

**Project Update (2)
23rd September 2013**

Enabling works

This work is due to complete this month and includes improvements to the door of the disabled toilet, works to the chair store to improve storage, works to sort out various drainage issues around the Cathedral and works to enable the creation of a temporary contractors compound. Once the work on the chair store is complete, items in the temporary storage unit will be returned where appropriate. The temporary storage unit is likely to be moved before being used to store other rarely used items during the capital build. Due to the delay in granting local planning permission there is still discussion about the arrangements for the main contractors compound and it is possible that we may now have to make use of a reduced area in the car park.

During the enabling works we have found, apart from broken drains and water trying to flow uphill, some bones. This is not surprising given the area the work was in may have been the monks cemetery. It is worth noting that there are extensive guidelines on the rules around the discovery of human remains which include the rules on reporting finds as well as the appropriate respectful treatment of them and these guidelines are followed by the Cathedral under the direction of the archaeologist and in consultation with the Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England and the Coronor's office. Every effort is made not to disturb any remains but that is not always possible and bones that have to be disturbed are buried nearby. Sadly the bones found do not appear to be St Ithamar or William of Perth....

Wall painting conservation

The work in the Crypt on the wall (ceiling!) paintings started on 2nd September and will continue through into December. The Crypt will remain unavailable except for very specific pre-agreed activities. There will be "Behind the Scenes" tours open to the congregation and visitors on Thursday 3rd October at 3pm and again on 16th October. It will be important to book a place, please ring Michelle Lees on 810064 or email her on michelle.lees@rochestercathedral.org or sign up on the sheet at the Welcome Desk. There will also be a tour specifically for the Cathedral Guides in order to help them interpret the wall paintings to visitors and if you are a Guide you will receive an invitation.

High Altar Storage

A new bespoke storage system is being built for behind the High Altar to enable better storage of vestments and textiles as well as other material. This will be manufactured off-site but is expected to be installed before December.

Main contract

Due to the additional work required for local planning and some staffing challenges for our architects there has been a delay in going out to tender for the main contract. However, after discussion, we realise it is going to make life a great deal simpler over the Christmas period if the main contractor doesn't start until January. Whilst this will delay the completion date, until we have appointed a main contractor, the timetable is still only our best estimate so beyond saying the capital works should be complete by September/October next year we cannot be more specific.



Other funding: Colyer-Fergusson Charitable Trust, Friends of Rochester Cathedral, Garfield Weston, Rochester Bridge Trust, Wolfson Foundation, Henry Smith Charitable Trust, Headley Trust, Esme Fairbairn Foundation.

Hidden Treasures: *Fresh Expressions*

Clearing the Crypt and Library

Thanks to the amazing herculean efforts of the library volunteers and the events team the contents of the library have been safely moved to the Kent History and Library Centre in Maidstone for safe keeping. The remaining items in Crypt, Library and vestries will be removed over the next month or so. A number of people have asked what will happen to the existing library shelving and there are several ideas including using it to make crosses for sale or making a sculpture as well as the more mundane option of selling it. All these options are being considered and indeed, if anyone has any other ideas feel free to let us know before Christmas!

Staffing

Michelle Lees started as Community Engagement and Interpretation Officer on 19th August. Michelle comes to the Cathedral with a wealth of interpretation and exhibition experience having worked for National Media Museum, Hull Museums and Harrogate Museums. She has previously worked with diverse communities in Bradford and Hull to deliver community led exhibition programmes and other activities. Michelle will be working with Medway communities, volunteers and other partners to create a locally relevant exhibition space in the crypt. If you've got any questions about community involvement or the exhibition spaces, please ask Michelle while she's passing or call 810064 or email michelle.lees@rochestercathedral.org.

Parking

Unfortunately, parking for volunteers remains suspended but it is worth saying how grateful Chapter is that they are taking this "on the chin" even though it is undoubtedly inconvenient. If we do have to use the car park for the contractors compound then alternative arrangements will be made for the diocesan staff affected (the diocese leases a number of spaces from the Cathedral).

Project tours – find out more

One of the best ways to find out more about the project is to walk around it and so I will be doing the following tours to which staff, volunteers and members of the congregation are all invited. Just turn up at the welcome desk at the appointed time and if at least one person apart from me turns up then we will walk around the project. **2nd and 7th October, 6th and 27th November. All tours start at 3pm.**

Keep in touch

These updates will also be available on the website. If you do have concerns about anything, please do let me know, I am more than happy to answer questions (assuming I can) and explain what is happening and why.

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