

TOGETHER WE ARE



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
SUFFOLK



Statement of Needs

Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich
SEPTEMBER 2024



I planted, Apollos watered,
but **God gave the growth.**

So neither the one who
plants nor the one who
waters is anything, but only
God who gives the growth.

The one who plants and the
one who waters have a
common purpose, and each
will receive wages according
to the labour of each.

For we are God's servants,
working together; you are
God's field, God's building.

1 Corinthians 3:6-9

TOGETHER WE ARE
THE DIOCESE OF ST EDMUNDSBURY
AND IPSWICH

Welcome to our Diocese – the See of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, the Church of England in Suffolk.

Suffolk is an incredible place to live, learn and work. It is a county both urban and rural, of countryside and coast, of heritage and enterprise.

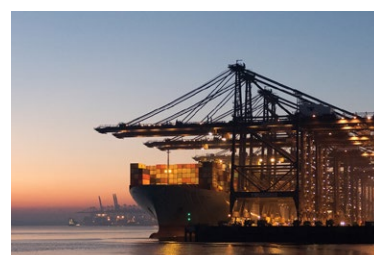
It's a place of breathtaking natural beauty and wide open skies. A place rich in character and culture, feeling and flavour. A county of warm-hearted and generous people with stories to tell and kindness to share.

The Church has been integral to the history of Suffolk, and we believe it is essential to its future.

The welcome we offer, the message we share, our vision to see flourishing congregations making a difference in their communities, will shape the county we become.

Would you prayerfully consider coming to be part of all this as our next Bishop?

SOME MEMBERS OF OUR VACANCY IN SEE COMMITTEE



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Heavenly Father,
send us a Bishop
grounded in your love,
a shepherd after your own heart,
a follower of your Way
and a teacher of your Word.

Through the wisdom and direction
of your Holy Spirit,
enable us so to recognise them;
that we appoint
not the one we think we want,
but the one you are calling.
Through your Son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.



TOGETHER WE ARE
12,000 PEOPLE REGULARLY ATTENDING
WEEKLY WORSHIP IN OUR CHURCHES

Will be a leader in mission

Energised by the challenge of making disciples of Jesus and growing his church in the four distinct missional contexts of our county.

Will be a visible presence

Joyfully at ease with all kinds of people, an articulate and inspiring communicator of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and a focus of unity.

Will be aspirational in outlook

Full of faith that Jesus can and will build his church and grow his kingdom here, unfazed by circumstances or narratives of decline.

Will be a convening figure

Able to bring together leaders from every sphere of life in Suffolk – business and civic society, politicians and everyone who seeks to address the problems we all share.

Will be courageous

Unflappable and unafraid of the challenges ahead, able to lead a trusted team in making hard and sometimes unpopular decisions that won't be welcomed by all.

Will be firmly rooted in the Word of God

A gifted teacher of the Bible, and able to reflect theologically on both the challenges we face and faithful ways to approach them.

Will be a natural shepherd

A pastor of pastors, with first-hand experience of growing churches both at a local and a strategic level, and an intimate understanding of ministry in the name of Jesus.

Will be experienced in discerning others' gifts

With a track record of building and leading effective and accountable teams, making wise appointments, implementing strategy and able to make difficult decisions.

In addition to these, our next Bishop...

Will be

Someone who affirms fully in all respects the ministry of women, building on our strong legacy of supporting and promoting women's ministry.

Will have

The opportunity to appoint the Suffragan Bishop of Dunwich, following the translation in September 2024 of Dr Mike Harrison to Exeter.



Our strategic vision is a response to the unique needs of the county in which God has called us to be his Church.

Suffolk comprises four distinct missional contexts: rural villages, urban populations, market towns and coastal communities.

Each setting requires a different approach from sensitive and discerning leadership. And yet we are united by a common goal: growth.

We call our strategic vision **Growing in God, and across our four missional contexts, we are earnestly praying and seeking to Grow in Depth, Influence, Number and Younger.**

Every parish and new worshipping community throughout the Diocese has been asked to engage in Growing in God, and it has been a joy to see imaginative and ambitious Plans for Growth emerging, naming our hopes and setting our priorities for fruitful mission and evangelism across our county. A designated Growth Fund has helped to resource new and innovative ideas across our churches.

Our vision has also attracted significant investment from the national Church over recent years, resulting in two large-scale mission projects: Inspiring Ipswich, focussing on our largest town and home to a quarter of Suffolk's population, and Growing in God in the Countryside. For more information see [page 23](#). As a result, we have nurtured pioneers and church-planters in a range of contexts.

Growing in God has been successful in large part due to the personal involvement of our bishops, and the support of our strong Mission and Ministry team which runs a ministry development programme for leaders and a formational community for church planters and pioneers. The Auxiliary Ordination Pathway (AOP) has been effective in identifying, training and releasing ordained ministers to serve in their own local parishes.

So much has been accomplished and yet there is so much still to do.

Our new Bishop will be energised by both the encouragements and the challenges involved in building on this bold strategic vision.



Our Growing in God prayer

O Lord, our God,
giver of life and growth,
grow in us a longing for you,
that we might deepen our faith;

grow in us a compassion
for your world,
that we might serve
our neighbours;

grow in us a vision for
your Kingdom,
that we might proclaim
your love.

By the power of your Spirit,
and in Jesus' name.

Amen



TOGETHER WE ARE GROWING

OUR STRATEGIC VISION: GROWING IN DEPTH

10

To deepen our awareness of God with us through prayer and vibrant worship, centring our lives on Jesus Christ through the proclamation of the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist.



Growth is nothing without
deep roots

At St Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich there is a strong focus on depth which has enabled record numbers of baptism and confirmations over the last three years following the arrival of their current Vicar. Growth in depth happens across all ages of the church. Choristers attend weekly discipleship sessions as part of their rehearsals. There they look at the Sunday's readings, discuss and explore the Christian life, and each term have a chance to 'grill the Vicar'.

For adults, every Lent, alongside the usual Lent Course, there is a themed sermon and seminar series with visiting preachers. Alongside this there is a fortnightly Pub Theology and the newly instituted autumn Tower Talks on faith in public life.

Growing in Depth with group Bible studies

St John's Church, Elmswell, is growing in depth through Bible studies. A group of 14 people have joined St John's Church community in the last two years to study the Bible with the Rector in small groups. Many of the people attending are families

with children. The church hosted a family social gathering to encourage fellowship and bonding with one another and a total of 26 people took part – 24 of which have joined the church congregation in the last two years, 14 of which were children and four were families new to the Christian faith.

The gathering was a great success, and those whom attended are looking forward to the next one!



Growing Youth Work

"I have recently been licensed as a Youth Minister, having completed the Youthscape Essentials

course, which covered insights into the issues for young people, developing youthwork skills and characteristics for leadership.

I love the variety of the role I have now. From leading Junior Church on a Sunday to Youth Hub on a Thursday. I have built contacts with the high schools, attended Christian Union and I'm exploring the possibility of chaplaincy. I mentor some of our young leaders and together we've started a pop-up game café in the school holidays.

Our musical venture, a youth choir, called Joy Collective! a youth choir, recently performed at our Mothering Sunday service and is growing in number. I mentor and support those that need it and walk alongside young people, helping them become closer to God. Serving young people is a joy and a privilege and seeing these young people growing in confidence and faith is an honour."

KATE CRACKNELL
Licensed Youth Minister



Discover more here in our film, **Big Weekend film**

To participate in God's loving movement towards the world in partnership with other congregations, denominations and people of good will.



Safe Harbour supports people with complex needs

Lightwave group Save Harbour, held in St Helen's Church, Ipswich, is a refuge for those facing life's complex challenges. It was opened in 2021 with the aim of helping people to turn their lives around and was seen as a community for 'people who have been battered and bruised by the storms of life.'

Safe Harbour offers food, warmth and hospitality to those who need it – not least those who are isolated or alone, those struggling with addictions, those navigating physical or mental health challenges, those in economic straits or facing other difficulties.

It provides a safe, loving, Christian community accessible to all and is flourishing, making a real difference to those who are involved.

"Safe Harbour is for those who are travelling through the storms of life. We are like a lifeboat station that aims to help those in need by welcoming them into a safe community through sharing meals and sharing the good news, that Jesus loves us and wants to journey with us,"

BOB HAMILTON
Leader of Safe Harbour Church



Church tackling food poverty attracts huge support

Pop-Up events were started by St Mary's Church, Hadleigh, to promote a community spirit for those struggling. The events offer a warm space for residents and villagers finding it difficult to pay for

soaring energy costs or have a hot meal. The majority of attendees come from Hadleigh, however some people travel to the town and events are also supported by Ukrainians and military families.

"In 2023, due to the positive response to the Pop-Ups and because of our ongoing concern as a church about food poverty, economic challenges, soaring energy costs, and social isolation, we expanded the Pop-Ups to make this event more accessible to the wider community."

MARYLOU DELFGOU,
Volunteer and a Lay Elder

In the previous 12 months, 32 Pop-Ups have been held with attendances ranging from 55 to 148, averaging 96 a session.



Felixstowe churches working to end holiday hunger

Churches in Felixstowe have provided hundreds of free packed lunches for families in need over the summer holidays. The 'Food for All' project, founded

by Churches Together in Felixstowe and overseen by St John the Baptist Church, has seen venues across the seaside town offer hot and cold food to families in need - feeding more than 50 people every weekday of the summer holidays.

"It's unbelievable the work they do here, they do such a fantastic job. People are finding it very difficult – there are more people in need than ever before. It is not means tested and is open to all, people can come here anonymously and simply collect their packed lunches – it is extremely well co-ordinated."

AMANDA FOLLEY
Town and District Councillor, church volunteer

To witness to the person and way of Jesus Christ in word and worship, in service and daily life, inviting others into the fullness of life found in him.



Church's online presence has helped it grow at a record rate

Seventeen men and women were confirmed at St Mary's Church, in Haverhill: the most in a single confirmation service for 34 years.

"One of the things I am really pleased about is that we have some candidates who have come through from our missional activity on a Friday. We run a whole day of activities on a Friday which includes a coffee morning, informal worship at lunchtime, a community hub for a local charity in the afternoon and a hot meal for families in the evening.

Another strength is our online presence, which has attracted people in the local area. It gives people the option to engage in worship in a way that helps them to encounter God. Many people don't choose one or the other, but use both online and in person worship at different times."

THE REV. DRINKWATER



Church plant reaches out to people in the community

How do you build a church without a church building? Pop a gazebo up in your front garden of course! Lindbergh Road Community Church (LRCC) was formed in the Priory Heath Estate in Ipswich and currently the church, a gazebo in the Revd Ian Daniels' front garden, has a regular congregation of 20 – 30 people every Sunday with

many others involved in related activities. The church vision is a thriving church for the estate - offering an open door to those in the community who want to journey with them in faith.

The Priory Heath estate is in the bottom 10% of deprivation in Suffolk and there have been recent stabbings in the area relating to drug related crimes.

The gazebo is a visible presence in the estate and people happen to come across it and stop to chat. Some people donated funds and they bought heaters, urns and a few more mugs and the church has grown from there. The church offers discipleship as a journey. People can share thoughts, have discussions, talk about a Bible passage and essentially enjoy being together and learning together. Those who come age from a five year old to an 85+ year old. The congregation is totally intergenerational, and diverse in many ways including neurodiversity.



Leading your Church into Growth comes to Suffolk

In July 2024 nearly 100 people came together to make a real difference in their local churches. The three-day conference offered practical help to partner with God and inspire church leaders to lead their church(es) into growth. The focus was on the importance of prayer and participants were

encouraged to understand the impact of personal contact and having pathways to invite people to church activities.

"We brought with us a person from our congregation who is new to faith, having only been confirmed this year. It was amazing to see this person grow in their faith over the course of the weekend. On Friday they were very uncomfortable about the concept of evangelism and mission, by the end when we had made the 'plan for growth,' they said 'Well clearly we need to start by praying and asking God what he wants us to do'. It was deeply encouraging to see how the conference had given them the opportunity to dive deeper into faith and grow."

MARY BROWN

To engage rising generations, allowing them to shape the Church and investing in them as ministers of the gospel, and to develop our congregations to reflect the age profile of their local contexts.



Church building to become a community hub

All Saints' Church, Stanton, near Bury St Edmunds, is throwing open its doors to the community by taking out some of its traditional pews to create a flexible space for other activities.

With a £200,000 redevelopment project, the church is disposing of 21 old Markham pews and replacing them with wooden chairs to create a welcoming, warm and wonderful space at the heart of their community, one that is open and accessible to everyone. The aim is to make the building as hospitable and as friendly as possible with local people taking ownership of their church.

The church hosts a Men's Breakfast once a month and teenagers already use the building as a warm space after school and at weekends. The church hope to provide an after-school 'drop in' for them, offering toast and tea/hot chocolate etc so they can start their homework, play board games and socialise in a safe space before going home.



Improving rural life for young people

Church Leaders and volunteers are organising a new club to tackle issues of rural isolation faced by young teenagers - offering socialisation and friendship in a safe environment.

The Rural Youth Cafe at Hoxne Pavilion, near Diss, was formed by the Hoxne Benefice to expand their activities within the community. The rural youth club, which started in January, is meeting monthly for two hours on a Friday evening where food, table football, pool, board games and creative activities are organised.

"We believe the café offers a safe space for young people to come together and relax, in a very rural area of Suffolk where there are relatively few opportunities for teenagers. As a benefice, we want to support children and families"

THE REVD CANON ELEANOR GOODISON
Priest in Charge

Although the youth club is still in its infancy it has already found favour with young people.



Weekly Food Bank, Youth Activities and Well-Being Café

St Thomas The Apostle church in Ipswich has a food bank every week, helping up to 50 people with 12

volunteers. They also hold youth activities weekly for up to 30 young people aged 11 to 19 years old, and have a weekly well-being café where people can drop in for support every Thursday.

"After spending only a short time with the team, I could so clearly see how passionate they are about caring for people of all ages and backgrounds in and around their church community and, in particular, how much their group of young people value being a part of church activities. The team are really listening to try to understand the challenges and provide a stimulating and safe space for young people to be. It's precious work and brings stability and much needed hope to often fragile lives that are really only just beginning."

TIM HOLDER
Diocesan Director of Engagement



Discover more here in our film, **Growing Younger**



I will wait on You Lord
I will wait on You Lord
I'm not going anywhere
So I will wait on You Lord

I will wait on You Lord
I will wait on You Lord
I'm not going anywhere
So I will wait on You Lord

TOGETHER WE ARE 443 PARISH COMMUNITIES

Our Vision for Growth is set against a backdrop of significant challenges and opportunities in the life of the Church and the county as a whole.

Our next Bishop will need creativity and courage to lead us in facing them, discerning where God is at work, and bringing the right people together to find solutions. Here's a snapshot.

A population growing – and growing older

Like much of the East of England, the population of the Diocese is growing faster than the national average. Suffolk's population, 768,555 in 2022, is projected to increase by 8% in the next 20 years. But the number of older people (65 and above) is set to increase by 38%, accounting for nearly one in three people. This will have a significant impact on our workforce, our economy, and the demands on public services, especially health and social care. See [Appendix three](#).

Some concerning health and wellbeing trends

Because of the aging population, conditions such as heart disease and diabetes, dementia and other age-related issues are set to become more prevalent here in Suffolk, and with them unprecedented stress on the care sector. Mental health issues, particularly among younger people and adults, are higher in Suffolk than nationally. For example, hospital admissions as a result of self-harm among those aged 10 to 24 are statistically significantly higher than national levels, and show a concerning upwards trend. New models of health and care are needed. See [Appendix three](#).



“ The Suffolk Community Foundation plays a central role in the county of identifying needs in our many communities, and convening partnerships across the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector to help deliver solutions. Working together in positive partnership is essential if we are to overcome long standing issues of deprivation as well as more recent issues arising from Covid.

The Diocese has a vital role to play at all levels and we look forward to continuing our collaboration following the new appointment.”

GEORGE VESTY
Chair, Suffolk Community Foundation



Inequalities and hidden poverty

Our Diocese is largely rural - more than 40% of our population lives in rural areas – and Suffolk has 50 miles of coastline with coastal towns both large and small. Though these include some highly desirable places to live, these communities often mask stark inequalities and serious issues of deprivation and isolation.

Suffolk is not amongst the most deprived local authorities in England. But the Diocese includes 12 areas in the 10% most-deprived areas in England, and 28 areas in the 11-20% bracket. Over 7,000 families and individuals use food banks each month in Suffolk – and this is believed to be a significant under-estimate. In short, relative deprivation levels have risen in Suffolk in recent years but much of this deprivation is hidden. Find out more at the [Suffolk Hidden Needs Report](#). See [Appendix four](#).

The changing face of rural communities

The past decade has brought major new housing developments to the county, with this investment set to continue. Unless the Church takes account of this trend in its future planning, opportunities will be missed with consequences for our long-term sustainability, profile and impact in the county.

The emergence of major new housing developments will eclipse the historic, largely rural pattern of parish settings, changing the character and creating tensions between inherited expectations and future needs.

A Chaplain has been appointed to the Sizewell C plant on the Suffolk coast between Aldeburgh and Southwold. This major national energy project will bring new jobs and investment to the region. However it will also place strain on local infrastructure and create tensions with local communities.

Eco-friendly Suffolk church wins gold

All Saints' Church, Mendham, is the first within the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich to achieve gold eco status from the A Rocha scheme. A Rocha recognises churches which are helping the environment in worship and teaching, buildings, land, community and global engagement and lifestyle and marks the Church's plans to analyse and reduce the Church's carbon footprint and manage land according to an environmentally friendly plan.

"Our Eco church journey began as we went into lockdown but now has become an integrated part of all we stand for and do. Our more recent actions have included equipping the church with all LED bulbs, promoting plastic-free July with the local school, hosting a fayre to promote local products, including farms and developing opportunities to use the churchyard for worship, reflection and to improve people's well-being. We also e-twinned the toilet with Uganda helping a community to build their own basic toilet, access clean water and learn about hygiene."

THE REVD DIANE EKINS POWELL

The churchyard has become a haven for residents and visitors alike to walk in and watch the birds, and primary school children also helped create a bug and hedgehog hotels and put up bird feeders.

Diane, a former headteacher at Ranelagh Primary School, Ipswich, added that the award would enable the church to share its values with others, share what it had learned and that small actions could make a difference.



"We need the Diocese to be brave in Suffolk and lead the way and I think a forward thinking Bishop could properly implement and invigorate our communities."

HIS HONOUR JUDGE MARTYN LEVETT DL
Honorary Recorder of Ipswich, Resident Judge, Ipswich Crown Court



The environment and becoming carbon neutral

With the national Church, we have committed ourselves to work with all available resources towards Net Zero Carbon by 2030, but this will mean difficult decisions ahead.

We are in the process of drawing up and implementing a programme of feasible actions such as improving the energy efficiency of our offices and clergy housing and facilitating energy audits for churches. Inspiring and committed leadership will be required to hit this ambitious target.



Discover more here in our **Environment film**

Decline in attendance and participation

Though recent figures offer some encouraging signs in worshipping numbers, the overall picture is one of decline in attendance and participation, in common with the rest of the Church of England.

Renewing our existing worshipping communities and starting vibrant new Fresh Expressions and church plants is at the heart of our vision to address this and we are making progress. Our nationally-funded mission projects, Inspiring Ipswich and Growing in God in the Countryside, are making a measurable difference but as their funding comes to an end, there are big challenges around consolidating our growth and integrating what has been learned.

We are greatly encouraged by the interest from clergy and local leadership teams in the Leading your Church into Growth (LyCiG) programme which is being rolled out throughout Suffolk over the next three years.



“ The role of the Bishop is extremely important in Suffolk where the Church is still so valued and respected. The Bishop is someone we look to for guidance in difficult situations, for stability and continuity.”

LIZ NICE
Editor, East Anglian Daily Times

The absence of young people and children

Few churches in our Diocese have thriving children's and youth ministries: some have none at all. And our vision for growing younger is set against a backdrop of a projected 4% decline in the number of children and young people in Suffolk.

Despite this, we are fully committed to Growing Younger congregations and we seek a Bishop who will champion growth and change, signs of which are breaking through in the growth of Messy Church (successful throughout Suffolk, especially Ipswich), schools chaplaincy (often in association with partners such as Christian Youth Ministries) and early years projects such as the soon-to-be launched Perfect Peace.

Maintaining our clergy and ministry teams

In recent years we have been successful in our goals to maintain the number of stipendiary clergy posts, sometimes through redeployment. Funding support from the National Church has meant we have even been able to grow clergy numbers in some areas in the last five years. But as this funding comes to an end, the Diocese will be faced with the challenge of sustaining the number of posts.

We have also increasing the number of self-supporting clergy, and increased the number of Licensed Lay Ministers and Lay Elders. Our Diocesan Investment Programme Funding supports vital ministerial development for our clergy in incumbent and similar roles.

The Growing Leaders programme, aimed at building vision and capacity to lead local initiatives, is currently in its fourth cohort in Ipswich and is being rolled out into other areas.



Reaching out to families in our communities

"'Emerge' is working alongside established churches with people of all ages who are currently outside church. We also work with a local charity, 'Just 42', to lead a CU at the local High School and a village youth club. We lead Sunday worship at Playford Village Hall with a few families joining us. Recent events included a Seed Swap (inspired by a growers' group in the village) and a Pancake Party.

We also have a few mid-week Lightwave groups or mission initiatives. Little Bealings Borrowers is a wildlife after-school group working in Little Bealings churchyard, set up in partnership with East Suffolk Community Partnership and Little Bealings Church. Our strapline is 'Do something small to be part of something big'. We're helping children and their families to see that caring for the natural world begins in a small way - on our doorstep, near our home or school. Recently we built a den in the wild area, collected and identified wildflower seeds and did a bioblitz to see the variety of invertebrates living in the churchyard. Each week we reflect on the beauty of nature, God the creator and his creation."

BEN WALE
Lightwave Hub Leader



Discover more here in our film,
Lightwave Suffolk



Giving and our financial sustainability

The annual budget for the Diocese is around £10m, and we depend on Parish Share to raise circa 80% of this sum. In general our finances are stable, with Parish Share almost back to pre-pandemic levels, but this is due to a higher level of stipendiary clergy vacancies and only workable in the short-term.

The traditional model across the Church of England, (which has been described as 'asking more and more from fewer and fewer') is not sustainable. Our Diocese has very limited investment and glebe income compared to some of our neighbours, and so we need to grow our funding base both through innovative approaches such as social enterprise ventures, as well as engaging local communities more directly in support of their local church.

Grappling with the issue of buildings and land

Proportionately, the Diocese has a higher than average number of church buildings. There are 481 church buildings in our Diocese, five of which are closed or not used for worship. Of the 476 functioning church buildings, a higher than average number are Grade I or Grade II* listed (95.6%). Each is a priceless asset treasured by their congregation as a place of worship and holds the possibility for community benefit in a variety of additional ways – many are currently under-utilised. Some are the only church – or the only shared community space – for miles around.

We need new and intelligent approaches to enable church buildings with dwindling congregations to become sustainable. We are also seeking the optimal use of the limited church land and property held by the Diocese.



“ The Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich has long-served as a valued community leader in Suffolk - so we look forward to continuing this close partnership working. The best community work is done when organisations come together around shared goals. This is exactly what happens in Suffolk and when our county is truly at its best.”

NICOLA BEACH
Chief Executive Officer, Suffolk County Council

Listening and learning across the Diocese

With so many small worshipping communities spread throughout the county, maintaining good communications to and from the Bishops and Diocesan Office can be difficult. There is real work to be done to enable mutual listening, sharing of vision, and learning from one another in an attitude of encouragement, service and support.

The Prayers of Love and Faith

The Living in Love and Faith process has exposed deep differences across the Church of England, including in our own Diocese. The proposals currently being considered by General Synod continue to divide those for whom they have not gone far enough, and those for whom they have gone too far.

Our next Bishop will need to recognise and honour the decisions made in the General Synod while acknowledging and working with the strength and diversity of convictions here. We will be looking to our Bishop to model gracious engagement and set a culture in which we can implement the outcomes of Living in Love and Faith for some in a way that protects the ministries of others.

Insight - learning and resource website

Insight is being developed by the Diocese as a learning and development tool to deepen our awareness of God as we grow together and learn together. It is designed to encourage continued engagement in our provision of resources, events and courses. Users can create their own Learning Plans by choosing topics of interest, access content relevant to specific Diocesan roles and will be able to manage their own educational journeys. Find out more by visiting cofesuffolk.org



Becoming a Priest on the Auxiliary Ordination Pathway

"I followed the Auxiliary Ordination Pathway which I loved. I never would have managed going to theological college, so this programme really worked for me, not least because I still need to work part-time.

We spent one evening a fortnight with the Bishops learning about what we were committing to in the vows we would take at our ordination, as well as many other topics. We also attended training modules that fed us with additional knowledge on a range of subjects such as the Old and New Testaments, Worship, Preaching, Ethics, Pastoral Ministry and Doctrine.

I learnt so much about the different workings of the Church of England, as my rural parish has always been a very 'low' church and I had never known anything different. Our cohort worked closely to support each other, and we also had fun along the way!

One of the big bonuses for me is that I grew up here in the local village and I know so many people, I attended the local schools and I really do feel an affinity with them. I hope that I make some difference to my benefice. My prayer is that the Lord will use me to truly serve him here amongst these wonderful people in our little corner of Suffolk so that many can come to see Jesus for themselves."

THE REVD SARAH LOCK
Assistant Curate (SSM)



"The facets of a 21st century church leader - working to support every one of the varied aspects of the community. Connecting both the urban and the rural communities within Suffolk. Sometimes that leadership is highly visible, at other times it is kept low-key. The wide-ranging nature of today's church leaders might surprise some people - but it is a vital component of our society."

TERRY HUNT DL
Chairman of Ipswich Vision and Inspire Suffolk



TOGETHER WE ARE
A POPULATION OF 684,000

The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich covers the county of Suffolk (excluding the area around Lowestoft in the north-east) and including one parish in Essex.

A rich and diverse county

It is a mainly rural Diocese, encompassing a large number of small villages, seaside resorts and market towns such as Haverhill, Beccles and Eye. It also includes the cathedral town of Bury St Edmunds with its historic Abbey.

The county town of Ipswich is home to more than a quarter of Suffolk's population, a recently promoted Premier League football team, and the well-regarded University of Suffolk.

Also within our borders are historic places of interest such as Sutton Hoo, the world-renowned cultural destinations at Snape Maltings and Aldeburgh, and the Heritage coast, a haven for lovers of natural history and birdlife.



What we do for a living

Suffolk's agricultural landscape reflects the foundation of a rural economy that has had a significant role in shaping not just the landscape but our culture and values over many centuries. While agriculture now accounts for less than 2% of the working population, an estimated 10% are employed in 'food to fork' businesses. A vast number of food producers and breweries, both small and very large, are based here.

Suffolk is understood as a county of opportunity. Transport and logistics firms are major employers along the A14 corridor and Felixstowe boasts the UK's largest container port.

Energy is set to become a significant growth area for Suffolk over the next decade with the arrival of the new Sizewell C nuclear plant. Thousands of new jobs and apprenticeships are expected to be created at the site and in supply chain companies. Advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, ICT and finance are also significant employers in the county.

Tourism brings well over £2bn to the local economy each year, with tens of thousands employed in the sector. Sport, through the horse racing industry around Newmarket and Ipswich Town Football Club, and arts and culture, including the annual Aldeburgh and Latitude festivals – play a significant part in making Suffolk a destination county.



The Church across the Diocese

Suffolk Diocese has 481 churches and 87 church schools, and we serve 684,000 people. We have 443 parishes and 111 benefices, giving us the highest percentage of multi-parish benefices of any Diocese. The number of Fresh Expressions has grown considerably in the last few years and currently stands at 187.

We have two innovative projects, nationally funded, each of which is seeking to see 1,500 new disciples by the end of 2025. 'Growing in God in the Countryside' is our rural project and 'Inspiring Ipswich' is centred on our county town.

'Inspiring Ipswich' has made over 22,000 new contacts, has started 45 new worshipping communities, seen over 1,700 people explore faith and has roughly 1,100 new disciples so far. To find out more go to inspiringipswich.org.

'Growing in God in the Countryside' is growing disciples through Lightwave group initiatives and supporting parish outreach in our rural areas. To find out more go to lightwave.community

The Diocesan Bishop lives in Ipswich which is also where the Diocesan Office is based. St Edmundsbury Cathedral is in Bury St Edmunds and is valued throughout the county for its wide range of services, including celebrating national and county occasions.

A great strength of the Diocese is the culture of collegiality among our Bishops, Archdeacons, Dean and Diocesan Secretary, who meet together weekly.



"A healthy business community underpins positive social and individual outcomes and for 140 years Suffolk Chamber has been at the heart of advocating for the county's dynamic, resilient and civic businesses. As such, we have an ongoing track record in working collaboratively with similarly-minded organisations, including the various faith communities in Suffolk, to address challenges and boost sustainable prosperity for all."

JOHN DUGMORE
Chief Executive, Suffolk Chamber of Commerce



Schools and children

Our work with schools is a strength. There are almost 15,000 pupils in our 87 church schools, 85 primary and two secondary. The Bishop is a member of the Diocesan Multi Academy Trust (cofesuffolkmat.org) and chair of Debenham High School Academy Trust, a 'stand alone' academy trust but which is in the process of forming a MAT with some of its feeder primary schools.

Our schools play an important part in the life of the Diocese with our Diocesan Director of Education a member of Bishop's Staff. We work closely with other Dioceses, regionally and nationally and with Christian Aid. Our RE teaching resource, the Emmanuel Project is widely used across Suffolk and in other Dioceses. Our Diocesan education team promotes a Christian vision for schools in which all can grow and flourish, and we promote excellence in the teaching of RE and in Collective Worship. For more information about our school pupils and staff feedback see [appendix five](#).



Currently 93% of all church schools in the Diocese are judged Good or Outstanding by Ofsted at their last inspection.



Churches and schools working together

Stoke by Nayland Benefice and Stoke by Nayland CofE Primary School have joined forces to offer 'no form-filling' financial aid to support families in need. The partnership between church and school became aware some families needed additional funding – and the 'no form-filling' hardship fund was ideally placed to support them.

"The types of things funded are especially matched to the family need. This could be items such as a new washing machine, new glasses for children with particular sight needs or new shoes."

KELLY MCGRATH, Headteacher
Stoke by Nayland Primary School

Prayer for the new bishop

by East Bergholt CEVC Primary School

Dear God above, we pray today,
for our new Bishop, in a special way.
Bless them with wisdom, strong and bright,
guide their steps, both day and night.

Give them courage, kind and true,
to share your love in all they do.
Help them lead with a caring heart,
and from your path, never to part.

Keep them healthy, happy, and wise,
under your watchful, loving skies.
We thank you, Lord, for sending them here,
in our hearts, they are always near.

Amen.

Safeguarding

We have a Safeguarding team of five with backgrounds in local authority, policing and probation work. Their aim is to strengthen and integrate good safeguarding practice amongst all those working, volunteering and worshipping across the Diocese. The team offers advice and an extensive training programme, supports safer recruitment and adoption of the National Casework Management System.

Our team is supported and advised by the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel, which also provides guidance and quality assurance on policy and practice matters. They are in the process of implementing the National Church of England Safeguarding Standards and Quality Assurance Framework.

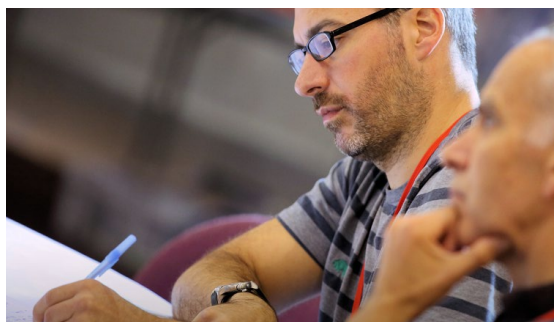
Over 55% of
parishes have
signed up to
use our Parish
Safeguarding
Dashboard

Wellbeing

We recognise the importance of wellbeing for those in ministry and for those employed by the Board of Finance. We aim to promote a culture of health, wellbeing and self-care throughout the Diocese covering all aspects of emotional, physical and spiritual health.

We encourage all clergy to take time for renewal, refreshment and re-creation for their own wellbeing and for the sake of their families and ministry, including weekly rest days, up to 36 days holiday, five retreat days per year, sabbaticals and we also expect that clergy, licensed Lay Ministers and Lay Elders will set aside regular time for study, retreat and development in ministry, and undertake at least one significant piece of Continued Ministerial Development each year.

The Diocese has a strong network of well-trained lay and clergy Spiritual Directors and two centres for spiritual growth at 'The Place by the Water' and 'Lark Rise Retreats'. Lark Rise, founded by three Felixstowe clergy, run frequent Quiet and teaching days as well as organising both local and international pilgrimages. They have attracted world famous speakers such as John Bell and Malcolm Guite to the Diocese for teaching days on deepening personal spirituality.



Our Cathedral

St Edmundsbury Cathedral, in the heart of Bury St Edmunds, is the Mother Church of the Diocese. It is the seat of the Bishop and a place of pilgrimage, once part of the great Abbey of St Edmund. Open daily, it attracts visitors from across the world for worship, visits, events, exhibitions and prayer. Supported by a dedicated team of volunteers, the Cathedral offers a warm welcome to all.

The daily rhythm of services, often enhanced with music from choristers and the magnificent organ, is central to the Cathedral's life. The Cathedral offers a regular programme of parish pilgrimages, giving people from throughout the Diocese and beyond the chance to explore the Cathedral and enjoy Evensong.

As a focal point in the community the Cathedral hosts many special services and events, such as the annual Harvest celebration, college awards ceremonies and anniversary services for local charities and organisations.

A comprehensive programme of recitals and concerts runs throughout the year alongside a calendar of events, ranging from a Christmas market to art exhibitions. Children can explore the Cathedral with their own trails, or if they come as part of a school visit, The Learning Hub team offers themed, age-specific activities.



We are delighted that the National Lottery Heritage Fund recently awarded a £730,000 grant for the development of a new project, 'The Abbey of St Edmund: A Millennium of English History in West Suffolk'. This partnership with West Suffolk Council and English Heritage aims to conserve and protect the Abbey ruins, build a visitor centre and west cloister on the Cathedral site, add a network of footpaths around the Abbey and use digital technology to provide interpretation for visitors.

To find out more about the Cathedral, visit stedscathedral.org



The Yard project: supporting young people

The Yard was an area of the Cathedral that was previously left overgrown, now it has been redeveloped as part of a social action project for young people. The project's aim is to create a dedicated place for young people in the Cathedral gardens, and a space they can make their own.

The Yard has been designed to offer a safe space where young people can come and spend time, learn new skills, meet new friends and improve their mental health, wellbeing and resilience. Activities include scrap-woodworking, eco crafts, firepit cooking and lots more.

The calm and peaceful location of the Yard, combined with small group sizes and a relaxed atmosphere that takes things at each young person's pace, has proved particularly positive for the young visitors. Feedback consistently shows that their wellbeing improves after time spent at The Yard and attendees are also seeing other benefits such as learning new skills, increased confidence and learning to make decisions.



TOGETHER WE ARE
STEEPED IN RICH HISTORY, AND HAVE
457 LISTED CHURCH BUILDINGS

We are a highly relational Diocese. We encourage team working and collegiality in everything we do, whether Fresh Expressions or traditional town and village churches, church plants or revitalisation projects. We also rejoice in many fruitful relationships with schools, chaplaincies and other partnerships.

University and colleges

We have one university, the University of Suffolk located in Ipswich, Suffolk New College is also in Ipswich, with additional further education colleges including West Suffolk College in Bury St Edmunds, Otley College and Suffolk Rural.

Chaplains and chaplaincy

Our statutory, voluntary and charitable agencies expect and welcome the Church to engage with them in tackling the issues facing the people of Suffolk. This is especially true in the area of chaplaincy.

We have chaplains serving a number of sectors in our communities including: police, hospitals, hospices, schools and further education colleges, agriculture, youth uniform groups, deaf chaplaincy, prison (there are three prisons in the Diocese at Warren Hill, Hollesley Bay and Highpoint), British Legion, Armed Forces, Sizewell C and Felixstowe Port.



“ We are proud to serve all communities in Suffolk, and do so with professionalism, courage and compassion, supporting the most vulnerable and engaging with others to build trust and confidence. The support of our partners, including the Church, is integral in providing a service that maximises safety across the county whilst treating people with fairness and delivering justice.”

CHIEF CONSTABLE RACHEL KEARTON
Suffolk Police



A passion for students

“ Life as a University Chaplain is one of constant change. Each year I reach out to 2,000 new students and staff (plus the 5,000 others still at the Uni) through Fresher’s Fairs, Welcome Meals, Interfaith events, lectures, prayer groups, Bible studies, social events, 1 to 1 conversations, public acts of worship and Remembrance, Christmas Carols... I could go on! Why do I do it? What does it achieve?

Chaplains are so often the face of the Church that people see in their workplace. I get to befriend those of faith and those of no faith simply by being present, as I initiate conversations, as I offer hospitality to all without question. As a result, a very varied cross-section of those at the University come to talk with me. Sometimes I have a clear opportunity to share my own faith journey; sometimes I act as a guide, pointing to all the great churches across the town. At times I pray with those who do not yet know God... helping them to see that faith is a genuine option.”

THE REVD LINDA PEPPER
Chaplain at the University of Suffolk



Other churches and Christian Networks

We aim to work ecumenically with the breadth of Christian denominations and networks. We have an Ecumenical Advisor and many of our churches are active in local Churches Together networks. These are especially strong in Ipswich through [Together for Ipswich](#) providing a communication platform between the civic authorities, particularly the Local Authority, and Christian churches, charities and people in Ipswich. This enables a better understanding of how local policy impacts on ordinary people, and a way to explore shared initiatives and partner effectively.

Dioceses across the East

Our relationships extend to broadening and working collaboratively across the Eastern region of Dioceses, which includes the Dioceses of Chelmsford, Ely, Norwich, Peterborough and St Albans. This is especially bearing fruit in the areas of schools, pastoral supervision as part of wellbeing and in working together on the Net Zero Carbon plans and tackling climate change as a region. We hope and aim to ensure other opportunities are pursued over time and our new Bishop will be a key enabler for this to continue.



“ We recognise that the process of welcoming and supporting asylum seekers and refugees to settle in the UK is best achieved when voluntary, community, faith and statutory agencies work together. The process is different for different people, some needing a lot of support whilst others more able to manage with little support. The common need however for all is that the environment they arrive into is welcoming and understanding of their needs, cultural differences and aspirations for the future.

We are greatly appreciative of the role of the many different agencies in Suffolk and although we operate on a strictly non-religious, non-party political basis, treating all our clients with the same levels of dignity and respect, we recognise the important role of the Church in forming part of the network of support. We are very grateful to the churches in Suffolk who raise funds and awareness, organise services for different groups and help with sourcing practical items (toys and sewing machines recently) for our clients.”

REBECCA CRERAR
Chief Executive of Suffolk Refugee Support

Partner Dioceses in Tanzania

The Diocese has a strong and flourishing link with the Diocese of Kagera, and more recently, with the Dioceses of Lweru and Biharamulo, in north-west Tanzania, covering territory bordered by Uganda in the north, Rwanda in the west and Lake Victoria in the east. The rich relationship is rooted in mutual prayer, friendship, learning and support. Visits by the bishops, clergy and laity happen regularly in both directions and continue to be a source of encouragement and creativity for all involved. The Diocese also has links with Belgium and Germany.

We have a prayerful and active concern for the events, needs and current landscape in these areas and the wider world, via our World Mission Group.



Other faith groups

Suffolk is more diverse than people realise, not least when it comes to other faiths.

Though most established faith communities are based in Ipswich, groups do gather in towns such as Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket. After Christianity, the largest faith in Suffolk is Islam, with three mosques in Ipswich and one in Newmarket. Ipswich is also home to a Hindu Samaj, a Sikh Gurdwara, a Buddhist centre, and a Liberal Jewish community.

Interfaith relations, though slightly strained following events in the Middle East, remain strong. They operate both locally and through our Diocesan Interfaith Advisor, the Revd Tom Mumford.



Christians from across the county are heading to Africa

Christians from across the county headed to Africa, enhancing our relationship with our link Diocese in Kagera. On the two-week trip, church leaders, including several curates, linked up with those struggling with the effects of climate change, rising prices and poor infrastructure - many homes do not even have running water or electricity. They were based in Kagera in Tanzania, East Africa, where most roads are dirt tracks and the average life expectancy is under 70 years.

The visit provided insights into life in communities abroad where people of faith not only survive at the sharp end of climate change but demonstrate enthusiasm and joy.

The Church community were curious about life in Suffolk and so glad that we had come to visit them. One person said that it strengthened the bonds of love between our two Dioceses. They also demonstrated how the motorbikes we had sponsored had been put to such good use. The Group sang the hymn How Great Thou Art, then in Swahili and us in English. Again, it cemented again the strong links between us.

The group visited many churches; the Kagera Hospital with gifts of medication, reading glasses and bandages; primary and secondary schools; farms communities, as well as the Kagera Christian Training College, and everywhere they went they shared food, fellowship and worship.

GMH and UKME

We are committed to bringing about the necessary changes highlighted by the Archbishops' Anti-Racism Taskforce to combat racism in all its forms and build a better future for the Church in Suffolk.

The Diocesan Racial Justice Working Group, chaired by the Bishop of Dunwich and resourced by the Diocesan Racial Justice Officer, is leading on implementing a racial justice policy which was approved by Bishop's Council in July 2024. Work has begun to fully implement our policy to take the practical steps to tackle racism and improve diversity, including improving the diversity of participation in church life, education, training and mentoring and in addressing history and memory.

Disability and inclusion

Our Diocese seeks to be a place where all people can belong as individual unique and valued followers of Jesus Christ. We celebrate the inclusion, contribution and ministry of disabled people, acknowledging that the church community is only complete when all are welcome.

We aim to support all congregations to ensure that our buildings, activities and services are welcoming and accessible for disabled people through the work of the Disability and Inclusion group. This group has created resources promoting access and inclusion. A member of the group also has a seat on the DAC to ensure all faculties meet the needs of disabled people.



"Suffolk is an increasingly diverse place when it comes to both faith and race. Ipswich has had a vibrant Caribbean and Indian population since the 1950s but is now far more racially, linguistically and ethnically mixed; the range of faiths represented in Ipswich, and more widely across Suffolk has grown. This includes diverse Christian communities.

The Church has an important part to play in supporting the inclusion, and indeed cohesion, of our richly varied communities. We have important shared values, human values and values we bring from our diverse cultures and faiths which should help to unite us and help us find common ground.

Many of us are working within VCFS organisations; working in partnership with the new Bishop, we can make a stronger impact on addressing issues of poverty, education and social cohesion as well as celebrating our common values. A new Bishop who is willing to and, has the skills to convene and include the different groups and community organisations will find us welcoming and keen to collaborate. A willingness to listen and learn from our experiences will provide a strong basis for collaboration."

GULSHAN KAYEMBE
Chair, Ipswich Community Media



Suffolk Centre of Mission

Suffolk Centre of Mission offers a Diocese-wide focus on Evangelism and Pioneering in partnership with Church Army. It works to support parish churches and Fresh Expressions with hands-on mission and evangelism as well as training via the Envoy programme.

Our three team members are based in local communities developing mission there while also encouraging others to step out into the community to share God's love in creative, contextually relevant ways. To find out more go to churcharmy.org/mission/suffolk/



"Envoy understands that evangelism is a gift which flows from the heart of a faith lived well and expressed uniquely by each person in a way that is right for them and their context. Discovering and releasing that unique gift for each person is central to an Envoy Community."

GAIL SOUTHGATE
Pioneer Evangelist and
co-leader of Pilgrims Together



Becoming an Evangelist on The Vocations Pathway

"Being an Evangelist is really part of who I am. My faith is an integral part of me. I believe that everything I do shines with the light of Christ. I love speaking about faith to people – but I do 'read the room' first! If people can see that I am a genuine, caring, open person then they are much more likely to trust and open up to me when they feel they want to. And I hope I make a difference!"

I have been able to create Advent and Lent bags for project where we give bags with readings, a short reflection and activity for each week of Lent or Advent to all our congregation, encouraging them to share the bags with friends and family. We take the bags to our toddler group where many of the families who come along don't attend church, we also give them to our school who have used them in their RE lessons. I have trialled litter picks in our parish, which I hope will become more regular later on this year. I hope that alongside other more parish and community based (rather than church based) activities we will be able to spread God's love to those in our local community.

I feel that I help build people's confidence in their faith, and that they feel confident to tell people that they are a Christian, I ask questions about faith and ask people to serve our church using the gifts that God has given them. I want to be able to share mine and others gifts with our community and build networks of trust and compassion all underpinned with God's love for all of us."

HELEN PRIOR-TOWNSEND
Lay Licensed Evangelist, now training
to be a Priest

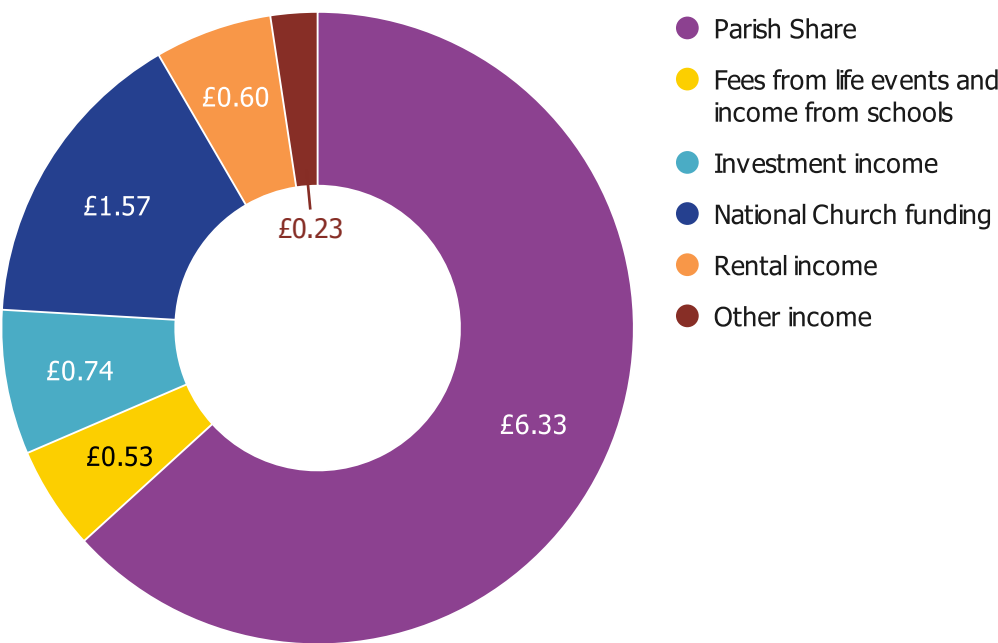


**TOGETHER WE ARE
SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITIES**

In 2023, the total Diocesan income excluding project income was £9,824,000. Our total expenditure was £9,859,000.

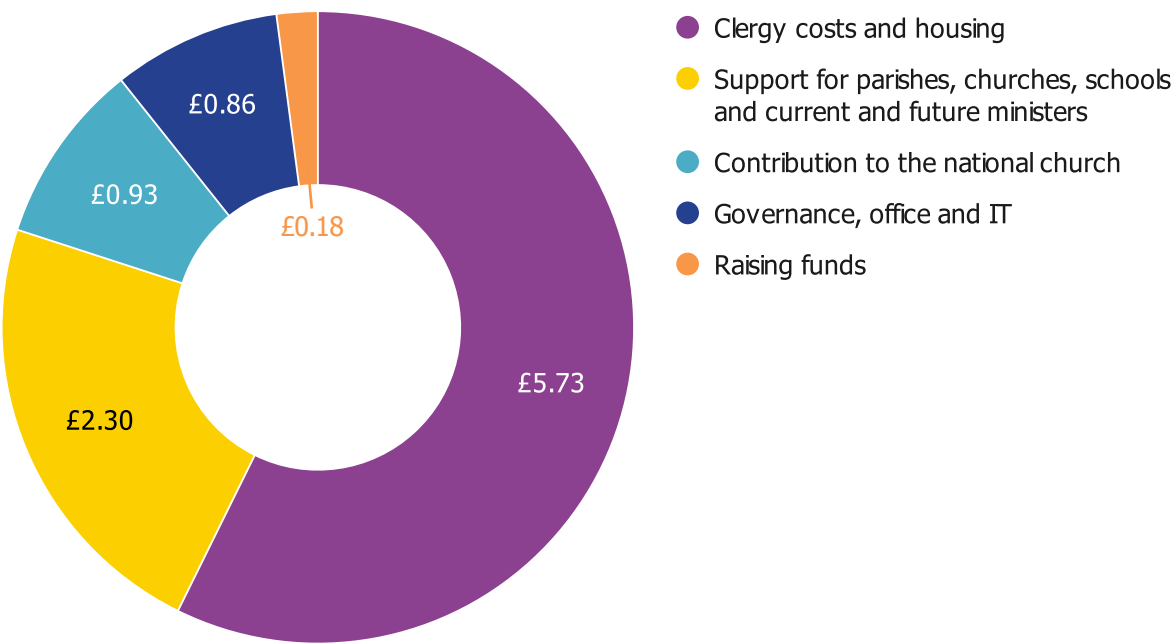
Where does our money come from?

Every £10 we receive is made up as follows:



How do we spend the money we receive?

Every £10 we receive is spent as follows:



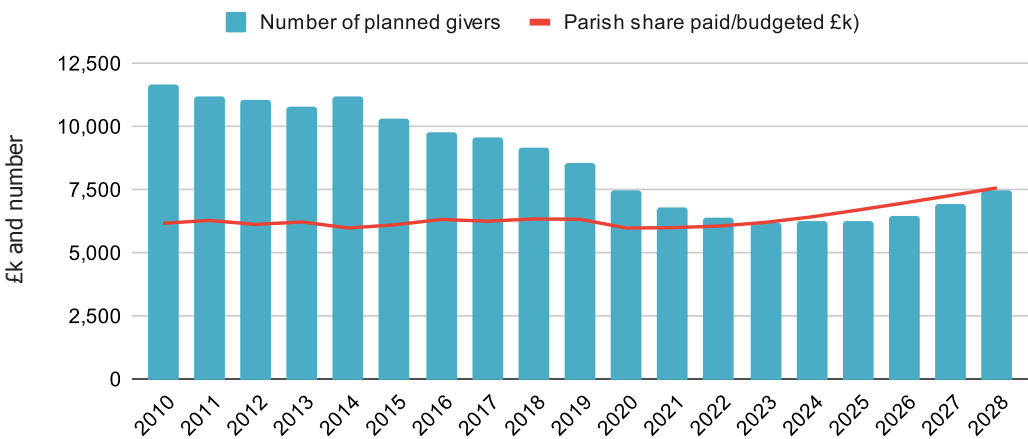
The annual budget for the Diocese is £10m, and we depend on parish share to raise circa 80% of this sum. In 2018, after measures to reduce costs and encourage giving, we broke even for the first time in many years. Whilst the pandemic set us back, with incredible generosity from parishes, we are £0.1m below the pre-pandemic level of parish share received. With rising costs, the gap between the parish share request and the actual receipts has widened to 85%. We recognise that financial conditions remain challenging for parishes and the DBF, but also that the collection rate must improve, if we are to pay for the ministry we require, and to improve the overall financial position.

In 2023 we have just under 6,500 weekly givers with the average weekly gift of regular givers being £13.51 per person per week, and for the 1,906 givers from 239 parishes in the parish giving scheme the average weekly gift was £15.56

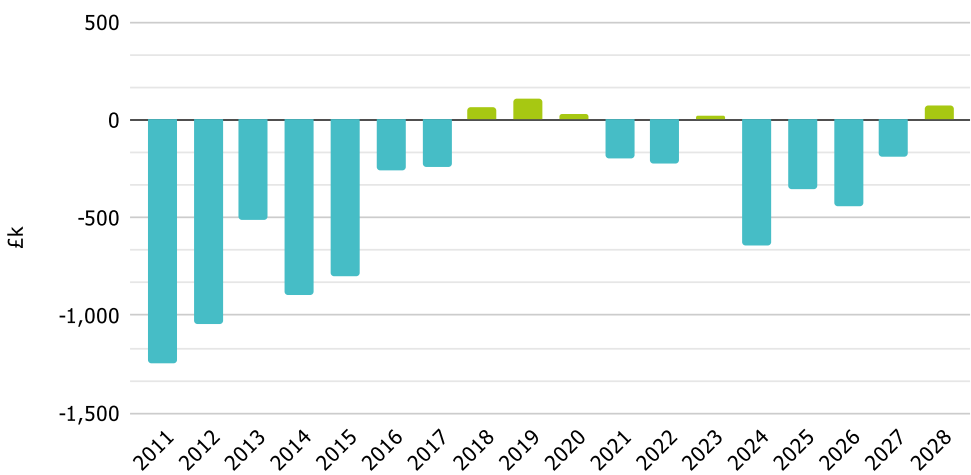
excluding gift aid. Whilst this is encouraging, the pace of engagement with PGS has slowed in the last couple of years. We remain very grateful and thankful for the many examples of sacrificial generosity in giving finances, time and skills across Suffolk but there is still the potential and need to go further.

Our Growing in God strategy and ongoing ministry bid to the Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board (SMMIB) directly address our financial and resourcing challenges with the aim to achieve financial balance and sustainability by 2028/29, with additional income streams contributing to the overall costs, addressing the challenges of managing and maintaining church and school buildings as well as our clergy housing, and to increase the number of planned givers and broadening the giving base, as highlighted in the graphs below.

Parish share received and number of Planned Givers 2010-2028



Financial performance: 2011-2028
(2024-2028 budgeted and planned)





TOGETHER WE ARE RUNNING 58 FOOD BANKS ACROSS SUFFOLK

Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich SEPTEMBER 2024

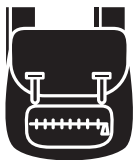
cofesuffolk.org

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Our Diocese in numbers



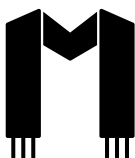
481 Church Buildings
443 Parishes
111 Benefices
16 Deaneries



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



2 Bishop's Mission Orders
119 Stipendiary Clergy



74 Self-Supporting Ministers
154 Licensed Lay Ministers
357 Lay Elders
189 Clergy with Permission to Officiate



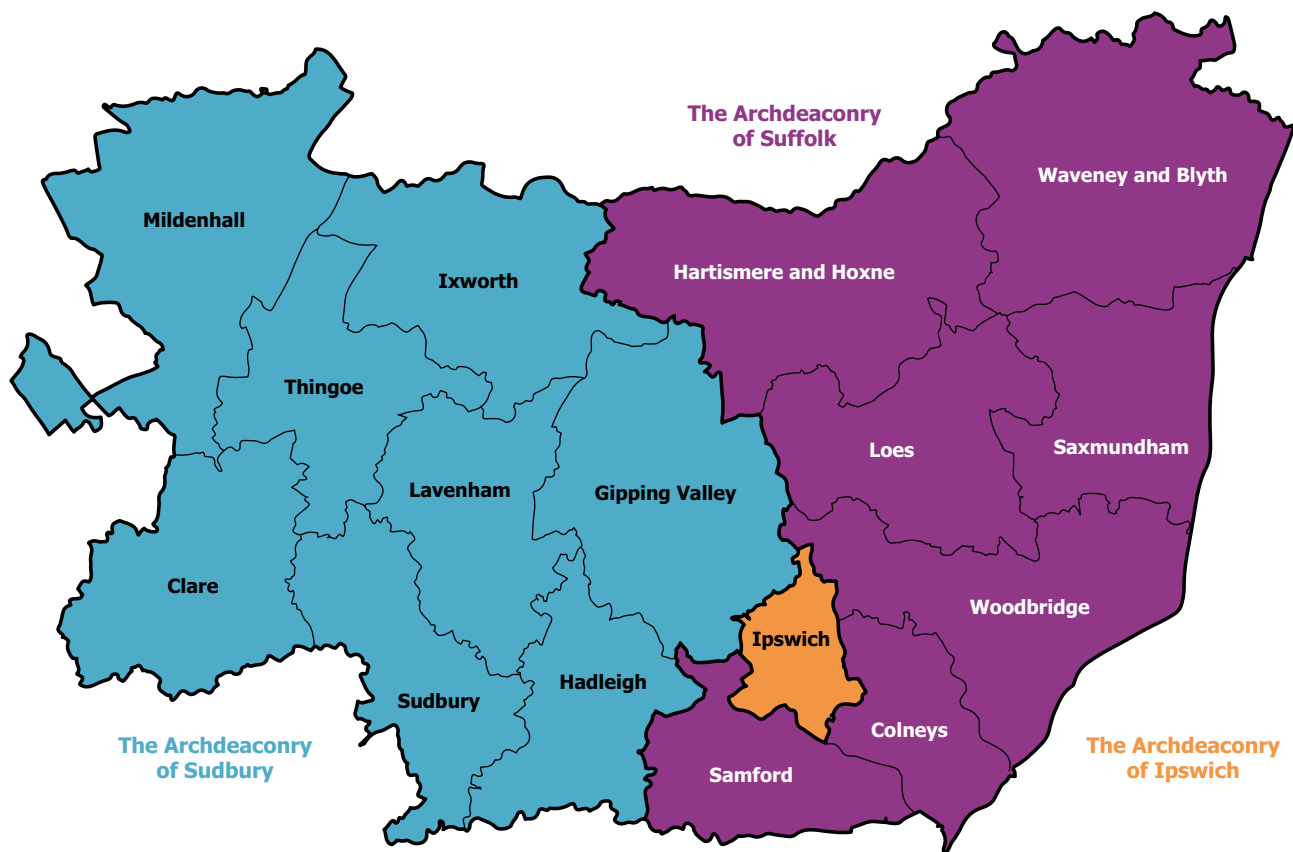
757 Baptisms in 2023
401 Weddings in 2023
1,256 Funerals in 2023



684,000 Population in the Diocese
1,450 Diocese area (square miles)

Geographical

The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich is largely rural but includes the county town of Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds situated to the west.



The Diocese covers the majority of the Suffolk, except for Lowestoft in the northeast, and includes one parish in the county of Essex. The county consists mostly of smaller market towns and villages.

The road network is made up of the A14 which runs from Felixstowe in the east, south of Ipswich and towards the Midlands past Stowmarket and Bury St Edmunds. The A140 is the main road from Suffolk to Norfolk, while the A12 (the main route to London and the M25) runs from the south of the county, around Ipswich, and towards the east coast to Lowestoft.

The Norwich to London Liverpool Street railway line passes through the county and provides access to the capital from Ipswich in under one hour.

Roughly half of the population of the Diocese lives in the following areas:

Urban Area	Population
Ipswich	169,000
Bury St Edmunds	41,000
Felixstowe	31,000
Haverhill	27,000
Stowmarket	24,000
Newmarket	21,000

Source: Strategic context - Suffolk Diocese
- Max Jackson (Vision & Strategy Consultant)

Age & Health Profile

The county has an aging profile - nearly 1 in 4 people are aged 65 and over. It is estimated the ratio will change to 1 in 3 people aged over 65 in 20 years' time.

Population by broad age group for Suffolk (2021)



The projected figures suggest that the percentage of children and young people will decline by 2% and those aged 16-64 will decrease by 5%.

Age	2020	2043	Variance
Aged 0-15	18%	16%	-2%
Aged 16-64	58%	53%	-5%
Aged 65+	24%	31%	7%

A combination of an increased but ageing population will have implications for health, general well-being and the economy. Based on contemporary mortality rates it is estimated that life expectancy is slightly higher than the average for England.

Life expectancy by Gender	Suffolk	England
Life expectancy at birth - Female - All ages	83.7	83.2
Life expectancy at birth - Male - All ages	80.5	79.3

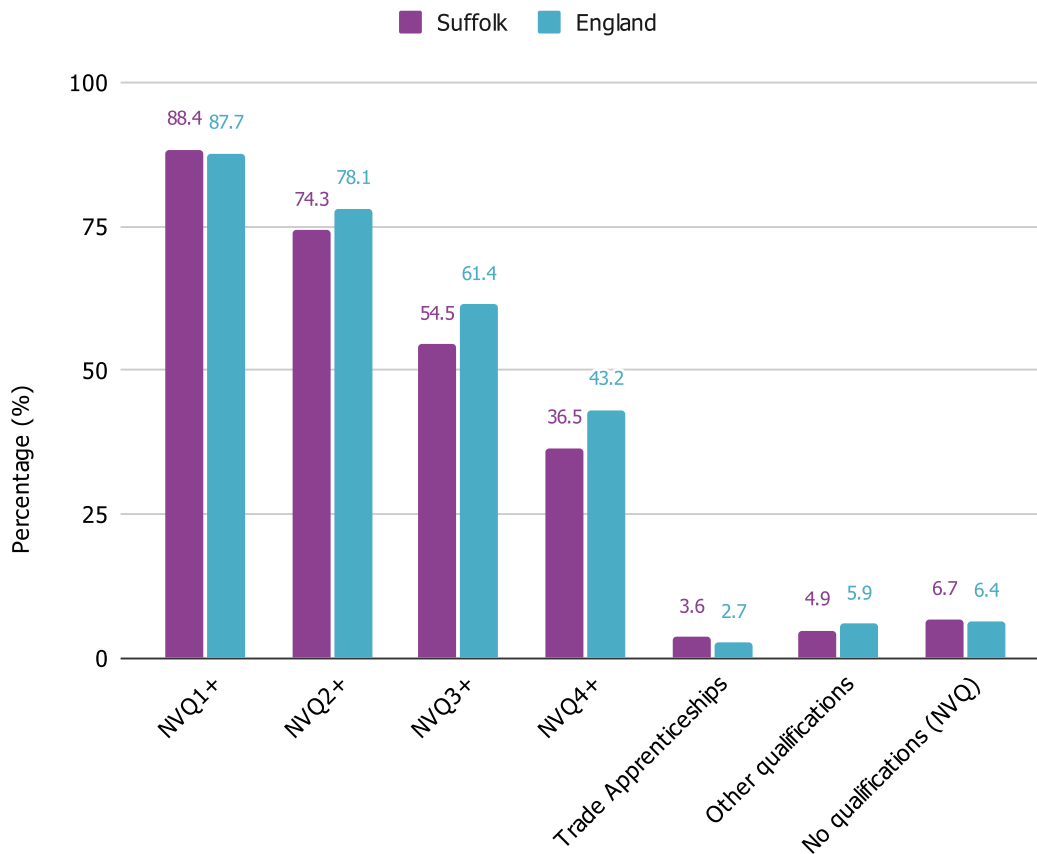
Source (whole page): [Population - UTLA | Suffolk | Report Builder for ArcGIS \(suffolkobservatory.info\)](#)

It is estimated that the percentage of households in fuel poverty for Suffolk was 12% (2022) - slightly lower than the estimate of 13% in England.

There is a strong link between qualifications attained and earnings. 6.7% of the population have no formal qualifications - slightly higher than the national average. Although 88.4% have qualifications at NVQ1+ level (the equivalent of three to four GCSEs at grades D-E) slightly better than the national average, this worsens at NVQ2+ and NVQ3+ levels.

The number of people with degrees (NVQ4+) in Suffolk is 36.5% which is 6.7% less than the national average.

Qualifications (aged 16-64) (2021)



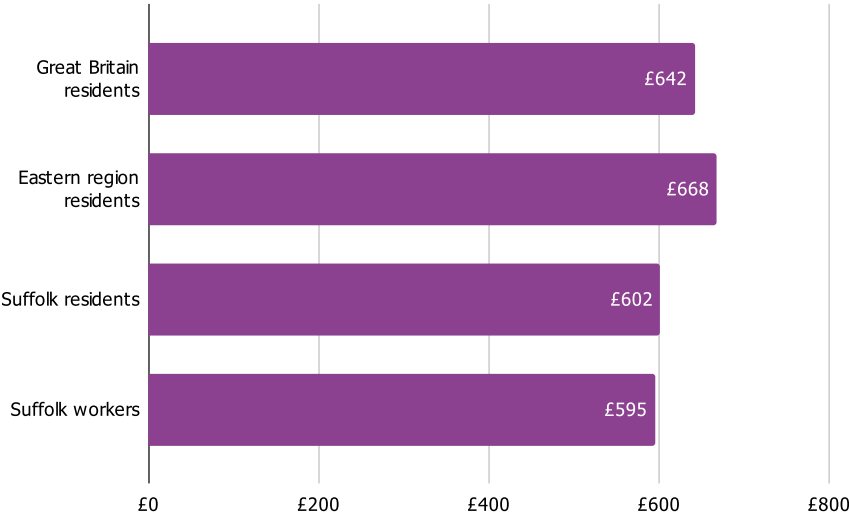
Source: APS

Employment

Suffolk’s employment rate is consistently higher than for Great Britain, and the local unemployment rate is lower than the national level.

While for many Suffolk is an attractive place to live, the data suggests that workers choose to live in the county but commute out for the higher salaries which are not available locally. Gross weekly pay is lower in Suffolk than compared to Great Britain as a whole. In 2022, people who worked full-time in Suffolk earned £40 per week less than the national average. Suffolk residents are also more likely to have no formal qualifications.

Median gross weekly full-time pay comparison 2022

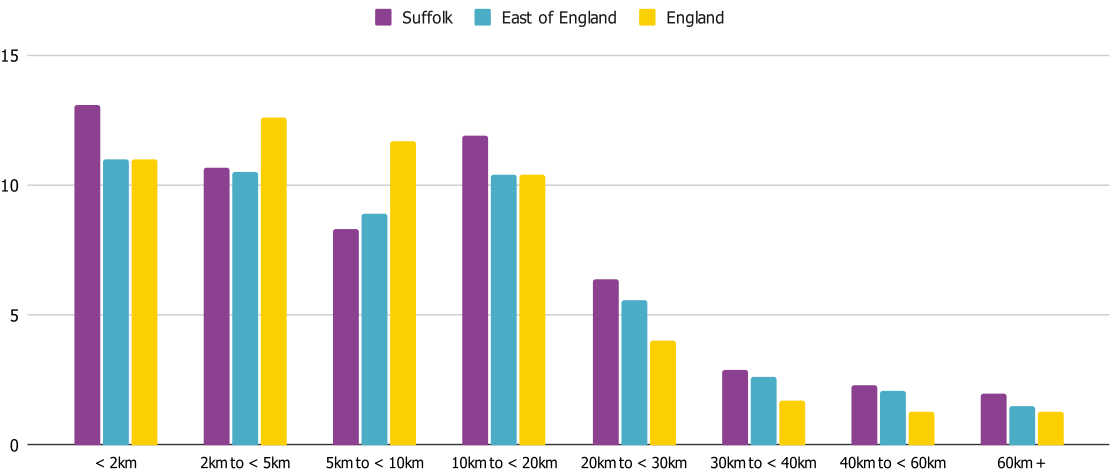


Source: [Suffolk in 20 years \(2023\) \(healthysuffolk.org.uk\)](#)

The largely rural nature of the county results in longer commuting distances than the national average.

55% of the population in Suffolk rely on travelling to work by driving a car or van – this figure is 10% higher than the national average.

Distance travelled to work (2021)



Source: [ONS - Economy - UTLA | Suffolk | Report Builder for ArcGIS \(suffolkobservatory.info\)](#)

The Suffolk versus England column below shows how employment rates within the county are skewed to business administration, manufacturing and agricultural when compared to the national averages. It also demonstrates the relative lack of higher salaries within professional, scientific and technical roles.

Employment rate by industry for Suffolk (2021)

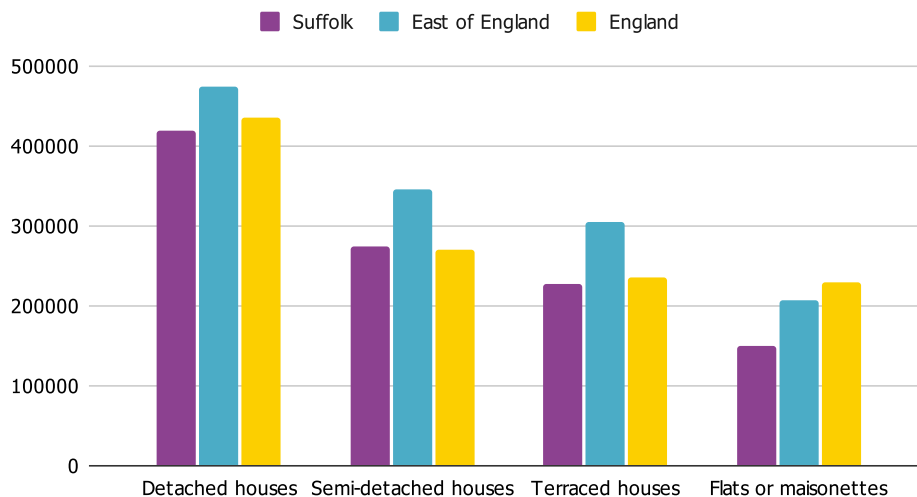
Industry type	Suffolk	England	Suffolk vs England
Business admin & support services	11.50%	8.90%	2.60%
Manufacturing	8.90%	7.30%	1.60%
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	2.90%	1.30%	1.60%
Transport & storage (inc postal)	6.30%	5.20%	1.10%
Construction	6.00%	4.90%	1.10%
Retail	9.50%	9.00%	0.50%
Motor trades	2.00%	1.70%	0.30%
Education	8.60%	8.50%	0.10%
Accommodation & food services	7.50%	7.40%	0.10%
Arts, entertainment, recreation & other services	4.30%	4.30%	0.00%
Mining, quarrying & utilities	1.10%	1.10%	0.00%
Public administration & defence	4.00%	4.10%	-0.10%
Wholesale	3.20%	3.60%	-0.40%
Property	1.10%	2.00%	-0.90%
Financial & insurance	2.60%	3.60%	-1.00%
Health	11.80%	13.10%	-1.30%
Information & communication	2.90%	4.50%	-1.60%
Professional, scientific & technical	5.70%	9.30%	-3.60%

Source: Economy - UTLA | Suffolk | Report Builder for ArcGIS (suffolkobservatory.info)

Housing

House prices in the county by type are broadly in line with the national average. Nearly 39% of homes are owned outright, this is considerably higher than the national average of 33%.

Median property price by type (Jan 2022 - Dec 2022)

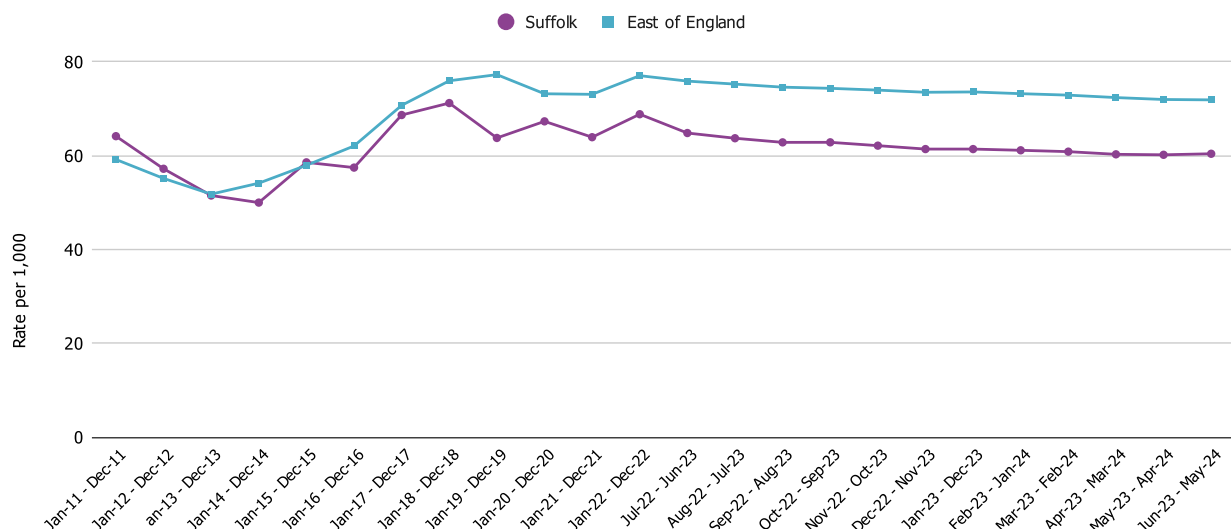


Source: ONS - [Housing - UTLA | Suffolk | Report Builder for ArcGIS \(suffolkobservatory.info\)](#)

Crime

Suffolk's crime rates are consistently lower than the comparable data for the East of England (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk) which includes theft, burglary, criminal damage and violence. The average rates for all crime show that recorded levels of crime have plateaued.

All crime - 12 month rolling rates (2011 - 2024)



Source: data.police.uk - [Crime - UTLA | Suffolk | Report Builder for ArcGIS \(suffolkobservatory.info\)](#)

ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS - PUPIL FEEDBACK

Pupil feedback from Church of England schools in the Diocese.

What are you thankful for?

- Friends and family
- Basic necessities
- Education
- Spiritual
- Life and happiness
- Sports and animals
- Knowledge

What gives you hope?

Encouragement:

- Learning from others who have overcome dilemmas
- Kindness from loved ones
- Trusting that God is always present

Supportive factors:

- God
- School
- Family and friends
- Perseverance
- Songs

What is difficult and can trouble you?

- Difficulty concentrating and getting distracted
- Struggling to overcome fears
- Unkind behaviour from others
- Animal abuse
- False accusations
- Hurt caused by people's actions
- Finding school difficult or facing failure
- Dealing with family matters related to siblings
- Experiencing bullying
- Fear of losing loved ones
- Regretting bad decisions
- Worries and concerns
- Bad dreams

Life Changes:

- Adjusting to sudden changes like moving houses or schools and having new siblings
- Impact of Social Media

What do you feel that God is saying to us at this time as we look for a new Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich?

- Compassion
- Familiarity
- Respect
- Kindness and love
- Leadership
- Spiritual guidance
- Belief in others
- Strength and faith
- Christian values
- Trust
- Reassurance
- Respect

What particular passions and qualities might the new Bishop bring?

- Passion for worship
- Helping others
- Courage and kindness
- Sharing the Word of God
- Positive attitude
- Spiritual attributes
- Church attendance
- Experience
- Trustworthiness
- Hopefulness
- Respect for others
- Love
- Wisdom
- Uniqueness
- Hardworking and dedicated

ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS - PUPIL FEEDBACK

What gifts or special qualities do they need?

- True of heart
- Respectful
- Knowledgeable
- Experienced
- Friendship
- Balanced teaching
- Positive role model
- Trustworthy, hopeful, respectful, and loving
- Wisdom
- Uniqueness

What experiences do they need to have had in their lives for this role?

- Experiences with people
- Church experience
- Overcoming challenges
- Previous church role
- Spiritual connection
- Dedication to the bible
- Leadership
- Evangelism
- Collaboration
- Compassion

Is there anything else that you feel we should consider when seeking the next Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich?

- Kindness
- Open-minded
- Positive outlook
- Embracing diversity



ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS - STAFF FEEDBACK

Staff feedback from Church of England schools in the Diocese.

What are you thankful for and what gives you hope?

- Relationships - parents and friends
- Community and people who support us
- The world, nature and pets
- Children
- Beauty of Suffolk

What is difficult, and what troubles you?

- Challenges in education - day to day life working in schools
- Lack of time and family engagement
- Personal worries - family troubles, illness and financial debt
- Environmental - climate change
- Societal - money and fame prioritised over compassion
- Human struggles and hopelessness
- Providing assistance - unable to offer guidance/support

What do you feel that God is saying to us at this time?

- Balancing patience and action
- Appreciate everything we have
- Rethink priorities
- Care for the weakest in society
- Love without prejudice
- Distractions such as TV, internet, advertising can hinder deeper reflection
- God created all people, and all are precious
- Call to come together
- Listen to God's ways
- Urgency to combat climate change through action

What particular passions and qualities might they bring?

- Strong leadership skills, commitment to social justice, and community service
- Passion for pastoral care and nurturing spiritual growth
- Inspiring and uniting diverse communities
- Humility, empathy and active listening
- Effective communication, strategic vision, and engagement with contemporary issues

What gifts and experiences do they need?

- Humanity, humility, understanding, compassion, love, sense of humour and temerity
- Strong personal faith and deep spiritual grounding
- Compassion, empathy, and pastoral care abilities
- Leadership qualities for direction and unity
- Effective communication and organisational skills
- Sound theological understanding and awareness of cultural diversity
- Pastoral experience providing practical insights into parish life

ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS - STAFF FEEDBACK

Is there anything else you feel we should consider when seeking the next Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich?

- Diverse experience
- Ability to use new technologies to reach all members of the Diocese, especially the younger generation
- Retain empathy
- Compassion and effective communication with people
- Avoiding rich, privileged and powerful individuals
- Recognise the potential in children and actively engaging with schools
- Spiritual grounding, pastoral care, vision for the future
- Collaborative leadership, commitment to social justice
- Effective communication, administrative competence
- Ecumenical and interfaith relations, personal integrity
- Deep understanding of the local context



THIS IS WHO WE ARE. TOGETHER.

We pray to be generous and visible people of Jesus Christ

