

Bath Abbey



Annual Review

Celebrating the completion of The Footprint Project

2023 - 2024

GAIA by Luke Jerram, during the Footprint Open Evening and Treasuring Creation Festival



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“ Living and Telling the Good News of Jesus ”

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The Purpose of Bath Abbey

To pursue our Vision through:

THANKSGIVING : Worshipping and praying

TELLING : Proclaiming the Gospel

TEACHING : Growing as followers of Jesus

TENDING : Caring as a church family

TRANSFORMING : Pursuing justice & peace in society

TREASURING : Sustaining and renewing creation





Welcome From the Rector

Welcome to our review of 2023-4 at Bath Abbey. It is a great pleasure to introduce this brief survey with so much to note and celebrate in our life together this last year, described by the team of splendid colleagues with whom I am honoured to serve.

I happen to be writing this in the week after Easter, fresh from a great outpouring of joy and thanksgiving shared with 1400 fellow worshippers, who joined us live on Easter Day alone.

A further, similar number also visited the Abbey every day in the Easter season, folk of all ages and backgrounds – including many children following a fun Easter trail around the building with their families, or being guided as a school party through their own meaningful “Easter Experience”.

What a joy it is, to “Live and Tell the Good News of Jesus” in this special place!

Sometimes, throughout the year, the Abbey serves that fundamental purpose in public and spectacular fashion. As a recent example, I think of our choristers this Holy Week, and their simply stunning performance of Bach’s St. Matthew Passion.

At other times we share that Good News in ways that are quieter, and deeply personal. I think of our chaplains and stewards giving gentle support to visitors on the Abbey floor, each and every day.

I also think of the 20 candidates (aged between 4 ... and 84!) brought for Baptism and Confirmation this recent Easter Eve. Indeed, since it tends to be the large-scale Abbey activities that most catch the eye, let me close with a few of their personal comments, deeply worth celebrating:

“I believe that through going to church and experiencing worship I found the love of God, and it’s

proved to be a guiding light”

“Since following Jesus, life has been incredible and I am no longer the person I used to be”

“Bath welcomed me with open arms and I feel at home for the first time in my life. As the Abbey welcomed me, I too welcome Jesus into my life”

For these and all that follows in this Annual Report, Thanks be to God!

Revd. Canon Guy Bridgewater
Rector of Bath Abbey





THANKSGIVING - Worshipping & Praying

CONNECTING WITH GOD IN THE EVERY DAY

During the build-up to Christmas, the Abbey (church family/ PCC) gave birth to a 'baby'! A new City Chaplaincy was born - a small team of chaplains from churches of different denominations across our city. Trained and encouraged by Mike Haslam, our diocesan chaplaincy advisor, armed with chocolate brownies and decked in tinsel, we set off into the Christmas Market.

Our aim was to be a listening, praying, caring presence in the craziness of the market, serving stall holders as well as visitors. We enjoyed an extraordinary time of blessing; a time of tears, prayers, and overwhelming joy.. and in January we decided to continue City Chaplaincy each Friday afternoon.

We spend time in the streets and public squares of our city, seeking to discern where God is at work by his Spirit, and to join in. This approach opens up all kinds of conversations and adventures.

Why not come and join us?

Revd Cath Candish
Abbey Curate





THANKSGIVING - Worshipping & Praying

Worship & Music

These past twelve months have been exciting and busy for the Music Department. The choir toured Provence in July (Girls and Lay Clerks), and the Boys and Lay Clerks sang in Portsmouth and Salisbury Cathedrals last Spring.



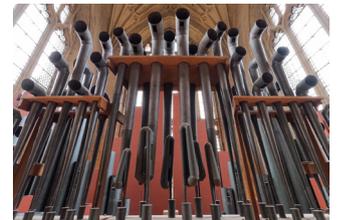
As part of our celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the Boys and Lay Clerks (formally 'Men's Choir') we invited back alumni to the Abbey. Over 40 singers joined us in February for our recording which will be released in 2025.



As well as liturgical highlights especially at Advent, Christmas and Holy Week, the choir concerts have included Handel's Messiah (which received a standing ovation in December) and Bach's St Matthew's Passion in Holy Week.



We were delighted to welcome Klais organ builders from Hamburg to complete the cleaning and restoration of the Abbey organ.



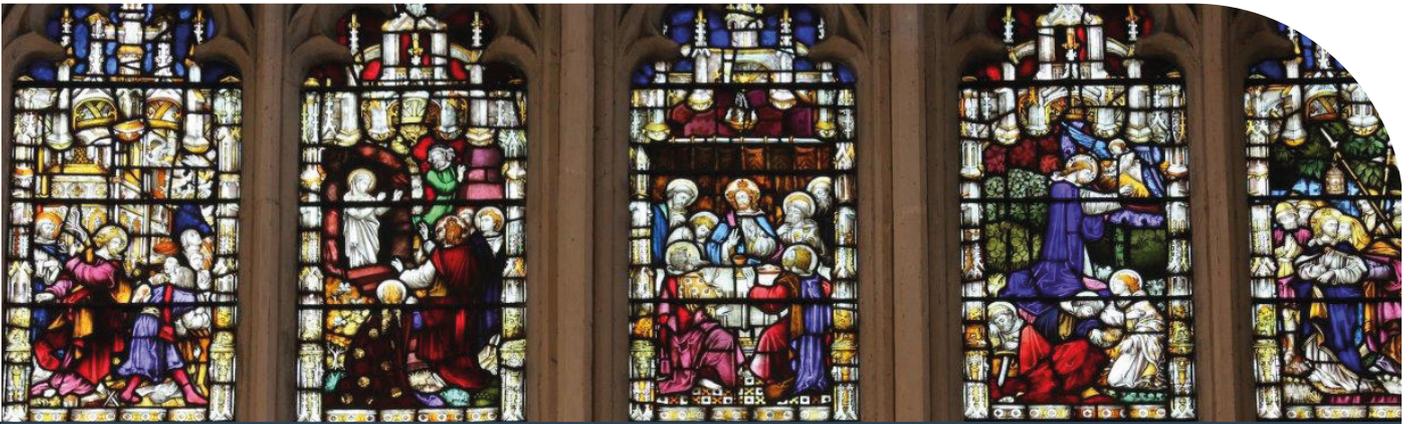
We welcomed new members of staff in September: Dewi Rees (Assistant Organist), Alex Hemple (Organ Scholar) and Simon Bartels (Music Assistant) who is here on work experience from Braunschweig.



The chamber choir has grown in numbers and confidence since Dewi's arrival and the Melody Makers have delighted listeners on many occasions including the Christmas concert and at the new All Together 9.30am service.



Huw Williams
Director of Music



TELLING - Proclaiming the Gospel

Worship & Ministry

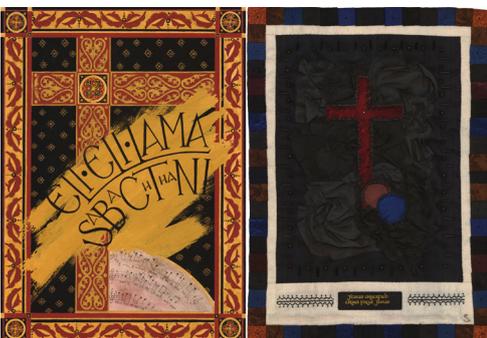
The principal opportunity we have to tell the good news of Jesus is with visitors on the floor of the Abbey and we are hugely grateful for the help of our stewards, tour guides and chaplains.

Their work has been supported by two exhibitions, both using the Abbey Diptychs in a visual 'conversation' with images from the Abbey's stained glass windows. Visitors have enjoyed getting 'close up' to the windows and making the connections with the bible and the story of Jesus.

The new 'Good News about Jesus' booklet was launched this year, to complement the popular 'Why Jesus?' booklet. This new booklet tells of the good news of Jesus using the architecture and fabric of the building and makes a very attractive giveaway.

For those who have wanted to explore the Christian faith more deeply we have run an Alpha course.

Revd Stephen Girling
Abbey Missioner





TEACHING - Growing as Followers of Jesus



Learning Programme

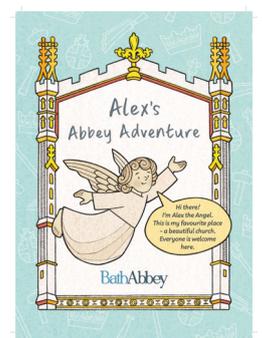
The Learning programme has continued to grow this year. Highlights include:

- The 'Playful Planet' programme during Gaia resulted in 800 students and 1300 family visitors taking part in tours and crafts. A special exhibition in the Abbey displayed children's eco-posters, made using scrap materials which were saved from going to landfill.
- A new website has been launched called www.bathabbeymemorials.org which contains a database created by the Abbey's Archivist and volunteers of all 1500 Abbey monuments. The fascinating lives of those on the Abbey's walls and floors have been featured in public talks for International Women's Day and Heritage Open Day.

- New resources for family visitors have been enthusiastically received. A 'Little Explorer' backpack contains toys and books for the Under 5s. There is also a version for children with special needs. Plus, a new trail called 'Alex's Abbey Adventure' is aimed at 6-11 years. In it, Alex the Angel shows children highlights of the Abbey.
- Community engagement projects are expanding, with regular tours and workshops for young and older carers from the Carers Centre. Art groups for people with mental health challenges have also been run successfully, in partnership with the 'Pathways to Wellbeing' project at the Holburne Museum.



Polly Andrews
Learning Manager





TEACHING - Growing as Followers of Jesus



Youth & Family Worship

I am thrilled to be the Youth and Families Minister at Bath Abbey. It has been a busy 6 months.

Abbey Kids on Sunday mornings goes from strength to strength. We have doubled the number of families who regularly worship at Bath Abbey. Abbey Kids is held every Sunday, apart from when the All Together services are held, and children regularly contribute to the All Together services. These are fun sessions of singing, games, bible stories and crafts.

Anchor, our youth group, and **Crypt Club**, our games night for Boys Choir members, have been successfully relaunched. Anchor has enjoyed crafts, a dance routine, treasure hunt and chilled games/discussion evenings. Crypt Club evenings involve table tennis, Lego, video and board games. Both Anchor and Crypt Club start with pizza.

Choir family socials (Girls Choir, Boys Choir and Melody Makers) have been introduced – Evensong tea/cake socials, wine/nibbles evenings, and private tower tours with refreshments at the top of the

tower. These events are well-attended and help the families to feel at home in the Abbey.

An amazing team of volunteers continues to grow. Many of our Bath Abbey members have a heart for ministry to children and youth. My work provides opportunities for their ministry. Teams are taking shape for different areas: Abbey Kids, Anchor, Crypt Club, choir family socials. A wonderful team of men have committed to helping with Crypt Club providing role models for the Boys Choir members.

In other news:

- We now have an Abbey Youth newsletter with issues every 2-3 weeks.
- We guided 10 children through baptism and confirmation.
- The service activity packs have been upgraded to be in line with the same standard as the visitor experience packs and to serve a wider range of ages.
- Our teenagers participated in an angel dance with flags at the Donkey service.

Again, it has been a wonderful 6 months!

Melinda Welch
Youth and Families Minister





TENDING – Caring as a Church Family

Safeguarding

In 2023 we successfully adopted new working practices set by the new DBS provider. Although challenging at times, it has continued to support the need for making the safer recruitment process for all staff and volunteers as streamlined as possible without compromising on standards.

We are proud to report that, throughout the year, the Abbey has continued to operate within our guidelines on safer recruitment and the timely completion of safeguarding training and DBS records.

In fact, over 100 DBS clearances/re-clearances have been obtained, and staff and volunteers have completed over 115 hours of safeguarding training. We would like to thank our staff and volunteers for cooperating in the timely completion of safeguarding training.

Safeguarding culture at the Abbey goes from strength to strength, albeit we continue to focus on embedding this further, so it becomes part of the day-to-day.

Natalie Cox-Mullings
HR Officer

TENDING – The Friends of Bath Abbey

The Friends of Bath Abbey has about 350 members who love Bath Abbey, and who delight in mixing the business of embellishing the building with the pleasure of enjoying themselves.

In the last twelve months, The Friends has paid for a new auxiliary organ blower and paid the deposit on the furniture for the church that will complete the vision of the Footprint Project, to which 'The Friends' has already contributed over £870,000.

In addition to paying for the 'liturgical furniture', The Friends will also make a substantial contribution to the work on the tower roof. In the last twelve months too, we have visited battlefields and memorials in Ypres and on the Somme, enjoyed

day visits to the RNLI and Compton Acres Gardens in Poole, and to Berkeley Castle, as well as holding a lecture evening on the Abbey's royal connections and our annual Spring Lunch at the Bath & County Club.

Work or play, we do it con brio!

Jeremy Key-Pugh
Secretary of the Friends of Bath Abbey





TENDING - Caring as a Church Family

“Seek the peace and prosperity of the city. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper” (Jeremiah 29:7)

2023 & 2024 Activities

Over the past year the opportunities to strengthen our discipleship and develop pastoral support across all ages have continued to grow: a new ‘Young Mums and Working Women’s group’ was established, and Abbey lunches started in 2023; homegroups were formed, a bereavement course began, and prayer ministry during the 9.30am service was launched.

It has been immensely encouraging to work with diocesan teams as we continue to host large scale services: Ordinations of Priests, Confirmations, and Archdeaconry services for hundreds of Year 6 children moving on to secondary school.

2024 has seen our new priority of **Tending** taking shape. With a focus on inter-generational worship, new ‘All Together’ services are now a regular part of the Abbey’s calendar. This was beautifully illustrated at our recent Confirmation service when we had the joy of welcoming ten children and ten adults into full church membership!

As our childrens’ and youth ministry continues to blossom, Melinda and I are enjoying being part of the diocesan initiative Launchpad. As a result we

are planning an ambitious project for the Autumn, hosting a special evening for hundreds of teenagers across the city.

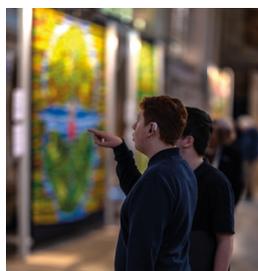
This Spring will also see a number of new initiatives being established:

- Firstly our Carers’ Café which will open in May.
- Secondly, ‘Walking Church’ (all-age) will begin when a number of us will share walks and reflections at beauty spots around the city.
- Thirdly, we will begin our Accessibility audit across the Abbey, to enable us to see how we might open our doors wider to those who have additional or special needs.

This year continues to provide exciting opportunities for us to link with charities and external caring organisations across the city, and it is a particular joy to work more closely with Genesis Trust and to be a part of their Faith Group.

A huge thank you to you, our Pastoral Visitors, Chaplains, Contact Group Leaders, Prayer Ministry Team, Hospitality Team, and Youth Volunteers!

Revd Chantal Mason
Abbey Pastor





TENDING - Caring as a Church Family



Building & Fabric

In March 2023 we successfully completed the £21m Footprint Project. The works have already won one regional and three national awards for design quality, and we are currently shortlisted for another national award.

In 2023 we also carried out various minor works including:

- the complete refurbishment of our Klais Organ.
- the construction of a temporary porch in the Abbey.
- the completion of a new safer walkway across the Nave roof for our Tower Tour visitors.
- the installation of a new safer handrail in the lower section of our North-West tower.
- the installation of new storage space in the Song School Corridor.

With the completion of the Footprint project we said a huge thank you and farewell to Nathan Ward, our Footprint Project Manager, who has gone to work for Synergy Project Managers. We have retained Nathan's services on a annual retainer arrangement.

We are also pleased to report that in 2023 we appointed a new Abbey Architect, Antony Feltham-King of St Ann's Gate Architects, who carried out the Quinquennial Report on the Abbey's buildings.

The report was very positive and the main area for us to work on going forward is to repair our roofs.

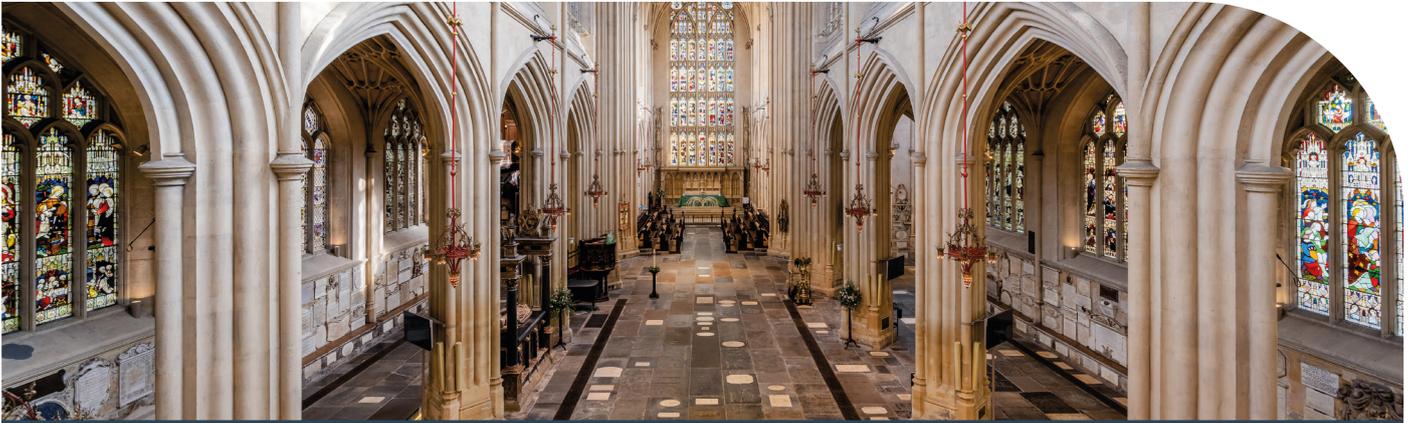
We are pleased to report that we have already repaired the Jackson extension (shop) roof and our first project in 2024 will be to repair the Tower roof. This will leave the significant project of repairing the Nave roof for 2026.

Not wishing to stand still, we have also identified a series of new smaller projects that will commence in 2024 and 2025. The Diocesan Advisory Committee visited the Abbey in early 2024 to view progress and provide guidance on some of the new smaller-scale projects that are being considered.

In 2024 we will also be designing and implementing a new building maintenance programme that will be managed by our Operations Team.

Frank Mowat & Tim Yeomans
Executive Director & Facilities Manager





TRANSFORMING – The Footprint Project



The Abbey's Footprint Project is complete.

The Footprint Project started life in 2005 (nearly twenty years ago!), powered by the ambition to repair the Abbey's sinking floor. This ambition quickly blossomed into a greater vision of transforming the Abbey's hospitality, accessibility, flexibility, and sustainability – securing its future ministry for generations to come. This innovative development project, which has been decades in the making and delivery, was completed in March 2023.

Bath Abbey is now fit for the 21st century and beyond. We have a magnificent and fully accessible Nave floor, comprised of hundreds of restored ledgerstones – the beauty and adaptability of our renewed worship space is simply extraordinary.

We have an innovative and sustainable underfloor heating system, powered by energy from Bath's thermal waters – helping us to reduce our energy costs and support the Church of England's goal of becoming Net Zero Carbon by 2030.

We also have a remarkable new Song School, a wonderful new programme of education and interpretation supported by the new Discovery Centre and Learning Room, a new Archive Store, refurbished Abbey Shop and offices, and so much more.

These spaces have transformed what we are able to offer – not just to our own Abbey congregation, but to the city we serve and its worldwide stream of visitors.

We can now see the fruit of the amazing vision, prayer, planning, generosity, and skilled hard work that has been poured by so many into resourcing the future of the Abbey.

Everyone who supported Footprint is part of this monumental achievement – whether you gave your time, talents, prayers, or generous donations - your commitment to the Footprint vision has brought it to life. Thank you!

With your support, Bath Abbey is freshly equipped as an oasis that refreshes lives with hospitality and fun, healing and peace – through welcoming, including and nurturing all we serve.

Nathan Ward & Cath Foxwell
Project Manager & Fundraising Manager

Over the following pages, you will see the progression of work, from building site to glorious award-winning spaces. These images highlight what a remarkable journey it has been and how these spaces have enhanced the Abbey for everyone who comes through its doors.





The Footprint Project

2005 - 2023

The Abbey's Nave

Before and During

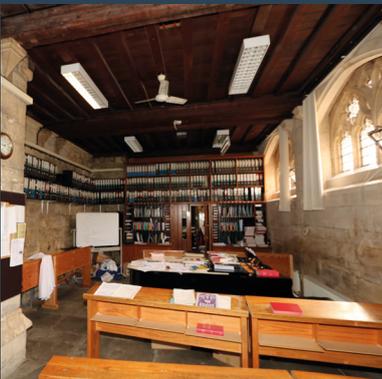


After



The Discovery Centre

Before and During



After



“The Discovery Centre allows our visitors, both local and from further afield, to understand the breadth and depth of the Abbey’s historical legacy, and the role it plays for the community in Bath today.

With exciting interactive exhibits, informative animations and the chance to try on historical costumes we now have an engaging space in which to share stories from the Abbey’s past, and a place to display key objects from our archives.”

Sarah Fielding
Head of Visitor Experience

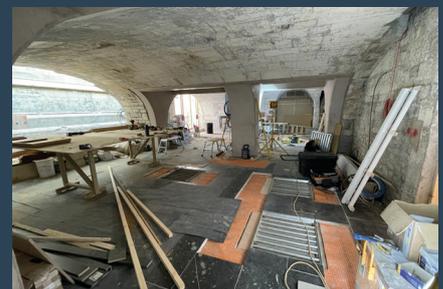
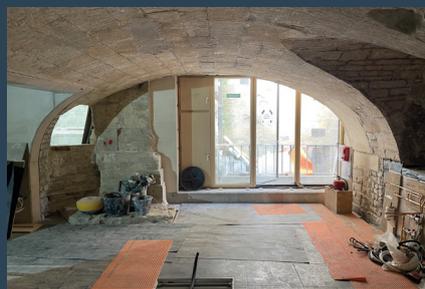
The Learning Room

“The Abbey’s Learning Room is a welcoming hub for the Abbey’s programme for schools, families, adult learners and community groups. It’s the perfect space to offer creative and engaging talks and workshops for all ages from toddlers in our Early Years sessions to senior citizens attending our ‘Cosy Place’ warm space.

Language students from Bath Welcomes Refugees have been attending weekly for over two years now, while we have recently started welcoming children and adults from the Carers Centre for tours and art workshops. The warm greeting is usually accompanied by nice refreshments prepared in the adjoining kitchen.”

Polly Andrews
Learning Manager

Before and During



After



The Song School

“We are delighted and proud of our wonderful new Song School. It’s one of the best in the country and it inspires and motivates our choristers, young and old, to give of their best in worship and concerts throughout the year.

We also welcome many visiting choirs so this purpose built and inspiring space is being used regularly by singers from around the country and further afield.”

Huw Williams
Director of Music

Before and During



After



The Abbey Shop

The new shop space allows us to tell the stories of the Abbey, providing visitors with a beautiful space in which to browse for souvenirs, locally created products, Christian literature and much more. Special products are available during exhibitions and at different times of the year, such as Christmas.

Before and During



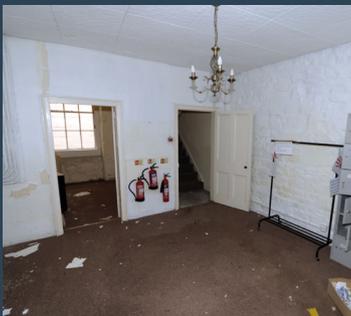
After



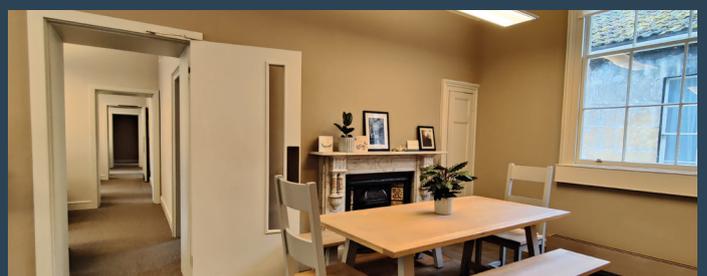
The Abbey Offices

Kingston Buildings, adjacent to the Abbey, have been transformed into an open-plan office for staff and volunteers. These modern, purpose-built facilities bring the church's working areas up to the same standards as the new spaces created.

Before and During



After





Thank you to Footprint's Supporters

The National Lottery Heritage Fund

The National Lottery Heritage Fund supports projects that connect people and communities with the UK's heritage. The Footprint Project was made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and we are deeply grateful for their transformative support. Thanks to the Heritage Fund's remarkable generosity, Bath Abbey has transformed its hospitality, accessibility, flexibility, and sustainability – and secured its future ministry for generations to come.



Stuart McLeod, Director of England - London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said:

“We are delighted that we have been able to support Bath Abbey to safeguard this remarkable Grade I listed building. Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, a grant of nearly £11million has enabled extensive restoration of the Abbey, as well as the creation of a new Discovery Centre. Together with an ambitious outreach programme of learning and engagement, the renewal of the Abbey will ensure this important heritage site will resonate with the community and beyond for years to come.”

With special thanks to Footprint's anonymous donor for their extraordinarily generous support

Our Community

We would like to extend heartfelt thanks to the Bath Abbey Family and our local community, whose gifts of time, talent, and generous donations made Footprint possible:

- Bath Abbey's Congregation, Volunteers and Staff
- The Friends of Bath Abbey
- Bath Abbey Music Society
- Footprint Project Board
- Footprint Appeal Board
- Diocese of Bath and Wells

A Benefactors' Roll is being produced, which will list individual donors to the Footprint Project and enable Bath Abbey to acknowledge and give thanks for the extraordinary support Footprint received from so many generous people.

The Learning Manager thanks the following for their knowledge, support, enthusiasm and skill:

- Bath Abbey's Learning Volunteers and Archive Research Volunteers
- Three Ways School
- St Andrew's C of E Primary School
- Black Families Education Support Group
- Black and Ethnic Minority Senior Citizens Association
- The Pathways to Wellbeing project at the Holburne Museum
- Bath Welcomes Refugees
- Age UK (BaNES)
- Jeremy Key-Pugh
- Anna Riggs
- Renée Jacobs
- Justin Folker
- Justin Towell
- Anna Barclay
- Holly Dabbs





Thank you to Footprint's Supporters

Trusts and Foundations

Trusts, Foundations and grant-giving bodies have been instrumental in achieving the Footprint vision for Bath Abbey. We are sincerely grateful to the local, national, and family Trusts and Foundations that so generously supported Footprint and helped bring this remarkable project to life.

- The 29th May 1961 Charitable Trust
- The Annett Charitable Trust
- Bath Boules Charitable Trust
- Bath World Heritage Site Enhancement Fund
- Benefact Trust
- The Brownsword Charitable Foundation
- Coles-Medlock Foundation
- Culture Recovery Fund for Heritage
- The Fairfield Charitable Trust
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- The Gatliff Trust
- Grace Dieu Charitable Trust
- The Hobson Charity
- J & P Benson Trust
- Kirby Laing Foundation
- The Layton Trust
- The Linbury Trust
- Lord Barnby's Foundation
- The Peter Stormonth Darling Charitable Trust
- The Ray Harris Charitable Trust
- Restore Our Planet
- The Roper Family Charitable Trust
- The Sandra Le Marchant Charitable Trust
- Stephen Clark 1957 Charitable Trust
- The Swire Charitable Trust
- Trevor Osborne Charitable Trust
- Wolfson Foundation

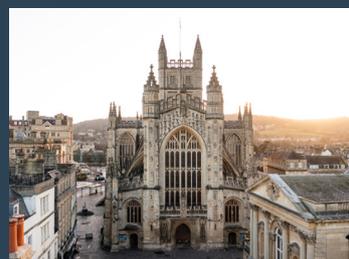
With grateful thanks to the Trusts and Foundations that wish to remain anonymous.

Footprint's Professional Teams

- ABG Design
- Buro Happold
- Emery
- Enlightened
- Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios
- IsoEnergy
- Mann Williams
- Sally Strachey Historic Conservation
- Synergy LLP
- Wessex Archaeology
- Wessex Water
- Wheelers

Footprint's Learning Programme Partners

- American Museum
- BANES Carers Centre
- Bath Ethnic Minority Senior Citizens Association (BEMSCA)
- Bath Festivals
- Bath Preservation Trust
- Bath Royal Literary & Scientific Institution
- Bath Welcomes Refugees
- Black Families Education Support Group
- Holburne Museum
- National Trust
- St John's Foundation
- Theatre Royal Bath
- Wells Cathedral





TRANSFORMING – Pursuing Justice & Peace in Society

Mission Support

The 'Gaia' earth installation gave us a wonderful opportunity to showcase the beauty of God's creation and to encourage people to join local eco-groups which are working together to make a difference in our natural environment and by combatting climate change.

We worked with city eco partners to host an 'Extraordinary Earth Day' with visiting speakers, family activities and networking opportunities for our partners.

We have continued to address the legacy of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade by providing training for

stewards and chaplains in which we explored the history of some of the Abbey memorials linked to the slave trade and built people's confidence for having difficult conversations.

Our wider mission support has continued:

- for vulnerable people in Bath,
- for literacy and bible translation work in Togo,
- for the UK Christian creation care movement,
- for sustainable farming in Zambia,
- and for a new partner charity 'Unseen', which addresses the scourge of modern slavery.

Stephen Girling
Abbey Missioner



Bath Abbey's Mission Partners:

Genesis Trust • Wycliffe Bible Translators • A Rocha
• Ripple Effect • Unseen





TREASURING – Sustaining & Renewing Creation

Visiting & Events

The highlight of 2023 was our Treasuring Creation Festival. With Luke Jerram's Gaia as the centre piece, the festival was designed to bring together a full and varied public programme focused on appreciating and caring for our planet.

It provided the opportunity to try new things; for example Extraordinary Earth Day and early years sessions, as well as adapting existing offers to reflect the festival's message; our Abbey Highlights Tour became the Treasuring Creation Tour, Evening Prayer gave focus to the theme of creation and family activities aimed to inspire children to care for our planet.

The programme was carefully curated to enable us to:

- share the Abbey's mission,
- cherish our existing visitors,
- welcome new audiences.

Our Discovery Centre is receiving glowing feedback. A team of volunteers completed over 750 exit interviews in the Discovery Centre between May and December. The results have been instrumental in understanding what is going well and where minor improvements can be made.

Our mystery visit score for 2023 was an incredible 94.2% which makes us the highest scoring Spiritual / Place of Worship attraction in England!

Admission fees continue to be well received and, despite the small increase in January 2024, visitors comment that the experience is good value for money. Our tours remain popular and we have recently translated our audio guide into four additional languages.

The shop had a record year in 2023. Spring was a great success with Easter and the Coronation, and we also launched a brand new, bespoke children's Activity Book, complete with a game of Angels and Ladders! Despite a dip in sales in Autumn, the year ended on a high with our most successful Christmas market period yet.

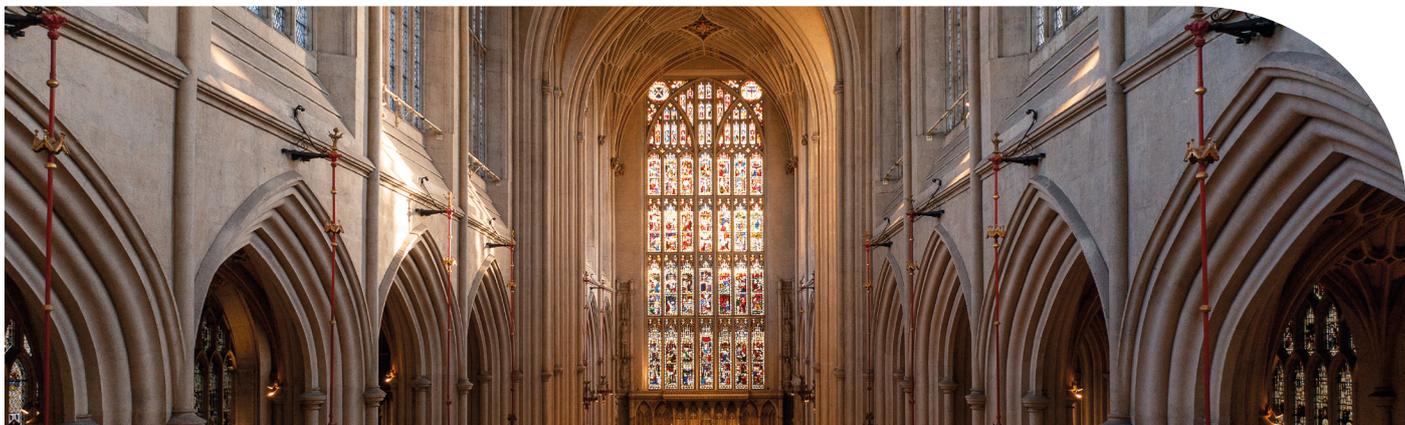
Our 2023-2024 events programme has included lectures, movement classes, film screenings and concerts ranging in genre from classical to alt rock, offering diverse experiences for visitors and local people in a unique setting.

On 1 February 2024 we were honoured to host a Service of Celebration to mark the 850th anniversary of St. John's Foundation, attended by Her Majesty The Queen.

As always, our thanks go to our wonderful team of staff and volunteers who make all of this possible.

Sarah Fielding, Donna Lodge, Fay Breed
Head of Visitor Experience, Shop Manager, Events Manager





TREASURING – Sustaining & Renewing Creation

Financial Review

2023 marked a watershed moment for the Abbey in so far as we saw:

- the completion of our Footprint Project;
- the opening of the Abbey's new Discovery Centre;
- and we introduced an Admission Fee to visitors.

Regarding the new Admission Fee, the Abbey is free to enter for those who live in a BA1 or BA2 postcode, to Discovery Card holders and for those entering to worship, pray or light a candle.

The Admission Fee has replaced our 'suggested donation' entry arrangement.

The introduction of the Admission Fee has been a resounding success and continues to be well received by the media, stakeholders and visitors, with TripAdvisor ratings continue to be positive.

Visitor income (including tours income) increased from £0.901m for 2022 to a record level of £1.558m in 2023 on similar visitor numbers.

In 2023, all the Abbey's income streams performed well especially:

- Events Income - which reached £176k gross for 2023 – a record year.
- The Abbey shop – shop sales reached £436k – a record year.
- Planned Giving reached £244k which was 7% up on the previous year.

The Abbey paid its Parish Share of £282k and we were able to award our staff a 5% pay award. We are also pleased to report that the Abbey produced an operational net trading surplus for the year (before Footprint Project and Klais Organ refurbishment expenditure).

Overall, we are pleased that the Footprint Project has been successfully completed and we now have a busy Abbey, very much alive and thriving. Our finances are now more stable and predictable, and our focus now is to replenish our reserves so that we are protected from future shocks.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the PCC and our team of Clergy for their wisdom and guidance and for being both resilient and brave over recent years, and for supporting the introduction of the Admission Fee.

We would also like to thank our fantastic team of staff, volunteers and chaplains who have done a stunning job of skilfully implementing our Recovery Programme throughout 2023.

Frank Mowat
Executive Director





TREASURING - Stewardship

Planned Giving

Many who read this are part of our Bath Abbey Planned Giving Scheme, for which the PCC and I are immensely grateful. If you aren't already a member of the scheme, and see the Abbey as your church family, please can I encourage you to join – which of course means regular income to cover the Abbey's running costs, whether or not we personally can come to Church each week.

The really good news is that income from planned giving at the Abbey has increased by 7% in 2023, and indeed has grown steadily over each of the last 3 years. If we are able to enhance that trend

slightly (as I wrote to all on our Electoral Roll last October) by a further 10% overall increase in 2024, our congregational giving will meet the full "Parish Share" that the Abbey pays to cover basic ministry costs in the wider Church.

Thank you SO much for helping us rise to that important challenge – and also of course to the hundreds among us who give their time so generously to God's work at Bath Abbey.

Your sacrificial support, love and prayers are deeply appreciated.

Revd. Canon Guy Bridgewater
Rector of Bath Abbey





TREASURING – Thank You!

Message From the Churchwardens

It has been a very good year. The early part of 2024 saw the introduction of a new “All Together” service aimed at bringing together different generations of the church family together at a 9.30 service once a month.

A very special service was held on 1 February 2024 in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen to celebrate 850 years of the Bath-based St John’s Foundation, one of the UK’s oldest charities.

Christmas and Easter saw thousands coming into the Abbey for services and it is a privilege to be involved in the organisation.

We would like to thank our wonderful team of Deputy Wardens and Worship Support Volunteers, without whom we would not be able to ensure the smooth running of our numerous services. Particular thanks go to Peter Windebank who has taken over the difficult job of compiling the rota and to Alan Morley who had done so for many years.

David Babb and Andrew Bragg, Churchwardens

We would like to extend one big THANK YOU to our Abbey staff for their diligent and high quality work; the extraordinary commitment of all our volunteers; and to our Abbey congregation for your ongoing love and support in ‘every member ministry’.

Thank you to each of you for your generous gift of time to the Abbey in all these endeavours. It is enormously appreciated and a joy to minister with you.

**Revd Guy Bridgewater & Revd Chantal Mason
Rector of Bath Abbey & Abbey Pastor**





TREASURING – Abbey Family Farewell

Remembering with love, members of the Abbey Church family who have passed away.

We remember with love all those from our church family who have died this past year. And we hold before God all who grieve their loss. At our Annual Parochial Church Meeting, we will be honouring them as they continue to inspire us in love and service.

In the Autumn we will be hosting a special 'All Souls' service (in partnership with Dorothy House) when we will be inviting Bath families whose loved ones have died this past year, to join us; as a part of our commitment to tend the city in 2024.

From our Abbey Electoral Roll we lovingly remember:

- Miss Lisa Phillips
- Mrs Sarah Sally Barton
- Dr John Wroughton
- Revd Martin Broadbent
- Mrs Denyse Spiller
- Mrs Susan Finzel
- Mrs Janine Awramenko
- Mr David Holley
- Mrs Ann Jill Lawrie
- Mr Eric Hodson
- Sir Geoffrey Tantum
- Mrs Joy Stockley

Revd Guy Bridgewater & Revd Chantal Mason
Rector of Bath Abbey & Abbey Pastor





TREASURING - Our Team



A must see when in Bath. Thanks to Rev. Cath for showing us around.

Mar 2024 • Couples

Highly recommend visiting Bath Abbey. We received a lovely welcome from the curate, Cath, who brought us around and showed us some of her favourite parts of the abbey, which was very much appreciated.

Written 1 April 2024



The Tours Are Well Worth It!

Apr 2024 • Couples

We visited Bath Abbey today and opted for the Tower Tour. Our guides were Emily and Stephen, who were both great. We were split off with Stephen for part of the tour. We were fortunate to have had him as a guide. He is knowledgeable, engaging, and funny – so full of historical information and imparted with humor and polish.



Beautiful Abbey full of history

A beautiful abbey with so much history. Museum downstairs is great. The stained glass in windows is exquisite. Well cared for building and worth visiting if you are in bath. Pre book the tour up the tower as it often sells out on the day as limited number allowed

Visited May 2023

Travelled as a couple

Written 16 May 2023



Spectacular views

May 2024 • Couples

We booked a tower tour, book early as they go fast. My wife was concerned about the 200 plus steps, as she has a bad back, we are in our mid 50's. However, it was a lot easier than expected, and our guides, Joe and Helena were full of information and left no question unanswered. Also a treat to be in the belfry when the chimes sounded. This may not be typical. Not cheap, but worth it. Also ticket gives all day access to Abbey.

Written 10 May 2024



A great visit!

Mar 2024 • Family

My sister and I recently visited Bath Abbey with Eleanor and Anna as our guides. They were knowledgeable and passionate about the Abbey, providing us with loads of insights into its history. The Abbey itself is a impressive building, with detailed infrastructure and amazing views from the roof. Highly recommend the tour!

Written 17 March 2024



A beautiful abbey, and the Tower Tour is a gem!

The Tower Tour is well recommended! Don't be discouraged by the warnings: those 200+ steps are really not too bad, and there are several stops along the climb to rest. And it's SO worth it: not only are the views really wonderful the higher you go, the guided tour is fascinating. Toby and Poppy took turns telling us about the history of the Abbey, the clock, the bells and their ringers; and they were both just the loveliest to listen to and talk with.

Visited June 2023

Written 7 June 2023



Stunning!

The Abbey Church dominates the landscape and the center of Bath. We arrived in Bath on the day of King Charles's coronation so celebrations were the order of the day. The bells rang all day on Sunday. We went to Evensong at 3:30 p.m. on Sunday and thoroughly enjoyed the heartfelt prayers for the new king and the country. The BEST part of the service was the singing by the children's choir and the church adult choir. I visited with some of the members of the church who were serving as ushers and they were so friendly and chatty. A high point of our visit!



The hour tower tour passed too quickly!

Feb 2024 • Solo

What a beautiful building. The windows and fan ceiling made my jaw drop. I did the tower tour learning from friendly guides Katy and Callum about the bells and their history.



The best experience in Bath

Nov 2023 • Couples

We paid the extra for the tour of the tower - which was the best decision we could have made! The views were incredible and gave you an opportunity to get up close to some of the amazing features of this building (the bells and the clock were personal highlights). Rob and Chloe (our guides) were very knowledgeable and friendly, injecting humour as they went and answering all questions! If you only do one thing when you're in Bath, forget the Roman Baths, go on this tour!

Written 4 November 2023



Brilliant tourist experience

Had a guided tower tour on Saturday, hosted by Juliet and Imogen. The pair were knowledgeable and professional throughout and the tour itself was very interesting, ending with a beautiful view from tower top of the city in all its glory. Would go again!

Visited May 2023

Travelled as a couple

Written 21 May 2023



Entertaining and informative!

This was a thoroughly enjoyable tour. The two guides were excellent, weaving in stories, answering questions, providing anecdotes to entertain and being all around knowledgeable. I very much enjoyed this tours. The steps up were much easier than I expected.

Visited May 2023

Written 6 June 2023



Just fabulous

May 2024 • Friends

Tower tour was awesome. Hannah and Jane were excellent - full of interesting facts and stories that brought the history of the abbey and tower to life. Totally recommend this tour.

Written 3 May 2024



Amazing crew amazing view

May 2024 • Couples

Anna and Juliette were amazing! So enthusiastic and knowledgeable we had the best experience will recommend to family

Written 11 May 2024



Image Credits

Photographer Credits

Thank you to the photographers who have worked with Bath Abbey over this past year, and whose work can be found in this Annual Review:

- ABG Design
- Anna Barclay
- Beata Cosgrove
- Ben Sandbrook
- Betty Bhandari
- FCBStudios
- Members of Bath Abbey Staff & Volunteers
- Phil Saunders
- Rich Howman

Every effort has been made to trace the photographers whose work appears in this publication. Any omissions or inaccuracies of accreditation will be corrected in future editions.

Illustration Credits

Pages 7 & 8
Ailsa Burrows

Ailsa has designed and created bespoke characters and images for the Discovery Centre, and her designs can be found more widely, such as in the Abbey Shop.



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The PCC has complied with the duty under section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have regard to House of Bishops Guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

BathAbbey

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