

# BEACON

The regular newsletter from the Development Office of Rochester Cathedral

JUNE 2021

## From the Dean's desk...



It looks as if summer has arrived and, with restrictions lifting, the possibility of drinks on the lawn and the return of all things convivial. I know a few friends who still have not ventured over their threshold and have been isolating for over a year. The expectation of leaving the house is understandably a little daunting and so I hope the Cathedral Trust programme will entice people to meet face to face once again.

Although virtual and digital communication has been a godsend and something of a lifeline during the pandemic, it can never replace the importance of physical meetings which are so essential to human flourishing. Sitting in the garden last week with long-absent friends I felt a great sense of contentment, as if something had been restored, redeemed even.

'What is this joy?' wrote Elizabeth Jennings, 'It is like love again and yet there is no object. This is more than seeking or possessiveness. The rain pleases, the sky blue...'

Well, let us hope for plenty of blue sky this summer.

A good deal of communication is non-verbal and being present with others has felt like a healing and a blessing. The coming programme of events will, I am sure, be occasions of joy. It will hopefully be an opportunity to see fabric work completed over

lockdown - no netting in the Quire, no dodgy window over the Dean's stall, repaired glass – and to view new projects like the Knot Garden and the proposed repair of the Bishop's Gate. Certainly, you can now see it in all its splendour, although it was the shrubbery that was keeping it up.

I hope that over the summer there might also be occasions for small groups to see the immense work that has taken place in King's Orchard over lockdown.

Finally, a recent report from the University of York on the response of churches to the Covid19 pandemic, demonstrated the essential contribution places of worship make to societal wellbeing and community cohesion, in normal times and times of crisis. One non-church member was reported saying 'Keep churches open at all costs. Don't abandon us when we need you most'.

Thank you for helping us stay open, we need you now more than ever.

The Very Revd Dr Philip Hesketh DL  
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@rochestercathedral.org](mailto:development@rochestercathedral.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.rochestercathedral.org/cathedral-trust/>

Pledges and gifts from 1st January to end May 2021 total **£188,921**

## Business Guild News

The Business Guild is getting back to normal with arrangements for networking events being made for the course of this year.



Continuing from our popular breakfasts in The Commissioners House in the Historic Dockyard, Chatham, that we regularly held before the Covid 19 pandemic, we will be inviting local businesses and our members to join us for dates this year. We are planning dates in mid-July and mid-October and this year we will be holding these events in the

Cathedral Crypt. As before we will serve you a delicious breakfast and you can guarantee an interesting speaker. We are all finished by 10am so it does not take up too much time of your working day.

The Business Guild recently ran a survey amongst its membership to assess what kind of topics would be preferred for discussion at our breakfasts, we have noted the requests and will start to action them going forward.



### Webinar rescheduled

We are delighted to advise that we have been able to reschedule our evening Webinar "Rory Sutherland speaks" and it is scheduled for 6pm to 8pm on Thursday 24th June.

### Summer events

During the summer we are planning an event at the Historic Dockyard for "Cocktails and Canapes", more information on this to follow.

### Annual Dinner

Our final event of the year planned so far is the (what once was!) the Annual Business Guild Dinner in the Crypt. A formal event not to be missed and the date for your diary is 20th October. Sadly, we have missed a couple of these during the pandemic and are really pleased that it can happen this year.



If you are interested in registering for the Rory Sutherland Speaks webinar, please contact [lynne.bax@rochestercathedral.org](mailto:lynne.bax@rochestercathedral.org)

We are planning more social events and we look forward to telling you more about these in our next edition.

## Knot Garden

Over the Spring The Knot Garden has been completed. Well done to our Head gardener Graham Huckstepp for his design and hard work. This garden is situated next to Garth House and overlooks the south side of the Cathedral.

We were very fortunate to receive a grant for the work from The Kent Community Foundation.

We can't wait to see it grow. Thank you!



## Trust Annual Evensong

Every year the Rochester Cathedral Trust holds a special Evensong to say thank you to all our donors, partners and supporters.



**This year it is scheduled for Sunday 27th June. (All being well!)**

We are very grateful to our Precentor, Canon Matthew Rushton for putting this service together for us.

## Cathedral Music Trust



We are delighted to be able to announce that during May we were awarded a revenue grant of £5,000 from The Cathedral Music Fund. This is for the provision of singing lessons for choristers for one year.

We are very grateful to, and would like to acknowledge the help of the Cathedral Music Trust's Diamond Fund for Choristers, which have made it possible.

## Art Auction / Bishops Gate

Rochester Cathedral Trust raise funds for restoration work through art auction

Rochester Cathedral Trust recently held an online art auction to raise money for the restoration of the Bishop's Gate in the grounds of the Cathedral.

More than thirty artists generously donated their artworks including a signed book by Damien Hirst, wonderful paintings covering a range of subjects, a studio experience and pottery – 39 lots in total. More than 3,000 visits were made to the auction website during the six day auction, and the highest number of bidders were for a painting by Kevin Clarkson "Rochester Cathedral from the Castle Grounds".

Together with donations, a total of more than £18,000 was raised, making a good start to the target for the restoration.

The Trust is looking to raise at least £50,000, one of the most urgent projects being to restore and save Bishop's Gate, a medieval structure on the south side of the Cathedral which countless people pass every day. This Grade 1 gateway stood opposite what once was the Bishop of Rochester's Palace and



the stonework dates from the 12th and 15th century. Some years ago part of this Gate had to be taken down and now more of the tower is in danger. It would be a great tragedy to lose this familiar structure and the wonderful vista it affords of the Garth and gardens from the footpath.

**If you would like to make a donation to this project, please get in touch with Lynne Bax**

## Railings Project



We are delighted to be able to report back that the railings on the North side of the cathedral have been installed and maintenance work is continuing on existing railings.

We are very grateful to our two supportive donors of this project.

# VIRTUAL CATHEDRAL project

Comprising over five hundred 3D models, the **Virtual Tour** is an incredible record of the architecture, history and collections of Rochester Cathedral.

Available online at  
[rochestercathedral.org/virtual-tour](https://rochestercathedral.org/virtual-tour)

...and coming soon

A 3D printing service for tactile exhibitions, prayer foci, gifts and souvenirs inspired by the finest sculpture and items from the Cathedral collections.

Do you have experience in 3D printing, wood routing, casting, or jewellery design? Get in touch and share your thoughts and ideas as we develop this innovative new service:

[jacob.scott@rochestercathedral.org](mailto:jacob.scott@rochestercathedral.org)

  
Grimacing monk  
corbel c.1240 CE  
North Nave Transept  
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