

## NLHF Application Extract

### Tell us your idea

Our project will address critical heritage at risk of loss in our 1,000-year-old Cathedral and widen and deepen the Cathedral's role in the community and visitor economy.

The project will:

- Enable the Cathedral to develop its leading role as a centre for the cultural life, visitor economy and wellbeing of the town and area. Our programme of engagement, activity and training will attract and engage a wider range of people, including families, young adults and disabled people, to participate in and benefit from our unique and inspirational space and heritage.
- Deliver major access improvements, visibility and welcome. With the help of our architect and a specialist access consultant, and in consultation with local stakeholders including Brecknock Access Group and our congregation, we have carried out a thorough options appraisal to identify the best option to provide fully inclusive equal access to the Cathedral. Our preferred option is to create a new west entrance. This would provide an at-grade entrance to the Cathedral and dispense with any need for ramps. It would also greatly improve entrance visibility externally and create a magnificent view of the Cathedral on entry. Cadw has indicated in-principle approval.
- Repair those of the Cathedral's roofs that are in most urgent need. Phasing our roof repairs enables us to: settle on an immediately affordable and deliverable project; respect the fact that the red sandstone tiles are now produced at only one quarry in modest quantities; develop heritage skills; and enable us to train a workforce in heritage roof repairing skills.
- In partnership with Wales National Roofing Training Group, we have developed an NVQ Level 3 Heritage Roofing training programme to instruct a core group of roofers in the specialist skills to undertake the re-roofing of the four priority roofs, providing the skills for further work on our other roofs in due course and a pool of people trained in these heritage skills for work on other projects. The programme will be piloted this summer, working on the Lychgate roof.
- Reorder the Cathedral's interior to provide greater flexibility, strengthening its use as a venue for community and cultural events and enabling more diverse arts and other events with partners in the town. This is likely to involve re-siting the pulpit and choir stalls and improving the acoustics in specific areas. Through Brecon Story – local groups, individuals, attractions and activity providers – we have canvassed views about how best to make sensitive changes to provide greater flexibility and will ensure their full engagement in the development stage.
- Provide new interpretation to bring 1,000 years of history to life for all visitors. We have done initial work on the Cathedral's stories and interpreting them within the Cathedral itself and our Outline Interpretation Plan is included in this application. We will consult widely during the development stage to ensure that the best approach is identified and co- designed with those with interest and enthusiasm for our heritage.

- Improve the Tithebarn, improving its capacity for community activities and event hires, thereby also strengthening the Cathedral's earned income streams. The Hours, our new café and shop operators, have many ideas for activities and events; they, with Brecon Story and other partners, will transform the breadth and diversity of participants and audiences.
- Transform the pace of our work to address our environmental footprint and future sustainability. We will develop a full sustainability audit and strategy and then, in the delivery stage, invest in the implementation of initiatives to transform our aging and inefficient systems and our overall performance.

### **Explain what need and opportunity your project will address**

Our project will address key needs relating to access, heritage at risk, heritage skills shortages and environmental sustainability. It will extend and diversify the Cathedral's role as a community and cultural resource, addressing the social and wellbeing needs of many in our community. It will enhance the Cathedral's role as a visitor attraction, contributing to the recovery of the local economy from Covid- 19 and strengthening the Cathedral's financial resilience.

In particular:

- **Access needs:** access into the Cathedral is very poor, deterring entry and creating an accident risk. With our architect, historic building consultant, access consultant, and in consultation with local stakeholders including Brecknock Access Group and our congregation, we have carried out an options appraisal to identify how best to provide fully inclusive equal access. Our preferred option is to create a new west door, providing entrance at grade and dispensing with any need for ramps. It will also greatly improve entrance visibility externally and create a magnificent view of the Cathedral on entry. Cadw has indicated its in-principle approval, subject to further testing of options and detailing during our development stage.
- **Heritage at risk:** roof failure is putting the heritage fabric, interior and treasures of the Cathedral at risk. The project addresses an urgent first phase of roof works to conserve the heritage and deliver skills and jobs benefits. With the benefit of the new Quinquennial Review we have identified the four roofs in most urgent need of replacement. Partnering with the Wales National Roofing Training Group, we have identified critical skills shortages in stone roof repair across and beyond Wales; our project will address these needs, repair our most damaged roofs and develop our own capacity to complete all our roofs over the years that follow.
- **Cultural and community opportunities:**
  - The Cathedral's internal layout constrains and limits use; there are opportunities for internal reordering to improve access, provide greater flexibility, diversify use and bring more and more diverse people to the Cathedral. In person consultations with members of Brecon Story and other local community and cultural event producers confirm the potential for more and different events at the Cathedral, including music, theatre, participative performances, festival events, spoken word and a wide variety of community activities. Our project will complement other facilities in the

town and unlock creativity and wellbeing outcomes from participation and enjoyment of cultural events in our wonderful building.

- Our consultations also confirmed the need for, and excitement about, a simple, affordable, good quality multi-use community space in the Tithebarn with catering onsite. Minor works will make the space accessible and suitable for a much wider range of community uses and small events than at present.
  
- Need and opportunity for heritage interpretation: responding to consultees' and visitors' interests in our stories, we have developed a new approach to meet needs and to inspire and engage both local people and visitors to the town and Cathedral. Heritage themes have been identified in a workshop with local stakeholders and our initial proposals about how we might tell these stories are set out in our Outline Interpretation Plan.
  
- Need for financial resilience: we need to strengthen the financial sustainability and resilience of the Cathedral, so that we can better care for our heritage in the long term and respond to the many interests and enthusiasms of our town and visitors. The project will bring new visitors, new incomes and new resources of staff, trainees and volunteers to enable us to meet these needs and opportunities over very many years to come.
  
- Need for improved environmental sustainability: our Cathedral requires fundamental and urgent action in this area and this project will transform the pace of our work to address our environmental footprint and future sustainability, providing investment in the implementation of electrical use and space heating to transform our fossil-fuel based systems and our overall performance.