



The Friends of Ely Cathedral Autumn Newsletter 2026



Welcome

Autumn 2026 Newsletter
From the Friends' Office



After a much needed summer break with my family, I was ready to return to the Friends Office to work on our Autumn programme and catch up with Friends old and new. First stop was my first Friends' Day and AGM on 12 September. It was a pleasure to meet so many members for an enjoyable afternoon of friendship, reflection and celebration. Your enthusiasm, support and commitment to The Friends are what make our community so special and a joy to be a part of. I am grateful to everyone who attended, contributed and helped make the day such a success.

Thank You

A heartfelt thank you to all our members for your continued support and for all of you who have paid your subscriptions and offered donations. Please do check your subscription is up-to-date and that you are paying our current rate.

Membership Gifts

Do you know someone who loves Ely Cathedral? Gift Membership remains a wonderful way to introduce new people to The Friends. It makes a thoughtful present and helps grow our community of supporters.

Looking Ahead

There is plenty to look forward to over the coming months from Harvest weekend to the Cathedral Christmas Gift & Food Fair.

Thank you for being a Friend!
Shelley



Friends Day 2026

Saturday
12 September



Around 100 Friends gathered at the Cathedral for this year's Friends' Day. The afternoon began with the Annual General Meeting, where members reflected on the achievements of the past year, heard updates on the work of The Friends, and looked ahead to future plans.

Following the AGM, guests were treated to an engaging talk by Jasmine Allen, Director and Curator of the Stained Glass Museum. Her presentation, *The Story of the Stained Glass Museum: From Rescue to Recognition*, explored the remarkable journey of the museum and highlighted the importance of preserving stained glass heritage for future generations.

The celebrations continued in the Lady Chapel with a special Anniversary Afternoon Tea, beautifully provided by the Ely Grazing Company. Friends enjoyed delicious refreshments, a glass of fizz, and the opportunity to catch up with fellow members while viewing the exhibition charting 90 years of the Friends' history and achievements.

The day concluded with Choral Evensong. During the service, the Friends' Chorister Prizes were awarded in recognition of the dedication, commitment and musical achievements of the choristers, whose contributions enrich worship and cathedral life throughout the year.

With thanks to all who came and made the day a success.



Christmas cards 2026

We're delighted to unveil our 2026 Friends of Ely Cathedral Christmas Cards, featuring beautiful artwork by local artist Jane Abbott.

Inspired by the beauty and atmosphere of Ely Cathedral at Christmas, these exclusive cards make the perfect way to send festive greetings while supporting the work of The Friends. Every purchase helps us continue our support of the Cathedral and its mission for future generations.

Cards are available to purchase through the Friends' Office, the Cathedral Shop, at selected Friends events, and from our stall at the Christmas Gift & Food Fair. To view the 2026 design and explore our range of Friends' merchandise, visit our webpage.

Jane Abbott is one of Britain's leading contemporary fine bone china & textile designers and one of a handful dedicated to rejuvenating the art of heritage homeware. She is also a Friend of the Cathedral and we are so grateful to Jane for donating these beautiful designs (www.janeabbott.com).



Events

Please do check your inbox for regular updates on Friends' events throughout the year.



Celebrating 90 Years of Friendship Exhibition Until 9 October, South West Transept

As part of our 90th Anniversary celebrations, we are delighted to present a special exhibition telling the story of our charity and its support for Ely Cathedral over the past nine decades. The exhibition will showcase photographs, documents, memories and highlights from the history of The Friends since our foundation in 1936. Visitors will have the opportunity to discover how generations of Friends have contributed to the preservation, restoration and enhancement of Ely Cathedral through fundraising, volunteering, grants and practical support.

Free to attend.

10.30am – 11.30am, Monday 30 November Restoring Glory: Ely Cathedral's Victorian Story Tour

Step back 150 years and imagine Ely Cathedral right in the middle of an ambitious restoration programme by Dean Peacock and George Gilbert Scott. Together they set in motion what became the most ambitious restoration of any British cathedral attempted at that time – re-imagining the inside, outside and from top to bottom. Their mission? To repair the damage left by the Reformation and peel away the layers that had built up over the centuries, hiding the beauty of the medieval building. Tickets £6, available via the Cathedral box office.

Harvest Weekend Saturday 10 & Sunday 11 October

This year The Friends will be at Harvest Weekend on Saturday 10 October, promoting membership and sharing information about our work. If you are attending, please do stop by and say hello.

The Cathedral has planned a wonderful weekend of harvest celebrations. Ground floor entry will be free on both days, and visitors can enjoy beautiful seasonal decorations, floral displays, harvest exhibits, family activities, mini ride-on tractors, honey tasting with the Cambridge Bee Keeping Association, and opportunities to learn more about the Cathedral's work and community. Ely Food Bank will also be collecting donations throughout the weekend.

There will also be Harvest Festival worship, family-friendly services, and Ely's Autumn & Harvest Fayre taking place nearby on Palace Green and Cross Green. More information can be found here: [Harvest Weekend](#).

Events

Ely Cathedral Christmas Gift & Food Fair

Thursday 19 - Saturday 21 November

Find us at the Christmas Fair where we will be selling our new Christmas cards and other merchandise.

Whether you're searching for unique Christmas gifts, meeting friends for festive food and drink, or simply enjoying the season, the Fair offers really memorable start to Christmas.

We are also looking for volunteers to help staff the Friends stall during the Fair. Whether you can spare a few hours or a longer period, your support would be greatly appreciated. If you would like to volunteer, please contact the Friends Office by emailing Friends@elycathedral.org or calling 01353 660348.

For visitor information and tickets, visit: [Christmas Gift & Food Fair](#).



Could You Spare a Few Hours?

The Friends rely on volunteers whose time, energy and enthusiasm make many of our activities possible. Whether you can help once a year or more regularly, your assistance is always appreciated.

Opportunities Include:

- Support the Friends' Stall at the Christmas Fair - if you can spare a few hours from the 19-21 November we'd love to hear from you.
- Deliver newsletters and yearbooks locally - dates advertised in January.
- Assisting at Friends' events as needed.



Volunteering is a rewarding way to meet fellow Friends, support the Cathedral and make a real contribution to the work of the charity. We would love to hear from you, please contact the Friends Office by emailing Friends@elycathedral.org or calling 01353 660348.

Welcome to Canon Rob Mackley

On Sunday 20 September, Ely Cathedral was delighted to welcome Canon Rob Mackley as he was installed as a Residentiary Canon during Choral Evensong.

The service marked an important moment in the life of the Cathedral and provided an opportunity for the congregation and wider Cathedral community to gather in prayer and celebration as Canon Rob began his new ministry at Ely as Canon Pastor. The Installation was a moving and joyful occasion, reflecting both the significance of the role and the warm welcome extended to him.

Following the service, members of the congregation joined Cathedral clergy, staff and supporters for celebratory refreshments, giving many the chance to meet Canon Rob and offer their good wishes personally.

As Canon Rob settles into his new responsibilities, we continue to hold him in our prayers, together with the parish and people of Little St Mary's, Cambridge, whom he served so faithfully. We look forward to the gifts, experience and pastoral leadership he will bring to the Cathedral community in the years ahead.



Thank You for Being a Friend

As we move towards the end of our 90th Anniversary year, thank you for continuing to support The Friends of Ely Cathedral. Every membership, donation, volunteer hour and act of advocacy helps ensure that this extraordinary Cathedral can continue to inspire future generations.

We look forward to seeing many of you at Harvest Weekend, our forthcoming Friends' events, and the Christmas Fair.

The Friends of Ely Cathedral
Celebrating 90 Years • 1936–2026



A special thank you to all who came to pack Christmas cards this year, it helps keep the costs down whilst being lots of fun!