



CHAPTER MINUTES

Minutes of the 208th Chapter Meeting
Virtual Meeting via Zoom
Wednesday 13 January 2021 at 11:00 am

Present: The Very Rev'd Joe Hawes (Chair)
Canon Tim Allen (TA)
The Rev'd Canon Philip Banks (PB)
Archdeacon Sally Gaze (SG)
Dominic Holmes (DH)
Barbara Pycraft (BP)
The Rev'd Canon Michael Robinson (MR)
Terry Stark (TS)
The Rev'd Canon Matthew Vernon (MV)

In Attendance: Sarah-Jane Allison (SJA)
Mark Pendlington (MP)
The Rev'd Sarah Geileskey (SGK)
Stewart Alderman (SA)
The Rev'd Ben Edwards (BE)
Christine Stokes (CS)
Michael Batty (MB)
Erin Seligman (Clerk to Chapter)

1. Prayers and Welcome

The Dean opened the meeting with a prayer. TS was welcomed and introduced to those present. SJA explained that SA would continue attending Chapter meetings due to being a member of management with responsibilities for overseeing Enterprises and chairing the Health and Safety Committee. This will be in attendance as opposed to a trustee.

2. Apologies for Absence

Sue Hughes (SH)

3. Conflicts of Interest

SJA informed Chapter that TS's son was a full-time staff member. TS has completed required Conflict of Interest forms and was reminded that, while Chapter minutes are published, all information discussed at meetings remains confidential. MR and SG were asked to abstain from voting on the Dean's proposal to offer financial support to the Diocese to prevent potential conflicts of interest.

4. Notification of AOB

The 13 October 2021 Chapter meeting has to be rescheduled due to a Supervisor's Meeting that requires the Dean's attendance. Alternate dates will be forwarded to Chapter.

5. Correspondence

The Dean said he sent a card to Sue Hughes on behalf of Chapter. Chapter acknowledged recent correspondence, and SJA said many notes of appreciation have been received by staff members for the gift cards they received at Christmas.

6. Urgent Actions Taken Since Last Meeting

6.1 Closure of services to the public

- 6.1.1 PB said a recent decision to close services to the public is before Chapter for approval. TA acknowledged this was a sad but correct move. DH said the spread of the virus is only getting worse and closing the Cathedral was inevitable. The Dean said closing places of worship is not mandated by the government and Bishop Martin said the Cathedral could continue to host public services. The Dean recognises arguments on both sides and is personally conflicted and reluctant to halt services, but if the government is urging the public to stay at home, St Edmundsbury should support that directive. PB said most members of the congregation have already relayed they will not attend services for fear of putting others at risk. SGY noted many people also travel from a distance to attend services here and is yet another reason to halt in-person services. SA said he felt it necessary to extend social distancing measures to well above the required two meters this past Sunday which is probably indicative the rise of infection rates in Suffolk poses a safety concern within the Cathedral's community.
- 6.1.2 The logistics of how the readings will be incorporated into this Sunday's services and thereafter were discussed.
- 6.1.3 MR said he too was in favour of this decision to close, however he urged caution to not automatically think we are only serving those who regularly attend services. He said there are a number of people who may be isolated or unknown to the clergy, but find value in visiting the Cathedral for private prayer.
- 6.1.4 **Chapter unanimously agreed** to immediately close the Cathedral to public worship.

6.2 Furlough Scheme and Grants

- 6.2.1 SJA said staff working hours in relation to the furlough scheme continue to be reviewed.
- 6.2.2 The Dean said the government is publishing a list of all those benefiting from the furlough scheme and the Cathedral will be included. He said this may draw some focus from the media and Sarah Friswell has been informed.
- 6.2.3 SA said the Shop employees are currently unfurloughed whilst carrying out the annual stocktake. The Shop and Pilgrims' Kitchen are each expected to receive another £4k in grants due to the current lockdown. The Dean said a second application for a grant through the Cultural Recovery Fund will soon be submitted. The Cathedral was not successful in the first round and are more hopeful this time.

7. The Dean

7.1 Receive the Dean's Report

- 7.1.1 MP thanked the Dean for his written proposal to dip into the Cathedral's reserves and make a one-off donation of £20k to the Diocese. Facing a £1.3 million deficit, the Diocese is currently seeking advice from financial experts on what steps it should take to weather the impact of this pandemic and grow. He added that the Dean's proposal indicates growing support and interdependence between the Cathedral and the Diocese. He said this offer is very positive and he is grateful this is on Chapter's agenda today.
- 7.1.2 TA was also grateful for the Dean's paper and figures provided but, while his initial instinct was to support this proposal as it is our duty to help, he questioned if gifting money to the Diocese would impact the Cathedral's chances to secure future loans and grants. He moved to postpone any decision until February in order to obtain assurances from the Church Commissioners, Christine Stokes, the Major Donor Panel and members of Forum. **Chapter agreed.**

7.1.3 The Dean said any donation to the Diocese would not impact the InHarmony project. Chapter further discussed the risks of offering this money and whether the amount should be more generous. MP said a wider discussion on how the Diocese and Cathedral could work together to share resources and cut costs would also be welcomed. **Chapter agreed** this proposal will be discussed at Forum.

7.2 Governance

7.2.1 Chapter unanimously approved changing SJA's job title to Chief Operating Officer. This change meets legislative requirements under the Cathedral Measure and will go into effect immediately.

7.3 Foundation of St Edmund

7.3.1 CS entered the meeting at 12.28 pm to seek Chapter approval to change the name of The Foundation of St Edmund to St Edmundsbury Cathedral Trust, as well as reorganise the charity as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). She said the changes would be made in a three-step process extending throughout several months. TA said changes to the Foundation are overdue and noted his willingness to accept the expert, professional advice of CS in choosing the forms of a CIO and an additional, exempt charity to replace the existing structure, but questioned her proposal to appoint the Dean, Sub Dean, Precentor and Chief Operating Officer as the sole Foundation trustees and suggested that it would be in accordance with good governance and an encouragement to donor confidence if, in addition to the three residentiary clergy proposed, there should be at least one trustee who was a person of standing in the wider community and independent of Chapter (eg Lucinda Hutson's role in the present Foundation). Moreover, it would be more appropriate for good governance if, as an employee of Chapter, the Chief Operating Officer were to serve as the Executive Officer of the trustees rather than as a trustee. CS said this model follows similar CIO's established at other cathedrals and expresses confidence in management's abilities and trustworthiness. **Chapter agreed** further input was needed and requested CS research CIOs that appointed trustees with no direct ties to its cathedral.

8. Cathedral Curate

8.1 BE entered the meeting at 11.50 am. He, along with SGY and Anita Rooney, have crafted the Cathedral's official statement on systemic racism for Chapter to adopt. BP noted her objections to part of a sentence asking us to "repent of that with which we have been complicit knowingly or unknowingly." BE explained why he included this wording and others agreed it was appropriate. TA applauded the effort as a whole and said this statement was an entirely appropriate extension of the Cathedral's stance on inclusivity and support of the LGBT community. However, Chapter postponed approval of the statement and directed BE to seek additional consultation from the community and develop an action plan as well. BE left the meeting at 12.21 pm.

8.2 Chapter paused for prayer. BP left the meeting at 12.42 pm.

8.1 Director of Learning

8.1.1 SGY submitted a job role description for the position of Director of Learning. Funding for this role would be available from May. Chapter agreed this position was quite broad and requires a candidate that is flexible and able to grow as the Cathedral's focus on education shifts and expands. CS added this position is purposely ambitious to also accommodate future efforts laid out in the Master Plan. Despite the pandemic and lockdown, CS insisted this is an ideal time to recruit as the new employee would ideally spend the first three months developing a viable programme that would then be ready for launch in the Autumn term. PB feared this role moved the Cathedral's focus away from youth and young people and was concerned we would be hard pressed to find a candidate that checked all these boxes.

8.1.2 SJA and CS agreed the job role should be changed to a managerial position. Chapter discussed the salary needed to attract candidates of a high calibre. SGY thanked Chapter for their input and said

she and CS will develop a revised job description for approval at a later date. CS left the meeting at 13.03.

9. The Administrator

9.1 Safeguarding

9.1.1 No safeguarding issues to report.

9.2 Policies

9.2.1 **Chapter approved** an updated version of the Flexible Working Policy.

9.2.2 Chapter withheld approval of the Family Friendly Policy and asked SJA to review the Maternity Pay section and offer an increase on statutory pay.

9.2.3 The Dean left the meeting at 13.22.

10. Finance

10.1. Receive Financial Reports / December

10.1.1. MP reported the Cathedral's financial position is faring better and he thanked staff for their efforts and focus. Donations remain strong and the Cathedral was able to furlough all staff members the last 10 days of 2020. MP exited the meeting at 13.46 pm.

11. Canon Precentor

11.1. Receive the Canon Precentor's Update

11.1.1. PB sought and received **approval** to continue negotiations with a party interested in hosting a beer festival at the Cathedral.

11.1.2 PB said work on Clopton Cottage continues and he and the Dean have appointed Whitworth Co Partnership to proceed with refurbishment plans for the Deanery. TA noted his approval of this decision.

12. Archdeacon For Rural Mission / Canon Theologian

12.1 SG relayed plans to host another multifaceted Run with Joy course this year. The programme will likely include the Messy Rule for young families and Labours of Love emphasising practical service as a spiritual discipline. The latter will fit well with Lent talks offered by MR at the Cathedral as well as an initiative to help neighbours serve each other. SG asked for Chapter's help in raising awareness of these efforts and creating publicity.

12.2 SG spoke of another effort to increase diocesan-wide engagement and partnerships through development of the Celebration of Agricultural Festivals. As the sons of farmers, TA and DH relayed their support and encouraged Chapter to endorse this effort.

13. Canon Pastor and Sub Dean

13.1. Receive the Canon Pastor's Update

13.1.1 MV said some Abbey 1000 events (the manuscripts exhibition and Benedictine weekend) have been further postponed in light of increased rates of COVID infections in Suffolk. The Abbey 1000 group will discuss this further at a meeting next week.

13.1.2 TA applauded Heritage Partnership's collaboration with English Heritage to enhance heritage interpretation in the Abbey area.

14. Minutes and Reports

14.1. Approve minutes from last meeting and review Action Points

14.1.1. The minutes were amended and approved.

14.1.2. The Committee reviewed the remaining outstanding Actions items and noted those still ongoing or completed.

14.2. Matters Arising

14.3. Receive minutes from last Enterprises meeting

14.4. Receive minutes and paper from last AEC Executive Committee meeting

14.5. Receive the Architect's Report

15. Any Other Business

16. Future Meeting Dates

17. Confidential Items

Chapter Meeting closed at 14.15 pm.