



## **Blackburn Cathedral Chapter Annual Report, 2019**

### Welcomes and farewells

The life of any Cathedral is continually marked by arrivals and departures, and 2019 was no exception for Blackburn. We were delighted to welcome Mr John Robinson, who took up his post on 1 September 2019 as Director of Music, in place of Mr Samuel Hudson. Mr Adrian Phillips left his post as part-time Finance Manager with our warm thanks for his careful attention to the Cathedral finances, and we were pleased to welcome Mr Gary Bullock in his place. Mrs Sharon Grayston left her post as Executive Director on 31 October on the completion of the Church Commission funding for that post. She had been involved in all aspects of the Cathedral's business, especially the preparation of the Strategic Plan. Instead, the Church Commissioners will fund the post of Commercial Director for three years from 1 January 2020.

We were sorry to lose two lay members of the Chapter during the year, Ms Kate Thompson and Judge James Prowse, and glad to welcome Lady Alton as a member from 1 November 2019. Canon Colin Williams kindly took up the role of Acting Canon Sacrist for six months before leaving because of ill health. The Venerable Michael Everitt left his post as Archdeacon for Lancaster to become Canon Pastor at Durham Cathedral, and a special Evensong took place in November to thank him for the many contributions he had made to the life and work of the Diocese and the Cathedral.

### Governance, finance and buildings

The Chapter, using the revised form of its Constitution and Statutes, was glad to appoint Dr Rowena Pailing, Canon Missioner, as the Vice-Dean with effect from 18 September 2019, adding a further role to her already full portfolio.

The Chapter continued to work with Mr Charles Hobson on the Cathedral's *Strategic Plan 2019-24*, including the rebranding of the Cathedral with a new visual identity. The formal launch of the Plan took place on Sunday 15 September, and the implementation phase can now begin. The purpose is about a Cathedral that is open to all and that, in telling the story of Jesus Christ, seeks to help people encounter God through worship and service to the community. The Plan focuses on mission and engagement, welcome and hospitality, buildings and heritage, worship and prayer, finance and stewardship, the Bishop and Diocese, and growth in faith.

In the autumn the Chapter agreed to the establishment of Blackburn Cathedral Enterprises, which will be the vehicle for the commercial arm of the Cathedral's activities. During the

year the association of Café Northcote with the Cathedral came to an end, and the cafe was handed over to the management of an entrepreneurial husband and wife team, Matthew and Jo Hunter.

The Cathedral's finances continue to be centre stage at all Chapter meetings. Expenditure is closely monitored, and the principal challenge is the generation of new net income in order to reduce and remove the annual deficit and build back financial strength. A Financial Improvement Plan, introduced in May 2019, identified several areas where additional revenue should be sought, including the Life Treasury and Cathedra Gin. The Cathedral has been greatly helped by the agreement of the Church Commissioners to fund the post of a fulltime Commercial Director for three years with effect from 1 January 2020. We are indebted to Ms Carol Fletcher, Senior Financial Planner at Church House in London, and Anthony O'Connor, Director of Fundraising and Development at Manchester Cathedral, for their willingness to come to Blackburn and give us the benefit of their insights and advice.

Negotiations on the financial settlement of the Cathedral Court development have continued under the chairmanship of Mr Keith Roberts. Blackburn Cathedral Developments were pleased to conclude an agreement with John Turner and Sons for the settlement of the main contract, and progress was made towards constructive discussions with the insurers of the construction engineers for the project. We expect those to be concluded during 2020. The letting or remodelling of Church House continues to be under discussion. The HLF project for the Crypt has been suspended. Although maintenance work in that area means that the Crypt can be used for some Cathedral purposes while its longer-term future is under consideration.

Mr James Sanderson completed the annual quinquennial inspection and twice came to the Chapter to report on his findings. While there is always work outstanding on an historical building of significance, Blackburn is fortunate that the underlying structure is basically sound and well cared for. We were pleased to have a new flagpole, complete with mitre, that was funded by the Blackburn Cathedral Trust. A new sound system has been identified as long overdue, and estimates for the work were received and discussed.

The Friends of Blackburn Cathedral Council continues its active role in support of the Cathedral. A newsletter is published twice a year, and three lunchtime talks are given. At the May AGM the Dean spoke about new Cathedral initiatives, and close liaison has taken place with him about redevelopment projects that can draw on a number of large legacies. Immediate actions included the provision of 30 pew Bibles, some i.t. support, and a short-term loan to the Cathedral, and longer-term discussions include the possibilities of contributing to upgrading the sound system and to the refurbishment of the Jesus Chapel. Intensive preparations are under way for the 2020 Flower Festival in June, building on the success of the 2016 festival and benefitting from the involvement of the same core team of people. There are opportunities for people from across the Diocese to act as stewards throughout the festival.

### Cathedral life and learning

For our new Director of Music, all music is God's creation and worship in such an intentional way, in a beautiful building with willing singers, is a great privilege. He seeks to build on the emotional connections of music with the Cathedral community, and to use mistakes as a form of learning while striving for perfection. His initial focus is on the social association of the Cathedral's singers across all its choirs and their members, towards a shared mission that

leads by example and earns respect, building on the culture of mutual encouragement that already exists. The proposed mobile Cathedral is one opportunity, including the possibility of taking the Cathedral choirs out to the parishes. Dependant on funding, there could be a Diocesan Organists' Training Scheme, and an Organ Outreach Scheme.

The Music Department includes the Sing Together staff, who build strong connections with local schools, making recruitment of choristers much easier. The team has wonderful ideas about writing some contemporary Christian hymnody for use by the children of the county, leading to greater awareness of the Cathedral's liturgical life into the Sing Together schools. The department supported Crisis, the national charity for the homeless, and raised £580 by performances of their annual carol. It also engaged in a Coat Drive, and assisted the Blackburn Food Bank with the movement of stock.

This year the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral Music have continued in their key mission of supporting the Cathedral's Music. FOBCM has helped sponsor the cost of Orchestral Players for events such as the Christmas Spectacular and the Patronal Festival, and they have helped cover the costs of various publicity initiatives, and various needs of choristers. Although they are currently without a Chairman, they continue in their work of supporting the Cathedral's music.

The safeguarding work of the Cathedral, has been strengthened with the support of the Canon Missioner who took lead responsibility during the independent audit by the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) in mid-October. The Chapter and the Safeguarding Management Group used the forthcoming exercise as an opportunity to review all aspects of the Cathedral's safeguarding policy, implementation and practice. The audit was a positive experience, highlighting some areas for consideration, none of which was a surprise. The report, which is at final draft form, reflects the positive culture change in safeguarding that has taken place over the last two years. It sets the challenge of how change can be fully embedded and continually improved through effective quality assurance.

The Cathedral has simplified its substantive safeguarding policy by the adoption of the House of Bishops' *Promoting a Safer Church* (2017), with an executive summary for easy reference, while retaining its existing policy as supplementary material. A Cathedral Safeguarding Adviser has been appointed, who will provide professional advice to the Cathedral on safeguarding and liaise with the Blackburn Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser. The Cathedral is also participating in the Past Cases Review<sup>2</sup>, building on a previous exercise in 2007-09, but this time including the abuse of adults, and ensuring that the voices of survivors are heard. The Cathedral is committed to the principles of *Promoting a Safer Church*, and to the paramount importance of the welfare of children, young persons and vulnerable adults, supported by processes and values that support those principles.

The Education Department, working on the basis of doing as much as possible on a two-day a week appointment, has shown steady growth. Visitor numbers rose to 1769 (2018: 1416), while income increased by 48% to £5917 (2018: £4011). While the department operates to provide a service to the schools of the Diocese and region, the content of the visits has moved to incorporate more hands-on activity by pupils and opportunities to embrace the essence of Christian faith and what it might mean in their lives. Evaluation responses about visits have been strongly positive. The Spirituality Day for Preesall School took place for the sixth time, while a form of it was successfully extended to St Michael's Chorley. The intention is to use September as the month in which to develop some annual events to offer to Key Stage 3/4 groups.

The seven flower arrangers, who work on a rota, often find themselves talking to visitors and feel themselves to be sharing in the Cathedral's welcome. Although by tradition there are no flowers during Advent or Lent, extra help is always welcome at Christmas and Easter. Flowers are discounted by a local florist, and their cost is supported by individual donations and the Friends of Blackburn Cathedral. Greenery is provided by the arrangers, and can be scarce, so offerings of that will be warmly received.

The Sunday School, supported by the Canon Missioner, enjoyed a fruitful year, with a buoyant team of teachers and assistants and regular planning meetings. The school uses Diocesan resources that follow the lectionary, enabling its children to join in with the rest of the congregation. They have undertaken readings at the 10.30 a.m. Eucharist with confidence and joy, and joined children from local schools at the Christmas Eve crib service. There was a summer picnic in the Cathedral garth, donations to the Harvest offerings, and a pizza party at new year. Ideas for further growth and greater regular attendance are most welcome.

Ringling at the Cathedral has shown good attendance for the Sunday Eucharist, with an increase from 14 to 24 in the number of mornings when all ten bells were rung. Regular Thursday practices have been well supported, albeit with a few cancellations. There was a special visit to Liverpool Cathedral, giving people an opportunity to ring on the heaviest bells in the world. Bells were rung for two weddings, and for the memorial ringing on 11 November, and the ringers managed four quarter peals and one full peal. Members of the Cathedral band have also supported the Blackburn Branch of the Lancashire Association.

#### And finally ...

The Cathedral has enjoyed a year of intensive activity, supported by the staff of the Cathedral's departments, its vergers and office staff, and its many volunteers. The Chapter extends its deepest gratitude to all those who contribute to the life and work of the Cathedral community and make it the special heart of Blackburn Diocese.

The Very Revd Peter Howell-Jones (Dean)  
The Revd Canon Dr Rowena Pailing (Canon Missioner; Vice-Dean)  
The Rt Revd Philip North (residential canon; part-time)  
The Revd Canon Andrew Horsfall (Canon Pastor; part-time)  
The Revd Canon Andrew Sage (College of Canons)  
Lady Alton (lay member)  
Mrs Marion McClintock (lay member)  
Mr Paul Mason (lay member)  
Mr Keith Roberts (lay member)

February 2020