

# OPEN DOORS

## GENERAL INFORMATION



### 1. What is Open Doors?

- Open Doors is an annual celebration of the architecture and heritage of Wales.
- It is part of European Heritage Days, which take place in fifty European countries each year in September.
- In Wales, Open Doors runs throughout the whole month of September
- It provides an opportunity for the public to visit places not normally open or to visit for free sites that usually charge. Sites that are normally open and free of charge offer something additional for their visitors.
- In 2018, 1,300 events Open Doors events took place throughout September at 287 venues across the 22 local authorities.

### 2. Why take part in Open Doors?

The main reason for participating in Open Doors is to encourage public access, enjoyment and participation in heritage. Participants will be offering an opportunity to inform and educate the public about the importance and value of heritage and its conservation, to help people understand and care about their history.

Other benefits include:

- Open Doors has built up a significant following from within local communities and further afield outside Wales. The events attract people of all ages and cultures, with many people taking part year on year either as participants, volunteers or visitors.



Free access or special free events which are easily accessible creates a good local feeling. Past organisers have attracted members and raised funds from catering, retail or through donations.

- By participating in Open Doors you will be included in a national marketing campaign, raising awareness and publicising your event, property or site to a large audience
- Working with other local heritage properties or groups in your local area will help form partnerships and a local heritage/tourism network which could benefit your business
- Attracting visitors to an area by providing a range of things to see and do can boost the local economy if those visitors shop, eat and stay

You may be required to provide open access/public exhibition to your property as part of the conditions of a grant funding – Open Doors provides an easy and fun way to fulfil this requirement.

### 3. Who can register for Open Doors?

Open Doors events must be FREE to all. To register, your activity must be:

- a building or site in public or private ownership that is not normally accessible to the public OR
- a building or site that normally charges an entry fee, but which will waive the fee on this occasion (for example sites in the care of the National Trust or Cadw properties, or places owned by private owner or charitable trusts) OR
- a building or site that is routinely open (a church, library, museum etc.) and will be organising a special event. (a talk, exhibition, access to records and treasures) OR
- a free event (a walking tour, lecture, exhibition, concert, memories, historical re-enactment) that in some way engages with the local heritage.

Open Doors takes place annually throughout September. Events normally occur on weekends to attract more visitors, but can take place at any time for any duration – as long as it's during the month of September.

All participants are encouraged to use the Open Doors logo and branding on all materials, so the events are easily recognisable, and tie in to the national marketing campaign.

We also ask participants to collect visitor data so we can evaluate the success of the programme and see the impact we've collectively made! Simple online or printed forms will be available for participants to evaluate their event.

### 4. How is Open Doors organised?

Cadw, the Welsh Government's historic environment service, is responsible for the co-ordination of the Open Doors programme nationally – however the event would fail miserably without the support of all the partners involved.

Each individual Open Doors event is organised by volunteers or staff at the property. This means that the organisation of the event, the local advertising, and the manning and running of the event on the day is organised locally.

In this way, the organisers have control over the event and can either open their doors to people who turn up on the day or can ask people to pre-book directly if space is limited.

#### What do we do?

- Manage the registration process
- Register all the events and publish the entire programme on the Open Doors section of our website
- Publicise Open Doors on a national level (through PR, marketing and social media)
- Provide generic marketing materials for you to use, free of charge
- Provide advice, support and information on how to organise your event and answer any questions you may have
- Work with local authorities, organisations and individuals to improve the programme and increase numbers

#### What do you do?

- Register on the Cadw website and provide the relevant information about your event
- Organise your event (arrange for building to open, book any entertainers/costumes/guides, arrange exhibition material etc.)
- Find the required number of volunteers to help
- Fill in the open doors posters with details of your event and place in local shops, churches etc
- Write articles for local paper and other relevant local publicity, based on the template we'll provide for you
- Record visitor numbers
- Complete feedback forms online after the event.

## 5. Working in partnership

We encourage organisations within the same area to work together and form clusters when working on their Open Doors events.

Co-ordinating events locally and making sure they're taking place over the same day or weekend makes the area more attractive to visitors – and past experience has proved that visitor numbers are higher when sites are working together.

Open Doors clusters already exist across Wales, including in Merthyr, Gwynedd, Conwy, Cardiff, Bridgend, Brecon, Ebbw Vale, Wrexham, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Monmouth, Llandaff and Denbighshire – and there's always room for more! All events in these areas take place over the same period of time in September, and some areas even print a programme advertising all local events. Across Wales, clusters are by run local authorities, townscape heritage initiatives or members of community.

But don't worry if there isn't a cluster already established in your area. Many individual sites also participate, ranging from private houses, churches, National Trust properties, Cadw properties, council properties, community owned projects and private buildings.

## 6. How to register?

To take part in Open Doors click here to register online.

The dates you need to know are:

- 1 March: registration opens
- 1 July deadline for registering
- 1 August: Open Doors national marketing campaign will commence, and the events will be visible on the Cadw website
- 1-30 September: Open Doors events take place

## 7. Case studies

Examples of past Open Doors events include:

- Pre-booked guided tour around Brynkinalt Hall, Chirk, a private estate
- Opening and guided tours of Hut 9, former prisoner of war camp, Bridgend, giving rise to a 'Friends of' group
- Book launch and talk in Hen Dy^ Cwrdd Chapel, owned by the Welsh Religious Buildings Trust
- Exhibition of transport through the ages at Rhondda Heritage Park.
- Exhibition about the sculptor Frank Roper whose is

on display in many South Wales churches

- Bell ringing and tower tours of St Mary's Brecon.
- Guided tours of schools e.g. Howell's School, Llandaff
- Behind the scenes tours at Gwynedd Record Offices
- Open Day at the Landmark Trust property Dolbedyr in Denbighshire
- Open afternoons at Hydro-electric scheme and salmon ladder
- Mountain Ash historic walk
- Talk by Wrexham County Borough Council's conservation team on how to look after historic buildings
- Re-enactment at Ruthin Goal
- Opening of the Hetty Winding House in Rhondda Cynon Taff
- Feedback and experiences from previous Open Doors organisers:

"It went fantastically well! Only our second year and we quadrupled our visitor numbers. The banner worked well and we had a local advertising campaign here also. Sales in our shop and cafe more than made up for the free entry".

Gregynog, near Newtown, Powys

## 8. Contact us

Email [opendoors@gov.wales](mailto:opendoors@gov.wales) for more information or register online at [cadw.gov.wales/open-doors](http://cadw.gov.wales/open-doors)

