

## A Message from the Dean



The past year for the Friends of Ripon Cathedral seems to have been another active one with some fascinating talks and lectures. I congratulate the Chair and members of the Council. It is encouraging to know that the Cathedral has in the Friends a body of people who are concerned for its wellbeing and who take a keen interest in both its history and development. I was delighted to join some of you during your seventy-sixth year for afternoon tea at the Ripon Spa Hotel. The festive entertainment was particularly enjoyable.

In my message last year, I mentioned how the Cathedral had benefited from the first tranche of £20million in the government's First World War Centenary Cathedral Repairs Fund. Three grants from that had provided us with almost £400,000 to complete some repairs to high-level stonework and windows. Thankfully, we were successful in attracting a gift from the second tranche of £20million; this is for even higher-level stonework repairs. Once again, this involves replacing gargoyles, giving us a golden opportunity to engage with schools across the region by launching a competition for designs. We now have the awesome task of processing and judging the hundreds of entries.

The ongoing maintenance of a mediaeval Cathedral presents sustained challenges. The timely support of a government certainly helps, as does that of individuals and organisations like the Friends. Chapter, however, also needs to access significant funds for the regular maintenance of its estate and the developing mission of the Cathedral. Without this the upkeep of the Church building would not be sustainable. Each year, therefore, the Chapter and PCC encourage regular congregation members to review the level of their financial support through weekly and monthly planned giving. Chapter is also doing more to inform people of the lasting benefit of leaving legacies to the Chapter's own endowments for fabric maintenance. Thoughtful generosity in this generation will provide ongoing support for centuries to come.

I remain convinced that Ripon Cathedral needs to be developed and enhanced if it is to fulfil the demands made on a twenty-first century cathedral. The Chapter's vision and strategy, *Growing God's Kingdom*, identifies key priorities. These have prompted the scoping of a major development project called *Ripon Cathedral Renewed*. This is an ambitious plan to open parts of the Cathedral that are closed to the public, make other areas more accessible, and provide new facilities, including: toilets, restaurant, new shop, song school, community space and storage. An application has been made to the Heritage Lottery Fund

(HLF). It is expected that the chances of this succeeding are relatively low, but they are far from negligible. And we are convinced that the project is of such regional, even national, significance that it deserves support.

We pray for success, then, with our HLF bid. But if we are not successful first time, and no cathedral has been, we will explore other routes to the same essential destination. We would like to have made sufficient progress by 2022 for this development, encouraged by the bold spirit and faithful determination shown by St. Wilfrid in 672, to form the basis of the Cathedral's celebration of 1350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the building of the crypt.

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I am grateful to the Friends of Ripon Cathedral for your ongoing support and I wish you well for the coming year.

The Very Revd John Dobson

The Dean of Ripon and President of the Friends

11th April, 2017

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