

# Chapter News



Southwell  
Minster  
THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF  
THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

## Episode Seven – Sept 2023

*One day Billy was sat in his office when a bear opened the door and said, “We are out of coffee!”. Thinking he must have dozed off and dreamt it he didn’t say anything. The next day the same bear opened the door and said, “The photocopier is broken!”. Again Billy ignores it. Well the third day the bear opens the door and says, “You are fired!”. This time Billy goes to his manager and asks, “What is the deal with this bear?”. The manager says, “He is the bear of bad news!”.*

While I was on holiday, I worshipped at a different cathedral. The Dean in the notices made the following statement: “The love of God is free, sadly the house of God has costs!” In this Chapter News I want to look at firstly at where we are in our property explorations and secondly at our ongoing financial deficit.

### **Property explorations:**

We wanted to do four things:

Reduce expenditure on property;

Increase income from property;

Provide suitable affordable property for our clergy;

Release capital from property to achieve the first three.



The headline is that sadly we do not have as many options as we anticipated and the time frame for carrying them out is longer than we hoped. (This has significant implications for our current annual deficit and future planning, see later in this Chapter News). What we are doing at the moment with the help of our architect is creating a narrative showing where we have need regarding our property (including the Minster). This is called a Conservation Deficit plan. That is, the amount by which the cost of repair (and conversion to optimum value use if appropriate) of a heritage asset exceeds its market value.

From this we would look to reshape our property and land portfolio in order to achieve the four actions above. This would leave us in a more sustainable position for future generations.

### **Ongoing Deficit:**

The bad news is that our annual expected deficit has significantly increased from a budgeted deficit of £137,000 to over £200,000 for 2023. A lot of this increase is around our buildings and more repairs than we were expecting which is why we need to address our ageing portfolio. The fact that sorting out our property portfolio will likely take years means this will be an ongoing drain for some time to come. Equally though our income has not achieved all that we hoped.

The good news is that our events are achieving more than we budgeted for. Our recent Gaia art installation saw over 11,000 people visit us which was beyond our expectations. This meant that our net profit was greater as well as building relationships with a broader range of people than before. This has also had the effect of more bookings for future events which is a lovely situation. Whilst this is encouraging, on its own it cannot solve our deficit but every little helps.



Giving from visitors and congregations though is not as we needed. This increase in income was our push for this year and next. Regarding visitors we have improved communicating our need and you may have noticed the new signage that is around. We hope this gives a better first impression as well as encouraging people to support us.



Planned giving is the other area that we had hoped for an increase which in the current climate is a difficult ask I know. If you, as you read this, feel able to start giving or to give more, then please do so. The planned giving leaflets are available in the Minster or online, or simply contact [andrea.pritchard@southwellminster.org.uk](mailto:andrea.pritchard@southwellminster.org.uk) or ring her on 01636 819027.

I realise this is a big ask in the current climate but in order that Chapter can make the best decisions, then we need to have the best idea of what our income will be going forward.

We had hoped that if all our income streams improved then we would significantly reduce our deficit. We have already limited expenditure for 2023 to what we consider necessary so to cut further means difficult decisions. Continuing to run year-on-year deficits means we decrease our assets and gives us much less flexibility for the future. Chapter is going to explore our options during the Autumn and the implications for our 2024 budget.

It is not without hope, but it is very tricky and difficult decisions will need to be made. Thank you to all those who continue to generously support the Ministry and Mission of Southwell Minster with their time, talents and money.

## Blessings

*Canon Paul Rattigan*

On behalf of Chapter

*PS Although remembering us in your will won't help us with the immediate problem, please do pick up a Legacy Leaflet. This will help us in the future as this is a long-term issue and not a quick fix. Many thanks.*

TUNE IN NEXT MONTH FOR THE NEXT  
EXCITING EPISODE OF CHAPTER NEWS!



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