

Chapter News



Southwell
Minster
THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF
THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Episode Ten – December 2023

St Peter allows a wealthy man to bring one small case full of whatever he wants to heaven. The man thinks and decides that he will turn all his wealth into bars of gold and take that. He arrives in heaven and Peter is curious to see what he has brought. When the man opens the case Peter says, 'Paving stones, you've brought paving stones!'

*Who's that man who stands on his tractor shouting the end is nigh?
Oh yeah Farmer Geddon.*

The End is Nigh, well at least the end of 2023. This is the 10th edition of Chapter News that we started back in January of this year. I hope you have found it helpful in seeing a little of behind the scenes of the issues that Chapter are grappling with.

It has been an eventful year in that the New Cathedral Measure came into force for us and on the 20th of November we passed stage one and on 20th February next year we will complete the process and become a full charity. Our Head of Finance is delighted as we finally get a charity number which makes dealing with various bodies much easier. The Chapter members become full Trustees and we have been doing some work about our change of responsibilities and how we work together better. We may not be fully there yet, but we have certainly changed and are beginning to grasp not just the seriousness of the changes but also the opportunities.

These changes fitted in with the plan that this was to be a year of consolidation, particularly around property and finance. These areas have taken up a lot of our energies for good reasons. As I explained our property portfolio is quite large but is not currently the resource it should be. Maintenance costs mean that it is costing us about £100,000 a year to simply have them. This combined with an already fragile day to day budget means that our deficit for the end of the year is going to be around the £200,000 mark. We need to decrease the costs of our properties as a matter of urgency, but this has proved not as straight forward as we hoped. We do not simply want to sell off assets to solve our current crisis but instead reshape the portfolio, so it better serves the Minster in the medium and long term. More work will need to be done in 2024 to achieve this.



The large deficit in our accounts for 2023 has implications also for our budget for 2024. We have had to be very prudent on our estimates for income for 2024 as the cost-of-living crisis has hit everyone. Increases in our Events and our visitor donations are encouraging but not sufficient on their own. Being more realistic on our income has meant that we have had to really look at our expenditure. The deficit this year will leave us with a much smaller amount of reserves that means we cannot have a similar deficit next year. Therefore we are having to look at cutting expenditure. This is proving a difficult conversation but much needed.

On a more cheerful note Richard and I both had sabbaticals this year which enabled us to exercise our grey matter in a different way.



Our sound system and our Quire organ have needed some attention for a long while. I am delighted to say that Chapter have approved works to upgrade these, the sound system as soon as possible and the Quire organ after Easter. This has been made possible through various donations, fundraising events and some legacies.

We would not have been able to do these key works except for the generosity of these individuals. Please do consider if you can help us in this way in the future by taking one of our legacy leaflets and prayerfully reflecting on its contents.



Finally looking into 2024. We don't know what this will hold as so many events in the past few years have shown us. However it is a significant year for Southwell Minster as it is 140 years since it became a Cathedral. So you will see lots of publicity and events around the theme of **Cathedral 140**. So do keep a look out.

May you have a blessed and peaceful Christmas and New Year.
See you on the other side,

Blessings

Canon Paul Rattigan

On behalf of Chapter

PS there will not be a Chapter News in January so you will need to wait until February for the next exciting episode 😊

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



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