St Edmundsbury Cathedral

CHAPTER MINUTES

Minutes of the 248th Chapter Meeting
Monday 18 March 2025 at 1.00 pm
Chapter Room

Present:
The Very Rev'd Joe Hawes, Co-Chair (JPH)
Mark Pendlington, Co-Chair (MP)
Archdeacon Sally Gaze (SG) *via Teams*
Sue Hughes (SH)
The Rev'd Canon Dr Victoria Johnson (VJ)
Barbara Pycraft (BP)
Paul Torrington (PT)
The Rev'd Canon Matthew Vernon (MV)
Jane Haviland Webster (JHW)

In Attendance:
Caroline Rouse (CRo)
Sarah-Jane Allison (SJA)
The Rev'd Chris Eyden (CE)
Frank Shippam, MA Partners LLP (FS)
The Rev'd Patrick Taylor (PTa)
James Mellish (JMsh) *via Teams*
Erin Seligman (Clerk to Chapter)

1. Opening Prayers

1.1 The Dean (JPH) opened the meeting with a prayer.

2. Welcome and Introductions

2.1 The Dean welcomed Frank Shippam of MA Partners LLP who will be presenting the 2024 audited reports.

2.2 The Dean welcomed the Rev'd Patrick Taylor (PT), vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon and Area Dean of Fosse Deanery, who is currently on placement at the Cathedral this week. PT observed today's meeting with Chapter's permission.

3. Apologies for Absence

3.1 Apologies were received from Terry Stark, Jamie Mellows (JM) and Stewart Alderman.

3.2 Chapter relayed prayers for JM and family.

4. Conflicts of Interest

4.1 Regarding item 9.3 on today's agenda, Canon Matthew Vernon (MV) made Chapter aware of Abbi Thorpe's close friendship with his wife, Kate Vernon.

5. Notification of AOB (No other business raised.)

6. Correspondence (No correspondence received.)

7. Sustainability

7.1 **Annual Report**

7.1.1 Frank Shippam (FS) of MA Partners LLP presented Chapter with the Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements for Year Ended 31 December 2024 and briefly noted items to highlight, to include the total yearly income of £2,173,913. The nearly £300k variance between the 2023 total reflects an uptake in donations but is mainly due to an increase in grants receivable, of which the majority are within the restricted fund connected to the Abbey, Reborn project. FS also noted strong movement within the unrestricted funds (£1.8m in 2024 compared to £1.7m in 2023).

7.1.1 Both the Shop and Pilgrims' Kitchen have strongly performed.

7.1.2 Total expenditures have increased by nearly £280k, of which the majority falls within the restricted fund expenditure for the Abbey, Reborn project. Ministry-related expenditure (i.e. services, music, maintenance, support costs, etc.) have increased but remain fairly comparable year to year.

7.1.3 FS noted a few additional movements, to include the sale of 3 Crown Street and property re-evaluation.

7.1.4 Current reserves are below the Cathedral's required level in the reserves policy (equivalent to three months' worth of operating expenditure), but the auditors currently found no concerns of significant risk.

7.1.5 With minor corrections / typos noted, Chapter **approved** the 2024 Annual Report and Consolidated Figures.

7.2 **Management Letter**

7.2.1 FS presented Chapter with the Management and Governance Report and briefly summarised observations arising from the audit which will aid system controls but not impact their findings. Chapter **approved** the Management letter and thanked FS. FS confirmed his attendance at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 8 April. FS left the meeting at 1.26 pm.

7.3 **Month End Accounts**

7.3.1 Chapter received the consolidated Management Accounts for February.

7.3.2 Chapter was informed of a lengthy conversation the Finance Committee recently had re: the phasing of the budget. There is a tendency to level income across 12 months, but profiling is and will be done when better information is available (e.g. seasonal-related factors, rental income, etc.) The Shop does perform its own detailed profiling.

7.3.3 Pilgrims' Kitchen revenue is currently below budget and below income recorded this same time last year. Gross profit margin has also fallen. Caroline Rouse (CRo) is monitoring the situation, as well as a drop in visitor income which is also of some concern.

7.3.4 CRo detailed the amount of grant money received and expenditures related to the Abbey, Reborn project for the period from project start of July 2024. The monthly Management Accounts will also track the project pledges.

7.3.5 The Dean (JPH) applauded the new format of the Management Accounts and suggested incorporating narrative comparing the Cathedral's standing five to seven years ago to today, which will be a vital piece of understanding where the Cathedral is growing and plateauing.

7.3.6 The Income Generation Group will meet more often and work to develop a strategic focus. Mark Pendlington (MP) called for the group to strategize ideas and best practices for income generation, study the current or future threat of donor fatigue and look to develop plans and ideas for implementation far into the future.

7.3.7 The Fundraising Manager will hopefully be able to focus on the Cathedral's legacy scheme after Thursday's Abbey, Reborn launch event. The staff member's workload is currently at capacity.

7.3.8 Final figures for the Noye's Fludde production to be confirmed.

7.4 **Lego Proposal**

7.4.1 Chapter **approved** the Lego Proposal, to include offering a buy-one-get-two bricks deal in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the completion of the tower.

7.5 **Properties / Building Update**

7.5.1 Chapter **agreed** to include repairs to the Lady Chapel ceiling within the 2026 Repairs/Maintenance budget.

7.5.2 Additional options for the Great West Doors are under consideration and will be submitted to the 16 May Fabric Advisory Committee meeting. This project is proving quite complex engineering wise and will not be incorporated into the Abbey, Reborn plans as it is hoped that it may be completed earlier, given the intention of The Friends of the Cathedral to make a substantive grant for this project.

7.5.3 The tenants will vacate 3 Crown Street on 28 March and the sale of the property will be completed 31 March. After settling the portion owed to the Diocese and paying for the Deanery refurbishment, remaining proceeds from the sale of 3 Crown Street will be deposited into the Cathedral's reserves.

7.5.4 All the Angel Hill flats have been refurbished and are currently inhabited by either staff or tenants. The vacated choral scholar flat was successfully let on a short-term six-month lease. The rising utility costs for the flats are of some concern for CRo and are currently under review.

7.6 **Project Protocol**

7.6.1 Chapter **approved** the Project Protocol checklist. Archdeacon Sally Gaze will first trial this checklist with the National Rural Mission Conference in September. Chapter relayed thanks to Jane Haviland Webster (JHW) for overseeing this project.

7.7 **Eco St Eds**

7.7.1 JHW referred Chapter to the minutes of the last meeting of Eco St Eds and agreed actions, to include increasing meetings to six per year and strengthening links with the Diocese.

7.7.2 The application for the Gold A Rocha award had not been submitted. The application form has now been updated requiring a new application, which will be circulated with Chapter's agreement.

7.8 **The Abbey, Reborn Project**

7.8.1 Chapter received the Project Management Plan 2024-26, as well as a brief verbal update from Project Manager James Mellish (JMsh).

7.8.2 Purcell Architects and Heritage Consultants are currently working on the design proposal of the Visitor Centre, cloister and Anshelm building.

7.8.3 A constructive meeting was held with the Fabric Advisory Committee to discuss visitor flow and additional project details. Feedback from the FAC was positive.

7.8.4 JMsh and JPH will join Purcell in April for a presentation to the Cathedrals Fabric Commission.

7.8.5 Approval to begin exploration work around the Anselm building will hopefully be received in six to eight weeks. The structural integrity of the Anselm is worse than initially thought.

7.8.6 Ecology surveys proved positive. Tree surveys will follow.

7.8.7 The Project Board is working with English Heritage on plans to repair the Abbey ruins and devise path networks.

7.8.8 CRo confirmed reimbursement claims are now submitted every four weeks as opposed to a quarterly basis, which is aiding the Cathedral's cash flow.

7.8.9 JPH suggested Steve Green, the project's business planning consultant, meet with both the Income Generation Group and the Finance Committee.

7.8.10 Channel of communication with Chapter re: the Abbey, Reborn budget is primarily through the Project Board. The board is, however, working closely with CRo.

7.8.11 A meeting to discuss Stage II cost lines will be held next week and will bring a better understanding of the budget going forward.

7.9 **Car Park**

7.9.1 JPH briefed Chapter on health and safety concerns regarding pedestrian flow through the Cathedral's staff car park once the Abbey, Reborn project is in place.

7.9.2 Maintaining DDA compliant access and entry points for deliveries will need to be resolved. Should the car park close, the Cathedral will lose income from tenants who currently pay for designated parking. A formal proposal will be brought forward at a later date for Chapter's approval. JMsh left the meeting at 1.49 pm.

7.10 **Safeguarding**

7.10.1 JPH updated Chapter on General Synod's recent decision of a compromised motion that initially endorses the proposed model 3 (i.e. creation of an external scrutiny body to oversee safeguarding in dioceses and cathedrals) while calling for further work as to the legal and practical requirements necessary to implement model 4, which would have made all safeguarding operations entirely independent.

7.10.2 187 members of the Cathedral community completed the recent Safeguarding Questionnaire. Feedback will be analysed and shared with Chapter, staff and the Cathedral community.

7.10.3 The Cathedral is currently working on updating its service level agreement with the Diocese.

7.10.4 SJA has sent a letter to the Diocese requesting the Safeguarding Leadership Training be confirmed. Although delayed due to a current lack of moderators, the outdated safeguarding training is a noted risk.

7.10.5 All staff and volunteers are up to date on their required training.

7.10.6 Chapter paused for a moment of prayer.

8 Mission

8.1 Learning Manager Review

8.1.1 Ahead of his retirement, the Reverend Chris Eyden (CE) presented Chapter with a summary of his accomplishments and observations as the interim Adult Learning Manager.

8.1.2 CE provided recommendations going forward, to include:

- Maximise our pew-free space and explore high quality national exhibitions
- Secure high-quality speakers
- Begin to start charging entrance fees to certain events / lectures
- Maintain the programme that's been established (lunchtime lectures, the Edmund, Blythe and Benedict lectures, secondary school programme, historical reenactments and heritage learning partnerships).
- Assemble a skilled team to fill specific job roles (visionary, theologian, manager, administrator)
- Plan themes one to two years in advance to allow the opportunity to connect speakers, contributors, books, exhibitions and online resources.
- Build on the Abbey site, Magna Carta and growing popularity of pilgrimages.

8.1.3 MV acknowledged CE's fantastic work and Chapter applauded all he has accomplished in such a short amount of time.

8.1.4 Concerns of how to keep the momentum going once CE leaves were acknowledged, particularly as the Abbey, Reborn project is currently accumulating so much of the Dean's and Sub Dean's time. CE said the Abbey, Reborn consultants are available to contribute ideas for themes and programming. CE can also offer support from a volunteer perspective.

8.1.5 Paul Torrington (PT) noted the public's overarching interest in cathedrals, even if they do not have faith, and learning is an opportunity to draw those people in and engage.

8.1.6 JPH said the conversation re: learning will be ongoing within Chapter and the Abbey, Reborn project board. CE left the meeting at 14.55 pm.

9 Governance

9.1 Heritage Partnership Governance Update

9.1.1 Chapter received an update on the Heritage Partnership governance.

9.2 Risk, Audit and Review

9.2.1 Chapter **approved** the nomination of James North to the Risk, Audit and Review Committee.

9.3 Safeguarding Committee

9.3.1 Chapter **approved** the nominations for Abbi Thorpe and Scott Owen to the Safeguarding Committee.

9.3.2 The National Safeguarding Team has confirmed the appointment of a Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel member as the independent chair of the Cathedral's Safeguarding Committee could only be a benefit. The Team did not identify any conflicts of interest. Chapter therefore directed SJA to move forward with the candidate interested in the position of Safeguarding chair for approval at the May meeting.

10 Dean's Report

10.1.1 The Dean relayed an invitation for Chapter to attend upcoming services, to include the Justice Service on 23 March, the Climate Sunday service on 8 June and the combined civic service and celebration of the 20th anniversary of the completion of the Cathedral Tower on 22 June.

10.1.2 A new full-time chaplaincy position at King Edwards VI School will soon be advertised. The successful candidate will be line managed by the Rev'd Laura Mumford, Growing Younger Enabler, and the school's headteacher and have the opportunity to be licenced to the Cathedral or a church in Bury St Edmunds.

10.1.3 Chapter **approved** the nomination of Claudia Grinnell as a Foundation Governor of St Edmundsbury School.

10.1.4 The organising committee for Bury St Edmunds Pride 2025 is seeking the Cathedral's involvement on the day, although to what extent remains unclear. Chapter directed the Dean to open conversations with the committee and confirm how they hope the Cathedral might be involved. Church of England policies, to include the hanging of flags, to be reviewed ahead of any commitments.

10.1.5 The Master Plan is currently being updated; however, the original framework and values will remain the same.

10.1.6 The recruitment process for the next Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich remains on schedule.

11 Minutes and Reports

11.1 Chapter received the Chapter Minutes

11.1.1 The Chapter and Confidential minutes from the 26 November meeting were amended and approved.

11.1.2 The Action Log was reviewed, and any outstanding actions noted.

11.2 Matters Arising

11.3 Chapter received the minutes from 11 February Information Protection Group meeting.

11.3.1 SJA has been actively searching for a new Information Protection Group chair. A candidate has come forward and the post may be filled soon.

11.4 **Chapter received the minutes from the 21 January Planned Giving Committee meeting.**
11.5 **Chapter received the minutes from the 5 February St Eds Cathedral Trust meeting.**
11.6 **Chapter received the minutes from the 30 January Finance Committee meeting.**
11.7 **Chapter received the minutes of the 5 March Fabric Advisory Committee meeting.**
11.8 **Chapter received**

12 Any Other Business

12.1 Chapter relayed early birthday wishes to the Dean.
12.2 PTa reflected on his time at the Cathedral and noted the feeling of warmth that feeds throughout the Cathedral and Pilgrims' Kitchen, all of which is a testament to the leadership and work of Chapter. Of the Chapter meeting, PT observed good governance and a collective effort even when faced with difficult decisions.

13 Confidential Items

14 Upcoming Chapter Meeting Dates

- Thursday 8 May 1.00-3.00pm
- Wednesday 18 June Greater Chapter 3.00-8.00pm
- Monday 21 July 3.00-5.00pm
- Monday 6 October 3.00-5.00pm
- Wednesday 5 November 1.00-3.00pm

Chapter meeting concluded with prayer at 3.26 pm.