Thursday 23 July 2026

eNews

Our regular round up of news and forthcoming events

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SUFFOLK

Young Ipswich choir perform first church service



The BlesSINGs Children's Choir at All Hallow's Church in Landseer Road, Ipswich has performed at its first service after receiving funding from the Diocese's Music, Mission and Young People (MMYP) project.
The Revd Emma Haggar said she was proud of how well the young singers performed. *"It's still early days but the choir performed brilliantly at their first service,"* she said. *"They really enjoyed themselves and were so engaged with the music and the words".*

MMYP is funded through the Diocese and seeks to connect with young people through music – building their confidence, supporting their mental wellbeing and introducing them to church and faith. Andrew Gosden, project manager, said: *"The initiative was set up to encourage more young people to visit our church communities and to reach young Christians through music and choirs".*
Read the full story here.

The Elizabeth Pathway: A Local Route to Ordained Ministry

The Elizabeth Pathway is a nationally-accredited training route designed for those in whom the Church discerns a vocation to ordained ministry, particularly people who feel called to serve in the communities where they already live and work. Named after Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, the pathway provides a local and accessible route into ordained ministry for those typically aged 53–67.

Delivered in partnership with Ripon College Cuddesdon, this two-year programme combines theological study, spiritual formation and vocational discernment. The first year focuses on exploring and discerning a candidate's calling, supported by the Diocese's Vocations Team, and preparation for the Church of England's national discernment process. Candidates also take part in diocesan modules, the Fellowship of Vocations group, and residential weekends at Cuddesdon in Oxfordshire. Those recommended for training continue into a second year of formation, combining further residential weekends, diocesan teaching and regular formation evenings as they prepare for ordained ministry.

Five people have already trained through the Elizabeth Pathway, and we are delighted to

be part of this national pilot programme. It offers a unique opportunity for those who feel called to build up the Body of Christ and share their faith through ordained ministry in the places and communities they know best. If you would like to explore whether ordination might be for you, click here to find out more or email stuart.batten@cofesuffolk.org.



Case study: the Revd Sarah Smith: For the past 13 years, I worked in primary education and before that, my experiences included teaching English as a Foreign Language, volunteering as a tutor at HMP Highpoint, supporting people through government-funded employment programmes, and, perhaps most importantly, raising my two sons. For the past 30 years, I have lived in Suffolk and have been blessed to worship and serve within a faithful rural church community. The Elizabeth Pathway appealed to me because it offered a realistic and accessible route into ordained ministry as a mature candidate. The programme enabled me to offer myself for ministry as a self-supporting minister while remaining rooted in the community I already knew and loved. This local approach was particularly attractive because it is such a privilege to walk alongside my neighbours in faith. I was able to balance my existing commitments alongside the programme's training requirements. Equally important was the opportunity to remain within my home benefice.

I am now Curate in the Stour Valley Benefice, where my training will help me serve the people of Suffolk as I live and journey with them. Read the full story here.

TOGETHER we are listening

Join our last prayer event :

Tuesday 28 July 7.00pm – 9.00pm led by Archdeacon Sam | St Margaret's Church, Ipswich | no need to book!

Please download the resources available on our website **here**, where you will also find the surveys for Clergy, Clergy PTO/Lay Ministers and the PCC Survey for Churchwardens and Treasurers. There is also an easy to print POSTER with a QR code directly to the congregation/public survey.

Envoy Spaces, Suffolk: Living Life Abundantly

ENVOY SPACES Suffolk

Envoy Spaces Suffolk is a learning community that helps Christians grow in confidence, discovering authentic ways to live and share their Christian faith well in their everyday lives. As a learning community, we are focused on the question: how do we recognise what God is already doing in our lives and in the lives of those around us? We focus on personal discovery and exploration rather than techniques or scripts.

At the heart of Envoy Spaces is an accompaniment programme. Small groups meet online

with a trained host and journey together through podcasts, group reflection and practical encouragement. They reflect on their own faith journeys and explore living and sharing their faith in gentle, relational ways, shaped to naturally fit their everyday lives. Envoy Spaces is open to everyone. Whether you are new to faith, a long-standing church member, lay or ordained, Envoy Spaces offers a welcoming place to learn.

So far, 95 people have taken part in Suffolk Envoy. Many have discovered simple, enriching ways to share their faith in the everyday of their lives. Others have also found the confidence to begin local mission initiatives and form new worshipping communities. Some have explored new vocations including chaplaincy, pastoral care, Lay Pioneer and Lay Evangelist roles, as well as ordained ministry.

Alongside the accompaniment programme, Envoy Spaces also offers:

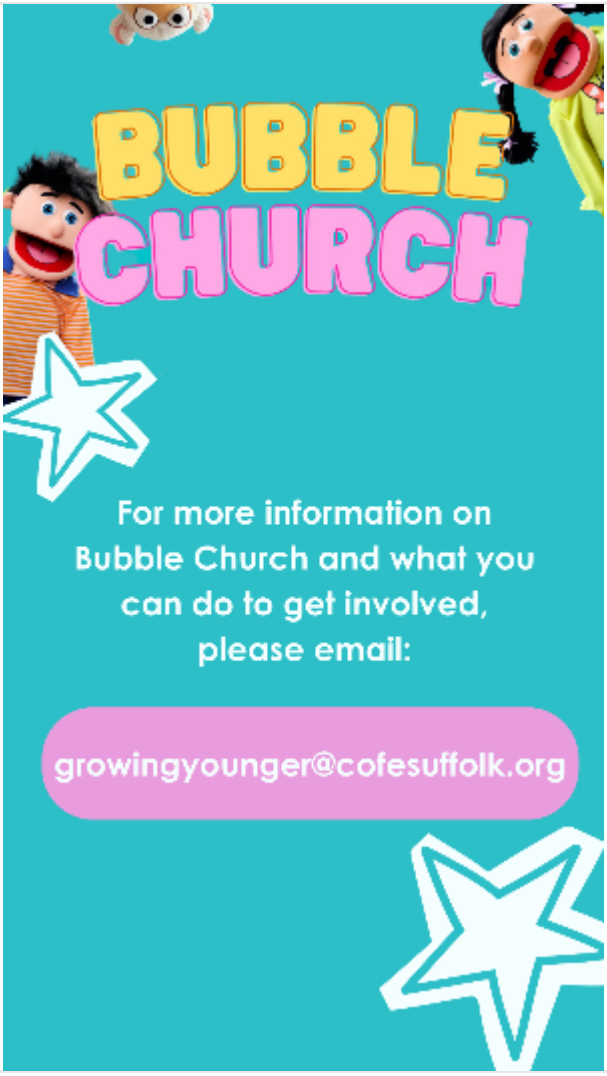
- How Beautiful – a half-day course to help participants recognise, reflect on and value their own faith journey.
- Envoy Tell! – an hour's introductory session to sharing our faith.

We are also currently developing:

- Envoy Grassroots – six sessions over two years, for teams to come together to explore pioneering opportunities in their contexts. There will be space for learning, reflection, planning and prayer to equip teams engaged in pioneering new contextual forms of being church.
- Envoy Days – opportunities to reconnect, share stories, encourage one another and celebrate what God is doing in and through our communities.

Envoy Spaces also equips and supports those already serving as Lay Pioneers and Lay Evangelists and offers guidance for anyone discerning a call to these or other formal ministries. Everyone involved will also become part of a wider online forum community, offering encouragement, friendship, networking, and ongoing support. For more information or to join an Envoy Spaces accompaniment group please email: envoyspaces@cofesuffolk.org

Growing Younger in our Diocese



Bubble Church Training is in full swing. Find out more about Bubble Church visit our website: **HERE**

Young Voices at General Synod: If you are aged between 18 - 25 years old, have you considered standing for General Synod?

The Church of England has backed plans from The National Society for Education to establish a group of up to 200 young adults (ages 18-25) from across all dioceses to contribute directly to Synod's discussions through surveys, reports and presentations. Up to five representatives from the group will attend each Synod session, ensuring that young adults' perspectives are heard in a structured and sustained way. The initiative also seeks to encourage more young adults to stand for election to Synod in the future. To find out more click the QR code or see our Synod notice at the end of this eNews.

Youthscape Essentials is all-round training for every youth leader

Take time to invest in yourself and your youth ministry. The course is free and includes an extensive training manual which will be given to you before the first session. In 2026 there were two streams available for Youthscape Essentials, online and in-person. In-person is now fully booked, but you can still join us online from 7.00pm – 9.00pm on

Wednesdays: 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. Please sign up here. *If these dates don't work for you, or if you would prefer face to face training, please email jamie.swinerd@cofesuffolk.org to register interest*

Deep Rooted 2026 | 14 August 2.00pm to 9.00pm | Red Lodge Sports Pavilion, IP28 8FQ

Calling all young people aged 11–17! Join Deep Rooted, a FREE youth event in Red Lodge packed with fun, friendship and faith. Our vision is to see young people rooted and established in their community, knowing they are loved by God and truly valued. Expect an exciting afternoon/evening featuring: live music, inflatables, graffiti wall, Nerf wars, burgers and much more!

Whether you can bring along members of your youth group, want to come with friends, or attend on your own, you're very welcome. This event is open to anyone across the Diocese who wants to engage, encourage, and bless young people. Come and be part of something special! Sign up here.

Diocesan and Mission & Ministry Events

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

A service at the start of Creationtide to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Eco Church | Saturday 5 September, 3.30pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

Join us for our service of celebration to mark the 10th anniversary of A Rocha's Eco Church Awards. Please register so we are aware of numbers, Please register here so we know you are coming to this free event!

PCC Workshop on Parish Giving Scheme: Monday 14 September, 11.00am



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 here: September

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A morning with Julia Mourant | Saturday 3 October, 10.00am to 1.30pm | Salvation Army Hall, Violet Hill Road, Stowmarket IP14 1NE
You are invited to attend a morning offered by Julia Mourant, author of 'The Spiritual Director: Practising the Charism of Presence and Attention', writer and Spiritual Director. She will explore the distinctive nature of spiritual direction as both vocation and spiritual gift, grounded in experiential formation, theological reflection, and the capacity for personal growth and transformation. The cost will be £10, payable in cash only on the door. Please register here.

Chaplaincy Gathering | Wednesday 7 October, 10.00am–3.00pm | St Felix of Dunwich Church, Rendlesham IP12 2GG
This special day brings together chaplains serving in a wide range of settings across Suffolk for encouragement, reflection and fellowship. Hosted by Archdeacon Rich, with contributions from Bishop Joanne and keynote speaker Dr Josh Hunt, Chaplain at Felixstowe School, the gathering will offer fresh insights, inspiration and opportunities to connect with fellow chaplains. Whether you serve in education, healthcare, the workplace, community settings, the emergency services or other sectors, this is a valuable opportunity to share experiences, deepen relationships and be renewed in your ministry. Lunch will be provided. Book here.

Christian Activism in Today's World – a study day for Lay and Ordained Ministers | Saturday 10 October, 9.30am Salvation Army Hall, Violet Hill Road, Stowmarket IP14 1NE

Supported by Mark Sheard (Diocesan World Mission Officer) and Richard Stainer (former Diocesan World Development Adviser) and joined by speakers from the CAP (Christians Against Poverty), Open Doors and the Mothers' Union (on Modern Slavery), this promises to be a rich day of exploration and reflection.

Further information and booking please click here.

PCC Workshop: Digital Giving (contactless and online, including QR codes) | Tuesday 13 October
Understand the need, options, availability, cost and impact of Digital Giving. Every parish should have some form of online giving available (includes 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. Book here.

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

Church Community Services and Events

Jigsaw Puzzle Festival *with beer!* | 31 July - 2 August | St Peter and St Paul's Church, Kedington CB9 7NN
Come along to a jigsaw puzzle festival, where alongside the puzzles there will be local real ales and ciders plus wine, soft drinks, teas and cakes.

Organ Recitals | St Mary's Church, Woodbridge
You are invited to a series of five recitals presenting music from across the centuries. Simon Kirk on 1 August, Ben Scott on 8 August, Mark Blatchly on 15 August, D'Arcy Trinkwon on 22 August and David Flodd 29 August. Each concert starts at 12 noon and refreshments are available.

Hitchin Concert Band on Tour | Friday 14 August, 7.30pm | St Peter's Church, Ipswich IP2 9TH
Join this programme of epic movies and TV music with showstoppers all suitable for the whole family. Conducted by Alison Eales with guest soloist Richard Ingham (saxophone). £8 adult / £4 per child, and family tickets (2 adults & 2 children) £20. Proceeds to the church. Book here.

From Hunter Gatherers to Henges; The Deep Time Sacred Gathering Place of Freston | Thursday 20 August, 7.00pm | Freston Village Hall IP9 1AF
Enjoy an illustrated talk by professor of Anthropology, Tristan Carter. Cheese and wine are provided, tickets cost £10 in advance or £15 on the door. In aid of St Peter's Tower Repair fund. Email Tessa Paul on tessa@hillsidefreston.com to book tickets.

Village Haymaking | Saturday 19 September, 10.00am | St Mary's, Stoke by Nayland CO6 4QU Churchyard
All welcome to a family friendly morning haymaking! The morning will also include a scavenger hunt and Colchester Morris Dancers. Light refreshments available.

Suffolk Harvest Festival | Sunday 4 October, 3.30pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral.
Bringing the community together for a county Harvest Festival to celebrate people and organisations across Suffolk who work the land and sea, and to give thanks to God for this year's harvest.

Christian Activism in Today's World – a Study Day for Lay and Ordained Ministers | Saturday 10 October, 10.00am to 3.00pm | Salvation Army Hall, Stowmarket.
A day exploring how we respond to the injustices of our world. Supported by Mark Sheard (Diocesan World Mission Officer) and the Revd Richard Stainer (former Diocesan World Development Adviser), joined by speakers from the charity sector. More information nearer the time.

Notices

Stand for Synod: General Synod is the national assembly of the Church of England—often described as the Church's Parliament. It plays a vital role in shaping the life, mission and future direction of the Church. It agrees new forms of worship, debates matters of national and international importance and approves the annual budget for the work of the Church at national level.

New clergy and lay members are being elected to General Synod this year – and you are invited to stand as a candidate. Almost anyone who attends church regularly is likely to be eligible to stand as a lay member. You don't need to be a member of a PCC, Deanery Synod or Diocesan Synod. Those elected will serve for five years.

If you think you could help shape the future of the Church please consider standing for General Synod - you can find all the information needed on our website here. This includes a handy timeline and the next key date is **14 August when nominations open.**

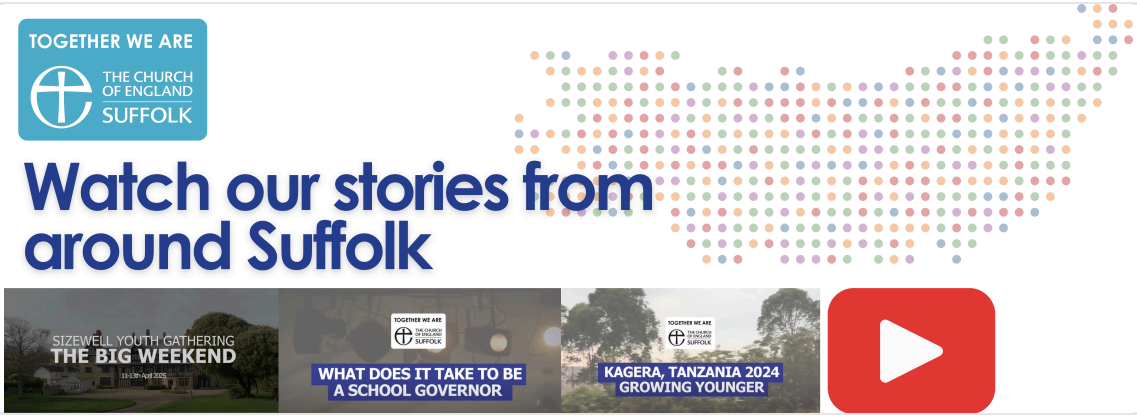
Extension to the deadline for the Return of Parish Finance: Thank you to all parishes who have already submitted their Return of Parish Finance. Completing your Return provides your benefice and our Diocese with valuable information and data. Please note that the National Church has extended the deadline for this return to **31 July 2026** to enable the collection of more data for its end of year report to dioceses. There will be no further extension. Please submit your Return via the Online Parish Returns System here. If you require login details or any other assistance regarding the online portal, please email statistics@cofesuffolk.org. Further information on the Return of Parish Finance and other returns is available on Insight here: Parish Returns resources - Insight CofE Suffolk.

Vacancies

Part-Time Parish Administrator (7.5 hours per week) | Christ Church Moreton Hall, Bury St Edmunds | Closing date: 24 July
Associate Vicar | St Augustine's Church, Ipswich | Closing date: 31 July
Chief Operating Officer | St Edmundsbury Cathedral | Closing date: 3 August
Children and Families Worker | Great Barton and Thurston | Closing date: 28 August
Rector | Sancroft Benefice | Closing date: 30 September
Team Vicar | Forest Heath Team Ministry
Senior Fundraiser | St Edmundsbury Cathedral
Associate Mission Priest / Lightwave Hub Leader | Bungay Benefice
Rector | North Bosmere Benefice
Kids Pastor | Full-time | River Church
Internship for 18-30s with theological training from St Mellitus College | River Church

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

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