

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

**Thursday 12 September 2024 at 10 am**

1. SD welcomed everyone to the meeting and MV led the opening prayer. SD explained that he was taking the chair for this meeting as LM was in hospital recovering from an operation. TB was welcomed to the meeting. GS will be the new representative of the St Edmundsbury Singers. There are now two co-Head Servers (JU and MF). They are aware that they have a place on the Committee and if they cannot attend, they will send a written report.
2. **Apologies:**
3. **Minutes** of the meeting held on 2 May 2024 were approved and signed.  
**Matters Arising Welcome Assistants:** SF reported that a meeting has been arranged for 19 September with the Welcome Assistants, Chaplains and Welcome Stewards – The Dean will be attending for a general exchange of views.  
**Chapter 4.** SF reported that although she had informed all volunteers about the last meeting of Chapter 4 numbers had not increased. A general discussion took place with various ideas being put forward – it was felt that perhaps just a coffee and chat meeting could be held quarterly – “Volunteers Coffee & Chat”. MV suggested that maybe the volunteers should be asked what they would like. SF will talk to LB and GH and report back.
4. **Cathedral up-date:** MV gave an up-date of changes to Cathedral staff: Canon PB farewell held on 8 September; Interviews for the new Precentor have been held and it is hoped an announcement will be made shortly. Canon MH is helping at the Cathedral until the new Precentor arrives – he is living in one of the flats. The Director of Music was installed, together with head choristers on 8 September; new Choral Scholar; Bishop MH leaves at the end of September to become Bishop of Exeter; Bishop MS will retire in February 2025; Canon MR has gone to London; A and CF are acting as Bishops Chaplains for the time being. MV added that plans are in place regarding a Canon Theologian, but no announcement yet.  
**NHLF project:** MV gave an up-date on this – JM has been appointed Project Manager; Dr CS appointed Fund Raising Consultant – more appointments will be made in due course. SF said that one of the consultants will be involved with the role of volunteers and she and some volunteers will be part of these discussions.
5. **Volunteering up-date: Kneelers** SF reported that this project is nearly complete. She was very grateful to PC for all her hard work in compiling details etc of the kneelers. Some churches have asked for more kneelers if available and this is in hand. Work is progressing on putting details on an Ipad for visitors.  
**Pastoral Team:** It was agreed that this team should become part of the Guild. SF will follow this up.  
**Disability Awareness Training:** SF will follow up on this.
6. **Safeguarding:** Nothing to report.

7. **Feedback on Annual Meeting 2024:** Agreed it had been a good event. Discussion took place as to whether the format could be slightly changed to avoid people leaving, especially before supper. It was decided to have a full discussion on this at the next Guild Committee meeting and members were asked to give some thought as to how the event could be amended. JM was mentioned as a possible speaker for 2025 – either for the AGM or St Edmund's Day 2025.
8. **St Edmunds Day 20 November:** SF reported that Dr FY was not available to give the talk. After discussion it was agreed that MV and VM would talk about Kagera – VM will also have items for sale. Timetable as follows:

1.00pm	Eucharist
1.30	Sandwich Lunch (SF will speak to PKs to ensure platters of sandwiches are provided for each table).
2.15	Talk

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

**Flowers** SEC reported that all is well with the flower arrangers, and they are preparing for Harvest.

**Shop** AB reported on behalf of JH – it has been a good summer, Christmas stock has arrived and will be displayed shortly. Advent candles and calendars are now on sale. There is a shortage of volunteers when people are unwell.

**Sunday Coffee** VM reported that she needs no more volunteers at present and it is going well. Grateful thanks to the Vergers. VM said she was going to retire next year.

**Young Families:** CT reported that they have 6 volunteers and was grateful to Pam Pitts for her organisation. Toys are shared with the 9.00 am Sunday service.

**Library:** Thanks to Canon MR who has been a great supporter of the library. Our volume of Hutchinson has been conserved through the generosity of the Friends and we have continued with our ongoing review of the condition of the books. Early catalogues which had been deposited in the Bury Record Office have been returned to the library and we have now catalogued the donation of 125 theological books of Ronald Blythe, which are now held in the Chapter Room. There is a new exhibition in the treasury – 'All Creatures Great and Small' - linked to the Cathedral's animal focus. There were over 100 visitors to the library for Heritage Open Days on 6 and 7 September and it will be open again on 13 and 14 September.

**Lego:** SF reported that around 145,000 bricks had been fixed. The large LEGO model sets are almost sold out.

**Vergers and Event Stewards** JS reported that, since the May meeting, MA has joined as a full time Verger. GS works as a Verger when she has spare hours from her Welcome Assistant role. S, K and P continue as Honorary Vergers in their various shift patterns

The Event Stewards team is now 23 Strong. A very positive meeting was held in the last week of August to review 2024, look at the rest of 2024, look forward to 2025. Events which have happened to note - Abba, Elvis and Tina by Candlelight, Bury Bach Choir, Gin Festival, London Concertante, Beer Festival.

**Guides** TB reported that the Guides continue to have a monthly training/revision

talk on the first Monday of each month, following the August break. The Guides with particular interest in any aspect of the Cathedral have been asked to consider doing research and sharing their findings with the group.

Stats (to date, January to August):

Public Guided tours (11 am) 2023 = 290 and 2024 (11 am and 2 pm) = 387

Tower tours 2023= 409 2024 = 479

Early indications are that we are doing more tours. We need to do further analysis to see the impact of the new Welcome Assistants have in upselling tours and Cathedral tours being sold online. To date the number of tours sold by Welcome Assistants is 195 and booked online since March is 104. It is difficult to say if this represents an increase in booked tours or not, as we would need to compare this figure against the old scheme of people booking through the Shop or TIP. SF and TB will look into this in October and also see if there has been an increase in booked parish and group tours. Anecdotally, it feels like there are increased group tours with bigger groups requiring two guides. As we have recently introduced two extra tours a week at 2 pm we need to look at the numbers we have for these extra tours.

We now have a German speaker as one of our guides who will be giving a German tour in October. He was on duty recently when a German family visited so he offered them a tour in German.

It is hoped to bring some of the feedback from tours to the next meeting.

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

### **School Visits**

Since the last meeting in May the Learning Hub team of volunteers have been involved in educational programmes for 243 pupils. The majority of the visits took place in May and June with July unusually quiet. However, we did a transition from Year 6 to Year 7 visit for St Benedict's High School in August. We also supported the Annual Diocesan Schools Service in June with around 700 pupils in attendance. The start of this academic year has seen schools looking ahead more than they did last year and booking for dates in 2025.

### *Family Activities*

During May half term 70 children with their adults enjoyed crafts themed around Springtime. In August we organised four mornings of Family Activities which resulted in 172 children attending with their adults. The first sessions of 'Bricktastic' were dedicated to everything Lego and the children built their own creations as well as building our mini-Cathedral model and the wolf. The second session called 'Cathedral Creations' was art based and the children used the Cathedral as their inspiration to design their own piece of art using different mediums. Thanks to staff colleagues who boosted the team for these events.

### *Volunteers*

Our small volunteer team has remained at a core number of six for delivering both school visits and family activities and often includes helping with prior preparation

for the events. I am very grateful for their dedication and input. We are still trying to add to the team. I now have two volunteers that will help for family activities, one being a young person who helped at the August family activities and has signed up for more. My plan currently is to build a separate team for the holiday craft days, and I would like to hear from anyone who is interested in just this role.

Thanks to the Verger team for all the moving of furniture on and off the Nave Pavement for both the school visits and the Family Activities.

**Written reports from those not able to attend:**

**Chaplains (GP)** Things are going ok. Rota ends in December for two months break.

**Welcome Stewards (JdeL)** There are approximately 30 Welcomers on the rota and most shifts are covered each month with only a few gaps. The Welcomers are all very obliging. With regard to the WAs, two Welcomers have stood down as a result (possibly three) but, others have no issue with the arrangement. The WAs greet the visitors first and then usher them to the Welcome Steward, and inform if required, separately. At busy times it has been quite useful to have a second person on hand.

**Gardeners (RB/CB)** The gardens have had the benefit this year of favourable weather conditions. The Beech hedge round the car park, reduced in height by about 45 cm last year now has a well leafed top with no bare branches visible. The grass has fully recovered from the drought of 2022 and we have had good floral displays of yellow Rudbeckia, red begonias and tobacco plants in front of PK. In the planters in the car park by the Cathedral Offices, the tall purple Verbenas and smaller begonias have provided a splash of colour. Once again the Edmund roses have flourished, attracting visitors' admiration and enquiries. In the Remembrance Garden perennial salvias, clematis and climbing roses have all given colourful displays and the star feature is the white Hydrangea Annabel just to the right of the entrance. The well-tended Herb Garden continues to attract visitors of all ages. The bad news is that Box blight continues. We have removed the Box hedge surrounding the small knot garden at the entrance to the Herb Garden and the area has been replanted partly with herbs from team members' gardens. The large Box hedge at the Northern end of the Chapter House garden is badly affected by blight and is to be replaced by Golden Privet later in the year.

All of this has been achieved by our skilled team with the support of the vergers and the Abbey Gardens staff for which we are very grateful.

**Bell Ringers (JG)**

Over the last four months there have been many special occasions when quarter peals have been rung, for example, The Diocesan Churchwardens celebration, the St Nicholas Hospice 40th Anniversary, D-Day service, Suffolk Day, the attendance of Bishop D and a farewell to TP. A peal was rung to celebrate the Patronal Festival of St James.

On Sunday 8 September there was ringing especially for Canon PB, who has been a great support to the ringers and we wish him all the very best in his new post at St Paul's Cathedral.

We celebrated the marriage of one of our own ringers, by ringing on the day of the wedding. The day after his wedding we tried to ring two complicated methods but were unsuccessful. However we persevered and we have now successfully rung these methods and we named them after the happy couple..

By the time of the meeting we will have hosted an Open Day at the Norman Tower, which was fully sold out. There is an Open House when visitors can drop into the Tower on Thursday 12 September from 2 - 5pm.

**10. Closing prayers:** led by MV. MV thanked everyone for their hard work and support.

**11. Dates for future meetings**

**St Edmund's Day 2024** - Wednesday 20 November from 1 pm

**Guild of St Edmund Committee meeting dates 2025**

16 January, 8 May and 11 September at 10.00 am and will be held in the Chapter Room.

**Guild Annual meeting 2025** - 5 June

**St Edmund Day meeting 2025** - Friday 21 November