

Absent overseas visitors force staff cuts in Westminster and St Paul's (Church Times: October 21)



REDUCED working hours and further redundancies have been announced at Westminster Abbey, as it continues to grapple with the fallout from the pandemic and the collapse in overseas visitor numbers.

There is to be a further round of redundancies this autumn, on top of the 20-per-cent cut in staff suffered last year.

The Dean and Chapter said it was “a matter of deep regret . . . that we must take these steps”.

The continued absence of overseas tourists has affected heritage buildings in London, including the abbey and St Paul's Cathedral. More than 90 per cent of the abbey's income comes from its entrance fee, as does two-thirds of St Paul's.

In a statement, the abbey said: “It will take many months for visitor numbers to start growing again.”

This week, a spokesperson said that it was continuing to look for other sources of funding to sustain it.

A spokesperson at St Paul's said: “We rely on visitor income to cover our essential costs, therefore closures and reduced tourist numbers resulted in a significant drop in income.”

It is understood that the cathedral has just secured a bank loan for £5 million.

