Thursday 10 September 2026

eNews

Our regular round up of news and forthcoming events

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SUFFOLK

£500k Suffolk Heritage Project Launches at St Peter's Church, Copdock



St Peter's Church in Copdock lowered six bells yesterday, for restoration to launch a major project reconnecting the community with local history, nature, and inclusive spaces.

But the bells are just the beginning - this is the start of a £500,000 project supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund to restore the 15th-century tower and transform the church into an accessible community hub.

The Grade II* listed tower - suffering from roof timber rot and severe Deathwatch beetle damage - will undergo structural stabilisation. The deteriorating 19th-century timber bell frame, which currently causes dangerous movement when the bells are rung, will also be replaced to safeguard the ancient building fabric. To make the building more accessible, a new level York stone pathway will replace the uneven churchyard terrain. For visitors unable to climb the narrow tower stairs, a permanent camera will stream live footage of the ringing bells directly to a ground-floor.

The project will also work with a whole host of local wellbeing practitioners to offer activities aimed particularly at addressing rural isolation.

The Revd Natalie West, said: *"We are absolutely thrilled to begin this transformative journey at St Peter's. Lowering our historic bells is a momentous, highly visual first step in restoring our 1478 tower and safeguarding our rare 1614 Miles Graye bells for future generations. However, this project is about far more than bricks and metal - it is about restoring the heartbeat of Copdock. Thanks to National Lottery players and our incredible local supporters, we are creating a welcoming, fully accessible community space where heritage, nature, and wellbeing meet."*

The project represents a total investment of just under £500,000, including the £250,000 National Lottery Heritage Fund grant, £147,000 in match funding and substantial volunteer support. Read the full story here where you can also find an outline of events planned at the church.

Eleven Recommended for Ordination Training
We are delighted to share that 11 people from across our diocese have been recommended for ordination training, marking an important milestone in their vocational journeys.

Gina Robertson (Lark Valley and North Bury benefice), Ruth Bull (Constable Country benefice), James Kelland and Christina Volkmann (Capel with Little Wenham and Great Wenham benefice), and Ros Macallister (Alde Sandlings benefice) will all continue onto Year 2 of the Elizabeth Pathway. As they progress into the second year, they will undertake further residential weekends, attend fortnightly formation evenings in Ipswich, and complete additional diocesan modules before being ordained in 2027.

Ryan Davey (Haverhill and Withersfield benefice) will begin a three-year full-time residential training programme at Westcott House, Cambridge. And Josh Pile, will embark on a three-year full-time non-residential pathway, combining practical ministry experience through a placement at St Augustine's, Ipswich, with theological study at St Mellitus College, London.

Both Kate Cracknell (Beccles with Worlingham, North Cove and Barnby) and Charlotte Gooch (Wilford Peninsula benefice) are beginning a two-year full-time non-residential pathway at ERMC (the Eastern Region Ministerial Course. While Joel Harland (Leiston benefice) will begin a three-year part-time pathway with ERMC, balancing ministerial formation alongside a full-time role at Sizewell C.

Andy Beard (Mission Ipswich East) has chosen to defer entry into training until September 2027.
As they take the next step in responding to God's call to ordained ministry, please keep those recommended for training in your prayers. You are also warmly invited to join the service celebrating these ordinands and three Readers also starting their training at St Edmundsbury Cathedral this Sunday at 3.30pm.

Review of Lay Ministries
Over the summer, Archdeacon Samantha led a review of Lay Ministry across the Diocese. The review affirmed the vital contribution of lay people in the Church's worship, mission and ministry, while also highlighted the need for greater clarity around terminology, licensing, authorisation, training and support. Bishop Joanne said *" The review has confirmed what we already know and deeply value: lay ministry is essential to the life, worship and mission of the Church. Across our Diocese, lay people serve in many different ways — preaching, teaching, pastoring, pioneering, evangelising, supporting children and young people, serving communities, leading worship and helping others grow in faith. I am deeply grateful for all that you give".*

Following the consultation and review a clearer framework for recognised lay ministry is proposed and in broad terms, the future framework will distinguish between **Licensed Lay Ministers** (LLMs) and **Authorised Lay Ministers** (ALMs). There is no change to the status of lay elders and they will continue to be recognised within their own distinct category as **Commissioned Lay Elders**. Those in lay ministries will have received an email outlining the changes and a copy of the letter can be read here.

Further work on implementation, formation and support will take place over the coming months, with the aim of strengthening lay ministry and nurturing vocations across the Diocese. Bishop Joanne expressed her deep gratitude for the faithful service of lay ministers and asked for prayers for the next stage of this work.

Commemoration and Thanksgiving for the Life and Gallantry of Sgt Alfred Ablett VC DCM



A Service of Commemoration and Thanksgiving, honouring the life and gallantry of Sergeant Alfred Ablett VC DCM was held at St Andrew's Church in Weybread on Saturday 5 September 2026.

He was the first man in Suffolk to be awarded a Victoria Cross in 1855 at the siege of Sebastopol during the Crimean War. This service was organised by the Weybread PCC in conjunction with the Grenadier Guards Association, Suffolk branch and the Royal British Legion.

Sing a Suffolk Christmas - Can you help?



Sing a Suffolk Christmas is a county-wide music and singing project and they are looking to bring musicians and singers from across the county together for some seasonal fun!

The aim is to record as many people across our the county singing two brand new Christmas songs for release on all streaming platforms. The two new songs are called 'Sing a Suffolk Christmas' and 'On this Christmas day'. Any money raised will go to the charity Tearfund.

We are looking for as many choirs as possible from across Suffolk to learn and record the songs. All the details you need are on their website here or email: suffolkchristmas@wendyhousemusic.co.uk.

Growing Younger in our Diocese

Setting up a Youth Club

Want to set up a youth club? 'Youth Club in a Box' is for you! It contains example forms, guidance on policies, and recommended discipleship and game resources. Enough people mentioned on our travels around the diocese that this kind of resource would be helpful, so we have created it. Find our Padlet with everything you need here. If you feel we have forgotten something, or have any questions please get in contact with jamie.swinerd@cofesuffolk.org"



Free Youth 'Confirmation' Course | Introductory Webinars | Tuesday 15 September and Wednesday 7 October both at 1.30pm.

'Confirmation' is a brand-new course offered by Youthscape which supports and prepares young people journeying towards confirmation. 'Confirmation' provides leaders with a well-rounded suite of flexible resources so that leaders can build a bespoke course that's right for their group and setting. Funded by the Archbishops Council's Partnership funding, 'Confirmation' is now available for free to all clergy and laity in the Church of England. Download for free and find out more here: www.confirmationcourse.co.uk or attend either of these webinars to register, please email jemimah.allen@youthscape.co.uk

Diocesan and Mission & Ministry Events

Season of Creation webinar series | Tuesday evenings, 5.30pm-6.30pm on 15 and 22 September
You are welcome to join these sessions exploring the themes of Hope for Creation. Please sign up here: Hope for All Creation. To support this Church House Publishing has just released a new edition of *A Time for Creation*. It now includes the newly approved liturgy for the brand new Festival of Creation in Christ, which falls on the first Sunday in September, 6 September this year. It also features prayers in times of extreme weather. You can purchase the book here. Creation in Christ liturgy has also been added to the lectionary and all the related digital apps and platforms. So it should automatically pop up now when you search for readings and prayers for that day.

Garden Party for Kagera | Saturday 12 September, 2.00pm - 4.30pm | 32 Church Lane, Henley, IP6 0RQ.

Want to find out more about Kagera? Come along to our Garden Party for refreshments, cakes, plants, raffle, Tanzanian crafts, children's activities and more. Learning how you can support our link dioceses in Tanzania. There'll be lots to do and lots to look at! Everyone welcome.

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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Wellbeing Steering Group: Are you passionate about supporting wellbeing across our diocese? We are gathering a Wellbeing Steering Group to help shape and encourage this important area of work.

An initial meeting will take place on **Thursday 17 September 3.00pm** at the Diocesan

Office. If you would be interested in being part of the conversation and exploring how we can promote wellbeing among clergy and lay leaders, please email Archdeacon Sam for further details and to register your interest. We would love to hear from anyone with an interest in wellbeing, pastoral support, or helping others flourish in ministry.

PCC Online Workshop – Linking our faith to living a generous life | Thursday 24 September, 1.00pm
Join us for an online session where we will explore how our faith links to living a generous life, a subject that lies at the heart of our relationship with God and with one another. We will give you an insight into how you might approach the topic of giving and generosity with your congregation, fellow church members, and those in the wider community. This webinar is suitable for clergy and PCC volunteers, and we will share examples, ideas and preaching resources, together with plenty of time for discussion. Book here.

Church in Action Roadshow | 29 September 2027, London, 1 October 2027, Derby
The Cinnamon Network seeks to equip UK churches for social action in their communities, by developing Christian social action projects and supporting church leaders and volunteers. They've got two roadshows coming up, giving a chance to hear from people taking forward projects in different contexts, and find out more about the support offered by the Network. Click here for more details.

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:

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.

Enhancing Worship (2026) | Wednesdays Starting 30 September | Earl Stonham Village Hall, Forward Green, Earl Stonham IP14 5HJ
This six-week module provides an opportunity to explore the nature of worship, varieties of worship in the Church of England, and the practical skills needed to both design and lead acts of worship. This module is open to all, it is also a requirement for Elders who lead worship and those on the Elizabeth Pathway. For information and to book please click here.

Find out more - 'How Beautiful' Reflective Morning | 9.30am - 12.30 Saturday 3 October | Christ Church Moreton Hall, Bury Saint Edmunds IP32 7EW
Join us for a reflective half day, focused on mapping and giving thanks for our own walk with God. We celebrate those who introduced us to Jesus and those with whom we share our faith and continue to journey alongside. We notice the patterns and rhythms of our everyday faithful walk with God alongside, naming key moments and encounters. A short time of centring worship is followed by times of input and opportunities to reflect on and map our own journey of faith. Sign up here.

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 on by card on the door. Please register here.

Chaplaincy Gathering | Wednesday 7 October, 10.00am | St Felix of Dunwich Church, Rendlesham IP12 2GG
A day of encouragement, inspiration and connection to equip and strengthen chaplaincy across Suffolk. This special day brings together chaplains serving in a wide range of settings 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. Lunch provided. **Please note - bookings close on Friday 2nd October 2026.** To register, please click here.

Leading your Church into Growth (LyCiG) – Follow-On Day | Saturday 10 October, 9.30am-1.00pm, The Coddenham Centre, Mary Day Close, Coddenham IP6 9SR
This follow-on day is particularly intended for those who came to the 2026 LyCiG conference, to help you continue on your journey of mission and growth, with further exploration of LyCiG's teaching and the chance to reflect and plan together as benefice teams. However, it is also open to teams who came in previous years as a refresher. We will be joined by one of our LyCiG speakers and members of the diocesan Mission and Ministry team. Booking 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. For further information and booking please click here.

Prisons week | 11 - 17 October
Prisons Week aims to encourage prayer and awareness of the needs of prisoners and their families, victims of offenders, prisons staff and all those who care. Download this information leaflet 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.

PCC Workshop: Cornerstone | Wednesday 4 November at 1.00pm - Teams
Join Emma Denton, Giving Advisor 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.

Meet the Parish Resources team | Tuesday 3 November various times pm only | St Nicholas Centre, Ipswich IP1 1UQ
Get help with purchasing or borrowing a device, how to have an effective online presence, setting up online giving with a QR code. Book here.

Safeguarding Sunday



Safeguarding Sunday is an annual awareness campaign led by Thirtyone:eight, held on 15 November (or when you are able). This year's theme is *Love Protects*, helping churches explore safeguarding as an expression of care, protection and love. Registration is now open for free resources including service-planning materials, and ready-to-use content. Many of our churches hold a Safeguarding Sunday during the year and find it a really positive experience. If you would like some assistance or would like to know more, email safeguarding@cofesuffolk.org

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Safeguarding Training: Do you like helping others? Have you got access to a computer and a willingness to share your skills? Are you the right person to become a local Safeguarding Trainer? If you would like to know more about becoming a Level One Safeguarding Trainer, please click here to view a role description and enrol on one of the short, online training courses taking place in September.

Safeguarding training courses available for you to access at any time via the National Training Portal include Basic Awareness, Foundation, Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse and Safer Recruitment & People Management: please click here to access the Portal. To book all in-person and diocesan led safeguarding courses, visit Insight. Here you, or your local safeguarding officer, can book you a place to attend. Courses bookable via Insight include Leadership; In-Person and Online via MS Teams, plus In-Person versions of Basic Awareness, Foundation, Leadership PTO and Raising Awareness of Domestic Abuse. We look forward to seeing you at a training event soon. Any questions, please contact us at safeguarding.training@cofesuffolk.org.

Introduction to Preaching Course | Saturdays 21 November 2026, 23 January 2027, 27 February, 1 May and 10 July.
Preaching is just one way by which we can grow in depth as disciples of Jesus Christ. If you feel called to preach then we want to encourage this gifting by offering an accessible means to enter this ministry. This five-session course is a mix of face-to-face teaching and practice in your context and you will be supported by your Incumbent and ministry team. This learning module is offered to everyone and is a requirement for Readers-in-training and those on the Elizabeth Pathway. For further information please visit here. Please email the Revd Lauren Moore if you have any questions.

Church Community Services and Events

Suffolk Churches Ride and Stride/Pedal and Drive | Saturday 12 September

Cyclists, walkers, vintage/classic car owners and even horse-riders, can start to plan their route for Suffolk Churches Ride and Stride and Pedal and Drive day. Organised by Suffolk Historic Churches Trust, this fund-raising idea started in Suffolk in 1982 and is now held across most counties in England. Half the money raised goes to the church, chapel or meeting house of your choice, and the remainder is given in grants by Suffolk Historic Churches Trust for urgent repairs or improvements to church buildings. Details of how to get involved are now in churches and on the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust website here.

Bereavement Café | Saturday 22 August, 2.00pm | Great Blakenham Parish Room IP6 0LN

A safe space to come and talk about your loss, no matter how recent. You can also just sit and be with others if you prefer. Tea, coffee and biscuits provided. For more info please email wendyatstmaryschurch@gmail.com.

2026 Annual Pilgrimage walk in Ipswich (Wolsey's route) | Sunday 6 September

Do join us for this popular event. Begins at St Peter's by the Waterfront (IP4 1BF) at 3.00pm and ends around 4.15pm at St Mary Elms (IP1 1EY) with refreshments. An ecumenical event; all welcome. Any queries to: nicholasjardine40@gmail.com).

The Pilgrimage Way between St Mary Elms, Ipswich, and St Edmundsbury Cathedral | Monday 14 September, from 7.00pm | Museum Street Methodist Church, Black Horse Lane IP1 2EF | Parking in Wolsey opposite.

Join this illustrated talk by Dr Mike Walker and hear about the exciting revival of this medieval pilgrimage route. Admission free. Refreshments available. For people of all faiths and none, encouraging "a transformational personal journey as well as a celebration of Suffolk." For more information please email: nicholasjardine40@gmail.com

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Classical Keyboard Spectacular | St Peter & Paul Church, Eye, IP23 7BD | Saturday 26 September, 7.30pm

Join this fundraiser for the repair to stained glass windows and enjoy the internationally acclaimed Jonathan and Tom Scott showcasing a programme of organ and piano duos plus animation on Tickets £25 (adult) £15 (under 18). For further details visit www.eyeparishchurch.org or for tickets click: here.

Flute recital | Holy Trinity Church, Long Melford, CO10 9DL | Saturday 26 September, 6.00pm

Featuring the music of Schubert, Poulenc & Ferroud. Tickets £10 please email Elizabeth Rossi (ejcobb@talktalk.net or call 07932 233431) or available on the door.

The African Choir of Norfolk | St Michael's Church, Beccles | Saturday 3 October, 7.00pm

Come along to see this choir which performed at the inauguration of Archbishop Sarah Mullally. Tickets cost £15 per person and can be bought on the door or reserved beforehand. For further details, please email: faith@darch.plus.com.

Suffolk Harvest Festival | Sunday 4 October | 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. Activities between 10.00am - 3.00pm include: Suffolk Trinity animals, machinery, stalls, family activities, food and drink. Followed by the 3.30pm Harvest Service giving thanks for Suffolk's Harvest. Download this flyer to promote locally.

Faith Community Drop in Session | Thursday 8 October, 2.00pm | St Nicholas Hospice Care, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2QY
Come along to a welcoming drop in session for members of different faith communities - find out more about how the hospice serves their community. Refreshments provided. To book your place, email education@stnh.org.uk.

Ronald Blythe Lecture | Friday 9 October, 7.30pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS
Sir James MacMillan, classical composer and conductor, will deliver this year's Ronald Blythe Lecture here at the Cathedral. During the lecture, he will explore the intersection of the arts and faith, with time following for a Q&A. Tickets are just £5 and are now on sale here.

Notices

General Synod Elections
The General Synod serves as the national parliament of the Church of England. Elected members serve a five-year term and actively shape the Church's future by approving new forms of worship, debating major national and global issues and voting on the national church budget. The important next steps:

- **7 September:** Nominations officially close.
- **The Portal:** The elections are managed online via Civica Election Services, with paper alternatives available for those without email.
- **Get Involved:** Find more details and download laity nomination forms on the diocesan website here.

For queries or help with the process, contact the election team directly at elections@cofesuffolk.org.

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. We really appreciate your time completing the form as your answers help us understand where parishes are thriving and where support may be helpful. **Please complete the form by 30 September** to help us produce a summary of trends across our diocese. If you require login details, are unable to submit the information online, or you need any other assistance regarding the online portal, please contact statistics@cofesuffolk.org We really appreciate your time completing the form.

New Building Management Portal to replace Online Faculty System: The Church of England is introducing the Building Management Portal, which will replace the Online Faculty System for applications relating to works on churches, their contents, and churchyards, with a planned release date in early October 2026. The existing faculty, List A, and List B processes are not changing, but the new portal will provide a clearer digital route for preparing, submitting, reviewing, and managing applications. Further detailed information will be provided in eNews in the coming weeks.

Vacancies

Associate Vicar for Mission | St Augustine's Church | Closing date: 25 September
Children & Families Worker | The Benefice of Holy Innocents, Great Barton and St Peter's | Closing date: 25 September
Rector | Sancroft Benefice | Closing date: 30 September
Archdeaconry Mission Enabler | Closing date: 30 September
Vicar of Ipswich Minster | Closing date: 10 October
Team Vicar | Forest Heath Team Ministry
Associate Mission Priest / Lightwave Hub Leader | Bungay 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 | Senior Non-Executive Chapter Member | St Edmundsbury Cathedral

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