



## **THE CATHEDRAL UNDER LOCKDOWN**

**By Dean Peter Atkinson**

People talk about 'coming out of lockdown' and 'getting back to normal'. People ask me when the Cathedral will 're-open'. This is understandable, but it doesn't address the challenge facing the Cathedral when the doors are eventually unlocked. When the Cathedral was closed as part of the Government lockdown on 23 March, 50% of the Cathedral's usual income dried up – from services, visitors, events, our café and our shop. Yet many of our expenses continue – the wage bill, the insurance, and the utilities. Like charities and companies all over the country, the Cathedral is facing the biggest cash crisis in a generation. Somebody said to me, 'But a cathedral can't go bankrupt, can it?'

Unfortunately, the answer is yes. Some people still imagine that the Cathedral is funded by the Government, or the central authorities of the Church of England, or the Diocese of Worcester, or the City. It's not. My colleagues of the Cathedral Chapter and I have to find practically all the money to maintain the building, pay for the staff, and fund everything that goes on in it. We don't have great reserves. We have managed to pay our way, year by year.

But this year is different. Activating the life and work of the Cathedral after the lockdown will be slow and costly. There are some things we have done in the past we shall not be able to do in the future. There are some parts of Cathedral life which will wait a long time before they are active again.

But the Chapter and I believe passionately in this great and glorious building, and all the prayer and heritage and beauty and music associated with it. We will do all we can to bring the life and work of the Cathedral back to a new and vibrant activity. We long for it to continue to be at the heart of the community of this city and county, as it has been for centuries. But we shall need your help.

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