

## Winchester Cathedral's Visitor Policy from March 2006

Many people feel strongly that a church, and especially a Cathedral, should be a place that offers free access to everybody at all times, a conviction that is grounded in a tradition stretching back over centuries.

While continuing to follow in this tradition, the Dean and Chapter found it necessary in recent years to encourage *donations* from visitors, in order to meet the cost of the Cathedral's ministry and mission. We reached a point, however, where the expected level of donation, and the measures taken to encourage it, felt very much like a charge. Furthermore, the income we receive from our visitors was decreasing, while numbers were increasing.

In view of these difficulties, the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral developed a policy to increase income in order to meet costs, while also improving *access*. Access is not simply about entry charges. It also concerns the quality of welcome and interpretation of the building that we offer.

Our policy is now as follows:

1. When the Cathedral is acting primarily as a place of worship or of refuge, we gladly continue to offer *free entry* - to all worshippers at public services, to all who come only to pray, and to all who are in distress. Visitors who join us for the major festivals of the Christian year are also able to enter freely.
2. A Cathedral *pass* is issued free of charge to all who support our work, either by regular giving or by serving as a volunteer. The churches of Winchester Diocese receive free passes for their members to use when they visit their mother church. Members of the Friends of the Cathedral receive a free pass, also entitling them to bring in their guests at reduced rates. Children under 16 coming with their families enter free of charge. Furthermore, an *annual pass* is available to any who choose to make a donation of at least the level of the full adult entry charge (see below).
3. We ask those who do not fall into any of the above categories to pay a fair *entry charge* (with concessions for students and senior citizens), enabling them to see one of England's most beautiful and historic public buildings, which we heat, light and maintain for their benefit. We ensure that visitors meet volunteers and paid staff whose common aim is to make each person's visit safe, enjoyable and inspiring.

All income raised by entry charges is used to 'make the Cathedral more accessible as a place where God the Holy Trinity meets all people and they may seek Him' (Chapter's Mission Statement).

We thank you so much for your contribution to our work.