

# pulpit designed by Henry Wilson in 1913 with the figure of St Hilda holding a model of Whitby Abbey; below: Advent Carol Service All photos © Ripon Cathedral except: Cover, p3 Dean John, pp4 & 10 Candlemas, p7 Andrew Harrison and Ripon Cathedral, p11 Organ, p13 Flower arrangements and chorister, p16 Helmsley Castle and Ripon Bible exhibition, p20 Ripon Cathedral in snow © Helen Tabor • Advent Carol Service pp2 & 10, pp14, 17 &19 Christmas concert © Bethany Clarke • p5 Easter Saturday, p6 Mayor of Ripon, p18 St Wilfrid Banquet and Spring Fair © Clive Trewhitt; p5 Summer concert © Bill Swan; pp5 & 17 Westminster Abbey choir tour © James Glossop • p9 Conservation Area and Eco Church Exhibition © Roslyn Swaney • p17 Bavarian choir tour © Lennart Preiss

# The Dean's OVETVIEW 2024-25

A year of remarkable blessings and achievements

I am delighted to share with you this Annual Review. Growing congregations, people developing in faith, a high-achieving choir, record visitor numbers, faithful service to city and region, determination to deliver essential facilities, historic carbon net zero planning permission, a strengthened safeguarding team, and generous financial support. These are just some of the encouraging things you will read about from its pages.

The reports, statistics and photographs speak clearly and joyfully of a vibrant cathedral which is blessed in being a growing mother church, sharing its spiritual and built heritage in life-enhancing ways with people near and far.

Our vision is to support Christ's mission, and our vision strategy is called *Growing God's Kingdom*. This Annual Review gives an encouraging insight into the tangible progress being made in each of its five strands of mission. It shows what can be achieved when together we are open to Christ's calling and equipped with his Holy Spirit.

We believe every person is of inestimable value, a child of the living God. This strengthens our desire to be open and welcoming to all. It informs our approach to safeguarding, welcome and service. And of equal importance to those being served are our clergy, 50 staff and 230 volunteers.



### "a vibrant cathedral which is blessed in being a growing mother church"

We were sorry to say good-bye to Claire Renshaw, Canon Pastor, Jo Bussey, Director of Development, and Jill Booth, Shop Assistant. We are grateful to each for their contribution.

It was a joy and delight to welcome Carol Pyrah, Chief Operating Officer, Canon Wendy Dalrymple, Canon Pastor, Angela Millington, Shop Manager, and Anna Boyce, Curate. They are all wonderful colleagues, strengthening further a brilliant, committed, hard-working team. Speaking of this, I sincerely thank our Chief Finance Officer, Anne Groves, for her additional outstanding contribution as Acting Chief Operating Officer. And I rejoice in Sarah Lynch's appointment as Cathedral Safeguarding Officer.

I very much hope you enjoy reading this Annual Review and are encouraged and inspired by it. Please see our website for ways in which you can learn more, show support, or get involved.

With my very best wishes

Dean John

## Letter from Bishop Nick

"a living building cannot stand still like a museum relic..."

Depending on how you approach Ripon, the cathedral appears differently. It isn't only the light reflected from the stone that changes the aspect, but also the backdrop of clouds, sky and trees. Every time I drive from Leeds I find myself looking for the first glimpse.

If this view is imposing now, I can only imagine the impact on those who saw it built in the first place. But, I also muse that those who designed and built Ripon Cathedral knew they might never see the finished product; knowing this did not deter them from doing their work. Similarly, they knew that the building would have to change over time. Just stand at the west end and look at the arches, and it is evident that a living building cannot stand still like a museum relic.

Ripon Cathedral is a source of light and life. If the building says something about the world in which we mortal human beings live, then

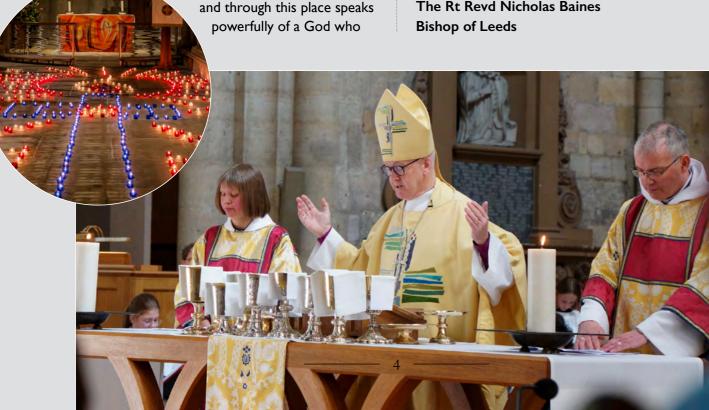
> the life and worship offered in and through this place speaks

is engaged in the messiness of the real world and who renews in each generation the means of commending the Gospel to all who come its way. The Good News of God's redemption and reconciliation does not change; the way we articulate it or dress it up (culturally) does.

As the first Bishop of Leeds I have been privileged to enjoy the worship and service of three cathedrals: Ripon, Bradford and Wakefield. They are different, yet consistent. I have loved every minute of my engagement with them. As I now approach my retirement at the end of 2025, I look back at recent years with gratitude to God, admiration of the clergy and lay leaders who shape cathedral life and mission, and an awareness of just how richly they have shaped my own Christian discipleship and ministry.

The last year presented challenges which remain to be resolved - not least the need for building development at Ripon. God who is faithful will continue to inspire people who are faithful. And the future will be blessed.

The Rt Revd Nicholas Baines



## Growing the worshipping community



Special services to commemorate Remembrance Sunday and our patronal festivals of St Wilfrid and St Peter are also core elements of the calendar.

Enabling participation for those who cannot visit remains a priority, with 4100 views of the Festival of Lessons and Carols during Advent 2024 (available on Ripon Cathedral - YouTube) and an established online-worshipping congregation for services.

Following the successful choir tour to Bavaria in July 2024, summer 2025 saw a four-day visit to Westminster Abbey. The full boys' and girls' choirs, together with ten lay clerks, sang four evensongs and Sunday's Sung Eucharist in the abbey (below right). It was particularly good to have strong support from chorister parents, cathedral Patrons and members of Chapter who were able to join the worship in Westminster Abbey and enjoy the Ripon choir in a new setting.

As well as recording and releasing a CD of Christmas music (still available), in May 2025 the choir recorded a new CD of English choral music for release later this year.



We were also delighted to see Assistant Organist, Alistair Stone, admitted as a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists and Senior Organ Scholar, Llew Blezard-Greenwell, appointed to a position at St Davids Cathedral.

An important contribution to the cathedral's music was also provided by the Music Group which continued to sing at key services such as Journey to Bethlehem.

Music is central to the life of the cathedral and we are offering a growing number of concerts. A successful Christmas Concert with our choir and Ripon's St Cecilia Orchestra has become an annual fixture, while longstanding partners at Ripon Choral Society, Ripon International Festival and St Cecilia's continue to draw big audiences. We were delighted to welcome the Ryedale Festival for the first time in 2025.



Being a mother church of the Diocese of Leeds



As a mother church of the diocese we were pleased to host, in October 2024, the Bishop's Clergy Study Day for more than 300 clergy from across the diocese. Speakers included Dr Helene von Bismark, a distinguished German historian, and Dr Nick Spencer, Senior Fellow at Theos, a Christian think tank. The cathedral also saw diocesan deaconings for 11 new deacons and priestings for four new priests, while cathedral clergy supported the 2025 priestings at Holy Trinity, Ripon. In spring 2025 we were delighted to welcome our new curate, Revd Anna Boyce, who joined us as a self-supporting minister alongside her other roles working in the NHS in young people's mental health and at Holy Rood House.

During 2024 the cathedral saw record attendance at the annual Plough Sunday Service and hosted the Yorkshire Agricultural Society Harvest Festival for the third year running. Major events in the Ripon calendar included the installation of the new mayor of the city, Councillor Jackie Crozier (below), and the annual St Wilfrid's Procession.



In April 2025 the Diocesan Chrism Eucharist took place in Ripon Cathedral: a moving service as clergy from across the diocese and a sizeable lay congregation share their commitment to serve and renew their vows. Bishop Nick blessed the oils used throughout ministry across parishes of the diocese for the coming year.

Bishop Anna Eltringham commissioned 13 Ecoenablers in September 2024, celebrating 13 graduates of the Gold 'Saving Creation' course from across the diocese (top left).

Central to our role as a mother church of the diocese is the lively and growing education programme. Over the last academic year we worked with over 3500 children via learning and education visits. Pupils have told us they think it is "a blast" coming to the cathedral and younger children love being led by Wilfrid Bear.

### "a blast"

Working together, our Education Department and Children & Families Officer supported 40 schools through their attendance at the Year 6 Leavers' Service and the creation of a graffiti wall of their names, exhibited in the cathedral. Each year we are proud to host the North Yorkshire Forces Children's Festival of Remembrance and an exhibition of their work.

With formal education programmes and self-guided sensory trails, our work can only be achieved through the ongoing support and growth of the specialist and expert volunteers who help to deliver the education programme. The education volunteers not only assist with school visits but are creating new learning packages.



## Promoting, developing and conserving our spiritual and built heritage

The cathedral is a place that promotes the Christian faith to all who enter it or visit it virtually. Many find inspiration through its rich spiritual and built heritage, and we were delighted to have welcomed a record 104,155 visitors in 2024. Visitors consistently leave great reviews and the cathedral is ranked within the top 10% of properties on Tripadvisor.

Pre-booked group tours also remain popular, with 45 tours (around 1000 people) during 2024 enjoying an experience with our expert volunteer guides and refreshments provided by the dedicated volunteer hospitality team.

With thanks to a generous donor, we were able to install new benches in the crypt, allowing visitors to encounter the quiet of a space where people have paused and prayed for 1350+ years.

Exhibitions form a major part of our programme. Last October's exhibition about the c1260 Ripon Bible (currently housed in the Brotherton Library, University of Leeds) was created by Carol Ballard and this summer we hosted the *Threads from the Cross* – a powerful work by textile artist, Jacqui Parkinson (above) – as well as *Inspired by William Morris*, an exhibition created by members of the British Society of Master Glass Painters and an associated exhibition and talks curated by talented cathedral volunteers.

Supporting partners in the city, we took part again in the Ripon Theatre Festival, hosting a mesmerising performance of *The Beloved Son*, a solo performance by Andrew Harrison (below), and Cloudscapes by Gobbledegook Theatre.

With the kind assistance of Harold Gosney, sculptor, and members of our Welcome, Pilgrimage and Heritage Committee, we have updated the guidebook on *The Harold Gosney Statues* and *Quirks and Curiosities in Ripon Cathedral*, both available from the cathedral shop.

Conserving such an important historic estate takes a lot of hard work behind the scenes. With support from the cathedral architect, Oliver Caroe, and his colleague Alanah Honey, we were able to complete the project to establish interment spaces in the Chapel of the Resurrection. Meanwhile, a major focus of work, as legislation and standards continue to change, has been updating compliance systems and working on an estate-wide management plan.

The Chapter's major development project, Ripon Cathedral Renewed, generated significant interest and both vocal objections and support for the scheme and the debate within the city has been challenging for all. In February 2025 Chapter took the decision to withdraw the planning application for its proposed annexe on the north side of the cathedral.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to the vision for Ripon Cathedral. With growing numbers of worshippers, visitors, pilgrims and concertgoers, along with our flourishing choir, the provision of essential facilities (including toilets) for all those who use the cathedral remains an urgent priority. We are also dedicated to protecting the fabric of the cathedral for future generations.

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We were sad to say goodbye to Canon Claire Renshaw in 2024, but delighted to welcome the new Canon Pastor, Canon Wendy Dalrymple, in April 2025 who joins us from Canterbury Cathedral where she was Canon Precentor.

Over the last year highlights include sustaining our offer of much-appreciated bereavement journey courses and providing attractive events for children and families.

In partnership with the Ripon Community Poppy Project we were delighted to host a spirited and lively concert commemorating VE day.

The Cathedral's Community Connections (C3) is the group through which members of the congregations extend the cathedral's mission in partnership with local charities and community groups. C3 partners include YMCA Ripon, Ripon Community Link, Jennyruth Workshops, Dementia Forward, Ripon City of Sanctuary, Help Ripon

& Rural, The Salvation Army, Ripon Community House, Christian Aid and Ripon Rotary Club. This partnership has continued its vital work helping a range of charities across the city of Ripon. Support was given to refugees from both Afghanistan and Ukraine.

One of the key events of the year is the Ripon Sights and Sounds event, organised by C3. This enables local charities and groups to showcase their work and recruit additional support. A record number, over 1000, attended the cathedral for this celebration of community life.

Our children's church continues to flourish, with 13 new families having joined over the past year. As well as engaging in their own age-appropriate worship, the children have also contributed to all-age services, such as Harvest, Mothering Sunday, Good Friday and the Journey to Bethlehem service on Christmas Eve, which is well loved by the local community and attracts 600+ people.

#### Carbon Net Zero

Working towards Carbon Net Zero was identified as a major priority within the 2021–22 review of *Growing God's Kingdom*. Under the chairmanship of David Elsy, a committee of able and enthusiastic members, with the support of the Canon Chancellor and the Eco Action Group, made substantial progress over the last year.

We were delighted to receive permission from both North Yorkshire Council and the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England for the installation of solar (photovoltaic) panels on the library and south aisle roofs in spring 2025 after extensive consultation with local and national bodies. In the coming year a priority will be a fundraising campaign to support installation of the panels.

With funding support from the Church Commissioners we have also been able to work with specialist energy and sustainability consultants, Max Fordham, on an estate-wide analysis of potential for carbon reduction initiatives. This will help prioritise investment across the estate.

Meanwhile, LED lighting introduced inside the cathedral has reduced electricity consumption by a third, replacement of the floodlights with LEDs is nearly complete and the introduction of QR codes for orders of service has helped to reduce the amount of paper consumption.

The energetic Eco Action Group hosted an evening of presentations from churches of different denominations to share their eco projects; mounted an exhibition of displays from churches across the diocese at various stages on the A Rocha UK Eco Church Award scheme; hosted an Eco Church stall at the Sights and Sounds of Ripon event, talking to people about the cathedral journey to net carbon zero by 2030 and the impact of our own personal carbon footprint; and gave a presentation at a Ripon Together energy-saving for businesses event at Ripon Races on how the cathedral was pursuing its net zero target.

Led by the Parish Environmental Officer, Ros Swaney, we were delighted to have the support of Open Country, a Yorkshire charity with 35 years of experience of working alongside disabled people, helping them to access and enjoy the countryside. A work party from Open Country scarified the conservation area in the cathedral churchyard and created a log pile for insects, leading to many more wildflowers flourishing in spring and summer 2025. This is supporting the annual wildlife and flora counts that have been instigated across the estate.

The cathedral remains an active participant in the Ripon Together Environmental Strategy Meetings, contributing to city-wide environmental objectives.

Above:

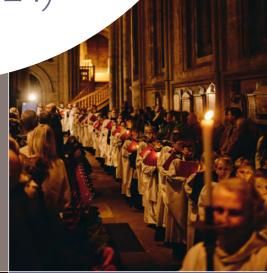
conservation area in the churchyard;
 right: Eco
Churches in the

LED lighting introduced inside the cathedral has reduced electricity consumption by a third...

Diocese of Leed

A year in the life of the cathedral in numbers (2024)

104,144 visitors



11,500 hours of choral singing a year



3,192 attending Christmas worship



19 visiting choirs



481 on electoral roll

Over 19,000 event attendees





3,428

pipes in the

organ

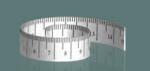
15,200 chairs moved



3,500 children on education visits

86.3m

– length of cathedral from end to end



10,680

- number of steps walked by the Head Verger on an average Sunday



Nearly 400 volunteer roles filled by 230 individuals







## Partnerships: Ripon Cathedral Rural Forum

Ripon Cathedral's Rural Forum and its steering group draws around 40 regional organisations together to strengthen community partnership and explore issues facing the rural communities, farmers and businesses of North Yorkshire. With member organisations including North Yorkshire Council, town councils, two regional national parks, Yorkshire Agricultural Society, the National Farmers' Union, the Country Land and Business Association, Yorkshire Water, Askham Bryan College and Swinton Estate, attendees heard the insights and aspirations of the newly-elected mayor of the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority.

Day conferences focussed on rural crime, rebuilding the rural economy, and rural schools.

The Ripon Cathedral Rural Housing Forum

focused on bringing together a number of landowners, housing associations and regional charities to explore how small-scale, affordable housing developments can be enabled in rural and sparsely-populated areas.

This year saw the consolidation and strengthening of the recently-established Ripon Cathedral Rural Ministry Forum. In partnership with the Bishop of Ripon, this provides support and inspiration for ordained and lay readers of rural churches across the whole diocese. During the year meetings included talks from the Rural Adviser of York Diocese, providing encouragement to those ministering in traditional parish settings, insights from a female farmer who has done much to promote women in farming and a well-known regional brewer.

Maintaining a living cathedral is a complex and expensive endeavour – it costs over £6,000 a day to keep the building open.

Behind the scenes is a multi-faceted operation running everything from the website to compliance checks, maintaining the cathedral grounds, organising weddings, baptisms and funerals, running events, opening and closing the cathedral (a complicated job in its own right) and providing musical training.

We are hugely grateful to our small team of c20 FTE paid staff (around 50 people in total) and the large and dedicated group of volunteers – around 230 individuals who carry out 395 volunteer roles.

Ripon Cathedral is committed to providing a welcoming, respectful and safe environment for all, including children and adults who may be at risk of abuse or neglect. The care and protection of children, young people and adults involved in cathedral activities is the responsibility of everyone who participates in the life of the cathedral community and we are deeply grateful to all the volunteers who have participated in our safeguarding training programme over the last year.

Cross-cutting

themes

April 2025 saw the appointment of our first dedicated Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, Sarah Lynch, who is working with Canon Wendy Dalrymple, Chapter Safeguarding Lead, and the Diocesan Safeguarding Team to continue to develop and improve our systems, training and support within the Church of England's National Safeguarding Standards.

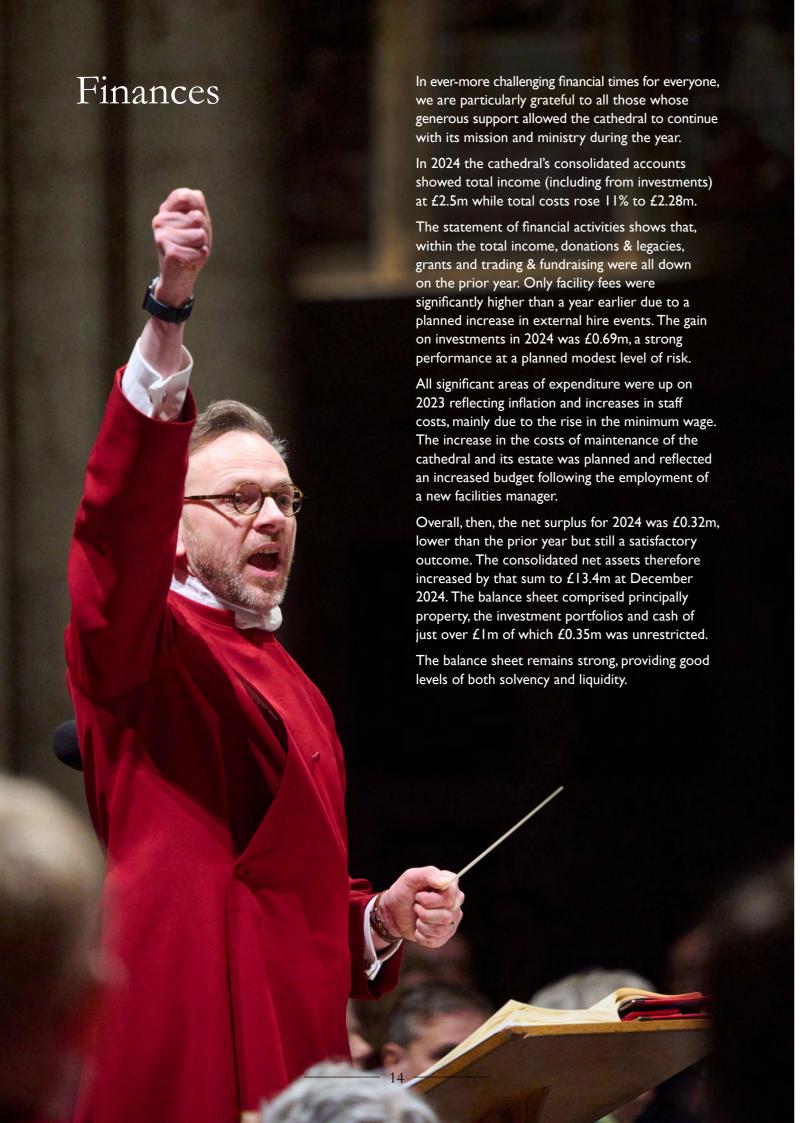
Training of all kinds remains a high priority.

The staff team have participated in an ongoing programme covering subjects as varied as First Aid, safer recruitment, risk assessments, counter terrorism and assisting the North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service in a live rescue simulation.

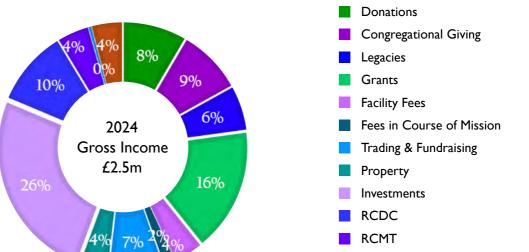
We are particularly grateful to all those hospitality volunteers who have completed their Level 2 Food Hygiene courses over the last year, and the guides and welcomers continue to develop their own knowledge of the cathedral through the well-received 'location seminars'.

An important area underpinning the work of the cathedral is our financial systems and processes and we were delighted to have been given a clean bill of health in a robust audit process by our independent auditors.

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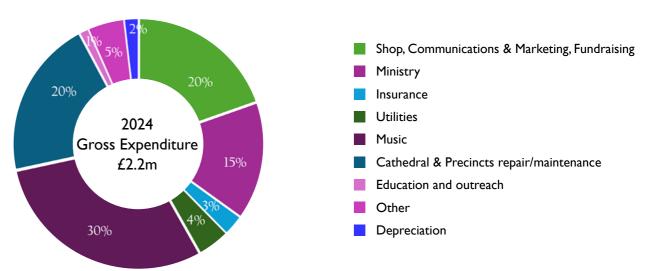
#### **INCOME**



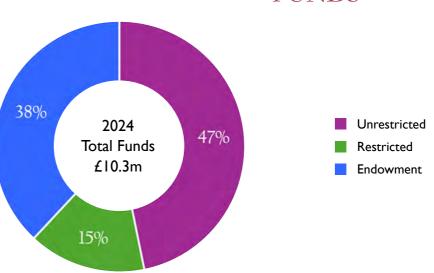
#### **EXPENDITURE**

Friends of Ripon Cathedral

Other



#### **FUNDS**



## The Friends of Ripon Cathedral

The Friends of Ripon Cathedral is an independent registered charity which is devoted to supporting the life of Ripon Cathedral. Friends' members come from the local community and wider region to participate in a range of talks and events throughout the year.

A series of well-attended and popular events in 2024 covered a wide range of topics. Lectures included one by Guy Wilson on the Royal Armouries at Leeds, Revd Malcolm Hanson exploring the meaning of Maundy and an exploration of the work of airport chaplains at Manchester Airport. A day visit to Helmsley to visit the castle and see the treasures in the English Heritage archaeological store, summer lunch at Beningbrough Hall and a presentation on The Skell Project completed the programme.

A recent innovation for the AGM welcomed members to evensong, a buffet supper in Thorpe Prebend House, the swift despatch of the necessary formalities and then a superb presentation by Canon Elaine Swinhoe, the Diocesan Mothers' Union President and a lay canon of the cathedral



Apart from providing educational and social events for Friends' members – currently running at some 264, a small increase on the previous year – the primary purpose of the organisation is to make grants to the Chapter in line with their strategic priorities. Grants awarded in 2024 brought the total over the past five years to £170,000. During 2024 grants were given for conversion of the floodlights to LED, the annual lecture series, the Ripon Bible exhibition and the education programme – a total of £9,288.18.

The Friends continued to sponsor the cathedral's autumn lecture series on the Ripon Bible, given by Carol Ballard, and its supporting exhibition.

Further information about the Friends including the 2024 Annual Report and Accounts, future events and how to become a Friend are on the Friends section of the Cathedral website: Community Initiatives & Opportunities at Ripon Cathedral.









## Ripon Cathedral Music Trust

Ripon Cathedral Music Trust, chaired by Sir Andrew Lawson-Tancred, exists to promote education in the art of music and to support music in connection with the cathedral.

During the year the trust gave grants of £104,000 to enhance cathedral music and musical education.

2024 was a particularly exciting and rewarding year for music at Ripon and the music trust was delighted to be able to support the ongoing success of Project Phoenix – the cathedral's initiative to recruit new choristers into the choir after numbers plunged following the Covid pandemic. With over 60 choristers, eight choral scholars and six lay clerks, the sheer quality of the choir has continued to rise.

The trust was particularly pleased to support the choir's tour to Bavaria where one of the highlights was a filled-to-capacity concert (nearly 800 people) at the wonderful baroque church in Waldsassen – an event that culminated in a standing ovation for the talented Ripon Cathedral Choir (below).



## Ripon Cathedral Development Trust

Established as a mechanism to raise money to support the care, conservation and ongoing operation of Ripon Cathedral, the Ripon Cathedral Development Trust, chaired by Mitchel Ingham-Barrow, has continued to provide invaluable support through its fundraising, patrons programme and annual fundraising events.

In 2024, the Development Trust supported the cathedral with funding of £189,954 towards general running costs, £30,000 to support music and £32,821 to support the Assistant Organist position.

We were delighted that the annual Spring and Christmas Fairs, showcasing local traders, continued to grow with a record 88 traders at the Spring 2025 Fair and the best ever stall income at the Christmas Fair despite heavy snowfall on the first morning (below and right).







## Thorpe Prebend House

Thorpe Prebend House is a Grade II\* listed building dating back to the 1700s. An important feature in the city's history, in 2024 the building was able to host 22 school and education groups, totalling 681 people. Other events which took place on site include gatherings of the Rural Ministry Forum, the Friends of Ripon Cathedral, the judging of Ripon Together's St Wilfrid's Stars awards and meetings of the Uredale Community Partnership. Our thoughts are with Rob Emmett, the former caretaker at Thorpe Prebend House, who sadly retired due to ill health in March 2024.

A key focus for investment during 2024 was upgrading of the fire detection and security systems.



#### Thanks to our donors

The Chapter of Ripon Cathedral is grateful to our many patrons, and all those who support the cathedral through parish giving, planned giving, congregational collections, individual donations and sponsoring a chorister or a week's music. Without their generous and ongoing support (whether given publicly or anonymously) it would not be possible to fulfil and grow the cathedral's mission of Growing God's Kingdom.

From just £200 per person we have a range of Patrons' Schemes at different levels, each of which is an essential part of supporting the ongoing mission and conservation of the cathedral and its choral tradition. A list of those patrons who are happy to be acknowledged is given on the website.

Please help us build resilience so that Ripon Cathedral is able to serve everyone who needs us - now and across the next 1350 years.



We extend grateful thanks to the funders below, and the many others who have supported cathedral projects anonymously:

G C Armitage Charitable Trust The Geoffrey F Armitage Family Charitable Trust The Ash Family

Benefact Trust Biker Ltd

The Bostock Foundation

Freda Bottomley

The Calmcott Trust

Cathedral Music Trust

Church Commissioners -

Cathedral Sustainability Fund

The estate of Joan Clegg

Diocese of Leeds

Donors to the Music Appeal

The estate of M Duxbury

Friends of Ripon Cathedral

The estate of Elisabeth Hogerzeil

Lucas Lee

Linley & Simpson

The Listed Places of Worship Scheme

Meg Munn

The Norton-Freeman Charitable Trust

The Ouseley Church Music Trust

The estate of Victoria Pace

Earl Peel

Tom Ramsden

Raworths LLP

Ripon Cathedral Development Campaign/Trust

Ripon Cathedral Music Trust

Ripon Girls Club

The Ripon Inn

Rudding Park

John Sayer

Phillip & Ursula Schmidt

WW Spooner Charitable Trust



Ripon Cathedral is a vibrant, living church with an unbroken history reaching back to the 7th century which serves the city of Ripon and the vast rural county of North Yorkshire. Alongside our sister cathedrals of Bradford and Wakefield we are here to welcome and serve those of all faiths and none, in this 21st-century Diocese of Leeds.

The cathedral is a registered charity which supports its £2m-a-year running costs through donations, grants and earned income. With three services a day, every day of the year, a choir of over 60 choristers and a wide variety of community events and activities, there is always something happening. We also look after the Grade I listed cathedral and its exceptional glass, carvings, monuments and collections, as well as an estate of important historic buildings.

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