

Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)

Parish of Thetford

7.30 p.m. on Monday 20th April 2026 in St Cuthbert's Church

It will be assumed that the annual reports and accounts have been read in advance of the meeting.

- 1. Welcome, apologies and opening prayer**
- 2. Opening worship**
- 3. Minutes of the annual meetings of 2025 and matters arising**
- 4. Election of Churchwardens for the coming year**
- 5. Electoral Roll report**
- 6. Elections and resolutions of the APCM:**
 - a) Election to Deanery Synod (3 people to serve for the 2026-2029 triennium)**
 - b) Election to PCC (9 people)**
- 7. Looking back:**
 - a) Annual report**

An opportunity to respond with questions, comments, encouragements and ideas. Please note that questions asked in advance are likely to receive a more considered answer on the evening.
 - b) Financial statements**

Please note that questions asked in advance are likely to receive a more considered answer on the evening.
- 8. Appointment of Independent Examiner**
- 9. Looking forwards**
- 10. Closing worship and prayer**

The APCM will be followed by a very brief meeting of the newly constituted PCC in order to elect PCC officers for the coming year.

Meeting of Parishioners and Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM)
Parish of Thetford
7.30 p.m. on Monday 28th April 2025 in St Cuthbert's Church

Attendees: The Rev Dr Peter Herbert (**PH**), Mrs Caroline Herbert (**CH**), Mr & Mrs Gary and Louise Applin (**GA & LA**), Mr & Mrs Keith and Sue Goldsmith (**KG & SG**), Mr & Mrs David & Rachel Woods (**DW & RW**), The Rev Matt Houghton (**MH**), Mr Neil Glen (**NG**), Mr Rod Back (**RB**), Mrs Maggie Baldwin (**MB**), Mr Bob Hurle (**BH**), Mr and Mrs Mick and Karen Tobitt (**MT & KT**), Mrs Sandra Phillips (**SP**), The Rev & Mrs Jonathan & Steph Richardson (**Rev JR & SR**), Miss Susie Bratby (**SB**), Mr Josh Samuel (**JS**), Mr & Mrs Josiah and Catherine Richardson (**JR & CR**), Dr David Galloway (**DG**), Mr David Carter (**DC**), Mr Robert Bell (**RB**), Mr Mike Harding - White (**MHW**).

1. Welcome, apologies and opening prayer

PH welcomed all those present to the meeting, Apologies from Mrs Helen Heywood & Mrs Kirsty Houghton, **PH** led those present in prayer.

2. Opening worship

Living Hope was sung by those present.

3. Minutes of the annual meetings of 2024 and matters arising

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record proposed by **TH** and seconded by **SB**. All present agreed and one abstention. **PH** mentioned that a question was asked about a business plan and it was decided by the PCC not to proceed at this point.

4. Election of Churchwardens for the next year

PH expressed a vote of thanks for **SP** and **KT** for their continued hard work during the year. The Meeting of Parishioners resolved that churchwardens could continue to serve for more than six continuous years. Churchwardens for 2025-2026 were elected as follows:

Karen Tobitt proposed by **GA** and seconded by **DG**

Sandra Phillips proposed by **NG** and seconded by **LA**

5. Electoral Roll report

RW reported that the new Electoral Roll stood at 56 people, with a further few to go on immediately after the conclusion of the APCM to take this over 60; this is a drop and **RW** encouraged people to promote going onto the Electoral Roll.

6. Elections and resolutions of the APCM:

a) Election to Deanery Synod (2 people to serve for the remainder of the 2023-2026 triennium) 2 casual vacancies nobody wanted the roles at this time. **CH** to carry on as the only representative on the Deanery Synod.

b) Election to PCC (8 people) 8 vacancies on the PCC **PH** went through the role of the PCC.

Maggie Baldwin (**MB**), Proposed by Corrine Brindle and seconded by Kirsty Houghton and Susie Bratby proposed by **SG** and Seconded by **SR**. **CH** led those present in prayers.

7. Rector's remarks

PH reminded those present of the 80th anniversary of VE Day, before opining that as a Team Ministry we currently stand in a period of uncertainty, with examples across the three churches of the parish, as well as the sports and fitness ministry. **PH** encouraged us to go wherever we are heading as those led by God, asking for his wisdom (James 1:5) and with Jesus central to everything (Colossians 1:15-20), dwelling on the wonder of Jesus, his incarnation and his salvation. **PH** concluded with a heartfelt thank you to all those who work for Christ in the roles they do within the Ministry, and above all, with thanks to God.

8. Annual reports

Rectors report: No comments or questions to **PH**.

St Cuthbert's Church: service of Peter Thomson and Sue Goldsmith as directors of Café Cuthbert and in particular of the service of Peter in the developing of the café and Sue for her sterling service as a director and continuing hard work volunteering in the café. **DG** asked if there was a plan financially for the Church, **PH** there is a plan with the wall works the floor work and quinquennial report recommendations which the PCC has to go through imminently.

Cloverfield: No comments or questions to **MH**.

Grace church: **DG** asked of **TH** how much impact does he think Grace Church has on the Abbey Estate? **TH** door knocking on the Estate **SB**, Sarah Killick and **JS** work with

the Bishops school, there is a regular presence on the estate and is something we definitely need to look at **SB** there is now a better recognition of who we are and what we do on the estate, **PH** we definitely need to think of other ways to improve our visibility.

PCC: No comments or questions to **GA**.

Safeguarding: **PH** thanks very much to Maggie for her work and especially in light of issues within the C of E regarding safeguarding, **RW** just to re-affirm that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Deanery Synod: **DG** asked for clarity on the actual reports from Deanery and General Synod clarified by **CH**.

St Cuthberts Fabric: **RW** do we know what the quinquennial report says **PH** we have the report but yet to review properly.

Mission Giving: No Questions etc.

Sports Ministry: **DG** is there a plan on fund raising the monies to keep both SB and JS? **PH** went through the latest £167,700 is needed to fund both positions, last update is just below £50K is currently the amount we have in place and big grants, **SB** went through some of the grant applications and asked for prayers for those. **TH** reiterated that JS's fitness classes are very good.

Café Cuthbert: **BH** is it not prudent to have a reserve fund for the depreciation of the equipment?, **PH**, yes the café has to fund the repairs which we have a healthy amount for currently, reiterated by **SP, PH & GA**. **PH** agreed that the replacement of the equipment would likely be paid by the PCC, and that thought should be given about how and when to start transferring funds for this purpose from the café company to the PCC. **PH** suggested an update to the café report before it goes to the Charity Commission, to clarify that payments come across as either rent or dividends, both of which are taxable. **MT** reiterated how much we are getting financially per week and the work of the volunteers. **RW** this is a safe space and would like more volunteers so we can open on a Friday morning.

9. Financial statements

PH a thing to note is the current accounts are in draft form as we are awaiting our independent examiner to have a final look over them. **PH** went through the report. **BH** asked why the payroll expenditure for the three sports ministry staff comes from three different funds, rather than one. **PH** explained that the money to pay two of the staff is legally restricted to different purposes, and therefore these funds are kept in separate restricted funds. **CR** asked re the parish share **PH** explained where the monies had come from, this may change this year but **PH** will be keeping the PCC updated on the future and with the funding received we are in a better position than we were last year.

10. Appointment of Independent Examiner

Robert Dabin has done it for the last 3 years and **PH** is happy with his work all present were in agreement for this to continue.

11. Matters raised by the church membership

Rev JR could we have a report for the children and young people? **PH** yes will add this to the list for the next APCM. **CR** yes I agree with this.

RW a flower festival here in June joint venture with the church and St Nicholas Hospice in Bury St Edmunds and would encourage people to be involved especially the Thetford Team Ministry.

12. Closing worship and prayer

Thine be the Glory was sung by all. **PH** thanked the PCC Secretary and those who had written reports for the meeting, and most especially the staff with their spouses and families.

PH led those present in The Grace.

The meeting ended at 2115hrs.

Thetford Parochial Church Council Annual Report on 2025

Introduction

This annual report looks back with gratitude to God for all that he has been doing in and through us over the course of 2025. Inevitably, there have been both joys and sorrows, encouragements and discouragements in our life together as churches and as a parish, but through it all we can testify to God's faithfulness, love and grace as we've sought to live out our Team Vision Statement:

Loving God

Wholeheartedly loving, worshipping and following God

Growing Together

Growing together in our love and care for one another, and as disciples of Jesus who are rooted in the Bible and prayer

Reaching Out

Welcoming everybody as we serve our different communities with the good news of the Gospel through words and actions in the power of the Holy Spirit

The following sections of the Report give highlights and a summary of what last year held across the churches and ministries of the Parish of Thetford. A few things further stand out from last year – beginning with the Team Churches Weekend Away in September, held again at Sizewell Hall on the Suffolk Coast. This was another rich and wonderful time of fun, fellowship, teaching, prayer and worship. We are so grateful for those who came to serve in various roles from other churches (main speaker, with the children and youth, and in the kitchen) – as well as to everyone who came and who contributed in all manners of ways to making it such a fantastic time. Praise God!

We praise God also for providing more than £220,000 in donations and grant funding towards the Sports & Community Minister and Fitness & Sports Minister posts. This, together with funds generated by the ministries themselves, means that we have been able to employ both Susie and Josh in these respective roles for at least another three years – with Josh now full-time as well as Susie.

Some things, though, have come to an end – notably the benefice magazine, 'Contact', which saw its final edition roll off the printer for December. We are immensely grateful for everyone who has contributed to the magazine over the years – and especially to Colin and Decia Orbell, its editors, for their ministry over more than 35 years. During the autumn some preparatory work was done to communicate in the 'Contact'-less world with a relaunched News Email, improved use of social media and – hopefully in time – a printed newsheet every other month.

Other Team-wide ministries have continued, including weddings, funerals and baptisms/thanksgivings, services in local care homes led by the clergy, and the monthly Team Prayer Night. Numbers at the latter continue to be small, although it is always a precious and valuable time together. During the autumn we trialled holding Prayer Nights at a different venue each month (including online), and this helped some to come who might otherwise have struggled.

As we look back on the last year with gratitude to God for all that he has done, allow me also to express my sincere thanks to everyone across our parish and benefice who has poured so much time, energy, dedication and care into the mission and ministry of our churches in so many different ways. It truly is a team effort – so thank you.

Peter Herbert
Team Rector

St Cuthbert's Church

The regular rhythm of life at St Cuthbert's continued during 2025. Regular services continued to be held on Sundays and Wednesdays (Holy Communion) at 10.30 a.m. The usual service pattern on Sundays was All-Age or Morning Worship on the first Sunday of the month, Morning Prayer on the third Sunday of the month, and Holy Communion on the other weeks. Thank you to everyone who contributes to these services – whether 'up front' by preaching, leading, reading and musically, or in roles such as welcoming and serving refreshments.

The Sunday Club children's group has continued to be offered most weeks as part of the 10.30 service although, having last year reported encouraging numerical growth in the group, attendance dropped off as we went through the year, leaving the group feeling rather small and fragile by the end of the year. A huge amount of planning, preparation and prayer goes into the sessions, and I am very grateful to the team of leaders and helpers for their devoted hard work.

At the start of the year we took the decision to bring The Gathering to a close. This had been our monthly afternoon intergenerational service – but sadly, despite much prayer and hard work – attendance dwindled and it became unviable.

We have two home groups particularly associated with St Cuthbert's, both of which meet weekly (one in the daytime, one in the evening). Thank you to Margaret Higgins for leading her group week-by-week with such dedication. Both groups are very welcoming of new members, so please have a word with me if you might be interested.

As described more fully in the dedicated report, Café Cuthbert has continued to thrive – providing a much-loved and valuable ministry to its loyal regulars as well as to visitors. To everyone who pours such energy and dedication into this significant part of our church's ministry – thank you. A new departure in the autumn was the opening of the café on Friday mornings with a limited menu but an extended children's play area. It has been encouraging to see the growth in numbers on Fridays, and the friendships being struck up between regulars and the team.

Of course, it's impossible in this report to thank everyone who contributes to the life of our church – but to each one of you in whatever you do (whether moving chairs and tables or decorating the church; lending a hand with maintenance or serving as part of the verger team), a heartfelt thank you.

Finally, it was with great sadness that we lost two stalwarts of St Cuthbert's during the course of 2025: Keith Goldsmith and Dorothy Boughton. They are greatly missed, and we continue to pray for their families and for all who feel their loss most keenly.

Peter Herbert
Team Rector

Cloverfield Community Church

I have been reflecting on the early church's mission and what lessons we can learn for the local church today. One passage from Acts 13 marks the formal beginning of the Christian mission to the Gentile world, centred on the church in Antioch. The chapter highlights a pivotal moment when the Holy Spirit directly calls Barnabas and Paul for a specific missionary journey, setting a precedent for future missions. Of course everything doesn't go to plan as they faced opposition.

What can we learn from this? Well firstly, we must not be afraid of opposition as we seek to share our faith. Prayer is vital as we make Jesus known (Ephesians 6:12).

We must also not be afraid of failure in trying new things and also of not being disheartened when new ventures don't work out.

Secondly we need to remember to engage in two-way listening. both to God and to the context we find ourselves in. In his book a 'Church for every context', Michael Moynagh describes it as a "serving first journey" that earns trust and a hearing from recipient communities. It is a slower but more organic process, which results in the invitation to plant seeds of the gospel of Jesus, and ultimately new church communities that emerge through experimentation and innovation.

Thirdly, small is good. One key lesson I learned from my youth work days was the importance of relations paces where people can find support and spiritual nourishment. Small groups helped build relationships.

If you lead or serve in a group in the church I encourage you to reflect on the following questions over the coming year:

- Where can you see God at work in your group?
- Where do you think the needs are, and the points of darkness or difficulty?
- What gifts and resources do you and your team bring? What are missing that you need to pray about?
- Who might our partners be? (individuals? community groups?)
- What will be the cost of doing what you have in mind? (Financial/emotional/time)
- What will make you shout "Hallelujah!" in one year's time, and in five years?

One phrase that has stayed with me is 'Open community centred on Jesus'. As God's church in 2026 that would be a good vision to pursue.

Thank you so much for everyone's contribution to Cloverfield church over the last year!

Special events: Light night, Easter and Christmas

Seasonal events continue to offer good outreach opportunities to our local community. At Easter we had our Messy Easter with the Sports Factory and again pulled in record numbers at our Light Night event. At Christmas it was wonderful to have good number of our community join us for Merry Messy Christmas, Community Carols and the Crib Service as we continue strengthening those community relationships. All these events wouldn't be possible without a willing team of volunteers.

Leadership

I would like to particularly express my ongoing gratitude to the Leadership team. Shauna Peacock who continues as Church Secretary, Maggie Baldwin who has now stepped down as Parish Safeguarding Officer and Kirsty Houghton as Children and Families lead. Tim

Peacock continue to head up managing our hall bookings and care of building. Howard and Morag Truscott have joined the leadership team with many valuable skills and gifts to offer. I am grateful for both Neil Glen who has after ten years stepped down as our treasurer and Howard for his taking on this important role. And David Ramanos as faithfully continues as our gift aid secretary.

Heating grants and boiler system fundraising

I'm extremely grateful to Tim Peacock's continued work on our new heating system and especially all the tireless work he has done applying for grants. Much ongoing prayer is needed with raising money for the future proposed project with solar panels and heat pump.

Worship

I am grateful to our band and the sung worship music they lead us in each Sunday under Tim Peacock and those who operate the sound desk. I am also hugely appreciative of our AWAs, Shauna Peacock and Kirsty Houghton who support me in leading our worship and to all those who regularly serve to lead intercessions, bible readings, welcoming, refreshments, sound desk etc...

Ecumenical Partnership

As a local ecumenical partnership between the Church of England and United Reformed church we are now engaging with the URC's Mission Partnership plan along with several URC churches across the area. Please do continue praying for this process to appoint a new URC minister across the area following the church's recent vote to join in with this.

Pastoral care

I am grateful for the love and care for others in our congregation and for many who show care of others especially in difficult times. It was sad to say goodbye to several of our church members over the last year. They gave much to the life of our church and community.

Homegroups

Small groups provide an important place for building fellowship, support and prayer as well as enabling spiritual growth. Kirsty leads the Refresh ladies fellowship which continues to flourish. The afternoon homegroup recently moved to the vicarage and has welcomed new members. We have been reflecting on the Sunday sermon series.

Schools

The Thetford team are engaged in several schools in Thetford. I continue to be a governor for Norwich Road school and regularly take assemblies and we are looking forward to hosting an Easter Experience for Norwich road and Bishops schools. Susie Bratby continues to engage with several schools including Bishops and Drake.

Youth work

There are several church young people who attend the fortnightly team Amplify group on Thursday evenings. Please do be praying for leadership going forward with current changes. Johnny, the new YFC worker, serves young people on our behalf with the Pulse youth café on Tuesdays as well as school assemblies and lunchtime clubs at Thetford Academy. Further funding continues to be required to ensure Johnny's ministry can continue.

Good grief café

Mal Turner of Turners funeral directors heads up this fortnightly group, alongside myself in our church. Offering a place of support and solace for those facing grief and loss. It is a privileged opportunity to meet with people in their grief as we share our shared experiences of loss together. If you would like to join with Mal and I in this important ministry and build relationships with folk and the church please let me know.

Matt Houghton

Team Vicar and Vicar of Cloverfield Community Church

Grace Church

It is a great privilege and joy to be part of the church family at Grace Church! As I look back on this last year there is much to give thanks for; seeing many growing in their love for the Lord and for one another, seeing others just keeping going and persevering in the face of suffering, set backs and trials and yet others coming along to church and exploring the Christian faith. In particular it has been a great encouragement to have a dozen or so new folk join us at the end of the year, five of whom were not previously attending church. This has meant that the children's group has doubled in size from an average of five to an average of ten. This is exciting but also comes with its challenges, not least for having enough leaders.

I love looking around after a service and seeing church in action and very much continuing after the formal end to the 'service'. I see people serving in all sorts of ways; clearing away the chairs, serving food that they or others may have made or prepared earlier. Praise God for new people stepping up to help with the 'hospitality' rota. I see others praying together; sharing one another's joys and burdens. I see people enjoying getting to know fellow members of their church family, sharing their lives and enjoying conversation and humour over food. I see people looking out for others and making an effort to get alongside folk, introducing new folk to others. It's also lovely to see and hear the growing number of young people having fun playing together in the main hall - adults like to sit and chat but on the whole children like to be active and play!

Some more specific encouragements this last year have been hearing of God's saving and transforming power in the lives of Eccles, Steve and Daniel at some of our Testimony Services. It's always such a boost to hear of how God has been at work and to be reminded that the gospel is His power to save! We have also enjoyed preaching series in the Servant Songs of Isaiah, Revelation 1-3, Paul's letter to the Philippians and Daniel. We often preview or review the Sunday passage in our Wednesday evening home group. Our all age carol service was big for us and we had the happy problem of running out of seats! The drama saw Josh acting out our need for a Saviour by pretending to be in a perilous state far out to sea. Jono embraced playing the life-saver role! We hope and pray that, all there, saw their need for Jesus. Regularly at our all age services over the last year we have put on Open the Book dramas of the passage, followed by a question and discussion time which has worked well.

As well as gaining several new people we have lost a few too which is always painful. Another challenge has been to start paying for the use of the Arts' Centre each Sunday since September. We're happy to do this but we also want, by God's grace, to increase our contributions to parish share.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with any questions or just fire away at APCM and I'll do my best to respond!

Tony Heywood
Team Vicar and Vicar of Grace Church

Youth Ministry

The Amplify Youth group has had a steady year with a small but committed group of around 5 young people. We meet twice monthly in term time on Thursday nights, where we eat together, study the bible and play games. We particularly enjoyed making our own pizzas one week.

Between Easter and Summer 2025 we looked at 'Two Ways to Live': a resource that covers God's work from creation to resurrection and the decisions we need to make in response. In the Autumn and Spring terms we have been doing a youth confirmation course with young people offered the opportunity to choose to be confirmed.

Young people have also engaged in wider youth activities such as Hub Youth run by Liberty Church, the More2Life lunch group at Thetford Academy, Encounter worship event in Diss and the Encounter Summer Camp at Sizewell Hall run by Integrate Youth for Christ.

During the year Catherine Richardson, who oversaw the group, left to take up a role as a Children, Youth & Family worker at Garland Street Baptist Church in Bury St Edmunds. Peter stepped in to oversee the group, supported by Jonathan. The team has benefited from the support of Susie, Josh, Karen T, Helen H, Caroline and Sarah K. Having so many people connecting with the young people is really positive and helps young people feel included at other times so we pray this continues.

Jonathan Richardson
Curate

Sports & Fitness Ministry

Colossians 3:17: "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

We have lots to be thankful for! It has been a significant season of development for our Sports and Fitness Ministry, with promising signs of stability and growth. Both Josh and I have now been employed on three-year contracts, giving us the security and capacity to plan, invest, and build lasting relationships. We are grateful for the trust placed in us by the Thetford Team Ministry and many generous donors, as well as the ongoing support of every volunteer, leader and prayer partner who makes this ministry possible.

Across our sports, fitness and community activities, we continue to engage with around 200 people each week, from primary-aged children through to older adults. Our timetable has included adult social football, stretch and pray, fitness classes, and a wide range of school-based sessions across four schools after school clubs, lunch clubs, PE lessons, Active RE and assemblies. Alongside this, we have hosted a big screen event, sports, football and family quizzes and community gatherings that bring people of all demographics together.

The adult football sessions are thriving, with new friendships forming and some people stepping into the wider life of the church. Josh's fitness classes have also grown as he has discerned which sessions best bridge the gap between church and community. Each class ends with a five-minute Bible-based reflection while stretching, and we pray the Lord nurtures the Gospel seeds that are sown in this time.

Through these different sessions, we are seeing people take brave steps of curiosity and faith. This has been seen in the number of individuals from fitness and football groups who have attended enquirers courses and/or coming along to church services. We praise God that he can (and does!) use sports and fitness to open doors into exploring the wonderful way, truth and life of Jesus.

Seasonal events such as the Legacy holiday clubs at Christmas, Easter and the Summer and the Summer of Sports programme have continued to widen our reach,

deepen relationships and provide more opportunities for us to share the Good News.

As we look ahead to 2026, we pray for ongoing obedience to Christ, fruitfulness in ministry, and boldness to proclaim the Good News in love. As Psalm 90:17 reads: *"May the favour of the Lord our God rest on us; establish the work of our hands."* May God continue to use sport, fitness and community events to draw people to Himself.

Susie Bratby
Sports & Fitness Minister

Local & Global Mission

Evangelistic Courses - we aim to run these regularly throughout the year so that there's always a course we can point people towards who show any spiritual interest. In May / June Josh and Tony led the 3-2-1 Course at 11 Winchester Way. Six attended, of whom three then attended the Christianity Explored course we ran in October / November with four others attending for at least a couple of the sessions.

Evangelistic Events - we had two men's breakfasts with Rev Ian Dyble speaking in March on 'Justice for All' and Simon Clegg speaking in June on 'The Great Commission'. Other outreach events included a 'Grill A Christian' in April, and a Football Quiz in November with a half-time gospel talk.

Schools Outreach - between us we take regular school assemblies at Bishop's, Norwich Road, Barnham with other, less regular opportunities, at Elveden, Drake and Thetford Grammar School. For approximately half of the weekly assemblies at Bishop's School we do Open The Book Bible dramas, which the children love. On top of assemblies Susie has taken Active RE at Elveden and Bishop's. Tony is also invited to visit RE classes at Bishop's to speak and take questions on such topics as: "What does salvation mean to you?" and "How do Christians bring hope at Christmas?" We also continue to partner with Integrate Youth For Christ with the Thetford Youth Project and help out at Pulse Youth Cafe (Tuesday afternoons at The HUB) and the More To Life course (Tuesday lunch times at The Thetford Academy).

Simon and Gillian Clegg - mission partners in Cape Town, South Africa. In April St Barnabas Church moved into a wonderful new facility in a more strategic and safer location. The move has given them the opportunity to pause and review their mission and the values they seek to uphold in their new building. That mission is now beautifully inscribed on the walls inside the entrance. "Through Bible teaching and Bible living, we are seeking to embody a Kingdom, where the love of Jesus reigns, dignity is restored, the weary are embraced and grace overflows." As a result of the move, they have welcomed a steady stream of locals into regular fellowship while continuing the training and support of a number of men preparing for pastoral ministry across Africa. For example, at the end of last year Seme Ludanga completed his Masters in Church leadership. He has now returned to South Sudan where he and another SBC student have started a ministry providing essential training for gospel workers there. They plan to train 90 men and women this year and 180 in 2027.

S&A - mission partners in South Asia. They started 2025 with a 3 month furlough and enjoyed reconnecting with us and other supporting churches and catching up with family. Since returning in April they have been busy making plans for the community hall / maternity centre through which they hope to reach out to nominal Christians and those from the majority faith. They are constructing the clinic first and then the residential block. They have employed workers, laid foundations and have built thousands of blocks of concrete. S has

been sharing the gospel with the workers and all those who visit the site. They are fundraising as they go. They would value prayer for all the above; for A as she continues to learn the language and as they settle into the village. As I write they have been there 18 months and have moved house three times already.

Graham and Nicola Aylett - mission partners. Graham continues in his role as General Secretary of the Increase Association, whose purpose is to connect and strengthen church-based training movements across Asia and beyond. Graham was travelling most months of the year with the following highlights: March - the International Council for Evangelical Theological Education Board meetings and conference in Albania. July - Increase Equippers and the Increase Board members meeting for training and planning in Malaysia. August - speaking at the Asia Theological Association's Triennial Conference in Taiwan. The quarterly meetings of the Global Pastoral Alliance continued to be encouraging and challenging. Nicola's role in organising and facilitating sessions of the Journey Deeper programme has been much appreciated by participants. Both Nicola and Graham continue to be so grateful to God for the opportunities that He's giving them to see more of what He's doing across Asia.

Tony Heywood
Team Vicar and Vicar of Grace Church

Café Cuthbert

- We now employ a manager 22 hours a week as the workload has increased owing to the number of customers we have on a Saturday.
- We no longer take orders at the table; customers must order and pay at the till. This helped with staffing problems.
- We decided to open on a Friday especially for mothers with young children, running with a 'light bites' menu. This has become popular, and takings are going up.
- To save waste we introduce sachet for sauces, salt, and pepper, and packets for butter, cream, jam, and marmalade.
- We have added toast to the menu, giving options for cheese, egg, and marmalade on toast. This has been extremely popular.
- We are always looking for volunteers, to enable some of the regular volunteers' time off.
- The coffee machine was serviced; we had issues with the Rational and called an engineer to correct the problem. We also called an engineer out to fix a problem with the dishwasher.

Sandra Phillips & Karen Tobitt
Church Wardens

Summary of Business Conducted by the PCC

I've attended the majority of the PCC Meetings and Standing Committee only missing due to my knee operations during 2025. I would firstly, like to thank Caroline Herbert for writing the minutes when I was unable to attend the PCC meetings.

Whilst attending PCC and Standing Committee meetings I've always tried to produce the draft minutes for Peter to review as soon as the meetings have concluded, so decisions and projects can be progressed as quickly as possible as I see this as important for the Ministry of all who sit on the committee.

The PCC, as a decision-making body in Thetford Team Ministry, is always trying to look for ways to improve the facilities for all people in the town and who use the church and I will continue to assist with this work in any way I can.

Gary Applin, Thetford PCC Secretary

Safeguarding

The PCC has complied with its duty under Section 5 of the Safeguarding and Clergy Discipline Measure 2016 to have regard to the House of Bishops' guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. All DBS checks have been renewed or applied for and the necessary Safeguarding training has been undertaken for the various roles within our Team churches.

I took over as PSO for Thetford Team Ministry on January 1st 2026, taking over from Maggie Baldwin after her many years of tireless work. Safeguarding remains a particular area of interest, and rightly so, within the Church of England as published within the media in the country. Within my day to day work I regularly refer to safeguarding colleagues within the ambulance service so have a good grounding to be able to take on the PSO role. Thanks to Maggie and Peter I have been shown the necessary areas I need to focus on, and I've started the courses I need to undertake to help me further grow into the role. Karen Tobitt has kindly volunteered to undertake the administrative element of the role and will be responsible for chasing our volunteers when their safeguarding training and DBS checks are due for renewal.

I have up to this point attended two dioceses Safeguarding Network meetings, this has enabled me to learn of the issues around Norfolk PSO colleagues are experiencing and I find these get togethers very useful and beneficial.

The Diocese is due to be audited within this current 12-month period looking at our Safeguarding processes in every detail looking at 5 areas, culture, prevention, recognising, assessing and managing risk, victims and survivors and learning supervision and support. Volunteers will be requested to assist with the audit process and the audit team will look at our strengths and identifying where practice can be improved in respect of the 5 standards already detailed.

What we need to do as a Team Ministry is to make sure our PSO(s) have access to the Parish dashboards which both myself and Karen do, all our training and that of our volunteers is up to date, we need to be able to safely recruit our volunteers and keep all our safeguarding records as up to date as we possibly can and keep all our records as securely as possibly.

Gary Applin
Parish Safeguarding Officer

Deanery Synod

The Thetford and Rockland Deanery Synod met four times during 2025. The first meeting was on Wednesday 29th January 2025 at St Remigius Church, Hethersett where Michael Newey, Chief Executive of Broadland Housing, and Jo Stevenson, Regional Development Officer for the East of England, Trussell Trust, spoke on the Cost of Living Crisis. At this meeting it was noted that Revd Matthew Jackson (Rural Dean) and Revd Lynn Chapman were to be installed as Honorary Canons of Norwich Cathedral on 9th February. It was also noted that Revd Tony Heywood had agreed to take on the role of Missionary Disciples Advocate for the deanery.

On Thursday 1st May Bishop Graham had been on a pilgrimage around the deanery with Bishop Åsa Nyström and young visitors from Luleå, Sweden (a link diocese of the Diocese of Norwich). They joined the Deanery Synod for Evening Prayer and a Q & A with Bishop

Graham. During the service special prayers were said for the late Revd Canon Lynn Chapman, former Rector of Hethersett with Canteloff with Little Melton and Great Melton, who had died in April.

Revd Canon Richard Lamey, Director of Mission and Ministry for the Diocese, came to the Deanery Synod on Thursday 17th July 2025 to talk about the emerging strategy to deliver the Diocesan vision “Transformed by Christ: Prayerful, Pastoral, Prophetic”. The key elements of the strategy are:

- Missional vision and culture
- Hope-filled clergy and lay leaders
- Communities of disciples
- Partners in mission and service across every part of the diocese

Richard answered questions from Deanery Synod members and asked for input (via a survey form) about the key challenges churches were facing. The aim is to develop a strategy which will respond to the challenges identified across the Diocese.

The final meeting of the year was held at Wymondham Abbey on Wednesday 22nd October 2025. Andy Jones and Vicki Yellop spoke about Raise Kids Work, a charity based in Wymondham focusing on advancing the Christian faith among children aged 5-11. It aims to provide a positive Christian influence in schools and churches through various programmes, including Christian-themed assemblies, mentoring and training for volunteers.

Caroline Herbert
Deanery Synod Rep

Fabric

- A smart meter has been installed for the church’s electricity supply; we are unable to have one at the moment for the gas as the WiFi isn’t available in the cellar.
- The roof has been painted with smart water to comply with our church insurance.
- The roof alarm is still waiting to be updated.
- We are still waiting for a quote for the tower to be cleaned from the pigeon mess.
- We are also waiting for a date from our gas suppliers for a service and a gas safe certificate.
- The gutters have been cleaned twice this year.
- A tree root is growing through one of the drains at the back of the church. Highways department have been out and looked at it, but it hasn’t been repaired yet despite constant phone calls.

Sandra Phillips & Karen Tobitt
Church Wardens

Financial Report

This report summarises key points and other items of note from the PCC’s financial activities in 2025. Further details can be found in the full financial statements which are made available along with this Annual Report.

The financial situation of our churches continues to be a mixed picture. Total income in 2025 (£171,528) saw a substantial increase on the previous year, due primarily to the significant level of restricted donations and grants received towards the next three years of the Sports and Fitness Ministry. We thank God for providing over £220,000 of grants and donations

(either already given or firmly pledged) for the continued full-time employment of both Susie as Sports and Community Minister and Josh as Fitness and Sports Minister until the end of September 2028. This is on top of the funds generated by the ministries themselves.

Unrestricted income to the General Fund (£35,536) fell slightly compared to the previous year, whereas income to the Grace Church Fund (£16,588) saw a significant increase. (See the section below for a description of the purpose of each Fund.) These funds resource the regular work, worshipping life, mission and ministry of St Cuthbert's and Grace Churches – and the majority of this income arises from the generous giving of the congregations, for which a huge thank you.

Overall expenditure in 2025 (£114,817) was very similar to the previous year. Within that, net expenditure from the General Fund saw a notable decrease (particularly due to reduced expenditure on immediate repairs and maintenance at St Cuthbert's). Expenditure from the Grace Church Fund was similar to 2024. The PCC continues to strive to prayerfully and carefully steward the resources entrusted to it.

The PCC has a policy of giving a sum equal to 10% of the previous year's donations made into the General Fund as St Cuthbert's outward mission giving tithe. In 2025, this outward mission giving comprised:

- £875 to our mission partners in South Asia.
- £875 to our mission partners, Graham and Nicola Aylett.
- £520 to our mission partners, Simon and Gillian Clegg (including an extra donation made towards their work at the 'Tea & Cake with the Cleggs' event).

(Further details of our mission partners and their work can be found in the 'Local & Global Mission' section of this Annual Report.) The PCC also makes an annual contribution of £50 towards the work of the Thetford Youth Project, which is included in the 'Other Charity Societies' expenditure from the General Fund. The remaining £836 of expenditure for 'Other Charity Societies' in the General Fund in 2025 is in respect of donations received for particular causes at special services – most notably collections made at the 'Together at Christmas' Carol Service and Mayor's Carol Service in 2024, paid across to the applicable charities in early 2025.

Grace Church made no outward mission giving contributions in 2025.

Across the parish, our two greatest financial challenges at present are:

- 1) Raising £100,000+ for the vital repairs to the south aisle east wall and other associated works. The Fabric Fund stood at £13,731 at the end of 2025, with a further £10,000 of a grant towards the project due to be paid over during 2026.
- 2) Paying a sustainable level of Parish Share. Our Parish Share payments to the Diocese are our contribution towards the costs of providing our three stipendiary clergy, as well as a small contribution to shared Diocesan resources from which we benefit, such as safeguarding, clergy training and the Children, Youth and Families team. A short, animated video, explaining more about where Parish Share comes from and where it goes, can be watched on the Diocesan website (https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/parish-support/finance_support/parish_support-finance_stewardship_grants-parish_share/). In 2025, St Cuthbert's contributed £8,550 in Parish Share (compared to a request of £25,230). Grace Church contributed £8,500 in Parish Share (compared to a request of £12,009). This level of underpayment continues to cause concern within the Diocese.

On a different note, the regular reader of these annual reports may recall that the balance shown for the Development Fund is not as straightforward as it seems. The negative balance of £54,886 on 31/12/2025 is comprised thus:

- a) A negative cash balance of £31,629.
- b) Kitchen equipment capitalised as a fixed asset with value £7,271.¹
- c) A contingent liability of £30,527 relating to EU grant funding towards the first stage of the redevelopment project. Until the terms of the grant are fulfilled, the grant could become repayable – and hence it is deducted from the fund balance as a contingent liability. The balance of this Fund (and the monies available to the PCC) would therefore increase by £30,527 should this liability be released.

Whilst the balances of the General and Reserve Funds continue to look comparatively healthy, we must remember that these Funds are the primary sources of cover for the negative Fund balances. Accounting for this, along with the capitalised kitchen equipment that cannot be spent as if it were cash, the combined General and Reserve Funds balance is effectively £15,105.

This will, I trust, be the final annual financial report written by me, since I am delighted that Neil Glen took over as PCC Treasurer in early 2026. Allow me to express my sincere thanks to everyone who assists with the PCC's financial management: the cash counting team, those who initiate and authorise payments and Kieran Kenny, our ever-helpful and diligent bookkeeper from Emerald Accountants. And for every financial contribution made to the life of our churches – huge thanks, once again. We praise God for his faithful provision as we continue to look to him to supply all our needs.

Description of Funds

Restricted Funds	
<i>Restricted Funds hold donations or grants that have been given for a specific purpose or project, and can legally only be used towards that purpose or project.</i>	
Organ Fund	Repair, maintenance and improvement of the pipe organ at St Cuthbert's.
Choir Fund	Purchase of music, subscriptions and affiliation fees for worship at St Cuthbert's and for the purchase/maintenance of choir robes for St Cuthbert's choir.
Development Fund	The first (2019-2020) phase of the redevelopment project at St Cuthbert's. See above for the capitalised equipment and contingent liability within this fund.
Sports & Community Minister Fund	Grants and donations towards the employment costs of the Sports & Community Minister (salary, pension, tax, payroll, equipment, training and personal expenses).
Redevelopment Phase 2 Fund	Grants and donations towards the future second phase of the redevelopment project at St Cuthbert's.
Timothy Fund	Missional and discipleship resources and projects in line with the wishes of the donor (originating with the

¹ The original purchase cost of the kitchen equipment in 2019 was £27,752. It is depreciated at a rate of 20% per year.

	bursary fund for the 2023 Team Churches Weekend Away).
Fabric Fund	Grants and donations for the repair and maintenance of the fabric at St Cuthbert's.
Restricted Sports Ministry Fund	Grants and donations towards the employment costs of the Sports & Community Minister <i>and/or</i> the Fitness & Sports Minister (salaries, pensions, tax, payroll, equipment, training and personal expenses).

Unrestricted/Designated Funds	
<i>Designated funds hold monies that have been set aside for a particular purpose but which are not legally restricted – and thus the PCC could choose to use for other purposes.</i>	
General Fund	The operational fund for income/expenditure in the general life of St Cuthbert's.
Reserve Fund	Reserves held in case of urgently needed expenditure (e.g. fabric repairs) or a sudden drop/delay in income. See above for the Reserve and General Funds covering the negative balance of other funds.
Sweden Fund	For activities surrounding the link with our twinned parish of Holmsund in Sweden.
Grace Fund	The operational fund for income/expenditure in the general life of Grace Church.
Sports Ministry Fund	The operational fund for income/expenditure in the general life of the Sports Ministry. Profits from the Sports Ministry which accumulate in this fund are transferred annually to contribute to the staffing costs of the sports ministers.
Projects Fund	Funds intended for major projects at St Cuthbert's, such as improvements to the fabric.
Clergy Discretionary Fund	Monies contributed by St Cuthbert's and Grace Churches for the confidential use of the clergy in alleviating urgent and severe economic hardship in the lives of members and friends of St Cuthbert's and Grace Church.
Catering Equipment Fund	For the purchase, maintenance, repair and replacement of equipment in the kitchen at St Cuthbert's. Income to this fund will usually come from the annual dividend paid by the Café Cuthbert company.

Endowment Funds	
<i>Endowment funds generate investment income which is paid to the PCC, leaving the capital untouched.</i>	
Chapel Acre Share Fund	Both funds are held with CCLA by the Diocese of Norwich as custodian trustee on behalf of the PCC. Investment income is paid into the Reserve Fund.
Watts Legacy Share Fund	

Transfers Between Funds

The following tables give the breakdown of the inter-fund transfers made during 2025 into/out of the General Fund, Grace Fund and Sports Ministry Fund. Note that contributions from Cloverfield Church are shown as external income on the relevant line and fund.

Internal Transfers into the General Fund	In
Grace Church contribution to clergy expenses	£1,400.00
Grace Church contribution to bookkeeping costs	£500.00
Grace Church contribution to ChurchSuite costs	£151.26
Sports Ministry contribution to ChurchSuite costs	£151.26
Grace Church contribution to Youth & Families Ministry	£71.11
Grace Church contribution towards priesting gift	£27.99
Total in:	£2,301.62
Internal Transfers out of the General Fund	Out
St Cuthbert's contribution to sports staffing	£1,500.00
St Cuthbert's contribution to the Sweden (twinning) fund	£50.00
Transfer to zeroise and close Flower Fund	£25.55
Transfer of half of 2025 Café Cuthbert dividend to Projects Fund	£750.00
Total out:	£2,325.55
Net transfer out of the General Fund:	£23.93

Internal Transfers out of the Grace Fund	Out
Grace Church contribution to clergy expenses	£1,400.00
Grace Church contribution to bookkeeping costs	£500.00
Grace Church contribution to ChurchSuite costs	£151.26
Grace Church contribution to sports staffing	£1,500.00
Grace Church contribution to Youth & Families Ministry	£71.11
Grace Church contribution towards curate's priesting gift	£27.99
Total transfers out of the Grace Fund:	£3,650.36

Internal Transfers out of the Sports Ministry Fund	Out
Sports Ministry contribution to ChurchSuite costs	£151.26
To Restricted Sports Ministry Fund for staff costs	£9,640.16
Total transfers out of the Sports Ministry Fund:	£9,791.42

Peter Herbert
Team Rector