

# Southwells Minster

Cathedral ♦ Gardens ♦ Palace

A report on the life and work  
of the Minster Community from  
the Cathedral Chapter  
for the year ending  
**31 DECEMBER 2023**

**VISITOR**

The Right Revd Paul Williams, Bishop of Southwell & Nottingham

**HIGH STEWARD**

Sir John Peace, H.M. Lord-Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire

**THE CHAPTER**

The Very Revd Nicola Sullivan, Dean of Southwell (Chair)

The Revd Canon Dr Richard Frith, Canon Precentor

The Revd Canon Paul Rattigan, Canon Missioner

Mrs Vicky Thorpe (co-opted as Safeguarding Co-ordinator until 20 November 2023)

**Elected by the Annual Parochial Church Meeting of Southwell Minster**

Mrs Jan Richardson MBE

Mr Andrew Corner

**Appointed by the Bishop of Southwell & Nottingham**

Canon Philip Blinston

Mr Arwel Griffiths

The Revd Canon Steve Silvester

**Appointed by Bishop's Council**

Mr Nick Alexander

Mrs Sarah Benedek

**THE COLLEGE OF CANONS**

The Very Revd Nicola Sullivan, Dean of Southwell (Chair)

The Revd Canon Paul Rattigan, Canon Missioner

The Revd Canon Dr Richard Frith, Canon Precentor

The Right Revd Dr Andy Emerton, Bishop of Sherwood

The Ven. Victoria Ramsey, Archdeacon of Newark

The Ven. Phil Williams, Archdeacon of Nottingham

The Revd Canon Dr Alison Milbank, Canon

Theologian

**THE HONORARY CLERICAL CANONS**

The Revd Canon Kate Bottley

The Revd Canon Bronwen Gamble

The Revd Canon Angela Fletcher

The Revd Canon Dr Stephen Hippiisley-Cox

The Revd Canon Barbara Holbrook

The Revd Canon Peter Huxtable

The Revd Canon Dr Richard Kellett

The Revd Canon Fiona Shouler

The Revd Canon Steve Silvester

The Revd Canon Nicolas Spicer

**THE HONORARY LAY CANONS**

Canon Michael Arlington

Canon Philip Blinston

Canon John Loughton

Canon Nigel Spraggins

**PRIEST VICARS**

The Revd Erika Kirk

The Revd David McCoulough

**THE ECUMENICAL CANONS**

The Rt Revd. Mgr. Patrick McKinney, The RC Bishop of Nottingham

Bishop Pangani McNight Thipa

**READER WITH PTO**

Canon Angela Ashwin

Mr Robert Ridgewell (from September 2023)

**THE CATHEDRAL COUNCIL (until 20 November 2023)**

The Right Revd Paul Williams, Bishop of Southwell & Nottingham

The Very Revd Nicola Sullivan, Dean of Southwell

Mr Andrew Fearn

Dame Elizabeth Fradd DBE DL

The Rev Canon Dr Richard Frith, Canon Precentor

Councillor David Mellen

The Ven. Phil Williams, Archdeacon of Nottingham

Mrs Jan Richardson MBE

**Every person or body having functions under the Constitution or Statutes shall, in exercising those functions, have due regard to the fact that the Cathedral is the seat of the Bishop and a centre of worship and mission.**

*(From the Introduction to the Constitution and Statutes, March 2000 – Revised January 2012)*

*'The Minster Community seeks to celebrate God's life, love and beauty in the Cathedral at the heart of the Diocese, in the life of the Parish and across the world.*

*Our hope is in God, the source of all community, and our purpose is the service of His Kingdom in the name of Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.'*

#### **THE FOUNDATION PRAYER**

Almighty God, you have made us members one of another in the mystical body of your Son: grant your grace to Paul, Bishop of this Diocese, to the Cathedral Chapter, the College of Canons, the Cathedral Council, to all members of this Foundation, and to all who work and worship here. Give them the spirit of wisdom and love, that they may live to your glory, to the furtherance of the Church in this place and this Diocese, and in union one with another through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God world without end. Amen.

#### **THE MINSTER COMMUNITY PRAYER**

Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, your Son, you embrace the whole world in your love. Inspire and guide the life of this Minster that the clergy and people, continuing to share their hopes and seeking the vision of your purpose for them may grow in grace and rejoice in the service of your kingdom.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

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This Annual report tells of the astonishing range of activities and contributions made by different groups within the Cathedral. You may feel exhausted reading it and wonder how such a small Cathedral in a small town with a relatively small staff and volunteer body manages it all. It is a great tribute to the commitment, enthusiasm and sheer determination of the many people who care deeply about Southwell Minster, the Minster community and the furtherance of God's mission in the world. I am thankful for inspirational, dedicated colleagues and the support of so many that keep the Minster open 365 days of the year, sometimes for 15 hours a day and ensure its worship and welcome is vibrant, meaningful and heartfelt.

2023 has been a difficult and critical year for the world. The war in Ukraine entered its second year, and, on 7 October, the horrifying events in Israel and Gaza unfolded, the consequences of which are likely to impact the globe for many years. The cost-of-living crisis has hit us all, and many have been tipped into debt and anxiety because of rising inflation, especially energy and food costs. We have been reminded of the climate emergency, again experiencing flooding in the town and along the Trent in the autumn. The Church of England has also had a tough year, many parishes struggling post the coronavirus pandemic and the continuing disagreement around human sexuality threatening unity. Through it all, we seek to be the Cathedral joyfully serving our diocese and parish with hope, faith and love, offered to each one by Jesus Christ. Read on to learn how we are doing this and why it matters more than anything else.

A brief mention must go to the implementation of the Cathedrals Measure 2021 and the new Constitution and Statutes. Our thanks to Nigel Spraggins CO, who has shouldered the considerable administrative burden of this new legislation. We will become a registered charity in February 2024, the Chapter becoming charitable trustees with all that implies.

As with all Cathedrals, we struggle to be financially sustainable, and even with huge effort, increased events and visitor donations we cannot balance the books due to the property portfolio and an under-budget income. Chapter is working to address this, but all options are non-palatable. 2024 will require firm decisions and forward planning to protect resources for our core mission and ministry. We appreciate your generous support and ask for your prayers.

**The Very Revd Nicola Sullivan, Dean of Southwell**  
**Tel: 01636 817282 (Dean's PA)**  
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## Worship and Liturgy

Without doubt, the highlight of our worshipping life in 2023 was the Minster's appearance live on BBC One on Easter Day, when our Cathedral Eucharist was broadcast to the nation. It was a truly unforgettable occasion, on which a huge number of staff and volunteers came together to show the Minster's worship, and our cathedral liturgical tradition, in the very best possible light – with a full Minster as well as many thousands of people joining us on television from around the country and beyond. A special mention must go to the Cathedral Choir, who rose to the occasion magnificently.

As wonderful as the occasion was, it was an entirely fitting conclusion to a very memorable Holy Week. One innovation, for us, was the moving of the Easter Liturgy away from its previous dawn slot to become a Saturday evening service. This had already been planned before the BBC got in touch, but it enabled us to celebrate the most liturgically important service of the year in full, with a substantial congregation, and still sleep enough to be awake for the nation on Easter Day!

Other highlights of the year included a very memorable service in May to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles. We are looking forward to a new fixture, the King's Birthday Service, being inaugurated in 2024.

At the end of the year we enjoyed a wonderful Christmas, with a real sense that many people were 'back' following the extended hiatus of the pandemic and its aftermath. In particular, the two major family services, Christingle and the Crib Service on Christmas Eve, were very well attended, as was our family-oriented Cathedral Eucharist on Christmas Day. And the Cathedral Carol Service, as well as having the largest congregations since 2019, was also easily the most musically memorable one I have experienced during my time here.

The Minster's round of praise and prayer went on, with our daily and weekly congregations continuing to consolidate. It is pleasing to note that our new pattern of worship on the second Sunday of the month, with a shorter, less formal Cathedral Eucharist and then a Sung Eucharist from the Book of Common Prayer at 11.15, now feels well embedded and sustainable – even though there remains more work to be done on that shorter 10.00am service in particular to enable it to develop a distinct identity and appeal.

Heartfelt thanks as ever go to the many individuals and groups, employed and volunteer, including those whose contributions are unseen – our organists, choristers, Lay Clerks, Liturgy and Music Administrator and Chorister Supervisor; the Minster Chorale; our vergers, churchwardens and sidespersons, and servers; our

readers, intercessors, and lay chalice ministrants; not to mention those who operate the live-streaming equipment enabling others to join our worship from home.

It is tempting to think that there is something special about worship in a cathedral. In a sense, perhaps there is. But at a more fundamental level, liturgy – everywhere – is a matter of the people of God, worshipping him as well as they can with the resources at their disposal. We continue to strive to give him the best of what we have.

**The Revd Dr Richard Frith, Canon Precentor**  
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## **Cathedral Choirs**

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Music at Southwell has gone from strength to strength in 2023, with some really memorable highlights. We have been blessed with a strong cohort of choristers as well as some superb musicians in the back row of the Cathedral choir, in the Minster Chorale, and at the forefront of our music-making.

As usual, following Christmas, we looked forward to the round of special services including the Epiphanytide Procession, which grows each year, to the annual Four Choirs Evensong, this year held at Southwell with the girl choristers and adults of Southwell, Coventry, Leicester and Derby. The whole of Lent was full of anticipation not just of Easter, but of the BBC arriving to broadcast our Easter Day Eucharist to the nation. What an honour this was for the choir, and my heartfelt thanks go to all involved, especially Jonathan Allsopp, who was directing during a long period when I was off work: this occasion showed Southwell at its absolute best.

The summer term was full of preparation for the Cathedral Choir going on tour to Sees in Normandy, which we did in July. Of course, before that we had to commemorate the coronation of King Charles III, and took part in various other exciting events through the term – these included two joint ventures with Lincoln Cathedral Choir, one with the Lay Clerks in Southwell, and one with the girl choristers and lay clerks in Lincoln. Both occasions were demonstrations of real musical co-operation and collaboration, and were valued by all. Another very important occasion was to form part of the summer term – the marriage of Jonathan Allsopp to Jessica Christy, at which many members of the Cathedral Choir were singing, alongside other friends and colleagues of Jonathan and Jess. However, the Sees tour capped everything off nicely, and we enjoyed superb concerts in the region as well as visits to local attractions both for pleasure and for education. None of the choristers had been on tour with us before, and we also were able to take some former boy choristers who had missed out on their

opportunity to tour with us. It was certainly a very memorable trip.

Over the year, the Minster Chorale has supported our worship with great strength, and is in good shape. They have enjoyed a good programme, especially including Messiah in December, joint ventures with other choirs, and a residence singing services at Hereford Cathedral. They continue to be a very important and much-loved part of the fabric of music at Southwell.

At the end of the Summer, the Cathedral Choir was pleased to take part in the Southwell Music Festival Sunday services along with the Festival Voices. What followed was an extremely busy term with the second Organathon, the RSCM Festival Service, and numerous other things including another very special wedding, this time of auxiliary lay clerk Peter Anthony and his now wife Penny. All of this built to a remarkable Christmas with concerts galore, including the sell-out *Magic of Christmas*, and the very challenging yet musically enjoyable carol services.

We said farewell to Matthew Jordan (lay clerk) at Christmas, and to George Balfour (organ scholar) in the summer, but we will have a new lay clerk in 2024 and Timothy Selman is already proving a very valuable organ scholar. Challenges abound as ever, but the musical offering at Southwell continues to grow and develop, and we are proud to produce a very high level of music-making for services and at other times.

**Paul Provost, Rector Chori**  
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## **Visiting Choirs**

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During 2023 we were pleased to be able to welcome twelve different visiting choirs, and as a result were able to have choral music at all but four of the Sundays when our own choirs were on holiday.

The choir of All Saints, Fulham came for a whole week at the end of July, and we were pleased to see the return of the St Michael's Singers for their bi-annual visit for several days in August. Other choirs visited for periods of between one and three days. Once again, we received positive feedback from choir directors and choir members about the welcome, appreciation and help they received from the whole Minster community whilst they were here. We thank everyone involved in this – particularly our clergy and vergers, but also the team of volunteers who provide tea for our guests on Sunday afternoons. We are very grateful to all the members of the visiting choirs (and their organists) who come to Southwell – usually at their own personal expense meeting the travel and accommodation costs of their visit – in order to help us

to maintain our choral tradition through most of the year. We now look forward to receiving the various visiting choirs booked in to come to Southwell during 2024.

**Alastair Clarke, Liturgy and Music Administrator**  
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### **Choral Outreach Programme**

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It is with sadness I report that the Choral Outreach Programme ended in July. The funding we had was used up and so, after fifteen years of continuous activities (apart from the inevitable halt during Covid times), the final events took place in the spring and summer terms of 2023.

Projects at four primary schools, two of which had had previous visits from the outreach team and two new, were very successful with encouraging feedback from staff. "It's been a fantastic opportunity for our children and they engaged well with it. We would be keen for further visits." And from another: "We loved welcoming you to our school and would love to be considered for any future singing opportunities that you may have."

As has been the case for many years, the Choral Outreach team, in collaboration with the Minster's Education Department, led singing sessions at the Year 5 'Art and Architecture Day' as well as for both Time Travelling weeks.

It simply remains for me to say a huge thank you to everyone whose support, encouragement and work has made the Programme the success it has been. Some of us have been involved since the initial school project in the autumn term of 2008! The team thanks, in particular, Charlie Leggatt whose success in obtaining funding made it possible for Choral Outreach to continue for so many years.

**Elizabeth Johnson, Administrator Southwell Minster Choral Outreach Programme**

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### **Southwell Minster Choir Association**

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2023 was a really busy, and mostly successful year for SMCA.

In February, a Come & Sing Haydn's Theresienmesse promotion led by Geraint Bowen (Organist & Master of the Choristers, Hereford Cathedral) attracted a full house of participants, and a good audience at the performance.

The 'Music in the State Chamber' series of hour-long Sunday evening concerts, set up initially to provide a platform for young musicians, were very well attended throughout the programme from May to December

arranged largely by Jonathan Allsopp and manned by a loyal group of SMCA members, thank you. Thanks for support also from the Lay Clerks who organised a sponsored cycle ride, raising funds to aid the Cathedral Choir's tour to Sees in Normandy. The tour was a great success, and particularly rewarding for the boy and girl choristers. SMCA supported the Minster Chorale's initiative in singing the choral services for a week in Hereford Cathedral; and again presented the Chorale's established annual performance of Handel's Messiah with the Musical & Amicable period instruments orchestra, Minster School singers, and superb soloists, all directed by ADOM, Jonathan Allsopp – who commented 'best yet'.

Haydn's Creation was a fine performance, but so deserved a better attendance.

The November social Quiz & Curry event held in the State Chamber with Guy as quizmaster and Rama from the Reindeer cooking the delicious curries, and organised by Jonathan Allsopp and his team, was again a sell-out.

Also, in November, SMCA was pleased to work with Minster's Head of Fundraising, Ruth Massey, in promoting, with Southwell Minster Old Choristers Association, the special Evensong for The Milo Chorister Fund—a further opportunity to support the future of the cathedral choristers. Our refreshments team provided and served food & drinks that followed Evensong,

Thanks to all our volunteer refreshments team who so cheerfully have prepared and served food & drink at many a concert interval in the Minster.

Closer links with the Old Choristers Association have recently been explored and will be clarified in early 2024.

SMCA's 2023 distinctive Christmas Card, 'Glancing Light' was designed by Sarah Heelis (Nesbitt) and proved quite a popular buy.

SMCA updated the Honours Boards by the entrance to the Palace, and continued support of the Melody Makers' Saturday sessions for young children, led by Lauren Osmond & Paul Provost, helping at the Christmas fun morning.

At the AGM, following ratification from Chapter, members voted to adopt a new Constitution after recommendation from a sub-committee led by chairman, Colonel David Sneath, who also negotiated with Chapter a MOU.

Trustees thank; members for their subscriptions, our regular generous donators, refreshments team, the committee, Rector Chori & ADOM, & All supporters.

**Michael Davidson, Honorary Secretary**

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## WORSHIP SUPPORT

### Vergers

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The end of 2022. It had been a hectic year with staff changes, me being confirmed as Head Verger, Edmund and Francis joining the team to bring us back up to full strength allowing Nick to step back and retire. Following our baptism of fire with the death of the monarch we had made it to and through Christmas unscathed and ready to head into 2023, putting the brakes on and hoping that things would go back to normal for a while. We returned in January and the plan for Easter was on the cards. The Holy Week and Easter planning happened and we all knew what the end of this term was going to bring, or did we?

Shortly after this, the BBC announced they were coming to film our Easter Day service. Our Easter Day Eucharist was to be broadcast live on BBC One, so all our plans went out of the window and a whole new set were to be devised. Working with the BBC, as Vergers, is quite an experience, having to work out how best to run cables into the building, seeing how they attach scaffolding supports into our triforium arches to protect the lighting and sound engineers when rigging up, and then rehearsing with the camera operatives to ensure that we weren't going to be in each other's way. As you can imagine a lot of planning had to go into this to deliver, what was a truly fantastic occasion.

No sooner had the TV camera's been removed than we were onto the King's Coronation. Whilst these occasions aren't as big for us as they are for the likes of Westminster Abbey, we still had our part to play, hosting activities, including a screen viewing of what was happening live in London so the local community could come together.

It was after this that our team took its first knock for the year. Kenny, having been with the team some 17 years, had handed his notice in 6 weeks prior and Coronation weekend was to be his last. We are grateful to Kenny for the years he gave and the continued support he still gives, even if he is no longer a member of the team. Kenny was shortly followed out the South Door by Francis having been offered a full-time post with St. John's Ambulance. One of Francis' last duties was helping to install the magnificent GAIA – the Earth which hung in our Nave for 3 weeks from the last week in July to the end of August. Once again, I'd like to thank the team and also Kenny who came back to support the installation having planned and masterminded how it was going to work.

We were back to a team of 3 but were not left in the lurch as Nick and Kenny continued to support us and the summer break saw the return of Alfie Ramsay from university to help us through August and September,

which of course concluded with another stunning music festival to close out August.

Going into the Autumn, things were not going to get any quieter, as well as all the usual events and concerts, a plethora of concerts by candlelight were booked in, keeping us all on our toes with staging and overtime. This felt an overly busy time especially as we were still a small team and there was only so much that we wanted to call on the goodwill of our former colleagues.

Things started to ease when Clayton joined the team full time, mid-November which helped us battled on through Christmas and in January, Hannah joined us to bring us back to full strength. Bring on 2024.

**Andy McIntosh, Head Verger**

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### Guild of Minster Servers

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I wish to express my sincere and grateful thanks to every member of the Guild of Servers here at The Minster. Thank you for all your valuable time, effort and willingness that at very short notice you stand in for a fellow Server so that each service is covered. We serve at many services throughout the church's calendar including special services assisting the clergy with their many duties.

**Jill Arrowsmith, Head Server**

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### Southwell Minster Bell Ringers

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Firstly, I must thank every Southwell bellringer for their commitment week in week out. Often, it's a cold, dark, wet Tuesday evening turning out to practice but it's worth it to meet a friendly group of people who tell me they enjoy it! Southwell band would be best described as a 'learner band' with a core number of experienced ringers. Like most activities, practice makes perfect and the actual time available is limited so inevitably progression is slow and therefore I am so pleased we have that commitment.

There was in addition to ringing for regular services, carol services and weddings. Christmas Day ringing is always a special way to start the celebrations and of course ringing out the old year and ringing in the new at midnight.

May 2023, in keeping with tradition the bells were rung for the Coronation of King Charles III.

2024 looks like being less busy. Twelve bell practices for ringers from the diocese will be held during the year and hopefully visiting bands will be coming to enjoy the



experience of ringing on the only anti-clockwise ring of twelve in the world.

If you think bell ringing is a pastime that you would like to take up and you are between 8 - 80, capable of climbing the 100 steps then contact me.

As always, our thanks go to the Dean and Chapter, The Chimes Trust and the ringers from within the diocese and beyond for their support.

**Trevor Bryan, Tower Captain**  
**c/o The Minster Office**  
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**Email: [trev.bryan@gmail.com](mailto:trev.bryan@gmail.com)**

## **Needlework Guild**

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2023 was a significant year for us, starting in January with the move to our new room in Trebeck, previously occupied by the theology library. Having our own space allows us to carry out larger, more ambitious work, knowing that we have space and access to our supplies and equipment whenever we need it, not just on the days when we have guild meetings booked. The bookshelves were replaced with Ikea storage units (built by canon Richard and me in the Christmas holidays!). One important addition to the room was three sets of adjustable embroidery trestles that were made by Edmund Salter, with beech wood donated by Edward Compton. The trestles will allow us to use larger slate frames, which are necessary for maintaining the tension required for goldwork and silk shading, particularly for larger pieces such as panels for vestments and altar frontals. We are especially grateful to Edmund and Edward for their donation, because trestles supplied by the RSN would cost £800 per set!

When I took over as tutor, the dean expressed her desire to get some new vestments designed and made "in house" by the Guild. To that end, we have been concentrating on learning and polishing up goldwork skills in our guild meetings, alongside our normal workload. At the same time, I was working on the designs for our first set of vestments. It was decided to start with the rose set (the Minster does not currently own any rose vestments), and this was made possible with the generous donation of the rose brocade and lining fabric. My designs are based on symbolism particularly associated with the minster ( see "rose vestments design notes"), and have been approved by the Dean and Chapter, and the Minster Fabric Committee. At the time of writing, the first embroidered panels have been started, and we are hoping to get the vestments completed for Gaudete Sunday 2024 (advent) or Laetare 2025 (lent).

Despite all these exciting new developments, our usual workload carries on – the vergers have had new gowns and cassocks which required the finishing touches adding,

and in one case, a complete remodel of the neck area to improve comfort. Amices and apparels have been tended to, and new linen palls have been started. We have helped the education department with their costumes for visiting schools. September brought a new intake of particularly small choristers, which required an urgent cassock shortening session! Our quire cushion project continues, with most members having a cushion design on the go as well as all the work on the vestments. We hosted two successful tutorial sessions for the minster discovery day, where we made applique felt lavender bags. The Geldart/Hodgson fowler processional banner that we uncovered last year has been delivered to the People's History Museum in Manchester for conservation, and is due to be returned later this month, when it will be used in procession one last time for the patronal festival.

It has been an exciting year for needlework guild, and I feel very privileged to be working with such a lovely, talented team, with a "can do" attitude to taking on new work. We continue to be supported steadfastly by the Friends of Southwell Cathedral, who pay for teaching and materials are also paying for the conservation and display of the banner. It just remains for me to say a big thank you to everyone for all of your dedication and hard work, you are all truly amazing.

**Emma Frith, Tutor**  
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## **Flower Guild**

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As usual our planning meeting in the Spring was well attended and we welcomed 2 new experienced arrangers who were happy to join our team and volunteer dates for the year ahead.

Some 'new' containers have been acquired this year allowing the use of chicken wire for the mechanics, instead of foam. Thanks to all our members who have tried and embraced this idea. The amount of foam purchased has been reduced and the availability of Bio Floral foam looks a promising way for us to adopt more environmentally friendly methods.

After a break for Lent arranging flowers for Easter is always a pleasure. The variety of styles using spring flowers in foam free designs and spectacular pillars and pedestals of longi lilies with rhaps palm were much appreciated.

Designs of red, white and blue were obvious choices for the Coronation of King Charles and our team produced magnificent displays for the celebrations.

Weddings requiring flowers were fewer, 6 altogether, and spread throughout the year. The special services including Civic services, Harvest, Bramley Festival and

Remembrance Sunday allowed individuals to be especially creative.

Designs with a musical theme, produced by Jenny's team, were much admired by visitors at the well-attended Music Festival in August.

Thanks to Rachel for creating the Advent ring. Traditional red, green and gold featured strongly in our Christmas displays, featuring foliage from the Education garden and some sprayed, recycled hydrangea heads.

There are currently 17 active members in the group and others who are unable to continue with larger designs. This is often due to the physicality of what is required. Adapting our rota so that members can still make a valuable contribution is something we must do in the future.

A big thanks to those who step in at short notice, offer to help others, including husbands, partners and especially the vergers. We can't manage without them.

I'm very grateful to Ann Bristow who has worked with me, put flower orders together with me and deputised on many occasions in my absence. It has been much appreciated.

**Kathy Hocking**  
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## PASTORAL CARE AND THE MINISTRY OF WELCOME

### Pastoral Care

2023 saw the continuation of the good and caring work done by the team. We are looking to issue a revamped Pastoral Care Leaflet sometime in 2024 to improve communication.

Thank you to the whole team for all the great work you do and continuing to support this important work. Thank you especially to Revd. Erika And Elizabeth who have kept the group going in my absence.

**The Revd Canon Paul Rattigan**  
**Email: [Paul.Rattigan@southwellminster.org.uk](mailto:Paul.Rattigan@southwellminster.org.uk)**

### Churchwardens and Sidespersons

My role as Senior Churchwarden began in June 2023. I would like to extend my thanks to Kathy Hocking (now Warden Emeritus) and all other Warden Emeriti for their support and wisdom as I began my new role.

The Minster is fortunate to have a highly committed team of Churchwardens, Emeritus Wardens and Sidespeople

who have shown dedication in welcoming, serving and keeping safe a wide range of congregations across many varied services throughout the year. Their loyalty to their respective roles has been exceptional and their willingness to volunteer, sometimes at short notice, has been greatly appreciated.

A special thanks to the Minster Office team, in particular, Matt Spillett, who has refined the management of the new rota system. He requests availability from us all, then very effectively compiles the rota and distributes it to everyone on time every month. His patience is definitely one of his many strengths! We continue to be grateful to Christine Homer for the provision of our gold sashes.

Alongside the normal pattern of worship, we have covered Baptism, Confirmation, Ordination and funeral services. I am very grateful to Stephen Littlewood, Warden Emeritus, for continuing his meticulous oversight and cover of funerals.

This year we have supported a number of significant services:

- Two Archdeacons' Visitation services held in June
- Platinum Anniversary Celebration of the Ordination of Bishop Ronald in June
- Two Ordination services for Priests and Deacons held in July
- The Animal Blessing service held in September
- All Souls Day Requiem with a larger than usual congregation in November
- The Celebration Evensong – of music, musicians and the Music Foundation in November
- Remembrance Sunday both the Cathedral Eucharist and the 'Solemn Requiem Eucharist'
- The Diocesan Confirmation Service in November

December was particularly challenging for us all as there were 70 duties to be covered, with a record number of people attending services. Since Christmas Day fell on a Monday and coupled with all the usual services on Sunday as well as the special Christmas services, this resulted in a very busy weekend! Attendance was high across all the special services. It was encouraging to see the Minster so full at every service. There were many highlights, notably the Christingle service, the Crib service, the Carol Services (of which there were 4), the Eucharist on Christmas night and the Christmas Day services. We could not have managed this without the outstanding cooperation of Wardens, Sidespeople and the Vergers.

During the year, we were delighted to welcome 7 new members of the congregation as Sidespeople: Sue Todd, Penny Rainbow, Wendy Hurrell, Andrew Rainbow,

Oliver Rainbow, Celia Burge and Martyn Burge. Wendy Hurrell has now become Deputy Warden and Maggie Peel, appointed as a Peoples' Warden.

This year, we say goodbye to Joan Hiller, Norman Wright and Hilary Wright, all of whom retired at the end of December. They have enthusiastically and loyally served Southwell Minster, having a combined service of nearly 60 years! We will miss them and wish them all good health and happiness.

It has been a great privilege to work with this Churchwarden and Sidespeople team, the Clergy, the Vergers and the various congregations. We look forward to developing our roles together next year and thank both Canon Richard and Dean Nicola for their continued support and guidance in developing our work.

*'Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus' Philippians 4.21*

Should you like to join our team please do not hesitate to contact me to find out more about what we do.

**Meg Maunder, Senior Churchwarden**

**Tel: 07810 656262**

**Email: [meg@megmaunder.co.uk](mailto:meg@megmaunder.co.uk)**

## **Honorary Chaplains**

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2023 saw a much-needed expansion in the team. With the increased activity in the Minster this was much needed and they played an important part in occasions like Gaia. Thank you to one and all.

**The Revd Canon Paul Rattigan**

**Email: [Paul.Rattigan@southwellminster.org.uk](mailto:Paul.Rattigan@southwellminster.org.uk)**

## **Guild of Minster Stewards**

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The main aim of the Guild is to provide a Ministry of Welcome to visitors on behalf of the Dean and Chapter of Southwell Minster. Visitors come to the Minster for many varied reasons, but the warm and friendly welcome shown by our Stewards, and their obvious love and knowledge of the building and its history, are frequently commented on and much appreciated by our visitors.

2023 was the first full 'normal' year that we have experienced since the impact of the pandemic. We were once again able to provide Steward cover to the Minster on a regular three-shift daily basis throughout the year. Thanks to the on-going process of recruitment and training of new Stewards that has been in place for some years, we were able to admit a record number of eighteen new Stewards by the end of 2023. This has brought our overall number of active Stewards back to pre-pandemic levels, in excess of 100, making us the largest group of volunteers working within the Minster.

In May we helped celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III, and a little later, in August, we held our own small informal celebration, to recognise the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the Guild of Stewards, which was much enjoyed by many of us.

At the start of 2023 we were delighted to learn that the Leaves in the Chapter House had been voted the number one 'Cathedral Treasure' in all the English Cathedrals. The initial publicity about this award undoubtedly had a beneficial impact on our visitor numbers early in the year. Overall visitor numbers for the year were significantly increased on the previous year and we welcomed 43,379 visitors to the Cathedral. In addition to that number are all the many visitors that attend for concerts, festivals, and other exhibitions, which are recorded separately. Stewards played their part throughout the year by assisting and supporting the Spring and Winter Craft Fairs, the Bramley Festival, the Gaia exhibition, the Southwell Music Festival, Candlelight Concerts in the Nave, and School Educational Visits.

The number of Guided Tours, both pre-booked by Groups in advance, and on-line booked by individuals, greatly increased, and over 1,340 people enjoyed a variety of tours to the Minster itself, and the Archbishops' Palace and Gardens. Tower Tours restarted in March and 377 adults and children enjoyed the climb through the bell tower and up to the roof on 33 separate tours. The revenue for the Minster resulting from all tours showed a marked increase on the previous year.

Our 'Learning More' programme, for the on-going educational development of all our Stewards, continued through the year and eight sessions were organised (although one had to be deferred to 2024 after we experienced severe wet weather!), covering many diverse topics including Chantry Chapels, Archbishop Edwin Sandys, and Choirs and Organs. All training sessions were very well supported.

'The Steward,' our in-house magazine for Stewards has been produced regularly throughout the year and is a source of much useful information for us all. The editorial team for this has recently been enhanced by the addition of some fresh faces from the Guild.

All active Stewards have now completed the Safer Recruitment Protocol, and most have also fully completed the Safeguarding Training programme, as required by the Diocese.

The Stewards' Committee has met at regular intervals throughout the year and much time and effort has been involved in revising and updating our Constitution. This has now been completed and was unanimously approved at our AGM in January 2024. A complete review and revision of all our information Factsheets has been undertaken recently and all are now available in electronic

format. It is planned to provide a facility on the Welcome Desk so that all Stewards can quickly access information on a wide range of topics when visitors ask questions, or further details are required on a subject.

We look forward to another year of progress on all fronts during 2024. If you would like to join our friendly group of Stewards please get in touch! Many thanks.

**Peter Aldrick, Chief Steward**

**Tel: 01636 815354**

**Email: [peteraldrick@btinternet.com](mailto:peteraldrick@btinternet.com)**

## **Safeguarding**

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The safeguarding of all who work, worship, volunteer and visit Southwell Minster remains the safeguarding team's priority.

May 2022, a Southwell Minster safeguarding officer was appointed, and a service level agreement approved between the Cathedral and the Diocese focusing on working together to improve relationships and safeguarding.

The safeguarding officer and coordinator continue to work tirelessly on improving standards of safeguarding across Southwell Minster. The National Safeguarding Team has recently launched a set of standards which the Cathedral safeguarding management group are working through on identifying how to ensure we are compliant and meet the standards with professional quality.

Policies are being renewed and new ones introduced. Safer recruitment is well underway, and a new process is in place to ensure we are in line with National policy. Relationships have been established with some key figures and engagements have taken place with many volunteers, so they feel valued and inclusive.

We continue to offer face-to-face training to assist those who prefer or are unable to use a computer. Safer recruitment is well underway, and we have adopted the House of Bishops policies as our guides to better practice. Our closer working partnership with the Diocesan team has also helped us access an array of training. There have been some subtle changes to the song school to improve the safety of our choristers along with recording and reporting systems. Choristers now have access to provisions which enable them to have a voice. A joint agreement was agreed between Minster School and the song school to ensure clarity of responsibility.

Following the SCIE (Social Care Institute for Excellence) audit, from September 2021, work has addressed the recommendations, and the action plan is well underway. The original plan and recent update can be viewed on the Southwell Minster website.

As the work on our key priorities continues, information regarding any changes and development concerning aspects of our safeguarding practice will be shared so that everyone becomes aware of how it affects them and their involvement in the life of Southwell Minster.

As we sign off from this brief review, I ask that we all remember that Safeguarding is **our** responsibility, it is **everyone's** responsibility.

**Penny Turner, Cathedral Safeguarding Officer**

**Tel: 01636 817200**

**Email: [penny.turner@southwell.anglican.org](mailto:penny.turner@southwell.anglican.org)**

**Vicky Thorpe, Cathedral Safeguarding Coordinator**

**Tel: 01636 817285 (Chief Operating Officer) or 01636 817290 (Vergers' Vestry)**

**Email: [safeguarding@southwellminster.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@southwellminster.org.uk)**

## **GROUPS IN THE LIFE OF THE MINSTER**

### **Growing in Faith**

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The rich variety of discipleship events continues to enrich our life here at the Minster. The talks around C S Lewis were a particular highlight. Home Groups continue with the addition of another group. Some of the other activities tailed off in the year due to my Long Covid. Thank you to all who contribute to this crucial ministry.

**The Revd Canon Paul Rattigan**

**Email: [Paul.Rattigan@southwellminster.org.uk](mailto:Paul.Rattigan@southwellminster.org.uk)**

### **Staff**

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There have been a limited number of changes in 2023.

Verger Team: Kenny Nairn and Frances Sheperd left and Clayton Davey joined us. The team have been at full strength since Hannah Woods joined us in early 2024.

Music Team: George Balfour moved on from being Organ Scholar to be replaced by Tim Selman.

**Canon Nigel Spraggins, Chief Officer**

**Tel: 07498 212775**

**Email: [nigel.spraggins@southwellminster.org.uk](mailto:nigel.spraggins@southwellminster.org.uk)**

### **Mothers' Union**

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Southwell Minster branch has continued to meet monthly in 2023, with most meetings taking place in Sacrista Prebend. The format has been relaxed, following the pattern of opening worship, a talk or discussion on a variety of topics and, of course, tea, biscuits and fellowship.

Sadly, our numbers have fallen considerably this year as members have left for various reasons. As we are now only a small group, we don't feel able to invite visiting speakers, but have found plenty to interest us in articles in the national "Connected" magazine as well as the world situation. We have been especially encouraged by the ongoing work of Mothers' Union across the developing world in empowering, educating and advocating for women and girls in many societies.

Several of us enjoyed lunch out at The Oak and our annual Strawberry Tea attracted a few more people from further afield.

We supported the Diocesan MU prayer and meditation in the Minster Garden in August, which was unfortunately spoiled by a downpour at the crucial moment. Thanks go to the vergers who allowed us to use the State Chamber until the rain stopped.

The year ahead, 2024, will be a time of reflection for us as a branch, as we engage with the national Reimagining Mothers' Union strategy. We will need to consider what changes we need to make to encourage more younger members to engage and catch the vision that began 148 years ago with Mary Sumner and is still greatly needed today. That may include making changes to when, where and how we meet.

Nationally, MU has continued to work for families and family life in supporting hospitals, prisoners, women's refuges etc., in this country, as well as campaigning against Modern Slavery and Gender Based Violence, as well as all the overseas development work. Each year, across the world, Mothers' Union members work tirelessly to improve the quality of life for those around them. They do this as part of their personal commitment to show their faith in action. The embedded nature of members in communities means Mothers' Union is uniquely placed to reach people which others struggle to reach.

Locally, nationally and globally our projects are helping build a better future: Stopping violence, stopping poverty, stopping injustice.

**Shelagh Baird-Smith, Branch Leader**  
**Tel: 01636 918341**  
**Email: shelaghbairdsmith@gmail.com**

## **Friends of Southwell Cathedral**

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2023 was a particularly full year for The Friends - notably with our adoption of a new constitution at a Special General Meeting (SGM) on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> June, which modernises our governance, whilst taking note of the provisions of the 2021 Cathedrals Measure. Our chairmanship, historically vested in the Provost/Dean of

Southwell, is now placed with an individual independent of Chapter. This avoids any suggestion of a conflict of interest in the Dean approaching a funding body of which s/he is the Chair. Our relationship with Chapter remains as close as ever and the Dean, along with up to two other members of Chapter, are invited under the terms of the new constitution to attend our Council meetings *ex officio* and to input. I was humbled to be voted in as the new Chairman.

Our Annual General Meeting preceded the SGM, starting with an illuminating talk by Martin Bussey entitled 'In no Strange Land: Reflections on a Journey.' With the meetings concluded, members moved over to the Walled Garden where, by kind permission of our President, Bishop Paul, a summertime lunch was held. Afternoon Tea, by Margaret Noble, was followed by Evensong; Bishop Paul being the preacher. Many thanks to Alison Salter, our Hon. Secretary, for her hand on the tiller of the AGM arrangements (and so much more besides).

The Friends' grant making to the Minster was given a substantial fillip by a most generous legacy received from Barbara Barker, with her testamentary request that we use this for the benefit of the Music Foundation. At the end of 2022, we donated £40,000 to help fund the restoration and 'MOT' of the Quire Organ; in the year under review, £40,000 to help with the costs of the organ scholarship and £13,000 toward the 'Milo' appeal, which benefits the Choristers. I represented the Friends at the special Choral Evensong held on 5<sup>th</sup> November when organisations that support the Music Foundation were thanked and the music and musicians of the Minster celebrated.

Along with our regular subventions to the Flower and Needlework Guilds, we have several funding projects in the offing which should come to fruition in 2024 (these include meeting the cost of the conservation and display of the Victorian Processional Banner, which returned to the Minster in January 2024).

Pauline Rouse, Events Secretary, organised an outing to Elton Hall on 16<sup>th</sup> May. Following a guided tour of the house, Friends enjoyed a walk around the gardens and admired the topiary, the Orangery, Shell seat and beautiful borders. On 12<sup>th</sup> September, Pauline arranged a visit to the 1620s House and Garden; a wonderful day (despite the rain!) which was hugely enjoyed by all who came.

On 8<sup>th</sup> June, several Friends helped Minster staff and volunteers in welcoming a visiting group from the Friends of Winchester Cathedral. Modesty forbids me from quoting the many kind remarks we all received from them but, suffice to note, the day went splendidly.

In October, Margaret Waddington, Elizabeth Johnson (a recruit to Council we are fortunate to have) and I spent a weekend at Hereford Cathedral at the Biennial

Conference of Friends of Cathedrals, Abbeys and Greater Churches. This was, in fact, the first such conference since Covid and all the more fascinating to meet colleagues from other cathedrals, share experiences and discuss issues that concern us all – notably, maintaining/increasing membership levels. We are ever on the lookout for new members and our application leaflet can be found throughout the Minster and Palace or at [www.southwellminster.org/friends](http://www.southwellminster.org/friends).

On 17th November, Friends gathered for tea in the Crossing, followed by a fascinating – oft moving – talk on ‘The Icons of Kyiv’ by three Ukrainian specialists forced to flee their homeland at the outbreak of war.

Our magazine, *Pepperpots*, came out twice (with a special supplement for the SGM).

Finally, we record with much sadness the death on 12<sup>th</sup> May of Fiona Allen, a long-serving member of Council.

**Charlie Leggatt, Chairman**

**Tel: 01636 819281**

**Email: [chairman@southwellfriends.org](mailto:chairman@southwellfriends.org)**

### Southwell Minster Theology Group

We continue to meet every other Tuesday at Sacrista Prebend and welcome new members and we are privileged to have participants from a range of denominations from all over the county. This past year we have looked at theology old and new, beginning with the Bible and Critical Theory, then examining the sermon practice of radical new theologies, finishing this Autumn by wrestling with the whole of the *Confessions* of St Augustine. We also had an enjoyable one-off session on the nature of heaven. People come and go, so do email me to see if there is a space or join the waiting list.

**The Revd Canon Professor Alison Milbank,**

**Tel: 07738 873279**

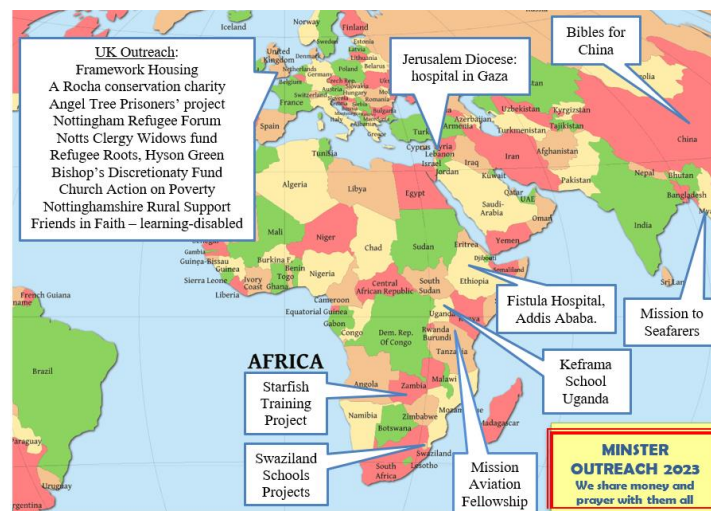
**Email: [milbankalison@gmail.com](mailto:milbankalison@gmail.com)**

## MISSION AND OUTREACH

### Mission Partnership Group

The Minster’s Mission Partnership Group continues to build up partnerships of friendship, prayer and financial support for God’s mission outside the Minster, and for over 25 years the congregation has allocated 10% of our planned giving for this mission. In 2023 we ended grants to groups with whom we had lost touch, and this enabled us to increase donations to the Mission Aviation Fellowship in Tanzania, and to the Al-Ahli Anglican hospital in Gaza, facing traumatic difficulties at this time. We have also begun a new partnership with The Ark

community centre on the Phoenix Farm estate in Gedling, and the chair of trustees is a member of the Minster. We are continuing our partnership with *A Rocha*, the church’s conservation charity, to enhance our role as a Conservation Cathedral with its medieval carved leaves.



**The Revd Canon Vincent Ashwin, Chair**

**Tel: 01636 813975**

**Email: [vincentashwin@talktalk.net](mailto:vincentashwin@talktalk.net)**

### Friends in Faith

We have continued our monthly gatherings where we create a space to share our gifts, exchange news, sing, enjoy craft and drama activities as well as telling stories and worshipping in a way that is meaningful to us. In August we held our annual picnic on Sacrista’s top lawn, playing games, treasure hunts and sharing lots of fun. We also joined with the Westgate Group for three services during the year taken by Erika. Thank you, Erika, for your kindness, support and spiritual guidance. Also thank you to Joan Broughton and her team who provide delicious teas after the services.

Friends in Faith is a diverse ecumenical group which is run by a small group of volunteers who ensure the quality and safety of our meetings to whom I am very thankful. Thanks also to Marion Turner who enhances our worship with her music and to the Mission Committee, Dean and Chapter for kindly providing the funds which enable us to continue offering this particular worshipping experience for our Friends in Faith.

**Lee Harbour**

**Tel: 01636 813805**

**Email: [lee@harbour.me.uk](mailto:lee@harbour.me.uk)**

## Minster Justice Action Group

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### MINSTER JUSTICE ACTION GROUP – ANNUAL REPORT 2023

The Minster Justice Action Group spearheads the Minster's social justice mission and ministry. The two major areas of our work in 2023 focused on Fairtrade and Environmental Action, for which dedicated working groups take the lead. Liz Rose, Coordinator of the Fairtrade Group, reports:

The Fairtrade group has had another busy year:

- During Fairtrade Fortnight (21 Feb – 5 March) a Diocese-wide Celebratory Service was held, with the support of West Trent Churches Choir, followed by hospitality using Fairtrade products and many stalls in the Crossing offering information and samples of Fairtrade wine and chocolate.
- During the fortnight, a wide-ranging display was mounted in the Minster Crossing.
- Subsequent to the Celebratory Service, All Saints, Barnby in the Willows invited the group to talk about Fairtrade and we were very enthusiastically received.
- The Minster School prefects adopted Fairtrade as a School Charity and the group was invited to talk to assemblies about Fairtrade.
- Fairtrade was reintroduced as part of Time Travelling in March 2023 by volunteers from the group and others recruited to help.
- We provided a Fairtrade stall at the Green Fayre on 25 March
- The Group was invited to draft the updates for Chapter's Fairtrade Policy and strategy, and these were accepted and signed off by Chapter.
- The Fairtrade group continued to provide Fairtrade tea, coffee, sugar and biscuits for refreshments after the Sunday morning main Service.
- In the Autumn one of our group was invited to join the National Campaigner Committee which provides a vital link between the Fairtrade Foundation and Fairtrade campaigners.
- We produced a leaflet about Fairtrade and Climate Change as part of the COP 28 exhibition in the Minster.
- The Group again supported the Minster Shop in running a very successful Fairtrade stall at the Craft Fair in November.

- We began seeking for Southwell to be reinstated as a Fairtrade Town. This is in its early stages.

Hugh Middleton, Coordinator of the Southwell Minster Environmental Action Group, reports:

Southwell Minster is now on the edge of being eligible to apply for Silver Eco-Church status.

We have been pleased to see Twayblade orchids and Great Burnet established in Potwell Dyke Grasslands, and there have been further sightings of Clifden Nonpareil moth, first seen there in 2022. We have supported the installation of some 30 swift boxes around the town and continue to explore how that might extend to the Minster itself.

More than ten thousand people attended the Gaia exhibition; a remarkable experience which was enhanced by our own prayer leaflets. During the year visitors will also have been exposed to our displays during the Season of Creation and during COP 28.

We now have an established round of quarterly, seasonal prayer leaflets, and quarterly services introducing them.

Contact and relationships continue to be developed with the diocesan Caring for Creation working group, Southwell Town Council and Green Southwell, with whom the Minster hosted a Green Fair in March.

Consideration is being given to further rewilding of the Minster Yard.

Additional initiatives taken by the Justice Action Group during the year include:

- The mounting of a display about Poverty in the UK and Church Action on Poverty over Church Action on Poverty Sunday in February – this raised awareness and funds.
- The recognition of Gender Based Violence in prayers and in a minute's silence in the Minster during Gender Based Violence Week
- Support of a weekly vigil for world peace.
- Frequent information items in pew news on e.g., Modern-Day Slavery, Homelessness, Foodbanks.

During the year, the group engaged in review of, and seeking to renew, our role and involvement in the Minster. Action demands actors - anyone who might be interested in learning more about the Minster's Justice, Fairtrade and Environment work is warmly invited to contact Hugh Middleton, Liz Rose or Patrick Sills.

Jessica Pacey died in November 2023 having withdrawn from coordinating the group in August. She is much missed and was committed, enthusiastic and influential in the role. We give thanks for her; may she rest in peace.

**Patrick Sills, Acting Coordinator of the Justice Action Group**

**E: patricksills18@gmail.com**

### **Friday Lunchtimes at the Cathedral**

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A total of seventeen Friday lunchtime concerts were given during 2023, with an average attendance of 85 – exactly the same as in the previous year. We would like to record our thanks to all the musicians who gave their time to come to Southwell to give these concerts (and who do so without any payment of fee or expenses), and also to all those on the Cathedral Hospitality Team who volunteered to serve refreshments to our audience prior to each concert. Finally, a thank you to everyone who attended any of the concerts and who contributed to the generous donations to the retiring collections, totaling £4,289.85, which has made a significant contribution towards the annual cost of the Minster's Organ Scholarship.

During the year Jeremy Pemberton stepped down from the task of booking the musicians to fill the schedule of concerts – a responsibility which has now been taken on by Guy Turner. We already have a full programme of concerts organised for 2024, and Guy has now begun work on booking the musicians for 2025! A huge thank you to Jeremy for undertaking this task over the last few years, and also to Guy for the practical work he has already done to ensure the continuance of this concert series.

Since these lunchtime concerts started several years ago all the donations given have been used to help pay for our Organ Scholarship. During 2023, a substantial legacy has been received through the Friends of Southwell Cathedral which will be used to pay the total cost of the Organ Scholarship for the next three years. Therefore, from the beginning of 2024, the donations made at our lunchtime concerts will now go to the Cathedral's Milo Chorister Fund – helping to support our Chorister Programme.

**Guy Turner & Alastair Clarke**

**Email: guyscottturner@gmail.com**

**Email: alastair.clarke@southwellminster.org.uk**

### **Social Committee**

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As in previous years we have been able to help organise Harvest Lunch with Andy Lester from A Rocha joining us, with opportunity later in the day for him to answer questions. The was again much enjoyed by all. Refreshments for the Winter Fair were prepared and served as we have done for. It is still hoped that we will be able to offer more opportunities for social and fellowship time.

## **CHURCHES TOGETHER IN SOUTHWELL**

The Minster has played a full part in the initiatives of Churches Together in Southwell during 2023, including:

- Quarterly Breakfast Forum
- Circulation of a Christmas Card containing details of Christmas services and church websites to all homes in Southwell and district
- The Welcome Scheme - distribution of welcome packs to new residents
- The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – celebration through shared worship and soup lunches at each of the town's six main churches
- Newark Foodbank -organisation of the weekly transport of donations for Newark Foodbank from the church and shop collection points in the town to the Foodbank warehouse
- Prison Fellowship – a Sycamore Tree course at Lowdham Grange
- Environmental Action and Worship, including communication with the MP and an ecumenical service during the Season of Creation.

Fuller reports follow on two of the major Churches Together activities, the Silence and Meditation Group and Christian Aid.

### **Southwell Christian Aid Committee**

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Southwell Christian Aid Committee is part of Churches Together in Southwell raising funds for the charity in Southwell and the surrounding villages of Edingley, Fiskerton, Halam, Halloughton, Morton, Normanton and Upton. The committee's volunteers distribute around 4,500 envelopes during Christian Aid week and hold an annual Lent Lunch in the State Chamber. Individual churches, including the Minster also have collections for the charity for humanitarian crises as they arise. The Minster raised an additional £400 from a bucket collection in July.

The emphasis in 2023 was on Malawi - one of the poorest African countries where 50% of the population lives below the poverty line and 20% in extreme poverty. Malawi is ranked 174 of 189 countries on the Human Development Index. Access to clean water, sanitation, and health care remain significant challenges for many Malawians, especially in rural areas. The collection concentrated on Pigeon Peas and the women who process them, helping to maximise their farming efficiency and profits to help with daily living costs often including schooling for their



children. Pigeon pease are a nutritious staple food in Malawi.

Southwell Minster has 22 Christian Aid collectors who distribute the envelopes, and we are very grateful for their support. In 2023, despite the cost-of-living crisis we raised £6,129. The group welcomes new distributors - please contact Helen Sills or Jean Jackson if you could help with this important part of our social justice ministry. Our thanks also to the Minster Shop and managers Amy and Nicola who willingly act as a reception point for donations.

The Christian Aid focus for 2024 is Burundi. Another impoverished African state. Please give generously to this next appeal. Thank you very much.

**Helen Sills & Jean Jackson**

**Tel: 01636 815173**

**Email: helen.sills23@gmail.com**

## **Silence and Meditation Group**

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This year has been a very positive one for our group. Numbers have increased and we continue to be able to offer each meditation online for those members who have moved away or are too frail to attend.

Different members of the Clergy or Lay members have led each session and this has enabled us to be guided in varied and interesting ways towards out time of contemplation and prayer.

We are most grateful that we continue to be able to meet in the beautiful and peaceful chapel of Sacrista Prebend.

Our group is ecumenical and all are welcome to join us on Thursdays during term time from 12.30 p.m. until 1.15 p.m. followed by fellowship for those who wish to stay.

**Elizabeth Yule**

**Email: elizyule22@gmail.com**

## **EDUCATION AND SCHOOLS**

### **Schools and Community Engagement**

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2023 was, in a sense, 'back to basics' for the education department, being the first year for at least ten years that we have not had to deliver the community engagement for the two consecutive Heritage Lottery Funded projects - the Palace restoration and most recently the Leaves. Engaging with thousands of (mainly young) learners makes our work central to the ongoing mission and outreach of the Cathedral, and I had the opportunity to speak about the great educational opportunities in Cathedrals, Abbeys and other places of worship at the national conference for the Council for Learning Outside

the Classroom in early March. 2023 has brought many highlights, and below I outline just a few.

We launched ourselves into what turned out to be a busy and successful year by hosting a wonderful community textiles project by Newark and Sherwood – displaying a colourful sunflower-bedecked banner in support of Ukraine. January was busy with, 'The Romans in Southwell' – our schools' archaeology day which we created in partnership with Southwell Community Archaeology Group. This popular day looks at evidence, settlements and washing and identifying real Roman finds, and over the year nearly 700 children participated!

In February and July, we host our drop-in family fun days, where we take over the Minster with themed games, crafts and activities. In February we were part of the Nottinghamshire-wide Festival of Science and Curiosity, which brings together children, families, schools and people who work in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths) careers or research. Our science themed day included a display of microscopic organisms photographed through a microscope, a 'Microscopic Minster' trail and looking at colour, light, materials, structures and materials as well as experiments with sight and sound using junk. Later in the year, the 'Gaia' installation prompted a Planet Earth summer trail, created by Minster School work placement student Pippa Harries, and a themed family fun day. We were joined by the Average Scientist who gave talks, and the art workshops which ran alongside it proved very popular. Each of these were attended by 400+ children and parents/grandparents/ carers.

There is always a free family trail available from the stewards – these are themed around the church calendar (e.g., Easter and Christmas), or other events happening in the world or the Minster, and this year we took the opportunity to create a coronation trail for the month of May!

The annual Time Travelling RE days in March and June brought its usual vibrancy as 1500 children from 34 primary schools attended. Throughout the rest of the year, we had our usual mixture of tailor-made RE days, small and large scale, from Foundation Stage to secondary schools as well as the welcome return of the Year 6 days in July after a covid break. I must pay tribute to our extraordinary team of education volunteers, who give up so much of their time to work with the visiting children and cope with the many demands put on them by the work. Feedback is consistently positive, and comments such as the following make the work incredibly rewarding:

*"We were made to feel very welcome, greeted at the door and always someone available to assist throughout the day"*

*“Everyone was extremely knowledgeable and very patient with our children, who can be a challenge at times!”*

A highlight of the year is always the adult ‘Discovery Day’ in September. This had been on hold since 2019, first due to Covid and then the queen’s death led to it being cancelled in 2022, so we were thrilled to welcome 74 delegates this year. The keynote speaker was Dr James Wright, buildings archaeologist, and delegates could choose from a menu of 13 workshops, tours and talks. The sun even shone for us which made walks around the gardens and Potwell Dyke all the more enjoyable!

A full programme of what is offered by the education team can be found on the Learning pages of the Minster website: [www.southwellminster.org/learning](http://www.southwellminster.org/learning)

**Diana Ives, Head of Education**

**Email: [diana.ives@southwellminster.org.uk](mailto:diana.ives@southwellminster.org.uk)**

## **Children and Families**

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2023 was a year of transition in our children’s and families’ work. Following a Candlemas-tide Christingle service in January, we said goodbye to Nick Harding, who had led our children’s work with huge energy and creativity since 2019. I assumed interim responsibility for this area of our ministry – an arrangement that was made permanent in the autumn.

Partly owing to this transition, some of our main families’ events did not happen this year. In particular, there was no event for children on Good Friday morning – though this was also due to the impact on the Minster’s Holy Week schedule of the BBC being in town for the broadcast of our Easter Day Eucharist.

The two main Christmas family services, though, were extremely well-supported. There was only one Crib Service, due to Christmas Eve being a Sunday and the need to accommodate usual Sunday morning services as well as Christmas Eve ones, but this was almost standing room only. Meanwhile the Christingle service had an attendance back to pre-Covid levels, perhaps helped by a giant walking Christingle loaned to us by the Children’s Society – which may have partly made up for the fact that we ran out of individual Christingles for the children!

I have also been working to maintain and develop links with local schools, including welcoming them into the cathedral for special services at Easter and Christmas.

The mainstay of our weekly children’s work continues to be Minster Kids, our Sunday morning children’s programme run by a fabulous group of dedicated volunteers. As well as providing faith input for our younger choristers, Minster Kids is also enabling us to minister to an expanding circle of non-chorister families.

Heartfelt thanks are due to all our children’s work volunteers – both those who lead and help with Minster Kids week by week, and those who are reliably on hand for our ‘set piece’ occasions during the year – as well as to Canon Alison Milbank, who continues to carry a significant share in this work, and Diana Ives and the education team, for all their support.

On a personal note, it has been a huge blessing for me to be involved regularly in children’s ministry again, and to work alongside such a wonderful group of colleagues – staff and volunteers – in this area of the Minster’s life. There is much to do, but plenty of grounds for hope in our work with the newest generation of God’s people in 2024.

**The Revd Dr Richard Frith, Canon Precentor**

**Tel: 01636 817282 / 07516 909456**

**Email: [richard.frith@southwellminster.org.uk](mailto:richard.frith@southwellminster.org.uk)**

## **The Minster School**

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We continue to celebrate the close and historic links between the school and Cathedral. In particular, we are immensely proud of all our choristers, who continue to support worship at the Cathedral as they have for centuries. These ties are central to our school and were again evident in our annual Foundation service which was attended by new students in Years 4 and 7, as well as new staff and parents. It was a great opportunity for the school to reflect on its history, the links with the Cathedral and their continued importance today. As with previous years, we celebrated our Easter and Christmas services in the Cathedral. This provided the students with a real sense of awe and wonder as they sat together, as a worshipping community, like generations have done before. A final highlight of the year were the Christmas and Easter concerts which provided opportunities for our students to perform for the whole community, to demonstrate the results of their hard work and commitment, as well as provide a space for reflection and worship.

**Andy Wall – Deputy Head Teacher**

**Tel: 01636 814000**

**Email: [a.wall@minster.notts.sch.uk](mailto:a.wall@minster.notts.sch.uk)**

## **Lowe’s Wong Anglican Methodist Junior School**

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Lowe’s Wong Juniors works closely with both our churches of Southwell Methodist and Southwell Minster. The year started with Harvest at Southwell Methodist and our Christmas and Leavers Services at Southwell Minster are real high points in our school calendar and we very much appreciate all the clergy who visit our school to offer Collective Worship.

As well as continuing to perform well academically in English and maths, we strive to develop independence and the personal skills and talents of every child in our school. The children are a credit to us, as they learn in a safe environment founded on clear Christian and British Values.

On both the sporting and music front, we have won further awards for success including our mixed swimming and athletics teams and our boys and girls football teams. All our sporting teams continue to do well in their respective leagues.

Finally, through fundraising we have supported a wide range of local, national and international charities including REACH, based in Southwell, and national events including Children in Need.

As Ofsted stated, 'There are lots of exciting things happening. Pupils are eager to arrive each day and to learn as much as they can. Teachers have high expectations of what all pupils can do.' We all feel here at Lowe's Wong that this continues to be the case.

**Mike Follen**

**Tel: 01636 813432**

**Email: head@loweswong-jun.notts.sch.uk**

## THE COLLEGE OF CANONS

It has been a year of stability within the College with no comings or goings! The College has several vacancies, and it is hoped the Bishop will make appointments in early 2024, not least so the College can explore its new non-governance role under the new Cathedrals Measure, which will come into effect from February 2024. There was one main meeting in June with College, Chapter and the remnant of the Council, meeting with the Bishop to explore the implications of the Measure and to give an overview of the Cathedral's work and missional focus.

Canon Stephen Hippisley-Cox came on part-time secondment during the summer while Canon Richard took a sabbatical, which was hugely appreciated and enjoyed. Thank you, Stephen!

**The Very Revd Nicola Sullivan, Dean of Southwell**

**Tel: 01636 817282 (Dean's PA)**

**Email: dean@southwellminster.org.uk**

## Electoral Roll

Numbers on our electoral roll have not changed markedly over the past year. It has nevertheless been a pleasure to welcome a few new joiners, and we look forward to a rise in numbers as weddings and baptisms return to a more

normal pattern. At the end of 2023, the number on our Roll stood at 253.

If you are not registered, please contact me for an enrolment form.

**Alice Snowden, Administrative Assistant**

**Tel: 01636 812649**

**Email: alice.snowden@southwellminster.org.uk**

## Stewardship

A major source of funding for the Minster's work is from regular giving by members of the Community with £123,907 being received during 2023 including Gift Aid. A huge thank you to everyone involved for their faithful giving.

If you are not currently a member of our Stewardship scheme, and feel able to make a regular commitment, we would be delighted to welcome you; please contact me.

**Andrew Bates, Stewardship Officer**

**Tel: 07761 295764**

**Email: stewardship@southwellminster.org.uk**

## SITES AND BUILDINGS

### Sacrista Prebend Retreat House

Revd. Dr. Michele Hampson left from her role as warden at Easter. Sacrista continued to operate with the administrative backing of the Minster office working with volunteers offering the retreat programme and overnight accommodation. From the summer onwards Sacrista has primarily been used as a meeting space for Minster groups as well as some single day retreatants. We are grateful for the work of the volunteer wardens and those who toil in the gardens.

**Canon Nigel Spraggins, Chief Officer**

**Tel: 07498 212775**

**Email: nigel.spraggins@southwellminster.org.uk**

### Cathedral Shop

Sadly, business has still not returned to pre-pandemic levels. People's buying habits have changed and many are suffering through the cost-of-living crisis. We do our best to stock a wide range of appealing products with an emphasis on local and fair-trade suppliers.

As ever, we are hopeful for a successful year ahead, with lots of exciting events to bring visitors to Southwell Minster and the town. All profits from the Cathedral Shop are donated to Southwell Minster and we really rely on local support especially during the quieter

months. Thank you to all our customers for their continued loyalty.

This year we have welcomed several fantastic new Shop Volunteers to our team. We remain truly grateful for all our Volunteers without whom the Shop could not function as it does.

We are open 7 days a week:

**Monday to Saturday 10 – 4pm**

**Sunday 11.30 – 3.30pm**

**[www.southwellminster.org/shop](http://www.southwellminster.org/shop)**

If you are interested in joining our Cathedral Shop Volunteers, please contact us or pop in for a chat, we'd love to hear from you.

**Amy Rodgers, Cathedral Shop Manager**

**Tel: 01636 812933**

**Email: [amy.rodgers@southwellminster.org.uk](mailto:amy.rodgers@southwellminster.org.uk)  
[cathedralshop@southwellminster.org.uk](mailto:cathedralshop@southwellminster.org.uk)**

## **Fabric Advisory Committee**

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We welcomed our new Cathedral Architect, Mandy Lorenz in the Spring.

The membership is: Allan Joyce (chair), Will Bowden, Stephen Littlewood, Rebecca Burrows, Adrian Dempster, and we have been joined by Ted Comer (Clerk of Works at Chester Cathedral). In attendance are the Dean, Canon Precentor, Philip Dixon (Cathedral Archaeologist), Mandy Lorenz (Cathedral Architect) and the Chief Officer. There remain 2 vacancies.

Matters considered by the Committee included: the consideration of the Quinquennial Report on the Minster; the Northern Cathedrals' Inventory Project – in which we participate; the 'permanent' installation of the equipment to allow livestreaming; refurbishment of the Quire Organ; the installation of CCTV within the Minster; and the potential gift of two stained glass windows from a church which is no longer required for worship.

**Canon Nigel Spraggins, Chief Officer**

**Tel: 07498 212775**

**Email: [nigel.spraggins@southwellminster.org.uk](mailto:nigel.spraggins@southwellminster.org.uk)**

## **Potwell Dyke Grasslands Action Group**

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The Potwell Dyke Grassland Actions Group team (affectionately known as PODGAGer's) collectively contributed around 370 hours of volunteering, covering 19 Saturday working parties, special mini mid-week working parties, fencing, moth trapping, presentations to community groups and a busy May and June of school visits and guided walks. We were grateful to Minster Fb

Ltd for their help raking hay and our friends at Southwell Lions too, who helped clear fallen trees and repair fencing.

We continued our long-standing ecological survey work which feeds into national databases such as the UK Butterfly Monitoring Survey (UKBMS). The 2023 butterfly surveys confirmed the continued decline in butterfly species and overall numbers too, mirroring the national trend. On a positive note, we were delighted to now have positively identified at least 5 different species of rare wild orchids on our site, which is a remarkable achievement.

The end of 2023 brought torrential rain which adversely impacted our site, leading to a lengthy closure for most of December due to flooding of extensive sections adjacent to the Potwell Dyke and waterlogging of large swathes. This led to the cancellation of much intended site work, but we are relieved to see the site now drying out and recovering well and have resumed working parties.

The Countryside Stewardship Agreement we have had for 20 years, has served us well and been an extremely helpful funding source but it is coming to an end. We believe the new Environmental Land Management Scheme will lead to a significant reduction in funding going forward. It is therefore important we continue to look for new sources of funding and would welcome any leads in this regard. For example, we were successful in securing a £943 grant from the Hardy Orchid Society which paid for two new gates. We are also grateful to Southwell Minster Environmental Action Group (SMEAG) who kindly gave us a grant of £200 towards fixing a fence.

Unbelievably, the group is now over 20 years old and wouldn't exist without the foresight and vision of our founding members. The last two original members on the committee Roz Johnson and Mal Rose are now stepping down, having given so much for so long. They intend to continue supporting the group in other ways and their knowledge and input is invaluable and greatly appreciated by all. On behalf of the group, I'd like to say a huge thank you to both for their enormous contribution.

Finally, we are always looking for enthusiastic volunteers, so if you or anyone you know would like to consider helping, please get in touch, we'd love to hear from you.

**Paul Watson, Chair, Potwell Dyke Grasslands Action Group**

**Email: [PODGAGTeam@outlook.com](mailto:PODGAGTeam@outlook.com)**

## **MARKETING AND EVENTS**

### **Marketing & Events**

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It has been wonderful seeing so many people enjoy our busiest ever programme of events at Southwell Minster, with over 35,000 people attending something, from the new series of Candlelight Concerts to outdoor theatre and

music, and of course the amazing art installations of both Gaia and Space Voyage.

We had three brilliant outdoor theatre performances, an amazing indoor 'street party' to celebrate the King's Coronation which saw around 400 people bring picnics into the Minster and watch the royal proceedings live on the big screen.

On the events side of things, we welcomed back The HandleBards for a brilliant performance of Twelfth Night, whilst This is my Theatre entertained us with The Railway Children, and Chapterhouse Theatre brought us a delightful showing of Cinderella. We also hosted a wonderful ABBA tribute act (21<sup>st</sup> Century ABBA) who sold out the Paddock (500 people) in the garden and left them singing for more (don't worry, they're coming back in 2024), as well as a fabulous performance from The Live Queen Experience. The Bramley Festival of Food & Drink and the Winter Craft fair both returned and saw over 2,000 people attend. The ever-popular Plant Hunters' Fair saw about 1,100 people through the gates, which was a record number, and we had our first spring plant fair too which was attended by over 1,600 visitors. Our Spring Craft Fair was also a huge success as 1,100 people came to view and shop at over 60 independent stallholders.

Thank you to all staff and volunteers who have helped make the events programme so successful in 2023 – we couldn't do it without you!

**Glenn Formoy, Head of Marketing & Events**  
**Tel: 01636 817284**  
**Email: [marketing@southwellminster.org.uk](mailto:marketing@southwellminster.org.uk)**

## Minster Website and Social Media

### Website

The Minster website has continued to stream certain services across the year. We know we have had viewers from Germany, Canada and New Zealand during 2023, showing there is no limit as to how far our online reach can extend.

### Social Media

Our use of social media has continued to grow, allowing us to deliver our messages further and wider as well as reaching diverse audiences. Many services throughout the year were live-streamed onto our website and YouTube channel, which has seen the number of subscribers increase significantly over the year. Our other social media channels all continued to see an increase in followers and engagement, and this has been a pivotal way of communicating.

Please visit our website: [www.southwellminster.org](http://www.southwellminster.org) and, if you haven't already, follow us on:

Facebook: @SouthwellMinster

X (formerly known as Twitter): @SouthwMinster

Instagram: @southwellminster

Youtube: [youtube.com/southwellminster](https://youtube.com/southwellminster)

**Glenn Formoy, Head of Marketing & Events**

**Tel: 01636 817284**

**Email: [marketing@southwellminster.org.uk](mailto:marketing@southwellminster.org.uk)**

## DIOCESAN NEWS

### Diocesan news

This past year we have creatively shared news, resources and updates from across the diocese. Our focus has been to celebrate growing disciples in every context and to support and resource our parishes and schools through our ongoing communication.

The Diocese monthly Day of Prayer which started in 2022 has continued, taking place on the second Thursday of every month. These have been encouraging times of worship and prayer across the diocese and have seen participation from many of our churches. We have shared these events on various digital platforms, helping to ensure prayer remains the central foundation to our life as a diocese.

In March, Bishop Andy shared his Easter Message from one of our primary schools in Worksop. His video reflected on the contrasting emotions of Holy Week, of grief that turns to joy, and what we can learn from children about living life to the full this Easter. This helped to reach thousands of people with the message of the gospel at this significant time of year.

Sadly, June 13th marked the date of the devastating Nottingham attacks. In response, churches held services and memorials, providing space for those who were grieving. Bishop Paul spoke alongside other faith leaders at the vigil in the Market Square, assuring the family and close friends that churches across the city would continue to pray for them in the very difficult days to come. In the face of such tragedy, the city and surrounding areas came together at this time, in unity and prayer for one another.

Later in the summer, the Ordinations at Petertide provided an opportunity to celebrate testimonies of faith and God's moving call on people's lives. Videos and images were used to celebrate the stories of deacons and priests, as well as lay ministers later in the year. In the autumn, every church in our diocese was encouraged to become an Eco Church with A Rocha UK. Helpful videos and resources were produced to highlight some of the ways our churches are caring for creation in their parishes, helping the planet on a local and global level.

For the start of Advent Bishop Paul shared his Christmas message to the diocese with a focus on the famous line from O Holy Night, 'A thrill of hope, the weary world

rejoices.' Similar to Easter, this was a great opportunity to reach far and wide in our diocese with a message of hope and salvation at Christmas.

Throughout this year Bishop Paul has continued to speak into important issues for our country and beyond through his role in the House of Lords. This has included subjects such as the UK defence spending for supporting Ukraine and refugees living in the UK, farmers and farming mental health provision, the shortages of support in health and social care, and most recently the ongoing situation in Israel and Gaza. The diocese has shared video clips from these speeches on our website and social media channels to help share this important work.

**Gary Pitt**

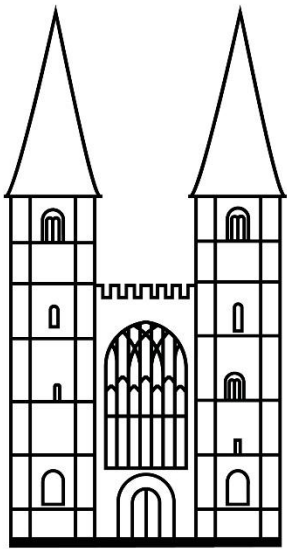
**Tel: 01636 814331**

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## Thank you for reading

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# Southwell Minster

Cathedral ♦ Gardens ♦ Palace