

The Church Commissioners has announced it will support England's cathedral choirs with up to £1 million available to ease the impact of COVID-19.



Fund which pledged to raise £1 million through fundraising ideas such

Following the Government's announcement last week that singing could recommence in specific circumstances, the funding will pay the salaries of Lay Clerks (adult singers) from September until the end of the year, including the season of Advent and Christmas Day.

The Church of England is also supporting the ongoing research overseen by Public Health England into the risk of the spread of Covid-19 through singing and awaits the findings.

The Bishop of London, Sarah Mullally has encouraged the Government to take a proactive approach to allowing singing to return to our churches and cathedrals as soon as it is safe to do so.

Funding will be drawn from the Cathedrals Sustainability Fund, as part of a range of financial measures to support cathedrals during this challenging time.

In addition to the £1 million to support the salaries of Lay Clerks, the Commissioners are also providing £800,000 to support heritage skills, £1.1 million short-term support to cover the salaries of other cathedral employees and £2.5 million to support a number of revitalisation projects.

The Cathedral Choirs Emergency fund is an initiative of the Cathedral Music Trust, the Ouseley Church Music Trust and the Choirs Schools Association.

The Cathedral Music Trust was founded in July 2020, building on the work of the Friends of Cathedral Music. The Trust aims to be a voice for cathedral music by campaigning on behalf of cathedral music and musicians, supporting cathedral choirs and choristers in need, and encouraging the pursuit of excellence in choral and organ music.

The Cathedral Choirs Emergency Fund will be giving grants from September to support cathedrals struggling to fund choristers and to other cathedrals in the UK, and will continue funding choirs on a needs-assessed basis from January.

The Third Estates Commissioner, Dr Eve Poole, said:

“Our cathedrals are a vital part of England’s built culture and heritage. As well as their spiritual role in society, through tourism they contribute significantly to their local economies.

“We are working with the Government to agree safe conditions for a return to singing, and our cathedrals are now open again to serve their congregations and communities. We know that there are many other choirs who are anxiously awaiting news, and in our conversations with Government we are pressing for broader support for this vital part of the nation's life.

“The Church Commissioners have introduced several streams of funding to support our cathedrals in crisis. As well as targeted support for music, we have acted quickly to protect vital heritage crafts in the stonemasons yards, as well as providing short-term financial help and funding for revitalisation projects.

“The challenge is enormous, and we are committed to looking at further ways to support cathedrals, and will continue to work with Government to identify partnerships to safeguard the long-term future of both our cathedrals and our churches.”

The Dean of Leicester, David Monteith, who Chairs the College of Deans said:

“We very much welcome the announcement of funding from the Church Commissioners, which matches the excellent fundraising efforts of the Cathedral Choirs Emergency Fund.

“This has been a time of huge uncertainty for our Cathedrals, their congregations, communities and employees. Every area of cathedral life has been affected by the restrictions to help combat COVID-19, but for many choral worship is at the very heart of what cathedrals offer in worship and as cultural beacons.

“While this support does not reverse the impact of COVID-19 restrictions, it can help to allay the short-term risks of the loss of these specialist roles, and we hope that the support from the community and the Church Commissioners will be further supported by the Government in its allocation of funding for the arts.

“In time we look forward to hearing inspiring music in our beautiful cathedrals up and down the land. This is music that might soothe our souls and lift our eyes towards the love of God beyond all the challenges we face”

Chairman of the Cathedral Music Trust, Peter Allwood said:

“We’re delighted that the Church Commissioners have committed to matching the £1m which we have pledged to raise through the generous support of those who love and value the glorious tradition of cathedral music.

“The choral tradition is an integral part of the nation’s cultural heritage which is unique and unsurpassed anywhere in the world.

“As they emerge from the current pandemic, our cathedral choirs will face huge challenges to maintain their long tradition of choral excellence.

“We are committed to continuing to help them to do so, and to ensure many more lives are enriched by the opportunities to participate in and to

hear choral singing.”

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/news-and-statements/church-commissioners-announce-ps1m-support-cathedral-choirs>