Thursday 7 May 2026

eNews

Our regular round up of news and forthcoming events

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SUFFOLK



Bishop Joanne writes...

Sometimes, we need to listen to our wake-up calls. I don't mean the kind of wake-up call that we arrange in a hotel when we have a flight to catch and don't want to miss it. I mean the kind of call that upends us where we are going wrong, brings clarity and discernment about what needs to change, and fires us up with new vision and new heart.

In the Old Testament book of Samuel, the young boy Samuel gets a wake-up call as he sleeps in the temple of the Lord. He was living in a time when leaders and people had stopped expecting God to be at work in their lives. There was poor leadership, abuse of power, and the elites who were in charge were not easily held to account. There was a struggle to determine the kind of society that people wanted to live in.

Samuel was an outsider. He didn't belong in the political or religious elite. But as he lay in the darkness of the temple trying to drift off to sleep, God spoke to Samuel. God called him to listen and to serve.

Samuel's experience reminds us that there are times across the globe, in any country, and indeed in any church, when those in power behave badly, and when the poor, the vulnerable, and the outsiders are forgotten. In those times, God's call may come, directly and repeatedly, to those who are willing to awaken, arise, and respond – even when the call feels uncertain and unfamiliar. Read the full letter here.

New Diocesan Director of Education

We are delighted to announce that Drew Quayle, currently Senior Lecturer and Course Leader at Anglia Ruskin University in Chelmsford has been appointed as the new Diocesan Director of Education. Drew was previously Headteacher at Bures CEVCP School in Suffolk from 2013-2017 and was a member of the Diocesan Board of Education from 2014 until 2022. Drew is currently completing a PhD in Education.

The diocese serves 87 Church of England schools throughout Suffolk. The current Director, Jane Sheat, is retiring this summer. Read more here.



St Mary's Church, Haverhill explores the universe!



Haverhill celebrated its second Science Festival at the end of April, with a range of activities aimed at increasing engagement with STEM subjects amongst young people, and raising the profile of business and innovation in industry in the town. The Festival was organised by the ONE Haverhill Partnership, a local strategic network which includes representation from Churches Together, and delivered by the Town Council.

St Mary's Church was excited to be part of the programme, with a large inflatable planetarium set up in the nave, where visitors were given a guided tour through the solar system and beyond. Children and adults of all ages were shown images of the night sky projected in 3D around them, and could explore the surface of distant planets in detail. The Revd Max Drinkwater, said, "*This was a fantastic opportunity to join in with a local festival and to help people to make connections between the wonder of the universe and worship of the God who created it".* Prayer stations were available reflecting on the recent Artemis II mission to the far side of the moon, and the opportunities which that gives to think about both human ingenuity and the gifts of God's creation. One activity asked people to make a 'constellation of thankfulness' by writing or drawing on a star something for which they wanted to thank God, while another saw people use the Fibonacci sequence to create artistic pictures such as the 'big fish' which might have swallowed Jonah.

Find out more here.

Grants of £57,500 Awarded to Suffolk Churches



Thirteen Suffolk churches facing huge bills for repairs and conservation have heard that they have been awarded grants towards their costs from Suffolk Historic Churches Trust. The total sum awarded at the April Grants Meeting was £57,500 divided among nine churches in West Suffolk, and four in East Suffolk.

The successful parish churches are in Bardwell, Blyford, Brockley, Bungay, Copdock, Creeting St Mary, Framsden, Hepworth, Lackford, Norton, Woolpit, Worlington and Worlingworth.

The various work that will be undertaken in the churches include repairs to floors, towers, roofs, ceilings, walls, windows, gutters and improved heating. At Holy Trinity in Bungay the work will enable more community activities to be held there, and at St Mary's,

Worlingworth, the grant will go towards a condition report prior to work on their nationally significant font cover.

Read the full story 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.

Interested in Running Bubble Church? | Teams



Bubble Church is a Sunday church service especially for babies, toddlers, and young families. It's a puppet-packed, Jesus-centred, coffee-and-food-fuelled, 30 minute kids and families adventure. Come along to an initial Teams session to get an overview to see whether this suits your church.
11.00am on Monday 11 May | Book here
7.00pm on Thursday 21 May | Book here

PCC Workshops



Why should your Parish join the 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 May | 12 June

PCC Buildings Workshop 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.

Digital Giving (contactless and online, including QR codes): Understand the need, options, availability, cost and impact of Digital Giving. 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. Book 13 May, 12.00pm | 3 October, 12.00pm

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THE BIG THANK YOU - Lightwave Community AGM and celebration 2026 | Wednesday 13 May, 6.30pm to 9.00pm | Red House Farm, Earl Stonham IP14 5EG
A fantastic opportunity to hear about what has been happening in and through the

Lightwave Community in the last year, to praise God and to show our gratitude to all who have been part of making it happen, especially our trustees. The meeting will also include the essential business of the Annual General Meeting for the Lightwave Community. For more information please email Kirk Matthews.

Safeguarding Training
There are various in-person safeguarding courses taking place over the next few weeks. 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.

Basic Awareness Training:
Bury St Edmunds, Thursday 14 May, book here.
Ipswich, Tuesday 15 September, book here.
Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse Training:
Huntingfield, Wednesday 24 June, book here.
A future course in 2026 will be held in Ipswich.
Foundation Training:
Bury St Edmunds, Tuesday 30 June, book here.
Ipswich, Tuesday 29 September, book here.
Leadership Training:
Earl Stonham, June and July (ten courses available), book here.

Additional dates for in-person and online Leadership 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.

Reader's 160th Anniversary Celebration Service | Sunday 17 May, at 3.30pm, St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 1LS
It was on Ascension Day, 5 May 1866, at a Convocation at Canterbury, that the Office of Readers was revived within the Church of England. In this 160th anniversary year it is an opportunity to reflect on and give thanks for the ministry that Readers exercise in parishes across this diocese and the Anglican Church. All are welcome to mark this celebratory occasion in the Cathedral, on the Sunday after Ascension Day, where Bishop Joanne will lead and preach at this service of Choral Evensong.

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 any clergy members considering retirement in the next 5 years, stipendiary or SSM, to reflect on transitioning from ministry to 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

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.

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

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.

LoveRural Conference | 19–20 October | Yarnfield Park, Yarnfield Lane, Stone, Staffordshire ST15 0NL

Early bird bookings are open, offering a discounted rate of **£190** until end June 2026. Special offer at £130 for young adults too. Spaces are limited, so we encourage you to secure your place soon and take advantage of these reduced rates. Click here for information.

St Edmundsbury Cathedral Pilgrimages
Saturday 9 May | Rogationtide Walk 'Beating the Bounds' of Exning & Newmarket Parishes.
Saturday 16 May | Little Gidding Annual Pilgrimage from Leighton Bromswold to Little Gidding in Huntingdonshire
For more information on all pilgrimages and registration please contact Cathedral Chaplain, Revd Canon Mark Haworth markhaworth@stedscathedral.org.

Recital | Saturday 9 May, 7.30pm | Holy Trinity Church, Bungay
Join a world-renowned classical pianist, American-Ukrainian Roman Rudnytsky, for a recital, one of seven in his UK tour. The recital will feature work by Rossini, Mozart, Ravel and Greig, with two items Rudnytsky has transcribed himself for solo piano – Mozart's Concerto in A for piano and orchestra, and Beethoven's Fantasia for piano, orchestra and chorus, op. 80 (the Choral Fantasy). Tickets are £10, email Terry Reeve or call on 07873 419535. Tickets will also be available on the door.

'**Drawn to Imperfection' |** St Andrew's Church, Ipswich IP5 1DH
Come along to an exhibition of 21 portraits of biblical characters by renowned artist Dave Nevarad. Exhibition opens with a cheese and wine evening on Wednesday 13 May from 7.30pm and then open daily 10.00am to 4.00pm until 20 May. For more information please click here.

A History of Israel and the Jews | Friday 15 May, 7.00pm or Saturday 16 May, 10.00am | The Place by the Water, Shottisham IP12 3HG
Come and explore 3500 years of history through the Bible and associated archaeology, the land of Israel and the history of the Jewish people. Refreshments will be served 15 minutes before each session, and there will be an opportunity for discussion throughout the event. Please note that the content for each session is the same. To book please email theplacebythewater@gmail.com.

Mildenhall Deanery Quiet Day | Tuesday 19 May, 10.00am-3.00pm, St Martin's Church, Exning CB8 7HG
Old Testament Prophecy in Bible, art and music with the Revd Dr Naomi Wormell, lecturer in Old Testament at Westcott House, Cambridge, and Rector of The Cheveley Group, Diocese of Ely.
All are most welcome – please bring a packed lunch. Enquiries to the Revd Canon Chris Childs, Rural Dean of Mildenhall on 01638 429212 or revcchilds@aol.com.

Great Blakenham Events | Great Blakenham Parish Room IP6 0LN
Bereavement Café | Saturday 23 May, 2.00pm - 4.00pm: A safe place to talk about your grief, whether recent, a long time ago, or anticipated.
Doggy Day | Saturday 18 July, 11.00am - 2.00pm: Celebrate the four legged friends in your life. Doggy tombola, dog competitions and more
Pet Celebration Service | Sunday 19 July, 11.00am: Celebrate how pets enrich our lives. For pets of all types, large and small.
Refreshments provided for all.

The Conference of Birds | Saturday 30 May, 3.00pm | St. Peter's Church, Great Livermere IP31 1JR
Come along and witness the performing ensemble of Planet Birdsong, a global citizen science initiative that connects people with birdsong. Tickets cost £15 for adults, children under 16 half price. Refreshments available, tickets can be purchased on the door. All profits to go to the church toilet fund.

Big Knicker Night to raise awareness of domestic abuse | Tuesday 23 June Salvation Army centre 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.

British Sign Language Workshop | Saturday 20 June, 10.00am - 4.00pm | Thomas Clarkson Centre IP33 3JT
St Mary's Church, Bury St Edmunds, are hosting a British Sign Language in worship training workshop to help increase inclusiveness within church settings using BSL. Lunch provided, costs £25. Book here.

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 Service | St James Church, Dunwich, Sunday 21 June, 6.00pm.
Dunwich Parish Church is delighted to be hosting the Jubilate Choir to lead a traditional service of Evensong. Do join this very special occasion, enjoy the beautiful music and stay for refreshment and fellowship after.

Come and See Weekend - Community of St Mary the Virgin | Saturday 11 July - Sunday 12 July | St Mary the Virgin, Wantage OX12 9AU
The Sisters of the Community of St Mary the Virgin are offering those wondering about a possible vocation to the Religious Life a chance to spend a weekend with them in their Convent joining them in chapel, eating with them, and more. There will also be opportunity to chat with the Sisters and ask questions. For more information please click 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.

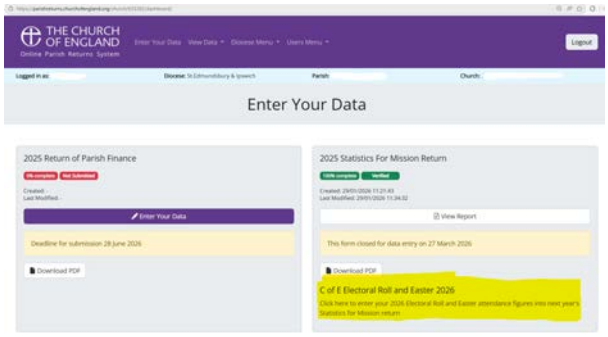
Cathedral Pilgrimage to Iona | 25 September to 3 October
A vacant twin room in Bishops House has just become available; if you would like to explore the idea of coming, do please email straight away the Cathedral Chaplain, Canon Mark Haworth or tel. 01284 748720 / 07932 160009.

Notices

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, 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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ACAT (Association of Church Accountants & Treasurers) – Members and Courses: Treasurers in our diocese are offered free ACAT membership which gives them unlimited access to the ACAT helpline, monthly newsletters, and the extensive handbook on their website. ACAT also offers expert training in many aspects of the church treasurer and trustee role. Please email emma.denton@cofesuffolk.org to ask for joining details. Training dates:

- The Church Treasurer: Insights into the Role and Responsibilities (27 May, 7.00pm, Zoom),
- Introduction to Being a Church Trustee (2 June, 7.00pm, Zoom)
- Generating Income and Grant Applications (6 June, 10.00, Cambridge)
- Being a Treasurer: The Basics – Session 1: Charity Law, Finance Processes and Bookkeeping (11 June, 7.00pm, Zoom)
- Charities SORP 2026: An Introduction (15 June, 7.00pm, Zoom),
- Being a Treasurer: The Basics – Session 2: Budgeting, Risk and Gift Aid (18 June, 7.00pm, Zoom)
- Being a Treasurer: The Basics – Session 3: Year-End Reporting (25 June, 7.00pm, Zoom)
- Gift Aid: Maximising the Benefits and Reducing the Pitfalls (6 July, 7.00pm, Zoom)
- Introduction to Computer Security for Churches (14 July, 7.30pm, Zoom)

Book here (ACAT make a small charge for training).

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.

Book of Common Prayer: St Mary's Church in Bury St Edmunds, has been blessed to have increasing numbers of confirmation candidates. They use and give candidates a copy of the Book of Common Prayer, often using surplus or redundant editions. If your church has spare copies (the wrong monarch being prayed for, no longer in use and of no historical significance), and you have the appropriate permission to pass them on, please email the Revd Canon Christopher (Tiffer) Robinson.

Vacancies

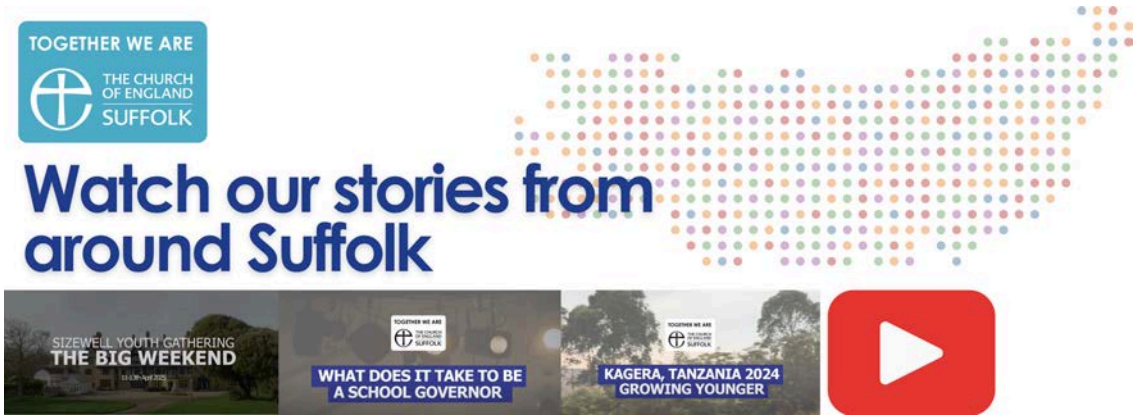
Operations Manager | St Augustine's, Ipswich | Closing date: 15 May
Kid's and Families Pastor | St Augustine's, Ipswich | Closing date: 15 May
Archdeaconry Mission Enabler | Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich | Closing date: 20 May
Vicar | Kesgrave with Little Bealings & Playford | Closing date: 20 May
Rector | North Bosmere Benefice
Team Vicar | Forest Heath Team Ministry
Rector | Box River Benefice
Team Vicar & Associate Priest | Blyth Valley Team Ministry F/T Stipendiary Post

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

Could you volunteer at St Edmundsbury Cathedral as a Day Chaplain?
St Edmundsbury Cathedral has a team of volunteer Day Chaplains, drawn from our own clergy and other denominations, licensed lay ministers, and suitably-qualified other lay people. They are seeking new team members to staff every weekday half-day, and would be very pleased to hear from people who sense this as an extra call on their ministry, and perhaps as part of their formation. A copy of the new Day Chaplain's Handbook is available from the Cathedral Chaplain, Canon Mark Haworth or tel. 01284 748720 /07932 160 009 who would be glad to discuss this with you.

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

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