



Keeping you connected

Newsletter

16 May 2025

From the Interim Executive Director

A message from Anna Pitt

Dear colleagues and friends,

This week we had the delightful task of shortlisting for our **Volunteer of the Year Award**, the first of its kind, sponsored by Newgate Finance. What a heartwarming day spent reading about the many volunteers who are the lifeblood of our cathedrals. So many hours spent giving selflessly, and the overarching theme through all the nominations was that volunteering isn't just an activity, it is a calling, and that by embodying the values of our cathedrals, volunteers help to ensure they are a transformative space. Bravo! Thank you to all those who took the time to nominate an individual or team. Our sponsor has generously agreed to work with us to make this an annual event. Thank you to **Derby Cathedral** for hosting our shortlisting day, and an opportunity to visit their Broderers' Exhibition and see their live streamed Peregrines!

You may be aware that on Tuesday there was a **Parliamentary Debate on Churches and Religious Buildings**. Some of our Deans are in conversation with their parliamentarians, and we are planning to do much more work on that project this year.

You can read the record of the debate here <https://hansard.parliament.uk/>, by choosing House of Commons debates, and the date it took place (13th May), and looking for the Westminster Hall debate on 'Churches and religious buildings', and do consider making contact with your MP if they spoke at the debate.

Warm wishes,

Anna Pitt

Interim Executive Director, Association of English Cathedrals

News from Our Project Boards

This Week's Highlights

The Cathedrals and Major Church Projects Support Panel

If you had a day or two of free advice from an expert on an issue your cathedral faces, what would you ask them? The Cathedral and Major Church Projects Support Panel offers cathedrals free advice and consultancy from nearly 70 volunteer experts. It aims to help cathedrals at the early stages of projects. Since its launch in 2017 it has dealt with over 200 requests from cathedrals. It's run by the Association of English Cathedrals and funded by the Church Commissioners.

Panel expertise includes architecture, conservation, fundraising, heritage interpretation, grant applications, project management, strategic planning, visitor engagement and many more areas. Recently we have recruited several former cathedral senior officers to provide an additional resource for enquiries such as overall reviews of commercial activities.

Contact Cathedrals Coordinator Anne Locke for more information or to make a request. She will aim to link you up with a suitable expert or team of experts for an initial discussion, possibly followed by a site visit – travel expenses are paid by the project.

anne.locke@englishcathedrals.co.uk or 07908 472082.

Cybersecurity advice

In the wake of recent ransomware attacks at the Co-op and Marks and Spencer, **Support Panel expert** Dr Tim French has recommended a number of links with the latest advice. If you have a particular concern please do contact Anne Locke anne.locke@englishcathedrals.co.uk and she will put you in touch with him.

National Cyber Security Centre advice and guidance for SMEs <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/section/advice-guidance/small-medium-sized-organisations> - includes a link to sign up to their regular newsletter.

National Cyber Security Centre free cyber security toolkit offers tailored advice and guidance, for SMEs after asking a few basic questions.

Access it here > <https://cybertoolkit.service.ncsc.gov.uk/>

Vacancies and Appointments

- **Durham Cathedral** are seeking an Executive Assistant to the Dean. This is a 0.7-0.9 of a full time role. Closing date 4 June. <https://www.durhamcathedral.co.uk/more/jobs/ea-dean>
- **Portsmouth Cathedral** are looking to recruit a Chief Finance Officer. The deadline is 23 May. Information on the application process and role description can be found at <https://www.portsmouthcathedral.org.uk/all-careers/fpzswl5dwkl3b6c9xn4lffj7prrr85-paf8w>

Don't forget, all of the job descriptions you share with us are uploaded to the CAFA website and can be accessed here: <https://cathedralcafa.org/request-login/>

Interesting Reports & Information

The National Churches Survey: giving every church a voice

The National Churches Trust is carrying out a survey to help policymakers, the media, and the wider public better understand the challenges churches face and to highlight the vital work that churches, like yours, do. This survey has the support of denominations, faith, and heritage groups across the country and we encourage you to take part. Your response will provide essential evidence to build a clearer picture – to tell a stronger, more informed story about your church, and others like it, so that together we can address some of the biggest challenges facing churches and help ensure their future.

I encourage you to complete The National Churches Survey and share this information with your Deanery Synod reps so that they can encourage parishes within your Diocese to join in too. The more churches that take part, the more impactful it will be. The survey is live from 6 May – 30 June.

[Take part in the survey and find out more information at nationalchurchestrust.org/survey](https://nationalchurchestrust.org/survey)

Training & Conference Opportunities

Upcoming events and learning opportunities:

- **CAFA Conference 2025.** We're delighted to say that bookings are now open for this year's CAFA Conference at Peterborough Cathedral, *Hearts for Mission, Minds for Monday*, 22-24 September. Please book by **30 June 2025 at the latest**. You'll find the conference programme below:
<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgzQbfBtmTfRHGWMDtsJKWmZfGSGX?projector=1&messagePartId=0.1>

And the booking form below;
<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/FMfcgzQbfBtmTfRHGWMDtsJKWmZfGSGX?projector=1&messagePartId=0.1>
- **The FAC Conference.** Organised by the CFCE Secretariat at the Cathedrals and Church Buildings Division of the Church of England, the FAC conference welcomes FAC Chairs, Secretaries and COOs to discuss the latest developments on cathedral buildings issues, projects and permission processes. This year it takes place in Canterbury from Wednesday 11th to Thursday 12th June, see the booking page <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/fac-conference-2025-tickets-1345434844839>, contact Rosie Smith rosanna.smith@churchofengland.org for more information.
- Diana Evans gave an extremely helpful overview of '**What does Historic England do for Places of Worship?**' to the HRBA. The slides are available on the HRBA website at <https://www.hrballiance.org.uk/meetings/talks/>. They are interactive, allowing you to click through to anything that takes your interest.
- The **CST** continue to offer excellent security training on a range of issues including Hostile Reconnaissance, Event Security, Conflict Management and Women's Safety. You can sign up for their up-coming webinars on the link below. <https://bit.ly/SAFEZoomHub>

Please save the date for the **AEC AGM on 17th June in London**. More information to follow, together with information on proxy voting arrangements.

Don't Forget...

- The CAFA website is an excellent portal for the storage of bespoke and template policies, job descriptions and plans. Any number of colleagues from your cathedral can register for free: <https://cathedralcafa.org/request-login/>

Stay Connected

Have news to share in next week's edition? Let us know by Wednesday at midday.

Contact: Anna Pitt – anna.pitt@englishcathedrals.co.uk

[Visit](#) the AEC website for the latest news from your fellow cathedrals.

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