

New measures to strengthen governance and operational frameworks for England's cathedrals have taken a step towards formal implementation.

Lincoln Cathedral  Jim Newton

At its February meeting, The General Synod supported revisions to the Cathedrals Measure which could see it passed into legislation later in the year.

The recommendations were first discussed by Synod in July 2018, following a report by the Cathedrals Working Group, set up by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Presenting the Revision Committee's report, The Dean of Southwark, Andrew Nunn, said:

"We all know that our Cathedrals are part of the rich heritage of this country, national treasures that we've the privilege of caring for and day in day out opening for the people of England to visit, to worship in, to encounter God in.

"But we need to be fit for purpose in the twenty-first century with robust governance structures, healthy finances and excellence at every level.

"I have no hesitation, as a dean, in commending this revised Draft Measure to the church."

The Third Estates Commissioner, Eve Poole, who chairs the Church of England's Cathedrals Support Group said:

"I'm delighted by the engagement and support Synod has shown for these proposals to strengthen the governance structures of our cathedrals.

"These includes clear support for regulation by the Charity Commission, where we look forward to a constructive partnership.

"Most importantly, the Measure will help to safeguard cathedrals for the future, supporting and enabling the unique role they play in our cities, communities and dioceses."

2020 sees a remarkable number of individual English cathedral anniversaries that help tell Britain's story. Many cathedrals are already planning major celebrations – from Canterbury with its Becket anniversary, Coventry with the 80th anniversary of its bombing, and Salisbury's 800th anniversary.

There will be new visitor centres, redevelopment projects, and special art and light shows. The National History Museum's T Rex: The Killer Question comes to Peterborough Cathedral, Durham launches the Northern Saints Trails while Norwich Cathedral welcomes Dippy the Dinosaur.

And thanks to an initiative between the Association of English Cathedrals and the British Pilgrimage Trust – there will be one-day pilgrimage routes to every Church of England cathedral highlighting the importance of spiritual, mental and physical well-being in 2020.

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