

St Edmundsbury Cathedral



CHAPTER MINUTES

Minutes of the 251st Chapter Meeting
Monday 6 October 2025 at 3.00 pm
Chapter Room

Present: The Rev'd Canon Katy Cunliffe (KC)
Sue Hughes (SH)
Mark Pendlington, Co-Chair (MP)
Barbara Pycraft (BP)
Terry Stark (TS)
The Rev'd Canon Matthew Vernon (MV)
Jane Haviland Webster (JHW)

In Attendance: Stewart Alderman (SA)
Caroline Rouse (CRo)
Sarah-Jane Powell (SJP)
James Mellish (JMsh)
Christine Stokes (CS) *Teams*
Erin Seligman (Clerk to Chapter)

1. Opening Prayers

- 1.1 Canon Matthew Vernon (MV) opened the meeting with a prayer.
- 1.2 Chapter's thoughts were with the Dean, who was speaking before the House of Bishops re: Living in Love and Faith.

2. Apologies for Absence

- 2.1 Apologies were received from the Dean, Canon Dr Victoria Johnson, Archdeacon Sally Gaze, Paul Torrington and Neil Parsons.

3. Conflicts of Interest

- 3.1 Terry Stark (TS) noted her relation to one of the nominees for the Order of St Edmund.
- 3.2 Canon Katy Cunliffe (KC) declared a conflict of interested related to agenda item 8.1.

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

5. Correspondence (No correspondence received.)

6. Sustainability

6.1 The Abbey, Reborn Project

- 6.1.1 James Mellish (JMsh) reviewed the following documents with Chapter: St Edmundsbury Cathedral Illustrative Master Plan and Conservation Management Plan, National Lottery Heritage Fund Project Conservation Plan, Stage 3 Design Report and Interpretation Plan.
- 6.1.2 The illustrative proposals of what the Cathedral may look like in 10 to 40 years' time were required by the Cathedral Fabric Commission to ensure the Abbey, Reborn project would not preclude further works. Plans include two options for a fourth cloister. Both would allow for a learning area and office space. The Dean has approved these proposals.

- 6.1.3 The Conversation Plan and strategic management plan focuses on the wider Abbey Heritage site and has been endorsed by the Abbey Heritage Partnership and the Abbey, Reborn Project Board.
- 6.1.4 The design of the Visitor Centre incorporates the architectural elements introduced by former Cathedral architect Stephen Dykes Bower. Challenges re: significant level changes have been resolved with stairs, pathways, terraced landscaping, etc. The consensus is to keep the Anselm Building intact, despite its disrepair. Incorporating a welcoming Georgian façade is planned.
- 6.1.5 Edmund blue is proposed as the new accent colour for the front of the Visitor Centre as the darken doorways may facilitate access given the various entryways along Angel Hill. Visitors will be approaching from multiple directions, requiring an attractive and accessible tourist point that is visible from every angle. Window details, flooring options, new roof etc. are also being considered.
- 6.1.6 The recent archaeology digs found a medieval ditch line, but no remains or items that would put the project at risk were uncovered. The archaeology tours went really well. More are likely to be planned during the project's delivery phase.
- 6.1.7 The current blueprint of the Shop should not change very much. The existing hidden courtyard will be utilised to expand the Shop's square footage and increase its sustainability. The space currently occupied by the Hunter Gallery will become an orientation space and hold additional toilets.
- 6.1.8 No holes can be drilled in the medieval wall, meaning the new Visitor Centre and new cloister will have to be independent structures. The precinct wall will be repaired and exposed internally.
- 6.1.9 Providing heating and power to the Visitor Centre and cloister continues to pose challenges given the limited space in the area. The available space within the Visitor Centre will be well used.
- 6.1.10 JMsh briefly reviewed repairs for the wider project, to include the Abbey ruins, Abbot's Bridge and Norman Tower, as well as access improvements to the ruins and crypt and plans for wildflower pollination.
- 6.1.11 Most of the existing car park will likely be landscaped during the delivery phases, with 11 spaces left intact for the Cathedral's tenants, deliveries and key staff members.
- 6.1.12 The consultation exhibition held in September went well, with about 400 people attending the multi-day event. Received comments were very positive and supportive of the project.
- 6.1.13 Ribbon cutting for the Abbey, Reborn project is anticipated for the end of 2028 or early 2029.
- 6.1.14 Chapter fully and enthusiastically endorsed the plans as presented above. JMsh left the meeting at 3.35 pm.

6.2 Finance

- 6.2.1 Caroline Rouse (CRo) circulated and summarised the Management Accounts for the month of September. An unexpected legacy of about £67k has turned the forecast for 2025 from a deficit to a surplus of about £35k. Net results for the half year show an underlying loss of £71k against a budgeted loss of £38k.
- 6.2.2 Income from the Cathedral community, stewardship and visitors continues to fall short of the budget and are the main areas of concern. SJP, CRo and JPH will meet with the Planned Giving chair next week to discuss.
- 6.2.3 The tap boxes are showing a small uptick in donations since training for the Welcome Assistants took place. Welcomers appear much more confident and are making the ask in a better way, although it is still too early to see if this uptick will be a permanent shift.
- 6.2.4 The new Visitor Experience Manager began last week and appears to be full of vigour and ideas, which is excellent and will hopefully bring positive changes in the new year.

- 6.2.5 Cash flow is positive at the moment due to the Cathedral currently holding £60k in proceeds (received via Zettle) from the recent Beer Festival. The contract with the Festival organisers (CAMRA) allows for the Cathedral to receive a flat rate of £8k as well as a share of the profits, which CRo cautiously estimates to be about £10k. She expects this amount to be even more though given last year's figures. CRo is withholding the Zettle proceeds until CAMRA provides transparency of total figures to ensure the Cathedral receives its fair share of the profits. Cashflow forecast shows £42k will be returned to CAMRA in October.
- 6.2.6 The cashflow is currently benefiting from the net receipts of £30k arising from the Grand Nave Dinner. However, given that these are funds raised for the Abbey, Reborn project they will be transferred to the separate bank account held by the CIO Trust to ensure those funds are ring-fenced.
- 6.2.7 Final accounts for the Deanery refurbishment project are expected shortly, including repayment of the retention, in the sum of £17k. This will bring the total cost of the project, excluding architect's fees, to £364k.

6.3 Legacy Plan

- 6.3.1 Christine Stokes (CS) presented Chapter with a revitalised Legacy Strategy.
- 6.3.2 Chapter was happy to see progress on this workstream but **agreed** the incoming Fundraising Manager should be able to review this document and make any necessary amendments.
- 6.3.3 The refreshed Legacy Leaflet will be printed ahead of the Fundraising Manager's arrival. CRo to relay any concerns re: perceived coercive wording to CS directly. CS said the Leaflet's wording is very similar to that used by all charities and to exclude certain dialogue would put the Cathedral on the backfoot.

6.4 Fundraising Update

- 6.4.1 CA provided a brief update on fundraising efforts for the Abbey, Reborn project.
- 6.4.2 Some trusts approached for donations have changed their guidelines and will not accept funding applications until the project's planning approval is received. CS has therefore altered her forecasted fundraising benchmarks but remains confident of overall success. Fundraising will continue right up until the delivery phase begins.
- 6.4.3 A 1327 Club will soon be launched for businesses interested in signing up as Project donors. CS left the meeting at 16.01 pm.

6.5 Music and Worship

- 6.5.1 Chapter **approved** the new Communion Administrants.
- 6.5.2 Katy Cunliffe (KC) has settled into her new role as Canon Precentor and thanked Chapter for their support and encouragement.
- 6.5.3 The music is consistently improving and was described as glorious and awe-inspiring. The impact from the Director of Music is evident.
- 6.5.4 Choristers returned from the summer holiday in good form.

6.6 Order of St Edmund

- 6.6.1 Chapter clarified and/or agreed the following:
- the Order will have a maximum of 24 living members;
 - Staff members can receive the honour if they display actions that go above and beyond job expectations and what current and former employees have done;
 - Putting forth numerous candidates each year may dilute the value for those already in the Order. Having a full Order of 24 members is not required;
 - Strong reasons are required for installation into the Order, as well as a demonstration of 'exemplary and unusual' service;
 - Only one nominee will be invited to join the Order for 2025.
- 6.6.2 This year's process seeking nominations from the Cathedral community went really well.

- 6.6.3 Chapter reviewed the nominations received and unanimously agreed Valerie Moore should receive the Order of St Edmund for 2025. The Dean will submit Chapter's recommendation to Bishop Joanne Grenfell for approval.

6.7 Buildings and Property Update

- 6.7.1 Chapter **agreed** to table approval of the revised plans for the Quire ramp to allow more time to review the documents. Should approval be needed ahead of the November Chapter meeting, a brief online Chapter meeting may be arranged.
- 6.7.2 A tenant is now occupying the West Wing of the Deanery.
- 6.7.3 All property renovations are now complete.

6.8 Eco St Eds

- 6.8.1 Work continues on the application for a Gold A Rocha award. The recently updated application is complicated, and members of the Eco St Eds Committee have each been assigned a section of the application to work on. The aim is to keep this application process achievable and affordable.
- 6.8.2 Aruna Stannard has been appointed clerk of the Eco St Eds Committee. She will make a wonderful addition to the Committee and is keen to join the Eco team.
- 6.8.3 The solar panel application was submitted in August, but registration of the application is on hold until the completion of a bat survey.
- 6.8.4 Jane Haviland (JHW) has joined the Diocesan Eco Committee and hopes the Diocese and Cathedral can both make useful contributions to the other.

6.9 Safeguarding

- 6.9.1 A recommendation coming from the INEQE audit is for the Cathedral to employ a Safeguarding Officer. SJP has created a job description for the role and is seeking funding through the Church Commissioners. She has requested salary costs for this position be added to the 2026 budget to allow for recruitment to begin. She is confident funding will eventually be secured but having an on-site Safeguarding Officer is of too much importance to wait for grant approval. Chapter **agreed**, noting a Safeguarding Officer will help eliminate risks and ensure good governance.
- 6.9.2 INEQE auditors held online meetings last week with a variety of staff and volunteers. Mark Pendlington's (MP) online interview with the INEQE auditors did not occur due to storm-related connectivity issues. **Action:** SJP will look to reschedule. In person meetings commence tomorrow, with a wash up meeting scheduled for Friday of which the Diocesan team and Bishop will attend along with the Management Team. A final report is not expected to be received for a few months.
- 6.9.3 Chapter paused for a moment of silence and reflection.

7. Mission

7.1 Kagera

- 7.1.1 Chapter received a report on Canon Matthew Vernon (MV) and Adam Geileskey's August attendance at the Diocese of Kagera's 40th anniversary celebrations.
- 7.1.2 All three Kagera bishops are looking forward to meeting the new Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich and expressed delight in her appointment. Bishop Grenfell is expected to join the next official visit to Kagera.

7.2 Learning

- 7.2.1 Chapter received a written Learning Hub update. SJP will line manage Fiona Hall, who will be based in the Learning Hub. She will attend Chapter when settled to report her findings and plans for the future. FH will line manage the Learning Hub Manager.

7 Governance

8.1 St Edmundsbury CofE Primary Foundation Governor

- 8.1.1 Chapter approved the appointment of KC as St Edmundsbury CofE Primary Foundation Governor.

8.2 Fabric Advisory Committee

- 8.2.1 Chapter **endorsed** the Cathedral Fabric Commission's appointment of Dr Elizabeth Pickup to the Fabric Advisory Committee.
- 8.2.2 Chapter **approved** the appointment of Dickon Whitewood and Michael Henriksen to the Fabric Advisory Committee.

8.3 Risk, Audit and Review Committee

- 8.3.1 Chapter **approved** the appointment of Rebecca Leek as chair of the Risk, Audit and Review Committee.

9 Minutes and Reports

9.1 Chapter received the Chapter Minutes

- 9.1.1 The Chapter and Confidential minutes from the 21 July meeting were amended and approved.

9.2 Matters Arising

9.3 Chapter received and noted as read the Dean's Update.

9.4 Chapter received the minutes and Budget Plan from the 6 August Ancient Library Committee meeting.

- 9.4.1 The Ancient Library welcomed many visitors during the Heritage Open Days and received £422 in donations.

10 Any Other Business

- 10.1 Chapter approved meeting dates for 2026.

11 Confidential Items

12 Upcoming Chapter Meeting Dates

- 12.1 The next Chapter meeting will be held Wednesday 5 November, 1.00 pm.
- 12.2 A Chapter lunch and refreshments will be served in the Chapter Room from 12.30 pm.

The Chapter meeting concluded with prayer at 17.01 pm.