



PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Peregrine Falcons' return to Ely Cathedral

Ely, Cambridgeshire – [07 April] — Ely Cathedral is delighted to announce the return of peregrine falcons to its historic West Tower, marking another exciting chapter in the life of one of the region's most iconic landmarks. The pair of peregrines have once again chosen the Cathedral as their nesting site, a testament to the building's suitability as a safe and elevated habitat. The female had initially laid three eggs with a fourth egg appearing over the Easter Bank Holiday weekend.

Cathedral staff first confirmed the birds' presence earlier this season, noting courtship behaviour and nesting activity high on the structure. "We are thrilled to have peregrines back at Ely Cathedral," said Michelle Baxter, Visitor Experience Manager. "The team here have been taking advice from specialists at the Hawk & Owl Trust to ensure we are doing everything we can to support the birds, including installing a purpose-built nesting box to encourage breeding and to create a safe and suitable environment for nesting and hatching. Their presence has become a source of fascination for those within the community as well as Peregrine Falcon enthusiasts elsewhere. With a fourth egg appearing over the Easter weekend, we are hopeful there will be a successful hatching of chicks."

Known for being the fastest birds in the world, peregrine falcons were once endangered in the UK due to habitat loss and pesticide use, but conservation efforts have helped populations recover significantly. Visitors to the Cathedral may be lucky enough to spot the falcons soaring overhead or perched along a ledge south side of the tower, though the nesting area itself remains protected to minimise disturbance. Since the eggs have appeared, and in line with the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, the team at Ely have suspended activity in the area including Tower Tours, any non essential maintenance work and use of the Cathedral flag pole.

Peregrines first began nesting at Ely Cathedral in 2019, and by 2020 they had successfully raised two chicks, sparking huge interest among locals and visitors alike. Conservation groups and Cathedral staff quickly began monitoring the new residents. In 2021, a webcam was installed, allowing thousands of people worldwide to watch the peregrine family raise four chicks—a highlight in the

Cathedral's wildlife story. Between 2022 and 2024, rival falcons competed for territory, and no stable pair settled to breed. Although peregrines were still seen around the towers, the nest remained empty. A hopeful new chapter began in 2025, when another pair returned and laid three eggs. Their arrival renewed excitement that peregrines might once again become regular Cathedral residents. Unfortunately, none of the 2025 chicks survived.

Today, Ely's peregrines tell a bigger story—one of wildlife adapting to city life and recovering after decades of decline. Their presence shows how nature and historic buildings can thrive side by side, connecting heritage, conservation and community. The Cathedral is keen to encourage the public to follow updates throughout the nesting season, with potential opportunities to observe the birds via guided talks or online features. For more information and to enjoy the livestream from the webcam in the nesting box please visit <https://www.elycathedral.org/plan-your-visit/things-to-see-and-do/peregrine-falcons>.

- **ENDS** -

Images : Ely Cathedral Peregrines (Credit Simon Stirrup)