

# BEACON

The regular newsletter from the Development Office of Rochester Cathedral

APRIL 2022

## From the Dean's desk...



### The Times They are a Changing.

Cathedrals have been part of the landscape for centuries. Many have been built and rebuilt on the same site or over an existing historical site. When excavating the Cathedral Crypt, as part of the project "*Hidden Treasures – Fresh Expressions*", the remains of a large Roman house were discovered,

further confirming that Rochester was an important Roman site well before the first cathedral was built in 604 AD.

But who owns a cathedral? You might think that since the Reformation, the Church of England is the present owner - but it is not. Nor is it owned by its bishop or dean. In fact, it is a body corporate – a bit like a company – made up from the members of its Chapter, its Council and its College of Canons – that is if "ownership" is the correct word?

This arrangement is legalised in the Cathedrals Measure 1991 and the Care of Cathedrals Measure 2011. These two pieces of legislation govern cathedrals. However, this is changing. To improve governance, accountability, and financial sustainability, all assets, engagements and liabilities will belong to a single body corporate – the Chapter.

The new Cathedrals Measure was passed by General Synod and received Royal Assent last year. This legislation will mean all cathedrals will be required to register as charities with the Charity Commission. This will ensure cathedrals are in line with best practice elsewhere in the third sector.

This is a major piece of work, and a working group has been established by Chapter to make sure Rochester Cathedral is ready by 2023/4. Quite simply this is nothing less than a sea change for English Cathedrals and how they are governed.

Of course, this is just one of the many tasks confronting cathedrals and without the expertise and skills of volunteers much of the work of cathedrals wouldn't happen. Rochester has

a small team of employed people delivering a big and demanding programme. Volunteers are crucial to how we function and operate in all areas of cathedral life, including its governance. The non-executive members of Chapter are volunteers who bring their professional judgement to the running of the Cathedral. We are hugely indebted to them for their time, energy, experience, and commitment.

The Trustees of Rochester Cathedral Trust are also volunteers who believe in the mission, purpose, and value of the Cathedral. So much has been achieved in the last few years because of their warmth and enthusiasm. Equally, without volunteers on the floor of the Cathedral it would be difficult to remain fully open and deliver the amazing number of services and events that we do.

As Covid restrictions are lifted, we pray volunteers will once again return, and new ones will come forward. Of the 350 pre-Covid Rochester Cathedral volunteers, only 183 have so far returned. It is a similar situation in other areas of the voluntary sector. So now is the time to consider volunteering as we rebuild our communities and offer active, even Christian service, to others.

Do get in contact if you are interested in volunteering in some capacity at Rochester Cathedral, for in the end I think cathedrals don't belong to any one person or body, they belong to us all. We are simply custodians who, in their generation, seek to preserve and hand on these earthly treasures to the next. Such a responsibility is a privilege and a joy.

The Very Revd Dr Philip Hesketh  
Dean of Rochester

*Rochester*  
CATHEDRAL  
Growing in Christ since AD604

**Please note:** You are receiving this newsletter because we think you have an interest in Rochester Cathedral and its events. If we have got this wrong please let us know by emailing [development@rochester-cathedral.org](mailto:development@rochester-cathedral.org) or telephone 01634 810074.

In order to process your kind donations, keep you updated with news and events, and carry out our work effectively, we will need to store and use the information you have provided to us. We are committed to treating your information with respect and in a transparent way. To find out more, please read our fundraising promise at <https://www.rochester-cathedral.org/cathedral-trust/>

Pledges and gifts from 1st January to 31st March 2022 total **£43,536**

## Addendum

As this issue of the Beacon goes to press, I'm conscious that much greater changes have taken place in the world and across the landscape of eastern Europe. The invasion of Ukraine and the plight of its people has shocked and appalled us. It reminds us too that the Church of Jesus Christ is more than just bricks and mortar. The Cathedral which is the focus and mother church of the Diocese of Rochester stands as a symbol of hope and example of Christian love. During these recent weeks the Cathedral Spire, like so many other structures has been lit blue and yellow in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and a reminder that we are called to good works and show acts of compassion. This tragedy has brought people once again together and made manifest the love of God. We continue to pray for the people of Ukraine, Russia, and the peace of the world:

*Almighty God,*

*from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed:  
kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all, the true love of peace  
and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom  
those who take counsel for the nations of the earth  
that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward,  
till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love;  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and forever.*

*Amen*

## Financial Report for 2021

Thank you to everyone who supported the Rochester Cathedral Trust in 2021.

**Income to the Trust for the year was £651,359**

**For investment in the Music Endowment  
£140,012**

Projects funded during the year included:

Children's Community Choir	£ 5,693
Contribution to Music Running Costs	£21,000
North Nave/Clerestory/Glazing	£ 8,231
South Quire / Clerestory	£ 6,184
Knot Garden	£ 2,000
Tractor/Lawn Mower	£ 7,379
Cloister Garth development	£ 5,312
Chorister Vocal Coaching	£ 5,000
Bishop's Gate	£ 4,061

The Trust has also committed its support to a number of Cathedral projects planned for 2022. We will report back on these projects as they develop.

## What's On

### The Leaves of the Trees

**April 24<sup>th</sup> – May 22<sup>nd</sup> 2022**

A touring artwork installation and reflective memorial to the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic by internationally acclaimed sculptor Peter Walker

### Gaia

**May 24<sup>th</sup> – June 12<sup>th</sup> 2022**

In Greek mythology Gaia is the personification of the Earth. Measuring seven metres in diameter, this art installation by Luke Jerram features detailed NASA imagery of the earth's surface and is accompanied by a specially created surround sound composition by BAFTA award winning composer Dan Jones.

## A new Tractor Mower for the Gardeners!

Thanks to the Cathedral Trust, the garden department is extremely proud to have been able to acquire a Husqvarna all terrain ride-on mower.

This highly versatile mower features a floating cutting deck, giving a wonderful even cut. Its ability to cut close to trees and lawn edges results in little or no strimming work. Already it has reduced the mowing time by half.

An excellent feature of the mower is its mulching technology where the clippings are circulated through the blades into small pieces and left to become natural fertiliser. It is an absolute delight to operate.

A big thank you to all who made this purchase possible

**Graham Huckstepp**

Head gardener



# Rochester Cathedral Children's Community Choir

In my role as Director of Rochester Cathedral Children's Choir (and animateur) there are two main parts to my work. Where the Cathedral sees me as running the Children's Choir every Thursday evening; the main part of my day work involves offering free choral outreach to teachers in our local schools.

Unfortunately, we know that Initial Teacher Training of singing is minimal at most, and many newly qualified teachers lack confidence and skills to teach singing. We therefore run a community outreach music project and offer a term of singing



to junior schools in our local area throughout the year. This is the main part of my role, and where I can demonstrate good practise to teachers and music leads in the hope that children can experience good teaching and learning of singing; as well as recruit the keen singers amongst them to our choir at the same time. In my weekly sessions with the school during that term, I will spend some time each week making sure they understand where I work, and that the other part of my job is running the

free choir at the Cathedral for children and a little more about what we do (Carol services, Summer Concerts, Sunday Services etc). I give out postcards with our details so that parents can get in contact; as well as removing barriers from joining the choir by making it free to all; and our performance uniform is also available to buy or borrow.

We also attract our young singers via various groups on social media (including Kent Music Teachers, Medway Music Teachers) and the Cathedral will post on social media as well. In addition, we work with our local music hub; and I have built up relationships with our local Primary Music Form and Senior Music Network. Word of mouth from our choir members often helps as well.

This was a little simpler before Covid-19. Some schools are still not singing despite guidance saying to the contrary and best practise guidelines. I expect this could be problematic in care homes at the moment as well, especially if the residents are medically vulnerable; but we also know there is much documented research on the benefits to mental and physical health so presumably there is good practise for care homes as well.

Finally, the other benefit of our choir is that various children, all from different backgrounds (approximately 8 in the time I have been here), have moved from Rochester Cathedral Children's Choir to become choristers for the main Rochester Cathedral choir after passing a successful audition. This is an opportunity that they wouldn't have

known about had it not been for the outreach project and our free weekly choir.

*Our thanks go in particular to the Freemasons of East and West Kent whose generous gifts to Rochester Cathedral Trust have supported the Children's Community Choir.*

## **Coral Roberts**

Director of Rochester Cathedral Children's Choir

## Choristers sing at Mercers' Livery Hall Lenten Evensong

On 10th March 2022, the Cathedral Choristers sang at The Mercers' Livery Hall in the City of London for their annual Lenten Sermon.

The Mercers' Company is a livery company focused on being a philanthropic "force for good", with a history dating back over 700 years. The Mercers have very generously sponsored a chorister place in the Cathedral Choir for a number of years, and it was a pleasure to be able to sing for them. Our Mercers Chorister, Alex Mathie in year 7, met The Master, and was able to show him his Mercers' Medal which is worn over his cassock and surplice.





# From darkness to light...

We are delighted to report that work to upgrade the Cathedral's lighting has now been completed, thanks to two very generous grants from the Friends of Rochester Cathedral and from the Rochester Cathedral Trust.

Our 2018 Quinquennial Inspection highlighted that the electrical installations within the Cathedral had not been significantly upgraded in many years. Some work was completed in the Crypt as part of the 'Hidden Treasure Fresh Expressions' project but the lighting within the body of the Cathedral was not up to standard with many fittings needing regular repairs. Many were very old and the parts required were becoming increasingly difficult to repair and replace.

As you can imagine, this was a significant piece of work, including new lighting on the Pulpitum steps; emergency lighting in the Gundulf Tower; new lighting in the North Transept arcade and new lighting in the Choir stalls in the Quire.

Now up and running, the new lighting will reduce our ongoing electrical maintenance costs and will also reduce our carbon footprint. It also offers far better lighting levels around the Cathedral – in fact the results have been described as 'spectacular' and are already hugely improving visitor experience. For example, look at this recent photo of the Organ. With the new lighting installed it really does look fabulous!

Thank you to everyone whose gifts made this work possible. Do come and see for yourselves the difference our new lighting has made.

