

Minutes of the 72nd AGM of the Friends of St Paul's Cathedral

Wednesday 10th July 2024

OBE Chapel, St Paul's Cathedral

Welcome

The Chair, The Reverend Canon Dr Neil Evans, Canon Steward welcomed everyone to the 72nd Friends Annual General Meeting and opened the meeting at 1.30pm with prayers including the Friends Prayer.

O God to whose great honour this Cathedral Church was built; send your blessing on all who serve and worship in St Paul's and all who enter its doors. Let it always be a place where your love is made known, your truth proclaimed, and your name glorified, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

It was noted the agenda for the 2024 meeting, the financial report for year ending 31st December 2023 and the Minutes of the previous AGM held in July 2023 were sent in advance via email and hardcopy ahead of the AGM.

There were hard copies available for use at the meeting.

Apologies

There were 57 attendees and the following apologies for absence were received in advance of the meeting.

Robin and Anne Bawtree	Virginia Hopson
David Mauleverer	Helen Auty
Colin Pearson	Judith Seaward
Nick Somers	Niul Dillon Hatcher
Hugo De Waal	Vera Freeburne
Monica Payne	Helen Egford
Modena Sandford	Peter Chapman

Introductions

The Canon Steward introduced Caroline Graham, Director of Development and Rebecca Thompson, Director of Property.

The Directors gave an update on

- Girls Voices
- The restoration of the Ball and Cross
- Plans for the Wren Centre of Excellence

Minutes of the AGM held on Wednesday 12th July 2023

As a matter of accuracy, a Friends member requested the number of attendees at the AGM be recorded in the apologies section rather than in the closing statement of the Minutes.

There were no matters arising from the Minutes of the 2023 AGM. The Minutes were approved unanimously.

Elections

- The Canon Steward explained there were two vacancies on the Friends Council.
- We received three nominations from Phillip Rice, Mervyn Hogg and Yemi Illumoka.
- Each candidate was given two minutes to address the floor. The candidates were asked to leave the OBE Chapel whilst voting took place.
- Voting took place by a show of hands.
- Each Friend at the AGM was asked to vote twice.
- Rachel Taylor, Finance Manager and Andrew Baksi-Rye, Head of Philanthropy acted as tellers
- Phillip Rice and Yemi Illumoka received the greatest number of votes and were duly elected.
- The Canon Steward thanked all three members for standing for election and welcomed Phillip Rice and Yemi Illumoka to the Friends Council.

Cathedral Update

The Canon Steward gave a Cathedral update.

- The Cathedral has had 377,516 visitors so far this year (January 2024-June 2024).
- This is 7% ahead of the budgeted numbers for 2024.
- The Cathedral has brought in £5.6m in admission income this year to date (January 2024-June 2024).
- This is 14% ahead of this time last year.
- Between Palm Sunday & Easter Day the Cathedral welcomed 20,500 people to services.
- The Interstellar Celebrity Organ Recital on 2nd May performed by Roger Sayer had over 1,200 attendees.
- The Cathedral held the OBE Ceremonial service on 15th May – Their Majesties The King and Queen were in attendance.
- The Invictus service of thanksgiving was held on 8th May with Prince Harry in attendance.
- HRH The Duke of Edinburgh attended the Galipoli Service.
- Orchestral Mass Services have been very well attended so far. The increase in visitor numbers and income has meant we have finally been able to return to a full complement of services since before Covid.

- Simon Larter-Evans, Headteacher at the Cathedral school left in July 2023 to become Principal of Tring Park school.
 - Rebecca Thompson was appointed as Director of Property in August 2023.
 - Judith Freemont-Barnes was appointed Headteacher at the Cathedral school in September 2023.
 - Caroline Graham was appointed as Director of Development in October 2023.
 - Jo Day Chief Financial Officer retired in December 2023.
 - Nick Sharman was appointed as the new Chief Financial Officer in January 2024.
 - The Reverend Canon James Milne has been appointed Canon Precentor at York Minster.
 - William Fox, Assistant Director of Music and Acting Organist, has been appointed as the new Director of Music at St Albans Cathedral.
 - Joe Kennedy, Virger has been appointed Head Virger at St Alban's Cathedral.
 - The Reverend Dr Catherine Okoronkwo has been appointed as Canon Steward and will start in September 2024.
 - The Reverend Canon Philip Banks has been appointed as Canon Precentor and will start in October 2024.
-
- Benugo won the catering contract with St Paul's. They are already acquainted with historic buildings. (they are currently at Westminster Abbey, London Coliseum, ABBA Voyage and BFI). A new café space and kitchen will re-open later this year.
 - The Cathedral has started a project to define its future Vision & Strategy for the next decade and beyond.
 - Friends were picked at random and asked to take part in focus groups and complete surveys about the Cathedral. It is taking longer than expected to collate the findings and further updates will be shared in the newsletter.
 - The relocation of The Light of the World painting to the South Nave aisle has provided the opportunity for a thorough condition assessment of the work required.
 - A temporary conservation area will be built in the South Transept, and it will be possible for the public to see the conservation work underway on dates throughout July and August.
 - The conserved painting will be in the South Nave aisle in September.
 - The Schools and Family Learning team have shown 14,632 students around the Cathedral since January and had 400 young people attend Messy Cathedral held in February.

Questions asked from the floor regarding the Cathedral update

Is there a new strategy for increasing the number of Friends?

The Canon Steward explained the Head of Philanthropy and the Membership Manager are always looking at new ways to increase the number of Friends. St Paul's Cathedral Trust in America (SPCTA) are encouraging Friends to join in the US and families can now become members with the new family offering. We have good links with the Cathedral school, and they are promoting membership. Current Friends are always the best ambassadors.

Are families of the school Choristers given a yearly membership.

The Canon Steward explained the Choristers have links with the Guild of Companions and receive benefits through them.

Joining the Friends used to be encouraged when new Volunteers joined the Cathedral, can this be encouraged again?

The Canon Steward explained information regarding the Friends is given to all new starters when they join the Cathedral.

Finance Update

Rachel Taylor, Finance Manager gave an update on the Friends Finances.

The accounts for year ending 31st December 2023 had been approved by the Friends Council at a meeting on 15th May 2024.

The audit of the accounts for year ending 31st December 2023 was completed by Brebners with no matters arising.

- The Friends received five legacies in 2023 totalling £94,000.
- Membership income was 15% higher than in 2022. This was due to a change in Membership fees and a 5% increase in members.
- Donations are lower than in 2022.
- The Friends reserves policy was updated to £40,000. This leaves free reserves of 1 years running costs.
- The following grants were given to the Cathedral in 2023 totalling £280,000.
 - o £96,905 to the Whispering Gallery project
 - o £60,060 to the Organ
 - o £125,000 unrestricted

The Finance Manager asked for the auditors Brebners to be appointed for 2024. This was proposed by the Canon Steward and seconded by Yodia Lo, Friends Council member. There was a show of hands, and the motion was passed.

Questions asked from the floor regarding the Finance update

What will the unrestricted grant of £125,000 be used for?

The Finance Manager explained Chapter will prioritise where the money is most needed. Some of the funds will be used to support the Choristers and the Schools and Family Learning department. The Finance Manager and the Membership Manager explained that there was an intention to show this information in the form of a pie-chart or diagram going forward.

Is there an increase in membership numbers because the Annual Pass has been abolished?

The Finance Manager and the Membership Manager explained we have seen a small increase in membership numbers due to Friends membership being the only option for an annual ticket.

However, many new members have expressed an interest in joining the Friends due to wanting to support the Cathedral through paying the membership fees.

AOB

There was no other business. The Canon Steward closed the AGM at 2.35pm

After the AGM, Friends enjoyed refreshments in the Wren Suite and a lecture in the OBE Chapel from the St Paul's Cathedral Collections department. This was followed by Evensong and a Chorister Recital attended by HRH The Duchess of Gloucester.