Thursday 21 May 2026

eNews

Our regular round up of news and forthcoming events

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SUFFOLK

Suffolk Show



We are delighted to be attending the Suffolk Show this year and welcome you to join us on Wednesday 27 and Thursday 28 May at stand 531. As always, visitors to the marquee will enjoy a warm welcome with complimentary tea, coffee and cakes while you will be entertained with, for example, a puppet show, children's games and Messy Church crafts for children.

Bishop Joanne will be at the show on both days and this marks a double celebration with her first visit to the Suffolk Show since she took up office, and her birthday on the first day. Bishop Joanne is inviting people to join her to a chat as we expect to meet young people, families, and up to 2,000 people in our marquee.



All refreshment donations at the marquee will be donated to the Diocese Agricultural Chaplaincy Team. The chaplaincy team will be at our marquee offering a listening ear, care, prayer and support as they build relationships with those in the farming and seafaring communities, offering support to those dealing with challenging times such as bereavement, financial difficulties, those currently dealing with mental health issues and more. There will also be a stand from our Link Dioceses in north west Tanzania in Africa with details about farming in that region, where many people are subsistence farmers living on less than £1.50 a day.

Our marquee is number 531 on Flowershow Avenue, and we look forward to seeing you there!

Bishop Joanne's heartfelt maiden speech in the House of Lords

A woman whose brother is spending decades behind bars for a murder he has always maintained he did not commit has praised a bishop for standing by their claim for a miscarriage of justice.



Bishop Joanne supported the family during a heartfelt maiden speech in the House of Lords. She told the House of Lords in Westminster that an urgent review was required of the Criminal Cases Review Commission.

The case concerns the conviction of Jason Moore, in 2013, for allegedly stabbing to death Robert Darby in 2005. He was found guilty on the evidence of a single witness who identified Moore from a line-up seven years after the murder in London. The witness later admitted that they had been drunk and were uncertain about the identity of the attacker.

Bishop Joanne was the Bishop of Stepney in London when she started examining the case local to her and says her faith compels her to see things through when she believes wrong has happened. Her raising this in the House of Lords will give hope to others campaigning to overturn what they argue are their wrongful convictions in Suffolk and elsewhere in the country.

Read the full story here.

Places of Worship Fund

A new national funding scheme for churches was launched on Wednesday, the Places of Worship Renewal Fund. It is aimed in part at plugging the funding gap created by the abolition of the Listed Places of Worship Fund. Any listed church in the Diocese is eligible to apply. A total of £23m this year is available. Awards will range in size between £10,000 and £1m, with priority being given to churches in areas of high deprivation and those which face the greatest fundraising challenges. The application process begins with submitting an Expression of Interest and all the guidance on doing that which is currently available can be found on Historic England's website here. We hope to be able to bring you more guidance in due course. In the meantime, you can find an explanation of how the new fund will operate on the website of the National Churches Trust here.



Review of lay ministry pathways and permissions *"Across the Diocese, we have much to give thanks for. Every day, our lay people offer their gifts with generosity, faith, and quiet dedication. This rich and varied ministry is not an addition to the life of the Church, it is at its very heart, flowing from our shared calling in baptism and shaping our common witness to Christ. With deep gratitude for all that is already flourishing, Bishop Joanne has invited me to review lay ministry pathways and permissions across the Diocese. This invitation grows out of a hopeful vision: that the many ways in which lay people serve might be more clearly supported, encouraged and celebrated. Across the Diocese there is a vibrant and diverse ecology of lay ministry, pastoral, youth and children's work, pioneering, evangelism, chaplaincy, and more. This diversity is a gift. The review will gently explore how clearer and more consistent pathways might strengthen vocation, support incumbents, and enable growth in mission, while remaining faithful to the life of our local churches.*

God has already been at work among us, and this review is a chance to be inspired anew, to strengthen what is strong, and to imagine what could yet be." - Archdeacon Sam.

Retirement Announcements:



Diane Matthews: After a 22-year long career working in many different teams across the Diocese, Diane Matthews has retired from the Bishop's Office. She has been a hugely valuable and integral part of the diocese, supporting six Bishops and several Archdeacons, as well as having worked in the diocesan office in various roles. Diane has always been a valued colleague and friend to many. We will miss her skills, cheerfulness and wisdom hugely and wish her every success and fulfilment as she enters this new phase of life. Each of our current Archdeacons have paid tribute:

The Ven David Jenkins, Archdeacon of Sudbury ,said "*Diane has been a wonderfully supportive colleague over many years. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to work with her. I wish her every blessing for her well-earned retirement*."

The Ven Samantha Brazier-Gibbs, Archdeacon of Ipswich, commented, *"I was so thankful for Diane's warm welcome, kindness and advice as I moved to St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. It was a joy to work with her,"*

The Ven Rich Henderson, Archdeacon of Suffolk, added, *"From the moment of my appointment in 2023 Diane showed real care, support and encouragement for me in my new role as Archdeacon of Suffolk. Over the years I have greatly valued her wisdom and experience. She will be a much-missed member of our diocesan team."*



Tim Holder: Tim is also retiring after two years in post as Director of Engagement. Tim has been instrumental in leading many projects during his time, particularly forging relationships with those in our communities and partner organisations in Suffolk. We are grateful for his valuable contribution and the positive impact he has made.

Tim says *"I've had a fascinating couple of years being part of the senior leadership team and getting to know many of the wonderful team of staff who support everyone out in the parishes across ever corner of the county. I have particularly enjoyed helping to strengthen communications and am particularly delighted with our 'Together We Pray' initiative which has brought a whole new dynamic to our broader team spirit and presence online. I would like to thank everyone who has been able to support our work, particularly out in the parishes where I perhaps enjoyed myself the most! I shall now return to my own parish, enjoy the summer and see how retirement suits me."*

Gary Peverley, Diocesan Secretary added, *"We will miss Tim's creativity, sense of humour and drive for engagement. We wish Tim well in his next adventure and thank him for his contribution and energy over the last couple of years."*

We will be sad to see Diane and Tim leave and send them both our best wishes in their retirement.

Together we Pray: During the Suffolk Show the Mission and Ministry team will be heading Together we Pray. The live Facebook prayers will now appear on the Diocesan Facebook page and will be available: here: www.facebook.com/CofEsuffolk. If you have been following the prayers for several years please do remember to switch to the diocesan Facebook page to view the prayers: @cofesuffolk. We look forward to seeing you there.

Diocesan and Mission & Ministry Events

Plugged in – technology for remote and rural communities | please note this event is cancelled

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PCC Workshop: Parish Giving Scheme: Join a monthly PGS webinar with the Parish Resources Team to find out more about the scheme, the benefits and how to join. The PGS is dedicated to serving givers and churches in a shared ministry of giving. Book: 12 June

PCC Workshop: Buildings: Do you have a pending project for fabric repairs in your church? Julie Alcock, Historic Church Buildings Support Officer; Toby Hart, Church Buildings Support Officer and Emma Denton, Giving Advisor will guide you through the process of where you need to start, who you need to involve, and any permissions required. Book: 7 July.

Leading your Church into Growth

Leading your Church into Growth, 12-13 June 2026 at Debenham Community Centre
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. Come along to be encouraged, inspired, and equipped with practical tools and frameworks for mission and growth for your church. This conference is relevant to churches large and small, rural and urban, and whether you are a single parish or a multi-parish benefice. We invite incumbents to come with a small team.
For more information, please email: the Revd Katie de Bourcier, Diocesan Mission Enabler, or Lisa Hicks, LyCiG Coordinator. To book please click here.

Carbon Literacy training | Wednesday 24 June, 10.30am to 3.30pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS
The Care of Creation Group and the Cathedral would like to invite eight people to join them for a carbon literacy training day. This specialist training is delivered by Eastern Education Group and costs £25 per person. Carbon Literacy is the ability to understand, communicate about, and act on climate change in our daily lives. At the end of the training, you will be able to create an action plan and commit to at least two practical

actions – one individual and one collective – to cut carbon in your personal and professional life. Places are available on a first come/served basis, to book and for further information please email Jane Haviland

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Safeguarding Training
Book your safeguarding course - for any in-person safeguarding training visit Insight, where you, or your local safeguarding officer, can book you a place to attend a course.

Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse Training: Huntingfield, Wednesday 24 June, book here.
Foundation Training: Bury St Edmunds, Tuesday 30 June, book here or Ipswich, Tuesday 29 September, book here.
Leadership Training: Earl Stonham, June and July, book here.
Basic Awareness Training: Ipswich, Tuesday 15 September, book here.

Additional dates for in-person and online courses will be published soon. 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.

Digital Surgeries
Join members of the Parish Resources Team for a one-to-one session to find out more about enhancing the digital giving presence in your parish:

Monday 13 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
Wednesday 30 September | Abbey House, Bury St Edmunds | 9.30am, 10.30am, 11.30am, 2.00pm or 3.00pm
Tuesday 3 November | Diocesan Office, Ipswich | 1.30pm, 2.30pm or 3.30pm.

Further dates across the county to follow. Click here to book any of these dates.

Called By Name | Friday 11 September - Sunday 13 September | Sarum College, Salisbury SP1 2EE
A two-day event for ordinands, curates and those discerning. A weekend for all of UKME/GMH heritage to support and nourish you on your vocations journey. All welcome, from explorers to curates. For more information and to book click here.

Church Community Services and Events

Pentecost Songs of Praise | Sunday 24 May, 3.30pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral
With Pentecost falling in half-term this year, the 3.30 pm Evening service at St Edmundsbury Cathedral will take the form of Pentecost Songs of Praise, rather than BCP Choral Evensong. Do come along to sing some of your favourite Pentecost hymns and to celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit together. The service will include anointing for personal renewal.

From Flight to Faith: Holy Innocents Great Barton dedicates new vocation this Pentecost | Sunday 24 May, at 10.30am, Holy Innocents' Church, Great Barton
During the festival service, the congregation will formally take down the *Flight of Kites* art installation and dedicate the church to a permanent, ongoing vocation of prayer for the 'Modern Holy Innocents'—children across the globe whose lives are affected or taken by war and conflict. All are welcome to join the service to share in this act of dedication and to commit to this new chapter of prayer and witness.

Organ Recital and Afternoon Tea | Saturday 30 May, 3.00pm | Holy Trinity Church, Barsham NR34 8HA
The recital is to be given by Dr David Flood, formerly Organist and Master of the Choristers for 32 years at Canterbury Cathedral. Enjoy a programme of well loved organ favourites as well as some more unusual musical treasures. Delicious Barsham Tea will be served afterwards. No booking required, donations on the door warmly welcomed.

Plant Fair | Saturday 30 May, 10.30am | All Saint's Church, Mendham IP20 0NH
Come along to a plant fair located right in a Gold Eco Churchyard! Plenty of plants for sale, mega-prize raffle, teas, cakes and light snacks.

CO-OP Brass Band and Concert | Saturday 6 June, 7.00pm, | St Mary's Church, Woodbridge
Join the Saint-Saens "Organ" symphony with local organist, Dr Sarah Dodds, for a concert in aid of the church 'Help Heat our Church' Appeal. Tickets are £12 each, and can be purchased online in advance: here or in the Church Shop, or on the door.

Choral Evensong | St John The Baptist Church, Snape IP17 1QW | Sunday 7 June, 6.00pm. With music from Franck, Wilby, Goss and Farrell.

Choral Evensong | St James Church, Dunwich, Sunday 21 June, 6.00pm. The Jubilate Choir will lead a traditional service of Evensong.

Big Knicker Night to raise awareness of domestic abuse | Tuesday 23 June Salvation Army Hall, Stowmarket



An evening of entertainment, speakers, stalls and refreshments. Free entry to anyone who brings and donates a new pair of underwear, all of which will be donated to two Suffolk women's refuge charity, Lighthouse Women's Aid and Restore Women's Aid centre. Click for more information and to book the Big Knicker Night.

Live, Love, Laugh: String Quartets by Holst, Beethoven and Mendelssohn | St Mary the Virgin, Dalham | Friday 5 June at 6.30pm
Celebrate summer with an evening of music. Bring a picnic to have before or after in the church grounds. A bar will be open from 6.00pm and during the interval. Brother Tree Sound String Quartet, one of the country's most innovative and exciting chamber groups, will play a programme of music featuring quartets by Imogen Holst, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, and a surprise piece about Suffolk. Tickets here.

Choral Evensong | Sunday 7 June, 6.00pm | St John the Baptist, Snape Church IP17 1QW

A service of prayer and music for Corpus Christi. Featuring music by Franck, Wilby, Goss, Farrell.

Shepherd Society Talk with Shireen Awwad Hilal | Saturday 27 June, 7.00pm | Brandeston Village Hall IP13 7AE
The Shepherd Society is one way in which Palestinian Christians respond to the Gospel's call to love our neighbour and care for the poor. The Shepherd Society has been assisting struggling Palestinians in the West Bank with meeting basic needs such as food, employment and medical care. Shireen will be talking about their work and delivering an important message to us as fellow Christians. Refreshments will be served on arrival.

Public Faith, Common Good, Christian Social Order | Tuesday 21 July, 10.00am - 4.00pm | Old Divinity School, Cambridge CB2 1TP
In communities that are increasingly fragmented and polarised, how can the Church articulate a compelling vision for the common good, social justice, and solidarity with our neighbour? This one-day symposium brings together theologians, practitioners, and thought leaders to reflect on the Church's role within contemporary public life. Book here.

Honey and the Bear folk concert at St Nicholas | Sunday 26 July, 2.15pm, St Nicholas Church, Bedfield IP13 7JJ
Suffolk's finest Folk and Roots Duet, Honey and the Bear, will be performing on behalf of the Friends of Bedfield Heritage. Entry costs £20 per ticket. Refreshments will be available. Please email friendsofbedfieldheritage@gmail.com stating how many tickets you require and further details will be sent to you. All profits to go to the church composting-toilet fund.

Cathedral Pilgrimage to Iona | 25 September to 3 October
A vacant twin room in Bishop's House has just become available; if you would like to explore the idea of coming, do please email straight away the Cathedral Chaplain, Canon Mark Haworth or tel. 01284 748720 / 07932 160009.

Notices

Churchwarden message re CMS: Every person who has a role in the diocese has their data held on our database called CMS. Those with roles can find their entry on the national CMS portal here. It is vital we keep our records up to date and next week, Churchwardens will receive an email from cmssupport@cofesuffolk.org asking you to confirm the contact details for the key posts within the parish. Could Churchwardens please look out for the email and respond as soon as possible. The process is simple and details will be contained within the email. If you have recently retired from post, please forward this to your successor. Because postholders may have changed due to recent elections at APCMs, it is important for all of us to have up-to-date details to ensure the right people are contacted at the right time on the most relevant topics for their role.

Places of Worship Renewal Fund:
A new national funding scheme for churches was launched on Wednesday, the Places of Worship Renewal Fund. It is aimed, in part, to plug the funding gap created by the abolition of the Listed Places of Worship Fund. Any listed church in the Diocese is eligible to apply. A total of £23m is available this year. Awards will range between £10,000 and

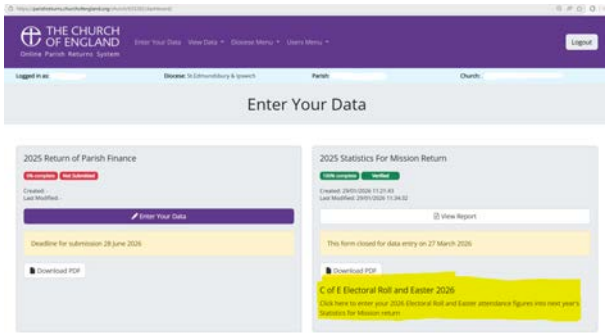
£1m, with priority being given to churches in areas of high deprivation and those which face the greatest fundraising challenges. The application process begins with submitting an 'Expression of Interest' and guidance is currently available on Historic England's website here. We hope to be able to bring you more guidance in due course. In the meantime, you can find an explanation of how the new fund will operate on the website of the National Churches Trust here.

Tools with a Mission for Kagera: St Edmundsbury Cathedral will be collecting donations for Tools with a Mission (TWAM), a Christian charity that collects unwanted usable tools, refurbishes them, and sorts them into trade tool kits for livelihood creation. Donations will be collected on Sundays 7 and 14 June by the South Door, and will arrive in Kagera before the end of October. They will be distributed to projects in the dioceses of the three Kagera Bishops who visited Bury St Edmunds in January, as well as to Burundi. This is a great opportunity for you to declutter, and for those in East Africa to gain much needed tools.

Articles of Enquiry: Parishes are kindly asked to complete the online Articles of Enquiry via the Online Parish Return System (OPRS) https://parishreturns.churchofengland.org/. The questions are posed by the Archdeacons and cover key areas of parish life, including Safeguarding, Environment, Discipleship, Giving and Church Buildings. They help us understand where parishes are thriving and where support may be helpful. Please complete the form by 30 September—thank you for your time and cooperation. If you require login details, are unable to submit the figure online, or you need any other assistance regarding the online portal, please email statistics@cofesuffolk.org

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Electoral Roll: By 1 July each year, the PCC Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary or the Electoral Roll Officer must notify the Secretary of the Diocesan Synod of the number of names on the Electoral Roll as at the date of the APCM. Anyone aged 16+, baptised, who lives in a parish or regularly worships there, and declares themselves a member of the Church of England, is eligible for the Church Electoral Roll. For a more comprehensive list of rules, please refer to 'Parish Resources' here. As of this year, please submit your Electoral Roll number via the Online Parish Returns system here. Once logged in, navigate to the 'Enter Your Data' section, as per highlight below to record your Electoral Roll number.



If you require login details, are unable to submit the figure online, or you need any other assistance regarding the online portal, please email: statistics@cofesuffolk.org. Please do not send the Electoral Roll itself, as this would breach data protection regulations.

Deanery Synod Elections: The term of office for the current Deanery Synod membership ends on 30 June 2026. We wrote to Deanery Synod Secretaries in December

informing them of the number of lay representatives to be elected from PCCs in their Deanery. PCCs must elect the allocated number of lay representatives at their Annual Parochial Church Meetings (APCMs), which must take place by 31 May, and the results of these elections returned to their Deanery Synod Secretary by 14 June.

The Deanery Synod Secretary must then compile **a register of lay and clergy representatives** with their names, addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses (specifying for each member the category of membership) and a copy of this register must then be sent to the Diocesan Secretary at diocesan.secretary@cofesuffolk.org no later than **1 July 2026**.

We provided a spreadsheet in the New Year enabling you to record this information. If you require another copy of this spreadsheet, or any further assistance, please email diocesan.secretary@cofesuffolk.org

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Energy Footprint Tool: Complete your EFT on the Parish Returns Portal here. It should take about 15 minutes to do, and completion of the tool will make your church eligible for various sources of funding for net zero and energy reducing projects in your buildings. There is funding from £5,000 up to £80,000 available over this triennium to support net zero projects in your parish. 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

Social Media Storyteller | Closing Date: 24 May 2026
Rector | Box River Benefice
Team Vicar | Forest Heath Team Ministry
Team Vicar & Associate Priest | Blyth Valley Team Ministry F/T Stipendiary Post
Rector | North Bosmere Benefice

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

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TOGETHER WE ARE
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
SUFFOLK

Watch our stories from around Suffolk



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