

**ALDEBURGH PARISH CHURCH
ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL**

**RECTOR
THE REVD SARAH DU BOULAY**

CHURCH GROUP REPORTS

1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025

DEANERY SYNOD 2025

The Deanery Synod met on 25th February at Darsham Village Hall

Rev Richard Finch announced dates for Deanery events during the coming year, Ascension Day Service on 29th May at Aldeburgh, the Archdeacon's Visitation Service at Aldringham on 16th June and the next Deanery Synod on 18th June at Saxmundham. He informed the meeting Bishop Martin had retired and Bishop Graham Knowles is the interim Bishop for the diocese.

All Deaneries surrounding us are now 'settled' meaning there will be no structural changes to Benefice/Deanery groupings.

Rev Rich will be on Extended Study Leave from 12th May – 3rd August 2025. He mentioned the previous Synod was facilitated by Ann Keitch who had greatly encouraged us.

Elaine Hawes and Jill Pascoe, Great Glemham, gave an enthusiastic and lively presentation headed 'Being Creative in our Churches – Involving our Local Communities and Beyond'.

Ideas were: Involving Others in Nativity Plays for example, Creating Together – wreath making in the Church, praying in the ruins at Dunwich, Leiston or Sibton, sharing a meal outside, events such as Alde Valley Classics, Sharing Skills such as baking, knitting, flower arranging. Displays of Altar Frontals, Wall Banners and Quilts, also concerts.

On 14th October the meeting was held in Aldeburgh Church.

Rev Richard Finch welcomed those present and introduced the guest speaker, Katie de Bourcier, Diocesan Mission Enabler. He gave a brief reminder of the length and breadth of the Deanery, ie Yoxmere in the North, Alde River in the south and Saxmundham east towards the sea. He spoke of his vision for the future of the Deanery and how can we be a stronger church community with what we have.

Rev Richard then invited Katie to continue developing this theme; Katie led a discussion into the following questions: 'Where is God leading us? Looking around and looking ahead – what are we doing as a Deanery? How is it going? What are the challenges that we still face?'

Discussions followed in small groups with ideas fed back to the full meeting. Thoughts included: Praying in the Ruins: a Lent Group based upon current topical issues with different speakers, based in Darsham, shared and advertised across the Deanery: a Pentecost Service with the 'Rocking Revs' Band at Great Glemham: a shared ALPHA course based in Aldeburgh.

Aspects of our Deanery felt to be good included the 'energy, positivity, friendliness and diversity of people, gender and places.

Information arising from the above discussions was gathered onto flip charts under the headings: 'Where is God leading us? Looking around and looking ahead – what are we doing as a Deanery? How is it going? What are the challenges we still face': 'What three words. Our words to describe our Deanery in five years' time': 'Activities'.

The Clergy Chapter meet regularly and use a WhatsApp Group to help them by sharing ideas and supportive reflections. Effective communications is proving to be a challenge, all messages are through the Rural Dean and there is currently nobody co-ordinating Deanery activities and sharing information around our Benefices.

Comment was made regarding the intense hurt and pain to local people (particularly the elderly) from the effect of the massive infrastructure projects connected to Sizewell C and Scottish Power. The previous known experience of living in this Deanery is being severely undermined and, in many churches, people are feeling overwhelmed. However, a 'bright spot' is that increasing number of parishes are beginning to look outward and see that more could be achieved through sharing across our boundaries.

Richard and Katie concluded the meeting. Next year we can try to take on 1 or 2 more small steps which should emerge as Richard and his Clergy colleagues discuss the outcomes of the evening. Working together is the best way forward. Katie added that we should experiment and if it works

– great! If not reflect upon what we have learnt. She suggested that we were steadily moving towards a Deanery Plan which would add value to our Christian Journey of Mission.

Rev Richard closed with a Blessing and urged people to pray together across the Deanery. Rev Richard has advised that he will be retiring during the summer (final date to be advised) and therefore will be resigning his posts as Rector of Leiston and Sizewell and as Rural Dean of the Saxmundham Deanery.

The dates of the Deanery Synod meetings for 2026 will be

Wednesday 25th February at Leiston Community Centre, King George’s Avenue, Leiston

Tuesday, 16th June, venue to be decided

Wednesday, 14th October, venue to be decided

Meetings will open from 7 pm for tea/coffee, business starting 7.30 pm.

2026 is the year for Deanery Synod Representative elections, held at Parish Annual Meetings.

Carrie Spence

Deanery Synod Representative

LAY ELDERS 2025

There are currently 8 Commissioned Lay Elders: Jill Brown, David Gordon, Susan Henderson, Ros Macallister, Catherine Palmer, Marie Szpak, Fran Smith and Julian Worster. All Elders must now complete Safeguarding training and received four certificates as a prerequisite for recommissioning.

The work of the Lay Elders includes:

- Visiting parishioners
- Praying with and for Parishioners and encouraging them in Christian discipleship
- Updating the prayer lists for use in Morning and Evening prayer
- Leading Morning and Evening Prayer and other forms of Service of the Word
- Reading the Bible in worship
- Assisting in the administration of the sacrament at the Eucharist
- Administering the sacrament to people in their homes or in hospital

Elders extend their personal, community outreach in numerous ways. Here are some examples:

- The Youth Club
- Fund raising
- Welcoming people at services
- Performing Sidesmen’s duties
- Supporting those in need of contact and reassurance
- Assisting with Church activity mornings and “Messy Church”
- Working with Ali Cherry, Parish Nurse, to help those who are unwell, lonely and housebound
- Assisting with the annual “Holiday at Home” organised by Ali Cherry
- Volunteering to enable Aldeburgh Good Neighbours “AGNES” to provide assistance to Aldeburgh residents including transport, shopping, collecting prescriptions and signposting to services and help.
- Alpha Course
- Monthly Elders’ meetings with the Rector and Curate
- Personal development training sessions and “quiet days”
- Friday Markets in August

Susan Henderson. Lay Elder

MESSY CHURCH 2025

CHRIST CENTRED; HOSPITALITY; ALL-AGE; CELEBRATION; CREATIVITY

We had another wonderful year with our Messy Church sessions, at Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

At Easter, the Easter Egg hunt in the church, was especially popular with happy, excited children racing around the church searching for the eggs that were hidden earlier by volunteers. The activities were all based around the theme of Easter and the children were very responsive and were able to tell us the real meaning of Easter – not just about chocolate or the Easter Bunny! Some of the children are very knowledgeable, thanks in part to the regular assemblies that Sarah and Mary take at the local Primary School. We sang songs and listened to the Easter story. Rev. Mary talked to the children at the end of the session and listened to their experiences of the morning. A foil covered chocolate Easter Egg, along with the Easter story was given to each child. For the harvest Messy Church we welcomed our friends, the “Reach Out Puppets” with Rev. Ian Daniels and his team from Ipswich. They sang songs and told stories, based on the harvest theme, ably assisted by their puppet friends who take on a character of their own, and each with their own personalities! The children and adults absolutely love them! The activities were all based on the harvest and God’s goodness to us all, thanking God for His many blessings. We sang songs like “Cauliflowers fluffy” which the primary school children have at their harvest festival, held in the church each year.

At Christmas Messy Church we celebrated the birth of Jesus, helped by our friends from Benhall and Snape with their “Open the book” team. They are a brilliant addition to our sessions and acted out the story with children taking the parts of Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the three Kings. There are always lots of volunteers for this! We were able to give out details of the upcoming Christmas services in the church. All the children received a foil covered chocolate angel with the story of Christmas in their going home bags.

At each of the sessions, refreshments are served by Jules and Andy. We have a prayer tree for everybody to write their own prayers, which is then taken into the children’s corner of the church. We have created a space for babies and toddlers to play, safely. Dru and Karen have started a new activity, making individual flower arrangements which the children really enjoy doing and taking home. There is always a food-based activity with Sandra and helper and a “going home” bag for the children to take all the things they have made.

Thank you to all the wonderful, creative, volunteers who help to make these sessions such a joy to be part of and Rev. Sarah and Rev. Mary for their support. Thanks to Jill, especially, for recruiting the children and families beforehand. We all enjoy it as much as the children. It is a real joy to welcome families to our church and church hall and to share the amazing stories of God and Jesus from the Bible with them, in a wonderful, loving atmosphere.

Fran Smith

ALDEBURGH YOUTH CLUB 2025

Aldeburgh Youth Club meets on a Monday evening at the Fairfield Centre and is for young people in school years 6-8. The club is staffed by David Buggs who the PCC employs, alongside a team of volunteers including Rev’d Mary and Rev’d Sarah.

The young people play board games, pool, air hockey, table football, table tennis, make crafts, chat, use the Wii, and enjoy snacks of toast and chocolate spread. In the warmer months and longer daylight hours the young people play football and swing ball in the garden. We endeavour to take the young people on one trip each term: last summer we took them to the RNLI station for

a tour, activities and chips; just before Christmas we took them tobogganing at the Ipswich Dry Ski Slope. Both trips were remarkably successful and enjoyed by all. Our numbers usually fluctuate through the year with more young people in the spring and summer terms and fewer over the winter, this has been the pattern this year. We have seen a slight decline in numbers since September and the beginning of the new academic year as we have had fewer children joining us from year 6, but we are hopeful that these numbers will increase as the evenings get lighter.

We have welcomed some new volunteers this year and have a strengthening team. However, we do still need more volunteers, please consider if you could offer even one Monday evening of your time per term. We are incredibly grateful to every volunteer that helps make running Youth Club possible and extend our heartfelt thanks.

Rev'd Mary Brown
Assistant Curate, Alde Sandlings Benefice

CHURCH FABRIC REPORT 2025

Our parish church has now been without a Churchwarden for three years. Without an elected churchwarden, the PCC has assumed the responsibility of the churchwardens' various duties. In the absence of elected Churchwardens, the PCC also assumes responsibility for the terrier of lands and buildings, the logbook of all alterations, additions, and repairs, and a full inventory of all articles appertaining to the church. The PCC is also responsible for ensuring that these are updated. The terrier and logbook are accurate, but the inventory continues to require updating.

The church building is structurally sound.

The PCC are working with the Diocesan Advisory Council to agree the material for replacement of the roof covering of the north and south isles.

Work is required to repair some exterior flint work and window masonry, but this work will not likely be done within this financial year.

The West wall of the Choir Vestry continues to show signs of dampness, and the plaster affected needs replacing. There are indications of insect damage to wooden beams and floors in the church tower, and a programme of debris removal and cleaning will be necessary before a full inspection can be made.

The PCC has continued to maintain the organ as minor breakdowns occur, but the organ does require substantial work in the future which will need major fundraising for this significant expense.

The wooden doors to the church office need sanding and repainting to prolong the life of the doors. The brickwork of the south entrance archway arch way requires repointing, and some bricks will need to be replaced.

East Suffolk Council is responsible for maintaining the Closed Churchyard, including any churchyard walls, fences, and gates. The council has agreed to cut the grass in the closed churchyard four times per year, but over the past few years they have failed to meet the agreed maintenance and have failed to keep the brambles growing in the churchyard in check. The

council has regularly cut the grass immediately around the church and church hall. The council is aware that the east churchyard wall is failing and is monitoring the situation.

The church carpark remains in good condition, and for the past three years, the PCC has employed a local person to clear the leaves from the carpark periodically and to keep the surface water drains clear. The car park notice board needs to be entirely replaced.

The Legacy Committee continues to make recommendations to the PCC on the wise use of a proportion of legacy funds. Church Hall renovations and repairs to include roof insulation, new toilets and new entrance doors will commence in early 2026. Progress has been made with the planning for the installation of a new church audio system and improved interior and exterior lighting.

The quinquennial inspection of the church buildings and grounds is now due and is awaiting the attention of the church architect.

Kenneth Smith

BELLRINGERS 2025

The ringers enjoyed their ringing in 2025. The bells were rung every Sunday morning, when there was a service, (although not always all eight bells), except for three weeks in the Autumn when the pulleys were being refurbished. We also rang for a number of other services and special occasions. These included several weddings, the Christingle service and some Christmas services

Eight peals and one quarter peal were successfully completed during the year. The quarter peal was rung as part of the town's 80th anniversary celebrations for VE Day and for Peace.

We continue to hold our regular Monday practice nights.

We have been very pleased to welcome a number of visiting ringers who have joined us both on a Sunday morning and Monday evening over the course of the year.

Very grateful thanks are due to the P.C.C. for paying for the refurbishment of the wooden pulleys that the ropes run over. They had become quite grooved and worn over the last sixty-five years since they were installed. We are very pleased with the noticeable improvement since this work was completed.

Teaching new recruits continues. Some of these are at varying stages of learning to ring and this has necessitated some extra bell handling lessons during the week when a single bell may have been heard ringing.

Aldeburgh was pleased to host the Suffolk Guild of Ringers eight bell striking competition in May with ringers from across the diocese attending and our local Northeast District team was particularly delighted to win this competition with a team made up of ringers from across this quarter of the diocese including Aldeburgh.

Aldeburgh was also very pleased to be able to enter two teams in the Northeast District striking competition in June at Rumburgh and out of the nine teams entering we were delighted our two teams were placed first and fourth.

Please contact Richard Rapior on 01728 452261 or come along to one of our Monday practices if you are interested in learning to ring or finding out more.

Richard Rapior. Team Captain

CHURCH HALL 2025

The Church Hall continues to be a popular venue in Aldeburgh and provides a suitable and convenient meeting place in the town and the surrounding area. The car parking near the hall being a contributing factor to many bookings. The Hall is used by many organizations too numerous to mention and a big thank you goes to all the local groups for their continued support. With regards to commercial bookings this does not always work with our regular bookings, and are no longer viable at times, but despite this the hall has been busy throughout the year, and in use most days.

Therefore, this reflects in our takings for the year, which is down by £602.00, the total being £8,936.00 for the year.

With plans for the refurbishment of the hall from a generous legacy received by the PCC, means that the hall can be renovated and facilities improved for our groups and users. This will be an exciting time for all concerned.

On a personal note, I would like to thank Adrian for monitoring the heating in the hall for our groups as when it's cold can be quite challenging. Also, both Ken and Adrian for answering my calls of help when things go wrong, which thankfully is not often.

Sandra Ralph
Church Hall Bookings Secretary

FAIRFIELD CENTRE 2025

The Fairfield Centre was established in October 1999 to provide a Centre to meet the social needs in the most densely populated part of the town of Aldeburgh. The purchase of the Centre which was a redundant Methodist Church/Hall was funded by public donations as a Millenium Project organised by The Parochial Church Council of the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Aldeburgh.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) are the trustees responsible for the Fairfield Centre.

In the Autumn of 2025, the Fairfield Centre Manager, Linda, retired and we record our sincere thanks to Linda for her leadership and for the positive changes achieved during her tenure. Appreciation is also extended to Ali and the team of resolute and enthusiastic volunteers; plus, the Treasurer David whose support was invaluable.

With a positive outlook and fresh ideas, we have now appointed a new Interim Manager Elly, whose priority is to continue with The Fairfield Centre being recognised as a lively and vibrant community space serving the local area with regular groups including,

Exercise, Dance, Yoga and Art Classes, a Youth Club, Bridge Club, Knit and Natter, Men's Pilates and Breakfast Church. The venue is also available for private hire for birthday parties, family occasions, meetings, social clubs, craft activities, workshops, concerts, ceilidhs and drama, with a fully equipped kitchen and enclosed garden.

Various fund-raising events were held throughout 2025 to help swell the coffers, and we now have a first-class website up and running.

We are deeply thankful for the generous donations we have received from various sources throughout the year. Without this support and our much-valued volunteers, our situation might be quite different, but overall, the Fairfield Centre has a positive and healthy financial position at this point.

Jenny Digby
PCC Secretary