

St Edmundsbury Cathedral



CHAPTER MINUTES

Minutes of the 255th Chapter Meeting

Thursday 23 April 2026 at 10.00 am

Chapter Room

Present: The Very Rev'd Joe Hawes, Dean (JPH)
The Rev'd Canon Katy Cunliffe (KC)
Sue Hughes (SH)
Neil Parsons (NP)
Mark Pendlington (MP)
Barbara Pycraft (BP)
Paul Torrington (PT)
The Rev'd Canon Matthew Vernon (MV)
Jane Haviland Webster (JHW)

In Attendance: Caroline Rouse (CRo)
Sarah-Jane Powell (SJP)
Erin Seligman (Clerk to Chapter)

1. Opening Prayers

1.1 The Dean (JPH) opened the meeting with prayer and welcomed Alice Milligan (AM), the newly appointed Cathedral Architect and Surveyor of the Fabric to today's meeting.

2. Apologies for Absence

2.1 Apologies were received from Canon Dr Victoria Johnson, Terry Stark (TS) and Stewart Alderman.
2.2 Chapter to relay congratulations to TS on her upcoming wedding.

3. Conflicts of Interest (No conflicts of interest reported.)

4. Notification of AOB

4.1 As noted under Item 11.

5. Correspondence

5.1 JPH noted the lovely correspondence received from both the newly appointed Lord-Lieutenant and the Countess of Euston re: the 18 April County Service of Celebration.

6. Sustainability

6.1 Cathedral Architect Report

6.1.1 Chapter received AM's first Surveyor's Report.

6.1.2 The cleaning of the Lady Chapel ceiling has been successfully completed but AM did observe some signs of movement and displacement of the timber mouldings, perhaps due to settling of the Cathedral tower. She recommended monitoring be put in place to fully understand the nature and rate of change.

6.1.3 Repair works to the decking outside Pilgrims' Kitchen have also been completed.

6.1.4 AM's appointment for the development of a design approach for the extension of Pilgrims' Kitchen has been confirmed for the RIBA 1-2 design stage. Three design options have all come in over budget and AM is currently deliberating next steps, to include consideration of a temporary rain cover as opposed to a fully enclosed structure.

- 6.1.5 AM has completed an initial appraisal of the condition of the Great West Window (report not yet circulated to Chapter). References of Philip Orchard's 2021 QI report re: rain leakage and a 2017 QI report indicating the window's satisfactory condition were referenced. The previous inspections were inhibited from a ground level view, and AM is organising a cherry picker to allow for a closer examination. A drone would not work in this situation as AM needs physical access to the window to assess its fragility. Quotes have also been sought from two specialist glazing conservators to establish the overall scope of necessary works and project costs. AM is cautiously optimistic the Great West Window will require less repairs than originally estimated.
- 6.1.6 AM's predecessor is concluding his work re: initial design strategy for the Great West Doors and will soon hand over this project to AM.
- 6.1.7 The solar panels are expected to be installed by month's end with testing and commissioning occurring in May or June.
- 6.1.8 The quinquennial inspection will begin after Easter and include all buildings within the Cathedral's 'green line.' AM to work with the Maintenance Verger to ensure safe access as and where needed.
- 6.1.9 AM attended a feedback session on decarbonisation options and spoke of a bivalent system successfully adopted at Newcastle that combines the use of new air source heat pumps with its existing gas boiler. At the Dean's direction, AM will begin developing a net-zero action plan and explore costings.
- 6.1.10 AM has prepared a strategy for achieving a gold A Rocha Eco Church award that heavily focuses on the generation of policies.
- 6.1.11 AM to attend a webinar on a new Places of Worship Renewal Fund, a competitive capital grant programme for repair and conservation projects. AM advised Chapter to pause planned capital repairs until more details about this funding opportunity come available. Repairs to the Great West Window would likely meet the requirements of this grant programme.
- 6.1.12 Chapter agreed having a trustee lead for fabric would prove beneficial to AM and the *Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn* project. Chapter members interested in fulfilling this role were directed to speak with Sarah-Jane Powell (SJP).
- 6.1.13 Chapter commended AM on her detailed and thorough report. AM left the meeting at 10.23 am.

6.2 Finance

- 6.2.1 Caroline Rouse (CRo) presented consolidated management accounts, a Managements Account Review and cashflow report for the 3 months ended 31 March 2026. The Cathedral is slightly ahead of budget which, while encouraging, should not be interpreted as being overly significant.
- 6.2.2 The Welcome Assistants have benefited from a grant-funded training session carried out in 2025 and, consequently, visitor income has increased. Further training would prove beneficial but external training is considered too costly.
- 6.2.3 During a recent meeting with the Senior Management Team, project manager James Mellish (JMsh) said the delivery of the *Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn* Project is not expected to have an overwhelming impact on Pilgrims' Kitchen. A designated walkway will be created from the road to the restaurant in order to maintain customer access.
- 6.2.4 Maintenance costs are below budget, although this is largely due to the permanent variances of two capital works planned for this year but carried out in 2025.
- 6.2.5 CRo has amended the layout of the consolidated management accounts in order to clarify available restricted and designated accounts. Upon review by the Finance Committee, two funds (Cockram Bequest and the Yard/Dulverton Trust) listed as designated were

determined to be restricted funds and will be reclassified as such. The designated and restricted funds total £145k, of which musical instruments comprise £47k.

- 6.2.6 The provided balance sheet offers a transparent review of assets and liabilities. Chapter trustees were invited to forward any queries to CRo.
- 6.2.7 Significant changes will be made to the *Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn* funding section of the consolidated management accounts if project funding for the delivery phase is granted. About £1.4m in pledges has been received for the project to date, of which nearly £280k has been collected. CRo said the project's fundraising consultant remains positive the fundraising campaign will be successful and that having all the planning permissions granted will bolster giving.
- 6.2.8 The Finance Committee indicated the 12-month rolling cash flow forecast may be overly cautious. CRo will review the various outflows.
- 6.2.9 Chapter received and confirmed as read the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting and St Edmundsbury Trust meeting, both of which were held on 10 March 2026.
- 6.2.10 Chapter received and confirmed as read the minutes of the Planned Giving Committee meeting held on 13 January 2026.
- 6.2.11 Chapter briefly discussed reported increases in pilfering within cathedral shops and its financial impact. The Cathedral Shop, with its multiple doors and blocked sightlines, may be at risk of being targeted. Action: SJP to address this with the Director of Enterprises.
- 6.3 Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn Project
 - 6.3.1 The National Lottery Heritage Fund's decision re: the project's delivery phase application will be made soon, although a public announcement will be delayed. Representatives for the Heritage Fund will visit the Cathedral on 12 May which is a good indication the application is being taken seriously.
 - 6.3.2 Planning permissions are expected to be received on 27 May, and this next benchmark will be communicated to project supporters.
 - 6.3.3 JPH and JMsh will provide a project update to the Cathedral community on Saturday 2 May. Both are also leading a series of 'road shows' to both communicate project plans across the county and build a network of destinations to showcase why visitors should plan for a multi-day excursion to Suffolk.
 - 6.3.4 Lunches, as well as a garden party, are being organised to thank project supporters.
 - 6.3.5 Paul Torrington said JMsh has completed a cash flow analysis for the entire project and any identified pinch points have been remedied.
 - 6.3.6 The development phase of the *Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn* project will impact use of the garth for large events. Alternative ideas will be needed to recoup lost income (i.e. large installation in the Cathedral, hosting events offsite, etc.)
- 6.4 Eco St Eds
 - 6.4.1 Jane Haviland Webster (JHW) thanked AM for joining the Eco St Eds Committee. Her involvement helps increase the integration of eco initiatives into the fabric and general operations of the Cathedral.
 - 6.4.2 At their last meeting, the Committee reviewed application questions for the Gold A Rocha Award. A budgeted action plan is being reviewed with CRo.
 - 6.4.3 Eco St Eds is also working with the Diocese to develop a net-zero action plan and bring environmental sustainability.
 - 6.4.4 Upcoming training opportunities were discussed.
- 6.5 Policies
 - 6.5.1 Chapter received a Policy Index identifying which policies are to be reviewed and renewed by Chapter, the Senior Leadership Team, the Safeguarding Committee, and the Health and Safety Committee. Trustees were invited to send any amendments to SJP.

- 6.5.2 Chapter approved a newly created Emergency/Business Continuity Plan. Action: SJP to take forward Chapter's concerns re: cyber attacks (1. To what extent is the Cathedral working with West Suffolk Council on their plan to maintain infrastructure and 2. How will the Cathedral help ensure continuity if a massive disruption occurs?) The Cathedral does have a Cyber and Information Systems Security Policy and has a contract with IT services to ensure protection.
- 6.5.3 Chapter approved the updated Complaints Policy.
- 6.5.4 Chapter approved the updated Conflicts of Interest Policy.
- 6.6 Safeguarding
 - 6.6.1 Chapter received the minutes of the 11 March 2026 Safeguarding Committee meeting.
 - 6.6.2 Chapter received a Quarterly Safeguarding Report. Action: The new Safeguarding Officer to be invited to a future Chapter meeting.
 - 6.6.3 Chapter received a copy of the updated *Promoting a Safer Church* poster. A photo of the Cathedral's Safeguarding Officer to be added.
 - 6.6.4 Efforts continue to recruit a Safeguarding Chapter trustee, as well as a Senior Non-Executive Member of Chapter (SNEM).
 - 6.6.2 Chapter paused for prayer and reflection.

7 Mission

7.1 Music and Worship

- 7.1.1 Chapter received the Canon Precentor's (KC) Worship and Music Report. A person has applied for the Tenor Vicars Choral position. This post has been vacant for quite some time due to a national shortage of tenors.
- 7.1.2 The Cathedral will soon host a Chorister Open Evening. Ahead of this, the Director of Music will lead workshops in local schools, with participants invited to attend the Open Evening.
- 7.1.3 The organ was digitally recorded, with the sample set made available for purchase through Barritt Audio on Friday. The Cathedral receives a portion of the royalties. The launch alone brought in £1,200 for the Cathedral.
- 7.1.4 Some 150 young people participated in yesterday's Gabrieli Roar production, which went exceedingly well. Organisers have expressed interest of a return performance. The Director of Music used this opportunity to approach some participants with invitations to join the youth choir.
- 7.1.5 Mark Pendlington (MP) applauded the Easter Day services, the smooth organisation and the soaring music, of which the quality and standard continue to rise. JPH spoke with the Bishop re: her experience with Easter, Chrism, etc. and she remarked about the Cathedral feeling 'like home.'
- 7.1.6 The Subdean and Canon Pastor acknowledged JPH, MP and KC, who have been working with the Countess of Euston on the 18 April service marking her retirement as HM Lord-Lieutenant of Suffolk.
- 7.1.7 The Chrism Eucharist was audibly led by women. This was not planned, but the Bishop determined this could occur on occasion.

7.2 Deputy Warden

- 7.2.1 Chapter approved the appointment of Andy Day as Deputy Warden.

7.3 Revised Master Plan

- 7.3.1 With minor amendments noted, Chapter approved the final draft of the revised Master Plan (2026-2030) and thanked MV for leading this process.
- 7.3.2 The document will be shared with the Cathedral community and SJP will speak with the Marketing Manager re: distributing the document more widely. The Senior Management Team will discuss if and when to share the Masterplan at a Diocesan Synod.

8 Governance

8.1 Chapter and Committees of Chapter

- 8.1.1 Chapter received and reviewed the membership of Chapter and Committees of Chapter, which highlights current vacancies and term dates.
- 8.1.2 The Nominations Committee is fully recruited. Additional members are needed for the Finance Committee to ensure a quorum when apologies are given.
- 8.1.3 The SNEM is appointed by the Bishop on consultation with Chapter.
- 8.1.4 Another two members could be recruited for the Risk, Audit and Review Committee. At least one non-executive Chapter trustee is required to be on the RARC. Both JHW and Neil Parsons are filling this seat. Action: SJP to determine if a conflict of interest has developed with another member of the RARC.
- 8.1.5 Chapter discussed the political shift that may occur with the upcoming election, what our message will be and how the Cathedral will position itself as a place of reflection. Any messaging will be in harmony with the Diocese. Action: JPH to speak with the Marketing Manager re: writing an opinion piece for the *East Anglian Daily Times*.
- 8.1.6 SJP continues to oversee the Cathedral volunteers and looks forward to a volunteer manager being recruited in September. An Events Manager will be recruited in 2027, and the Visitor Experience Manager will expand to a full-time position from September.

9 Minutes and Reports

9.1 Chapter Minutes

- 9.1.1 The 12 March Chapter and Confidential minutes were amended and approved.
- 9.2 Chapter received the minutes of the 9 March 2026 Enterprises Board meeting.
- 9.3 Chapter received the minutes of the 3 March 2026 meeting of Ancient Library Committee.

10 Any Other Business

- 10.1 The Project Protocol checklist was found to be too cumbersome and time consuming for staff members and has been amended to better reflect Cathedral procedures (e.g. weekly Staff and Senior Management meetings).

11 Confidential Items

12 Upcoming Chapter Meeting Dates

- 12.1 The 2026 Greater Chapter meeting will be held on 3 June. Agenda to be circulated soon.
- 12.2 The next Chapter meeting will be held Tuesday 28 July, 10.00 am.

13 Review of Meeting

- 13.1 Barbara Pycraft (BP) called today's Chapter a good meeting at which everyone contributed. She was pleased with the questions raised and felt much was accomplished today. She urged trustees to continue to challenge and question, particularly on agenda items they may not have expertise.
- 13.2 Procedures re: welcoming of guests could be finetuned.
- 13.3 Highlighting the sections of received reports / minutes that specifically require Chapter's attention would prove beneficial.
- 13.4 BP suggested members of the College of Canons be listed on the website, particularly with the upcoming Greater Chapter meeting.
- 13.5 BP was very impressed with AM's report.
- 13.6 Maintaining set deadlines for agenda items / papers is also important.

The Chapter meeting concluded with prayer at 12 noon.