



Keeping you connected

Newsletter

27 March 2026

From the Executive Director

Dear colleagues and friends,

A word this week from me about our membership of ALVA (Association of Leading Visitor Attractions). I know a handful of cathedrals are independent members, and the AEC are also members. ALVA offers training forums for key senior leadership roles (Marketing, Fundraising, Security, Sustainability, Finance, Membership) and we have one funded place on each of these sessions (2 per year, per role). We offer these out through our contacts with your team members, and distribute the training opportunities. The resources from these sessions are also made available, and again shared through our networks.

ALVA members are able to ask questions, via ALVA, to the rest of their membership body, and I'd like to encourage you that if you have a query, you can send that to me and I can liaise with ALVA to hopefully find you some sector-wide information or support.

Annually, ALVA also publishes data on trends in visitor numbers, and their most recent survey explores the journey from 2020-2025 for visitor attractions. You can delve into the report [here](#).

This work is important to our sector, you'll see some of our member Cathedrals within these figures as significant heritage attractions nationally. Also, our work with THEOS tells the story of the strong heritage/tourist motivation for people visiting cathedrals. The joy in the story of our cathedrals is the powerful and transformative possibility once the visitor arrives and the potential for spiritual encounter.

Warm wishes,

Anna Pitt
Executive Director, Association of English Cathedrals

1. Your AEC National Cathedral Conference Update



After Easter we will be circulating information on how to book on to different workshops at the conference. Numbers for each session are limited and we'd encourage you to decide amongst your delegation how to get the best from the workshop sessions by each attending a different one and feeding back to each other.

2. Vacancies and Appointments

Following the announcement of the retirement of The Very Revd Jonathan Greener as Dean of Exeter, The Very Revd Stephen Waine has been appointed Interim Dean of Exeter by the Bishop of Exeter. Stephen brings a wealth of experience in cathedral and parish ministry. Stephen served as Dean of Chichester from 2015-2023, where he provided leadership to the Cathedral for eight years. He currently serves as Vicar of six rural parishes in Dorset.

Stephen will join **Exeter Cathedral** on Wednesday 1 July 2026, and will become Interim Dean from Saturday 1 August 2026.

Derby Cathedral has appointed Reverend Lindsay as Canon for Worship and Music.

The Venerable Rod Green has been appointed as the next **Suffragen Bishop of Stepney**.

St Albans Cathedrals have appointed Reverend Dr Jennifer Cooper as Canon Chancellor

Vacancies: Don't forget to share your vacancies with us. We will circulate them in this newsletter for interest, and importantly we add them to the CAFA website.

3. News from the: Communications Support Project Board

New member: We're pleased to announce that Cath Coates, marketing and comms officer at Carlisle Cathedral, will join the board of our communications support project.

Can you help: High-res Floor plans of our cathedrals wanted for new photographic volume?

We've been contacted by Australian photographer, John Swainston who is seeking help on floor plans for our cathedrals for his latest volume on Anglican cathedrals, due out later this year, entitled *I Will Lift Mine Eyes*. It features the story of cathedrals in the context of British and French history, illustrated with predominantly interior images. He is keen to include ground plans / line drawings as one of the resources for readers and seeks a license of use for his book and needs the high-resolution files that each cathedral uses in guide pamphlets, websites and the like.

Each cathedral will be properly acknowledged. Can you help? He can be contacted at: ozjohns849@gmail.com.

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

Events - please send through information regarding your events, exhibitions and special services. The AEC events page attracts over 2.5k visitors every month. You can keep us updated 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 there and to your website. The form is quick and easy to complete - and please remember to include an image or two. Thank you!

4. Arts in Cathedrals Advisory Board

JOY... inspired by nature - is this exhibition for you?

First presented as the Summer Exhibition at the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry in 2024, the artist is keen to explore how the work might inhabit different kinds of spaces — including Cathedrals and places that offer reflection, light and connection

JOY...inspired by nature is a multi-sensory (physical, not technological) visual arts exhibition celebrating nature, creativity and JOY as essential human experiences. Conceived during the Covid pandemic, it responds to ongoing environmental and social uncertainty by inviting JOY as a quiet yet powerful act of care and hope.

The exhibition centres on two large-scale installations — *How Does Your Garden Grow?* and *RE* — supported by an original soundscape and subtle scentscape. Together, these elements create an embodied experience that encourages visitors to slow down, notice and reconnect — with nature, with place and with themselves.

Rooted in inclusive and socially engaged practice, the exhibition is adaptable and responsive. Alongside the core works, we invite local artistic contributions and offer

opportunities for gentle participation, allowing each iteration to reflect its setting and community.

The exhibition is now being developed as a national tour, with Torre Abbey, Torquay confirmed for summer 2027 and an application to Arts Council England to support financially.

To begin the conversation of JOY touring to your venue please contact

Nicola Richardson joy@vortex-creates.co.uk, 07958 291162.

A tour pack can be found [here](#) should it be useful.

5. Chapter Training Board

We held our first AEC Introduction to Cathedral Governance Training session at St Martin's House, Leicester last month. It was attended by newly appointed Residentiary Canons, Chapter Members (lay and clergy), two recently appointed COOs, and members of associated cathedral committees (including an Independent Safeguarding Chair). We were warmly welcomed by Dean of Leicester, Karen Rooms, who led the first session "What exactly is a Cathedral" and enjoyed the efficient hospitality of the staff team at St Martin's. We were also delighted to be joined at lunchtime by Janet Berry (Head of Conservation & Collections Policy, CoE) who lives in Leicester. Subjects covered by our speakers included: Cathedral Governance, Strategic Risk Management, Care & Development of our Buildings, Cathedral Finance and An Introduction to the NCIs. Following the training, we invite delegates to complete a feedback questionnaire which is reviewed by the Chapter Training Board and informs future training. Here are a couple of comments made:

... thank you for the work involved in gathering the expert speakers and preparing this material. It was particularly useful to meet Adrian (Daffern) and Greg (Hudson), whose work will no doubt touch our cathedral in future - now we have a face to put to a name. Getting speakers who are part of the ongoing support network is especially useful.

Session lengths were just right and the turnover of speakers prevented getting bogged down in over much detail. It left me wanting more than wishing I had had less. Even risk and finance which are not my topics of delight came over in an interesting way.

Find out more about the remaining two 2026 training sessions [here](#) or contact susan.chapman@englishcathedrals.co.uk for more information.

6. Interesting Reports & Information

Drop-In session with CCLA to discuss investment performance: Thursday 9th April, 11am.

Microsoft Teams meeting:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/31330136600054?p=o4PJBikXTn7XzsWOtP>

Meeting ID: 313 301 366 000 54 Passcode: Ur6MB9rv

This session will also be recorded and circulated for those unable to attend at the time. If you have any questions you would like to submit to the CCLA please send these to Anna Pitt anna.pitt@englishcathedrals.co.uk by 2nd April. There will also be a time for CCLA to take questions on the day during this hour-long session.

As you know, a new grant scheme is being launched in April, called the Places of Worship Renewal Fund. It is funded by the government. This will provide capital funding for listed places of worship in England (only). It will be administered by Historic England. It will distribute £23m per financial year, for four years. We're pleased to announce that on **29th April at 2.00pm**, Deborah Williams, Regional Director, Midlands at Historic England, will be talking by Zoom about the new Fund. **Save the date: more details will follow.**

7. 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.

[Follow us](#) on social media.