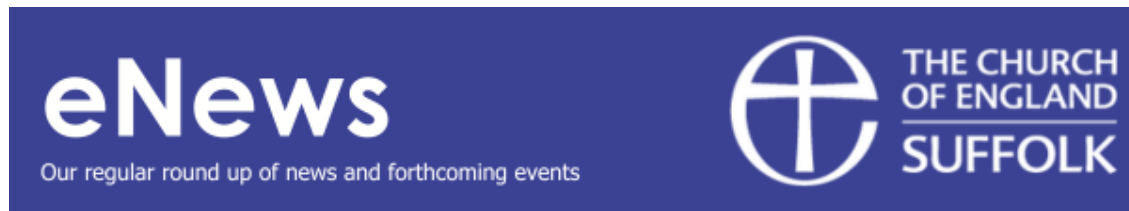


Thursday 27 November 2025



Mildenhall Recycling Drive



Over the summer St Mary's Church, Mildenhall launched their Recycling challenge. Congregations across the Deanery were asked to pass on unwanted items for recycling at Harvest time.

The team were specifically looking for unwanted/old prescription glasses, sunglasses and mobile phones to be donated to [Lions Club International](#) and [Phones for Africa](#), in consideration of the Fourth Mark of Mission: *To seek to transform unjust structures of society*. Also sought were unwanted/old and even broken cables, old electricals and batteries to be recycled, in consideration of Fifth Mark of Mission: *To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the Earth*. The church was encouraged to hear that the

challenge had been extended out to local schools and Town Councils. The results were amazing 460 pairs of prescription glasses and sunglasses, over 1,000 batteries, nearly 30kg of cables and more than 50 mobile phones were received.

Read the full story on [our website here](#). The Diocesan new environment policy was re-launched at the October Diocesan Synod, please find your copy [here](#).

St Michael's Baby and Toddler Group

The Benefice of Martlesham with Brightwell received a £1500 grant from the Diocesan Growth Fund to assist with the launch of their toddler group in January 2025. Each week between 15 and 30 children attend the group with their adults including parents, childminders and grandparents. Nearly every week new people are welcomed who have heard about the group from friends or social media. The quality equipment, large space and warm welcome all seem to lead to visitors having a positive experience and coming back again. Read the full story on our [website here](#).

If you are interested in applying for a Growth Fund grant please find all the information, application dates and the application form on our website [here](#).



The Revd Canon Stuart Batten, Diocesan Director of Ordinands and the Revd Lauren Moore, Diocesan Learning Development Manager, will be hosting Together we Pray next week.

Advent Calendar



As Advent begins this weekend, we are delighted to launch our Social Media Advent Calendar!

Look out for our daily posts on the Diocesan Facebook page at 9.00am, featuring children and volunteers from the St Augustine's Bubble Church Group. A huge thank-you to the Revd Ros Williams for her wonderful work in creating the films—and for bringing so much joy to the children and puppets alike!

Many of our churches are offering family-friendly services this season, including Christingles, carols, Christmas tree festivals, and so much more. To find your local family service, please visit www.achurchnearyou.com.



Listen to the Revd Ros Williams as she tells Tim Holder, Diocesan Engagement Director, about Bubble Church and introduces our Advent Calendar.

Lamb Teddies Share Faith and Hope Across the UK

This Christmas a nationwide heart-warming initiative is offering visually-impaired children across the UK the opportunity to experience the gospel through specially designed lamb teddies embedded with accessible Christian audio stories. The *Hope for All* project, led by Torch Trust, aims to distribute 200 of these faith-filled resources for **free** over the next two years, bringing encouragement and spiritual growth to children with sight loss. The teddies will be distributed in partnership with Christian charities, schools, churches and sight loss agencies (SLAs) to ensure they reach the children who need them most. For more information visit www.torchtrust.org/lamb

Mission and Ministry Events

Exploring the Old Testament

Wednesday 14, 21, 28 January; 4, 11, 25 February; and 4 March 7.30 - 9.30pm | Earl Stonham Village Hall IP14 5HJ

The Old Testament is the larger part of the Bible and has far more to say than the New Testament about things like the life cycle (birth, marriage, death), sickness and health, daily work, the environment, social justice, and so on. In other words, it relates to life as we know it on a day-by-day basis. In this short course, Hugh Williamson will try to open our eyes to some of this wealth by surveying in an engaging manner all the different types of material in the Old Testament, very much with an eye on how we can apply it in our own times in both church and society. [Book here.](#)

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. The day will start at 9.00am with welcoming drinks, with the course starting promptly at 9.30am. Lunch is included. For more information on Bridge Builders as an organisation [please see their website](#).

Places are free of charge but numbers are limited and are being offered on a first-to-respond basis. If you would like to take up the offer of this valuable training, please register [here](#). (Please note: this link is for Clergy and LLM only - log-in is required).

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](#).

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](#).

Save the date - Fieldwork: Celebrating Rural Mission and Ministry in Suffolk | 28 February 2026



Join this Diocesan day conference for church members, PCC members, those in our church schools, lay ministers and clergy from our rural parishes, as a time to hear from great speakers, 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. More details including a booking link will follow soon.

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](#).

Events and training

Understanding and working with relationship and family dynamics Friday 28 November, 9.00am to 4.00pm | St Andrew's Church Hall, Rushmere St Andrew, Ipswich IP5 1DH

This workshop is offered by Inspire Counselling and Training. Facilitated by Dr Jan Fish, an accredited counsellor, supervisor and trainer. This day is suitable for student and qualified counsellors, supervisors, ministers and church leaders, pastoral and youth workers, teachers and teaching assistants together with anyone with an interest in working with families. The day will be interactive and experiential, exploring approaches to understanding the human need for relationships and the powerful unconscious dynamics that occur within families. Full information is available [here](#).

Fruit and Nut Advent course | St Mary's Church, Buy St Edmunds IP33 1RT | Mondays 1, 8, 15, 22 December at 7.00pm for 7.30pm

Join Amy Scott Robinson who will be guiding an exploration of the themes of Advent through four biblical fruits and nuts and the advent themes they represent.

Generosity at Christmas Webinar | Tuesday 2 December at 1.30pm - 2.30pm | Online

Join this special webinar designed to equip clergy on how to celebrate and encourage giving and generosity over Christmas. The birth of Jesus, one of the greatest acts of generosity, is a great time to consider how we can live out generous lives, inspired by a generous God. There will be lots of practical ideas for clergy to take away to put into practice this Christmas. [Book here](#).

Crossroads Retreat hosted by Quiet Waters | Tuesday 9 December 9.30am - Wednesday 10 December 4.00pm | Quiet Waters Christian House, Bungay NR35 1PD

This Retreat is for you when you sense something is changing in your life but are not clear about the way ahead. This two-day retreat is a chance to take time out, free from any pressures or expectations, to listen deeply to yourself, get a fresh perspective and discern the 'good way' forward that is yours and yours alone. All in a secure and peaceful environment where you'll be free to share as much or as little as you'd like. The retreat costs £270.00 and is full-board. To book, please contact the QW office at mail@quietwaters.org.uk or call 01986 893201.

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 was relaunched three years ago. They meet four times a year, usually at the Cathedral, 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. If you are new to the diocese, recently ordained (including deacons), and feel this could be a spiritual home and place of encouragement and support for you, then come along. The next meeting lead speaker will be the Revd Canon Stuart Batten on Desert Spirituality. For more information please contact Mother Ali: teamvicarlvnb@btinternet.com

Church Community Services and Events

Christmas Market | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS | Thursday 27 November to Saturday 29 November | 10.00am – 4.30pm each day | £1.00 entry fee
Over 50 stallholders will showcase their products, filling the Cathedral Nave. There will be refreshments available along with daily entertainment. Special Tower Tours will be running available to pre-book [here](#). Tours are £12.00 per person and are the last opportunity to climb the tower before March 2026 as Tower Tours go on their winter break.

Christmas Crib Weekend | 29-30 November, 10.00pm to 4.00pm, All Saints' Church, Great Glemham IP17 2DA

The Christmas crib or Nativity scene originates from Saint Francis of Assisi's first 'living' nativity in Greccio, Italy in 1223, inspired by his pilgrimage to Bethlehem. This weekend, why not visit Great Glemham church which will be full of cribs so you can enjoy many versions of this traditional scene and read their stories. Refreshments will be served. At 4.00pm on Sunday 30 November there will be a Advent Service of Darkness to Light with special music from the Alde River Choir.

Candlelit Advent Carol Service | Sunday 30 November at 5.00pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

As we move towards the start of Advent, you are very welcome to join St Edmundsbury Cathedral to take time out and just 'be' as we begin the Advent season. All are welcome, especially if you are not holding an Advent service in your church. To help with our planning, please RSVP by emailing rsvp@stedscathedral.org.

Advent celebration | Sunday 30 November at 6.00pm | St Mary at the Elms, Ipswich IP1 2AA

Join the Copt Hall Singers for an Advent Carol Service, free of charge - retiring collection.

'Christmas through the Keyhole' | Saturday 6 December, 30 minute tours from 1.00-3.30pm | St Mary's Church, Bury St Edmunds, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1RT

Offering an interactive Christmas trail telling the Christmas story starting in the present day, then visiting Mary's home, the shepherds' field, the Majis' observatory, Joseph's workshop, ending up in the Bethlehem stable. At each zone you will be invited to use all your senses to find out more about the characters in the story and how each one became involved in the amazing story. This is a great opportunity to experience the Christmas story. With an opportunity to do some Christmas crafts and have tea and cake. No booking required. For more information jennifer.aston@btinternet.com

Local Houses of Prayer Training Day | All Saints' Church, Newmarket | Saturday 6 December, 10.00am to 4.00pm.

This is a movement of Christians from many different churches who have the desire to pray specifically for their own town and villages, the streets where they live, and those who live and work around them. They are tiny prayer groups, typically starting off with 2-3 people, which adopt a small geographical area. This training day offers an opportunity to learn more about the underlying biblical principles, to hear stories of what God has done and is doing in different places, and find out what the next steps might be for us here in

our own local area. The invitation is to all members of Churches Together in Newmarket and the surrounding area, and any others who might be interested. For more information visit the website here: localhousesofprayer.org/events

Christmas Fayre | Saturday 13 December | Great Blakenham Parish Room | 11.00am to 2.00pm

Come along for craft stalls, Christmas gifts, refreshments and an opportunity to visit Father Christmas in his grotto in the church.

Advent Event for Bury St Edmunds | Sunday 14 December, 7.00pm | St Mary's Church, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1RT

St Edmundsbury Cathedral's InHarmony project is working with Cantus Firmus Trust and Churches Together in Bury St Edmunds and District to present an Advent event for the town, entitled 'Sharers in the Promise'. The presentation uses music and drama to reflect on the coming of Jesus Christ – a promise of hope and salvation in which all can share. Admission is by free ticket, available at cantusfirmus.org.uk There will be a collection to help cover costs.

Remembering Loved Ones at Christmas | St Mary's Church, Great Blakenham | Saturday 20 December, 3.30pm to 5.00pm

Join this gentle candlelight service to pause, reflect and remember loved ones during the festive season. Share hymns, music, prayer and the lighting of candles.

A Seasonal Celebration of Song | Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford CO10 9DL | Saturday 20 December, 5.00pm

Come along and join a seasonal celebration of song, with HappySounds Community Choir and special guests Sudbury Sings and The VIP's. Tickets cost £10 in aid of Compassion/Macmillan, contact info@happysounds.co.uk

Notices

Online Parish Returns System (OPRS): This is open to parishes wanting to input attendance figures on the number of people attending their church in person for services and other acts of worship during the first four weeks in October. This includes the number of people attending on Sundays and during the week (Monday to Saturday). The OPRS can be accessed via following link <https://parishreturns.churchofengland.org>. If you need help creating an account for the Online Parish Returns System, please send an email to statistics@cofesuffolk.org and we will be happy to help you.

Articles of Enquiry: the term 'Articles of Enquiry' refers to a set of questions or topics which are posed by the Archdeacons. In 2025 the chosen themes related to the Environment, Discipleship, Giving / Stewardship, Mission, and Safeguarding and collected information regarding the year 2024. To read an Executive Summary of the results please click [here](#).

Looking for a Christmas present? Look no further than Belstead Church Gin! All proceeds of gin sales will go directly to the Fabric Fund for church restoration project. Developed in collaboration with Nowe Spirits, a local distillery in Suffolk, the gin contains seven botanicals inspired by the mulberries and apples in Belstead churchyard, creating an artisan small-batch gin with a unique flavour. Available online: nowespirits.co.uk

Vacancies

[DAC Chair](#) | Voluntary Role | Closing date: 30 November

[Treasurer](#) | All Saints' Church, Thorndon | Closing date: 30 November | Please [email here](#) for more information.

[Kids Pastor](#) | River Church | Closing date: 30 November

[Worship Pastor](#) | River Church | Closing date: 30 November

[Café Manager](#) | Holy Trinity Church, Ipswich | Closing date: 5 December

[Organist/Pianist and Choir Leader](#) | St Mary's East Bergholt, Constable Country Benefice | Closing date: 7 December

[Non-Executive Safeguarding Chapter Member](#) | St Edmundsbury Cathedral

[Cathedral Volunteers](#) | St Edmundsbury Cathedral

[Risk, Audit and Review Committee Member](#) | St Edmundsbury Cathedral

[Associate Chaplain](#) | Sizewell C

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

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



TOGETHER WE ARE
THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
SUFFOLK

Watch our stories from around Suffolk





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