



Salisbury Cathedral's Social Justice Programme

Salisbury Cathedral is the Mother Church of 456 parishes in Wiltshire and Dorset, and a centre of pilgrimage for hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. Each day, week in week out, as it has been for century after century, God is worshipped here. Although a heritage destination for many, above all it is a place of prayer, contemplation and deep spirituality.

Salisbury Cathedral is a stable, well respected organisation with a history of marrying tradition with innovation. The current cathedral was consecrated in 1258 and is one of the finest medieval cathedrals in the UK with the tallest spire; the main body of the building was completed in only 38 years. Our Dean was the first female Dean of a medieval cathedral and, having launched the first Girls' Choir in 1991, we are one of only a few cathedrals to offer equal bursaries to the girl and boy choristers.

Like all cathedrals Salisbury Cathedral has charitable status. Our turnover is approximately £4.5 million per annum (we are in the middle of a major repair programme which has temporarily increased our expenditure) and our running costs are mostly funded by donations from our congregation and income from visitors, the shop and refectory.

What do we want to do, and how?

We want to help people in the UK (and, via our diocesan and other partners, people in Sudan too) who are excluded from the "normal" life that we enjoy. We want to use our visible position to effect change; challenging our visitors to face and tackle injustice, whilst supporting smaller charities who do not have our profile.

We attract over 250,000 visitors to the Cathedral each year – and a similar number to our website – meaning we have significant opportunities to engage large volumes of people in our causes. Our visitors are already diverse, including people from all backgrounds, races and religions, from across the UK and from overseas.

We also have special assets, in particular the best preserved original 1215 Magna Carta - one of only two outside the British Library – which we can use to illustrate the history and current need for social justice. We can use our presence and relationship with senior decision makers and the media to champion the causes of our partner organisations. We can use the profile, history and treasures of the Cathedral to draw attention to the sometimes unpopular aims of Social Justice.

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Development Office

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The project's four main aims are:

1. To support the Millennium Development Goals, in particular campaigning for the eradication of poverty, both in the UK and through our partnerships, in the Sudan.
2. To work closely with Amnesty International to raise awareness of and ask for the release of prisoners of conscience. We will run a range of education classes and encourage the visitors to the Cathedral to take part in letter-writing campaigns.
3. To promote citizenship and human rights to a wide audience through the medium of an exhibition focused on Magna Carta and through related workshops and activities. We want to target teenagers and young adults in particular, to inform and help the next generation tackle current injustices.
4. To help the local effort for the disadvantaged, working with local charities. We will focus primarily on the homeless, finding appropriate ways to support and strengthen them and to meet needs not currently addressed.

We intend to fulfil our aims by working with an experienced Social Justice Director, who will develop a full range of activities in conjunction with our partner organisations. The new post holder will work closely with our Head of Education to develop workshops and classes for children and adults, promoting the social justice issues outlined above as well as the right for freedom and racial equality. We will build on our existing successful interfaith workshops to encourage all faiths to tackle society's problems. The Magna Carta exhibition will be open and free to our 250,000 visitors every year and will promote the principles of fairness and equality which are reflected in the 1215 document.

Why?

Two main factors led us to develop a business plan and project around social justice; one external factor and one internal factor.

The external factor

Salisbury is representative of many small "rural" cities: it is perceived as an affluent area, but the veneer of wealth often hides disturbing statistics about poverty and homelessness. The Indices of Deprivation show Salisbury scoring particularly poorly on access to housing and services, with 16 areas in the district in the 5% most deprived nationally. The Indices further note that areas of high and low prosperity can be found side by side. Recent research has shown that problems fester within a society with the biggest differences between rich and poor. On a wider scale, the South West as a whole has 95 centre-based Super Output Areas that rank within the most deprived 10% in England, according to the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation.

There are recognised social problems and inequalities within the South West where a new approach is required. We believe that we can use our position and reputation to good effect, to support smaller charities who struggle to tackle the bigger issues around social justice.

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The internal factor

In 2006 Salisbury Cathedral started a strategic review of its work which culminated in the development of its Strategic Plan, confirmed in 2007. The plan details the actions necessary to meet the developing needs of visitors to the Cathedral as well as the steps essential to strengthening our mission.

Social justice was strongly highlighted as an area which merits more focused work if we are to make a real difference and not just pay lip service. We know that we must tackle directly the issues surrounding Social Justice if we are to take an active role in challenging inequalities in our society. We also recognise that this will not be an easy path and it may challenge some of our existing supporters with uncomfortable messages.

Who will be doing the work?

The Strategic Plan identified the need for resources in terms of both time and social justice expertise within the Cathedral. We have now committed to create a part-time post for a social justice expert who will report to the Chapter Clerk, employed for a fixed period of three years. After this point we will review the project and decide whether the work can be carried on by existing staff and clergy, or whether we need to continue the post. The post holder cannot work in isolation and we envisage very close working with the Head of Education; Director of Marketing and Communications and the four principal clergy (internally); the charities we already work with and support in the UK and Sudan (externally) as well as forging new links.

Impact and evaluation

This is an experimental project, but we hope to use the following methods to assess our progress:

Quantitative research

- Entry and exit surveys and workshops to monitor changing attitudes
- Surveys at the end of the exhibition
- Numbers attending the programme of lectures, workshops and activities
- Memberships of human rights organisations we promote
- Repeat visits requested from outreach work
- Number of website clicks to linked charities / causes and downloads of resource materials
- Numbers of letters written to support the social justice cause e.g. requesting release of prisoners of conscience
- Numbers participating in interactive elements of exhibition

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Qualitative research

- Feedback from groups after lectures / activities
- Feedback from visitors to the cathedral in ongoing research
- Follow up presentations and work from school groups
- Benchmarking with other social justice organisations / authorities

We will report specifically on the success of our social justice project on an annual basis targeting both media and other service deliverers within this sector. At the end of the project the Cathedral will deliver a case study identifying the successes and the key lessons learned from this project, which we would expect to place in key media.

The Cathedral also reports on its activities annually to both its own community and to the Church Commissioners via interim and annual reports. As one of the cathedral's strategic objectives, the results of the social justice project will be formally recorded through this existing process.

Budgets

The total project cost will be £199,636 over three years, including £66,000 for the Magna Carta Exhibition.

Please help us by making a donation. You can make donations by credit card, CAF Account, cheque and cash, and we are very happy to discuss other forms of gift such as shares or legacies. You can call us to make a donation on 01722 555107, or contact us at j.wright@salcath.co.uk; Development Office, The Chapter Office, 6 The Close, Salisbury, SP1 2EF

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