



Living in the Close

WELCOME AND INFORMATION
FOR RESIDENTS

Welcome to the Close of Salisbury Cathedral

It is an extraordinary privilege to worship, work, and live in this unique environment. In this booklet my Cathedral colleagues will share their passion for the Close and their deep understanding of it, to assist you in adjusting to life here or in deciding whether this somewhere you would like to live.

The Close and the buildings in it were constructed to support the life and worship of the Cathedral. While the purpose of the Cathedral has not altered in the eight centuries of its existence, the purpose of every other building in the Close has. The buildings have grown and developed; the Close has grown and developed. It is principally a place of worship, pilgrimage, and prayer; it is also the home of four museums, two schools, a theological college with bed-and-breakfast accommodation, and other commercial businesses – as well as of domestic dwellings.

The majority of the land and buildings remain the property of the Cathedral's trustees, the Chapter. We employ expert staff to manage and care for the estate, are advised by external professionals, and are guided by our Property Strategy Group, Environment Committee, and the Close Partnership (which brings together the institutions based in the Close). Clergy and other staff live here. Heritage crafts are learned and practised on the site. World-class choral music is rehearsed and performed. Hundreds of thousands of visitors are received.



The vision of the Chapter is to advocate liberty, encourage creativity, and seek the eternity revealed in Jesus Christ. Our ambition is that the Cathedral should welcome as many people of as diverse a background as possible throughout the year as worshippers, tourists, event-goers, and searchers for truth. This is how we serve our city, our region, and our nation.

To live in the Close is unlike living in any other neighbourhood in England. It is to live in a place shaped by and for the Cathedral's life. We look forward to welcoming you.

The Very Revd Nicholas Papadopoulos
Dean of Salisbury

A worship space

Salisbury Cathedral is recognised around world as one of the most iconic Christian churches. The precincts immediately surrounding this busy site of prayer and pilgrimage form the Close, an area built by the Cathedral in support of its life and mission.

Every day, at least three acts of worship are held in the Cathedral. Some of these are small and intimate. Others are large and dramatic. In December, for example, thousands pass through the Close to attend Advent and Christmas services.

There are times when worship spills outside the Cathedral during special seasonal services. On Palm Sunday there is a procession through the Close. At dawn on Easter morning, a fire is lit outside the west end of the Cathedral, a symbol of Jesus' resurrection life defeating darkness.

Residents are very welcome to attend all public worship in the Cathedral. Full listings of regular and seasonal services are on the Cathedral website where you can also subscribe to updates via email or social media.

Entry to the Cathedral for worship is free for all: we encourage donations from those who attend services, but there is no visitors' entry charge at these times.



A shared space

The Close is a complex urban environment. In addition to those who come for worship and who live within its precincts, thousands visit or pass through every week. The Cathedral is committed to welcoming and cherishing every user of the Close: each plays a part in our life and each makes a vital contribution to the flourishing of Salisbury City.

The Cathedral attracts over a quarter of a million visitors every year, many from overseas: tour groups, pilgrims seeking spiritual refreshment, language schools, families on days out. Many are drawn by things which can only be found in Salisbury: the tallest spire in Britain, the best-preserved first edition Magna Carta, the oldest mechanical clock in the world, and – of course - the Close itself.

There are other venues within the Close: four museums, two schools, a theological college, and several businesses. These amenities and institutions, as well as the wider musical life of the Cathedral, enhance the cultural richness of Salisbury for visitors and residents alike.

Situated between the city centre and residential areas, many residents of the wider city enjoy the Close for meeting friends, walking dogs, and relaxing in a beautiful space.

Some parts of the Close are used by the Cathedral for operational purposes. Office staff are currently spread across three sites. We are planning to co-locate these within a refurbishment of Leaden Hall at the southern end of the Close. The Leaden Hall site already houses our education team who support visiting schools, and our plans for the site include a new archive to secure the long-term conservation of the Cathedral's historic collections within the Close. To the immediate south of the Cathedral, the Works Yard is a dedicated base for our masons, glaziers and maintenance team.



A dynamic space

Ever since the Cathedral was built in the 1220s and the mile-long wall was put around the Close a century later, the site has been changing and developing. The architecture of the site reflects no single era but has evolved with buildings from each of the intervening centuries. Some date back to the Middle Ages. Over a third have been built since the turn of the twentieth century.

With many people using the Close every day, vehicles necessarily pass through the precincts. Access and parking are skillfully managed by the team at the Traffic Hut near the High Street gate. Annual access permits for on-street parking are available for residents through the traffic team who also manage the Cathedral car park at the southern end of the Close.



As part of our commitment to reaching a wider range of people, the Cathedral offers a variety of events, some of which are organised within the Close. Examples include performances by a swing band outside the west front, and the Sarum Lights sound and light show in the winter. The Close contains a few permanent art exhibits, as well as being used to house temporary installations within the Cathedral's regular art exhibitions.

Third party requests to use the Close are carefully managed. Protests and demonstrations are not permitted. Use of drones is strictly regulated.

Salisbury Cathedral is committed to ensuring it provides a safe and caring environment for all, including children and adults who may be at risk of abuse and neglect. Further information about safeguarding in the Cathedral and Close is available on our website.

The Cathedral carefully monitors security arrangements around the Close. High resolution CCTV covers most of the public areas. We contract a security company, who give enhanced support during the busier summer months and at big services. We receive regular updates and advice from the police, including about counter-terrorism.

The public gates to the Close are usually locked between 11pm and 5am. Residents are issued with a key to access the gates between these times.

A living space

People have lived within the Close ever since the architect of the Cathedral, Elias of Dereham, built the first house at Leaden Hall in the thirteenth century. Today there is a mix of occupancy. The majority of the land is owned by the Cathedral. Some of its properties are on long leases. Others are let to tenants.

Fifteen properties are used for service occupants (clergy, organists, vergers). As well as Cathedral owned properties, the Close community also includes a number of privately owned properties. All have a role to play in the residential life of the Close.

Cathedral properties are fully surveyed every five years (quinquennial inspection). These QIs determine repair and improvement priorities. Annual regular maintenance and routine testing is also undertaken.

If you are a tenant and have maintenance issues in your property, please contact the Property Manager at the Chapter Office. If you are a service occupant, please refer to the handbook you were issued on arrival, and liaise with the Property Manager as appropriate. A up to date list of agents whom tenants and service occupants might contact in the event of an out-of-hours emergency is available from the Property Manager. The residential complexes within the Close (Matrons College and Sarum St Michael) will have equivalent contacts for what to do in the event of an emergency.



Residents of the Close are eligible to join the Close Residents Association. The Association organises social functions around the year and the chair is in regular contact with Cathedral staff about issues of mutual interest.

The Canon Treasurer and Chief Operating Officer (Chapter Clerk) of the Cathedral lead a termly Residents Information Evening in the Cathedral refectory. The aim of these gatherings is to share news and information about events forthcoming which might be of interest to residents. Invitations to the Residents Information Evening are issued by email; please contact the Chapter Office to check you are on the mailing list for this.

A green space

The public realm of the Close is maintained by the Cathedral. As with its properties, the Cathedral prioritises investment in the public realm through a process of quinquennial inspection and annual budget. We are also guided by an access review which advises on how we can make our spaces more open and available to all.

The precious ecology of the Close was recognised and celebrated in 2021 when Salisbury became the first Cathedral to be awarded the A Rocha Eco Church Gold Award. Peregrine falcons, rare bats, and swifts all live within the Close, and rare plants grow in the churchyard, cloisters and Marsh Close.

Volunteer teams have created a winter pollinator garden in the eastern churchyard and a wildflower area on Marsh Close, a former school playing field to the south of the churchyard. Trees are regularly inspected and cared for, in line with the Cathedral's tree policy.

We recognise the potential of the Close to help us reduce our consumption of carbon. We are working towards electric vehicle charging points to encourage the transition to greener forms of transport and we are exploring the possibility of ground source heat pumps.

We want everyone to enjoy the Close together, especially the green space of the churchyard to the immediate north and west of the Cathedral. Simple rules are displayed at the entrances to the churchyard asking cyclists not to ride in this space, dogs to be kept on leads and games with heavy balls to be played elsewhere.

We steer those who wish to unleash dogs or play football to use that area of Marsh Close which is not roped-off for wildflowers. Marsh Close is usually available, except on rare occasions when the Cathedral permits its use for events (eg. the annual NHS thank-you week), and as overflow parking for major acts of worship like big funerals or diocesan ordination services.

The Chapter Clerk and Canon Treasurer share updates on maintenance of the public parts of the Close at the termly Residents Information Evening. Recent improvements include resurfacing near the entrance of the Works Yard and a rolling programme to refurbish the street lighting. Feedback about public areas of the Close may be channeled either through the Residents Association or to the Property Manager at the Chapter Office.

A heritage space

Salisbury Cathedral and its Close are highly treasured and carefully managed parts of England's national heritage. A Conservation Area covers the whole precinct and many of the buildings are listed. The archaeology of the Close has Scheduled Ancient Monument status and many of the trees are under protection orders.

The Cathedral has long experience of working within the statutory frameworks which support such a unique context. We have internal committees and professional advisers, including a conservation architect and an archaeologist, as well as external regulation through the Charity Commission and Church Commissioners. We are subject to both the civil planning authority and internal Church of England fabric permission

processes. Our aspirations for the Close are laid out in a Masterplan, An Exceptional Place, which was endorsed by Wiltshire Council after extensive consultation.

In delivering repairs and improvements, we are committed to using skills and materials appropriate to context. Some of this comes from our own team because Salisbury is among the few cathedrals to maintain an onsite Works Yard. With a track record of delivering projects around the Cathedral and further afield, the work of our masons and glaziers is regularly recognised with nominations and awards for conservation excellence. We are committed to apprenticeships, through which the specialist skills of our craftspeople are handed on to future generations.



Who's who

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Close Residents Association - contacts are available through the Chapter Office



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