



Keeping you connected

Newsletter

28 November 2025

From the Executive Director

Dear colleagues and friends,

Our planning for our National Conference in May 2026 continues, and we are delighted to announce one of our keynote speakers on Wednesday 20th May - **David Olusoga**. David Olusoga is a historian, writer, and broadcaster. He is the presenter of *A House Through Time* and author of *Black and British: A Forgotten History*. Professor of Public History at the University of Manchester, David looks at what our history reveals about contemporary society and the lasting effects of the British Empire.



We have invited David to join us to reflect on the role of cathedrals in society. Throughout history, cathedrals have stood as symbols of hope, resilience, and community. In this inspiring keynote, and subsequent panel discussion, we will reflect on the timeless role of these sacred spaces in our lives. We will share insights into how cathedrals serve as places of solace and reflection, and as vibrant centres for art, music, and human connection. The

address will celebrate the countless ways cathedrals enrich our culture, foster a sense of belonging, and contribute to the well-being of individuals and society.

For the panel discussion, chaired by The Very Reverend Mandy Ford, Dean of Bristol, David will be joined by Dr Eve Poole OBE, Chair of the Woodard Corporation, Author, Expert in Leadership and Change Management and former Third Church Estates Commissioner; Dame Fiona Reynolds DBE, Chair of the Cathedral Fabric Commission for England and former Director of the National Trust and Master of Emmanuel College Cambridge; and Reverend Julia Porter-Pryce, Creative Arts Co-ordinator in the Diocese of London and published specialist in curating contemporary art.

We look forward to a hugely engaging morning in our conference programme, and I'd encourage you to follow the links below to complete booking forms and bursary applications.

Warm wishes, Anna Pitt
Executive Director, Association of English Cathedrals

1. Your AEC National Cathedral Conference Update



BURSARIES: remember that with generous support from CCLA and CAFA, we will have enough bursary funding to support every Cathedral that requests a bursary with at least one funded place. You can find the bursary application form alongside the booking form here: <https://www.nationalcathedralsconference.org/book-now/>

EARLY BIRD BOOKING RATE: the early bird booking rate ends on 31 December 2025 so please make sure you book in time to secure this for your delegates. Thank you.

2. Vacancies and Appointments

Peterborough Cathedral Announces Appointment of New Chief Operating Officer.

Peterborough Cathedral is pleased to announce the appointment of Jack Pishhorn as its new Chief Operating Officer, succeeding Jan Armitage, who is stepping down after guiding the Cathedral's operations through a period of significant growth and challenge.

Jack joins the Cathedral from North Northamptonshire, where he is Head of Culture, Tourism and Heritage and responsible for the development of the award-winning Chester House Estate, a nationally recognised heritage, tourism and community destination. He brings extensive operational and strategic experience from across those sectors and was named "Northamptonshire Business Person of the Year" at the Business Chamber of Commerce Awards in 2024. *He starts January 2026.*

3. News from the: Communications Support Project Board

Divine Light - we launched our winter social media campaign this week. Based on the volume of the same name by Janet Gough OBE, we will feature stained glass from every one of our cathedrals every day throughout Advent and Christmas inviting people to find their own meaning and message in the colours, shapes and pictures and discovering more about the history and artistry behind them. It follows on from the success of our previous campaigns, Angels, Doors, and Cathedral Treasures.

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2025/28-november/news/uk/uk-new-in-brief>

Media UCB Radio marked Coventry Cathedral's Blitz anniversary events, BBC Midlands spent time at Birmingham Cathedral pulling together a package to mark the Birmingham

Pub bombings. Ely Cathedral choristers made The Times on the carousel just installed to herald the start of the Ely Christmas market. R4 featured Lincoln Cathedral's discovery of Lewis Carroll correspondence in their archives, and The One Show is filming with Rochester this weekend for a short Christmas package.

This year's Christmas morning service on BBC One will come live from Bradford Cathedral, reflecting Bradford's status as UK City of Culture. On radio, Midnight Mass will be broadcast live from Liverpool Cathedral, led by the Dean, the Very Revd Dr Sue Jones, with a sermon from the Interim Bishop, the Rt Revd Ruth Worsley.

Thanks as always to all those involved making time and space to accommodate media inquiries, I know how busy and time-consuming that can be.

We met as a Board and are seeking three new members. We would love to hear from smaller cathedrals - do get in touch if you want to find out more. We meet online quarterly. jane.bower@englishcathedrals.co.uk

The main topic at our November **monthly comms drop-in** was the importance of gathering together under one roof,, and the opportunities for that offered by the **National Cathedrals Conference in Bristol next May**. We hope some of our comms colleagues are able to do just that with the generous bursary allowances available for all cathedrals. The monthly drop-ins are an informal space held on zoom to share notes, ideas, good practice and wisdom, and tend to attract around 18-20 cathedrals each month.

With Advent and Christmas now fast approaching, please keep us updated regarding your events via our [Event Capture Form](#). We love to showcase the vast array of events taking place across our network with the aim of amplifying your event and driving more people to your event and to your website. The form is quick and easy to complete - and please remember to include an image or two. Thank you!

4. Training & Conference Opportunities

The Charity Tax Group are running an online course for finance colleagues on claiming gift aid correctly: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/charitytaxgroup/1898705>

5. Interesting Reports & Information

A link to the **Heritage Alliance's Budget Briefing** can be found here: <https://www.theheritagealliance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/THA-2025-Autumn-Budget-Analysis.pdf>

The Cathedrals and Major Church Projects Support Panel - an AEC resource

If you had a day or two of free advice from an expert on an issue your cathedral faces, what would you ask them?

This is your regular reminder that 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 the Support Panel's 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. If the panel can't help she may well be able to signpost you to other sources of advice and support.

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

6. 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

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