

Discover DeCrypt, Gloucester Annual Report for 2022



Discover DeCrypt is a charity based in the Church of St Mary de Crypt and the adjacent old schoolroom in Southgate Street in the centre of Gloucester. Our £2.1 million restoration project, completed in 2019, was made possible through a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and donations from other trusts, organisations and individuals. We aim to share our faith in Jesus Christ, to promote the story of our history and heritage and to enhance the life of our city.

Inspired by the vision of sharing our 'Faith', our 'Story' and our 'Life', Discover DeCrypt has continued throughout 2022 to maintain our mission to welcome people in the spirit of Christian hospitality. In addition to groups which use our buildings on a regular basis, we have welcomed 22,000 visitors over the course of the year. Visitors are greeted by our team of well-briefed volunteers, who are always keen to share their passion for our heritage and their interest in the story of the city of Gloucester.



This report highlights some of the major events we have held in 2022 and the groups we have supported in order to fulfil the three-fold objectives at the heart of Discover DeCrypt's vision.

Objective 1 – FAITH:

To share an inclusive sacred space

- As a consecrated Christian church, we continue to offer space within our busy city for people to pray, reflect or simply take in the tranquillity of our building.
- We hold a weekly service of 'Prayers for the City' each Friday lunchtime; a particular focus this year has been to pray for the people of Ukraine.

- Special Eucharist services have taken place on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Ascension Day and Pentecost; the year ended with a service of carols and Christmas readings. On Good Friday we had a prayer board outside the church where people could stop and write their prayers and concerns for Ukraine. This was extremely well received.
- In June we contributed to the Churches Count on Nature, recording the diversity of life in the churchyard and giving thanks for the glory of God’s creation. We are working towards the national Gold Eco Church Award.
- The annual Gloucester Day service, which takes place in September, is held in the church followed by a parade through the four main gated streets led by the Town Crier.



Objective 2 – STORY:

To preserve and enhance our heritage, making heritage and history accessible

- Our team of volunteer guides has been on hand throughout the year to escort visitors around all areas of the church and schoolroom, focusing on the architecture and historical characters who have given interest to this place. Specialist tower tours have also been provided.
- Planning has continued for a major conservation project of the unusual medieval wall painting of the Adoration of the Magi in our chancel. Condition reports on the painting, stonework and stained glass in this area have been undertaken.
- Significance reports have also been commissioned on the wall monuments in St Katherine’s Chapel in order to begin to understand their conservation needs. Developing access to this area forms the basis of the faculty application made for the removal of the Victorian organ.



- The exhibition created by students from the University of Gloucestershire has remained in a prominent location to explain George Whitefield’s links with slavery and to set his career in the context of his time. It featured on a BBC Points West report in February.
- We played a full part in the city’s Tall Ships Festival in June and ran a competition in which participants designed, built and raced their own ‘small ships’; we also hosted a fascinating Siege of Gloucester tabletop re-enactment.

- Throughout the year we have had the pleasure of hosting a series of art exhibitions. These have included: an 'Inside Out' exhibition by art therapist trainees; an exhibition by members of Hardwicke Art Club; an exhibition of artwork by primary school children; a display of fine art, sculpture, carving and ceramics by the Gloucestershire Society of Artists; and an exhibition on the Cotswolds by local artist Joanna Howe.

Objective 3 – LIFE:

To provide an inspiring community space that is affordable, accessible and welcoming

- The café in the schoolroom has been enhanced with additional seating and a wider range of refreshments. It supports our weekly Coffee, Cake and Conversation mornings, and hosts events such as the 'Rainbow Cuppa' attended by members of the LGBTQI+ community. The café is popular with its own customers and groups which hold meetings at Discover DeCrypt.
- The groups which lease our premises on a regular basis reflect a diverse range of different interests. Among those included are the Heart of Gloucester community choir, a tai chi group, an Inclusion Gloucestershire drama group, AA meetings and the Cuddesdon, Gloucester and Hereford training course for ordinands.



- We hold a weekly 'Stay and Play' drop-in session for parents, carers and under-5s, which has gone from strength to strength with an increasing number of participants supported by their own WhatsApp group.
- Community events to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of her late Majesty were a real highlight of 2022. We hosted a Jubilee concert and a vintage tea dance, both of which were greatly enjoyed and supported by community workshops in flower arranging, bunting-making and frocks and frills up-cycling.

- The year ended with a Christmas Tree Festival, which saw a variety of organisations from across the city put up trees around the church as well as a popular wreath-making workshop.



Thank You

We are grateful to have received continued funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to support professional consultancy advice into Discover DeCrypt's organisational resilience. A range of meetings has been held with many individuals and groups with an interest in our work. The result should be lots of fresh initiatives to implement in 2023 and beyond!

We would like to thank all those who have enabled Discover DeCrypt to flourish and move forward this year. A particular debt of thanks is due to Jess Gordon, who has contributed so much to Discover DeCrypt over many years and sadly relinquished the role of Community Manager this summer. We are also grateful to: our devoted volunteers, who welcome visitors week after week; our faith community, on whose continued prayer we rely; our regular hirers, who are always so appreciative of our facilities; and all our visitors and supporters, whose continued engagement and interest has made all we seek to do worthwhile.

One visitor comment which seems to sum up the year was: "Very welcoming and well-organised; we loved the tea dance on Jubilee Sunday!"



Jubilee Tea Dance

Charity Details

Registered Charity Number: 1167097

Address: St Mary de Crypt Church and School, Southgate Street, Gloucester, GL1 1TP

The following have continued to be trustees throughout 2022: Rev Canon Nicola Arthy (Ex-Officio Chair); Mr Peter Gould (Treasurer & Vice-Chair); Mr David Evans (Secretary); Rev Dr Sandra Millar, Ms Ursula Corcoran, Rev Guy Treweek and Mr Richard Ryan.

Trustees are either nominated by the PCC or appointed by the Chair following consultation with existing trustees. The full Board of Trustees has at least four meetings a year, whilst a smaller group referred to as the Operations Board meets more frequently.

The charity employs an Operations Manager and a Community Manager and others in duty manager, café manager and cleaning roles. We also rely extensively on our volunteers, all of whom work hard to help make Discover DeCrypt the lively and vibrant community it is.

David Evans on behalf of Discover DeCrypt