

St Edmundsbury Cathedral



Guild of St Edmund Committee Meeting

Thursday 6 May 2021 at 10.15 am on Zoom

Geoffrey House	[GH]	Chairman
Sarah Friswell	[SF]	Visitor Experience Manager
Sandra Harbord	[SH]	Tourist Information Point (TIP)
Susan Cockram	[SC]	Flower Arrangers
Kim Judge	[KJ]	Discovery Centre
Jo Dean	[JD]	Volunteer Recruitment Assistant
Jill de Laat	[JdL]	Welcomers
Stephen Dart	[SD]	Tour Guides
Louise Martin	[LM]	Lego
Joan Garrett	[JG]	Bell ringer
James Stark	[JS]	Verger
Robert Bourne	[RB]	Groundforce
Ann Brown	[AB]	Cathedral Shop
Canon Matthew Vernon	[MV]	Sub Dean

1. The Chairman welcomed everybody, especially Robert Bourne and James Stark who were attending for the first time; Canon MV opened the meeting with prayers.
2. Apologies were received from Sarah-Jane Allison, Marion Bonfield, Catherine Cox, Jane Harrison and Valerie Moore. Note: Cathedral Wardens were not in attendance; a representative of the Wardens should be invited to future meetings.
3. The minutes of the meeting 14 January 2021 were approved.

4. **Matters Arising**

Kickstart scheme. The Kickstart scheme programme should start soon, managed initially by the Job Centre. SF would be responsible for training 2 young people as Welcome Assistants and to learn life skills. They would be with us for 6 months, working alongside volunteer Welcome Stewards

Intranet One system had been tested. It worked for volunteers, but it did not integrate well with the Cathedral's database. Another system is being reviewed.

5. **Volunteering Update (SF)**

SF reported on behalf of S-JA. There were a few staffing updates. Leavers: Rachel Clover, Head Verger, Jonathan Goddard, Digital Communications Manager, William Saunders, Music Advisor. New arrivals: Claire Cachelin, Learning Manager, Tim Parsons, Director of Music and Becky Luetchford, Social Media.

On finances, of particular interest to the Guild was the awarding of just under £73,000 from the Culture Recovery Fund. This covered several aspects of reopening, including volunteer training, new signage in the Welcome area, some LEGO events, special guided tours. Promotion and marketing would be included for all of this.

SF thanked all the volunteers who had been happy to carry out duties in lockdown, adjusting well to the new ways of working. Since Christmas we had been busy with stewards for personal prayer, a special extra cohort for the period of mourning for HRH Prince Philip. Other active groups were Groundforce, Diddy Disciples, Shop volunteers, servers, bell ringers, flowers arrangers and the Discovery centre team doing 40 days in Lent online.

Attention was now turning to LEGO, Tower Tours, Guided Tours and TIP. An intense programme of refresher training is planned which should help make everyone feel 'safe'.

Sunday morning coffee and Concert Stewards remained in abeyance awaiting further lockdown easing. VM has reported that she was in discussions with the Dean about the viability of Sunday morning coffee and she awaited his decision.

The Cathedral Masterplan offered the impetus to look afresh at what we do. "Welcome" was one of the core values, and Mission and Hospitality as two areas of work, so this very much resonated with our area of the life of the Cathedral.

Choir members (volunteer adults, not the choristers) were not members of the Guild. It had been suggested that they should be included. This was received positively but needs to be discussed with the new Director of Music and the choir members.

SD asked whether the recent water ingress to the TIP from the Shop had impacted the Ancient Library. It had not.

GH encouraged everyone to take a flexible approach to returning, keeping an open mind to new ideas. We will not be going back to how it was pre-pandemic. MV shared an example of new thinking on the Remembering Together service.

6. Guild Annual Meeting (AM)

The Guild AM was planned for 14 June, but covid restrictions indicated that a later date would offer more opportunity for attendance. Tuesday 20 July was proposed, following the format of 4 pm meeting (including report from SF on the way forward but no group reports), 5.30 pm Evensong followed by buffet in Pilgrims' Kitchen if permissible.

7. Guild St Edmundtide meeting

Two options were discussed, and a decision made to request a 'Guild-only' service at 1.00pm on Friday 19 November, followed by lunch and talk in the Edmund Room (MV to be the speaker).

8. Guild membership

Some volunteers, not huge numbers but a steady trickle were indicating a wish to retire. Volunteer co-ordinators were requested to check through their lists of volunteers to see if they are still willing to continue. Please advise SF of anyone intending to retire so that she can follow up with a procedure for 'retiring' volunteers.

Because, in these unusual times, we have had a higher number of retirements than usual, it was proposed that all retirees over the past year are invited to the Annual meeting (July 2021) so that their volunteer service can be marked.

9. Nominations for role of Chair of the Guild

Chair of the Guild is a voluntary role for a maximum of six years. GH had kindly continued due to the pandemic, for which thanks were extended. Ideally a new Chair should be sought and elected at the annual meeting in July. The role involves chairing not only the Committee meetings but also the Annual meeting and the role holder needs to be an advocate of volunteering and support SF in her role as Volunteer manager. Names of nominees were sought. It was noted that all previous role holders have been male.

10. Volunteer Co-ordinators' open forum – matters for discussion

AB reported that the Shop had re-opened though footfall was low at present.

JS asked volunteers to support the reconfigured vergers team. They were there to help.

JdL thanked the Welcomers who had been keen to continue welcoming when possible. The NHS Test and Trace requirements were sometimes challenging to manage but had to be done. There were potential new welcomers but also one or two have stepped down.

SH reported that the TIP team would need more recruits and suggested a recruitment drive. They would prefer shorter shifts.

LM reported that contactless donations to LEGO would now be possible. Initially, on re-opening, visitors will not be able to build themselves or touch the model. Some volunteers have retired, so new recruits may be needed.

JG advised that the bellringers have been able to ring handbells outside in groups of six and ring in the Norman Tower for Easter. As restrictions lift, they would respond as permitted. There were two potential new recruits.

RB reported that, due to retirements, the Groundforce team was down to 4-5 members, so new volunteers were sought. The support from Canon Philip and SF was appreciated.

KJ reported that the new Learning Manager, Claire Cachelin, was now in post. Although there were no school visits, the team had been contributing to online resources. There would be a period of change, which is supported by the volunteers.

SC was pleased to report that she was in contact with parishes, including some new ones, who were keen to return to flower arranging in the Cathedral.

SD commented that the Guides have met on Zoom to continue their training programme. Special tours are being developed which will offer visitors the chance to visit the Ancient Library and Treasury. It may be necessary to train more guides later in the year.

JD commented that all volunteers are ambassadors, and their positivity encourages others to consider volunteering at the Cathedral.

MV thanked everyone for their patience and endurance during the pandemic. He expressed excitement for the way ahead.

II. The meeting finished with the Grace.

Date of next meeting – Thursday 16 September 2021 at 10.15 am

There was some discussion about whether meetings should continue using Zoom, as this saves on travel time and parking costs, but could exclude some members. Both options were available for this date.