



Derby Cathedral Community Learning Strategy

Introduction

The Community Learning Strategy aims to establish an inclusive and engaging learning environment within Derby Cathedral, promoting personal and communal growth, fostering a sense of belonging, and encouraging lifelong learning. This strategy focuses on empowering individuals from diverse backgrounds to explore their faith, develop new skills and deepen their understanding of the Anglican tradition. It is split into two parts – an adult specific strategy and a children and young people strategy.

Derby Cathedral Adult Community Learning Strategy

Needs Assessment

To implement a strategy that is both effective and sustainable it has to deliver on actual needs of the various communities we engage with. It is unclear whether any needs assessment has been carried out in the past to identify the learning needs and interests of the community, so this should be our starting point. This assessment can be done through a mixture of methods, starting with a survey - electronically accessed through The Flag, as well as available on paper and made available to the various congregations across the week. This can be followed up with interviews with members of the congregation, staff and other stakeholders (such as close partners, like ArtCore, University, etc). The data collected needs to be analysed to determine the key areas of interest and potential learning opportunities. It is important to explore various areas of interest, and I'd like to start with these: spiritual growth, Anglican tradition, skills development, community outreach and personal development.

Learning Programs and Activities

Based on the identified needs and interests we could develop a range of learning programs and activities that cater for these. Some examples might include:

- a. **Spiritual Growth:** We could offer workshops on
 - Christian spirituality (different traditions, including Benedictine, Ignatian, Franciscan etc);
 - Bible study (complementing what is already offered by the Wednesday Group, but in a different format, possibly theme based or Bible Book specific sessions);
 - prayer practices, such as: *Learn to pray* to more “advanced” meditational or contemplative prayer, and
 - theological discussions – probably in conjunction with others, on specific topics where a specific demand has been expressed (e.g. War; Climate Change; Racism; poverty, etc and how we can engage theologically with these topics). We should be considering collaborating with others to deliver these, for

example Canon Theologians (or other willing knowledgeable theologians in each area), clergy - making use of the knowledge “in house” or in the Diocese, and possibly inviting trained spiritual directors to facilitate these sessions.

- b. **Anglican Tradition:** If there is demand for this we could organise workshops and lectures to help facilitate a deeper understanding of our very rich Anglican tradition – anything from its history, liturgy and sacraments. The Anglican Communion has ready made and available materials that could be used. It may also help further develop an understanding of the Anglican Communion and how Derby Cathedral fits within that. We can progress to how changes happening currently within the Community will have an impact on decisions that we make here (e.g. how we interact with LLF). I think it would be important to provide opportunities for dialogue and exploration of Anglican values and practices, what makes us Anglican (as opposed to any other denomination – and does that matter?), if there is an expressed demand for it.
- c. **Skills Development:** Can we offer practical skills workshops and classes that align with the interests of the community? Using the skills already available within our congregations what could we offer? Some examples might include:
- a Community Choir (I know others are already being explored as a possibility);
 - a repair café
 - IT workshops (get online, stay safe online, etc)
 - local area history and interests
 - accounting and budgeting skills
 - sewing and embroidery skills
 - flower arranging
 - art and creative workshops
 - Collaborate with local providers to develop this (Uni, Derby Museums, Deda, ArtCore, others)
- d. **Community Outreach:** We can continue to offer opportunities to foster social awareness, empathy and community engagement. These already include The Community Café, the FairTrade Stall, the Christian Aid week (as well as other charities), as well as all the work that the JPCC does. I wonder if there is room to further develop our partnerships with local organizations and allow for further participation from our Cathedral Communities and congregations? At the moment this work is carried out mostly by a few committed individuals. As part of the needs assessment we should try and see whether there is an appetite to further this work and what skills others can provide to complement what is already being done.
- e. **Personal Enrichment:** We could provide courses and seminars that focus on personal growth and well-being, such as:
- meditation,
 - stress management,

- mindfulness
- self-care.

We could collaborate with experts in these fields to produce both a plan of events and, more importantly, an interactive community that becomes self-supporting. There are various apps that can be used to support this work, but we could also potentially do some basic things like motivational quotes for the day or a “thought for the week”, that helps to foster wellbeing and build an online and face-to-face community.

Learning Spaces

One of the greatest barriers to growing this vision might actually be a lack of physical facilities. In an ideal world, we would create dedicated learning spaces that inspire and facilitate learning within the Cathedral (including the Cathedral centre). These spaces could include classrooms, discussion areas, a functioning library (physical or online), and multimedia facilities for presentations and audio-visual resources. These spaces should be comfortable, accessible and equipped with the necessary tools and technology. In our present situation, this may not always be straight forward. However, if we are to use the rooms we have available to us, we would need to make sure they are, above all, accessible. Particularly for those with mobility issues or other accessibility issues (hearing or sight impairment, dementia, etc). The room which is now known as the Education room, is not available a few times a week as the Finance Team use it, which makes remodelling to fit our purposes possibly a bit more complicated. However, if a solution to that occupancy could be sorted and the room changed to meet a learning environment standard, then that could be a great resource. Would it be worth considering remodelling the Beddoes Room so it can be divided and used as one or two rooms as needed? This would allow more than one activity to happen simultaneously. A more radical option would be the remodelling of the Retro Choir space, to free it to be more usable. A less drastic solution could be to use (rent?) premises within Church House or come to some mutually beneficial arrangement with the Diocese to use their rooms. This may no longer be appropriate when Church House is sold and a new premises found. However, it may be worth thinking about using the premises of other partners, particularly when we are co-creating workshops. Could the MFC be available sometimes, or thinking more left-field, rooms within the Joseph Wright Centre? As part of the needs assessment, accessibility issues and location, must be investigated as possible barriers to accessing any learning opportunities.

Collaboration and Partnerships

Establishing collaborations and partnerships with other educational institutions, local community organizations and other faith communities does much more than allow for better premises to be found, it should be the bed rock of our Learning Strategy in that it broadens the learning opportunities and creates a more diverse and inclusive learning environment. In a diverse, yet quite segregated city like Derby, this is of particular interest. Collaborations and partnerships are already happening and have been further enhanced over the last 3 years and should be capitalised on. This can take the form of shared or co-created programmes, guest speakers, joint workshops, and other resource-sharing initiatives. The Faith Alliance, when it comes into being, should be a natural partner in our Learning Strategy.

Getting the word out

It is essential that we develop a proactive and co-ordinated marketing strategy to raise awareness of the learning opportunities offered by the Cathedral. We'd need to develop and use various channels, such as: the Cathedral website; social media platforms; newsletters (The Flag and other partners' newsletters too); and local community networks. We would need to engage with local schools, colleges, and other faith-based organizations to expand the reach of our offer. Would the current Digital Marketing Officer have the capacity to take on this within the time available to her? This is an important area to consider when deciding on achievable timescales for this learning strategy.

Evaluation and Feedback

It is important that we regularly evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the learning programs through participant feedback (formal and informal). We can then use this collected data to refine and improve the offerings, ensuring they remain relevant and responsive to the needs of our communities.

Sustainability

For any of this to even get started and to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Community Learning Strategy we need to consider viable funding sources, the level volunteer availability and engagement and the quality of our partnerships.

- a. **Funding Source:** We should strive to keep any learning programs free or at least affordable and accessible to individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds – that cannot be done without reliable, external sources of income. Possible source of income include:
 - Existing legacies (currently at £7,500 Burrows Legacy and about £3,000 in Templeton Fund)
 - Church Grants (Commissioners, Diocese)
 - Other Fund Holders, some examples include: The National Lottery Community Fund; All Saints Educational Trust (aset.org.uk), Thrive Together Fund (from the Foundation for Social Development). There's a piece of work to be done on finding and pursuing specific sources of funding. Whether this fits within the CCL role or elsewhere needs clarification.
- b. **Volunteer engagement:** We are more likely to engage volunteers if they help to co-create the various programmes on offer. Finding volunteers to participate in something that is already organised may prove hard (as there are many perceived barriers to volunteer at the Cathedral). To develop this level of engagement it is important that trust is built between the Canon for Community Learning and any possible volunteers. This has already started but it is an ongoing process, that will further develop over the coming years.
- c. **Quality of partnerships:** This brings me to the fact that we will be highly dependent on the quality of our relationships with our various partners. These have improved drastically over the last few years, as the Dean has built a great deal of relational capital within the City and its various communities. However, we are also very

vulnerable to personnel changes that lead to a sudden and sometimes irredeemable loss of said personal capital. We will need organisational structures in place so that the work can continue when a member of the team leaves (be it from the Cathedral or the partner's end).

Achievability and Timescales

By implementing this Community Learning Strategy, Derby Cathedral can continue its work of being a vibrant centre for lifelong learning, nurturing personal and spiritual growth, fostering community connections, and enriching the lives of its members and the wider community.

I believe the Cathedral Learning Strategy can be achieved by using the detailed template already in place to deliver the Strategic Development Plan. Namely, once the strategy is approved by Chapter, it will be divided into achievable critical projects that will be led by me (CCL). I propose that the first such project would be to design and deliver a Learning Needs Assessment. As a rough plan, our timescales could be as follows:

- Present Draft Learning Strategy to Chapter – mid July
 - Make changes as suggested – end of July
 - Design and deliver a Needs Assessment questionnaire – August
 - Analyse Data received – end of September/early October
 - Design programme to deliver top priority needs (based on data collected) for each area (i.e. Spiritual Growth, Anglican Tradition, Skills Development, Community Outreach, Personal enrichment), taking into account availability of volunteers, finance and depth of existing partnerships in place – from Advent 2023 (this will be an ongoing process).
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Children and young people specific strategy

The Community Learning Strategy for children and young people is vital to the success of our overall Learning aims. I've outlined it here, separately from our adult strategy, as the approach to how we engage with young people and their learning and development needs to be different from how we engage with the adults we are also trying to reach. Our aim is to create a nurturing and inclusive learning environment that promotes personal and spiritual growth, facilitate skill development, and foster a sense of belonging in all young people we make contact with.

Needs Assessment

A needs assessment is required but the stakeholders will be different. It is important that the needs of children and young people is what is captured, rather than the perceived need from others who perhaps remember how things used to be done at the Cathedral. It is hoped that a comprehensive needs assessment will enable us to identify the specific learning needs and interests of children within the various communities we engage with. This assessment can be carried out through surveys, interviews, and focus groups with:

- families within our congregations (Sundays and Messy Cathedral),
- special days (e.g. God and the Big Bang or National Space Centre visit),
- The Derby Cathedral School,
- other schools that visit us,
- Choristers and their families and
- schools engaged with the Music in Schools programme.

Once data is analysed, we can determine the key areas of interest and potential learning opportunities for each group.

Possible Children's Learning Programs, Activities and Collaborations

The aim is to develop age-appropriate learning programs and activities for children. These may include the following elements:

a. Religious Education: depending on needs identified we may want to offer regular Messy Cathedral or maybe, if feasible, Sunday school classes. We could offer holiday time clubs or provide other opportunities to have engaging and interactive lessons that explore Bible stories, Christian values, and spiritual practices in a child-friendly manner. It is already clear that there is demand for a pro-active and organised offer to schools so that each child who enters our building has an opportunity to hear the principles of the faith and to experience the awe of the physical space.

b. Sacramental Preparation: I think there is also a need to organise special programs to prepare children for sacraments such as baptism, and confirmation. This would be more

naturally targeted at the children already within our communities (congregations and choristers) but there may be an opportunity to eventually extend that to others (e.g. children in schools who are engaging with the Music in Schools programme).

c. Creative Expression: Encourage children to explore their creativity through activities such as arts and crafts, music, drama, and storytelling. These activities can be integrated into religious education classes or offered as standalone workshops, fostering imagination and self-expression. This happens currently through Messy Cathedral but there may be scope to work in partnership with other stakeholders in the community.

d. Service and Outreach: It may be worth exploring whether there is a perceived need to engage children in age-appropriate service projects and community outreach initiatives. The aim of these would be to instill in them a sense of compassion, empathy, and social responsibility. I believe that we are in a great position to work in collaboration with local schools and charities to encourage children's active participation in charitable activities and educate them about social justice issues.

e. Social and Emotional Development: We should explore working in partnership with schools (particularly The Derby Cathedral School) to provide opportunities for children to develop social skills, emotional intelligence, and empathy through group activities, team-building exercises, and discussions on topics such as kindness, forgiveness, and friendship. We can offer not only the Cathedral as a special setting but can offer links with The Peak Center at Champion House (Edale) and other local Diocesan facilities.

Learning Spaces

Creating dedicated learning spaces within the cathedral premises that are welcoming and conducive to learning for both adults and children is a real challenge. The best use is made of all the available space but constant problems include noise level, insufficient break-out rooms and limitation of some spaces which are not suitable from a safeguarding point of view. In the medium to long term, we should be working towards spaces that are safe, age-appropriate, accessible, and equipped with the necessary tools and resources. In the short term, it is important to continue to work with partners and stakeholders to make the most of any opportunities.

Outreach and Promotion

As for the adult strategy a comprehensive outreach and promotion strategy to raise awareness about the learning opportunities offered by the cathedral for children must be devised. We would need to utilise all the various channels we would for the adult strategy but also consider others, such as partnering with local schools and their supporters, as well as other faith-based organisations to expand the reach of the programs for children. This would need to be done with the help of the Digital Marketing Officer.

Sustainability

For any of this to even get started and to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Community Learning Strategy we need to consider viable funding sources, the level volunteer availability and other possible personnel options, as well as the quality of our partnerships.

- d. **Funding Source:** We should strive to keep any learning programs free or at least affordable and accessible to individuals from various socio-economic backgrounds – that cannot be done without reliable, external sources of income. Possible source of income include:
 - Existing legacies
 - Church Grants (Commissioners, Diocese)
 - Other Fund Holders, some examples include: Foundation Derbyshire; The National Lottery Community Fund; All Saints Educational Trust (aset.org.uk), Thrive Together Fund (from the Foundation for Social Development) and several others. There's a piece of work to be done on finding and pursuing young people specific sources of funding. Whether this fits within the CCL role or elsewhere needs clarification.
- e. **Volunteer engagement:** We are more likely to engage volunteers if they help to co-create the various programmes on offer. Finding volunteers to participate in something that is already organised may prove hard (as there are many perceived barriers to volunteer at the Cathedral).
- f. **Future Youth (Ministry Experience Scheme):** We have been asked by the Diocese to consider applying to have a FY (MES) person come spend a year at the cathedral. Please see separate proposal. They are paid £23,214 of which we have been asked to contribute £7,500. We have already been promised a grant of £2,500 from the Gell Fund towards this so we are now looking at £5000. That is all in cost (only minimal expense related to any activities we develop also having to be covered by the Cathedral). All employment costs to be covered by the Commissioners and the Diocese, including a setting up grant for things such as laptops if needed. The role is a fixed Term of 11 months, starting on 4th September and ending on 28th July (with the possibility of increasing that if both parties were keen). Having someone, nearly full time, to help develop the practicalities of the learning strategy would be invaluable and at such subsidised rates, also good value for money. This person would need training and support as they grow in their role and own personal development but it is something I recommend we consider seriously. The amount that would need to be paid in this financial year is £1600 with the remainder to be paid in the next financial year, which would give us time to apply for grants or find other benefactors.
- g. **Quality of partnerships:** I'm particularly encouraged by the ongoing improvement and growth of our relationship with the Derby Cathedral School. That is also true of other schools that are starting to pro-actively approach us for visits and other forms of partnership development. However, we continue to be vulnerable to personnel changes that lead to a sudden and sometimes irredeemable loss of personal capital. We will need organisational structures in place so that the work can continue when a member of the team leaves (be it from the Cathedral or the partner's end).

Achievability

This Child and Youth specific Learning Strategy can be achieved by using the detailed template already in place to deliver the Strategic Development Plan. Namely, once the strategy is approved by Chapter, it will be divided into achievable critical projects that will be led by me (CCL). I propose that the first such project would be to consider the employment of a Future Youth trainee. The second would be to design and deliver a Learning Needs Assessment. As a rough plan, our timescales could be as follows:

- Present Draft Learning Strategy to Chapter – mid July
- Make changes as suggested – end of July
- Apply to be part of the Ministry Experience Scheme – July through to September
- Design and deliver a Needs Assessment questionnaire – September or October
- Analyse Data received – October/November
- Design programme to deliver top priority needs (based on data collected) for each area taking into account school and term specific time constraints, the availability of volunteers, finance and depth of existing partnerships in place – from Advent 2023 (this will be an ongoing process).

Evaluation and Feedback

We will need to continually evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the learning programs for both children and young people through regularly collected formal and informal feedback. It is important that we encourage ongoing communication and feedback from young people and their families and make necessary adjustments to meet evolving needs.

Summary

It is my hope that by implementing this Community Learning Strategy, Derby Cathedral will create a vibrant and transformative learning environment, nurturing personal growth, strengthening the faith of its members, fostering community connections, and equipping individuals of all ages to live out their faith in meaningful ways.