

PARISH CHURCH NEWS

Ss. Peter & Paul, Clare
with St. Mary the Virgin, Poslingford

The Rev'd Mark Woodrow

Vicar and Rector of the Stour Valley Benefice

(Tel: 01787 277515 Email: rector@stourvalley.org.uk)

(Usual Rest Day: Monday)

The Rev'd Dr. Karen Smith

Assistant Curate

(Tel: 01440 594036 Email: drkarensmith@me.com)

(Usual Rest Day: Saturday)

The Rev'd Sarah Smith

Non-Stipendiary Assistant Curate (Deacon)

(Tel: 07795 530881 Email: revsarahsmith@outlook.com)

(Usual Rest Days: Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday)

No. 460

August 2026



The Assumption of Our Lady
15 August

Curate's Chronicles – August 2026 (Riding High or Revved up Rev!)



“Four wheels move the body, but two wheels move the Soul”

Lani Lynn Vale

There is even an old joke that King David in the Old Testament was the very first biker - how do we know this, well the Bible tells us that "his Triumph was heard across the land!"

But back to my reflection, having endured yet another hour-long tail-back on the A14 heading towards Cambridge, I sat in my car envious of the motorcyclists zooming by. “I’m sure it can’t be that difficult to learn” I thought.

Shortly after, I read about Elspeth Beard, the British architect who in 1982, at just 23 years old, became the first British woman to ride a motorcycle solo around the world on a 1974 BMW. That was the final push I needed. I booked my lessons. My sons thought I had gone completely bonkers, but I took to it quickly. Soon, I was happily swooshing along our Suffolk country lanes, discovering picturesque villages and then onto exploring the beautiful Norfolk coast.

However, it took me a good while to brave the A14 and find the confidence to "get a wiggle on" in the fast lane. To face the dual carriageway, I said goodbye to my 500cc Suzuki and hello to a 750cc Moto Guzzi Café Classic. With its drop handlebars, inverted forks, and gleaming chrome, it looked lovely. Crucially, it was the only bike with a bigger engine that actually allowed me to put both feet flat on the ground! Suddenly, the dreaded daily commute was transformed. I started arriving at work with a smile on my face, finding the journey energising, economical, efficient, and thoroughly fun.

One of the best parts of biking is the wonderful camaraderie. Just the other day, I was having breakfast in the beautiful village of Finchingfield—a well-known biker destination—when two riders asked to join my table. They were absolutely delighted to discover that the local Rev was eager to see their bikes and hear all about their route for the day!

You can imagine my delight, then, when I recently learned that our very own processional team member at Clare Church, the lovely Sue Huggins, is no stranger to two wheels either! It seems the biking bug is catching in the benefice.

You have probably heard of the Hell's Angels, but did you know we have "Heaven's Angels" here in the UK (OK, they are actually called the Christian Motorcyclists' Association (CMA) but they are really nice people, and I am sure Heaven would approve!) Their members believe that "as motorcyclists there is nothing more exciting than riding our bikes, and as Christians we have discovered that there is nothing as fulfilling as knowing Jesus personally."

See you on the road—or in the pews!

With every Blessing,

The Rev'd Dr Karen Smith

Curate

The Vicarage Garden Party



PLEASE NOTE: Apologies, apologies, apologies...incorrect date given in the July Parish Magazine. **The Vicarage tea party will be on Bank Holiday Monday, 31 August (not 24th) from 2 p.m.**

The afternoon will feature the customary attractions, viz. Tombola Bottle Stall, Teas & Cakes, Books, Bric-à-Brac, Homegrown produce, Raffle and quite possibly others too. Doors open at 2 pm.

Jane Turner has very kindly agreed to act as 'overall overseer', so if you would like to help in any way or have items to contribute, please speak to her (jturner4md@yahoo.co.uk / 07931 691547). Thank you and see you there!

PCC MEETING



The PCC held a scheduled meeting on 10 July, at which the perennial subject of finance was discussed. To ensure better planning, it has been agreed that our Treasurer, Sarah, will prepare a budget, as this has already been implemented and proved its worth at Cavendish. The church in Clare is still in need of a fundraiser, and the Rector/Churchwarden would be delighted to hear from anyone willing to take on this important task.

The *Parclose* project has now been completed (*see the excellent article by Nicholas Turner in last month's magazine*) and Phil Kitchingman was thanked for all the hard work he had put into obtaining financial assistance from the various charitable bodies which have kindly supported the work.

A sub-committee of the PCC is currently addressing a rather knotty question relating to church land at Poslingford, some of which is currently farmed and some used as allotments, but the situation may alter. At this stage it is not possible to give any further information, but no doubt this will be provided "in the fullness of time".

The issue of Safeguarding happily continues to be problem-free.

Meanwhile, work progresses on the forthcoming Vicarage Garden Party on` August Bank Holiday Monday. Please support this very worthwhile and enjoyable event, tell your family, friends and neighbours about it and, importantly, see Jane's informative article elsewhere in these pages.

Finally, the Electoral Roll now stands at seventy one (71) persons.

James
Hon. Sec. PCC

Parish Share

By far the greatest challenge we find ourselves having to meet each year is our contribution towards supporting the Diocese in providing clergy, safeguarding support, and other running costs. As a benefice in 2026 the Diocese have requested that we contribute £77,478 (of which the Benefice have asked Clare and Poslingford to contribute £33,703 – over £648 a week!) and that is before we turn the lights on in Clare or Poslingford!

Our Diocese is one of the most efficient in the country, and does an amazing job of trying to balance the books. On the following 5 pages is some useful information about how your money is used.

TOGETHER WE ARE



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
SUFFOLK

Parish share guide



Growing in God

OUR THANK YOU

Since arriving in Suffolk late last year, I have been deeply grateful for the warmth and kindness shown to me and my family.

Your welcome has been generous, kind, open-hearted and full of encouragement, and it has been a joy to begin meeting so many of you, and discovering all that makes our great county special.

As I embark upon my service here in Suffolk, I look forward to building on this welcome, strengthening our ties across the county, and supporting our Church to be the light of Jesus Christ in every community.

Over these first few months in the Diocese, I have been greatly heartened by the depth of generosity I see in our churches and our communities, and I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing support, particularly for the extraordinary commitment you continue to show through Parish Share.

Your generosity sustains ministry in every part of Suffolk — in our rural villages, our towns, and our growing communities.

I am especially mindful of those parishes who give sacrificially and faithfully year after year, often in challenging circumstances. Please know how much this contribution means, and how greatly it is valued.

But, of course, I recognise that generosity takes many forms. It is to be found in the countless hours offered by volunteers, in the dedication of churchwardens and treasurers, in the pastoral care quietly given, in support for families, in youth work, and in the steady rhythm of prayer that upholds our common life.



Every one of these gifts strengthens the mission we share, and is to be valued as greatly as the financial contributions which we rely upon.

As I settle into this role, I am looking forward to working with you as we continue to grow the Church in Suffolk. My particular priorities — supporting and expanding rural ministry, championing young people and ensuring their voices are heard, and maintaining our commitment to the highest standards of safeguarding — are all grounded in a desire to see our communities flourish and our churches become places of hope for all.

Thank you for the generosity you show so readily, and for the faithfulness with which you serve your communities.

+ Joanne

Bishop Joanne



Together we are The Church of England in Suffolk and, as Christians, we meet the need in our county by joining forces to improving the lives of everyone.

We are thankful for giving in all its forms as it is fundamental to strengthening the quality of our mission, worship and the practical support we can offer to those around us.

Underpinning everything, with the generous support of Parish Share, is our central commitment to maintaining our clergy numbers and continuing to develop their skills to fully provide them with support.

Our clergy, alongside lay ministers (see Our Diocese in numbers) and with the support of voluntary churchwardens, treasurers and other PCC members, are united in a common vision: Growing in God - with flourishing congregations who make a positive difference to local lives.

We are most grateful for the financial gifts you have given to your church which in turn supports the Diocese. Parish Share is a key element in ensuring that all parishes throughout Suffolk have access to the resources they need, and it is your financial contribution that enables us to support a sustainable future for your local mission and ministry.

To find out more about Parish Share go to:



[cofesuffolk.org/
for-parishes/
parish-share/](https://cofesuffolk.org/for-parishes/parish-share/)

TOGETHER WE ARE

ONE OF THE LARGEST CHARITIES IN
SUFFOLK WITH OVER 3,000 VOLUNTEERS

Our Diocese in numbers



481	Church Buildings
443	Parishes <i>(excludes BMO & Cathedral)</i>
111	Benefices <i>(excludes BMO & Cathedral)</i>
16	Deaneries <i>(excludes BMO & Cathedral)</i>



87	Church Schools and Academies <i>(85 Primary schools and 2 High Schools)</i>
21	Schools in our Diocesan Multi Academy Trust



2	Bishop's Mission Orders
126	Stipendiary Clergy



74	Self-Supporting Ministers
142	Licensed Lay Ministers
315	Lay Elders
175	Clergy with Permission to Officiate



740	Baptisms in 2024
540	Weddings in 2024
1,320	Funerals in 2024



684,000	Population in the Diocese
1,430	Diocese area (square miles)



Our vision is to be Growing in God with *Flourishing Congregations – Making a Difference*. To achieve this growth, of course we have to be financially sustainable.

The Diocesan Board of Finance is the charity and administrative hub for the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, we work hard to be financially sustainable, and our expenditure is carefully monitored to ensure our income is used as effectively as possible.

The annual budget for the Diocese is around £10m and in general our finances are stable while they continue to be a challenge.

In 2024 and once again in 2025, we asked people and parishes to give generously and sacrificially, making every effort to support us through Parish Share. It is your generous donation that enables us to collectively make a difference in our communities.

With rising costs and our commitment to retaining clergy and lay minister numbers, we continue to recognise that our financial conditions remain challenging.

Over 80.8% of our Diocesan income goes directly back to our parishes providing ordained ministers and lay ministers alongside essential practice services and resources.

Lord Jesus,

You have shown us how to live and love generously, giving up everything – even your life – for us.

It is your loving generosity that has given us life.

We pray that you may continue to give us this gift of generosity and grow it within us.

So that your church may radiate your generous love and care for all.

Please help us to inspire and encourage each other to live the generous life you have called us to.

Amen

To find out more about our opportunities and challenges go to:

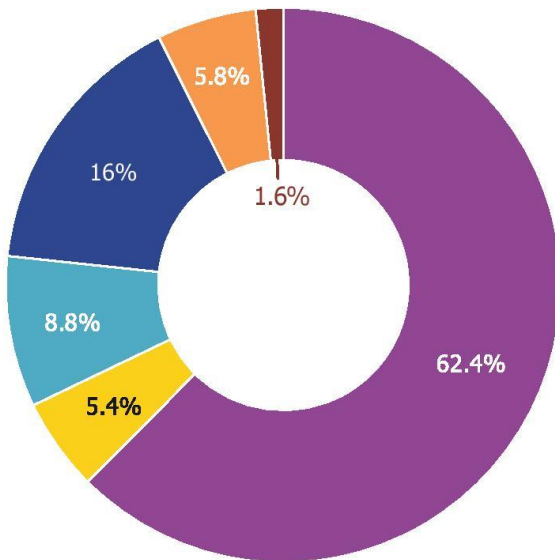


[cofesuffolk.org/
for-parishes/
parish-share/](https://cofesuffolk.org/for-parishes/parish-share/)

OUR FINANCES AND RESOURCES

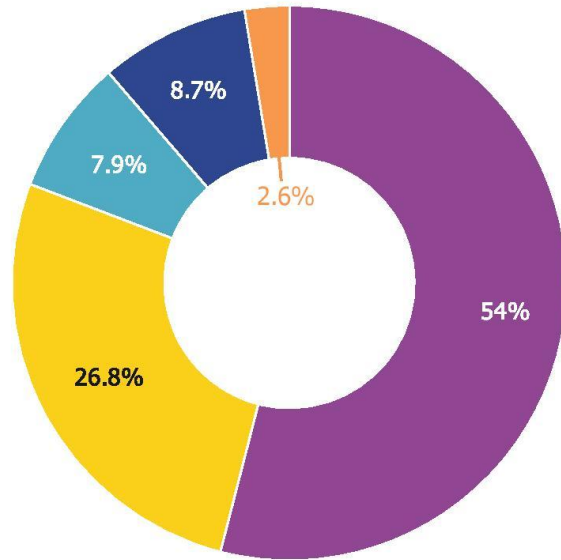
In 2024, the total Diocesan income, excluding project income, was £10,108,000. Our total expenditure was £10,357,000.

Income
£10,108,000



- Parish Share - £6,310,000
- Fees from life events and income from schools - £550,000
- Investment income - £891,000
- National Church funding - £1,604,000
- Rental income - £588,000
- Other income - £165,000

Expenditure
£10,357,000



- Clergy costs and housing - £5,588,000
- Support for parishes, churches, schools and current and future ministers - £2,778,000
- Contribution to the National Church - £822,000
- Governance, office and IT - £900,000
- Raising funds - £269,000

Generosity is at the heart of the diocese, reflecting our response to all that God has given us. Contributions to Parish Share from our churches help provide more funding for mission and ministry across the entire Diocese, benefiting everyone.



GIVING TOGETHER



Grow with us



Explore
Insight here:



Register with Insight to join our courses and events as well as download resources such as pdfs, videos and links to other websites. It is easy to use and keeps all your bookings and resources in one place.

insight.cofesuffolk.org



Stay connected

Subscribe to our weekly eNews to receive updates and news directly to your inbox.



cofesuffolk.org/subscribe-to-our-newsletters



Make your donation today

You can donate directly to support the work in Suffolk via this link:

givealittle.co/c/6M4hDIEJtrRO0zkaP2MOdH



Making a gift in your will

Legacy giving is a statement of values and a celebration of life. Remembering your church in your will is a lasting gift.



insight.cofesuffolk.org/?s=wills



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
**Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich**

4 Cutler Street, Ipswich IP1 1UQ
Charity number 248919



To find your local
church visit:

www.achurchnearyou.com

A Sussex Smuggler's Song

Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)



If you wake at midnight, and hear a horse's feet,
Don't go drawing back the blind, or looking in
the street. Them that asks no questions isn't
told a lie. Watch the wall, my darling, while the
Gentlemen go by!

Five and twenty ponies,
Trotting through the dark –
Brandy for the Parson,
'Baccy for the Clerk;
Laces for a lady, letters for a spy.
And watch the wall, my darling, while the
Gentlemen go by!

Running round the woodlump if you chance to
find Little barrels, roped and tarred, all full of
brandy-wine, don't you shout to come and look,
nor use 'em for your play.
Put the brushwood back again – and they'll be
gone next day!

If you see the stable door a-settin' open wide;
If you see a tired horse lying down inside;
If your mother mends a coat cut about and tore;
If the lining's wet and warm – don't you ask no
more!

If you meet King George's men, dressed in blue
and red, you be careful what you say, and
mindful what is said.

If they call you "pretty maid", and chuck you
'neath the chin, don't you tell where no one is,
nor yet where no one's been!

Knocks and footsteps round the house -
Whistles after dark –
You've no call for running out 'till the house
dogs bark.
Trusty's here and *Pincher's* here, and see how
dumb they lie –
They don't fret to follow when the Gentlemen
go by!

If you do as you've been told, likely there's a
chance, you'll be give a dainty doll, all the way
from France, with a cap of Valenciennes, and a
velvet hood – A present from the Gentleman,
along o' being good.

Five and twenty ponies
Trotting through the dark –
Brandy for the Parson,
'Baccy for the Clerk.
Them that asks no questions isn't told a lie –
Watch the wall, my darling while the
Gentlemen go by!

Margaret Livingston

Margaret Livingston, along with Robert Helliwell, was churchwarden when I came to Suffolk in 1993 to be Rector of the Stour Valley Group of Parishes. Margaret was a huge help to Elizabeth and myself in our settling in and helping us feel at home. She has remained a close friend over subsequent years.

Margaret was a very accomplished musician and music teacher, a member of the Church choir and Choral Society. Besides being a good friend Margaret was very committed to the Parish Church, to its growth and the well-being of the building which involved significant fund-raising, about which she was full of ideas. A notable legacy was the development of the Church Shop and the merchandise on sale – tea towels, mugs, cards, and also she initiated the Clare Cook Book (with illustrations by Rosemary Godfrey) which is still in use in our home. Margaret liked to use her hands with needlework, and embellishing cards with her art work. We shall miss her home crafted cards and notelets.

When she retired from being churchwarden she studied for a degree with the Open University in Renaissance Art, and we attended her graduation in London at the Festival Hall. This fitted with her love of Italy and her home in Poppi. Margaret was devoted to her family and grandchildren, and 15 years ago moved to Bristol to be nearer to her family. We attended her funeral in Bristol at the end of June in the Church she attended, at which her younger sister Janet, her 3 children and grandchildren were all present.

Margaret was a splendid person as a churchwarden, a member of the congregation, a very supportive friend and a person of strong faith and fun.

The Revd Canon John Rankin

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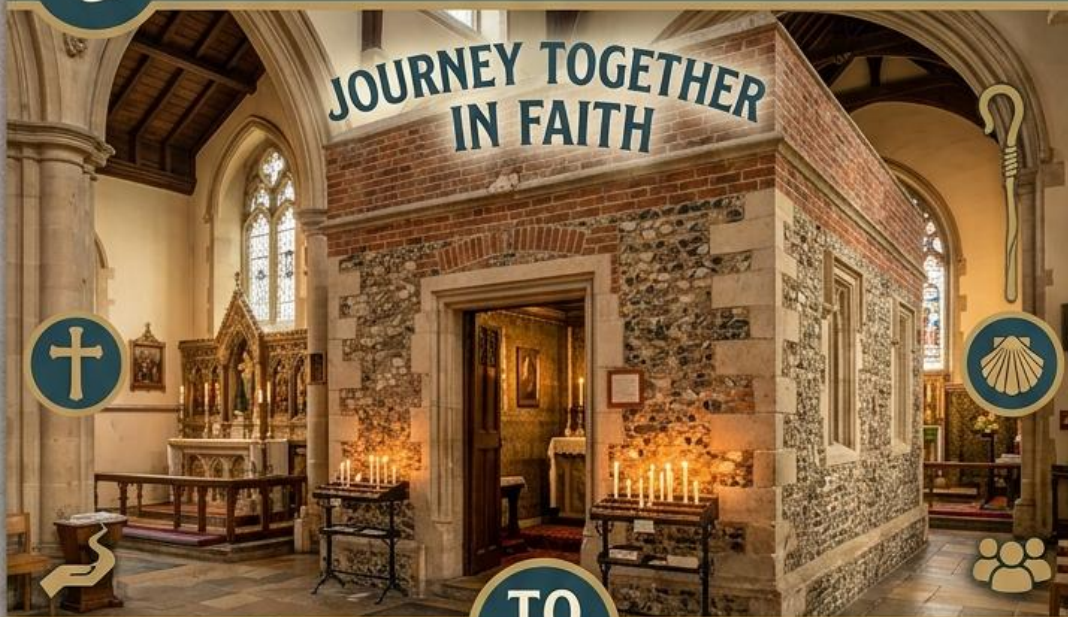


"It's only being so cheerful wot keeps me going!"

(Churchyard: Cley next the Sea, Norfolk)

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BENEFICE RESIDENTIAL PILGRIMAGE



TO WALSINGHAM



21st September 2027
to 23rd September 2027



COST

£210 PER PERSON

Non-Refundable Deposit

Payable of

£40 PER PERSON

at time of booking

Additional details available
from Revd Mark or Revd Sarah

COFFEE CONCERTS

ST PETER & ST PAUL, CLARE

Coffee is served from 11.00; concerts start at 11.30 and run for approximately 45 minutes



Saturday, **18 April**: talented teenage musician **JAMES BARKER** plays popular music on piano and organ



Saturday, **16 May**: local organist **CHRISTOPHER MOORE** presents a programme of music for organ

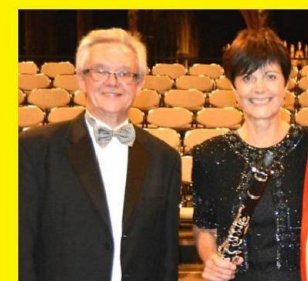
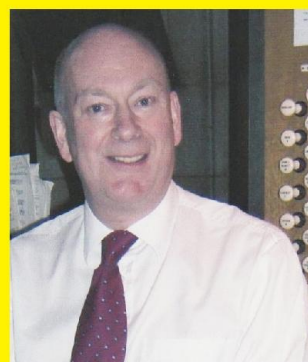
Saturday, **20 June**: London-based flautist **ANDREW MORRIS** – a varied programme of music for flute and piano

Saturday, **18 July**: the **ASADI PIANO QUINTET** presents the magnificent Quintet for piano and strings in A major by Dvořák



Saturday, **15 August**: professional pianist **JILL CROSSLAND** gives a concert of fine music for piano

Saturday, **19 September**: music for clarinet and piano played by husband and wife team, **KOREN WILMER** and **ANDREW PARNELL** from Ely



*Admission is **free**, with a retiring collection. After expenses, remaining funds will support the work and fabric of St Peter and Paul Church, Clare.*

Some upcoming events across the Benefice



Cavendish Sale Trail - Saturday 1st August 2026 from 10am until 3pm

Your opportunity to find a bargain and raise funds for Cavendish Church. Maps of all the places taking place can be purchased from the Church.



Community Scarecrow Making – Saturday 8th August 2026 from 2pm to 3.30pm – Poslingford Church

Come along and make your own Scarecrows - Straw will be provided but please bring tights, outfits and lots of imagination! This year's Theme is Occupations & Professions – Refreshments available. Donations of tins and packets for the Community Pantry very much welcome.



Wixoe Family Fun Day - Saturday 8th August 2026 – 3.30pm onwards – 8 Stour Vale, Wixoe

Come along and enjoy a fun afternoon of activities and games. A bring and share picnic – please bring your own chair, and beverages.



Hundon Flower Festival – Saturday 22nd & Sunday 23rd August 2026 - from 11am to 4pm

All are welcome to come along to All Saints' Church for their ever popular floral displays, from groups and individuals in the village. Refreshments available - Donations towards the work and restoration of the church will be appreciated.



Hidden Treasure - Wednesday 26th August 2026 – 10am to 12.30pm – Stoke-by-Clare Church

A Children's Summer Adventure – Something especially for the younger members of our community! A FREE morning of Games, Crafts, Bible Stories, Music and Refreshments.

Stour Valley Benefice - Services for August 2026

Sunday, 2nd August: Nineth Sunday after Trinity

Stoke by Clare: 09:00 Holy Communion
Cavendish: 10:30 Morning Prayer
Clare: 11:00 Holy Communion

Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow

Led by The Revd Sarah Smith

Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow

Sunday, 9th August: Tenth Sunday after Trinity

Hundon: 09:00 Holy Communion
Stoke by Clare: 09:00 Morning Prayer
Cavendish: 10:30 Holy Communion
Clare: 16:00 Evensong

Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow

Led by The Revd Sarah Smith

Led by The Revd Dr Karen Smith

Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow

Sunday, 16th August: Eleventh Sunday after Trinity

Stoke by Clare: 09:00 Holy Communion
Cavendish: 10:30 Morning Prayer
Clare: 11:00 Holy Communion
Poslingford: 16:00 Evening Prayer

Led by The Revd Liz Paxton

Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow

Led by The Revd Liz Paxton

Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow

Sunday, 23rd August: Twelfth Sunday after Trinity

Stoke by Clare: 09:00 Morning Prayer
Wixoe: 09:00 Holy Communion
Cavendish: 10:30 Holy Communion
Clare: 11:00 Morning Prayer
Hundon: 18:00 Evening Prayer

Led by The Revd Sarah Smith

Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow

Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow

Led by The Revd Sarah Smith

Led by The Revd Sarah Smith

Sunday, 30th August: Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

Stoke by Clare: 09:00 Holy Communion

Led by The Revd Mark Woodrow



Cavendish: 10:30 **Benefice 5th Sunday Service
For the Season of Creation – Living Water**

Led by The Revd Sarah Smith

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