**Minutes from the Annual Meeting**

The Chapter would like to thank those who attended the Annual Meeting on Sunday 11th May 2025. As part of this activity, we are sharing a summary of the minutes so that those unable to attend can continue to be informed about the life of our Cathedral.

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|   | Item | Person/s |
| I | **Welcome and Prayer** The Dean of Chichester, the Very Reverend Dr Edward Dowler  |  |
| II | **A report on changes to the Roll since the last annual church meeting\***ED reported that this is a complete revision of the Electoral and Community Rolls[[1]](#footnote-1). We are thankful to those who have taken time to complete their forms and submit them to the Cathedral. Electoral Roll:This year, we have 190 individuals on the Electoral roll (up from 2024: 186). Of those 190:* 116 were also on the 2024 Electoral roll list
* + 13 have crossed from the 2024 Community roll
* + 61 new names.
* Out of last year’s 186 members, there are fifty-nine names that have not signed up this year (plus eight who have moved from Electoral to Community). Possible reasons include moving away, illness/death (though in reality, we cannot know the detail of every case).

Community Roll We have 29 individuals on the Community roll (down on 2024: 56). Of those 29, 21 are new this year (including eight moving from last year’s Electoral roll). 12 of the 29 are clergy, including two bishops. Of the 56 from last year, 13 have crossed to the Electoral roll this year, 8 have signed up again on the Community roll meaning we have lost 35 individuals.  | Edward Dowler, The Dean (ED) |
| III | **Dean’s Report to 2025 AGM**First of all, I would like to thank you for your welcome to my family and me over the past few months. I am thankful to God for the great privilege of being Dean of Chichester and it has been wonderful to work with excellent clergy colleagues, our wonderful Cathedral staff and the many, many people who so generously give of their time and talents voluntarily. **GOVERNANCE:*** In September I was appointed as Dean of Chichester, installed on 14th September 2024. This followed Interim Dean, the Reverend Canon Simon Holland and Acting Dean, the Very Reverend Graeme Knowles. I would like to thank them both for their contributions to Cathedral life.
* After a number of years with the Cathedral (initially as Head of Finance, before becoming joint Communar and Bursar) Ruth Bamford resigned from her post in December 2024. We warmly welcomed Amy Sim as Communar earlier this year. Amy has served the cathedral for eight years, most recently as Interim Communar, and Head of Operations.
* After five years as a residentiary canon, our Precentor, Daniel Inman, returned to parish ministry as Associate Vicar of St Luke's and Christ Church in Chelsea in the Diocese of London. The responsibilities of the Canon Precentor now sit with me, as the Dean.
* This week we bid farewell to our Chancellor, the Reverend Canon Dr Jack Dunn who is to become Chaplain of Brighton College. We are grateful for Jack’s support of Cathedral governance, and leadership in relationship to families, children and young people. We are currently recruiting for the post of Canon Chancellor.
* We welcomed new members of the Chapter, including Gabrielle Higgins, Justin Harrington and John Booth. Should you wish to meet these members of Chapter, please speak to them after this presentation over Coffee. You can also read their biographies on the Cathedral website (‘About us’ section

**WORSHIP AND MUSIC:*** On average this past year we had 364 worshippers join us for worship on Sundays, and a further 43 who were children under the age of 16 – representing the continued growth of our provision for families. We have a faithful congregation for Morning Prayer and the Eucharist and welcome many visitors to services during the week, in particular to Choral Evensong..
* We welcomed 4075 people for special services, and over 5885 young people from schools, including for end of term services. We also warmly welcomed the graduations to the Cathedral this year, working closely with both the University of Chichester and Chichester College.
* We made the decision to restructure our daily morning worship, moving Morning Prayer to 7.45am, immediately before the daily 8.00am Eucharist.
* Recently, the Cathedral welcomed over 2,681 worshippers over Holy Week and Easter Day (a slight increase on last year). The return of the Chrism Eucharist was also warmly welcomed, with 488 attendees – and clergy from across our Diocese travelling to renew their vows and receive their oils.
* We continue to live-stream our worship, including our Sunday Eucharist and service of Choral Evensong. This digital offering is warmly received by congregants across the world, and locally – including at local care homes, including Wellington Grange.
* We have welcomed an increase in pilgrimages this year, with many parishes across East and West Sussex looking to celebrate the Diocesan and Cathedral anniversary celebrations. Over 40 have been scheduled from February 2025 onwards.

**VISITOR EXPERIENCE, EVENTS AND PROGRAMME:*** During this year, we launched our Spire Visits – tours to the Cathedral’s Lantern with panoramic views of Chichester and beyond. These have been sell-out events, with spaces booked out months in advance. We look forward to introducing an extended Roof Tour in due course, with more detail on the incredible roof structure that recently underwent such a significant restoration.
* We have rolled out a schedule of training to improve the welcome received by our communities, and visitors. This includes Equality, Diversity and Inclusion sessions, as well as training on how to de-escalate challenging situations.
* Our exhibitions programme continued to engage audiences far and wide, including our presentation of Luke Jerram’s *Mars* in October 2024. A programme of events included a prayer trail and story-telling for under 5s.
* Chichester950, our 950th anniversary programme, commenced in February 2025. A full programme for the year ahead (ending in mid-November), highlights include our exhibition (*Religion, Rebellion & Reformation*) which shares the story of the Christian faith across East and West Sussex through artefacts and biographies; TrinityFest on the Green (and the service beforehand, on Trinity Sunday, 15 June) a party on the Cathedral Green, and Together in Unity – a concert celebrating the 60th anniversary of Leonard Bernstein’s Chichester Psalms (17 May 2025). We have strongly encouraged parish pilgrimages and have welcomed many parish groups

**INCOME GENERATION:***The Cathedral finances will be covered in more detail under items IV (Income Generation).** The worshipping life of the Cathedral is its central and core business and our world class musical tradition is integral to that and of course draws people towards God in a unique way. Since I became Dean I have worked closely with the team at the Chichester Cathedral Restoration & Development Trust to ensure that we have a successful focus on raising funds to sustain the musical life of the Cathedral. We have promoted the Chichester Cathedral Platinum Endowment Trust for Music and provided opportunities, as that fund we hope and pray builds up, for sponsorship of individual choristers. This year, match-funding is available for up to £950,000 – meaning your donation is doubled. I do continue to ask for your support for this initiative so that we can secure the future of our world class musical and choral tradition.
* I would also like to thank the Operations Team, and Directors of Chichester Cathedral Enterprises Limited for continuing to raise income through our shop, accommodation, events and venue hire. And also the Friends of the Cathedral for their hard work, support and encouragement.
* I wish to thank our worshipping community who support the life of the Cathedral by donating their time and talents, as well as by contributing financially. I would also like to ask those present to continue to encourage members of the congregation to donate through the Parish Giving Scheme. This is a national scheme which enables giving to churches in a simple and frictionless way. Please may I ask you to consider your giving as part of your Christian commitment. An enormous amount of work is put into sustaining the cathedral building but congregational giving primarily goes to keep our doors open and sustain our worshipping and community life. Your generosity helps in particular with items such as the provision of our excellent verger team, liturgical materials such as altar supplies and service booklets and the hospitality and outreach we are able to offer. In other words, with those things that make the Cathedral distinctively a centre of worship and mission.

**VISION PRIORITIES*** As many of you will be aware, we are part way through an extensive vision document but I would like to focus on some key priorities that the Chapter has identified for the current year.
* **Worship**: as I have said we continue to fundraise for the sustainability of our musical life but also to find ways in which our rich legacy in art and music provide ways into faith and holiness. The Dean’s lectures later in the year and also, we hope, further events in 2026 will help us to focus on this.
* Under **teaching and learning**, we are seeking to recruit a Canon Chancellor who will take the lead in education and Christian formation across age groups and with the younger age groups we have greatly increased our offer with the arrival of our Creative Learning Officer who has done great work in this department. The 950 exhibition has been a significant educational resource for the many who have visited and we have renewed the signage around the Cathedral to emphasise not only the historical significance of different parts of the building but their spiritual and theological significance.
* Under **Heritage, Fabric and Environment**, work goes on to respond to the INEQE safeguarding audit. We are seeking to develop a plan for Cathedral heating, to reduce waste and to work towards a sustainable future. We are also in the early stages of what may turn out to be an exciting and transformative project to restore the bell tower. The Clerk of Works, Tony Allen, retired recently after many years of great service to the Cathedral. We are planning to appoint a Head of Estates to replace him, whose task will be to ensure that we are making the best in every way out of the wonderful environment we have been given. During the year we were awarded the Ecochurch gold award.
* Finally, under **Funding, Finance and Enterprise**, we are reviewing the way in which income is generated and spent, including the way that we ask visitors to contribute – which we hope to keep on a voluntary basis. We aim to increase the number of visitors and the quality of their experience. A large amount of time and effort, in particular from our new Communar and those on Chapter responsible for finance, into careful examination of the way we spend our money. We believe we now have a realistic budget for the current financial year in a financial situation that continues to be very challenging. We will shortly be recruiting a new Chief Financial Officer who will have a key role in addressing these issues.

**THANK YOU**Finally, I would like to thank on my own behalf and that of all of us, my colleagues on the clergy team at the Cathedral, the Cathedral Chapter, those who serve on our various Committees, our dedicated staff team and our wonderful volunteers who work to sustain our life in so many areas. I give thanks to God every day for my part in this and look for continued blessing in the year to come. In this Easter season, we give thanks that Christ is truly risen and that, amongst many challenges for the world and the Church, he leads us to new life and new hope. | (ED) |
| IV | **A presentation of the financial statements of the Cathedral**  * AS began by sharing her pleasure to be reporting for the first time as Chief Operating Officer, having taken up the role in January after serving as Head of Operations for seven years.
* AS continued by reflecting on where we are, the challenges we have faced, and our clear and pragmatic plan for the years ahead.
* In common with many other historic organisations, recent years have been an undeniably challenging time for the Cathedral. In March 2024, the Cathedral concluded the period with an operating loss of over £500K. This is a greater challenge than expected as it was hopeful that the outlook for 2025 would be more positive. However, whilst income rose from 2.1m to 2.2m, costs also rose to over 3m.
* Rises in utility costs alongside the considerable costs of maintaining a Grade 1 listed building of this scale while ensuring the Cathedral remains open, safe and welcoming to all, remains an ongoing challenge.
* Recent infrastructure changes and improvements alongside high costs of repair, demands constant stewardship. The Cathedral has also seen rising insurance premiums and increased costs in professional services. Higher compliance requirements and the maintenance of specialist systems have also contributed to our annual outgoings.
* As a result of these combined pressures, March 2025 looks set to close with an operational deficit of over £700k before transfers from our restricted and designated funds are applied to cover key areas. The forecast for 2025, if unaddressed, projects a deficit closer to £750K.
* AS stressed that proactive measures are being taken. For 2025, a realistic, considered and achievable budget has been set which addresses our expenditure, our income and long term sustainability.
* The Cathedral’s 5-yr financial strategy is focused on growth in income streams which can reliably support our operating costs. This includes developing new visitor income experiences, particularly through the expansion of our very popular guided tours and group visits. Also targeting growth through Chichester Cathedral Ltd. This includes retail, venue hire and our highly successful accommodation offer.
* We are also working hard to open the Cathedral more extensively to appropriate commercial activity beyond the daily pattern of worship, thus enabling us to make greater use of our exceptional space for venue hire, concerts and events. We are also working in parallel with our catering partners to support their growth which will impact positively on Cathedral finances.
* Fundraising efforts continue unabated alongside commercial efforts and endeavours. For example, we are actively raising funds for music, fabric and outreach activities. Community outreach work has recently been boosted by additional support for our Hometech outreach project from the West Sussex County Council’s Digital Inclusion Team. This is testament to the relevance and reach of our work in the wider community.
* AS concluded: ‘While the challenges are clear and significant, so too is our determination to build a sustainable future for Chichester Cathedral.’
 | Amy Sim, Communar & Chief Operating Officer (AS) |
| V | **The annual report on the fabric, goods and ornaments of the church or churches of the parish** VB began this section by paying tribute to the Estates team, notably our recently retired Clerk of Works, Tony Allen, our maintenance team, Matt and Simon, our Interim Estates Manager, Vicky Sutton, the Vergers, the Trust and the Seffrid Guild for their repair work. VB then outlined the major projects undertaken in 2024, much of which occurred behind the scenes. * Completion of lighting project with some adjustments to the Lady Chapel. New lighting in the Treasury cabinets and new lighting in the Cathedral Library which has been transformative.
* Installation of new heating and ventilation system in the library, installed to help maintain the best conditions for the books. VB gave thanks to Amy Sim, Rebecca Lewry-Gray, Vicky and the Library volunteers for their support in the absence of a proper Canon Librarian. New Axial online catalogue system soon to be put in place.
* Organisation and cataloguing of the Muniment Room is now complete thanks to Ian Milton and his team. This work has already proved invaluable as it helped our architect find plans of the Cathedral, for example, where underfloor pipes are in the North aisle.
* New walkways, safety lines and emergency lighting in the triforium and stairways to enable access to high roof and lanterns for tours.
* Beautiful oak accessibility ramp in East end of cloisters installed last year- greatly improved safety and looks beautiful.
* Increased CCTV coverage within the Cathedral to help keep visitors, staff, volunteers, worshippers and the Cathedral treasures and fabric safe. Noticeable rise in low level antisocial behaviour and vandalism.
* Considerable H&S improvements to the interior of the Bell Tower.
* Behind the scenes, new fire alarm system installed throughout the Cathedral.
* Bell Tower – considerable preliminary planning work by Surveyor of the Fabric and Fabric Advisory Committee to plan for restoration. Applying to National Lottery Heritage Fund to support this.

**Sustainability*** VB reported on the Cathedral’s heating problems as a result of corroded and limescale filled old pipe work. A survey was undertaken in 2024 to investigate possibility of Net Zero Project using air heat source pumps (costed at c £5m). To support this project, an application was made to the Church Commissioners to be a Cathedral Demonstrator Project. The £175k bid was for the development of engineering plans. Despite encouragement, this bid was unsuccessful and this immediate project has now been shelved.
* Current heating problems lies with old pipe work rather than boilers. The Cathedral needs an effective environmentally friendly heating system. To this end, a survey has recently been undertaken alongside investigations into electrical heaters and further draft exclusion. Funds are available from the Trust for this.
* VB brought this section to a close by sharing our delight in obtaining Gold Eco Church status. This award helps with fund raising as well as being commendable in its own right. VB formally thanked Vicky for all her hard work with this. VB also asked the congregation to visit our new ‘Bug-thedral’!
 | Vanessa Baron, Canon Treasurer (VB)  |
|   | **A report of the proceedings of the Deanery Synod**SJ drew attention to the Deanery Synod report which had been shared ahead of the AGM. Particular items to note: * The Rural Dean had received grants from various sources and parishes were invited to apply for money to assist with missional plans. All parishes who applied received about £1000.
* Chichester and Westbourne are the only Deaneries that do not currently have or share a Family Support Worker through issues of finance, especially given that many parishes struggle to afford their parish share.
* A number of Diocesan clergy have also left in the course of the year.
* Deanery Day (June ’24), organised in two parts to support parish ministry ( Eco-church, led by Bishop Nick Holtam, was discussed alongside Revd. Rachel Gledhill who spoke of developing Eucharistic worship for children.)
* SJ concluded by noting how the Deanery Synod facilitates collaborative working between parishes across the Diocese. SJ also shared the challenges currently facing the synod which include: no rural Dean and other key staff.
 | Simon James, Deanery Synod representative (SJ) |
|   | **Other matters of general Cathedral interest:**1. **Sustainability (Net Zero and Eco Church)**
* HCS spoke of the Cathedral’s commitment to a holistic (environment, culture and church) green approach as a Eco Church. He echoed VB’s delight in achieving Eco Church Gold, noting that we are the fourth cathedral to achieve this. HCS explained that this was a rigorous process which covered cleaning products, lawn cutting etc. The award reflects the bedrock of our green approach to cathedral life.
* HCS spoke of the measures taken to reduce our carbon footprint and also expressed his disappointment to be unsuccessful with the Church Commissioners’ bid.
* Finally, HCS confirmed that the Cathedral heating is the next project.
1. **Education:**
* RB began by describing how the Cathedral’s schools and family’s outreach has been on a significant journey over the last 9 months.
* Several priorities became apparent on her arrival in September 2024. Firstly, the name under which our work would sit needed a fresh start and the best way forward with this was to rebrand. This changed from ‘Learning and Engagement’ to ‘Creative Learning and Discovery’. Very positively received.
* Secondly, the Cathedral needed to work on rebuilding our reputation by establishing strong and positive working relationships across a wide range of contacts, particularly schools where contact had been lost following the pandemic.
* Lastly, that rebuilding would take time to ensure our mission to children, young people and families moving forwards is established on strong foundations and within staff capacity across the life of the Cathedral.
* Drive to recruit a Children’s and Youth Engagement Officer has been unsuccessful after three rounds of recruitment.

**Creative Learning and Discovery Ministry and Outreach** * **Vision:** RB described the vision to make Jesus Christ known to children, young people and families. In practice, the vision needs to permeate through every aspect of our outreach and work across the Cathedral and is a fully interwoven part of our ministry. We must constantly ask ‘What we are doing for children and families?’ and ‘how are we inviting to them to know Jesus Christ more clearly, love Him more dearly and follow Him more nearly day by day?’
* **Aim:** To co-create with children, young people, families and teachers the activities delivered by this area of ministry. Putting their voice at the centre of what we do. And to have opportunities both at the Cathedral and through our outreach work across this region for creative encounters that are immersive and imaginative.
* **Mission**: Increasing Engagement with Children, Young People, and Families Our mission is to enable children, young people, and families to explore the Christian faith in a way that is relevant, accessible, inspiring and memorable. This includes introducing them to the rich heritage and stories of Chichester Cathedral and the Christian tradition through self-led discovery trails, creative workshops and interactive experiences.
* **Impact:** Between September 2024- March 2025 Creative Learning and Discovery has engaged with twenty-three schools and welcomed 1,051 children with 130 staff through school visits. RB has networked with sixty headteachers in the region. During Mars exhibition, RB curated an all-age prayer trail called ‘A journey under Mars’ which engaged children and adults in scripture, thought and prayer exploring the themes of conflict and environmental responsibility. Adding to this the team have reached 804 children, parents and caregivers through family activities including our sold-out Mars Makers craft workshops and reading under Mars for U5’s. At Christmas families were invited to take part in our advent, Christmas and Epiphany trail which took children on a journey around the cathedral discovering the nativity story within our decorations, artwork and stained-glass windows. At the start of 950 anniversary year, we hosted a fully booked DRAW950 event in February half-term, invited 250 children into the cathedral to immerse themselves and illustrate key moments from the Cathedral's rich 950-year journey.
* Earlier this spring our new friend Wilfrid the Seal was launched alongside our bespoke children’s trail which sits alongside our exhibition in the northern chapels. While the trail is aimed at children, which asks important questions for all ages. At the end of March, we welcomed six local primary schools to come and co-create with us our new bug cathedral. Looking ahead we have recently launched a Diocese wide creative writing competition called Write950 for those aged 4-18 and we are working in collaboration with one of our cathedral charitable partners Children’s Bookfest and Waterstones Chichester to deliver this project. We are working in collaboration with the Diocesan Board of Education on an art project called Fish950 which invites all year 6 children from diocese to individually create a fish piece of artwork which will be joined together to create a sea of fish that will hang in the cathedral this summer.
* RB concluded by acknowledging the work of James and Victoria who consistently, kindly and faithfully lead within the families service on a Sunday morning and weaving together what we do to serve the families that call this church home. It is a joy and privilege to work on these projects alongside Diocesan partners, charitable partners and local businesses.
1. **Christian Nurture:**
* NA spoke of recent confirmation classes (14 young people and adults confirmed on Easter eve). He has also held Deanery confirmation classes for eight attendees.
* George Bell House Bible Fellowship study groups took place during Advent and Lent. These included in depth exploration and discussion of Bible passages. NA spoke of how these study groups develop knowledge but also offer time and space in spirit of fellowship.
* NA also flagged the ‘Be still’ organisation which will restart in George Bell House at the end of June 2025. More information will follow.
1. **Safeguarding:**
* VB reported that the Cathedral and the Diocese were part of a wide ranging and in depth safeguarding audit in 2024, carried out by INEQE. This report is available on the Cathedral’s website.
* VB paid particular tribute to the former Canon Chancellor, Jack Dunn, for his drive, commitment and expertise in all matters concerning safeguarding.
* VB also paid tribute to the Cathedral’s Organist and Master of Choristers, Charles Harrison, for his care for the wellbeing of the choir. The Chair of the Safeguarding Management Committee and Lay Chapter member, Austin Hindman, was also thanked for his tireless commitment to Cathedral safeguarding.
* The Cathedral is now working through the action plan following the INEQE audit. To this end, the operational Safeguarding Operational Group, comprising a cross section of Cathedral staff, has recently been established.
* VB also gave thanks to the Diocesan Safeguarding Adviser, Colin Perkins, for his guidance, support and expertise. The Cathedral has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Diocese which outlines the level and scope of this support.
* Safeguarding training is firmly embedded, for both staff and volunteers. VB paid tribute to Carolyn Atkinson (Volunteer and HR co-ordinator), Val Timlin (Head of HR) and AS (Communar) for organising and overseeing this.
* The Cathedral’s Safeguarding Management Committee meets regularly and now includes a serving police officer. This has increased the breadth of knowledge, expertise and experience of the committee. A new member will shortly be joining who will represent survivors and victims. VB explained that how we respond to victims of abuse is of the highest priority. Staff training has been put in place to support this and we look forward to more expert guidance.
* VB concluded by thanking everyone especially those who have undertaken safeguarding training without question. VB also reminded the members present that safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.
 | Howard Castle-Smith, Lay Chapter member (HCS)Rosie Bradberry , Creative Learning and Discovery Manager (RB)               |
|   | ED introduced attendees to the Lay and Clergy members of the Cathedral Chapter who were present at the meeting, including Howard Castle Smith and Austen Hindman. He invited members present to ask any questions following the meeting.  | Chapter   |
|   | Close & Prayer | ED  |

\* A copy of the Roll was made available on the evening for inspection.

1. Chichester Cathedral maintains two Rolls. The first is an Electoral Roll for members of the congregation, so that they can elect representatives to Deanery Synod. If you are not eligible to join the Electoral Roll, you may join the Community Roll. Many volunteers, who are not members of the congregation, may wish to join this Roll. It also includes active clergy. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)