

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

**Thursday 2 May 2024 at 10 am**

1. LM welcomed everyone to the meeting and GP led the opening prayer.
2. Apologies: MV, TS, AB, BP, JS.
3. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2024 were approved and signed. SC was welcomed as minute taker.

**Matters Arising** Welcome Assistants: SF reported that five people were now in place. JdL said that some Welcomers felt redundant – one has resigned, and she had received many comments, both good and bad. It was suggested that it might be better for the Welcome Assistants to speak to visitors at the end of their visit – this would allow time for them to come into the Cathedral, meet the Welcomers and then be asked to donate, not be “pounced” upon immediately on entering. SJA confirmed that the present system is being trialled for a time and thought would be given to an alternative after a suitable time. It was agreed that the Welcome Assistants would be told not to give out the welcome sheets.

Terms of Reference: SF reported that she had looked at the length of time members of the Committee had served – SC had served 23 years but as she is now minute secretary would start again! It was noted that a number had served many years and thought should be given to allowing other volunteers to serve on the Guild.

4. **Cathedral update:** SJA reported on the successful NLHF application. £730,000 had been received which is the Development Phase grant. We will have to make another application in 2 years for £6.6million which will be the Delivery Phase. SJA outlined the plans – the Cathedral is working with the West Suffolk Council, English Heritage and will involve the West Cloister, refurbishment of the Anselm building into a visitor centre, new footpaths in the Abbey Ruins and many other related projects. There will be a need to raise a further £1.9m which will come from grants and donations. It is a 5-year project. It is hoped that the Visitor Centre will open in 2029. Recruitment will take place for an Architect/Project Manager and Fundraiser. More volunteers will be needed! LM asked if the extension to Pilgrims Kitchen was included in this project; SJA confirmed that this is a separate project and it is hoped to extend PK with a covered area over the existing decking area. The Marquee would not be replaced. SJA also confirmed that the “arch” opening from Abbey Gardens will not be happening and that access to the new area would mostly likely be by way of the Herb Garden. The Yard project will be moving to an area at the bottom of the Precincts. It was agreed that the plans as they are at present will be shown at the Guild AGM.

SJA went on to report on the Finances of the Cathedral: the deficit for 2024 had been set at £41,000 but at the end of March this now stood at £23,000 – this is mainly due to the

success of Enterprises – especially PK. It is hoped that the visitor income will increase now the Welcome Assistants are in place.

SJA reported that the Loft of 3 Crown Street had been sold and completion is due in three weeks, the house remains unsold. Work is progressing well on the flats above the shop providing a flat for Lewis; one for the Organ Scholar and one for the Choral Scholar who will arrive in September. This will leave two further flats which will be let out. The income from the Loft will be used for refurbishing the Flats and the income from the sale of 3 Crown Street will be used to do the necessary work on the Deanery.

5. **Volunteering up-date:** Kneelers SF reported that most of the kneelers had now been returned to the Parishes. The final handout will be on Sunday 5 May. After this parishes, who have requested to have further kneelers, will be approached again. All the kneelers with American connections and various organisations have been retained. 30 kneelers are available for the congregation to use – various ideas were put forward for displaying these at the back of the Cathedral – nothing has been decided. SD said there were about 500 kneelers available for visitors to see in the Cathedral.

*Disability Awareness Training* - SF has completed this online course and confirmed this would be available to 9 others. Please speak to SF if interested.

*Recruitment* - SF said that new volunteers are still coming but it is sometimes difficult to allocate them to the “right” area.

*Chapter 4* - SF has been asked to advertise this as attendance numbers are very low. CM asked what it was – it is a social event for all volunteers and meets quarterly with refreshments and a speaker. SF will check whether it is in the Volunteers Handbook. It will also be mentioned at the Guild AGM and Guide meetings. The strap line is ‘Cathedral, Community, Companionship’. Date of the next meeting 23 May in The Learning Hub,

6. **Safeguarding** SJA reported that a new national database is expected very shortly and felt this would be very useful. The Pastoral Group are going to do a Domestic Abuse Training course. An anonymous summary of any incidents is reported to Chapter for any action required. LM said she had attended the Safeguarding Leadership training course as a Spiritual Director which she had found extremely helpful. Safeguarding is now on all agendas at all committee meetings.

7. **Annual Meeting 13 June:** SF outlined the programme: optional tours at 3.00 pm (Cathedral/Tower/Bell tower); 4.00 pm AGM with long service awards/new volunteers welcome (10 anniversary of TIP) John Saunders will give an illustrated talk followed by Evensong and supper. SF reported that there is now just one Annual Report, and this will be available online, paper copies if requested.

8. **St Edmund's Day 20 November:** SD outlined the programme for this 1.00 pm Eucharist, followed by lunch and then a speaker. LM asked for ideas for a speaker – Frances Young was suggested, and SF will follow this up.

9. **Volunteers Co-ordinators' open forum:**

### **Vergers (JS)**

Since our previous meeting, our Honorary Vergers have been undertaking more duties to help cover the shifts following BJ's departure. I am very grateful to them for stepping up and adding to their regular duties. I am also pleased to announce the arrival of a new full-time Verger, MA. MA has previous experience of working at a Cathedral, having been in post as a Verger at Ely in the 90's and 2000's. MA will begin here towards the end of May, so please make yourself known to him when that happens. This information will appear in the Sunday bulletin this weekend, but I felt our prestigious Guild Committee should be made aware ahead of that! Easter was busy as usual, but fortunately, I think went without any hitches!

### **Events (JS)**

A quiet period since our January meeting, due to the wait on the arrival of the chairs. We have had a few events since; Fleetwood mac by Candlelight, The Beatles by Candlelight, and a Silent Disco. We have also had two dinners: Birkett's Law firm and the Freemasons. We are now entering into a period where there is something happening almost every week. I thanked the Concert and Event stewards at the APCM and I will thank them again now, as without them we wouldn't be able to do all the events we are doing.

### **Welcomers (JdL)**

We currently have 42 Welcomers on the rota but some don't always do a shift each month, for various reasons. But most do at least two a month.

The rota is never 100% filled, with the summer 4-5.30 slots not overly popular.

I have to mention the new the Welcome Assistants. I have had one or two comments put my way which concern Welcomers feeling superfluous to requirements. One told me that the WA was giving out welcome leaflets (I assume this is not in their brief), another two have told me first hand that they feel redundant in the role, one of whom has resigned as a Welcomer with immediate effect. I have also heard third hand that others feel the same but appreciate that may come under hearsay.

I wanted to pass these thoughts on.

### **Bellringers (JG)**

In the last few months, apart from our regular Sunday morning ringing, we have rung for Mothering Sunday and Palm Sunday.

At our recent AGM JC has stepped down as our Tower Captain after 6 years in office. He is being replaced by AS and TH.

It would be good to recruit new people to learn the art of bellringing, and If you know of anyone interested in joining the Norman Tower ringers or in learning to ring - or just want to find out more - please contact AS.

Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> May has been designated as Bell Sunday by The Central Council of Church Bellringers and we will be ringing for the afternoon service.  
There are 17 active ringers.

### **Learning Hub (KJ)**

Since the meeting in January the small, but quality team of Learning Hub volunteers have been involved in the following:

#### *School Visits*

To date we have worked with 264 pupils from different schools and have written some new programmes for the visits.

#### *Family Activities*

During February half term, we ran two mornings of craft activities and organised two dinosaur shows (Teach Rex) with the theme 'Prehistoric'. Both sessions of the craft activities were full of 100 children and their accompanying adults enjoying the activities on the Nave Pavement. Teach Rex sold 800 tickets.

#### *Messy Cathedral*

Supporting the Children's & Families Minister, we prepared craft activities and helped on the day and 31 children signed up for the event.

#### *Big Sing*

Supported and worked with the diocese education team to deliver this event. Around 600 school children attended.

#### *Vocations Fair*

Sf and KJ set up an information stand to try and attract some new volunteers to help with the work of the Learning Hub and a couple of useful conversations were had despite the low number of people attending.

### **Guides (SD)**

A revision/practice session for new season was held in April and the next training session will be led by HP.

The guides offer tours for parishes and groups, with some opting for combined tower and Cathedral tours (including one recently for a group of Americans). A tour was given to staff from English Heritage.

The rota for May is now in place.

### **Library (SD)**

The Library Committee met in March (they meet three times a year) to review all policies. Two books have recently conserved Durandus (1486) & Hutchinson (1718 – preacher here).

DS has catalogued plans for building the tower & the north transept.

An On-line exhibition called 'Illustrations in Echard's History of England' has been created (by JdL & DdC).

The Treasury exhibition 'Powerful Portraits' has now been replaced by 'O all ye Green Things' (to link to botanical themed visitor leaflet).

A Sixth Form student from Abbeygate has used images from the library as stimulus for his

final A Level piece on the Seven Deadly Sins.

Simon Thurley visited to look at Enfield accounts bound into volumes of Luther.

### **Gardeners (RB)**

The Cathedral Gardeners continue in good heart and at full strength. Visible developments since the last meeting: the pots along the path down to Pilgrims' Kitchen have proved vulnerable to damage and have been removed; and an area of spring flowers and ornamental grasses has been successfully established at the far end of the lower Remembrance Garden. The round pots currently in the car park by Abbey House will be moved to the lower Remembrance Garden. Box blight is badly affecting a number of bushes and it is proposed to remove these and replace with other planting. We shall be observing a "no-mow May". The Remembrance Garden and Herb Garden will feature in the Hidden Gardens of Bury, in aid of the Hospice, on Sunday 30 June.

### **Sunday Morning Coffee (VM)**

We have continued to serve filter coffee, tea and biscuits each Sunday to chorister parents and those attending Services at 9 am and 10.30 am. We have a good team of volunteers and no recruitment issues.

We encourage people to bring their own mugs as we do not have the facilities to wash all the mugs as well as thermoses and jugs. The vergers wash mugs in PK's dishwasher after closing. We are very grateful for this but it does impose extra work on people who are so often overstretched with their normal duties. We would always provide mugs for visitors and those who occasionally forget.

During Lock down some of our equipment disappeared and took a lot of time and effort to retrieve. We have since marked our jugs with SMC and our tea spoons with a prominent pink spot. They still seem to have roving tendencies but if they find their way to your area their return would be appreciated.

### **St Edmundsbury Singers (CM)**

The St Edmundsbury Singers sang with the Back Row at the 6 am Easter Morning Dawn Service, followed by breakfast at PK, which was much appreciated.

This term started with the Solemn Eucharist for Philip & James, Apostles on Wed 1 May, followed by Ascension Day, 9 May at the 6pm Eucharist at St Mary's Church, processing afterwards to the Shrine of St Edmund. We continue to sing Evensong on alternate Wednesdays. We shall sing Evensong at Pentecost on Sunday 19 May.

On Sunday 2 June, we join the Back Row and the Girl Choristers for the service celebrating the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ordination of Women. On Saturday, 29 June we shall sing at the service for the Ordination of Priests and on Saturday, 6 July we join all the Cathedral Choirs for TP's farewell Summer Concert. On his final Sunday 7 July we shall again sing together in the world premiere of Philip Moore's Messe Solennelle, commissioned by Bishop Graeme and SK for St Edmundsbury Cathedral, to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of Graeme's consecration.

NB CM will be retiring from the St Edmundsbury Singers, so a new representative is needed.

### **LEGO (SF)**

We have now placed over 135,000 bricks. The ground floor of the Cathedral Centre is complete and the main body of the Cathedral. Thanks to help from a young volunteer the Yard garden and some of the Anselm building is now also in place. We will be starting on the Shop in LEGO in May.

### **Flowers (SC)**

All going well – the Cathedral had looked lovely at Easter.

### **Young Families (CT)**

15-20 families come each week. All going well.

### **Chaplains (GP)**

Rotas full – all going well.

### **Shop (JH)**

It has been agreed not to sell the wooden coasters in the shop. Plenty of sales on-line.

10. GP said the closing prayers.