

St Edmundsbury
Cathedral



Community

Annual Report 2025

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A message from The Dean

2025 was another year of evolution. A diocesan Bishop retired and a new one was elected, confirmed and a few weeks ago, joyfully welcomed and enthroned. A new Precentor was happily appointed and Installed. Several new staff members were appointed following the departure of others. A supper and meeting for Chapter held a few weeks ago recognised, as each member of staff introduced themselves, how recently many of our staff started in role.

And yet, as the continual round of change and new opportunities present themselves, and however seldom a 'normal' Sunday or 'average' week occurs, the core business of St Edmundsbury Cathedral continues: to worship God in community, to serve our Bishop, diocese and county, to provide welcome and hospitality according to the Benedictine principles we hold close, to care, alike for visitors as for regular members of the community, to learn together and to speak out with humility and boldness in the public square.

I need to remind myself, and try to remember to remind Chapter, colleagues and volunteers, that all of the imperatives which preoccupy us day to day are essentially tools to serve that core mission, and that we need to see and meet them in that context.

Inevitably, much attention and time has been taken up during 2025 by the development phase of the Abbey of St Edmund Reborn Project. Our Project Board, calmly and skilfully chaired by Mark Rogers, has overseen the development of an exciting and challenging set of plans, prepared by a wide range of skilled consultants which form the second round application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, very recently submitted by our energetic, hard working and highly experienced Project Manager, James Mellish.



This has rightly taken necessary time and attention from Chapter, senior management, staff and consultative groups in the Cathedral. The implications of how much the Project, if the various funding routes are secured, will contribute to the life of the Cathedral, town and wider county, has become clearer to us every day. In the developing narratives of communication and consultation I stress that this is the most significant project for the Cathedral since the building of the tower in 2005.

How we welcome an increased number of visitors, tell the story of St Edmund and the Abbey, offer learning, events, volunteering opportunities, apprenticeships and internships, opportunities for healing and restorative activities, as well as the conservation of nationally significant heritage demonstrate that this is a project whose time has come, and a challenge which our generation must not miss. By the time of our Annual Meeting, the second round bid to the NLHF will have been submitted, the match fundraising will be well advanced and we will await the hoped for outcome of statutory permissions and grant funding.



2025 saw many services to celebrate the work of partner organisations on significant anniversaries, the 80th of VE Day, the regional carol service for the Princess of Wales Royal Foundation, the 20th anniversary of the completion of the Millennium Tower, alongside the regular round of liturgies, have been something of a baptism of fire for Canon Katy in her first seven months. That she has met the challenge, supported by incredibly hard working musicians, vergers, other staff and wardens, with calmness, good humour, a commitment to good liturgy and attention to detail is a tribute to a fine colleague.

Priorities for 2026:

- The hoped for successful outcome of the National Lottery Heritage Fund bid, and the fundraising work which matches it will inevitably be at the forefront of minds and attention for much of 2026, but other imperatives will not be neglected.
- The adoption of the second phase of the Cathedral Masterplan will be finalised and presented to Bishop, Chapter, Committees and consultative bodies for approval during 2026.
- Ongoing work to support the ministry of Bishop Joanne will be discussed by Chapter and senior management .
- As part of both the diocesan 'Growing Younger' and 'Growing in Number' imperatives, reviewing the worship, learning and belongings we offer to our families and younger members will also be at the forefront of the attention of senior management.
- In a challenging financial context, Chapter and Finance Committee will continue to have laser like focus on income generation and cost saving during 2026.
- How we continue to live out and develop our Benedictine values will continue to be a focus for us, particularly in how those values contribute to the stability, resilience and mutual commitment of the Christian community in Suffolk.



In that sense, although, as the exchange at the beginning of my report suggests, life in a Cathedral is always evolving, never the same from one day to the next, in another sense it is as ancient as the Benedictine principles on which the Abbey of St Edmund was founded, principles which are rooted in the gospels of Jesus Christ, and therefore we believe, Spirit breathed.

I thank all of you who support our common endeavour and who are loyal to what we try to achieve here at St Edmundsbury. This Community Report is just a small insight into what you all contribute toward Cathedral life and we are grateful.

Dean Joe.

Dean Joe Hawes



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 Katy Cunliffe Canon Precentor

Worship lies at the heart of the Christian life. It is the foundation of all we do and all we are as a Cathedral; without it, we would simply be a tourist attraction or an event venue. Each day, regardless of what else is happening, we offer praise, prayer and worship to God through the Daily Offices of Morning Prayer and Choral Evensong or said Evening Prayer, and through the celebration of the Eucharist. Through our participation in worship, we are inspired and empowered to live as the people of God; we are sent out to do God's work in the world, bringing light and life to all.

For the first part of 2025, the Cathedral was without a Precentor. We are grateful to Canon Mark Haworth for stepping into the role and overseeing much of our liturgy in the interim period, before my arrival. As well as the regular round of daily, weekly and monthly services, this also included overseeing Bishop Martin's farewell services, the Commissioning of Bishop Graeme as Acting Bishop, the Justice Service, Holy Week and Easter, the Diocesan Confirmation Service, and a special service to mark VE Day.

I was installed as Precentor at Evensong on 1 June and it was wonderful to have the whole Choral Foundation singing at that service. I have been warmly welcomed to the Cathedral and supported by colleagues and congregation members alike as I've found my feet in this role and got to grips with the Cathedral's ways of working.

Not long after my arrival, we had a special service to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Tower, closely followed by the Diocesan Ordination Services at the end of June. Other notable services include two Installation Services, the Diocesan 'Called Together' Service celebrating Lay Ministry, the County Harvest Festival and, of course, our Advent and Christmas worship. On top of our regular services and the usual carol services we host in these seasons, 2025 also included a relatively last-minute addition of The Royal Foundation's 'Suffolk Together at Christmas' Carol Service which, supported by the Lieutenancy, Suffolk Community Foundation, and local businesses, celebrated the love and kindness shown by so many charities and organisations across Suffolk.

Here at St Edmundsbury Cathedral, we worship God through the ancient and beautiful Anglican musical and liturgical tradition. Whilst honouring and having confidence in this inherited tradition, we also embrace innovation and creative expressions of faith when appropriate. We are committed to ensuring that all people are able to actively participate in worship. Whilst acknowledging that there is much more for us to do, this commitment is seen in the variety of styles of worship that are offered at the Cathedral on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis. Our regular Sunday pattern of worship consists of a BCP Holy Communion Service, an all-age Eucharist, a Common Worship Eucharist, and Choral Evensong. Our regular weekday Eucharists include a healing Eucharist, a meditation Eucharist, and a Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion service, as well as said Common Worship Eucharists. And, on a monthly basis, there is short dementia-friendly communion service, and a pram service aimed at pre-school children and their carers. In addition, livestreaming ensures that worship remains accessible to those unable to attend in person.

At the end of 2025 we said goodbye to Richard Hubbard who, for the past 10 years, has been the Cathedral's Music Development Officer, working on behalf of both the Diocese and the Cathedral to support parishes in their music. We are grateful to Richard for all he brought to the life of the Cathedral and Diocese during his time with us.

The organisation of high-quality worship is a team effort. I am grateful to everyone who contributes to the delivery of our worship: to my clergy colleagues, including our many auxiliary clergy on whose ministry we depend and for which we are so grateful; to Claudia Grinnell, our Director of Music, Richard Cook, our Assistant Director of Music, and all our musicians for the way in which they enrich our worship so beautifully; to James Stark, our Head Verger, and the Verger team for their liturgical organisation and support; to Natalie Werner, our Liturgy and Music Administrator for her excellent eye for detail and deadlines; and to everyone who serves, reads, intercedes, arranges flowers, rings bells, welcomes and stewards. Thank you, all.

But thank you, too, to everyone who turns up to pray and to worship, at whatever service and in whatever way. May we never forget the privilege and the responsibility we have of coming together to worship God in this holy place. Through our worship, may we be joined together in faith and love and transformed evermore into the likeness of Christ.

Cathedral Music: Claudia Grinnell, Director of Music

As ever, it has been a busy 12 months, in which it has been particularly wonderful to install our brilliant new (now not so new) Precentor, Canon Katy. Alongside the annual highlights of Britten's Ceremony of Carols performed by the St Edmundsbury Singers, the summer concert given by the whole Choral Foundation, and the Christmas concert given by the Cathedral Choir and RAF Honington Voluntary Band, the choir diary has seen a number of exciting visits and projects.

The choristers had a fabulous time taking part in a performance of Bach's St Matthew Passion alongside Ipswich Chamber Choir and the Geldart Ensemble at Snape Maltings in April. In May, the adults of the Cathedral Choir enjoyed a few chorister-free days singing in Exeter Cathedral, and later in July the Cathedral Choir spent a long weekend singing in Carlisle Cathedral. We have also enjoyed reviving our programme of Diocesan Evensongs, taking one of our choirs to a church in the diocese to sing a special service.

It has been lovely to premiere a number of new compositions written especially for us this year. The Youth Choir's repertoire has been expanded by a new set of canticles by Tim Noon, and the Cathedral Choir has enjoyed not one, but two new pieces written by Sarah Cattley: The Search for God, which sets poetry by Thomas Heywood all about looking 'higher' for God—appropriate for the service celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Cathedral tower!—and also Lullay, My Liking, a medieval text which survives only in a manuscript compiled at the Abbey of St Edmund, set for the Princess of Wales' carol service, 'Suffolk Together at Christmas'.

A composer who has featured heavily on our music lists in recent months is Marcel Dupré, whose organ and choral music we recorded in October. The first edits should be with us in the first few months of 2026, so watch this space for details about the CD's release!

Installation of the Canon Precentor

June 2025



St Edmundsbury Singers: Georgia Small

Richard Cook, Assistant Director of Music, has continued to lead the St Edmundsbury Singers, with the assistance of Claudia Grinnell, Director of Music. Both leaders work hard to maintain a high standard of music and singing, which was further supported during 2025, by the undertaking of a 'one-to-one' appraisal with every member. This personal practice of nurture from focused leadership, has served as an exercise for ensuring that every member of this voluntary ensemble continues to feel valued, and supported; clear communication and feedback, cemented by a culture of belonging, continues to build and sustain this wholesome singing community, which ultimately serves its wider Cathedral-community – thus, creating maximum mutual benefits for all involved.

The St Edmundsbury Singers continue to rehearse fortnightly, in preparation for regular Wednesday Evensong services, as well as for service on scheduled Sundays. The choir has sadly bid farewell to a few of its singers during 2025, including retiring longstanding members, whilst also welcoming new and experienced voices from the wider singing community of Suffolk. With this slight fluctuation of membership throughout 2025, the group has sustained a healthy number, and is currently standing at 26 singers, all of whom have been thoughtfully assembled into a well-balanced choir of excellence.

The St Edmundsbury Singers have delighted, and supported our Cathedral congregations and audiences, with a variety of offerings throughout 2025 – as a choir standing alone, and at times in conjunction with the Adults of/and the Cathedral Choir, or together with the whole Choral Foundation. These occasions have included the marked services of: An Easter Vigil at Dawn on Easter Sunday; the installation service of the Reverend Katy Cunliffe [Precentor]; the installation service of Honorary and Lay Canons and admission to The Order of St Edmund; All Souls Requiem Eucharist; the First Eucharist of Christmas [Midnight Mass]; as well as the well-attended July Summer Concert in the Nave, to mark the close of the academic year.

The St Edmundsbury Singers work hard to build their own traditional offerings – annually; and, mutually, they witness the return of their (growing) audiences - year after year. Benjamin Britten's 'A Ceremony of Carols', is a prime example of this shared satisfaction of annual ritual, which was performed for its third January-outing in 2025, and consecutively, its fourth in January 2026. Each year, something new is introduced to the execution of this popular choral masterpiece, under the first-class guidance of Richard Cook and accompanying harpist – being all-in, a sublime presentation with endless potential.

Social get-togethers are planned and supported throughout the year, and 2025 was no exception; this is when choir stalls are replaced by pub cushions and benches, and choir folders swapped for wine glasses and cutlery! The upholding of morale is essential for great teamwork, and great teamwork is at the core of this well-established, well-led choir. Without a doubt, The St Edmundsbury Singers continues to be an integral part of the music ministry in our beautiful Cathedral of St Edmundsbury.

Cathedral Chaplains: The Reverend Canon Mark Haworth, Cathedral Chaplain

Day Chaplains, a distinctive role within the family of Cathedral volunteers, are rostered each morning and afternoon to offer a devotional presence within the Cathedral and its precincts, to be available for one-to-one counsel, priests offering the Sacrament of Reconciliation if requested, sharing in prayer, and to signpost Christian faith information and resources, in addition to the leading of times of public prayer at 12 noon and 3.00 pm.

For 2026, having lost three day chaplains from last year's 18, we have been able (with the DDO's help) to recruit six serving curates, one Reader-in-Training and one permanent deacon, ensuring that our rotas are fully staffed Monday to Saturday, while offering them the experience of being part of the Cathedral life and ministry as part of their formation, also enhancing the involvement of benefices from across the diocese with their own cathedral. On the basis that peoples pastoral and spiritual needs are not seasonal we plan on there being no break in January and February 2027, thus offering this ministry for the full calendar year.

Cathedral Wardens: Terry Stark and Barbara Pycraft

We are constantly asked, how does the role of Cathedral wardens differ from that of wardens in a parish? Whilst we are "let off" the responsibilities of buildings and fabric, this is more than compensated for by the organisation required for the smooth running of each service, from Choral Evensong in the quire to a Cathedral filled to capacity for the Nine Lessons and Carols.

Apart from being the first point of welcome for anyone attending a service, our roles incorporate safeguarding, health and safety and an understanding of often complex seating plans for large services throughout the year, such as the Justice Service and Ordinations.

2025 saw some special celebrations, such as VE Day in May and the marking of 20 years of the Cathedral Tower in June and as our team also works closely with the Canon Precentor, we were particularly delighted that month to welcome the installation of Canon Katy.



Churches Together: Pam Pitts

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

There was an exchange of greetings between some churches in the autumn, including the United Reformed Church with the Cathedral. Some local churches took part in the "Shine Your Light" initiative involving singing carols on Angel Hill on 13 December; this was part of a nationwide event.

"Sharers in the Promise" was a presentation for Advent held at St Mary's Church on 14 December. It involved Cantus Firmus Choir, St Mary's Church Choir and children from Guildhall Feoffment School.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was marked from 18 January at various churches in the town. The launch service was at All Saints Church; a lunchtime prayer service was held at the Cathedral on 19 January led by Canon Mark Haworth. The materials for this year were prepared by a team from Armenia with the theme "One Body, One Spirit."

The Good Friday Walk of Witness is organised by Churches Together. It starts at the Cathedral with a short service at 10.30 am and continues with a silent walk through the streets. A large wooden cross and banners are carried to the Cornhill where a small stage has been set up for reflections and music. Hundreds of people will take part in this moving event on 3 April 2026.

World Day of Prayer: Mandy Alderman

The Bury St Edmunds World Day of Prayer committee includes representatives from All Saints Church, Trinity Methodist Church, St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Garland St Baptist, St Edmund's Catholic Church, Southgate Church, Northumberland Avenue Methodist Church, United Reformed Church, St John's Church, Christ Church Moreton Hall, St Peter's Church, Bury St Edmunds Society of Friends, West Stow - Lark Valley Churches and St Mary's Church.

This year the service has been prepared by the Christian women of Nigeria with their message 'I will give you rest, come'. Nigerian women's lives are marked by endless labour from sunrise to sunset. These women traverse treacherous paths to their farms often carrying both their harvest and their children along unmaintained roads through thick bush.

The World Day of Prayer Service in Bury St. Edmunds was held as always on the first Friday of March, 6 March 2026, at St John's Church at 10.30 am and at Southgate Church at 7.30 pm.

Last year's service raised £679.60.

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, and others offer prayers and readings, 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 continues to grow and flourish and attracts both the very youngest and more mature members of the cathedral community. Children and young people families 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. The All-Ages Eucharists are held four or five times a year at the 10.30 am service and are also very successful and well-received with our young people contributing to the services in a range of ways. During Advent the All-Ages service, focused on the story of the Jesse Tree, linking it to our own Jesse Tree window, with young people and children narrating and creating a tableau of some of the key characters. Junior Church, led on a rota basis by a group of wonderful volunteers, 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. Eight children and young people were baptised during the year, and three were prepared for and admitted to Holy Communion at Pentecost and on Advent Sunday.

It is a delight 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 twelve children and ten adults each week. During 2025 we also re-introduced the monthly Pram Service alongside Young Families, which has proved to be very popular and is well-attended although numbers vary. Two very successful Messy Church sessions were held at Candlemas and during Holy Week, and we welcomed children with their families to participate in a range of activities, including the creation of Christingles and the cathedral Easter Garden respectively. Messy Cathedral also includes a short worship session, and a simple shared tea. It is for everyone and volunteers from a range of aspects of cathedral life help to run the sessions.

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 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 continue to develop this further in 2026. New carpet is badly needed, and donations of age-appropriate books and toys are always gratefully received. 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 2026 and beyond.



Baptism

August 2025



VE Day Service

May 2025

Society of Norman Tower Bellringers: Joan Garrett

In 2025 there were 17 active ringing members of the band, and we continue to receive the support of several retired ringing members. If anybody is interested in finding out more about bellringing, or would be interested in learning this skill, do get in touch to find out more.

There is regular Sunday morning service ringing from 9.30 - 10.30 am and on second and fourth Sunday afternoons from 2.15 to 3.30 pm as well as ringing to celebrate many other special Cathedral, Suffolk and National events throughout the year. Practices are currently held on Thursday evenings from 7.15 to 9.00 pm.

During the year we were successful with 37 quarter peals, an increase of 8 on the previous year, with December being our busiest month when we rang for many special carol services, for Advent and for the Nine Lessons and Carols services. There were 8 successful peal attempts in the year.

We rang to say farewell to Bishop Martin and welcomed our 12th Bishop The Right Reverend Dr Joanne Woolway Grenfell, and rang for the Installation of Canon Precentor Katy Cunliffe. We rang to celebrate the ordination of new Deacons and Priests and the licencing of Lay Ministers, the Installation of the new Archdeacon of Ipswich, to say farewell to Sarah Friswell, and to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of the completion of the Cathedral Tower. We also rang for Mothering Sunday, Justices Service, Palm Sunday, VJ Day, Suffolk Day, County Harvest, St Edmunds Day, and Remembrance Sunday. Sadly local resident Lord Norman Tebbit passed away in August and we rang in his memory and for his funeral.

Cathedral Home Group: Chris and Christine Andrews

We meet each Monday evening during school terms for just under two hours. Christine and Chris Andrews continue as hosts. Membership has remained steady, two people leaving for the time being, three people joining at different points in the year. We value this opportunity to gain further insights into Christian faith from the Bible and from the books we read together. We also learn much from each other's insights and experience, as we reflect on our faith and the challenging world in which we now live.

Since the last report we finished the "Out of the Shadows" by Liz Shercliff and Kate Bruce, excellent studies on the women in the Bible, OT and NT. This rewarding book reminded us how many women have key roles in God's work in the Old and New Testaments. We followed this with "Humbler Faith, Bigger God" by Sam Wells vicar of St Martins-in-the-Fields in London. He takes a range of different aspects of Christian belief and summarises a traditional expression of each before proposing a parallel interpretation shaped by contemporary scholarship. This is not a lightweight book and we are glad we persevered.

Following this we have just started Rowan Williams' "Discovering Christianity – a guide for the curious". This is one of his excellent series of shorter books, opening up Christian thought and practice in writing that has a light touch with his characteristic depth as well.

It goes without saying that if anyone wants to find out more about joining or give the meetings a try, please do just ask.

Servers: James Utting, Head Server

The team of approximately ten 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 alter. A server will also present the gifts of the people for the Blessing and help to prepare the Altar for Communion and clearing afterwards.

This year 2025 we have welcomed several new servers including Ian Witts, Philip Roberts and Jill Burrows, who have all stepped up to take on greater roles within the team and we have also been undertaking training for several junior servers who have both come from the community and from those Choristers leaving the choir who wished to still be involved in the Cathedrals Sunday worship. The junior servers have been learning while assisting the Thurifer with the boat.

We do have two servers Delphine Coiley and Tobin Nelson who will be leaving us in 2026 and we thank them both for their service.

We continue to look 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 stedserver@gmail.com.



Kevelaer Candle Pilgrimage: Stewart Alderman, Enterprises Director

The annual candle pilgrimage to Kevelaer took place between Monday 15 and Saturday 20 September 2025.

Kevelaer pilgrim leaders Lorna Brook, Geoffrey House and Stewart Alderman were joined by Canon Katy Cunliffe and members of the Cathedral community Sue Long, Liz Rowlands and Andy Ellis.

Departing on the Monday evening there was some anxiousness as the storm force winds of the first named storm of the year created a very choppy sea. Thankfully modern cross channel ferries are very stable, even in high seas, and everyone enjoyed a comfortable nights crossing. On Tuesday an easy journey through Holland into north west Germany 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 we enjoyed 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 for a lively wine tasting evening and a discussion on various pieces of classic literature.

Thursday saw Father Heiner lead us on a trip to the ancient industrial city of Essen. In the morning we visited the Cathedral which houses the Golden Madonna, the oldest fully sculpture gilded figure of Mary in Europe. This was followed by a visit to the UNESCO world heritage site, the Zollverein coal mine.

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 1 February, where the Pilgrims presented the new candles to The Dean. The Votive candle, which this year bears the inscription of The Precentors Candle is in the high alter and is lit at every evensong and 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

The Learning Hub had another busy year, and the small, dedicated team continued to deliver heritage and Christianity structured programmes for schools during term time. We also provided a roving guide for those schools preferring a self-guided visit to enable them to ask questions to check their knowledge. Both the King Edward VI exchange students from Shanghai and St Benedicts Summer School pupils returned for annual visits. Schools also participated in creative projects and produced banners for the county Harvest service and angels to hang over the Nave from Advent to Candlemas.

Beaver scout troops and other community groups were welcomed for late afternoon or early evening sessions for a Cathedral Tour and/or Godly Play session which provided the content for their Faith badges.

The hugely popular family craft activities were organised during the school holidays and the themes centred around the celebration of the 10-year anniversary of the Cathedral Tower and eco and recycling. The Rhubarb Theatre reinforced the eco message by bringing their mime and puppetry show to the Cathedral during October half term.

The team also collaborated with colleagues to provide creative activities for Art on the Garth, Messy Cathedral, Cathedrals at Night and the Christmas Market. The Diocesan Education team was also supported for their 'Big Sing' and annual education service. In addition, the Learning Manager partnered with the Visitor Experience Manager and designed and delivered a customer service workshop at West Suffolk College for BTEC students.

Our successful adult learning events included online Lent talks, the Ronald Blythe Lecture and the Forgiveness Exhibition.

Into 2026 the Learning Hub team will continue reviewing and improving what is offered and begin to lay the foundations for moving towards the Abbey Reborn Project.

Tanzania Partnership: The Rev'd Canon Matthew Vernon, Canon Pastor and Sub Dean

The Cathedral plays its part in the longstanding link between our diocese and three dioceses in northwest Tanzania: Kagera, Lweru and Biharamulo. We support our partners through prayer (each day at Evensong and now at the Sunday Choral Eucharist) and ongoing fundraising, as well as sharing what it means to be Christians in different places. In 2025, our Sub Dean visited Kagera Cathedral representing our Diocese at the 40th anniversary celebrations of Kagera Diocese. The monthly Kagera stall after the 10.30 am service has been raising money to provide life-changing water storage tanks which give access to clean water at people's homes.

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

As an Inclusive Cathedral, we affirm that all people are created equal by God and we continue to foster a welcoming and accessible environment for all. Our aspiration to be a dementia-friendly Cathedral now includes regular hymn singalongs – opportunities to enjoy familiar music when other memories are less clear. As a place of equal access for all, a recent improvement at the Sunday Choral Eucharist is the provision for people who are disabled by the altar rail to receive communion standing.

We continue to support Our Bury St Edmunds as they promote the town as an inclusive community. This year, we have again celebrated with same-sex couples during our regular services, in accordance with national church guidelines. We will start an Open Table community at the Cathedral for LGBTQIA people early in 2026 as part of collaborating with organisations that promote inclusivity, challenge prejudice, address ignorance, and combat hate crime. We are committed to treating all people with fairness and dignity, regardless of age, disability, partnership, pregnancy, religion or belief, race, gender, or sexual orientation.

Social Action: The Rev'd Canon Matthew Vernon, Canon Pastor and Sub Dean

The Cathedral's wide-ranging activity in the community is delivered by committed staff and faithful volunteers, and, working with partners, we contribute 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 outside mainstream education) are ongoing. The Hope Into Action house we support has been providing a single mother and children with a stable, safe home for several years. The Yard project is delivered in partnership with the charity innov8. The Cathedral continues to support local foodbanks and in 2025 gave direct financial support to four Suffolk charities: The Befriending Scheme, Eden-Rose Coppice Trust, Activlives and YANA. As a FairTrade Cathedral we have a monthly FairTrade stall in the Cathedral on Sunday mornings and celebrate the town's annual FairTrade Fortnight.

Pastoral Support Team: Pam Pitts and 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 and Home Communion, monthly Communion Services in local residential homes, First Tuesday Lunch, the monthly Together on Tuesday Eucharist (for people who need a simpler service than Sunday mornings), 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 team, made up of Cathedral clergy and lay people, also contributes to the Cathedral becoming more dementia-friendly. 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: Jane Dow, Project Lead

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

In 2025, we continued our partnership with innov8 Workshops, an alternative education provider based in Rougham. Innov8 now provides one full-time and one part-time mentor to deliver one-to-one horticulture, outdoor, and craft sessions in The Yard, supporting some of the county's most at-risk young people and those at greatest risk of exploitation. We are discovering that the success of these Yard sessions relies upon us building relationships and trust over time. Innov8 also assists with our free after-school and holiday activities held at The Yard.

Several key partnerships were sustained throughout the year, including our collaboration with King Edward VI High School's Intervention Team and their newly appointed chaplain, who support our weekly gardening club for students who benefit from time out of the classroom. Outreach Youth also continued to run free Saturday support sessions at The Yard. We delivered holiday activity sessions across the year for young people eligible for free school meals, funded by the Holiday Activities and Food Programme. These sessions were particularly valued by neurodiverse children and young people who have experienced trauma due to their sensory-friendly, outdoor nature.

The Yard relocation project began gently in 2025, with initial use of the Old Orchard at Abbey Precincts for den building, games, and the development of a small garden plot. We have received £5,000 from the West Suffolk Council Locality Budgets to support pre-planning surveys for the installation of a new classroom, alongside outdoor games and bushcraft equipment. A planning application could be submitted by May 2026, with a decision expected in time for relocation at the beginning of 2027.

Overall, 2025 was a year of creativity, inclusion, and meaningful engagement, supporting young people from across the community to feel safe, valued, and connected.

Guild Get-Together: Lorna Brook

After some discussion about the name of Chapter 4, which many people said they did not understand, it was resolved to rename the Volunteers' forum the Guild Get-Together. We hope that this will be more easily understood.

In 2025 we held four meetings. In March, Roy Tricker entertained us with his accustomed verve on the subject of churches and people in Suffolk. In May, Martyn Taylor talked to us about past and present Bury St Edmunds with several slides to illustrate this. In July, Georgia Small told us of her journey from Canterbury to St Edmundsbury. In September we held a fundraising coffee morning for the Befriending Scheme, a charity supported by the Cathedral.

A full programme has been devised for 2026 and members of the congregation and their friends are encouraged to come along.

Safeguarding: Sarah-Jane Powell, Chief Operating Officer

Safeguarding is Everyone's Responsibility

The Cathedral is committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of everyone within our community and follows the ethos and principles of Safeguarding as outlined by the National Church. Namely:

- Promote a safe environment and culture.
- Safely recruit and support all those with any responsibility related to children and vulnerable adults within the Cathedral.
- Respond promptly to every safeguarding concern or allegation.
- Care pastorally for victims/survivors of abuse and other affected persons.
- Care pastorally for those who are the subject of concerns or allegations of abuse and other affected persons.
- Respond to those that may pose a present risk to others.

These commitments align with the Cathedral values:

- **Faith:** Faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and God's unconditional love for all people. This is our Christian conviction, and it is what defines and shapes us;
- **Welcome:** Welcome to friends and to strangers, to people of all faiths or none, to those with whom we agree and disagree; building a culture of openness and collaboration and generosity across the country;
- **Compassion:** Working alongside people in need, expressing love, tolerance and respect through our actions;
- **Confidence:** Confidence to challenge wrongs, to be honest about who we are and what we stand for; to be daring in what we do, how we do it and who with.

In 2025 Chapter approved a Safeguarding Strategy recommended by the Cathedral Safeguarding Committee:

Independent Chair – Will Wright, safeguarding chair@stedscathedral.com

Chapter Representative - Barbara Pycraft

Diocesan Safeguarding Officer – Karen Galloway, 07785 621319

Assistant Diocesan Safeguarding Officer - Shelly Thomas, 07795 974734

Cathedral Safeguarding Officer - Sarah-Jane Powell, sarah-janepowell@stedscathedral.org

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

Human Resources and Safeguarding Administrator – Drew Parnell, drewparnell@stedscathedral.org

Independent Committee Member - Mary Memarzia, 07415 580821

Abbi Thorpe – Committee Member

Scott Owen – Committee Member

In October, the Cathedral was audited by an external company called INEQE. We would like to thank all those that completed a survey and spoke to the auditors. We received some preliminary feedback and are waiting for the full report of their findings. Following one of the recommendations we have appointed a stand-alone Cathedral Safeguarding Officer Tanya Dawson who you will all meet in the coming weeks. Tanya will be driving the Church of England's National Safeguarding Standards.

Safeguarding Continued: Sarah-Jane Powell, Chief Operating Officer

The Five Standards are:

- **Culture, Leadership and Capacity:** Church bodies have safe and healthy cultures, effective leadership, resourcing, and scrutiny arrangements necessary to deliver high-quality safeguarding practices and outcomes.
- **Prevention:** Church bodies have in place a planned range of measures which together are effective in preventing abuse in their context.
- **Recognising, Assessing and Managing Risk:** Risk assessments, safety plans and associated processes are of a high quality and result in positive outcomes. The assessment and management of risk is underpinned by effective partnership working.
- **Victims and Survivors:** Victims and survivors experience the timeliness and quality of Church bodies' responses to disclosures, and their subsequent support, as positively meeting their needs, including their search for justice and helping their healing process.
- **Learning, Supervision and Support:** All those engaged in safeguarding-related activity in Church bodies receive the type and level of learning, professional development, support, and supervision necessary to respond to safeguarding situations, victims and survivors, and respondents, effectively.

The Cathedral is committed to safeguarding as a core element of its ministry and mission.

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 run by Kate Vernon and Penny Bentley. It usually runs on the fourth Sunday of each month after the 10.30 am Eucharist. We sell ranges of tea, coffee, chocolate, muesli, greeting cards and dried fruit, as well as the ever-popular ginger biscuits. This year we had a good range of products for Christmas which sold well; chocolate and Advent calendars were especially popular.

We organise all stock orders and sales from the stall to go directly through the Cathedral accounts, so that all transactions are efficient and transparent. We are grateful to the vergers for their help with this. All customer payments are now contactless. 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.

Chrism Eucharist

April 2025



The Mother's Union: Jane Leung, Branch Leader

The Cathedral Branch of the Mother's Union continues to grow and has currently 41 members. Sadly, two of our long serving Mothers' Union members passed away in 2025, Pippa Jones and Margaret Ellis. 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 activities have included:

- Our year started with a very interesting talk from Mercy Ships, who deploy hospital ships to some of the poorest countries in the world, delivering vital, free healthcare to people in desperate need.
- Mothering Sunday where our members made over 400 posies.
- Cathedral MU presented the Paschal Candle and Votive Candles to St Edmundsbury Cathedral.
- Celebrated our Lady Day Service at the Cathedral and branches from across Suffolk attended.
- Celebrated World Day of Prayer.
- Supported the Messy Christingle morning.
- Throughout Spring and Summer, the Craft Group made a single bed quilt. Money raised enabled Bury Drop In Centre, to purchase tents; sleeping bags; hand warmers and gloves.
- Helped Junior Church with the Easter Garden by providing potted plants.
- Our Garden party was successful with many varied stalls, cream teas and lots of laughter. Money raised went to MU charities.
- Outings on the Lady Florence, from Orford and West Stow Hall and Church.
- We continue to support World Day of Prayer.
- Prison Sunday Q & A session, serving refreshments.
- Man the Jigsaw stall at the Christmas Fair whose funds went to the Cathedral.
- Toiletries and hats were supplied by the congregation for Sea Sunday Service. These toiletries and a total of 65 woolly hats were taken to the Seafarers Mission in Felixstowe.
- Provide refreshments to Chapter 4.
- Wave of Prayer Long Service Award presented to MU members .
- Morning Coffee for members at Audreen and Brian Lillistone's.
- Two members produced a blue and pink pedestal for the Remembering Together Service.
- Other events that we run or support are: Parent and Toddler group; Craft Mornings; Scrabble mornings.
- We also donate to the Moses Basket project and Gatehouse Food Bank.

Cathedral Sewing Group: Lorna Brook

Observing a need for a group of people able to mend ecclesiastical items, in July I gathered nearly a dozen interested women (men are by no means excluded) to sew for the Cathedral on an ad hoc basis. We have attended to the white and green nave altar frontals and are currently mending the green high altar frontal. We have sewn buttons on shirts and cassocks and are prepared to stitch pretty well anything brought to us by the vergers.



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.

Visitor Experience and Engagement: Fiona Hall, Visitor Experience Manager

Sarah Friswell retired in August, and Fiona Hall joined the Cathedral team in October as the Visitor Experience Manager.

Annual visitor numbers were around 68,500, a slight fall from previous years, with July and August being the busiest months. A dedicated team of staff and volunteers continue to provide a warm welcome as Welcome Assistants, Information Stewards, Guides, and Chaplains, to enhance the visitor experience.

The Welcome Assistants received some external training to understand our visitor flow, the multiple stake holders and how to professionally ask for donations which resulted in an increase in visitor income.

Guided Tours and Tower Tour bookings continue in popularity and can be booked online and on-site through Welcome Assistants. Visitor feedback remains overwhelmingly positive. The visitor experience was further enriched by the 20th anniversary of finishing the tower with interpretation, an exhibition and tours. We also ran Art in the Garth, 'Cathedrals at Night', and a successful Christmas Market. The ever-popular LEGO® model is now 90% complete thanks to dedicated volunteers and visitor donations.

Our volunteer flower arrangers and gardeners play a vital role in ensuring the Cathedral and its grounds are welcoming and beautifully presented for all visitors.

The Guild of St Edmund and Volunteers: Sarah-Jane Powell, Chief Operating Officer

The Cathedral currently has 298 active volunteers, including individuals with over 40 years of service. New volunteers were recruited in 2025 to the shop, welcomers, servers, wardens, Sunday Coffee, Lego, Bell Ringers and flowers. We said farewell to a valued colleague and thanked Sarah Friswell, who managed and supported our volunteers with such dedication and care. We wish her every happiness in her retirement and are incredibly grateful that she will continue with us as a volunteer to help complete the LEGO project.

The Guild of St Edmund Committee met in January, May and September with a representative attending from each volunteering group. All volunteers were invited to the AGM in June where long service awards were given out. St Edmund's Day lunch took place in November with an informative talk from James Mellish the Project Manager of the Abbey of St Edmund Reborn. Every volunteer, whether serving for weeks or decades, plays a vital role in the Cathedral's mission. Our heartfelt thanks to all who give their time and talents so generously.

Events: James Stark, Events Manager and Head Verger

2025 saw an extremely ambitious events calendar with an ambitious budget to meet. The role of events is to 'fit in' around the worship and visitor experience which we offer here at The Cathedral. I always remember to mention that the events would not happen without our extremely committed Event and concert steward volunteer teams, who continue to give up their time to come and support the Vergers Team in the running of events here. We are very grateful to them.

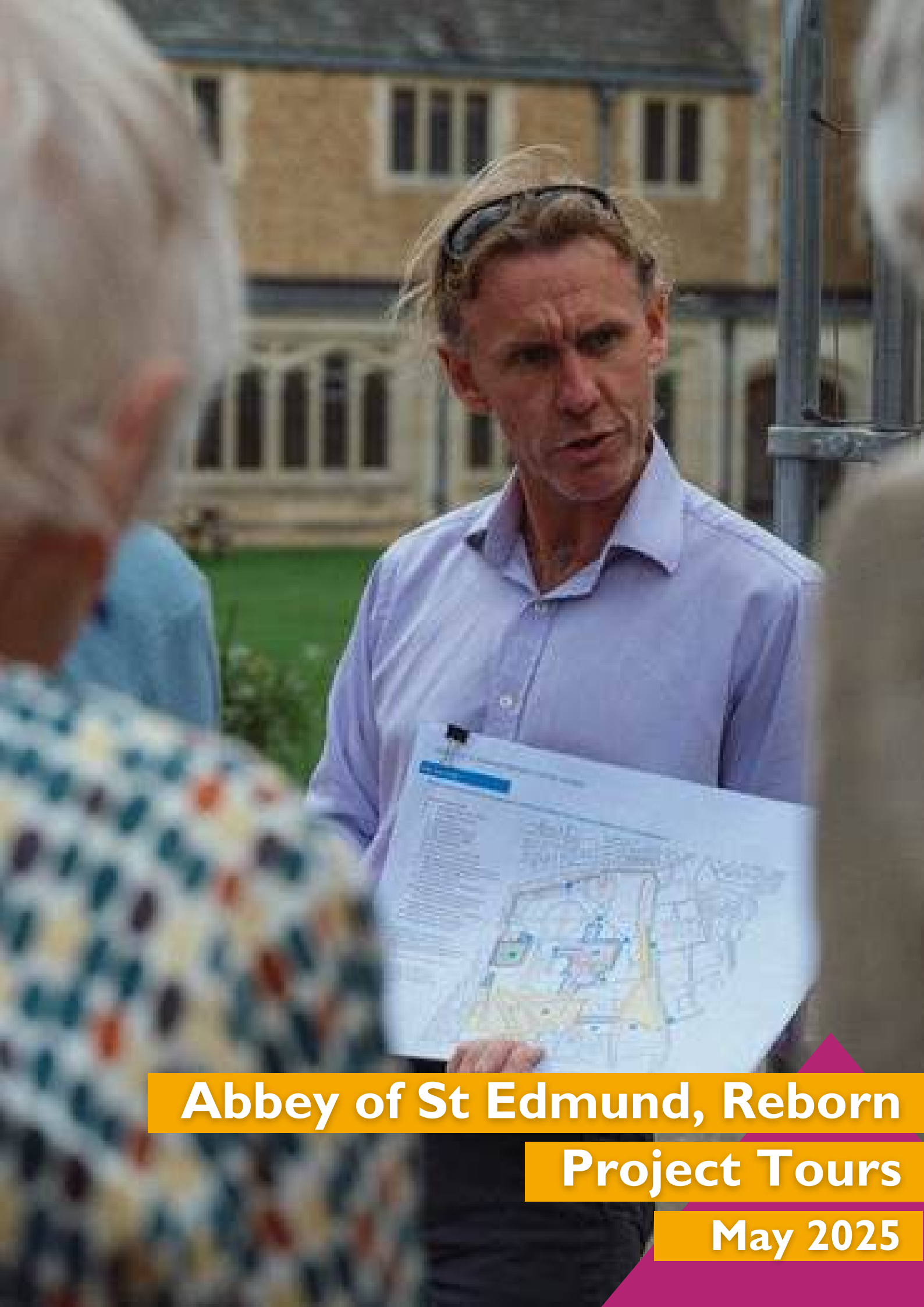
Concerts by Candlelight were our main concert attraction in 2025. New tribute band shows such as Coldplay, Taylor Swift and Adele were performed, as well as returning favourites such as Queen and Meatloaf. It has shown us that there is a real want for audiences to witness their favourite performers' music performed at the Cathedral and is something we are continuing into 2026. It is still 'in trend' at other Cathedrals around the country, so continuing this is a no brainer for us. We also hosted a range of classical music concerts, such as four performances by London Concertante and Britten Sinfonia. A new one for 2025 was welcoming The London Film Music Orchestra to perform a wide variety of Film music, such as music from various James Bond films and also music from Pirates of The Caribbean.

Silent Discos continued to be ever popular with the people of Bury St Edmunds. They really are a great event which welcomes people into a safe space, where they can enjoy themselves. Martin Kemp performed a DJ set here, similar to a Silent Disco, but a live performance which went down well with the audience. The last one I will mention is the Beer Festival which returned for the fourth year to the Cathedral. We find new ways to improve this event each year and are still learning as we go. A record number of attendees came over the five day period, and we look forward to playing host in 2026.

Vergers: James Stark, Events Manager and Head Verger

The Vergers continued to be a key part of the day-to-day running of Cathedral activities, whether it be a busy and ambitious events programme, or our daily round of services. Notable services which the team were key players in were the Farewell Service to Bishop Martin Seeley, HM Courts of Justice Service and the Twentieth Anniversary Service marking the completion of the Millennium Tower. Another notable highlight was hosting The East Anglian Branch of The Guild of Vergers for their annual AGM and a service of Choral Evensong, where we were able to induct no less than five new members into the guild. We look forward to this becoming an annual celebration at the Cathedral.

In 2025 we welcomed Stefanie Allen as a new Verger, joining from St Paul's Cathedral and we said farewell to Matthew Austin. The Vergers team is made up of three full time staff members, two part-time staff members and a cleaner, as well as four honorary Vergers, who are extremely dependable and come in for daily services, as well as larger services when called upon. As always, in these reports, I cannot praise them enough for their dedication to the role at our Cathedral.



Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn

Project Tours

May 2025

LEGO®: Sarah Friswell

2025 was an exciting year for our dedicated team of LEGO volunteers, as the end of the build came tantalisingly close. To link with the anniversary of the completion of the Millennium Tower, it was agreed that there would be a special promotion to help get the Tower built in LEGO bricks. Whilst the Tower sections were being built, visitors' donations went twice as far with every £1 donated allowing two, rather than one, brick to be added to the model. There were also LEGO building sessions as part of Family Activity days and the Cathedrals at Night event. This meant that by the summer, the Tower was up to its full height and included an abseiling mini-figure to match the real-life abseilers who were raising funds for the East Anglia's Children's Hospices.

Work continued behind the scenes preparing some of the sections of the upper floor of the Cathedral Centre, ready to add in due course. By the end of 2025, only 8000 bricks remained to be added so 2026 will include a celebration to mark the completion of the model. The LEGO project is hugely popular and the brilliant volunteer team enjoys not only ensuring that the model gets built but also engaging visitors in conversations about the Cathedral and its work.

Flower Guild: Susan Cockram

The Guild is a group of some 18 members who use their creative skills to produce arrangements in the Cathedral on a regular basis. We also welcome arrangers from local Parish churches who come in and greatly enjoy arranging flowers in their Mother Church.

We have just arranged flowers for Bishop Joanne's Enthronement and there certainly was an air of excitement about that morning – I hope you noticed the mitres in the Cloisters! Not only do we arrange weekly, but also for weddings, funerals, major Diocesan services, dinners and more.

Arranging a pedestal does take time – preparation of foliage and flowers is so important, cutting the ends and giving them a good drink – this helps to prolong their life, so our secateurs are working hard, and I am so grateful to all the arrangers and the waterers who each day water our arrangements. This year we welcomed Jane Romana-Powling and Phil Lilley to the team and I hope they enjoy arranging flowers.

All the time and effort put in is worthwhile when we receive wonderful feedback and comments from the Congregation and visitors. We are a happy group but always looking for new arrangers so do please get in touch with me if you are interested: sue@cockram.net

We are very grateful to for the kind donations received during the year which helps us to arrange flowers to enhance our beautiful building. Do come and join us! Fun, flowers and friendship is the motto of flower arrangers.

Welcomers: Jill de Laat

Welcoming visitors to the cathedral continues to be an important role which our 30+ volunteers enjoy throughout the year. During the winter months we cover two shifts per day but with the advent of spring a full rota of volunteers, throughout each day, greet our visitors with warmth and information about the Cathedral, its mission, purpose and its place within the community. We give each visitor as much or as little information as they ask for and do our best to ensure their visit is a fulfilling one.

We get many visitors from overseas and from other parts of the country; often it is their first time in Bury St Edmund's so the history is also important to place the Cathedral within the context of the town and its past and they appreciate the depth of knowledge our Welcomers can impart. By working as a team with the Welcome Assistants, we endeavour to make sure our visitors leave with happy memories.

Ancient Library: Stephen Dart

Exhibitions in the Treasury are the public face of the library and in January we worked with local student, Charlie Norman, for his exhibition 'Inspired in the Library.' Next came an exhibition linked to the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Tower. The most recent is 'St Jerome and the Bible'.

On-line exhibitions enable us to take a more detailed look at individual books. This year Jill de Laat and Debbie de Cova have described the illustrations found in the works of Jean Gerson (Paris, 1521) and the volumes of St Jerome (Antwerp, 1578-9).

We displayed Prayer Books in the Cathedral for a workshop on worship organised by the Learning Hub for 70 primary school children and books with images of towers for the 'Cathedrals at Night' in November. Open Days have proved very popular with 60 visitors on Suffolk Day (21 June) and 178 visitors on the Heritage Open Days in September. Other groups have come from Wicken Skeith, Sweden and Elmswell and there was a specialised tour for members of the Richard III Society.

Emily Wildish, from the University of St Andrews, has published a blog on the library on the Universal Short Title website as part of her study on the catalogues of Suffolk Parish libraries. The catalogue of Ronald Blythe's religious books is now on the Ancient Library webpage. We have had many discussions with the consultants for 'Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn'. However, the most significant event this year has been the donation of the Bury Psalter by the Foundation Governors of King Edward VI School to the Cathedral. Suzanne Reynolds and I have been fully engaged with all the necessary preparations for its formal presentation at Evensong on 5 March and for its exhibition in the Treasury.

I would like to thank Sarah Friswell for her tremendous support for the Ancient Library over the years and welcome Canon Katy Cunliffe and Fiona Hall to the committee. 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

2025 was another year of growth for our online marketing channels. We saw a 13% increase in followers on our biggest channel, Facebook and our new social channels, Blusky and TikTok grew 76% and 392% respectively. Our engagement rate was up across all social networks and our video views increased 32%. Social media advertising delivered a big return on investment with a net income for ticketed events at £15k with a £605 spend.

Website traffic remained very similar to 2024. The What's On page remained the most visited, attracting 22k, more views than our second most visited page, Services. Our email subscriber list expanded by 7%, but we saw a decrease in average open rates across these emails.

Press coverage in 2025 was at a similar place to the previous year, 160 pieces of total coverage (97 local, 63 national). National coverage got a boost this year as the Cathedral hosted Lord Norman Tebbit's funeral in July, a service which was covered 27 times and in every major national news outlet. Our next most covered story was the Dog Calendar which saw seven pieces of coverage but an additional nine mentions in press around Bury St Edmunds status as a dog-friendly town.

Marketing and Communications continues to support all Cathedral departments, promoting our key masterplan priorities of Worship, Mission, Hospitality, and Sustainability, alongside the National Lottery Heritage Fund project.



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

The Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn is a major National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) project that aims to conserve, protect, and reimagine the historic Abbey of St Edmunds site. The project focuses on stabilising and conserving the Abbey ruins, improving public access and safety, creating a new visitor centre on Angel Hill, expanding accessible pathways (including an extension of the Cathedral cloister), and delivering engaging educational experiences through interactive and digital interpretation.

The project entered its development phase in April 2024, supported by an NLHF development grant of £729,553. This phase runs until February 2026, culminating in a delivery phase application. A final funding decision on the project is expected in Summer 2026, alongside a requirement to raise additional match funding.

To lead delivery, James Mellish was appointed Project Manager in September 2024, bringing extensive experience in heritage project management. A multidisciplinary team of specialist consultants has been engaged to develop architectural designs, cost plans, archaeological assessments, interpretation strategies, activity and engagement programmes, business and management plans, evaluation frameworks, marketing strategies, and fundraising plans.

The project is a partnership led by St Edmundsbury Cathedral, working closely with West Suffolk Council and English Heritage, with oversight provided by a diverse Project Board of clergy, heritage, academic, and independent experts. Together, the partnership seeks to transform the Abbey site into a dynamic heritage, cultural, learning, and community destination bringing economic benefits to Bury and beyond.

You can keep up-to-date with project updates via www.abbeyofstedmund.com.





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: Katherine Wright, Fundraising Manager

The day-to-day running of St Edmundsbury Cathedral would not be possible without our Fundraising efforts. As the Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn project reaches a pivotal stage, our fundraising priorities are evolving whilst several existing initiatives continue to perform strongly.

In 2025 our dedicated Patrons consisting of individual, joint and corporate members contributed £35,242. The Patron scheme remains a significant part of our Individual Giving, which we continue to rely on. Some highlights of the year include the Summer Garden Party, a trip to Cambridge to visit Pembroke and St John's Colleges, and the Patrons' Carol Service, all of which has helped grow relationships with our Patrons. I'm greatly looking forward to getting to know all the patrons in my role and building these relationships in 2026 and hopefully welcoming some new Patrons as well.

Our one-off donations and regular giving have seen exponential growth, from £16,789 in 2024 almost doubling to £33,808 in 2025.

A highlight of the year has been the Grand Nave Dinner, raising vital funding for the Abbey of St Edmund: Reborn project whilst also bringing entertainment and fine dining to our guests. This raised approximately £30,000, as well as fostering our connections with some of the prize winners who won private performances and champagne receptions at St Edmundsbury Cathedral.

Looking into 2026, we will be growing on the foundations of our existing work with our Fundraising messaging and strategy development, working towards completing fundraising for the Abbey Reborn project. 2026 will also bring the usual calendar of Patron events and activities, and planning for the Grand Nave Dinner in 2027.

We are very grateful to all who donate, have remembered the Cathedral in their will, and support us through Planned Giving and the Patron Scheme. Every gift, whatever the size, helps us continue to open our doors and plan for the future. A heartfelt thank you to all our supporters. If anybody is interested in finding out more about the Patron scheme, or would like to speak about joining Planned Giving, regular giving, donations or gifts in wills, please email me at katherinewright@stedscathedral.org.

Pilgrims' Kitchen Restaurant: Stewart Alderman, Enterprises Director

Pilgrims Kitchen continued its eight-year growth trend, with a 7% increase in turnover compared to 2024 achieving sales of £600,000. This success reflects the wide ranging menu and quality of the food on offer coupled with a high level of customer service along with an increasing number of functions that Pilgrims caters for on behalf of the Cathedral. Space constraints remain a challenge, particularly at our busiest times. Initial costings to extend the indoor seating area were cost prohibitive, however, with our new Cathedral architect, we continue to explore options to extend the space within a more realistic budget that would allow achievement of an acceptable return on investment.

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. Our team is made up of myself and two part-time Sales Assistants as well as a dedicated team of 50 volunteers. Over the last year we have seen a change of staff with Sue Hollis retiring and Michael Jack switching roles to become a Welcome Assistant in the cathedral. We welcomed Dawn Parnell and Ellen Collier to the team as our new Sales Assistants.

After a quite unpredictable year for sales, November 2025 saw a big upturn in the shop with turnover for the Christmas Fair alone standing at over £10.5k (£3.5k up on last year) and back to turnover levels set during the town Christmas market. November was our best month for turnover, and we achieved over £35k for the month. In addition, we had an excellent December, with a turnover of just over £28.5k. These last two months in the shop made up for some quieter months earlier in the year, seeing us finish with a total turnover of just over £199k and a very strong average spend of £12.27.

Over the year we constantly update our stock, sourcing new ranges to tempt potential customers as well as keeping stock of our core lines. We have a wide customer base from tourists who want a souvenir, local residents who pop in for a birthday card and present (an important source of revenue when we are not in tourist season) to local churches who visit us to purchase candles and communion wine for services. This creates an interesting product mix and means no two days are the same for the staff and volunteers who deal with the queries and questions which arise. The volunteers in the TIP and shop are vital to providing the service we do and a massive part of the how successful we are.



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

Members of Forum are elected at the APCM but all members of the Cathedral congregations are welcome at the meetings to discuss 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 2025. Agenda items included the Cathedral's charitable giving, the Abbey of St Edmund Reborn project, the review of the Cathedral Master Plan, the Cathedral sound system, and Safeguarding (which is an agenda item at every meeting). New members of staff have attended meetings to inform members about their roles.

Cathedral Gardeners: Robert Bourne

The Cathedral Gardeners have continued year-round – having been rained off only once in 2025 – to maintain the garden and green areas surrounding the Cathedral. Colourful displays were maintained outside Pilgrims' Kitchen and in the Remembrance Garden, and the Herb Garden was regularly tended. The extension to the upper Remembrance Garden lawn was successfully seeded and the adjacent newly-planted privet hedge and salvias are growing healthily. The Judas tree seems to have recovered and blossomed well. The hot, dry summer weather of 2025 has however taken its toll, particularly on the lower Remembrance Garden lawn.

The Abbey Reborn project will markedly affect the gardens, and pending progress on this, and on the repair of the ancient flint walls bounding the gardens, our emphasis has been on maintenance. Prior to the archaeological dig outside the cathedral office, the planters in that area were permanently moved to the vicinity of PK. At the request of the Council, extensive ivy was removed from the western end of the boundary with the Abbey Gardens, although the Council has yet to reinstate that boundary.

The Edmund Roses have been successfully propagated by rose growers in Norfolk and, although now sold out, are expected to reappear in their catalogue. The original plants in the gardens are being looked after pending their likely relocation as part of the Reborn project.

Following the departure of Sarah Friswell, who gave great support to the Gardeners, regular liaison continues with Cathedral management through Steve Cole, maintenance verger.



Harvest

October 2025

EACH Abseil

August 2025



Planned Giving: Felix von Nathusius

As I reflect on my second year as Chairman of Planned Giving, I remain deeply grateful for our open, committed, and engaged congregation. It continues to be a privilege to meet members and gain a deeper appreciation of the cathedral's life and ministry. My thanks also go to all past Committee members for their dedicated stewardship.

Our current committee—David Eden (joined 2025), Valerie Moore, Dan Soper, and me—remains committed to upholding the Cathedral's strong tradition of generosity. We also warmly welcome Katherine Wright, our new Fundraising Manager, and thank her and Caroline Rouse for their support. Planned Giving continues to sustain much of the Cathedral's mission, guided by our core Giving Principles:

- One Giving – multiple channels: recognising that people give in different ways, and all are valued.
- Giving is voluntary: every giver determines their own level of support.
- Givers should be informed: transparency and regular communication are essential.
- Data and analysis must be available: ensuring responsible and evidence-based stewardship.
- Giving follows ethical and legal guidelines: maintaining integrity in all we do.

This year has again brought financial pressures. Planned Giver numbers remain stable at 141, but the 35 joiners since February 2024 did not fully offset the 29 leavers, resulting in a decrease in annual Planned Giving.

We continue to encourage new members to join the Parish Giving Scheme, which simplifies administration and ensures automatic Gift Aid collection. Regular Planned Giving income for the year was £120,040 against a £135,000 budget, down from £125,931 in 2024. Gift Aid contributed £23,286 in 2025, slightly below £24,503 in 2024. Around half of Planned Givers have opted out of the inflationary increase, and we encourage all givers to consider opting in. We also hope to engage more younger worshippers in establishing regular giving. If you feel called to serve as a Giving Ambassador, we would be delighted to hear from you.

We will continue to keep the congregation informed through Giving Newsletters and by being visible at services. Please do speak to us about the benefits and practicalities of Planned Giving.

Finally, my sincere thanks go to the Committee, Cathedral staff, and the Dean for their support—and above all, to all who give regularly. Every contribution helps ensure that the Cathedral's worship and service continue for generations to come.



Friends of the Cathedral: Susan Cockram, Director

2025 was an active year for Friends with various changes to the events held over the years.

The Friends' holidays, which have been run for many, many years have now ceased – due to increased costs and lack of support. I am so grateful to Arthur Tanner who has been organising holidays and outings for over the past eight years. If anyone would be interested in organising outings, I would be delighted to hear from you.

On a brighter side we have two excellent Quirky talks; Bunny Campione from The Antique Roadshow entertained us with some of her tales from the show and then in October, Barbara Segall gave an interesting, illustrated talk on gardens in and around Suffolk.

The new format for Annual Day was very successful, and this will be repeated on 11 June 2026. We are planning two more Quirky Talks this year, March and October and a very special event to be held at Snape Maltings in July – more details to follow!

We have continued to support the Dean and Chapter with various projects – providing dollies which help the Vergers move the chairs and the re-liming of the Lady Chapel roof which is about to start.

So, if you would like to know more about the Friends or our various activities, do please contact me sue@friendsevents.co.uk or pick up a leaflet from the Cathedral. We have increased our membership this year but always would welcome more!

Fabric Advisory Committee: Susan Cockram, Secretary

This past year has been a very busy one for the FAC with several additional meetings. The Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn project is a very exciting and interesting scheme, and we have been advising and commenting on the plans for the proposed third Cloister of the Cathedral and additional plans. We should hear if the consents will be given by June.

The FAC have also been advising the Dean and Chapter on the proposed Quire ramp, Great West Doors and other smaller projects. The Committee is fortunate that Polly Saltmarsh, an expert Conservator on paintings, is looking at the Cathedral Arts Policy and advising on paintings given to the Cathedral.

Five new voting members have joined the FAC this year bringing their expertise in various ways. Philip Orchard, Cathedral Architect and Surveyor, is retiring this year after 24 years. He has done a sterling job. We are delighted to welcome Alice Milligan who has been appointed as Cathedral Architect and Surveyor.

Cathedral Fabric, Property and the Environment: Jane Haviland Webster

The Facilities and Maintenance Verger and team continued to safeguard the Cathedral's fabric and long-term resilience. Preparation for installing PV solar panels on the South Aisle and Lady Chapel progressed well, with work scheduled for spring 2026. Once operational, the panels are expected to provide around 21% of the Cathedral Centre's electricity. The project has secured both planning approval and funding through the Church of England's Net Zero Carbon Cathedrals initiative.

The transition to fully LED lighting is nearing completion, with only a few areas still requiring conversion. Extensive refurbishment of the Deanery and its grounds has resulted in full occupancy, and the renovated West Wing is now generating additional income.

Emergency call buttons across the site have been upgraded, improving coverage and reliability. New hot water boilers installed in Abbey House and the Cathedral Centre have significantly increased energy efficiency. Major repairs were also completed on the Abbey Precinct garden wall adjoining neighbouring properties.

The Cathedral's screen and sound systems have been upgraded to HDMI and digital standards, enhancing the experience for both in-person worshippers and online viewers.

Eco St Eds has begun progressing toward the A Rocha Gold Standard. Work is underway to establish a baseline carbon footprint and develop wider environmental engagement across worship, teaching, and community activity. A gap analysis is being conducted to determine the required budget and programme for application submission, and supporting documents are in early development. The group has now become a Committee of Chapter, reflecting strong organisational commitment to environmental stewardship. Membership includes the Chief Finance Officer, the Dean, a non-executive trustee (Chair), congregation representatives, and the Diocesan Net Carbon Zero Officer. The Chair has also joined the Diocesan Care for Creation Working Party to support more integrated environmental planning.

The solar panel subgroup has submitted the planning application to West Suffolk LPA, with a decision expected in February 2026. If approved, installation and commissioning are anticipated by Easter.

Electoral Roll: Sarah-Jane Powell, 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 on 8 April 2025, at which the year-end total membership on the Electoral Roll stood at 260.

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. The figure will change in 2026 when each parish will have two members, with the exception of St Mary's with St Peter's, Bury St Edmunds who will have four and our Cathedral who will have five. All parishes will have to elect their Deanery Synod reps at their APCMs in 2026.

Synod meets 3 times each year and we invite a visiting speaker for the first half of our 90 minute meeting. In 2025 our speakers engaged with us on a good variety of subjects:

- Edward Creasy, Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance, and Gary Peverley, Diocesan Secretary, presented and took questions on Parish Share, using graphics available to parishes.
- Revd Laura Mumford, Growing Younger Enabler, heads a team to work with us to Grow in God by encouraging those aged 11 – 25. We broke into small groups to discuss what we are doing and what we would like to do in this respect.
- Julie Podd, Parish Resources Manager, and Emma Denton, Giving Advisor, gave presentations on gifts in wills and how to encourage us to leave legacies to our churches. Material is available for use in our parishes.

In addition, we asked Edward Creasy, Gary Peverley and Philip Codling, Finance and Operations Director, to meet with our PCC treasurers at the end of the year to discuss Parish Share again and in particular its draining of our resources.

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

We were delighted to elect Elizabeth Gingell from Fornham All Saints' as our Deanery Secretary and Michael Wilde (Cathedral) as our Deanery Organiser.

We have five clergy vacancies and two lay vacancies for Diocesan Synod to be filled.

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

Michael Wilde
Lorna Brook
Liz Steele
Geoffrey House

Deanery Synod Reps

St Edmundsbury Cathedral



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