



## THE DEAN

Surely the most significant aspect of this summer for the diocese of Salisbury is that it is welcoming a new bishop. By the beginning of the autumn the Revd Nick Holtam, vicar of St Martin-in-the-Fields, will have become Bishop Nicholas and will have moved with his family from a flat high above Trafalgar Square into South Canonry. We hope he will be enthroned in the cathedral in October and thus begin his ministry as the seventy-eighth Bishop of Salisbury.

Bishop Nicholas comes to us with almost thirty years of experience in parish ministry. Apart from a short period when he was teaching in theological college he has served in three very different parishes, so has a profound understanding of the tasks of the local church.

One of those local churches happened to have 10 Downing Street and Buckingham Palace within its parish boundaries so he has also operated on a very public stage. Many of us will have listened to broadcasts from St Martin's or perhaps responded to its Christmas appeal. Our new bishop is an inspiring speaker and an influential thinker but he also has an easy manner, a ready laugh and genuinely enjoys listening in on other people's stories, so I'm confident that we're going to enjoy getting to know him.

He does not come alone! Helen his wife is a maths teacher and has worked most recently with older teenagers in a referral unit in Brixton. She is also immensely skilled at origami so I'm expecting our Education Department to be negotiating for some courses when she might teach others the art of beautiful paper products. Helen is a Quaker by background and conviction so will be a new member for the Friends Meeting in Salisbury as well as a regular worshipper at the cathedral. The Quaker tradition is a very important part of the ecumenical life of this country and played an important role in my own spiritual development, so I was delighted to visit the new meeting house on Wilton Road when it opened last year and take the cathedral's good wishes to them as they began life in a new home.

Nick and Helen have four grown-up children. David, who is married to Eleanor, is an accountant in London. Tim has almost finished his training to be a teacher and lives in Brighton. Sarah is warden of a Quaker meeting house in central London. Phil has not long finished university and is working in Bristol. They are all great fun and we look forward to their enjoyment of being part of our extended community.

Of course we hope that Nick, Helen and their family will be immensely happy as they settle into the Close, and that Nick will thrive as bishop of this large and historic diocese. What are the challenges he will face as he finds his way around?

In one sense the task of the parish churches never varies: to present the faith of Jesus Christ afresh in every generation and to worship God in a way that encourages everyone in the local community to think of doing the same. Our neighbours expect us to be confident in that faith and open-hearted in that invitation. Yet the local churches of Wiltshire and Dorset face challenges which need to be addressed boldly if the Church of England in these counties is to be true to itself and its inheritance of faith. For instance, despite many noble initiatives and diocesan plans, few such things have made any recent impact on the numerical growth of the local church. For twenty years the numbers of people who attend church have been in decline and that tends to make planning for the future more difficult and more reactive. In addition it becomes harder to sustain the stock of historic church buildings, so powerful on the landscape but costly to maintain. And there are inevitable issues around the leadership of clergy and lay people in a church where both congregations and those being trained for accredited ministry tend to be getting older.

The richness of our inheritance in this place cannot be underestimated and the resources of the diocese make us stronger than many parts of the worldwide church, but with a new episcopal leader at the helm this is a good time to revisit our priorities and ways of doing things – for the better service of our communities and in the hope of building good partnerships as public services shrink.

If we rejoice in welcoming Bishop Nicholas we also know that later in the year we will have to experience the sadness of saying farewell to the Precentor, one of the best loved and most creative spirits in the cathedral's life. It would be premature for me to anticipate Jeremy Davies's departure before we send him off into a long and active retirement just after Christmas, but I hope friends from far and wide will think of gathering with us on Sunday 15th January 2012 to celebrate his extraordinary ministry of over twenty-six years in Salisbury.

It feels entirely appropriate that during his last Holy Week and Easter, Jeremy and his colleagues in the Liturgy and Music Department were having their skills recorded and transmitted by the BBC. Some of you may have enjoyed watching the live broadcast of our Easter Day service, timed to a neat fifty-nine minutes in order to fit the broadcasting schedules. I do not think that I can promise seven-minute sermons in future at such big festivals! We have already filmed two programmes of 'Songs of Praise' which will be shown later in the year and we are in the middle of helping produce a ninety-minute documentary about cathedral choristers for showing next year. We are always a little nervous when we allow cameras and microphones to invade our space because they can

distort what we do and put worship at risk, but the media teams we have been working with have been infinitely sensitive and respectful and so I suspect you will view our life pretty much as it is. You might even catch some images of our splendid flower festival which was once again such a success in June.

All the proceeds from that flower festival went to the continuing success of our Major Repair Programme. Another important person who will retire later this year is Ted Hillier, who has directed the workforce in our Works Department for many years and will be handing over to Ralph Bell, a new Clerk of the Works, who comes to us from Suffolk. Just as Ted leaves we will be moving all our masons onto the scaffolding which surrounds the Chapter House. Thanks to a very generous anonymous donation we hope to spend the next two years bringing that area of the cathedral back to its best. Significantly this will enable us to start work on the construction of the Little Paradise project - a new home for our boilers, new storage space and most importantly new toilet facilities. This is a project which the Friends have already adopted and it is through your commitment that we will see the transformation of those facilities. State-of-the-art and ample toilets will be an achievement well worth a good party and I bless the Friends, your excellent Chairman and Secretary, and all the Executive Committee for making possible that step forward in our life.

Whatever the comings and goings in the people who serve God here, making the cathedral's life strong and sustainable, the essential message is always the same: to proclaim our faith afresh in every generation and to give thanks for the enormous blessings which we see day by day. Thank you as ever for your support.

**June Osborne**  
Dean of Salisbury

### **GRANTS MADE TO SALISBURY CATHEDRAL: 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011**

**No new grant applications were received from the Dean & Chapter this financial year. However, balances remain for ongoing grants as follows:**

Te Deum Frontal .....	£8,058
Monument Conservation .....	£15,000
Improvements to Choir Lighting .....	£44,000
Cathedral Flowers .....	£2,000
Little Paradise first stage work .....	£60,000
<b>Total: .....</b>	<b>£129,058</b>