

## **Guild of St Edmund Committee Meeting**

**Thursday 15 September 2022 at 10 am**

1. LM welcomed everyone to the meeting. Canon Matthew prayed a prayer for the late Queen.

2. Apologies: JH, SJA, SD, TS

3. Minutes of the last meeting on 5 May 2022 were agreed and accepted.

It was noted that the Flower exhibition raised over £1700 with donations going to Kagera and the Learning Hub.

An example of the new lanyards was shown and it was agreed to use landscape orientation ID badges. These will be made available to chaplains, flower arrangers, welcomers, Shop and TIP volunteers.

#### **4. Cathedral update**

Thanks were expressed to all volunteers for getting mobilised so quickly following the Queen's death.

Since the May meeting of the Committee, many events have happened such as the Flower exhibition Beer festival, Platinum jubilee, manuscripts exhibition. All had volunteer input.

The Chairs appeal is now fully financed. The chairs will arrive in the New Year, to accommodate pre-existing bookings which needed seating plans. 300 of each type of chair are being purchased. The *Edmund* chairs will always be in the cathedral. *Theo* chairs will be brought in when needed to give greatest flexibility. A hymn shelf is now incorporated into the design. Options are being explored about the sale or re-use of the pews.

3 Crown Street – work continues but is taking longer than planned. Gaining access to the flats above the Shop is also taking longer than planned. Deanery Project– we have gone through process of asking for the staircase to be removed. This has been rejected (as it is deemed to be a significant feature of the building). There is a second appeal process. A small extension to the Deanery will go ahead as a separate project. This will of course delay the whole process. This was part of the financial resilience plan.

Financially things are OK. We are waiting for some legacies including Simon Gibson legacy (going into reserves). Cost of living increases will impact us in terms of giving, Enterprises and on fuel bills. The Finance team is working through this.

SJA is leading on the new Constitution and Statutes. The musical life of the Cathedral is thriving with lots of new probationers, thanks to Richard, Tim and Nathalie. The installation of new choristers has been postponed (due to the Queen's death).

Canon Jutta is working with the Cathedral on Benedictine values. She will speak to Forum and the Chapter Awayday.

The Yard project – Jane Dow manages this really well. It was the focus at the AGM. It reaches out to young people who are out of education. The work is funded by grants.

#### **5. Volunteering update**

### *Visitor Survey*

The Visitor survey which we ran in the winter was repeated this summer, with help from three volunteers who carried out a total of 147 surveys. It is interesting to compare the two sets of data. By and large the percentages are similar – eg most of our visitors are in the 66-75 age bracket, mostly coming for historical interest and travelling by car. The only significant change was in the numbers coming on a first visit. In the winter months this was at 60% but in the summer only 48%.

We are now about to join a national survey which is being co-ordinated by the Audience Agency and supported by the Association of English Cathedrals. We are asked to interview a minimum of 380 people over the coming year (to end August 2023). The surveys will be done face to face with an iPad (as before). This will give us a useful comparison with other cathedrals.

### *Training in the autumn*

Over the autumn and winter, we will be offering sessions on 'How to encourage donations', 'understanding Benedictine values' and 'Being Dementia-friendly'. These sessions will be open to all volunteers, irrespective of their role.

It was noted that the donations box is difficult to see (visitors often cannot find the place to put their donation. Anything to make it more obvious would be good. New signage is being considered. Contactless giving is more popular now. LEGO has done well this summer.

Gift Aid – are we maximising this? We need to ask 'If you are a UK tax payer?' We will investigate the option for Gift Aid on the contactless boxes.

### *ChurchSuite*

The new database is finally up and running. All communications are now sent via the database. The next stage is to get every volunteer with their own account so that they can log in themselves and access rotas. So far this has only been rolled out to the LEGO volunteers. There is still a long way to go but we have made a start.

We are taking this opportunity to ensure that all volunteers have completed Safeguarding and that their volunteer start date is logged.

### *Time and Talents*

We are looking into the possibility of holding a 'Time and Talents' event to encourage the congregation to explore new volunteering opportunities. The idea would be to give each of the areas of volunteering a stand/table and to have some one duty to talk about what is involved with that particular role.

What would be the best time of day was discussed. It was agreed to look at a two day event - a Saturday morning and Sunday after the 10.30 am service in the South transept. This would then attract people from beyond the immediate community as well as the congregation. It needs to include a welcome to new congregation members too.

Generally volunteer recruitment is going quite well with 16 new volunteers since May.

## **6. Safeguarding**

A survey is being carried out about the culture of our community, linked to recent advanced Safeguarding training. It will be shared with this committee.

Any issues – please share now with Canon Matthew. As leaders within groups, we need to make sure that we know who to go to with safeguarding issues.

## **7. Guild AGM**

The talk by Jane Dow on The Yard was really good. The Awards were appreciated. The format worked well and supper was good.

## **8. Edmund meeting**

Friday 18 November – eucharist at 1 pm, lunch in the Edmund Room (capacity will be 80), followed by a talk by Pat Murrell on the Great Churchyard.

## **9. Open forum**

Bell ringers: they have been very busy ringing muffled for Queen on Friday, Saturday and Sunday and unmuffled and open for the Proclamation time. The heritage open Days event on Saturday 10 September had to be cancelled but the Norman Tower will be open today from 2 – 5 pm. They are now thinking about Christmas ringing. There are currently 22 ringers.

Welcome Stewards: There are 30 on the rota, with very few gaps. All welcomers are very co-operative.

LEGO is going well. A good number of bricks have been added over the summer. In July the 100,000 brick/halfway mark was celebrated with a lot of children enjoying LEGO workshops.

BP reported that the wardens have to be adaptable as systems are always changing.

GP reminded everyone that the chaplains rota will continue all months except January and February.

VM reported that the Sunday Morning coffee rota now extends to the 9 am service. There are actually so many volunteers now that the rota has had to be altered so that there are only 2 on duty for each shift. They love the location with the goods stored behind and drinks being made in the vestry. The important message is that people need to bring their own cups. We are throwing away too many cups. Washing up has been offered by PKs but logistics are too hard.

Vergers: Mark Hawker has left but Ben Jenkins is now full time and there is a new verger Alan O'Connor (2 days a week), bringing the team up to capacity. Andrew Whitfield has really cut back his hours but may help occasionally. Paul and Keith continue as honorary vergers. August was a quiet month following the busyness of June and July.

JS reported that the events programme is going well and expressed his appreciation for

the support of the concert stewards team. Looking ahead there will be a Cathedral choir concert on 10 December, proceeds to the cathedral. The tickets will be fairly priced. The Christmas market, 24-26 November, is attracting a lot of paying stall holders. Performance carols/concerts will be a part of it.

There will be a second Cathedrals at Night event on 21 October. The theme will be creativity, activities from 6.30 - 8.30 pm with Compline at the end.

KJ reported that since the last meeting 230 school children have visited for a mixture of mainly St Edmund Days and manuscripts visits. Whilst the school visit provision this year has begun to recover, they are still seeing some impact of the past couple of years. Bookings for autumn are coming in and they remain optimistic that a more normal level of bookings will return for the new academic year. It was good to be able to display information for the Flower exhibition and they are delighted with the donation to their work. a mixed group of young people and adults from RAF Lakenheath on a Saturday morning to think about faith and pilgrimage and helped with the 100,000 Lego brick celebration where they were overwhelmed with excited children participating in crafts. The themed family activities during the school holidays were well attended with around 150 children and their adults. Both children and adults joined in with the crafts making it an inter-generational event and not just, 'something for the children'.

SC reported that all is going well for the flower arrangers. On 12 October there is a special foam free demo (oasis is bad!) in the Edmund Room. All welcome. Flowers will be prepared for the Commemoration service for the Queen on Saturday.

SF reported that eight new guides had passed their exams. The Ancient Library is open for Heritage Open Days though some tours had had to be cancelled due to the death of the Queen.

RB reported that there is one new volunteer gardener. The fencing in PK's garden is because we are awaiting repairs by English Heritage to the flint wall. Once the work is completed we will look at re-planting. The Judas tree in the middle of the lawn in memory of Dean Neil Collings has some problems but it will be kept and pruned and hopefully recover. There is a plan to plant a tree to mark the Platinum Jubilee/Abbey 1000.

CT said that Diddy Disciples and Young Families are going well and are both part of the same family now. They serve to make sure people feel linked up and are good social occasions with amazing volunteers.

AB reported that August sales were good due to the Threads exhibition with all exhibition related items being sold. Christmas stock is coming in and Advent candles are already selling. Sometimes it is difficult to find cover for the weekends but there is a good loyal team of volunteers. LEGO models are selling well.

The Tourist Information Point has recorded good visitor numbers. Many tourist attractions are no longer doing leaflets and timetables, so enquiries take longer. New volunteers have been recruited but more are needed.

MV reported that there is a new volunteer member of the pastoral support team.

10. MV closed the meeting with prayers.

Date of meetings for 2023.

**19 January 2023**

**11 May 2023**

**14 September 2023**

**All at 10 am in the Chapter Room**