



Nottingham Cathedral

Restoring Pugin
Welcome Lead Project Brief
July 2025



Project Background

Organisation profile

The Diocese of Nottingham was established in 1851. It promotes the Catholic faith and supports the spiritual life and Christian service of its people. It provides 178 places of worship and 86 Catholic schools across the East Midlands. Nottingham Cathedral is its Mother Church. It serves a diverse and disadvantaged inner city parish as well as providing a focus for diocesan and city events. The Cathedral is open from 7am to 7pm 7 days per week. Times of worship are 7.30am and 1pm on weekdays and 8am to 12.30pm on Sundays.

Sunday mass attendance increased from 750 in 2023 to 900 in 2024. Overall we estimate annual mass attendance to be 75,000. There are around 2,500 regular attenders. We estimate non-worship casual visitors (not including event attendances) to be around 24,000. These are people coming in to light a candle, to sit in peace for a while, or just to look around.

Cathedral heritage

Nottingham's Roman Catholic Cathedral was designed by Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812-1852) and completed in 1844. It is listed Grade II*. It was consecrated as the Cathedral of the newly restored Catholic Diocese of Nottingham in 1851. At the time of completion it was the largest Catholic church to have been built in England since the Reformation. At Nottingham Pugin developed his vision of the importance of the chancel and screen to the sanctity of the Mass, which in turn influenced the Oxford Movement and the development of Anglo-Catholicism.

In his short life Pugin was one of the most influential champions and exponents of Victorian Neo Gothic architecture and decoration. His influence on George Gilbert Scott and William Morris is well-documented. His fame was assured through the design of the Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben) and his work on the Palace of Westminster. The Cathedral at Nottingham was one of his proudest achievements. He designed the exterior in the simple Early English style, in order to devote budget to the lavish internal decoration of a Mediaeval church.

The Cathedral was last decorated in 1993 and is in urgent need of redecoration. We have spent the last seven years working out the best way to achieve this. Conservators have undertaken paint tests and investigations using different methodologies in 2019, 2021, and 2023-4. We received funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund in 2018 (Discovering Pugin project) and again in 2023 for the development phase of a major project to restore the original decorations to the east end – 3 chapels and the connecting ambulatories. The Heritage Fund has now confirmed a grant of £1.7 million towards a £2.3 million delivery phase.

Restoring Pugin project aims and benefits

We will restore AWN Pugin's original rich neo-Gothic decorative scheme to the walls and ceilings of the three east chapels and connecting ambulatories at Nottingham Cathedral. These are decorations of outstanding significance and rarity which help explain the birth of the Gothic revival. We will tell this story in a range of traditional and innovative ways. In addition to restoration work our project will:

- attract 20,000 audiences over 20 months to our events and activities programme
- provide excellent interpretation of our historic Cathedral

- provide excellent public engagement with our discoveries and our heritage story
- work with partners to reach disadvantaged communities in particular asylum seekers, and families with SEND children
- work with schools and NTU to promote heritage career options to young people from communities who would not normally consider them, using *Pugin's Revival* video game
- improve the skill base of the paint conservation sector by employing a full time trainee
- train at least 50 new volunteers in visitor engagement and event management
- employ and train 4 heritage career starters for 36 days each
- enable us to become more sustainable as an organisation
- make us an active partner in Nottingham and regional heritage events and initiatives.

Benefits of Restoring Pugin are as follows:

1. Restoration of a rare survival of a Victorian Gothic decorative masterpiece in the east end of the Cathedral
2. Improvement in the skill base of the paint conservation sector through a paid paint conservation traineeship
3. Explanation of the science and art of historic paint research and conservation to a wider public via a short film and a series of events to different audiences
4. Establishment of the Cathedral on the heritage map of Nottingham so that the story of Pugin and the beauty of his work can become better known
5. Promotion of heritage career options to young people from communities who would not normally consider them, with a focus on neural diversity and inclusion
6. A VR experience to explain the changing paint schemes of the Cathedral to a wide audience
7. Teaching young people (age12-17) about the needs of historic buildings and the impact of different conservation interventions via a video game experience (created in the development phase by Nottingham Trent University)
8. Training 50 volunteers in visitor engagement and event management skills
9. Attracting a wide range of new visitors to the Cathedral
10. Active partnership in Nottingham and county heritage events and initiatives.

New signage will ensure that everyone is made to feel welcome and invited to visit. There is no charge. New interpretation inside and outside will include panels, leaflets, a guidebook, an interactive touchscreen and audio tour. We will offer more regular guided tours and participate in city-wide events such as Light Night, Festival of Science and Curiosity, Heritage Open Days etc. We will offer regular craft based holiday workshops for families.

Visitors and engagement

In 2022 -23 the Cathedral achieved approx. 2,000 non-worship events visitors. The non worship events comprised Light Night, Heritage Open Days and 2 concerts all organised by the Friends of the Cathedral.

During our Restoring Pugin development phase September 2023 to September 2024 we undertook 39 activity-based events and 45 guided tours. We reached 8500 audiences via these events. Nearly half of these came to our Light Night installation (2 nights), around 650 to Festival of Science and Curiosity (2 days), around 300 to Heritage Open Days (4 days). 72% of audience survey respondents were first time visitors.

We have developed good relationships with Rumbletums Café (work experience for young people with special educational needs), Refugee Roots, Christian Action Network, Nottingham Playhouse, NG1 (local Derby Road businesses group) and with the Nottingham SEND Keyworking Team. We collaborate to support their users with appropriate activities.

We undertake focussed engagement work with 2 marginalised and harder to reach groups: Families with children with SEND, and migrants and asylum seekers. We held 3 Pugin related crafts workshops for asylum seeker families and are developing relationships of trust with refugee women and children living in a nearby city centre hotel. We have won extra funding from the City Council for a programme to provide welcome and wellbeing activity for the women in the Cathedral Hall. We held 10 events for families and/or young people with SEND with a focus on crafts and on careers options. For this work we are partnering with Notts SEND Keyworkers Forum, Bennerly Fields Special School, Rumbletums Café, Notts Refugee Council and Refugee Roots to develop our offer to these groups.

We expect to welcome nearly 20,000 visitors over the 20 months of the Restoring Pugin Delivery Stage, broken down as follows: HOD x2 – 1000. Festival of Science and Curiosity x2 – 1000. Light Night x2 – 8000. Luxmuralis installation x5 nights – 5000. Careers events x16 – 400. Arts & craft workshops x30 – 600. Other one off events – 3000. Guided tours for schools x10 & other groups x60 – 750.

We expect that there will be around 8,000 **event** visitors per year going forward i.e. attending Heritage Open Days, Light Night, tours, talks and workshops. We expect **casual** visitors to the Cathedral to increase from approx. 24,000 to around 35,000. This increase will be the result of raised awareness that there is something rare and spectacular to see there, and as a result of the improved welcome and visitor experience.

Target audiences- existing and new

1. Existing congregation, volunteers and users of the Cathedral including Friends of the Cathedral
2. Current and new residents of Nottingham including recent migrants, families with children with SEND, young people with mental health conditions in particular those exacerbated by the pandemic, socially isolated people,
3. Secondary schools in Nottingham with higher than average SEND pupils and those in areas with poor social mobility
4. Young people studying or recently qualified in paint conservation
5. Young people studying at NTU and the University of Nottingham
6. People working in Nottingham
7. Visitors to Nottingham, staying with friends and relatives and international tourists staying in the area

Restoring Pugin Delivery Phase Project Brief	
Role Title: Welcome Lead (WL)	
Days: approx. 5 days per month @£200 per day	
Value: £20,000	
Contract length: 100 days to be delivered in total	
Start date and finish date: September 2025-February 2027	
Responsible to: Engagement Manager (EM)	Responsible for: Volunteers, Friends of the Cathedral, Heritage Assistants
Funding: The National Lottery Heritage Fund	

Overall purpose

Your primary role will be to support the Engagement Manager in the recruitment, training and support of a team of volunteers who will provide resource for delivery of the Activity Plan. You will also play a key role in supporting with events for different community groups to be delivered throughout the life of the project.

This role will be freelance and based from home, however, you will undertake work at various sites including Nottingham Cathedral and education and community settings. We envisage that most of the work for this role will be delivered on site at the Cathedral.

You will be responsible for your own tax, insurance, pension and equipment.

Principle duties and responsibilities

- You will work with the EM, the Cathedral Administrator and the Diocese of Nottingham to produce a suite of volunteer support documents
- You will be the primary contact for new volunteers and will manage volunteer applications.
- You will manage communication between volunteers and the project team.
- You will undertake a skills audit of existing volunteer and identify gaps and training needs.
- You will support the EM with the organisation and delivery of key events, workshops and activities.
- You will support the Cathedral Administrator with ensuring that appropriate records are maintained for the volunteer workforce.
- You will devise and deliver a programme of training, support meetings, and social events for volunteers.
- You will consult and liaise with other training providers such as Museum Development Midlands and the Volunteer Centre and other dioceses to understand best practice and make use of existing resources.
- You will work with the Evaluation Consultant to ensure that the volunteer programme and activity plan is evaluated successfully throughout the programme.
- You will produce a monthly newsletter of volunteer opportunities and events.
- You will work with the Friends to recruit volunteers to support each event.
- You will keep a database of volunteer hours and activities for the purposes of reporting to The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Personal Specification		
Qualities	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge & Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working with volunteers. • Good administration skills • Knowledge of Outlook, Word, excel. • Experience running events • Knowledge of good practice for volunteer management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working with parish communities at churches or cathedrals • Experience working with people from a wide range of backgrounds. • Knowledge of Health and Safety policy and practise in relation to working with volunteers. • Experience working in a heritage environment.
Skills & Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective in building and managing relationships with colleagues and partners, • The ability to manage multiple activities and prioritise your workload • Good communication skills, both written and oral. • Excellent organisational skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence working with a range of different audiences
Characteristics & Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can bring out the best in people, facilitating personal development both in yourself and others • You are happy to work outside of your comfort zone and think laterally to tackle new challenges effectively • You will have an understanding of and commitment to equality and diversity. • You will understand and empathise with the Christian values inherent within this project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You understand the barriers that exist in recruiting and retaining volunteers • You have a personal faith

How to apply

Please send your CV, contact details for two referees, and a letter of around 4-500 words describing how you fit our criteria and why you want the role, to the Project Manager : jane.hellings1@btinternet.com and copied to cathedral@dioceseofnottingham.uk
Deadline 9am Monday 18th August