

Media statement

- On Thursday 28 June 2007 at Lambeth Palace a new charity will be announced – the **National Churches Trust**. This is the new name of the Historic Churches Preservation Trust and the Incorporated Church Building Society.
- The National Churches Trust will set out to position itself as the leading national independent body concerned with the protection and welfare of churches throughout Britain.
- The change has come about as the result of a wide review and full consultation. It has the endorsement of HCPT's and ICBS's Patron, office holders and Trustees, together with major supporters and the Charity Commission. Under a new, more modern legal structure both HCPT and ICBS will be retained as restricted funds of the National Churches Trust.
- The reason for the change is that as the nation moves into the 21st century, it is clear that the task of simply giving modest grants to churches in need is not sufficient. The average cost of repairs continues to rise considerably faster than inflation. New and significant sources of funding need to be identified for the sector and new ways of working need to be developed.
- The National Churches Trust will be implementing a structured programme of national fundraising initiatives
- The National Churches Trust will actively promote models where congregations and other community-based providers work successfully in partnership to attract broader support from government, business and the philanthropic community.
- One example of a new approach to the management and care of church buildings has already been proposed - the Cumbrian Churches Partnership. This is an independent organisation designed to provide at a regional level, innovative and practical responses to the many challenges facing church buildings and the communities in England's second largest county. If successful, it is hoped that the ideas developed by this new initiative can be extended to other parts of the country. This initiative has been developed by the National Churches Trust and the Churches Conservation Trust.
- HCPT's current Patrons, Presidents, Vice Presidents and Trustees will form the governing body of the new charity, which will be managed by the Trust's existing executive team.
- The implementation of an enhanced, robust and innovative new grants programme will be an essential element of the new strategy for both donors and beneficiaries. In 2008 and 2009 the annual grants budget will be increased by almost a third. In 2006 the Trust made 297 awards of just over £1.5 million from HCPT and ICBS funds.
- The work and activities of the National Churches Trust will be introduced over the coming months and all audiences will be kept fully informed.
- Andrew Edwards, Chief Executive, says:
"The manner in which we support our churches is one of the most important public-policy debates of the day. There can no longer be the automatic

assumption that churches will continue to enjoy strong support throughout society.

“The National Churches Trust will take an active role in promoting public discussion. We believe that churches are a major public asset and part of the nation’s heritage and infrastructure. These important buildings cannot be sustained without broader recognition and support.

- Chairman of the Trustees, Michael Hoare, says:
“Over the centuries the history of the church has always been one of constant change and renewal. Originally built as places of worship, churches must also respond to the varied needs and aspirations of local communities. Ways must be developed to give these splendid buildings wider use, and to ensure they are properly maintained for future generations.”

- ends -

date

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