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ANNUAL REPORT 2024

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**NEWCASTLE
CATHEDRAL**



The Annual Parish Vestry Meeting
and
Annual Congregational Meeting
Sunday 25 May 2025
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 19 May 2024
2. Elections
 - To elect two Chapter members
 - To elect Assistant Churchwardens
 - To elect Sidespeople

3. Reports

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4. Any other business (if notified in advance)
5. The Grace

Minutes of the Annual Parish Vestry and Annual Congregational Meeting held in the Cathedral on Sunday 19 May 2024

Present: The Very Rev'd Lee Batson, Dean of Newcastle (Chair), Rev'd Canon Peter Dobson

In attendance: Kate Sussams (Chief Operating Officer), Isabel Hunt (Business Support Officer)

The meeting commenced with prayer led by the Dean.

Apologies were received from Jessica Bushby, Gavin Hardy, Carol Holland, Judith Husband, Lesley Lee, Ruth Lunn, Les Noble, Marion Peutherer, Jennifer Ross, Philippa Sinclair, Lesley Wright.

Parish Vestry Meeting

Election of Churchwardens

The Chair gave thanks to Ged Graham, Alison Malcolm and Gavin Scott, all of whom have served as Churchwardens for a number of years.

The Dean read out the names of those nominated: Mrs Nneoma Adigwe, Mr Vincent Adigwe, Mrs Vicki Pickering, and Mr Timothy Wigglesworth. An election was not necessary, and the above were duly appointed to the office.

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

Annual Congregational Meeting

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2023 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 2023/2024 had been prepared and exhibited for inspection in the Vestry. There were 141 names on the Roll (99 households).

Election of Assistant Churchwarden

The following were appointed as Assistant Churchwardens: Ged Graham and Freda Anderson.

There were no nominations from the floor and those nominated were duly accepted and elected.

Newcastle City Centre Churches Together

This group is currently not running and has not been since Covid-19. There are hopes this will recommence in the future.

Sidesmen and Sideswomen

The Chair gave thanks to Jim Murray and Hazel Noble who are standing down from office. Those continuing are Judith Noble, Lesley Noble, Carol Holland, Jennifer Ross, Mualalem Degu, Heather Murphy, Catherine McNally. Lesley Lee, Mohammed Hoz, and Helen Robertson wish to join the team.

Continuing Sidesmen and Sideswomen were re-elected en bloc. New nominations were accepted and approved.

The Dean's Report

The Dean reflected on the group of people the congregation do not get to see who do all the things that in other places of worship is done by volunteers. The Cathedral is blessed to have around 30 staff, around 12-15 full-time equivalents, all of whom are worth more than they are paid, are doing far more hours than if they worked elsewhere and take care of the things that keep the Cathedral running. The Chair asked the congregation to acknowledge this through thanksgiving.

Finance Report from the Chief Operating Officer

Kate provided top-level figures and asked people to come and see her afterwards if they have queries. There have been challenges in the last 7-8 years and we have come through our CGISS project.

The Cathedral always runs at a loss and this fluctuates each year. Broadly, this has been a £130K loss per year over the last 10-12 years. 2023 showed a lower deficit and there were various factors involved including a one-off donation of £50K which could not be planned for. We were also lucky to be awarded a grant from the Church Commissioners to help with rising utility costs, but this was one-off and will not be repeated for 2024. A new Church Commissioners' application has awarded us approximately £240K to cover staff costs for around 3 years.

Neringa Baguckiene, Finance Manager, provided in-depth figures in the annual report booklet and Kate noted the two main costs are music and fabric (looking after the building). It was noted that insurance costs are around £60K per year. The Mission and Ministry section in the finance report covers candles, congregational giving, donations, grants from the Church Commissioners, etc. This underpins the Cathedral and is always going to be a challenge for us. Money from the Church Commissioners is received at the beginning of each year and covers up to around 9 months out of 12. External hire events help breach the gap in revenue. Events take up a lot of time and effort and this is not our greatest priority but visitors, which events bring into the building, are important. Amy Carrithers, Front of House Manager, works hard to secure income via the events portfolio and this is currently good and we continue to work with other Cathedrals to learn best practice. We will never be able to host events every Friday and Saturday night and would not want to as it is not our primary purpose.

The Music Team have been working exceptionally hard to get the National Schools Singing Programme up and running. This project is significant as we are the only Anglican Cathedral to receive this funding. The Music Team's Christmas events also help to bring in around £15K per year.

On-going maintenance in buildings is a high priority, such as lifts in the Cathedral, which come with substantial cost. Our new Fundraising and Development Officer, Ashley Bell, hit the ground running with the organ appeal and working with Newcastle Cathedral Trust to source funding. She is also focusing on bringing in more revenue towards Unrestricted funds.

The Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, Alan James, provided details on the Committee's remit and their work over the last 12 months which has involved gaining insight into risk, governance, and how the Cathedral operates. The Committee were shocked to discover the complexity of the organisation.

Alan welcomed people to ask questions and refer these through the relevant committee as needed.

The Dean thanked Kate and Alan and asked if there were any questions from the floor.

A question was asked whether the Canon for Worship and Congregational Life would cover pastoral care. The Dean confirmed it will and said he will provide more information on the roles later.

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

Looking ahead

The Dean noted that he has been here for seven months now. Following Peter's departure later this year we will have two new Residentiary Canons. There will be an opportunity to thank Peter for all he's done on 21 July.

Decisions on strategy and the Cathedral's future are being considered and will need to be made swiftly. Work has already progressed on recruiting the two new Residentiary Canons and one appointment has been made. The Chair expressed that organisations go through these patterns of change and has provided the opportunity to shape the new Canon for Worship and Congregational Life around worship whilst also factoring in congregational development and pastoral care.

It was confirmed Rev'd Ruth Hulse will begin as Canon for Worship and Congregational Life in July. One of the biggest questions we have asked Ruth to consider is how to work effectively with the congregations to ensure

their voice is heard loudly. As someone who has been in a Parish Church, the Chair was surprised at the level of congregational voice and whilst this is not unique to us, it is something we want to advance. The first congregational meeting is planned for 29 September, a few months after Ruth has begun in post and we should have our other Residentiary Canon with us then.

The Cathedral's strategy will focus on who and what Newcastle Cathedral is and where we go from here. This process will involve 3 core key stakeholders – the Chapter, the staff, and the congregations - who will have time to look at the strategy and feedback. The meeting on 29 September will be the congregations' opportunity to feed into the process and will be an important moment.

The hope is that the new Canon for Mission will begin in post on 14 September. This role will build on what Peter Dobson has done and will overtly focus on mission, social justice and social action.

The other key priorities are how we connect with our Diocese where there is so much potential to be a flagship, investing in the right partnerships to further our identity and promote social justice.

We are also considering the size of the Cathedral we should be, in terms of whether we should host double the number of events or half the current number and this ties into our capacity and financial abilities.

The Chair highlighted this will be a journey moving forward.

The Dean welcomed questions from the floor. A query was asked about the many congregations the Cathedral has and how we feed into the other congregation groups. The Dean said this is something which is being considered and will be a key priority for Ruth when she comes to us.

A query was asked why the South door cannot be open on a Sunday morning and the Chair said he will investigate this.

A comment was made about how delighted they are to have Lee here as Dean and are impressed with his spirituality and thank God for bringing him to us and are likewise blessed for having such a committed team.

This being all the business, the meeting closed with the Grace at 12:20pm

Date of Next Meeting

To be arranged.

Signed:

Date: 19 May 2024



Dean of Newcastle

ANNUAL REPORTS

From the Dean

The past year has been one of further transition in the life of this Cathedral, with us saying goodbye to Canons Peter Dobson and Clare MacLaren, and welcoming Canons Ruth Hulse and Zoe Heming in their place. Indeed, such has been the rate of change that there was no priest in the Cathedral in September 2024 who could say what had happened twelve months earlier!

It is important to place on record our deep appreciation for all that Peter and Clare brought to this place, and for all the lives they touched through their ministry here.

Making two new appointments has given us the opportunity to give renewed emphasis to particular aspects of the Cathedral's ministry. Ruth was appointed not just to oversee worship and music but has been given a particular brief to also work with those who worship with us regularly. This is to help the congregation to feel more a part of the wider life of the Cathedral, as well as intentionally focusing on growing in discipleship, and it has been encouraging to see how many people engaged with the Advent course she offered as one of her early contributions to life here.

Building on the work of Peter Dobson and the Cathedral Lantern Initiative enabled us to reshape the role that Zoe is now fulfilling such that we have a stronger focus on the social justice dimension of mission. She has already brought to us some insights into how we can be more accessible for those with disabilities in what we offer here.

I am looking forward to seeing where we are at the end of 2025 when both of them have really settled into their new roles.

The decisions around these appointments have helped to give shape to the emerging strategy for the Cathedral which will be pulled together during 2025.

We have given more thought to our role as the Mother Church of the Diocese and have encouraged more clergy to participate in the life of this place particularly through presiding at midweek services of Communion. We have hosted a number of Diocesan celebrations – not least one to mark thirty years of the ordination of women to the priesthood and have also been in a position to provide cover for churches across the Diocese when they are without a priest.

It was a privilege to be asked to create space for a LOUDfence in the Cathedral to acknowledge the pain of all those who have experienced abuse within the Church. The survivor led service that we hosted was one of the most powerful occasions of the year, and the existence of the LOUDfence was more poignant as news of further abuse scandals emerged during the latter part of 2024. We will continue to be a Cathedral that tries to always take the voices of survivors seriously as we move forward in mission and ministry. The INEQE safeguarding audit has been very helpful and acted as a catalyst for us appointing our first fully qualified safeguarding professional to the team here.

As we seek to serve our city, it was good during the Christmas period to be able to offer services for two new groups – Northumberland Police and the North East Chamber of Commerce – and we hope to develop these relationships during 2025. The latter is particularly important as we discern how we can better engage with

the world of work, and with the businesses that surround us and build upon our inheritance as a place that was built and maintained by the business community of earlier generations.

This Cathedral is a phenomenal place, and no amount of words will ever do justice to all that we do here. We continue to be a beacon of light, and it has been so pleasing to see so much growth in our ministry in 2024. We do so whilst having to deal with ever more pressing financial challenges which will need to be faced more directly in 2025.

We are able to do all that we do because we have a fantastic group of volunteers, and an amazingly dedicated and committed staff group – all of whom give so much of themselves because they believe in what we are trying to do as we strive to be a source of transformation for all who come into contact with us. I am deeply grateful to them all. I would like to say a particular thank you to my new colleagues on SMT – Ruth and Zoe – and to our amazing Chief Operating Officer, Kate Sussams, who really is a gift to all of us.

Lee Batson
Dean of Newcastle

Electoral Roll Report 2024/2025

In accordance with the requirements of the Synodical Government Measure 1969 an Electoral Roll for 2024/2025 had been prepared and exhibited for inspection in the Cathedral Office. Numbers will be given at the Annual General Meeting. There were 163 names on the Roll (117 households) when prepared. Over the course of the year, this increased to 181 names and 136 households.

As per Church Representation Rules every sixth year, beginning with 2025, a new roll must be prepared and is now available to view (on request) in the Vestry or by contacting the Cathedral Office on 0191 232 1939 or emailing office@newcastlecathedral.org.uk.

Ellie Robertson
Electoral Roll Officer

Worship and Congregational Life

It didn't take long, following my installation as Canon for Worship and Congregational Life, in July 2024, for me to realise what a unique and precious place Newcastle Cathedral is. It was a joy to begin to get to know staff, members of the church community, volunteers, and visitors over those first few months, and to see the values of the Cathedral being lived out practically each day. The compassion shown, the genuine interest in the lives of others, no matter who they are, the offering of time and immense talent, and the humanity shown each and every day are the heartbeat of the Cathedral, and I count myself very fortunate indeed to be a part of the ministry here.

Even for the few months that I have been part of the team, there are too many things to celebrate to include them all in this report, so a few highlights will have to suffice.

Of course, one of those highlights must be the music that contributes so greatly to the Inspiring Worship of the Cathedral. It did not take long at all to recognise the dedication and skill of the whole of our music department, and especially our Director of Music, Ian Roberts, and Assistant Director of Music, Kris Thomsett. They pursue excellence, but with a much broader understanding than simply perfect pitch and flawless sound. Through the National Schools Singing Programme, children from all backgrounds are given an invitation into the world of choral singing, and our Harvest Festival gave some of our youngest choirs a platform to sing in the Cathedral, surrounded by a flock of Illuminated Sheep! Our Lay Clerks, Choral Scholars, Choristers, Voluntary choirs, Choral Supervisors, Singing Programme Directors, Organists, and administration team are all

dedicated and work extremely hard, contributing to the excellence that we all too often take for granted, but we only need to look back at the very many Christmas services and concerts they were involved with, not to mention carol singing at Sainsburys over two very cold weekends to raise funds for the music department! Hearing compositions from our music team, and many individuals being given the chance to cantor or sing solos, speaks volumes about the talent that we have, and the way that Ian and Kris try to develop each member of the team. A separate music report is included later on.

The, often, unsung heroes of Cathedral life are volunteers and vergers. At Newcastle Cathedral we are blessed with a team of vergers who understand the demands of a Cathedral and yet are still able to show compassion and give time to those who need it, contributing to our value of Radical Welcome each day. I wouldn't like to count the number of teas and coffees I have seen them make for people who come to the door, all whilst trying to keep the Cathedral a safe and clean venue, under the guidance of Head Verger, Paul. Our vergers are a source of knowledge and experience and have answered hundreds of questions about how things have been done, and how things could be done, and they take almost everything in their stride, from moving Illuminated Sheep, to trying new chair configurations for Harvest, from setting up for concerts and huge school events, to being the frontline for any incidents that occur. A report from the verger team is included later in this report.

Newcastle Cathedral is also blessed to have regular attendees, on Sundays, during the week, and also online. There is a community, which I am beginning to get to know and am trying to find ways to develop and nurture. One of the joys in the Autumn was getting to know our friends from Iran and beginning to run bible study sessions for them. I know I speak for Zoe too when I say that their questions often challenge us and really make us think! The Advent Course, Searching for Home, too was a time of delving deeper into what makes a home and what makes us a community, and in both groups that ran the course, we saw new members take their place, and new friendships form. The Congregation Meeting in September, and conversations that followed, gave an insight into who was part of the Cathedral, and how we might develop what will bear even more fruit. I'm grateful to our Junior Church leaders for all they do with the children and young people who come and was delighted when some of our older youths began to help lead Junior Church sessions in the Autumn. For me, this was a particular highlight and showed our value of Empowering Worth, as the adults leaders helped the girls with planning and delivering the session, offering encouragement and advice to support them. Of course, many people contribute to all that happens in worship; our wonderful team of servers began a new chapter as Giles stepped down as Head Server, and Beth took on the role, our dedicated Churchwardens continued to be a valuable and reliable presence, our steadfast Cathedral Readers offered their ministry in a variety of ways, those who read, pray, arrange flowers, serve coffee, and help in so many ways all contribute to the life of the Cathedral, and help to create a sense of community. A report from the Churchwardens is included later in this report.

I look forward to all the years that lie ahead, and continuing to work alongside all those mentioned above, and many more besides as we nurture the worship and congregational life of Newcastle Cathedral together, to the glory of God.

Ruth Hulse
Canon for Worship and Congregational Life

Music

Music continues to be a vital ingredient in our daily life of worship and prayer at the Cathedral. My colleagues Kris Thomsett (Assistant Director of Music) and James Watson (Organ Scholar), along with Choristers and their parents, our Chorister Supervisors, Lay Clerks, Choral Scholars, Schola Cantorum, Cathedral Consort and our Cambiata Voices have, through their commitment and musicianship, enabled this to continue throughout the year.

We embarked upon 2024 with our recently instigated Schools Singing Programme in full flow as part of its first full academic year (supported by the Vinehill Trust). A couple of Celebration Concerts during March were an opportunity for the 11 schools to perform to each other in the Cathedral, and it was wonderful to have hundreds of children singing together at these events. The Schools Singing Programme is enabling the many, from all areas of the city, to experience a high-quality musical education through singing in the classroom. Some of those children are then encouraged to get involved with singing at the Cathedral, and this can be educationally, culturally, and spiritually transformational. With a greater number of children involved in the life of the Cathedral through our choirs, this really is mission in action!

One challenge is for us to build and maintain the resource to help those families that come through the doors of our Training Choir, so that, whatever the socio-economic or cultural background, a greater number of children can be supported to become choristers and then sustained on their journey. Through doing this we seek to make a long-standing difference in the lives of more children and young people, some of whom would not otherwise have the opportunity. With a view to further realising this aim we appointed Verity Hodson Walker as Singing Programme and Chorister Coordinator in September (with support from the Cathedral Music Trust). As well as working directly with the children and their families, Verity shares the administrative support duties for the department with Tim Cranfield.

In the delivery of the programme in schools we welcomed Eimear Hurley in September. Clare Crinson stepped down from her work on the programme at Christmas having done much to instill the programme with schools, and Laura Oldfield continues to play a hugely significant role in all of our work with children in schools and at the Cathedral. A new initiative, as part of a Cathedral Music Trust pilot has been Small Sounds, our singing group for babies, toddlers, and their parents, led by Alessia Lotto and Kate Short. The hope is that, in time, this will feed into Mini ChoriStarters and ChoriStarters (our pre-Chorister groups) which continue to thrive. Although there is still much for which to strive, numbers in our choirs are strong, and the high musical standard reached by our Choristers is now being celebrated at a local and national level.

In February, we had the opportunity to raise our profile through taking part in Alexander Armstrong's Choral Adventure. Over the course of a week, Alexander visited four cathedrals and a Cambridge college. He was doing this as part of his role as ambassador for the Cathedral Music Trust (CMT) and was recording interviews that have more recently gone out in the CMT social media channels. He was also giving a running commentary on his journey as part of his daily shows on Classic FM. He told the Classic FM audience that "great things are happening at Newcastle" and played a track from our 'Year at Newcastle' CD. Perhaps the most unusual part of the project was the fact that some 200 people turned up for the Monday Evensong at which he attended and read the Second Lesson. We'd expected a few extra, but the Quire was so full that some of the Lay Clerks had to share a seat(!), and the Nave was also full. Surely the best attended Monday Evensong in history!

With the aforementioned opus dei of the Cathedral foremost in our considerations, it is nevertheless important to celebrate opportunities to illuminate some of the most significant times of the year with special performances. As part of our observance of Holy Week, the Cathedral Choir sang Bach's St John Passion on

Palm Sunday with a fabulous ensemble of period instrumentalists. This was a major undertaking, with our youngest boys and girls not so used to singing in German. It was a wonderful experience for them to sing a major work with a highly qualified band of professional instrumentalists, and many are still talking about it a year later. With the exception of the Evangelist, all of the solos were expertly taken from within the choir, with the Head Chorister of our Senior Girls singing the soprano solos, and Lay Clerks and Choral Scholars fulfilling the other roles. This was a beautiful and fitting start to the most important week of the year.

Throughout 2024 our Organ Appeal for Phase One of the organ rebuild gathered momentum, with a significant number of generous people sponsoring pipes, and grants awarded from some external charities. There is still a long way to go, but we are pleased that it feels like the ball is rolling. The role of the Cathedral Organ in the life of the Cathedral cannot be underestimated, and I feel the hand of responsibility for this special instrument, as I do for my human colleagues that contribute to the music in so many ways. There is much to celebrate, but I'm acutely aware that we need to ensure financial resources so that we and future generations can continue to make music in service of the gospel of Christ for the years, decades, and centuries to come.

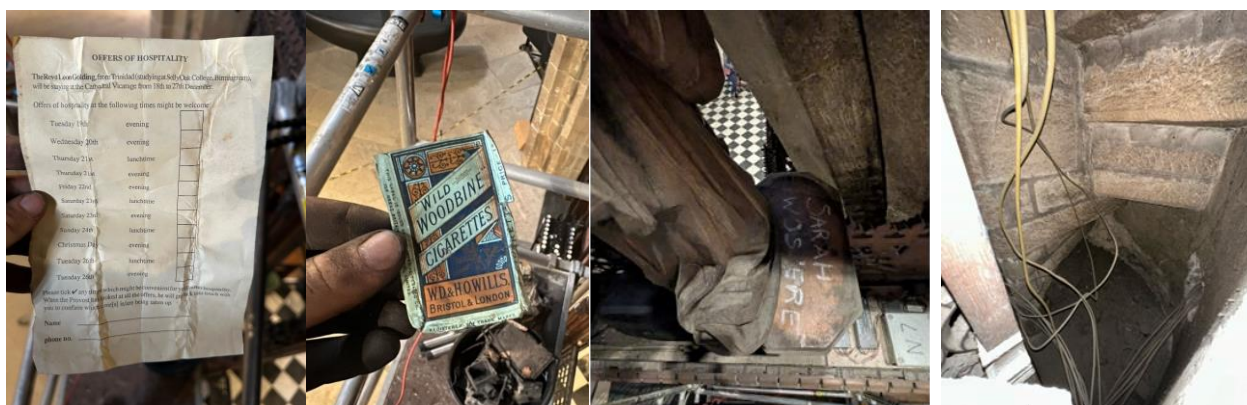
Ian Roberts
Director of Music

Verging

Throughout 2024, the team continued to be busy day to day looking after and maintaining the Cathedral, helping to give out over 12,000 warm drinks as part of the Radical Welcome, as well as supporting the clergy and enabling worship.

We also continued to support the vast programme of events and venue hire. This can be very demanding physically, often involving moving chairs and so on late into the night and then resetting the Cathedral once everyone else has gone home, ready for worship the next day. These events are key in providing crucial income.

One of the more interesting things we managed to get completed this year was high level cleaning of the quire, from on top of the scaffold. Lewis found some interesting bits of rubbish from years ago. Along with what could have been a stair well to the old organ.



If you would like to know more about the vergers' role or would like to volunteer with us do get in touch. I promise you won't be moving chairs late into the night and we will provide tea and biscuits.

Paul Russell Sewell
Head Verger

Churchwardens

At the Annual Vestry Meeting held last year we saw something of a change of personnel as two of the Churchwardens, Alison Malcolm and Gavin Scott, stood down after a number of years of loyal service. It was a delight to welcome Nneoma and Vincent Adigwe to the team of Churchwardens after they had served as Sidespeople, and that Vicki Pickering was 'promoted' after her many years of being an Assistant Warden. I was delighted that Ged Graham was able to continue in his role as an Assistant Warden, being joined by Freda Anderson upon her appointment.

We have seen many changes in the life of the Cathedral over the past few years, including the appointment of an entirely new Clergy team. After sixteen continuous years of service I have decided that the time is right to stand down as Churchwarden. It has been an honour to serve in this role. Those who will continue to serve will do so very well.

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, at Ordinations. 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 of 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. Can I also send my thanks to my colleagues who have loyally acted as Wardens and Assistant Wardens over the past year.

Timothy Wigglesworth
Churchwarden

Mission

Since being installed as a Canon at this exciting cathedral in September I continue to be amazed at the ways in which, with a relatively small team, this cathedral stands out as a place which makes decisions and lives out its life of faith in ways which both "show and tell" what is at the heart of our calling as Christians to love our neighbours.

I'm grateful for the commitment and structure of the daily services that I share with Lee and Ruth and thoroughly enjoyed my first Cathedral Christmas where we were able to bring together thousands of people from across the city for worship.

The roles and responsibilities from both mine and Ruth's predecessors shifted with the appointment of the new Canons. Arts, Learning and Engagement fall under my role as Canon for Mission, alongside the work of the Lantern Initiative (renamed Cathedral Lantern Project in 2025), the Volunteer Coordinator and our new, dedicated Safeguarding Officer whose reports are included later in their own right. I am incredibly grateful for how quickly we have a team with a shared sense of purpose which has empowered me to focus on the collaborative, strategic work of helping us to share our values more coherently and sustainably with visitors and partners across the city. Amid the many staffing changes in the wider Cathedral life during the last year, I have really enjoyed meeting, learning from and gathering our experienced cohort of wonderful volunteer

Chaplains who have continued to provide a consistent and invaluable ministry among us. I look forward to the year ahead during which time we hope to welcome student Ordinands and others on their own vocational development to learn from and support the intentional pastoral and spiritual support offered to visitors and pilgrims alike.

Learning and Engagement

We were sad to say goodbye at Christmas to the wonderful Amy Outterside, as she started a new phase in her life. She continued to plan and lead school visits, arts workshops and exhibitions, Family Days, and vibrant and engaging activities for our younger visitors with great energy and is missed. Recruitment is underway for the next phase of this vital work, as part of our shared vision to a more visible and coherent integration of the faith and values at the heart of everything we do. Ruth and I are looking forward to closer collaboration in the incredible work that the Music Department do among the hundreds of children and families they work with, our Diocesan colleagues and of course our Junior Church leaders!

Volunteering

I wish to pay tribute to the hard work and dedication of Vanessa Ward in maintaining and continuing to build the incredible community and skills of the volunteers, without whom we could not do or be who we are. In addition to her report, I wish to commend the pastoral care and support she offers to volunteers, her willingness to find other ways to train and find the right roles for new volunteers from diverse communities and backgrounds. Her work is a wonderful example of how we live the value of Empowering Worth and the aims of the Lantern Initiative to dedicate time and resources to enable Personal Engagement and Empowerment among those who come through our doors.

Lantern Initiative

Both myself and the new Lantern Lead, Laurie Crow, began after a hiatus in staffing as Jon Canessa moved to further build the Recovery Church network. The first few months were a time of learning about the joys and challenges for staff and volunteers engaged in the front-line delivery of our work with those who come to the Cathedral because we are now known as a place to find sanctuary, hospitality, and practical support.

With invaluable insight from the experiences of the new Lantern Initiative Lead, we've worked hard to support this complex and demanding way that we hold space for the people of the city. This also involves other proactive partnership work with others, which you can read about in her report. Work has begun to establish the next phase of this wonderful ministry sustainably, safely and with greater integration into all aspects of Cathedral life. We are at an exciting time for this work, with a second, full time post to begin shortly. I'm grateful for the Steering Group (staff and committed friends) who have been responsible for initiating, resourcing, and shaping this work and for the ongoing collaboration and commitment to working together to shape the more permanent and integrated work in the next phase. I know that Ruth and I are passionate about ensuring that our regular worshipping community members find new ways to develop and express their own vocation to be part of this work, as the light of Christ, expressed through a creative and holistic program of activities by the new Lantern Officer is a fantastic next step in achieving this.

Our shared work to welcome and support asylum seekers and refugees into our community, through practical support and advice, friendship, training, and discipleship has been one of the most rewarding and fruitful areas of ministry. Closer collaboration with partners in this growing ministry will be a key focus of the work of the new Lantern Officer.

Interfaith and community cohesion

I am grateful to Helen Wright for continuing to lead the Scriptural Reasoning Group which meets monthly with other faith leaders to share and discuss sacred texts and practices of faith in a spirit of mutual respect and learning. Prior to my arrival we hosted the first Community Iftar at the Cathedral.

Arriving in post only weeks after the dreadful riots in the summer, convening groups and individuals with different faiths and life experiences to build relationships has been an important strand of my work. We've hosted a "Bake Not Hate" event during "Hate Crime Awareness Week" with a local Community Cohesion Police officer.

Community building and reconciliation is a more pressing need than ever and here at the Cathedral is a ministry I am passionate about and, along with the Dean, am looking forward to building upon in the year ahead.

Theology And...being a resource for the Diocese

A monthly social space for anyone in ministry into a shared social and learning space is just one way we show our commitment to being a resource for the Diocese with more planned for the year ahead, including offering Ordinands and trainee Readers opportunities to experience ministry at the Cathedral, collaborating with the Chaplain to Survivors, new Safeguarding team as well as enjoying getting out and about offering cover in parishes on some Sundays.

It's been a demanding and rewarding first few months in post and I'm excited about the year ahead.

Zoe Heming
Canon for Mission

Lantern Initiative

The Lantern Initiative is an ingrained and interpersonal working of Newcastle Cathedral's values, Radical Welcome, Inspiring Worship and Empowering Worth. It works and walks alongside and never in front of our city's marginalised or with people experiencing dark or difficult times and seeks to be a beacon of light, like our Lantern Tower in days gone by.

The aims and approaches of the Lantern Initiative are to incorporate our values and make them visible to Cathedral visitors, groups who attend here, our congregation and to individuals in the wider city.

We do this equilaterally as a Cathedral team by; developing partnerships, strength-based approaches to engagement, co-creation and a real holistic approach to meeting an individual's needs with a person centred and trauma informed approach.

Our new group work for this year has included a partnership with Harbour Northeast, who have been delivering 'Behaviour Change Programmes' to try and complement our existing Women's groups and partners and to really lean into the gender-based violence space and work towards a community free from violence and abuse. The 12-week programmes have been a huge success, and we continue to build on these relationships and highlight the issues surrounding gender-based violence in our city with events such as our White Ribbon Event on November 25th. The event was attended by more than eight of our partner agencies, the wider community and people that the Lantern Initiative supports and will now become an annual event.

Our Speaking Up Together group continues to thrive here in everyday Cathedral life with the instillation of an exhibition created with members and the building of accessible tours that have and will be delivered by Speaking

Up Together themselves. The group continues to grow their community and support us to highlight the need for accessibility within the Cathedral. Speaking Up Together requested that we use 2025 to start a 'Lantern Choir', for all and everyone who the Lantern supports and to encourage collectiveness and togetherness. We have been supported by Citizen Songwriters to create and hold space for this in Spring.

In the last year, the Lantern Initiative developed partnerships with over 70 local services and agencies, housed six rough sleepers with holistic support and hosted five psychoeducational and psychosocial group sessions per week.

Laurie Crow
Lantern Initiative Lead

Safeguarding

Newcastle Cathedral adopts the Church of England's House of Bishop's 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 risk to others.

The Dean and the Chapter's roles and responsibilities for safeguarding are highlighted at the beginning of each year, with a scheme of delegation agreed and monitored.

2024 saw the appointment of Zoe Heming as the Canon for Mission who came into role in September, replacing Rev'd Canon Peter Dobson. There was also the appointment of a dedicated and qualified Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, Jayne Forsdike, who came into role in October.

In 2024 there has been a focus on strengthening safeguarding systems and processes, including responding to the INEQE audit, with continued reporting to the Chapter. This has included:

- The recruitment of a dedicated qualified Cathedral Safeguarding Officer role (CSO), who since being in role has raised awareness of safeguarding, tightened processes and procedures, supported training and safe recruitment of volunteers, all of which is demonstrating an enhanced understand of safeguarding with an increase in referrals across the board.
- The CSO has ensured a continued focus on case work, including responding to allegations of abuse, undertaking risk assessments and reviews of safety plans, working closely where appropriate with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and other statutory and non-statutory organisations.
- Reviewing the procedure for incident reporting and developing a banning procedure for individuals who are found to be a risk to others.
- Review of the Safeguarding Committee Terms of Reference with external independent oversight and support from the Director of Children's Services in Northumberland. This has included strengthening membership to ensure there are more independent members.

- Undertaken a risk assessment of the work of the Lantern Initiative considering how it interacts and overlaps with the wider work of the Cathedral.
- Providing additional scrutiny and challenge from the CSO to ensure safe recruitment, ongoing support and management of all volunteers, staff and clergy.

2024 has also been a time for reflection in safeguarding for the Church of England, with the publication of the Makin Review. As a Cathedral we feel positive that we have already made significant steps to ensure safeguarding is a priority and we have not shied away from facing the hard reality of church-based abuse and its impact on victims and survivors, and will continue to strive to be provide a culture and environment where victims and survivors can report or disclose abuse safely and where they will find support and best practice that contribute to the prevention of abuse.

In closing, the Dean and the Chapter give huge thanks to all staff, volunteers and clergy for their commitment to safeguarding during 2024.

Canon Zoe Heming, the Cathedral's Chapter Safeguarding Lead and Jayne Forsdike, the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, would be happy to discuss any of the above in greater detail. Further information can also be found on the safeguarding pages of the Cathedral website.

Jayne Forsdike
Cathedral Safeguarding Officer

Volunteering

It is always good to complete a full calendar year in any post of work. As Volunteer Coordinator this has given me an opportunity to get a more comprehensive sense of the rhythm of life in the Cathedral, just how dedicated our volunteers are and the breadth of roles that they cover.

The earlier part of the year was very much dominated by the Safeguarding Audit and ensuring that all of the necessary training and paperwork had been or was in the process of being completed. I would like to thank the volunteers for their cooperation and assistance in this, as there were gaps and not a great deal of time to rectify them.

Volunteer recruitment has been slow, but steady. There is general recognition that volunteering has not returned to pre-pandemic levels right across the charity sector.

End of 2024

Current Volunteers	83
In Process	3
Applicants	6

Total volunteering hours	3882 (= 2.25 full time employees)
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Radical Welcome and General Volunteer Training has been taking place monthly. Attendance levels can be variable, but the training itself is well received. This is designed to be both induction and refresher training, which reflects the many changes that take place in the Cathedral. 48 volunteers and staff undertook training in 2024. The Rev'd Jon Canessa, Lantern Initiative Lead, left in the early summer and his successor Laurie Crow joined us in Autumn. Laurie's input into the training has been helpful and inspiring.

On an informal basis, a monthly Coffee, Cake and Chat session continues to be held, which is an opportunity for volunteers from different shifts to meet up with each other and for staff to drop in. One of the highlights has been the occasional visit of Flora, Jen's (Monday PM volunteer) dog. She certainly took centre stage!

The monthly Volunteer Newsletter helps keep everyone up to date on upcoming events and one-off/new volunteering opportunities. It also keeps volunteers informed and briefed about new initiatives, activities and exhibitions, ahead of their arrival so that they are fully equipped to answer the range of questions they receive from visitors.

I continue to send regular emails between these newsletters and postings on MyImpact, the volunteer software used by the Cathedral. A lot of my time is spent responding to ad hoc phone calls and emails from our dedicated volunteer team, responding to expressions of interest, and meeting with prospective volunteers. Several of the new volunteers are student-age or have come to us via Recovery Church, which suggests that the Cathedral's volunteering opportunities are attracting increasingly younger and more diverse groups.

For the first time a Celebration of Volunteering Service followed by refreshments to say thank you for their contribution was held in June during National Volunteers' Week. It was great to welcome other volunteers from Newcastle and as far afield as Carlisle. This will be repeated in 2025.

Volunteering is part of the lifeblood of the Cathedral covering many areas from Welcomers to Monument Cleaners, Researchers to Event Stewards, Chaplains to Flower Arrangers. The gift of their time and dedication is very significant to the overall life of the Cathedral.

Vanessa Ward
Volunteer Coordinator

Finance

A report issued by the Church Commissioners in 2024 showed that many of the UK's Anglican Cathedrals continue to be challenged financially, with over 60% running at a deficit and a number of these facing stark cashflow challenges. In this vein, Newcastle Cathedral was fortunate to be included in a pilot study commissioned by the Church Commissioners in 2024 to look at the state of cathedral finances; staff were involved in a 'deep dive' assessment of the financial position and opportunities. We were pleased to hear from the business planning consultants that they considered us a very well-run cathedral and, whilst having significant capacity challenges and a very low staffing compared to a number of other cathedrals, they felt that we were certainly punching above our weight and not missing any opportunities in both income generation and keeping a tight rein on our costs. This work is ongoing into 2025, and we anticipate that our help in this pilot study will enable a UK-wide review of cathedrals' finances.

Top-level financial picture for Newcastle Cathedral in 2024: budget for the full year was -£233,746. Year End position was -£262,969 (-£29,243 variance).

Challenges

- Infrastructure costs including utilities, fabric repairs/maintenance, insurance and compliance (such as Health and Safety) remain our most significant challenges. We remain deeply committed to looking after our beautiful cathedral and ensuring that it is a safe space for all who work and visit here, so whether we have one person through the doors each day or hundreds (and we certainly work towards the latter), there is a very real cost of keeping our cathedral open, safe and welcoming.
- Our staff are extremely important and despite the challenges of rising National Insurance contributions, the Chapter are committed to annual reviews of pay and also to the Newcastle Living Wage.

- Repairs to the tower are urgent and we are working closely with Newcastle City Council on a plan of action; 2024 saw a significant joint spend on investigations to masonry issues.
- We are also committed to the upkeep of our housing stock and dedicated unforeseen expenditure to repairs at 2A Holly Avenue. The good news is that this property is now rented out and bringing in a good income stream.
- Cathedral House has also had a focused expenditure, and we are committed to upgrading the interior to attract new tenants. Although rental income from our commercial tenants has not met the 2024 budget, there has been a focused period of grant finding, resulting in over £70K grant-funded through private donors and a local Trust for improvements to this property (2024 saw urgent works including the installation of a new fire alarm system and new heating system). Further works will include window repairs and redecoration.

Opportunities

- One of our key opportunities for achieving sustainability will be the establishment of an Endowment Fund, where our supporters can make donations which will be invested into our reserves to produce regular income. Work by the Church Commissioners-appointed business planning consultancy has suggested that a source of independent significant income will be the long-term way to bridge the structural deficit between income and costs.
- Our Head of Fundraising and Development has been hard at work on securing grants for our mission and core work. She has been successful in securing money for staff posts (including the Chorister Supervisor and the upcoming Community Engagement Officer/Learning Officer roles), an Artist in Residence programme and of course funds for large-scale organ maintenance.
- Our events programme continues to be extremely successful. The report from our Front of House Manager highlights some of the incredible success in income generation, with a 34% increase in hire against budget. The music team's Christmas Carol concerts were also really well attended, and we are pleased to be able to announce further such concerts for 2025.
- The Inaugural St Nicholas Gala Dinner, masterminded by the Cathedral Trust (with significant support from the Front of House Manager, Marketing Manager and Head of Fundraising and Development), saw over 200 local businesspeople and friends of the Cathedral coming together to raise over £30,000 for our work. The next dinner will be in May 2025.

The team have worked incredibly hard this year, coming together in a collaborative spirit to overcome some significant challenges and are really focused on passionate delivery of all we do. Of course, we could not have done it without the support (financial of course, but also in myriad ways of supporting all the team) of the congregation, the Friends of St Nicholas Cathedral and the Newcastle Cathedral Trust.

Please note, our annual audited accounts will be available on our website later in the summer.

Kate Sussams
Chief Operating Officer

Cathedral Church of St Nicholas			Budget 2024			Actual 2024			Variance
Management Accounts: 2024			Income	Expenditure	Surplus / (Deficit)	Income	Expenditure	Surplus / (Deficit)	Surplus / (Deficit)
A	Core Activities:		£	£	£	£	£	£	
	Mission & Ministry:								
1	Collections		115,155		115,155	113,280		113,280	(1,875)
2	Donations		11,000		11,000	12,238		12,238	1,238
3	Fees & Charges		46,000		46,000	70,908		70,908	24,908
4	Grants		279,639		279,639	334,166		334,166	54,527
5	Mission & Ministry			(34,600)	(34,600)		(38,744)	(38,744)	(4,144)
	Total Mission & Ministry		451,794	(34,600)	417,194	530,592	(38,744)	491,848	74,654
6	Music		141,255	(246,249)	(104,994)	149,388	(233,810)	(84,422)	20,572
7	Clergy Expenses			(10,640)	(10,640)		(27,189)	(27,189)	(16,549)
8	Clergy Housing			(24,650)	(24,650)		(40,156)	(40,156)	(15,506)
9	Vergers & Sacristy			(96,000)	(96,000)		(112,339)	(112,339)	(16,339)
10	Fabric			(186,012)	(186,012)		(255,773)	(255,773)	(69,761)
	Total Music/Clergy/Vergers/Fabric		141,255	(563,551)	(422,296)	149,388	(669,267)	(519,879)	(97,583)
11	Mosley Street		85,000	(83,426)	1,574	44,974	(89,452)	(44,478)	(46,052)
	Total Investment Property		85,000	(83,426)	1,574	44,974	(89,452)	(44,478)	(46,052)
12	Investments (Share Portfolio)		66,000		66,000	65,667		65,667	(333)
A	Operating Surplus / (Deficit)		744,049	(681,577)	62,472	790,621	(797,463)	(6,842)	(69,314)

B	Trading Contributions:								
13	Café - Licence to Occupy		7,500	0	7,500	7,500	0	7,500	0
14	Retail		20,000	(11,600)	8,400	22,600	(14,063)	8,537	137
	Total Licence to Occupy & Retail income		27,500	(11,600)	15,900	30,100	(14,063)	16,037	137
15	Events & Hire		100,000	(30,750)	69,250	126,947	(48,367)	78,580	9,330
B	Trading Contribution		127,500	(42,350)	85,150	157,048	(62,429)	94,617	9,467

C	Surplus / (Deficit) Before Overheads		871,549	(723,927)	147,622	947,670	(859,892)	87,778	(59,844)
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D	Overheads:								
16	Administration			(338,757)	(338,757)		(301,044)	(301,044)	37,713
17	Finance			(42,611)	(42,611)		(49,723)	(49,723)	(7,112)
D	Total Overheads			(381,368)	(381,368)		(350,767)	(350,767)	30,601
E	Surplus / (Deficit) After Overheads		871,549	(1,105,295)	(233,746)	947,670	(1,210,659)	(262,989)	(29,243)

F	Special Projects/Grants								
18	Sustainability Grant No 1 (2018)			(54,000)	(54,000)		(60,312)	(60,312)	(6,312)
19	Sustainability Grant No 2 (2020)			(19,812)	(19,812)		(19,051)	(19,051)	761
20	Sustainability Grant No 3 (2022)			(45,207)	(45,207)		(41,120)	(41,120)	4,087
21	Sustainability Grant No 4 (2023)			(51,700)	(51,700)	0	(2,328)	(2,328)	49,372
22	Sustainability Grant No 5 (2024)					137,460		137,460	137,460
23	Lantern Initiative Project		81,000	(81,000)	0	42,493	(42,493)	0	0
24	Organ Appeal					88,860		88,860	88,860
F	Underlying Operating Surplus / (Deficit)		952,549	(1,357,014)	(404,465)	1,216,483	(1,375,961)	(159,479)	244,986

25	Depreciation			(44,000)	(44,000)		(51,370)	(51,370)	(7,370)
26	Contingency			0	0		0	0	0
G	NET Surplus / (Deficit)		952,549	(1,401,014)	(448,465)	1,216,483	(1,427,331)	(210,849)	237,616

Capital Receipts

	Capital Receipts								
	Legacies - Restricted		0		0	0			0
	Legacies - Unrestricted		0		0	543			543
	Total Legacies		0		0	543			543
H	Capital Receipts Total		0	0	0	543			543

I	Surplus / (Deficit)		0	0	0	1,217,026	(1,427,331)	(210,305)
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	Gains / (Losses)								
	Realised		0		0	13,273			13,273
	Unrealised		0		0	58,038			58,038
J	Total Gains / (Losses)		0	0	0	71,311	0		71,311

	Drawdown of Investments & Income Loss								
	Total Gains / (Losses)		0	0	0	0			0
L	Drawdown		(130,000)		(130,000)	(200,000)			(200,000)

M	Retained Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year		0	0	0	1,288,337	(1,427,331)	(138,994)
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Events, Front of House and Retail

From my perspective, the most important appointment of 2024 was our Front of House Assistant. As the events side of our business has continued to grow – in reality and potential – I’ve increasingly been focussing my attention where I knew we could generate the most income. The job got larger; capacity stayed the same, until Jennifer Flint started at the Cathedral in mid-May. Her impact has been phenomenal. Not only has she used her extensive skills in coaching to create some exceptional Making the Ask training for our retail volunteers, she has also nurtured their team spirit, expanded the size of the team, and made some exciting changes to the space itself as well as the offer. I’ll let her tell you more in her own words....

“One of the early changes I made was to improve the layout, making the retail space more visually impactful, inviting and accessible - maximizing options for better merchandising.

I strengthened the retail team with the addition of two regular volunteers, which allowed us to open more reliably. I also invested significant time and energy in team building and communication, which included



developing a monthly newsletter dedicated to the retail space and bringing people together to create a sense of engagement and belonging. The impact of this has been demonstrated by a palpable sense of collective ownership for the retail space amongst the volunteers.

In addition, we extended our product range, bringing on board new suppliers and analysing sales to understand how different product lines were performing, using this insight to discontinue poor selling items and invest our budget more wisely. This approach has reaped rewards, with a significant percentage of the new products consistently featuring in our top ten monthly bestsellers list.”

The impact of all this work can be seen in the sales and donation figures for the retail space; 2024 sales: £20,251 (against budget of £18,000) and 2024 donations: £2,361 (against budget of £2,000).

Several years on from our HLF project, there were times in 2024 when it was difficult to recall and do justice to the time, energy, and money that went into making the ‘new’ Cathedral. The FoH team, amongst others, have continued to try to make sure visitors to the Cathedral can still experience the awesome power our building holds which was so evident when newly uncovered. Our welcome is still warm and allowing our committed staff and volunteers the opportunity to feel good about their physical surroundings is vital – everyone who comes through the door should see a space that is cared for and, though this was not always evident in 2024, we are persevering.

Throughout 2024 the relationships built around our events business have been strengthened and diversified. Local and national charities, musicians, music promoters, businesses, caterers, agencies, and event organisers now count our Cathedral as a reliable and creative business partner. We delivered £113,000 of venue rental income against a budget of £85,000. Increasingly as an organisation we have begun to understand the importance of the events aspect of our organisational life; the demands of financial pressures may push our collective resource in this direction, but the unique power of a diverse events programme to bring new audiences into the cathedral should not be underestimated. Newcastle Cathedral is a special place with the potential to transform everything from an evening out to an approach to life. The bigger our audiences, the more diverse our partners, and the more we allow ourselves to explore possibilities, the better chance we have of allowing that gift to be enjoyed. 2024 wasn’t easy, but it was worth it.



Image: Chris White

Amy Carrithers
Front of House Manager

Fundraising and Development

I was delighted to join the Cathedral team at the start of 2024 and what a wonderful first year it's been. I'm grateful for all of our community – staff, volunteers, congregation, partners and many more – for making me feel so welcome and helping me get to grips with all that is Newcastle Cathedral. It feels like an exciting – but challenging – time for the Cathedral as we chart our path post-*Common Ground in Sacred Space* and through a landscape of ever-increasing running costs as we try to deliver positive, meaningful impact for our communities.

Fundraising

An early task was the creation of a Fundraising Policy that ensures we are not only legally compliant in the work that we do but that also reflects our moral and ethical values in terms of both protecting vulnerable people from pressure or manipulation to give and retaining the humanity and dignity of those we work with when speaking to funders and other stakeholders. I know that the Chapter and the wider Cathedral will be proactive in holding us to account against these standards.

Applications to Trusts, Foundations, and other grant giving bodies have in the main been successful throughout the year, with support secured for posts including the Chorister Supervisor and the upcoming Community Engagement Officer post. A number of applications were in support of our organ appeal, detailed further below, and we also hosted a fully funded networking day focused on values-led business planning and delivering positive impact for your community, thanks to Heritage Compass.

Launch of 'Not Just a Pipe Dream'

The Cathedral's organ requires major maintenance and overhaul every 40-50 years and the increasing repair requirements over the last few years means that the time for this work is near. We launched 'Not Just a Pipe Dream' with the hope of taking a phased approach to the works. Following generous grants from the Pilling Trust and Bramall Foundation, donations, and income from our 'sponsor a pipe' programme, we were able to contract Harrisons & Harrisons at the end of the year for the initial works. We still have a long way to go though – anyone interested in supporting can find out more at newcastlecathedral.org.uk/organ-appeal.

Partnerships

The arrival of the *Illuminated Sheep* as part of our harvest celebrations offered lots of opportunities to platform and support a really varied group of local organisations, with the Cathedral using the event and run up to collect for the West End Foodbank, and groups including the Young Carers and regular collaborators Speaking Up Together doing a creative 'takeover' of our adopted sheep. The Heaton Hookers, a multi-generational knit and crochet group, colourfully yarn bombed the Cathedral, with the majority of the decoration dismantling into scarves to be distributed for those in need for the winter. We look forward to what further collaboration and partnerships might look like, as well as the lovely feeling that comes from seeing the community take ownership of the space.



The Cathedral is increasingly visible in the business community; we were delighted to be selected to host the Destination Regeneration Framework for the region, attended by NECA Mayor Kim McGuinness. Christmas events for North East Chamber of Commerce and NE1 were both popular, taking place in the light of the beautiful Christmas tree generously donated by Bowmer and Kirkland. I'm heartened by the philanthropy and interest in the Cathedral's work by local businesses and excited to see what else we can achieve in partnership.

Newcastle Cathedral Trust's Gala Dinner was another highlight of the year, attended by some of the most recognisable businesses and names in the region, including Margaret Barbour, the Fenwicks family, and the Bishop. The team at the Cathedral worked closely with the Trust on the planning and delivery of the event, which was so well received we're doing it all again in 2025!

Looking ahead

The close of 2024 saw the Cathedral's fundraising strategy being drafted setting out opportunities and plans to address the Cathedral's deficit in a structured, strategic way. 2025 will see the launch of a legacy campaign and efforts to build an endowment that will bring long term financial sustainability to the Cathedral. If you are interested in hearing more about our plans or would like discuss ways you can support your Cathedral, please feel free to contact me via ashley.bell@newcastlecathedral.org.uk or 0191 235 7555. Every contribution, no matter how small, ensures that we can continue to shine brightly for all.

Ashley Bell
Head of Development and Fundraising

Marketing and Communications

Working with a significantly smaller budget and capacity compared with during the National Lottery Heritage Fund project (which ended in 2023), my focus shifted to streamlining communications, including enhancing our website and supporting other departments in promoting their work. Alongside managing website and social media content, I continued to coordinate third-party listings and reviews and send monthly e-newsletters to an expanding database of subscribers eager to learn more about the Cathedral's activities.

Services and Music

Through a joint campaign with the Cathedral Music Trust, January saw record attendance for a regular weekday Choral Evensong when TV/radio personality Alexander Armstrong visited as part of his Classic FM Choral Adventure. In the Summer, I communicated the visit of Cathedral Music Trust patrons, The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, and, in October, promoted the new Small Sounds group for children aged 0-4, which attracted 46 grown-ups and their children for the first session through targeted social media campaigns and flyers. Additionally, I produced promotional materials for the 'Not Just a Pipe Dream' organ appeal, including leaflets, banners, blog posts, and online content.

A key responsibility this year was managing the communications regarding the recruitment of our two new Residentiary Canons. I designed job packs, published adverts, and communicated their appointments, as well as their installation services, through photos and social media. With the new Canons in place, I have begun planning strategies to increase attendance at services, aligning with the Diocesan vision of growing "younger and more diverse". Early successes include higher attendance at Armistice Day and Advent/Christmas services. The Diocese has already funded new digital screens at the West Entrance to display service times and visitor information.

Supporting the Diocese will continue to remain a priority. I communicated coverage for Maundy Thursday, ordinations, installations, and the Bishop's media engagements, as well as contributing articles for *Link*, the Diocese's monthly magazine. This work is discussed and planned in monthly meetings with my Diocesan Communication team counterparts. Additionally, I participate in regular Zoom meetings with my Marketing counterparts from our fellow 41 Church of England cathedrals, providing opportunities to exchange experiences, seek advice and share best practice.

Events and Activities

With a smaller Learning & Activities team this year, I took on a greater role in suggesting and planning events and exhibitions. We received notable media coverage for the 'Twilight Tranquility' evening events in February and the 'Illuminated Sheep' programme in October. The 'Illuminated Sheep' project involved engagement with local community groups, including Speaking Up Together, Newcastle Carers and Newcastle Foodbank, and this type of collaboration continues to resonate with our audiences. Exhibitions such as the 'Speak Their Name

Suicide Memorial Quilt' and 'Portraits with Purpose: Continuing Bonds' by St Oswald's Hospice also received significant local press and visitor attention.

Throughout 2024, I continued to manage the Cathedral's TicketSource booking system, including overseeing administration and responding to enquiries for various events. This included 'ticket split' events like artist workshops and performances, which led to an increase in e-newsletter subscribers.

I also support our relationship with external clients, including Kinda Dusty Ltd and Awesome Silent Discos, by adding their event listings to our website and, for the first time, generating income through enhanced marketing packages and sponsorship opportunities. I also designed corporate materials (such as table plans) for events like Destination North East's 'Regenerative Tourism' event and NE1's Business Breakfast.

Supporting groups with a closer relationship to the Cathedral, such as Newcastle Cathedral Trust, the Friends of St Nicholas, and the Chorister Alumni network, I designed newsletters and worked collaboratively on items such as an 8-page souvenir programme for the Trust's inaugural fundraising Gala Dinner.

Living the Lantern







Exhibitions like 'Portraits with Purpose' connect closely with the Lantern Initiative, which exists to walk and work alongside people experiencing difficult circumstances. This year, I assisted the Rev'd Jon Canessa in creating an 8-minute video for the Lantern Initiative, which was shared widely with stakeholders and is now available on our YouTube channel and website (newcastlecathedral.org.uk/lantern).

In a year which included a lengthy period without an incumbent Lantern Initiative (LI) Lead, I continued to promote this vital area of the Cathedral's work, covering projects like the Story Chair's return, the Stories of Sanctuary choir, the 'FED UP!' performance about food poverty and the Christmas meals delivered in partnership with Changing Lives. These initiatives garnered press interest and positive social media engagement. I was delighted that acclaimed poet and theologian Malcolm Guite chose to write about the Cathedral's work with people experiencing homelessness in The Church Times:

"Seeing [people without a home] there, in that sacred space, was a sacramental experience, and showed forth not only Christ's teaching, but his very presence."

In late 2024, I assisted with the recruitment of Laurie Crow, the new LI Lead, and I look forward to collaborating with her and our new Canon for Mission, Zoe Heming, to develop a strategic and longer-term way of communicating the Lantern Initiative's work. This work has the potential to connect with all areas of the Cathedral and resonate deeply with the wider community, region, and Diocese.

2024 in Numbers

-  45,000 – Copies of our quarterly 'What's On' leaflet distributed across the region.
-  2,775 – Mailing list subscribers (up from 2,303 last December).
-  900 – Online viewers for Candlelit Midnight Mass, our most-watched live-streamed service of the year.
-  22 – Articles written and published in Link, the Diocese magazine (not including various regional and national media coverage).
-  16 – E-newsletters sent to our subscribers, including newsletters on behalf of the Friends of St Nicholas.
-  10 – Job vacancy documents designed, listed and advertised online.

Peter Cumiskey
Marketing and Communications Manager

Cathedral Architect

Quinquennial Inspection Review (QIR) 2025

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

The QI survey work was completed last year and a report issued to the Chapter in January. The report makes recommendations on the maintenance, repair and development of the Cathedral and Refectory Hall.

In summary the building is well cared for and in good condition following the CGISS development project. However, like any historic building, there is a schedule of works to be carried out to put it in good order. The major work is the repair of the lantern tower.

Works Underway: Lantern Tower Repairs

Conservation-accredited structural engineer, Charles Blackett Ord, has carried out an initial structural review of the situation. The detailed laser scan and measured building survey has been provided to fully assess and understand the condition of the tower, and to schedule the repairs. Discussion is ongoing with Newcastle City Council (who have historic responsibility for the maintenance of the upper part of the tower) and they are currently making enquiries with scaffolders to provide access for further investigation to be carried out to inform repairs.

Electrical engineers are preparing proposals for the relighting of the lantern as the existing fittings are at the end of their life and are inefficient energy-intensive halogen lamps. The proposal is to replace these with new LED fittings.

North and South Quire Aisle Heating Trenches

In January, a contractor undertook lifting of the flagstones above both heating trenches to assess the condition. Repair work is necessary to ensure that they are robust and not at risk of breaking as has previously occurred at the North aisle. I am preparing a report to be reviewed by the structural engineer prior to repair specification.

North Porch Upgrades

The existing balustrade is loose and is out of action. Repair proposals have been produced to repair the balustrade and include strengthening with stainless steel dowels to help prevent this damage from reoccurring. Consideration is also being given to making the external north porch entrance more welcoming and accessible by providing new external lighting and a handrail.

Scott Lindsay
Cathedral Architect

Deanery Synod

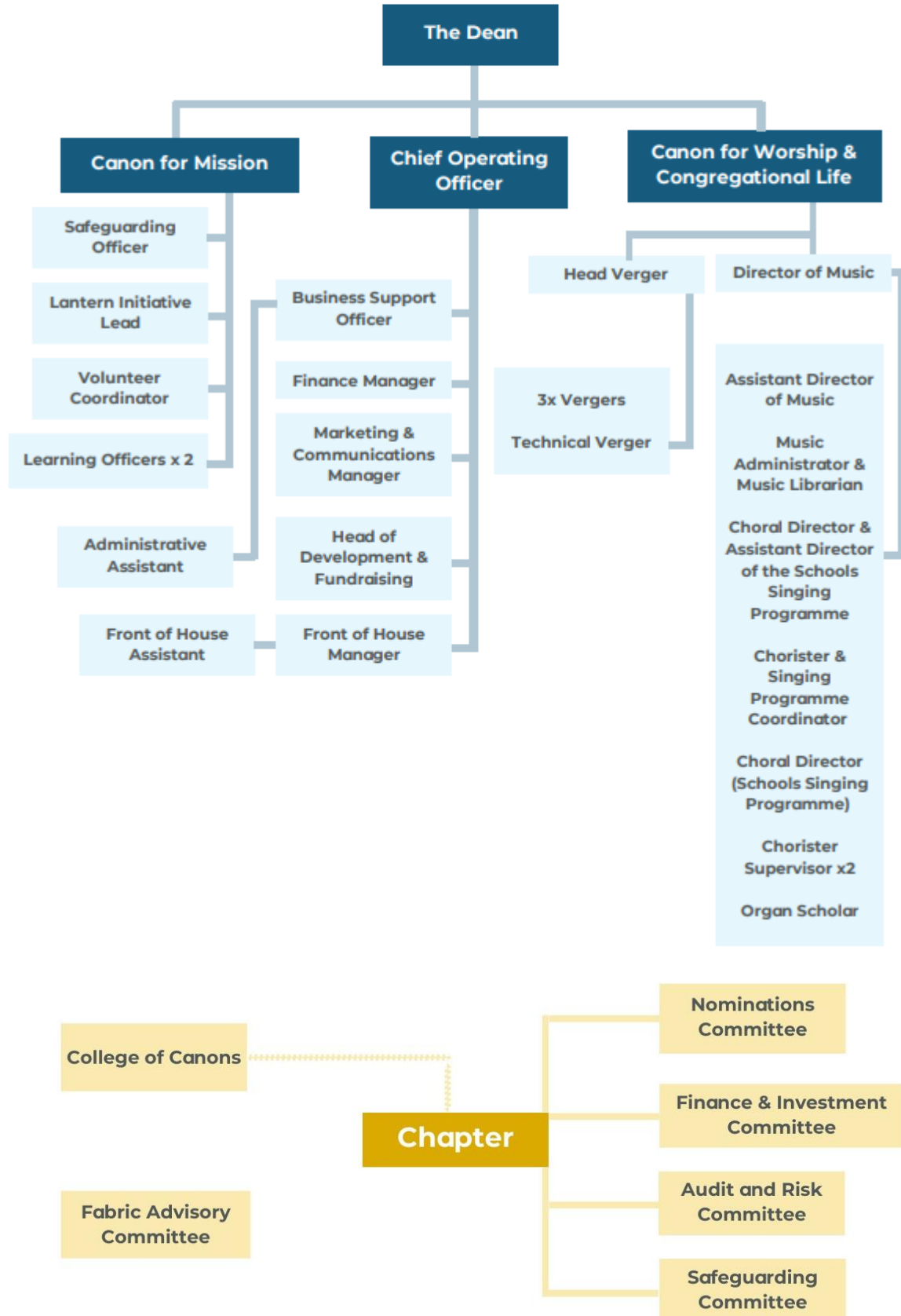
In April 2024, we welcomed the Rev'd Paul Baker, Vicar of St Nicholas, Gosforth as Area Dean of the Newcastle Central Deanery and at the Synod meeting held on 18th July, Leanne Conway-Wilcox, from the parish of The Ascension, Kenton was elected as Lay Chair and Molly Allan, from St Nicholas, Gosforth, took up the post of Deanery Synod Secretary. Elections for the Deanery's representatives on the Diocesan Synod were held in June 2024.

At the July meeting, Gill Mitchell, the Deanery Finance officer, gave an update on Parish Share, the payment made by parishes to support the work of the Diocese (this covers parish clergy and diocesan support staff). Many parishes struggle to pay parish share, and few have large reserves to draw, on but the need for parishes to contribute to cost of the provision of ministry in their localities is generally understood. The issue of help with the costs of maintaining our church buildings was raised and it was noted that the Diocese now employs a Church Buildings Support Officer who works with parishes on grant applications. The meeting also received an update on the work of the Deanery Development Group and on the July session of the General Synod, and those present exchanged news from their own parishes.

The Synod received a further financial update at its meeting on 24th October. There was also a report from the Deanery Development Group. The Deanery plan which had been produced as part of the development process was now out of date and needs to be rewritten, although some points in it have been implemented and are working well, most notably work with young people. Not all churches needed to be doing the same thing, and the work of each individual church should be celebrated as contributing to the whole. The meeting also heard a report on proceedings at the September meeting of Diocesan Synod, including work on outreach, racial justice and climate justice. As usual, information and news from the parishes represented at the meeting was shared.

Katherine Govier
Deanery Synod Representative

ORGANIGRAM SEPTEMBER 2024



2024 IN ACTION

