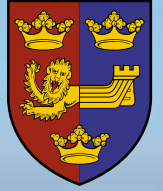


# St Edmundsbury Cathedral



Master Plan 2020 – 2030

---

# Message from the Bishop

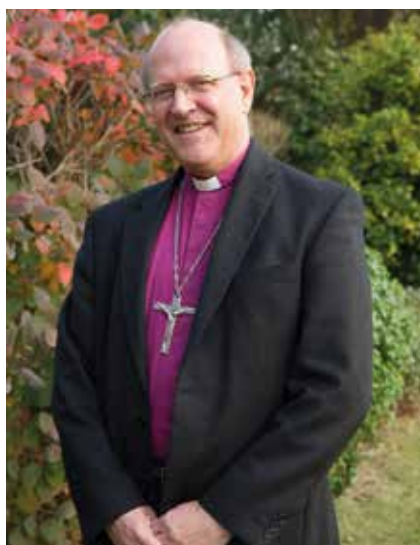
St Edmundsbury Cathedral is one of the most iconic buildings in Suffolk. It is a place cherished by so many people, representing a sense of continuity with our Christian heritage and yet always inspiring hope for the future.

One thousand years since the foundation of the Abbey of St Edmundsbury means the Cathedral today stands on the foundations of one thousand years of continuous prayer, worship and Christian witness. This Master Plan sets out a bold and exciting vision as we cross the threshold into the next millennium and build on that tradition for the people of Suffolk.

In looking to the future, we remain rooted in the Benedictine principles which inspired the original Abbey community. At our core is a commitment to remain a place that proclaims our faith in God and God's unconditional love for all people. This is the bedrock upon which all our plans are laid.

Inspired by our heritage, we look to the future with confidence as we reach out, with openness and love, to the breadth of society. This is why our Master Plan has a focus on building relationships, collaboration and looking outwards to new groups of people. To be able to do this with integrity, we recognise the need to build people's trust and so our values also reflect our desire to always be a place of welcome and compassion.

This Master Plan sets out many of the specific things we hope to do to achieve this vision over the next ten years. In laying out our plans, I hope this will inspire everyone who reads it to consider what part God is calling them to play in building the future of the life of the Cathedral.



With every blessing,

+ *Martin*

Martin Seeley,  
Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

---

---

# Message from the Dean

As 2020 closes we face two new beginnings. The first is the second millennium of a Christian community on this site; the second is the start of a new stage in St Edmundsbury Cathedral's journey.

A process of prayer, reflection and consultation has led to this Master Plan.

It outlines a series of aims, arising from our shared values, which set the agenda for our life and work over the next ten years.

At a time of change and crisis for our world, society and Church, we need to be agile to meet the rigours of living more generously and with renewed service - rooted and grounded in worship, love and care but also stewarding more carefully the finite resources of a world facing environmental crisis.

Our life of prayer challenges us to speak boldly into a society scarred by increasing polarisation and inequality.

The Spirit of God, active in our world, challenges us to hold a vision of hope and renewal in the face of cynicism and disillusionment.

A thousand years ago, a Christian community, founded on the Rule of St Benedict, kindled a flame that shared the light of Christ throughout Suffolk. It is our aspiration and commitment to fan that flame into a blaze of renewed worship, service, love and care for the people and county of Suffolk.

I warmly commend this Master Plan to you.



Joe Hawes,  
Dean of St Edmundsbury



# Contents

5	Introduction
7	Values
8	Our areas of work
9	Worship
10	Mission
11	Hospitality
12	Sustainability
14	How we will finance our aspirations



Wooden sculpture of St Edmund  
by Leonard Goff



Sculpture of St Edmund by Dame Elisabeth Frink

---

# Introduction

St Edmundsbury Cathedral is Suffolk's cathedral, situated in the heart of Bury St Edmunds, open and available to everyone. As a physical place it is the cathedra, the seat of the Bishop, a centre of worship and mission, and is a symbol of the aspirations of the wider diocese. As a spiritual place it is a focus for pilgrimage and pastoral care. As a place of heritage, located on the historic Abbey of St Edmund site, it is a window into key moments from the past thousand years. As a cultural place it is a venue for learning and exploration, for artistic and musical imagination and experimentation. As a convening place it gathers communities in debate, questioning and discussion. St Edmundsbury Cathedral is the sum of all these: a gathering place for the communities of our diocese and county, and for pilgrims and visitors from farther afield.

King Cnut named the abbey after Saint Edmund, martyred in 869 by the Danes, and to this day cathedral, abbey and town carry that name. More than a thousand years later, the polarisation of society casts an ever-deepening shadow. In these challenging times, St Edmundsbury Cathedral must be brave by bringing faith into a cynical world and helping to build the kind of society we believe God is interested in – a society based on the active sense of dependence human beings have on each other. This is what Christians call the Kingdom of God and pray for each day in the Lord's Prayer. Our vision is to be a sacred space which transforms lives for the next thousand years.



Tapestry of St Edmund by Sybil Andrews

This Master Plan is concerned with what is important for us to do over the next ten years. The following aims, while anchored in the practicalities of day to day living, respond to this vision. They are to

- a. Be a nationally and internationally recognised centre of pilgrimage, focusing on St Edmund as the first patron saint of England;
- b. Bring together the whole site, linking the Cathedral and the Abbey as a richly textured experience;
- c. Be recognised as a regional and national centre of excellence for liturgical, choral and musical tradition;
- d. Be a dynamic centre in the diocese for learning about faith, heritage and music, for all ages and at all levels of ability;
- e. Safeguard God's creation by protecting, through our own example, the environment and life on earth;
- f. Develop larger and younger congregations with greater diversification;
- g. Establish a new monastic community based at the Cathedral;
- h. Be a symbol of unity, tolerance, inclusivity and respect across the county.

This ten-year Master Plan sets out what the Cathedral will do to advance these aims. It is the document within which all operational activities and capital projects are located, and answers such questions as

- What are our values?
- What are our core areas of work?
- How do we finance all of our aims and aspirations?



In 1214 the Magna Carta barons met here and swore commitment to the cause at the Abbey altar



'Abbey of St Edmund before the Reformation' by WVK Hardy c1883  
(West Suffolk Heritage Service)

---

# Our Values

Our Values inform how we do things and are values that can be lived. We hold our Benedictine principles close – principles such as love, care, hospitality, and community – and are presenting these values in a way that relates to and can easily be understood in the twenty-first century. They are about how we work with each other, how we talk about the Cathedral, how we reach out to the whole of Suffolk and beyond, and how we transform ourselves as we grow together. They are Faith, Welcome, Compassion and Confidence.

**Faith** in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and God's unconditional love for all people. This is our Christian conviction, and it is what defines and shapes us;

**Welcome** to friends and to strangers; to people of all faiths or none; to those with whom we agree and disagree - building a culture of openness and collaboration and generosity across the county;

**Compassion** working alongside people in need, expressing love, tolerance and respect through our actions;

**Confidence** to challenge wrongs; to be honest about who we are and what we stand for; to be daring in what we do, how we do it and who we do it with.



# Our Areas of Work

The Cathedral has four key areas of work:  
worship, mission, hospitality and sustainability.



---

# Worship

We worship God through the ancient and beautiful Anglican musical and liturgical tradition. As guardians of this tradition, we provide worshippers with an opportunity to encounter the sacred. Over the next ten years, we want to grow the congregation, especially with younger age groups, nurture and broaden our choral tradition to the highest possible standard, offer different styles of worship for an increasingly diverse congregation, and promote cathedral music more widely within the diocese and county.

To help us on this journey, we will

- a. Utilise technology to expand the reach of the Cathedral's worship;
- b. Strengthen our links with our communities so we can
  - 1. recruit more choral scholars and choristers; and
  - 2. engage a greater number of young people with their musical heritage; and
  - 3. harmonise and grow our relationships with the people of Suffolk.
- c. Enhance our choral tradition by developing the professional standards and musical repertoire of all our choirs;
- d. Develop our front row to ensure access for all;
- e. Create an orchestra to give more musical opportunities for people of all ages and provide musical excellence;
- f. Create a regional/national Music Hub and training centre;
- g. Set up a Music Foundation for fundraising towards an endowment.



Cathedral organ built by  
Harrison & Harrison in 2010



Flipping pancakes on Shrove Tuesday

# Mission

The Cathedral is the Bishop's seat, a resource for clergy and the diocese. It is also a place from where we play a role in the life of the community we serve. Over the next ten years, we want to be increasingly outward looking, positioning the Cathedral as a centre for learning about the Christian faith and helping towards a more caring and just society.

To help us on this journey, we will

- a. Embed learning throughout the Cathedral site by
  1. Developing a comprehensive activity programme for schools;
  2. Establishing a formal and informal learning space that links imaginatively to other learning programmes such as community engagement, youth groups or family days
  3. Inter-connecting discrete learning channels such as the Ancient Library, site-wide interpretation, discovery trails, group tours, cultural events, artist/poet/musician in residence
  4. Work with key partners especially the Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership and the town of Bury St Edmunds.
- b. Develop our online presence so that we can communicate on multiple platforms with an increasingly large and diverse audience;
- c. Use our presence and reputation to work with local and county partners for the common good – building outwards from existing relationships with civic, government and other non-profit organisations such as hospices, the West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust and the Suffolk Community Foundation;
- d. Inspired by the Abbey of St Edmund's central role in the story of Magna Carta and its legacy, stage debates and discussions and engage with the social and moral issues of the day, speaking for those who have no voice or platform, asking the difficult questions of those with power and influence, offering a confident and compelling Christian voice within the diocese and other churches in local and national debate;
- e. Build relationships with the communities of other religious traditions and with organisations which help us deepen our commitment to inclusivity and diversity.



The Dean helping at the foodbank



Letter to the Prime Minister about refugees

# Hospitality

We are a welcoming, non-partisan space in a world greatly in need of compassion and sanctuary. Over the next ten years we want to help everyone who comes here to have an enriching spiritual and cultural encounter, to strengthen their sense of belonging, and help them towards new ways of seeing the world.

To help us on this journey, we will

- a. Work with the Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership towards a unified Abbey area, improving access for visitors, providing area-wide interpretation and contributing to the growth of Bury St Edmunds as a tourist destination;
- b. Tell the story of St Edmund to national and international audiences, establishing the Cathedral and the whole Abbey area as an important focus for pilgrimage and sourcing accommodation for pilgrims;
- c. Be a venue for artistic events and exhibitions – theatre, musical performances, art installations – nurturing the cultural capital of the communities we serve;
- d. Develop new models for guided tours and other ways of engaging with the Cathedral and its treasures, responding to a post-COVID society;
- e. Develop the profile of volunteering at the Cathedral to reach out to a younger demographic and adapt volunteering roles to match new patterns of volunteering.



Diocesan Youth event 'Gather



'Teach Rex' in the Cathedral



'The Martyrdom of St Edmund' by Brian Whelan

---

# Sustainability

We have an important role to play in promoting green practice and demonstrating a commitment to environmental action. We need to ensure the continuing sustainability of the cathedral foundation for years to come. Over the next ten years we want to be firmly on the path towards being carbon neutral by 2030 and have made significant inroads into future proofing our organisation. And safeguarding will remain a key priority as we ensure a secure and caring environment for all.

To help us on this journey, we will

- a. Work with the Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership on a phased capital programme to protect and interpret our heritage and to shape how the Cathedral and whole Abbey area will look in 2030;
- b. Develop our aspirations for working more closely with the diocese;
- c. Develop new and strengthen existing income streams to build financial resilience;
- d. Reduce the carbon footprint of our buildings and make carbon neutrality a key priority in any new capital projects;
- e. Actively recruit to Chapter and to Staff people of talent and diversity;
- f. Ensure all those working for or having contact with the Cathedral are safe and are protected from abuse and/or exploitation;
- g. Provide opportunities for staff to develop both professionally and individually and for volunteers to broaden their skills and experiences;
- h. Protect through digitisation the historical records and testimonies contained in the Ancient Library and Archives;
- i. Help ensure the continuity of traditional crafts skills through training opportunities for those interested in careers as stonemasons, carpenters and stained-glass specialists.



Volunteering in the garden



Abbey of St Edmund ruins



---

# How we will finance our aspirations

To deliver on all our aims and aspirations we need to strengthen our reserves, develop adequate working capital resources and establish a long-term endowment.

To help us on this journey, we will

- a. Establish a fundraising function to develop further our income streams from memberships, legacies, appeals, trust funding, and sponsorship;
- b. Expand our marketing reach, drawing audiences in to the historic integrity of the site and its powerful spiritual presence;
- c. Expand our events portfolio to include major exhibitions and cultural events across the site;
- d. Refurbish the Deanery to provide income through rental and to open the Deanery for occasional community use;
- e. Empower Cathedral Enterprises to increase our income streams through increased visitor numbers, expanded retail facilities and the creation of a visitor centre – made possible by the delivery of a phased capital programme with the Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership.



Banquet in the Nave



Service personnel from RAF Honington enjoying hospitality



# St Edmundsbury Cathedral



A thousand years of God's love in Suffolk

[stedscathedral.org](http://stedscathedral.org)