Thursday 16 April 2026

eNews

Our regular round up of news and forthcoming events

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SUFFOLK

Special retirement service at St Edmundsbury Cathedral



This Saturday at 3.00pm, St Edmundsbury Cathedral will host a special service to honour the retirement of Clare, Countess of Euston CVO, as Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk and to welcome the appointment of Mark Pendlington DL.

Lady Euston has held the role of Lord Lieutenant of Suffolk since 2014 and is the British monarch's personal representative in the county. She has dedicated her career to supporting some of Suffolk's most vulnerable people and has held leadership roles across several of the county's important charitable organisations, including the Suffolk Community Foundation, St Nicholas Hospice and Age Concern Suffolk. Beyond her charitable work, Lady Euston chaired the Suffolk Strategic Partnership Board and led the Suffolk Agricultural Association.

Mark Pendlington DL, has been appointed by His Majesty King Charles III to the role of Lord Lieutenant following Lady Clare's retirement. He has held numerous roles in the county, including Senior Non-Executive Member of Chapter at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, and was Chair of Trustees for the Diocesan Board of Finance until 2023.

The service will be a real celebration of Suffolk. Please read the full story here.



The Revd Dr Charlotte Harkness will be leading Together we Pray next week, at the usual time of 8.30am on the Bishop's Facebook page.



Vocations Fair | Saturday 25 April 10.00am to 12.20pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral.
Come along by yourself or with congregation members to meet the Revd Canon Stuart Batten and his team who are ready to greet you and share the latest news about training and opportunities available in this Diocese.

This day focuses on encouraging individuals to explore God's call in their lives, including lay and ordained ministries. We have put together a collection of resources here, including reflections, prayers, orders of service and information about some of the vocations in the Diocese.

We are starting our nine days of prayer for vocations today as we lead up to the vocations fair. Please follow our posts on our social media channels. Or you can download the prayer guide here.

Discipleship Resources for Groups
Are you a Church Leader looking for resources for home groups or short courses? Look no further! Click here to access our discipleship resources padlet.

Archdeaconry Visitations
Please note that the visitation dates have been released and are available on our website here.

Diocesan and Mission & Ministry Events

Lark Rise Retreats

'Faith on the edge - Jesus heals at the margins', a retreat day based on Luke 8.40 to 56, led by the Revd Helen Rengert on Saturday 9 May at St Edmund's Church, Langer Road, Felixstowe.

Days run from 10.00am – 4.00pm and cost £27/person including refreshments and lunch. A bursary fund is available. More details and bookings are on www.larkriseretreats.org or call Catherine Bond and Jane Pearse on 01394 284213.

Safeguarding Training

In-person **Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse** Level Training is taking place in Bury St Edmunds on **Wednesday 29 April**, book here. Future courses in 2026 will be held in Huntingfield and Ipswich.

To book your place on any in-person safeguarding training visit Insight, where you, or your local safeguarding officer, can book you a place to attend a course.

If you are looking for Safeguarding Leadership training, please check Insight for the latest course dates. Additional dates will be published as soon as they are available, so please keep checking in to find the right course for you. There will be a combination of in-person and online Leadership courses available throughout 2026. For those people who want to get a head start on completing the pre-work for their Leadership Training, please click here to view and download the Leadership pre-work materials that all participants need to complete before attending their first booked session of Leadership Training.

Child Exploitation Awareness Training

Are you working with children and young people? Ensure you have the knowledge and confidence to keep them safe with Child Exploitation Awareness Training. Claire Prosser, Criminal Exploitation Project Manager from Suffolk County Council, is delivering this course on 7 May 2026 in Ipswich. Please register to attend here.

PCC Workshops



Friends Group Workshop: Come and hear how a Friends group can benefit your church and get new people involved from the wider community to help share the load. Emma Denton will take you through the process of the best way to set up a Friends group to help with your fundraising and how it put it to good use. Book here.

Grants and Funding Workshops: Come and join Giving Advisor Emma Denton and guest to find out about how the Cornerstone database can help you navigate the grants and funding options available. Also, how the Diocese can help advise and source grant funding for you, and hear about first hand experiences, and success stories. Book here: 30 April Workshop | 4 November Workshop

Digital Giving (contactless and online, including QR codes): Understand the need, options, availability, cost and impact of Digital Giving. Every parish should have some form of online giving available (including QR codes) and we can help you find the best option, including tips on how best to promote it to your congregation and wider community. A contactless donation device might be right for your church, and we will show you what's available to buy or you might choose to borrow one of our diocesan devices for an event

or trial. We can help you find the best solution for your parish. Book here for 13 May, 12.00pm | Book here for 13 October, 12.00pm

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Eco Church Support | Tuesday 28 April, 6.00pm to 7.00pm on Zoom
Join this online support group for an interesting talk by Nigel Cooper about using Creation Care to engage with your local community. Register 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, this course 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.

Digital Surgeries
Join members of the Parish Resources Team 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. For more information email our Diocesan Giving Advisors: emma.denton@cofesuffolk.org or trudie.harkin@cofesuffolk.org.

Wednesday 29 April | St Edmundsbury Cathedral | 9.30am, 10.30am, 11.30am, 2.00pm or 3.00pm
Wednesday 8 July | St Michael's Church, Framlingham | 9.30am, 10.30am, 2.00pm or 3.00pm
Tuesday 4 August | St Peter and St Paul's Church, Lavenham | 9.30am, 10.30am, 2.00pm or 3.00pm
Further dates across the county to follow. Click here to book any of these dates.

Net Zero Carbon Heating | Zoom | 30 April
Join this session on 'Decarbonising Church Heating Systems - Voices of experience', offered by the Regional Net Zero Carbon team. Click here to book.

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.

Celebrating our Care for Creation | POSTPONED
Unfortunately, this event has been postponed. An updated date will be provided asap. We apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Faith Story - Archdeacon Sam | 7.00pm, 18 May 2026 | Teams
All are welcome to join us for the next 'Faith Story' in our series as the Ven Samantha Brazier-Gibbs, Archdeacon of Ipswich, shares her faith journey with us. Have you asked 'How do I know what God is asking me to do?' Come and join the conversations with others about their faith journey. Book here.

Preparing for Retirement Conference 19-21 May 2026 | The Retreat House, Chelmsford CM3 1HA
This is suitable for anyone considering retirement in the next 5 years, stipendiary or SSM to reflect on transitioning from ministry in retirement. For clergy, and especially those who have been in full-time ministry for many years, retirement raises questions about identity and meaning. If you would like to join us, book here. The conference cost will be covered by the diocese and won't come from your CMD grant. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email Lesley Steed.

Plugged in – technology for remote and rural communities | Saturday 30 May, 10.00am **|** St Felix of Dunwich Church, Rendlesham, IP12 2GG



This one-day workshop will offer a range of cost-effective suggestions whether you are starting from square one or looking to upgrade or improve existing systems. It will be led by David Jordan, who has deep experience of finding technological solutions to support mission and ministry in his own rural multi-parish benefice. Come with your questions and learn from David and each other. Diocesan staff from the Parish Resources team will also be there to talk about digital giving and grants. A free lunch will be provided. Book here.

Leading your Church into Growth

Save the Date: Leading your Church into Growth is coming back to Suffolk in 2026!
12-13 June 2026 at Debenham Community Centre, it will run for the Friday evening and all day Saturday. Following the positive feedback from our Leading your Church into Growth (LYCIG) conferences in 2024 and 2025, we are delighted that the LYCIG team are coming back to lead another conference for us in 2026. The Insight booking link will be shared shortly. For more information, please email: the Revd Katie de Bourcier, Diocesan Mission Enabler, or Lisa Hicks, LYCIG Coordinator.

Date change: Elders Celebration service with Bishop Joanne
Our biennial service of thanks and celebration will take place in the Cathedral as usual this year but we have made a date change to avoid a clash in Bishop Joanne's diary. The service will now be on **8 November** at 3.30pm. The original date was 11 October. More information will be sent nearer the time.

Spring Serenade | Sunday 19 April, 3.00pm | St Mary's Church, Playford IP6 9DS
Experience an afternoon of song in glorious harmony with Suffolk's all-female acappella choir. In support of the church. Tickets cost £7 and include refreshments. To book please email jos@10K.com.

Hope Against Hope | Sunday 26 April 3.00pm to 5.00pm | St Mary's Church, Woodbridge
An opportunity to come together to share stories and music with local Ukrainians and join a conversation with Sir Nick Young. Refreshments available. In conjunction with Suffolk Refugee Support and Kesgrave and Woodbridge Ukraine hub.

An evening with Julian and Jiaxin Lloyd Webber, Saturday 2 May 7.00pm. St Andrew's Church, Rushmere St Andrew, Ipswich IP5 1DH.
This evening with internationally renowned cellists launches St Andrew's 2026 May Festival which includes something for everyone: concerts, exhibitions, Christians in sport breakfast, evening meal, talks, children's events and special services. The theme this year is 'Drawn to Jesus?'. Tickets £25, under 18s £10. For more information and booking: www.standrewschurchrushmere.onesuffolk.net

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Bury Male Octet with Eddie's SwingSisters | Saturday 9 May, 7.30pm | Hitcham Church
An easy listening programme ranging from the Medieval to modern - including popular songs from WW2, Frank Sinatra and pop. The Bury Male Octet, who appeared at the Theatre Royal in February, will sing acapella whilst Eddies SwingSisters will have backing music, both choirs will sing together for the second half. Hitcham Church is off the B1115. Parking is in the church car park which is accessed from Fen Lane (What3Words expel.materials.magically) with a short walk up to the church. Tickets are just £5 and include tea and coffee. Raffle. In aid of church funds, please email RNFCurrie@gmail.com for more information.

Art Exhibition | Saturday and Sunday 9/10 May | Village Hall, Old Newton IP14 4ED
Come along to a creative art exhibition, refreshments available, in aid of St Mary's Church.

Model Railway Exhibition Saturday 16 May, 10.00am – 4.00pm, St Peter and St Paul Church, Lavenham
Layouts of all kinds, in a range of scales, regions and countries (with special focus on East Anglia), together with trade stalls. Refreshments available. Adult admission £7.00, family tickets £12.00 (purchased in advance to guarantee entry). In aid of Christian Aid.

Folk Concert for Christian Aid | Saturday 16 May, 6.00pm, St John the Baptist Church, Needham Market IP6 8AE
Come along to a folk concert held to raise funds for Christian Aid. Performances from Maggie & Stan, Wildflowers, Joka and Folk on the Hill. Entry costs £8 (cash only) on the door including interval tea and biscuits. There will also be a raffle.

Notices

Parish Accessibility Fund: The Church of England has made funds available to support parishes wishing to enable greater access to churches. These funds are supported by the Diocese in order to link parishes to the national scheme and ensure compliance and submission criteria are met. The Fund can support adaptations to meet the needs of the disabled, visually- or hearing-impaired and the neurodivergent. Church of England consecrated church buildings and community halls in the ownership of the PCC that are used to promote mission are all eligible. Full details of the scope of the Parish Accessibility Grants' scheme are here and the VAT rules are here. As a first step you should contact contact **Toby Hart** at the Diocesan Office via email toby.hart@cofesuffolk.org

Move to Cornerstone Grants from Church Grants from 31 March 2026: For the past few years, the Diocese has had a paid subscription to the Church Grants Database. This ended on 31 March 2026 and you will not be able to access Church Grants any longer. We will be moving over to the new Church of England Cornerstone Grants Database which will be free to use and is designed to support churches in identifying and securing funding opportunities.

- All those churches already registered with Church Grants will be contacted by the Parish Resources Team with an invitation to register with Cornerstone Grants. You do not need to pay to join Church Grants.
- If you need access before you receive our email please complete the Cornerstone form to establish your parish needs, verify your contact details and sign up for an online training session.
- The Parish Resources Team will be in touch to register you with Cornerstone on behalf of your parish.

The support from the Parish Resources Team remains and we will be providing training to help you get the most out of Cornerstone Grants. Emma Denton will continue to help you with all your grant queries, as well as writing bespoke Grant Strategies, reading applications prior to submission and supporting you through the process of applying for grants.

Inspire Counselling: Low-cost, professional, safe and confidential counselling service offered in Ipswich for individuals aged 18 years and over, currently accepting new clients. All the counsellors are Christians. Open Tuesdays and Thursdays. For further information please contact Inspire on 01473 217694, email contact@inspirecounselling.org.uk or visit their website here.

Energy Footprint Tool: 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.

Vacancies

Deputy Diocesan Director of Education | Closing date: 20 April
Vicar | Kesgrave with Little Bealings & Playford | Closing date: 20 May

Rector | North Bosmere Benefice
Team Vicar | Forest Heath Team Ministry
Team Vicar | Sole Bay Team
Rector | Box River Benefice
Team Vicar & Associate Priest | Blyth Valley Team Ministry F/T Stipendiary Post

Tenor Vicar Choral and Non-Executive Safeguarding Chapter Member | Cathedral Volunteers | Risk, Audit and Review Committee Member, Finance Committee Member | St Edmundsbury Cathedral

Organist or Pianist **|** United Benefice of Stanton | For more information please contact Ali Wakelin on 07717 125743.

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