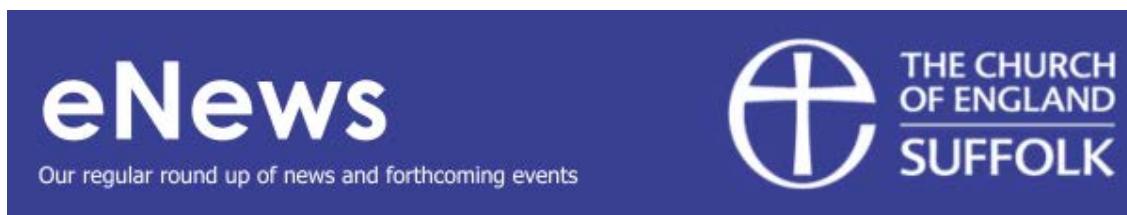


Thursday 15 January 2026



Sally Gaze said farewell in her final service, as Archdeacon for Rural Mission



The service was held last Sunday at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, where Sally has been a Canon and member of the Chapter. Sally has led the 'Growing in God in the Countryside' project which was funded by the national Church of England for the last seven years. The project has been focussed on helping people find faith in God in rural areas. The project supported creative developments in the countryside from pop up café and foodbanks in Forest Heath, to walking and pub meetings near Aldeburgh.

The service featured interviews with people who had been involved with the project. They spoke about how finding faith had helped them with mental health, drinking issues and/or helped them to discover their personal call to serve God in ministry.

"It has been a great privilege to serve God in the beautiful county of Suffolk," said Sally, *"I've learned so much – especially to listen more and to trust people as they discern what is needed in their local area. The best thing for me has been seeing and hearing how many people's lives and circumstances have been transformed through prayer as they discover faith for the first time."*

The project has particularly drawn children and young people into faith and in the 2024 count, 657 new people had regularly joined a Christian community in a rural area because of the projects work, often through the Lightwave Community. Work begun by the rural project is continuing under new leadership – especially the Lightwave Community, now led by the Revd Diane Grano and rural chaplaincy continues to thrive with Graham Miles, Agricultural Chaplain in Suffolk. To read the full story please [click here](#).

Diocesan Director of Education, Jane Sheat, retires

Jane Sheat is retiring as Diocesan Director of Education (DDE) for the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich at the end of this academic year. Jane will have served in the role for 16 years since 2010.



Jane says:

"It has been an absolute pleasure and a privilege to serve as DDE. Over the years I have worked with an incredibly talented team and with fabulous headteachers and governors in our 87 church schools throughout Suffolk.

When I started, it was the very beginning of the establishment of academies and there have been many changes and challenges in the education landscape over the years. Throughout that time, our church schools have done an incredible job of providing a high quality of education underpinned by Christian values. My job has been to ensure that as a diocese we provide effective training and support so that pupils and adults in all our church schools flourish. I am particularly proud of our RE teaching resource, the Emmanuel Project which is widely used by teachers in Suffolk and beyond, and of having established our Diocesan Multi Academy Trust. I am also pleased to have developed partnerships with organisations like Christian Aid and iSingPop.

I have loved this role and will miss the people with whom I work but feel that the time is right to retire this summer. I look forward to this next stage of life, and to continuing to serve God, whatever He has in store!"

Read the full story on our [website here](#).

Planning for Growth



As a diocese, we have been encouraging the use of Plans for Growth for a number of years. During 2025, we reviewed our processes for Plans for Growth at both deanery and benefice level and we are thrilled to be offering a new package to support our parishes to make it easier to complete your plan for growth including:

- Why Planning for Growth is a good idea
- What do we mean by growth?
- Ways to approach developing a Plan for Growth at benefice level
- How does Planning for Growth work for new worshipping communities?
- How will Deanery-level Planning for Growth work under the new process?
- How Planning for Growth connects with other resources and initiatives
- Support, resources and reference material to help with Planning for Growth
- Planning for Growth FAQs
- New easy to use templates to use

One of the important things we do in Planning for Growth is taking time to discern what God is doing in our churches and communities, and to hear what he is inviting us to do. We need to take time to see which way the wind of the Spirit is blowing, and that then shapes our plans. You may be completing a Plan for Growth for the first time, but where a previous Plan for Growth is in place, this is a great opportunity to review the existing plan, and discuss what has been actioned, what hasn't moved forward, and what else has

happened that wasn't in the plan.

We are really looking forward to reading your plans and offering you support in achieving them. Advice, support and practical help is available from the Mission and Ministry Team, Diocesan Mission Enabler, the Revd [Katie de Bourcier](#). All the resources are available on Insight [here](#).

Envoy Spaces, Suffolk



Envoy Spaces is the new home of Pioneering and Evangelism within our Mission and Ministry Team. Through different gatherings and small groups, we explore together what it means to live and share our faith well, within a mixed ecology of church; honouring and blessing the unique gifts that long-established and newly-pioneered ways both bring. We seek to discover together relational ways to share our faith in the everyday of life, in word and in action, sensitive to

personality, to context and to need. Projects include:

- a day / half-day session focused on mapping, exploring and reflecting on our own faith journeys
- joining a small Envoy Community focused on growing in the Envoy Practice of Abundance: noticing, naming and valuing in one another what God is doing and the gifts God has given and embracing the Envoy Practice of 4-Fold listening: to God, self, each other and our own context. Envoy groups seek to release in each other our own unique gift of evangelism, how God is inviting each one of us to share his love with those we encounter in the everyday of life
- Pioneer Envoy which explores discerning how God is already at work in the community and inviting us to join in, creating different ways of being church together.

Envoy Spaces, Suffolk is a partnership with Church Army. To contact the Envoy Spaces, Suffolk team please email [Gail Southgate](#), Lead Pioneering and Evangelism Enabler, or [Bob Hamilton](#), Pioneering and Evangelism Enabler. Or visit our Insight page [here](#).



Energy Footprint Tool launched on 12 January 2026

The Energy Footprint Tool (EFT) is now open for churches to enter energy use from 2025. Every footprint we leave behind shapes God's creation. Recording your energy use is an unseen but essential act of caring for people and the planet. Completing the EFT is a simple but powerful way to support the Church of England's shared journey to net zero. Each year's data builds a clearer picture of our carbon footprint and helps us act more strategically together. Complete your EFT on the Parish Returns Portal [here](#). If you require log-in details or any other assistance with the online portal, please email statistics@cofesuffolk.org. If you need help with the EFT please email [James Rolls](#), our Net Zero Carbon Officer.

Mission and Ministry Events

Handling Conflict Constructively | Saturday 17 January 9.00am - 4.30pm |

Saxmundham Church Hall, Saxmundham IP17 1ES

As part of the commitment to equip Church Leaders for the challenges of ministry, we are running a Bridge Builders 'Handling Conflict Constructively' training day. Lunch is included. Last few places available please email [Vanessa Kidd](#) to book.

The only way is Ethics! | 20, 27 January; 3, 10, 24 February; and 3 March | 7.30 – 9.30pm | Earl Stonham Village Hall IP14 5HJ

The Christian Ethics module is a six-session course which explores the history of ethical thought and also everyday issues and moral questions from capitalism to the environment. This module, led by the Revd Rachel Revely, aims to further develop moral thinking, appreciation and judgment that is appropriate within the context of Christian teaching and pastoral ministry, and Christian living. [Book here](#).

Draw Near: Life-giving habits for Lent | Wednesday 21 January at 12.30pm | Online



Join this special webinar to explore Lent and Easter 2026 resources for churches. The Church of England's theme for Lent will be **Draw Near: Life-giving habits for Lent**. The resources have at their heart the theme of a 'rhythm of life' – habits and patterns which help us grow as disciples of Christ day by day, especially as we prepare to celebrate the great mystery of God's saving

love at Easter. [Sign up here](#).

Church of England Talk Series | All starting at 7.30pm | Ipswich Minster IP1 3BN or on YouTube [here](#)

Join this talk series offering a blend of established and emerging theologians, writers and commentators, all exploring what a good Church of England should look like for the nation it seeks to serve.

21 January, Dean Mark Oakley - The Imagination

29 January, Archdeacon Rich Henderson - The Rural Church

There will be a Q&A session after each talk and refreshments will be served for those attending the Minster. All welcome, no booking required. To find out more please visit [Ipswich Minster on Facebook here](#).

Thy Kingdom Come 2026: Inspire and equip for churches | Thursday 22 January, 11.00am to 12.00pm and repeated at 7.00pm-8.00pm | Online

Join this helpful workshop to guide churches on how to engage with Thy Kingdom Come 2026. The session will explore different ways churches can pray and collaborate together, from across traditions and denominations, and will also provide plenty of space for participants to share best practice and gather new ideas. Facilitated by the Revd Canon Jean Kerr (Thy Kingdom Come) and Doral Hayes (Churches Together in England). Book [here](#). (Registration with Church Support Hub required),

Enhancing Pastoral Ministry | 28 January; 4, 11, 25 February; and 4, 11 March | 7.30pm - 9.30pm | Earl Stonham Village Hall IP14 5HJ

Enhancing Pastoral Ministry is a six-session course for people who are involved in pastoral care (for example, Readers, Lay Elders, clergy, pastoral visitors) as well as those interested in a deeper understanding. Guest speakers will include: Karen Galloway and members of the Diocesan Safeguarding team; Annabel Turner, member of the Diocesan counselling team, and the Diocesan Growing Younger team. [Book here](#).

Being a Treasurer: The Basics | Thursday 29 January, 5 and 12 February, 7.00pm - 9.00pm | Online

Offered by ACAT, these sessions will help Treasurers navigate the complexities of being a church treasurer. Learn with confidence through this comprehensive three-session course covering legal duties, financial processes, budgeting, gift aid, and more – all presented by experienced trainers in a live Zoom webinar setting tailored for both new and seasoned treasurers. Click to book [here](#).

All our PCC treasurers are entitled to free membership of ACAT (Association of Church Accountants & Treasurers) through our diocesan block membership. If you would like to become a member please email [Julie Podd](#), Parish Resources Manager. Once you have joined ACAT you have access to their online training (at a small cost), their latest courses are listed on their website. We also encourage you to join our diocesan online **Treasurer Forum** which is a great place to network with other treasurers, and we regularly post useful information and resources for treasurers. Please email [Emma Denton](#) to receive your invitation to join.

Bubble Church: Grow your families ministry | Thursday 29 January 2026, 12.00-1.00pm

You may have seen our Bubble Church advent calendar over the Christmas period. Now you can learn how Bubble Church has brought new worship to 76 churches across the UK through this online webinar. Find out about what this Sunday service of worship looks like, and hear from clergy who will share their experiences of how the service has brought in new families from their communities, 75% of whom are not from churched backgrounds. Book [here](#) (Registration with Church Support Hub required),

PCC Workshop on Planning for Growth – what, why, who, how? Thursday 12

February, 7.30-8.30pm | Online



Come and join this TEAMS webinar, led by Revd Katie de Bourcier, Diocesan Mission Enabler to find out more about Planning for Growth in benefices and deaneries. Planning for Growth is one of the ways in which we seek to fulfil our vision to be a diocese that is Growing in God. Plans for Growth encourage us to work prayerfully, collaboratively, and creatively as we seek to share God's love in word and action. At this webinar, we will introduce the revised Plan for Growth templates and resources, talk about why Planning for Growth matters and how a Plan for Growth can be developed, and

explain the help and support on offer from the Mission and Ministry Team. There will be a chance to ask your questions too. To book, please email mission@cofesuffolk.org.

Fieldwork: Celebrating Rural Mission and Ministry in Suffolk | 28 February 2026, 9.30am to 4.00pm | Wingfield Barns, Nr Diss IP21 5RA



Join this Diocesan day conference for church members, PCC members, those in our church schools, lay ministers and clergy from our rural parishes. We will hear from a great keynote speaker, the Revd Jo Neary – Tutor in Rural Ministry and Mission (part-time) at Sarum College, Salisbury, alongside her part-time post as team vicar and pioneer priest in the Beaminster Area Team in Wiltshire, who will encourage us to think about the distinctive identity, calling and potential of the rural church.

There will be time to share our stories of joy and challenge, and be encouraged and inspired. It is being organised by rural ministers with the help of Diocesan staff and is free to attend. [To register please book here.](#)

In the beginning was the story. A different approach to the New Testament |

Starts Wednesday 29 April 2026 for seven weeks at Earl Stonham Village Hall

Led by the Revd Canon John Parr, Approaching the New Testament takes a story-shaped approach to the heart of Christian faith. This course looks at the beginnings of what became Christianity, in the writings of the New Testament, and explores their narrative features. The New Testament writers passed on the gospel of Jesus Christ not as a collection of facts or doctrines, but as a series of stories that shaped people's lives. What can we learn from them about the challenges we face in doing the same in our day?

[Please book here.](#)

The Gathering | Friday 24 April 6.00pm - Sunday 26 April 2.00pm | Vauxhall Farm, Great Wenham CO7 6QQ



The Gathering is a residential weekend organised in partnership with Ipswich CYM and youth leaders from across Ipswich. The excellent Tim Alford will be joining for the Friday night who will do a great job in delivering a Gospel talk. The cost for this weekend is £110 per young person. Bookings are managed by CYM Ipswich using the online *Ticket Taylor* system. If you have

questions, please don't hesitate to email [Jamie Swinerd](#). To find out more and book please visit our website [here](#).

Flourish | Saturday 2 May 2026, , 9.30am for 10.00am – 3.00pm | The Salvation Army Hall, Stowmarket IP14 1NE

An invitation to all Readers, Licensed Lay Ministers and Lay Elders to join us for our annual study day. The guest speaker this year is the Revd Dr Thomas Sharp from St Augustine's College of Theology. A core part of Thomas's teaching focuses on human flourishing, especially how Christians care for others in times of hardship. The morning session focuses on Pastoral Care in a Broken World and the afternoon session is on the Theology of Safeguarding – what does it mean to care? Reserve your free space now! Click here: [Flourish - Insight CofE Suffolk](#).

Youthscape Essentials

Youthscape Essentials is all-round training for every youth leader. The course covers 30 different topics; including insights into youth culture, practical skills to build confidence and the development of leadership characteristics. This course is free and includes an extensive training manual which will be given to you before the first session. We are delighted that there are two learning streams available, online and in person.

Face to Face: 28 March, 9 May, 6 June with an online top-up session organised with delegates | venue will depend on the location of the delegates. To sign up to the face-to-face stream please click [here](#) and use course code "2201492"

Online by TEAMS: (Weds 7.00pm - 9.00pm): 16 September, 7 October, 11 November, 9 December, 13 January 2027, 10 February 2027, 10 March 2027, 14 April 2027, 12 May 2027 and 9 June 2027. To sign up to the online stream, please click [here](#) and use course code "2201540"

If you are interested in Youthscape Essentials but cannot make some/any of the above dates, then please do email [Jamie Swinerd](#), Diocesan Youth & Young Adults Enabler.

Church Community Services and Events

Holocaust Memorial Day Service | Abbey Gardens, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS |

Tuesday 27 January, 10.30am

The annual Holocaust Memorial Day Service will take place in the Peace Garden during this National Day of Remembrance, all victims of genocide are remembered, including more recent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. Joining the service will be school students, local councillors and the MP who will contribute to the service. St Edmundsbury Cathedral will be open throughout the day for reflection and contemplation. All are welcome.

United in Solace and Grace

Saturday 7 February, 11.00am | St Edmundsbury Cathedral including an exhibition by local artists and survivors organisations and Sunday 8 February, 4.00pm | All Saints Holbrook 'United in Solace and Grace' is a series of reflective church services which are designed to reach out to survivors of abuse of all kinds, families, supporters and professionals. You are



invited to join the above services to mark 'It's Not OK Week'. For more information about United in Solace and Grace please visit www.solaceandgrace.co.uk or email the Revd [Jenny Seggar](#).

Society of Catholic Priests (SCP) | Thursday 26 February, 11.00am, St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

The St Edmundsbury and Ipswich chapter of the SCP meet four times a year for a Eucharist, talk, lunch and conversation. The society is inclusive - for ordained men and women - and it celebrates humanity in all God-given diversity with respect to ethnicity, gender and sexuality. It is in the catholic tradition found within the Anglican communion and is centred on the Eucharist. Join the next meeting by the Revd Canon Stuart Batten on Desert Spirituality. For more information please email [Mother Ali](#).

Psalmandscape | Saturday 28 February 2026, 11.00am to 4.30pm, All Hallows Church, Ipswich IP3 0EN

Join the Cantus Firmus Choir for a day to explore the Psalms through music. You will sing a variety of music inspired by the Psalms, in a broad range of musical styles. There will be reflections on the Psalms, led by Revd Emma Steadman. The day will end with a short act of worship, incorporating some of the music learned during the day. The event is suitable for all who enjoy choral singing. Details and booking at cantusfirmus.org.uk

Parish/Benefice/Deanery visits to St Edmundsbury Cathedral: There is an opportunity to come together to the cathedral during this year on the following Sunday afternoons: 19 April, 10 May, 14 June, 5 July, 18 October. The established pattern is to arrive in good time for a Reflective Pilgrimage at 2.00pm; Choral Evensong at 3.30pm where visiting clergy/LLMs are invited to robe and for the first lesson to be read, the group remembered in prayers, followed by tea and cake in Pilgrims' Kitchen afterwards, departure is usually by 5.00pm. Please email the Revd Canon [Mark Haworth](#), Cathedral Chaplain to book a date and for any further information.

Iona Pilgrimage 2026 | September 25 - October 2 2026

The St Edmundsbury Cathedral pilgrimage to the Argyllshire Island of Iona, based at Bishops House, now has some extra spaces available at the nearby Catholic House of Prayer. Anyone interested in exploring this possibility in more detail is welcome to email the Revd Canon [Mark Haworth](#), Cathedral Chaplain before 21 January.

Notices

Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn project: We are delighted to announce that multiple planning applications for the Abbey of St Edmund Reborn project have now been submitted – a significant step forward in bringing this ambitious vision to life. There is a new micro-site dedicated to the project and its updates. You can visit that site [here](#). Each month, Project Manager, James Mellish will provide an update on what's happening with the project, Read the December update [here](#).

Statistics for Mission: Thank you to all parishes who have completed their Statistics for Mission forms - the data you provide helps to offer insights into trends such as attendance and electoral roll. The National Church deadline is 31 January 2026. Returns should be

submitted via the Online Parish Returns System, which can be accessed here: [Parish Returns Online](#) If you require log-in details or any other assistance with the online portal, please email statistics@cofesuffolk.org Further information regarding Parish returns, including videos on how to submit, can be found here: [Stats for Mission - Insight CofE Suffolk](#).

Parish Giving Scheme Updated Gift Form: Please ensure that you are using the latest PGS Gift Form with the date 09/2025. For the latest Gift Form please go onto Insight [here](#) or if you would like us to provide you with a Gift Form complete with your details please email pgs@cofesuffolk.org

Raffle for Free CollecTin More Contactless Device: The Parish Resources Team have a CollecTin More device which we would like to offer to a parish **FOR FREE!** Churches must have Wi-Fi installed in the church for the device to work. Please apply by emailing [Julie Podd](#), Parish Resources Manager by 30 January 2026 if you would like to go into the draw. Churches will be notified by the middle of February if they have been successful and will need to send us a picture of the installed device to use in our promotion materials.

Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme: The Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme (LPWGS) closes on the 31 March this year (or earlier if the remaining £6m is claimed, whichever is sooner). If you can, claim now! The scheme allows listed places of worship of all faiths across the UK to reclaim the full amount of VAT they pay on repairs over £1,000. A good way to keep this in the forefront of the government's mind is for churches to thank their MP and invite them to see the works they have completed. The LPWG Scheme has attracted strong parliamentary interest and churches need the certainty of funding available from 1 April 2026.

George van Kooten's book: "Reverberations of Good News: The Gospels in Context, Then and Now": Based on the sessions George van Kooten led in the Bishops' Teaching Mornings, his new book has just been published by [SCM here](#).

Vacancies

[Chair of the Diocese Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches](#) | Closing date: 16 January

[Kids Pastor](#) | [Worship Pastor](#) | [Executive Assistant](#) | River Church | Closing date: 31 January

[Choir Director](#) | All Hallows Church, Ipswich | Closing date: 31 January

[Rector](#) | Box River Benefice | Closing date: 4 February

[Diocesan Director of Education](#) | Diocesan Office | Closing date: 9 February

[Team Vicar & Associate Priest](#) | Blyth Valley Team Ministry | Closing date: 11 February

[Church Administrator](#) | Christ Church Felixstowe | Closing date: 20 February

[Lightwave Pioneer Leader](#) | Bridge Communities, Suffolk

[Team Vicar](#) | Sole Bay Team

[Team Vicar](#) | Forest Heath Team Ministry

[Non-Executive Safeguarding Chapter Member](#) | [Cathedral Volunteers](#) | [Risk, Audit and](#)

[Review Committee Member](#) | St Edmundsbury Cathedral

[Associate Chaplain](#) | Sizewell C

[Part-time Youth Worker](#) | All Saints' Church, Ipswich

Royal Naval Chaplaincy | email the Chaplain Recruiter, the Revd [Alastair Blaine](#) RN.

[Click here to print and share with others](#)



Watch our stories from around Suffolk



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