



and civic life of the country according to the latest figures from the

Chichester Cathedral

In 2019, 1.3 million people attended services at cathedrals across the country, with midweek service attendance continuing to grow.

England's cathedrals also attracted nearly 10 million visitors a year, the [new data](#) predating Covid-19 restrictions shows.

In 2019, a weekly total of 37,300 people attended cathedral services - an increase of 13 percent from 2009. While Sunday attendance remained stable, attendance at midweek services grew by 35 per cent over the decade.

Christmas and Advent service attendance also rose over the same 10-year period, with 2019 showing record high reported numbers for advent events including carol services, concerts and nativity plays.

Attendances at public or civic services in cathedrals grew to just under 1.8 million people in 2019, which includes special services and graduation ceremonies.



Truro Cathedral

Cathedrals reported a total of 9.7 million visitors in 2019, just below the highest-ever figure of 10.1 million reported in 2018.

Additionally, Westminster Abbey drew an additional 4,400 weekly worshippers, and totalled 1.27 million annual visitors meaning nearly 11 million people visited a cathedral or Westminster Abbey in 2019.

A 2014 study estimated that in normal times cathedrals contribute a total of £220 million to local economies, creating around 5,500 jobs.

Cathedrals rely on visitor income to maintain excellence in worship, community outreach and heritage accessibility.

Much-needed support grants totalling £17.5 million have so far been received from Government, alongside additional contributions from Charities and the Church Commissioners in 2020. These have helped cathedrals to cope with the shortfall in visitor numbers caused by

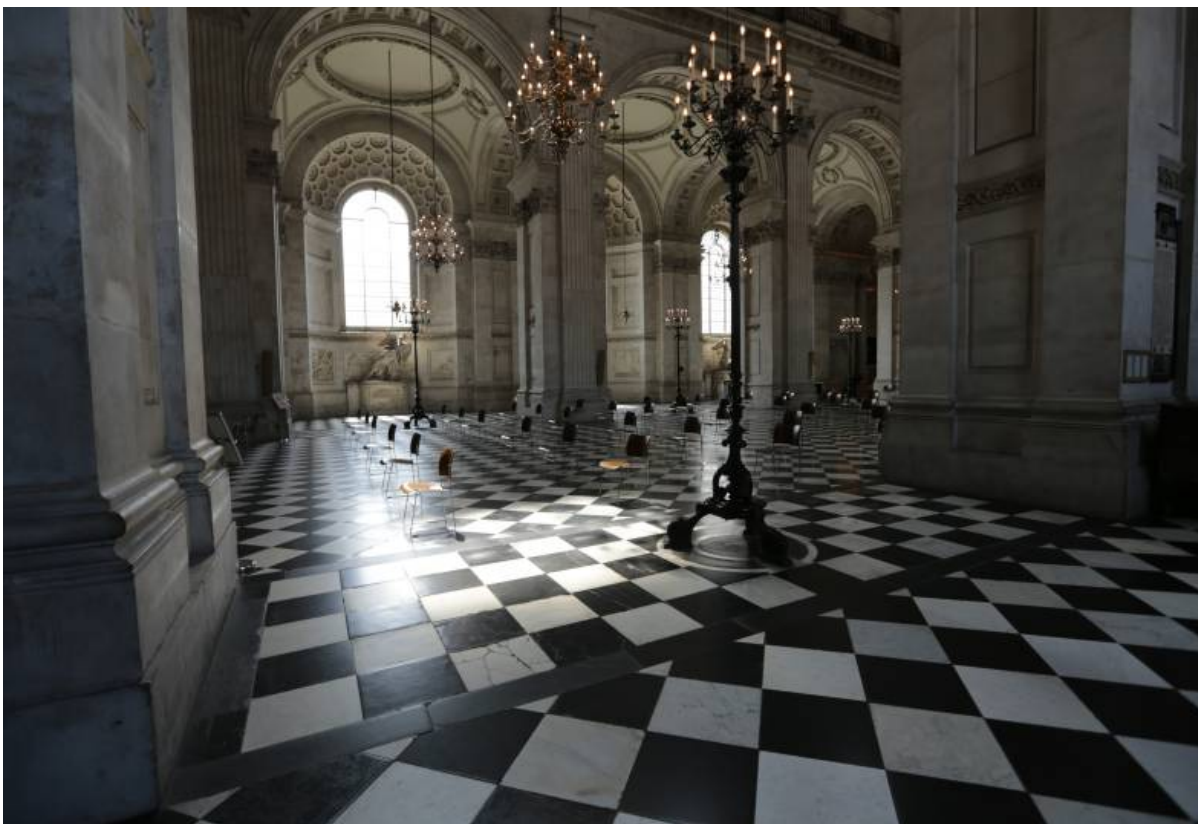


London Sinfonia | Southwark Cathedral

Adapting to Covid-19 restrictions

Cathedrals have found new ways to engage worshippers and visitors safely since the introduction of lockdown restrictions. Every cathedral able to re-open to the public has achieved the [Visit Britain's](#) industry standard and consumer charter mark 'Good to Go' which means visitors can be confident that cathedrals are taking all the necessary steps to help ensure people's safety in line with latest Government and Public Health guidance.

Across the Church of England, more than 17,000 online services and events have been provided following the introduction of the lockdown and restrictions on public worship in March, according to a [report](#) published in October.



around 1,500 people regularly engaging with daily streamed services.

St Paul's Cathedral

Professional cathedral choirs were among the first to resume choral worship, including with weekly BBC Radio 3 broadcasts which reach an estimated audience of 300,000 each week.

Winchester Cathedral’s ‘Kings & Scribes’ Exhibition achieved the accolade of ‘most improved heritage development’ in the UK Heritage Awards. Elsewhere, St Paul’s Cathedral launched ‘Remember Me’ an online book of remembrance for the COVID-19 pandemic. St Paul’s also explored new ways to worship at home including ‘Choir of the Nation’ - a remote singing project that saw people sing hymns from their homes all over the world to celebrate Easter, VE day and St George’s Day.

Salisbury, Bradford, Lichfield, St Edmundsbury and Norwich Cathedrals all created virtual tour facilities for visitors with others, including Chelmsford, Carlisle, Salisbury and Ely, using external lighting to create a ‘Light of Hope’ installation for All Saints’ tide, while an outdoor pets’



Portsmouth Cathedral

St Albans Cathedral launched a crowdfunding campaign to create a socially distanced firework display when the usual city fireworks could not go ahead – the event raised a record £30,000 for local charities.

Chichester Cathedral is currently virtually-showcasing work by 35 local artists who, as part of an arts festival, were asked to reflect on their experiences of the pandemic and the spirit of togetherness experienced in West and East Sussex.

Remembrance services went ahead either streamed or outdoors, and people were encouraged to take part from home. Cathedrals are currently re-imagining Christmas this pandemic year with a range of plans - from online Advent calendars to virtual Christingles all aiming to bring comfort and joy in challenging times. It is hoped that carol services and Christmas worship will be able to go ahead in a Covid-safe manner, pending Government guidance



Chichester Cathedral

The Chair of the Association of English Cathedrals, Adrian Dorber, who is Dean of Lichfield, said: “It’s encouraging to see attendance at cathedrals holding steady up until the onset of COVID-19. Cathedrals continue to offer a reliable, accessible source of Christian presence and engagement with their communities.

“We’ve had to rise to the challenge of lockdown and restrictions in a variety of ways, but the crisis has catalysed our use of digital media and opened up a whole new way of reaching a new and diverse public.

“When we have been able to open for worship we’ve done so safely, meeting Covid-secure guidelines. Opening for daily private prayer has been welcomed by many, with innovative uses of time and space.

“Cathedrals receive many prayer requests online and people come to us wanting to light candles and stand still in holy, calm and beautiful places.

“Naturally, we’re also grateful for public and charitable funds which, recognising the roles we play in our communities, have enabled us to keep going during terrible financial weather and allowed us to come up with recovery and renewal plans.

“We’re up for fresh challenges – we just hope the scale of them won’t be as testing as those of 2020!”

More information:

- [Download the full cathedrals statistics \(2019\)](#)
- Data are collected from all 42 mainland Church of England cathedrals, from Westminster Abbey.
- The report is published by the Church of England's Research and Statistics team.

Source URL: [*https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/news-and-statements/visitor-and-worshipper-numbers-englands-cathedrals-grew-prior*](https://www.churchofengland.org/news-and-media/news-and-statements/visitor-and-worshipper-numbers-englands-cathedrals-grew-prior)