

DIOCESE OF CHESTER**CHESTER CATHEDRAL REPORT**

Clergy

- Changes in clergy during the year include the Vice Dean Peter Howell Jones departing to become Dean of Blackburn in January 2017 and Dean Gordon McPhate retiring in September 2018. Barry Wilson arrived as Vice Dean in September 2017. Jane Brooke has been acting Vice Dean since January 2017 and then Acting Dean from September 2017.

Values

- Staff appraisal now includes how well the values of hospitality: listening, respect and welcome, are exhibited in the cathedral. Dementia awareness training for staff took place for staff and volunteers during the year.

Connecting

- The Cathedral provided lunches for the homeless one day each week as a test project earlier in the year. Links with the homeless agencies and charities continues to establish the most beneficial way forward.
- During the second half of the year the cathedral has aimed at being more 'open', both locally and nationally. Plans are being considered to open the West doors, with a proposal for glass doors and using this as the Cathedral's primary entrance. This will demonstrate a welcome to those passing-by and will link well with the proposed Northgate Development across Town Hall Square. We are also working with other support groups and agencies and would like to offer a safe place for these groups including the street pastors.
- The cathedral has been a stimulus and a support for the pan Cheshire work on anti-modern slavery. Small groups in Chester were introduced to the current situation of modern slavery and an ecumenical service was held in September 2017. The work was sufficiently influential to be minuted at a CWAC council meeting. It was followed by an evening in partnership with CWAC and Chester Diocese which focussed upon supply chains in businesses. The cathedral was instrumental in encouraging the Clewer Initiative to include Chester Diocese in a national pilot to increase awareness of modern slavery.
- Connections have been made with the national Lay Benedictine Order to strengthen links.

Worship

- There has been a focus upon special services including a pet service to link with the exhibition of ARK. These services have seen an increase in attendance numbers.
- The cathedral is planning to revitalise two side chapels in the South Transept by dedicating one to martyrs including the Melanesian martyrs and one to the city which will include the street pastors.
- Jesus Shaped People material was introduced through sermons in the Spring and through evening study groups. The Sunday School particularly were impressed with the resources and the young people responded excitedly to the discussions.
- 'Spaces of Hope' on a Wednesday afternoon in January 2017 spawned 'The Gathering', a band from Middlewich to come to lead a Sunday evening service. It is planned to be monthly in future.

Exhibitions

- ARK was a high quality sculpture exhibition in the cathedral with internationally recognised artists. It was expertly placed around the building by Pangolin and attracted 138,000 visitors locally and internationally. It was funded by generous sponsorship. A particular success was the engagement of 1180 children and young people who came on school visits, at no charge, to take part in active workshops which focussed upon the sculptures. ARK did not make a profit though it did attract two awards: 'Cheshire Tourist Experience or Event of the Year' and 'The Chairman's Award' from the Chester Civic Trust.

Commercial activities

- The shop is performing strongly and has produced an increase in net profit during the year.
- The refectory has a new counter and chairs and will offer more 'fine dining' and evening catering events in the coming year. The toilets are being redecorated. Novus, the prison service training organisation, is working on helping with a number of maintenance projects and have already started work in the grounds of the cathedral.

Estate

- The Cathedral's quinquennial maintenance report has been received. While there are few urgent issues, masonry is in need of repointing: a project that is likely to take up to 10 years in total.
- The Cathedral benefited from a Centenary War Fund grant to provide emergency lighting.
- The cathedral offices have moved across the Square to number 9. This has enabled refurbishment work to commence to turn 12 Abbey Square into a residential property.
- Refurbishment work has also begun at 8 Abbey Square where Special Needs Care Limited will be establishing a drop-in centre and some residential accommodation.
- The cathedral continues to work with CWaC to ensure that the proposed Northgate development has a positive impact on its activities and as little disruption as possible during construction.

Jane Brooke

Acting Dean Chester Cathedral March 2018