



Chair's Report 2026

Financial Situation

As you will see from the Financial Report, the Friends of Guildford Cathedral (Charity No. 250402) was able to continue its support for the Cathedral despite the difficult financial situation. The Social Committee raised £2960 from social activities and grants of £56,760 were made in the year.

However, our income does not cover our outgoings, and this has resulted in a deficit of which was covered out of reserves and would have been larger were it not for legacies received.

Our costs are made up of the salary paid to our secretary, Yvette Wright, the cost of mailing, associated office costs and the preparation of our Accounts. Because postage is now very expensive, we prefer to communicate with our members by email by sending out regular news and AGM documents this way. I notice that other Cathedral Friends' charities are now doing the same.

We have about 300 members. Yvette Wright has been working to contact them all and keep our records up to date.

However, the present position will become unsustainable unless we can find more funds through increased subscriptions and fundraising. We cannot solely rely on legacies, and a decision has been made to increase our subscriptions from this year. We now have two categories for new members to choose from, an individual membership of £25.00 and a joint membership rate of £40.00 (two people from the same household). We have begun the process of implementing these new rates, and existing members will be contacted in the coming months to revise their payments.

Fundraising

Our main fundraising event is running the Tombola at the Cathedral Christmas Fair, which takes place over two days at the end of November (for 2026 this is 20 & 21 November). Thanks to the superb efforts of our donors and those who helped over the 2 days, the 2025 Christmas Tombola raised more than ever before - all of which went to the Cathedral. I would like to thank all those who donated, including the local companies in and around Guildford and other members of the congregation. We are lucky to have such generous supporters.

Social Events

Afternoon Tea and Talk

In November we held an afternoon Tea and Talk event in Seasons. David Rose, local historian, was our guest speaker who talked about Surrey villages. We all enjoyed an excellent talk from David and a lovely afternoon tea was provided by Seasons. This was very well attended, with good feedback. We are planning another tea and talk on 1 December 2026. Details to follow.

Trip to Chichester Cathedral, 4 June, cancelled

After the success of the Salisbury Flower Festival Trip in May 2025, we had hoped to arrange a visit to Chichester Cathedral & the Festival of Flowers in June this year. Unfortunately, there was insufficient interest to take this forward. The cost of coach hire has become very expensive, and it is essential that we have enough people to fill a coach to cover costs.

Similarly, it was felt too expensive to arrange a coach visit to the Wintershall Nativity. Many members have expressed a preference for daytime activities at the Cathedral, and we are looking into this.

RHS Wisley Gardens

We are considering a visit to RHS Wisley. Date and details not yet known.

Monthly Lunch Club

A great success has been our Monthly Lunch Club. This was set up a year ago by Angela Townsend. We meet, generally on the first Sunday in the month at a different pub or restaurant, in locations within easy reach of the Cathedral. The Sunday roast is the most popular choice of food! These lunches are for Friends as well as those who are not members of the Friends of Guildford Cathedral. Yvette Wright (Secretary) sends Friends details of the lunches each month by email. The event is also advertised in the Notice section of the Cathedral's Order of Service.

If you have ideas for other social or fundraising events. Please let us know.

Trustees

Pauline Read retired at last year's AGM and Mary Morris resigned earlier this year. They have both worked very hard for many years and we are very grateful for everything they have done. We have welcomed Dr Roshan Varghese to the Board. We also welcomed our new Dean, the Very Rev Bob Cooper as an ex officio member of the Board.

We are always looking for more Trustees to join us. If you are interested, please contact me or our Secretary Yvette Wright. It is not a large commitment and very worthwhile to be helping to support the Cathedral. We also welcomed our new Dean, the Very Rev Bob Cooper as an ex officio member of the Board.

Board Meetings are held three times a year. We discuss and plan our social and fundraising events and decide if we have sufficient funds to meet the Application for Grant to Chapter. We would consider if the request from Chapter meets the purposes of the Charity, which are:

- to Advance 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.

We have met with the Cathedral's new professional fundraiser, Owen Collins, and have been asked to fund the continuing role of the Family Engagement Officer for a further period. We are waiting to hear about the Cathedral's plan for the future which will reform our fundraising activities.

If you have and suggestions for future events, please do contact me or Yvette Wright.

This has been a difficult year for the Cathedral with many changes of personnel among the clergy and the staff, but we will continue to support the Cathedral and pray that the new plan for the future will bear fruit.

Joy Allen, Chair Friends of Guildford Cathedral

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