

St Stephen's Church & Café



The vision for the role

We are looking and praying for an enthusiastic, energetic and experienced priest. This exciting post offers an opportunity to lead and shape mission and ministry in Norwich city centre – building on current strengths, developing our outreach, leading us in new vision.

The context

St Stephen's is a parish in the heart of the vibrant city of Norwich with the church building central to its large shopping area.

Within the parish are office buildings, student accommodation, the main bus station for the city and Norwich Free School. You'll see visitors, tourists, shoppers, and many others using or walking past the church building every day.

The Diocese of Norwich covers a large geographic area, but a third of the population are based in the city of Norwich. It is divided into three areas, each of which has a Bishop and an Archdeacon. This post falls in the Norwich Archdeaconry, in the deanery of Norwich East.

Cover photo and photo (right): A view of St Stephen's Church North Side.
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The task

- Help us discern a renewed vision for our church and café which draws on our diverse strengths and gifts, building on the foundations of what has been established.
- Help us grow the mission and ministry of the church, especially with schools, children and young people.
- Grow and oversee lay ministries including leading worship and pastoral care.
- Together with the staff team, share in the pastoral care of the church congregation, café and visitors – in particular, developing the role of café friends, who work within the café offering pastoral conversations and prayer.
- Deepen and grow relationships with the life of the city – in collaboration with the Assistant Priest.
- Lead us in being good stewards of creation and in particular achieving the Eco Church Silver Award.
- Help us discover how we can become a Sanctuary Church to follow the strong Norwich tradition in offering a safe place for those who are vulnerable and threatened.



Our new Vicar – person specification

- A person who values emerging and traditional models of church, and has the creativity and openness to do things differently.
- A person with the flexibility to lead and encourage formal and informal worship that is open and inclusive.
- A person with the skill and aptitude to collaborate with colleagues and enable them to thrive in their ministries - coaching/mentoring/supervision skills would be welcome.
- A good communicator and preacher – prayerful, scriptural, and open to charismatic ministry
- A pastoral heart - committed to the church's ministry of hospitality and outreach in the city
- A person with gifts to build and encourage community within the Church Fellowship and the Parish
- approachable, empathetic and a good listener. Able to connect with people from all walks of life.
- able to lead and encourage us in our work with students and young people, as well as increase the opportunities for children and families.
- Well-organised, able to take the lead where needed and see things through



Clergy support

The PCC fully supports the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing. We will support our incumbent to take one day off a week, two days together in each month and their full allocation of holiday, together with time for retreat.

The Church employs a full time Operations Manager who is responsible for much of the administration of the Parish.

The PCC will pay fully reimburse Clergy expenses in accordance with current Church of England guidance and best practice.



Sunday Worship at St Stephen's

There are two morning services – 9.15am and 10.45am. Both services use liturgy from Common Worship and broadly reflects the liturgical calendar. Holy Communion is held every week, alternating between services. The church enjoys consistently high-quality preaching delivered from our current clergy, Licenced Lay Minister and a wider preaching team.

- **9.15 service:** Liturgical – Common Worship but not overly formal – mainly hymns sung
- **10.45 service:** A diverse congregation, with flexible and open worship, live music and children's provision
- **Weekdays:** 9.30am Morning Prayer service following a Celtic tradition.
- Prayer Network email: urgent prayer needs
- Small groups and prayer triplets meeting during the week
- Courses including Alpha and a Lent course each year.

The provision of a children's play area in the church, together with children's work during the 10.45am Sunday service is encouraging links between families and the church and we have recently started to experiment with all-age worship along the lines of Messy Church during major festivals. We are hoping that these can be developed further.

St Stephen's organ requires extensive work to be functional and has not been used for services for many years.

Photo (right): A 9.15 Service at St Stephen's
© David White 2024



The Café

St Stephen's Café is at the heart of the church's mission being shaped by the church's Mission Statement: **Open Doors, Open Hands, Open Heart.** The café has given the church resources to live out the calling to serve and support people from multiple backgrounds: the lonely, elderly, disabled, people with mental health problems, rough sleepers, prison leavers, book groups and other clubs, remote workers. A full history of the Café and the philosophy behind its operation can be found in a Grove booklet entitled "Entrepreneurial Mission in a Church Café" by Madeline Light and Naomi Lawson Jacobs.

A typical day in the St Stephen's Café will see the church full of people of every age and from every walk of life eating and drinking and sharing in conversation. Adding to the hubbub our toy collection attracts many families with their preschool children.

Additionally on Wednesdays as part of the Renew Wellbeing movement we offer a safe space, a listening ear and activities where 'it's okay to not be okay'.

Photo (right): The Café during the Art Exhibition held regularly in September each year.
© David White 2024



The income from the Café not only pays for many of its staff but also for the Community Worker and part of the Children's Worker salaries. The Café is supported by a team of volunteers from the church and the community, some of whom have special needs themselves. Some church members act as Café Friends acting as listening ears and friends to those in need, and sometimes praying with customers.

The Café seeks to bridge the gap between the church and the community by 'being a Kingdom presence for people around us without there being pressure to join us'. People can belong at St Stephen's before they believe, but there are many examples where café customers have become part of the worshipping congregation.

Photo (right): Volunteers serving in the Café.
© David White 2024



Links between the Church and the wider Community

The building

St Stephen's church and churchyard lie at the entrance to Chantry Place shopping centre, and a path through the churchyard is a major pedestrian access route to the shops.

The churchyard

The churchyard has been closed for many years and is maintained by the City Council. It is used regularly by shoppers and office workers for lunches and as a meeting place.

The Café

St Stephen's is a busy and thriving church, with the building open seven days a week. The Café operates on Monday – Saturday (10am-3pm) and has a loyal and growing customer base. (see below)

Norfolk Community Chaplaincy Community Chaplaincy Norfolk

We have strong links with CCN who support ex-prisoners after release. They are based at The Chapel (see next page)

Community Worker

Our Community Worker is funded through the Café, supports people on the edge of the Norwich community. She advocates for clients with statutory agencies, helps with housing needs and signposts those with addiction issues to appropriate agencies. The Community Worker also runs a separate charity, REST, which runs a house for those recovering from addictions.



The Chapel, Fellows Plain

In addition to the main church building, the church has a lease from the Fellows Plain developers to use the former hospital chapel, which is grade 2 listed. This is currently used for a Carer and Toddler group (Little Fellowes) run by our children's worker on three mornings each week, CCN and other community groups



The Church Community in numbers

- 111 on electoral roll
- 79% on the electoral roll live outside of the parish.
- Worshipping community: 146 adults and 18 children
- Average combined attendance in person and online estimated as 90.

Children & young people

In recent years, we have focussed our missional activities on growing a younger age profile, particular families with younger children and now have children's work available during the 10.45 service on Sunday. We recognise that there is still much work to be done here, particularly in making better connections with those living within the parish.

Life events

Special life events services are rare at St Stephens, averaging 1 wedding and 2 baptisms per annum.

Congregations

The background of church attenders tends to be White middle class although the congregation is increasingly multi-racial and we have seen a significant increase in Black Africans worshipping with us. The church also welcomes and accommodates vulnerable individuals including those with mental health issues, ex-prisoners and those living on the margins, including the homeless.

Churchmanship

St Stephen's churchmanship has tended to be low church, open evangelical and we are comfortable to explore different liturgical and worship styles. Under the previous Vicar's incumbency there has been an openness to charismatic ministry including prophecy and healing and we hope this will continue and grow over the coming years. Clergy do not robe at St Stephen's.

Living in Love and Faith

St Stephen's has a very varied congregation drawn from a variety of church traditions and none, resulting in a wide variety of theological views. This is the case for the issues raised in Living and Love and Faith and the church has chosen not to formally take a position on using Prayers of Love and Faith. We are known as a church who welcomes everyone, and we recognise that what we have in common is significantly stronger than areas where disagreement can be found.

The Current Staff Team

- 1 Assistant Priest – Self Supporting
- 1 Curate - Stipendiary
- 1 Licensed Lay Minister
- 2 Office staff
- 1 Café Manager and 4 Café shift managers plus a team of 20-30 volunteers
- 2 Caretakers
- 1 Community support worker
- 1 Children and Families Worker plus 1 Sunday Kids Worker
- 1 Social Media and Website lead

Churchwardens and PCC

- 2 Churchwardens; 1 focussed on pastoral issues and 1 on buildings and premises
- 8 elected members of the PCC

Our Parish in numbers:

- Just over 2000 people according to 2021 census
- 675 households
- Deprivation ranking: 2,299 out of 12,399. Inside most deprived quartile.
- 60% of population under 30
- 6.4% over 70.
- New student accommodation
- Commercial buildings converted to residential.
- White ethnicity 78.5%
- Asian 13%
- Christian description: 26.6%
- No religion or do not state a religion: 64.1%

Commercial and school links

For the past 4 years, the assistant priest has been responsible for developing our links with the commercial life of the city, including organising a Community Arts Festivals with art exhibitions, drama and music events. He also serves as a Police Chaplain, covering the police station in the city centre. There is also a developing relationship with Norwich Free School with groups coming into the church for activities at Christmas and Easter.

History

The Church's history has been celebrated through a research project into Richard of Caistor, "The Good Vicar" of St Stephen's from 1402 to 1420. In 2023, the church became part of a Pilgrimage Trail and Art Exhibition celebrating the 650th anniversary of Julian of Norwich's Shewings. The church is regularly open as part of Norwich Heritage Open Days.

The Church building and Churchyard

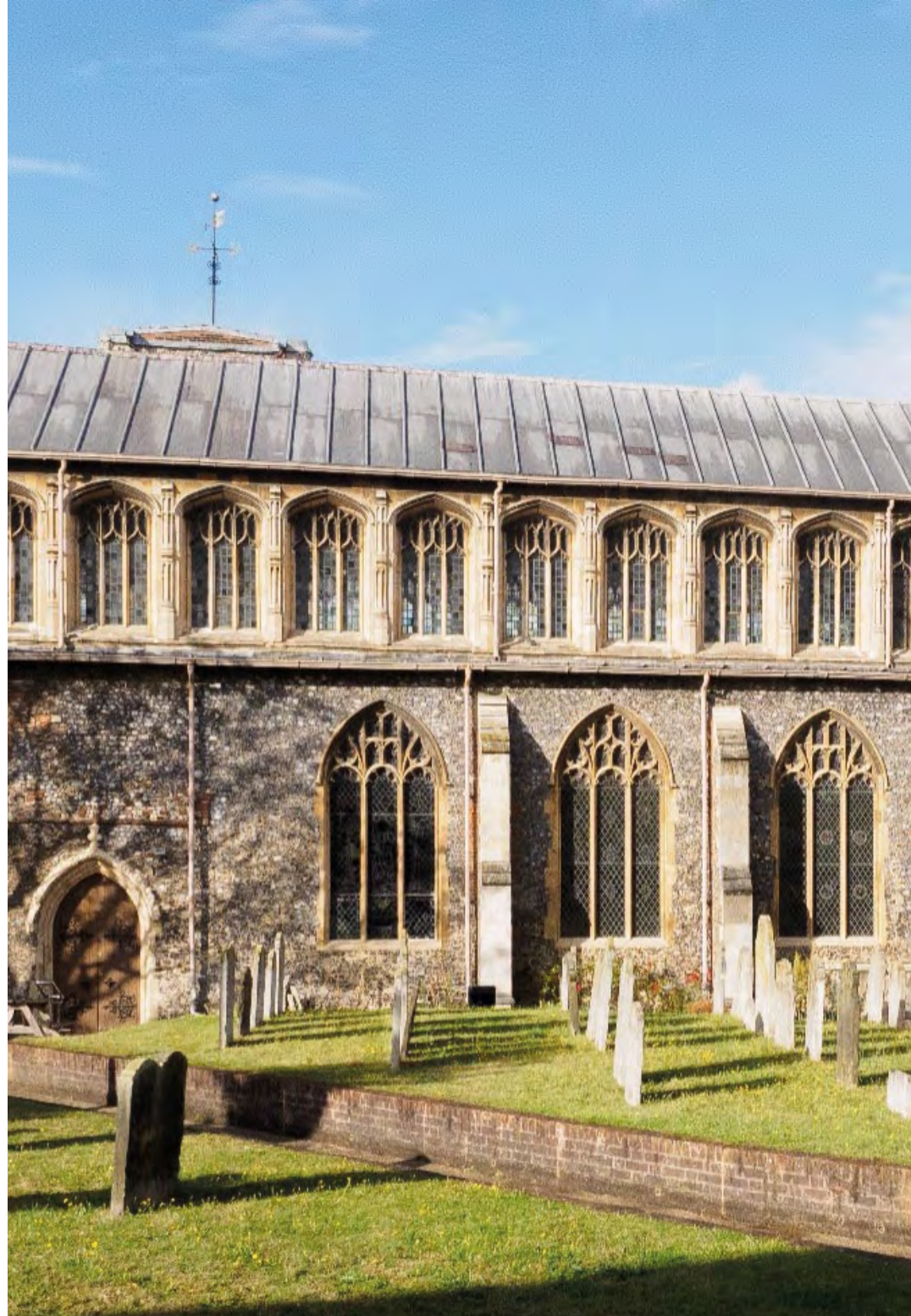
There has been a church presence in the area since the 12th Century and a church on the current site since the 15th century. For a full history, please go to: ststephensnorwich.org

A quinquennial has recently been completed and we have received the recommendations of the Architect arising from that. The main issues raised by the report relate to significant work on the South Aisle roof and work on the exterior of the Clerestory windows above that roof. The Churchwardens and other members of the Standing Committee intend to investigate these recommendations further, in order that a plan to address them can be presented to the PCC for approval early in 2025. No more further development works are planned at this time, although a number of projects are under consideration subject to finance being found. These are:

- The installation of solar panels on the south aisle roof.
- The replacement of our gas boilers with either air source heat pumps or electric boilers
- Creation of additional private space for our ministry and pastoral teams.
- The restoration, and possible relocation of the organ.

Photo (right): The South aspect of the Church viewed across the Churchyard

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Finance

Finances at St Stephen's are generally stable. The church pays its parish share in full each year. There is a clear policy that the income from the Café should not be used to fund the activities of the congregation, or the maintenance of the building unless the work is specific to that activity.

The church has a legacy fund, formerly held in a separate trust, which is restricted to the maintenance of the fabric of the building. This fund would cover regular repairs and maintenance of the fabric but is not sufficient to fund major repairs were they required.

The PCC have resolved that 10% of giving will be donated to charitable causes and widely defined missionary work. This fund is managed by the incumbent and the Standing Committee.

Diocesan vision and strategy

The Diocese of Norwich's vision is to be Transformed by Christ: Prayerful, Pastoral, Prophetic. You can find out more information about this at www.DofN.org/vision

Work is well underway on the nine priority areas that will help us live out and deliver this vision. The Vicar will be someone who is excited by this vision and who is able to see ways in which it can be made a lived reality in the parish

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is of vital importance, and the PCC is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We have adopted the CofE Safeguarding policy, and this is displayed in all our churches and other premises.

Vicarage

The Vicarage is located in The Crescent, a private road just off Chapelfield Road, in the heart of the fine city of Norwich. It is a substantial listed period house, in good order. We are seeking to find a replacement property either within or just outside of the Parish which would be more energy efficient and easier to maintain, whilst also having the necessary requirements for a Vicarage.

The next Vicar would move into the existing vicarage initially and when a suitable replacement property has been acquired they would then move into the new Vicarage. The moving costs, and a relocation grant would be paid by the Diocese and the Vicar would be granted a generous amount of time off in order to manage the move. The new Vicar would be fully involved in the planning for the new Vicarage.



Helpful links

Diocese of Norwich

www.dioceseofnorwich.org

Church of England

www.churchofengland.org

Living and working in Norfolk – Norfolk County Council

www.norfolk.gov.uk/jobs-training-and-volunteering/living-and-working-in-norfolk

Thank you

Thank you for reading this benefice profile.
We look forward to hearing from you.





THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

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