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The Economic and Social Impact of England's Cathedrals: Cases studies

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1.0 Case study reports

The following case studies accompany the 2021 report 'The Economic and Social Impacts of England's Cathedrals', undertaken by Ecorys on behalf of the Association of English Cathedrals. Case studies were carried out with six cathedrals – Gloucester, Leicester, Liverpool, St Edmundsbury, Rochester and Winchester. These six were chosen to provide coverage of the different cathedral types defined in Section 3.1. of the main report. The case studies consisted of interviews with direct employees of the six cathedrals, along with individuals who volunteer at the cathedrals, and individuals working in partnership with the cathedrals. These interviews built on the survey that was undertaken as part of this research gathering additional detail on the economic and social impact that the cathedrals bring to their local area. The interviews also explored the impact that COVID-19 had on the cathedrals in 2020. The interviews were carried out by video conferencing during November and December 2020 and are written based on the information and views expressed by those interviewed.

1.1 Gloucester Cathedral: Case Study

Background

Gloucester Cathedral is situated in Gloucester city centre which has a population of around 129,000 people¹ and is the county town of Gloucestershire in the South West of England. According to interviewees, the Cathedral is regarded as an important part of the city's identity by its residents and one of three main reasons why visitors come to Gloucester, alongside shopping and rugby. Gloucester Cathedral welcomed 447,000 visitors in 2019, of which an estimated 257,000 (57%) were tourists. The majority of visitors (80%) were from the local area or visiting as part of a day trip from home, motivated by the Cathedral's architecture and its proximity to the Cotswolds, which allows them to combine a visit to the Cathedral as part of a day out or short break in the local area. More recently, featuring in the Harry Potter films has added to the Cathedral's popularity, particularly amongst overseas and younger visitors.

However, interviewees were keen to stress how the typical visitor profile contrasts with the population profile of the local area. The Cathedral itself is situated in a ward which is in the poorest 10% in the country, meaning that catering for the needs of local people alongside its visitors is not without its challenges. For example, interviewees remarked that visitors do not tend to spend much time in the area immediately surrounding the Cathedral, often preferring to venture into the Cotswolds once they have finished their visit. This is an issue which is exacerbated by a lack of hotels in the vicinity, limiting the option for visitors to extend their stay should they wish to.

The city of Gloucester has a higher proportion of children and young people (aged 0-19) as well as working age people (aged 20-64) compared to the county and national average². In contrast, Gloucester Cathedral's visitor base is perceived to be largely the older, white, and middle class who are interested in the cultural offer of the Cathedral. In order to diversify its visitor base, therefore, the Cathedral has focused its marketing on attracting younger and more local audiences in recent times. It has completed phase one of a large National Lottery Heritage funded project 'Pilgrim' which aims to make the Cathedral more accessible and appealing to a diverse range of visitors and to maximise the Cathedral's regeneration potential.

¹ Population Profile 2020 District Report (Gloucestershire County Council, 2020. <https://inform.gloucestershire.gov.uk/equality-and-diversity/interactive-report/>)

² Population Profile 2020 District Report (Gloucestershire County Council, 2020. <https://inform.gloucestershire.gov.uk/equality-and-diversity/interactive-report/>)

Cathedral Green, 2018



Photo credit: Gloucester Cathedral

Economic impact

The Cathedral puts on a number of events throughout the year in order to serve its community and attract visitors, including hosting an annual Christmas market and participating in Gloucester's History Festival, as well as graduation ceremonies, talks and concerts. It also hosts the Three Choirs Festival every three years, which is a major national event attracting a large number of visitors which results in increased footfall and spend in local shops and eateries.

In October 2019, Gloucester Cathedral hosted the Museum of the Moon exhibition³ which attracted 70,000 visitors over a three week period. The approach of hosting a major art installation was repeated in October 2020 when Gloucester hosted Luke Jerram's *Gaia* in the Cathedral Nave. The Cathedral ran a series of events in partnership with others in the city in parallel to this exhibition, including themed films, webinars and live performances in the Cathedral which attracted visitors and created employment opportunities for local contractors and marketeers. Furthermore, the installation was initially coordinated in partnership with local arts organisation *Strike A Light*, to whom the Cathedral donated a share of the proceeds. Following the success of these exhibitions the Cathedral plans to host a large flagship exhibition every year. It is hoped that this will benefit the local community by helping to put Gloucester on the map and giving the city a big annual event to look forward to each year, as well as being an effective means of attracting more visitors to venues throughout the city.

The main area of focus for Gloucester Cathedral in recent years has been *Project Pilgrim*⁴, a major £6.4m redevelopment which was supported by nearly £4.5million of National Lottery Heritage funding. The two-stage

³ <https://gloucesterculture.org.uk/story/from-earth-to-moon/>

⁴ <https://www.gloucestercathedral.org.uk/project-pilgrim/how/>

project, which started in 2014, aims to make the Cathedral more accessible and appealing to visitors through a series of developments, including making the ground floor wheelchair-friendly, the entranceway lighter and more open and revamping the Cathedral grounds to make them a pleasant outdoor space for the public to enjoy. Previous research showed that locals would visit the Cathedral grounds but not go inside the Cathedral, so part of Project Pilgrim's focus was on engaging the local community and making it known that the Cathedral is free and accessible to all. The decision to undertake this work was also inspired by a wider discussion around maximising the heritage that the city has to offer, and Gloucester City Council recognised the benefit of this work and invested in the project alongside other initiatives to redevelop listed buildings in the city.



Photo credit: Gloucester Cathedral

Whilst the redevelopment improved the visitor experience it did not increase the value of an average donation (Gloucester Cathedral does not charge entry fees), so in 2019 a number of professional Welcome staff were hired to greet visitors and ask for donations. This initiative quickly saw a dramatic increase in visitor revenue that peaked at nearly £75,000 in October 2019 when the Museum of the Moon exhibition was running. Interestingly, the Cathedral's onsite cafe saw a corresponding increase in income with interviewees speculating that visitors were more likely to spend money during their visit due to donating on entry. Whilst previously visitors might have been content to pop into the Cathedral for a short time, interviewees believed that donating on entry meant that visitors were more likely to stay for longer and spend more money in the Cathedral because they valued their visit more.

Where possible the Cathedral uses local services, for example by stocking creations from local artisans in the gift shop and buying food for the cafe from local butchers and greengrocers. This is reflected in the major redevelopments for Project Pilgrim which used local contractors where possible, if not in Gloucestershire then within the South West. However, interviewees noted that with such a large-scale redevelopment they need to secure the best possible services so more specialist skills - such as stained glass window conservation, or materials such as stone - have to be sourced from further afield. This outsourcing is mitigated by the fact that the Cathedral has its own stone masons and maintenance department which allows it to undertake much of its own repair work as well as take on apprentices in stone masonry and other areas, such as property maintenance and finance.



Photo credit: Gloucester Cathedral

The vast majority of Gloucester Cathedral's direct employees live locally, with two thirds residing within Gloucester itself and 90% within the county of Gloucestershire, meaning outgoings on salaries are spent locally. As the Mother Church of the Diocese, all 60 of the Diocese staff are predominantly based on site at the Cathedral, and the Cathedral's existence therefore supports their employment in an indirect way, as well as boosting the number of people working in the city centre. Conversely around a third of volunteers live outside of the city, providing an economic benefit of footfall in the city centre as volunteers regularly spend money on car parking, food and shopping that they probably would not have otherwise done. Many volunteers also give their time to other local organisations, so form part of a city-wide volunteering network that joins the Cathedral with other efforts benefitting the local community.

The Cathedral maintains a close relationship with local businesses, which enables key stakeholders to work together to further the economic and social interests of the city as a whole. For example, the Dean chaired the Gloucester City Regeneration Advisory board, and now chairs its successor (the City Centre Commission), supported by the city council, which focuses on a 10-year strategy for the city centre, covering everything from regeneration to health to housing. Interviewees commented that the Cathedral is seen as a neutral and safe space for such meetings which can sometimes be political in their nature. In turn the Cathedral takes its leadership responsibilities seriously, with Cathedral employees taking an active role in a number of local economic and community initiatives, whether in an official or voluntary capacity. For example, the Head of Projects is a trustee at the Gloucester Culture Trust and chairs Gloucester heritage forum, whilst several staff members are Governors at local schools voluntarily.

Social impact



Photo credit: Gloucester Cathedral

Gloucester Cathedral has recently employed a full-time member of staff as a Community Engagement and Social Responsibility Manager, which reflects the amount of outreach work they do in the local community and builds on the work they are doing in conjunction with Project Pilgrim. A lot of the Cathedral's community work is with the local homeless population, and the Cathedral has run a breakfast club twice a week since 2007, which typically sees an attendance of 30-40 people. More recently they have started a gardening group and a walking rugby group, which have quickly become popular amongst local homeless or otherwise vulnerable individuals. The Cathedral also exhibited the work of a formerly homeless artist, which was highly successful at raising awareness of homelessness. This inspired the Cathedral to open regular art drop-in sessions for the local homeless community at Gloucester City Mission Café when it is safe to do so.

Art and creativity also form a key part of the work that the Cathedral does around mental health. Previously the Cathedral has run workshops, alongside Gloucestershire county council and other local partners, to work with those who have been diagnosed with mental health conditions. Participants' artwork was displayed in the Cathedral, creating awareness in the lead up to World Suicide Prevention Day, which culminated in a special service for anyone impacted by suicide. It hopes this will demonstrate to the local community that the Cathedral wants to provide a platform for awareness raising and discussion around mental health. Since 2018, the Cathedral has developed an annual programme of art for wellbeing courses for local residents, and a two-week slot in the calendar is now reserved on an annual basis for the associated Art and Wellbeing Exhibition. The Cathedral works with local alternative education provider Bridge training to run art, drama, and photography courses, which culminated in a cast of over 50 young people performing outside the Cathedral last year.

Whilst the Cathedral does not engage in a great deal of direct youth work, school visits are a big part of its offering. Last year the Cathedral welcomed over 3,600 students as part of organised school visits, 80% of whom came from schools within the county. A joint mosque and cathedral tour has proved particularly popular with schools and helped to strengthen the Cathedral's interfaith ties. Whilst school visits are not free, they are a loss leader with the Cathedral viewing them as an important part of their education outreach.

Music plays a pivotal part in the life of the Cathedral and interviewees reported that the music on offer at Gloucester attracts visitors to services from across the UK. In addition to the professional choir and the choristers from the King's school, the Cathedral runs three amateur choirs for young people of different ages. They also run a Junior Voices Project which involves supporting choirs in local primary schools who are invited to perform in the Cathedral.



Photo credit: Gloucester Cathedral

Musical outreach is mostly funded through endowments as well as funds gathered through the Friends of the Cathedral, alongside other pockets of additional funding.

In 2019, Gloucester Cathedral received support from over 400 volunteers who contributed over 500 hours between them per week. The Cathedral has employed a dedicated volunteer officer in the recent past in an attempt to professionalise the volunteer workforce by appointing individuals to specific roles which need filling, providing more in-depth training, and frequent contact. Whilst many volunteers remain in the older demographic, the Cathedral has consciously tried to diversify its volunteer base in recent years, by introducing roles which require less time commitment and working with partners such as the University of Gloucestershire and National Star College (a local special needs college) to fill ad-hoc roles such as stewarding at large-scale events. Because the Cathedral is now quite strategic with the roles it places volunteers in, many use pre-existing skills (such as ex-teachers who help on school visits) which enables these individuals to maintain their sense of identity and gives them a purpose and sense of fulfilment, as well as providing an opportunity to socialise with others.

Impact of Covid-19

COVID-19 is perceived to have had a huge impact on the Cathedral financially, and interviewees estimate the pandemic has cost the Cathedral over half of its £2.2m annual budget for 2020. With the cancellation of nearly all overseas and school visits, and a reduction in UK residents travelling from further afield, the Cathedral has also missed out on much of the income it would have gained from visitor donations, which in 2019 amounted to approximately £595,000. The surrounding businesses to the Cathedral have also borne some of the brunt of a lack of visitors, with local cafés, who would usually be flooded with visitors to the Cathedral during events such as graduations, operating reduced menus and opening hours. Whilst the Cathedral hopes to largely rebound to its 2019 visitor numbers by 2022, interviewees did not expect overseas visitor numbers to rebound until 2023.

Whilst face to face worship did resume somewhat during the second half of 2020, the Nave (the central part of the Cathedral which typically hosts services) was operating at 10% capacity. This restriction has meant that special services such as Christmas carol services, normally run regularly throughout December, were cancelled along with the revenue they usually provide. However, by investing in its digital delivery and putting services online, the Cathedral has been able to reach a wider audience both through its traditional services as well as outreach work such as art courses. Interviewees remarked on the benefits of this, and the Cathedral plans to continue its digital

outreach to some extent beyond the pandemic by investing heavily in developing its website and appointing a Digital Communications Officer. The Cathedral made the decision to not offer any virtual school tours, and is hoping that school visit numbers will rebound reasonably quickly following the pandemic, seeing as the majority of their visits are from schools who return year after year.

Despite the financial challenges that COVID-19 has brought to Gloucester Cathedral, interviewees felt optimistic about the future. At the start of the pandemic the Cathedral set up a fundraising campaign called the Beacon of Hope Appeal.⁵ A generous response has seen the Cathedral raise in excess of £1m in the months following the pandemic, allowing them to plan ahead with financial certainty until the end of 2021 and so continue to provide support and outreach to local communities. This appeal, helped in part by a staffing restructure just prior to the outbreak of Covid-19, has meant that the Cathedral has not had to make any of its staff redundant due to the pandemic, despite some of them being furloughed in the short-term. Whilst the Cathedral closures also prevented volunteers from carrying out their duties, interviewees noted they are keen to return to their roles and the Cathedral generally feels positive that their volunteer base will remain stable in the long run.

⁵ <https://www.gloucestercathedral.org.uk/support/beacon-of-hope/>

1.2 Leicester Cathedral: Case Study



Photo credit: Leicester Cathedral

Background

Leicester Cathedral is a grade II listed building that dates back to the thirteenth century. It is built on the site of a Roman temple and is surrounded by medieval and Georgian buildings, which together form the locally named 'Cathedral quarter.' The Cathedral is dedicated to St Martin of Tours and due to this dedication, the Cathedral has a long history of supporting the homeless in the city.

The Cathedral offices and shop are housed in St Martins House opposite the Cathedral. This building is owned by the Diocese of Leicester and additionally provides a conference centre and office space for other organisations. In partnership with the local council, the grounds around these two buildings were remodelled into cathedral gardens that opened in 2014, improving the appearance of this part of the city and providing an outdoor event space.

The Cathedral's popularity as a tourist attraction increased significantly following the discovery of King Richard III and the introduction of his tomb inside the Cathedral in 2015. This find raised the profile of the Cathedral locally, nationally, and internationally. A channel 4 documentary covering the finding, identification and subsequent burial of the King was shown around the world. As a result, interviewees reported that visitor numbers increased from around 30,000 to over 200,000 in 2015. Following this initial rush of interest, numbers started to drop off from 2017 but remain around 100,000 per year. In 2019, approximately 40% of visitors were international. Interviewees noted that the Cathedral has used this increase in publicity to grow its reputation and networks, as a route to becoming more involved with the local community.

This sustained increase in visitors also led the Cathedral to design its 'Leicester Cathedral Revealed' project. This is a £11.3m project planned to take place over 2021/23 to restore and develop the Cathedral, covering everything from updating the Cathedral's heating and accessibility, to building an onsite Heritage Learning Centre that will provide an exhibition area and a learning space. The Cathedral is currently one of the smallest in the UK and

interviewees reported that the increased visitor numbers have meant that visitor space and multipurpose rooms have become very crowded.

Economic impact

The Cathedral is viewed by interviewees as an important gateway into Leicester, bringing in around 100,000 cultural tourists annually, with interviewees reporting that many tourists come specifically to see the tomb of Richard III. Due to the Kings tomb being housed in the Cathedral, the Cathedral is the heart of the Richard III tourist offer in the city and county, which also includes the nearby council-built Richard III visitor centre, the city's museums and art galleries, and the Battlefield Centre at Bosworth. Together, these attractions present the Kings history and the story of his discovery and identification, providing a structured tourist offer for the city that appeals to those interested in either history, science, religion, or heritage. As such, the Cathedral works closely with other organisations and the council to market the city and bring in tourists.

Interviewees noted that the Cathedral has also built up a reputation as an arts venue, which encourages both tourists and locals to visit the Cathedral. For example, in 2019, the Cathedral hosted Luke Jerram's Museum of the Moon exhibit as part of the city's One Giant Leap event, which offered space themed activities during the school holidays. The Cathedral makes a point of linking any art exhibits and events into their own ethos, and for this reason the moon exhibit was accompanied by events exploring humanity's place in creation. The Cathedral match funded the One Giant Leap event, which interviewees reported bought around 11,000 people into the city.

Interviewees noted that the Cathedral's direct employees live throughout Leicestershire, with the vast majority living less than 10 miles from the Cathedral. The Cathedral tries to use local firms for its contracted-out services, estimating that approximately 75% of such work is provided by local firms. General trades are from within the city (e.g. heating engineers) and stonemasons are also based in Leicestershire. Recent repair, totalling £450,000, was paid for via a government fund and carried out by local contractors. Due to the scale of the work a national architecture firm designed the building plans, resulting in about 85% of the fund being spent locally.

A café and a cathedral shop are hosted in St Martins House, across from the Cathedral and run by the Diocese of Leicester. Interviewees noted that much of the customer base for these two businesses comes from those visiting the Cathedral. All food served in the café is locally produced.

Social impact

Leicester is a National Asylum Seeker Service (NASS) designated dispersal city, and the Cathedral is involved with a number of city-wide initiatives to welcome and support asylum seekers. It has an ongoing partnership with the city council, whereby all Syrians arriving in the city go to the Cathedral on arrival. The Cathedral welcomes these refugees and helps orientate them into Leicester. The Cathedral also runs a weekly drop-in centre in connection with the charity City of Sanctuary,⁶ offering a mixture of social and support activities, such as craft activities, games, and IT and English classes. The After 18 Project working with refugee and asylum seeking young adults is a third cathedral partner working in the sector. In 2019, the Cathedral hosted the Leicester Welcome Project, which gave immediate practical support to asylum seekers living in and near Leicester, providing gifts of food, clothes and toiletries. The project also offered support through signposting to other advice organisations, advocating for asylum seekers, and offering informal advice.

The Cathedral is involved with the local branch of Street Pastors,⁷ an international outreach initiative where members of the Cathedral go out onto the streets of Leicester with the aim of caring for the community. This

⁶ <https://leicester.cityofsanctuary.org/>

⁷ <https://streetpastors.org/locations/leicester/>

includes having conversations with young adults out for the night, sitting with or assisting people in distress, and generally being available to attend to people's physical, emotional and spiritual needs.

The Cathedral also offers school education visits and operates a music outreach programme, whereby it provides singing lessons (for a fee) to primary schools across the county. Interviewees reported that these are typically schools without music teachers, so no music tuition would be available to the children without the Cathedral's work. The Cathedral has previously used grant funding from the Arts Council England to provide individual children with free music and singing lessons.

Around 200 people volunteered at the Cathedral during 2019. Interviewees, as well as respondents to a survey carried out by the Cathedral, noted that volunteering made people feel part of a community. Elderly volunteers in particular are thought to benefit from the social connections that volunteering at the Cathedral offers, including talking to visitors, meeting up with other volunteers outside of the Cathedral, and attending an annual volunteer's dinner.



Photo credit: Leicester Cathedral, Easter

For younger volunteers, the work offers the opportunity to enhance their skills and gain work experience. Interviewees also reported that volunteering gave them a sense of fulfilment through assisting visitors and that one of the key reasons they wanted to volunteer at the Cathedral was its welcoming ethos, with all religions welcomed.

Interviews reported that Leicester Cathedral has strong links with the local community, including local government, universities, theatres, the football club, tourism boards, and private businesses. Many of these links were established during the arrangements for the burial of Richard III in the Cathedral, which necessitated meetings and conversation with a range of public services and civic boards. The Cathedral has maintained these relationships and now has a reputation for acting in a convening role, with interviewees reporting that it provides a neutral space to hold discussion. For example, Leicester police have asked the Cathedral to work with specific community groups to try and reduce growing religious and cultural tensions. The Cathedral has hosted meetings with Muslim and Hindu religious leaders, and due to the Cathedral's relationships with the local football club, the Cathedral was able to get free match tickets, so that a group of Muslims and Hindus could go to a match together. This was tweeted as counter narrative to the division growing between these religions in Leicester.

Alongside this, the Cathedral is using its connections to raise awareness of the financial difficulties faced by those who do not have access to the internet. This can act as a hurdle to getting a bank account, which leads to difficulties in getting paid work and paying bills. The Cathedral is working with local finance providers to raise awareness of this issue and to find solutions.

The Cathedral is a member of Leicester Business Improvement District (BID), which is hosted in the diocese buildings in St Martins house. The Cathedral works closely with the BID to reduce homelessness in Leicester and in 2018 the Cathedral led on developing a homelessness charter for the city.⁸ This charter brings together various organisations with a role to play in reducing homelessness (including the council, the police, local businesses and charities) and sets out key aims for the city, including increasing the availability of affordable accommodation. Through discussion with these groups, it was identified that not everyone begging on the city streets was homeless and that while the public wanted to help the homeless, they were concerned about giving to

⁸ <https://www.giveleicester.org/leicester-homelessness-charter/>

people on the streets. Contactless giving points have now been set up around the city, with the money going straight to a local night shelter.

St Martins House also host Sound Café, a charity that supports those who are homeless or vulnerable. The charity aims to help attendees 'find their voice' through providing a range of activities, including singing, poetry, music, and art. The charity also acts as an informal listening and signposting service for attendees who wish to access more formal help, such as housing services. The Sound Cafe was originally set up by a member of cathedral staff and the choir rehearses and preforms in the Cathedral for free.

The Cathedral also hosts various civic engagement events, including the Lord Mayor's civic service, an Armed Forces Day, and the annual VE day service. Carol concerts are also held for specific parts of the local community, including the police force, the university and a local grammar school. In addition, the Cathedral provides space for the city to host comedy gigs, music concerts, and dinners for businesses and charities.



Photo credit: Leicester Cathedral, memorial of lament

Impact of COVID-19

In 2020, Leicester was effected by local as well as national lockdowns, resulting in the city being under restrictions for much of the year. Interviewees reported that while the Cathedral was continually assessing what it could practically offer visitors during 2020, restrictions meant that the Cathedral has only been able to open for private prayer. No audience events have been hosted since March 2020. Both the Cathedral shop and café closed in March and didn't reopen in 2020. Due to the reduce activities, fewer volunteers have been needed. The Cathedral also furloughed staff and made a small number of redundancies. The Cathedral's major redevelopment project – Leicester Cathedral revealed - which is planned to start in the second half of 2021, will mean that the Cathedral will be closed for an additional 18 months. As such, the Cathedral's activities will be curtailed in the coming years but Cathedral on Tour will take the choir and other activities to parishes across the diocese, while 'Leicester Cathedral Presents' will create cathedral events in other venues in the city.

Due to its closure during much of 2020, the Cathedral has worked hard to remain in contact with its congregation in other ways. It phoned congregation members to identify those struggling with lockdown and has continued phone contact with those identified as being lonely or needing support. The Cathedral also created a newsletter, and interviewees reported that members of the public had reported that this was helping them remain connected to the Cathedral and the local community. At Christmas, the Cathedral had an outdoor band playing carols, to offer some festive cheer as people did their Christmas shopping. The Cathedral has also offered online services and events, but interviewees noted that while online events help retain community links, it is difficult to turn online activity into economic uplift for the Cathedral.



Photo credit: Leicester Cathedral, Oddfellows Brass Band

1.3 Liverpool Cathedral: Case Study

Background

Liverpool Cathedral is the largest Cathedral in the UK and a Grade I listed building. In the centre of the Cathedral is a single tower, which at 100.8 meters (331 feet) high is one of the tallest bell towers in the world and offers excellent views of the city. While entry to the main floor of the Cathedral is free, visitors pay to go up the tower.

The Cathedral is located out of the city centre on Hope street, approximately 15 minutes' walk from a train station. Interviewees reported that the Cathedral has worked hard with nearby cultural venues to make the area and itself a prime tourist destination for both local and international visitors. In 2019, cathedral visitor numbers had reached approximately 800,000, with around 25% of these being international visitors.

The Cathedral is of historic and religious interest to visitors but has also built a reputation as an arts venue. It displays a number of permanent paintings and sculpture by 20th and 21st century artists, including a coloured glass, light and text work by Tracey Emin that won the 2009 ACE Award for Art in a Religious Context. The Cathedral also hosts temporary installations, such as the museum of the Moon exhibit, which the Cathedral displayed as part of events around the 2018 Culture Liverpool celebratory Changing Tides programme.

In recognition of its tourist offer, the Cathedral has won a number of tourist awards. In 2018, it was the winner of the Liverpool City Region Large Visitor Attraction award. In 2019, it received a TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence for five successive years of excellent reviews. In 2020, the Cathedral was given a People's Choice Award after reviews on TripAdvisor placed it in the top 10% of attractions worldwide.

In 2016, along with Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral and St Bride's church, Liverpool Cathedral set up Micah Liverpool, a social justice charity that aims to help people out of poverty. Interviewees noted that Liverpool Cathedral provided all seed funding for Micah (£250,000 in total). Today the charity operates with a small team of direct employees, alongside volunteer support from Liverpool Cathedral.

Economic impact

Over 90% of the 127 people employed by the Cathedral in 2019 lived in Liverpool. Interviewees noted that the Cathedral operates a policy of trying to fill all roles locally where possible, as one of its key aims is to make a positive impact on employment in the local economy. For example, the Cathedral recently renegotiated its catering contract, with the winning caterers being a locally based company. This catering company provides all the food in the Cathedral restaurant, as well as some of the catering for the public and corporate dinners that the Cathedral hosts throughout the year. When it comes to building repairs, which often require specific and unique skills such as stone masonry, the Cathedral does find that it has to look beyond the city borders but will explore local options first.

As part of its commitment to improving city wide employability, the Cathedral works with Micah Liverpool to run a ten-week employability programme that aims to get people who have been unemployed for at least six months back into work. Those on the programme receive the Liverpool Cathedral Award in Recruitability. While six months is the minimum amount of time someone needs to have been unemployed to start the programme, interviewees reported that many attendees have been unemployed for ten years or more. These people often face multiple barriers to finding work, including mental health and physical disabilities. In reflection of this the programme aims to improve skills, confidence, and readiness for work through offering support in job searching, CV and application writing, along with interview techniques, including mock interviews. Those on the programme can also complete vocational qualifications in health and safety, emergency first aid and food hygiene. Liverpool Cathedral also offers voluntary work experience to those on the scheme and has itself directly recruited current employees from the

programme. In 2019, 42 people took part in the programme.⁹ Of those 41% moved into employment. This figure rises to 45% for those completing the programme.

The Cathedral shop also supports local employment through selling merchandise (e.g. coasters, cards, prints and baubles) that feature designs by local Liverpool artists. Interviewees noted that the shop is a considerable contributor to the Cathedral's revenue, and along with the corporate dinners the Cathedral hosts, helps it cover part of the cost of its own upkeep and provide wider community services, such as supporting Micah Liverpool.

Along with being a tourist attraction in its own right, the Cathedral also hosts events throughout the year. Annual winter and summer arts markets are held in the Cathedral where all the stalls are run by independent artists, designers, and makers from across the region, who sell their own work. Known as the North West's biggest arts and crafts fair,¹⁰ it features more than 200 artists and designers. Artisan food organisations also run stalls. Charging around £3 a ticket, interviewees noted that the market brings a large number of visitors into the city.

The Cathedral also hosts temporary art exhibits throughout the year that feature local and/or international artists that draw people into Liverpool. In 2019 it hosted Gaia, an accurate and detailed NASA image of the earth. This exhibit contributed to the record visitor numbers the Cathedral saw in 2019.



Photo credit: Liverpool Cathedral

In 2020, the Cathedral hosted Angel Wings, a moving light projection artwork whose feathers pulsate and change colour to a curated soundtrack. Interviewees reported that typically visitors who are attracted to art exhibits such as these tend to be from the local area or wider region, and come into Liverpool specifically to see the exhibit, then stay in the city to go shopping and/or have a meal.

Social impact

Beyond its religious offering, Liverpool Cathedral supports the city community in a number of key ways. It operates a city-wide school outreach programme to encourage and provide music education. This is done partly because the Cathedral intentionally doesn't have its own choir school - so draws on talent from the city - and partly as the Cathedral is aware that many schools in Liverpool do not have a music department. As such, the number of schools offering GCSE music is reducing and access to musical tuition in general is becoming increasingly limited. Those interviewed noted that the Cathedral wants to ensure opportunities are there for all those with an interest in music, and does this through offering the Liverpool Cathedral Schools Singing Programme (which delivers singing lessons in schools for a fee) and running choirs aimed at different abilities and ages, from around 12 months old (through its Tiny Maestros programme) to adults. The Cathedral also offers a Grade 5 Music Theory Foundation Course. As part of the Schools Singing Programme, all pupils involved perform at a concert held in Liverpool Cathedral.

⁹ Micah Liverpool Charitable incorporated organisation annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2019, (Micah Liverpool, 2019) <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5071314/accounts-and-annual-returns>

¹⁰ <https://www.winterartsmarket.com/visitor-info/>

The Cathedral choristers are also made up of girls and boys from different schools across Liverpool. The Cathedral also has a range of community-based choirs.

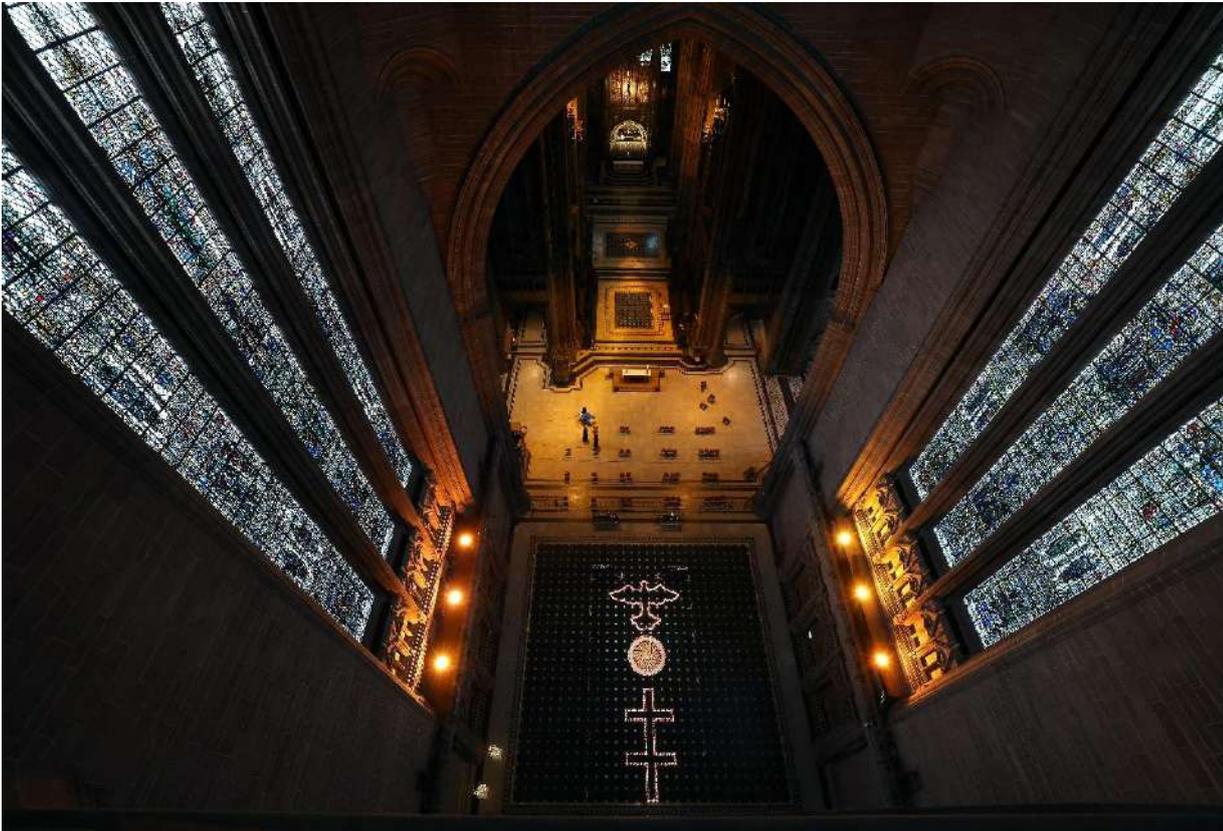


Photo credit: Liverpool Cathedral

Employees of Liverpool Cathedral are also members of a range of organisations and Boards, including the women's refuge hostel board, VS6 (a partnership of support organisations working with 8,600 voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise groups operating across Liverpool), Hope street community interest company (focused on making the area around Hope street more attractive to visitors), the Liverpool Visitor Economy Network Board, the Coach Welcome Scheme (which welcomes coach groups and drivers into the city), Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, and Liverpool University Hospital Foundation Trust. Cathedral employees also act as school governors. Those interviewed noted that being on these boards ties the Cathedral into the local community and the issues it faces. As the Cathedral has a reputation as place of neutrality, it then tries to use this knowledge and its reputation to help broker relationships between other sectors of the community. For example, the report of the Hillsborough independent panel was launched at the Cathedral. To this day the Cathedral has ongoing engagement with the families affected, regardless of whether or not they are part of the Cathedral's congregation.

This programme of community events includes other memorial services for events that have deeply affected the local community, such as a special service for families who have lost children in traffic accidents. Liverpool is also home to a large number of Persian worshippers and in recognition of this the Cathedral runs Sepas', a Persian congregation where the worship and teaching is all either in Farsi or translated. The service takes place every Sunday, followed by refreshments. The Cathedral also provides the rooms where English lessons are given to refugees and asylum seekers.

In addition, the Cathedral works with national and local charities to arrange an annual charity abseil down the Cathedral, in which approximately 800 people typically participate. The Cathedral also hosts an annual sleepover to raise money for The Whitechapel Centre, a local homeless charity. In 2019, 450 people took part in this event.

The Cathedral also has close links with the universities in the city. For example, graduation ceremonies take place in the Cathedral, the work of architectural students is displayed in the Cathedral, and the Cathedral has provided grant funding towards PhD students researching the social history of the Cathedral.

Over 200 people volunteered at the Cathedral during 2019, performing a wide range of activities from welcoming visitors to embroidery. Volunteers have noted that as well as feeling as though they are giving back to the community, they also benefit from their volunteering activities themselves, as it enables them to socialise and feel part of a community, benefiting their wellbeing. This tends to be particularly true for the older volunteers, many of whom reported to interviewees that they often felt isolated before becoming volunteers. Those who become volunteers via the Micah Liverpool charity also find it beneficial to mix with the other volunteers and cathedral employees, who expose them to new networks and experiences of employment.

Through its links with Micah Liverpool, the Cathedral also supports food bank services, which operate two days a week and provide packages with three days of emergency food for each guest. These foodbanks operate out of two churches in Liverpool and support over 300 people per week. Micah Liverpool also runs four community markets, one of which takes place at Liverpool Cathedral twice a week. Each of the community markets offers food, deemed to be surplus to requirement by supermarkets, for sale at below market rate prices. The main aim is to support people who may be on the brink of using foodbanks.

Impact of COVID-19

Restrictions around COVID-19 have drastically reduced the number of visitors the Cathedral saw in 2020, which is estimated to have fallen to around 200,000, despite interviewees reporting the Cathedral is well regarded as a safe place to visit because of the covid protection measures it has introduced. Interviewees reported that this, along with the postponing and cancelling of corporate dinners, exhibits, and other events and ceremonies, has had a large impact on the Cathedral's finances and future plans.

Due to the large scale of the Cathedral building, the financial demands in terms of upkeep are large and interviewees stressed that the Cathedral has focused on becoming self-sufficient, with employees of the Cathedral noting that by 2019 the Cathedral had reached revenue breakeven point. Maintaining this is a key aim of the Cathedral, and pre-COVID the Cathedral was well placed to continue improving its financial position, which would enable it to further expand its community-based offering.

In particular, the Cathedral had put in place a goal of increasing visitor numbers up to 1 million a year by 2024, representing a 25% growth on the 2019 figures, thereby make the Cathedral's operating plan completely sustainable. While this was always an ambitious target, the Cathedral was building up a programme of events and pre-COVID was on track to meet this goal. However, those interviewed expect COVID to not only influence visitor and event numbers in 2020, but to have a long-running effect in terms of people feeling less secure in travelling internationally and nationally, and in visitor numbers being limited by necessary social distancing constraints. Due to these limitations, the Cathedral also envisages a long-running fall in the amount of business it sees from hosting international conference dinners and cooperate dinners, which previously helped the Cathedral raise a significant amount of funding. These international conferences typically take two to three years to plan, so there will be a lag before they start up again. Cathedral employees also noted in interviews that they expect Brexit to have a further damping effect on international visitors and conferences.

As such, interviewees see the recent changes as a structural shift rather than just a short-term cash flow problem, and the Cathedral has revised its business plan accordingly. In the main this has involved bringing forward changes it was planning to implement over the longer term – in particular switching from hosting corporate to public events, and a focus on increasing visitor numbers from the city and region to become a cathedral for the city, rather than for the international visitor. While these are changes the Cathedral wanted to implement anyway, the effects of COVID have forced the need to focus on them immediately.

COVID has also impacted on the Cathedral's volunteers, many of whom are older and have needed to self-isolate. Fewer volunteers are currently needed, due to restrictions on opening times and visitor numbers. The Cathedral has remained in touch with its volunteers, who are keen to come back to the Cathedral and report missing the social and community aspects of volunteering.

1.4 Rochester Cathedral: Case Study



Photo credit: Rochester Cathedral

Background

Rochester Cathedral is one of several historic and cultural attractions in Rochester: close by is Rochester Castle and the town has strong links to Charles Dickens, who lived there and featured the town in his writings. The wider Medway area has further tourist attractions such as Chatham historic dockyards and the Royal Engineers museum. Consultees felt that individually the Cathedral and other sites were not necessarily attractions by themselves, but together they constituted a full day offer for tourists. Exit surveys conducted by the Cathedral support this view, showing that people would often combine a visit to both the Cathedral and castle. Rochester also hosts various historical and cultural events throughout the year which attract large numbers of visitors (around 50,000 people a day). The Cathedral actively participates in the organisation of these festivals which include: Sweeps festival, Dickens summer festival, Dickensian Christmas festival, Christmas markets.

In 2015 a new station was built near to the Cathedral, which has increased footfall in the area. Over recent years roughly three quarters of visitors to the Cathedral came from the immediate area and 15% were visiting the area as part of a day trip.

In 2016 the Cathedral welcomed a new Dean and employed a Chapter Clerk with experience in the local tourism and heritage sector. Both appointments reflected a desire by the Chapter to reframe the Cathedral as a tourist and heritage attraction, in addition to a place of worship. In recent years, the Cathedral has made a renewed effort to increase its attractiveness to visitors through hosting a series of exhibitions, and interviewees spoke of a desire to turn Rochester into a destination cathedral. Their events programming has resulted in an increase in visitor numbers over recent years, with a corresponding change in the demographics of visitors, including an increase in family groups. In 2019, the Cathedral had an estimated 184,000 visitors, not including those attending services. Visiting numbers for services also increased, which Cathedral staff attributed to the calendar of events. For

instance, in the year following several high-profile exhibitions, there was a 16% increase in attendance at Christmas and advent services.

Economic impact

In recent years the Cathedral has organised a programme of events to attract a larger number of visitors, and to increase the diversity of visitors. This built on previous research they had undertaken around the barriers to attracting families. Findings showed that key barriers included perceptions that cathedrals are unwelcoming and conservative, and concerns that attempts would be made to evangelise visitors. Additional barriers included perceived entry fees (Rochester Cathedral is free to visit) and the belief that you had to behave in a certain way inside the space. The Cathedral's events programming has sought to overturn those views with innovative and engaging exhibitions.



Photo credit: Rochester Cathedral

In August 2019 the Cathedral made international news when it hosted a mini golf course in its nave – the first of several unorthodox exhibitions. The event was sponsored by the Rochester Bridge Trust, and each hole was a model bridge. Cathedral staff explained that the objective was both strategic and theological: it was intended to draw new audiences into the Cathedral, but also reflected the Cathedral's missional work building bridges in the community. The exhibition received a large amount of media coverage, both in the UK and internationally, and contributed to 35,000 visitors that August (a 90% increase on the previous August). Consultees also noted increased diversity among visitors to the mini golf, which brought together people from different generational and socio-economic groups.

Mini golf was followed by further exhibitions. The next month the Cathedral hosted in its grounds the Knife Angel, a 25ft statue constructed from 100,000 confiscated knives, and in early 2020 provided a temporary home for the Museum of the Moon, an inflatable seven-metre model of the moon. These events have continued to have a positive impact on visitor numbers. The Knife Angel drew 45,000 people in 4 weeks, compared to 7,000 the previous September, and the Museum of the Moon had 120,000 in three weeks, helped by coinciding with a school half term. A light-touch visitor survey conducted during the Knife Angel suggested that half of visitors had never visited the Cathedral before, illustrating the success in programming of engaging new audiences.



Photo credit: Rochester Cathedral

These events not only positively impacted visitor numbers, but also increased income to the Cathedral and, anecdotally, to surrounding businesses. All events are free entry, but interviewees estimated that shop and café turnover quadrupled during the mini golf, while a spike in donations was also seen. Similarly, the museum of the Moon resulted in £45,000 of donations over three weeks. Anecdotally, interviewees felt that the influx of visitor cathedrals had benefited local businesses and traders, especially since the high street caters to the tourist trade. One interviewee said that local shops look forward to cathedral events, as they result in increased footfall on the high street. However, it was noted that businesses serving locals may have faced difficulties due to inadequate parking provision: due to increased numbers of tourists using parking, locals found it harder to park in the centre of town.

In addition to its own events the Cathedral helps with the organisation of the main festivals that take place in Rochester. It is part of the festival partnership for a new festival of light currently being organised which aims to increase footfall during times of slower business for local retailers. The Cathedral also features as a key venue in the City of Culture 2025 bid, not least because it is one of the largest spaces in the area. It is also used for graduation ceremonies for the three local universities.

The Cathedral has a policy of trying to spend locally where possible. It has spent roughly £1.3m on restoration over the last three years, of which almost all was spent in Medway, Kent, or the wider diocese. Consultees did mention that charity law restrictions meant that in some cases they had to prioritise cheaper quotes over local ones. Most of the contractors that the Cathedral employs are local, and its café stocks local produce. It employs 25.5 FTE employees (around 43 people in total), and the vast majority of these live within the diocese.

The Cathedral is proactive at building relationships with businesses and stakeholders across diverse sectors. For example, it has worked closely with Southeastern Trains to ensure that they advertise events, and collaborated with local winegrowers to launch an English wine festival which has now developed into the Kent Food and Wine Festival. Over ten years ago it established the Rochester Cathedral Business Guild which aims to “provide members with opportunities for entertaining customers, suppliers or staff in a unique setting through a variety of events and networking functions” and “stimulate ideas on business practice and ethics”.¹¹ Consultees noted that the building is an inspiring venue for Guild members to host business meetings, and that the Guild serves as useful networking opportunity for local businesses. The Guild also arranges speaker events. For example, they recently hosted a well-attended session on furlough rules delivered by a law firm. The Guild not only benefits members through association with the Cathedral’s heritage, but also benefits the Cathedral as local businesses are more likely to offer services pro-bono in return. The Cathedral also sits on the City Centre Forum, which is open to all traders and has helped to strengthen links between the Cathedral and the high street.

Social impact

Consultees reported that while other cathedrals run outreach activities such as foodbanks or night pastors, Rochester Cathedral has limited resources and therefore finds it more effective to partner with other local organisations. They see the Cathedral’s role as one of providing support, promotion, and funds to support existing social outreach activity. For example, they work with a local group of volunteers who provide food for homeless people, feeding an average of 40-50 people every Saturday. The Cathedral acts as a drop off point for food and funds the hire of the space to host the sessions. It also offers Cathedral premises for outreach activities, and has recently hosted activities including dementia awareness meetings and domestic abuse training.

¹¹ <https://www.rochestercathedral.org/business-guild>

One example of community outreach, led directly by the Cathedral is the children's community choir. The choir aims to challenge the perception that choral singing is elitist and is open to anyone to join. The Cathedral secured grant aid to provide singing lessons in local schools, and the community choir performs in the Cathedral. Consultees highlighted this as an example of how they can make inroads into the community, noting that several members of community choir have since graduated to the main Cathedral choir. For the main Cathedral choir, the Cathedral funds musical tuition for all choristers, including theory and vocal coaching.

The Cathedral plays a role in educating people, both by welcoming school trips and through its wider education programme. In a normal year they welcome approximately 12,000 school students, down from a peak of about 18,000, due in part to reductions in school finances and increased regulations. They offer educational activities spanning multiple subjects including history, RE, science, maths, and languages. They also coordinate with other local attractions such as the castle, Huguenot Museum, and Bridges Trust to develop cohesive day trips for school groups.



Photo credit: Rochester Cathedral

The wider education programme seeks to make the most of learning opportunities afforded by Cathedral events. For instance, when the Knife Angel event was on display the Cathedral worked with local schools to encourage them to visit, and even arranged for free coach transport for some schools, using it as a way to open up discussions around knife culture. Local police were present to talk to students, and one police officer noted that it was easier to engage with students outside of a classroom context. The education programme also links into other events in Rochester where possible. For example, the Cathedral runs Dickens-themed tours during the Dickens Festival, and delivered nature-focused activities around the Sweeps Festival. Education staff at the Cathedral are working with local sites to develop a cohesive family offering, and are also seeking to expand the adult education programme, for instance by developing “Explore and Draw” activities with a local artist.

The Cathedral has more direct educational engagement through its relationship with The King's School, Rochester (as well as its Preparatory and Pre-Preparatory offshoots) which is an independent cathedral school. The school uses the Cathedral for its daily worship, as well as for events such as a speech days and carol services. The school Chaplain is also priest vicar of the Cathedral, and acts as a conduit between the two. School staff noted that the Cathedral provided an important sense of spiritual connection which, while difficult to measure, was very important to pupils' learning experience and the school's identity.

In 2019, there were roughly 380 volunteers, who perform a range of duties including welcoming visitors, acting as guides, staffing exhibitions, running school visits, and staffing the café. Most volunteers are local but tend to be elderly and the Cathedral is in contact with universities as a way of engaging with a new generation of potential volunteers. From a financial perspective there is a reliance on volunteers (for instance, the café is only profitable due to having no staff costs) but the Cathedral has recently secured grant aid to fund a team of welcomers.

Finally, in the broadest sense of social impact, Cathedral staff spoke about the importance of the Cathedral as a community space which is open to everyone from all faiths or no faith: it's a big enough space to embrace everyone. They noted that unlike other historic places, the Cathedral is a living building which is open every single

day of the year. Additionally, interviewees reported that the Cathedral is a central part of the town's historic character, and a source of pride and identity for residents.



Photo credit: Rochester Cathedral

Impact of Covid-19

Interviewees report that COVID-19 has disrupted many aspects of the Cathedral's daily activity. Due to social distancing, Sunday worship is restricted to less than 100 people, where previously there would have been around 250. Services have been shorter and less frequent, and fewer worshippers in vulnerable groups (especially those over 70) have been attending. School visits had to stop; they are now taking bookings for future visits but capacity may be reduced temporarily. Most staff were furloughed at some point, and a small number of staff had to be made redundant.

Duties for volunteers also reduced and since many volunteers are elderly, it is expected that not all will want to return once the Cathedral resumes full activities as COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. COVID-19 also meant that much of the positive momentum of the events programming was lost. However, the Cathedral has continued to use its space in innovative ways, acting as an asymptomatic testing centre and offering to be a vaccination site. Equally, it has integrated technology where possible, for instance live streaming services and working with high street traders to develop a Covid-safe QR code trail to tell the Christmas story during December 2020. Despite the disruptions of covid-19, interviewees reported that during lockdowns the Cathedral was seen as a place not just of spiritual wellbeing, but also mental wellbeing.

1.5 St Edmundsbury Cathedral: Case Study



Photo credit: St Edmundsbury Cathedral

Background

St Edmundsbury is based in the historic market town of Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. There has been a church on the site since the 11th Century but it was only in 1914 that it was made a Cathedral, as part of the creation of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. Since 1959, various building works have been undertaken to expand the Cathedral, most notably a 150 ft tower which was completed in 2005. The Cathedral sits within the footprint of the site of the Abbey St Edmunds, which was one of the largest Christian sites in Europe at its time until its destruction during the dissolution of the monasteries in 1539. The ruins are now an English Heritage site. Close to the Cathedral is another church, St Mary's, which is one of the largest parish churches in England.

Consultees noted that Bury St Edmunds is traditionally a destination for day visits, being under two hours' drive from London and Midlands towns. It has a range of offerings in addition to the Cathedral, Abbey, and St Mary's church, including a concert hall, theatre, independent shops, and market. It also hosts fourth largest Christmas fair in Europe, during which the Cathedral offers multiple 20 minute "Shoppers' carols" services, which are well attended. Since 2014, the Cathedral has hosted the tourism information point for the town.

The completion of the Cathedral tower in 2005 led to an increase in visitors, reaching nearly 100,000, although visitors numbers have since decreased. In the past five years, the Cathedral has significantly increased its use of events as a way to encourage visitors, and in 2019 it received over 70,000 visitors. Consultees identified three groups of visitors: regular worshippers who generally lived locally; non-local worshippers, such as those visiting Bury for the weekend; and general non-religious visitors. The Cathedral is free to enter but does charge for tours

and offers a separate tower tour. Cathedral staff mentioned their intention to build the visitor experience, both through non-traditional events programming and longer-term investment in facilities. It has recently secured funding from the Cathedral sustainability fund for a Digital Market Manager, which will enable them to expand their regional and national promotion.

Economic impact

Interviewees noted that the Cathedral is an important part of Bury St Edmunds tourism offer, and one of its top five attractions. Its tower is visible from the main road which runs past the town, with interviewees describing it as a “beacon” and “magnet” which encourages people to take a detour and visit the town.

The Cathedral hosts a range of events across the year and has used less traditional events as a way to broaden visitor demographics beyond the middle class, middle aged couples who have traditionally comprised the majority of visitors. Consultees mentioned diverse non-liturgical events including yoga, gong baths meditation, badminton, and film screenings, as well as more traditional talks and lectures. It is one of four cathedrals building a Lego model of itself, which has been a large attraction for adults as well as children. Visitors donate £1 per brick, and one interviewee reported that for some families it has now become a yearly tradition to add a brick. The Cathedral has also actively engaged families through organising events aimed at children, such as hosting an animatronic T Rex dinosaur and arranging science activities during school holidays.

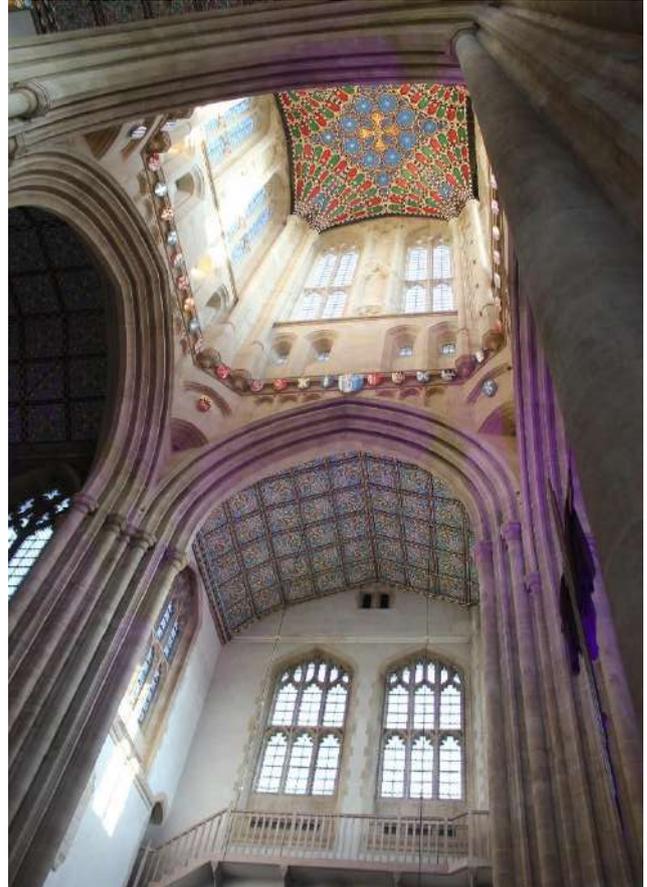


Photo credit: St Edmundsbury Cathedral

When hosting an exhibition of local children’s art in the cloisters, many parents commented that they had never visited the Cathedral before, but were keen to return for a longer visit. This shows the value of using non-traditional programming to engage local visitors who might not attend for worship. There is a longer-term desire to reorganise the nave in order to make the Cathedral more attractive and flexible as a venue, both for hire and for its own events.

In addition to hosting its own events to bring visitors into the town, the Cathedral often plays a role in supporting events occurring in the town. As one interviewee involved with local tourism stated, they would not consider putting on any major event without involving the Cathedral. It also acts as one of the venues for the annual Bury St Edmunds Festival and hosts the annual awards for the Bury in Bloom project, which aims to attract tourist through planting and maintaining flower displays around the town. It has also acted as one of the locations for local art trails, which aim to increase visitors to the town. The Cathedral co-leads a partnership of local organisations which are working to improve the heritage offering of the Abbey. This is still at the planning stage and depends on a successful funding bid, but would strengthen the visitor experience by uniting the Abbey gardens, Cathedral and grounds, and St Mary’s Church into a single heritage area with improved facilities. The Cathedral also hosts a large number of guest choirs (30 in 2019), who stay for up to a week and therefore spend in the local economy.

The Cathedral has close links with the business community through its involvement with various groups. It is a member of BID for Bury, which aims to encourage visitors within an hour’s travel, and Bury St Edmunds and Beyond, the towns Destination Management Organisation, which aims to engage visitors between one and three

hours' travel. These relationships are seen as mutually beneficial: the Cathedral benefits from publicity and advertising generated by the groups, who in turn feature the Cathedral as one of the town's attractions. Cathedral staff noted that in the past the business community did not always feel that the Cathedral was theirs to make use of, so several years ago the Cathedral hosted the BID for Bury AGM in their restaurant, in order to show the different spaces and facilities they could hire. The Cathedral also has links with the Chamber of Commerce. In 2019 the Cathedral hosted its first business community carol service, showing its commitment to strengthening the relationship with local businesses.

Where possible the Cathedral uses local services and suppliers. Staff reported that most of their regular contractors are local, including cleaning, maintenance, heating, and IT contractors. Their food supplier also has its own policy of sourcing local produce. They sometimes go out to tender for services but generally limit this to the local region, with the exception of very specialist services such as hiring a steeplejack to repair the tower flagpole. The commitment to local suppliers is intended not only to financially support the surrounding region, but also to limit the Cathedral's carbon footprint.

The Cathedral employs approximately 9 FTE workers, across 16 posts. About a third of these live in the town, with the remainder living elsewhere in the county, no more than an hour's travel from the Cathedral. In addition to these staff, the shop and restaurant have 5 FTE and 15 zero hours staff, who are employed by a separate, financially independent organisation linked to the Cathedral called Enterprises Limited. The Cathedral is seeking to create additional employment opportunities through signing up to the Government's Kickstart scheme, as part of a consortium with various other cathedrals. Under the scheme, grant money would be provided to fund work placements at the Cathedral for Universal Credit claimants between the age of 16 and 24. In addition to creating employment opportunities, the scheme would provide work skills and mentoring opportunities to local young people. The scheme is a good example of how the Cathedral aims to make use of existing initiatives to achieve positive economic and social outcomes.

Social impact

The Cathedral is committed to various social causes, which it embeds in its daily operation. It is a member of the [Inclusive Church](https://www.inclusive-church.org/)¹² network and is working on becoming a dementia-friendly cathedral. As part of this, staff are undergoing online dementia-friendly training, and an expert will assess the site to advise on how to optimise access for people with dementia.

Cathedral staff also stressed their commitment to caring for the environment. They have won a bronze award from A Rocha,¹³ an international Christian organisation supporting conservation, and spoke of their desire to progress to a silver award. The Cathedral's ethical commitment is also affirmed through its status as a fair trade cathedral: it buys fair trade produce and hosts a stall selling fair trade produce one Sunday every month. It also has a group called Faith in Action, which looks out for social issues and initiatives to support. For instance, the Cathedral is actively engaging with the Bury Black Lives Matter group.

12 <https://www.inclusive-church.org/>

13 <https://www.arocha.org/en/>

For social outreach activities, the Cathedral generally partners with local organisations and charities. Staff see this as a more effective way to make use of their limited resources, and it helps to avoid duplication of efforts. For example, the Cathedral provides volunteers for Bury Drop In, a lunch club which provides meals for the homeless, and the Dean supports the charity in an ambassadorial role. The Cathedral also works with Hope Into Action,¹⁴ a charity that buys houses to use as homes for those in need, including people who have recently left prison and domestic abuse survivors. The Cathedral is working with the charity to buy a house in Bury and provide friendship, training and mentoring for residents.

The Cathedral has made efforts to present itself as a source of wellbeing for the wider community, beyond its regular worshippers. It has previously printed leaflets advertising wellbeing activities including lunchtime recitals, choral evensong, silent meditations, and mindfulness. Staff viewed these activities as a way to invite the local community to participate in the Cathedral without an explicitly religious focus.



Photo credit: St Edmundsbury Cathedral

As one staff member said, ‘cathedrals are safe and neutral spaces which welcome everybody with no judgment’. Another example of outreach to the community is the Young Families group, which aims to support parents, with a focus on wellbeing, parenting, and pastoral care. A Pram Service also took place once a month in 2019. From this emerged a Baptism preparation course which has now developed into “Diddy Disciples”. Staff spoke of how these groups can help to tackle isolation and foster belonging in new parents. Most attendants are not congregation members, so it is a good example of how the Cathedral can provide positive impact to the wider community.

Interviewees reported that schools visit the Cathedral and the Cathedral’s education team also go out into local schools to deliver RE curriculum activities. In particular, the Cathedral has close links with the local Church of England school, with Governors of two local Church of England schools appointed by the Cathedral. Cathedral staff spoke of how they were using this relationship to support pastoral care at the schools, with the aim of increasing attendance, attainment, and wellbeing for local young people. For the past four years, the Cathedral has also run a gap year placement scheme for an organ and choral scholar, in partnership with two local secondary schools. The schools provide the funding and in return the young person provides musical support at the school and Cathedral, while also gaining professional experience.

In 2019 there were approximately 310 volunteers at the Cathedral. These volunteers support the daily operations of the Cathedral in diverse roles including welcomers, shop assistants, flower arrangers, and gardeners, in addition to liturgical support such as wardens and bellringers. Consultees noted that initiatives like the Lego cathedral have been effective at broadening the profile of volunteers: it resulted in 45 new volunteers who came for Lego rather than for religious reasons, but who now volunteer in other areas of the Cathedral. Roughly two-thirds of volunteers live in Bury St Edmunds, with remaining third living elsewhere in Suffolk. Staff reported that volunteers are essential for the running of the Cathedral, and were also confident that their volunteers received a sense of pride, belonging,

¹⁴ <https://www.hopeintoaction.org.uk/>

and responsibility as a result of their involvement. In particular, many volunteers are recent retirees, for whom volunteering can provide purpose and reaffirm skills and experience they have developed during their careers.

More broadly, interviewees reported that the Cathedral makes an important – but hard to quantify – contribution in its role of expressing, framing, and convening the local area. It is the place that the county comes together to grieve and celebrate at times of local and national significance.

Impact of Covid-19

COVID-19 has had a large impact on visitor numbers, with congregations reducing by about two-thirds since services resumed in July 2020 as a result of social distancing requirements. During lockdown the Cathedral began live streaming services and continues to do so, meaning services are accessible to all. Educational outreach activities such as school visits have been postponed, although the Cathedral has been maintaining links with school by asking pupils to send in artwork which they have put on display. The youth group has been convening on Zoom, and the “Diddy Disciples” sessions have continued in a socially distanced manner by meeting on the Cathedral lawn during summer 2020. While various volunteer activities have been halted, interviewees reported that there was a full volunteer rota for December 2020, showing the commitment among the volunteer community to supporting the Cathedral’s reopening.

The Cathedral has also introduced new initiatives to help the local community during COVID-19. During the first lockdown, several staff volunteered at a foodbank and realised that not everyone accessing support had use of cooking facilities. As a result, the Cathedral restaurant began preparing ready meals. The restaurant now produces 100 meals a week which are distributed from five local foodbanks. Meals were also delivered to homeless people being housed by the council during lockdowns.

The Cathedral has also seen key events postponed as a result of COVID. For example, St Edmundsbury Cathedral was part of the organising group for the Abbey 1000 festivities planned to celebrate one thousand years since the founding of the Abbey. This had been due to take place in 2020 but has now been postponed to 2022 due to ongoing COVID-19 restrictions.

1.6 Winchester Cathedral: Case Study

Background

Winchester Cathedral is located in Winchester city centre, a city near the South Coast of England with a population of around 125,000¹⁵. According to interviewees, the Cathedral is perceived to be the major visitor attraction in the city though there is also a strong cultural and shopping offer which encourages tourists to combine a visit to the Cathedral with nearby attractions and amenities. Given the Cathedral's proximity to the High Street, most visitors to the city will come into the perimeter of the Cathedral and its grounds provide a welcome opportunity for shoppers and visitors to relax.



Photo credit: Winchester Cathedral

Winchester was England's first capital city and was regarded as its most important city until the eleventh century. Tourists are therefore particularly interested in Winchester's historical significance, which is a big source of attraction for visitors to the city. In 2019, Winchester Cathedral welcomed a total of 360,000 visitors, of which 126,000 paid an entry fee, with the remaining number accounting for those who attend special services or events such as concerts, graduations, and school visits, as well as returning visitors.¹⁶

Economic impact

Interviewees reported that visitor numbers to the Cathedral have been declining. In order to restore visitor numbers to the levels seen in the mid-late 20th century, Winchester Cathedral recently opened a new "Kings and Scribes" exhibition¹⁷ which aims to leverage the city's historic significance. The exhibition deliberately seeks to engage all

¹⁵ <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/facts-figures/population>

¹⁶ Visitors must purchase a ticket to enter the Cathedral which is valid for a year and allows them an unlimited number of visits within that time period.

¹⁷ <https://www.winchester-cathedral.org.uk/planning-your-visit/kings-and-scribes/>

age groups as part of the Cathedral's wider aims to attract more families and younger visitors. The construction of the Kings and Scribes exhibition was assisted by a £20 million Heritage Lottery Fund grant which also helped to cover the cost of essential repair work. The exhibition opened to the public in 2019 and had a notable impact on visitor numbers.



Photo credit: Winchester Cathedral

Whilst larger projects such as the Kings and Scribes exhibition may entail using suppliers from further afield in order to find the appropriate specialist skills, Winchester Cathedral has its own Works Department (including Stone Masons) which enables them to carry out many essential repairs in house and take on local apprentices in traditional crafts. Most other suppliers which the Cathedral uses are local, from electrical coordinators to fire risk services to their IT company. The main area that the Cathedral outsources is catering, which is run by a national company which uses local produce for the vast majority of stock it sells.

The Cathedral hosts many events throughout the year with the main highlight being the Christmas market which is recognised as one of the best in Europe¹⁸. Funded and run by the Cathedral, the market usually attracts over 400,000 visitors per year generating £250,000-£300,000 for the Cathedral in a typical year, as well as increasing footfall and spending in the local retail and hospitality sectors. Consultees noted that hosting large-scale events also creates an employment benefit in the local community as services such as security, retail, and hospitality are outsourced to local suppliers for special events.

¹⁸<https://christmas.winchester-cathedral.org.uk/exhibitors>



Photo credit: Winchester Cathedral

Winchester Cathedral hosts a number of other events throughout the year which generate income from paying visitors, including concerts, lecture series, schools' carol services, graduations, a Harvest Festival (including a Farmer's Market) and a Flower Festival (held every 2-3 years). Interviewees noted that these events boost the local economy due to visitors coming into the city and spending money as part of a day out.

The Cathedral also works closely with the City Council and Tourism South East to attract tourists into Winchester through trade shows, exhibitions, media, and PR. These often focus on large-scale events and help local businesses to increase their brand presence, such as setting up stalls during the Christmas Market and Harvest Festivals.

The Cathedral is also a very active member of the local Business Improvement District and works collaboratively with local businesses. In particular, they are heavily involved with the Winchester Central Regeneration Scheme which plans to regenerate an area on the other side of the high street as part of a wider goal to increase social diversity and ultimately encourage the working age population to remain in Winchester.

Social impact

Winchester Cathedral organises and runs a number of community initiatives including recurring events such as Tea at 3, which provides a regular space for local residents to socialise, and annual and one-off events such as the Lantern Parade over advent, as well as dedicated carol services for special needs schools across Hampshire. Alongside other churches in the city they support Winchester-based initiatives such as the Night Shelter, Street Pastors and City Centre Chaplaincy.

Whilst the Cathedral does a lot of work in the local community, they do not have a specific outreach project and focus on using their status and resources to provide a platform for others. For example they provide free Christmas market stalls to charities and offer their charity of the year the opportunity to host an evening at the Cathedral for free. In the most recent instance this enabled the charity to raise around £40,000 in one evening. More recently

they are working with Bishops in the Diocese towards a Common Good agenda to expand the type of outreach work undertaken by churches in Winchester, for example by working closely within interfaith communities.



Photo credit: Winchester Cathedral

One of the most prominent ways the Cathedral engages with the local community is through its educational work with children and students. Whilst schools pay a nominal fee for organised visits, the learning officer also undertakes a number of free outreach activities such as art and science sessions. The education and learning team also organises free family events in school holidays such as Christingle making at Christmas and lantern making at Halloween. These events are advertised alongside school visits with the hope that children will want to return to the Cathedral with their parents. Furthermore the Cathedral looks to maintain a close relationship with the Cathedral school, and as such the Dean is the school's Chair of Governors and their Director of Learning is a Governor.

One of the main ways in which Winchester Cathedral is involved with the local community is through its volunteer base. In 2019 Winchester had a volunteer base of between 700-800 individuals, who contributed an estimated total volunteer time of 2,500 hours per week. Each year they receive around 180 applicants despite doing very little active recruitment beyond word-of-mouth, though an annual volunteering showcase event at the Cathedral celebrates the diversity of volunteering roles. Volunteers take on a multitude of tasks particularly in visitor experience, with over 200 slots for guided tours per week.

Although some university students volunteer as a way of bolstering their CVs, there is little diversity within the volunteer base which is reflective of Winchester's ageing population,¹⁹ as over one fifth of residents are aged 65 or over. Most volunteer because doing so gives them a sense of purpose and they want to give back to the community. Volunteering also provides volunteers with a sense of community and friendship in turn benefitting the mental and physical health of many of Winchester's elderly residents.

¹⁹ <https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/facts-figures/population>

Impact of COVID-19

Unsurprisingly, the enforced closure of the Cathedral due to COVID-19 has had a significant impact on visitor numbers, which in 2020 were at around 30% of their 2019 total. Interviewees reported that the Cathedral has seen an even bigger decline in non-paying visitors, as the demographic of those attending services is older and therefore more hesitant to attend in person, even when the Cathedral has been open for services. Despite this, Winchester Cathedral is optimistic that visitor numbers will recover to their 2019 levels within the next couple of years, and has taken encouragement from the fact they managed to reach a wider and more diverse audience through its live streamed online services during the pandemic.

The biggest dent in the Cathedral's annual income was due to the cancellation of the 2020 Christmas market. This also impacted local businesses who usually benefit from increased footfall and visitor spend during the event. The Cathedral usually hires around 100 seasonal staff at Christmas to support the Christmas market, the absence of which has contributed to Winchester Cathedral's total net employment loss of 18%. Although COVID-19 has not forced Winchester to make any redundancies, staff numbers have decreased slightly due to voluntary leavers and a recruitment freeze. Volunteer numbers also fell, as fewer volunteers were required and some needed to self-isolate. There is also some doubt over how many volunteers will chose to return to volunteering following the pandemic, due to health and safety concerns.

The Kings and Scribes exhibition also had to close early due to the pandemic, and the Cathedral hopes that the exhibition will play an important part in attracting visitors back to the Cathedral once it reopens. Due to restrictions on travelling and potentially a reduction in willingness to travel, the Cathedral has focused its digital marketing campaigns on potential visitors within a 45-minute drive, to encourage more local visitors to the city.

The Cathedral also saw most of its educational visits cancelled in 2020. However, the learning department has adapted and are designing resources that can be delivered virtually.