

# Press release: Independent review calls for greater community use to give church buildings a sustainable future

Churches should be opened up for new and different uses by communities to help build a more sustainable future for the buildings, an independent report has recommended.

[The Taylor Review: Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals](#) says that congregations should be empowered to involve more local people in enjoying, valuing, using and caring for their churches.

The review panel, chaired by Bernard Taylor and made up of representatives from the Church of England and heritage bodies, was set up last year to find new ways to maintain Church of England buildings and look at the potential for different funding models.

A total of 12,200 Church of England churches are listed and since 1999 there has been £2.6 billion invested in repairs and new build projects, with Government and lottery sources providing £810 million of this investment.

Bernard Taylor, Chairman of the English Churches and Cathedrals Sustainability Review, said:

Church buildings are an important and a much-loved part of our national heritage and form an integral part of our sense of identity and community. However, despite the hard work of many groups and volunteers around the country, they face complex problems of maintenance and repair, and are not always well used and supported.

Increased use and helping communities in their broadest form to see the value and potential of the local church is the key to the church building becoming more self-sustaining and ultimately ensuring its long term survival. The solution must be local and there is no instant solution, but these recommendations represent the next steps towards a more sustainable future for these important buildings.

Heritage Minister John Glen said:

I welcome this report and want to thank Bernard Taylor and the whole panel for their work. Our church buildings are a major part of our heritage and it is vital that they are cared for and

protected. This report has shown how valued these buildings are and how many thousands of volunteers work so hard on their upkeep.

This review is an important first step to building a more sustainable future for thousands of church buildings across the country, and we will look at these recommendations carefully.

The review panel welcomed the work by the Church of England to simplify its processes and make it easier for churches to get consent to share use of their buildings. Guidance is also being prepared by the Church of England to support models of community ownership and responsibility such as the creation of local Trusts and Friends.

The Rt Revd John Inge, Bishop of Worcester and lead bishop on cathedrals and church buildings, said:

I welcome the findings of this Review. Our 16,000 churches are the jewel in the crown of our built heritage. They exist, as they always have done, to serve their communities. This is seen through daily acts of worship, celebrations of the joys of life and commemorations of its sorrows. They are, though, not just places of worship for their communities: they are social hubs for people of all ages, spaces to offer hospitality and vital services to the vulnerable; churches increasingly are the glue in community life.

I have enormous respect for the millions of volunteers and church workers who through the generations have cared for our churches.

The strategy proposed in this report to support these vital buildings will, I pray, help to protect their fabric and equip them to serve anew in the future.

The Review makes clear how churches and cathedrals are vital community assets in need of support nationally. We look forward to working with funding partners to put the proposals into place.

The review panel highlighted the best practice of many churches and of volunteers around the country, with buildings adapted and used for cafes, playgroups, and in some cases NHS and post office services. The panel said it wants to see more innovation of this kind.

It has proposed creating a national network of Community Support Advisers to help churches identify and strengthen wide ranging relationships within their local area. It hopes that through greater community engagement, churches will be used more frequently and can maximise new funding options reflecting this broad community involvement.

Congregations are individually responsible for the care of their own buildings and despite the commitment and hard work of volunteers, the panel found a lack of consistency in the ability of many churches to carry out

routine maintenance and repairs.

The panel has recommended creating a group of 'Fabric Support Officers' who have practical heritage buildings expertise to ensure that all churches have access to high quality advice. It also wants churches to develop annual minor repairs plans. This will mean that repairs can be addressed immediately and prevent the development of more costly major repairs. In addition, it has recommended a rolling ten-year major repairs plan to be prepared and kept up to date so that larger works can be planned and given the best chance of being properly funded.

It has proposed that these recommendations should be tested through pilot schemes in both rural and urban areas.

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1. Read [Bernard Taylor's blog](#) about the review
  2. [The Taylor Review: Sustainability of English Churches and Cathedrals](#) was established in May, 2016.
  3. A call for evidence to inform the review received almost 5,800 responses.
  4. The panel consists of:
    - Chairman: Bernard Taylor CBE, Chairman of The Royal Commission for the Great Exhibition of 1851
    - Sir Tony Baldry, Chair of the Church Buildings Council
    - Dame Helen Ghosh, Director General of the National Trust
    - Loyd Grossman, Chair of Heritage Alliance
    - Rt Revd Dr John Inge, Bishop of Worcester, Lead Bishop on Church Buildings
    - Sir Simon Jenkins, Trustee Churches Conservation Trust
    - Sir Peter Luff, Heritage Lottery Fund
    - Sir Laurie Magnus, Chairman Historic England
    - Neil Mendoza, Landmark Trust & DCMS Non-Executive Director
    - Very Revd Catherine Ogle, Dean of Winchester
    - Jennie Page, Vice Chair of the Church Buildings Council
    - Alice Perkins, former Chair of the Post Office
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# News story: Sellafield leader awarded by the Duke

The Duke of Cambridge asked about Dorothy's work to decommission the legacy ponds

Dorothy Gradden, head of legacy ponds at the nuclear site, was presented with her medal in recognition of her services to the nuclear industry.

She attended Buckingham Palace with her son Josh and partner Paul Stewart, who also works at Sellafield Ltd.

Dorothy said:

It was an incredible day.

To walk through the Palace gates, under the Royal balcony and up through the steps into the ballroom, knowing who has walked up those steps before you was just mind boggling. I'll never forget it.

The Duke of Cambridge expressed an interest in Dorothy's work to decommission the legacy ponds, during a private conversation while presenting the award.

He said he'd never actually visited Sellafield but had skirted around its no-fly zone on several occasions while serving with the RAF.

When asked how she managed to do a job which involves moving legacy hazards on a daily basis, Dorothy replied "safely".

It was while in the cloakroom of Buckingham Palace that Dorothy found herself standing next to the author of the world's best-selling book series, Harry Potter.

Dorothy said:

I was adjusting my hat and there was JK Rowling in the mirror standing next to me adjusting hers. It brought home just how big a day this was.

Dorothy is in charge of decommissioning the two open air nuclear storage ponds at the Sellafield site, a programme that has taken huge strides forward under her watch.

She said:

I really do feel that this is what my career has been all about. I have the best job on site, technically challenging, leading a large culture change programme and delivering risk and hazard reduction every day. It really is a privilege to do this job.

A total of 60 people received their awards on the day, from the fields of education, business, theatre, music and the diplomatic service. After visiting the Palace in the morning, there was a treat of afternoon tea at the Savoy.

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## **[Press release: Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2018](#)**

The Queen has approved that His Grace Richard Walter John Montagu Douglas Scott, The Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, KBE, DL, FSA, FRSE, be appointed as Her Majesty's Lord High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 2018.

The Lord High Commissioner is the Sovereign's personal representative to the Annual General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. He attends the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on behalf of the Sovereign. He makes the opening and closing addresses to the Assembly, and carries out a number of official functions as the Lord High Commissioner.

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## **[Press release: Interim report: Collision near London Waterloo station](#)**

RAIB has today released its interim report following a collision near London Waterloo station, 15 August 2017.

We will publish a final report, including any safety recommendations, at the conclusion of our investigation.

Our investigation is independent of any investigation by the railway industry or by the [Office of Rail and Road](#).

You can [subscribe](#) to automated emails notifying you when we publish our

reports.

PDF, 1.3MB, 15 pages

If you use assistive technology (such as a screen reader) and need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email [enquiries@raib.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@raib.gov.uk). Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.

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## [Press release: High speed broadband to become a legal right](#)

The Government has confirmed that universal high speed broadband will be delivered by a regulatory Universal Service Obligation (USO), giving everyone in the UK access to speeds of at least 10 Mbps by 2020.

This is the speed that Ofcom, the independent regulator, says is needed to meet the requirements of an average family. After careful consideration the government has decided that regulation is the best way of making sure everyone in the UK can get a decent broadband connection of at least 10 Mbps as soon as possible.

Following the creation of new powers when the Government passed the Digital Economy Act 2017, we launched our consultation on the design of the regulatory USO in the summer. The Government will now set out the design for a legal right to high speed broadband in secondary legislation early next year, alongside our detailed response to the consultation.

Ofcom's implementation is expected to take two years from when we lay secondary legislation, meeting the Government's commitment of giving everyone access to high speed broadband by 2020.

In the summer, we received a proposal from BT to deliver universal broadband through a voluntary agreement. We welcomed BT's proposal and have considered this in detail alongside a regulatory approach. We did not feel the proposal was strong enough for us to take the regulatory USO off the table, and have therefore decided not to pursue BT's proposal in favour of providing a legal right to broadband.

The government believes that only a regulatory USO offers sufficient certainty and the legal enforceability that is required to ensure high speed broadband access for the whole of the UK by 2020. However, we welcome BT's continued investment to deliver broadband to all parts of the UK.

Culture Secretary Karen Bradley said:

We know how important broadband is to homes and businesses and we want everyone to benefit from a fast and reliable connection. We are grateful to BT for their proposal but have decided that only a regulatory approach will make high speed broadband a reality for everyone in the UK, regardless of where they live or work.

This is all part of our work on ensuring that Britain's telecoms infrastructure is fit for the future and will continue to deliver the connectivity that consumers need in the digital age.

This regulatory approach also brings a number of other advantages for the consumer:

- the minimum speed of connection can be increased over time as consumers' connectivity requirements evolve;
- it provides for greater enforcement to help ensure households and businesses do get connected
- the scheme will maximise the provision of fixed line connections in the hardest to reach areas.
- places a legal requirement for high speed broadband to be provided to anyone requesting it, subject to a cost threshold (in the same way the universal service right to a landline telephone works)

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