



GUILDFORD  
CATHEDRAL

# VISION AND STRATEGY CONSULTATION 2025—2026



# HOPE AND VISION — YOUR VOICE COUNTS

## **A Letter to Our Cathedral Community Concerning Guildford Cathedral Vision and Strategy Consultation 2025—2026**

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We write to you today with great excitement and anticipation as we embark on a significant journey together – the development of a new five-year vision and strategic plan for Guildford Cathedral that will guide us from 2026 to 2030. This is not merely an administrative exercise, but a profound opportunity to discern God's will for our beloved Cathedral and to listen carefully to the voice of the Holy Spirit in our midst.



## **A Spirit-Led Process**

This vision and strategy development is not something we undertake in our own strength or wisdom alone. From the very beginning, we are grounding this work in prayer and theological reflection, recognising that any meaningful direction for our Cathedral must emerge from a deep discernment of God's calling for us in this place and time. We invite you to join us in prayer throughout this process, that we might be attentive to the Spirit's leading and faithful to the mission entrusted to us. As a guide, the precis of the theology that we believe underpins our initiative is included as an appendix to this letter. If you wish to read the whole theological document, a copy can be found on our website or in the cathedral.

## **Your Voice Matters**

How do we envisage this invitation working out? At the heart of this process lies a fundamental truth: every voice matters. Whether you are a member of staff, a volunteer, a regular worshipper, a Chapter member, a representative from our parish communities, or one of our valued external partners, your insights, experiences, and hopes for the future are essential to this endeavour. We want to consult you, and we firmly believe that the Spirit speaks through the whole people of God. We are committed to ensuring that this consultation process reflects that conviction.

# The Journey Ahead

Our Vision and Strategy Steering Group will guide us through seven carefully planned phases over the coming months:

## **Phase 1: Initiation and Governance (July 2025)**

We began by establishing our steering group, comprising representatives from across our Cathedral community, including Chapter members, clergy, staff, diocesan representatives, and external stakeholders. This group will set our objectives, scope, and timeline, launching with prayer and theological reflection.

## **Phase 2: Listening and Consultation (September-October 2025)**

This is where your voice becomes central to our process. We will engage extensively with all our internal stakeholders – staff, volunteers, congregation members, Chapter, and our various committees including the Finance Committee, Enterprise Board, Fabric Advisory Committee, Music Development Fund, Friends of Guildford Cathedral, and Choir Parents. Simultaneously, we will reach out to our external partners, including the Advisory Board, parishes through Area Deans, and the College of Canons.

Through questionnaires, interviews, and congregational meetings, we will gather your insights, hopes, and concerns for the future of our Cathedral. This will be particularly and prayerfully launched on September 14th during the services that day.

## **Phase 3: Vision and Strategic Themes (October-November 2025)**

Drawing from your contributions, we will work with Chapter to draft our Vision and Mission statements – defining where we want to go and why. We will identify strategic themes that deliver our Vision and Mission, establishing specific, measurable objectives for each theme.

## **Phase 4: Financial Strategy and Budget Planning (October-December 2025)**

Recognising the importance of financial sustainability, we will develop a comprehensive financial strategy aligned with our strategic themes. Our objective is to achieve a balanced budget by the end of 2028, exploring revenue streams and identifying opportunities for greater efficiency.

## **Phase 5: Consultation and Refinement (January - February 2026)**

We return to you, our stakeholders, to share our draft strategy and gather your feedback. This is another crucial opportunity for your voice to shape our final direction.

## **Phase 6: Final Approval and Launch (Eastertide 2026)**

Following Chapter approval, we will publicly launch our strategy, celebrating together the vision God has given us for the years ahead.

## **Phase 7: Implementation and Monitoring (March 2026-December 2030)**

The real work begins as we implement our strategy with annual action plans, regular reviews, and transparent reporting to you all to maintain accountability and trust.

## A Call to Engagement

This process belongs to all of us; your voice is valued. Over the coming months, you will receive invitations to participate in various ways – through surveys, interviews, meetings, and feedback sessions. We encourage you to engage wholeheartedly, bringing your prayers, your wisdom, and your passion for the mission of Guildford Cathedral.

We are seeking to discern together what God is calling us to be and to do in this place. This requires not only our best thinking but also our faithful listening – to one another, to our communities, and above all, to the Spirit of God who guides and sustains us.







## Moving Forward in Faith

As we step into this process, let us hold fast to the hope that God has good plans for Guildford Cathedral – plans that will enable us to serve Him more faithfully and to be a beacon of His love in our community and beyond. The challenges we face are real, but so is our God who calls us forward into a future filled with hope and possibility.

Please keep this process in your prayers and prepare your hearts and minds to contribute to this important work. Together, guided by the Spirit and grounded in prayer, we will discern God's vision for our Cathedral and develop a strategy that is both faithful to His calling and sustainable for the future.

We look forward to walking this journey with you and to all that God will reveal to us along the way.

With every blessing in Christ's service,

**The Very Rev'd Bob Cooper**  
Dean of Guildford

and

**Major-General Roddy Porter**  
Senior Non-Executive Member of Chapter

*July 2025*

# A SUMMARY FOR THE CATHEDRAL COMMUNITY

As we look ahead to the next five years, the Dean and Chapter have been reflecting deeply on God's calling for Guildford Cathedral. This summary outlines the theological foundation that will guide our vision and strategy, rooted in prayer, Scripture, and our Anglican heritage.

## **Our Foundation: Christ at the Centre**

Everything we do must flow from our commitment to Jesus Christ. As Paul reminds us in Colossians, "in him all things hold together" and "in everything he might have the supremacy." This means our worship, community life, and strategic decisions will be shaped by Christ's love, sacrifice, and resurrection power, with prayer and Scripture at the heart of our discernment.



## Eight Key Areas of Focus



**1. Mission and Outreach** We are called to be a “sending and welcoming hub” for Christian witness. This includes hospitality to visitors, clear proclamation of the gospel, active engagement in social justice, and embracing digital ministry to reach the spiritually curious online.



**2. Beautiful Liturgy** Our worship must be excellent and beautiful—both in form and spirit. We will offer music that lifts the soul, preaching that feeds heart and mind, and sacraments that mediate grace, creating liturgy that is inclusive and accessible to all ages while remaining rooted in Anglican tradition.



**3. Our Role as Mother Church** As the diocesan cathedral, we serve as a symbol of unity for the whole Diocese of Guildford. We will host major diocesan events with warmth and dignity, provide refuge and reflection for clergy and lay ministers, and pioneer initiatives in theology, arts, reconciliation, and vocations.



**4. Financial Stewardship** Achieving financial stability is essential for sustainable mission. We will focus on balanced budgets, imaginative fundraising, and diversified income streams while maintaining Gospel values of transparency, justice, and generosity in all financial decisions.



**5. Congregational Growth** We seek both spiritual and numerical growth, rooted in deep community, prayer, and formation. This includes developing hospitality and welcome ministries, small groups, courses for enquirers, and fostering a culture where people are known, loved, and empowered to serve.



**6. Young People's Ministry** Following Jesus' example of welcoming children, we will develop robust ministries for children and young people, build links with schools and universities, and mentor young leaders. Young people will not only be served but empowered to shape Cathedral life.



**7. Diocesan Partnerships** We will strengthen our relationships with parishes across the Diocese, supporting them in evangelism and discipleship while serving as a centre for diocesan training, mutual support, and shared missional identity.



**8. Lifelong Learning and Discipleship** We will create a culture that prioritises learning, reflection, and spiritual maturity through regular teaching opportunities, study groups, theological forums, and retreat days. Our discipleship will be intergenerational, intercultural, and inspiring.

# Moving Forward Together

This vision is not about preserving the past but about faithful transformation. Over the coming months, we will be developing detailed strategies for each of these areas, always guided by prayer and the Holy Spirit.

We invite you to join us in this journey of discernment and growth. Your prayers, insights, and participation are essential as we seek to be a holy place of encounter, service, and hope—radiant with the light of Christ for our Diocese and beyond.

As the Psalmist reminds us:

*“Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain” (Psalm 127:1).*

**The Very Rev'd Bob Cooper**

Dean of Guildford

July 2025

## Questions for Reflection:

- How might God be calling you to participate in this vision?
- Which of these areas particularly resonates with your heart for ministry?
- What gifts and skills do you bring that could serve our mission?



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