

Statement of Need

Chairs January 2021

The Minster has just been granted a Faculty to remove 18 pews and install toilets and a servery in the north aisle of Doncaster Minster. Once this work has been completed there will be an accessible and flexible space adjacent to the servery.

We wish therefore to buy new lightweight, comfortable, stackable chairs that can be set out in many different ways, to enable us to make best use of this new flexible space for the benefit of many users, and the Minster.

The chair we have chosen is the Howe 40/4 Side chair, as this has a reputation for being a quality chair that is comfortable, lightweight, durable and stackable;



Howe 40/4 Chair
Standard Price £212+VAT



Howe Single Trolley
Price £312 + VAT

We wish to purchase 120 of these chairs to enable us to achieve uniformity of all the flexible seating used in the Minster. We expect to receive a price reduction depending on volume of other orders and Company pricing policy.

We also wish to purchase a single trolley that holds a maximum of 40 side chairs to enable us to transfer chairs easily, quickly and safely from one part of the Minster to another when needed.

When we planned this space, we envisaged it could have various uses:

- To provide a sociable space for tables and chairs for anyone having refreshments from the servery, including some of the 20000 tourists who visit the Minster in a normal year;
- To provide a flexible space with flexible seating arrangements that is not possible with pews. This will enable us to hold new smaller events/services for smaller groups, for mission, education or entertainment.
- To provide a flexible space to be used when we have services or events, to enable us to accommodate more wheelchair users and their companions, so that they can sit together side by side, rather than one in the wheelchair in the nave crossing and one in a pew behind;
- To provide a flexible space for parents with pushchairs so that when they attend a large service or event, they can sit in a seat, adjacent to their pushchair, without having to remove their child from it (on many occasions waking the child in doing so), take the pushchair to the rear of the church so that aisles are not blocked, and then have the child on their lap;

For the first time this enable the Minster to be a more welcoming and accessible place for all, but especially so for wheelchair users, their companions and parents with young children. Similarly, we will be able to offer seating which does not present a challenge for elderly or disabled people who find it difficult with pew platforms and restricted space between pews.

We will, in our Mission Action Plan 4 discussions, consider new ways to provide worship and new missional activities that have not been possible before.

We will be able to provide a place to sit and have refreshments for: congregations to socialise after services, audiences after events, learners after classes. The many tourists who visit the Minster, will be able to buy refreshments and sit and enjoy the spectacular architecture and stained glass, and the Minster can generate additional financial contributions from the sale of these refreshment towards the Minster running costs. We also see this as an opportunity to bring a cohesive approach to all the other flexible seating in use in the Minster by:

- Replacing the grey plastic/metal chairs currently used by the choir when they sing, socially distance, under the tower, rather than using the choir stalls as advised during this Covid emergency. There are several different makes of chair currently available and in use, these unfortunately don't stack easily together, and many of them are in a poor state;



- Replacing the wooden upholstered chairs currently in use in the Forman Chapel, many of these are badly stained or come apart when they are picked up. These chairs are not stackable, and are relatively heavy, and therefore difficult to move. During this Covid emergency, when we have been open for private prayer, we have found these chairs to be particularly problematic in maintaining high hygiene and safety standards, especially as they are not stackable when they are in the stage of 'non-use' during our 48 hour safety rotation cycle.

Funding

The cost for 50 chairs has been included in the Toilet and Served project and we have already reached our initial project target. However, fundraising is continuing for the project in the event that we have to pay full VAT after 31st March 2021.

We have launched a new 'sponsor a chair' funding scheme to enable us to replace existing chairs and will be selling the pews that are to be removed from the Minster to make room for the toilets and served, so that the PCC will not have to pay for any of the chairs.

Summary

The Minster is very keen to ensure that we are a welcoming space for all and to make the widest possible use of this wonderful building for worship, heritage, entertainment and learning and in the service of the community.

We believe the purchase of the Howe 40/4 chair and trolley will enhance the new facilities, enabling us to introduce a uniformity of flexible seating across the Minster. It will make the Minster more easily accessible, and we will be able to develop new activities to encourage wider use by individuals and organisations from the community we serve.