

Diocese of Truro



Determinations

of Philip, Bishop of Truro,
following a Visitation of Truro Cathedral



Introduction:

‘Finally beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things... and the God of peace will be with you’. Philippians 4.8-9

I am immensely grateful to Bishop Joanne Woolway Grenfell, Lucinda Herklots, Dave Pate, Patti Russell and Peter Spindler for the skill, wisdom and dedication with which they have discharged their responsibilities with respect to this Visitation. I am also extremely grateful to the Chapter and staff of Truro Cathedral for the support they have offered to the Visitation Team in challenging circumstances, and to all the participants in the Visitation for their readiness to speak with team members with honesty and courage.

I had already commissioned a Review of the Cathedral, which began in January 2022 and reported in May 2022. This Review was undertaken by four Reviewers. In the light of its findings, I decided that a Visitation was necessary as the only sure way open to me to ensure that the Review’s findings would be implemented.

Section 6(5) of the Cathedrals Measure 1999 allows a Visitation of a Church of England Cathedral to be carried out and provides the legal framework within which a Bishop may instigate such a Visitation prior to the provisions of the Cathedrals Measure 2021 coming into force. The Church Commissioners have also provided a document, Guidance on the Visitation of Cathedrals, which sets out:

- a. the role and jurisdiction of the bishop as the cathedral Visitor;
- b. when and how the Visitation of a cathedral may be held, and;
- c. how the Visitor’s determinations or directions may be enforced.

My decision was that this should be a “special” rather than a “general” Visitation: i.e., one which is held when the Bishop decides it is necessary to investigate one or more specific matters or issues of concern, rather than inquiring into the Cathedral’s life more generally. These specific matters or issues of concern were set out by me in my Visitation Citation and Articles.

I appointed five Commissaries to undertake this Visitation. Four of the five had formed the original Review team. A fifth member was appointed to bring external scrutiny to the Review’s findings and also to bring additional expertise in the area of cathedral governance and finance.

The Visitation Commissaries used my Articles as the basis for their enquiries and began work in July 2022, concluding in December 2022. They have now delivered their Report to me: a document which will remain confidential to me, but upon which the Determinations below are based.

The Visitation examined the life and culture of Truro Cathedral in more depth than the Review. More people were interviewed, and substantially more submissions were received.

All comments were read by all team members, and all perspectives were taken seriously. The team was mindful of the need to take a balanced view which reflects the many strongly positive aspects of Truro Cathedral, whilst also painting a picture of what needs improvement. The team’s aim was not to assess the popularity of particular clergy or staff, but to look at systems, processes, culture, and practice across the Cathedral.

The team was mindful of the earlier Review, and its report with 15 recommendations and two interim recommendations. When interviews took place as part of the Visitation, participants were usually interviewed by Commissaries by whom they had not previously been interviewed for the Review. The new, fifth member of the team was invited at every point to test out the earlier Review findings, paying particular attention to matters of governance and finance.

Although there are some areas which were examined much more closely in the Visitation, the team's findings are not substantially different from those of the Review. There are no findings or recommendations from the Review that they chose not to uphold. Some further detail and recommendations was added in response to the Visitation's 23 Articles of Enquiry and these points are reflected in these Determinations.

The team identified some improvements in practice taking place in the time period between the conclusion of the Review and the conclusion of the Visitation. In particular, since the arrival of the interim Dean in October 2022 they saw a step change, with swift and positive developments relating to vision setting; expectations around culture and behaviour, and practice; improvements in finance, health and safety, and safeguarding. They were unable, because they are outside of their remit, to note most of these changes. They do, however, express their full confidence in the interim Dean's leadership and their appreciation of his responsiveness and competence in dealing with any matters that were raised both in relation to the earlier Review findings and to the work of Visitation. I wholly concur with that judgement.

In the light of the findings of the Visitation I now make the Determinations below, and do so with the fervent prayer that Truro Cathedral might enter into a new season of fruitfulness in the mission and ministry of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as a place which is both sacred space and common ground for all the people of Cornwall and beyond.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Philip Trow". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

December 2022

Determinations:

These Determinations begin with a general summary of the Visitation's findings in a specific area, followed by Determinations which are both general and specific in scope in relation to that area.

The Visitation team found serious concerns in regards of vision, mission, engagement, discordant leadership, conflictual working relationships, underperformance and an unhealthy culture. Although they saw some evidence of warm and productive working relationships, some key relationships and working practices were made less effective by the prevailing culture and the lack of alignment of roles and/or post holders to the mission and values of the cathedral. The responsibility for this lies with the 'leadership' function held by the Chapter and senior leaders. The areas identified for improvement are crucial and central to creating a culture of change, clarity, effectiveness, collaboration and efficiency in the life, witness, service and outreach of the Cathedral. This has to change at pace.

I direct that in relation to the leadership and management culture of the Cathedral and the extent to which this affects cathedral operations including safeguarding:

1. Chapter must ensure that challenges identified in leadership, collaboration, and interpersonal relationships are addressed, in order to develop a healthy, inclusive, collegial, and safe culture. This should include:

- restoring the shared foundations of community life within the cathedral building, with clergy fully present and participating together in prayer, worship, teaching, hospitality, and other activities;
- clarifying the roles and expectations of all senior roles within the Cathedral, engaging in courageous and challenging conversations with post holders about their skills, behaviours, and capabilities in relation to both individual roles and team working, and using performance management tools where necessary to address any matters of competency;
- committing to an ongoing process of mediated conflict resolution between members of the senior leadership team;
- auditing the skills, capacity, and diversity of Chapter members and undertaking further recruitment and training to support the Cathedral's needs as it prepares to adopt the Cathedrals Measure 2021.¹

2. In consultation and engagement with all Cathedral stakeholders and the wider Truro community, Chapter must refresh the Cathedral's vision and values and create a new strategic plan. Thereafter, the Cathedral must ensure that all its operational plans are linked to its strategy and that Chapter meets regularly to review progress.

3. Chapter must ensure that a regular cycle of strategic review is developed, to enable it to continue to discern its calling in a fast-changing world, being open to challenge, learning, and continuous improvement.

¹ See also the next section on governance: structures and the efficacy of the Executive and Chapter for further determinations regarding the Cathedral's development of its governance structure.

4. Chapter must give priority to ensuring the provision of discipleship development for cathedral congregation members of all ages. This should include better provision (beyond the Cathedral's existing work with choristers) for children and young people in worship and education, for Christian learning generally, and for serving the community of Truro which lies beyond the Cathedral's walls.

5. Chapter must ensure that HR and data privacy practices are reviewed and developed, taking professional advice where needed, to include:

- consistent and aligned staff/volunteer/clergy handbooks, as well as policies applicable to Chapter;
- an appraisal system for lay staff aligned with the Cathedral's vision and values;
- proper use of Ministerial Development Review (MDR) for clergy, including the new process prescribed for the review of residentiary canons following the implementation of the Cathedrals Measure;
- embedding HR and data privacy policies by ensuring all stakeholders review those applicable to them, and know how to access them, and by regular and mandatory training in respect of key policies;
- and adequate and up to date systems of HR record keeping which are joined up with safeguarding records.

Chapter should bear in mind when developing these practices the demands of the Cathedrals Measure 2021.

Amongst the concerns identified by the Commissioners was a lack of clarity, most especially regarding roles, responsibilities, authority and accountability. They also noted a lack of debate, challenge and scrutiny around decision-making. The lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities and a formal accountability structure for both Chapter and the Executive Committee was identified as a key area of concern and one for swift change. A lack of terms of reference for committees (apart from the safeguarding committee) and schemes of delegation further works against good governance, robust challenge and collective accountability. There appeared to be very little separation of the Cathedral's governance and executive functions and little proper attention had been paid to conflicts of interest. Resolving the effectiveness of governance structures and the efficacy of Executive and Chapter is a priority.

I direct that in relation to cathedral governance structures and the efficacy of the Executive and Chapter:

6. Chapter must ensure that the Cathedral invests in developing a people strategy to ensure that those in key positions are equipped to do their job effectively. This should include:

- a training needs analysis to identify gaps in provision;
- a revised and enhanced induction programme for all staff and clergy;
- trustee training;

- senior leadership training.

7. Chapter must:

- adopt the Cathedral Governance Code or an appropriate variation of it;
- adopt and follow a suitable code of conduct that reflects the Cathedral's values, and set out expected standards of ethics, probity, and behaviour;
- implement a regularly reviewed conflicts of interest policy, with appropriate training, to include the maintenance of a register of interests, and appropriate declarations of interest, including an annual declaration, to ensure that Chapter and committee members maintain their independence;
- finalise and implement the draft Financial Regulations, including reporting arrangements, to ensure oversight of delegated matters, whilst ensuring that adherence to the Regulations is kept under regular review;
- implement further delegation arrangements and terms of reference for all committees based on the requirements of the Cathedrals' Measure with sufficient detail and clear boundaries so that delegations are clearly understood and carried out (systems should also be put in place to monitor and oversee how delegations are exercised);
- carry out a courageous evaluation of Chapter, to include an analysis of its power dynamics and the Dean's role in Chapter. Following on from this work, measures should be put in place to create a culture where views and differences can be aired and debated constructively in the interests of the Cathedral.

Considering the importance of the life and witness of the cathedral it is a matter of serious concern that decision-making processes have been found to be poor. They have often been hampered by a lack of information, proper debate, decisions being delayed and conflictual working relationships. This is a situation that must change swiftly.

I direct that in relation to cathedral decision making processes and, in particular, the process by which Chapter manages critical issues:

8. Chapter must improve its structures and efficacy by:

- keeping up to date with relevant developments in the law and regulatory guidance (both from the Church Commissioners and the Charity Commission);
- developing and implementing an effective recruitment process for Chapter members to further develop its base of skills and expertise;
- developing and implementing a sufficiently resourced induction programme for Chapter and Executive Committee members;
- carrying out a governance review in line with the guidance provided by the Church Commissioners and establishing a robust and adequate committee structure to assist Chapter in scrutinising certain areas of the operation in more detail.

Safeguarding has been identified as an area of rapid, recent and significant improvements since the spring of 2022. I am pleased to note this. I commend staff for their efforts in enhancing the safeguarding framework. A number of recent concerns have been resolved quickly and appropriately, for example; the reporting mechanisms available on the Cathedral website.

I direct that in relation to safeguarding:

9. Chapter must ensure that safeguarding experience and training are criteria for the appointment of a new Director of Music and that a detailed handover is provided by the outgoing Director. The new post holder will need to be effectively supported and performance monitored and will need to work closely with the safeguarding team to ensure all necessary arrangements remain robust.

10. Chapter must continue to oversee the embedding of a culture of safeguarding in all aspects of cathedral life by ensuring that:

- risks are properly identified, assessed, documented, and mitigated;
- the cathedral safeguarding action plan takes account all of all past review findings and incorporates learning from other national reviews to remain current;
- the Chapter lead is held to account through key performance measures such as compliance with training, vetting and case management;
- matters relating to role descriptions and DBS requirements for adult choir members are reviewed and resolved.

11. The Chapter lead for safeguarding must review the capacity and capability of the safeguarding team and arrangements with the Diocese, to ensure that the team is properly resourced and empowered to deliver a robust response to any emerging issues. It should clarify the relationship with the Diocese to ensure that boundaries are clear, and vulnerabilities minimized. This should be carried out with external specialist support.

The cathedral must be a safe place for anyone who attends, visits or works there. Health and Safety was not a key focus of the earlier Review although it was considered by the Review team in the context of Chapter's management of risk. The Visitation team revisited the initial findings of the Review. The overall findings are of concern and form these determinations, particularly a poor response to previous external reviews. I note and honour that swift and significant progress has been made in regards of safeguarding risk: whilst there are matters outstanding that need to be achieved overall, there is good progress.

I direct that in relation to the Cathedral's management of risk, and in particular, its approach to health and safety:

12. Chapter must create a health and safety committee to include the Dean as Chapter lead, the COO, a representative of the vergers, the Operations Manager, and a person with relevant health and safety and buildings experience. The health and safety committee

must report back to Chapter and health and safety must be a standing item on **every** Chapter agenda.

13. Chapter should propose to the trustees of Truro Cathedral School Ltd that an external audit of Truro Cathedral School Ltd's governance and financial arrangements takes place, to ensure that funds have been maintained and spent in accordance with the charity's objects and the requirements of the Charity Commission, taking advice in respect of serious incident reporting.

14. Chapter must ensure that all outstanding matters relating to policies, practices, recording, and risk assessments in the 2019 health and safety audit are implemented.

15. Chapter must ensure that risk assessments are in place for the diverse activities of the Cathedral including worship.

16. Chapter must ensure that the training of vergers and management staff responsible for health and safety is prioritized, brought up to date, and appropriately recorded.

17. Chapter must ensure that the Cathedral develops and keeps a routine cleaning and maintenance schedule to ensure that day to day maintenance and checks are carried out and acted upon, for example in relation to regular inspections of the cathedral steps.

18. Chapter must ensure that the Cathedral addresses the remaining matters outstanding from the SCIE and PCR2 reports and scrutinizes the outcomes, putting in place a clear strategy with timescales for completion.

19. Chapter must develop a clear policy on risk and ensure that the responsible officer updates the cathedral risk register, to include a section addressing the mitigation of each identified risk.

20. Chapter should consider forming a Property and Buildings committee to set and monitor long-term strategy in relation to the management of cathedral buildings, with reference to the 2019 Quinquennial report; it should also ensure oversight of the upkeep and ongoing maintenance of all cathedral buildings (see also the recommendations in relation to Articles 6-13 re committee structures).

21. Chapter should re-tender for the provision of auditing services to the Cathedral, having due regard to relevant Charity Commission guidance in respect of conflicts of interest.

22. Chapter must ensure that there are regular recorded checks for fire safety equipment and evacuation drills.

I will not repeat the concerns about decision making expressed above. However, it is vital that the cathedral operates within a timely, open and transparent framework at all times, that decisions are evidenced based and that diversity of thought and opinion is welcomed not ignored, shunned or feared. It is also important that any external advice is considered and impacts on decision making. Getting these processes right, as has certainly not always been the case heretofore, is key to the flourishing of the ministry and mission of the cathedral.

The Visitation team specifically identified significant lack of thought or preparation towards the new Cathedrals' Measure and the vital and substantial change this entails. By

the Spring of 2022, many of the expected procedures and practices that should have been in place or under development were not. There is much work now to be completed.

I direct therefore that in relation to cathedral decision making processes and, in particular, the process by which Chapter manages critical issues:

23. Chapter must introduce effective decision-making processes by adhering to the Cathedral Governance Code and Charity Commission guidance in relation to decision-making, delegation and control. In doing so, the senior leadership must seek and have due regard to external professional advice, especially in the context of HR and safeguarding.

24. Chapter must enhance decision making processes by being more open and transparent and improve diversity of thought by introducing more diversity of recruitment, external scrutiny, and consultation in cathedral life. Scrutiny from the Church Commissioners should be sought in relation to historic cathedral property sales.

25. The implementation of all the above is to be independently reviewed one year after the ending of the Visitation with any further actions necessary to be reported to the Bishop of Truro. Implementation of those actions will be required under the terms of the Visitation.

Conclusion:

In the introduction to my Determinations, I shared my ‘fervent prayer... that Truro Cathedral might enter into a new season of fruitfulness in the mission and ministry of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as a place which is both sacred space and common ground for all the people of Cornwall and beyond.’ That is also my expectation. The ministry and mission of our great cathedral is vital to the life and witness of the whole of the Diocese of Truro. There is much work to be done. This work will require many things not least prayer, teamwork, commitment, tenacity, change of working practices, protocols and policies, far greater understanding of accountability and a renewed sense of the place of the cathedral in the Kingdom of God.

Nonetheless the Cathedral is rich in many things and with refreshed vision, purpose and direction I am convinced, that, the Lord being our helper, it will indeed point with renewed and joyful conviction to the Lord who loves us.

‘Speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.’ Ephesians 4:15,16