


Annual Report 2017

A low-angle photograph of Rochester Cathedral, showing its massive stone structure, a large Gothic window, and a tall square tower against a blue sky with light clouds.

Rochester
CATHEDRAL
Growing in Christ since AD604

Introduction

Rochester Cathedral has sought witness to the love of God for over 1400 years. Here, down the centuries, the Christian faith has found expression through worship, prayer and service. We continue to participate in God's love for the world today through mission and purposeful engagement. This report covers a year of significant transition. A great deal has been achieved through the dedication and hard work of staff and volunteers. Our thanks go to them and to all those who love this Cathedral. We have seen the completion of the *Hidden Treasures: Fresh Expressions* project which has been so time consuming and now look forward to enjoying the benefits of a transformed crypt and library. We have welcomed new colleagues who have brought imagination and a different perspective. A new team takes time to establish itself as we re-adjust and form new relationships and friendships. Yet, already there is a strong sense of purpose and Chapter has produced a new Development Plan to help direct our path over the next five years.

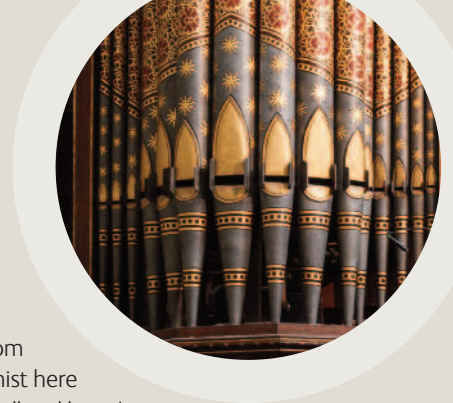
Our new Plan seeks to enhance the Cathedral's desire to nurture human flourishing and become more Christ-like in our attitudes and daily living. The Chapter has identified five key areas which will be our main focus over the coming years and provide a springboard for future development and long term sustainability.

The Development Plan recognises the importance the Cathedral plays in the lives of many people, of all faiths and of none,

both as a historic landmark and as a holy place. It seeks to work alongside other partners and stakeholders in enabling the Cathedral to be a truly inclusive space which signposts the Kingdom of God. In the words of the psalmist here is a 'broad place where we may walk at liberty' and again, 'He brought me into a spacious place because He delighted in me'. In honouring its Benedictine roots, the Cathedral remains a 'hospitable space' which seeks to provide a safe place to encounter the 'other' through story, stones, silence, music, movement and prayer. As the poet T. S. Eliot wrote:

*We must be still and still moving
Into another intensity
For a further union, a deeper communion*

It is a huge privilege to be Dean at such a time of renewed energy in the life of the Cathedral. As we move forward we do so in the knowledge that others have trodden this way before and many will come after us. It is but a single moment in time. Yet, this is our time to make a difference and to share God's love with those whom we meet through word and action. May God bless those who visit this house and all who labour in His service.



Chapter and staff

Membership of the Cathedral Chapter changed significantly in 2017, with the arrival of Chapter Clerk-Executive Director Simon Lace, Canon for Mission and Growth Rachel Phillips, Canon Precentor Matthew Rushton and the retirement of Canon for Discipleship Paul Francis. Other staff changes included the retirement of Education Officer Sue Gray and the arrival of new vergers Dan Auckland and Judith Reading and director of the Rochester Cathedral Children's Choir, Coral Roberts.

Cathedral Foundation and associated bodies

The Cathedral benefits greatly from the support of:

- The Cathedral Council
- The College of Canons
- The Friends of Rochester Cathedral
- The Rochester Cathedral Trust
- The Rochester Cathedral Business Guild

Development Plan

During 2017 the Chapter adopted a five-year Development Plan, with **five Key Aims**:

1. Grow our communities through prayer, worship and action
2. Develop opportunities for personal and spiritual growth
3. Strengthen our engagement with our partners and stakeholders through listening and collaboration
4. Maintain and improve our historic buildings, spaces, monuments and collections
5. Become a more sustainable and resilient organisation





Highlights of 2017

Key Aim 1

Grow our communities through prayer, worship and action

The primary purpose of Rochester Cathedral is to be a centre of Christian worship and mission; it is the seat of the Bishop of Rochester and the mother church of the Diocese of Rochester. Everything we do is rooted in prayer and worship.

Worship

Over 1,200 services, including:

- Installations of two new residentiary canons, new honorary canons and a new Archdeacon of Tonbridge
- Ordination of new deacons and priests
- Licensing of new lay ministers
- Plough Service celebrating agriculture in Kent
- St George's Day Parade – Medway Towns uniformed groups
- Mayors of Kent service
- Evensong attended by Masons of West Kent
- Mayor making service
- 350th anniversary of the Battle of Medway, attended by members of the Dutch royal family
- Royal Engineers' memorial service
- Wisdom Hospice Lights for Christmas service
- Diocesan schools services

The Cathedral's musical reputation was bolstered by live broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 Choral Evensong and BBC Radio 4 Sunday Worship; and performances, both in the Cathedral and elsewhere, by deputy head chorister Edward Hyde, BBC Radio 2 Young Chorister of the Year.

Children, teens and young adults

Rochester Cathedral Sunday Club grew to 80 members and an average weekly attendance of 20-30 children. A cast of 40 children and young people performed a play at the Christmas Eve nativity service.

Sunday Club supported various charitable causes, including Save the Children (Myanmar) and the Strood Community Project (Christmas toy service). A sponsored *toddle truck race* around the nave raised £1,700 for the family of a Sunday Club member with an incurable and life-limiting illness.

Ibasha, a small group for 15-20 year olds, met monthly.

Eleven children from Sunday Club were baptized, 12 were admitted to communion and three young people were confirmed.

Rochester Cathedral Children's Choir

Under its new director Coral Roberts, Rochester Cathedral Children's Choir grew to 18 members aged 6-13, from 13 local schools. The Choir performed at the Mercers Hall, presented some short concerts in the Cathedral and sang at the Christmas Eve nativity service.

Collaborating with the Medway Music Association, the children's choir is a key part of the Cathedral's outreach to local schools; visits to four schools helped 400 children to prepare for the schools' carol service in the Cathedral, attended by families and friends from all over Medway.

Activities for children and families

- Pre-school activity trails
- Family activities in school holidays
- Children's activities during the Rochester festivals
- Family Fun Day, welcoming around 200 children and families

School visits

Around 11,500 students came on educational visits. Curriculum changes saw an increase in visits from years 8 to 13 (age 12 to 18), and the political climate led to more schools visiting Rochester (as opposed to London or Canterbury) from Europe, especially France.

Graduations

- Canterbury Christ Church University
- University of Greenwich
- University of Kent

Tourists and pilgrims

- Highlight talks and tours – over 1,500 casual visitors.
- Candlelit pilgrimages
- Specialist workshops and events on themes linked to the Cathedral's collections and current exhibitions.

Exhibitions

- *Textus and Town*
- *Holey Roses* floral celebration commemorating Dean Samuel Hole
- *Bridgeworks* exhibition by the Rochester Bridge Trust



Friends of Rochester Cathedral

The Friends of Rochester Cathedral enjoyed a full programme of events, in the Cathedral and elsewhere, increasing membership and strengthening links between the Cathedral and its supporters.

Welcome and hospitality

- Improvements to external signage
- A new team of volunteer Event Hosts for events in the Cathedral other than worship
- Many welcomers undertook Welcome Host training
- A new coffee station for services and events, thanks to a grant from the Rochester Cathedral Trust
- A new crypt servery, funded by the Friends of Rochester Cathedral

Opportunities were taken to engage with people under-represented in the Cathedral community e.g. LGBTI+.

Chris Bostock was commissioned as the Cathedral's first Anna Chaplain – a new form of lay ministry amongst older people, particularly those living with dementia.

Events for the wider community

- Free print workshops as part of the Medway Print Festival
- Art exhibition as part of the summer Open Studios event
- Gathering for people supporting those living with dementia
- 'Knit and Natter' to raise money and awareness in Baby Loss Awareness Week

Communication

A new, more interactive website was developed and social media was used more extensively, to grow the Cathedral's online presence.

Concerts

- The Sixteen
- Rochester Choral Society
- The King's School
- Rochester Cathedral Children's Choir
- Canadian 'newgrass' band, the Abrams
- Lithuanian embassy
- Kent Police Male Voice Choir
- English Touring Opera

The Cathedral choir joined in concerts with The Sixteen and English Touring Opera (Bach B minor Mass) and itself performed Part 1 of Handel's *Messiah* with carols in December.





Key Aim 2

Develop opportunities for personal and spiritual growth

Daily prayer

We revised the timing and form of weekday morning services, which now include a daily reading from the Rule of St Benedict.

Prayer and spiritual growth

Clergy, day chaplains and the Cathedral's prayer ministry team ensure that prayer, spiritual support and comfort are always available for worshippers, pilgrims and visitors.

In common with some other Cathedrals, we have begun to explore and pray about the possibility of establishing a resident or non-resident community of prayer, in keeping with our Benedictine tradition.

Exploring faith

Many people participated in two six-session modules of the Church of England's Pilgrim course and the Rochester Diocesan Lent course.

Volunteers

44 new members joined our volunteer community in welcomer, library, education and family, exhibition, event host and steward roles. These included those recently retired, and young people exploring a range of careers.

A new *Family Learning Team* was formed, to assist with craft and learning activities during school holidays.

We provided work experience and mentoring support for four young students.

Staff and volunteers received training, including:

- Presentation skills
- Welcoming sight-impaired visitors
- Live interpretation (volunteers dressed and performing 'in role' as medieval monks/nuns)
- Training linked with exhibitions e.g. training by Bridge Trust archivist for Bridgeworks exhibition hosts.

Training around the Cathedral's collections, included:

- A comprehensive study of *Textus Roffensis* and *Customale* facilitated by Dr Christopher Monk
- Object handling and curatorial care
- Bookshoe making and spine repair
- Close examination of the Cathedral's murals and graffiti.

We held a summer party to thank all our volunteers – the first event held in the Garth since before the building works – and pre-Christmas celebration drinks and mince pies in the crypt.

Vocations

A member of the Cathedral choir and congregation began part-time training for ordination, and a former member of the Cathedral congregation was amongst those ordained as a deacon in September.



Key Aim 3

Strengthen our engagement with our partners and stakeholders through listening and collaboration

Bishop and Diocese

The diocesan *Called Together* strategy was launched in the Cathedral in November, with over 500 people attending from across the diocese. For many, this was their first visit to their Cathedral.

Links with diocesan schools remain strong:

- 32 schools (over 800 pupils) and parish clergy attended the annual Diocesan Schools Festival, presented jointly with the Diocesan Board of Education.
- Five Medway schools attended the MASH (Medway Anglican School Heads) festival for Year 2 children (age 6-7).
- The Cathedral exhibited nativity installations created by diocesan schools.

Medway Council

The Cathedral welcomed Medway Council at services for the mayor-making and for the Battle of Medway commemorations.

Rochester Festivals

The Sweeps, summer Dickens and Dickensian Christmas Festivals brought nearly 14,000 visitors to the Cathedral.

The Cathedral joined other local partners to deliver schools workshops as part of the summer Dickens festival.


Local heritage partners and community groups

Through events and exhibitions, the Cathedral worked with local heritage partners and community groups, including: the Huguenot Museum, Medway Council Heritage team, Nucleus Arts, Medway Libraries and Rochester Bridge Trust.

Our learning team participated, alongside other local heritage partners, in training for newly qualified teachers in Medway.





 **Called together**
grow anrich resource



Key Aim 4

Maintain and improve our historic buildings, spaces, monuments and collections

Hidden Treasures: Fresh Expressions (HTFE)

The *HTFE* project was completed and signed off by Heritage Lottery Fund in September, though with outstanding defects.

The fit-out of the Collyer Fergusson Room was completed and the Crypt servery installed with financial assistance from the Friends of Rochester Cathedral.

The Gundulf's side-crypt, a part of the original HTFE project which was omitted to reduce costs, was also completed with assistance from the Friends, providing an extension to the Treasury exhibition area.

Chapter Library

The newly-refurbished Library opened in April and the Countess of Wessex visited it in October to meet volunteers who had worked on the project.

The library team worked with higher education institutions, including the University of Kent and Lambeth Palace, on the creation of the Cathedral's special collection library and training for library volunteers. We introduced regular 'show and tell' sessions for visitors, and for groups, who included University of Kent Masters students, Templeman and Drill Hall libraries, Prayer Book Society, U3A and Santander.

Workshops, activities tours and lectures delivered as part of *Hidden Treasures: Fresh Expressions* provided opportunities to promote *Textus Roffensis* and our collection to wide and varied audiences, linking with other exhibitions in the Cathedral.

Anglo-Saxon expert Dr Christopher Monk continued to provide translations of some of the more obscure parts of *Textus Roffensis* and a team of volunteers assumed curatorial responsibility for the *Textus and Town* exhibition.

To protect objects and the legacy of our collections, volunteers were trained in basic preventative measures and object handling. An initial tranche of 150 books were protected through the repair of broken spines and binding, and by the creation of book-shoes (made by volunteers) to support and protect the spines.

Rochester Cathedral Research Guild

Working with the Cathedral Archaeologist and Surveyor to the Fabric, Guild members continued to research and interpret the wealth of new archaeological data provided by the *Hidden Treasures: Fresh Expressions* project, and recorded architectural and artistic features to assist future conservation.

New techniques and technologies such as medieval graffiti surveying, 3D modelling, drone photography and ground-penetrating radar provided quantities of new data, helping to answer some questions surrounding the medieval cathedral and priory.

The Research Guild continues to index, collate and publish the Cathedral's trove of archive reports and academic publications, publishing online out-of-print works and otherwise hard-to-obtain items, including the ongoing translations of *Textus Roffensis*, *Customale* and other medieval documents.

All of the Research Guild's work is freely available online; much is published in academic journals and/or presented at conferences. The Cathedral and its collections feature increasingly in local, national and international academic publications.

Embroidery

The Guild of Embroiderers made a new gold cope for the Bishop of Rochester, to match the new Chapter copes.

Security

A grant of £25,000 was received from the Home Office's *Places of Worship Security Fund* programme for the installation of CCTV throughout the Cathedral.

Building improvement works

The Cathedral's eastern roofs were renewed and repaired with a grant of £460,000 from the Government's First World War Centenary Cathedral Repair Fund.

The Rochester Cathedral Trust provided a grant for a glazing survey of the Cathedral's windows and ferramenta.

Improvements were made to housing for Cathedral clergy and to the commercial and residential estate.

Future development

Rochester Cathedral Trust received a grant of £100,000 from the Garfield Weston Foundation towards a feasibility study for a project to conserve and reinterpret the medieval chapter house and cloister.

Chapter established a Capital Projects Board to oversee future capital projects.



Key Aim 5

Become a more sustainable and resilient organisation

Development plan

The Cathedral's new Development Plan will provide direction and structure for the Cathedral over the next five years.

Finance

The Cathedral's Finance Committee worked in conjunction with the board of Rochester Cathedral Enterprises to ensure robust budgeting and financial stability, reporting regularly to Chapter, the Cathedral Council and the Cathedral Forum.

Commercial operations

The Cathedral Tea Rooms closed in May, having suffered sustained financial losses leading to an unsustainable burden on the Cathedral. One employee was made redundant and another was redeployed elsewhere in the Cathedral. The former Tea Rooms (renamed St. Andrew's House) have been let to the Rochester Bridge Trust for five years, promising the first significant income from the property in many years.

We ran a successful trial for a volunteer-led Café in the Crypt for a week in November, culminating in the Dickens Christmas Festival weekend.

Estate

Significant investment was made in renovating the Cathedral's residential and commercial estate. Despite the inevitable voids during the works, income from the estate finished 1% above target for the year.

New staff

A new Canons' Verger post was created within the verger team.

Appointments were made to new roles for 2018:

- Visitor Experience & Enterprise Manager with responsibility for developing the Cathedral's commercial operations
- Volunteer Manager role expanded to a two-person job-share full-time equivalent role.


Safeguarding


The Church of England published new safeguarding guidance in October, including, for the first time, guidance specifically for Cathedrals. Chapter adopted the new guidance and in December appointed Greg Barry to the new role of Cathedral Safeguarding Officer. Chapter continues to work closely with the diocese on safeguarding matters, and under its auspices: the Cathedral Safeguarding Officer is shared with the diocese, and Chapter is represented on the Bishop's Safeguarding Advisory Panel and the diocesan Safeguarding Executive Committee. Chapter set up a Safeguarding Implementation Group to oversee the implementation of the new guidance, compliance and training.



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