



Common Ground in Sacred Sacred Space Project Update – July 2018

Design Development

We're very pleased that at a meeting with the Heritage Lottery Fund in June, our concept design plans for interior and exterior spaces were approved for detailed design development. Over the next few months, the Design Team will be preparing drawings for a planning application and for approval by the Cathedrals' Fabric Commission.

Cathedral staff have discussed options for the design of new liturgical furniture, loose seating and interpretation units, which will tell the story of the people connected with the splendid collection of ledger stones, monuments and stained glass windows. The designers have recently experimented with audio visual projections in the nave to see what effect can be created without disturbing the fabric of the building or daily liturgy.

We also have plans to interpret significant features in the churchyards whilst turning this area into a pleasant space for relaxation and events. The Cathedral Archaeologist has undertaken trial excavations in the churchyards and car park to ascertain any ancient burials which might be disturbed by re-landscaping works. Needless to say, large quantities of bone were discovered along with an intact skeleton, which was left in place.

Gateway to Heritage

The Heritage Lottery Fund panel was impressed with our intention to position the Cathedral as a gateway to the city's heritage, working with the Castle and other heritage partners. Since then, we've led discussions with a wider group of heritage venues and the Bigg Market to see how we can collaborate in cross promotion, volunteering and city-wide events, such as Heritage Open Days. One idea is to test a pop-up tourist hub at Central Station to drive visitors towards Old Newcastle venues for particular events days. Recent consultation with 300 shoppers/visitors in Newcastle city centre has indicated that there is significant public interest in the Cathedral telling the story of the city's history, in opening up tower tours and developing exhibitions and engagement programmes. Our Activity Planner is examining how the Cathedral can support informal and formal learning programmes for local schools, colleges and community groups, whilst the community history volunteers are busy researching ledger stones stories previously untold.

Sustainability

We have been in conversation with Durham Cathedral about suitable retail options for the nave, and with catering providers regarding opportunities for café/mobile coffee cart/corporate dining and other large events. The Business Plan consultant has proposed a number of low risk, slow gain income streams to support the Cathedral's future sustainability. All events will need to be supported by a strong marketing strategy and the Cathedral's Head of Marketing is devising a phased communications plan to develop the Cathedral's visitor base and encourage new audiences.



Newcastle
Cathedral

Fundraising

To date, the Cathedral Trust has raised £968,000 towards the capital works, activity programme and specialist elements. We are mindful that the construction market is volatile and so fundraising from trusts, foundations, businesses and individuals will continue into next year. Thank you to all who volunteer time on behalf of *Common Ground in Sacred Space*.

Lindy Gilliland
CGISS Project Manager
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