Our regular round up of news and forthcoming events from our diocese [View this email in your browser]

Thursday 24 September 2026

eNews

Our regular round up of news and forthcoming events

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SUFFOLK

Historic bell set to ring again at Gipping Chapel



After almost 70 years of silence, the bell at Gipping Chapel is ready to ring once more, thanks to the dedication, generosity and hard work of local supporters.

Also known as the Chapel of St Nicholas, Gipping Chapel is a Grade I listed building near Stowmarket. Built between 1474 and 1480 for the Tyrell family of Gipping Hall, the late medieval chapel is renowned for its exceptional flint flushwork and surviving fragments of medieval stained glass. It is also linked to one of England's most enduring historical mysteries through Sir James Tyrell, who has long been associated with the story of the Princes in the Tower.

The chapel's history has recently been brought together with a major conservation project to restore its historic bell. The single bell, recast in 1812, had become unsafe to ring due to the deteriorating condition of the frame, fittings and tower structure. Read the full story on our website here.

New Building Management Portal: The Church of England is introducing a new 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 of 6 October 2026. The new portal has been designed to make the application process easier to follow and to improve consistency in the way casework is managed. It will give users clearer information about application stages, supporting documents and the actions needed as an application progresses. The existing faculty, List A, and List B processes are not changing. The new portal provides a different digital route for preparing, submitting, reviewing, and managing applications. Existing and historic Online Faculty System cases will be migrated into the new portal. If you have a current application, please be aware that on Tuesday 29 September at 5.00pm the Online Faculty System will move to read-only access. More information is available on Insight here. If you have an urgent query not answered by the information provided, you can email us on dac@cofesuffolk.org

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Places of Worship Renewal Fund (PWRF) Round 2 Expressions of Interest Open: offering a £92 million programme supporting the repair of listed places of worship across England and targeted at areas in most need. Delivered by Historic England and funded by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, the fund will run over four years to March 2030. The Places of Worship Renewal Fund is open to all faiths and denominations, and places of worship do not need to be on the Heritage at Risk Register to apply. Applicants and projects must meet the fund specific requirements listed on the Places of Worship Renewal Fund Webpage. The deadline for submitting Expressions of Interest for the Round 2 of grants is midnight, Friday 2 October, 2026. Further rounds of grants are expected to open in the future. Details of future funding rounds, including timing, will be announced in due course, via their website.

Grants of £20,000 to £50,000 available for churches strengthening community connections: Parish churches in England may be eligible for grants of £20,000 to £50,000 through the Government's Common Ground Award 2026–27. The funding supports capital improvements and equipment that bring people from different backgrounds together. Eligible projects might include improvements to a church hall, kitchen, toilets or accessibility; the creation of flexible spaces; the purchase of furniture, IT or audio equipment; or improvements to heating, lighting and energy efficiency. Solar panels may also be considered where they directly support the building's continued affordability and community use. The crucial test is whether the investment will strengthen an established community-cohesion role – for example, activities bringing together different faiths, ethnicities, ages or cultures. The award is not intended for routine repairs, general church restoration, exclusively religious activity or a net zero project without a convincing community connection. Applications open on **14 September and close on 12 October 2026**, with capital expenditure normally committed by **31 March 2027**. The full eligibility criteria, is available in the Common Ground Award 2026–27 prospectus. For further information email James Rolls, Net Zero Carbon Officer.

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.

Confirmation course: This is a free course for young people in the Church of England. Funded by National Church and developed by our friends at Youthscape, this course is for anyone who is looking to lead young people through confirmation. Jamie Swinerd, Diocesan Youth Advisor attended a Webinar recently on the development of the course

and says *"Youthscape have done a great job developing this course which is rooted in Jesus, based on solid research and aimed at leading young people to a place where confirmation is not a graduation, but a significant journey in their faith development. It is the first confirmation course I have seen that includes sessions to deliver after the confirmation service."* To access the course please visit Insight here. If you have any questions relating to the course, please do email jamie.swinerd@cofesuffolk.org.

Diocesan and Mission & Ministry Events

Digital Surgeries: Meet the Parish resources team! Get help with purchasing or borrowing a device, how to have an effective online presence, setting up online giving with a QR code.

Wednesday 30 September | Abbey House, Bury St Edmunds | 9.30am, 10.30am, 11.30am, 2.00pm or 3.00pm. Book here.
Tuesday 3 November, 1.30pm, 2.30pm or 3.30pm | St Nicholas Centre, Ipswich IP1 1UQ. Book here.

Find out more - 'How Beautiful' Reflective Morning | 9.30am - 12.30 Saturday 3 October | **Please note a change of venue: Lady Chapel at Holy Trinity, Long Melford J**oin 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. If you would like to book last minute or discuss the change of venue please email Gail Southgate.

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.

Decarbonising Churches – Voices of Experience | 7.30pm-8.30pm, 8 October | Zoom
Are you in the early stages of thinking about replacing your heating system or know it's something you'll need to be doing in the next few years? Come along to hear how other churches have managed this process, including managing discussions with your PCC, where to go for advice and knowing when and how to engage with consultants and DAC. This is a webinar for parishes across the East of England which is being hosted on Zoom by the Diocese of Ely. You can book your place on the webinar here: www.elydiocese.org/church-in-action/environment-and-sustainability/nzc-news/voices-of-experience.php

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Sight Loss Sunday | 11 October
An initiative by Torch Trust, Sight Loss Sunday is a great opportunity to celebrate those who are blind and partially sighted in our congregations and communities; and to equip the church to achieve it's aim of welcoming all of God's people. Even if there is no one in your church who you can currently think of that has sight loss, the RNIB suggest that one in five people will live with sight loss in their lifetime. Their website has a wealth of resources that you can access please visit www.torchtrust.org or get in touch slfc@torchtrust.org

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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 2026:
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.

Grants & Funding | 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.

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: 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.

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.

Theological Refreshment in Ministry (TRiM) 2026 | Monday 16 November | The House of Retreat, The Street, Pleshey, Chelmsford CM3 1HA

Rooted in Deuteronomy 6:5, this retreat invites participants to explore wellbeing as a holistic gift from God, encompassing our emotional, spiritual, intellectual and physical lives. Through prayer, reflection and practical exercises, we will create space to deepen self-awareness, strengthen resilience and take ownership of habits that support flourishing. This, our annual regional short residential conference, is open to all ordained and licensed lay ministers. More information and booking details here.

Elder's Celebration Service | 8 November, 3.30pm | St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds, IP31 1LS
A warm invitation for all Elders with family and friends to join this service giving thanks for Elders and celebrating their ministry. Bishop Joanne will be leading the service and the is an opportunity to meet the bishop and stay for refreshments afterwards.

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

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 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.

Bereavement Café | Great Blakenham Parish Room IP6 0LN | Saturday 26 September, 2.00pm - 4.00pm
A safe space to come and talk about your loss or just to sit and be with others. For more details please email Wendy Hooper.

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, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS
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.

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.

Diocesan Choral Festival | Sunday 8 November **|** St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1LS

For the attention of choir leaders and singers**:** Individuals and groups are invited to sing in Suffolk's beautiful cathedral. Rehearsal 2.00 pm, service 3.30pm. FREE, but sign-up essential.
All are warmly invited to join the Cathedral Choir to sing for this year's Diocesan Choral Festival Service on Sunday 8 November. The afternoon will be led by the Cathedral's Director of Music, Claudia Grinnell, and accompanied on the mighty Cathedral organ by Assistant Director of Music, Richard Cook. At the same service we will be giving thanks for the ministry of Diocesan Elders, so it promises to be a real celebration. For more information and to sign up, please visit: Diocesan Choral Festival 2026 Tickets.

Notices

General Synod Elections 2026–2031: The voting period for the new quinquennium opened on 21 September 2026, closing on 13 October 2026 at 5.00pm for portal votes and 12 October for postal votes. Eligible electors will be able to participate in choosing representatives who will help shape the future direction and governance of the Church of England. Candidate Addresses and Statements can be viewed online through the Civica portal or via the diocesan website here. For questions regarding your eligibility or for general information, please email the diocesan elections team 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). 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.

Notice of Statistics for Mission October Count: Could all parishes complete and submit their annual Statistics for Mission October Count. The October Count is an important tool that helps us understand the health, reach, and growth of our communities. This data provides a clear picture of how God is working through our parishes by measuring in-person and at-home attendance across the first four weeks of October. It allows the national church and the diocese to allocate resources effectively, support parishes productively, and celebrate areas of growth. Please submit your figures through the official Online Parish Returns System. Key dates:

- What is counted: Traditional church services, "Fresh Expressions" of church, and school services held either in the building or in the community.
- Age Categories: Split into Adults (16 and over, including clergy/leaders) and Children/Young People (under 16).

- Timing: Separated into Sunday attendance and Weekday attendance (Monday through Saturday).
- Church at Home: Remote engagement including live-streamed or pre-recorded online services, phone services, or distributed paper service sheets.
- Where to Submit: Enter your data directly into the Online Parish Returns System

Please email the diocesan office if you have forgotten your parish log-in details via statistics@cofesuffolk.org The national system accepts entries until 31 January, but Returns can be saved and updated throughout the year, making the process easier and reducing the workload later. Thank you to everyone who dedicates their time to compiling these statistics. Your input ensures that every member of our worshipping community is counted.

Be winter ready!
With colder weather on the way, now is the perfect time to test your heating system if you haven't already. Checking that your boiler, heating controls, timers and thermostats are working properly now can help ensure your church stays warm throughout the winter. It also gives you time to identify and resolve any problems before the heating season begins, helping to avoid unexpected breakdowns when you need your heating most. If your heating isn't working as expected or you'd like any more advice, please contact the Net Zero Carbon Officer James Rolls.

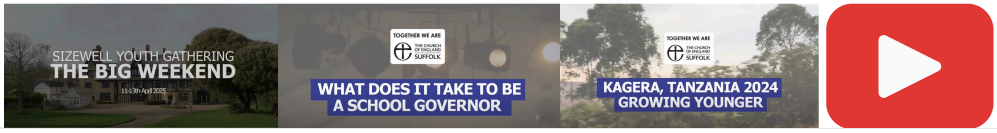
Vacancies

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
Counselling Centre Manager | Inspire | 23 October
Team Vicar | Forest Heath Team Ministry
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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TOGETHER WE ARE
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Watch our stories from around Suffolk



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