

# St Edmundsbury Cathedral



## Minutes of the Vestry and APCM meeting held on 8 April 2025 at 6.30 pm

### Opening Remarks:

The Dean (JPH) opened the meeting with a warm welcome and prayer.

### Present:

There were 63 members of the Cathedral community in attendance (names on file).

### Vestry Meeting

1. **Re-Election of Churchwardens:** Terry Stark and Barbara Pycraft were the only nominations received. The Dean called for any further nominations and when no other persons were put forth was delighted to declare TS and BP duly re-elected. Both churchwardens were thanked for their continuing service and received enthusiastic applause.
2. With no other business to discuss the Dean closed the Vestry Meeting at 6.36 pm.

### Annual Parochial Church Meeting

1. **Apologies:** Apologies were received from 35 members of the Electoral Roll (names on file.)
2. **Minutes:** The minutes of 23 April 2024 Vestry and APCM meeting were approved and will now be signed into record by the Dean. No matters arising from the minutes were raised.
3. **Electoral Officer:** Electoral Officer Simon Waters (SW) spoke of this year's preparation of a full renewal of the Electoral Roll, which under the Church Representation Rules must occur every six years. Notice of the preparation of a new Roll was circulated via notice boards, Diocesan E-News, the *Weekly Bulletin* and email.

As of the 24 March deadline, the Electoral Roll consisted of 254 Cathedral community members, a reduction of 82 names from the previous Roll of 336. A total of 104 people were not re-enrolled for a variety of identified reasons (e.g. death, relocation, hospitalization, etc.). Twenty individuals were newly added to the Roll. SW will follow up with a small group of known community members who did not re-enroll.

Following tonight's meeting, the Electoral Roll reopens for applications. The Dean and attendees thanked SW.

4. **To Elected Three Members of the Electoral Roll to Forum: Felix von Nathusius, Liz Rowlands and Alice Sheepshanks** were duly elected to fill the three vacancies on Forum. Each will serve on Forum for the coming year. Forum members receive reports of Chapter, debate the weighty topics of those meetings and provide guidance as requested. Margaret Bond and Margaret Wheeldon stood down from Forum. Attendees thanked both for their service.
5. **Representatives to Churches Together: Pam Pitts and Margaret Steavenson** were thanked for their service, and both were duly re-appointed. All were invited to attend Churches Together meetings as well as the upcoming Walk of Witness.
6. **Representatives to World Day of Prayer Committee: Jane Leung and Mandy Alderman** were duly re-appointed and thanked for their prior service.
7. **The Cathedral's Annual Report** was made available on the Cathedral's website, with the link emailed to all electoral members prior to this meeting. The Dean introduced the new Chief Finance Officer, Caroline Rouse (CRo) and the new auditor, Frank Shippam (FS) of MA Partners LLP.
8. **The Finance Report 2024** was presented by Paul Torrington (PT), Chair of the Finance Committee. Total income for the budgeted year totaled £2,173,913 against a total expenditure of £2,233,309, a loss of £59,396. The Cathedral recorded a £76k deficit in 2023.

In 2024, the introduction of an 'Entry by Donation' approach saw the creation of paid Welcome Assistant positions supported by a three-year grant from the Cathedrals Sustainability Fund.

PT acknowledged a decrease in visitors and donations in 2024 due, in part, to the Cathedral being closed for various events. A decrease in Planned Giving and Gift Day income was noted as well.

CRo introduced herself and provided a brief summary of her professional background. Her immediate task as the CFO is to understand the Cathedral's cash flow and mitigate challenges in that regard (the Abbey, Reborn project, Solar Panel project, capital expenditures) as well as identifying budget pinch points and where improvements can be made within the areas of visitor income. The Cathedral has budgeted a small surplus in 2025 and CRo looked forward to returning to the APCM with a positive report.

FS reported Pilgrims' Kitchen had a budget surplus for 2024 and recorded the highest profits of any year. Fielding questions as to why the Marketing budget was so high, FS noted the lag in reporting incurred expenditure and the yielded income.

Costs are always kept under a very close eye, but new sources of income are needed, particularly as we are a smaller cathedral with few assets. If approved, the Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn project will be one such source.

PT confirmed the Cathedral does not yet have the equivalent of three months of operating expenditures in reserves, but efforts are underway to bolster savings. The Cathedral is forecasting £100k from the sale of 3 Crown Street will remain after the Deanery refurbishment is paid for. This sum will be added to reserves. The auditors have not identified any concerns and are satisfied the Cathedral can operate for the next 12 months. FS is equally satisfied both Chapter and the Finance Committee are having appropriate conversations re: the Cathedral's fragile state. An indication of concern is likely if finances do not improve within the next 12 months.

JPH noted cathedrals across the country are in difficult situations and St Edmundsbury's £60k deficit is considerably less than the six-figure deficits reported by other cathedrals. The present finance structure for cathedrals is not viable, as confirmed in the recent Project Narthex financial audit undertaken by the Church Commissioners. Narthex auditors noted the Cathedral is controlling costs and maximizing sources of income (Welcome Assistants, concerts, events, etc.) The top idea for improvement revolved around drawing Pilgrims' Kitchen customers to the Cathedral.

PT noted the financial support currently received from the Church Commissioners and hoped grants would be extended to permanently cover the salaries of the CFO and COO.

Recorded visitor income was queried as the figure seemed too low to include all revenue streams. FS is confident all visitor income is accounted for but may be under different budget lines. CRo to investigate. Additional giving points have been set up with the Cathedral.

9. **The Dean's Report** began with a brief update on the Music Department on behalf of Claudia Grinnell (CG) and Richard Cooke (RC) who are on break due to the school holiday.
- CG began as the Director of Music in August 2024.
  - In November 2024 the Cathedral held three performances of Noye's Fludde, which involved some 300 local schoolchildren. The event was a great success and made possible by various grants, to include support from the Vestey Trust.
  - A Be A Chorister event will be held in May, ahead of auditions for the new academic year.
  - A Choir Tour to Carlisle Cathedral is scheduled for July.

**Marketing and Communication Manager** Catherine Rayson presented a short review of her role and relayed the events that drew the most amount of publicity for the Cathedral last year. Another Dog Calendar will be produced, featuring 12 new dogs. Celebrations marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the completion of the Tower build will also be highlighted. A detailed recap can be found within the *Annual Community Report*.

**Head Verger and Events Manager** James Stark also referred attendees to his detailed annual report before highlighting the following:

- The Cathedral will host a model railway exhibition for the first time.
- Concerts by Candlelight continue to be popular, the organisers are good clients, and the Cathedral will host these events for the foreseeable future.
- Events marking the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the completion of the Tower build will include a Tower abseil, an Art on the Garth event and a Summer Choir Concert of which a new piece has been commissioned.
- Despite a strong events calendar, to include the beer festival, silent discos and Christmas Market, worship remains the priority.

**Visitor Experience Manager** Sarah Friswell was attending a conference. Canon Matthew Vernon presented an update on her behalf.

- A five-day Suffolk Saints Pilgrimage will be held in May and will include stops linked to St Botolph.
- The kneeler project has concluded. Some 400 kneelers were returned to the parish of origin, with the matching kneeler still housed within the Cathedral.
- Various celebrations have been planned to mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the completion of the Tower build (Ancient Library tours, Lego building, Tower exhibition).

**Fundraising Manager** Katie Schütte was also not able to attend today's meeting. MV presented the following update on her behalf:

- The Patron Scheme has increased to 101 members at the close of 2024.
- A number of Patron events were held during the year, to include a Carol Service and Summer Garden Party. A Patron Trip to Pembroke has been arranged for May.
- A Grand Nave Dinner will be held in May with proceeds benefiting the Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn project.

**The Dean** spoke of the team assembled to manage the Cathedral's fabric with the departure of Canon Philip Banks (PB). This team is led by Steve Cole. To date all the Angel Hill flats have been refurbished and are either rented or occupied by staff. Choral scholars will now be housed within the flats instead of an off-site rental, which will save money. Other points highlighted include:

- The Deanery Refurbishment Project is currently on budget and on schedule and JPH looks forward to welcoming everyone to see the final product.

Identified issues (i.e. insulation, electrics, rotting floors) are being mitigated and the house will be a good home for subsequent deans.

- The Abbey Precinct will be refurbished ahead of the arrival of the new precentor.
- Trial solar panels were installed for reflective testing (and passed). The solar panel project is grant funded and will significantly help with the Cathedral's utility bills.
- A presentation re: Project Magna Carta project was presented to the Fabric Advisory Committee. The responses received during the public comment period were noted. The FAC's decision is expected to be made public soon.
- Bee hives are still stationed at the Cathedral and any honey produced will be sold.
- JPH recognized those who left the Cathedral in 2024/25: Tim and Cressida Parsons, PB, Bishop Mike Harrison, the Reverend Anita Rooney and Bishop Martin Seeley. Although difficult, the departures led to new arrivals – Director of Music, Canon Theologian and the soon-to-arrive Canon Precentor.
- With receipt of the National Lottery Heritage Fund grant, the Cathedral embarked on what will quite possibly be the most exciting project to date – the Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn. Meetings with project consultants are already filling the diaries. The project will draw a new generation to the Cathedral and bring construction of a Visitor Centre and cloister return, as well as connect pathways, protect the biodiversity of the area and provide a better understanding of the Abbey. Following this Development Phase, an application will be submitted to the Heritage Fund for a second round of funding to deliver the project. In the meantime, the Cathedral is tasked with raising £2.5m for the project. Despite the difficult economic climate, JPH said fundraising is going well. He relayed his gratefulness to all supporters.
- The Cathedral continues to craft opportunities that will naturally guide people from being initial tourists to pilgrims to regular worshippers.
- Securing financial sustainability remains a challenge but cannot be what solely drives the Cathedral. The Cathedral will focus on its key vision, 'Holy ground where God's love in Christ changes lives.'
- Music continues to strengthen.
- JPH provided brief updates on the expansion of the lecture series, the F-Word Exhibition and social action. JPH continues to schedule parish visits, and all the clergy regularly represent the Cathedral at licensing services.
- New pilgrimage and bicycle routes are being explored, as well as the possibility of extending Pilgrims' Kitchen.
- Chaplains are on duty at various events (Christmas Market, Beer Festival, etc.) to engage with the public and spark conversation.
- JPH thanked the incredibly hardworking staff who are underpaid, overworked and dealing with the added pressures of the Abbey, Reborn project.

- The Cathedral is blessed with more than 300 volunteers who provide support in numerous areas, to include flower arranging, gardening, welcoming visitors, organising coffee, and running bake sales. The volunteers, as well as the team of wardens, are hardworking and incredibly valuable.
- JPH thanked Chapter for their common purpose, vision, hope and firm, but gentle, challenges. JPH equally thanked his Sub Dean for his support and listening ear.
- Attendees applauded the Dean, thanked him for his inspiring presentation and relayed their gratefulness for his service over the past seven years.

#### **10. Any Other Business**

- Volunteers are needed re: foot washing on Maundy Thursday. Contact Terry Stark if interested.
- Those wanting to stay for breakfast after dawn service on Easter are kindly reminded to book.

The meeting finished with prayers at 19:55 pm.