Diocese of East Anglia – Historic Churches Committee

Minutes of a Meeting held in the Parish Hall at Our Lady and St Joseph, Sheringham

14th July 2026

Present: Moira Goldstaub (Chair), Fr David Bagstaff, Fr Martin Hardy,

Rowan Easter, Richard Halsey, Nicholas Jacob.

In attendance: Matthew Champion (HCSO), Charles Gillott (Hon Sec)

Fr Simon Davies (Parish Priest, item 3 only), Eva Burnett (Masters student).

1. The meeting began with a prayer.

2. Apologies received from Fr Christopher Smith, Deacon Paul Raynes and Scilla Latham were accepted. Fr Martin was welcomed to his first meeting.

3. Members were given a tour of the Church of Our Lady and St Joseph, led by Matthew Champion and Fr Simon.

    - The Church is listed primarily because of its interior.
    - It was designed by Giles Gilbert Scott (1906-08) then extended by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott, doubling in size, (1936-38), to accommodate a growing population. The nave is tall and narrow.
    - The original west end window was retained after the extension. It has cracks and microfractures. Its external protection should probably be removed as part of any restoration project. Stained glass specialists estimate that renovation and cleaning would cost about £50,000 including VAT.
    - There are no architect's drawings available, but a drone survey has now been carried out.
    - The condition of the low-pitched roof is a concern. There is no fixed access. Routine maintenance and drain clearing (last done in 2025) requires expensive scaffolding. Blocked hoppers and pipes cause water ingress. There is no failsafe water management system. MC has taken expert advice on roof access. English Heritage are aware of the issue and recognise that proper access is essential for the preservation of the building. Ideas include installation of a pole. Members of the committee suggested options: replacing the roof tiles with sheet metal using harness points for access or engaging a rope access expert to carry out roof

maintenance, which would save the cost of scaffolding. Harness points require certification and maintenance, adding to cost. The wide parapets have suffered from exposure to sea air. It was suggested that the parapets might be replaced by dripping eaves.

- There is fine artwork and statuary, including Stations of the Cross, Cross and Sacred Heart statue by the Stuflesser studio, and an impressive painted reredos, artist unknown but work in a style seen at other churches in East Anglia, eg at Ranworth.
- The roof and stained glass in the side chapel need repair and restoration.
- The sanctuary has been reordered in the past but is cramped and awkward for the celebrant and altar servers so needs to be improved. There may be records of past work at the Cathedral.
- Some brickwork on outside walls has deteriorated, especially on the seaward side of the building. Some replacement and repointing are needed. Large trees close to the building have received attention.
- The current priority for repair and restoration is the listed presbytery (not within the Committee's jurisdiction) but MC will work with the parish to prepare a plan for work to the Church, which will come to this Committee in due course.

4. The minutes of the last meeting (14.4.26) were approved and signed by the Chair.

5. Quinquennial Inspection Reports

   There were no reports available. MC advised the meeting that the report on Our Lady Immaculate and St Philip Neri, Kirtling, is overdue but is currently in preparation and should be available next time. Reports on the Cathedral (an update), The Sacred Heart, Southwold and Our Lady and St John the Evangelist, Sudbury are due this year.

6. Faculty Application – Our Lady Star of the Sea, Lowestoft

Form 1, extract from the 2026 QI report, quote from contractor, illustrations and photographs had been circulated in advance. The gas boiler in the Church basement needs replacing and the matter is before the Committee as the proposal involves some work on the external fabric. MC answered questions. The Committee approved this application. The Secretary will begin the consultation process.

7. Faculty Application – St Pancras, Ipswich

This is a retrospective application as the parish has already installed, without prior reference to the Committee, a statue of their patron saint, St Pancras, at the front left side of the sanctuary. This is a modern statue made by the Stuflesser Studio in

painted linden wood on an oak plinth. It is not attached to the fabric of the Church but the Secretary had taken the view that this installation has an impact on the appearance of the interior of this listed (Grade II) Church, such that a faculty should have been applied for. Form 1, an explanatory letter from the parish and photographs showing the statue from various vantage points had been circulated in advance. The meeting had also been shown photographs taken in 1961, at which time there were two statues at the front of the sanctuary, one on either side. The new statue is in a similar position that that occupied in 1961 by a statue of the Blessed Virgin. (Later heating works make it impossible for the new statue to be in the same position). The meeting considered the size of the new installation (120 cm high on a 100cm pedestal), its location and its modern character. The parish's application for a faculty was approved. The Secretary will begin the consultation process.

8. Historic Churches Support Officer's report

This had been circulated in advance of the meeting and its contents were noted. The following points were discussed:

At the Cathedral, an application for a grant of £1m has been submitted to the Places of Worship Renewal Fund. A response from the Fund has been deferred meaning that the application has not been successful in the current round, but it will roll over into the next round. No further action from the Diocese is required. MC is aware that applications from other Churches in the area have been turned down.
There has been structural movement on the south side affecting the spiral stair and columbarium. This has developed quite quickly such that in a period of three months six stair treads have sheared off and two newel stones have shattered. The architect Nicholas Warns is advising and the situation is being monitored, with electronic monitoring of all areas of the building planned. Records show that a sink hole developed in the spiral stair area in 1943.

The Trinity Church consultation is continuing.

St Peter and All Souls, Peterborough. A decision has been made not to proceed with National Heritage Lottery Funding for this project. The procurement process involved is onerous and slow such that a minimum of two years could pass before contractors are on site. MC has taken advice from an independent project manager and has found that redecoration costs and architect's fees have been overstated in the plan produced to date, and the overall cost is likely to be significantly lower than projected. The parish community is heavily engaged and has already raised significant funds. The aim is to produce a faculty application to the next meeting of the Committee, with the intention that contractors will

start work in early 2027. Grants already received from NHLF will not have to be repaid.

Our Lady Immaculate and St Joseph, Lawshall. Work mentioned in the report is nearly complete but has been delayed by recent hot weather.

St Anthony of Padua, Fakenham. This Church is not listed but is in a conservation area. The west window has bowed because of rotting wooden frames and the problem has worsened in the recent hot weather. Some glass is cracked. The panels have been removed. The widow is now boarded. A formal letter has been sent to the local authority describing the emergency work which has been done. It will take time to raise funds for repairs.

9. The Secretary's Report had been circulated in advance and was noted.

Other Business

- The Chair had been unable to attend the AGM for HCCs in May.
- The statutes of the Committee provide for a quorum of six on current membership. Enquiries are continuing to find an artist to join.
- Facilities are available to hold meetings via Teams as a fallback in the event of adverse weather.

Next Meetings

13 October, Poringland.

12 January 2027, in the Cathedral Narthex, Norwich.

20th April 2027, Poringland.

13 July 2027, Poringland.

All meetings will begin at 10.45 for an 11.00am start.

MOIRA GOLDSTAUB..... (Chair)

13.10.2026