

St Edmundsbury Cathedral



A thousand years of God's love in Suffolk

Minutes of the Forum meeting held in Pilgrim's Kitchen on Wednesday 21 June 2023

Present: Canon Matthew Vernon (Chair), Sarah-Jane Allison, Canon Philip Banks, David Eaton, Paul Elkin, Gray Elkin, Dean Joe Hawes, Fiona Knapp, James Knowles, Robert Lant, Sandra Lant, Louise Martin, Kathryn Mitchell, Jane Movley, Pam Pitts, Barbara Pycraft, Rev Anita Rooney, Liz Rowlands, Alice Sheepshanks, Terry Stark, James Stark, Naomi Sturges, Margaret Wheeldon, Doreen Young.

Observing: Chris Andrews, Caroline Baker, Debbie Bowles, Dee-Dee Dobell, Edmund Smith, Chrissy Trendall.

- 1. Welcome:** Canon Matthew opened with a prayer and gratitude.
- 2. Apologies:** Carole Arnold, Margaret Bond, Sue Cockram, Jane Leung, Jane Olive, Sue Hughes, Pat Kirby, Tim Parsons, Margaret Steavenson, Karen Smith, Liz Steele, Louise Stewart.
- 3. Minutes:** The Minutes of 25 January 2023 were approved and duly signed.
- 4. Appointment of Secretary:** Louise Martin was willing to continue.
- 5. Appointment of Vice-Chair:** Terry Stark taken over from Barbara Pycraft.
- 6. APCM Review:** running around the room with the microphone was distracting, liked short punchy reports, having staff in meeting was super. Same again next year.
- 7. Forum Terms of Reference:** Paper circulated prior to the meeting. Intentionally extended process to identify more clearly and strengthen the role of Forum. Forum has a key role. Draft Terms of Reference will be available at the next meeting. The process will be continued throughout the year. Feedback is important from all the cathedral community including those not able to approach cathedral staff or clergy individuals.
Those present were asked to provide their comments : Need to percolate proposals rather than decisions coming down from Chapter to Forum. Service issues could be discussed even if ideas are then handed over to another body eg wardens group. Forum minutes should be disseminated more widely. After Forum meeting minutes are agreed suggest they are added to the electronic bulletin to say available on the web and in the office on paper. Widen forum membership, maybe to also include those who are not elected. eg Guild of St Edmund, Choristers, Youth Choir. **Consultation** - Forum could put in agenda item requests. Suggestions box has already been introduced - we could use this for agenda items. **Ownership** - Forum needs to have ownership. Large number of members would give fair representation. Quarterly meetings on different days and different times. Publish agenda earlier and on a noticeboard. Representatives are important to cover all areas of cathedral life. Invite individual members to Forum for key topics. **Advocacy** - representing congregation and other communities within the Cathedral eg Diddy Disciples, Social Action, etc. Areas to be covered throughout the year include communications, music, property using the masterplan for structure. **Chapter** - Reports and updates from Chapter should be included at Forum but in a concise manner

for selected points or areas. Need the ability to challenge and question Chapter on its decision making. Limitations on role of Forum might include those statutory obligations such as Safeguarding and Health & Safety. Everything else that is not a statutory requirement ought to be within the scope of Forum of discussion. Forum reports to Chapter should be formally received such that Chapter is obliged to know the concerns raised by Forum. Forum should have stronger links with the APCM and bring back topics of discussion at Forum. Do we need to have elected members, why not instead have a representative from each of the elements of cathedral life eg Diddy Disciples, Learning Hub etc. What voice ought the clergy to have in forum ? Is Forum a space where clergy could raise comments and opinions in a personal capacity, admittedly there might be a danger of already powerful voices having dominance.

8. Cultural Survey results: Safeguarding – external person has been appointed to the committee. New evensong booklet published. Communication group re-formed. Suggestions box for ideas in PKs and in Cathedral at the West End. Asking again for new members to join the communications group. Timing of the weekly bulletin email was questioned. Further work and actions are being agreed and implemented over the coming months.

9. Dean's Report: Joe reported that Forum is like the sovereign it has soft power but it must exist. Recently we have said goodbye to Dominic Holmes from Chapter, we have seen Sarah Geileskey installed at St Mary's in Ipswich. The ongoing **Chairs** project saw a site visit from the Cathedrals's Fabric Commission for England - a new design was presented without an upholstered seat. Concerns were raised about the removal of pews which were answered by Julian Litten. A new application is now needed for their September meeting and it must be right this time. Statutory consultation bodies need answers to their questions. Need to know a plan to change the flooring is in place.

Greater Chapter met last week, guests invited from a Suffolk NHS, Suffolk Community Foundation, and Suffolk University to see how the cathedral can better serve our county ? **Events** – exhibitions coming up, Summer Fair, Concerts, Aldeburgh Festival Concert, singing schools initiative where 150 children attended, encouraging singing in schools as the cathedral choir is now over subscribed this September, which is joyful news. **Social Action** is also joyful, The Yard, Together on Tuesdays, Bury Black Lives, Kagera, Hope into Action. **Ordination retreats** are being hosted this year, Anita's first communion service on 5 July – all welcome. Bishops' staff meetings are being held at the Cathedral and Diocesan Deanery meetings. **Dean's 5th anniversary garden party.** Sarah-Jane Allison reported that we are currently recruiting 3 new non execs to Chapter. Still have vacancies on Nominations committee, Risk and Audit Committee and Finance Committee ensuring that not all members term finishes at the same time.

Financial Update: Budget for this year was forecasting £88,000 deficit, at this time we have a £9,000 deficit. Stewardship and Visitor Income is currently down, additional expenditure was required for a new fat trap (£2,000) to be installed in Pilgrims Kitchen. Events are doing very well. Deanery – following the proposal to sell the Deanery a small working group has been established including Mark Pendlington, Sue Hughes, Michael Robinson and Sarah-Jane Allison. They are looking at the whole property portfolio before making recommendations to Chapter taking on board that several people have been opposed to the Deanery being sold. Question raised: have reserves been increased by the patrons' scheme? The introduction of the patrons scheme has made a significant difference to our finances along with a couple of legacies which have enabled the refurbishing of cathedral properties to generate further income.

AOB: What is happening about a Ronald Blythe memorial? Glass Doors into the West End etched with words from Ronnie. Friends to help purchase doors , memorial funds raised to complete the etching.

The meeting finished with prayers at 8.07pm

Louise Martin/June 2023

Forum dates

2023: Tuesday 26 September, Tuesday 21 November.

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