



Exeter
Cathedral

Cathedral News

Aug 2026 – No. 767



From the Senior Non-Executive Member of Chapter

To give my clerical colleagues a rest it was suggested that I might say a few words about the role of the non-executive members of Chapter, including my particular role as Senior non-executive member or SNEM.

The role of the non-executives is relatively new: created by the Cathedrals Measure 2021 and reflected in our Constitution and Statutes which came into force in late

2023. The non-executives are appointed by Chapter on the recommendation of the Nominations Committee and after consultation with the Bishop: the SNEM is appointed by the Bishop after consultation with the Chapter. There is a religious qualification we have to meet, and we are all communicant members of the Church of England.

The Constitution sets out various procedural requirements for Chapter to function and specifies that the number of non-executives must outnumber the executive (ordained) members. All members of Chapter, lay or ordained, are equally responsible and accountable for decisions made. The non-executives each bring particular skills and experience which are used to strengthen Chapter's discussions and decision-making. The Dean (or interim Dean) usually chairs Chapter, with the SNEM taking the chair if the Dean is not present.

We have not been short of challenges over the last two and a half years, and the next few months will be no exception as we seek to support Stephen as the interim Dean.

Jenny Ellis





From the Company of Tapisers

A Day to Remember:

Over the past year I have updated you on our progress with the 'Circle of Life' project. We were one of twelve Cathedrals who took part in a challenging attempt to create a piece of Opus Anglicanum needlework. (Opus Anglicanum embroidery goes back to medieval times when English embroiderers excelled by using stitching techniques that were not known outside England.)

Here in Exeter, we formed a group of six stitchers to work on this project, which was the brainchild of the Worshipful Company of Upholders in London. The aim was to learn and

pass on these ancient sewing techniques before they became lost and forgotten. We had to complete two panels: a couched outline of Exeter Cathedral and an intricate scene of a horse-drawn hearse. Our 'reward' for being a part of this unique endeavour was to be invited to a banquet at London's Guildhall when the finished 'Circle of Life' would be unveiled.

So, on one of the hottest days this summer, we travelled to London. The Guildhall, from 1441, is a most impressive venue – and looked spectacular filled with tables covered in crisp linen and gleaming wine glasses. Altogether 450 guests attended and were served with a starter of salmon, then guinea fowl, followed by citrus cheesecake – washed down with wine and water. The food and service, provided by 'Clink Events', were excellent. This is a London caterer with a difference: they train and employ individuals from the prison service. (Their name 'Clink' comes from the notorious Clink Prison, of course.)

At the conclusion of the banquet The Master of the Upholders expressed his appreciation to all the 107 stitchers who worked on their project and spoke of the legacy of the Upholders, and the Royal Charter they received 400 years ago.

The guest of honour was the Lady Mayor of London, Dame Susan Langley. She praised the contribution of the Upholders and stressed the importance of encouraging confidence in young people.



Finally, the moment for the Unveiling arrived. The curtain covering the 'Circle of Life' was pulled away to the strains of some atmospheric unaccompanied singing. It felt quite surreal to see the embroidery of all the participating groups assembled into one complete circle: it represented countless hours of study, practice, time and energy. As we looked at it, we felt all our efforts had been worth it: here, in front of us, was a 21st century piece of art using techniques from seven hundred years ago!

It has been an honour to be a small part of the creation of the 'Circle of Life' – and yes, the

banquet was a much-appreciated reward!

Diana Symes, Chairman Company of Tapisers

Cathedral Community Committee (CCC)

The next meeting of the CCC will be in August on a date still to be fixed. Please send any suggestions, comments or agenda items to Ann Barwood amb@exeter-cathedral.org.uk or to Heather Morgan hmm53@tiscali.co.uk

Next month's edition

We hope to publish the next edition of *Cathedral News* on Sunday 6th September. Please send any articles or other information to any of the editorial team: Jenny Ellis, Rosemary Bethell or Heather Morgan at hmm53@tiscali.co.uk by **Tuesday 1st September 2026**.

Installation of the Very Revd Stephen Waine Saturday 1st August

The Very Revd Stephen Waine will be installed as Interim Dean during Evensong on Saturday 1st August at 5.30pm. All are welcome.

From the Cathedral Flower Arrangers

We were thrilled that Dean Jonathan loved the pulpit surrounded by sunflowers for his last day. We gave Pamela some fresh sunflowers and the Dean a yellow rose that he can plant in Torquay now that he has time on his hands!

We have surrendered to nature and returned to silk flowers for the next few weeks. However hard we have tried, nothing lasts for more than a few days, and fresh flowers are so expensive – so it was really becoming a waste of money, let alone the time it was taking to arrange and replace them. The water in the Nave containers was actually lukewarm at one stage last week! A complete change from January when we thought we would get frostbite whilst arranging!

Our “new” flower room is causing us some problems in the heat too. Properly locked up, it becomes too warm to leave any foliage or spare flowers in there. I went in one morning and five carnations were completely crispy having been inadvertently locked in over the weekend. The floor managers have been happy for us to leave the shutter up so at least the “perfume” is not as foul as it could be. The airflow is being looked at for us in the next few weeks thank goodness.

We are looking, as always, for new flower arrangers so should you know anyone who has some experience and would like to know more please ask them to contact volunteers for an informal chat with us about what is involved. We would be very grateful for any opportunities to add to our number.

Flick Evans, Chair Exeter Cathedral Flower Arrangers

Re-Telling The Story of Exeter Cathedral

As part of the new Cathedral interpretation scheme installed last year, displays in the Cathedral, the Friends’ Cloister Gallery and the Treasures Exhibition, include QR codes providing access to a large collection of new Cathedral web pages.

To make this information accessible to a wider audience, these web pages have now been reorganised. They have been combined with web pages about additional topics, including the conservation work which has been underway here for the last decade, and also with the recently released series of 12 short ‘Did You Know?’ videos.

[READ MORE >](#)

Recipe for a Retreat



Take 16 people from Exeter Cathedral.

Marinate for 12 months in prayer, plans and preparation.

Add a generous amount of fellowship, friendship and sunshine. Sprinkle freely with teaching, silence and prayer and you have the recipe for a wonderful retreat.

On 14th July 2026 a group from Exeter Cathedral embarked on a 3 night retreat to Hilfield Friary in Dorset, and one member of the group, who was unable to travel at the last minute for medical reasons, undertook the retreat from home.

Hilfield Friary is a Community House of the Anglican Society of St Francis of Assisi, which was founded in the 1920's.

The Friary is set in 43 acres on the edge of the Dorset Downs, overlooking the beautiful Blackmore Vale.

Visitors to Hilfield are invited to take part in the prayer life of the four resident Franciscan brothers, and to share meals in the refectory with the whole community, including volunteers and residents.

Our group was led by Canon Deborah Parsons, who managed to devise a programme that gave us the freedom to relax into the rhythm of the Friary and at the same time participate in a timetable of teaching, prayer and silent periods of contemplation.

Over a series of talks she took us deeper into Christ's teaching on "The Kingdom of God is ..." by expanding and explaining the messages beneath the surface of some well-known parables.

In our quiet space at Juniper House, she gently guided us on a journey through prayer, music, parables and thoughtful artistic displays towards a deeper awareness of our individual, spiritual needs.

Our closing prayer was:

Lord Jesus

You are the Pearl of Great Price, the treasure beyond all treasures.

Give us the courage to choose You above all else and to follow You with generous hearts. May what we have received here bear fruit in our daily lives. Amen.

Thank you Canon Deborah.

Thank you Canon Cate, for the walks and prayers and appreciation of nature.

Thank you Jackie for organising the logistics and accommodation.

We all feel blessed by our shared experience and strengthened corporately and individually.

New September Festival of Creation in Christ

Alongside the publication of Hope for All Creation, General Synod recently gave final approval to a new annual Festival of Creation in Christ, to be celebrated in Church of England churches on the first Sunday in September. The new Festival is one of the fruits of a growing ecumenical movement across churches worldwide and offers an opportunity for Christians to give thanks for God's creation and redemption of the world, reflect on humanity's responsibility to care for the natural world and pray for its renewal.

The title "Creation in Christ" emphasises that creation is understood through the person and work of Jesus Christ: created through him, sustained in him and destined for renewal in him. The new liturgical resources include prayers, readings and other material centred on creation, stewardship and hope, drawing Christians through worship and prayer toward playing their part in the Church's mission to "safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth".



1050 is Back!

Exeter Cathedral's much-loved Ten Fifty Café van has re-opened in the relaxing Cloister Garden, now serving refreshing drinks in one of the most stunning parts of Exeter.

- **Ten Fifty Café:** Mondays-Saturdays, 10am-4pm
- **Chapter House Café:** Mondays-Saturdays – 9:30am-5pm | Sundays – 11:30am-4pm

Christianity Deanery Synod

Following the recent election, Charles Curnock, Jake Hibberd and Heather Morgan have been elected to the House of Laity of Christianity Deanery Synod. In addition to working with clergy and lay members of the synod to build up the church in Exeter and its surrounding areas, they will be eligible to vote in the forthcoming elections for General Synod. Thank you to them for being willing to serve in this way, and please pray for them as they begin their work.

A memorable Sunday

Sunday 5th July was the day we bade farewell and thank you to Jonathan and Pamela and wished them well for their retirement.

At the 10am Choral Eucharist, fortified by Mozart's Coronation Mass and stirring hymns, Jonathan presided and preached. After the service, on behalf of the Cathedral Community, Heather Morgan thanked Jonathan and Pamela, and paid tribute to all their work in and for the Cathedral. Bishop Mike reflected on Jonathan's priestly ministry. The flower arrangers and Cloister Club presented gifts, and Jonathan was given Garden tokens and an M&S voucher from the large sum donated to his retirement collection. A new BBQ is on order, and we hope that Jonathan and Pamela will enjoy deciding how best to use the substantial balance. A hog roast in the Bishop's Palace Garden concluded the morning.

After Evensong, which included Stanford in B flat and Wesley's *Blessed by the God and Father* tributes were paid by the Lord Lieutenant, by Jenny Ellis, the Senior Non-Executive member of Chapter, and by Bishop Mike.

From Dean Emeritus Jonathan Greener

I must express my enormous gratitude for two fantastic services on Sunday 5th July, for the many people who turned out to say goodbye, and for the remarkable generosity in the gifts we have received. Pamela and I have been deeply touched by the over-kind words that have been spoken of us both, and shall move on with the fondest of memories of such a warm-hearted farewell.

I was really pleased to receive life membership of the Friends of Exeter Cathedral, and then to be made Dean Emeritus. While I have no intention whatever of breathing down my successor's neck, I hope this means that we can pop out from under our palm tree from time to time to replenish our tanks with the water of cathedral life, and to bask in the glorious music which the choir delivers day in, day out – and to particularly good effect in that weekend. But I would say that, having, I think for the first time ever, been privileged to choose all my favourite tunes to be compressed into the two Sunday services.

Life has been too busy, given the need to prepare for our clear-out sale, to process the many emotions of the last few weeks. But we carry with us such positive messages and smiling faces to sustain and encourage us when we finally settle down to our new pace of life.

The other encouragement as I said that weekend, is the confidence that the Cathedral will continue to flourish and grow, thanks to the huge number of people around our county to whom it means so much. Please continue to use the place, support the place, and above all love the place – and please also share that love as enthusiastically and widely as you can possibly manage. For one thing of which I'm certain: the more people involved with the Cathedral, the more secure its future.

Thank you, once again, for all you have done and will continue to do to support our wonderful Cathedral, and heartfelt thanks for all your kindness to this now has-been Dean.

Thank you

Demelza Henderson would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who sponsored her or supported her Land's End to John O'Groats bike ride in May/June. She raised just over £7,000 for the Association for Promoting Retreats - more than she ever dreamed possible. Thank you all! (and if you haven't read all about it, you can read a short reflection on promotingretreats.org/cycling-reflection).

Summer Opening of the Bishop's Palace Garden

Have you ever wanted to learn about the historic home of Devon's bishops since the 13th century, or wonder through the medieval Palace Gate to explore the tranquil, secret garden hidden right in the heart of the city? If so, why not join us on one of our fascinating tours this summer:

- Wednesday 29 July | 10:30am
- Wednesday 5 August | 10:30am
- Wednesday 12 August | 10:30am

[BOOK YOUR TICKETS >](#)

In Conversation with Rosie Jackson on: Love Leans Over the Table Sunday 13thth September 2026 6:30pm The Chapter House, Exeter Cathedral

(Refreshments served from 6.00pm)

Dr Rosie Jackson has a background in education and therapy, but her primary love work-wise for the last decade has been writing and teaching poetry. Her poems are widely published in journals and anthologies and her most recent collection, *Love Leans over the Table* (2023), has been acclaimed for its exploration and celebration of mystical life.

Celebrating both divine and human love, her poems move through personal loss and trauma to spiritual awakening and epiphany, finding echoes in the imagined lives of mystics such as Julian of Norwich and other English anchorites, St John of the Cross, John Donne, George Fox, Simone Weil and many more. She will share some of her work, respond to questions and discuss how spiritual experience and faith can find their voice in poetry.

Join us for a fascinating conversation followed by a short service of compline.

Harvest Supper 2nd October

We have arranged to have a Harvest Supper on Friday 2nd October in the Medieval Hall. As this is a smaller venue, numbers will be limited so please put the date in your diary and book early. Keep a lookout for more information about tickets nearer the time.

Last Summer Things Were Greener



What brings me hope? This question made me pause and think as I struggled to come up with a definite answer. After all, hope is not always easy to find in a world that can at times feel so confusing and uncertain.

But as I kept thinking, I realised hope isn't abstract; it's often quiet and way too often goes unnoticed. Hope manifests itself in small things: kindness of other people, someone's smile, carrying on in the face of challenging circumstances, or the 'simple' act of trying again.

Tradition and looking to the past for reassurance also matters; for history reminds us that hard times always pass. Just like storms or seasons do. Hope, for me, is belief in that constant cycle, where "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." It's not certainty, it's persistence – and sometimes that's enough.

Robert Middleton

Painting details: Boer War (1900–1901), Last Summer Things Were Greener by John Byam Liston Shaw (1872–1919), Birmingham Museums Trust.

What's on in August

The Music of Pink Floyd By Candlelight

1 August

Join us for the ultimate tribute to Pink Floyd, performed live at Exeter Cathedral – by candlelight – by the UK's leading Pink Floyd tribute act.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/pink-floyd-by-candlelight/>

St Sidwell 2026 – In Focus: Life in Tudor and Stuart St Sidwells

3 August

Join us for this informal drop-in exhibition featuring maps and documents focusing on life in St Sidwells, Exeter, from the 15th to 18th centuries.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/st-sidwell-in-focus/>

St Sidwell 2026 – 'Women and Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart St Sidwells talk by Professor Mark Stoyle

3 August

In this lively talk, historian Professor Mark Stoyle will provide an overview of St Sidwell's turbulent past.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/women-and-witchcraft-talk/>

The Music of Meat Loaf by Candlelight

8 August

Direct from London's West End, join us for an unforgettable night of Meat Loaf anthems, performed by candlelight.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/the-music-of-meat-loaf-by-candlelight/>

Library & Archives In Focus – Cats in the Cathedral

10 August

Come along to this pop-up exhibition to discover records of cats on the medieval payroll and find out what really happened to Tom the wartime cat.

Hands On History: Archives Across Time

13 August

Aged 14-18? Discover what secrets a 1,000 year old archive holds and the stories hiding in the Cathedral's oldest documents.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/hands-on-history-archives-across-time/>

Organ Recital: Andrew Millington

13 August

Exeter Cathedral is thrilled to welcome former Director of Music of Exeter Cathedral, Andrew Millington, to our summer recital series.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/organ-recital-andrew-millington/>

Organ Recital: Timothy Parsons

27 August

Timothy Parsons, Director of Music at Wells Cathedral, will be performing as part of our summer organ recital series celebrating exceptional organ music in one of the country's most atmospheric and historic sacred spaces.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/organ-recital-timothy-parsons/>

Exeter Independent Market

29 August

Discover the best of Exeter and the South West at the Exeter Independent Market on Cathedral Green.

<https://www.exeter-cathedral.org.uk/whats-on/events/exeter-independent-market-august/>

Visiting Choirs

During August, we welcome a number of visiting choirs to lead our choral worship. They include St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Terrace Park, Ohio, USA, Chingford Parish Church Choir, the Open University Chapel Choir, and Wells Cathedra, Chamber Choir. Our thanks and best wishes to them all.

Saint of the Month: Clare of Assisi, Founder of the Minoresses (Poor Clares), 1253

Lesser Festival 11th August

St Clare was born in Assisi, in Italy, in 1194, and was so inspired by hearing St Francis (her elder by about 10 years) preaching in the town that she followed him into the religious life. She is commemorated on 11th August, the day on which she died in the year 1253.

Within a few years of her embracing the life of poverty and simplicity that Francis modelled, she came to live at the beautiful little church of San Damiano just outside Assisi's city walls. Soon other women from Assisi came to join her, and it became a thriving community. Despite being enclosed and self-contained, the sisters weren't cut off from the outside world; they would have been visited regularly, perhaps daily, by local priests who administered Holy Communion and heard their confessions, and of course, Francis and the other friars would visit periodically too.

The Poor Clares, as they soon became known, lived a strict monastic life according to a Rule which Clare herself had composed. It was based on the earlier Rule of St Benedict, with a carefully-prescribed balance of prayer, study and manual work, but it was unusually strict about possessions and property. Like Francis, Clare was absolutely insistent that the sisters should own nothing of their own, and rely totally on donations from local benefactors.

Clare always considered the sisters' contemplative and friars' active ministries to perfectly complement each other, as do the lives of Mary and Martha in the gospels. Franciscan spirituality has always involved a balance of action and contemplation; it is the living of a gospel-based life, focused on love, peace, right-relationships, inclusiveness, respect, and a care for creation. Or as the Franciscan writer, Brother Ramon, put it 'the Franciscan life is a life centred on the love of God, of humanity and of creation, expressed as much through silent prayer as active ministry'.

St Francis' special connection with the natural world is something that sets him apart from other saints of the Middle Ages, and is, of course, why so many people nowadays have heard of him. But Clare felt similarly, and her love of creation shines out from many of her writings. She encouraged her sisters to consider themselves as equal and integral parts of creation alongside the natural world.

Life is to be lived with joy and in simplicity, Clare writes, and the natural world around us simply provides a springboard for us to praise God.

As well as her Rule of Life and a Testament, Clare also wrote a number of letters to her protégé, St Agnes of Prague, four of which survive. In them, Clare writes about poverty and contemplation, the beauty and the challenges of living a truly Franciscan life, and the joy and peace that come from knowing and loving Christ. Several times, she uses the imagery of a mirror as a metaphor for this. 'The challenge is to not only look into the mirror and see ourselves and Christ', Clare writes, 'but to also think of how the mirror is reflecting us to others'. She wrote this prayer to Agnes of Prague in 1238.

*Place your mind before the mirror of eternity!
Place your soul in the brilliance of glory!
Place your heart in the figure of the divine substance!
And transform your whole being
into the image of the Godhead itself through contemplation!
So that you too may feel what His friends feel
as they taste the hidden sweetness
which God Himself has reserved from the beginning
for those who love Him. Amen.*

Demelza Henderson

Thank you...

...to everyone who contributed to the success of the Quiz Evening on 22nd July. 50 people gathered to take part in the quiz and to welcome the Interim Dean, The Very Reverend Stephen Waine, and his family.

We enjoyed quiches, salads and traybakes prepared by a very hardworking team of helpers. Special thanks to Jake Hibberd who compiled and presided over the quiz questions. We were very grateful to the members of the Cathedral staff, Harvey and Katie, for all their help in making the Chapter House ready and to everyone who helped to clear up at the end of the evening.

The quiz was taxing but perhaps not as much as Jake's written efforts in Christmastide and Eastertide. We ended up with a dead heat between the Dean's Team and the Heatherlings. After a tiebreak, the winners of the quiz were the Dean's Team - a fitting end to a special evening. And no, it wasn't fixed- the best team won!

Charles Wood (1866-1926)

1926 was a memorable year; the birth of Queen Elizabeth II, the General Strike, England won the Ashes by beating Australia in the 5th Test Match, and AA Milne wrote Winnie the Pooh (of which perhaps more in October), to name but some of the anniversaries to note.

For church musicians and those who love cathedral music, we can add to that list of centenaries the death of Charles Wood on 12th July 1926.

Born in Armagh on 15th June 1886, Charles Wood attended the Cathedral Choir School there. He studied at the Royal College of Music before continuing his education at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He was a renowned teacher of harmony, counterpoint and composition. From 1889 he taught at Gonville and Caius College, where, from 1894, he was the first Director of Music and organist. In 1924, he succeeded Stanford as Professor of Music at Cambridge, but sadly died only two years later. His premature death meant that Wood never heard a performance of some of his most famous and lasting compositions.

As a pupil of Stanford and Parry, and teacher of Vaughan Williams and Howells, Charles Wood is central in the line of succession of the most eminent composers of church music.

When I was a student, new to the cathedrals and their music, I was puzzled by references to “Wood in the Fridge”, discovering, eventually, that this was an irreverent reference to his setting of the *Communion Service in the Phrygian Mode*. We don’t hear that piece very often these days, in common with the *St Mark Passion*, which was at one time very popular. His settings of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis and many anthems, however, remain a staple of the cathedral choir repertoire.

Wood’s output was very varied-including chamber music and large-scale choral works- tuneful and accessible. For good parish choirs, works such as the Evening Service in E flat (“No 2”) and anthems such as *O Thou the Central Orb*, and not forgetting *This Joyful Eastertide*, are manageable. The glorious and complex works for double choir including the *Evening Service in F “Collegium Regale”* and anthems such as *Hail Gladdening Light* and *’Tis the Day of Resurrection* are majestic pieces for cathedral choirs.

But it’s the unaccompanied motet *Oculi Omnium* (The eyes of all wait upon thee O Lord) that is my personal favourite, indeed it’s a “Desert Island” favourite; beautiful in its quiet simplicity.

In his home city of Armagh, there is an annual Charles Wood Festival in August with a summer school for singers, organists and choral directors. This year it runs from 16th to 23rd August. The artistic director is David Hill. The BBC will broadcast Choral Evensong from the Festival on Wednesday 19th August on Radio 3.

Heather Morgan

Quiet Days

Online Quiet Day on 11th August

Demelza Henderson will be leading an online quiet day focusing on the life and spirituality of St Clare, on Tuesday 11th August, to which anyone can join. It will run from 10.45am until 3pm, and include short acts of worship, reflections and meditations, as well as periods of silence and (if you choose) a shared 'fellowship lunch'. You can find out more, and register for the Zoom link, on oasisdays.org.uk.

Quiet Morning in Lypstone in September

Demelza will also be leading a Quiet Morning in Lypstone Parish Church (EX8 5JU) from 10am until 1pm on Wednesday 23rd September. This will be part of the National Retreat Week initiative (renewall.org.uk). The morning will include times of worship, short meditations and ideas for prayer; refreshments will be available. There is no charge, but donations are invited to offset costs. To register your interest, or book a place, please email quietdaysindevon@gmail.com.

Cathedral Music Trust Gathering at Exeter 9th -11th October

We look forward to welcoming to Exeter supporters of Cathedral Music Trust who will gather at the Cathedral from 9th -11th October. Exeter is proving to be a very popular destination and already over 80 supporters of the Trust have booked to attend. They will come to Evensong on all three days, and also the Sunday 10am Choral Eucharist.

Please do come along to one or more of the services over that weekend to welcome our guests. There will be musical treats to enjoy, including a newly commissioned motet, and a number of opportunities to learn more about the Trust and the ways in which it supports and promotes cathedral music.