



Context

Cathedral and Mission

The seat of the Archbishop of York, the Cathedral and Metropolitan Church of St. Peter in York – York Minster as it is better known – is the mother church of the Northern Province and the Cathedral for the Diocese of York. It is, and has been for almost 2000 years, a centre for Christian life in the north of England. It is also one of the most iconic and famous buildings in the United Kingdom: a gothic masterpiece in stone and stained glass.

The Minster is a magnet drawing people to visit the City of York and a defining symbol of this ancient capital of the north. Alongside this rich history and architectural heritage the Minster is also home to a thriving and diverse community. Prayer is at the heart of this shared life: the regular rhythm of daily worship presented within walls that have soaked up the prayers of the last 1400 years. Excellence in liturgy is matched by excellence in music, delivered by the Minster's world-renowned choir and recently refurbished organ.

We welcome over 600,000 visitors through the door each year, many not expecting the transformational encounter they experience within the Cathedral. Each is on their own personal pilgrimage and a key element of Chapter's mission is to engage with each of those pilgrims. These individuals also provide key financial support for furthering mission and ministry. In short, without the income generated from visitors it would be impossible to sustain the life of this community.

The Minster sits in a site of over 6 hectares, scheduled ancient monument and containing 56 Grade I and Grade II listed buildings. This medium sized enterprise requires a team of teams to ensure all runs smoothly. Over 160 staff are employed in occupations as varied as Sawyer, to Safeguarding Advisor to Sales Assistant. 40 Choristers (equal numbers of boys and girls) are educated at St. Peter's School, York, a school which can trace its foundation to the Anglo-Saxon founders of the Minster. Alongside this staff body, some 400 volunteers gift their time to the smooth running and flourishing of the Minster.

The Minster is complex and complicated, spacious and yet intimate, ancient and still contemporary. It is many things to many people; beacon of hope; place to demonstrate, seat of Archbishop, sanctuary, architectural gem, tourist attraction, shop, spiritual home, apprentice

workshop. It is infectious, as all cathedrals are: those that work, serve and worship here will testify that it gets under your skin, in a good way.

Chapter's Strategic Plan – Living Christ's Story

Under the leadership of the last two Deans, Vivienne Faull and Jonathan Frost, Chapter have prepared two strategic plans, the first of their kind for the Minster. Now into the second year of the Strategic Plan 2021-2026, Chapter's Mission, sitting alongside that of the Diocese of York is underpinned through four key areas of work: prayer; stewardship; service and hospitality. Both plans were developed following considerable stakeholder input, both within and without the immediate cathedral community. Chapter has worked to identify funding streams to deliver the key developmental aspects of this strategy, capital development, outreach and missional projects from within its own healthy unrestricted funds and by working in close partnership with the York Minster Fund.

The care and development of the Minster's precinct, to deliver a plan to care for the asset sustainably and to return income back into Chapter, is ground-breaking. Chapter have overseen the development of a Neighbourhood Plan, the first for a heritage institution, which once ratified (likely May 2022) will see the document having planning weight, providing certainty for applications, funders and also for the capital programme over the next 10 – 20 years.

As part of our mission and engagement we are constantly trying to encourage people on their next step of faith and using the rich resources of faith across the organisation and new ways of engaging people in person or on-line are being explored. This has included a number of webinars; weekly Bible Studies; invitation to join online courses to explore faith; the provision of live streamed worship and opportunities to participate in worship from home through our continued zoom provision. Working in partnership with the department of Christianity and Culture based at the University of York, and others, we aim to be seen as a 'Gateway to the Northern Saints' offering the opportunity to explore faith through pilgrimage. Important to all of what we do is to be continually aware of who is 'absent' and how we can be a more open, inviting and inclusive community, searching out ways where we can come alongside those who are hidden or seldom heard. We are also committed to expanding our links with the Anglican Communion and developing a formal link with St. George's Cathedral Capetown where the Diocese of York has a Companion Link.

Worship and Prayer

Worship and prayer are the foundation of the Minster's life. Worship is at the heart of everything the Minster does and shapes the life of the whole community. In the last two years the Minster has been developing a model of liturgical programming drawing together all aspects of our public facing work into a more focused liturgical framework working closely to integrate worship and mission. Worship in the Minster is being developed to affirm the metropolitan status of the cathedral and the cathedral as a place where the Anglican tradition is upheld in all of its fullness. The strategic plan aspires that the Minster be a place for liturgical excellence and a centre for the teaching of worship and music in new and creative ways. Recent liturgical developments are beginning to reflect the mission of the Minster in speaking to a congregation which is not only gathered in the building but engaging with worship from the four corners of the world. A carefully thought through live-streaming offer has now been in place for a year and online audiences are growing week by week. The pandemic is known to have decimated church attendance (in person) across the Church of England, the Minster too has been affected but has weathered the storm fairly well with average Sunday attendances across 8am BCP Communion, Choral Matins, Choral Eucharist and Evensong reaching 600-700. Weekday Evensongs continue to attract 100-150 people per day. The promotion of worship and prayer via social media and through wider learning opportunities is a key theme of the new strategic plan. During the pandemic there has been an increase in new comers and a shift in the demographic of the weekly and daily congregations with younger and more diverse people attending. The transition of choristers to St Peter's School, York has opened up new possibilities for the development of programmes which engage new demographics in the musical and liturgical life of the Minster with a strategic music and mission post planned to begin in 2023. This will enable the minster to engage with schools, children and families from a wide range of backgrounds. The furnishings and liturgical presentation of York Minster now lags a long way behind most English cathedrals, with little investment or cohesive vision over the past 40 years and a make do and mend attitude which presents as shabby and sometimes uncared for. A newly developed liturgical plan is in place to enhance liturgical hospitality and presentation, the hope being that in the next five years there will be a full liturgical re-ordering from East End to West with a particular focus on the Nave. These improvements are vital and long overdue.

Organisation, Management and Governance,

The day to day operation of the Minster is carried out by the staff and volunteers mentioned above, overseen by a Senior Executive Team, comprising the Dean, the Residentiary Canons, Director of Works and Precinct, Director of Visitor Experience, Chief Finance Officer, chaired by the Chapter Steward (COO). That team meet once a week, delivering the annual business plan, drawn from the strategic plan and enabled via a scheme of delegated authority.

York Minster is in Group 1 of the Cathedrals completing Charity Commission registration and therefore has new governance arrangements in place in anticipation. Chapter consists of the Residentiary Canons and Dean, and currently five Non-Executive Lay Canons. Chapter meetings are minuted by the Chapter Clerk with the Chapter Steward (COO) in attendance. Chapter are currently advised, as per the 1999 Measure, by Cathedral Council and College of Canons.

In the last three years the governance of the Minster has been clarified and strengthened with clear lines between governance level decision making and operational level decision making. The Chapter functions well and is fortunate to attract skilled members who bring a diversity of perspective and expertise to the running of the Minster as an organization, as a tourist attraction and business and as a cathedral called to service the Diocese and Province of York with a national and international reputation.

Chapter work in close partnership with the Trustees of the York Minster Fund (YMF). The Fund was established in 1967 to raise monies to secure the central tower, which at the time was at risk of collapse. YMF make funding available to Chapter for the care and conservation of the fabric of the Cathedral and precinct. Their support was invaluable during the pandemic and they are chief financial supporters of the development of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Minster and Diocese

The Minster plays an active part in the life of the Diocese, both in York, but also by our Clergy, staff and volunteers participating beyond the Minster throughout all three Archdeaconries. The Dean is a member of the York Diocesan Leadership Team, Maggie McLean, Canon Missioner is the Diocesan lead for the link Diocese in South Africa. Developing and strengthening these wider Diocesan and church links is a vital part of our 2021-2026 strategy.

The Cathedral gifts funds to the Diocese each year, and as part of a bold initiative in the 2021-2026 strategy is seeking to increase that gift to 5% of discretionary income each year.

The Minster also plays a leading role in the liturgical life of the Northern Province, with all consecrations taking place in the Minster.

Chapter is also the patron for several benefices across the province (and a number in the southern province) and dedicates time to nurturing these relationships.

The Minster, York and the Wider Community

York Minster is a site of considerable history and heritage: its 1400th anniversary approaches in 2027. The fabric, including the renowned medieval stained glass and stonework, and the museum, library and archive collections, which encompass 300,000 items and 2000 years of history, are of great significance. In our stewardship and care for them, we seek to make them as accessible as possible, supporting worship, prayer, learning, engagement, research and reflection. Formal and informal learning opportunities are provided to our diverse audiences including schools, families, 'seldom heard' audiences, our local communities and visitors to the area, through lively and dynamic exhibitions, events and activities programmes.

The Minster works closely with the Business Improvement District (BID), with Make it York and City of York Council. Close working relationships exist with local cultural partner organisations including National Trust, National Railway Museum, National Centre for Early Music, York Museums Trust, York Archaeological Trust (Jorvik Viking Centre) and Mediale Festival.

The Minster Post-Pandemic

The current position of the Minster is remarkably healthy given the difficulties experienced during 2020 and 2021. One of the central planks of Chapter's 2015-2020 strategy "Living within our means" ensured that at the start of 2020 Chapter had £13M of unrestricted reserves, and crucially £2M in cash pending the start of a property re-development project. This cash cushion, ensured assets were not realised at the bottom of a very rocky market in spring 2020. A quick policy of pruning for growth and in line with the four key purposes identified in the interim strategic plan developed in 2020, reduced ongoing costs (redundancies and closing the Minster School) and limited risk. This swift action and the incredible bounce-back of domestic tourism in

York ensured that losses were less than anticipated. A second plank of the 2015-2020 strategy continued through into 2021-2026 was the ambition to diversify income streams, to be less reliant on the international tourist market (51% of visitors were international in 2019), and to invest in the wider precinct to ensure secondary income and other commercial opportunities.

The team who serve and work at the Minster in 2022, is a smaller, wiser, closer and more exhausted team than that of January 2020. However, the experience of the pandemic has brought us together, has connected us as human beings as well as colleagues, demanded we found new ways of doing old things and we know for certain the mixed ecology of in person and online worship will continue, as will hybrid working. During the pandemic we also completed the next edition of the Strategic Plan, and developed a Neighbourhood Plan, which will go forward to public referendum for legal adoption in spring 2022, so while tired and in need of care the team are also energised and excited about what is to come. After a number of years of uncertainty, greater staff and clergy turnover than in the immediate recent past, the Community here would welcome a period of stability as we deliver our exciting plans.

Future Challenges

For Yorkshire, York is relatively wealthy, voted remain and is over 95% white. The lives of those in relative comfort in rural Ryedale have very little in common with those in the poorest parishes of Hull and Middlesbrough. Life expectancy, aspiration and income vary enormously across this vast and varied Diocese. Yet the Minster must find a way of being relevant in each of these contexts.

York itself is a paradox, renowned for heritage and history it is also a UNESCO City of New Media Arts, with many in the city not wishing to trade on the history and heritage. Home to an expanding population of students due to the two thriving universities, most graduates migrate to Leeds, Manchester and London due to the cost of housing. The city is part of the York and North Yorkshire LEP, but many commute to Leeds, Manchester and London, it is quicker and easier to get to London on the east coast mainline than to get to the furthest flung parts of the Diocese of York.

The Minster benefits from the thriving tourist trade in York, but city centre and wider development schemes, which could grow and sustain this enterprise, are stymied again and again by the lack of a local plan for the City and nimbyism.

These contextual challenges mean that York is a city where it is hard to deliver change, where networks both within and without the Cathedral community, are often still, sadly, based on

gender, class and race. It is hard for Chapter to recruit at entry level roles into the organisation as housing costs are so significant, and getting to and from the Minster is not easy for those who don't have access to a car, or are unable to use the east coast main line.

Sustainability is a clear challenge for Chapter as we look to reach net zero status by 2030. Current work includes an expectation the cathedral will achieve A Rocha Gold by spring 2023 and a review of our investment holdings against EST principles. However, there is a great deal to do to deliver Scope 2 requirements across and aging portfolio of listed buildings, not least the Minster. Scope 3 requirements (post 2030) also demand we look at the travel of those who come to the Minster, and supply chains, which has a knock on for financial sustainability.

However, the creation of the Strategic Plan 2021-2026 and the Neighbourhood Plan has sought to address many of the challenges identified, and there is enthusiasm and energy in the team here in realising those ambitions.