



## CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER'S NEWSLETTER FOR VOLUNTEERS 4 DECEMBER 2025

### Introduction

1. A hugely busy month with a number of major services and a wide variety of events all crammed into the programme. Massive thanks to all our Volunteers who helped with the organisation and delivery of so much, and for everything else that they do. The Strategy and Vision work has reached an important stage, many thanks to everyone who provided feedback. There was also an important visit by Sir Robert Buckland, the former Cabinet Minister who is now the Third Church Estates Commissioner. He is the senior official in the Church Commissioners with responsibility for cathedrals and the funding they receive from central church, so hugely influential as the cathedral sector seeks to develop a more sustainable model.

### Worship

2. The times of services are as follows:

**Sunday** – 7.30am Morning Prayer, 8.00am Holy Communion, 9.45am Cathedral Eucharist, 6pm Evensong.

**Monday** - 8.30am Morning Prayer, 9.00am Holy Communion, 5.30pm Evensong.

**Tuesday** - 8.00am Morning Prayer, 8.30am Holy Communion, 5.30pm Evensong.

**Wednesday** - 8.30am Morning Prayer, 9.00am Holy Communion, 5.30pm Evening Prayer.

**Thursday** - 8.30am Morning Prayer, 12.30pm Holy Communion, 5.30pm Evensong.

**Friday** - 8.00am Morning Prayer, 8.30am Holy Communion, 5.30pm Evensong.

**Saturday** 9.00am Morning Prayer, 9.30am Holy Communion, 4pm Evening Prayer.

3. Details of Christmas services are on the website. From 26 December until 3 January weekday and Saturday morning services will be held as usual, with Evening Prayer moving to 4.30pm. On Sunday 28 December there will be normal services in the morning, but no Evensong – Evening Prayer will be at 4pm. Normal Sunday services will be held on 4 January, and on 5 & 7 January there will be morning services at the normal time and Evening Prayer at 5.30pm. On 6 January there will be Evening Prayer at 4pm and the Epiphany Eucharist at 7pm. The choir return on Thursday 8 January and timings are all as normal thereafter.

### Opening Hours the Cathedral, Shop and Seasons

4. The Cathedral opening times are as follows:

- Sunday – 7.30am to 5pm.

- Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday – 8.30am to 5pm.
- Tuesday – 7.30am to 5pm.
- Saturday – 8.30am to 5pm.

The Shop is open from Monday to Saturday from 9.30am until 4.30pm. Seasons is open from Monday to Saturday from 9am until 3pm, and on Sunday from 9am until 12 noon.

5. The Cathedral will be open throughout the period 26 December to 5 January, with doors opening half an hour before the first service in the morning, and closing at the end of Evening Prayer or Evensong. Seasons closes at 3pm on Tuesday 23 December and will be drinks and light snacks only that day, re-opening at 9am on Monday 5 January. The Shop closes at 4.30pm on Tuesday 23 December and reopens at 9.30am on Monday 5 January.

## **Chapter**

6. Chapter met on 11 November and were briefed on the financial situation and updated on the budget proposals for 2026 (these will be approved at the December meeting). There was also a presentation on the outcomes of the consultation phase of the Strategy and Vision work. The new Strategy will be launched during Eastertide 2026.

## **Bellringing**

7. Service and practice ringing has continued as normal. Four quarter peals have been rung, including one with the bells half-muffled on Remembrance Sunday, and another in a completely new method on 12 bells devised by one of our ringers. On Saturday 8 November the ringers welcomed young ringers from Surrey, Bucks and Berks for an hour and a half's ringing at the Cathedral before they went on to ring at the other Guildford churches. A peal attempt on 22 November by a largely local band was sadly lost after over 3 hours' good ringing.

## **Facilities**

8. The new fire doors at the foot of the Tower have been completed, and a smoke curtain fitted across the eastern entrance at South Gallery level, to protect the bell ringers if they need to evacuate the Tower in the event of a fire in the Cathedral. There was more fire fighting training on 12 November, and the return inspection by Surrey Fire and Rescue took place on 18 November. The Cathedral passed the inspection, there are now only 3 items outstanding from the original report which need to be addressed by January. The Cathedral boilers have proved troublesome but are now fixed, and various repairs have been required in the toilets in the Visitor Centre, as well as to the automatic doors at the entrance to Seasons. There was also a problem with the manhole cover in the corridor between the Shop and the toilets, but a repair has been effected.

## **Families Engagement and Schools**

9. Nicola Cole, Head of Schools has been prepared and delivered a 'Godly Play' taster session with Rachel Johnson, Families Engagement Officer, which was attended by over 10 children's and families workers and incumbents from across the Diocese. She also conducted 'nativities around the world' visits and workshops. The very young children who

attended on Tuesday 11 November and were present during the short ceremony at 11 to mark Armistice Day were extraordinarily well behaved!

## **Fundraising**

10. Owen Collins, Head of Fundraising, joined on 18 November and after carrying out his induction has been investigating funding sources for the Visitor Centre toilets project, as well as finding out more about processes and procedures here at the Cathedral. He attended a conference in London on new legislation which enables donors to give without exposing themselves to risk.

## **Liturgy and Music**

11. The first weekend in November's major services (All Saints, the Cathedral Eucharist and All Souls) were great successes; particularly well received was the beautiful Durufle Requiem at All Souls. Well done to Bob for presiding and preaching at all three! The following Sunday was Remembrance Sunday, with the County Service in the morning and the Requiem for Remembrance in the evening. Friday 14 November saw the second of the Schools Evensong project Evensongs with Gordons School, supported by the Cathedral Music Trust. On Sunday 16 November, Guildford Cathedral Singers joined with the Cathedral Choir to sing Evensong, directed by former Sub Organist Peter Wright. On Tuesday 18 September the girl choristers were in Cambridge for a day of workshops with Sarah MacDonald at Selwyn College, Steven Grahl at Trinity College (where former chorister Rebecca now sings as a choral scholar) and Graham Ross at Clare College (where former chorister Emma now sings as a choral scholar - another chorister, Kate, sings at Christ's College). At Clare, the girls sang a joint service of Evensong with their Chapel choir. The Advent Carol Service on Sunday 30 November was really well received, and marked the start to the new Church year and was the first of many carol services the Cathedral Choir will offer over the coming weeks. The big news of the month is that Lay Clerk Peter Hicks has successfully auditioned for the countertenor vacancy in the King's Singers vocal ensemble. We are hugely proud of Peter, who will take up his role in August 2026. Congratulations!

## **Marketing and Communications**

12. With the arrival of the new Head of Fundraising (cf para 10 above), Nicola Pratt has now taken over the new role of Head of Marketing and Communications. Claire Waters-Duke, formerly the Marketing and Communications Officer has now left the Cathedral. This month work has continued on preparing for the transfer of data from Access to iKnow Church, the new host of our Customer Relationship Management database, which has been a little challenging at times! Nicola has been involved with a number of marketing initiatives, including recruitment of new Chapter members as well as the Sir John Rutter concert.

## **Virgers**

13. Huge thanks to Paul, Steve, Andrew and Nicola for all the incredible support they have been providing for a massively challenging November and for all that will be required during Advent and Christmas.

## **Visitor Experience and Events**

14. Saturday 1 November's Craft and Flea market went well, as did the George Michael concert on Thursday 6 November. On Saturday 8 November there was a major event in the form of a Great Gatsby Ball, which was very popular. On Thursday 13 November there was another successful Coffee Concert featuring young (and very talented) musicians from the University of Surrey. Seasons hosted a 'mini Christmas market' also on Thursday 13th, which attracted a good deal of interest. This being staged on the same day as the Coffee Concert made for a busy Café Restaurant for most of the day. There was another lovely concert on Wednesday 19 November, a small but appreciative audience came to enjoy Nadia Eide and an accompanying choir. Friday 21 and Saturday 22 November saw the Cathedral's own Christmas Fair being staged, another enormous success. Finally, a hectic November drew to a close with the Etsy market on 29 November. The Jacqui Parkinson exhibition has now departed and is much missed!

M J O'GRADY Chief Operating Officer