

St Edmundsbury Cathedral



Guild of St Edmund Committee Meeting

Thursday 16 September 2021 at 10 am

1. This is the first meeting chaired by LM. She welcomed everyone to the meeting, especially Georgina Pinches who was attending for the first time. Canon MV opened the meeting with prayers. Everyone introduced themselves.
2. Apologies were received from SJA, CC, JH, SH, SC and JG.
3. The minutes of the meeting 6 May 2021 were approved. They will be emailed to members of the committee, so that they can be circulated to all volunteers, and they will be added to the website.
4. **Matters Arising**

Kickstart scheme. After much effort, unfortunately it has not been possible to recruit a Welcome Assistant through this scheme due to lack of applicants. Instead, recruitment was widened and MW has joined the staff team to take up that role, supporting the volunteers in the cathedral. She is on a fixed term 6-month contract (and joined the meeting from 10.30 am).

Intranet Data is being 'cleaned' ready to transfer to a new system called ChurchSuite. This will give better opportunities for communicating with volunteers and planning rotas. SF will ask for help with testing the system.

Choirs SF met with the Director of Music to discuss members of the choirs joining the Guild. It was agreed that this is not appropriate for the children's choirs. However, the St Edmundsbury Singers were invited to join and a simple form used to capture volunteer start date. This has been well received. Discussions are ongoing about the men of the choir joining the Guild.

5. **Guild Annual Meeting**

This was held on 20 July in person with a meeting in the Nave followed by Evensong, then refreshments. Feedback was good. The format will be repeated in future years.

The Long service awards are a good idea but the system needs some refinement. The new database gives the opportunity to check information held about volunteers. **ACTION:** JD and SF to work on a thorough refresh of all data, contacting each volunteer to get them to confirm data we hold (including volunteer start date and emergency contact details).

6. **Recruitment and training**

Currently there are 3 new volunteers in the process of being recruited. The pandemic has left some areas of volunteers with low numbers – eg LEGO, Guides, Learning Hub guides. A recruitment drive is needed. A Volunteer Fair is being hosted by the Cathedral on 6 October (organised by Volunteer Suffolk). We will have a stall. ACTION: SF, KJ and LM to organise our presence (interactive) with SD being on duty as a guide. A sign should be displayed permanently at the West End promoting volunteering and explaining roles and opportunities. ‘Volunteering’ web page will be enhanced with home page focus in Volunteers’ Week. SF will investigate linking with BBC Radio Suffolk’s volunteer promotion. Taster sessions will be offered to congregation members to encourage new volunteers.

7. Volunteer Co-ordinators’ open forum

The bell ringers sent a message to say that the Norman Tower will be open for Heritage Open Days from 2- 5 pm today (16 September).

LM asked if it might be possible to lift some remaining restrictions on LEGO building. SF will ask Stewart Alderman to confirm that visitors may now add bricks (hand sanitising encouraged).

TS reported that they have had a good recruitment drive and the team is working hard on its ‘welcome’.

VM was pleased to announce that coffee will be served again after the service from Sunday 19 September so the team of volunteer helpers has been reinstated.

AB reported that takings in the Shop are steady. Some coach parties are returning. Christmas stock is due soon. During the Beer Festival footfall was low and the level of complaints high. She asked if consideration could be given to the Cathedral opening time, which remains at 10 am (since the pandemic).

The TIP is still closed (following a flood) but work is progressing, and it is hoped that it will reopen in October.

JdL commented that it is not always possible to fill every gap on the Welcomers rota.

RB reported that the gardeners have been renamed the ‘Cathedral Gardeners’. Two new volunteers have been recruited. Some tasks are now outsourced. Regular meetings with Canon Philip and SF continue.

SD commented that the take up on the 11 am Public Guided tours is good but further advertising is needed (large sign, announcement over the PA were suggested). Confirmation was sought on who to contact at weekends, if a volunteer needs to call in sick (the contact is via the vergers). It was agreed that refresher information is needed on health and safety matters (eg where the defibrillator is kept). This will be organised for all volunteers.

JD was excited at the opportunities ahead to develop volunteering at the Cathedral.

GP suggested that the chaplains' rota be extended beyond October. It was agreed that this would be a positive action.

BP commented that there is sometimes a lack of information for volunteers in the Shop/Welcomers, which means that they are not able to advise visitors about what is happening. It was agreed that MW will create a document on a weekly basis which will give details of services/events/things to note in the coming week.

8. Guild of St Edmundtide meeting

This will take place on Friday 19 November. A 1 pm Eucharist will be followed by light lunch in the Edmund Room and a talk by the Sub Dean on the plans for Abbey 1000. Invites will be sent out in mid October.

9. The meeting finished with the Grace.

Dates of meetings in 2022 – Thursdays at 10 am - 13 January, 5 May and 15 September
in the Chapter Room