

Annual Meeting 29th May 2022: Dean's Remarks

You have received my annual report for the year 2021 (pp.3-5). I do not intend to go through this – you will be relieved to know – but any questions are very welcome. What I do want to do is make some comments about the current year by way of helping us all understand how Derby Cathedral is moving forward. So my reflections at this AGM are about vision and strategy.

But as we do that, let's take a quick step back and think about the City of Derby, our immediate setting. There is a movement stirring in the City that will I believe prove to be significant when we look back on these times. Listen to this part of the opening statement in the city's bid to become UK city of culture 2025. It refers back to the building of the Silk Mill 150 yards from where I stand in the early 1720s, the same decade in which this wonderful nave was constructed.

In 1721 a mix of creativity and innovation sparked the Industrial Revolution in Derby – 300 years later through our City of Culture bid that same mix will be a catalyst for a new era – a Creative Revolution, placing arts, culture and creativity at the centre of everything we do. This will lead lasting social and economic change. In an era of increasing digital, Artificial Intelligence and automation, it will challenge what it means to be human in the 21st century.

Now the city was not successful in the bid, although I think getting down to the longlist of eight does represent real success and the city has openly stated it will be competing for the capital of culture status for 2029. The really important point is that there is an emerging consensus across the city that in order to be the very best city Derby can be the softer, cultural, ethic, value based side of city life need emphasising just as much as the high tech industry and the strong employment market. What I find most interesting is that values and social ethics are moving towards the centre stage of the discussions I am invited to attend. And these are areas debate that a Cathedral is well placed to make a contribution.

Not only is this most welcome from a Christian or more broadly a religious perspective but it represents a major opportunity for the mission and ministry of this Cathedral church as we move into the future. We were part of the creative movement of the 1720s and we can be part of the creative moment now in the 2020s. Derby Cathedral is the seat of the Bishop of Derby and makes Bishop Libby's teaching ministry in the diocese visible. We are a centre for mission and worship for the whole diocese which we seek to serve in the best way we can.

Part of our calling is to make an impact in both the City of Derby and the County of Derbyshire and for many years not only have we been doing this, but our contribution is recognised and valued. On Tuesday last week I was an honoured guest at the Mayor Making as its called, the Derby City Council AGM. The new mayor, Cllr Robin Wood, who was elected for his third term said this to the city council in his acceptance speech.

It is important to mention the contribution of our most distinguished building, the Cathedral Church of All Saints, Derby. Whilst being a beacon of spiritual leadership to many people in a cross-cultural, multi-faith city, the Dean and Chapter enter the secular life of Derby so splendidly with spectacular exhibits, such as the Museum of the Moon; the Knife Angel and currently the Peace Doves that are a combined work of ten thousand children determined to demonstrate that they are optimistic for the future for Peace in a time when there is war in our own continent that so cruelly effects the people of Ukraine, many of whom have close connections with us here in Derby.

We already make a key contribution to the public life of the City and County and we have much to build on. It's a good place to start from.

On Friday I attended a Marketing Derby breakfast at the Silk Mill where a new vision and strategy for this city of derby was unveiled. It was an inspiring presentation by the Deputy Chief Executive and the Head of Regeneration. We will hear more about this city vision in the coming months, but the discussion after the presentation was all about putting the vision into practice.

And it's the same with us. Its easier to have a vision than to have a strategy to implement the vision. And its easier to have a strategy than to deliver on it! In this respect we are no different from any other institution or organisation.

So what is the next step as we look to the future?

As I said in my annual report Chapter has been working on a strategic vision and plan, and this was agreed in outline at the end of last year. The plan sets out a vision and strategy for the future of Derby Cathedral and I am inviting each one of you into a significant conversation about what the future looks like.

Our vision and strategy starts from where Chapter believe the cathedral is in its journey with all the realities that we face following the past two years experience of the pandemic, but also with our many strengths. There are some things that we are already doing to build the future mission and ministry of the cathedral and these are included. But there are also many things that we aspire to be and which are new.

The strategic plan sets out a vision for the future in six strategic focus areas. These strategic focus areas are already helping chapter to think about the future and how the many different parts of cathedral life fit together in one central narrative. These six strategic focus areas are:

- **Inspirational worship and music** – we have a vision to develop new forms of worship to attract new people to join us, and enable our music which is the heartbeat of our life together to grow to the next level
- **Learning** – we have a vision to become a learning community, a 'go to place' for understanding of the Christian faith and a centre for public debate in the city and county
- **Conserving and developing our heritage** – we have a vision to enable this building to serve all our communities more effectively, efficiently and to support our worship more effectively than it does now
- **Partnership** – we have a vision to become a good partner to institutions and organisations in the city and county with whom we share common goals for human flourishing
- **Recovery, sustainability and growth** – we have a vision that we will continue to recover well from the pandemic, that all we do is able to be paid for, that our finances are secure

and there is no draining of from unrestricted funds, and that in every aspect of our life together we are seeing growth

- **Arts and culture** – we have a vision to build on the great work of the Moon, the Knife Angel and now the Peace Doves to become a significant and proactive contributor to the cultural and artistic life of the city.

Within each focus area there is a project plan and there are critical projects that have to be a priority for us if we are going to make progress. We wish to share this with you in some detail and each member of the cathedral community is invited to attend a small group meeting over the next few weeks where I and members of chapter will introduce to you the vision and its strategy and seek your views on the direction that we are heading in. The majority of projects that we envisage require shaping and developing and that is job for us all. In next week's Flag we will be inviting everyone to sign up to join a group of 20 or so people for a briefing and a discussion to share and record your views. This is a beginning. We aim that our vision and strategy will be owned by the whole of the Cathedral community. Its vital that we hold the future together and everyone has a part to play in enabling Derby Cathedral to grow and develop.

We are also beginning a consultation with the diocese of derby and are inviting the parishes, benefices, deaneries and archdeaconries into the conversation. We have already presented to Bishop's Council and are due to introduce our vision and strategy to the Diocesan Synod next month. We are making arrangements with our key stakeholders to talk through our strategy and gain their views on how we might be a good partner to them as they prepare for their own future, and also how they might wish to support as in our growth over the next few years.

It's the beginning of a big conversation throughout the diocese – both with the church and with secular partners about their Cathedral's future. I firmly believe that all the gifts we need to achieve this future are given to us by God. What's important to do is release the potential of us all as we create the future that God is holding out to us and beckoning us towards.

I highlighted the new Cathedrals Measure in my annual report. As I conclude let me say a few words about this. and how it fits with our vision and strategy.

Led by Carol Thomas our COO and supported by Nadine Waldron, the former Derby Diocesan Registrar, we are currently preparing our new Constitution and Statutes. Derby Cathedral, along with all other cathedrals will come under the regulation of the Charity Commission. The central change is that Chapter will become the board of charity trustees and will report annually to Charity Commission. The governance role of our Cathedral Council will cease and although we will continue to have a College of Canons it will no longer have an oversight function. There will be dual regulation with the Church Commissioners who will co-regulate our finances and oversee any property transactions or development.

In a few weeks time we will be consulting with the Cathedral community on our new constitution and statutes. They will be posted on the website and available for everyone to feedback their views. There will be quite a few changes to the way that things are organised – there will be new committees, new arrangements for honorary and lay canons including ecumenical canons and there will be more chapter members.

We will be one of the first cathedrals to go under the measure, and establishing new governance arrangements very soon will be great help to us as we develop our future together. There will be

more effective scrutiny of the cathedral team's work, accountability will be clearer and there will be a wider range of people involved in governance. Developing our governance to the next level of effectiveness is a key part of our strategy and underpins our move towards a different sort of future. Our plan is to go under the new measure by the end of this year. Please do respond by feeding back your views on the proposed governance documents when you see them.

That is all I wish to say this morning. A huge thank you to you all. Your energy and commitment to the life of Derby Cathedral is more than appreciated. Thank you to my chapter and clergy colleagues. Thank you to every single person whether member of staff or volunteer or someone who attends worship; each one of you plays a vital role in enabling Derby Cathedral to be an inspirational and exciting place and I look forward to much to developing our future together.

The Very Revd Peter Robinson

Dean of Derby