

St Edmundsbury  
Cathedral



**Community**

**Annual Report**

**2023**

# Contents

## Section 1: Worship

- Cathedral Worship
- Music
- InHarmony
- St Edmundbury Singers
- Cathedral Chaplains
- Norman Tower Bellringers
- Children, Families, and Young People
- Cathedral Wardens
- Churches Together
- World Day of Prayer
- Servers
- Cathedral Home Group
- Together on Tuesday
- Kevelaer Candle Pilgrimage

## Section 3: Hospitality

- Visits
- Volunteers
- Guild of St Edmund
- Events
- Vergers
- LEGO
- Welcomers
- Ancient Library
- Cathedral Flower Guild
- Abbey of St Edmund Partnership
- Marketing and Communications

## Section 2: Mission

- Learning Hub
- Inclusive Cathedral
- Social Action
- Pastoral Support Team
- The Yard Project
- Safeguarding
- Fairtrade Stall
- Kagera
- Sunday Morning Coffee
- Mothers' Union
- Chapter 4

## Section 4: Sustainability

- Philanthropy and Membership
- Fundraising Compliance
- Eco St Eds
- Cathedral Gardeners
- Enterprises
- Pilgrims' Kitchen
- Cathedral Shop and Tourist Information
- Friends of the Cathedral
- Planned Giving
- Cathedral Forum
- Cathedral Fabric
- Fabric Advisory Committee
- Electoral Roll

# A message from The Dean



The year steadily delivered the core values our ten-year masterplan is built around: worship, mission, hospitality and sustainability.

I am thrilled to see that not only have our weekly attendances returned to pre-pandemic levels, but also that attendance, particularly among young families and children, continues to increase.

It has also been a year of consolidation of our structures of governance as we became a charitable incorporation, adopting new constitution and statutes, with the development of new committees of Chapter.

The quality of music and worship has continued to improve with impressive levels of chorister recruitment.

The Cathedral continued to serve its diocese, town, and county with significant services to mark the Coronation of The King, the 50th anniversary of the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust, the County Harvest Festival, the annual Justice Service and regular diocesan services, as well as special services to affirm lay ministry.

Social action at the Cathedral continued to develop, incorporating greater numbers of young people using The Yard project, as well as the growth of the Singing Schools scheme. We have progressed in our work with dementia awareness, Hope into Action, our support for the Ukrainian community in Suffolk, our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion work, and continued partnership with Bury St Edmunds for Black Lives.

Financial sustainability continues to be a key priority. As we move into 2024, we have the potential for great opportunity and exciting development. We continue to build on secure foundations, trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Dean Pe.





# 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 grow the congregation, especially with younger age groups, and nurture and broaden our choral tradition to the highest possible standard. We offer different styles of worship for an increasingly diverse congregation, and promote Cathedral music more widely within the diocese and county.

---

## Cathedral Worship: The Rev'd Canon Philip Banks

Our Cathedral is first and foremost a place of prayer and sacred space. A space where people from every walk of life can connect with the Source of life and love, of being and becoming, to find the love of the God who brings healing, transformation, and light into all that we are and do. This 'holy ground' offers a space where we can recognise our inner life: our Cathedral's worship is the 'heartbeat' of all that we seek to do. This heartbeat, rooted in Benedictine Spirituality, has nourished people of faith here through all life's changes from birth to death. The Cathedral seeks to offer occasional innovative and experimental worship and breathe new life into our wonderful inherited traditions of liturgy which have fed and nurtured many generations of Christians.

This heartbeat of worship has continued throughout the year. The Eucharist is the ultimate healing sacrament of Christ's presence. Cathedral clergy, together with our wonderfully supportive retired and auxiliary clergy, have ensured, tirelessly, that the sacrament is celebrated daily throughout the year. Our livestreaming policy ensures that all of our main worship is accessible online: this will continue into the future to allow those who are unable to be here physically to connect to our worship spiritually.

The music of our Cathedral is not only central to our worship but also contributes to the wider cultural and spiritual life of Suffolk. We record our thanks to our Cathedral musicians who, through their hard work and creativity, help us express the human spirit more deeply than words alone and 'hear the echoes of the angels' song'. Our music provision includes our Singing Schools programme and valued partnerships with King Edward VI School and County Upper School with Scholars and School Musician in Residences.

Our weekly Sunday All-Age Eucharist is now an established part of our Sunday worship. Our regular round of worship continues to include weekly meditation and mindfulness, a weekday healing service, and a monthly dementia-friendly service. In addition, the Cathedral hosted numerous special services for the county, community, and diocese, including a service to mark the Coronation and opportunities to support the Ukrainian community.

Less quantifiable but equally important are the thousands of people during the year who pause in our Cathedral to pray or light candles. Many in our congregation join our Cathedral family for a sense of belonging, to be part of our praying and inclusive community. With the rhythm of daily services and the church year, our faith is sustained and nurtured by the beauty of Cathedral liturgy, music, and preaching.

Our gratitude goes to all who make such excellence possible: vergers, musicians, servers, wardens, bellringers, administration staff, volunteers, clergy, and so many others who make the Cathedral the vibrant and creative place that it is. Without this skill, devotion, and hard work, our worship would not be, for the glory of God, of the transformational nature that it is.

---

---

## Cathedral Music: Timothy Parsons, Director of Music

2023 was another action-packed year of music at St Edmundsbury Cathedral. Our programme continued to grow and develop thanks to the ambition and vision of our Dean and Chapter, and the tremendous support of a huge number of people.

Our boy and girl front rows are flourishing. By the end of last year, we finally reached a stage where we were actually oversubscribed for choristers – at the time of writing, we have 44 children on the books (40 was always the aim), divided exactly evenly between boys and girls. There is a healthy interest in chorister places and it seems likely that our numbers will continue to grow.

During 2023 the Cathedral also completed its process of appointing six professional singers to the choir: two each of altos, tenors, and basses. We now have a fabulous foundation on which to build the choir's future. Our voluntary Lay Clerks – now three in number – continue to make a valuable contribution, and it is important to record that two of our longest-standing members, Christopher Movley and Stephen Dart, decided to stand down following many years of loyal service. Our sincere thanks go to them for all they have contributed to music at the Cathedral.

As a whole, the Cathedral Choir has grown in musical confidence and stature: we have added many new and challenging pieces to the repertoire, undertaken several concerts, and are about to make a recording with the Regent label. A tour of Normandy is scheduled for April 2024, which will be the third undertaken since 2022. We're indebted to The Friends of the Cathedral Choirs for their tireless fundraising efforts which enable us to undertake such exciting projects.

Under Richard Cook's direction, the St Edmundsbury Singers have also grown in number and have performed at several of the highest-profile liturgical events of the year, including Midnight Mass, the Requiem for All Souls, and the Easter Vigil. January 2023 saw their first performance of Britten's 'A Ceremony of Carols' which proved so popular that it was repeated in 2024 and seems sure to become an annual fixture.

The Youth Choir continued to offer young singers an opportunity to sing to a high level following vocal change. Aimed at ex-choristers, we have also welcomed several newcomers from non-church choir backgrounds. This group is gaining a reputation for its fresh, pure sound and a recent highlight has been an act of meditation for Holocaust Memorial Day.

June 2023 saw the official launch of a very important strand of the music department, namely the Singing Schools programme. In November 2023 we undertook our most ambitious Singing Schools project to date, a unique and creative performance of part one of Handel's Messiah. 'Messy Messiah' involved around 200 children from across the county in singing and dancing, plus an orchestra, soloists, and an SATB choir.

In September 2024, I will be moving on from my position as Director of Music at St Edmundsbury to take up the same role at Wells Cathedral. I would like to express my enormous gratitude to everybody who gives so much support to the Cathedral's music. My three years in post have been a truly wonderful period in my personal and professional life, and I look forward to following the continued success of the Cathedral's music.

---



# Messy Messiah

November 2023





---

## InHarmony: The Rev'd Canon Philip Banks

The important work of the Cathedral's 'InHarmony' Music Outreach Project has continued under Richard Hubbard's excellent leadership. He has been a fantastic 'ambassador' for the Cathedral, and InHarmony is one of the Cathedral's flagship projects which makes essential connections between the Cathedral and wider diocese and supports churches requesting help with music and worship. This year's hugely successful 'Messy Messiah' production could not have happened without the work of InHarmony, and has provided the building blocks for next year's 'Noyes Fludde' project. Richard's contribution to the music of our weekly Sunday All-Ages service and to diocesan worship has been invaluable, ensuring that many different traditions can feel at home in the cathedral. Of the workshops and events Richard has organised this year, the Pilgrimage of Song and Ordinations were highlights.

## St Edmundsbury Singers: Clarissa Machin

The St Edmundsbury Singers are the Ladies Choir and were invited to join the Guild in 2023. I am delighted to be their first representative on the Guild Committee.

The Singers were founded in 1988 by Paul Trepte, who came to hear us sing Evensong at Worcester Cathedral last August. There are three founding members still singing - Claire Robinson, Penelope Carter, and Liz Wright - and several others who have sung for over twenty years.

The Assistant Director of Music, Richard Cook, has directed us since taking up his appointment in 2019. There are currently thirty-one members and he receives regular enquiries.

We sing Evensong every other Wednesday, alternating with the Youth Choir. In January 2023 we sang Britten's 'Ceremony of Carols', performing it again in January 2024. We hope it will become an annual event. We sing Eucharist and Evensong on Sundays with the Back Row when required, and last Mothering Sunday we sang with all the Choirs for Sarah Geileskey's last service. In July we sang for the Ordination of Priests, when Anita Rooney and ex SES singer Mel Takacs were ordained, and sang for Anita's first Eucharist the following week. Three days later we took part in the Summer Concert singing the Vivaldi 'Gloria'. In September we sang at the LLM Service for the All Souls Service, performing the Durufle 'Requiem' with the Back Row, and on Sunday 10 December we sang two services including the Churches Together in Bury carol service.

We shall be singing in the 2024 Easter Vigil at 6.00 am, and look forward to singing for Tim Parsons's last concert on 6 July.

We are an integral part of the Music Ministry in our beautiful Cathedral.

---



---

## Cathedral Chaplains: Georgina Pinches

In 2023 we had a full year of the new system for chaplain duties i.e. March to December (as opposed to May to September) which proved worthwhile because it also covered the Easter and Christmas periods. To help with this coverage we were fortunate to recruit a number of extra chaplains – not quite all coming out of the woodwork but a fair number nevertheless!

We have had quite a few events during the year, which created opportunities for chaplains to be on duty. It goes without saying that there were those who were particularly interested in volunteering when the Beer Festival was on! The Cathedral was buzzing when the Christmas Market was in progress, and this presented lots of opportunities to speak to both visitors and stallholders. During the quiet times we had the chance to catch up with folk and hopefully encourage them on their journey.

We 'cast our bread upon the waters' and may not see 'results' as some may expect, but chaplaincy is not about that. Loitering with intent is what we do, taking opportunities when they come our way and sometimes 'engineering' a little if appropriate.

Many thanks to those of the chaplaincy team who are so willing to help in this way.

## Society of Norman Tower Bellringers: Joan Garrett

In 2023 we continued with 23 members, although three people were unable to attend due to health issues. We ring from 9.30 am to 10.30 am for Sunday morning service and from 2.00 pm to 3.30 pm twice a month for Sunday afternoon services. In addition, we practice on Thursday evenings from 7.15 pm to 9.00 pm.

All the bellringers at the Norman Tower are members of the Suffolk Guild of Ringers, and 2023 was the centenary of the formation of the Guild. Many special ringing events were organised to celebrate the Centenary and on the Guild Dinner Day on 25 March a peal taking three hours and 20 minutes was rung at the Tower and included many of the local ringers. The Guild chairman, who organised the dinner, is a member at the Norman Tower and did an excellent job.

In total eight peals were rung during the year, and we were very pleased to ring for the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla.

Thirty quarter peals were rung, most of which took place on Sunday afternoon for Evensong and acknowledging special occasions such as Plough Sunday, Mothering Sunday, Bury Beer Festival, and Remembrance Sunday. Quarter peals also took place to mark Anita Rooney's first Eucharist as celebrant, St Edmunds Day, and for the Emergency Services Carol Service.

---

---

## Children, Families, and Young People: Fiona Knapp

Children, families, and young people continue to be an integral part of life at St Edmundsbury Cathedral. A team of volunteers runs the flourishing Young Families group for pre-school aged children and their carers. It is held every Friday morning all year round and forms an important part of our outreach. During 2023 we also continued to run short sessions of Diddy Disciples alongside Young Families, although numbers were sometimes very low and at the end of the year we decided to take a break to take stock and undertake some research with parents and carers. A very successful Messy Easter was held in the Cathedral during Holy Week, and we welcomed approximately 30 children with their families to participate in a range of activities, a worship session, and a simple shared tea. Messy Cathedral is for everyone and volunteers from a range of aspects of Cathedral life helped to run the session. It was a delight to witness the buzz in the nave and the children's Hosanna banner which was hung over the nave altar!

Our Vision for Young Worshippers encourages and supports children and young people both to grow and to lead us in our liturgical life. Our boy and girl choristers lead sung worship, others offer prayers and readings, and some participate as acolytes and in the role of sub-deacon. With its special focus on children and families, the weekly forty-minute 9.00 am All-Ages Eucharist is flourishing and helping us all to deepen our faith. Children and young people are invited to carry the cross and candles at the beginning and end of the service. They offer a range of insights to our conversations as together we strive to discern the ways in which we are called to live as people of faith in the world today.

It has been a delight this year to encourage more young people join and shape the life of the Cathedral, not only through worship, but through the many other strands that connect them to the Cathedral. A team of leaders and helpers run Junior Church during the 10.30 am service on Sunday mornings, although there is a large variation in numbers from week to week. 13 children and young people were baptised during the year, eight were prepared for and admitted to Holy Communion, and one young person was confirmed. We work hard to ensure children and young people are encouraged to find their voices, to understand that the Cathedral is a space for them, and for some, a place to call home. Children and young people enrich the life of our Cathedral community, and we do well to listen to and learn from the youngest among us. We look forward to all the joys and challenges they will bring us in 2024 and beyond.

## Cathedral Wardens: Terry Stark and Barbara Pycraft

It is always a pleasure for our team to welcome visitors along with our regular congregations to the Cathedral. In addition to the number of items we hand out at the start of a service, we now have some beautiful service books reflecting the liturgical year, including some helpful large print versions. We warden a vast array of services, often involving complex seating plans. This year, closely following our annual Justice Service, it was a particular pleasure for us to participate in the Suffolk Celebration Service for the King's Coronation.

For larger services, in our efforts to save paper, when it is impossible to predict how many orders of service will be required, we have been pleased to see how many people have been able to access the service QR codes on their phones.

---





**Sea Service**  
**July 2023**



**Coronation Service**  
**May 2023**

---

## Churches Together: Pam Pitts

Through the [Churches Together website](#) there are links to local churches, activities, events, and community work to find out how you can be involved in the fellowship and work of the churches and organisations in our communities as well as keep up to date with current events.

Churches Together meetings are held four times a year at different church venues in the town. There are also regular Prayer Mornings as well as Study and Share sessions. 'Weekend Thoughts' are published weekly in the Bury Free Press.

There was an exchange of greetings between The Seventh Day Adventist Church and the Cathedral in October. An Advent Carol service was held in the Cathedral on 10 December and 10 churches were involved. The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was held from 21 - 27 January on Monday 12.30 – 1.30 pm at the Cathedral and at other churches throughout the week. The materials for the 2024 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity were prepared by an ecumenical team from Burkina Faso: "You shall love the Lord your God ... and your neighbour as yourself" (Luke 10:27).

The Good Friday Walk of Witness is organised by Churches Together. It starts at the Cathedral with a short service at 10.30 am then continues with a silent walk through the streets. A large wooden cross and banners are carried to the Cornhill where a small stage is set up for reflections and music. Hundreds of people take part in this moving event.

This year there will be a free Summer Celebration in the Abbey Gardens during the afternoon of 30 June – a coming together of people from many local churches sharing praise and prayer in an informal setting. We encourage people to bring picnics, folding chairs, or rugs.

## World Day of Prayer: Mandy Alderman

This year the World Day of Prayer service was represented by the Christian Women of Palestine so the service was even more poignant. The service is prepared by the Christian women about two years before the World Day of Prayer, so those women could not have realised how their lives, or the world, would change.

The World Day of Prayer Service was held on 1 March 2024 at Garland Street Baptist Church at 10.30 am and at the Quaker Meeting House at 7.30 pm. The morning service was attended by 72 people who came out to pray for these women in torrential rain. 34 people attended the evening service. Many who attended said that it was a very moving service.

Just before the service took place, a special prayer had been written to take into account the awful events that have occurred since the Palestinian women had prepared their service.

---



---

## Servers: Scarlett Blacker

The role of the Server is to serve God in the Holiest of places, carrying the processional cross and candles; being the Thurifer or Boat to raise our prayer purifying and sanctifying; presenting the gifts of the people for the Blessing; helping to prepare the Altar for Communion and clearing afterwards.

Being a server means being prayerful and ready to assist in a calm and spiritual way, a time both of real calm and high alert. Our servers span a wide age range and representation of the Cathedral family.

On a weekly basis the Servers assist at the Sunday 8am BCP; Sunday 9 am All Age Eucharist; Sunday 10.30 am Sung Eucharist; and 3.30 pm Sunday and Saturday Evensong. We were delighted to be joined by young people from the 9am service when we held a joint service for Mothering Sunday this March.

In September we said goodbye to our previous head server, Catherine Cox, as she left to train for ordination at Westcott House in Cambridge. Catherine and I worked together over the summer to ensure that I was ready to step into the role of head server when she left.

We have had a number of new faces join the team this year, including some young people from the congregation. Our continued strength in numbers has allowed us to mark Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, and Easter with incense at the 10:30 services.

Ongoing training of servers takes place on a formal and informal basis, and we are trialling monthly training sessions for new and old servers as well as those who might be looking to dip their toe into serving.

## Cathedral Home Group: Chris Andrews

Our meetings have continued through this year with seven or eight members and latterly the welcome arrival of two new members. The meetings are normally held on a Monday evening at 74 Daisy Avenue, Moreton Hall. Two of us are worshippers at St Mary's and we all welcome this widening of the membership. We keep in touch with two or three people whose health no longer allows them to attend regularly.

We celebrated an informal holy communion together using the service from Iona, as an act of thanksgiving before the summer break.

After finishing the book by John Bell on the themes and character of the Psalms, we have just finished reading 'Encounters' by Rachel Treweek, who is Bishop of Gloucester. She wrote this after a sabbatical spent partly in Tiberias, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee in 2019. The chapters follow a sequence of encounters between Jesus and a whole range of people as recounted in the gospels. It also reflects on significant encounters in the course of Rachel's own life, work, and ministry which have helped her to grow as a person and a priest. This has been a rewarding book and we recommend it.

Our meetings continue to help friendships to grow and deepen. We would be delighted if anyone in the congregation or beyond would like to know more or want to join us.

---

---

## Together on Tuesday: The Rev'd Anita Rooney

This service appeals to people who find traditional services challenging to attend because of age-related, neurological, or physical problems, and those living with dementia and their carers who still want to sing and praise God. The service is short, relaxed, and informal; people are encouraged to be as comfortable as possible and move around if needed. There is always coffee, cake, and a strong emphasis on fellowship and support, thanks to an experienced pastoral support team consisting of pastoral carers, nurses, and those experienced with dementia.

This service is now embedded into the life of the Cathedral and attracts 20+ people. We also have visitors from across the diocese and from further afield (thanks to the many coach trips into Bury St Edmunds) who are keen to learn what this type of service is about, as well as ministers from other denominations who come to get ideas for their own Churches.

## Kevelaer Candle Pilgrimage: Stewart Alderman

Kevelaer pilgrim leaders Lorna Brook, Geoffrey House, and Stewart Alderman were joined by Canon Philip Banks and congregation members Liz Rowlands and David Herrick. Departing on the Wednesday evening, the sea was thankfully calm for the overnight ferry from Harwich to the Hook of Holland. On Thursday an easy journey through Holland saw the group arrive on Thursday afternoon at the Priesterhouse where we received our usual warm welcome and lunch in the wonderful dining hall.

On Thursday we took the opportunity to explore the town of Kevelaer with its street sculptures, liturgical and candle shops, and the huge stations of the cross that are spread across the park. Our main focus however was on the Shrine to 'Our Lady' the gatherer of the afflicted, the church of St Antonio, and the amazing Candle Chapel. In the evening we joined local people in one of the Basilicas side chapels for evening mass. We were delighted to be asked to join Father Gregor, the head priest at the Basilica, for dinner and to have the opportunity to hear about the church in Germany and planned changes to the running of the Basilica and the Priesterhouse. Father Gregor asked us to join him and Cardinal Willem Eijk, the visiting Cardinal Archbishop of Utrecht, for breakfast on Sunday morning. The Cardinal was very open about some of the difficulties facing the Roman Catholic Church and the steps that they were taking to overcome them. The group found this session very inspiring.

After breakfast we attended the Sunday Mass in the Basilica where Liz represented us by reading one of the lessons. During the service our new Votive and Paschal Candles were blessed before their onward journey to the Cathedral to be presented at Candlemass. The pilgrimage also included trips to the towns of Xanten and Kalkar where our man in Germany, Guido, gave a talk on the incredible wood carvings above the altar in St Nicholas Church. The day also included tea and cakes at a restaurant on the banks of the Rhine.

The Votive candle is in the high altar and is lit for every Evensong. The new Paschal Candle will be lit for the first time at the dawn Eucharist on Easter Sunday.

---



# Mission

The Cathedral is the Bishop's seat, a resource for clergy and the diocese. It is also a place from where we serve community life. 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 help nurture a more caring and just society.



---

## The Learning Hub: Kim Judge, Learning Hub Programme Manager

Our rhythm of school visits, themed family activities during the holidays, and community group visits such as Beavers and Cubs continued throughout the year. Overall, the Learning Hub connected with around 2,500 young people and their accompanying adults.

Our popular holiday family activities which take place on the Nave Pavement in the centre of the Cathedral were well attended, with often three generations of a family involved in the crafts. The themes for 2023 were an Elizabethan Experience, Ignite, Elements, Remembering, and Christmas. At each session, families left artwork to put on panels which are displayed beside the North Gallery stairs. Each panel depicts either a season in the church year or a topic the Cathedral is thinking about, such as Pentecost. The Learning Hub team also organised craft activities for Messy Easter, Heritage Day, Summer Fair, Suffolk Harvest, and the Christmas Market.

The team worked in partnership with the Bury Records Office to deliver a Bury Psalter workshop, and with the Visitor Experience Manager to deliver a Travel and Tourism Masterclass to college students, an internal Welcomers Advanced workshop, and Twilight Talks and Tours for your cathedral at night event.

In addition, we designed and delivered values workshops and informal workshops. A coronation prayer space and a Godly Play taster day were also organised as well as providing a liaison role for both the Diocesan Education Service and Crime and Punishment showcase for schools.

During Lent we organised another successful series of guest speakers looking at themes 'Fearfully and wonderfully made in the image of God: Challenging perceptions to empower change', with around 90 people joining online each week. The Edmund Lecture due to be given by Dame Barbara Woodward, UK Permanent Representative (Ambassador) to the UN was unfortunately postponed because of the crisis in Gaza but is now planned for March 2024.

We worked alongside the Music Department in November to provide the concept and co-ordination for an engaging creative project to decorate the Cathedral with colourful banners for the Messy Messiah performance. A number of schools and the cathedral's junior church and choristers created this artwork. Again, during the Christmas period, visitors to the Cathedral hung stars with their hopes for 2024 on our multicoloured tree.

Staff changes happened during the year, with Claire Cachelin leaving in July and Kim Judge overseeing the work of the Learning Hub for the remainder of the year assisted by a small, dedicated team of volunteers. In January 2024, Chris Eyden joined the team to focus on adult learning with Kim Judge now concentrating on school visits and family activities. With the start of 2024 the bookings for school visits are looking healthy with some new challenges for the team to write different material for our school programmes and various adult learning programmes are taking shape to be delivered throughout the year.

---

---

## **Inclusive Cathedral: The Rev'd Canon Matthew Vernon**

The Cathedral marked Dementia-Friendly Sunday again in May 2023. Our dementia-friendly activities include the monthly Together on Tuesdays (a simplified Communion Service for people who find a Sunday Service overwhelming). We contributed to our MP's Dementia Awareness and Signposting Event in October and we were a location for filming as part of the County Council's virtual reality project for people with dementia unable to visit special places in the county.

We continue to celebrate, as an Inclusive Cathedral, that all people are created equal by God. The national church's decisions about equal marriage mean we can no longer offer stand-alone blessings of same-sex relationships, but we are allowed to celebrate with couples during our regular Services. We pursue these issues because we aim to welcome and treat all people fairly, irrespective of age, disability, gender, partnership, pregnancy, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. In this we seek to work with other organisations that promote inclusivity, challenge prejudice, address ignorance, and tackle hate-crime.

## **Social Action: The Rev'd Canon Matthew Vernon**

Our Social Action Group oversees the Cathedral's wide-ranging activity in the community by committed staff and faithful volunteers. The Cathedral, working with partners, contributes to compassionate action in the community in a number of ways – as demonstrated at various points in this Annual Report, such as The Yard Project and dementia-friendly activity.

In 2023, a family, supported by the Cathedral, moved into a house in Bury St Edmunds, bringing to fruition our Hope Into Action project (a national charity that works with churches to provide housing for people in need). The Cathedral continues to support local foodbanks as well as the churches in our link Diocese of Kagera, Tanzania. The Social Action Group includes a Chapter member and an Honorary Canon with social action expertise in the county. The group acts as a “think-tank”, supporting projects delivered by staff and volunteers.

## **Pastoral Support Team: The Rev'd Canon Matthew Vernon**

The Pastoral Support Team delivers the formal pastoral care within the Cathedral community. This includes home visiting, the First Tuesday Lunch Club, monthly Communion Services in local residential homes, the annual Remembering Together service (for those who have experienced the death of a child), and the weekly Young Families group. Gifts and cards at Harvest and Christmas are given to housebound or isolated members of the Cathedral.

The Pastoral Support Team is made up of Cathedral clergy and lay people. Within the Cathedral Community a great deal of informal pastoral care also happens between congregational members and is an expression of our Christian concern for each other.

---



---

## The Yard Project: Jane Dow, Youth Project Lead

During 2023, The Yard project became embedded in the community as a trauma-informed youth provision, supporting young people with a variety of identified needs, from neurodiversity to refugees and children eligible for free school meals.

Funding was generously provided by the East of England Co-op Community Cares Fund, the Lord Belstead Charitable Settlement, the Suffolk Public Mental Health programme COVID-19 Memorialisation grant, and the Dr Joyce Cockram bequest.

The Yard space and garden room evolved in response to need. We now have the means to cook fresh and healthy food indoors during poor weather, and the garden has new dwarf fruit trees, bushes, and raised beds for salad plants. Our young participants have built more benches from scrap wood.

Our team consists of the Project Lead, two part time support workers, and a small number of professional volunteers. We were also supported by volunteers from the Bury Men's Shed. Our group activities are limited to eight children per session, and we try to have a ratio of one adult to two children for each session due to the complex needs of some of the young participants.

We developed our existing partnerships with Suffolk 4YP, Suffolk Family Carers Young Carers, Outreach Youth, Access Community Trust youth centre, and started our weekly gardening club with King Edward IV High School Intervention Team. In June, we entered a new partnership with Innov8 Workshops, an alternative education provider based in Rougham. We now offer ten hours a week of one-to-one horticultural mentoring to some of the hardest to reach young people and those most at risk of exploitation.

We continued to run sessions funded by the Holiday and Activities Food Programme for young people whose families are eligible for free school meals or have another identified need. In consultation with young participants, we hosted a Halloween movie night, trialed new recipes in our outdoor cooking, and introduced art and circus workshops in the summer break. We also hosted a free, accessible, family show in the Cathedral which attracted an audience of 70 children and adults.

We started our Tuesday after school volunteering sessions for participants in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and trialed Friday after school sessions for Mindfulness and Emotional Resilience. Overall, we enjoyed a creative, inclusive, and fulfilling year of group activities and one-to-one sessions meeting the needs of our young community and the requirements of our funders.

During 2023, we had 365 spaces filled by young people over 212 sessions. Since partnering with Innov8 Workshops in June, we have used the Yard most weekdays as well as in the holidays, meeting one of our key objectives for 2023. Of the 98 young people who completed a Generic Wellbeing Survey after their Yard session between February and September 2023, 78% gave a top wellbeing score of between 25 and 30/30 and 22% gave a response of between 20 and 25/30.

---

---

## The Yard Project continued: Jane Dow, Youth Project Lead

Going forward, we will apply to continue with the HAF programme and have secured funding from the Community Lottery Fund, Suffolk Community Foundation Centenary Fund, Tesco Community Fund, and the Cathedral Chapter Missionary Donation. This will enable The Yard to remain open until September 2024 and provide additional opportunities for vulnerable young people to join us after school and at weekends, extending the capacity of The Yard as a space of welcome, refuge, and learning.

Areas for development in The Yard:

- more after school and weekend sessions that meet a real need
- recruit additional part time youth support workers
- continue to collaborate with young people and partners to improve and develop activities and mentoring sessions
- ongoing fundraising
- training in anger management techniques for young people.

As we grow in experience, we become ever more aware of our participants' wide-ranging interests and their diverse requirements: they are leading the way with their enthusiasm, their vision, and their needs.

## Safeguarding: Sarah-Jane Allison, Chief Operating Officer

St Edmundsbury Cathedral:

- is committed to safeguarding all those who attend worship and other activities that we offer
- accepts the prime duty of care for children and vulnerable adults
- follows recommended safeguarding practice in recruiting, training, and supporting our ordained and lay ministers, our employees, and our volunteers
- follows advice, guidance, policy, and practice of the Church of England in promoting a safer church
- will respond to concerns and allegations without delay in accordance with Diocesan Safeguarding Procedures.

Safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and kept under review by the Safeguarding Committee who are: Karen Galloway, Diocesan Safeguarding Officer who advises and works with the Cathedral on safeguarding matters; Sarah-Jane Allison, Cathedral's Safeguarding Officer; Matthew Vernon, Priest with Pastoral Charge for Safeguarding; Barbara Pycraft, Chapter's Safeguarding Lead; Drew Parnell, Cathedral's Human Resources and Safeguarding Administrator; and Mary Memarzia, Independent Member.

The care and protection of children, young people, and vulnerable adults involved in Cathedral activities is the responsibility of the whole Cathedral. Everyone who participates in the life of the Cathedral has a role to play in promoting a safer Cathedral for all.

---



# The Yard Official Opening

April 2023





---

## Fair Trade Stall: Janet Banks and Scarlett Blacker

The Fairtrade stall has been running monthly this year after the 10.30 am Eucharist, usually on the fourth Sunday. The option to pay contactless has helped boost sales now that fewer people carry cash, but it does tend to be the same handful of people in the congregation supporting the stall. We would be delighted if more people would come and give Fairtrade products a try.

Sadly, Traidcraft plc went into administration a year ago after struggling with COVID-19 and supply chain challenges over the past three years. It has been challenging to continue stocking the stall with Fairtrade goods, but - apart from the popular cookies - we have now managed to find replacement suppliers for all items. We have continued to share the order with St Edmund's Catholic Church to avoid paying delivery costs, and store most of the goods in the Cathedral between stalls. These supplies also keep the Cathedral office and vergers' vestry stocked up with Fairtrade tea and coffee.

Buying Fairtrade products means you are supporting organisations dedicated to fighting poverty through trade. As well as ensuring that the workers who produced the food and drink we enjoy are fairly paid and treated, profits from companies like Divine and Clipper go back to health and education projects in the countries that produce them – rather than to supermarkets.

## Sunday Morning Coffee: Valerie Moore

The Sunday Morning Coffee team now cater for the parents of choristers and people from the 9.00 am and 10.30 am services. We serve Fairtrade filter coffee, tea, squash, and biscuits. Sometimes people who wish to celebrate a significant event will bring cake to share. These are very sociable occasions where all are welcome.

## Kagera: Valerie Moore

Our Diocese has had a link with the Diocese of Kagera in Tanzania for 30 years. This part of Tanzania borders Rwanda and Burundi. We have a stall once a month after the 10.30 Service to raise funds to support projects there. Since the autumn we have raised sufficient money to purchase one motor bike and are just over halfway to purchasing a second. The Pastors can have up to a dozen churches in their care and travel between them can involve long journeys over challenging terrain. A motor bike can make an enormous difference to the Ministry and life of a Pastor and his Church.

Please come and look at the stall to see the products on offer, a map of Kagera's location, and a photo of the bike. Your support can make a huge difference.

---

---

## The Mother's Union: Jane Leung

The Cathedral Branch of the Mother's Union continues to grow and has currently 41 members. Some of our members are unable to attend meetings but still have an active interest in the organisation and support generously where they can.

The main fundraiser is still the Strawberry Tea which was held in June 2023 in a member's garden. It was very well attended and the funds raised were donated to charities from the Mother's Union's agreed list. Funds were also raised to provide support for the Women's Refuge and to buy food for the local Food Bank.

Monthly meetings were held throughout the year, and included talks on Ukraine by Brian Earley, Stained Glass by Michele Russell, A Journey by The Very Rev'd Jo Delfgou, a Visit to The Yard, The Salvation Army by Major Paula Ashman, Bury Town Pastors by Mrs Jo Copsey, and the Bury Drop In by Sabine Dornbusch. Other monthly meetings included 'Bring a friend for tea and a chat' in January and preparing Christmas gifts for an agreed charity in October.

The Mother's Union provided posies for Mothering Sunday and played an active part in the service. They have representatives on the World Day of Prayer Committee where the service was held on the first Friday of March at St Peter's Church in the morning and All Saints Church in the evening.

Members of the Mother's Union are also represented on the Pastoral Care Committee and visited those in need. Members are further represented on Young Families held on Friday mornings in the Edmund Room. Annual services attended by members included Lady Day in March 2023, Wave of Prayer in July 2023, and Mary Sumner Day in August 2023.

## Chapter 4: Lorna Brook

Chapter 4 met four times last year. In March, the Revd. Dr Sarah Gull talked about nettles and their several uses, giving a fascinating demonstration of a weaving technique which could be used for baskets, for example. In May, Simon de Laat brought slides and a most informative talk about the Air Ambulance Service. In July, Major Georgina Pinches, who is a volunteer chaplain in the Cathedral, talked about the history of the Salvation Army and her vocation within it.

In September we held a coffee morning in aid of Ukraine during which a Ukrainian artist displayed some of his work. We raised £150 for the cause.

---



# 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.



---

## Visits: Sarah Friswell, Visitor Experience Manager

Visitor numbers in 2023 reached nearly 73,500. This demonstrates our continued growth since the pandemic and an uplift on the number of visitors in 2019. With an increased number of volunteers in roles such as Welcome Stewards, guides, and chaplains, we have been able to fill the rotas more successfully this year. The friendly, welcoming presence of volunteers makes a huge difference to the experience of our visitors.

The Cathedral relies on donations from visitors as a part of its income, and efforts were made to improve this in 2023 by interventions like re-positioning the donations boxes. This increased the average donation per person to 74p.

Guided Tours and Tower Tours were popular and it was good to be able to offer more regular tours now that the guide team is at full strength. The guides also offer some sessions where they are just 'on duty' to answer questions and chat to visitors. Heritage Open Days were extremely popular with the Ancient Library and Norman Tower open to visitors. Changing exhibitions in the Treasury and occasional exhibitions in the Cathedral and Cloisters mean that visitors are assured of something new to see on each visit. A highlight in 2023 was the loan of the Bury Psalter for a weekend, giving a rare opportunity to see this beautiful manuscript written in the Abbey of St Edmund.

The LEGO model continues to grow, though there is still some way to go to completion. It is a good talking point and generates a lot of interest amongst visitors of all ages.

A series of Twilight talks was programmed in the autumn, offering a talk by a specialist followed by a thematically linked tour by torchlight. These enjoyable evenings, focussing on the development of the building, were enriching and entertaining.

New themed leaflets were introduced, following on from the success of an Advent 'Angels' leaflet in 2022. Visitors were encouraged to follow a trail linking our 'Royal Connections' and 'Food and Drink', exploring stained glass, statues, and art work.

The non-English Welcome leaflets were all updated in 2023, thanks to help from one of our linguistically gifted volunteers and a young Ukrainian student. As well as a print version, visitors are encouraged to use a QR code to access a leaflet in their own language.

In September, the final face-to-face interviews took place, which contributed to a year long visitor survey set up with the Audience Agency and the Association of English Cathedrals. The data has been analysed and gives valuable insights into our visitors. This will be used to inform our planning and programming for future visitors.

---

---

## Volunteers: Sarah Friswell, Visitor Experience Manager

Approximately 300 active volunteers form the Guild of St Edmund, the Cathedral's body of volunteers. The number of volunteers fluctuates over the year as some volunteers retire, several who have been volunteers for many years. A good number of new volunteers have joined, offering to get involved in different roles and coming from not just the local area but also further afield. We had a particularly good response to our request for new chaplains to be on duty supporting visitors. A new streamlined application process was introduced in 2023, using ChurchSuite, the Cathedral's database.

The Guild Committee, chaired by Louise Martin and attended by a representative of each volunteering group including now the St Edmundsbury Singers, met three times to discuss volunteering matters. The Guild as a whole met in June, with volunteers enjoying tours of the Norman Tower, organ loft, Ancient Library, Tower, Cathedral and behind the scenes in the Sacristy. Long service awards were presented and new volunteers welcomed. The Edmuntide gathering gave the opportunity to enjoy lunch and conversation together followed by a fascinating talk on the Ancient Library by Stephen Dart.

A number of volunteers undertook the Welcome Host customer service training course. Many joined a very informative session on understanding dementia from the perspective of front line customer service. The guides meet regularly to study particular topics and enhance their knowledge.

A number of young people have taken up volunteering roles in 2023, including a 15-year-old helping with the LEGO project as part of his Duke of Edinburgh award. Other college students have done a week's work experience, shadowing staff and working alongside volunteers to learn vital skills.

Whether offering a shift a month, or a weekly slot, the contribution of our volunteers is vital and enables us to offer a warm welcome to all visitors and support the mission and ministry of the Cathedral.

## The Guild of St Edmund: Louise Martin

The Guild of St Edmund, which supports all volunteers in the Cathedral, has two annual meetings: an AGM in early summer, and an Edmuntide meeting in November. The Guild Committee, with representatives of the various groups, additionally meets three times a year. Standing agenda items include a Cathedral update on finances, buildings, and staff changes, a volunteering update from all Guild representatives, and a safeguarding update. In April volunteers attended an excellent Dementia awareness training workshop. Before the June AGM, volunteers had a choice of mini-tours including visits to the organ loft, Norman Tower, and a chance to see the vestments in the Sacristy. During the AGM, Canon Matthew Vernon spoke about Dementia awareness.

Sarah Friswell and Drew Parnell developed a volunteer application process via ChurchSuite which ensures all new volunteers receive an application form, volunteer agreement, and volunteer handbook in a timely manner.

---

---

## Events: James Stark, Events Manager and Head Verger

2023 saw the busiest year we have had for Events, even since before the COVID-19 Pandemic. I am grateful as always to the Verger team for their patience and assistance which helped make 2023 a huge success.

As in most years, we tend to have a quiet period in January following the Christmas festivities. In February, we hosted a reeling night for the first time which was very well received by all. March kicked off the 'concert season', and we hosted Suffolk County Council for their end of term 'Young at Heart' concert, bringing young musicians of Suffolk together for an evening. Our own Cathedral Youth Choir performed, and it was a huge success for outgoing County Councillor, Robert Everitt. The following week, we hosted 'Queen by Candlelight' across three consecutive evenings - a first for us, and all complete sell-outs. The COO was dancing, which indicates it was a very successful event.

In May, we hosted The Bury Bach Choir for their only performance of the year, as well as hosting our first ever 'Wedding Fayre' which brought many new faces into the Cathedral whom may not have stepped foot in otherwise. June saw us welcome our friends from across the county at Aldeburgh. The Aldeburgh Festival returned and we welcomed yet another sell-out crowd. To end the choir term in July, the Cathedral Choirs came together for a summer concert which has now become an annual booking. Another first for the Cathedral was to host a 'Silent Disco', which has toured around many Cathedrals. We welcomed a huge crowd of 700 to dance in the Cathedral Nave, and the Event Stewards were also able to have a boogie.

August meant it was once again time to host the East Anglian Beer and Cider Festival for the third straight year. All went smoothly, and we feel like it has developed well since its introduction in 2021. Another first was hosting a small 'Gin to my Tonic' Gin Festival. Once again, a tried and tested model around some Cathedrals and Town halls, this event welcomed around 1200 people over two sessions throughout the afternoon and evening. The Cathedral Christmas Market returned and was another huge success over the three days, welcoming many visitors to the Cathedral. It was important for us to deliver well once again, due to the town not hosting an old-style fayre on Angel Hill.

Honourable mentions include G4 @ Christmas, London Concertante, Christmas with the Cathedral Choir, and The Grand Nave Dinner. It's good to be able to welcome Cressida and Katie to the Events Team as we look to extend our offering of events here at St Edmundsbury Cathedral. We look forward to a busier 2024.

## Verger: James Stark, Events Manager and Head Verger

The Verger Team have had a very busy year as normal. The Verger team consists of three full-time members of staff, three part-time members of staff, and three honorary (volunteer Vergers). We were delighted to welcome Scott Owen as a new honorary Verger towards the back end of 2023. Scott has previous experience of working at Peterborough Cathedral. It will be a busy 2024 for the team as we take a lead role in both Services and Events. Each Verger now has experience in all the major festivals, including Easter and Christmas. This meant that Christmas 2023 went very smoothly, and we look forward to Easter which is fast approaching.

---





**Harvest Festival**

**October 2023**

---

## LEGO: Sarah Friswell, Visitor Experience Manager

The gallant team of volunteers who build the LEGO model got into their stride in 2023 and added many more bricks, bringing the total close to 125,000 by the end of the year.

Visitors have delighted at seeing Pilgrims' Kitchen, complete with tables, chairs, and pot plants, in LEGO form and have been amused at being asked to add a brick to the ladies and gents toilets. But every brick counts and gradually the model is progressing.

It has been good to have the assistance of some younger volunteers, including one youngster who comes with his grandad and another young man who helped out as part of his Duke of Edinburgh award. This has helped our faithful dedicated team, many of whom have been adding bricks since the start of the project in May 2016. We ran LEGO building sessions as part of the summer fair and throughout the year, and the model continued to be a source of interest to visitors of all ages and from all over the world. Many Cathedral model kits have been bought by visitors and are now being built in their homes. All the wolf models have now been sold.

Occasionally the team gets together to test build modules waiting to be added to the main model. There are still many more to add, but it has been decided that we will build the roof sections offsite so that visitors will be able to peep inside right up to the last moment. The latest estimate suggests that we will be adding the final brick in 2026. In the meantime, keep donating!

## Welcomers: Jill de Laat

The number of welcomers has increased of late and we now have 42 volunteers. We can fill pretty much all the rota most months, with many volunteers eager to do one a week. This is very gratifying.

Welcoming is a very worthwhile way to spend a couple of hours. Visitors are all different – in their reasons for coming, their level of interest, their desire to spend time looking around, and their eagerness to engage. Some visitors take a leaflet and hasten on to make their own discoveries whilst others are keen to learn as much as possible, from the foundation of the abbey to the building of the tower and all points in between. This can result in an interesting situation at busy times when the Welcomer is in full flow to one visitor, but then a horde comes through the door. Clicking them in and dishing out leaflets can become quite a logistical challenge. All in all, though, the Welcomers present a cheerful and unflustered face to new visitors and it is a very rewarding experience.

---

---

## Ancient Library: Stephen Dart

There were nearly 300 visitors to the Ancient Library this year, including 155 members of the public on Heritage Open Days, who were particularly generous with donations. Other groups included the Elmswell History Group, the Norwich Cathedral librarians, parties from Wittenberg and Thailand, and trainee academic librarians from Cambridge. Individuals have researched the Macro family (linked with Cupola House), the Hadleigh martyr, Roland Taylor, and our copy of Euclid.

We visited Abbeygate Sixth Form College with eight volumes which were of particular relevance to the syllabus studied by Upper Sixth students but also attracted the interest of many others. The library collaborated with staff of the Learning Hub for a study day for 30 students aged 14-16 from Chantry Academy and with a Treasury exhibition on Queen Elizabeth I's succession, linked to a half term project.

Other exhibitions this year were 'Angels in Print', 'Charles I and Charles II', 'Food and Drink', and 'Powerful Portraits'. It was also good to display King Edward VI's 'Bury Psalter' and participate in study sessions in partnership with Suffolk Archives and the Foundation Governors of the school.

Funding from Chapter has enabled us to conserve a volume by Durandus, printed in Strasburg in 1486. A volume by Francis Hutchinson (Preacher here from 1686 to 1716) which includes his research on witchcraft is at present with the conservator, as a result of the generosity of the Friends of the Cathedral.

A report in the 'Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History' published in December highlights research undertaken on donors, manuscript pastedowns and identification of bindings in recent years and, also, our programme of book conservation.

## Flower Guild: Sue Cockram

We have enjoyed another year arranging flowers in our beautiful Cathedral. As always, we are so grateful to the flower arrangers from the various Parishes. Margaret Woolmore, who has arranged flowers in the Cathedral for many, many years, has decided to retire and we shall all miss her very much. Margaret was also my deputy, and Vicki Hease has agreed to step into this role. This year we have welcomed a new recruit, Janet Meyer, and I hope she will enjoy arranging flowers with us.

If you would like flowers arranged for any special occasions, anniversaries, weddings, birthdays, or christenings, do please get in touch.

My thanks go to the flower arrangers, both from the Cathedral and Parish representatives, and our faithful waterers. Fun, Flowers, and Friendship is the motto of flower arrangers, and we exercise that to the full, adorning our beautiful building, having fun, and making friends – we are a friendly group! We always need plenty of help and would love to welcome anyone who would like to join us. Do please get in touch with me on 01284 766688 or email [sue@cockram.net](mailto:sue@cockram.net)

---



---

## Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership: The Rev'd Canon Matthew Vernon

To assure a sustainable future for the Abbey of St Edmund, an application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund was submitted in November with the Cathedral, West Suffolk Council, and English Heritage working together as members of The Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership to develop and deliver a major project. The Heritage Partnership comprises 29 organisations and individuals who care about the Abbey. It aims to encourage people to experience the international significance of St Edmund and the historic Abbey, and to ensure that the Abbey will inspire all its visitors through excellent conservation, learning, and community engagement. The Abbey area is three times the size of the Abbey Gardens and includes the Cathedral and its ancillary buildings, as well as the Great Churchyard with St Mary's Church, and the Water Meadows. Members of the partnership include experts in heritage, planning, archaeology, academia, and local history.

## Marketing: Catherine Rayson, Marketing and Communication Manager

After implementing new practices in 2022 such as the content calendar, events email, and social media advertising, 2023 was the year for carrying on these marketing initiatives and seeing growth.

This growth has come from our social channels where we've had an average 12% increase in followers. We also saw a good increase in those on our email mailing list with a 24% growth of those who want to hear from us about our events. This means marketing to an engaged audience who will purchase tickets and attend our variety of events. Although the average cost per click went up to 19p in our social media advertising, we made a net income of £15,393.24 on events advertised, against a spend of £842.11.

We made a small increase in website visitors in 2023 and saw trends emerging in our most popular pages which remain, 'what's on', 'worship/services', 'plan my visit', 'Christmas Market', and 'Pilgrims' Kitchen'. We maintained a decent spread of media coverage, 152 pieces, without any major headline events (e.g. Abbey 1000) and pushed on branding work such as building signage and visitor items.

We formed a communications group made up of representatives of the Cathedral staff and Cathedral community. The aim of this group is to establish a conversation across all areas of life at the Cathedral and make sure communications needs are met. 2023 saw us implement a 'You Said, We Did' campaign which reinstated suggestion boxes in the Cathedral and showed our responses.

---





# 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. Safeguarding will remain a key priority as we ensure a caring environment for all.



---

## Philanthropy & Membership: Cressida Parsons, Philanthropy & Membership Manager

It has been a successful and varied year for fundraising as we continue to build the in-house fundraising department. My role continues to focus on raising vital funds for the Cathedral through our Patrons, appeals, legacies, and fundraising events.

A major focus for 2023 was the inaugural 'Grand Nave Dinner' which was a wonderful night of dinner, dancing, entertainment, and auction for 220 people. The £52,000 raised surpassed expectations and will be spent on three vital areas of our mission: our social outreach, music, and fabric. The evening would have been impossible to host without the generous support of our sponsors, event partners, and auction donors, each giving so generously. Many people gave their energy, guidance, and passion to make the evening a reality and we are so thankful and excited about the new friendships and relationships with town and county that were built on the night.

Legacies have been a focus in 2023 with the aim of building awareness of 'leaving a gift in your will'. No matter how small or large, every gift in every will makes a difference and we have run two Legacy Sundays and provided printed materials to help spread the word among the congregation and wider community.

Patron numbers have remained steady. A hugely enjoyable part of the scheme is connecting and getting to know Patrons at our special events. Highlights included: a private viewing of the Bury Psalter, the Gabrielli Consort in performance as part of the Aldeburgh Festival with a reception at the Deanery, and festive mulled wine and whiskey receptions over the Advent and Christmas period. It has been a joy to work with existing patrons and welcome new faces too.

Following the major fundraising campaign 'The New Chairs Appeal' in 2022, we look forward to March 2024 where the project will reach its completion with the delivery of the new chairs. This will mark the beginning of a new era of flexibility for events and services at St Edmundsbury Cathedral.

The in-house fundraising team consists of Cressida Parsons employed by the Cathedral as Philanthropy and Membership Manager and Christine Stokes as External Fundraising Consultant. We are delighted to welcome Katie Schutte in January 2024 as Events and Fundraising Assistant, a post generously supported by the Cathedral Sustainability Fund.

We have lots to look forward to in 2024: retaining and increasing our individual and corporate Patrons with imaginative events remains a priority, as well as continuing to implement our legacy strategy. We will repeat the 'St Edmund Gift Day' to which so many gave so generously.

---



## Philanthropy & Membership continued: Cressida Parsons

The Cathedral manages all fundraising through the internal team and does not work with external bodies working on our behalf. In 2023 we received no complaints regarding our fundraising activities.

St Edmundsbury Cathedral Fundraising activities are always governed by our 'Ethical Fundraising Policy'. The purpose of this policy is to record the basis on which the Cathedral will or will not pursue and manage donations. The fundraising department regularly refers to the Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice.

To protect vulnerable people and members of the public from intrusion and persistent approaches, all contact with donors:

- is logged and tracked securely using the fundraising database
- is sent by the in-house fundraising team directly
- is made through phone/email/post a maximum of three times a year but usually only annually
- contains clear instructions on how a person can be removed from mailing lists.

A member of the fundraising team will attend all events to ensure that that they are being appropriately run.

Where concerns are raised that the donation might come from an individual(s) considered vulnerable and are therefore acting without sufficient agency, the Cathedral reserves the right to refuse the gift.



---

## Eco St Eds: The Rev'd Anita Rooney

Having achieved our Silver Arocha Eco Church award, we aim to be consistent about our environmental message and continue to encourage our congregation and others in our diocese.

We do this every week in our Green Tips in the Bulletin. But we have also had many activities and successes in the last year, which have included:

- A Mini Meadow on the Cathedral Garth
- Now exclusively buying environmentally cleaning products
- Holding a yearly Climate Sunday Service
- Supporting other initiatives such as Earth Day
- Achieving great strides in the Solar Panel project

We have achieved gold status in three of the five categories of the Eco Church Gold award and hope to succeed in getting our Gold Eco Church award in the not too distant future.

## Cathedral Gardeners: Robert Bourne

The Cathedral Gardeners have continued to meet weekly on Tuesday mornings, and as in the previous year have not once been rained off. Ted Simmons, former verger, has joined the team. There is regular helpful liaison with Cathedral management and Stephen Cole, Facilities & Maintenance Verger. The team also has cordial relations with the Abbey Gardens staff, who have for instance supplied the woodchip mulch used in the Herb Garden.

Much effort has been put into the recovery of the lawns and flower beds from the drought conditions of 2022. Some reseeding has been carried out and the border at the Abbey Gardens end of the lower Remembrance Garden lawn has been replanted with ornamental grasses. Box blight has affected the gardens and two bushes have been replaced with yews. We have maintained summer floral displays in the box planters in the front entrance area and by Pilgrims' Kitchen, although the pots along the path to Pilgrims' Kitchen have proved vulnerable to damage and have been re-sited. Winter floral displays have been enhanced. We seek to operate in an environmentally responsible way, with no pesticides and limited use of artificial weedkillers and fertilizer.

Our access to the beds adjacent to the ancient flint walls has inevitably been restricted or prevented throughout the past year. The beech hedge adjacent to the path to Pilgrims' Kitchen has been successfully reduced in height. New signs have been installed at the entrance to the Remembrance Garden, by the Judas tree given in memory of Dean Neil Collings, and by the holm oak planted as part of the Queen's Green Canopy project. More herbs in the Herb Garden have been labelled. The original propagators of the Edmund Roses have ceased trading and efforts are being made to find another source of supply.

Our overriding aim continues to be to maintain the garden areas surrounding the Cathedral so as to enhance the site and to be attractive and welcoming to the Cathedral community and visitors.

---

---

## Enterprises: Stewart Alderman

St Edmundsbury Cathedral Enterprises Ltd is a registered company that is responsible for running the commercial activities of the Cathedral - namely the Shop, Pilgrims Kitchen Restaurant, and the Edmund Room. The Company is run by a board of seven directors comprising clergy, lay members of the cathedral community, and external members who bring a variety of business skills to the Enterprises Board.

The aim of Cathedral Enterprises is to support the mission and ministry of St Edmundsbury Cathedral both financially via profit and other financial contributions such as rent and a large share of the Cathedral's administration costs, and through enhancing the overall experience of those visiting the Cathedral.

## Pilgrims' Kitchen: Stewart Alderman

Pilgrims' Kitchen (PK) is run by restaurant manager Nikki King and chef Paul Hughes with a team of 14 mainly part-time staff.

The restaurant comprises the inside seating within the Cathedral centre as well as an outside decking area and a large marquee in the garden. The restaurant caters for all visitor needs with home cooked meals, soups, sandwiches, home produced cakes, and Paul's famous cheese scones. Real fairly traded coffee is served barista-style alongside a wide range of fair-trade teas, soft drinks, beers, and wines. Customers can eat in or take away. Free Wi-Fi is available for customers and the addition in April 2019 of automatic glass doors has made PK a fully equal access restaurant.

In addition to the day-to-day serving of visitors, PK also hosts private dinners and functions in the restaurant and caters for events in the Cathedral itself on a regular basis.

2022 had been a very successful year for turnover in PK, but as the cost-of-living crisis took hold and inflation soared the pressure on costs saw an underperformance in profit. The challenge for 2023 was to maintain the excellent sales by continuing to offer great value whilst ensuring that margins were at a level to realise the expected profit targets. Both of these business goals have been achieved with turnover for 2023 being 23% higher than in 2022, and profit exceeding budget by 160% - a 130% increase compared with the previous year.

During the busy lunchtime periods, PK operates significantly above cooking and baking capacity. To address this, the Enterprise Board has invested for the future by purchasing two new Combi Ovens to replace the current one. Improvements in the design and technology of this equipment mean the two new ovens will fit into the same space as the current single oven. This will double the oven capacity without needing to extend the kitchen space and means that we can change our priorities and now look to invest in extending the restaurant indoor seating area instead.

---



---

## Cathedral Shop: Jane Harrison, Enterprises Retail Manager

The Shop and Tourist Information Point (TIP) are managed by Jane Harrison alongside two part time members of staff, Michael Jack and Sue Hollis, and a very dedicated team of 45 volunteers. The shop and TIP are open seven days a week and our role is not only to generate income for the cathedral and support its work but also to offer a warm welcome to visitors and Cathedral community alike when visiting.

Following the successful refit of the shop and TIP in 2022, we entered 2023 in a good position. The year started well, and a slightly later Easter meant a longer lead up which we always find beneficial as customers have longer to purchase their lent books, cards, and decorations.

This was followed by the King's Coronation which gave us focus for a range of royal and commemorative products. These sold exceptionally well and generated a lot of interest. Over the summer, tourist numbers picked up and the focus moved to souvenir products such as magnets, tea towels, and food. Volunteers in the TIP come into their own offering advice and suggestions to visitors alongside promoting and selling tickets for Cathedral guided tours and tower tours, another revenue stream for the Cathedral.

Later in the year we launched our range of Cathedral beer, which is brewed by Artefact Brewing, a small craft microbrewery located in Ixworth, just a few miles down the road from the Cathedral. This proved to be an excellent Christmas gift idea and a great addition to the product mix in the shop. Even closer to home we were very pleased to offer Cathedral honey in the shop for the first time. The hives are located on top of the Cathedral centre and the bees gather nectar and pollen from the Abbey Gardens and surrounding area, creating a beautiful honey. Following its sell out success, we are now waiting for our next batch.

The Cathedral Christmas Market brought a lot of extra footfall and custom to the shop. Sales were brisk and the shop saw a lot of customers who might not usually visit us during the year, coming in to buy items from our extensive range of decorations, advent calendars, and nativity sets. Although the shop relies heavily on the sale of gifts to maintain our margins, we also see it as an important part of our role to continue to supply church requisites, religious books, and cards to the local community and churches who come to us at various times of the year for things such as palm crosses, paschal candles, and communion wine.

Increased trade continued through December resulting in the highest annual turnover to date for the shop and TIP. This is against a backdrop of difficult trading conditions for the high street which continued from 2022. Increased stock costs and the average customer having less disposable income meant we had to work hard for every pound through the till and had to react to the retail climate by adjusting our ranges and prices accordingly. We have returned to and exceeded pre-pandemic turnover, and although the number of transactions has decreased due to tough trading conditions, this has been offset by an increased average spend. This has been achieved through careful product selection and visual merchandising, made much easier and more successful by improvements made by the shop refit.

The shop and TIP rely heavily on the contributions and dedication of our loyal volunteers and our success is also down to their continued effort and support which we greatly appreciate.

---

---

## Friends of the Cathedral: Sue Cockram

2023 was a very active year. In March, over 100 Friends gathered at Lavenham to listen to the very interesting and amusing Quirky talk given by Judge John Devaux. In May, we went to Shotley, visiting HMS Ganges Museum and a trip down the river. Friends Day went well in July, and in September over 50 of us greatly enjoyed an informative talk with slides on gardening in a marquee in the beautiful garden at Great Ashfield. Walking around the gardens was a real treat! Many of our events conclude with delicious homemade teas. As always, we held our Annual Art Exhibition which was very successful in raising money for our funds. Early September, the annual holiday took place visiting Derbyshire. Our thanks must go to Arthur Tanner for arranging our holidays and outings.

We have supported the Dean and Chapter by giving funds to the new chairs for the Cathedral and the restoration of books in the Ancient Library.

We have a full programme planned for 2024: a talk on Suffolk Windmills, a visit to The Minster at Great Yarmouth which Stephen Dykes Bower helped to restore, and a September holiday to Guildford, Portsmouth, and Chichester.

If you would like to know more about the Friends, please do contact me at [sue@cockram.net](mailto:sue@cockram.net) or pick up a leaflet from the Cathedral. You would be most welcome.

## Planned Giving: Liz Steele

As I complete my final year as Chairman of Planned Giving I can reflect on the achievements that we have made over the years. The past year has once again seen the effects that the cost of living and changes in circumstances has made to our income. During COVID-19 we were very pleased to see that our figures were, on the whole, maintained. The past year has seen a fall in our income with a total of £132,210 compared with the budget set of £135,000. We are very pleased to record that the number of people who are giving via Parish Giving has increased to 91, with members switching from standing order or weekly envelopes. The committee continue to encourage new members to join. We attend the regular services and spend time during coffee to chat and inform.

We have had a number of deaths and some older people have gone into nursing homes. As well as this, some members of the congregation have resumed their worship at their local churches. The work of the committee in the future will be to encourage younger worshippers and supporters to begin their regular support.

I would like to personally thank the committee, past and present, for all their support. I would like to thank Christopher Barlow for his work as receiver as this is a very involved job. Finally, I would like to thank all those who answered the call and who give on a regular basis. The income we receive from your gifts is a very large part of the Cathedral income and helps us to continue our support for worshippers and visitors for the present and for the future.

---

---

## Cathedral Forum: The Rev'd Canon Matthew Vernon

The role of the Cathedral Forum has been reviewed and strengthened following the changes to the Cathedral's Governance. New Terms of Reference have been adopted to outline how members of the congregations meet regularly to discuss forthcoming issues in the life of the Cathedral and provide input to Chapter decision-making. The Forum provides a vital link between Chapter and the congregations' views, actions, concerns, and questions.

## Cathedral Fabric and Property: The Rev'd Canon Philip Banks

Stephen Cole, our excellent Facilities & Maintenance Verger, undertakes or manages the many small and large on-going day-to-day maintenance projects and work, from the contractual maintenance of heating systems and lifts to larger projects such as new Treasury display cases, lighting protection improvements, and electrical repairs. Working with our Cathedral Architect, projects this year have included the renovation of one of our cathedral domestic properties, the continued gradual replacement of lighting and heating across our buildings (as part of our drive to reduce carbon emissions), and cathedral exterior stonework repairs. Planning for the installation of PV panels on the cathedral south-facing roofs (as part of the Eco St Eds group work reported elsewhere) continued and it is hoped to have the project completed in 2024.

## Fabric Advisory Committee: Sue Cockram

The Fabric Advisory Committee (FAC) hold three meetings annually to advise the Dean and Chapter on various projects which are currently in hand: the new chairs for the Nave of the Cathedral, The Deanery alterations, and the installation of solar panels. We also provide advice on a variety of other minor projects relating to the conservation and maintenance of the fabric of the Cathedral and sundry embellishments.

Dr Julian Litten, who has been Chairman since 2012, will be stepping down in March this year and his successor will be chosen from the existing FAC Voting members.

## Electoral Roll: Sarah-Jane Allison

At the year-end, total membership on the Electoral Roll stood at 353. David Eaton resigned in 2023 and Simon Waters has been covering this role from February 2024 until formally elected at the APCM.

---



---

## Thingoe Deanery Synod: Michael Wilde

Deanery Synod is a collection of representatives from the Anglican parishes in Bury St Edmunds and the surrounding villages. It consists of all the clergy from those parishes together with a number of lay representatives from each parish, their number determined by their Electoral Roll figure.

Synod meets three times each year and we invite a visiting speaker for the first half of our 90 minutes meeting. In 2023 our speakers engaged with us on a good variety of subjects:

- Safeguarding by Lisa Hicks, Diocesan Safeguarding Training Co-ordinator
- St Nicholas Hospice by Revd Canon Sister Sharon Connell, Lead Chaplain & Spiritual Care Co-ordinator
- Bury Drop In by Sabine Dornbusch, General Manager, Bury Drop In

These Synod meetings brought clergy and lay people together to engage with current issues and topics. The remainder of each meeting was spent on local news, updates, planning, and reports from Diocesan and General Synods. Importantly, the Deanery Mission & Pastoral Committee met in its reconstituted form to prepare our work of updating and implementing the Deanery Plan.

Our Deanery Lay Chair moved to Lancashire at the beginning of the year and the position has been vacant for the remainder of the year. We hope to fill the position early in 2024.

Colin Firth remains as Deanery Organiser for finance, and Michael Wilde as Deanery Secretary and Deanery Treasurer.

Last year all parishes elected new members to Deanery Synod. Here at our Cathedral we elected Lorna, Liz Steele, Geoffrey House, and Michael Wilde to represent us. All our clergy are automatically members.

---

---

# St Edmundsbury Cathedral



Angel Hill  
Bury St Edmunds  
Suffolk  
IP33 1LS

**[stedscathedral.org](https://stedscathedral.org)**

[reception@stedscathedral.org](mailto:reception@stedscathedral.org)

   @stedscath

---