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

Thursday 8 October 2026

eNews

Our regular round up of news and forthcoming events

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND SUFFOLK

The Gathering Brings Young People Together in Worship and Faith



On 25 September, around 100 young people, along with 30 youth leaders, gathered at River Church Ipswich for The Gathering, a youth worship night organised in partnership with Ipswich CYM, local youth leaders, and the Diocese.

The evening provided an opportunity for young people from across the area to come together to worship, hear the Gospel, enjoy games, and share pizza. It was a joyful and encouraging event, helping young people connect with one another and grow in their faith.

One young person from St Thomas' Church, Ipswich, said: *"This is the best thing I have done this year. I am going to go back and tell my dad that he needs to get back to church!"*

Diocesan Youth Adviser Jamie Swinerd said: *"The Gathering is an excellent opportunity for young people to come together and grow in their faith. We are seeing young people meet Jesus and connect with others who attend the same school but may not realise they are both Christians. You can see the growth in them. It is a real privilege to be part of a truly collaborative event that puts Jesus and young people at its heart while respecting everyone's church tradition."*

The Gathering is one of several similar events taking place across the Diocese, creating opportunities for young people to explore faith, build friendships, and encounter Jesus.

If you would like to find out more about youth events taking place in your area, please email: Jamie Swinerd.

Church bells to be restored to tune of £160,000

We are delighted that St Mary's Church, in Haverhill, has received various grants and generous donors, the money to restore its bells. Please read the full story in the BBC here.

Kintsugi Hope Wellbeing Groups:



It is World Mental Health Day on 10 October.

Kintsugi Hope Wellbeing Groups provide a safe and supportive environment where you can share your struggles, gain valuable insights and develop practical tools to enhance your wellbeing. Through a combination of group discussions, activities and peer support people find the strength and resilience to navigate life's challenges with confidence.

Find out more about training to run Kintsugi groups here.

Portraits featured in National Portrait Gallery Exhibition

Portraits of Revds Canon Andrew Dotchin, Catherine Bond and Jane Pearce, are to be featured in *Fairyland*, a new exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, opening on 8 October. The exhibition explores stories of identity, inclusion and community, and features portraits of individuals whose lives and work have contributed to these conversations. For more information about *Fairyland*, please click here.

Diocesan and Mission & Ministry Events

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 its 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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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.

Ask us anything: Social media at Advent and Christmas | Tuesday 13 October 12.00pm - 1.00pm
In this webinar the Church of England team will share the top tips to help you make the most of social media opportunities across Advent and Christmas. Led by two members of the Church of England's social media team to share ideas, inspiration and resources for what you could be sharing online, and to take any specific questions you might have. Book 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.

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. Tuesday 3 November, 1.30pm, 2.30pm or 3.30pm | St Nicholas Centre, Ipswich IP1 1UQ. Book here.

Being Anglican 2026 – 27 | The 6-session course starts on 9 November at 7.00pm - Teams
Join the Revd Canon Charlotte Cook to explore the essential aspects of Anglicanism together in an informal learning style. This course will be particularly valuable if you would like to explore your rich Anglican heritage. It is free of charge and all are welcome. Further information, dates, times and booking details are available here.

Suffolk Worship Leaders Network | Thursday 12 November 7.00pm-9.00pm, River Church IP4 1BZ
Come along to a gathering amongst fellow worship leaders to pray and network together to swap ideas, encourage each other and build connections.

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.

Clergy and Spouse Preparing for Retirement Day | Wednesday 18 November | The House of Retreat, The Street, Pleshey, Chelmsford CM3 1HA

By popular request from those who have attended our Clergy Preparing for Retirement Conference, we warmly invite clergy who have reached the age of 60 and their spouse to this additional event. Enjoy a day together in the quiet surroundings of Pleshey Retreat House that may help you – practically, psychologically and spiritually – prepare for this next transition in life. The day will include professional input from a psychotherapist and guest speakers, and we will be joined by a couple who have recently retired from ministry who will speak from experience. For more info please click 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.

Advent retreat days | Thursday 26 November and Friday 27 November from 10.00am to 4.00pm | Lark Rise, 230 Ferry Road, Felixstowe IP11 9RU
Run by Lark Rise Retreats and led by Vanessa Herrick, the topic is John the Baptist 'Harbinger of Hope'. More details on www.larkriseretreats.org and book on the website. Email larkriseretreats@gmail.com or phone: 01394 284213.

The Wisdom of St Francis | Saturday 28 November, 10.00am-3.00pm | St Michael's Church, Framlingham IP13 9BJ
Come along to a pre-advent quiet day led by the Revd Chris Davey. Please bring a packed

lunch, tea and coffee provided. Please indicate your attendance either by signing up in church or emailing framparish@gmail.com

Church Community Services and Events

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.

Throne of Beauty | Saturday 17 October, 7.30pm | St Margaret's Church, Ipswich, IP4 2BT
Join this concert by Suffolk Chamber Choir and listen to pieces by celebrated women composers incluing Hildegard of Bingen, Judith Weir and Cecilia McDowall and others. Tickets adults £16 and under 18's £8 Refreshments available. at St Margaret's Church. Tickets are available on the door!

A Woodbridge Mass, All Saints' | Sunday 1 November, at 11.00am | St Mary's Church, Woodbridge IP12 4LP
Join this Woodbridge Mass by Ben Ponniah. There will be a Retiring Collection for the Church Choir Funds.

Wind and Brass Ensemble Concert | St Peter and St Mary's Church Stowmarket
7 November 3.30pm Join this concert with the Trianon Music Group for an afternoon Wind and Brass Ensemble Concert. Tickets are free but please reserve your place 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.

Suffolk Worship Leaders | Thursday 12 November, 7.00pm | River Church, Ipswich
Words from Andrew Gosden

Notices

The Energy Supermarket: We would like to make you aware of reports received from several parishes regarding unsolicited telephone calls from The Energy Supermarket, typically made by Kenny Shaw. The calls have reportedly focused on the Climate Change Levy (CCL) and the submission of PP10 and PP11 forms, which may be required where an exemption from the levy is available.

We have been informed that, in some cases, it has been suggested that the caller obtained parish contact details from the Diocese or from diocesan staff, or that they are contacting parishes on behalf of, or in partnership with, the Diocese. We wish to clarify that this is not the case. The Diocese has not provided parish contact details to this company, has no business relationship with the company, and does not endorse or recommend its services. If you receive such a call, we recommend that you undertake your own due diligence before engaging any third-party organisation.

If you are unsure whether your parish is currently paying the Climate Change Levy, this should normally be shown as a separate item on your electricity or gas bill. If you find that you are paying the Climate Change Levy, the diocesan Net Zero Carbon Officer can provide you with further advice on how to check whether you can claim an exemption.

This notice is provided for information only and should not be interpreted as commentary on the quality of any particular organisation's services. Rather, it is intended to ensure that parishes are aware that the Diocese has no involvement in these approaches. If you are concerned please email James Rolls, diocesan Net Zero Carbon Officer.

STAND for SYNOD

General Synod Elections 2026–2031: The voting period for the new quinquennium opened is 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.

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.

Parish Accessibility Fund Grants: There are funds available to improve physical access to churches. Grants of up to £5,000 can be secured quickly and easily and can fund projects 100% with no match funding. For full information is available on Insight: LINK or contact Toby Hart, by email toby.hart@cofesuffolk.org

Vacancies

Vicar of Ipswich Minster | Closing date: 10 October
Mission & Ministry Team Administrator | Closing date: 14 October
Data Integrity Analyst | Closing date: 15 October
Diocesan Growing Younger Children and Families Adviser | Closing Date: 21 October
Counselling Centre Manager | Inspire | Closing date: 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 | Volunteers | St Edmundsbury Cathedral

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