

St Edmundsbury Cathedral



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Minutes of the meeting held for the Guild of St Edmund

Thursday 16 January 2025

1. SD welcomed everyone to the meeting and MV led the opening prayer. SD welcomed CR, who is the Chief Finance Officer for the Cathedral and would just be attending this meeting. Everyone introduced themselves giving a short resume of their volunteering role within the Cathedral.
2. **Apologies:**
3. **Minutes** of the meeting held on 12 September were approved and signed.
Matters Arising *Volunteers Coffee & Chat* SF reported that it had been agreed that a survey would be sent to all volunteers asking various questions as to when/if they attend; suggestions for the future etc. SF said that the normal response to surveys is about 25%.
Pastoral Team SF confirmed that they are now part of The Guild.
4. **Cathedral Up-date:** S-JA reported that the Cathedral has been asked to be a pilot Cathedral for an external financial audit known as the Narthex Project. Consultants will be with us at the end of the month. With new auditors and a new CFO this should prove beneficial for our financial sustainability.
S-JA reported that Lewis is now the line manager for the Welcome Assistants. Visitor income for December was down due to the number of concerts and services, although the Welcome Assistants have increased visitor income in previous months.
Work on the Deanery has started. When the Dean moves in, the West Wing will be rented out. 3 Crown Street is again under offer, hopefully exchange at the end of January with completion shortly after that. The flats have now been refurbished and rented out. L and M have car parking as members of staff but no other tenants.
Interviews have been held for the Canon Precentor, and it is hoped to announce the successful candidate shortly and hopefully be in place after Easter.
NW is now Music and Liturgy Administrator. CE is retiring at Easter.
The Bishops' Farewell 2 February – 10.30 am service for the Congregation; 3.30 pm by invitation only.
VJ is the new Canon Theologian on Chapter, she will not line manage the Learning Hub as she is a visiting Canon. SD asked if she would be on the Ancient Library Committee, this has not been decided.
S-JA confirmed that there are no plans to replace the Curate this year.
MV gave an update on the NLHF Project and explained that various consultants had now been appointed and are meeting with various members of staff about the current and future uses of the Cathedral. This is prior to the next round of funding application to be submitted early next year. JM is the Project Manager. The fundraising is being

led by the Dean and CS and there will be a public launch on 20 March. The car park outside the Anselm Building will be impacted in May when it is dug up for archeological purposes.

5. **Volunteering update:** SF reported that there are 297 volunteers to date and thanked everyone for their help. The application form is being refreshed, and SF has also updated all volunteer records. SF said she would be meeting a possible new Lego volunteer under the age of 18 which may present problems with safeguarding. SF reported that the annual reports from each group would be needed soon – it had been decided this year, just to have one report which will be used twice. Deadline 24 February.
6. **Safeguarding:** It was agreed that Safeguarding Sunday had gone well, and that VJ had spoken well. A further Safeguarding Survey will be sent out later this year. S-JA reported that there is a new case management system called My Concern to be used throughout the Church of England whereby all churches can record safeguarding concerns and can see if an individual is already on the system.
S-JA said there would be a safeguarding audit this year in June and auditors would come in October to talk with various members of staff, volunteers and the congregation. It was emphasized that if any volunteers have worries about safeguarding to speak to either SF, MV or S-JA.
7. **Terms of Reference:** S-JA went through each point – under ‘Appointment Terms’ the Guild does not always replace members when their term of over; this is often due to lack of people standing. Sentence 2 was amended to read ‘Service may continue for further years subject to’
8. **Edmundtide Meeting (Nov 2024)** It was agreed that this had been a very successful event with 68 attending.
9. **Plans for Guild meetings in 2025:** Discussion took place regarding the AGM on 5 June. As attendance had been down in 2024, the following timetable was suggested: Evensong followed by Supper at which any presentations, reports and long-service awards will be made. SF had provisionally invited JM to speak but it was agreed not to have a speaker for this event, but to ask JM to come to the Edmundtide meeting in November.

10. Volunteer Co-Ordinators’ Open Forum

Learning Hub *Kim Judge*

Since the September meeting, the Learning Hub volunteers have shared their knowledge with 271 children and accompanying adults across a variety of our school programmes. They were also involved in providing chaperone and safeguarding support during October and early November for the rehearsals and performances of the Flooded production which 280 children took part in.

In addition, the Learning Hub ran our popular Family Activities during October half term, and these were again well attended with 90 children and their adults. For ‘Your Cathedral at Night’ we again set up craft activities to support the theme and many adults as well as children enjoyed taking part. On the Saturday of the Christmas Market, we organised craft activities in the Lady Chapel with over 90 children participating.

It was an extremely busy and sometimes stressful time towards the end of last year, but the volunteers did as much as they could to support me with good humour and cheerfulness not minding what they were asked to do. The Learning Hub is very lucky, and I am so grateful to have such a good team around me.

LEGO *Sarah Friswell*

147,426 bricks have been added. It would be good to see an end in sight for this project. Even with building the roof sections without recouping the donations (as agreed by Chapter) it will still take approx two more years. It is hoped to complete the Tower section this year in line with marking the 20th anniversary of the completion of the Tower.

Welcomers Report *Jill de Laat*

The Welcoming over the winter months has been reduced to two slots each day – 11-1 and 1-3 which has worked well. Not everyone can have their weekly slot during this time as there would not be enough to go round but I did explain and no-one has complained. It will be back to normal in March.

There are approx. 30 Welcomers – it varies as some opt out during the winter.

Six Welcomers resigned following the introduction of the Welcome Assistants so it may be helpful to have some additional ones come the Spring.

Flower Arrangers *Sue Cockram*

After a welcome month “off” in December – Advent – we returned at Christmas to decorate our beautiful Cathedral, and everyone seemed delighted with the result! We had a major problem as one box of flowers did not arrive – but the Dean came to rescue tracking down a large number of white flowers for us on arranging day!

We are looking forward to a busy year with several weddings and celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the completion of the Tower.

Several flower arrangers have retired for various reasons, so I am going on a recruitment campaign!

Wardens *Terry Stark and Barbara Pycraft*

Christmas 2024 was far the busiest it's been for sometime, with 900+ at the Nine Lessons and Carols and numbers exceeding previous years at all other carol services last year. Barbara and I could not manage these services as well as all those that happen on a daily basis without the commitment of all our deputy wardens. For that we are forever grateful. Well done to all those who volunteer.

Guides *Tessa Bailey*

Public Guided Tour numbers for 2024 516 attended tours of the Cathedral.

Tower Tour Numbers for 2024 673 attended Tower Tours.

This represents an increase in numbers from 2023.

Group Tours given and numbers attending 2024

Between January and November there were 41 Group Tours with 656 participants.

Moving Forward

At the last Guides meeting in November 2024, we agreed changes to our Guiding offer in 2025:

- Public Guided Tours will be offered daily from 1 April to 31 October, at a new start time of 11.30 am, and 2 pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays, {where the cathedral calendar allows}.
- Tower Tours will be offered from 1 March to 31 October with the addition of extra tours being offered on some Fridays, at 2 pm, and Saturdays at 1.30 pm, where the cathedral calendar allows.

Our aspiration is to increase our offer of Guided Tours, for the whole season, as long as we have the Guides to cover the extra tours. In addition, we have always offered Tours on Bank Holidays, excluding August when the Cathedral hosts the Beer Festival.

We are also considering how we more formally obtain feedback on the Tours offered; there are three ways we could achieve this:

- email a feedback form out to participants who have booked a tour via email
- Handing out a feedback form to participants to be returned later
- Handing out a feedback form to be returned at the time in the “Suggestion Box”

Feedback forms are always emailed out to leaders of Group Tours.

We also discussed the possibility of offering Themed Tours.

Gardeners *Robert Bourne*

The Cathedral Gardeners are currently on their one-month Christmas break and return to duty on Tuesday 21 January. Sadly we will be without SB, through illness, and we hold him in our prayers for a good recovery. Since the last meeting the large box hedge at the north end of the upper Remembrance Garden lawn has been removed. This has exposed the toolshed, which is undergoing repair and repainting. It is proposed to extend the lawn to the rear of the armillary sphere, which is now better exposed to view, and to plant Golden Privet behind the new lawn edge. Two of the planters in the car park area outside the cathedral office have been replaced and two more new ones are to be purchased.

Wallflowers and daffodils have been planted for the Spring display outside PK and pansies, violas and daffodils are planted outside the Cathedral Offices and in the Remembrance Gardens. The Abbey Gardens staff are kindly protecting one of our tender shrubs (Abutilon) in their poly tunnel.

Library *Stephen Dart*

On Heritage Open Days we had 175 visitors who made donations of £326. We are planning additional public openings this year. Our display of 7 books at 'Cathedral at Night' attracted a great deal of interest. Individual visitors included a manuscript expert from the national library in Stockholm. JL and DC are preparing an on-line exhibition on printing techniques and book decoration in early 16th century Paris using our two volumes of Gerson's works. The next exhibition in the Treasury features the A Level artwork of CN who was inspired by illustrations from volumes in the library. He was a student at Abbeygate Sixth Form College and is now doing an Art Foundation course at West Suffolk College. We have had discussions with consultants for the NLHF project. The recently conserved volume linked with Thomas Cranmer and framed photographs of late 19th and early 20th century clergy are expected back within the next month.

Chaplains *Georgina Pinches* (in absentia)

Several people have had to drop out. However the rota will restart at the beginning of March.

St Edmundsbury Singers *Georgia Small*

The St Edmundsbury Singers continue to be a significant resource to the Cathedral community. There are three founding members still singing, plus several others who have sung for over twenty years.

Membership currently stands at twenty-seven, including three members of staff. RC, the Assistant Director of Music, has directed the St Edmundsbury Singers since taking up his appointment in 2019. Sight singing is essential; rehearsals are fortnightly, before singing at due Evensong services on alternate Wednesdays, as well at regular Sunday services.

Having sung Britten's 'Ceremony of Carols' in January 2023, it has become an annual event. Other offerings, during the past few months, have included: 'Draw Near with Faith' by Peter Miller, sung in September, 'Im Himmelreich ein Haus steht' by Max Reger (a song for a four-part female choir, sung in October), and for Advent: an arrangement of: 'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel' by Franz Joseph Hayden, which proved a popular choice for a peaceful December Evensong.

It is clear how much the choir members care deeply about their choir and its purpose.

Vergers and Event Stewards *James Stark*

Very, very busy Christmas but all went well. Many more events are planned for 2025 than 2024. There are now 21 Concert stewards and the first concert is on 21 January. Four honorary vergers are now involved. On 4 March three are being installed into the Guild of Vergers. (SD added that the FOCC continue to provide drinks at some concerts – also the FOCC quiz is on 1 March at 6.30 pm).

Young Families *Chrissy Trendall*

This group has been going for 25 years. PM has joined the team so two are on duty each Friday morning. There continue to be very successful and happy meetings on Friday mornings. PP continues to mastermind.

Shop and TIP *Ann Brown*

The Shop had a very good Christmas and only a few items left unsold. Figures are in line with the budget set. JH has concerns about the TIP as there are gaps on the rota.

11. Closing Prayers: led by MV. MV thanked everyone for their hard work and support.

12. Dates for future Meetings:

Annual Guild Meeting 5 June (see above)

St Edmunds Day 21 November at 1.00 pm

Guild Committee meeting dates: 8 May and 11 September at 10 am in the Chapter Room.