

The inaugural meeting of the Guild of St Benedict was held in St Benedicts on Wednesday 8th February 2023. Over 60 volunteers attended.

Guests were welcomed with a glass of prosecco and canapes

Father Christopher welcomed everyone and expressed a huge 'ThankYou' for all that has been achieved and is currently happening thanks to the commitment and hard work of so many.

He then went on to explain how 14 centuries ago St Benedict had created his Rule for Life. Central to the Rule was the practice of welcome and hospitality, something that was carried on by the monks at Wymondham Abbey. Today we continue that practice of welcome and hospitality, central to everything we do.

Jim Hartley (Interim Church Warden) then explained the purpose of the Guild and how it would operate.

It is hoped that belonging to the Guild will encourage a feeling of belonging as well as an opportunity to get to know other volunteers and what is happening across this large and complex organisation.

1. There will be 2 gatherings for all volunteers per year.
2. Heads of Teams will meet initially 4 times per year (to be reviewed after 1 year) Team leaders will be asked to produce a short written report which will be compiled prior to the meeting. There will be opportunities for discussion and suggestions for future developments.

The report and minutes of the meeting will be circulated to all volunteers.

3. As an expression of gratitude all volunteers would be offered a 10% discount at the Abbey Shop. This can be accessed via the membership card.

In subsequent discussions between Fr Christopher, the Church Wardens and Sarah it was decided to delay the offer of discount, to be reviewed later in the year, to allow the shop to get on a firm financial footing

4. All volunteers will be given a personalised Membership card with their preferred name on it
5. (Not mentioned on the evening. All Guild members will be given a small Lapel badge.)

Chris Grant (PCC Treasurer) explained that we were now in the process of adopting the Church of England 's "iKnow Church" management process which will allow us to hold all the data pertaining to the Abbey in one place and will facilitate the efficient dissemination of information to all relevant bodies. To make sure no one misses out we need to have everyone's details on the database - hence the request to complete a volunteer information form (available at the Welcome desk)

The membership card also contains an app. which facilitates easy access to the database.

Paul Wood (Safeguarding Officer) reported that roughly half of the volunteers had completed the stage 1 'Basic Awareness' safeguarding course and asked that those who haven't do so as soon as possible. He offered support to any who might have problems with the technicalities.

Robert Cuyler (Guild Chairman) reiterated the welcome and thanks for all that the volunteers do. He asked that any volunteers who were not currently donating to the Abbey consider doing so through the Parish giving scheme.

He also encouraged any who were not regular worshippers at the Abbey to attend one of the services so they were in a better position to explain if visitors asked them about church services.

There was a final encouragement to mingle and get to know new people.