



CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER'S NEWSLETTER FOR VOLUNTEERS 27 MARCH 2025

Introduction

1. Yet another extraordinary month. There is intense pressure on the programme with the need to generate additional income for the Cathedral at a time when there are many additional services for Lent as well as preparations being made for Holy Week and Easter. This is resulting in additional work for many people, as well as putting strain on the building. Chapter members are enormously grateful to all of our wonderful Volunteers for all they are doing to support the Cathedral at this difficult moment.

2. At the link is an advertisement for a fundraising event at St Martha-on the-Hill on 21 April. There are also advertisements for Mental Health Awareness training which started on 25 January 2025, together with feedback from previous courses. There is also a note from the Brigitte Support Trust about bereavement support groups and Grow and Glow about a women's mental health support group.

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/cq0aofuklgmlh4wlhxyz/ADzFWV-iNtaHVMbK0RHTfiU?rlkey=vn9stfi9by352eje36cyjt365&st=s3g6zhw9&dl=0>

Worship

3. The times of services remain:

Sunday – 7.30am Morning Prayer, 8.00am Holy Communion, 9.45am Cathedral Eucharist, 6pm Evensong.

Monday - 8.30am Morning Prayer, 9.00am Holy Communion, 5.30pm Evensong.

Tuesday - 8.00am Morning Prayer, 8.30am Holy Communion, 5.30pm Evensong.

Wednesday - 8.30am Morning Prayer, 9.00am Holy Communion, 5.30pm Evening Prayer.

Thursday - 8.30am Morning Prayer, 12.30pm Holy Communion, 5.30pm Evensong.

Friday - 8.00am Morning Prayer, 8.30am Holy Communion, 5.30pm Evensong.

Saturday 9.00am Morning Prayer, 9.30am Holy Communion, 4pm Evening Prayer.

Opening Hours the Cathedral, Shop and Seasons

4. The Cathedral opening times are as follows:

- Sunday – 7.30am to 5pm.
- Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday – 8.30am to 5pm.

- Tuesday – 7.30am to 5pm.
- Saturday – 8.30am to 5pm.

The Shop is open from Monday to Saturday from 9.30am until 4.30pm. Seasons is open from Monday to Saturday from 9am until 3pm, and on Sunday from 9am until 12 noon.

Chapter

5. Chapter met on 25 March. There was a demonstration of 'Godly Play' by Nicola Cole, Head of Development, and a long discussion on the Cathedral finances. The work on the Cathedral's Mission and Vision, and the associated Strategic Development Plan, is about to commence and Chapter will be cognisant of the need to drive towards a balanced budget as part of this work.

Bellringing

6. The qualifying rounds of the National 12-Bell Striking Contest took place on Saturday 22 March and it is pleasing to report that the Guildford team came second at Liverpool and thus qualify for the final, which takes place at St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, on 28 June. They were up against strong opposition from Worcester, Chester, Cheltenham, Liverpool and the Society of Royal Cumberland Youths. It is also notable that three people who had learnt to ring at the Cathedral as youngsters took part in other 12-Bell Contest teams, two of which also qualified for the final. Prior to that the Portsmouth 12-Bell team came to Guildford for a practice on 15 March. The annual Tower meeting took place on Sunday 16 March. The Tower Captain (Chris Rogers) reported on another satisfactory year in which a high standard of ringing had been maintained. All the Tower officers were re-elected, the Ringing Master (Richard Burton) outlined his plans for the year ahead and decisions were taken on the tower outing in October and a weekend away in 2026. A peal was rung on Saturday 8 March by members of the Westminster Abbey Company of Ringers, of whom Richard is Deputy Conductor, and two quarter peals have been rung since that last Newsletter.

Development Department

7. Nicola Pratt, Head of Development, is working on the loan of the practice Jarrow Stone to St Paul's, Jarrow (Bede's monastery) where the stone originated from. The stone leaves the Cathedral on 2 April. She is working with press and local councils in the North East where there is much interest. Full details on the stone are in the attached information booklet. There will be a performance of the 'Easter Oratorio' by Christopher Wood to raise money for the Cathedral on Saturday 12 April. Tickets can be purchased here:

[Guildford Cathedral - Box Office](#)

Daring Descent. Do you like a challenge? Do you want to abseil down the Tower? Are you free on Saturday 14 June? The Cathedral is looking for a team of people to abseil to raise money for the Cathedral. Full details to follow, but Karen would love to hear from you! See flyer attached.

Facilities

8. Jim Blake, Head of Property and Facilities, has been in discussion with the Diocese and the University grounds' team regarding the planting of an oak tree to mark the opening of the new Church House Guildford on Stag Hill. Jim has also been liaising with the Church House team with regard to their CCTV system with an extension to the Cathedral Office and an increased recording capability. The opening ceremony takes place on Monday 7 April at 10am and all are welcome. If you wish to attend please let Matt O'Grady know (dops@guildford-cathedral.org).

Families Engagement and Schools

9. Nicola Cole, Head of Schools, has enjoyed showing groups from Pond Meadow School (the Cathedral's most local Special Needs School) around the Cathedral this month. The Eco Day, held in conjunction with the Diocese on Thursday 13 March, was a great success. Extremely positive feedback from the schools was received, including the following:

'Another great day as always, which the children thoroughly enjoyed.'

Nicola has also produced a local history module, which has been presented to schools during workshops this month. Godly Play sessions will begin in May, please pass the attached flyer to anyone who might be interested.

Liturgy and Music

10. The St Catherine's weekend away for the girls during the first weekend of March was a great success, as was the Evensong featuring the music of Herbert Howells at the Evensong on Sunday 2 March. Ash Wednesday's Choral Eucharist on 5 March was a beautiful service attended by 116 people, a significant increase on previous years. Sundays in Lent have featured a series of Stations of the Cross services, which haven taken place immediately after Evensong. The choir is hoping to tour to Denmark in the summer to the link Diocese of Viborg. The BBC Young Chorister of the Year entry deadline falls much earlier this year so the team are also looking at some possible entrants. Congregation numbers are generally on the increase.

Virgers

11. Huge thanks to Steve, Andrew and Nicola, who have provided unstinting support to an unrelenting programme of services and events during a busy month whilst there have been staff shortages. Their hard work and dedication are massively appreciated.

Visitor Experience and Events

12. Congratulations to George Baldwin, the Organ Scholar, for his wonderful recital at the Coffee Concert on Thursday 6 March, attended by over 140 people. There was a 'Craft and Flea' market on 1 March which went very well, and on Saturday 8 March a Harry Potter music concert was staged. Elvis (by Candlelight) was in the building on Saturday 15 March, and extremely busy programme the following saw a large scale concert celebrating the 350th anniversary of Reigate Grammar School on Wednesday 19 March, followed by the Bracknell Choral Society performing 'The Dream of Gerontius' on Saturday 22 March. 'Worth the Weight' host another market on Saturday 29 March. The Ukranian 'Icons on Ammunition Boxes' are back, it is a privilege to host the exhibition at such a poignant time.

M J O'GRADY Chief Operating Officer