

St Edmundsbury Cathedral



A thousand years of God's love in Suffolk

Minutes of the Forum meeting held in Pilgrim's Kitchen on Wednesday 28 September 2022

Present: Canon Matthew Vernon (Chair), Tim Allen, Sarah-Jane Allison, Canon Philip Banks, Margaret Bond, Susan Cockram, Paul Elkin, Gray Elkin, Sue Hughes, Dean Joe Hawes, Fiona Knapp, James Knowles, Jane Leung, Louise Martin, Pam Pitts, Liz Rowlands, Alice Sheepshanks, Terry Stark, Margaret Steavenson, Liz Steele, Doreen Young,

Observing: Canon Jutta Brueck, Alan Bond,

1. **Welcome:** Canon Matthew welcomed Fiona Knapp in her new role as Licensed Lay Children's Families' Minister and then opened with a prayer

2. **Apologies:** Carol Arnold, Cedric Catton, David Eaton, Dominic Holmes, Rev Sarah Geileskey, Alex Knock, Sandie Lant, Robert Lant, Jane Olive, Tim Parsons, Kathryn Mitchell, Jane Movley, Barbara Pycraft, Anita Rooney, Karen Smith, James Stark, Louise Stewart, Margaret Wheeldon

3. **Minutes:** The Minutes of 22 June 2022 were approved with one minor amendment and duly signed.

Matters arising – **Hope into Action** – It was queried as to whether Ukrainians might be appropriate as tenants. Matthew noted this but thought it unlikely at this stage as tenants would need to be in receipt of housing benefit. We are waiting to hear on progress as the rewiring and redecorating is taking longer than originally hoped.

4. **Benedict and the Cathedral** – presentation by Canon Jutta who introduced herself as having experienced Benedictine life for a year before she was ordained and pursued Benedictine values throughout ordained ministry. **The wisdom from St Benedict is contained in his rule and provides a source of wisdom for living as Christians in times of great change and fragmentation.** Canon Jutta had pre-circulated a paper before the meeting and invited questions from Forum members. TA questioned whether our roots and heritage were actually Benedictine, given the towns people of the time of the dissolution disputed the behaviour of the Benedictines of the Abbey. This was noted by Canon Jutta as an important observation but perhaps to be parked for the ensuing discussion as where do our roots and history begin? JH supported the fact of the history of the Benedictine's community and prayerful life. ES – how would Canon Jutta be able to move this discussion on to the volunteers and congregation. PE – How to cultivate

prayerful silence in the cathedral when we are also trying to encourage more visitors and events? Canon Jutta acknowledged this is a challenge. JH – our inner silence also needs to be cultivated.

The Rule of Benedict is to be read at daily Morning and Evening Prayer.

Benedict is firmly rooted in the bible. Perhaps there might be an opportunity to read the rule in a home group. **We live in the presence of God. Listen with the ear of the heart, attentively and deeply.**

Benedictine Ethos – Stability, Mutual Listening, Conversion of life. The Cathedral is already practising a Benedictine way of life as the Master Plan acknowledges. This vision may still see conflict with different groups and ideas but the ideal of stability should enable this to be held together and managed. Commitment to learning and growing is important for an organisation and community. This impacts on Forum and our role and also with volunteers and the congregation. Canon Jutta had presented her paper to Staff and led a day with Chapter and managers this week. How do we want to take this further? Further offerings of the Run with Joy course, regular workshops and study or quiet days.

A discussion ensued in groups PP – we have a busy environment here it can be quite an undertaking to find time for silence and reflection. JH – when things go wrong in cathedrals (3 cathedrals are currently receiving a Visitation) often because of pressure and anxiety, we need to look at the Benedictine ethos to avoid this. ES – we need to pitch the language right with regard to accessibility and at the right time of the day or evening with lay as well as clergy input. JB – we should be getting into the habit of listening to each other. TA – adopting the rule is beneficial but is it sufficient just at Morning and Evening Prayer as we have small numbers attending at the moment?

Canon Jutta summed up – **Guard your heart** – live joyfully as Christians, find more balance in your life and be attentive to God. Dean Joe thanked Canon Jutta for her input this week at the Staff and Chapter and Forum presentations and SJA presented her with a gift.

5. Developing Cathedral Culture – the draft survey discussion was circulated before the meeting. TS – it's a long survey – acknowledged as only a draft at this stage. ES suggested a shorter concise survey with simpler wording and space for free comment at the end. JH – it should be given to as many people as possible to get a view of culture of the Cathedral. The survey should be anonymised. A volunteer or two would be helpful to assist Matthew and Sarah Jane. ES and DY agreed to assist.

6. Cathedral Governance Changes and the role of Forum – Canon Matthew suggested that Forum might propose actions to be taken to Chapter rather than the other way around. There might be areas around worship and social action that Forum can make suggestions to Chapter. It would be beneficial to allow more discussion and input before Chapter make decisions. Dean Joe would like to hear from staff at Forum about communication, worship, and music. PP – we used to have a between meeting newsletter or email to members. MS – it may be useful to have a co-chair of Forum from the laity. AS – it sounds a positive move to have a practical input in Forum. JB – gave a Benedictine ethos

overview of what is needed in Forum. Listening and then taking action. MV will propose this way forward for Forum at the next Chapter meeting.

7. Dean's Report: When feeling overwhelmed with responsibilities he had been advised to write a list of the good stuff - worship and music with 45 choristers (and their parents), all age service, congregations increasing and all are being warmly welcomed at Sunday services. Civic services are expected to be excellent and have been acknowledged as such. Governance ensures we are asking some hard questions, the Dean's update should be made more widely available. New committees are a good chance here – nominations committee – how can we bring on board more talented and experienced people not already part of the cathedral community? An audit of the community will be required to get feedback. The College of Canons have a job of work to do and this is being acknowledged and actioned upon. Dean Joe paid tribute to Tim Allen as his six year term on Chapter as the Bishop's lay representative comes to a close. He was thanked for his loyal and supportive service. Canon Jutta's work on Benedict is a gift as well. There has been a plethora of Abbey 1000 heritage events, concerts, the flower and beer festival. 49 stalls are now booked for the Christmas Market in 2022. The Chair appeal is completed and grateful thanks expressed to the Friends of the Cathedral for their large donation. Thanks also to the staff team who are committed, overworked and underpaid. We also have a successful Pilgrim's Kitchen and shop.

The list of challenges is inevitably about money, trying not to move from crisis to crisis. Applying for grants for future building proposals eg a proposed visitors centre, encouraging planned giving and worship collections. There are also building challenges – the application for the Deanery was comprehensively turned down. The staircase has to stay so its back to the drawing board. The Social housing flats are still waiting to be rented out as court proceedings progress with the sitting tenant. We are working in a culture which is challenging to organised religion – there is a general distrust of all organisations. The looming winter crisis of financial hardship, especially over electricity and gas prices has prompted Bishop Martin to task Sarah Geileskey with ensuring the Cathedral can be a warm and welcoming hub for example offering vouchers for warm food and drink.

AOB : Together on Tuesdays – new service – leaflet available to distribute. Next service is on 11 Oct at 2pm. Result of work by Anita Rooney.

The meeting finished with prayers at 8.05pm

Louise Martin/September 2022

Forum dates

2022: 30 November

2023: Wednesday 25 January, APCM Tuesday 25 April, Wednesday 21 June, Tuesday 26 September, Tuesday 21 November.

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