



GUILDFORD  
CATHEDRAL

The Cathedral of the Holy Spirit

# Our Strategy 2026—2032



*This strategy has been a long time coming, and it is the better for it. Before a word was written, we listened: to those who worship here week by week, to those who have never crossed the threshold, to clergy and civic leaders, to young families and long-serving volunteers. You all helped shape what you are reading. You told us what you love about this Cathedral, what concerns you and what you believe we can, together, become. What follows is our response.*

*What you told us was both humbling and energising. This Cathedral is loved. It is also capable of so much more.*

*We face real challenges, and we name them honestly in these pages. But we begin from a place of genuine confidence, rooted not in our own abilities but in the God whose Cathedral this truly is. The foundations are strong. The calling is clear. The people are willing.*

*I commend this strategy to you with gratitude and with joy. Come and be part of what is ahead.*



**The Very Reverend Bob Cooper,  
Dean of Guildford**

# A place for everyone

Guildford Cathedral has stood on Stag Hill since 1961, built by the people of Surrey, brick by brick, as their own. From the very beginning, it was called the People's Cathedral, and that is what we intend to remain.

We exist to be a Christ-centred beacon of worship, witness, and transformation for the Diocese of Guildford and the civic life of Surrey. We are a place where people encounter God and find rest; where music and beauty draw the soul upward; where the lonely find refuge and the searching find hope.

We are the Diocesan Mother Church, a spiritual home, a gathering point for ordinations, confirmations, synods, and diocesan celebrations. But we are also a neighbour and a servant: present in the life of Surrey and the Diocese of Guildford, open to all without exception.

Our vision is simple and demanding:

*Worshipping God*

*Transforming Lives*

*Serving Community*

In this strategy, a shared aspiration emerges: a Cathedral that is open, welcoming, creative, and outward looking. A place where music and the arts flourish; where faith is nurtured and deepened; where families feel at home; where the lonely and sad find refuge and people can explore meaning and purpose; and where the Cathedral plays a confident role in our wider civic and cultural life.

# Our journey to 2032

We are at a genuine moment of opportunity, and we approach it honestly. There are things we need to address: our finances, our staffing, and some long-standing practical limitations. But there are also extraordinary gifts to build on: our music, our sacred space, our history, our people.

This strategy sets out a journey in two stages.

## Phase 1 2026–2028: **Building for the Future**

These years are about getting the foundations right: a well-led and well-supported team, a clear path to financial health, and strong systems for the work ahead. But this is not an inward-looking exercise. Even as we stabilise, we will begin to turn more confidently outward: towards Guildford, towards the Diocese and our parishes, towards all who are searching for meaning, beauty, and belonging.

The aspiration for Phase 1 is to build coherence, stability, and strategic readiness. By 2028, we will have the people, the finances, and the foundations in place to grow with confidence.



## Phase 2 2029–2032: Growing and Flourishing

Building on those foundations, we will expand our reach and deepen our impact across all six of our strategic themes. We will strengthen our role as the Mother Church of the Diocese, grow our engagement with young people and families, and deepen our presence in the life of Guildford and Surrey.

This phase culminates in our 70th Anniversary in 2031, a year we intend to mark with celebration, thanksgiving, and a renewed commitment to the Cathedral's future.



# What you will see happening

Six themes shape everything we do. Here is what **Phase 1** means for each of them.



## Worship

You will experience worship that is beautiful, well-prepared, and genuinely welcoming to all. We will review and strengthen the rhythm of our services, invest in the long-term sustainability of our outstanding choral tradition, and ensure that every person who arrives, whatever their starting point, feels that they belong here. We will also begin the essential work of addressing our acoustic limitations, so that our words and music can be heard and received by everyone.



## Learning

You will find new opportunities to explore and deepen your faith. We will launch structured discipleship pathways, including courses such as Alpha and Pilgrim, alongside Bible study, small groups, and opportunities for theological reflection. We will strengthen our partnerships with local schools and the University of Surrey, and offer public conversations each year that engage our community with the big questions of our time.



## Mission

You will see the Cathedral becoming more visible and more outward-facing. We will renew our digital presence, including a new website and a consistent voice on social media. We will clarify our missional calling as a community, concentrate our energy on the work that makes the greatest difference, and build the partnerships that reflect our commitment to the flourishing of all.



## Community

You will notice the Cathedral more present in the life of Guildford and more connected to the Diocese. We will establish the Cathedral Forum, a space for the wider Cathedral community to speak and be heard. We will strengthen our welcome from the moment people arrive and work to ensure that every person who enters feels noticed, valued, and invited to return. Our ambition is to be genuinely the People's Cathedral in practice, not just in name.



## Sustainability

You will see a Cathedral that is well-run, well-governed, and working honestly towards financial health. We face a large structural deficit that must be addressed, and we are tackling it directly. We will invest in our staff and volunteers, clarify roles and responsibilities, and build the governance culture that allows everything else to flourish. Our goal is a balanced budget by the start of 2028.



## Growing Younger

You will see children, young people, and families more fully at home in this Cathedral. We will develop our schools engagement across the Diocese, deepen our Godly Play ministry, and create new events for children and young people in partnership with diocesan colleagues. We want younger generations to find in Guildford Cathedral not just a beautiful building, but a community that is genuinely for them.

# An honest word about our finances

We will not pretend that the financial picture is straightforward. Guildford Cathedral carries a structural deficit that we must address to remain a flourishing centre of worship and mission. This is not merely an accounting challenge: it is a moral and spiritual responsibility, and we approach it as such.

We have a clear and costed path to a balanced budget by 2028. This will require discipline, creativity, and generosity. It means making some difficult decisions, growing our income across a range of sources, and asking more of those who love this Cathedral.

We are grateful beyond words for the generosity already shown by so many: in regular giving, in legacy pledges, in time and skill freely offered. Every gift matters, and every gift is a statement of faith in the Cathedral's future.

## Help support us

If you are in a position to give or to give more, we would welcome a conversation. If you are able to offer time as a volunteer, that too is a gift of incalculable value. And if you can simply pray for this place, that is where everything begins and ends. Your support enables us to continue offering a place of welcome, prayer, and service for all who come here. Together, we can ensure that this work continues to flourish for generations to come.

**To make a donation online in support of this appeal, please visit:**

<https://guildfordcathedral.myknowchurch.co.uk/giving> and select Campaign "Support Guildford Cathedral" from the dropdown menu.



**To make a donation via your mobile phone:**

Simply open your phone's camera app and point it at this QR code to the left. A link will appear on your screen — tap it to continue.

*Thank you for your continued support*

# Come and be part of this

This strategy belongs to everyone who loves Guildford Cathedral. It is the fruit of hundreds of conversations, honest self-reflection, and a shared belief that this Cathedral has an extraordinary future. **You are part of that future.**

## Worship with us

Join us for any of our services throughout the week: from the simplicity of Morning Prayer to the beauty of Choral Evensong, from a quiet weekday Eucharist to the fullness of Sunday morning. All are welcome, wherever you are on your journey.

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## Learn with us

Explore our discipleship courses, join a study group, or attend one of our public lectures and conversations. There is always more to discover, and you are welcome at every stage.

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## Serve with us

We depend on the generosity of our volunteers in almost every area of Cathedral life. If you have time, skills, and enthusiasm, please speak to a member of the team. There is a place for you here.

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## Give with us

Your financial support makes this strategy possible. Please consider setting up a regular gift, or speak to us about a legacy or a major gift. Every contribution, however given, is an act of faith.

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## Pray with us

Above all, pray for this Cathedral: for its Dean and Chapter, its staff and volunteers, its congregation, and all who come searching. Prayer is where everything begins.

*“Unless the Lord builds the house,  
those who build it labour in vain”*

Psalm 127:1





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For more information about this strategy, or to speak to someone about giving, volunteering, or becoming part of the Cathedral community, please contact the Cathedral Office.

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