



**NEWCASTLE  
CATHEDRAL**



# **STRATEGY 2025-2028**

**‘A BEACON OF LIGHT’**



# 1. WHO WE ARE

*"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."*

– John 1:5

**For over 800 years, Newcastle Cathedral has been an enduring beacon of light for the people of the North East.**

Rooted in the presence of God, it has long been a place of safety, belonging and hope. Our iconic Lantern Tower, once a guide for sailors, remains a symbol of welcome to all who come to the city.

Today, as the UK's only cathedral dedicated to St Nicholas – the patron saint of sailors and protector of children – we strive to embody his famous spirit of kindness, hospitality and safeguarding. We are committed to building on our rich traditions while adapting to the needs of our diverse community.



*The Bishop of Newcastle, The Right Revd Dr Helen-Ann Hartley, and the Dean of Newcastle, The Very Revd Lee Batson.*





Rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, Newcastle Cathedral is a place of radical welcome, inspiring worship and deep community engagement. We are the Mother Church of the Diocese of Newcastle and the seat of the Bishop of Newcastle, serving the city and wider region – supporting 240 churches and 49 schools in their mission to bring faith, hope and love to their communities.

Located in the heart of a vibrant city, the Cathedral is a living landmark. We celebrate our rich history, from medieval origins to the untold stories of those who shaped our city. Central to our worshipping life is the Cathedral Choir, which has members from a range of backgrounds. Our musical offering enriches our services and connects us to centuries of tradition, while our space hosts many events – welcoming first-time visitors into this sacred space.

Through the Cathedral Lantern Project, children's and youth singing programmes and other work, we extend a beacon of hope to those navigating life's challenges – offering a radical welcome to people of all faiths and none.

**Top image:** *The Bishop of Berwick with members of the Cathedral community.*



## 2. STRATEGIC VISION

### 2.1. MISSION STATEMENT

Newcastle Cathedral's mission is to continue being a beacon of hope, hospitality, and inclusion for all who enter its doors in the name of Christ. We aim to be a source of light and support in our city, region, and beyond, fostering an environment where individuals from all walks of life feel welcome, empowered and valued. Alongside this, we are committed to ensuring the Cathedral's financial sustainability, so it remains a vital resource for future generations.



### 2.2. CORE VALUES



#### **RADICAL WELCOME**

We commit ourselves to learning how to offer a radical welcome to all who would enter or engage with the Cathedral and its life.



#### **INSPIRING WORSHIP**

We place a priority on seeking to facilitate inspiring worship in the everyday life of the Cathedral.



#### **EMPOWERING WORTH**

In all that we do, we will seek to value others and to encourage them to value themselves. In our engagement with the City and Diocese, we will advocate for the creating of a society that values human worth.

## 2.3. WE ARE COMMITTED TO...

- **Inclusivity:** Offering a generous vision of what it is to be made in the image of God, we aspire to be a place where all can feel included and safe, and where a diversity of voices contributes to shaping the priorities of the Cathedral.
- **Hope & Support:** Extending compassion and practical support to those facing life's challenges through initiatives like the Cathedral Lantern Project.
- **Safeguarding:** Ensuring that we have the best Safeguarding culture possible, always paying attention to the need to protect the most vulnerable, taking seriously any concerns that present themselves, and ensuring the voice and experience of survivors of abuse informs our decisions.
- **Community Engagement:** Developing our engagement with our Diocese and congregations and actively contributing to the social fabric of the city and the region through outreach and partnerships.
- **Tradition & Innovation:** Honouring and sharing our history and traditions while embracing innovation to remain relevant to current visitors and future generations.
- **Financial Sustainability:** Ensuring the financial resilience of the Cathedral through sustainable practices, diverse income generation, and prudent stewardship of resources.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Continuing to work with Diocesan Colleagues and National Church Institutions to explore the most efficient and effective ways of achieving Net Zero.



*The Soweto Gospel Choir performed at Northern Roots' 'Songs of Freedom' event which celebrated Black British voices in the North East.*

# 3. SHINING BRIGHTER

Over the next three years, we will aim to shine brighter in:

- 3.1 The Diocese of Newcastle**
- 3.2 The Region of the North East, north of the Tyne**
- 3.3 The City of Newcastle**

We will shine brighter for

- 3.4 Marginalised and vulnerable people**
- 3.5 Those who engage with faith through the Cathedral**
- 3.6 The staff and volunteers of the Cathedral**

We will shine brighter by

- 3.7 Maintaining the Beacon**

## 3.1. THE DIOCESE OF NEWCASTLE

*We will shine brighter as the Mother Church of the Diocese by:*

- 3.1.1** Continuing to be a place 'of convening' where our sense of mutual belonging and connectivity across the Diocese can be embodied and deepened, and where the Church and other organisations can be brought into conversation with each other.
- 3.1.2** Actively inviting clergy, lay readers and parish groups to feel at home participating in the life of this place.
- 3.1.3** Leading for the Diocese in its relationships with people of other faiths.
- 3.1.4** Ensuring Cathedral Clergy and other staff are available to support parishes, and sharing our expertise when it is possible to do so.



**3.1.5** Working with the Diocesan Mission and Ministry Team and Citizens Tyne and Wear to develop the work of parishes in engaging with issues of social justice.

**3.1.6** Collaborating with the Diocesan Board of Education and Diocesan Children's and Young People's Teams to create a place where young people can grow in faith and learn about our city and region's heritage.

**3.1.7** Engaging with the Initial Ministerial Education Team and Lindisfarne College of Theology to be a place where people can do placements as part of their ministerial training and offer other educational opportunities as part of our commitment to deepening the discipleship of all God's people.

**3.1.8** Working with the Diocesan Mothers' Union to promote awareness of Gender Based Violence across the Diocese and discerning how the Diocese can best respond to it.

**3.1.9** Developing stronger relationships with other Diocesan-wide networks e.g. Workplace Chaplaincy, LGBTQ! Chaplaincy.

**3.1.10** Actively working with the Diocese to consider whether the Schools Singing Programme might expand as a tool for mission, in partnership with schools and churches, in other areas of the Diocese.

**3.1.11** Developing the College of Canons to be a place where wisdom can be shared for the benefit of the Cathedral and the whole Diocese.



## 3.2. THE REGION

*We will shine brighter in the region by developing the role of the Cathedral in the public square by:*

**3.2.1** Actively looking for opportunities to engage with the three local authorities serving the people of our Diocese, along with the Police and other public sector bodies.

**3.2.2** Becoming a Cathedral for the Business community, discerning what this means through our developing relationship with NECC and NEI.

**3.2.3** Being the strategic lead for the Diocese in its work with Tyne & Wear Citizens.

**3.2.4** Actively engaging with other Third Sector Organisations, and umbrella bodies, to ensure opportunities for collaboration are not missed.

**3.2.5** Engaging with the new combined Mayoral Authority, along with colleagues in the Diocese of Durham, to ensure that the voice of faith communities is able to influence decisions being made in this new level of governance.

**3.2.6** Developing our place within the region and the city's wider tourism offer.



*North East Mayor Kim McGuinness addressed leaders from the region's local authorities at the launch of Destination North East England's Regenerative Visitor Economy Framework.*

### 3.3. THE CITY OF NEWCASTLE

*We will shine brighter in the city through our programme of learning, arts and events, which will be developed by::*

**3.3.1** Ensuring that there is a clear and consistent articulation of our mission and commitment to social justice and heritage through our programme of exhibitions and educational visits.

**3.3.2** Creating space in our events and exhibitions programme for those from marginalised communities to be heard and championed as part of our commitment to advocacy and social justice.

**3.3.3** Engage with other partners to raise the profile of the Cathedral as a venue for the Arts and other events.

**3.3.4** Actively exploring different operational and trading models for our events and other commercial activities.

**3.3.5** Building upon our relationships with partner schools, and expanding the number of schools we work with, through our Singing Programme and other activities, with the aim of bringing more children and young people into the life of the Cathedral and embedding the Cathedral as a leading voice in the field of musical education.



*The 'Together at Christmas' carol service is an annual event hosted by the Lord-Lieutenant of Tyne and Wear to thank and recognise the contributions of members of the local community.*

### 3.4. MARGINALISED AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE

*We will shine brighter for our most vulnerable and marginalised members of our communities by:*

**3.4.1** Continuing to make Safeguarding a priority, and ensuring that we respond to all the recommendations articulated in the INEQE audit of 2024.

**3.4.2** Further embedding the Cathedral Lantern Project into the life of the Cathedral, and ensuring a continuing and developing focus on our work:

- i.** supporting people who are homeless, and those recovering from addiction.
- ii.** supporting asylum seekers and refugees.
- iii.** supporting other vulnerable groups, including those who have experience of gender based violence.
- iv.** developing our advocacy with and among those affected by structural and social injustice, and empowering others to engage in this dimension of our Christian calling.

**3.4.3** Addressing barriers to belonging by a review of the accessibility of our physical space, our written communications, and any other obstacles that may prevent people finding their way into the heart of our life when they engage with us.



*A rehearsal for the 'Stories of Sanctuary' concert featuring songs written and performed by asylum seekers, refugees and members of the recovery community.*

## 3.5. THOSE WHO ENGAGE WITH FAITH THROUGH THE CATHEDRAL

*We will shine brighter for those whose primary motivation for connecting with us is to explore and deepen faith by:*

**3.5.1** Intentionally, confidently and overtly being an inclusive and safe Christian community for all those who connect with us and ensuring that their experiences are reflected in our worshipping life.

**3.5.2** Creating opportunities for people to grow in discipleship, through the provision of a range of courses, the development of small groups, training for roles in the church e.g. serving and reading and making space for people to hear each other's faith stories.

**3.5.3** Developing our approach to pastoral care, including how we involve those who have recently joined us, as well as support for those who are bereaved.

**3.5.4** Growing the congregations who worship with us across a broad demographic.

**3.5.5** Enabling the congregation to have a more overt voice in the decision-making processes of the Cathedral and its wider work.

**3.5.6** Investing in young people through the development of Junior Church, working with our Cathedral choristers, and the development of a young adults group.

**3.5.7** Offering different opportunities for worship.



**3.5.8** Continuing to develop our Cathedral Choir of Choristers and Lay Clerks and ensuring that our music provision is sustainable.

**3.5.9** Ensuring there is a healthy culture at the heart of all that is offered in worship.

**3.5.10** Further developing the Schools Singing Programme to provide a continuous pipeline for future Cathedral Choristers and further integrating the programme within the wider life of the Cathedral.

## **3.6. THE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS OF THE CATHEDRAL**

*We will shine brighter for our staff and volunteers by:*

**3.6.1** Developing a structure within our operational life to enable staff to contribute to the wider decision-making of the Cathedral.

**3.6.2** Developing CPD/training opportunities for all staff and volunteers.

**3.6.3** Actively look for alternative sources of funding for key posts.

**3.6.4** Undertaking regular staff and volunteer surveys to ensure Chapter and the Senior Management Team have a better understanding of the team's perception of the working culture, communication, and their ability to play a full part in organisational success.

**3.6.5** Benchmarking salaries for posts against those offered in other Cathedrals and similar organisations.



**3.6.6** Committing to tracking and achieving the Newcastle Living Wage.

**3.6.7** Increasing the number of volunteers who contribute to the life of the Cathedral, and ensuring there is sufficient capacity to manage and support those who do volunteer with us.

**3.6.8** Ensuring there are sufficient support structures in place for staff and volunteers to thrive.



## **3.7. MAINTAINING THE BEACON**

*If we are to shine brighter over the next three years, we will need to ensure that attention continues to be paid to the beacon that is the Cathedral. We will do this by:*

**3.7.1** Developing our governance structures, including being constantly mindful of the diversity of voices that sit on Chapter and its Committees.

**3.7.2** Improving our budget setting process and moving to a balanced budget by 2026.

**3.7.3** Increasing our focus on fundraising to enable financial sustainability and to maintain and develop the mission of the Cathedral. We will achieve this through an endowment strategy, legacy giving, strategic applications to Trusts and Foundations, working with the Cathedral Trust and regular stewardship campaigns for our congregations.



**3.7.4** Developing our approach to income generation via events, visitor donations, retail, leasing of Cathedral House, and our partnership with the Oswin Project.

**3.7.5** Ensuring our Cathedral properties – including the Cathedral House – are maintained adequately.

**3.7.6** Exploring the implications of any sale of Cathedral property.

**3.7.7** Continuing to have a rigorous approach to Health and Safety, ensuring we have an effective approach to risk assessment; training is provided where necessary; and that we pay attention to any new legislative requirements, e.g. Martyn's Law.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Newcastle Cathedral has stood as a beacon of light for nearly 800 years, and we continue to shine brightly as we embrace both our heritage and the challenges of the future. Through our commitment to radical welcome, inspiring worship and empowering worth, we strive to shine brightly for all who would enter or engage with the Cathedral and its life. As the 'Mother Church' of the Diocese and seat of the Bishop of Newcastle, we are proud to support our local churches, schools and communities while offering a space for reflection, hope and transformation.

Our Cathedral is a place where everyone is welcome, a living landmark where history meets the present, and a place of light that guides us all toward a brighter future. Financial sustainability is key to our ongoing mission, and we are committed to ensuring the long-term health and continued relevance of this sacred space.



*Image © Michael Bailey Photography*



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