

# Chelmsford Cathedral: Tower Repairs (1 of 2 projects funded)

Awarded £268,622 in November 2014

## The need

The grant was required because cracking and erosion was rendering the area around the tower potentially hazardous due to falling flints. The cathedral had carried out much restoration over the previous 15 years and while some work had been done on the tower, no funds remained to cover this more extensive repair.

## Outcomes

The works have meant that the tower is now much safer and aesthetically pleasing. The repairs are expected to last for at least 60 years, meaning that immediate focus can now be placed on other areas of the cathedral in need of repair. The team at the cathedral have learnt a great deal through working on the projects, in particular around conservation, building management and risk evaluation.

## Economic and social impact

During the project covered by the grant there were six jobs created across a variety of traditional building methods including roof carpentry, leadwork and stonemasonry. Two apprentices worked on the team, an apprentice carpenter and an apprentice stonemason.

The repair works attracted a lot of media attention and generated community interest in the heritage of the cathedral. A visit was held for the new John Lewis directors to show them around the tower, and an interview with Essex Radio was broadcast promoting it. Several articles have also been published in the *Essex Chronicle* and it is expected that visitor numbers will increase.



The tower during the repairs. Photo credit: Chelmsford Cathedral.



Tower repairs and regilded clock face. Photo credit: Chelmsford Cathedral.

## Works completed and timescale

Repairs works to the tower commenced in April 2015 and were complete in October 2015. The works to the tower included redecoration of the clock face, repairs to the lantern supporting the copper spire and repairs to the walls. Other works carried out included stonemasonry and flint repairs.

## The Cathedral

Designated a cathedral in 1914, Chelmsford Cathedral was originally a parish church. The first recorded service was in 1223 and much of the stonework is from Norman times. The church was rebuilt in the 15th century but, due to the ongoing War of the Roses, this took almost a century to complete. A 1983 refurbishment created the light and colourful interior, which features many modern artworks.

## Chelmsford Cathedral: Song School Roof Repair (2 of 2 projects funded)

*Awarded £300,000 in November 2016 towards a project cost of £350,000*

### The need

The 1920s cathedral extension covered by the roof is essential to the functioning of the cathedral, housing not only the Song School (where the choir practises), but the cathedral toilets, kitchens and offices. The Song School roof dated from 1922 and had become structurally unsound, visibly sagging and at risk of collapse under the weight of a snow fall.

### Outcomes

As a result of the work, the Song School is now much safer and aesthetically pleasing. The replacement of the lead roof prevents leaking, and insulation makes the building drier and warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer, making it a much more pleasant environment. A mansafe system to enable safe working externally has been installed. The team at the cathedral learnt a great deal through working on the project, particularly around conservation, building management and risk evaluation.

### Economic and social impact

During the project covered by the grant there were six jobs created across a variety of traditional building methods including roof carpentry, leadwork and stonemasonry. Two apprentices worked on the team, an apprentice carpenter and an apprentice stonemason.

The Song School has become an attractive space as a venue for a wider range of activities, such as lectures and social gatherings, than in the past, and has given the cathedral the ability to host more community events in the future.

### Works completed and timescale

Bakers of Danbury Ltd were contracted to carry out the roof repairs on the Song School. Repair works began in April 2017 and were completed in December 2017. They began with removing the existing lead roof and the repair and reinforcement of structural timber beams. Some masonry restoration was required and a new timber framework for the new lead roof. Internal plastering and redecoration was then carried out. The work was completed within budget. As a result of some very competitive tenders not all the grant was claimed: a saving of £65,000 was passed back for re-allocation by the Fund's Expert Panel.



New interior of the Song School. Photo credit: Simon Marks.



View of the new lead roof. Photo credit: Simon Marks.

### The Cathedral

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