

# St Edmundsbury Cathedral



## Drone Policy

While drones offer the ability to gain a rarely seen perspective of buildings and their surrounding areas, we must balance this desire with the need to preserve and care for our buildings and ensure the safety of those on our site.

### Overview

The use of drones (also known as unmanned aerial vehicles or UAVs) over or around St Edmundsbury Cathedral, including inside the Cathedral itself, is strictly regulated to protect the safety, privacy, and enjoyment of all visitors, staff, and our heritage assets.

This policy applies to all drone users—commercial, media, or recreational—wishing to fly drones from or over Cathedral land.

### General Policy

St Edmundsbury Cathedral does not permit the use of any unmanned aircraft system or drone within its grounds without prior approval. The Cathedral and its buildings are a privately owned space that is open to the public and in constant use by visitors (including children), Cathedral staff and volunteers, and local residents. Most of the properties, including the Cathedral, are listed and the fabric of these historic buildings can be precarious and fragile.

### Conditions for Approval of Drone Use

We acknowledge that there are some non-commercial users who have the correct training or permission from the Civil Aviation Authority (or CAA) to operate unmanned aircraft or drones legally. However, even if you are fully certificated, you will still need to obtain permission to fly within the Cathedral and its surrounding buildings as it is in essence, private property.

Permission will only be considered where the operator can demonstrate:

#### 1. CAA Registration & Credentials

- Valid CAA Operator and Flyer IDs.
- Possession of a current A2 Certificate of Competency (A2 CofC) or General Visual Line of Sight Certificate (GVC), if required.
- Operation falls within UK drone code regulations.

*Note: You do not need to register with CAA if you'll only use a drone or model aircraft that weighs below 250g and is a toy or does not have a camera.*

#### 2. Risk Assessment & Flight Plan:

- A full site-specific risk assessment.
- Detailed flight plan including date, time, duration, and purpose of the flight.
- Emergency procedures and evidence of awareness of nearby hazards (e.g. birds, towers, crowds).

#### 3. Insurance:

- Proof of current Public Liability Insurance (minimum recommended: £5 million).
- Insurance must specifically cover commercial drone operations.

To request permission to fly a drone on Cathedral land, please email within a ten-day notice period to [communications@stedscathedral.org](mailto:communications@stedscathedral.org) with evidence of the above. Please note, all commercial filming projects are subject to a fee or donation.

## Regulations

In line with CAA regulations, anyone given permission to fly a drone must observe CAA policy regulations for flying in towns or cities:

- You must not fly over 120m/400ft above the ground
- You must not fly within 50m of people or properties/objects that are not under your control (if your drone weighs below 250g this distance is reduced)
- Never fly over people who are crowded together
- You must keep a least 150m horizontally away from residential, recreational, commercial and industrial sites. This includes tourist attractions such as the Cathedral. If your drone weighs below 250g this distance is reduced.
- You must always maintain Visual Line of Sight (VLOS) i.e. keep the drone in direct line of sight.

This code covers flying in the Open A1 and A3 categories. If you want to fly outside the rules in this Code, you must first get the correct authorisation. For example, you'll need authorisation from the Civil Aviation Authority if you want to fly at different heights or distances to the ones in this Code, closer to a residential, recreational, commercial or industrial area, or over crowds or groups of people.

## Restricted Zones

The following areas are designated no-fly zones without explicit written authorisation:

- The interior of the Cathedral.
- Directly above or within close proximity to public gatherings.
- Within 50 metres of residential or ecclesiastical buildings.

## Legal Compliance

This policy is compliant with:

- UK Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) guidelines
- Data Protection and Safeguarding laws as applicable to aerial imagery and filming

*This policy is subject to change pending Chapter approval.*