

St Edmundsbury Cathedral



A thousand years of God's love in Suffolk

Minutes of the Forum meeting held in Pilgrim's Kitchen on Wednesday 26 January 2022

Present: Canon Matthew Vernon (Chair), Sarah-Jane Allison, Canon Philip Banks, Susan Cockram, David Eaton, Gray Elkin, Paul Elkin, Rev Sarah Geileskey, Dean Joe Hawes, Sue Hughes, Fiona Knapp, James Knowles, Louise Martin, Valerie Moore, Pam Pitts, Alice Sheepshanks, James Stark, Terry Stark, Margaret Steavenson,

Observing: Liz Steele

1. **Welcome:** Canon Matthew opened with a prayer.

2. **Apologies:** Tim Allen, Margaret Bond, Canon Cedric Catton, Jane Olive, Barbara Pycraft, Anita Rooney, Karen Smith, Doreen Young. **Not attending:** Dominic Holmes, Alex Knock, Jane Leung, Jane Movley, Louise Stewart, Sam Vernon.

3. **Minutes:** The Minutes of 12 October 2021 amended to include Terry Stark as attending, approved and duly signed.

4. Open Forum follow up:

- **Christmas Market** – James reported about £8,000 profit and additionally £680 raised for Kagera. Plans for the 2022 market to be decided upon in due course. Congratulation to James Stark and the team.
- **Welcoming.** Alice Sheepshanks and Matthew had met to discuss the welcome we give to congregation members, acknowledged that although it is always tempting to sit in one place we might consider a 'swap seat Sunday' to meet new people. The importance of coffee welcomers who can talk to those hovering on the periphery. Also- re-instating welcome cards. A Desert Island Discs session (but with pudding). All these ideas received general support.
- **Other Matters Arising** - update on the Cathedral roof bees - honey, not yet ready but in production!

5. **Pastoral Matters:** Matthew reported on Mission related aspects of the Cathedral Master Plan. Funding has been sourced for the house, which has been identified on the Hardwick Estate, and **Hope into Action** are now in the process of buying it. Kate Vernon has agreed to be the lead volunteer in support of the residents and liaising with **HintoA**. HintoA provide the professional expertise and liaise with other agencies. John Parr has written a paper on spiritual care in a **dementia-friendly Cathedral** which was warmly received as a resource on this issue. Unfortunately Maggie Woodhouse from West Suffolk Hospital had to postpone today a Cathedral visit to assess dementia-friendliness of our buildings but this will be re-scheduled. The Sunday service on 22 May will profile this issue and John Parr will preach. A new book by Wendy Mitchell 'What I wish People Knew about Dementia' was recommended to all.

6. Environmental Action: Thanks to Anita Rooney's hard work in helping the Cathedral achieve the Silver award for eco-friendly church, this now puts us on a par with other Cathedrals. More work still to be done to achieve the Gold award. A Survey to be carried out to assess what the next steps will be. Sarah Geileskey reported that Humbleby Yard has been cleared by the Cathedral youth group and it has been identified as an ideal space for an eco-garden and for young people to gather. The Dulverton Trust have been approached and have agreed to fund this project with £30,000 to assist young people in connecting with their heritage, nature and volunteering. Jane Dow has been appointed this week to lead this important project.

7. Dean's Report: A detailed report from Dean Joe had been circulated prior to the meeting. Dean Joe reported that he had been interviewing for a new head of King Edward VI School that day, working with the students and he had been most impressed with their thoughtful input and enthusiasm. All to note that that Stewart Alderman will be awarded the Order of St Edmund on February 13 and Margaret Ellis will also become Reader Emerita on that day. Further honorary Canons have been appointed and have been assigned work with the cathedral. Addresses for Friday devotions in Lent have been organized with the new canons which will be interesting and informative. There have been two Open days at the Deanery to look at moving the 1910 staircase from the Georgian hall. Approval might be granted if plans can demonstrate a benefit to the diocese and local amenity groups. Planning application to be submitted in late January 2022 – so hopefully this will get approved but not yet certain. All support welcomed for this project – it was acknowledged that disabled access will be available at the back of the Deanery although no additional parking can be made available.

A mixed mode of chairs has been selected by Chapter to replace the pews: a new St Edmund chair designed by Luke Hughes for the central Nave, with an "off the shelf" chair for the side aisles for large events when needed. A sample chair will be on display at the launch after Evensong on 15 February. This will be an appeal within the Cathedral community. The overall costs are estimated at £150,000. £250 per chair to include Zifra labelling for the chairs on the end of rows. The Friends of the Cathedral are being approached as well as Chapter members. What will happen to Kneelers? Can we make them into a tapestry, or have a sample display at the back of the Cathedral for people to use if they want to? The plan is to sell the pews to offset costs. Can they be stored off-site and then auctioned in one go? No space for holding books unfortunately as this would make them unstackable.

8. Finance Update - Sarah-Jane provided a written financial statement which was only a draft at the moment, but it was clear that the budget for 2021 showing a deficit of nearly £28k had been turned into a forecasted £69k surplus. This was owing in a large part to a legacy which will be earmarked for other projects. Even so, without the legacy, the deficit would only have been £4.5k. Planned Giving has been fantastic, grants were given last year as well. Next year there will be a planned strategic deficit – financed by a loan to be repayable over three years, but it is hoped that visitors will return in greater numbers in 2022. Liz Steele reported on planned giving. 19 people still pay with weekly envelopes, 77 use monthly Standing Orders and 70 are in the Planned Giving scheme, a total of 166 regular givers. Unfortunately the target of £155,000 has fallen short for last year, but hopefully next year this can be improved upon. Liz Steele and Christopher Barlow are always ready to encourage more use of Parish Giving Scheme and they provide a confidential service to the

Cathedral in this matter. The electronic giving boxes have been a success and data received enables their positioning at strategic times and places to maximise their use.

9. Liturgy & Music: A detailed report from Canon Philip had been circulated prior to the meeting. Philip highlighted that Worship is our central reason for existence. He paid tribute to Tim Parsons and Richard Cook in the Music department. The newly reformed Youth Choir provided their first Evensong prior to Forum which was excellent. Thanks were expressed to James Stark for the work with Livestreaming. It was noted that the West Window will need refurbishing, there are trees to maintain, the flats above TIP to be taken back into Cathedral ownership, but will need refurbishing. No. 3 Crown Street is also being refurbished. Glass Doors also planned for the West Door (not to replace but to enhance viewing from outside the Cathedral).

10. AOB – Cedric Catton had emailed to suggest a sing along musical event to celebrate the Abbey 1000 and to raise funds, this idea will be fed into the Events team by MV. Coffee is back on Sunday 30 January - all to note to bring their keep cups. Abbey 1000 is now happening!

The meeting finished with prayers at 19:35

Louise Martin/Jan 2022

Forum dates 2022: APCM – 4 May, 22 June, 28 September, 30 November

All except the APCM will be held at 6:30pm in Pilgrim's Kitchen.