

Project Update 12– March 2015

Summary

This project has had so many issues and changes it has been difficult to find a point where we can pin it down and have any confidence about exactly what work will be done and by when! The discovery of the Norman doorway, under the Kent Steps, really did throw the cat amongst the pigeons and the subsequent investigation work has been both costly and time consuming. However, we are relieved to report that HLF have, exceptionally, granted additional funding to enable us to complete the project, albeit without a lift in the originally anticipated location.

Disabled access

The biggest impact has been on the disabled access and this will now be achieved by:

- Nave to Quire: A new stair lift up the re-instated Kent steps
- Nave to Cloister: Level access will still be created into the cloister
- Nave to Crypt: Exiting from the South door, along the cloister path, into the re-modeled vestries and down a smaller lift into the Crypt. As this involves going outside, a modern canopy arrangement will be installed to protect people from the weather.

In the long term the Cathedral will still continue to explore improved options for access but as indicated above, this will provide some access and enable us to finish this project.

Timetable

Due to all the delays to the project the completion date is looking more like October 2015.

Building Works

Despite the delays, it has been possible to continue with parts of the work. The floor in the Crypt and Ithamar chapel has, mostly, been taken down to the required level and the archaeological investigations have kept a team of people enthusiastically busy. The complexity of some of the problems faced made it difficult to have volunteers involved with the archaeological work but a number of tours were led by Graham Keevill (Cathedral Archeologist), to show the finds from the Roman structure to the Norman footings, and of course, the Norman doorway. 124 people participated in these tours. A video on the findings in the crypt can be accessed via this link: <https://youtu.be/X9JX8nUAFWs>

The floor has begun to go back down in the Ithamar chapel so we are finally beginning to see some construction as opposed to destruction.

The library roof has also been stripped of its tiles and archaeological recording of the roof has been completed. Rebuilding of the Cloister wall on the west side has also finished.



Other funding: Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust, Friends of Rochester Cathedral, Garfield Weston, Rochester Bridge Trust, Wolfson Foundation, Headley Trust, ChurchCare and Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Exhibition Fit out

The design work for this has been progressing and a sample exhibition case is being manufactured so we can test the ability to control the environmental conditions. An audio-visual software consultant has been appointed to develop both the introductory audio-visual and the software for the touch screen units.

Activity Plan

Work is still progressing despite the timetable delays. A successful family fun day was run on 21st February with 271 adults and 200 children attending. With regards to the exhibition planning, Michelle Lees, our Community Engagement & Interpretation Officer, is progressing with the object list and items for the timeline.

Whilst we said good bye to Armand De Filippo (Library Development Officer) in December, the rest of the team are picking up on the activities that Armand was responsible for.

Rochester Cathedral will be hosting the Faversham's copy of the Magna Carta from 10th October – 13th December during its 800th Anniversary year. This will be the only location where the Textus Roffensis and the Magna Carta will be on display together. As we cannot be 100% certain that the Crypt will be finished, this will be hosted in the Lady Chapel.

Project Management

Had the project run to time the building work would have been finished by now but as that is not the case, Gilly Wilford is now picking up the day to day project management because it is important to have someone available on-site to represent the Cathedral and make decisions as needed.

Edwina Bell will remain involved but more at a distance providing support covering liaison with HLF and other grant awarding organisations, managing the budget and working with Gilly on the ongoing sustainability. This will provide continuity for the project.

Gilly Wilford and Edwina Bell
March 2015



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