



'I planned my own funeral': Bishop Kenneth reveals impact of his illness

Read the BBC Radio Solent interview: pages 6-7

APPEAL LAUNCH TO TURN HEADS

OUR cathedral is to launch a public appeal – with the first donations handed over in spectacular fashion.

A special service at 10.30am on May 7 will mark the start of a fundraising drive across the diocese. Half the money for the ambitious £2m project to transform the cathedral has already been raised privately, but another £1m needs to be raised.

Bishop Kenneth and the dean, the Very Rev David Brindley, will travel across Portsmouth Harbour in the Queen's Harbour Master's launch for the service, carrying the first donations to the cathedral's 'Continuing The Voyage' appeal. Worshippers will meet them at the Camber in Old Portsmouth and follow them to the cathedral.

Then our cathedral precentor, Canon Nick Ash, and bishop's chaplain, the Rev Alex Hughes, will abseil down the west wall of the cathedral carrying the next donation to the appeal, as the bishop, dean and congregation watch.

The service will then begin with a blessing of the ground to be developed outside the cathedral. Seawater from Portsmouth Harbour will be sprinkled over the grass to symbolise our cathedral's coastal location. The congregation will then move inside for the rest of the service. Bishop Kenneth will preach, challenging members of the congregation and the wider community to donate money to the appeal and to organise fundraising events.



It's a long way down: Canon Nick Ash (back) and the Rev Alex Hughes prepare for their abseil

The dean said: "This is an ambitious project to create first-class facilities, so it's important that we launch the appeal in a high-profile way. It will be an exciting morning, and if people stop and stare and wonder what's going on, so much the better!"

The £2m project aims to help our cathedral develop first-class visitor facilities for the congregation, tourists, and audiences at concerts and arts events, as well as extending its education, music and community facilities.

The five-year plan involves creating a new refectory where visitors and others can find refreshments, re-locating the cathedral bookshop, and revamping the North Cloister to include new toilets, renovated vestries and more space for vergers. This will help the cathedral attract more

coach parties and individual tourists, improve it as an arts venue and allow better access to its historical artefacts.

An education centre will be created within Cathedral House, to include audio-visual facilities for giving presentations about the cathedral's history and the faith of its community. This will give schoolchildren a fuller educational experience when they visit.

A music centre will also be created so cathedral choirs – including the new teenage choir 'Cantate!' – can rehearse, and church musicians from around the diocese can improve their skills.

Existing community facilities in Cathedral House will be improved to meet health and safety standards, and provide disabled facilities. The plan also involves a full conservation survey of the

cathedral so the future care of the building can be assured.

An appeal committee, which is chaired by Nigel Atkinson, former managing director of Gales Brewery, and includes the cathedral's patron, the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, and has already approached grant-giving trusts, major donors and companies for assistance and is exploring other funding opportunities.

A separate team – the appeal events group – will co-ordinate fundraising activities within the cathedral congregation, the local community and across the diocese. It will be chaired by congregation member Mike Jackson.

Anyone wanting to organise a fundraising event for the appeal should contact either the appeal office on 023-9234 7401 or Mike on 023-9282 0006.

Lent cash will help Iraqi church to develop

THIS year's bishop's Lent Appeal will raise money to help an Iraqi church.

St George's in Baghdad was closed for 13 years and only re-opened after the most recent Iraq war. Few Anglican congregations face the difficulties it does - it is surrounded by bomb barricades and razor wire and is protected by armed guards 24 hours a day.

It was initially used by the American and British military and diplomats, but has now become the main place of worship for many Iraqi Christians. Canon Andrew White was the first chaplain, but the threats against him grew until it became impossible for him to get to church.

He had developed a leadership team of Iraqis who took over the running of the 800-strong church. But the team of four never returned from a church leaders meeting in Jordan last September. They may have been targeted because they were Christians.

Half of the cash we raise will help develop its former rectory into a venue for weekly meetings and children's activities. The other half will go to a local appeal - the Beaulieu Respite Care Unit on the Isle of Wight in 2004. It offers respite care to 36 families with children who have learning disabilities ranging from cerebral palsy to autism.

Cheques should be made payable to 'Portsmouth Diocesan Board of Finance' and sent to the diocesan offices, Cathedral House, St Thomas's Street, Portsmouth, PO1 2HA.