

VICARS' CLOSE

A MEDIEVAL STREET SINGING THROUGH THE CENTURIES

The Project

The Project will save this internationally significant architectural site. It will deliver an exciting and ambitious new visitor experience, together with a programme of events to uncover and celebrate our heritage. Working in partnership across our communities, the Project will ensure that Vicars' Close remains valued, protected and relevant for future generations.



The Heritage

Vicars' Close is the oldest intact medieval street in Europe (1348) still used for its original purpose: to house the Cathedral's adult choir. Surveys have shown the pressing need to rectify the seriously deteriorating condition of each of the twenty-seven historically significant Grade I listed houses, the Chapel, Vicars' Hall, and Treasury rooms.

Our project will repair and conserve the envelope of the Close's buildings, to halt the water ingress and damp that is causing considerable and accelerating deterioration to the buildings' fabric. Without these urgent works there is an imminent danger that Vicars' Close is added to Historic England's 'Heritage at Risk Register.'

Our significant historic spaces will be opened to the public, with new interpretation sharing 800 years' of untold stories about the architectural, musical, and social heritage of the Close.



Exterior damage caused by damp



Opening unseen spaces

Fuelling imaginations, cultivating creativity

Working with local experts, professional artists and volunteers, we will co-create and co-deliver a full programme of activities, workshops and events to engage and inspire a broad range of audiences. Our musical heritage and unique archival collection will provide the inspiration for cross art form participation and expression, inviting people to bring different perspectives to inform our interpretative story.

Partnerships will be fostered with schools, colleges and universities, as well as work placements for young people and lifelong learning opportunities for adults. We will reach out beyond our immediate community and work with organisations across the county to engage new and harder to reach audiences.

Our themes are wide ranging, from life in the Middle Ages to the exploration of emotional responses to music. Our buildings provide fascinating clues to the physical development of the Close and how it has responded to social changes over time. Our gardens will focus on the medicinal use of plants and how, by looking to the past, we can make a positive contribution to the future through increasing biodiversity and native planting.

Volunteers will remain at the heart of the project, researching our history, capturing living memories, sharing our heritage and welcoming our visitors.

Our Project provides an incredible opportunity to explore our shared history and touch people's lives now and in the future.

Timeline

- 2024
Funding confirmed from National Lottery Heritage Fund
- 2025
Work starts on site
- 2028/9
Project complete

Funding

The project will cost in the region of £7million.

We have secured £5.4million of funding, including a grant of £4.4million from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), leaving £1.6million in match funding required to enable us to complete the project.



Inspiring young people



Sharing our heritage



Encouraging creativity