



## Chair's Report 2025

As you will see from the Financial Report, the Charity (The Friends of Guildford Cathedral) had a total income of about £29,161 last year, of which £14,500 came from legacies. Our total expenditure was nearly £72,000 including grants to the Cathedral of £60,477 which amounts to a deficit of £42,733.

As our Treasurer, Mike Bishop has explained, we made this up out of our investments which he has worked hard to organise in such a way that we can make better use of them for the benefit of the Cathedral.

Our costs are made up of the salary paid to our Secretary, Yvette Wright, the cost of mailing and associated office costs and the preparation of our Accounts by Helen ML Lee. Because postage is now very expensive, we are trying to encourage members to use email. I am pleased to say that the vast majority now do use email, and we have been able to send out our regular Newsletters, other correspondence pertaining to Friends' news, social events and AGM documents in this way.

We have about 300 members. Yvette has been working to contact them all by phone, letter or email to ensure we have their up-to-date contact details. It is clear however, that the present position will become unsustainable unless we can find more funds through increased subscriptions and fundraising. We cannot rely on legacies.

I have visited several Cathedrals this year including Peterborough, Norwich, Lincoln and Salisbury, and have found that they are all finding the financial landscape difficult particularly since Covid, so we are not alone in this.

Our main fundraising event is the Friends' Christmas Tombola held at the Cathedral's Christmas Fair that takes place on two days at the end of November. Many thanks go to the superb efforts of two Trustees Shirley-Margaret Lloyd and Pauline Read over many years. The Christmas tombola raised more last year than ever before all of which went to the Cathedral. For many years they have both worked enormously hard organising social events for the Friends and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them both immensely for their hard work and dedication to the Friends.

We must also mention that Trustees Jonathan Neil-Smith and Shirley-Margaret Lloyd left the Board in October 2024. John Austin left the Board recently. We are pleased to welcome Dr Roshan Varghese to the Board. Pauline Read will be leaving the Board at the 2025 AGM. We are always looking for more Trustees; if you would like to know more about how to become a Trustee, please contact me, or our Secretary, Yvette Wright.

I have been asked how we distribute funds to the Cathedral. Before each Board Meeting (held three times a year) we receive from Matt O'Grady, COO of the Cathedral, a request for money to pay for things for the Cathedral (This is known as the "Application for Grant to The Chapter of Guildford Cathedral") Matt usually attends our meetings when we question him further on what we have been asked to give. When Matt has left the meeting, the Trustees discuss whether we have sufficient funds and whether the request meets the purposes of the charity which are set out in the Trustees' report and which are:

- to advance the Christian religion for the benefit of the public in accordance with the statutes affecting the Cathedral,
- To provide furnishings, embellishments and equipment for the Cathedral,
- To advance education of the public in religious fabric and assisting in the maintenance of the Cathedral.

The Friends have been able to support the Cathedral by paying for the rental of temporary video screens set up in the Nave during the Christmas periods (2023 & 2024) so that the congregation can properly see and enjoy the larger festive services. We had very good feedback from the congregation who particularly enjoyed being able to see the organist at work.

We have also purchased a new iPad for the Dean, Bob Cooper, and made a grant towards refurbishment of the Cathedral offices and repairs in the Cafe and for the salary for a Family Engagement Officer.

We are trying to develop a social programme for the Friends. In the last year we have had a talk on computer scams from AgeUK Surrey and a coach trip to Salisbury Cathedral to see their flower festival last month. We welcomed the Friends of St Edmundsbury Cathedral in September. We are planning a talk in November from a local historian and will be seeking interest for a coach trip to Wintershall for their Christmas Nativity. Angela Townshend will be telling us about a proposal for a luncheon club.

If you have any ideas for future events and/or fundraising activities, please do contact us and I would like to thank you all for attending and for your support.

Joy Allen, Chair Friends of Guildford Cathedral

[joy.allen@btinternet.com](mailto:joy.allen@btinternet.com)