably the long-list in which, for instance, only eight of the 28 C of E churches fell within these parameters, many others, although having a NE post-code, being located in rural Northumberland or other urban areas. The eventual sample comprised 4 C of E, 3 RC, 1 Methodist, 1 Methodist/URC and 1 Baptist.

REPRESENTATION: The seminar delegates comprised C of E, Methodist and URC representatives, and a conservation officer.

Questionnaires were returned from 4 C of E, 2 RC, 1 Methodist, 1 Methodist/URC and 1 Baptist LPoW. Feedback was also received from the conservation officer.

FINDINGS: The main points to emerge from the Newcastle survey were:

1. A legacy of large Victorian LPoWs, many of which are now very under-used.
2. Mixed fortunes in the present condition of these buildings, in part dependent on the opportunity and desire for change with the times.
3. Responses from Trustees indicated that:
 - a) There was a wide variety of opinion on the implications of being listed, with comments including
 - ‘It reminds us to care for the building and maintain it in a manner that is respectful of its architecture’
 - ‘expensive repairs but better access to funding’
 - ‘we could not carry through our original plan to demolish the building’
 - ‘permission takes ages and work is expensive’
 - ‘our building is seen as important for the community and the nation’.
 - b) Most respondents felt that listing did not add value to worship. One said that ‘listing is not relevant to worship’ whilst another regretted that listing placed restrictions on worship styles. An alternative viewpoint was offered by one trustee who said ‘It’s a beautiful building for liturgy’.
 - c) Most felt that the restrictions imposed by listing had not prevented them from doing things they would like to do. One referred to the inability to remove gallery pews to make more space and one to the delays to and additional cost of works due to the procedures associated with listing. Only one considered that listing provided additional opportunities, by being an attractive venue for events.
 - d) Most trustees did not consider that they get more support from the community because they were listed; one recognised the interest of enthusiasts in their

stained glass windows and another commented 'Those who might not contribute to the mission or ministry of the church are happier to give to ensure the building is open and preserved for the future'.

- e) Most used their buildings for some activities other than worship. Some of these were limited to religious events and school visits, whilst others had a wide range of community activities. One (recently altered and extended church) said that '70+ outside groups use the building'. Two had no outside use. Two LPoWs had associated halls. There were mixed responses to the question of whether there was adequate support and guidance available to help them to develop secular uses.

There was general agreement on what made their building sustainable, summed up as 'regular income, regular use' 'good maintenance and increasing energy efficiency' and 'sensible use of modern improvements'

- f) Most felt that there was adequate support and guidance available to help them to maintain their LPoW. Answers to the question 'what would make the biggest difference to your ability to manage your building?' included

- Funding (for most respondents)
- Skills training
- Greater freedom
- More help from local authority and central government.

Some had skills available within their membership, although most usually sought professional help. One said 'the architect is my best friend. Having people who "can" in the congregation is not enough, you can't sue them when it goes wrong'

- g) Most did not foresee major building problems in the future but all mentioned expensive maintenance items (re-wiring, roof, crumbling stonework, heating system, improvement of facilities) All feared their ability to meet the costs. Trustees were fairly unanimous on their views of a shared approach to management, all feeling that their building was their responsibility whilst some saw merit in some kind of partnership, especially if this came with funds 'without too many strings attached'.
- h) Other comments included:
- i) 'Mission is fuelled by maintenance – a run-down building can distract from the message'.

4. Responses from congregation members showed that:

- a) All but two were aware that their building was listed, less than half knew why although most knew what listing meant.
- b) Respondents were unanimous that their LPoW played an important part in their lives in respect of worship, and almost all considered that it helped with the development of faith and of community spirit. Less than half saw benefit in respect of social networking, communication or the dissemination of information.
- c) Less than half said that worshipping in a listed building contributed positively towards, or added value to, their worship experience.
- d) Most saw some increased use or no change in the future, with two envisaging their LPoW becoming less used or closing.

5. There were four responses from secular users, representing three LPoWs, one Methodist, one Methodist/URC and one Baptist. The Methodist/URC's community history group met in the new extension but as a community history group they 'like the historic backdrop'

- a) Most used the LPoW because of its location and suitability for their purposes, although cost played a part for one.
- b) Most were aware that their building was listed, and half knew what listing meant.

There was one response from a Heritage Office with the City Council which is too small to report here

D. DETAILED ANALYSIS BY USER GROUPS

A detailed commentary on the results of these differing user group questionnaires by region is given above, with many comments from contributors. This section does not repeat that content, but provides some statistics for each user group taken over all locations.

TRUSTEES.

Trustees of the 67 participating LPoWs completed detailed questionnaires.

- 70% of Trustees said that the maintenance of LPoWs should remain their responsibility, although many expressed a preference for some kind of partnership.
- 40% of Trustees felt that listing added value to the worship.
- 80% of Trustees derived no additional use of their building from its being listed.
- 35% of Trustees considered that the fact that their LPoW was listed had restricted or prevented activities which they had proposed.
- 55% of Trustees thought that they received added support from their local community because their PoW was listed.
- 45% of Trustees considered that there was sufficient help available to them to enable the development of secular and community activities in LPoWs.
- 55% of Trustees considered that there was sufficient support and guidance available to them to help to maintain their buildings.

CONGREGATION.

There were 89 replies from members of congregations of LPoWs.

- 90% were aware that their PoW was listed.
- 55% said that had an understanding of why it was listed.
- 70% were familiar with the implications of listing.

When asked about the part their LPoW plays in their lives:

- 100% said it played a part in worship
- 62% said it played a part in social networking
- 53% said it played a part in providing information (about both their building and faith, and public service information).
- 50% said it played a part in helping with communications
- 42% said it played a part in developing trust
- 88% said it played a part in developing community spirit
- 86% said it played a part in developing their faith

- 62% of congregation members considered that listing added value to their worship (although their comments made it clear that it was in most cases the whole ambience, acoustic quality and sense of continuity of worship that they meant.)

48% saw the future for their LPoW as more use, 40% saw no change in the present position, 7% saw less use in the future, 5% anticipated the closure of their LPoW in the future.

SECULAR (NON-WORSHIPPING) USERS.

There were 19 replies from secular users of LPoWs. Due to the low sample, size results should be treated with caution

- 68% were aware that the PoW they used was listed.
- 75% were familiar with the implications of listing.

When asked about the part their LPoW plays in their secular activities:

- 58% said it played a part in social networking
- 58% said it played a part in providing information
- 47% said it played a part in helping with communications
- 53% said it played a part in developing trust
- 68% said it played a part in developing community spirit
- 58% said it played a part in other ways.

- 63% of secular users considered that being in a listing building added value to their activity.

- 74% said that being in a listing building was no obstacle to their activity.

When asked why they used the LPoW:

- 79% of secular users said the building suited their purposes
- 89% said that it was in a convenient location
- 37% used it because it was competitively priced
- 21% said there was no real alternative venue
- 21% said there were other reasons why they used the LPoW (some secular users were affiliated to the particular LPoW in some way).

CONSERVATION OFFICERS AND HERITAGE CHAMPIONS

There were 10 replies from Conservation Officers and Heritage Champions. Due to the low sample, size results should be treated with caution

- 30% were familiar with all the LPoWs in their area, the rest only with some or as and when consulted on them.

30% replied to the question 'what more could be done to assist owners of LPoWs?':

- 'in the end it all comes down to funding – so more money'
- 'more and better information'
- 'guidance in producing conservation statements and conservation plans'
- 'highlighting successful multi-agency projects'.

- 80% saw the future for LPoWs as more closures, one reason given being 'significantly less public sector funding in the foreseeable future.'
 - 80% saw more non-worship use/extended use in the future.
 - 20% saw more involvement by the local authority in the future.

E. OTHER VARIANTS: DENOMINATIONS/FAITH GROUPS ETC.

Much of the comparative information on this aspect is contained in other sections of this report. The following points which came out of the study are worthy of note:

1. Listed Places of Worship fall into two types:
 - a) Those that are owned by a major denomination or faith group, and held in trust by a local body of Managing Trustees, a PCC perhaps, or church council.
 - b) Those owned and managed by individual faith groups, usually owning and caring for just the single building
2. The difficulties in maintaining interest in this study by many 'other faith' and 'non-mainstream Christian denominations' has already been noted.
3. The provisions put in place by the major (ecclesiastically exempt) Christian denominations to inspect, record, manage and protect LPoWs seem to be generally effective in instilling a good understanding and sense of responsibility amongst those who care for those buildings.

There appears to be a very patchy understanding of the implication of, and procedures connected with, listing in those denominations and other faiths which are not covered by ecclesiastical exemption. Neither is there often any reliable regime in place to inspect, record and repair these buildings.
4. Secular use of LPoWs varies with denominations and faiths, and sometimes within denominations. Where the interior of the LPoW is viewed as 'sacred space', sometimes because of its architectural qualities, at other times due to the attitude of the users towards it, there is much less secular use. At times this is because the faith group has other premises which are more useful for secular activities, but in other instances it would seem that the worshipping congregations of some denominations and faiths do not feel it appropriate for their religious building to be used for non-religious activities.
5. Local authority conservation officers are, understandably, more familiar with non-exempt LPoWs than those which have ecclesiastical exemption. Since many serve on DACs they do obtain insight into some C of E LPoWs, but often have no knowledge of the buildings of other exempt denominations.

F. OBSERVATIONS ON LIMITS AND VARIABLES DUE TO METHODOLOGY

The way that the survey was conducted brought about a number of constraints which must be borne in mind when analysing the findings:

1. The sample was small, particular when taken on a regional basis. The target set was to obtain the views of ten LPoWs in each region, and to concentrate on those that were representative of the focus of each regional study. Where there was a lack of response a decision had to be made on how wide to extend the sampling since, due to the limited number of relevant LPoWs in each region, any widening of the sample was often likely to dilute the focus. An example is Bradford, where the focus was on 'other faiths' , but where the lack of response necessitated a widening of the sample, which then included a greater proportion of mainstream LPoWs.

2. Difficulty in obtaining objective assessments in subjective situations. Two examples demonstrate this:

a) Trustees' views on the merits or otherwise of listing may well be coloured by whether it prevented them from doing something they planned, or whether they were successful in obtaining EH grant aid or not.

b) Comments made by congregation members in support of their answer as to whether or not listing 'adds value' to their worship show clearly that they are referring to their experience of the whole ambience, or tradition of worship of the LPoW. This may or may not be due to features which relate to the listing of the building.

So whilst they may say that it is the atmosphere and not the listing which is important, it is not easy to make the distinction.

In any event the views of two or three members of a congregation may not be at all typical of the attitude of most, and may be representative only of a particular sector of that worshipping community, those who are prepared to fill in questionnaires.

3. The variety in the depth and extent of data available from (a) different target churches in the same locality (b) different localities, could lead to a distorted conclusion. Some gave detailed responses to all questions, others only replied to some, or gave vague answers. The views of some, therefore, inevitably play a greater part in the conclusions of this study than those of some others.

G. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section draws together the main conclusions to be drawn from this consultation, and after each one suggests one or more ways in which a response could be made.

The main conclusion of this report is contained at the end of section B and is repeated here:

The evidence of this survey is that there is an enormous will by many faithful and dedicated volunteers in positions of responsibility to always do what is best for their LPoW, often at great cost to their time and their pocket. Concern was repeatedly expressed, however, that they do not feel that they always have the support they need, either financially or in terms of advice and counsel, and that their best intentions are often frustrated by the bureaucracy, duplication, conflict of interest, inflexibility and lack of sympathy of those involved in the listed building system. But their concern above all, as they look around at their ageing and diminishing colleagues, is that they see neither how this process could continue when they are gone, nor any signs that a new process is being established to replace it.

Dealing with LPoWs is a unique process and very different from dealing with Trustees of other heritage properties.

Listed Places of Worship occupy a unique position in the spectrum of heritage property. They fall into two types:

- a) Those that are owned by a major denomination or faith group, and held in trust by a local body of Managing Trustees, a PCC perhaps, or church council.
- b) Those owned and managed by individual faith groups, usually owning and caring for just the single building.

In both cases the day-to day management, the arrangements for inspection, repair, maintenance and the longer-term well-being and sustainability of these buildings are in the hands of a largely voluntary and unskilled work force, whose association with the building is not direct but as a result of their association with the faith group occupying it. In many cases these same people also carry out much of the maintenance and repair themselves. This situation contrasts with, say, the owners of listed private houses, the maintenance and upkeep of which are part of general housekeeping, of listed commercial properties, where commercial interests and profitability include budgeting for facilities management and maintenance, or of listed heritage buildings which are primarily managed as tourist attractions, with an entrance fee charged to assist with upkeep.

The dedication of this work force was evident at every location and in every response, as was the fruits of their labours, but so also was their frustration with the time, effort and financial cost which this aspect of their faith life demanded, to the detriment of what were seen as their more primary concerns.

The following list of conclusions is not in any specific order of priority, although it is clear that the first represents the single biggest and most important finding.

1. The biggest risk facing most PoW is dwindling and ageing congregations, and fewer clergy. Faith groups ask,

'Who will be looking after the building in ten years time?'

Many faith groups with a responsibility for a listed PoW or other historic building believe they are continually sidetracked into concerns about building fabric to the detriment of their primary calling. If resources were used for being a faith group, instead of an historic property manager, the long term future might be more secure – there would, at least, still be a group using and caring for the building. As it is, the present management regime, which is just about coping, has a finite, and fairly short-term, future. The constant struggle to raise funds to maintain LPoWs can itself be a deterrent to new members, who do not see this as the best use of their resources in the pursuit of their faith. It was clear from the survey that only a small number of LPoWs have a strategy in place to endeavour to secure a sustainable future.

- We would recommend more research to be carried out, perhaps in conjunction with the main denominations who are responsible for most LPoWs, specifically to establish the current sustainability of these buildings, and the prognosis for them over the next ten years, which is the likely timescale in which the voluntary management resource will drop below a critical level.
2. If there were more funding available for the upkeep of listed PoW, there would be more time for the core business which sustains the congregation. There was a recognition that EH funding was often the key to releasing funds from other agencies.
- Can EH ensure more funding is available and for a wider range of work than at present?
 - EH would be held in higher popular regard if it could ensure funding of a wider range of work, aimed at sustaining those responsible for maintaining the building and releasing the congregation for other work.
 - We suggest that existing grant fund be redistributed to provide a larger number of small grants rather than smaller number of large grants – (using the same pot). Could there be a “minor -works” grant scheme, say, up to £25k with a simplified application process and less rigid controls on how it is used? We note that the presence of EH funding does help to ‘lever in’ other funding - the ‘heritage dividend’; more, smaller grants would probably actually ‘lever in’ more funding in total.
 - Measures are needed to clarify the funding streams of LPoWs so that there is sufficient separation and transparency for secular funders to support the costs of building maintenance without feeling that they are contributing to ‘religious purposes’. The machinery for this already exists in some denominations. In parallel with this, more education is needed to make secular bodies and individuals aware of the realities of the cost of maintaining this vital sector of the built heritage, and that the only way at present to support this is by giving direct to the LPoW.
3. A major complaint is the length of time it takes to get permission to undertake work on listed PoW and the number of bodies that need to be consulted.
- Could there be a “one stop shop” for permissions facilitated by EH?
OR an agreed overarching policy – as Dartmoor National Park do with other agencies- within which there is a simplified approvals structure? We recognise that this could be complex since agency boundaries rarely coincide.
 - Could consideration be given to agreeing a time limit for giving a response to an approach from a LPoW?

4. Faith groups in listed PoW want greater freedom to make changes within those buildings.
 - Could EH initiate a review of what could be done without permission? There is a lack of understanding as to what restrictions listing places on buildings, whether Grade I is more restrictive than Grade II, whether the specific listing description is relevant and so on.

5. Beyond the mainstream Christian denominations, faith groups have little understanding of the implications or processes of managing a listed PoW. As our research has shown these are also very difficult groups with which to make contact, but clearly this is where help is needed. We found that, on at least one occasion, a small faith group had acquired a listed property for use as a place of worship without knowing either that it was listed or that this would have implications for their purposes.
 - Could EH work more closely with local authority conservation officers to pick up these groups?
 - Could estate agents be instructed that, when a listed building is sold, EH is informed of the buyer, who can then be contacted regarding the responsibility of owning a listed building and, equally important, where help and advice are available?
 - Could the listing description be incorporated into the land registry details in the way that restrictive covenants are?
 - Could EH work to ensure that conveyance searches not only disclose listing but also place a requirement to clarify the responsibilities?

6. Funding for upgrades such as WC facilities and tea points was a constant request. The research has shown that using PoW more for community activities is not the answer in all cases and could jeopardise the sustainability of other venues. Where PoW have limited community use, for example, 3 concerts per year and tourism, it is very difficult to access secular funding as the community use is too low to attract funding but these activities need facilities. Facilities are also seen as helping to address falling numbers.
 - Could EH seriously consider funding for these facilities?
OR, due to the restrictions on what EH can fund, make allowance by way of a fabric grant for those churches which fund these facilities themselves?

7. Funding advice. Many people asked for a “one stop shop” for advice on funding resources. We recognise that this is not practical but what is important is the provision of advice and project management on the whole process. There is a call for help with the initial stages of the process.
 - Could EH research what advice is available within each region at each stage and act as a signposting service?

8. Skills training was asked for - especially by those who had *already* been on a SPAB course. Maybe there needs to be more work on promoting the usefulness (and fun?) of these courses with quotes from people who have found them beneficial. Both training for those involved in the care and maintenance of buildings and also training for small builders in conservation matters.

9. Most faith groups do not seem to be aware of or how to engage with secular initiatives such as area regeneration programmes – the idea of approaching the local authority for help and partnership is not even considered.
 - Could EH promote “working in partnership” with local authorities (perhaps through Support Officers)?
 - Could EH encourage local authorities to be more proactive?
 - Could this be part of EH funding of feasibility studies – seed funding- as 7 above?

10. More involvement of the local community. Whilst one’s immediate reaction is that the PoW should be able to do this themselves, there is no doubt that a well-publicised national campaign to get people involved in the “heritage on the doorstep” would appeal to people who watch TV but don’t notice what they drive past every day – think of the interest in that TV programme *Restoration*. This also links in with paragraph 7.
 - What about the development of local heritage trails, development of Heritage Open Days idea, Buttress club – support the church from outside?
 - Could there be more support for and involvement of National Churches Trust following the Virtuous Circle?

11. There is some confusion about English Heritage’s dual role as both the body who grants permission for work on listed buildings and grant provider for the same. Several people thought that if permission for work had been given by EH then EH should automatically support the work financially; they could not see that the two were not connected.
 - Could EH, in their consultations with LPoWs, ensure that they clarify that the one does not automatically lead to the other?

12. ‘Please don’t leave us in limbo’ – A number of LPoWs felt abandoned because proposals which they saw as vital for their future were refused on heritage grounds, and no further advice was available.
 - What can EH do to support LPoWs whose projects are going nowhere or where projects are turned down and no alternative advice available?

FINAL COMMENT

This study, whilst limited in its scope, has brought new light on the situation in which many Listed Place of Worship exist, and on the risks that they face in the very near future. Across the land the problem is the same. The system currently in place, a legacy of many generations of the faith-filled and the faithful dedicatedly caring for their place of worship, often making great sacrifices in order to do so, is coming to an end. The whole heritage of listed places of worship is at risk.

The stark truth is that, in many cases, this would appear to be the last generation who will fulfil this function. In a very few years many fine buildings could have no-one left to care for them. Many already have passed into the charitable care of bodies such as the Friends of Friendless Churches. Some, of course, do have a future, and evidence was seen of a promise of sustainability over the next few years, but these are a minority.

The choice seems clear. Whilst interim measures can be put in place to help those who currently care for these buildings, and this study suggests a variety of these, now is the time to plan for when those people are no longer around to do so. Either another system is put into place, drawing on other resources, or it must be accepted that many of these

noble (and some not so noble) edifices will be lost to the nation for ever. There does not seem to be another way; continuing the present way would not appear to be an option for much longer.

Living Stones

For English Heritage

May 2010

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We would like to acknowledge the support given to this study by the 67 listed places of worship who participated and without whose input there would be no report.

We also recognise the contribution of the 64 who were approached but who either declined or did not respond, for the statement they made by so doing.

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