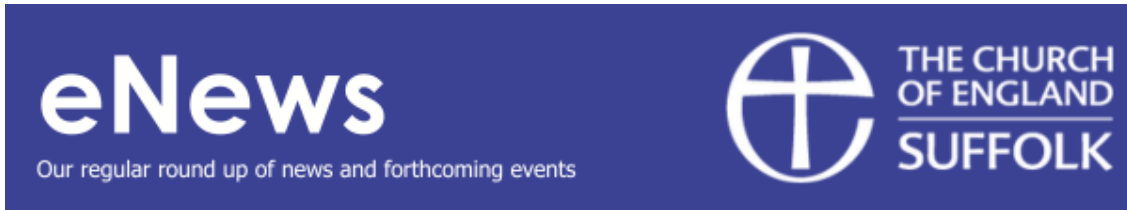


Thursday 6 February 2025



An official farewell to Bishop Martin



Bishop Martin retires on Friday 28 February and hundreds of well-wishers attended a farewell service in St Edmundsbury Cathedral on Sunday 2 February to mark his retirement.

Bishop Martin said: *"It was most humbling to see such a turn out in the cathedral, a place close to my heart where I have attended many celebrations during my time in Suffolk. The*

service brought home the close connections that have been forged during my time as bishop and I leave with a host of treasured memories and friendships that will last the rest of my life. So I thank the people of Suffolk for their welcome in 2015, their support and their passion for the Church in the intervening years, and their warm wishes for my retirement".

A champion of parish and chaplaincy ministry, Bishop Martin had overall responsibility for the Church of England in Suffolk, covering nearly 480 churches and 87 church schools, serving 631,000 people. He has been committed to maintaining and increasing the number of serving clergy in Suffolk, and to not closing churches. In this last year the Diocese has seen a rise in church attendance, particularly among young people. Bishop Martin has adopted a proactive stance in Suffolk with the aim of developing the church's influence in communities at a grassroots level. This led, for example, to practical support for top-up shops and food banks housed on church premises to support families during a cost of living crisis. During his time in Suffolk he also undertook several pilgrimages at Lent with Bishop Mike, the then Bishop of Dunwich. Each time they walked 70 – 80 miles to meet people from all walks of life and understand challenges faced in communities.

Bishop Martin was particularly proud of the diocese's long-established link with Kagera in Tanzania, which he visited in 2019, 2023 and 2024. Bishop Darlington Bendankeha said: *"He has shown commitment in making sure that this partnership has moved from one level to another."* Bishop Darlington added that Kagera would greatly miss the Bishop *"However, his work will continue to speak loudly in our daily lives. He will be remembered as a man of God who worked tirelessly for the church and community within and beyond the UK".*

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

Bishop Martin speaks on his farewell service...

Sunday was overwhelming. First, the Eucharist in the morning with the Cathedral congregation, during which I was very aware it would be the last time I would preside in that wonderful space, with those wonderful people. And then the afternoon Evensong packed with representatives from across the Diocese and County was just so beautiful and, yes, emotional, and far more so than I had anticipated! The music was wonderful, both the fabulous singing and the sumptuous playing. Listening to my children read the lessons felt like rounding off these ten years – they had read at my consecration and enthronement. The farewells were embarrassing and poignant. I just wanted to say in reply, I have been so grateful to God for calling me to this amazing Diocese and allowing me to serve here. And then the laying up of the Diocesan crozier, and the walk with my

family down the aisle as the music to which Jutta and I walked out at our wedding, was moving beyond words. We stepped into the night, and the cold, through the west doors and stood there for a few minutes. I felt in that moment that in my laying up of the crozier, and so symbolically handing over my care for the people of Suffolk, you had given me back to my family.

Thank you, and God bless you.

+ Mark



Gold Eco Award for St Mary's Church, Haughley



St Mary's Church, Haughley, is the fourth church to receive the Gold Eco Church award in Suffolk. The Award is given by A Rocha UK, and reflects commitment to walk in step with nature and put creation care at the heart of what they do.

The Eco Church team has worked over several years to increase the biodiversity of the churchyard and other areas in the village. They also produced local nature walk maps and are very proud that their Land Management Plan and Plan for Nature has been identified as a nationally leading exemplar by A Rocha UK. The group has ambitious plans to continue churchyard development, for example with a wildflower meadow area and a sensory garden. Churchwarden Josephine Gibson said: *"We cannot do enough to protect creation, to adapt our own lifestyles to be as eco-friendly as possible, and to celebrate and conserve biodiversity. We do not see this prestigious award as an end in itself, but instead as a springboard to further effort and development, as part of our church's identity and a critical part of Christian worship, and as part of the wider ecology of the parish."* Read the full story [here](#)

Lavenham 500

Lavenham Church tower, a Beacon of Hope, is 500 years old in 2025. It is one of



the tallest, most magnificent village church towers in the country. The Revd Canon Simon Pitcher invites the whole community to join in celebrating this significant birthday. A whole range of events have been organised throughout the year including historical lectures, concerts, Tudor Fair and Family Fun Day, plus a specially brewed beer to get everyone in the party mood. In this brochure you will find details of all the events that are taking place. We would love you to join us. Download the brochure [here](#).

LENT 2025



Bishop's Lent Appeal: Inspired by his trip to Tanzania last year, Bishop Martin saw the importance of our continuing relationship with Kagera, all that it offers and how important it is for us to strengthen the link. Bishop Graeme has therefore agreed that the 2025 Lent Appeal will be for Kagera. Taken from

the hymn 'Great is thy faithfulness' this year the theme of the appeal is '**Bright Hope for Tomorrow**'.

Our aim through the appeal is to support farming initiatives and good practice in agriculture, training of evangelists and clergy at Kagera Christian Theological College (KCTC), and resourcing of pastors in their parishes. We will also continue our support for healthcare in the region through the Diocesan hospital.

[For all the resources, to order the printed booklets and to donate please visit our website here.](#)

Unforgivable? St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 1LS

The Cathedral's Lent theme in 2025 is 'Unforgivable', exploring the limits of forgiveness. Inspired by the book by The Revd Dr Stephen Cherry, Dean of King's College Cambridge, the Cathedral is offering a series of talks, events and addresses during this Lent. You can engage with every step of this exploration, or you can dip into the things that inspire you most. For a PDF of what's happening during Lent, [click here](#).

A Rocha International launch new Lent book: A Rocha International, a Christian conservation charity, has launched a new Lent Devotional dedicated to creation. 'The Whole Easter Story: Why the Cross is Good News for All Creation' by A Rocha International's Jo Swinney explores how the cross transforms not just our own individual

connection with Jesus, but also our relationships with each other and our world. Find out more [here](#).

Events

United in Solace and Grace

Sunday 9 February, 4.00pm | All Saints' Church, Holbrook IP9 2QP

A reflective service to mark the end of 'It's Not OK Week'. The service has been thoughtfully and prayerfully put together by a team with wide and eclectic experience. There will be time for reflection and prayer, or to simply light a candle for those we know who are in need of our thoughts and prayers. As part of the service, we also hope to produce a small piece of interactive art, which will continue to develop and grow as a symbol of freedom and renewal. All are welcome.

AChurchNearYou.com: How to use the platform as your church's free website

Wednesday 12 February at 11.00am | Book [here](#)

Join this extended webinar, which will look at all the features of AChurchNearYou.com that are available for individual churches, and the new benefice functionality that could help those of you who edit multiple churches. Come along to a live demonstration to gain confidence editing your site.

Give to Go Green: Drop in Session

Thursday 13 February, 1.00pm | [Book here](#)



Great news! Give to Go Green launches second round. In this drop-in session James Rolls and Emma Denton will be talking about Give to Go Green, a match funding, £1 for £1 initiative set up to help churches carry out net zero carbon projects in their buildings. For more information please email: james.rolls@cofesuffolk.org.

Discover the music and worship resources of Iona

Saturday 15 February | Workshop 2.00pm | Service 4.30pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS



A workshop exploring the rich and varied worship resources of the Iona Community. We'll be discovering (and singing) a range of songs produced by the Wild Goose Resource Group, and looking at poems, prayers and reflections that can be used creatively in acts of worship. The workshop will be especially useful for those

involved in planning and leading worship, but is also suitable for anyone who enjoys singing. Workshop leader: Richard Hubbard, St Edmundsbury & Ipswich Music Development Director, with local members of the Iona Community. The workshop will be followed at 4.30pm by a service incorporating Iona resources. Tickets cost £6 and are available [here](#). Admission to the service is free. For more information,

email music.development@stedscathedral.org.

Digital Surgery with the Diocesan Parish Resources Team

Wednesday 19 February, 10.00am

Join members of the Parish Resources Team at the first of a series of surgeries to find out more about enhancing the digital giving presence in your parish. Come along and have a one-to-one session with one of our Giving Advisors to find out about purchasing or borrowing a contactless device, setting up online giving (including QR codes), get your contactless device repaired or updated with new campaigns, and finding out how to have an effective online giving presence on your ACNY or website pages. [Book your place here](#). For more information email [Emma Denton](#) or [Emma Rowlinson](#), Diocesan Giving Advisors. We will be running more sessions - booking details out soon!

- Wednesday 2 April 2025 - St Edmundsbury Cathedral from 10.00am - 12.00pm and 2.00pm - 4.00pm
- Wednesday 11 June 2025 - Diocesan Office, 4 Cutler Street, Ipswich from 2.00pm - 4.00pm

Faith Story with Katie de Bourcier

Monday 24 February, 7.00pm. By Zoom

In this hour-long conversation, the Revd Katie de Bourcier, who joined the Diocesan Mission and Ministry team as Diocesan Mission Enabler in 2024, will share her faith journey with us, and there will be lots of time for questions and conversation. Listening to someone else's journey with God is not only interesting but encouraging and helpful for our own spiritual growth and development. [Sign up here](#).

East Anglia Rural Mission Hub

Thursday 27 February 10.00am - 4.00pm | Clare Priory, Clare CO10 8NX

The East Anglia Rural Mission Hub meetings are open to all with an interest in pioneering in the rural context and consist of a time gathered together in prayer and discernment, sharing experiences and ideas. The event is subsidised by Rural Ministries allowing the ticket price to be held at £10 including lunch and refreshments. If you are interested but would like to know more then please get in touch with Simon Mattholie on 075152 53365 or email simon@ruralministries.org.uk

Rural Ministry Support and Learning Space

Thursday 27 February, 2.00pm - 3.30pm | Earl Stonham Village Hall, Stowmarket IP14 5HJ
or 7.30pm Wednesday 5 March 7.30pm to 9.00pm | Teams

Following recent feedback, the Diocesan Mission and Ministry team want to explore the value in bringing together incumbents in rural multi-parish settings for mutual support and learning. These meetings offer a chance to share your ideas about what you would find useful, and what a learning community for this purpose might look like. To book, please [click here](#). For more information, please email the Revd [Katie de Bourcier](#), Diocesan Mission Enabler, or call on 07955 273158.

Diocesan Growing Younger Conference

Saturday 8 March 10.00am - 3.30pm | St Michael's Church, Framlingham IP13 9BH



Growing Younger is at the heart of our mission. We seek to support and enable those working with children, young people, families and young adults, and to come alongside young people to help them grow in their faith and become confident disciples of Christ. Archdeacon Rich and the Growing Younger team are hosting a

Growing Younger Conference, and we are delighted that Lucy Moore, founder of Messy Church and who now leads the CofE Growing Faith Foundation, will be the keynote speaker. The day will also include worship, workshops and networking. Come along as individuals or bring a team, booking is via [Insight here.](#)

Grandparents' Day

Saturday 15 March 10.30am – 2.30pm | St John's Church, Cauldwell Hall Road, Ipswich IP4 4QE

'What does it take to be a Grandparent of Faith? This event, organised by the Mothers' Union but open to non-members, is designed to bring together grandparents and honorary grandparents of faith (from little faith to strong faith) and of any denomination. Join us to feel supported, encouraged and affirmed as a spiritual influencer to your grandchildren through a programme of worship, key speakers and small group workshops. [Free tickets available here.](#)

Resound with Joy! Readers, LLMs and Elders study morning

Saturday 29 March, 9.00am | Salvation Army Hall, Stowmarket IP14 1NE

Visiting Canon Theologian, The Revd Dr Victoria Johnson, will take us on an unusual journey to explore how the voice of God has been represented and portrayed in worship, art and culture leading us to ponder anew how God speaks to us today. The concept of 'voice', whether human or divine, encompasses the spoken, sung and heard. Her musings, through humour and wisdom, will broaden our own theological insight and deepen our spirituality. The morning will encompass both pragmatic responses to how we use our voices and the deeply spiritual. Elders, Readers and LLMs: [Reserve your free space now!](#)

The Big Weekend

Friday 11 April, 11.00am - Sunday 13 April, 4.00pm | Sizewell Hall, Leiston IP16 4TX

The Big Weekend is a weekend of craziness, worship, games and friendship all focused around learning more about living as a Christian in the 21st. The event is for young people from school years 7-13. Whilst it is Christian in ethos and focus you don't have to call yourself a Christian to be able to attend and have fun! Cost of the weekend is £60 per person. [Book here.](#)

In the beginning was the story... a different kind of introduction to the New Testament

Wednesdays 30 April, 7 May, 14 May, 28 May, 4 June, 11 June and 18 June, 7.30pm - 9.30pm | Earl Stonham Village Hall, Stowmarket IP14 5HJ

This course looks at the beginnings of what became Christianity, by examining the New

Testament as a series of 'stories we live by' rather than as the foundations of the doctrines that emerged much later. It explores some of the pressures faced by multi-cultural churches in an uncertain and sometimes hostile world, to help us learn about ways of living with similar-but-different pressures in our own day. To book your place please [click here](#).

Building a Generous Church conference

Saturday 17 May, 9.30am | Bridge Community Church, 68 Queen's Road, Bury St Edmunds IP33 3EW



We invite you to join Archdeacons David and Rich; Gary Peverley, Diocesan Secretary; Diocesan staff and others to be inspired by three keynote speakers focusing on compassionate communities and the impact on our society, and how to put generosity at the heart of our lives. You can choose three workshops from a wide range of subjects to attend, to help your church become more informed and better resourced to grow a generous culture and reach financial sustainability. Bishop Graeme will open the conference. All those who are part of the Church of England Suffolk community are welcome. For more information and to book please click [here](#).

'Leading your Church into Growth': LyCiG is back for 2025!

Friday 13 June, 5.00pm to 9.00pm and Saturday 14 June, 9.00am to 6.00pm | Debenham Sports & Leisure Centre IP14 6BL



We invite you to come with a team from your benefice, parish or worshipping community – that could be a team of three or a team of 12, the PCC or a few people keen on mission, or whatever combination works for you. This Suffolk-based LyCiG conference will be led by guest speakers from the National LyCiG Organisation. It will take the form of an open seminar with interactive talks, practical exercises, workshops and time for personal reflection. The aims of the course are to:

- Inspire you as leaders to help lead your church(es) into growth
- Encourage you to feel that in your own way, at your own pace, and with God's help you can do it
- Equip you with a straightforward and workable strategy
- Give you teaching resources so you can share LyCiG with others in your church
- Enable you to create (or update) and implement a Growing in God Plan for Growth.

This is a free event! Spaces are limited so please ask your Incumbent or Churchwarden to book early. Please [visit here to book](#).

LoveRural - National Rural Mission Conference 2025

Monday 22 September, 11.30am and Tuesday 23 September, 3.00pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

Join the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich for this 24-hour national gathering to thank God for the ways in which he is making new disciples in rural contexts and reflect on key learning. This event will bring together senior leaders, pioneers, rural resource church leaders and other partners. We will share learnings from rural Strategic Development



Funded (SDF) projects, including Suffolk's "Growing in God in the Countryside" and the national "Rural Resourcing Church Learning Community". There will be opportunities to connect and pray with others and explore developments in rural mission. [To book please click here.](#)

Notices

Grants for historic church interiors and churchyard structures: Offering grants for the conservation of our historic church interiors and churchyard structures in partnership with the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Pilgrim Trust, the Radcliffe Trust, the Oswald Allen Bequest, the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, the Gunnis Fund, and the Anglican Parish Churches Fund. Full information available [here](#).

Safeguarding is now on Insight: We are delighted to announce that all our Safeguarding courses are listed on Insight, which makes finding a course even easier. You will need an Insight account to book your safeguarding course - please remember you will need to log in. This is so that completion of a course can be automatically recorded on our database and you will receive a reminder to book your next course three to six months before your training expires. Support from Insight (how to register, how to find your course, for example) is available from insight@cofesuffolk.org. For support regarding your Diocesan safeguarding training please email safeguarding.training@cofesuffolk.org. If you are uncertain about which Safeguarding course you need to attend please have a look at our website [here](#) or download [the tick list here](#).

New Electoral Roll: The Electoral Roll is a list of names and addresses of every person who can vote in the annual parochial church meeting. It is revised annually but replaced in its entirety every six years. The current electoral-rolls (created in 2019) will be replaced with brand-new rolls this year (2025). Everything you need to help you with this is on our website: [APCMs and electoral roll - Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich](#).

In accordance with the [Church Representation Rules](#), following your APCM and no later than 1 July in each year, parishes should give the Diocesan Secretary written notification of the number of names there are on the roll of the parish as at the date of the annual parochial church meeting. To facilitate this requirement, please return your completed Electoral Roll Certificates by email to diocesan.secretary@cofesuffolk.org. We ask that wherever possible forms are returned electronically, however if you have no means to do this, they can be returned by post at the address: Diocesan Electoral Roll Officer, The Diocesan Office, 4 Cutler Street, Ipswich, IP1 1UQ.

Statistics for Mission

Thank you to all parishes who have completed their Statistics for Mission forms. The National Church deadline has been extended to 14 March 2025. 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 contact statistics@cofesuffolk.org. Further information regarding Parish returns, including videos on how to submit, can be found here: [Parish returns - Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich](#).

Vacancies

[Children and Families Pastor](#) | Beccles | Closing date: 7 February
[Perfect Peace Project Administrator \(Part-time\)](#) | Closing date: 10 February
[Team Rector](#) | Wilford Peninsula Team Ministry | Closing date: 12 February
[Learning Development Manager \(Insight\)](#) | Closing date: 12 February
[Personal Assistant to Diocesan Secretary](#) | Closing date: 16 February
[Governance Manager](#) | Closing date: 16 February
[Rector](#) | Woolpit and Drinkstone Benefice | Closing date: 21 May
[Part-time Associate Priest](#) | Carlford Benefice | Closing date: TBC

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



TOGETHER WE ARE
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
SUFFOLK

Watch our stories from around Suffolk

SIZEWELL YOUTH GATHERING
THE BIG WEEKEND
18-20 April 2025

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE
A SCHOOL GOVERNOR

KAGERA, TANZANIA 2024
GROWING YOUNGER



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