

## CONSULTATION ON THE CATHEDRAL'S LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### 1. What is this consultation about?

The Cathedral has identified the need to increase income from visitors to help meet rising running and maintenance costs and protect the Cathedral's future as a place of worship, welcome, and community life in the long-term. This consultation explores whether existing approaches can be improved and whether additional or different measures may be required, including the potential introduction of an entry charge.

#### 2. Why does Worcester Cathedral need to increase income?

Worcester Cathedral is an independent charity. It does not receive regular government funding and must fund its own ministry, staffing and the care of this historic building. The Cathedral is facing rising costs linked to inflation, energy, essential maintenance and staffing. These costs are increasing faster than income resulting in a funding gap which cannot continue indefinitely.

The Cathedral remains open and active, but without addressing this imbalance it will become increasingly difficult to maintain the building, support staff and volunteers, and deliver worship, music, education and community activity in the long term.

#### 3. Is the Cathedral in financial crisis?

No. Worcester Cathedral is not at risk of immediate closure. However, the current financial position is not sustainable over time, and responsible action now helps avoid much more difficult decisions in future.

#### 4. Aren't you already asking visitors for donations?

Yes. Worcester Cathedral already operates an Entry by Donation approach, but it has historically been communicated in a limited and inconsistent way with insufficient results.

Recent changes, including clearer signage and improved queue management, are intended to make visitor giving more intentional and visible. Data from these changes is being reviewed as part of this consultation.

#### 5. Does this mean Entry by Donation is being ruled out?

Entry by Donation remains part of how the Cathedral invites support from visitors. However, the Cathedral also has a responsibility to be realistic about whether this approach, even when well executed, is sufficient on its own.

## **6. Are you planning to introduce a charge to enter the Cathedral?**

No decision has been taken yet. However, the Cathedral recognises that some form of charging may ultimately be required if visitor income cannot be increased to a sustainable level through other means.

This consultation is intended to ensure that any future decision is informed by evidence, data and the views of those who care about the Cathedral.

## **7. What has already been decided, and what is still open for consultation?**

The Cathedral has identified the need to increase unrestricted visitor income as a fixed requirement. The consultation is open on how this is done, including the shape of any charging or donation model, price ranges, exemptions, and how changes are introduced and communicated.

## **8. Will people still be able to enter freely to pray or attend services?**

Yes. Worcester Cathedral will always remain open for worship, prayer and quiet reflection. Any future approach to visitor income would protect this and ensure that those coming for spiritual or pastoral reasons have access where appropriate.

## **9. I already give to the Cathedral. Does this affect me?**

The Cathedral is deeply grateful to those who already give through regular donations, collections, Friends membership, or volunteering.

This consultation is not about increasing expectations of existing supporters, but about how tourist and heritage visitors contribute towards the costs of caring for the Cathedral.

## **10. What does this mean for volunteers and staff?**

Staff and volunteers are central to the Cathedral's welcome and daily life. Their experience and insight are essential to understanding how any visitor income approach works in practice and how it may affect the atmosphere and operations of the Cathedral.

## **11. What happens after the consultation?**

The Cathedral will review the data, and feedback gathered and decide whether changes to its approach to visitor income are needed. The findings will be used to inform Chapter's decision-making, including assessing readiness, risk and implementation considerations.

Any next steps will be communicated clearly and transparently.