



ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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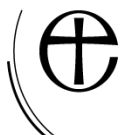
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NEWCASTLE
CATHEDRAL



The Annual Parish Vestry Meeting
and
Annual Congregational Meeting
Sunday 19 May 2024
11:30am

AGENDA

Annual Parish Vestry Meeting

1. Opening Prayer
2. Apologies for Absence
3. To elect four Churchwardens
4. Any other business (if notified in advance)

Annual Congregational Meeting

1. To agree and consider the minutes from the meeting held on 14 May 2023

2. Elections

To elect Assistant Churchwardens

To elect two representatives to Newcastle City Centre Churches Together

To elect Sidespeople

3. Reports

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4. Any other business (if notified in advance)

5. The Grace

Minutes from the Annual Parish Vestry and Annual Congregational Meetings held on 14 May 2023

Present: The Very Revd Dr Jane Hedges, Interim Dean of Newcastle (Chair), Revd Canon Peter Dobson, Revd Canon Clare MacLaren

In attendance: Mr Ian Roberts (Director of Music), Ms Kate Sussams (Chief Operating Officer)

The Chair welcomed all present and commenced the meeting with a prayer.

Apologies were received from Dr Frederick Gavin Hardy, Mr David Lawrence, Mrs Gillian Lawrence, Mrs Lesley Lee, Ms Helen Robertson.

Parish Vestry Meeting

Election of Churchwardens

The Chair read out the names of those nominated:

Mr Gerald Graham, Ms Alison Malcolm, Mr Gavin Scott, and Mr Timothy Wigglesworth.

There were no other nominations from the floor and as such an election was not necessary, and the above were duly elected to office. The Chair offered thanks to the four Churchwardens for all they did last year and the time and dedication they will give this year.

This being all the business the Parish Vestry Meeting was closed.

Annual Congregational Meeting

Minutes

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 April 2022 were approved and accepted.

Report on the Electoral Roll

Ms E. Robertson reported that in accordance with the requirements of the Synodical Government Measure 1969 a revised Electoral Roll for 2022/2023 had been prepared and exhibited for inspection in the Vestry. There were 141 names on the Roll (99 households).

Election of Assistant Churchwardens

There was only one nomination in advance of the meeting, Mrs Vicki Pickering. In the absence of any other nominations from the floor, Vicki was duly elected as an Assistant Churchwarden. The Chair extended thanks to Vicki for volunteering to continue in this role and for all her work over the previous year.

Newcastle City Centre Churches Together

A maximum of two people can be elected to this group but as yet no nominations have been received. As there were no nominations from the floor, the Chair asked the congregation to have a word with one of the clergy if they'd like to know more about representing on this group.

Katherine Govier, a previous representative of the group, said the group has not organised or come together much since the pandemic.

Deanery Synod

Nominations for Synod were received from Dr Frederick Gavin Hardy and Ms Katherine Govier. There being no other nominations from the floor, both were duly elected.

The Chair discussed the importance of Deanery Synod in the structure of the Church of England, particularly when it comes to electing those who sit on General Synod and is also an opportunity to feed into the local community of Churches. The Chair urged anyone else who would like to be involved in this to speak with a member of the clergy.

Sidesmen

Current Sidesmen and Sideswomen were re-elected en bloc. New nominations were received from Muluaem Degu, Kevin Hall, and Catherine McNally, all of whom were duly elected.

The Chair highlighted the importance of these roles in Church ministry, welcoming people into the building and making them feel comfortable, particularly given the number of entrances to the building. The Chair thanked all those who give this welcome each week.

The various reports included in the Annual Report booklet were presented and accepted en bloc.

The Dean's Report

The Dean offered some words of reflection on her and Chris's arrival in the area, exactly one year ago this week. Shortly after their arrival, Jane became Interim Dean at Canterbury Cathedral. Chris remained in the North East and became a regular worshipper at the Cathedral while Jane attended when in the area. The Dean highlighted the warm welcome they both received and the loving community into which they came and joined and is a positive reflection on the Cathedral's congregation and community.

The Dean noted the Cathedral's CGISS Project and the extraordinary amount of work that went into it, pre-project, during and after, and gave recognition to all involved in the process. The former Bishop of Norwich will be visiting next week and is excited to see the transformation. The Cathedral hosted Diocesan Synod yesterday, the first time since the building had been reordered and the positive feedback received from those attending was wonderful. The Dean gave huge thanks to all those involved in the project and paid tribute and appreciation to Geoff Miller, on behalf of the Chapter, who saw the project through to fruition.

The Dean provided information on the Dean's vacancy and the panel of representatives who support the selection process. The panel consists of two representatives from the Chapter, Eric Jubb and David Lawrence, an external Dean (The Very Revd Catherine Winfield, Winchester Cathedral), a representative from the Archbishop's Appointments Office, which on this occasion has been delegated to Helen Dimmock from the Crown Office, and who is an extremely experienced person. There are also representatives from the College of Canons and Bishop's Council, in addition to the Chair who is appointed by the Archbishop of York. The panel's Chair is

the Lord Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear, Ms Lucy Winskell. The Diocesan Bishop, The Rt Revd Helen Ann Hartley, also sits on the panel.

The role is a Bishop's appointment, and she has the right of veto, if needed, because of the close working relationship between Bishop and Dean.

The panel have been working on a statement of needs and liaising with various bodies to draw this up along with a supporting pack which was available to anyone who was interested in the post. The post was advertised in April and shortlisting has taken place with interviews scheduled for the start of June. The hope is that a decision will be made quickly so that a new Dean is in post in the autumn. Currently the 14th of October is being held as a possible installation date and people are welcome to pencil that in their diaries.

The Dean commended the appointments process to people's prayers.

A question was asked who the representatives from the College of Canons and Bishop's Council were and these were confirmed as Canon Ruth Rogan and Canon Isabella MacDonald-Booth.

A question was asked about why there was such a gap in between interview and installation. The Dean explained this is due to certain processes that need to be followed, including carrying out medicals, safer recruitment, and time for the candidate to finish in their current post.

The Dean gave an update on the Cathedrals Measure as the Cathedral has completed quite a chunk of this process to become regulated by the Charity Commission. There are two phases, the first resulting in Certificate 1 and the second in Certificate 2 which will see us gain a charity number. The Cathedral has completed phase one and is close to completing phase two which see people appointed to the statutory committees required under the new measure. We have had an encouraging response from people wishing to become members of the Cathedral Chapter and the other committees including the Finance and Investment Committee and the Audit and Risk Committee. The process is an open one and a very good briefing pack has been put together by the current Nominations Committee. There is hope that over time more people will want to join these committees. If there are no vacancies, applications can be held on file and the Dean asked anyone interested in being part of the more formal side of cathedral life to take a pack away today. Questions about the roles can be directed to Canon Clare and Eric Jubb who sit on the Nominations Committee or alternatively, Kate Sussams.

The Dean gave huge thanks to her colleagues on the Chapter, particularly the two full time residentiary canons, Peter, and Clare, who have been holding a great deal during this interregnum and would like to pay tribute to them and their hard work as well as their accommodations of a part-time interim Dean.

The Dean paid tribute to the Cathedral's fantastic staff who work so hard in a modest sized Cathedral like this, doing all the necessary things, not simply looking after the building but also complying with health & safety, safeguarding, and finances. On behalf of the Chapter, the Dean gave thanks to Kate, the wonderful Vergers, the music department and all the people who work each day to make the Cathedral such a lovely place to be.

Finance Report

The Dean introduced Kate Sussams, the Chief Operating Officer, to give a finance report.

Kate discussed the budgeting process the Cathedral completes, explaining we budgeted for a deficit of just over £193K for 2022. Due to the CGISS project and extra costs associated with it, the Cathedral has not had a truly reflective financial year for several years. 2022 is the first year that felt more standardised in terms of operations. We are in a better position than expected with the year-end deficit being just over £94K and this is largely due to the amount of money our extra events, including external hire events, have brought in as well as some extra savings elsewhere. Kate noted there have been some struggles in our first full year since re-opening, particularly school group visits. Whilst we did get a lot of school groups visiting it was not to the level that was expected in terms of paid visits. External hire events are providing significant funds for the Cathedral, but they require an enormous amount of work by staff behind the scenes, and we are always questioning the impact of these. We received a lot more donations than expected via the website but were down on donations through our contactless machines and feeds into 'Making the Ask' of visitors. Grants, many of which are connected to the CGISS project, skew the finances somewhat and stripping these out, we can see two main items, collections and events and hire income. The retail space is not making a huge profit but is well received by visitors and there is a high spend per head. Our biggest income is still derived from the congregation community via Freewill Offerings and our candles are also bringing in good income, showing that it is an important part of people's visit to the Cathedral. In terms of spending, the biggest costs remain staffing and administration costs such as insurance, which is very high, and the fabric budget which is integral to ensure the upkeep of the building for the future. The question of how much it costs to run the Cathedral every day is often asked and is not as simple as face value because other costs need factored in, including the office building and other properties. The per day figure is very high and whilst we could hold a concert every night of the year to meet this, it is not something we would ever consider and means we must find other ways to bring in income. Utilities are a big concern and we have done a lot of work with brokers to get the best deal, which is still a big cost, and is a huge increase when compared to our last full year in 2019.

An area of improvement we need to focus on is revenue money - funds that are not allocated for specific activities or items. Securing grants such as this is very hard, and we are pleased to have received funding from the Church Commissioners to secure a Fundraising Development post. The Cathedral Trust have been brilliant in fundraising for the CGISS project and are now looking to fundraise to cover revenue costs. The Chapter and Senior Management Team are turning their attention to a new business plan following the end of the CGISS project and post pandemic. Kate reiterated the Dean's comments about the small team working at the Cathedral and the level of dedication each one of them gives to us.

A question was asked about what the Cathedral Trust is and what it does. Kate explained that historically, most Cathedrals have a trust that go out and fundraise on their behalf. Our Trust is comprised of local businesspeople who write grant applications and to date have raised almost £2 million for the CGISS project. A question was asked whether the contactless machines offer the option to gift aid and it was confirmed that one of the machines does, but not all of them.

Canon Clare highlighted that congregational giving fell quite a bit below what was budgeted and as a result Kate and she are working with the Diocese Giving Team to organise a Stewardship campaign for later in the year, as requested by the Chapter.

Music Presentation

The Chair introduced the Director of Music, Ian Roberts, to provide an update on their activities and outreach. The Chair noted the hard work with a modest music budget, compared to other cathedrals, and the achievements the music team are creating factoring this in. The Chair gave her thanks to the team and congratulations on the number of children and adults in the choir.

Ian discussed one of the central aims of the music programme is to change the lives of children and young people across the region through cathedral music. Despite some significant relationships with schools, we do not have any one school we work with to the exclusion of others and allows us the special opportunity to offer incredibly valuable religious, musical, cultural education to children from all socio-economic backgrounds. The effects of this have the potential to be inspirational and aspirational and we have begun to achieve this through our Schools' Singing Programme (SSP). We are one of six cathedrals piloting this programme, which began in the RC Diocese of Leeds twenty years ago. The Hamish Ogden Foundation saw the work being done and wanted to replicate this on a more national scale. This will involve working with primary schools in a different way than we have previously, by enabling a Choral Director to work with schools every week of the school year. This embeds us as part of school life and culture and the community culture in a way we have not been able to till now. There are two Choral Directors, Laura Oldfield and Clare Crinson, current Lay Clerks, who are undertaking the bulk of this work. Initially, we are working with 12 primary schools comprising 1440 children and following this, if successful, we can grow the model, so that in 2024 we double the number of children being reached. We have been granted seed funding from the Hamish Ogden Foundation over 5 years and the idea is that this will enable us to create a sustainable programme where schools recognise the value we are bringing and pay to be in the programme. The hope is that the money received from schools will pay for the Choral Director roles.

Ian provided an update on the current music offer which comprises 78 children, ranging from the age of 6 to 18, who are regularly involved in music making at the Cathedral. The hope is to increase this to over 100 by September and to keep growing from there. This does pose dilemmas in terms of physical space available in the building and staff ratios for supervision, but it is vital work to ensure children from all economic backgrounds are involved in cathedral music. Through the SSP, we are trying to move boundaries and get into communities across the city. Having noticed formal auditions put children off applying for the choir, the music team have adapted the process by introducing training choirs which the Choral Directors ask children showing promise to attend for 6 months. Following this, the children could be asked to become a probationer chorister. This approach is proving much more accessible for the children.

Ian asked the congregation to pray for the exciting work going on in the music department and to spread the word far and wide about what we are doing. Ian is hopeful our Choristers will have a new 'early years' group and there is now Cambiata Voices to support boys to continue when their voices change.

When telling people about music at the Cathedral, Ian asked the congregation to also make people aware of the huge effort that goes into working with the community to change lives because a big challenge is always going to be funding.

The Chair thanked Ian for his presentation.

This being all the business the meeting closed with the Grace at 12:33pm.

Date of Next Meeting

To be arranged.

Signed: 

Date: 30 May 2023

Interim Dean of Newcastle

ANNUAL REPORTS

1. From the Dean - looking ahead

It was – and continues to be – such a blessing that I was installed as the new Dean in October 2023. Even in the short time I have been in post, I have become aware that our Cathedral offers a very particular and important ministry in the wider context of the Church of England – a ministry that is significantly driven by our commitment to our core values of *Radical Welcome, Inspiring Worship, and Empowering Worth*. It was these values, and the work that emerges from them, that attracted me to this post in the first place, and it is a privilege to have been called to lead this Cathedral as it serves the people of this Diocese.

I am aware that my arrival was a further point of transition in the life of this Cathedral. 2023 was a year in which this place hosted the installation of an interim Dean and a new Diocesan Bishop. The Revd Canon Clare McLaren went on secondment in September, and we had the joy of being supported by The Revds Benjamin Jarvis (who continues to help us) and Sam Lohead. I know that colleagues would want me to place on record our thanks to The Very Revd Jane Hedges for her work with us last year. And I want to thank Kate Sussams and The Revd Canon Peter Dobson for all they do, and particularly for the way they have led and supported this Cathedral through all the changes of the past year, and for the way they have helped me to feel settled so quickly into my new role.

It is hard to write an annual report when you have only been in post for the last two months. However, in those ten weeks I was privileged to attend *Songs of Sanctuary* which enabled the voices of those seeking asylum to be heard; enjoy a Gin and Rum Festival during which I was asked questions about God; lead worship with the support of our phenomenal choir and then meet musicians for a classical concert on a Sunday evening – and this was just in one 72-hour period in November! This is a snapshot of what happens here week in, week out – and about which you can read more in the other reports in this document. It all happens because we are blessed with a small, but incredibly able and highly committed team of paid and volunteer people who are the greatest gift God has given this Cathedral Church.

We are also blessed to have a number of partnerships which enable us to offer something of the love of God more widely than we could if tried to do everything on our own. Another snapshot – one week in December when we welcomed Marie Curie Hospice, the Lord Lieutenant's Carol Service for Volunteers, Northumbria University, and the Sir Bobby Robson Foundation. It was also a month when we hosted the NE1 Business Community, Dame Allans' School, Crisis, Northumbria Police, Changing Lives – and I could go on.

At my installation, I spoke of the importance and power of place. I have truly discovered that God is both in and active in this place in ways far more abundant than I could even have imagined as I stood in the pulpit on that occasion. And so, I conclude with words of a former General Secretary of the United Nations – Dag Hammarskjöld: For all that has been, Thanks. For all that shall be, Yes.

The Very Revd Lee Batson
Dean of Newcastle

2. Report from the Chief Operating Officer

Fabric

In 2023, we undertook a long and involved process of appointing a new Cathedral Architect who will advise the Chapter on key maintenance, structural and fabric issues. Interviews were conducted in May 2023 and the panel (which consisted of the Chair of the Cathedral's Fabric Advisory Committee, the Chief Operating Officer, Chapter member David Lawrence and Oliver Caroe, architect for York Minster and St Paul's Cathedral) selected Scott Lindsay, partner at Simpson and Brown architects in Edinburgh. Scott knows Newcastle Cathedral well (previously working for Purcell, architects for the *Common Ground in Sacred Space* project) and we are fortunate to have his experience and skills on board.

One of the key issues which has taken a lot of time in 2023 (and continues to be a focus well into 2024) is the Lantern Tower. Many of you will know that the bells haven't been rung for a long while and that the West end doors are closed due to a covered walkway having been constructed by Newcastle City Council outside. Newcastle City Council have maintenance responsibility for the top of the Lantern Tower, and we have been working extremely closely with them to identify some structural issues on the top-most pinnacles. They have constructed the covered walkway on the pavement outside the West end to ensure safe passage of pedestrians. They have also engaged with a specialist firm, Heritage Stone Access, who have undertaken a series of quite breathtaking investigations high up on the tower. Those of you with eagle eyes will spot their access ladders firmly lashed to the top spire! Early in 2024, the City Council commissioned structural engineer Charles Blakett-Ord to advise on detailed structural issues. We have been really grateful for various volunteers helping with some research into the long-term repairs which have been done on the tower (we've gone as far back as the 18th century!) to understand long-standing issues of movement and vibration. There is much work left to be done and we are extraordinarily grateful to the bellringing group for their patience and understanding. It was extremely disappointing not to have the bells rung for the Inauguration of the Bishop or the Coronation and we look forward to being able to have our loyal and experienced group back again in the not-too-distant future.

CGISS project

May 2023 saw the formal end of the Common Ground in Sacred Space project. Our Project Manager, Lindy Gilliland, had left in March 2023 for a brand-new role in the National Trust and it was with extraordinary sadness that we learnt of her death in June 2023 after a short illness. Lindy left a huge legacy at Newcastle Cathedral, responsible for coordinating the £6m CGISS project, with all its opportunities and challenges. Lindy played with Orchestra North East and in March 2024, they celebrated her life, along with her husband, children, family, friends, and colleagues, with a series of moving orchestral pieces.

Governance

After a great deal of hard work, the Cathedral was finally awarded its charity number in Summer 2023 under the Cathedrals Measure 2021. Essentially, the main changes under the Measure are:

- The Chapter as the sole body responsible for the management and governance of the Cathedral, with the College of Canons, an advisory body
- More lay members than clergy on the Chapter

- As previously, the Dean is Chair but is now supported by a Senior Non-Executive Member (who chairs the Chapter if the Dean is absent); the current SNEM is David Bilton
- A formal Senior Management Team group which meets formally every month and shares minutes of the meeting with the Chapter
- Four formal sub-committees of the Chapter: Nominations Committee, the Finance and Investment Committee, Safeguarding Committee and the Audit and Risk Committee.

Across all our committees we are very fortunate to have experienced and committed individuals who help steer and support the Chapter in decision-making. We now have a slightly different way of reporting our finances (as we are jointly regulated by the Church Commissioners and the Charity Commissioners) and we have produced new policies to help our governance processes.

One of the main pieces of work which was started in 2023 was the complete revision of the Chapter's Risk Register, a document designed to highlight the key risk areas across the whole cathedral (e.g. governance, finance, operations, etc.) and propose mitigations to manage or reduce the risks. This significant piece of work has been undertaken by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC). The ARC is also now responsible under the new Measure for reviewing the audit of the accounts and recommending their adoption to the Chapter.

Staffing

For a large part of 2023, we were fortunate to benefit from the wisdom and experience of Jane Hedges as our Interim Dean; however, we were pleased to welcome our new Dean, Lee Batson, in October 2023.

Staff we said goodbye to in 2023: Lindy Gilliland (CGISS Project Manager), Laura Simmonds (Learning and Activities Officer), Emily Stolting-Ayoub (Music Assistant), and Katie Wright (Marketing Intern).

We have been pleased to welcome some new staff throughout the year. Harriet Salisbury started as Admin Assistant in January 2023 (funded by the Cathedral Sustainability Fund), the music team have been joined by Tim Cranfield (Music Administrator) and Grace Weerakoon/Alessia Lotto as Chorister Supervisors. Vanessa Ward joined us as Volunteer Coordinator. We are especially lucky to have Vanessa on board as she has a wealth of experience from Durham Cathedral and Shepherds Dene. Likewise, Ashley Bell was appointed right at the end of the year as Head of Development and Fundraising and has a background at Durham Cathedral. Both posts have been funded by the Cathedral Sustainability Fund.

Kate Sussams
Chief Operating Officer

3. Electoral Roll Report 2023/2024

In accordance with the requirements of the Synodical Government Measure 1969 an Electoral Roll for 2023/2024 had been prepared and exhibited for inspection in the Cathedral Office. Numbers will be given at the Annual General Meeting. There were 156 names on the Roll (115 households) when prepared. Over the course of the year, this increased to 163 names and 122 households.

Ellie Robertson
Electoral Roll Officer

4. Report from the Canon for Outreach and Discipleship

Significant to the joy there is in ministering as part of the team at Newcastle Cathedral, and leading on particular areas of our common life, is the collaborative working with gifted individuals across our congregations, volunteer base and staff. As ever, I am conscious that work in the areas I have responsibility for are given voice in their own reports, but I do want to acknowledge, with gratitude and admiration, the impact of my different colleagues' work.

During 2023, I have been privileged to take over the line management of the Learning and Activities' Team. This was during Rachael Rickwood's maternity leave, which was ably covered, and our work in this area developed, by Dr. Amy Outterside (who moved from being an Intern in the team to an Officer position) and Laura Simmonds, both of whom took on additional hours and responsibility in Rachael's absence. Sadly, we said goodbye to Laura, 14th December, after she was offered a full-time permanent Learning and Activities role, working for Durham County Council. Amy and Laura have, as you will read, both worked very hard to develop the learning offer post-'Common Ground In Sacred Space,' growing the offer based on faith and the Cathedral's religious significance alongside art and heritage, whilst also ensuring outreach to and opportunity for schools who may struggle to access the Cathedral's offer due to travel and other associated costs, with thanks to the generosity of the St. Hilda's Trust.

You will read that, during 2023, the work of the Lantern Initiative has developed into new areas at the same time as consolidating established work. We owe a lot to The Revd Jon Canessa as our Lantern Initiative Lead for all that he models around a Radical Welcome which reaches those too easily forgotten and made unwelcome in so many other places, alongside a tenacious passion for bringing social justice and change. I am also indebted to the Lantern Initiative Steering Group, giving thanks for the contribution of Lindy Gilliland as she moved on to a new post in the National Trust, and welcoming Vanessa Ward onto the group as our new Volunteer Coordinator. With the initial funding period for the Lantern Initiative ending May 2024 I am indebted to John Sadler and Lindsay Cross, and the Newcastle Cathedral Trust, for their work, together with the Steering Group, on bids to secure funding for the next three year period, seeking to fund an additional post to work alongside Jon, as-well as resources to both expand a training and consultancy offer from the Lantern Initiative and fund an expanded programme of activity and support for those we work with and alongside in dark times. Happily, there has been a positive response to the applications securing the work of the Initiative into 2027.

As part of our commitment to two of our Cathedral values in-particular (Radical Welcome and Empowering Worth) the Chapter and Management Team have worked hard to secure our partnership with the Oswin Project and all that this brings to Cathedral life through the work of Café 16 – working with others to create second chances and to put our values into action. With gratitude for the gift of a generous benefactor helping us to make this possible, I am also immensely grateful to Kate Sussams, our Chief Operating Officer, who has worked hard to negotiate a Licence Agreement that is fit for purpose and gives both sides the flexibility to be able to respond to the needs of those who come to us, valuing the work and ministry of the café and its staff, not least our wonderful Café Manager, Clare Guiney. Together with the generosity of the Ecclesiastical Moulton Trust, our café staff help to provide refreshment for those who are particularly in need day by day, as do our wonderful Vergers, some days serving tens of hot drinks every hour of the day.

Our common life as a Cathedral has continued to be greatly enriched by the growing number of sanctuary seekers finding a spiritual home amongst us. We were delighted, on 16th November 2023, to launch a partnership between ourselves, The Arts' Society North East and Citizen Songwriters to fundraise for a piece of work to help 'sanctuary seekers' (of all forms) find a way, using the gifts of a composer and musicians, to tell their story during 2024. We were able to secure additional funding from The Arts' Society nationally and our launch concert, being extraordinarily well attended, raised more money than targeted. The project is going ahead in 2024 and we look forward to sharing in what is created during summer 2024.

An additional project to support asylum seekers was also secured in 2023, with thanks to some other generous benefactors and the work of Lesley Lee, which will allow us to support those worshipping with us to learn English, filling a significant gap in the provision across the city and region. Unfortunately, all of those this work was established to support were moved by the Home Office, but work is ongoing to establish the needs of a newer cohort.

Over the course of 2023 three different groups were prepared for confirmation. Two of these groups were made up of individuals from the asylum seeker community, with each group meeting weekly for over five months to explore the faith and scriptures in their own language, with the help of a Farsi translator alongside a member of the Cathedral clergy. In addition, a Farsi-English Bible Study Group has met throughout the year, with the assistance of another translator. The weekly Thursday Bible Study has gone from strength to strength, growing to incorporate newer members of the congregations with thanks to Helen Wright and her diligent and sensitive leadership of the group. During Lent 2023, different members of the Cathedral Ministry Team facilitated two weekly sessions (one online in the evening and one in the Cathedral during the day) reflecting on 'The Gift of Reconciliation'. A further joy in the life of discipleship amongst the Cathedral congregations has been the growing number of people working with Cathedral clergy to explore a sense of vocation to licensed or ordained ministry, with eight individuals doing so at different stages during 2023. The discipleship of our youngest members has been greatly enriched by the efforts of David and Gill Lawrence, Nneoma Adigwe, and Beth Conway who have, after the success of different trial periods during 2022 sustained Junior Church almost every week of 2023.

Finally, as part of the Cathedral's particular calling to help resource ministry and mission in the Diocese, working together with the Continuing Ministerial Formation Officer during 2023 we have hosted and resourced a monthly gathering for licensed and ordained ministers, current and retired, to meet to reflect theologically on a theme with a visiting speaker, followed by Evensong. We have also worked with the Director of Initial Ministerial Education Phase 2 to support Curates from Newcastle and Durham to explore ministry on the margins, with other sessions being held for more experienced ministers to come together to discuss trauma informed ministry.

Revd Canon Peter Dobson
Canon for Outreach and Discipleship

5. Report from the Cathedral Architect

Appointment of the Cathedral Architect

As required under the Cathedrals Measure 2021 and Care of Cathedrals Measure 2011 (as amended), it is required to appoint an Architect or Surveyor in the capacity of the Cathedral Architect/Surveyor of the Fabric. Following almost 2 years with Jonathan Deeming fulfilling the role, the Cathedral undertook the formal recruitment, supported by Oliver Caroe, Cathedral Architect for Ripon Cathedral, St Paul's Cathedral and York Minster.

Scott Lindsay was appointed Cathedral Architect in late summer 2023. Scott holds AABC and RIAS Accreditation in Conservation Architecture at the highest level. Scott is a partner at Simpson & Brown and previously worked at Newcastle Cathedral including the CGISS project under Jane Kennedy whilst employed by Purcell.

Works Planned: Quinquennial Inspection Review (QIR) 2024

As required by the Cathedrals Measure, the incoming Architect must complete a full Quinquennial Inspection Report of the fabric within two years of appointment.

The overdue QI is scheduled to take place in May 2024.

An interim QI was undertaken in December 2021, in the absence of a new Cathedral Architect. This will be the first full QI since 2016.

Works Underway: Lantern Tower Repairs

The focus of 2023 was the investigation of the condition of the lantern tower following storm weather and a lead capping which had become dislodged from the lantern. Following identification and retrieval of the capping, a series of high-level inspections have been carried out to determine the condition of the lantern tower. Conservation-accredited structural engineer, Charles Blackett Ord, has since been appointed by Newcastle City Council to advise on the structural condition of the tower.

A detailed laser scan and measured building survey is currently being procured to fully assess and understand the condition, and to schedule the repairs. A programme of repairs will be drawn up with the contract work undertaken in 2024.

The Path to Net Zero

A draft Net Zero action plan has been discussed with Tristan Oliver, Diocesan Consultant. The plan will be developed to identify opportunities for the Cathedral to reduce carbon in its operation and sets out future goals to achieving NetZero.

Scott Lindsay
Cathedral Architect

6. Report from the Churchwardens

At the Annual Vestry Meeting held last year the four Churchwardens were re-appointed, Alison Malcolm, Gavin Scott, Gerald Graham and myself. I was delighted that Vicki Pickering was able to continue in her role as an Assistant Warden.

As the life of the Cathedral has now fully returned to pre-Pandemic times of four years ago, I would again like to appeal for any volunteers to come forward to act as Assistant Wardens. This is not an overly arduous position, and very different to acting as a Warden of a parish Church. It would only mean being on duty for one Sunday each month. If anyone feels able to do so, or would like further information, please contact me, or any of the Wardens who will be on hand each Sunday.

Since the previous Annual Meeting, the role of the Warden has continued to be that of being on duty at services on a Sunday and other occasions, for example, to mark the installation of the Reverend Canon Lee Batson as our new Dean. It is always a privilege to be involved with these, and other, significant events at the Cathedral. On a Sunday there are a number of matters to check and organise, but the main focus is being present at the West-end of the Cathedral to welcome worshippers and visitors, and to deal with any problems.

Also, it has been of tremendous assistance to have the continued support on a Sunday morning from the Sidesmen and Sideswomen, who act as welcomers, provide service sheets, and help take the collection. Can I express my thanks to all those who have offered their time each Sunday, and again appeal to anyone who would like to offer their time to help with this role, to contact me. Again, the more help that is offered will ensure that you are probably only needed for one Sunday per month.

Can I send my thanks to my colleagues who have loyally acted as Wardens and Assistant Wardens over the past year, and look forward to working together, with our new Dean and what will be a new collection of Cathedral Canons, and with anyone else who would like to be involved, over the next year.

Timothy Wigglesworth
Senior Churchwarden

7. Report on Deanery Synod

Meetings of the Newcastle Central Deanery Synod continue to largely be taken up with work on the Deanery Development Planning process. A Deanery plan was presented to the diocese in the summer of 2023, and this now needs to be implemented. The broad vision is to '*Connect with and serve our communities collaboratively, draw closer to God and to each other in prayer, and care for God's creation*'. What this looks like in practice will vary throughout the deanery, which covers the city in the south and more suburban areas to the north and includes parishes with a wide variety of socio-economic contexts, as well as the Cathedral, the Resource Church, and hospital and university chaplaincies. A major theme is how we can work together more effectively and share our resources – our buildings and our people, with all their gifts and experience. The deployment of stipendiary ministry is a part of this. The Cathedral and its staff lie outside of this process, but our ministerial resources need to be taken into account when looking at provision for ministry in the city centre, although the Cathedral's wider role in the diocese also needs to be remembered during the planning process.

At two meetings, in May and in July, Synod members were asked to think about what their own parish might be able to contribute to the overall plan. There was a need for outward-looking vision, rather than a survival mentality, which might mean considering how to make buildings fit for purpose, so that they can be used more by different groups, or building links with people through pastoral care, or raising the profile of the church within the local community. Finance is often an obstacle, and the Deanery Finance Officer, Gill Mitchell, flagged the support that is available to parishes to encourage people to give to their churches.

The Finance Officer spoke again at the meeting in October, about Parish Share and how payment of this enables support to parishes across the diocese, enabling the church to be a worshipping presence in even small, rural communities. Again, Parish Share is not

something that directly concerns the Cathedral, but it is important to recognise the challenges that are being faced by the church as a whole, and the ways that have to be found to meet those challenges. The meeting also worked on setting priorities for their own churches in the context of the overall Deanery plan and how parishes could work together to support one another. The meeting also received a report on the July and October sessions of General Synod, which included debates on Living in Love and Faith, on safeguarding, and on divestment by the church from fossil fuels.

Collaborative working as envisaged in the Deanery plan is beginning to take shape, and the January Synod meeting received a report on a group looking at work with children and young people. Events are being organised and it is hoped that the city centre is an area where this work might be developed. The meeting also asked parishes to look again at their individual priorities and what support they might need to make progress. There was also an update on Parish Share and parish giving, with the need to cover costs of stipendiary clergy being a consideration. One encouraging area of work is Eco-church. Our deanery has the highest proportion of eco-registered churches in the diocese, owing to active encouragement and support by the Area Dean and the Deanery Eco-Champion.

At the January meeting, thanks and good wishes were given to the Area Dean, the Revd Pauline Pearson, who stood down from the post on her retirement in March. Thanks, were also given to Carol Barclay, who was standing down from her position as Deanery Lay Chair. Although the deanery has yet to find a new Lay Chair, it was recently announced the Revd Paul Baker, Vicar of St Nicholas, Gosforth, would be licensed as Area Dean in April, and we look forward to continuing to plan and work under his leadership.

Katherine Govier
Deanery Synod Representative

8. Report from the Director of Music

2023 was our first year as one of six pilot Anglican cathedrals taking part in the National Schools Singing Programme. Through the initiative we receive seed funding to develop relationships with primary schools across the city, including in less affluent areas. We offer our partner schools an hour each week of classroom singing throughout the year as part of the curriculum, also providing CPD for teachers, online resources, general support of musical endeavours in school, and performance opportunities at the Cathedral. We are seeking to improve the standard of singing as well as the general music provision in schools across Newcastle and beyond, giving many children opportunities that they would otherwise not receive, and equipping them to build on their work in school, perhaps through singing at the Cathedral. We began with a small number of schools after Easter, increasing this to 11 schools in September 2023. Almost 700 children have benefitted from the weekly curriculum singing sessions, with nearly 100 children and young people coming to sing at the Cathedral in one of our choirs: *Mini-ChoriStarters* for Reception and Year 1 children, *ChoriStarters* for Year 2, the Training Choir (Years 3 & 4), our groups of boy and girl Choristers (from Year 3), our Senior Girl Choristers (from Year 10) and Cambiata Voices (older boys with changing or changed voices).

In April we were delighted to welcome Clare Crinson as a Choral Director and Assistant Director of the Schools Singing Programme. Gill Blazey stepped down in her leadership

of *ChoriStarters*, and we are so very grateful to Gill for all that she contributed to our work with the youngest children. From September, Clare Crinson took over the reins of *ChoriStarters*, starting *Mini-ChoriStarters* for the even younger children. Clare joined the existing Choral Director, Laura Oldfield, to run our pioneering Training Choir which offers children from our Schools Singing Programme a first taste of Cathedral singing and aims to lead on to many becoming Probationer Choristers. We were incredibly sad to say goodbye to Emily Stolting-Ayoub (our Music Assistant) in September, who enjoyed working with our children and young people so much over 8 years that she left us to train to become a primary school teacher. Emily's role proved difficult to fill with one person, so for an initial year, we have divided the role. We appointed Tim Cranfield to look after the music administration and library, and as a role share, Grace Weerakoon, and Alessia Lotto as Chorister Supervisors.

During late March we had the recording sessions for the latest Cathedral Choir album *A Year at Newcastle*. This is now available to buy as a disc or on streaming platforms. The recording takes the listener on a journey through the church year (Advent to the Feast of Christ the King) featuring music by 20th and 21st Century composers. It includes various 'first recordings' of works newly written or recently rediscovered. I commend the recording as an excellent addition to your collections, and a beautiful gift for friends. In May, we returned to BBC Radio 4 in a Sunday Worship broadcast from the Cathedral on the day following the Coronation. Both endeavours proved wonderful ways of bringing our wonderful Cathedral Choir a wider profile, gathering listeners from across the nation, and around the world.

We were delighted to receive a generous grant from The Cathedral Music Trust, giving us the opportunity to expand our Choral and Organ Scholarship scheme, and receive funding towards the all-important individual singing lessons for the Choristers from September. The Choral Scholarships often act as a training ground for those that may become future Lay Clerks, and we hope that, through aiming to work with six student singers each year, this will help us in our succession planning. The enlarged scheme also further builds on our links with Northumbria and Newcastle Universities, as well as allowing us to continue to offer opportunities to students from Durham University. Beyond the work of the Cathedral Choir, our Choral Scholars support the work of our Schola Cantorum, Cambiata Voices, and particularly through acting as 'section leaders', lead a wider group of volunteer students as part of our Cathedral Consort. Our Organ Scholar, James Watson, plays a fundamental role in the musical life of the Cathedral. With rehearsals and Evensong services happening concurrently on various days of the week we rely on James for a lot of the organ playing, and on occasion he also gets to conduct Evensong. In an innovative partnership with St Andrew's Church, Newgate Street, in which they pay into the scholarship scheme, James is their principal organist on most Sunday mornings, and our Choral Scholars take it in turns to sing at St Andrew's, meaning that St Andrew's can enlarge their regular quartet on certain Sundays as well as enjoying a high standard of organ music.

Other highlights of the year included a successful first Chorister Alumni Weekend, with former Choristers, Choral Scholars and Lay Clerks returning to the Cathedral to sing in services and to socialise for a weekend in June (the weekend was expertly administered by Marion Peutherer). A couple of weeks later, the last weekend of the academic year, saw us play host to our colleagues, the choirs and organists of Hexham Abbey and Carlisle Cathedral in the Hadrian Three Choirs Festival Concert. Throughout the year, our weekly Monday Organ recitals continued to attract a sizeable audience, regularly

attending to be inspired and entertained. The Cathedral Choir Christmas Concerts enjoyed record attendance, with an audience of over 700 over 2 nights.

As exciting as special occasions and projects are, it is the daily singing of the Office, to the glory of God, which is our first and foremost priority. We maintained this on six days of the week throughout 2023, and through our various different choirs, we continued to enlarge the community of those regularly involved in the worship and prayer life of the Cathedral. This is a sizeable undertaking and would not be possible without the commitment of my many valued colleagues. I am so very grateful to Kris Thomsett (Assistant Director of Music) for his many skills as a musician, for his inspiring of singers and his skill and resourcefulness when dealing with the organ (both playing and fixing!), and to all of our Choral Directors, support staff, Lay Clerks, Choral Scholars, our Choristers and their long suffering parents, and all of those that give of their time to sing in one of our other choirs. Also, thanks to our volunteer Chorister Supervisors, The Choirs' Association Committee, and those that generously support the continuation of music at Newcastle Cathedral in any other way.

Ian Roberts
Director of Music

9. Report from the Finance Manager

Financial Report for the year ended 31 December 2023

Budgeted Deficit (before Special Projects, Depreciation and Legacies) - £330,666
Year End actual Deficit - £36,251

The budget process is undertaken in the previous year and whilst it always has to some extent be an iterative process, nevertheless in 2023 Year End result showed a large variance (£294,415). This was due to several factors:

There were some **savings** in the 2023 budget including areas such as website maintenance (funded from the end of the Common Ground in Sacred Space Project) and underspend on the architect retainer fee budget whilst we were recruiting for a Cathedral Architect.

Some areas of the Cathedral income did really well – including a better Year End result for weddings/tours/school visits. The highlight was the income from hiring out the Cathedral to external clients for events (e.g. music concerts) and the associated bar takings (£120K).

We had some un-forecasted income which included a very generous private donation of £50K, a one-off grant from the Church Commissioners to assist with increased utilities costs and a grant for the Music Team's work on the National School Singing Programme.

Some of the budget challenges we had in 2023 included additional spend on clergy properties, some additional spend on maintenance of the Cathedral building (security/fire alarm systems and gutter maintenance) and the continuing challenge of finding tenants for Cathedral House to support service charge costs.

We are really very grateful for the support from the new Finance and Investment Committee (John Inglis-Jones, Catherine Winfield, Gavin Black, Andrew Wathey, and Peter Dobson).

Neringa Baguckiene
Finance Manager

Cathedral Church of St Nicholas Management Accounts: 2023		Budget 2023			Actual 2023			Variance
		Income	Expenditure	Surplus / (Deficit)	Income	Expenditure	Surplus / (Deficit)	Surplus / (Deficit)
A Core Activities:		£	£	£	£	£	£	
	Mission & Ministry:							
1	Collections	105,000		105,000	105,943		105,943	943
2	Donations	10,000		10,000	56,404		56,404	46,404
3	Fees & Charges	7,000		7,000	59,194		59,194	52,194
4	Grants	402,640		402,640	481,052		481,052	78,412
5	Mission & Ministry		(35,200)	(35,200)		(26,654)	(26,654)	8,546
	Total Mission & Ministry	524,640	(35,200)	489,440	702,592	(26,654)	675,938	186,498
6	Music	46,813	(190,437)	(143,624)	99,973	(207,995)	(108,023)	35,601
7	Clergy Expenses		(116,297)	(116,297)		(107,652)	(107,652)	8,645
8	Clergy Housing		(24,730)	(24,730)		(35,364)	(35,364)	(10,634)
9	Vergers & Sacristy		(94,950)	(94,950)		(85,023)	(85,023)	9,927
10	Fabric		(282,850)	(282,850)		(206,957)	(206,957)	75,893
	Total Music/Clergy/Vergers/Fabric	46,813	(709,264)	(662,451)	99,973	(642,991)	(543,018)	119,433
11	Mosley Street	47,390	(45,900)	1,490	46,663	(79,387)	(32,724)	(34,214)
	Total Investment Property	47,390	(45,900)	1,490	46,663	(79,387)	(32,724)	(34,214)
12	Investments (Share Portfolio)	40,550		40,550	62,368		62,368	21,818
	A Operating Surplus / (Deficit)	659,393	(790,364)	(130,971)	911,597	(749,032)	162,565	293,536
	B Trading Contributions:							
13	Café - Licence to Occupy	0	0	0	5,625	0	5,625	5,625
14	Retail	17,000	(8,600)	8,400	15,543	(7,584)	7,959	(441)
	Total Catering & Retail income	17,000	(8,600)	8,400	21,168	(7,584)	13,584	5,184
15	Events & Hire	57,000	(9,000)	48,000	100,437	(44,875)	55,561	7,561
	B Trading Contribution	74,000	(17,600)	56,400	121,604	(52,459)	69,145	12,745
	C Surplus / (Deficit) Before Overheads	733,393	(807,964)	(74,571)	1,033,201	(801,491)	231,710	306,281
	D Overheads:							
16	Administration		(214,845)	(214,845)		(229,785)	(229,785)	(14,940)
17	Finance		(41,250)	(41,250)		(38,176)	(38,176)	3,074
	D Total Overheads		(256,095)	(256,095)		(267,961)	(267,961)	(11,866)

Cathedral Church of St Nicholas		Budget 2023			Actual 2023			Variance
Management Accounts: 2023		Income	Expenditure	Surplus / (Deficit)	Income	Expenditure	Surplus / (Deficit)	Surplus / (Deficit)
E Surplus / (Deficit) After Overheads		733,393	(1,064,059)	(330,666)	1,033,201	(1,069,452)	(36,251)	294,415
FSpecial Projects								
18	CGISS Stage 2 - Delivery - Cathedral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19	CGISS Stage 2 - Delivery - NHLF	114,382	(114,382)	0	263,038	(262,842)	196	196
20	Sustainability Grant No 1 (2018)		(47,000)	(47,000)	0	(8,111)	(8,111)	38,889
21	Sustainability Grant No 2 (2020)		(69,500)	(69,500)	0	(74,283)	(74,283)	(4,783)
22	Sustainability Grant No 3 (2022)		(60,284)	(60,284)	0	(27,048)	(27,048)	33,236
23	Sustainability Grant No 4 (2023)				122,107			0
24	Lantern Initiative Project	43,000	(43,000)	0	47,765	(47,576)	189	189
F Underlying Operating Surplus / (Deficit)		890,775	(1,398,225)	(507,450)	1,466,111	(1,489,312)	(23,201)	484,249

25	Depreciation		(22,000)	(22,000)		(48,792)	(48,792)	(26,792)
G	NET Surplus / (Deficit)	890,775	(1,420,225)	(529,450)	1,466,111	(1,538,104)	(71,993)	457,457

Capital Receipts

Capital Receipts							
	Legacies - Restricted	0	0	0		0	
	Legacies - Unrestricted	0	0	4,000		4,000	
	Total Legacies	0	0	4,000		4,000	
H	Capital Receipts Total	0	0	4,000		4,000	

J	Surplus / (Deficit)	0	0	0	1,470,111	(1,538,104)	(67,993)
Gains / (Losses)							
	Realised	0	0	4,495		4,495	
	Unrealised	0	0	34,311		34,311	
L	Total Gains / (Losses)	0	0	0	38,806	0	38,806
K	TOTAL SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) FOR THE YEAR				1,508,917	(1,538,104)	(29,187)

10. Report from the Front of House Manager

Over the last few years, we have become a Cathedral and team accustomed to change. Like its closest predecessors, 2023 saw plenty of it from the perspective of FoH; new staff, new opportunities, new ways of thinking about who we are as an organisation and how best we articulate that. Perhaps the most exciting change though is that we began to see how much opportunity there still was to explore the potential of this beautiful building, to bring new kinds of experiences to different audiences, and to push ourselves to be creative within the space.

We diversified our event offer. A lot of it still seems to be by candlelight of one form or another (and yes we have paid our electricity bills), but we also had our first DJ-led dance event with a headline act, our first silent disco, the biggest wedding blessing ceremony and after-party we could jam in, a summer-long collaboration and programme of events with St Oswald's Hospice, more charity concerts, more conferences, more orchestral events, and more choirs than we perhaps thought possible.

The retail space, though suffering from a lack of staffing, still achieved over 96% of its budget, with a whopping £8.32 average for each spend per transaction. This comes down to the ongoing commitment of our well-trained and enthusiastic volunteers.

Alongside all of our exceptional events, we have also continued to be a welcoming space for visitors local, national and international, including continuing to provide a Radical Welcome under increasingly pressured circumstances as the cost of living and external factors have meant more people than ever seek solace, warmth, and safety inside our walls. This has not been without its challenges, but it's a constant reminder that the important work of income generation is not an end in itself, but rather a means to facilitate the opening of our doors, our welcome.

Throughout 2023 we have built solid relationships with numerous external partners, local charities, musicians, music promoters, businesses, caterers, agencies, and event organisers. Although our event income was spectacular – £81,500 for venue hire (£106,00 with refreshment income included) against a target budget of £50,000 – these relationships will be what sustains us over the coming years. They mean more than just great people coming together to do extraordinary things; they also imbue us with confidence that our record for creativity, returning audiences, and perseverance will allow this amazing space to continue to thrive.

Amy Carrithers
Front of House Manager

11. Report from the Head Verger

It's not always obvious to members of the Cathedral community, or the public, but without our vergers it would simply be impossible for the Cathedral to open its doors each day and function as efficiently as it does.

As well as playing a vital role in supporting clergy and enabling worship, vergers are continually engaged with essential buildings maintenance, site management, room set up, cleaning, engaging with the homeless, and the list goes on.

One of the biggest roles the vergers have is supporting our programme of events and venue hires.

It can often mean demanding physical labour in preparing the Cathedral, moving chairs sometimes daily for each different setup, and working late into the night clearing and re-setting the building when everyone else has gone home.

This work is particularly important because events and venue hire are now providing a crucial income stream, which is critical to our financial sustainability going forward.

We work alongside our volunteers for concerts and events to provide friendly welcome, and our new volunteer vergers role. If you would like to find out more about volunteering, please come and see any of the vergers. I promise you won't be moving chairs late into the night; but we will provide the tea and biscuits.

I want to say how much I enjoy working in such a wonderful building with a brilliant team of vergers and volunteers.

Thank you all for your hard work.

Paul Russell-Sewell
Head Verger

12. Report from the Lantern Initiative Lead

The Lantern Initiative is an outworking of Newcastle Cathedral's values, Radical Welcome, Inspiring Worship and Empowering Worth. It works and walks with people experiencing dark or difficult times and seeks to be a beacon of hope. It aims to create 'brave spaces' of hospitality and belonging at the heart of the city. Initiatives are developed in partnership with individuals and organisations to co-create programme activities, services and events with people that are concerned with social justice and human flourishing and the upside-down nature of the Kingdom of God.

At the beginning of 2023, Nina Harkness (NHS Outreach Nurse for the Street-life and Homeless Community) began to deliver drop-ins to respond to some of the practical needs of Cathedral visitors that have specific health requirements. This partnership has been very effective and has enabled over 100 people to access welfare support (registering people with a GP; treatment for infected wounds and damaged feet; making housing appointments; access to harm reduction programmes, etc.).

In the summer the Cathedral hosted the Story Chair event, a partnership with Changing Lives, Probation and Northumberland University. Women who have been through the criminal justice system recognised the tangible sense of sanctuary and safety offered by the Cathedral. With support, they secured funding to develop a programme to share their stories of hope with others facing similar traumatic life experiences. As part of this, the women met MP Jess Phillips to lobby for changes to existing laws on abuse and domestic violence. Two of the women from this group currently volunteer at the Cathedral.

A pilot course in partnership with Newcastle Diocese ran during October and November. Three half-day sessions enabled 10 parish priests to reflect on their own context in the light of meeting people with lived experience and the praxis Newcastle Cathedral is developing around Radical Welcome. The course was co-delivered and included insights from three people with lived experience (trauma, addiction, and recovery) and considered how the Cathedral is establishing a more trauma-aware and compassionate culture.

- Churches as places of sanctuary? (Safeguarding, boundaries & well-being)
- Trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's)
- Triggers and responding to conflict (including de-escalation)
- The power of stories and myths and listening to voices of lived experience
- The drama (and coaching) triangle, including rescuing models of mission
- Blind spots and unconscious bias
- Language and Liturgy

- Asset Based Community Development (What are the partners and relationships that we wish to cultivate?)

The course was followed up with a visit from Tim Evans, Senior Associate of Nurture Development (ABCD) who gave a talk as part of the Diocesan 'Theology And . . . 'series.

As part of its work with Recovery Church, five residential trips took place during the year. These involve taking people from 'Oaktrees' Recovery & Rehab group to The Northumbria Community to explore faith and spirituality in the context of addiction and recovery. These visits have always proven to be powerful as those attending open up and share honestly their hopes and fears within the context of the Northumbria Community.

Since Newcastle Cathedral started to host weekly Recovery Church services, over 130 individuals have attended at least one of the Wednesday evening services during 2023. The community currently has over 40 regulars, although numbers at the weekly service are typically nearer 20. A weekly drop-in on Friday lunch times began in November to enable people to meet and eat together and receive pastoral support when needed.

Throughout the year, the Cathedral hosted 4 services with Oasis Housing, Changing Lives and Newcastle Treatment & Recovery Service to remember people who have died as a result of chronic drug and alcohol addiction and in August a service was held for the whole recovery community to remember those as part of International Overdose Day.

Revd Jon Canessa
Lantern Initiative Lead

13. Report from the Learning and Activities Officer

2023 has been a fun filled busy year for the Learning and Activities team. Over the course of the year, we have worked closely with schools, charities, artists, and community groups bringing to life a vibrant exhibition, events, and schools' programme.

Exhibitions

In 2023 a wide-ranging exhibition programme featured both internal and externally produced work, all of which were universally well received and enjoyed by visitors. In February 'C is for Cathedral' an exhibition by Arcadea, a local charity supporting artists with learning disabilities showcased a visual cathedral alphabet produced after a series of tours, visits, and workshops in the Cathedral. The launch event was attended by the charity and artists, cathedral staff, volunteers, and members of the Chapter. The exhibition drew in visitors and was one of the most well-received exhibitions of the year. In April we showcased the archaeological history of the Cathedral unearthed by the CGISS project. This was an interesting exploration into past Tyneside life but also a thought-provoking discussion on how we treat human remains and how we are remembered.

That month also saw the installation of the 42 Cathedrals travelling exhibition by Peter Marlow. Filling the South Transept and South Quire aisle this exhibition was visually striking and drew in visitors in good numbers.

Following on from so much positive feedback in 2022, June saw the return of our exhibition exploring themes related to the Pride movement and issues faced by the LGBTQ+ community. Once again, this exhibition invited much visitor engagement and

generated overwhelmingly positive feedback, perhaps demonstrating our continuing dedication to our values of 'Radical Welcome.'

During the summer our partnership with St Oswald's Hospice's 'Shaun on the Tyne' trail led to a delightful installation of a large nautical themed Shaun the Sheep and 5 smaller statues decorated by local school children. This was an incredibly popular exhibition, attracting large numbers of visitors, a big proportion of which were first-time visitors to the Cathedral.

To coincide with the installation of our new Dean Lee Batson in October we brought to life an exhibition of our glorious golden copes. The exhibition explored themes represented on the copes such as our Northern Saints' heritage and considered how this theme and others were represented artistically in textile form. This exhibition was well received and generated a sense of appreciation from visitors in being able to have a closer look at these wonderful garments.

During this time, we also welcomed the 'Coat of Hopes,' a patchwork pilgrim coat on its ongoing walk-through Britain. The coat was made by hundreds of people to highlight climate change and the threat of ecological disaster. This generated much positive feedback and provoked many conversations around the subject.

The year ended once again with a showcase of some of the St. Nicholas icons from the Cathedral's extensive and well-preserved collection. The exhibition explored the multifaceted nature of St. Nicholas' sainthood and the many ways in which they have been represented.

Events

It's been another busy year for the Learning team with regards to events. Following on the success of the previous year we once again ran our ever-popular Tower Tours from April-August, which continued to attract large visitor numbers and lots of positive engagement until the tour year was cut short by the need for emergency maintenance work which is ongoing and expected to last most of 2024. We once more ran regular Cathedral History and Northern Saints tours, which were very well received by visitors. 2023 also saw a significant increase in the number of prebooked private tours by community, society, and school groups. These were led by the Learning team and were universally well received.

In both the February and October half terms we welcomed back the *Great North Children's Hospital* and their 'Pop up Hospital.' This event continues to be popular and grow in the variety of activities and attendance of health professionals which enhance children's understanding and health and wellbeing, whilst also explaining what it's like to go to a hospital.

During 3 evenings of the Easter school holidays the Cathedral was transformed with our art and light installation trail 'Light at the End of the Tunnel.' Featuring the work of 6 artists who work in light and sound, the trail shone a light on some of the Cathedral's treasures and special spaces. The trail celebrated the arrival of spring and featured many interactive elements. The trail proved popular and led to many positive comments by visitors as well as on social media and in the press.

During the Easter holidays we held an Archaeology Day to coincide with our archaeology showcase exhibition. The day featured interactive events such as hands on artefact discovery for children and talks by the Cathedral archaeologist.

In May the ever popular 'Late Shows' returned to the city. We opened our tower for a series of 'Twilight Tours' which attracted large numbers of visitors bringing new audiences to the Cathedral.

As part of the Newcastle Sings Festival, we hosted several pop-up community choir performances and two school choir festival days.

The summer featured a festival of Shaun the Sheep and a variety of farm related activities. Children were invited to participate in a range of self-led crafts throughout the holidays and to participate in our week 'Woolly Tales' story time sessions. Two flocks of sheep were welcomed to the Cathedral on two family fun days. These animals were a hit with visitors, big and small. The days also gave visitors a chance to participate in farm themed crafts led by the Learning team, volunteers, and other Cathedral staff.

In September Heritage Open Days returned to the Cathedral. This year we decided to host a 'Volunteer Showcase,' highlighting all the fantastic and essential work undertaken by our team of dedicated volunteers. These events also invited visitors to embark on a Cathedral history tour and get hands on with the Cathedral's many treasures.

In October half term, we acknowledged the Cathedral's connection with the armed forces with our 'Armed with Knowledge: Tyneside's Intelligence Force.' Visitors explored how the British Army has changed over time and found out what goes on in the Military Intelligence Corps!

December saw the beginning of a children's craft table for Advent and Christmas. Visitors were encouraged to engage with various art and games-based activities to engage with the Nativity Story and due to popularity with visitors, this has been expanded to feature throughout the liturgical year, and also to engage with wider events and issues that affect Britain today.

Schools

Our work with schools has gone from strength to strength with the Cathedral firmly establishing itself as a venue for outside classroom learning. We continued to see an increasing number of new schools visiting but have importantly increased our numbers of returning schools, becoming an annual destination. Pupils have ranged from pre-school age to A-level from faith based and secular schools with rising numbers of GCSE preparation visits. Groups have explored a range of cross-curricular subjects but put simply they relish the chance to explore such a wonderful building and its history. Object handling has become a popular feature of our workshops, with the Hexham Bible being the star of the show.

We once again hosted a schools' conference for the project 'God and the Big Bang' which saw over 100 primary and secondary students take part in talks and workshops with scientists who are also Christian.

In the autumn, we began an ambitious project to engage with school children in disadvantaged areas in the Diocese. This project was kindly funded by the St Hilda's Trust and enabled us to offer free workshops and travel for a workshop at the Cathedral. These workshops will continue into 2024. These pupils were then invited to participate in a schools' exhibition in the Cathedral exploring the theme of 'Special Spaces.' The brief was to create a stained-glass window using any medium to express what makes the Cathedral and/or a space special to us. The resulting exhibition will open in April 2024.

Overall, 2023 has been an exciting year with much progress made. 2024 is looking even more optimistic and engaging with a vibrant exhibition, events, and community engagement programme.

Teachers' comments:

'This has been fantastic! Children have had a brilliant time. Everything I asked the Learning Officer for in terms of learning objectives has been delivered and more.'

'This has been such a great experience for the children. They have really enjoyed it and learned so much! They don't really get the chance to visit places like this; this has been special.'

Childrens' comments:

'This is the coolest place ever!'

'This place is amazing.'

'I really enjoyed the workshop. It was so fun, and I learned a lot. My favourite part is the stained-glass windows.'

Dr Amy Outterside
Activities and Learning Officer

14. Report from the Marketing and Communications Manager

2023 was another year of significant change and excitement. The conclusion of the National Lottery funded 'Common Ground in Sacred Space' project (CGISS) presented a valuable opportunity to assess priorities and messaging. We were able to leverage the positive momentum built during the project in terms of relationship-building, to develop marketing and communications in a long term, sustainable way.

Preparing for a world after CGISS

February and March were busy months, as we 'tied up loose ends' ahead of grant funding coming to an end. In this, I was assisted by the Marketing Intern Katie Wright. Once funding for her post ended in April, I was pleased that Katie found a role suiting her passion for heritage at Northumberland Archives, Woodhorn. In Katie's final months, she focused on setting up templates and systems that have significantly streamlined my workload since her departure. These tools have been invaluable, especially now that I'm managing the workload solo.

This year, I've continued to oversee (design/populate/print/distribute) the quarterly Cathedral 'What's On' leaflet which I introduced in 2022. These are shelved in transport hubs, shopping centres, cultural venues, and other churches, boosting our visibility across the North East. The quarterly approach gives visitors more reason to return and encourages staff across various departments to programme activities and events further in advance.

Making the most of Comms Opportunities

Spring brought the inauguration of the new Bishop of Newcastle and the Coronation of King Charles. These occasions provided valuable communication opportunities, garnering television, and local newspaper coverage. Additionally, the Cathedral Choir was showcased on BBC Radio 4 during the coronation weekend – featuring for the second year running on 'Sunday Morning Worship'. The Bishop's installation included the design of a printed order of service, which involved collaboration with multiple parties in the Diocese and the Bishop's Office.

On a very different note, I was keen to embrace the opportunity for a 5-minute national TV feature highlighting the Cathedral's first silent disco. The result was a thoughtful and positive segment on BBC One's 'Sunday Morning Live', exploring cathedrals' roles in their communities. The feature included interviews with Interim Dean Dr Jane Hedges and volunteer Chris Taberham, shining a light on the vital role volunteers play in the Cathedral's life.

Partnership working

Our main attraction during the summer was our involvement in the citywide 'Shaun the Sheep on the Tyne' trail. This proved invaluable in drawing in first-time visitors, as indicated by St Oswald's Hospice's visitor surveys and app engagement figures. Additionally, it provided an opportunity to be part of a highly publicised and well-resourced campaign managed by St Oswald's Hospice, and to highlight the charity's amazing work.

Other notable collaboration included the Story Chair event in September, jointly coordinated with Changing Lives and Northumbria University. This event garnered national coverage through The Church Times and the Association of English Cathedrals. Our partnership with the university's media team stemmed from earlier collaboration on an International Women's Day event in March. Additionally, in December, we secured two TV news features highlighting Changing Lives' Christmas Meal appeal, including a slot on BBC Look North's Christmas Day bulletin.

Also, regarding partnerships, the process of recruiting, appointing, and installing the Revd Lee Batson as Dean of Newcastle, for which I created the recruitment pack, marked close collaboration with the Diocese Comms team. This has led to my invitation to fortnightly communications meetings, solidifying the Cathedral's role as a resource for the Diocese.

Advent and beyond

Advent and Christmas have reinforced the comms benefits of clients hiring the Cathedral for their own concerts, services, and fundraising events. The leaflet for this period was completed in September, thanks to various departments providing information about events. The programme, featuring both established favourites - the Bobby Robson Foundation concert - and new events - Northumbria Police's Christmas service - generated its own local news coverage, allowing me to concentrate on the Cathedral's festive worship services and begin work on the Spring 2024 campaign.

As we move into 2024, my focus is on sustaining the momentum of our successful quarterly campaigns to drive return visits and increase awareness. I aim to revamp the content of the Cathedral website (soon celebrating its fourth birthday), to reflect its post-CGISS identity and highlight community projects like the Lantern Initiative which make the Cathedral unique.

Audience growth

In 2023, our social media followers on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), and Instagram continued to experience steady growth. There was also a notable increase in subscribers to our e-newsletter, now nearing 2,500.

The surge in newsletter subscribers can be attributed partially to my introduction of TicketSource as our primary box office system. A UK-based platform, TicketSource seamlessly integrates with our e-newsletter systems. We can better monitor responses to custom questions such as 'Have you visited Newcastle Cathedral before?' and 'How did you hear about this event?' Significantly, 38% of the 701 attendees at the Cathedral Choir's December concerts were first-time visitors, indicating that our marketing efforts are successfully bringing new audiences to the Cathedral.

Peter Cumiskey
Marketing and Communications Manager

15. Report on Safeguarding

Newcastle Cathedral adopts the Church of England's House of Bishop's safeguarding policy – '*Promoting a Safer Church*' – as its own policy, augmented as appropriate to take into account different aspects of the particular context of Newcastle Cathedral.

Newcastle Cathedral is committed to:

- Promoting a safer environment and culture.
- The safer recruitment and ongoing support and management of all those with any responsibility related to children, young people, and vulnerable adults within the church.
- Responding promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Caring pastorally for victims and survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Caring pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Responding to those that may pose a present risk to others.

The Dean and Chapter's roles and responsibilities for safeguarding are highlighted at the beginning of each year, with a scheme of delegation agreed and monitored. The Safeguarding Committee met four times in 2023, making recommendations to the Chapter. One of these meetings was a joint meeting with the Senior Management Team to consider the 2024 Safeguarding Action Plan priorities through the lens of the new national safeguarding standards.

In addition, the Chapter receive a report from the Chapter Safeguarding Lead (CSL – who was also still occupying the Cathedral Safeguarding Advisor role throughout the year) at each meeting. Over the course of 2023 the Chapter gave particular attention to:

- Monitoring the nature and progress of active safeguarding cases.
- Reviewing Church Safety Plans and the arrangements in place with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team (DST) for negotiating and making such agreements.
- The continued implications of the William Scott Farrell (WSF) Learning Lessons Serious Case Review, the resulting actions (incorporated into the Annual Safeguarding Action Plan) and the support of survivors.
- The report of the first internal Annual Review of Safeguarding (which will take place each year when there is no Independent Audit), interviewing staff and volunteers around their understanding of and compliance with safeguarding policies and procedures, subsequently feeding actions into the Annual Safeguarding Action Plan. Resulting actions particularly related to clarifying terminology and expectations in the Digital Media Safeguarding policy; amendments to the Safer Recruitment Policy resulting from those using it; a further audit of staff files; lowering the threshold on complaints which are recorder and for which the Complaints' Policy is enacted.
- The resourcing and commissioning of a Learning Lessons Review at the end of a longstanding Cathedral safeguarding case.
- The ongoing annual review of policies originally drafted and adopted in 2020/2021.
- Assurance around how staff and volunteers are briefed on policies and procedures, particularly where changes are made.
- Participating in the pilot of the Church of England's new Casework Management System, 'My Concern', and the considerable work to migrate files (particularly amidst system glitches and failures).
- Reviewing the Safeguarding Quality Assurance Framework, reported on annually.
- Re-negotiating the nature and resourcing of a new part-time post for a professional Cathedral Safeguarding Advisor, revisiting the possibility of a post based in the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, supervised by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisor.

- Approving the list of activities involving children, young people and vulnerable adults related to the Cathedral.
- Reviewing the Safeguarding Committee's Terms of Reference.
- The prospect of and subsequent tender process for a baseline Safeguarding Audit with the Diocese in preparation for the Independent Safeguarding Audit in 2024.
- Initial preparations for the next round of Independent Safeguarding Audits by INEQE Safeguarding Group (planned for May 2024).
- Engagement with Professor Alexis Jay and her consultation related to 'The Future of Church Safeguarding Programme'.
- Reports from the Cathedrals' Safeguarding Network and meeting of Chapter Safeguarding Leads.

As part of the Dean and Chapter's commitment to the quality assurance and continuous improvement of safeguarding practices and procedures in the Cathedral, in addition to the commissioning of the new Annual Review, and alongside the monitoring of the Safeguarding Parish Dashboard and CSL's monthly reports, the Chapter also considered progress towards the Cathedral's Safeguarding Action Plan monthly throughout 2023. The Action Plan is also monitored three times per year by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel. Areas of particular focus and progress during 2023 not already mentioned above included:

- Bringing all types of Cathedral volunteer files onto one online system.
- Renewing the Cathedral Volunteer Expectations form with each volunteer.
- Work with the Nominations' Committee towards the safer recruitment of the additional Chapter and committee members necessitated by the Cathedrals' Measure 2021 and our registration with the Charity Commission during 2023.
- Ongoing work to assure that safeguarding issues are raised and addressed in preaching and liturgy, in the prayer diary and mid-week services.
- Liaison with the Dame Allans' Schools and the safeguarding of the Schools' Choral Scholars.
- The provision and impact of line-management training for all types of managers on the Cathedral staff.
- Embedding a new appraisal system across the Cathedral staff, adding in further opportunity for reflection on the Cathedral's values and culture.
- Awareness raising of key safeguarding messages and the issues related to different forms of abuse through exhibitions and as part of the Cathedral's messaging.
- Work with survivors of church-related sexual abuse to assure their voices are heard and experiences learned from, particularly the potential of a joint project with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

In closing, the Dean and Chapter are hugely grateful to the members of the Safeguarding Committee for their insight and input into the governance of safeguarding in the Cathedral during 2023, not least Jackie McHanwell, the committee's Independent Chair. Particular thanks are due to Gill Lawrence for her considerable commitment to the voluntary role of Deputy Cathedral Safeguarding Advisor. During 2023, the committee said farewell and offered their thanks to Laura Simmonds, one of the Cathedral's Learning and Activities' Officers as she left her post.

Canon Peter Dobson (The Cathedral's Chapter Safeguarding Lead) would be very happy to discuss any of the above in greater detail, as would Dr. Maggi Creese (the Interim Cathedral Safeguarding Advisor, in post for the duration of 2024). Further information can also be found on the safeguarding pages of the Cathedral website.

Revd Canon Peter Dobson
Chapter Lead for Safeguarding

16. Report on Volunteering

I have been in post since early September 2023 following an 8-month gap of there being no Volunteer Coordinator. I would firstly like to acknowledge the sterling work done by colleagues in keeping the volunteers going and supported in that period.

Consequently, there has been a large amount of administrative work to catch up on, particularly in relation to safeguarding records and following up on volunteer applications.

I have spent considerable time just getting to know the volunteers and being around to give them support. I keep my working days flexible to allow me to have the opportunity to meet them all.

To date the majority of volunteer documentation e.g. Induction pack, Volunteer leaflet, role descriptions, etc has been revised and updated. Monthly Radical Welcome and General Volunteering training sessions have been reestablished. Making the Ask training was delivered in January and further topic specific training is being offered including Domestic Abuse training.

On an informal basis a monthly Coffee, Cake and Chat session has been held to facilitate volunteers to meet up with each other and for staff to drop in. There is a monthly Volunteer newsletter to help keep everyone up to date, as well as regular emails and postings on MyImpact, the volunteer software used by the Cathedral. The plan is to get as many of the volunteers to sign up and use MyImpact as possible so that we can get a more accurate picture across the cathedral of volunteer hours contributed. On average it is in the region of 3,500 hours a year (according to the software) but I suspect it is considerably more than that.

There will be a service for the Volunteers followed by refreshments to say thank you for their contribution in June during National Volunteer Week.

Volunteer recruitment is beginning to pick up, but it is nationally recognised due to Covid, and the current economic climate where there are many charities, organisations and heritage sites all competing for volunteers from the same volunteering pool. We currently have 123 volunteers on the books, volunteering in all walks of Cathedral life, with 6 in process. It's really good to see this includes a number of students as well as retirees.

The Common Ground In Sacred Space project set itself the aim: *to provide a radical welcome to an increased number of visitors and communities through an enhanced and empowered volunteer programme.*

The Evaluation Report in 2023 contained the following quotes from volunteers:

"I look at people differently, I think I am more thoughtful about how I respond to others."

"It has made me more aware of the problems that people can face in their daily lives."

"It's a great place to volunteer as we genuinely have a real diverse team of interesting folk from all backgrounds, and I feel we cover all bases and corners of society today."

We are well on the way to achieving this and we can be justifiably proud of our volunteers and their contribution to the life and worship of the cathedral.

Vanessa Ward
Volunteer Coordinator

17. 2023 Organisation Chart

