



ESGOBAETH TYDDEWI
DIOCESE of ST DAVIDS



St Davids Cathedral Visitation Report 2025

The Cathedral Church of St Andrew and St David has stood for over a millennium as a beacon of faith, hope, and pilgrimage—a sacred place where the Christian presence has been nurtured and celebrated across generations. It remains a centre of worship and witness, entrusted to us as a living expression of God’s mission in this land.

Regular Episcopal Visitations are an essential part of the life of any cathedral, ensuring that its governance, ministry, and witness remain strong and faithful to the calling it has received. The last Visitation to St Davids Cathedral took place in 2010; fifteen years have now passed, and this process is long overdue. The time has come to pause, reflect, and renew our shared commitment to the flourishing of this holy place.

My purpose in calling this Visitation is not to seek fault, but to enable the Cathedral and Chapter to reach their full potential in Christian witness. This is an opportunity to strengthen governance, clarify structures, encourage personal growth, and shape a long-term strategy that will sustain the mission of the Cathedral for generations to come. Where weaknesses are identified, this should be embraced as a positive step - because acknowledging what needs attention is the first stage in addressing it faithfully and effectively.

This is not about the bishop exercising authority for its own sake. It is about the bishop bearing the burden of responsibility and sharing it with the Dean, the Chapter, the Cathedral staff, and the people of St Davids. Together, we carry the weight and privilege of stewarding this historic centre of worship, ensuring that its life and ministry continue to reflect the glory of God and the hope of the Gospel.

This Report is based on evidence, documentation and oral testimony supplied during the Visitation. The findings and conclusions reflect the information available at that time. The publication of this report was rescheduled to allow for careful consideration of matters and additional information that emerged in relation to a safeguarding issue identified during the visitation process.

The key recommendations set out in this Report arise directly from the evidence and from the Consultants’ assessment of the governance, leadership, and operational arrangements in place at that time. Where recommendations are forward-looking in nature, they are intended to address structural or cultural issues identified through the evidence, rather than isolated incidents.

I commend to you this Report and the work of the Visitation. May it serve as a catalyst for renewal, growth, and deeper faithfulness to the mission entrusted to us.

Governance

The governance structures of St Davids Cathedral show encouraging signs of progress, though significant challenges remain in achieving consistently effective implementation and accountability. The Chapter now meets quarterly, supported by subcommittees that focus on key areas such as finance and Human Resources (HR). While these arrangements appear sound in principle, the visitation highlighted areas where practice does not fully align with intention.

The ongoing review of the Cathedral's constitution and the planned transition to Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) status are positive steps toward greater clarity and accountability. The Finance Committee has begun addressing historic issues, though progress has been slower than hoped. Similarly, the HR Committee has made notable improvements since 2019, introducing job descriptions, contracts, and standardised pay scales where these were previously absent.

Nonetheless, concerns remain about governance culture and effectiveness. Some Chapter members feel their role is limited, with papers often arriving too late for proper consideration. Meetings have been described as being weighted towards introductions rather than strategic priorities. Varying levels of financial literacy also make it difficult for some members to engage confidently with the Cathedral's financial challenges.

The relationship between Chapter and executive leadership would benefit from greater clarity. Decision-making processes have not always felt transparent, and there is a perception that accountability for significant operational decisions could be strengthened. Although a risk register is in place it appears to function more as a compliance tool than as a driver of strategic planning. Despite known funding challenges, the lack of a long-term strategic plan beyond 2025, is a critical gap and a cause for concern.

Finally, the division of responsibilities between the Dean and Chapter, the Friends organisation and the Cathedral's trading arm remains insufficiently clear, and the lack of clarity contributes to tension and inefficiencies.

Key Recommendations for Governance

❖ Develop a Five-Year Strategic Plan

- Establish a clear roadmap beyond 2026 with clear priorities, stress-tested projections, and measurable outcomes, including financial sustainability measures.

❖ Create a Smaller Executive Committee

- Form a smaller group that meets monthly to provide responsive oversight, support for management decisions and maintain momentum between Chapter meetings.

❖ Improve Meeting Preparation and Efficiency

- Circulate all Chapter papers at least one week in advance, including concise executive summaries and clear recommendations.

❖ Strengthen Governance Skills, Training and Confidence

- Provide targeted training - particularly in financial management and strategic planning - to support trustees in fulfilling their responsibilities effectively.

❖ Expedite Transition to CIO Status

- Establish clear governance protocols before implementation.

❖ Commission an Independent Governance Review

- Within 12 months of implementation invite an external review - assess the effectiveness of the new arrangements and recommend further improvements.

❖ Clarify Roles and Responsibilities

- Define and formalise the respective relationships between the Dean and Chapter, Friends, and trading company. These formalised relationships should be documented.

❖ Establish a Delegation Scheme and Reporting Standards

- Introduce a formal scheme of delegation and reporting expectations to reinforce transparency, accountability and informed oversight of operational decisions.

Chapter

The Cathedral Chapter, as currently structured, faces several challenges in delivering the level of strategic leadership and oversight expected of an institution of this scale and significance. While members bring valuable skills, considerable dedication and commitment, the collective body does not yet function consistently as a fully effective governing body equipped to address the Cathedral's most pressing issues and urgent priorities.

The Chapter comprises the Dean and appointed Canons. Lay input is provided through committees, whose membership includes lay participants, contributing appropriate expertise. Several members expressed a desire to play a more active and meaningful role, noting that meetings can often become absorbed in operational matters at the expense of strategic priorities. Meetings were described as lengthy, occasionally lacking focus and not always structured to give sufficient attention to core issues.

The quality and timeliness of information provided to Chapter is inconsistent. Financial papers, while thorough in technical detail, lack clear analysis and commentary, making it harder for members to form well-informed judgements. Late circulation of papers reinforces a reactive rather than proactive culture. Extended introductions and procedural items were also noted as reducing time for substantive discussion.

Interpersonal and working relationships within Chapter would benefit from further strengthening. Decision-making processes are not always fully inclusive, leaving some members feeling removed from key discussions. This has contributed to a sense of imbalance and reluctance to engage fully in open debate.

The Chapter's response to ongoing financial pressures lacks the necessary urgency. Despite persistent deficits, there is limited evidence of decisive action to secure long-term sustainability. A tendency to defer difficult decisions has been observed, which risks compounding financial pressures over time.

Finally, the spiritual dimension of Chapter's work appears less visible than might be expected. Theological reflection in decision-making is limited, and shared prayer outside formal worship is infrequent. This gives the impression that Chapter's spiritual purpose is being overshadowed by institutional concern.

Key Recommendations for Chapter

❖ Restructure Chapter to Strengthen Governance

- Establish the CIO which will act as the smaller trustee body which will enable more frequent and effective meetings.

❖ Mandatory Governance Training

- Ensure all members complete training in charity governance, financial management, and strategic planning within six months to support confident and informed decision-making.
- ❖ **Clarify Terms of Reference and Reporting**
 - Set out clear responsibilities for all committees and ensure regular, structured timely reports to Chapter.
- ❖ **Introduce an Annual Board Effectiveness Review**
 - Conduct a yearly assessment of Chapter's performance, culture and processes and act upon the findings to support continuous improvement.
- ❖ **Agenda Setting**
 - Review the current agenda-setting processes of setting agendas and clarify the functional purposes of items marked "to note", "to recommend" and "to action".
- ❖ **Embed Theological Reflection**
 - Begin each meeting with prayer and a short reflection by a member of Chapter linked to agenda items, ensuring decision-making remains rooted in spiritual discernment.
- ❖ **Establish Annual Cycle of Business**
 - Develop a structured yearly plan to ensure statutory responsibilities, monitoring activities and strategic matters are addressed systematically throughout the year.
- ❖ **Co-opt External Expertise Where Needed**
 - Invite specialists in areas such as fundraising and commercial development, to contribute to committees or specific projects where additional skills would be of benefit.
- ❖ **Agree Confidentiality and Transparency Protocols**
 - Establish clear expectations regarding confidentiality and communications to balance openness with appropriate discretion in decision-making and governance processes.

Senior Leadership

The senior leadership team of the Cathedral - comprising the Dean, Sub-Dean, Canon Pastor, and Chief Operating Officer - faces challenges in functioning as a fully cohesive and effective unit. The visitation identified areas where strengthened communication, clearer collaboration, and greater

clarity around roles, would support a healthier working environment and help the Cathedral make the most of the opportunities before it.

Leadership capacity is stretched by competing responsibilities and external commitments, reducing the time available for joint planning and strategic focus. Greater clarity around decision-making and delegation would help reduce frustration and improve efficiency. While compliance improvements have been achieved, further attention is needed in areas such as income generation and financial planning.

Communication within the senior team is inconsistent. Scheduled meetings have not always taken place, and when they do, strategic discussion is minimal. The lack of regular shared prayer among clergy was also noted as a missed opportunity to model spiritual leadership, unity and collective purpose.

The Cathedral's financial situation requires urgent and coordinated leadership action. Developing a clear, shared sustainability strategy for beyond 2026 has yet to be developed, and this must be an urgent priority.

In addition, safeguarding must remain a core responsibility for all senior leaders and the Chapter, ensuring compliance and embedding best practice throughout Cathedral life. Safeguarding leadership should be visible, proactive, and fully integrated into governance and operational decision-making.

Key Recommendations for Senior Leadership

❖ Prioritise Cathedral Commitments

- Ensure that senior leaders can give appropriate time and attention to Cathedral leadership during this pivotal period.

❖ Engage External Leadership Support

- Engage a leadership coach to help strengthen communication and confidence in roles and responsibilities.

❖ Embed Regular Meetings and Prayer

- Establish a weekly senior team meeting with a clear structured agenda and renew a commitment to daily shared prayer among clergy as a foundation for unity and spiritual leadership.
- ❖ **Strengthen Roles Clarity and Delegated Authority**
 - Set out clear responsibilities for each senior role and ensure that decisions made under delegated authority are recognised and upheld.
- ❖ **Review the COO Role and Organisational Structure**
 - Consider whether the current structure best supports key priorities – particularly income generation and visitor experience, and organisational coordination – and adjust as needed.
 - Instigate an external review of the appropriateness and effectiveness of the current role and make representations to Chapter.
- ❖ **Develop a Long-Term Financial Sustainability Plan**
 - Produce a detailed strategy for financial sustainability beyond 2026, including income diversification and careful cost management. Such a strategy should be owned by Chapter.
- ❖ **Introduce Annual 360-Degree Feedback**
 - Implement feedback for senior leaders to support development and accountability.
- ❖ **Strengthen Safeguarding Leadership and Compliance**
 - Make **safeguarding a standing agenda** item for the senior team and Chapter; ensure all leaders undertake regular safeguarding training and embed routine safeguarding audits into governance practice.
- ❖ **Invest in Management Leadership Training**
 - Provide development opportunities focused on financial planning, change management, team development, and safeguarding responsibilities ensuring all senior leaders are equipped for the demands of their roles.

Finance

The Cathedral's financial position remains the most critical challenge highlighted during this visitation. Financial sustainability is fundamental to enable the Cathedral to fulfil its mission, maintain its historic fabric, and remain a vibrant centre of worship and outreach. Without robust financial planning and disciplined financial management, the Cathedral's ability to sustain this role is at risk.

A general theme can be captured in a quotation by a witness describing the relationship to financial management and oversight as “a cruising culture - drifting, plodding”.

The current financial trajectory is unsustainable. Unrestricted deficits have persisted for seven years, eroding reserves to a dangerously low level and leaving the Cathedral exposed to any unforeseen costs. Free reserves are very low and a cause for great concern. The planned withdrawal of episcopal and diocesan support by the end of 2026, amounting to £98,000 annually, compounds this risk.

While we acknowledge the recent appointment of a Project Development Manager, there is currently no evidence of success in securing external funding. This reinforces the need for a comprehensive fundraising strategy.

The Finance Manager brings considerable expertise and remains one of the Cathedral’s key strengths. We also wish to acknowledge the positive contribution of the Financial Assistant, whose reliable support plays an important role in the finance team. The Financial Manager’s recommendations regarding improved budgeting and structured financial planning must be implemented as a priority. A clear and consistent budgeting framework will support better governance, enable confident and informed decision-making, and strengthen day-to-day operations and financial reporting. It is essential that the professional financial advice of the appropriate senior officers is acted upon. We also commend the Chair of the Finance Committee for his robust and responsible guidance, which provides strong strategic leadership. It is essential that this leadership is fully recognised by the Cathedral and Dean and Chapter, ensuring that the financial guidance is effectively implemented.

Income generation will require renewed focus and a step change in approach. Visitor numbers remain below pre-pandemic levels, and per capita giving remains comparatively low. Grant applications have yet to yield results and opportunities for commercial development and broader fundraising have not been fully explored. Although expenditure control has recently improved, further efficiencies are likely to be achieved through a structured review.

Safeguarding restricted funds and improving financial controls must also be immediate priorities. Current cash handling processes present unacceptable risk, and relationships with key stakeholders -such as the Friends- would benefit from thoughtful rebuilding rooted in trust, collaboration and shared purpose. During the Visitation strong representations were made by the Friends concerning

the transfer of a legacy. A Serious Incident Report has subsequently been submitted to the Charity Commission.

Key Recommendations for Finance

❖ Establish Strong and Effective Financial Rigour

- Treat financial sustainability as integral to the Cathedral's overall health – operational, spiritual and long-term.

❖ Commission an Independent Financial Review

- Establish a clear financial baseline, identify cost savings, and explore new income opportunities.

❖ Develop a Five-Year Financial Strategy by April 2026

- Create a forward-looking plan with stress-tested scenarios, contingency plans, and clear measurable targets.

❖ Strengthen Financial Reporting and Decision-Making

- Ensure that monthly management accounts with variance analysis and rolling forecasts are routinely reviewed by Chapter and the Finance Committee.
- Make deliberate use of the Finance Manager's professional advice, recognising the value of his expertise and the importance of robust budgeting.

❖ Review the COO Role with a Focus on Income and Development

- Consider how the role might be refined-or restructured- to give greater priority to income generation, commercial development and visitor engagement, so that there is clear and active responsibility for driving fundraising and grant applications. Progress should be regularly reported to and monitored by the Dean and Chapter.

❖ Strengthen Procurement and Cost Control

- Introduce a requirement for competitive quotes for expenditure above £1,000 and review key contracts to ensure value and efficiency.

❖ Improve Cash -Handling and Financial Controls

- Put in place secure, professional cash-handling systems or outsource to a professional provider to reduce risk and strengthen confidence in financial controls.

❖ Renew the Relationship with the Friends Organisation

- Rebuild and strengthen the partnership through transparent communication, shared priorities and collaborative planning.
- ❖ **Launch Stewardship and Giving Campaign**
 - Encourage regular giving from the congregation and visitors (e.g. Gift Direct), supported by clear messaging and accessible contactless options.
- ❖ **Review Trading Company Arrangements**
 - Explore how the trading company can deliver maximum benefit to the Cathedral.
- ❖ **Protect Restricted and Designated Funds**
 - Implement a clear reserves policy ensuring that restricted funds are safeguarded and not used for operational expenditure.
- ❖ **Enhance Finance Committee Expertise**
 - Consider co-opting individuals with specialist knowledge in charity finance and fundraising to support strong and informed governance.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a core responsibility for the Cathedral and must be woven into every aspect of its governance, ministry, and daily life. It is central to creating a safe and welcoming environment for everyone, particularly children and vulnerable adults. While recent steps -such as updated policies and the inclusion of safeguarding as a standing item on Chapter and HR Committee agendas - represent meaningful progress, the visitation has highlighted several areas where practice and culture now need urgent strengthening.

An inquiry into a potential safeguarding failure is currently ongoing, and its findings will be annexed to this report for consideration. This reinforces the importance of safeguarding and the need for proactive, visible leadership and clear accountability.

Although policies and procedures are in place, there are still gaps in training compliance, clarity of roles, and practical arrangements. The absence of a dedicated Cathedral Safeguarding Officer, delays in appointing a choir chaperone, and uncertainties over safeguarding communications all point to the need for more robust systems and clearer responsibilities. Safeguarding must not be seen as a procedural requirement alone, but as an integral expression of the Cathedral's mission and its pastoral commitment to those it serves.

It should also be noted that all clergy DBS checks are managed by the Bishop's Office and are fully compliant; this therefore sits outside the scope of this report.

Key Recommendations for Safeguarding

❖ Commission an Independent Safeguarding Audit

- Engage an external safeguarding specialist to review current practice, highlight strengths and identify areas for improvement.

❖ Appoint a Dedicated Cathedral Safeguarding Officer

- Create a standalone role separate from the COO responsibilities, with clear visibility and accessibility to staff, volunteers, and visitors.

❖ Strengthen Training Compliance

- Ensure all clergy, staff, and volunteers complete the required safeguarding training within three months, with regular refreshers to maintain confidence and consistency. It is a requirement that all new staff complete at least Module A before commencing their duties.

❖ Provide Quarterly Safeguarding Reports to Chapter

- Include updates on concerns, training completion, and policy developments as a routine part of governance and oversight.

❖ Appoint a Choir Chaperone Immediately

- Put in place a designated chaperone and ensure robust safeguarding arrangements for all choir activities, including rehearsals, services and tours.

❖ Enhance Safeguarding Communication

- Display clear, age-appropriate safeguarding information throughout the Cathedral so that children, parents and visitors know how to seek help or raise concerns.

❖ Introduce Regular Safeguarding Supervision

- Provide structured supervision and support for everyone working with children and vulnerable adults to reinforce good practice and early intervention.

❖ Formalise Safeguarding Partnership with Ysgol Penrhyn Dewi

- Develop a written agreement that sets out respective responsibilities and ensures strong, coordinated practice.
- It is recommended that the School Chaplain is the link officer.

❖ **Undertake Safeguarding Scenario Practice**

- Run regular practical exercises and scenario-based discussions to build staff confidence and ensure procedures can be implemented effectively.

❖ **Implement a Whistleblowing Policy**

- Introduce a clear, trusted procedure for raising concerns to ensure transparency and accountability.

Worshipping Community

The worshipping life of the Cathedral demonstrates a commitment to its historic and liturgical traditions. At the same time, there are clear opportunities to strengthen vitality, engagement, and integration among those who gather to worship. The daily offices and Sunday services continue to be offered with dignity and care, yet concerns remain about the overall spiritual health and sustainability of the Cathedral's worshipping community.

The continuation of daily prayer is a particular strength with Morning and Evening Prayer offered throughout the year. However, attendance is often small, and clergy participation is inconsistent. The absence of regular corporate prayer among stipendiary clergy was noted as a missed opportunity to show spiritual leadership and to nurture a sense of unity.

Sunday worship reveals similar patterns. The 9:30am parish service, though faithfully led, remains a small and fragile congregation with limited success in attracting younger families. The Cathedral Eucharist at 11am benefits from the choir's contribution, yet attendance beyond visitors is inconsistent. Evensong at 4pm, is musically rich but was described by some as inconveniently timed. A number of those consulted felt that worship at times carries a certain heaviness rather than being uplifting, indicating a need for fresh renewed energy, creativity and imagination in shaping the worshipping experience.

Integration between different congregations is limited. Parish and Cathedral communities often function separately, and the Welsh-language service, while valued, remains isolated from the wider worshipping life. Visiting choirs offer important continuity but can also contribute to a sense of fragmentation.

Pastoral care for the existing congregation is minimal. Home communion reaches only a small number of people and visiting relies almost entirely on a few individuals. There is no shared or

consistent system of pastoral responsibility, leaving many members of the congregation without regular contact or support. The lack of systematic pastoral follow-up means the Cathedral has limited awareness of the needs and wellbeing of its congregation. This is a serious issue that needs to be addressed with immediate effect.

Opportunities for spiritual formation are also few. Beyond the formal services, there are limited pathways for people to grow in faith - such as Bible study, prayer groups, or seasonal courses. This constrains the Cathedral's ability to nurture discipleship and faith and deepen spiritual life.

Yet there are signs of encouragement. There are increasing numbers of school and choir members presenting for Confirmation, and the Cathedral continues to uphold strong liturgical and musical traditions. With renewed focus on shared prayer, pastoral care, and opportunities for formation, the Cathedral has the potential to flourish more fully as a house of prayer and a vibrant centre of spiritual life.

Key Recommendations for Worshiping Community

❖ Re-establish Daily Corporate Prayer

- Stipendiary clergy must commit gathering daily for shared prayer offering visible spiritual leadership and nurturing a deeper sense of unity within the ministry team.

❖ Enhance Welsh language ministry within the life of the Cathedral.

❖ Develop a Robust and Coordinated Pastoral Care System

- Introduce a clear, shared structure for pastoral responsibility, ensuring regular visiting, consistent home communion provision, and timely pastoral follow-up. This should be supported by a trained team of volunteers, with oversight from clergy, so that no member of the congregation is left without care or contact.

❖ Review the Sunday Service Pattern

- Consider adjustments to service times and styles to meet the needs of different groups, including exploring a more informal or family-friendly service that could build engagement among younger households.

❖ Provide Regular Opportunities for Spiritual Formation

- Offer a programme of seasonal courses, Bible studies, quiet days, and prayer groups to encourage growth in faith, deepen discipleship and support those exploring Christian life.

❖ **Strengthen Integration Across Congregations**

- Foster greater connection between parish, Cathedral, and Welsh-language congregation through joint services, shared ministry projects and regular social events.

❖ **Create a Clear Welcome and Integration Process for Newcomers**

- Develop intentional pathways for newcomers, including follow-up contact, and invitations into the wider life and ministry of the Cathedral.

❖ **Develop Links with Diocesan Spirituality and Training Resources**

- Draw on diocesan expertise and materials to enrich and support formation and renewal within the Cathedral Community.

❖ **Hold Regular Congregational Meetings**

- Create opportunities for listening, feedback, shared vision-building, and open communication, helping the worshipping community to grow in confidence and cohesion.

Fabric and Building

The Cathedral building remains one of its greatest treasures, yet it also presents the most complex and demanding responsibilities and challenge. Its ancient and historically significant fabric requires constant care and the scale of the maintenance needed is far beyond current resources. Years of deferred maintenance have resulted in a substantial backlog, with recent surveys highlighting several urgent structural issues -particularly in the tower- that now require timely attention to safeguard the building's integrity.

The Archdeacon of St Davids's prompt intervention following falling debris in the Quire is acknowledged. This rightly led to the temporary closure for safety. This underlines the pressures of managing the fabric and the limitations of a largely reactive approach.

A number of key gaps contribute to these challenges. There is no dedicated maintenance role, leaving vergers – already carrying significant responsibilities - to manage routine tasks. In addition, long-term strategic planning for preservation remains underdeveloped. The work of the previous Cathedral architect is gratefully acknowledged and for her support which has helped sustain the building through a demanding period. The appointment of the new Cathedral architect, working closely with the Cathedral archaeologist, brings a fresh and highly constructive approach, and there

is confidence that his clear methodology and proactive oversight will help bring coherence and momentum to future projects.

Early steps toward exploring a National Heritage Lottery Fund grant are encouraging, though progress has been slow.

Accessibility remains inadequate, limiting the experience of many worshippers and visitors. Consideration of energy efficiency and sustainability has also been minimal, despite rising costs. Commercial properties such as the Goat Street block are continuing to deteriorate with no clear or agreed plans for their future use or disposal.

Overall, the approach to the fabric would benefit from a clearer vision and coherent strategy. At present, the absence of detailed costings, an agreed capital framework and clear prioritisation means that decisions are often driven by immediate need, rather than planned long-term stewardship. Strengthening planning, alongside the renewed architectural leadership now in place, will be essential in ensuring the Cathedral's buildings can be preserved and cherished for generations to come.

Fabric and Building – Key Recommendations

❖ Immediate Health and Safety Issue

- Establish a formal Health and Safety protocol to ensure urgent risks are identified early, managed swiftly, and overseen with clear lines of accountability, ensuring rapid response and clear accountability.

❖ Strengthen Daily Oversight of the Fabric

- Appoint a Clerk of Works or Fabric Officer as a matter of priority to manage routine maintenance, support the new Cathedral architect's programme, and coordinate contractors effectively.
- Reduce reliance on vergers for technical tasks such as lighting and gutter clearance.

❖ Develop a Coherent Long-Term Strategic Plan

- Commission a comprehensive condition survey to provide a clear baseline and enable informed prioritisation of interventions.

- Create a 20-year fabric maintenance plan with detailed costings, phasing, and an agreed sequence of priorities.

❖ **Strengthen Funding and Project Management**

- Progress the National Lottery Heritage Fund application with appropriate urgency to maximise the chances of success.
- Establish a Building Development Committee, drawing on expertise in heritage, finance, and project delivery to support Chapter in overseeing major works.

❖ **Foster Strong Professional Collaboration and Communication**

- Maintain regular engagement between Chapter, the new Cathedral Architect and the Cathedral archaeologist to ensure best practice, compliance and continuity.
- Hold quarterly review meetings for Chapter to monitor progress, risks and emerging needs.

❖ **Improve Accessibility**

- Task the COO to commission a full accessibility audit with clear, costed recommendations.
- Implement basic improvements immediately – such as white lining on steps, clearer signage, or upgrading key facilities.
- Address critical issues such as wheelchair access and lift reliability as part of a medium-term plan.

❖ **Enhance Energy Efficiency and Sustainability**

- Undertake an environmental audit to identify practical energy-saving measures and potential grant funding.
- Prioritise upgrades that reduce operational costs and align with environmental commitments and diocesan aspirations.

❖ **Clarify a Strategy for Commercial Properties**

- Review the Goat Street block and other properties to assess for development potential, partnership options, or disposal where assets no longer support the mission or financial sustainability of the Cathedral.

❖ **Strengthen Safety and Risk Management**

- Ensure a timely and coordinated response to structural risks supported by clear faculty and DAC processes.

- Introduce regular fabric tours for Chapter members to deepen understanding, accountability and informed decision-making.

❖ **Build Heritage Partnerships**

- Explore collaboration with heritage bodies and local institutions to access funding, specialist expertise, and shared resources that could support long-term conservation of the Cathedral.

Library

The Cathedral Library is an extraordinary, undervalued and under-recognised asset within the Cathedral's mission. Since 2017, under the freelance leadership of the Library Development Officer it has been transformed from a largely overlooked storeroom into a functioning and welcoming scholarly space. Public access, rotating displays, and a growing programme of talks and lectures, including participation in Libraries Week, have significantly raised its profile and encouraged new volunteers. The theological framing of its contents as "secondary relics" has helped reclaim its spiritual importance as well as its cultural value.

It is no exaggeration to say that, without the vision and commitment of the Library Development Officer, this Cathedral Library- the only surviving example of its kind in Wales- might possibly have been lost. Her dedication has preserved and renewed a unique heritage resource for the Cathedral and wider community.

Despite these considerable achievements, the library continues to experience a lack of institutional support. It has no dedicated budget line within the Cathedral accounts, even though it administers its own fund. The Library Development Officer has no formal contract or job description, which creates avoidable risks and does not reflect the scale and significance of her contribution. Governance is limited: the library committee meets only twice a year and lacks the range of expertise needed for proper oversight, and there is no strategic plan to guide development or integrate the library more fully into Cathedral operations.

Several practical issues remain unresolved. Cataloguing is incomplete, there is no clear acquisitions policy, and insurance arrangements may not adequately cover the more valuable items. Space constraints continue to limit growth. The library's educational potential - particularly in theological learning, schools work, and faith development - is largely unrealised. Opportunities for income

generation, or partnerships with academic institutions are not yet being fully pursued and the library is not currently included in wider building or development planning.

Library – Key Recommendations

❖ Formal Recognition and Integration

- Introduce a dedicated budget line within the Cathedral accounts to reflect the library's significance and ensure transparent support.
- Integrate the library more fully into Cathedral governance and long-term strategic planning so that its role in mission, education and heritage is properly managed.

❖ Employment and Appropriate Support

- Provide a formal contract or service agreement for the Library Development Officer giving clarity, fairness and security in line with their responsibilities.
- Ensure appropriate remuneration and institutional backing to sustain the high service already being delivered.

❖ Strengthen Governance and Strategic Direction

- Expand the Library Committee to include external expertise in heritage, conservation and education, enabling more effective oversight.
- Develop a clear strategic plan that aligns the library's work with the wider mission of the Cathedral.

❖ Improve Collection Management and Care

- Establish a clear acquisitions policy to guide future growth of the collection.
- Implement professional cataloguing and appropriate digital systems to enhance accessibility and preservation.
- Commission a conservation assessment to identify priorities for care and restoration.
- Review insurance arrangements to ensure adequate cover for rare and valuable items.

❖ Address Space and Integration Needs

- Resolve ongoing storage pressures and ensure the library is included in future building plans.
- Integrate the library into visitor routes, tours and interpretative materials to highlight spiritual, educational and historical value.

❖ **Expand Education and Outreach**

- Develop programmes for schools, theological and clergy groups to realise the library's potential as a resource for faith development.
- Build partnerships with universities and heritage organisations to support research, conservation and public engagement.

❖ **Develop Sustainable Income Generation**

- Explore opportunities to raise funds from specialist exhibitions, rare book tours and curated experiences.
- Consider digital access that could broaden reach and create new revenue streams.
- Launch targeted fundraising campaigns, including engagement with national and international donors and supporters, to secure the library's future.

Music and Festival

The Music Department remains as one of the Cathedral's most significant assets, continuing to deliver choral worship of a high standard despite ongoing financial constraints and organisational pressures. Under the leadership of the Director of Music/ Organist and Master of the Choristers and the Assistant Director of Music, the department upholds a traditional choral foundation while navigating the need to adapt to present-day realities. The continued commitment to a full choral establishment, including sixteen girl choristers supported by Choral Scholars and Lay Clerks, is deeply valued. The voluntary Cathedral Singers further broaden the Cathedral's musical life, and the Cathedral Young Voices create progression routes for young singers.

The annual Festival continues to be a cherished element of the Cathedral's cultural calendar, drawing audiences from across the region and further afield, showcasing artistic excellence. However, its financial return remains disproportionately low in relation to the significant investment of time and resources. With anticipated profits of only £1,000 against costs of £83,000, and with visitor giving falling sharply during the Festival period, it is clear that a strategic review is needed to reassess its purpose and sustainability. While the reduction from nine days to six was intended to streamline the programme, this has yet to be accompanied by a clear articulation of purpose, financial rationale or a strengthened sponsorship.

In addition to these structural considerations, aspects of internal culture and communication require attention. Several Lay Clerks have expressed concerns about feeling undervalued or insufficiently informed, particularly in the absence of regular feedback or appraisal processes. In

a context already shaped by geographical isolation and limited professional development opportunities, these issues have the potential to affect morale and retention. Addressing these constructively will be vital in sustaining the department's reputation for excellence and ensuring a supportive working environment for all.

Music Department and Festival – Key Recommendations

❖ Department Culture and Communication

- Establish more consistent internal communication and introduce regular feedback/appraisal processes for all musical staff.
- Foster a culture of mutual respect and shared purpose ensuring all contributors feel recognised and supported.

❖ Safeguarding

- Prioritise the immediate appointment of a choir chaperone and ensure safeguarding policies are fully implemented across rehearsals, services and choir tours.
- Review current safeguarding procedures to ensure they are fully aligned with best practice and implemented consistently by all involved in the department.

❖ Repertoire and Artistic Growth

- Broaden and expand the repertoire to reduce repetition and sustain musical challenge and to support more diverse genres.
- Introduce structured voice training for choristers to enhance standards and progression.

❖ Recruitment and Education

- Recruitment to be aligned with the needs of the choir but within the financial constraints of the Cathedral.
- Address the need to encourage boy choristers.
- Strengthen partnerships with local schools to enhance chorister recruitment and promote musical learning.
- Explore opportunities for organ teaching to make full use of the Cathedral's exceptional instrument and to nurture and train organists for future generations.

❖ Outreach and Mission

- Reinstatement of parish outreach visits to renew connections across the diocese and identify new avenues for support.
- Position music intentionally as a means of evangelism and community engagement.

❖ **Professional Development**

- Provide clear training and development for Lay Clerks and Choral Scholars to support retention, morale, and artistic excellence.

❖ **Festival Strategy and Financial Sustainability**

- Undertake a thorough review of the Festival's strategic purpose and financial model as current projections are not sustainable.
- Explore structural changes, including potential redesign or reduction, if financial viability cannot be improved.
- Actively pursue new corporate sponsorship and diversify the donor base to lessen reliance on a small group of supporters.
- Address the decline in visitor giving during the Festival by aligning worship, visitor engagement, and fundraising strategies.

❖ **Integration Across Cathedral Departments**

- Enhance collaboration between the music department and other Cathedral teams through coordinated planning, shared priorities and clearer lines of communication.

Community Engagement

St Davids Cathedral stands at the heart of Britain's smallest city, yet its relationship with the local community feels distant and strained. While the Cathedral is admired as a historic and spiritual landmark, many residents perceive it as focused on tourists rather than locals. This disconnect has led to frustration, missed opportunities, and weakened trust. Community facilities such as Tŷ'r Pererin, despite its original vision, have not fulfilled their potential. It is important to recognise the incalculable debt owed to the Education and Pilgrimage Officer, whose vision, oversight, and contribution to the Cathedral as a whole—and particularly to Tŷ'r Pererin—have been extraordinary. Any success achieved so far is largely due to her commitment and dedication.

However, challenges remain: volunteer engagement is fragile, cultural programming often feels exclusive. Meanwhile, Welsh language and cultural integration remain minimal, and pastoral engagement with the wider community is limited.

Despite these challenges, there is significant potential for renewal. By prioritizing authentic relationships, cultural inclusion, and visible leadership, the Cathedral can re-establish itself as a true community asset—spiritually, culturally, and economically.

Key Priorities

❖ Develop a Community Engagement Strategy

- Shape a clear, consultative plan that listens to local voices and invites shared ownership.
- Ensure the strategy reflects both the Cathedral's mission and the needs of the wider community.

❖ Strengthen Leadership Presence

- Increase the visibility of the Dean and Chapter at civic events and local gatherings to rebuild confidence and connection.
- Place the Canon Pastor at the heart of relationship-building, helping to nurture trust, cultural understanding, and pastoral warmth across the city.

❖ Future of Ty'r Pererin

- Undertake a review to consider the sustainability of Ty'r Pererin.

❖ Revitalise Volunteer Engagement

- Appoint a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator to oversee recruitment training and ongoing support.
- Create a structured approach to volunteer development with regular encouragement and recognition.

❖ Develop Relationship with the Friends

- Commit to open communication and genuine partnership.
- Identify shared projects where collaboration can visibly benefit both the Cathedral and the wider community.

❖ Expand Cultural and Educational Outreach

- Integrate free or low-cost community events in the Festival programme.
- Build systematic links with all local schools, not only the church school.

- Make fuller use of the library for education, heritage learning and cultural development.

❖ **Celebrate Welsh Language and Culture**

- Increase Welsh-language services and weave cultural traditions more intentionally into Cathedral life. Strengthen relationships with local cultural organisations and eisteddfod committees.
- Utilise the Canon Pastor's Welsh language skills as a key asset for outreach and connection.
- Enhance the bilingual presence within the Cathedral.

❖ **Communicate Economic and Social Impact**

- Develop partnerships with local businesses to foster mutual benefit and community pride.
- Commission and share an economic impact study to help demonstrate the Cathedral's value to the region.

❖ **Broaden Pastoral and Worship Opportunities**

- Offer worship times that are accessible for a wider range of people.
- Explore new worship styles and fresh expressions to reach those who may not engage with traditional patterns.

Cathedral Operational Review

The Cathedral is strengthened by strong positive internal relationships. Warm appreciation is expressed to the Vergers' Department for their commitment and flexibility which has helped to sustain the life of the Cathedral during a demanding period. Their dedication exemplifies the resilience and professionalism that underpin the Cathedral's life and ministry. At the same time, several significant challenges need to be addressed if the Cathedral is to remain welcoming, well-manged and spiritually vibrant.

Volunteer and Staffing Pressures

A substantial shortage of volunteers is placing increasing strain on daily operations. Staff are often covering multiple roles, which is not sustainable. Recruitment processes have been limited and geographic challenges make it difficult to attract new volunteers.

The servers' team, for example, now consists of only four or five people - where ten are needed. The aging volunteer base and minimal advertising reinforce the need for a proactive, onward-looking recruitment plan, using social media and local networks more effectively.

Management and Communication Gaps

Supervision structures - particularly for welcomers - are unclear. Although the COO is the formal line manager, day-to-day oversight often falls to the Dean's Verger and his team. The absence of a house manager adds pressure to tour management and daily operations.

Communication between the deanery office and Cathedral floor staff is inconsistent and diary management is a recurring concern. Weekly staff meetings are often seen as unproductive, and performance reviews are irregular or not taking place.

These issues highlight the need for clearer lines of accountability, more reliable communication, and a more coordinated approach across teams.

Operational and Infrastructure Challenges

Persistent concerns around lighting, sound and accessibility continue to affect both worship and visitor experience. The refectory lift requires replacement, and sound systems need upgrading.

Accessibility also relates to geography: many tourists do not reach the Cathedral. Creative partnership solutions - such as shuttle links or collaborations with local transport providers - could improve access.

Standards and Leadership Structure

Some aspects of liturgy and preparation need renewed focus. These issues appear connected to overlapping responsibilities within the current leadership structure, and lack of coordinated leadership which can lead to uncertainty in decision-making.

Team Dynamics and Support

There is a sense of disconnect between office staff and Cathedral floor staff, which undermines

unity. Existing volunteers would benefit from more consistent support, recognition and encouragement to sustain morale and engagement. The recruitment efforts to date have limited impact, signalling the need for a new, more strategic approach.

Communications and Marketing

The Cathedral lacks a dedicated communications manager, resulting in underdeveloped social media and marketing activity. Daily engagement is essential for promoting events, welcoming visitors, and attracting volunteers.

Strategic Recommendations

To address these challenges and strengthen Cathedral life, the following actions are recommended:

❖ Volunteer Recruitment and Support

- Launch targeted campaigns through social media and local networks.
- Develop a structured volunteer support, training and recognition programme.

❖ Communications and Marketing

- Appoint a dedicated communications/marketing manager.
- Ensure regular, engaging daily activity across social media platforms.

❖ Operational Improvements

- Replace outdated accessibility equipment, including the lift.
- Prioritise upgrades to lighting and sound systems.
- Explore creative transport and access solutions for visitors.

❖ Management and Coordination

- Assign a dedicated diary manager for effective scheduling and communication.
- Clarify supervision structures for welcomers and other volunteer roles.
- Introduce regular performance and probationary period reviews.

❖ Lay and Clerical Staff Engagement and Integration

- Increase staff visibility on the Cathedral floor.

- Develop opportunities for joint activity between office and floor teams to build unity and understanding.

❖ **Financial Planning**

- Address financial challenges through coordinated fundraising, grant applications, and long-term planning.

Final Evaluation

The Cathedral stands at a significant moment – rich in heritage, blessed with strong music and liturgical foundations, and supported by dedicated people, yet facing pressing challenges. Shortfalls in leadership, governance, financial management and strategic planning requires urgent action. This situation cannot continue.

Key Issues

- **Financial Sustainability:** Depletion of reserves, ongoing deficits, and loss of diocesan support places the Cathedral at risk of financial unsustainability and could lead to insolvency within two years. A credible recovery plan has not yet been developed.
- **Leadership:** Working relationships among senior clergy have become strained, creating an environment that makes collaboration and effective decision-making difficult. Patterns of communication and behaviour need to be strengthened to support a healthy leadership culture.
- **Governance Weakness:** Although structures have been improved, Chapter still lacks clarity, accountability and strategic direction.
- **Safeguarding and Compliance:** Critical gaps remain and have to be actioned.
- **Opportunity:** Strong heritage, music tradition, visitor numbers, committed staff/volunteers, and school partnership offer potential for renewal.

Consolidated Recommendations

Immediate Actions (0–3 Months)

- **Finance:** Commission an independent financial review; produce and develop a credible 2026 plan; introduce monthly reporting; engage a fundraising development officer/professional fundraiser.
 - **Leadership:** Establish daily prayer for senior clergy; clarify roles and expectations; initiate a review of the COO role to ensure that it aligns with current needs and provides the right level of support and effectiveness.
 - **Safeguarding:** Strengthen the existing safeguarding function held by COO and appoint a designated safeguarding lead to support this function (especially for choir activity); appoint a choir chaperon; complete staff training; improve cash-handling processes.
 - **Fabric and Access:** Deliver accessibility improvements; appoint a Clerk of Works; progress National Lottery Heritage Fund application.
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Short-Term Reforms (3–6 Months)

- **Governance:** Complete Chapter restructuring; provide governance training; implement clear delegation frameworks; progress transition to CIO status.
 - **Income and Engagement:** Launch a stewardship campaign; rebuild the relationship with the Friends; adopt a more professional approach to grant applications.
 - **Pastoral and Community:** Establish a structured pastoral care system; review the pattern of Sunday services; strengthen newcomer integration processes.
 - **Volunteers:** Appoint a Volunteer coordinator; develop a community engagement strategy.
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Medium-Term Development (6–12 Months)

- **Strategic Planning:** Develop a 5-year plan with priorities, financial projections and measurable outcomes; commission an independent governance review.
 - **Staffing:** Restructure staffing where necessary - implement professional development pathway.
 - **Library:** Fully integrate into Cathedral structures; build educational partnerships; explore potential income streams.
 - **Buildings and Assets:** Launch major fundraising initiatives; formalise partnerships with heritage bodies; review commercial property assets and options.
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Long-Term Transformation (12–24 Months)

- **Financial Stability:** Reach a sustainable financial position; realign operations where necessary.
 - **Leadership Culture:** Foster a more collaborative leadership culture; invest in leadership development.
 - **Relevance and Mission:** Strengthen missional impact; deepen community relevance and embed the Cathedral's role as a spiritual, cultural and civil anchor; develop fresh expressions of worship.
 - **Strategic Partnerships:** Collaborate with diocesan structures, other cathedrals, and cultural/educational institutions.
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Conclusion to the Bishop's Cathedral Visitation – Year of Grace 2025

As we draw this Visitation to a close, I offer heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed to this significant year in the life of our Cathedral. Your names are recorded with gratitude at the end of the Visitation document, and each contribution has enriched this process immeasurably.

I extend particular appreciation to The Dean and the entire Cathedral staff for their cooperation and commitment throughout this journey. The Dean's insights have made a substantive and lasting contribution.

I also wish to acknowledge the Dean's wider role - not only within the Cathedral but also her service to the Province.

I express my deep pastoral concern for the clergy who serve within the Cathedral. The weight of structural and operational challenges can easily overshadow their true calling as ministers of Word and Sacrament. We must ensure that, even in times of complexity, clergy are enabled to live out their vocation with integrity and joy. This requires intentional care, spiritual renewal, and shared responsibility so that their ministry remains Christ-centred and life-giving.

Finally, where weaknesses in our structure have been identified, it is the responsibility of all of us - clergy, staff, Chapter, and congregation - to strengthen, rebuild, and enable a better and more Christ-centred focus. This is not the work of one person or one office, but a shared calling rooted in faith, hope, and love.

May this Year of Grace bear fruit in renewed faith, strengthened governance, and a deepened sense of our calling as a Cathedral community, rooted in Christ and serving His mission in the world.

In His Service,

The Right Reverend Dorrien Davies
Bishop of St Davids
30th day of December 2025