

Week ending 7 December 2025

Connect

The bulletin for clergy, lay leaders and all who are the Church in the Diocese of Bath and Wells.



Safeguarding Audit 2025

In March 2025 it will be the turn of Bath and Wells to be audited by the INEQE Safeguarding Group. The audit is part of a national programme, commissioned by the Archbishop's Council, to conduct an intensive and comprehensive review of safeguarding at each diocese and cathedral in the Church of England.

How you can help - Survey: 29 November to 31 January

People holding different roles across the diocese, including clergy, church volunteers, church staff, parish safeguarding officers, and diocesan staff are invited to complete a safeguarding survey.

INEQE have now opened the survey for Bath and Wells. This is anonymous and confidential, responses will be received directly by INEQE and not by the Diocese of Bath and Wells or the Church of England. Details of the survey will be sent directly to some of those we hope will engage with it, such as survivors, and we will be promoting it widely so we can have get as much information as possible to support us as we seek to continued to improve safeguarding in all our settings.

[Complete the survey.](#)

[Download the poster](#)

[Find out more about the safeguarding audit](#)

Below is a video message from Bishop Michael. You can watch this video again [via YouTube](#) or download it [from Vimeo](#).



The December 2024 Safeguarding Newsletter is available to read on [the Bath and Wells website](#).



More than 120 are confirmed at Wells Cathedral

Wells Cathedral was filled with joy and celebration as more than 120 people from across the diocese were confirmed. The candidates, from a diverse range of ages and backgrounds, were joined by a large congregation of family members, friends, and church community supporters who travelled from near and far to witness this special moment in their faith journey.

Bishop Michael said, "It has been extraordinary to be in Wells Cathedral for these confirmations. Each is here because their Christian journey has brought them to a new place of commitment, of love of God and a willingness to serve God in the world." [Find out more](#) about the service and those being confirmed.

Note for PCCs from the Secretariat team

Electoral roll

2025 is the year that we are required to compile a new Church Electoral Roll.

Jenny Hollingsworth, Diocesan Secretary says, "The preparation of a new roll is an opportunity to encourage those new to church life, or the community, to join the roll as a symbol of commitment to the church. It allows us all to take part in decisions which affect the church and parish."

Find out more about what is required on the [Electoral Roll page on the diocesan website](#).

Parochial Fees

A reminder that the deadline for submitting your parochial fees return and payment for 2024 is the 31 January 2025. From the 1 January 2025 you should use the new 2025 form and tables which are now available on the [Parochial Fees page on the diocesan website](#).

2024 Statistics for Mission Return

A reminder that the national church deadline for submitting your 2024 Statistics for Mission Return is the 31 January 2025. Please contact returns@bathwells.anglican.org should you have any questions or require any support.

Elections

A number of elections are currently underway in Bath and Wells, including one to fill a casual vacancy on the House of Clergy of General Synod, following the resignation of The Revd Sue Rose. Any qualified candidate wishing to stand for election should submit their nomination on the Civica elections portal by noon on 24 December. A Zoom husting for candidates is scheduled to be held at 19:00 on Thursday, 16 January.

Elections are also underway for Bishop's Council, and for the Diocesan Board of Patronage. Bishop's Council members have a threefold role: the standing committee of the Diocesan Synod, the Board of Directors of the Diocesan Board of Finance, and the Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee. Members of the Diocesan Board of Patronage are involved in the process of shortlisting, interview and appointment of clergy, and encourage appointments which are compatible with the traditions of each benefice. Nomination and voting details have been issued to the eligible Diocesan Synod members.



Elizabeth Renshaw-Ames is to become the new Chair of the DBF

Bath and Wells is delighted to announced that Elizabeth Renshaw-Ames is to become the new Chair of the Diocesan Board of Finance.

Elizabeth, who will take up the position in the new year, is an experienced leader and Chartered Accountant with over 40 years' experience in professional and financial services. She was, until her retirement in 2020, CEO of HSBC Bank Pension Trust (UK) Limited.

Welcoming Elizabeth, Bishop Michael said, "I am thrilled to welcome Elizabeth as Chair of the DBF. I am delighted that we will be able to benefit from her wealth of wisdom and experience. The role of Chair of the DBF is a key appointment for the Diocese of Bath and Wells and with Elizabeth's guiding hand we can build on the gifts of previous generations to underpin the ministry of the future." [Read more.](#)



Pre-Advent Retreat Day with Bishop Rowan

More than 300 people attended the Pre Advent Retreat Day at Wells Cathedral. The day began with Morning Prayer together in the Cathedral. There were three sessions throughout the day led by Bishop Rowan. Each of these lasted an hour and was followed by a time to reflect on what was shared. There were areas to reflect in silence, and others to discuss ideas.

The Communication team would also like to thank all those who responded to their informal 'stones in buckets' social media survey. We were delighted with the level of engagement – 375 votes in total!



Bishop Peter receives a warm welcome



Prebends installed at Wells Cathedral

At the end of November Bishop Peter Hancock returned to Bath and Wells to preach at the Wells Cathedral Festal Eucharist. Bishop Peter, who is now an Honorary Assistant Bishop in Guildford Diocese, spoke of Jesus' call to Peter and Andrew to be his disciples.

"2000 years ago, Jesus told Peter and Andrew to put down their nets and said now you will fish for people instead. We still hear that same call, calling to us. The call to follow Jesus."

For the first time in its history, the installation of prebends included two new ecumenical bishops, bearing witness to the increasing links the cathedral is building with the wider community.

Bishop Roshin Lal, the Community of Christ Church Bath, Bishop Bosco, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Clifton, and Colin Kerry were installed during Evensong. This is the first time Wells Cathedral, enabled by the new Cathedral Measure under which it now operates, has been able to do this.



Celebrate your church's Patronal Festival with a grant of up to £500

The Choral Evensong Trust is offering grants of £250 and £500 to parish churches to celebrate their patronal festivals in 2025. This initiative builds on the success of recent trials in rural churches, where choral evensong services saw an increase in attendance and helped foster community engagement.

Michaelmas saw St Michael and All Angels in Dinder, near Wells, filled to capacity for evensong sung by the Wells Cathedral Chamber Choir, with many attendees saying they were participating in church activities for the first time.

You can find out more about the grants, who can apply and what the grants cover on [the Choral Evensong Trust's website](#). To request more details, please contact hello@choralevensong.org.

Living Alongside Bats in Churches Grant

As a legacy of the Bats in Churches Project partnership, the Bat Conservation Trust, the Church of England, Natural England, Churches Conservation Trust and Historic England have come together to offer places of worship the opportunity to apply for the new Living Alongside Bats in Churches Grant Fund. This is a small grant aimed at supporting places of worship who are in need of help with their roost; for example, the roost might be causing an increased cleaning burden.

Though the application deadline for this round of awards is not far away - 10 January 2025, it is worth noting the scheme is run twice a year, so there will be other opportunities to apply. [Find out more.](#)



School Leaders and Parish Partners Conference 2025. 'Creating Welcoming Communities'

Do you have a school in your benefice or parish? Whether you are connected to a church or non-church school, you are welcome to come to our 2025 conference, together with your headteacher, to explore how as communities we might bring about real long-lasting change in relation to racial justice.

As valuable and vital parish partners to our local schools, we would love to encourage you to speak with your head teacher about the conference and then book to come together, or identify another suitable parish partner to accompany your head teacher (parish partners come for half-price!).

The day will include interactive key notes from three exciting speakers: Rev'd Anjali Kanagaratnam, Emily Norman and Elizabeth Olulari. The afternoon will provide an opportunity to join a workshop and reflect with your school leader, plus there will be exhibitors, and the Bishop will be joining us each day.

You can find more information and booking details on the Bath and Wells website:

[Booking for 20 March 2025](#)

[Booking for 21 March 2025](#)

£25 for Parish Partners (Clergy, Chaplains, Foundation governors for example)

£50 for School Leaders (Headteachers, Exec headteachers, Heads of School and CEO for example)



Bishop Michael joins 2025 Wilder Churches event

On Thursday 20 March 2025, Bishop Michael will join the March Meetup of Wilder Churches, to share his love for the natural world and his passion for environmental care. This will be an opportunity to ask questions, gain inspiration for creating wilder churchyards, and hear the Bishop Michael's vision for a greener, flourishing diocese.

Wilder Churches began in March 2021 as a partnership initiative between the Diocese of Bath and

Wells and Somerset Wildlife Trust. The initiative aims to support communities to get to know the wildlife in their local churchyard and other church land, and work together to find ways to increase the value of these special places for wildlife.

Everyone is welcome. [Please register.](#)

[Find out more](#) about Wilder Churches and resources on the Wilder Churches webpage.

A reminder

The Environment Team is sharing top tips this Advent for a more sustainable Christmas, helping us care for God's creation. Follow the team's new social media accounts to stay updated on all things environment!

[X/Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

Clergy housing assistance during the Christmas period

The diocesan office is closed for the Christmas period from Monday 23 December and will re-open on Thursday 2 January 2025. Should you require any housing assistance during this period, the Property team have created an emergency list of contractors which may be helpful. All the contractors have generously offered to provide cover and have instructions to make safe in the first instance. The list indicates when they are available as you should note that they are not all available all of the time.

Information on the steps to follow should you have an emergency during this time, and the list of contractors can be found on the [Clergy Housing pages of the Bath and Wells website.](#)

This block is for special content that you want to stand out.



Resources

This year's theme 'Follow the Star: Calm and Bright' is all about finding peace and joy during a stressful season.

[Take a look at the Calm and Bright page](#) for an overview of the resources available.



Digital content ideas

What digital content could you share this Advent and Christmas? Here's a range of ideas to spark your imagination. [Read more.](#)



AChurchNearYou.com

How to use the platform as your church's free website. This webinar covers the editing features available for churches, and the new benefice functionality that could help those of you who edit multiple churches.

Learn more about [Calm and Bright](#).

Please register [Thurs 12 December 11am- 12:30pm](#)

In brief

- Contemplative Christianity Correspondence Course. A 6 month course beginning in January via email, looking at the contemplative and mystic tradition within the Christian faith. [Find out more about the course and book online.](#)
- [Art for Advent](#), at Sarum College December 11, 2024.
- Rediscovering a Rule of Life, Sarum College, 15 January 2025, online 12 to 1pm (£40). Four seminars led by [Canon Tom Clammer OC](#) reflecting on key principles of creating or refreshing a Rule of Life. [More details are available online](#)
- Pilgrim-journey based in Dunster and Exmoor 23 February – 1 March. For details, [please visit the Journeying website](#) or email info@journeying.co.uk

If you have news to share, tag us on your social media channel or [email the Communications team](#).



School celebrates 50th anniversary

From Lego and cake to a special new song – Taunton's Bishop Henderson Primary School has been celebrating its 50th birthday in style. The Church of England school opened in 1974 and was named after Bishop Edward Henderson, who was the Bishop of Bath and Wells.

To mark this special birthday, staff and pupils hosted a series of events. The children built a replica of the school from Lego, and everyone at the school added their fingerprint as a leaf to a specially drawn tree.

Head teacher Rachel White said, "The school has always felt like one big family and it was really special to experience the love and warmth people have for the school across the generations."



Senior Police Chaplain steps back from lead role.

Due to step back on 31 December, Senior Police Chaplain Andy Paget has served for more than 28 years as a force chaplain with Avon and Somerset Police and over 23 years as Lead Chaplain. He began in the summer of 1996 on Bristol's Central Police District.

Andy leads a team of fourteen volunteer chaplains, serving the six and a half thousand members of Avon and Somerset's police family.

Although much of the work of Andy and his team of volunteer chaplains takes place under the radar, in the confidential space of one-to-one contact with individuals or their families. The team won the Police Support Volunteer Team of the Year Award in 2023 and again, this



Pupil Chaplains gather at Taunton Minister

This month around 55 pupil chaplains from 6 schools gathered at Taunton Minister. The day was an opportunity for pupil chaplains to connect with others from different contexts, learn more about their roles and to celebrate what they are doing together.

The pupil chaplains from Backwell Junior School led the opening worship. The children had a tour of Taunton Minister, being challenged to find about the building and many enjoyed trying to count the numerous angels in the church. They also thought about the joys and challenges of their roles before writing a prayer together for their pupil chaplaincy team.

The afternoon worship was led by Lou Jarmain who leads the pupil chaplaincy team at

The whole school gathered in St Michael's Church for a commemorative service where they were joined by the Simon Hill the Archdeacon of Taunton, the school's adult choir and invited guests.

[Read more about the celebrations.](#)

year, won both the local and regional PSV awards.

[Find out more](#) about Andy's role and that of the Force Chaplaincy team.

St Andrew's Church of England Primary School in Taunton. The children had an opportunity to make a prayer heart and led in prayer using their newly written pupil chaplaincy prayers.

Advent and Christmas in Bath and Wells



Holy Trinity Church in Poulton has been festooned with handmade Christmas trees. The trees all designed and decorated by church groups have been hung from the ceiling of the church. Revd Adam Pitt shared cardboard tree kits he'd made with groups such as the local school, and the bell ringers, from there it was up to each how they decorated their tree. If you are passing why not drop in and take a look.



These are just some of around 1000 bells handmade by people from St Peter's and St James' Churches in Yeovil, and friends, and packed in biodegradable cellophane packets with an invitation to their Christmas services and event. The bells are all different, and are designed as tree decorations. They are knitted, crocheted, and made of wood, clay and felt.



USPG's Christmas Appeal



Ripple Effect's Big Give campaign

This campaign to support rural families in Bangladesh through the Community Health Care Project – in particular for mothers and babies - is a wonderful reminder that God sent His Son Jesus, brings health, hope, and joy to vulnerable families in Bangladesh.

A range of resources, including a children's resource, are available [to download now](#).

[USPG's Advent Guide](#) is a 4-week meditation written by partners around the world.

Donations to Ripple Effect's Big Give campaign help support people like Edith whose life has been transformed. Thanks to support from Ripple Effect she has learned sustainable farming techniques that allowed her to bring her banana plantation back to life and diversify her crops. She now owns a successful shop and earns stable income. [Find out more about the campaign and how your donations could be doubled.](#)

Diocese of Bath and Wells

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