

Royal approval for refurbished Minster

HRH Prince Edward helped worshippers celebrate the reopening of Newport Minster after an ambitious transformation project.

The Duke of Edinburgh attended a service with 400 worshippers from across the island and beyond, to mark the completion of the final £2.6m project to finish the external restoration and refurbish its interior.

The Minster now has new flooring, heating, toilets, kitchen facilities, seating and meeting rooms. Newport Minster now aims to become a valuable venue for community groups, as well as a spiritual hub for the island.

The Prince has been the royal patron of the campaign to renew Newport Minster since it started in 2006. He was given a tour of the newly-refurbished building ahead of the service, meeting some of the craftspeople, professionals, donors and volunteers who helped the transformation happen.

The royal Duke was able to see the new meeting rooms, kitchen and café facilities created within the nave, the 300 chairs that can be moved to provide a flexible space, and the display boards to inform its 30,000 annual visitors.

He left temporarily for County Hall before returning once 400 worshippers had arrived in the Minster for the special service. They included local clergy, community groups, choirs, uniformed organisations, and schoolchildren. The Lord Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight and the High Sheriff were



Top: HRH Prince Edward meets clergy and churchwardens on his visit to Newport Minster; below: pupils from Christ the King College leading worship; above right: HRH the Duke of Edinburgh gives a Bible reading (photos: Michael Dunkason)

among the island dignitaries there.

Bishop Jonathan led the service, which included hymns, worship songs, prayers and readings. Hector Kier, the former chair of the Friends of Newport Minster, read Psalm 122, and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh

read from the gospel of Matthew.

Before delivering his reading, the Prince said: "It has been an absolute pleasure to have been the patron of this appeal. I want to add my thanks to everyone who has been involved in it, everyone who has

New team rector to take over in September

BISHOP Jonathan has appointed the Rev Chris Bradish as the new team rector to lead our churches in Newport, Carisbrooke and Gatcombe.

Chris is currently rector of Andover parish, which includes four churches in North Hampshire. He will head to the Isle of Wight with his wife Naomi and three children over the summer, and is likely to be licensed on September 15.

He trained for ordination at Ripon College Cuddesdon, served for a year on the staff team at Holy Trinity Brompton, and has seen social action projects flourish in Andover, so he feels comfortable with all kinds of Anglican traditions.

His current church, St Mary's, also functions as the town's largest civic church and has strong links with the Army chaplaincy in Andover. So he will

be well placed to engage with the island's civic and historic links.

He said: "We are thrilled to be asked to serve in Newport, Carisbrooke and Gatcombe, and to join with others in the Church's mission to the Isle of Wight. It seems as though these churches in the heart of the island are in an exciting place at the moment, with a new chapter about to start."

Chris worked as a solicitor in London, and felt called to ordained ministry. He trained in Oxford and was ordained as a deacon and then as a priest at Winchester Cathedral.

He served his curacy in Alton and then spent a year on the staff of Holy Trinity Brompton, before being asked to lead a project to refresh the vision of the Anglican churches in Andover.



The Rev Chris Bradish and his wife Naomi in Newport Minster on the day of its reopening service



the service. Newport Minster's Community Choir sang *Only You*, the choir of Newport C of E Primary School sang *Ready Set Go*, and the worship group from Christ the King College in Newport led the congregation in singing *10,000 Reasons* and *Thine Be The Glory*.

The Ven Steve Daughtery, Archdeacon of the Isle of Wight, preached on the feeding of the 5,000, emphasising the

supported this, for all the wonderful craftsmen who have been involved in restoring this fantastic minster, and to say what a pleasure it is to be here at this event to see it being fully reopened and restored. It is what we set out to do. We are handing it back to you, and please make the best use of it."

The church choirs from Newport and Carisbrooke sang John Rutter's *For the Beauty of the Earth* before

overwhelming need that presented itself and the underwhelming resources that Jesus transformed. After the service, snacks and cakes were served with wine, and the Newport Minster bell ringers rang a quarter peal 'Grandsire Doubles'.

The church then reopened to the public on May 3, for the first time since Autumn 2022. The first community group to use the building was the Play Café toddler group, which was launched in the

parish centre earlier this year and has welcomed 65 families.

The project to complete the restoration of the building's exterior and to refurbish its interior has been funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic England, the National Churches Trust, the Benefact Trust, other grant-giving bodies, private individuals and local fundraising.

HRH the Duke of Edinburgh has supported the Minster and visited on several occasions over the past few years, tracking the multi-phase project to renew the building.

There has been a place of worship on the Minster site for at least 1,000 years, with a medieval structure completed in 1175. It is a grade 1 listed building and welcomes up to 30,000 visitors a year. It has had royal connections for the past 400 years, and is the final resting place of Princess Elizabeth, daughter of King Charles I.

Read more and see our video on www.portsmouth.anglican.org/minster