Minster Community Elections

The Minster Community elects its new Committee every three years, in a process that includes the election of four representatives onto the Cathedral Council and three onto the York Deanery Synod. But what exactly are these bodies, and what do they do?

1. The Cathedral Council is one of the three constituent parts of the Minster’s governing body, working in partnership with Chapter and the College of Canons to oversee the life and work of the cathedral and to assist with advice and support on issues arising. Its members are connected in many different ways to the Minster, representing a wide range of local and regional interests and expertise, from both within and outside the Church of England. The Chair and eight members are appointed by the Archbishop. Other members are nominated from Chapter and elected from the College of Canons, and four members are elected by the Minster Community. The Archbishop also attends and speaks at Council meetings. Council has twenty members in total, and currently meets at least three times each year. Council has the constitutional power to request reports on any area of the Minster’s work that it wishes to scrutinise, and its principal function is to advise Chapter on an objective but constructive basis, sometimes referred to as being ‘a critical friend’. As the Minster’s constitutional ‘watchdog’, Council has the power to report matters of concern to the Archbishop (as our ‘Visitor’) and to the Church Commissioners.

2. The Deanery Synod plays a key role in the governance of the Church of England, consulting parishes locally and giving them a voice in the decision-making processes of the wider Church (a ‘deanery’ is a group of neighbouring parishes, and ‘synod’ means ‘council’). Our Deanery Synod consists of all the licensed clergy in York and a number of elected lay representatives from each parish in the deanery. Deanery Synods do not have a significant amount of direct power, but they do help to shape Church of England policy decisions. Practical policy matters are referred to Deanery Synods from time to time for consideration and comment by the Diocesan Synod and by General Synod. Deanery Synod also provides a valuable forum for the sharing of information between churches locally, and between the national church, the diocese and the local church, helping to shape and develop the work of the Church in the city. The York Deanery Synod currently meets four times each year.

3. The Minster Community Committee is the elected group that helps to present the views of the Minster Community to the Minster’s governing body. The Committee includes fifteen members elected by the Minster Community – eight are elected directly onto the Committee, and the other seven are ex officio members who join the Committee by virtue of their election as Minster Community representatives on Cathedral Council or Deanery Synod. Other Committee members include the Dean and at least one of the Minster’s Residentiary Canons. The Committee meets approximately eight times a year to discuss and respond to issues raised by the Minster Community and to provide opinions on issues referred to it by Chapter. There is a special focus on worship, welcome and service to the wider Minster Community, and the Committee has developed a highly-valued network of sub-committees and working groups that together make a substantial contribution to many different aspects of the Minster’s worshipping and social life.