

Inquiry into the Welsh Government's Historic Environment Policy
Response from Hugh Morgan

To : National Assembly for Wales
Communities, Equality
& Local Gov. Committee
Cardiff Bay,
CARDIFF CF99 1NA

Date : 15th August 2012 My Ref: 217

Dear Sirs, Your Inquiry into Historic Environment Policy

A message from the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales says that you are undertaking an inquiry into Historic Environment Policy including merger proposals.

I don't know how far this extends but I do hope that you have given some thought to the plight of historic Churches and Chapels which form such a vital part of our heritage.

The Friends of Friendless Churches are doing a good job in looking after Churches closed by the Representative Body of the Church in Wales and (more recently) the Welsh Religious Buildings Trust were doing a parallel job for the Chapels though with less funding available.

In both cases the ability to save beautiful Churches and Chapels is restricted by the availability of funds and it is here that I feel that the National Assembly might be prepared to consider helping on an interim basis.

Inso far as the Churches are concerned there is a problem on creating Trusts to hold the position between closure and (eventual) take over caused by Section 10 (2)(c) of the Charities Act 2011 (a repeat of previous legislation) which prevents the creation of a new Charity 'for purposes for which the property has been consecrated'.

I have long since sustained correspondence to try and get this provision modified so as to make it clear that it does not apply to Churches vested in the disestablished Church of Wales but so far my pleas have been ignored!

My particular interest is in South West Pembrokeshire and you

✓ will see from the enclosed pamphlet that a couple of Churches in the area had been taken over by the Friends of Friendless Churches at the time of publication. Since that time one Chapel has been closed and one (and possibly more) Churches are under threat of closure.

So I do hope that you can help.

Yours sincerely,

Hugh Morgan.

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