

St Edmundsbury
Cathedral



Community

Annual Report

2024

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A message from The Dean

It is said that the only constant in life is change, and what makes the difference is how we encounter change. When I wrote last year's introduction to the Annual Report, we knew that change was on the horizon: Bishop Martin retiring after ten years of loving service to our diocese and county; a development phase bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund in support of a major project for our ancient Abbey ruins, Cathedral and town; we knew that, life being what it is, colleagues in cathedral and diocese might, at some stage move on. What we didn't suspect was the number of those who would move on, or the scope and scale of change that we would be invited to encounter.

To enumerate departures, briefly.

- On 9 July last year we bid farewell to Tim and Cressida Parsons following Tim's appointment as Director of Music at Wells Cathedral.
- The 28 July saw the departure of Canon Michael Robinson, Canon Theologian and member of Chapter following his appointment as Vicar of Holy Trinity, Sloane Square. The Robinson family had become regular members of the Cathedral community there was sadness in the 9.00 am All Ages Service community to say goodbye to Kate, Alice and William as well.
- On 8 September we said goodbye to Canon Philip and Janet Banks following Philip's appointment as Canon Precentor at St Paul's Cathedral, and on 5 October, with pride we saw him installed.
- On 29 September we said goodbye to Bishop Mike Harrison following his appointment as Bishop of Exeter.
- On 5 January we sent The Rev'd Anita and Kevin Rooney off to Horringer following Anita's appointment as Rector.
- On the Feast of Candlemass, 2 February, the diocese and county gathered to celebrate the ministry of Bishop Martin as he retired as our diocesan bishop.

So although change is inevitable it feels like we have had more than our fair share in 2024!

However, change brings opportunity, and we were delighted in September to welcome our new Director of Music, Claudia Grinnell. She has made an excellent start and music flourishes at St Edmundsbury. Of particular note and a baptism of fire for Claudia, was a major production of 'Flooded', only a couple of months after her arrival, incorporating Benjamin Britten's 'Noye's Fludde' with a contemporary play and working with hundreds of local schoolchildren and an outstanding orchestra.

We were also thrilled to be able to welcome The Rev'd Dr Victoria Johnson, Dean of St College Cambridge as our Canon Theologian and member of chapter. Victoria brings to Chapter a wealth of experience from former Residuary Canonries at Ely and York and continuing in role as Dean of St John's, she offers the resource of valuable links with the academic community at Cambridge University. Cathedral and diocese are already benefiting from her skills as a Public Theologian and her distinctive voice as priest and pastor.





We have also been delighted, after a couple of rounds of advertising, to appoint The Rev'd Canon Katy Cunliffe as our new Canon Precentor. Katy comes from a very successful ministry as Rector of three parishes in Manchester diocese and with a track record as an evangelist. We very much look forward to installing her in June.

It has also been very good, thanks to a grant from the Cathedrals Sustainability Fund, to welcome Caroline Rouse as our new Chief Finance Officer. Caroline brings a wealth of experience of international financial management and is getting to grips with our finances, while considering how we can best improve our processes, increase the flow of information and plan for the future.



On Maundy Thursday last year, standing in the nave of the cathedral, surrounded by diocesan clergy, having lunch after the Chrism Eucharist, I was stunned to receive the news that we had been awarded a development stage grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for The 'Abbey of St Edmund - Reborn' project. My astonishment was that, given the size of the project and the level of grant we were applying for, although we were full of confidence, and much work had been done with our development partners to make the best possible application, the normal response to applications of this size is that amendments and tweaks are required and a further application requested.

To have received such a positive response at the first time of asking was both a great vote of confidence, and a challenge for us to ensure, in the 18 months between the award of the grant and the deadline for submission of the application for the delivery phase by the end of February 2026, that we build the most best and most detailed application. To this end we have appointed nine consultants to take the project from an outline to a detailed and comprehensive set of plans and designs, covering everything from conservation to new build, interpretation design, activity planning and business resilience planning, archaeology, conservation management, destination management and building relationships with other key partners throughout Suffolk. This has all brought immense pressure to bear on diaries, for the project team and other members of staff. The workload is high, but the prize is worth it!



Amid all this change and busyness, the round of worship, music and prayer, hospitality, welcome and learning, events, pastoral care and gathering county and diocese continues.

I am incredibly proud of my team, grateful to Chapter, and particularly the unfailing support and friendship of our Sub Dean and Canon Pastor, Matthew Vernon, as well other colleagues and our growing, happy band of volunteers.



As I criss-cross the Cathedral buildings every day, I remain excited and hopeful for the many ways in which St Edmundsbury continues to offer the loving welcome of God in Christ to all who come through our doors.

Dean Joe.



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 Matthew Vernon, Canon Pastor and Sub Dean

The second half of 2024 was a time of change for our Cathedral community and worship. Director of Music, Tim Parsons, moved to Wells Cathedral in the summer, and our new Director of Music, Claudia Grinnell, joined us from Winchester Cathedral in September. Our Precentor, Canon Philip Banks, now at St Paul's Cathedral, and our Suffragan, Bishop Mike Harrison, now in Exeter, both left us in September. Canon Mark Haworth, recently retired and moved back to Bury St Edmunds, has provided invaluable cover of precentorial duties.

Our Cathedral is a house of prayer and peace for all people. It is a place of Anglican worship, the seat of our Bishop, and a gathering place for our County and Diocese. The Cathedral's worship is the 'heartbeat' of our daily life. Cathedral clergy, together with our wonderfully supportive auxiliary clergy, have ensured that worship is offered daily throughout the year. We draw on the Benedictine heritage of our site including a reading from the Rule of St Benedict each day at our evening service. The Cathedral offers fresh expression of the wonderful inherited traditions of liturgy which have fed and nurtured many generations of Christians. Livestreaming of Services allows 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. Our music provision includes our Singing Schools programme and valued partnerships with King Edward VI School and County Upper School with Scholars and School Musicians in Residence. 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.

Our Sunday Services includes the All Ages Eucharist. Visitors from other parishes often join us to see how it is done. 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 hosts numerous special services for the county, community, and diocese.

With the rhythm of daily services and the church year, our faith is sustained and nurtured by the uplifting Cathedral liturgy, music, and preaching. Our gratitude goes to all who make Cathedral worship possible: vergers, musicians, servers, wardens, bellringers, administration staff, volunteers, clergy. Without their skill, devotion, and hard work, our worship would not be as it is.

Thy Kingdom Come: The Venerable Sally Gaze, Archdeacon of Rural Mission

We supported this national season of prayer for evangelism by distributing resources for parishes at our Maundy Thursday Eucharist and through prayer stations in the Cathedral between Ascension and Pentecost. On Pentecost Sunday, we hosted a worship service called "Catching the Fire" celebrating all that God has been doing through local mission activity across the county.

Cathedral Music: Claudia Grinnell, Director of Music

A busy 2024 saw the Cathedral Choir tour to Normandy, broadcast twice on BBC Radio 3, record a CD, and welcome a new Director of Music in September. Thanks to the choir's expanding reputation, offers of additional performance opportunities are increasing and chorister numbers remain healthy (19 boys and 20 girls). There is a good appetite for future recruitment, which can be more selective as the musical expectations are raised. The Cathedral remains committed to a local and national reputation for excellence in choral music which is open to all children with the necessary enthusiasm and potential.

The full team of vicars choral and lay clerks continues to go from strength to strength, whilst the Cathedral's organ and choral scholarships provide valuable training opportunities for early-career musicians and working links with King Edward VI and County High Schools. The Cathedral hopes to strengthen these links further through robust advertising and recruitment for the next scholars.

The Cathedral's two voluntary choirs offer regular performance opportunities at a consistently high standard. Alongside their regular pattern of Evensongs, the St Edmundsbury Singers often join the adults of the Cathedral Choir to lead the music at important events, such as the Easter Vigil, the All Souls' Requiem and Midnight Mass. The Youth Choir, though small in membership, makes a beautiful contribution to worship. It is an opportunity for continued high-quality choral singing after choristership on a reduced schedule, although pleasingly, there are also a number of singers in the Youth Choir who were not choristers here first.

Outside of the pattern of worship, November's production of Benjamin Britten's opera *Noye's Fludde* drew together nearly 300 local schoolchildren in three spectacular performances. The project was generously supported by the English Arts Council and, closer to home, the Vestey Trust. Almost immediately it was completed, the Cathedral Choir embarked on an ambitious and successful Advent and Christmas run, exploring a range of new repertoire—including a number of works by female composers—and consistently performing to the highest standards.

Cathedral Chaplains: Major Georgina Pinches

The chaplains had another good year from March through to December 2024, particularly as we had recruited more volunteers so there was fairly good coverage throughout the year. We have ordained and lay chaplains who give their time just to 'loiter with intent' and be aware of those who may need a word of encouragement, a listening ear, or even a challenge!

Brief prayers are said at 12.00 pm and 3.00 pm and visitors frequently tell us how much they appreciate them. Personal stories have been shared over the year that emphasise the contribution that chaplains have made and how worthwhile it is proving to be.

We look forward to another fruitful year in 2025 and the opportunity to minister in a subtle and non-threatening way. Many thanks to our chaplains who willingly give their time for this special form of service.

Flooded!

November 2024



St Edmundsbury Singers: Georgina Small

The St Edmundsbury Singers has continued to be led by Assistant Director of Music, Richard Cook, who has maintained a high standard of singing and expectation. Fortnightly rehearsals have served to prepare the choir for Evensong services on alternate Wednesdays, as well as for regular Sunday services. With an audition required for new, interested singers, Richard has preserved the true essence of service that this Cathedral ensemble has always maintained. This year has seen the retirement and moving on of a few members, whilst simultaneously welcoming in newcomers, keeping the number healthy, standing at 30 voluntary singers in all.

Claudia Grinnell has been warmly welcomed as St Edmundsbury Cathedral's Director of Music and, since her arrival in September 2024, she has overseen and supported Richard Cook's commitments to the St Edmundsbury Singers (occasionally singing with the ladies herself). Claudia has kept in close touch with this group, taking great care to effectively organise the diary and ensuring that this choir continues as a valued presence within the Cathedral community.

Benjamin Britten's 'A Ceremony of Carols' was performed for the third year in a row on 26 January 2025, when an intimately beautiful, and memorable service was attended by an appreciative congregation. Other offerings during the latter part of 2024 included: 'Draw Near with Faith' by Peter Miller (September), 'im himmelreich ein haus steht' by Max Reger (October), and for Advent, an arrangement of 'O Come, O Come, Emmanuel' by Franz Joseph Hayden, which proved a popular choice for a peaceful December Evensong.

The singers continue to care deeply about the choir and its purpose, and the offering of both ancient and modern music continues to be supported with enthusiasm. Without a doubt, The St Edmundsbury Singers remain an integral part of the music ministry in our beautiful Cathedral.

Cathedral Wardens: Terry Stark and Barbara Pycraft

One of the most significant aspects of our covering of services in 2024 has been the introduction of chairs, enabling a greater flexibility in both layout and accessibility. Apart from the creation of space, the chairs facing inwards on the north aisle provide easy access to the lift and for our Davers Court visitors, while the similar arrangement on the south aisle provides a livestream free area in the Cathedral for those who wish it.

This last year has seen a full diary of weddings, large funerals, and a wide variety of services including one with St Mary's for Ascension Day and special services for Prisons' week and the Bury Drop-In.

From the small Wedding Blessing to a full Cathedral for the Nine Lessons and Carols, it has been a privilege for our team to warden these services and to try to make our Cathedral a place of welcome for everyone.

Churches Together: Pam Pitts

Through the Churches Together [website](https://together.ourchurchweb.org.uk/stedmundsbury), (together.ourchurchweb.org.uk/stedmundsbury), there are links to local churches, activities, events, and community work to keep up to date with current events and find out how you can be involved in the fellowship and work of the churches and organisations in our communities. 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 pm – 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. In 2025, hundreds of people will gather again on Friday 18 April.

A Summer Celebration of music and praise was held in the Abbey Gardens in June; about 150 attended. This year this will happen again, with 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.

There was an exchange of greetings between 12 churches in the Autumn, including The Bridge Church with the Cathedral. Some local churches took part in the "Shine Your Light" initiative involving a Carol service on the Cornhill on 15 December; this was part of a nationwide event. The launch service at Garland St Baptist Church incorporated an Agape meal. The materials for this year were prepared by an ecumenical team from Bose in northern Italy with the theme "Do you believe this?".

A Churches Together Advent service will be held at the Cathedral on Sunday 7 December.

World Day of Prayer: Mandy Alderman

This year the service was represented by Christian Women from The Cook Islands.

The World Day of Prayer Service was held on 7 March 2025 at St Mary's Church at 10.30 am and at the St Edmund's Catholic Church at 7.30 pm. The morning service was attended by 76 people and 40 people attended the evening service. Both churches were decorated with palms and all attendees received a garland on entering the church to bring a feel of the Cook Islands to the services. Both services were said to be spiritual and moving.

Children, Families, and Young People: Fiona Knapp, Licensed Lay Children's and Families' Minister

Children, families, and young people continue to be an integral part of life at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, and we encourage their participation in a range of ways.

Our Vision for Young Worshippers encourages and supports children and young people both to grow in 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 40-minute 9.00 a.m All-Ages Eucharist continues to grow and flourish and attracts both the very youngest and more mature members of the Cathedral community. Children and young people are invited to carry the cross and candles at the beginning and end of the service and they offer valuable insights to our conversations, helping us all to grow younger and deeper in faith together. Junior Church has continued to meet during the 10.30 am service on Sunday mornings, although there is still a large variation in numbers from week to week. 14 children and young people were baptised during the year, and three were prepared for and admitted to Holy Communion.

It has been a delight this year to encourage our young people join in with and shape the life of the Cathedral, not only through worship, but through the many other areas that connect them to the Cathedral and the Cathedral to them. 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, attracting an average of 14 children and 13 adults each week. This figure is based on a total of 700 children and 650 adults over 50 weeks. A very successful Messy Lent was held in the Cathedral in March 2024, and we welcomed approximately 30 children with their families to participate in a range of activities, a worship session, and a simple shared tea. Volunteers from a range of aspects of Cathedral life helped to run the session and it was a delight to witness the buzz of activity in the Nave. The children's 'Alleluia Cross' made as part of this was hung in the Lady Chapel on Easter Sunday. A small group of children from Junior Church created the Easter Garden during Holy Week and we were grateful to Lorna Brook for purchasing the plants and Christopher Barlow for his gardening expertise.

We work hard to ensure children and young people are encouraged to find their voices and know that the Cathedral is a welcoming and safe place for them. It was with this in mind that we have established a Children's Area in the South Aisle. This contains books and toys, together with drawing and colouring materials and copies of the Cathedral Trails. It is very well-used, and we have received lots of positive feedback. It would be good to develop this further in 2025. Children and young people enrich the life of our Cathedral community, and we do well to welcome, listen to, and learn from the youngest among us. We look forward to all the joys and challenges they will bring us in 2025 and beyond.

Mothersing Sunday

March 2024



**Celebrating the 30th Anniversary
of Ordination of Women Priests**

June 2024



Society of Norman Tower Bellringers: Joan Garrett

In 2024 there were 17 active ringing members of the band, and we continue to receive the support of several retired ringing members. The ringers always like to recognise special Cathedral, Suffolk, and National events by ringing the excellent 12 bells in the Norman Tower.

During the year we rang 29 quarter peals, and one of the most significant for us was the quarter peal to say farewell to Canon Philip Banks on 8 September, a strong supporter and friend to the ringers for the last 12 years. We wished him well in his new role by presenting him with a framed copy of our special performance. We also rang to say farewell to Timothy and Cressida Parsons and welcome Claudia Grinnell. We rang new methods that we called Craig and Renee for the marriage of one of our ringers, Craig Gradidge. We also rang for Mothering Sunday, Palm Sunday, St Nicholas Hospice 40th Anniversary, Suffolk Day, St Edmunds Day, Remembrance Sunday, Advent, and Christmas Services along with many other events.

Whilst there were nine peal attempts scheduled for the year, sadly there were only four successes and the peal for the Patronal Festival of St James in July was one of those. There is regular Sunday morning service ringing from 9.30 am to 10.30am and on second and fourth Sunday afternoons from 2.15 pm to 3.30 pm as well as ringing for many other special occasions. Practices are held on Thursday evenings from 7.15 pm to 9.00 pm. If anybody is interested in finding out more about bellringing, or would be interested in learning this skill, please do get in touch.

Cathedral Home Group: Chris and Christine Andrews

Monday evening meetings each week in “term” time at 7.00 pm have continued this year at 74, Daisy Avenue hosted by Christine and Chris Andrews. We number nine members, two of whom are regular worshippers elsewhere than the Cathedral. We take a break to join individually in courses like the Cathedral Lent Course.

After finishing “Encounters” by Bishop Rachel Treweek, we worked steadily through “My Sour-Sweet Days”, a selection of the poems of George Herbert made by Mark Oakley. His commentary on each poem helps the reader to appreciate the skill of Herbert’s writing and the depth of insight he employs, both in spiritual exploration in the company of God and in the business of navigating daily life. We all found it rewarding for the soul as well as the mind.

More recently we have been reading “Out of the Shadows”, the first of two studies by Liz Shercliff and Kate Bruce of the many women in the Bible, from both Old and New Testaments. The book is designed to help this preaching and the authors combine sound scholarship with imaginative insights into the personal and social issues which these women embody and act out. They follow this with a complete text of a possible sermon on the subject and a beautifully worded collect arising out of the text. This and its companion volume are informative and thought-provoking without being in any way heavy reading.

If anyone would like to know more about the meetings it goes without saying that we are more than happy to have a talk.

Servers: James Utting, Head Server

The team of approximately 10 regular servers work on a rota basis to provide support to the clergy and the vergers in ensuring the smooth running of the Cathedral services. The roles undertaken are varied and include Crucifer, carrying the processional cross; Acolyte, carrying the processional candles; Thurifer, raising our prayer to God, purifying and sanctifying the altar. A server will also present the gifts of the people for the Blessing and help to prepare the Altar for Communion and clearing afterwards.

2024 has been a year of several goodbyes, not only of clergy, but also of servers, with several leaving us to go on to further education and to explore their vocation. Our previous Head Server Scarlet Blacker left us to commence her Ordinand training at Westcott House, and Simon English has also left for Ordinand training at Ridley College.

With the reduced level of servers this year, it has been a challenge to fill all the roles at our 10:30 am morning service every Sunday. However, I am proud to say that several of our volunteers have been serving nearly every Sunday through Advent and Christmas.

With the help of Canon Mark Haworth we are looking to recruit new servers of all age and ability from the Cathedral community and further afield. If you are interested please speak to myself or email stedsserver@gmail.com. Ongoing training of servers will be resumed this year with the first sessions on how to use the Thurible, which will be given by myself.



Kevelaer Candle Pilgrimage: Stewart Alderman, Enterprises Director

The annual candle pilgrimage to Kevelaer took place between Monday 17 and Saturday 21 September 2024.

Kevelaer pilgrim leaders Lorna Brook, Geoffrey House, and Stewart Alderman were joined by The Reverend Anita Rooney and her husband Kevin, and members of the Cathedral branch of the Mothers Union, Jane and Frank Leung, Margaret and Alan Bond, Mandy Alderman, and Christine Trendall.

Departing on the Monday evening, the sea was thankfully calm for the overnight ferry from Harwich to the Hook of Holland. On Tuesday an easy journey through Holland saw the group arrive at the Priesterhouse where we received our usual warm welcome and lunch in the wonderful dining hall. In the evening the group attended Mass in the Beichtkappel (confession chapel) at the basilica.

On the Wednesday, Father Heiner led us on a spiritual tour of Kevelaer where the group discovered the street sculptures and liturgical and candle shops. 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 afternoon we travelled to Kalkar where “our man in Kalkar” Guido Braam gave a talk on the amazing alter carvings at St Nikolas church. In the evening Father Heiner hosted us in the Chapter Room for a lively wine tasting evening and talk about the German church.

Thursday saw a trip to the nearby town of Xanten to view the Dom, followed by lunch at a restaurant on the banks of the Rhien. In the evening Reverend Anita and the ladies of the Mothers Union had an informative meeting with a group of German women who are associated with the Basilica.

On Friday we attended the high Mass (for Pilgrims) at the Basilica where our new Paschal and Votive candles were blessed and the candle that we leave for display in the candle chapel was lit. After a final lunch in the Priesterhouse, it was time to head back to Holland for the overnight ferry home with a stop at the lively city of Utrecht on the way.

The final part of this pilgrimage was some months later in our Cathedral, at Candlemass on 2 February, where the Pilgrims presented the new candles to The Dean. The Votive candle, which this year bears the inscription of the Mothers Union, is in the high alter and is lit at 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 10 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

Staff and a small, dedicated team of volunteers working within the Learning Hub continued to provide opportunities for all ages to engage creatively and interactively with spiritual and heritage learning.

Events and programmes filled our three learning streams, (i) structured visits for all school key stages, a number bespoke depending on the learning objectives required; (ii) our popular free family activities during the school holidays and some weekends and (iii) adult exploration of spirituality, faith, and topical issues with online, lunchtime, and evening talks and exhibitions.

We also worked with other Cathedral colleagues to organise and participate in events such as, 'Your Cathedral at Night' Twilight talks, the Christmas Market, and the 'Flooded' production which included around 300 pupils from schools around the county and was a major project for the Cathedral.

A new initiative called 'Big Issues' was piloted, with clergy and informed lay personnel going into King Edward VI School and leading discussions with students on issues that young people may be concerned about or interested in.

Going forward, the Learning Hub will continue to enhance and review our core educational programmes, continue with the successful model of holiday family activities, and embed the newly established adult learning opportunities.

Kagera: Valerie Moore and the The Rev'd Canon Matthew Vernon, Canon Pastor and Sub Dean

The Cathedral has been part of the Diocesan link with Kagera in northwest Tanzania for 30 years. The Cathedral supports Kagera in friendship, prayer, and financially, including daily prayers at Evensong for our brothers and sisters there as well as regular fundraising activity.

We have a stall once a month after the 10.30 am service, currently raising money to provide water storage tanks. For many people in Kagera, access to clean water is difficult and time-consuming, often from a communal tap or the river. The money we donate helps to pay for tanks which cost just over £100. They are being provided for disabled and elderly people and built adjacent to their homes and linked to guttering and a downpipe. The water is accessible through a tap. The provision of these tanks changes lives and is greatly appreciated.

In 2024, the link between our Cathedral and Kagera Cathedral was more formally established through the respective Sub Deans meeting and agreeing some practical expressions of the link. Our Sub Dean visited Kagera in July as part of a group led by Bishop Martin which included two teenagers from the Cathedral (and others from the Diocese).

Please pray for our brothers and sisters in Kagera as they pray for us.

Inclusive Cathedral: The Rev'd Canon Matthew Vernon, Canon Pastor and Sub Dean

Dementia-Awareness Sunday is an annual event and the focus of a 10.30 am Choral Eucharist in May. Our dementia-friendly activities include the monthly Together on Tuesdays (a simplified Communion Service for people who find a Sunday Service overwhelming). In September, we hosted an event for businesses and organisations in Bury St Edmunds that are promoting inclusivity. That event was the beginning of ongoing work between partners to make the town even more inclusive and aware of different needs. As an Inclusive Cathedral, we continue to celebrate that all people are created equal by God.

This year we have again celebrated with same-sex couples during our regular services, as the national church's rules allow. We pursue these opportunities because we aim to welcome and treat all people fairly, irrespective of age, disability, partnership, pregnancy, religion or belief, race, gender, 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, Canon Pastor and Sub Dean

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 several ways. Our Hope Into Action project (a national charity that works with churches to provide housing for people in need) and The Yard project (providing for young people who find mainstream education challenging) are ongoing. 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. The Cathedral continues to support local foodbanks and we are reviewing how we select charities for the direct financial support that the Cathedral gives each year (a small percentage of Planned Giving income). The Cathedral Forum is more involved in that selection than before.

Pastoral Support Team: The Rev'd Canon Matthew Vernon, Canon Pastor and Sub Dean

The Pastoral Support Team delivers the formal pastoral care within the Cathedral community. This includes home visiting, First Tuesday Lunch, 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. 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. To respond to pastoral need, the Team relies on hearing pastoral news from congregation members. 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 with Innov8 Workshops 2024: Jane Dow, Project Lead

The Yard Project is a trauma-informed youth provision supporting young people who have a variety of identified needs, from young people who are living with trauma or deprivation, to children diagnosed with special educational needs. Our team consists of the Project Lead and Mentor, two part-time support workers, and a small number of professional volunteers. The Yard is a space of welcome, refuge, fun, and learning.

In 2024 we formalised our partnership with Innov8 Workshops, an alternative education provider based in Rougham. Innov8 Workshops now provide a full-time mentor for one-to-one horticulture, outdoor, and craft sessions for some of the hardest-to-reach young people and those most at risk of exploitation in the county. They also support the running of the free after-school and holiday activities at the Yard.

We maintained our relationship with King Edward VI High School Intervention Team and carried on with our weekly gardening club at the school.

Ipswich-based charity, Outreach Youth, continue to use the Yard free of charge for their fun Saturday support sessions.

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. These sessions were regularly oversubscribed and of particular interest to neurodiverse young people as the outdoor activities can suit their sensory needs.

Looking to the future, we started work at the Old Orchard at Abbey Precincts hosting a volunteer day for members of the USAF to help clear brambles and rubble and support young people to lay woodchip paths, try out the new strimmer, and build dens in the hazel coppice.

Overall, we enjoyed a creative, inclusive, and fulfilling year of group activities and one-to-one sessions meeting the needs of our young community.

From September 2024, we were able to offer 13 spaces a week for one-to-one mentoring with Innov8 Workshops. Throughout 2024 we offered weekly holiday activity sessions for small groups of up to eight young people and term time after-school clubs on a Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

Rural Mission: The Venerable Sally Gaze, Archdeacon of Rural Mission

The Cathedral continued to develop its rural outreach, including a particular focus on the agricultural festivals - the blessing of the Plough on Plough Sunday, an outreach service in a rural parish for Rogation and partnering with the Lightwave Community in a diocesan-wide celebration of Harvest at the Trinity Showground in Ipswich. We were supportive of the initiation of Farming Community Breakfasts with the agricultural chaplain Graham Miles. We also began to make plans to host a national Rural Mission Conference at the Cathedral in September 2025, led by the Diocesan "Growing in God in the Countryside" Project.

Safeguarding: Sarah-Jane Allison, Chief Operating Officer

St Edmundsbury Cathedral prioritises safeguarding as a fundamental responsibility. The Dean and Chapter are committed to fostering a safe, respectful environment where concerns are raised and addressed transparently and promptly. The Cathedral Chapter is guided by the Diocesan Safeguarding Officer (DSO) under a Service Level Agreement with the Diocese. The Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP), chaired by an independent safeguarding expert, oversees safeguarding policies, training, and implementation across the Diocese. The Cathedral's Safeguarding Officer is a member of this group to ensure best practices in safeguarding at the Cathedral.

Given the Cathedral's work with children and vulnerable adults, safeguarding remains a significant priority. The Cathedral is committed to:

- Safeguarding all worshippers and visitors
- Providing duty of care for children and vulnerable adults
- Implementing best practices in recruitment, training, and support for clergy, staff, and volunteers
- Responding promptly to concerns under Diocesan Safeguarding Procedures

If you are concerned that someone is at risk of or experiencing abuse, or if someone poses a risk to others, please contact one of the Cathedral's Safeguarding Committee using the details below.

Diocesan Safeguarding Officer – Karen Galloway, 07785 621319

Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Officer - Shelly Thomas, 07795 974734

Cathedral Safeguarding Officer - Sarah-Jane Allison, sarah-janeallison@stedscathedral.org

Priest with Pastoral Charge – Rev'd Canon Matthew, canon.pastor@stedscathedral.org

Independent Committee Member - Mary Memarzia, 07415 580821

Chapter Representative - Barbara Pycraft.

Safe Spaces is a free, independent support service offering confidential assistance to anyone abused by someone in the Church or due to their relationship with the Church of England, the Catholic Church in England and Wales, or the Church in Wales. While church-funded, it operates independently under Victim Support, a leading charity for abuse survivors in England and Wales. Phone 0300 3031056 or email safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk

Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Compliance

The Cathedral follows DBS Code of Practice and complies fully with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR in handling, storing, and disposing of certificate information.

Congregational Garden Party

August 2024



Fair Trade Stall: Kate Vernon and Penny Bentley

The Fairtrade stall is part of the Cathedral's commitment to social justice. Buying Fairtrade products means we 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, their communities receive FT premiums for health and education projects.

The stall is now being run by Kate Vernon and Penny Bentley, who took over from Janet and Scarlett in October. It still runs on the fourth Sunday of each month after the 10.30 am Eucharist. We sell ranges of tea, coffee, chocolate, and dried fruit, as well as the ever-popular ginger biscuits. In Fairtrade Fortnight in October, the Cathedral had a visit from Patrick Kaberia, a tea farmer from Kenya, who encouraged us to buy Fairtrade by describing the benefits for his cooperative farm and for his family. This year we had a good range of products for Christmas which sold well; chocolate Advent calendars were especially popular.

We have reorganised all stock orders and sales from the stall to go directly through the Cathedral accounts, so that all transactions are efficient and transparent. Since October we have only taken contactless payments and sales have risen since then. We are grateful to the vergers for their help with this. The stall also keeps the Cathedral office and vergers' vestry stocked up with Fairtrade tea and coffee.

Sunday Morning Coffee: Valerie Moore

Coffee, tea, squash, and biscuits are served after the 9.00 am and 10.30 am services each Sunday. We also have gluten-free biscuits and a range of teas. It is also a good time for people to celebrate significant events and anniversaries, providing cards and sometimes fizz.

This is always a social event and you will always be welcome to share news, opinions, and friendship as well as drinking tea and coffee.

Chapter 4: Lorna Brook

Chapter 4 met four times in 2024, on the theme of Ministry. Major Stanley Pinches talked about his life and work in the Salvation Army. Canon Alan Forsdike led us through his path to ordination. Canon Mark Hunt told us about various episodes in his career, featuring in particular his time as a prison chaplain. We also held a coffee morning in aid of the Train-a-Priest Fund: we were able to send just over £100 for their work in Africa.

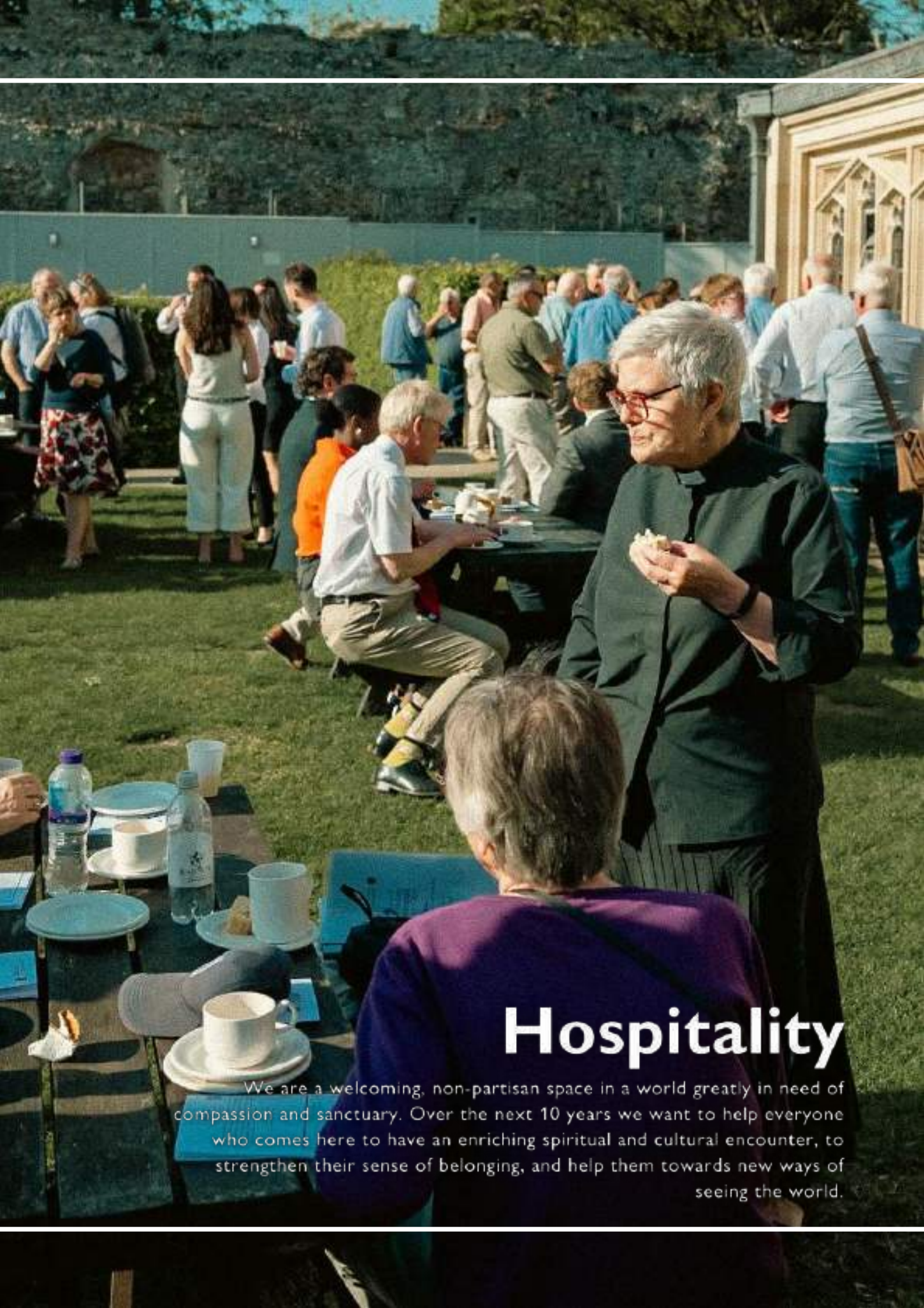
It is becoming difficult to find speakers for this group: perhaps members of the congregation and volunteers could suggest names or even come forward themselves if they have an interesting story to tell.

The Mother's Union: Jane Leung, Branch Leader

The Cathedral Branch of the Mother's Union (MU) continues to grow and has currently 43 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. Our 2024 activities included:

- Making 440 posies for Mothering Sunday
- Celebrating World Day of Prayer
- Helping Junior Church with the Easter Garden by providing six members and cakes
- Attending the Newmarket MU 100th Birthday
- Our annual Strawberry Tea which raised £1,037
- Outings to Moat House and Bedfield Hall
- Hosting Fressingfield MU, who visited the Cathedral for a tour and afternoon tea, which was supplied by the Cathedrals MU
- Presenting the Wave of Prayer Long Service Award to four members
- Two members producing a blue and pink pedestal for the Remembering Together Service
- Making cakes for the Q&A session after the Prison Sunday service
- Six members and husbands/partners travelling to Kevelaer to collect the Pascal and Votive candles
- Manning the Jigsaw stall at the Christmas Market, raising £1538.50 for the Cathedral
- Morning Coffee for members at Audreen and Brian Lillistone's
- Toiletries and hats were supplied by the congregation for Sea Sunday Service and a collection of £408.86 was taken, which went towards the Seafarers Mission. A total of 49 woolly hats were also taken to the Seafarers Mission in Felixstowe
- Mary Sumner Day was enjoyed by nine members who attended a celebration at Southwold.

We also donate to the Moses Basket project and Gatehouse Food Bank, and run and support other events: Parent and Toddler group, Craft Mornings, Scrabble Mornings.



Hospitality

We are a welcoming, non-partisan space in a world greatly in need of compassion and sanctuary. Over the next 10 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

The number of visitors continues to exceed 70,000 over the year, with July and August being the most popular months. This year saw the implementation of the 'entry of donation' approach, which introduced paid Welcome Assistants to the welcoming team. This scheme is funded by the Cathedrals Sustainability Fund and the team of Welcome Assistants cover daily shifts encouraging visitors to support the Cathedral through donations. This has had significant impact on donations. A dedicated team of volunteers continues to offer a warm, friendly welcome to the Cathedral and supports the visitor ministry as Welcome Stewards, Guides, and Chaplains. These people are our frontline ambassadors and make such a difference to visitors.

There has been a marked increase in the number of individuals booking on a guided tour or Tower tour in 2024. All tours are now available to book online, and if spaces are available, they can also be booked on the day via the Welcome Assistants. Feedback from the tours is universally positive. Art exhibitions, charity displays, and a changing programme of themed exhibitions in the Treasury enhance the visitor experience too.

The LEGO model is three quarters of the way to completion (nearly 150,000 bricks). Steady progress is made thanks to the keen team of volunteers who faithfully fulfil duties each week and to the visitors who donate. Visitors regularly ask about the kneelers and this year saw a major project to find new homes for them, with the arrival of chairs in the Nave. 500 kneelers have been retained and can be found in the North Transept, side chapels, and Chancel. The other 500 have been reunited with the parishes which made them.

The autumn months included a Twilight Talk by Horry Parsons focusing on the building of the Millennium Tower, with the chance for the adventurous to climb to the top of the Tower as part of the evening event. Another popular event was 'Cathedrals at Night', held close to St Edmund's Day. Visitors met historic characters linked to the Abbey, such as Jocelin de Brakelond and the Abbey cook, who had fascinating tales to tell. Wolf-shaped biscuits and mulled wine were enjoyed as well as the opportunity to get up close to books from the Ancient Library. The evening concluded with a beautiful service of Compline sung by the Youth Choir, who processed out attired as monks.

Two more themed tour leaflets were introduced this year, highlighting links to herbs, flowers, and animals.

Linking to our heritage and in the tradition of the Abbey of St Edmund, we are pleased to welcome pilgrims throughout the year. The parish pilgrimage tours are offered once a month, when a group from the Diocese visits, joins Evensong, and enjoys tea provided by the Friends. Individual and groups of pilgrims also make their way to the Cathedral, collecting a pilgrim's stamp in their pilgrim passport from the Shop. A band of our own pilgrims followed a specially devised route linking places associated with St Botolph in May 2024. The route made its way from Dunwich, via Ipswich, to Bury St Edmunds passing through beautiful Suffolk countryside and pausing at many wonderful churches.

Volunteers: Sarah Friswell, Visitor Experience Manager

The number of active volunteers is currently 295. This includes volunteers who have given over 40 years of faithful volunteering service and in 2024 21 new volunteers, who took up a variety of roles. The online application process, introduced in 2023, using ChurchSuite, the Cathedral's database, is working well. All volunteer records are stored on this facility and regular checks are done to keep the data up to date. The Cathedral offers a wide range of volunteering opportunities from gardening, to leading school visits, to being part of the wardens team.

The Guild of St Edmund Committee, which is made up of representatives of the volunteering groups, met three times to discuss volunteering matters. The Guild as a whole met in June, and again on St Edmund's Day. All volunteering, whether weekly or twice a year, for one year or 40, is celebrated because without this support, we could not do what we do. A heartfelt thank you to all volunteers for giving so generously of your time and talents.

The Guild of St Edmund: Sarah Friswell, Visitor Experience Manager

All volunteers at the Cathedral are automatically members of the Guild of St Edmund. The Guild of St Edmund Committee, which meets three times a year, is made up of representatives of the many different groups of volunteers – such as bell ringers, flower arrangers, servers, shop helpers, guides and many more. It is chaired by Louise Martin, supported by Stephen Dart. This year the Pastoral team has also been brought into the Guild to recognise the volunteering role of the members of that group. The Guild as a whole meets twice a year. In June we celebrate volunteering and acknowledge long service and all those who have joined as new volunteers in the past year. This year, on St Edmund's Day, volunteers joined the Eucharist, had lunch together, and then enjoyed a fascinating talk by Canon Matthew Vernon and Valerie Moore about our link with the Diocese of Kagera in Tanzania.

The framework of the Guild allows all volunteers to flourish in their roles, keep connected with other volunteers, and support the Cathedral's mission and ministry. 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.

Welcomers: Jill de Laat

This year the Welcoming team lost a few of its members but there are still 35 regular Welcomers to greet visitors every day of the week. The addition of the Welcome Stewards has become a feature and the two roles are working together and helping to increase donations from visitors. Being a Welcomer means that one is able to talk to all visitors who would like to know more about the Cathedral – its history, place in the town, and its role as a fully functioning church. Occasionally, a visitor may question whether we still hold services; perhaps they think it is just a nice building with a bit of history. If so, they are soon corrected.

The role is a fulfilling, and important, one, being the first volunteer that a visitor will encounter upon entering the Cathedral. Some people are content to just follow the map, learning for themselves as they go round. But for those after more in-depth knowledge, being a Welcomer is a great opportunity to impart that knowledge and, hopefully, leave someone a little wiser than they were when they came through the door.

Events: James Stark, Events Manager and Head Verger

2024 began as a waiting game. We were waiting on the permissions to replace the Cathedral pews with chairs, which meant that our Events programme didn't kick in until just before Easter. This meant that much was crammed into two thirds of the year.

I always begin these updates by saying that none of the events would happen without two specific groups of people. Firstly, our committed group of Concert and Event Stewards, who turn up rain or shine to support the work, and secondly, The Vergers department, who spend countless hours preparing the Cathedral to enable these events to take place, and making sure that the Cathedral returns as a normal place of worship for Sunday Mornings, when the event or concert takes place in the Nave.

We wanted to expand our Events programme by using the Cathedral in more creative ways. Our first example of this was to be able to host more dinners and dances. We hosted the Suffolk Masons for their fundraising dinner in March, and we are very grateful for the support they gave us, especially for our chairs project. Shortly after, another dinner, this time for one of our Corporate Patrons, Birketts. Again, a brilliant occasion and a chance to show the Cathedral without any pew restrictions.

We were lucky to be able to put on a range of concerts throughout the year, with a good range of performances in the hope to cater for all audiences. Some of these included tributes by candlelight, such as Fleetwood Mac, The Beatles, Abba, Tina Turner, Elvis, Elton John, David Bowie, Queen, and a Christmas themed evening. All these invited large audiences, and we are in a good position to continue with these in 2025. This happens to be what is 'in trend' at Cathedral's up and down the country, so it would be silly not to continue the theme.

Whilst the tribute acts are always a hit with audiences, we do like to continue to host classical music concerts. One of the groups we regularly work with are The London Concertante, who came for four concerts. They always perform brilliantly, with a range of different programmes, such as music at the movies, a Viennese Christmas, and Vivaldi's Four Seasons. Bury Bach Choir also performed a concert with us in May, which was a very enjoyable concert. We have worked with the group for many years now and have built up a very good relationship, one which will return in two years' time.

Other events which we have held are Silent Disco's. They are such good fun to be at, and to watch the various age ranges having a boogie in the Nave, it really is something. I urge anyone to attend one of the ones we are hosting in 2025. The Beer Festival returned for its third year, and again welcomes many people, including those who have never stepped foot on the Cathedral grounds before. We try to make improvements each year, to make sure that things can run as normally as they possibly can, whilst improving the experience for those attending.

A new event for 2024 was playing host to the Great East Anglian Cathedral Model Railway Exhibition. This was to mark 75 years of the local Bury St Edmunds Model Railway Club. This was I believe only the second Cathedral (after maybe Chester) to play host to this type of event. We have formed a good relationship with the club, so look forward to more happening with them in 2025.



Harvest

October 2024

LEGO: Sarah Friswell, Visitor Experience Manager

The number of bricks added to the model stands just short of 150,000 – three quarters of the way to completion. It has been agreed that some sections will be built ‘offsite’ (mainly the roof sections). The team has also been preparing some of the sections of the upper floor of the Cathedral Centre. We don’t want to add these sections too soon, as this will block the view of the inside of the model. This year two German visitors kindly made a video of the inside of the model which they have allowed us to make available to show visitors.

This year has seen the completion of the ground floor of the Cathedral Centre and the addition of the Shop and Tourist Information Point. Youngsters from the Yard Project have helped out by building the sections of the model which represent the Yard in real life.

In the summer, a family activity day included some creative LEGO building by young visitors.

The LEGO continues to attract repeat visitors, often grandparents who bring their grandchildren regularly to track the progress of the model. It is joy to see people’s faces light up when they see that we are engaged in such a fun project.

Flower Guild: Susan Cockram

I feel very privileged to lead the team of flower arrangers in the Cathedral and am very grateful to them for their help and support during the year. I must also thank the Parish representatives and our faithful waterers. We have arranged flowers this year for many events: weddings, Ordinations, Edmund Day, farewell to Bishop Martin and so many others. 2025 will also see us busy with flowers, greenery, and secateurs with more weddings and of course the celebrations for the 20th anniversary of the completion of the Tower – it is hard to believe!

On a sad note, Pippa Jones died in January, and we shall miss her very much. Several of us arranged flowers for her funeral. Valerie Wilde has “retired” as she is busy as Churchwarden of St Johns. I am delighted that Kim Judge and Chrissy Trendall have joined the team. However, we do need more flower arrangers and waterers so PLEASE do get in touch if you would be interested. (Sue Cockram 01284 766688, sue@cockram.net) And if you would like flowers arranged for any special occasion, anniversary, wedding, birthdays, or christenings, do also reach out.

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!

Vergers: James Stark, Events Manager and Head Verger

As mentioned in the Events round-up, the Vergers were key in ensuring all Cathedral activity ran as smoothly as possible. It was a delight to be able to welcome Matthew Austin to the Vergers Team in 2024. Matthew has brought a wealth of experience from his former role at Ely Cathedral. We said farewell to Ben Jenkins, who decided to pursue a new career path in agriculture.

The Vergers team is made up of three full-time Vergers (me, Lewis, and Matthew), two part-time Vergers (Alan and Steve (Maintenance)) and Julie, our cleaner. I have also been very grateful to be able to call upon our four honorary Vergers when we need them (George, Scott, Paul and Keith). A busy year, where everyone got stuck into the range of services and events which we offered.

Ancient Library: Stephen Dart

Exhibitions in the Treasury are the public face of the library and this year we illustrated the Cathedral's themes of plants and animals in the exhibitions 'Oh All Ye Green Things' and 'All Creatures Great and Small'. We also worked with local student Charlie Norman, who used images from our books for his A-Level Art final piece. His exhibition 'Inspired in the Library' was installed at the beginning of January 2025.

Books were on display in the Cathedral for the workshop 'Too Much Information', which looked at parallels between the introduction of the internet and printing, and the 'Cathedral at Night' in November, when we had a constant stream of visitors.

175 members of the public attended the Heritage Open Days (and gave donations of £327) and there were visits from English Heritage, Henley MU, Elmswell WI, a group of retired clergy from Ely, and sixth formers from Thurston and Culford. Individuals included a librarian from the Herzog Library in Wolfenbüttel and Simon Thurley, the expert on Tudor Royal Palaces, who looked at the accounts of building works at Enfield Palace, which are bound into volumes of the Works of Luther.

Volunteers, Jill de Laat and Debbie de Cova, prepared an online exhibition on the illustrations in Echard's History of England (London, 1718) and, for International Women's Day, we posted on the French printer Charlotte Guillard (1487-1577). Dr Suzanne Reynolds is making a detailed study of our earliest books, including the recently conserved Durandus (Strasburg, 1486), one of the seven surviving books from the library of the Crutched Friars in London.

As a result of the closure of the Bury Record Office, our three library catalogues (1599, 1764 and 1911) have returned to the library along with the 'Collectanea Buriensis' of James Burrough.

We are grateful for the support of Chapter, the Friends of the Cathedral, and individuals whose generous contributions have enabled us to conserve books and photographs.

Marketing & Comms: Catherine Rayson, Marketing and Communications Manager

2024 has been a year of growth across our marketing channels. We saw increases in social media audiences, including a 23% growth on Facebook, and with live-streaming moving to YouTube, our subscriber base grew 136%. We also launched a TikTok channel at the back end of the year.

We also saw growth in our website visits, increasing page views by 24%. Top pages remain the same with What's On attracting 23k more views than our second most-viewed page, Services. We grew our data list by 27% allowing us to market our events to an engaged audience.

In addition to the day-to-day of supporting the Cathedral and all it does, the big story of the year was the Dog Calendar. We are the first Cathedral in the UK to do a project like this and it supported the wider town initiative to be crowned the most dog-friendly town in the UK (which Bury St Edmunds did in fact win at the end of 2024). This project generated a great deal of press coverage - 13 pieces - including being featured in The Times Photo of the Day and on the BBC News website. ITV Anglia and Radio Suffolk also joined us for the launch of the calendar in September. With this project as a boost, press coverage grew from last year and our national coverage has also increased.

Marketing and Communications continues to work with all the departments within the Cathedral to promote our key masterplan focuses of Worship, Mission, Hospitality and Sustainability. Additionally, this year there was support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund project in the area of communications.



The Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn: James Mellish, Project Manager

The Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn is the shorter, working title of the project, The Abbey of St Edmund: A Millennium of English History in West Suffolk which we are in the process of developing, thanks to the support of National Lottery players. This ambitious £9.9m project will:

- Conserve and protect the highly significant Abbey ruins, giving them a sustainable future
- Create a visitor centre within a line of listed Cathedral properties between the Abbey Gate and Norman Tower, forming a visible and accessible link with the town and providing a wonderful visitor experience
- Improve and expand the network of footpaths to ensure everyone is able to access the Abbey area and to strengthen the Abbey's connection to Cathedral and Town
- Welcome and engage everyone through enthralling interpretation, a schools curriculum-linked learning programme, community activities and events

In April 2024, the project received a development grant of £729,553 from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, enabling us to develop our ideas further and to take the project to RIBA 3 level. This is known as the development phase of the project and by the time it is complete we will also need to have raised £2.4m in match funding.

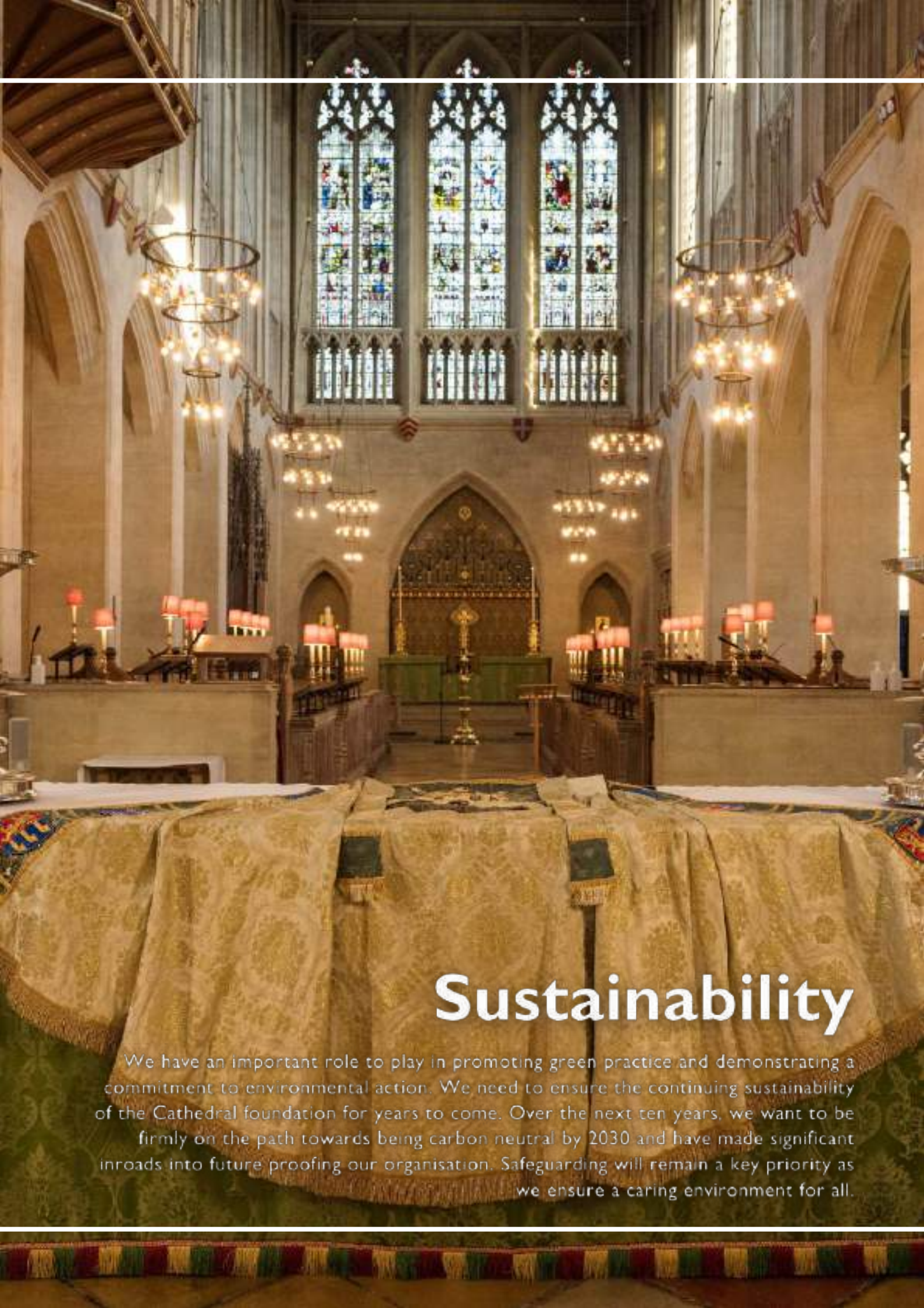
In February 2026, we will submit an application to the Heritage Fund for the delivery phase of the project. If our application is successful, work is likely to start on site late summer/early autumn 2026 and this will be complemented by more than two years of engagement activities for all our communities.

To support the Project Board in steering The Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn, James Mellish was appointed as the Project Manager in September 2024. With a background in managing heritage projects, including roles at Bury St Edmunds Guildhall and Clare Country Park, James brings invaluable expertise to the team.

The project has also engaged a team of expert consultants to guide its development, including:

- Purcell - Architect, Lead Consultant and Heritage Consultant
- RFA Design Interpretation - Plan and Design Consultant [CS1]
- Robin James Sullivan - Activity Plan Consultant
- Bowles Green - Business Plan Consultant
- The Audience Agency - Visitor Marketing Consultant
- Tricolor Associates - Evaluation Consultant
- Castons (Artelia Group) - QS Consultant
- Cotswold Archaeology - Archaeological Consultant
- Alan Baxter Associates - Cathedral Conservation Management Plan
- Dr Christine Stokes - Fundraising and Communications

St Edmundsbury Cathedral (the lead partner), West Suffolk Council and English Heritage (the project partners) have come together as members of The Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership (comprising 29 organisations and individuals who care about the Abbey) to develop and deliver this project.



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.

Fundraising: Katie Schütte, Fundraising Manager

The Patron scheme continues to be the cornerstone of individual giving, consisting of individual, joint, and corporate members from across Suffolk and beyond. In 2024, Patron memberships contributed £40,678 towards the Cathedral's mission, ministry, and music – an increase of £9,243 from 2023. This is because membership numbers increased from 82 Patrons in 2023 to 101 Patrons by the close of 2024. It has been hugely enjoyable getting to know each and every Patron throughout the year, with highlights including the Summer Garden Party and Patrons Carol Service, with their drink and canape receptions. We look forward to building these relationships into 2025, and welcoming new faces too.

The Cathedral's 2024 Gift Day appeal raised £17,965 for the Cathedral. Individuals were invited to make a one-off donation to support the worship, music, arts, learning, and social outreach of the Cathedral, and were thanked for their kind generosity.

In April 2024, we were awarded a £729,553 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to develop plans for The Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn. In collaboration with our partners English Heritage and West Suffolk Council, this Development Phase funding has enabled us to progress plans, with the aim to apply for a full Heritage Fund grant at a later date. The project will transform the way residents and visitors engage with the Abbey and Cathedral, and re-establish Bury St Edmunds as a site of national and international heritage and cultural significance.

We were delighted to be awarded grants for the November production of *Flooded!* which combined Benjamin Britten's *Noye's Fludde* and Neil Clayton's *The Fools' Flood*. We would like to thank the following bodies and individuals for their financial support to this ambitious and creative project: Arts Council England, Britten Pears Arts, Bury Male Voice Choir, Councillor Robert Everitt, Councillor James Finch, Councillor Karen Soons, Culford School, Suffolk County Council, the Cockram Fund, and the Vestey Trust.

Looking ahead to 2025, we anticipate our second ever 'Grand Nave Dinner' to be a huge success. A night of fabulous food, dancing, entertainment, and auction, this event will raise money for The Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn project.

Thank you to all who have so generously donated to St Edmundsbury Cathedral and are remembering us in their will. We are grateful to those who continue to support us through Planned Giving and the Patron scheme as regular donations enable us to plan for the future and be strategic rather than reactive. No matter how large or small, every gift makes a difference.

If anyone is interested in finding out more about the Patron scheme and the benefits of joining this special community, or would like to speak about regular giving, donations, and gifts in wills, please email me at katieschutte@stedscathedral.org.

Enterprises: Stewart Alderman, Enterprises Director

We run a popular Restaurant, Pilgrims Kitchen, along with a very successful Cathedral Shop, both of which contribute greatly to the finances of the Cathedral, as well as providing spaces for visitors and locals alike to meet up and enhancing the overall offer of the Cathedral as a tourist attraction. These enterprises delivered combined revenues of £740,000 (2023 - £635,000).

Edmund Room: Stewart Alderman, Enterprises Director

The Edmund Room is a space used extensively for Cathedral use but brings in a small amount of revenue from external hire for functions and meetings.

Pilgrims' Kitchen Restaurant: Stewart Alderman, Enterprises Director

Pilgrims' Kitchen is open to the public during the day and is available for private dinners and functions in the restaurant. It also caters for events in the Cathedral and Edmund Room on a regular basis.

The restaurant has continued the seven year trend of growing its turnover year on year with a 15% increase compared to 2023. This is a testament to the range and quality of products and the service offered. The biggest challenge faced by Pilgrims Kitchen is that of space at its busiest times, and to this end plans are at an early stage to extend the inside seating area for customers.



Cathedral Shop: Jane Harrison, Enterprises Retail Manager

The Cathedral Shop and Tourist Information Point are open seven days a week offering a wide range of products and information to visitors and local residents. It is run by three members of staff and a team of 50 volunteers.

2024 proved to be a very good year for the shop with turnover exceeding the previous year and our target. The average spend was up on the previous year and we exceeded the margins set down in the budget. For us to be able to achieve this we continually look at the mix of products we sell so we keep the ranges fresh and interesting but also balance the margins. Last year saw the launch of our own range of gin which sits alongside our existing selection of St Edmundsbury branded food and drink that consistently proves popular with customers.

From October sales began to ramp up as the shop was filled with stock for Advent and Christmas. During this period we sold over 500 Advent candles alone. This is the trading quarter when the shop generates the most income and achieves the most profit so is essential to a successful year. Overall an excellent year.

Cathedral Gardeners: Robert Bourne

The Cathedral Gardeners have continued to meet on Tuesday mornings throughout the year. We are fortunate in having a skilled team who work well together. In favourable weather conditions, the lawns, hedges and borders flourished during the year and colourful flower displays were maintained around Pilgrims' Kitchen, in the planters at the entrance to the car park, in the Herb Garden and elsewhere.

The large box hedge at the end of the upper Remembrance Garden lawn, badly affected by box blight, has been removed and the exposed wall of the toolshed repaired and repainted. The lawn itself is being extended, resulting in the armillary sphere being better displayed, and a row of golden privet has been planted. Two of the planters opposite the Cathedral Office have been replaced; further work in this area, and in front of Pilgrims' Kitchen, is on hold pending the progress of the Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn project.

Professional rose growers near Norwich are attempting to propagate the Edmund Rose from 'bud wood' we supplied last Autumn. If successful, we should have a supply of new Edmund Roses later in the year.

We continue to enjoy close relations with the Abbey Gardens team. We are also grateful for the support of the Cathedral management and vergers: following the departure of Canon Philip Banks, who instituted liaison meetings with the Gardeners, these meetings have continued with Sarah Friswell and Steve Cole, maintenance verger, on a regular basis.

The gardens continue to be maintained on sustainable principles, with minimal use of chemicals. A "no-mow May" was observed. The gardens were on view in the Hidden Gardens of Bury, in aid of St Nicholas' Hospice, in June.



BBC Radio 3 Broadcast

June 2024



East Anglian Beer Festival

August 2024

Planned Giving: Felix von Nathusius

As I conclude my first year as the Chairman of Planned Giving, I am filled with gratitude for our open, committed, and engaged congregation. It has been a pleasure meeting members and learning more about the Cathedral. I extend my heartfelt thanks to all past members of the Planned Giving Committee for their contributions, and to Liz Steele, our former Chairman, for her many years of stewardship and guidance. Our current committee, comprising Valerie Moore, Dan Soper, Rev'd Canon Chris Andrews and me, Felix von Nathusius, is dedicated to upholding the Cathedral congregation's proud tradition of giving. Giving is a vital part of our worship, and Planned Giving significantly contributes to the Cathedral's funds.

This year, as in so many before, we have felt the impact of the rising cost of living and changing circumstances on our income. Despite these challenges, financial contributions in other areas have grown, and overall giving has steadily increased. This support has enabled the Cathedral to sustain its work and embark on new missionary, social, musical, and building projects.

We continue to encourage new members to join the Parish Giving Scheme, which simplifies administration and facilitates automatic Gift Aid collection. Gift Aid added £19,093.99 to our pot in 2024. In 2024 our regular Planned Giving income was £125,931, falling short of our £140,000 budget. Since 2021, our income has decreased from £145,469. Additionally, the number of regular givers over the past year declined slightly. Currently, 50% of Parish Giving Scheme (PGS) members have opted out of the inflationary increase. We urge all givers to consider opting in. Another of our aims is to encourage younger worshippers and supporters to give via in a formalised/regular manner. If you are interested in supporting us as a Giving Ambassador, please let us know.

With the term of Rev'd Canon Chris Andrews coming to an end, we are seeking a replacement member of the Planned Giving Committee, ideally from the 9:00 am congregation. We thank Chris Andrews for his many years of support and are grateful that he will continue his work as a Giving Ambassador.

We aim to keep the congregation informed through regular Giving Newsletters and by Committee members being visible at services – please look out for us, and for our Giving Ambassadors, who can also speak to you about the advantages and practicalities of Planned Giving.

I would like to personally thank the committee, past and present, the Cathedral staff, and the Dean for their support. I also extend my gratitude to all who have answered the call and give regularly. Every donation helps ensure that the Cathedral continues its long tradition of worship and service for both current and future generations.



Friends of the Cathedral: Susan Cockram, Director

2024 was a very active year. We held another very successful Quirky Talk at Drinkstone when two of builders who worked on the construction of the Orwell Bridge gave a fascinating talk – health and safety did not exist!

I am delighted that Lucinda Hutson and Sue Rawlinson have joined the Friends Council, and I look forward to working with them. In April, several Friends visited Great Yarmouth to see The Minister and after lunch visited a fascinating Museum about the history of the Town. Friends Day went well in July; Stephen Dart spoke very enthusiastically about the books in the Ancient Library; this was followed by a delicious tea in Pilgrims Kitchen, and we then attended The Summer Concert given by the Choir. We held our Annual Art Exhibition in the Cathedral but regrettably this was our last after over 50 years – this is mainly due to the reduced financial return to the Friends. Early September, the annual holiday took place visiting Guildford, Portsmouth and Chichester. Although numbers were down, everyone enjoyed it and again my thanks must go to Arthur Tanner for arranging our holidays and outings.

We have a full programme planned for 2025 – Quirky talk at Lavenham when Bunny Campione from The Antique Roadshow. In September, Art is arranging the holiday to Leicestershire. Annual Day is taking a different format this year: it will be held in June starting with Evensong at 5.30 pm followed by the AGM, supper and a speaker. More details will be coming shortly. In October another Quirky Talk when Howard Stephens will speak about “Life behind the Iron Curtain” has been arranged.

We have continued to support the Dean and Chapter with various projects. If you would like to know more about the Friends or our various activities, do please contact me at sue@cockram.net or pick up a leaflet from the Cathedral. We have increased our membership this year but will always welcome more!

Electoral Roll: Sarah-Jane Allison, Chief Operating Officer

St Edmundsbury Cathedral is a registered charity with Chapter Trustees following the Charities Act 2011. The registered charity number is 1202911. The Constitution and Statutes provide the legal basis for the charitable and ecclesiastical functions of the Cathedral, which at its heart is a Christian community united in worship together with the Bishop and the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. As a Parish Church Cathedral, we have an Electoral Roll compiled in accordance with the Church Representation Rules. The Annual Parochial Church Meeting took place in April 2024, at which the year-end total membership on the Electoral Roll stood at 353.

Cathedral Fabric, Property and the Environment: Helen Dangerfield

Our Facilities and Maintenance Verger and his team oversee the projects the Cathedral has underway to protect its fabric and future. The work has included the continued gradual installation of LED lighting and exterior stonework repairs to the cathedral estate. Extensive refurbishment work has occurred this year on the Cathedral flats above the shops. These are now providing a healthy rental income as well as accommodation for Cathedral staff. Significant repair works were also performed on the North Garth flint wall after the collapses that occurred in 2023.

The Eco St Eds group continued developing strong foundations this year, agreeing new Terms of Reference and working hard towards calculating the carbon footprint of the cathedral estate. Eco St Eds has worked hard to uphold environmentally-responsible values across Cathedral life, delivering consistent messaging and encouragement to be green and greener in practice, notably through the weekly Green Tips. They continued their commitment to achieving A Rocha Gold.

A sub-group of Eco St Eds been working on the detailed design for a solar panel project involving installation of 78 solar panels on the roof of the Nave South Aisle and Lady Chapel roofs. The electricity usage at the Cathedral will reduce by 20.4%. The project was awarded funding from the Church of England Net Zero Carbon Cathedrals project to fund delivery, which is planned for 2025 subject to planning permission granted.

Fabric Advisory Committee: Susan Cockram, Secretary

The FAC hold three meetings annually to advise the Dean and Chapter on various projects relating to the conservation and maintenance of the fabric of the Cathedral and sundry embellishments. We shall be meeting more frequently in 2025 as the development of the National Lottery Heritage Fund Project takes place working with the other Consultants on this exciting project.

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death of Dr Julian Litten in October 2024. He joined the FAC in 2006, becoming chairman in 2012 and resigned in 2024. The existing FAC Voting members unanimously elected Ms Ruth Blackman as the new chairman.

Cathedral Forum: The Rev'd Canon Matthew Vernon, Canon Pastor and Sub Dean

The new Terms of Reference for Forum adopted last year have resulted in more constructive and positive meetings. Members of Forum are elected at the APCM but all members of the Cathedral congregations are welcome at the meetings 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. The Forum met four times in 2024. Agenda items included the Cathedral's charitable giving, our link with Kagera Cathedral, equal access at the Cathedral, Planned Giving, developing the welcome at the 10.30 am Choral Eucharist, and Safeguarding (which is an agenda item at every meeting).

Thingoe Deanery: Michael Wilde, Deanery Synod Rep

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 3 times each year and we invite a visiting speaker for the first half of our 90 minutes meeting. In 2024 our speakers engaged with us on a good variety of subjects:

- Suffolk Historic Churches Trust by Geoffrey Probert, Chairman of SHCT
- Our carbon footprint by James Rolls, Diocesan Net Zero Carbon Officer
- Revd Sarah Quantrill, the recently licensed Minister at Christ Church Moreton Hall who is also our Archdeaconry Mission Enabler and talked about both her roles.

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. The Deanery Mission & Pastoral Committee met to continue its work on the Deanery Plan for Growth which was agreed at the October meeting of the Archdeaconry Mission & Pastoral Committee.

We were delighted to elect our new Deanery Lay Chair – Dr Sarah Cooledge from Fornham St Martin parish. Colin Firth stood down as Deanery Organiser after many years of faithful service and Synod expressed grateful thanks to him. It is intended that Michael Wilde will succeed him once a new Deanery Secretary is identified to release him from that work.

We elected new members from Deanery Synod to Diocesan Synod for a new triennium of work. The newly elected clergy members are:

- Revd Ben Edwards - Gt Barton & Thurston benefice
- Revd Nicola Grieves - Barrow benefice
- Revd Alison Miller - Lark Valley & North Bury Team benefice who is also a new member of General Synod
- Revd Dr Andrew Miller - Lark Valley & North Bury Team benefice
- Revd Andrew Williams – St Mary & St Peter, Bury St Edmunds
- Revd Canon Philip Banks – Precentor who had to stand down on his move to London

This leaves us with 5 casual clergy vacancies to be filled over the coming months.

The newly elected lay members are:

- Peter Boyt - St Mary & St Peter, Bury St Edmunds
- Lorna Brook - Cathedral
- Sarah Cooledge - Fornham St Martin
- Geoffrey House - Cathedral
- Michael Wilde - Cathedral
- Liz Steele – Cathedral, elected to fill a casual vacancy

This leaves us with 2 casual lay vacancies to be filled over the coming months.

Current Cathedral membership of Deanery Synod is:

- Lorna Brook
- Geoffrey House
- Liz Steele
- Michael Wilde

Please speak to one of us if, after prayer, you feel moved to represent the Cathedral at Deanery Synod and/or the Deanery at Diocesan Synod where important current issues of relationships, safeguarding and finance are under review.

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