

# St Edmundsbury Cathedral



A thousand years of God's love in Suffolk

## **Minutes of the Forum meeting held in Pilgrim's Kitchen on Wednesday 22 June 2022**

**Present:** Canon Matthew Vernon (Chair), Sarah-Jane Allison, Margaret Bond, Susan Cockram, David Eaton, Paul Elkin, Rev Sarah Geileskey, Dean Joe Hawes, Fiona Knapp, James Knowles, Jane Leung, Louise Martin, Jane Olive, Pam Pitts, Barbara Pycraft, Liz Rowlands, Alice Sheepshanks, James Stark, Terry Stark, Liz Steele, Louise Stewart, Margaret Wheeldon, Doreen Young.

**Observing:** Jan Simonds, Margaret Ellis, Kate Vernon

1. **Welcome:** Canon Matthew opened with a prayer remembering St Alban.

2. **Apologies:** Tim Allen, Canon Philip Banks, Canon Cedric Catton, Gray Elkin, Dominic Holmes, Sue Hughes, Alex Knock, Jane Movley, Tim Parsons, Anita Rooney, Karen Smith, Margaret Steavenson.

3. **Minutes:** The Minutes of 26 January 2022 with one minor amendment were approved and duly signed.

Matters arising – Pam Pitts had brought in a book by Wendy Mitchell 'What I wish People knew about Dementia' along with copies of John Parr's sermon on dementia, available for those who could not hear it the first time.

4. **Appointment of secretary:** Louise Martin was re-appointed for 2022/2023.

5. **Appointment of vice-chair:** Barbara Pycraft was appointed to take over from Terry Stark for 2022/2023.

6. **Co-option of Forum Members:** James Stark as Head Verger, David Eaton as Electoral Roll Officer, Tim Parsons as Director of Music, Sarah-Jane Allison as Chief Operating Officer, Sue Cockram as Director of the Friends and Pam Pitts as Pastoral Support Team Coordinator were all co-opted for 2022/2023.

7. **Hope into Action:** Ed Walker from Hope into Action first presented to the Cathedral in September 2019. The Faith in Action group met with HiA and presented a proposal to Chapter in June 2020 which was accepted. Matthew and Kate Vernon attended the Hope into Action conference in Peterborough on 29 Mar 2022. St Edmundsbury Cathedral is now a Church Partner of HiA Suffolk. Chapter has signed a Service Level Agreement (SLA) which sets out key roles and responsibilities. **Grace House** is now completed in Bury St Edmunds, it is a small 3 bed house with a courtyard garden. HiA Suffolk is currently organizing the renovation including rewiring, fire safety upgrades, painting and new flooring throughout. Identifying tenants (likely to be a family fleeing domestic abuse) with the goal of

having tenants by Christmas. Kate is the Lead Co-Ordinator for the Cathedral, and is the key point of contact with HiA and is in regular contact with the Empowerment Worker (Helen Page). The cathedral's role is now to make the house into a home, buying furniture and household items (new or nearly new). Preparing the house in terms of fixtures and fittings. Once tenants are in residence offering prayer, friendship and support and possibly a house blessing. We will raise funds to cover the items above and contribute to work of HiA Suffolk. Approximately £500 has been spent so far on items like sofas, coffee table, cushions, mirror, lamps, cutlery etc. Immediate ways to support are donating to meet £5000 target or to buy from a wish list. List should be available in July. Looking to borrow a van in September and a handy person to help with fixtures and fitting. Tony Kimber has been proposed. HiA Suffolk might benefit from being a designated Cathedral charity going forward. Kate met with Catherine Rayson with regard to how much we can share on our website – but social media is not generally seen as appropriate.

**Question** – is there interaction with social services? What is the time scale? There are links with external agencies. It would be three years before a family is expected to move on. Contact Kate Vernon if there are any queries. Thanks expressed to Kate for her hard work in getting this off the ground. An excellent model of social action. **Question** : would the tenants be encouraged to bring their own items if they wanted to? Absolutely - yes and Bridge Church also agreed this was a good idea, - the idea is not to over-do the setting up of the house.

**8. Developing Cathedral Culture** – the Church of England's new leadership training on Safeguarding focuses on developing healthy cultures in organisations. Dean Joe Hawes had just returned from Christ Church Cathedral Oxford where a Forum like ours would not be currently possible. The BBC documentary 'The Churches Darkest Secret' reported on the Bishop Peter Ball case – what went wrong that allowed the issues to get out of hand? There followed a discussion in groups on the questions - What is still wrong with the culture in the CofE and what does a good and healthy culture look like? These points were raised:

- a. Clericalism, deference and secrecy. Safeguarding issues swept under the carpet, Survivors not listened to.
- b. SJ-A is recognised as our safeguarding officer by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and is a Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and receives external support for her role in diocesan safeguarding meetings as well as from the CofE.
- c. A feeling that senior clergy cannot be challenged. Are we too defensive as an organisation? We do need to have this conversation. We can all be vulnerable at times.
- d. Record issues as they occur so that we don't miss anything. Building up a pattern of issues can be helpful here. If volunteers hear complaints they must report them immediately to the safeguarding officer.
- e. Greater transparency and openness – encourage more people to hold roles and not to continue for years on end. If something is confidential then we should say so.
- f. If things bubble up from within the community such as HiA and dementia friendly church this is a sign of a healthy community.
- g. A chance to walk the floor and listen to each other.
- h. There may be a feeling or a risk that clergy are thought to be nearer to God and beyond challenge.

- i. How do we become relevant to people outside the Cathedral? Outreach. How to encourage an exciting and dynamic atmosphere. Liverpool's strap line is 'A safe place to do risky things'. We should aspire to this. Sue Hughes is the Chapter lead on social action issues.
- j. Is the dependency on IT to inform people of where to go for information not inclusive enough? Suggested that posters are needed with pictures to bring it back to basics. Although we must not be too dependent on paper. Can we have more services outside as a means of witnessing?
- k. Better communication and joined-up thinking eg posters advertising Flower Festival had printed times which were occasionally not correct owing to Diocesan Synod closing the Cathedral for a Saturday morning.
- l. The knock on effects of decisions are not always addressed which leads to unease and confusion.

Joe was thankful for the Abiding Wisdom weekend, Concerts, Beer Festival and Flower Exhibition Festival. Platinum Jubilee weekend services and the excellent support provided by the vergers team. Black Lives matter workshops have been happening in schools. Lay canons are working hard. The Deanery planning application goes in on 6 July – prayers welcome.

**9. Cathedral Governance Changes and the role of Forum** - break out session – Forum will continue – we will remain a parish church cathedral. How will Forum contribute in the next couple of years to the life of the Cathedral. Our current statutes state that Forum should consider and make recommendations to Chapter offering advice on all matters affecting the Cathedral Community.

- a. Can we have a Joint Chapter and Forum meeting ? If Chapter is widening out to bring in expertise in areas we don't provide from the congregation, then Forum should be the tribune of the people.
- b. Where are our younger members on Forum? Are the meetings at the right time and on the right days of the week? Meetings could alternate between Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.
- c. Inform congregation on when Forum meets – suggestion box for ideas.
- d. Joined up thinking – communication.
- e. clarification and justification of what's going on. Go between Chapter and congregation.
- f. Don't present things to Forum as a fait accompli. More up front discussion before decisions are made. Listen to the youngest, and the least
- g. More co-options to represent volunteers – marketing campaign as to what Forum is about.
- h. Forum participation should be beefed up and be less passive than at present. It should have a defined role, formally acknowledged both by Chapter and the congregation, a role that consists more than rubber stamping with little comment on decisions of Chapter. This cathedral has a very active congregation, which contributes to its running particularly pastorally and in the ministry of welcome. It likes to be consulted before things are set in stone. When the new statutes are set up there could usefully be a formal statement about which matters Chapter must consult Forum. This formality should be seen as a backstop as if good communication exists it should not be needed.

- i. Forum should be a bit of a 'break' - a stop and pause between Chapter and the congregation. Its role should be to encourage healthy and energetic communication. We should question tradition and always ask for clarification and justification about any major decision. We can be disruptive if necessary - we can temper what happens and act as moderators.

**10. Finance, Buildings and Chairs update** Sarah-Jane forecast a deficit of under £8k this year. Heads of Department are looking at their budgets to ensure we hit our targets. Visitor numbers are up but income is down. 3 Crown St is still being renovated owing to asbestos being found. Adrift at the moment but plans in place to get back on track. Sanctuary housing will be released back us but we are having to be patient as a vulnerable person needs to be rehoused. More events are being planned under James Stark's remit. Chairs – 90% there with 149 people having donated. The remodelled version of the Edmund Chair is still to be delivered for people to try out. Pews will be offered to the cathedral community first and then to the wider public. Chairs cannot be put in until the beginning of the New Year owing to concert ticket sales already underway.

**11. National Cathedral's Conference Report** – Sarah-Jane Allison, Stewart Alderman, Joe Hawes, Philip Banks and Matthew Vernon attended the second NCC in Newcastle 16-19 May, Notes of presentations and workshops attended were circulated with the agenda.

Discussions looked at Racial justice, the Environment, visitor attractions and healthy church.

12. **AOB** – Terry thanked all volunteers and advised we are reinstating basket collections this Sunday – if anyone wants to volunteer for this Terry will compile a rota.

The meeting finished with prayers at 8:15pm

Louise Martin/June 2022

**Forum dates 2022: 28 September, 30 November**

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