

Issue 1
Summer 2025

Cathedral Matters

News & Views from
Blackburn Cathedral



LATEST NEWS

Updates

what's been happening
at your Cathedral **p4**

IN CONVERSATION

Interview

with John Robinson
Director of Music **p6**

ALL CHANGE

Spotlight

a look at a current
fabric projects **p9**

WHAT'S ON

Events

forthcoming events and
dates for your diary **p11**



GOVERNANCE

Interim Dean Calls For Healing and Reflection

Canon Andrew Horsfall is well known to the Cathedral community having been closely involved here for almost ten years. Ahead of starting his ministry at the Cathedral, he spoke of his commitment to compassion, truth and collaboration.

“ It is clear the Cathedral community needs a period of healing and reflection to understand and interpret the events of recent weeks.



I know we have significant work to do over the coming year to rebuild trust and to put things right. My hope is for that work to be conducted in an atmosphere of respect, compassion, honesty, kindness and prayer: the values of a truly Christian community. I fully support Chapter's willingness

to embrace all the recommendations within the INEQE Safeguarding report. The pathway to improvement, not just of safeguarding - but to the whole Cathedral culture, is clear and is one which we must all pursue together with vigour.

The cathedral community is experiencing difficult times and my commitment to you all is to provide encouragement and pastoral support in any way I can. We all have a part to play in this journey of renewal and whatever your role I hope you will see this as an opportunity to come together in fellowship and enable each other to flourish. ”

With my prayers and warmest greetings.

The Revd. Canon Andrew Horsfall
Interim Dean of Blackburn

GET IN TOUCH

Contact Canon Andrew Horsfall via email:
interimdean@blackburncathedral.co.uk

Get in touch

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blackburncathedral.com/newsletter

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INEQE REPORT

Decisive Action in Response to Safeguarding Report

Blackburn Cathedral has accepted in full all the recommendations of an independent safeguarding audit report and is taking decisive action in response.

The audit was carried out by INEQE Safeguarding Group as part of a rolling programme across The Church of England to be completed by 2028 and involving all dioceses.

The audit makes a number of important recommendations, which the Cathedral has accepted in full. We have already taken swift action to address the most urgent of these, including:

- Partnership with the Diocese for the management of safeguarding casework.
- Appointment of two new members of Chapter with safeguarding experience.
- Planning for the establishment of an independent Safeguarding Improvement Board.
- Transferring all case records to the National Safeguarding Case Management System.
- Proactively seeking professional partnerships with other statutory bodies.

The INEQE Independent Safeguarding Audit identifies 28 recommendations for the Cathedral, covering leadership, governance, case-management, recruitment, communications and culture.

In addition, it makes a number of recommendations about how the safeguarding provision can be improved across the Diocese.

LEARN MORE

The INEQE audit report can be found in full at:
blackburncathedral.com/ineqe

To see safeguarding resources and to report a concern visit:
blackburncathedral.com/safeguarding

RESPONSE

A Fresh Approach

Meetings were held with the congregation on the 13th and 20th of July.

The first, held in the Builders' Yard, was attended by Chapter members **Keith Roberts** and **Janet Thomas**, the Senior Non-Executive Member. The second took place in the South Transept with the **Rt Revd. Philip North**, Bishop of Blackburn in attendance.

Both meetings featured extended times for questions and responses, with robust and honest dialogue. This kind of open engagement marks an important step in the cultural shift we are seeking to deliver within the life of the Cathedral.

One theme that emerged from the feedback we received, was the need to improve communication and to that end, we have launched this regular publication as one of a number of ways we intend to strengthen how information is shared with our communities.

NEXT MEETING

Sunday 21st Sept at 12pm

UPDATE

News in Brief

Here's what has been happening in and around the Cathedral community.

Annual Cathedral Weekend Away

Members of the Cathedral community recently spent time together at our **annual weekend away** at the Stonyhurst Christian Retreat Centre.



Along with enjoying social time together, they were guided by Revd Leah Vasey-Saunders as they reflected on change - its challenges and its deep potential for renewal. We thank Leah for leading us so gently through the weekend and to those who came and made it such a special time together.

Pilgrim Cellist

We welcomed **Kenneth Wilson**, the 'Pilgrim Cellist', to Blackburn Cathedral for the penultimate stop of his mammoth cycling pilgrimage where he played at all 42 cathedrals. Not only



did he cycle to each one, he did so with a cello strapped to his bike! The performance of his special meditation will long be remembered by all in attendance.

Knife Bench Unveiled

Apprentices from **WEC Group** unveiled a very special bench made from 127 surrendered knives, collected from knife surrender bins across Lancashire. The young apprentices were in charge of the design and manufacture of the bench which is now on display in the South Transept and all are welcome to come and view it and learn more about the project.



The bench was installed during Knife Crime Awareness Week and will serve as a lasting reminder of the dangers of knife crime. The project was delivered in partnership with Lancashire Violence Reduction Network during 'Operation Sceptre', an initiative aimed at tackling knife crime through prevention, education, and enforcement.

Festival of Making

Blackburn Cathedral was once again a host venue for the annual

National Festival of Making.

We welcomed thousands of guests who enjoyed the ever-popular Makers Market, art installations and exhibitions.



Visitors were also able to take part in workshops and craft demonstrations and enjoyed fascinating talks and presentations. Many of those visiting had never been to the Cathedral before and it was a wonderful opportunity for our team of welcomers to engage with new faces and share more about the building and our heritage as well as encouraging future visits.

Observation Wheel

Cathedral Square played host to the UK's largest transportable **observation wheel**, offering riders incredible views over Blackburn Cathedral and beyond. The 50m high ride was popular with visitors and was hosted by Blackburn With Darwen Council.



Cathedral Music Trust Visit

Jonathan Mayes, the CEO of Cathedral Music Trust, visited us as part of an epic cycling pilgrimage, visiting over 100 choirs across England and Wales in just 50 days.



During this unenviable challenge, Jonathan will cover 2,700 miles, raising much-needed funds for cathedral music along the way.

Volunteer of the Year Awards

Blackburn Cathedral Archivist **Sue Hall** was named runner up in the first ever English Cathedrals Volunteer of the Year Awards. Congratulations Sue from all at Blackburn Cathedral.

'Wish You Were Here' Summer Campaign

The **Association of English Cathedrals** launched their summer campaign inviting visitors to make cathedrals part of their story this summer. Free 'Wish You Were Here' postcards

are available in every cathedral so that guests can send them to family and friends as they capture magic moments. There are selfie portrait frames for people to share their memorable cathedral stories on their social media with posts or videos using the hashtag #WishYouWereHere

Blackburn Rovers Kit Launch

The Nave at Blackburn Cathedral was the location for a special photoshoot as players from **Blackburn Rovers** modelled the club's brand new away shirt ahead of its pre-season launch.



The shirt, described as a 'love letter to the town', takes inspiration from - and is adorned with illustrations of - the most iconic landmarks across Blackburn with Darwen, including the Railway Station, Corporation Park, Darwen Tower, Wainwright Bridge and of course the Cathedral.

Cathedral Archives

The Cathedral Archives have received a major upgrade thanks

to the expertise of **Armour Systems** who have generously supported us with the installation of state-of-the-art storage and document protection facilities in the Undercroft.

New Summer Trails Launched

Two new **Summer Trails** have been launched in time for the holiday season. The Cathedral is a popular destination for people during the school break and we welcome many younger guests during this time.



The trail for younger children takes them on a journey through the building as they hunt for animals. The other is craft-themed and is more suited to older children whilst giving an insight into interesting elements of the Christian faith. There is also a stained glass art competition where entrants can win prizes, kindly donated by Waterstones.

LEARN MORE

See our latest news at:
blackburncathedral.com/blog

In Conversation with John Robinson, Director of Music

Playing a key role in shaping the musical life at the Cathedral, he leads the Cathedral's choirs, oversees the music programme and is a passionate advocate for the power of sacred music.



Why is music so important to the life of a cathedral and Blackburn in particular?

Music is so important. Primarily because many people find religious expression in music in a way that is harder to do with just words alone. Music takes people to an emotional place beyond just text and so the job of any choir is to make the praying more beautiful, more holy or to go emotionally beyond what the words can.

Oh... and to inspire people to sing!

There's a real sense in which as a cathedral choir we're helping the congregation both to listen and to express themselves through their own voices. I believe the philosophy we have in terms of children finding their own voices and growing in themselves is something that can be transferred to the adult congregation and the worshipping life of the Cathedral.

What makes the musical offering here so distinctive?

What we do well here is champion individual singers and emphasise the fact that we all sound different. People have larger and smaller voices but because we have a really big building to fill acoustically, our philosophy as a choir is that we are never afraid of singing loudly and that helps people find their voices.

You've been here since 2019, what initially attracted you to the role at Blackburn Cathedral?

Blackburn was famous at the time for having an outstanding music outreach programme called 'Sing Together' (now 'Let's Go Sing') run by the fantastic Gill Fourie, who also ran our Lantern Voices Junior Choir, which I am very keen to resurrect. It gave access to over 4,000 local children from all walks of life and the opportunity to be able to potentially create beautiful church music with all those kids, was something of a dream position. And then there's the acoustic!

The fact that the Cathedral has such a beautiful echo means that when you teach young people to sing in it, the building itself gives back. In turn they gain confidence and you soon realise that you're on a social mission as well as a musical one.

You've worked with choirs in many settings. What do you find special about working with young people in our Cathedral context?

It's a huge privilege to work with our children and it really gives me energy to be able to go into rehearsals and hear their excitement at coming at new music for the first time. We have a really open culture in which they say whatever is on their minds about what we're singing so there's a connectivity there across generations. Obviously I'm several generations older in terms of being a singer, but to be able to hear it afresh is really invigorating for me.

I find that when the red light goes on and we're live on BBC Radio 3, the children are completely reliable because somehow they focus really well under pressure and they're totally calm, while I am a bag of nerves! The discipline thing is really interesting because I think in days gone by there was a sense in which you sort of did everything reverently and silently whereas now I find that the music is actually a discipline in itself. And they really get that. They hear the music and they want to do it well and that can only come from a natural self-discipline that can't really be imposed.

In your experience, what difference does being a chorister make to a child?

Aside from things like music theory, children find they learn all sorts of transferable skills, particularly around organisation and being part of a team. A lot of what we do in the choir is about listening and learning to hear

other people's qualities and to compliment them. And they're all from different schools, so they get to meet other children who have similar interests and most of them develop strong friendships outside choir as well.

What would you say to a child (or their parent) who might be interested in joining the choir?

The most important thing is they must have some kind of enjoyment of music - and that can be of any style. They don't have to have any experience, we don't expect them to be amazing singers on day one or to be able to read music. We teach all that so what we're really looking for is their commitment and a willingness for parents to bring them here until such time that it becomes a joy for them, and just being here is what the child really looks forward to each week.

Finally, what keeps you inspired in your role, day to day?

That's easy... it's the sound that the choristers make when they sing. It could be a midweek Evensong and you'll hear the most beautiful sounds from these young people in service to the Cathedral, in the community and in worship.

It's really inspiring to hear them develop, grow in confidence and see their journey from when they're really young and often timid, to when they're older, having gained musical confidence. Recently we said goodbye to some of our leaving choristers. One of them had been in the choir for 12 years and to have heard her trajectory from the start to the mature, poised and confident singer that she's become has been truly inspirational.

LEARN MORE

Find out more at:
blackburncathedral.com/music

GET INVOLVED

Find Your Place With Us

Life as we know it at Blackburn Cathedral simply wouldn't be possible without the help of our team of dedicated volunteers and there is a place for you to join them on our team.

We rely greatly upon the generous contributions made by volunteers who come from our regular congregations and from the wider community.



Opportunities exist for suitable volunteers to help within the life and service of the Cathedral such as welcoming guests and work undertaken in support of visits by schools, churches, pilgrims and tourist groups.

Volunteering can be a way of using your gifts or a means of developing new skills and some of the roles on offer include:

- Stewarding at services or concerts
- Joining the education team
- Becoming a volunteer Virger
- Becoming a tour guide
- Cathedral Server
- Bell ringing
- Cleaning the Cathedral or gardening around the site
- Joining a choir

LEARN MORE

Find out more and request further information at:
blackburncathedral.com/volunteer

Why Volunteer?

Our volunteering opportunities aim to be fun, sociable and beneficial to experiencing new things. There are many other benefits to volunteering at Blackburn Cathedral including:

- Gaining experience of working in a unique heritage environment
- Contributing to the ongoing success of the Cathedral and individual events
- Hands-on experience that provides transferrable skills
- Meeting people from a wide variety of locations and walks of life
- Working alongside knowledgeable staff
- An opportunity to showcase your unique talents
- Supporting us as we make a difference to our guests
- Be part of our story, discover your own and have fun!

We fully recognise the value volunteers bring to our organisation and the time and commitment they give to all areas of our operation and for which we are extremely grateful.

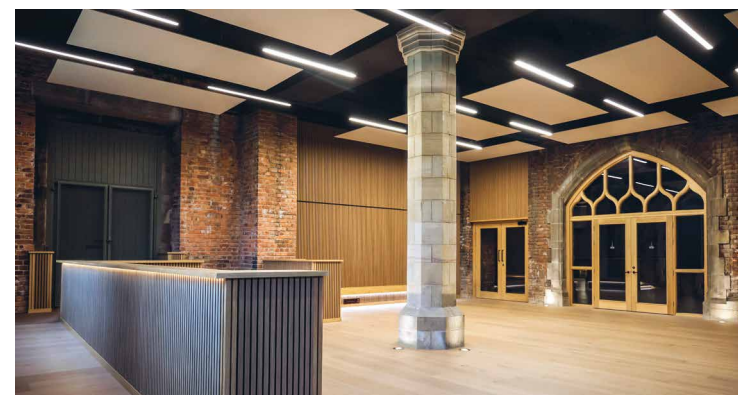
FABRIC

Completion of Crypt Project Delivers New Opportunities

The major redevelopment project that has transformed the Crypt, will help form the central part of our commercial strategy.

Over the past 12 months major works have been undertaken in the Cathedral Crypt to convert this under-utilised space into a unique, atmospheric and flexible space suitable for a variety of events including receptions, parties, banquets, concerts, education events and exhibitions.

The creation of different areas within the space maximises the potential for it to become a busy and popular venue for businesses, community groups and private functions alike. The aim of this key Centenary project is to ensure the Crypt becomes a central resource for the town and the wider region.



Featuring a new bar and commercial kitchen, state-of-the-art lighting, acoustic panelling, improved access and complete redecoration, the project's lead contractor was David Holmes Construction, a company from Clitheroe with heritage buildings experience. Many skilled local tradespeople have contributed extensively to help bring the vision to completion.

This large scale project has benefitted considerably from the expertise of Louise Priestman, the Cathedral Architect, and the Fabric Advisory Committee. Funding and support has been received from a number of key partners including Blackburn Cathedral Appeal Trust, The Benefact Trust, Garfield Weston Foundation, Blackburn with Darwen Council and other charitable donors to whom we extend our grateful thanks.

FABRIC

West End Lobby Update

Detailed plans for the remodelling of the West End Lobby have now been completed.



The objective of this Centenary project is to improve accessibility and provide an energy-efficient solution that reflects the Cathedral's values of welcome and generous hospitality. The design will ensure visitors who enter via the existing West Doors are met with an uninterrupted view of the splendour of the interior that awaits them.

Delivering a modern, accessible configuration incorporating under floor heating and improved information display, it will also offer protection from the excesses of the Lancashire climate and in turn, improve our energy efficiency.

We are now awaiting the necessary approval from the relevant authorities in order to proceed, whilst actively seeking funding from a variety of sources in the hope that this project will be completed in the first quarter of 2026.

APPOINTMENTS

New Faces at the Cathedral

We welcome two new members to Chapter and detail the latest arrivals and changes to the Cathedral team.

Chapter

Chapter has welcomed two new members:

Naomi Healey is headteacher at St. John's CofE Primary School in Cliviger and a governor at St James CofE Primary in Burnley, where she leads on safeguarding and PE. Naomi is involved in her local church where she has served as a church warden, led Sunday School and was the organist for 25 years. She is also involved in scouting and holds the Queens Scout Award and is the Beaver Scout Leader at 2nd Ramsbottom Scout Group.



Jayne Jenks is a passionate advocate for Christian Education and for enhancing the culture within communities so all children, young people and adults may flourish. Having recently retired as Headteacher of a CofE Secondary Academy, she now supports schools as an associate school adviser in the Diocesan Board of Education Services team. Jayne worships at Christchurch, Parbold where she is also a member of the PCC.



Departures

We recently said goodbye to three members of our team - Safeguarding Adviser **Jenny Price** stepped back from her role after 6 years with us.

Music Administrator **Abigail Birch-Price** who had been with us since October 2023, has left to take up a full time position at the Diocese of Liverpool.

Checks & Greys Shift Supervisor **Gareth Jones** has also moved on to pastures new. We thank them all and wish them the very best for the future.

Cathedral Team

Susan Connor joined as Finance Officer for Blackburn Cathedral Enterprises. She is responsible for core bookkeeping tasks and supporting the Cathedral's commercial activities including Checks & Greys Café, events, catering and merchandising.



Sarah Bell joins Blackburn Cathedral Enterprises as Hospitality and Events Coordinator where she will support the smooth running of café operations while also planning and delivering catering and hospitality for internal and external events.



Music Department Administrator Vacancy

The Music Department is looking to appoint a **Music and Liturgy Administrator** to join their small but creative team. They are seeking an efficient administrator who will be flexible and willing to help develop the position organically, as our ministry evolves.

The successful applicant will enjoy using their initiative and inspiring positivity in those around them as they help promote the work of the department effectively with a range of internal and external stakeholders.

If someone you know may be interested in this role, please feel free to share the details.

See full details and apply at: blackburncathedral.com/vacancies

DIARY DATES

Highlights This Season

We host a wide range of events that bring people together and we strive to offer something for everyone. Here are some highlights between now and November:



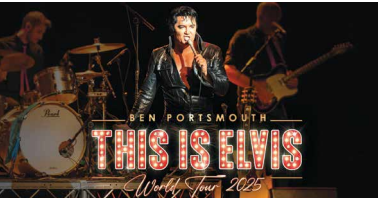
Cathedral Community BBQ
Sun 7th Sep 2025 | 12pm
blackburncathedral.com/bbq



Appeal Trust: Charity Golf Day
Wed 10th Sep 2025 | 11.30am
blackburncathedral.com/golf



Council of Nicaea Conference
Fri 12th & Sat 13th Sept 2025
blackburncathedral.com/nicaea



Ben Portsmouth: This is Elvis
Fri 26th Sept 2025 | 7.30pm
blackburncathedral.com/elvis



Everything Under The Sun
Sat 27th Sept 2025 | 7.30pm
blackburncathedral.com/everything



British Textile Biennial 2025
Thu 2nd Oct - Sun 2nd Nov 2025
britishtextilebiennial.co.uk



Gaia: Daytime Viewing
6th Oct - 16th Nov 2025
blackburncathedral.com/gaia-day



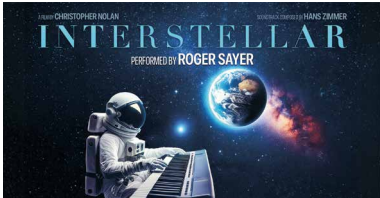
Gaia: Evening Viewing
6th Oct - 16th Nov 2025
blackburncathedral.com/gaia-evening



Events Under Gaia
6th Oct - 16th Nov 2025
blackburncathedral.com/gaia-events



Gin & Rum Festival
Sat 18th Oct 2025 | 12.15pm & 6pm
blackburncathedral.com/ginrum



Hans Zimmer's Interstellar
Fri 24th Oct 2025 | 7.30pm
blackburncathedral.com/interstellar



Creation Care Conference
Fri 31st Oct & Sat 1st Nov 2025
blackburncathedral.com/creation



Experience earth like never before

Explore Luke Jerram's Gaia
at Blackburn Cathedral from
6th October - 16th November.

blackburncathedral.com/gaia

