

# Peterborough Cathedral secures Heritage Lottery investment

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Peterborough Cathedral

The project forms part of the Cathedral's plans for development as it works up to and beyond its 900th anniversary in 2018. The **'Peterborough 900: Letting it Speak for Itself'** project aims to ensure that the cathedral plays an increasing role in the life of the city and Diocese. It is an iconic place where thousands of people can come to worship, to understand their heritage, to develop musically or simply to enjoy a wonderful event. The aim of the project is to enhance visitors' experience of the cathedral by improving access both intellectually and physically.

The ambitious plans will give visitors the opportunity to experience a fresh and exciting interpretation of the cathedral and its faith story. New glazed doors will create a more welcoming entrance at the west front of the cathedral and landscaping work will mean a level and safer access for visitors. In addition, the project will conserve and convert the Knights' Chamber, a Grade I listed building, into a reception area for schools and visiting groups. A new Heritage, Visitor and Education Centre will be created within the Precincts, by converting and conserving a Grade II listed building.

The new Heritage Centre will also help the cathedral to work with a larger number of schools and young people from a wider area. On offer will be high-tech interpretation materials and enhanced

facilities for people with disabilities. It will also provide space for the cathedral to develop its work with vulnerable people and community groups. Partnership with individuals and communities is central to the project, which includes a programme of imaginative activities and inspiring events to ensure that many people have the opportunity to get involved.

The Very Reverend Charles Taylor, Dean of Peterborough said: "This award is very good news both for Peterborough Cathedral, for the city and the wider region. It affirms our plans to make our cathedral more accessible to new visitors, not only physically but also intellectually and culturally. This can only be good for the regional life and economy. We are enormously grateful to HLF for recognising what the cathedral can offer to the community, and also to all who have supported the bid."

Alison McLean, Committee Member for Heritage Lottery Fund East of England, said: "Cathedrals - often pinnacles of architectural ingenuity and craftsmanship - are appreciated by millions and play a central role in the cultural, social and economic life of this country. Whether viewed as places of worship or commemoration, as physical manifestations of a shared history or as tourist attractions, cathedrals are amongst the most outstanding elements of the UK's heritage and Peterborough Cathedral is no exception. The Heritage Lottery Fund's investment will help conserve both this beautiful building and unlock its stories for future generations to enjoy."

Councillor Graham Casey, Heritage Champion for Peterborough City Council, said: "It is fantastic news that our wonderful Norman Cathedral has been awarded such a substantial grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

"The cathedral is the foremost jewel in the city's crown and we are incredibly fortunate to have such a beautiful building in our city centre. It attracts a large number of visitors to Peterborough each year and anything that helps to ensure that continues, such as this funding, is most welcome."

The Rt Revd Donald Allister, Bishop of Peterborough, said: "I am delighted about this grant, and very grateful to the Heritage Lottery Fund. This is not just about presenting and explaining a wonderful building for the next generation, or about preserving and maintaining a magnificent piece of our Christian heritage, important though these things may be. This is about the Church's mission today and tomorrow. Welcoming people into the Church, into its life as well as its buildings, is a central part of our calling as Christians. The cathedral reminds us of the greatness and glory of God, of the presence and love of Jesus Christ, of the life-changing and empowering Holy Spirit. It is for all people, and this project is designed to make it more accessible, more understandable, and more welcoming for all."

It is hoped that the work to Peterborough Cathedral will take place during 2014 and 2015, phased where necessary to allow the cathedral to continue with its work as a centre for Christian worship.

The cathedral is one of two wonderful buildings being awarded funding today (Durham Cathedral - home to original 13th-century copies of the Magna Carta - has received £3.9m). Ed Vaizey, UK Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries, commented:

"This investment will ensure that these cathedrals, a unique part of the UK's heritage, will be restored in a way that not only preserves the past but also protects for future generations. The projects at Durham and Peterborough will allow visitors to experience and learn about fantastic

periods in our history, and mark important anniversaries for both.”

## **Notes to editors**

### **Peterborough Cathedral and Peterborough 900**

In 2018 Peterborough Cathedral celebrates the 900th anniversary of the start of the present building – hence the 'Peterborough 900' Development Project.

Peterborough Cathedral is the seat (Cathedra) of the Bishop of Peterborough. His Diocese covers Peterborough north of the river, all of Northamptonshire and Rutland – more than 300 parishes and churches with an estimated population of 842,000. As an Anglican cathedral it is a place of worship but its role extends well beyond that. People of all faiths and none, in Peterborough and the surrounding region, identify with the cathedral as the symbol of the city. Cathedrals are of great importance in celebrating events of historical significance. Peterborough Cathedral has a wealth of history and heritage that can be shared and enjoyed by all. Both Katherine of Aragon and Mary Queen of Scots were buried at Peterborough Cathedral (Mary Queen of Scots was later reinterred at Westminster Abbey).

The cathedral is open daily and is currently enjoyed by around 70,000 visitors and pilgrims annually. In addition to the regular services, the cathedral is a venue for ecumenical and interfaith meetings and events, and a focus for civic occasions and festivals. It hosts an active musical programme for a variety of choirs, orchestras and musicians, both amateur and professional, together with artists of regional, national and international acclaim. [Visit the website for further information.](#)

### **HLF East of England**

Over the last few years, the East of England Development Team has been working closely with organisations from across Peterborough to help increase funding for schemes across the city. This investment in the Cathedral follows earlier awards to the City Museum, Sacrewell Farm and the Environment City Trust which have had a transformational effect on the city and its heritage.

### **Further information**

For images and interviews, please contact Liz Hurst, Communications Officer, at Peterborough Cathedral on 01733 355 309, email: [liz.hurst@peterborough-cathedral.org.uk](mailto:liz.hurst@peterborough-cathedral.org.uk).

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