



Vicars' Close Project

Community Consultation Group Callout

Here at Wells Cathedral, we are looking to create 3 new **community consultation groups**, which reflect the diversity of the county, and will help us better understand our offer to local communities.

The groups will:

1. Provide **feedback on the design and approach to Vicars' Close**, our new historical visitor attraction, opening in 2027.
2. **Share thoughts and ideas on Wells Cathedral** and how it can broaden its appeal.
3. Contribute reflections about their **experiences of living in Somerset**.

Participants in the groups will receive a **financial contribution for their time**.



Vicars' Close is an amazing medieval street that feels like travelling back in time. For over 650 years it has been home to the Cathedral's choir. As well as repairing the buildings, we are engaging people in a whole range of activities – from singing and oral histories to wildlife gardening. Eventually, once we've finished repairs and made it more accessible, we will open parts of the street as an innovative new visitor attraction with all kinds of things to explore.

Given its continued use as a residential street for many people, our theme for this activity is the idea of 'home'. We're excited to explore what this means to people from across the county.

The Vicars' Close Project is made possible with The National Lottery Heritage Fund. Thanks to National Lottery players, we have been able to increase our work engaging and consulting with communities.

About the Groups

We will be creating 3 groups over the next 2 years.

Each group will have 10 places available.

We want to **learn how to engage more impactfully with our communities**, offering different opportunities which will **appeal to a wide range of people**.

We want each group to **represent the diversity of our region**, so are looking to establish groups who reflect this diversity. We are particularly keen to hear from those **people who may not have engaged with Wells Cathedral before or feel there are barriers to their engagement**.

These barriers could include:

- a feeling that history or 'the arts' are not accessible for them.
- a lack of interest in the Cathedrals activities.
- a feeling that the Cathedral does not offer opportunities for them.
- a feeling of lack of representation within the Cathedral.
- a feeling that they might not be welcome at the Cathedral.
- physical accessibility barriers that the Cathedral presents.
- geographic or rural isolation.

We want to create an equitable experience for all, and are particularly interested in hearing from:

- Those who identify as disabled.
- Young people (aged 18-30)
- Carers and parents
- Farmers and those who work in rural trades and economies.
- Those who do not visit creative or cultural sites, or who have never visited the Cathedral before
- Those who may identify as Global Majority and/or of a heritage which reflects global diversity.
- Those who identify as neurodiverse.
- Those who do not identify as religious or of a different faith to Christianity.

If you have any access requirements, we will make any reasonable adjustments we can to best support you. Exact adjustments will depend on the individual, but may include things such as: ensuring accessible spaces for meetings and workshops, shortening, or adjusting session times, creating opportunity for more remote engagement, support with access to technology etc.

How will we use your input?

We will use the groups to help us **shape our thinking**, inviting **feedback on specific parts of our strategy and future planning**.

The first group will be involved in discussions and feedback on the Cathedral's approach to the Vicar's Close Visitor Experience and planned creative activity. This group will be known as the 'shaping' group, helping us to shape our ideas and plans.

Through reports compiled across the engagement with the group, an overview of key contributions will be shared with the senior leadership team and be considered as part of their thinking and future planning.

We cannot commit to acting on each idea or piece of feedback that is raised as part of these meetings, but they will be vital in the Cathedral gaining a clearer picture of how it can more impactfully support its local community.

The details:

The first group will run between: **January 2026 – August 2026**

Location: **Wells Cathedral** (remote engagement may be possible depending on circumstance)

The group will consist of 6 x 2-hour meetings (roughly 1 per month), with a financial contribution of £11.50 per hour. Total = £138 total (£23 per meeting, payable on completion of the project).

You must ensure you are available to attend all the meetings prior to accepting the engagement and will not be paid for any sessions not attended.

Any additional expenses, i.e. travel, must be agreed in advance and will be dependent on individual circumstances.

The dates and times for Group 1 sessions are:

Session 1: Thursday 15th January, 6-8pm

Session 2: Thursday 12th February, 6-8pm

Session 3: Thursday 16th April, 6-8pm

Session 4: Thursday 14th May, 6-8pm

Session 5: Thursday 16th July, 6-8pm

Session 6: Thursday 13th August, 6-8pm

As part of the groups, you may be asked to participate in recordings and interviews, contributing stories and memories about your experiences of living in Somerset. This could inspire the creative activity being developed around the Vicars' Close project or feature as part of the visitor experience.

Individual permission will be sought when there is any use of photography, video, and audio recording. No-one will be recorded if they do not wish to be, and all participants have a right to anonymity.

Any feedback offered as part of the groups will be anonymised when being shared with anyone beyond the core project team (Interpretation Designers, Creative Facilitator and Engagement Co-Ordinator).

How to Apply

The deadline for applications is **Monday 10th November at 10am**

You can apply in the following ways:

Online Form: <https://forms.office.com/e/uqJPS62aVe>

WhatsApp Voice Note: to **07747214861**

WhatsApp Video Recording: to **07747214861**



If you are submitting via voice note or video recording, as well as **answering the questions below**, please make sure you include your **name, phone number** and an **email address** that we can contact you on. The maximum total length for videos or voice notes should be **5 minutes**.

Voice Note/Video Questions to Answer (key questions in **bold**):

1. What is your name?
2. Where do you live in Somerset?
3. What is your email address and phone number?
4. **What interests you about this opportunity?**
5. **What about your lived experience prepares you well to contribute to a community consultancy group?**
6. **Why are you interested in contributing ideas about the Vicars' Close Project and the future of Wells Cathedral?**
7. Are you available for all of the project session dates?
8. Do you have any accessibility requirements?
9. Would you prefer to attend in person or remote initial informal meeting?
10. Please indicate your availability for the initial informal meeting dates (see below), highlighting any dates or times you will **not** be able to attend.

Next Steps

Prospective members will be **invited to an informal group meeting** with the Creative Facilitator and Engagement Co-Ordinator.

These informal meetings will take place in **November 2025** at Wells Cathedral or online, depending on your preference.

Dates for the meetings are as follows:

Tuesday 25th November, 2-3pm (online)

Tuesday 25th November, 4-5pm (online)

Tuesday 25th November, 6-7pm (online)

Wednesday 26th November, 2.30-3.30pm (in person at Wells Cathedral)

Wednesday 26th November, 4-5pm (in person at Wells Cathedral)

Wednesday 26th November, 4-5pm (in person at Wells Cathedral)

Please let us know if there are any accessibility requirements or reasonable adjustments you might need.

Group Selection

Following the informal meetings, candidates will be **informed as to whether they will be invited onto the group.**

We are looking to bring together groups which reflect a diverse cross section of the community across the county. This means that we are looking for a range of voices and people with different lived experiences. Groups will be composed taking that consideration into account and to ensure we have a diverse range of views and perspectives.

Anyone who is not invited to join a group **does not need to apply again** for subsequent groups and **will be automatically considered for future opportunities.**

Dates for Group 2 (Testing) and 3 (Legacy) will be released in March 2026 (Group 2) and February 2027 (Group 3). The Testing group will be involved in testing the Visitor Experience and offering feedback on usage. The Legacy group will help the Cathedral plan beyond the end of the Vicars' Close Project.

Further Information:

For more information or if you have any questions, please contact the Vicars' Close Project Team:

VCProject@wellscathedral.org.uk