

A grant of £71,726 has been awarded to York Minster to support the costs of Benefact Trust apprentice joiner, William Dixon.

York Minster is one of the world's most magnificent cathedrals, at the centre of Christianity since the 7th century. It has a rich tradition of heritage crafts, with one of the oldest and largest workforces and stoneyards in the country. York Minster was built for the glory of God, with every aspect of this ancient building from exquisite, handcrafted stone to an unrivalled collection of medieval stained glass telling the story of Jesus Christ.

Apprentices have enjoyed the chance to train with the cathedral's skilled craftspeople since medieval times and today's trainees learn across a complex and ongoing cycle of repair, restoration and conservation.

With the continued challenge of young people entering the heritage skills sector and a rapidly aging workforce, the Benefact Trust apprentice joiner will help reverse this trend by offering sustainable and much needed experience in the craft of heritage joinery.

During 2024, Will's work will include working on joinery across the Minster's estate, understanding the opportunities and challenges within listed buildings and how to overcome them. He will also be one of the first apprentices to benefit from York Minster's new Centre of Excellence for Heritage Skills and Estate Management where he will use cutting edge technology and facilities, interacting with heritage professionals from around the world and inspiring young visitors to pursue a career in this field.

Alexander McCallion, Director of Works and Precinct said: "Apprentices are the lifeblood of the Minster's continuing work and development and we are absolutely delighted to welcome Will as our new Benefact Trust apprentice joiner. The Trust's generous support for heritage skills for Christian buildings enables the training of the next generation of heritage crafts professionals who will work on one of the most iconic buildings in the country. We look forward very much to seeing Will's experience and skills grow and to working with him on many different joinery projects. We are very grateful to the Trust for their investment in our work and the future of heritage skills".

Paul Playford, Senior Grants and Operations Officer for Benefact Trust, said: "It is a privilege to support William's apprenticeship at York Minster. This is not only a fantastic opportunity for him to gain skills and experience in one of the most magnificent cathedrals in the world; it is another talented individual securing the future of the cathedral.

"This latest grant is in addition to funding we awarded last year, which is helping to develop York Minster's Centre of Excellence for Heritage Craft Skills and Estate Management. We're delighted to be able to support this innovative project which is inspiring the next generation of heritage crafters."