



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - September 2026

Ely Cathedral successful in funding application for vital repairs and conservation of its celebrated organ.

Ely Cathedral has successfully been awarded a £649,395 grant from The Julia Rausing Trust towards the repair and conservation of the Cathedral's organ.

A team of expert organ builders are due to start working on the organ in Spring 2027. It is anticipated the project will take over a year to clean and repair all 5800 pipes, fix the power motors and wind system, and carry out a complete overhaul of the worn-out console and electrical system.

Canon James Reveley is the Canon Precentor and Interim Dean at Ely - "The organ plays an essential role in many aspects of daily life at Ely Cathedral, from worship and choral music to education, outreach and concerts, while also forming an important part of the Cathedral's history and architecture. The generous funding we have received from The Julia Rausing Trust will make a significant contribution towards helping to ensure that these ongoing traditions continue to be enjoyed by future generations."

Historical records provide evidence of organ music at Ely Cathedral from the medieval period, with records dating back to the 14th century. Historians believe it is highly likely that organs were in use at Ely as early as the 12th century. The present organ was built in 1908 by renowned organ builders Harrison & Harrison, incorporating some of the pipework from its predecessor. The magnificent organ case, designed by the celebrated Victorian architect Sir George Gilbert Scott, remains an important feature of the Cathedral's architecture.

An exciting second phase of the project, subject to securing a further £375,000 in funding, will see the installation of a new nave division – essentially a second set of organ pipes located partway along Ely Cathedral's impressive 75-metre-long nave. Edmund Aldhouse, Director of Music, explains "The nave division will act as an acoustic projector, directing the sound of the restored organ down the length of the nave so that its rich and powerful sound can be heard with greater clarity by everyone, wherever they are seated. By projecting the organ's sound directly into the nave, the new division will not only enhance congregational singing during services but also create a more immersive experience for audiences attending concerts and recitals. We would love to hear from anyone who would be

interested in supporting this exciting new addition to the Cathedral. Please get in touch with our fundraising team for further information.

Anne Dodwell, Director – Arts and Heritage at The Julia Rausing Trust, said: “We are proud to support Ely Cathedral in the repair and restoration of its celebrated organ. This funding reflects the Trust’s commitment to protecting the UK’s historic buildings, and we are pleased our support will help sustain the cathedral’s musical endeavours to inspire the local community and aspiring musicians for generations to come. We hope the contribution will encourage other funders to support the project’s second stage: the installation of a new nave division”.

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About Ely Cathedral

Highly regarded by historians and architects from all over the world for its beauty and size, Ely Cathedral is widely acknowledged as ‘one of the wonders of the Medieval world’. Visible for miles around, the Cathedral is often referred to as ‘The Ship of the Fens’.

The present building dates from 1081 and is a remarkable example of both Romanesque and Norman architecture. In addition to its unique Octagon Tower and magnificent Lady Chapel, Ely has the third longest nave of any UK Cathedral. The Cathedral’s role today is not so far removed from its days as a Benedictine monastery and offers regular daily worship with a special emphasis on choral music. It still maintains a resident choir of 22 choristers and 6 lay clerks and so continues the tradition of choral evensong every day of the week during term time.

As well as being a major visitor attraction, the Cathedral serves as a cultural focal point for East Anglia by providing a unique venue for the arts & music, for exhibitions, concerts and theatre. Most recently Ely has gained global recognition a prominent film location including *Elizabeth: The Golden Age*, *Macbeth*, *The King’s Speech*, *The Crown* and *Maestro*.

For media enquiries, please contact: la.thompson@elycathedral.org

About The Julia Rausing Trust:

The Julia Rausing Trust was established by Sir Hans Rausing in memory of his late wife, Julia Rausing, (née Delves Broughton), the British philanthropist who died in 2024.

Julia Rausing co-founded The Julia and Hans Rausing Trust in 2014. She was widely known for her unwavering commitment to philanthropy and her impactful contributions to a wide range of UK charitable causes. She was instrumental in building the Julia and Hans Rausing Trust into one of the largest philanthropic funds in the country, donating £400 million to causes across Health, Welfare, and the Arts, primarily within the UK.

The Julia Rausing Trust is a registered charity (number 1213572) and was established by Sir Hans Rausing in order to make grants in Julia’s name, supporting causes she was particularly passionate about.

<https://www.juliarausingtrust.org>