

# Diocesan News

## May 2025

 THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND **Loving. Living. Learning.**  
Diocese of Leeds **Learning**  
[www.leeds.anglican.org](http://www.leeds.anglican.org)

### Celebrations of new Archdeacon, Canon Pastor and Honorary Canon at Ripon



The Ven Dr James Theodosius, Archdeacon of Richmond and Craven, was recently collated and installed at Ripon Cathedral alongside their new Canon Pastor, the Revd Canon Wendy Dalrymple, and a new Honorary Canon, the Revd Canon Sue McWhinney.

Ven James knows the Ripon area well, as during the last ten years he was Vicar of Upper Wharfedale and Littondale, then served at Holy Trinity, Skipton, where he was also Area Dean.

A strong advocate for rural ministry, he is keen to ensure that the urban and rural are thoughtfully integrated in ways which echo the good news of the gospel.

Revd Canon Wendy comes from Canterbury Cathedral, where she was a Precentor,

heading up worship and events.

Serving her curacy in Mirfield, Revd Wendy became the first chaplain to the Sir Robert Woodard Academy in Lancing, West Sussex.

She then spent three years in the Guildford Diocese as Priest-in-Charge of a rural benefice, and eight years as Rector of All Saints with Holy Trinity, in Loughborough, and has served as an Area Dean, Chair of House of Clergy and as a General Synod representative.

The Revd Sue McWhinney is Associate Priest at St Michael the Archangel, Kirkby-in-Malhamdale, sometimes called the "Cathedral in the Dales", in the Upper Aire Benefice (the churches of Gargrave, Coniston Cold, and Kirkby Malham).



Special event marks the successful renewal of St Oswald's tower



The restored tower of St Oswald's, Askrigg, complete with new rendering, was blessed by Bishop Anna at a special event to mark the successful end of an inspiring project.

"After over a decade of hard work in research, planning and fundraising, the historic tower of St Oswald's in Askrigg is now restored and returned to how she was intended to be - a beacon in the landscape, physically and spiritually," said Revd Dave Clark on behalf of all involved.

"The workmanship and skill from all those involved is truly wonderful and it's right to thank the Lord for blessing us with such a marvellous team and for keeping everyone safe during the work."

More than 200 people attended the special commemoration event, including the Rt Revd Anna Eltringham, Bishop of Ripon, who blessed and consecrated the restored tower.

# Church grants scheme launched to kick start affordable housing plans

Parishes hoping to build affordable homes for their communities on pockets of church land – or as part of schemes such as rebuilding parish halls – are being invited to apply for grants to pay for expert advice from a new £3.2 million fund.

Funding of up to £25,000 towards the cost of architect, consultant and other professional fees needed to assess the feasibility of housing proposals on church land, will be supported through the Church of England scheme with some grants contributing to the cost of navigating the planning process.

John Knox, diocesan Director of Business Planning & Head of Property said his team were ready to support such projects in our parishes.

“This new scheme represents a great opportunity to gain financial support to help get things off the ground – quite literally.

“While this is a national initiative, we are always here ready with local expertise and advice,” said John.

The funding comes from an overall grant of £4.25 million over five years to help dioceses and parishes in building homes on their land as a response to the housing crisis.

A newly-formed Church of England Housing Project team, led by Beki Winter, formerly of the Housing Justice charity, is



now actively seeking parishes interested in, or already working on, developing homes that address the needs of their communities.

“Many parishes have issues with their buildings or property, but don’t always realise that these problems could be opportunities to provide some housing,” she said.

“For example, an outdated church hall could be rebuilt to include a few flats above it, or a surplus car park could be redeveloped to provide some social homes.

“There are many creative ways to use church land or property to provide housing for people in need, whilst improving community facilities or bolstering parish finances.”

The grants programme runs alongside expert guidance for Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) that are interested in exploring how they could manage their property differently and provide homes for those in need.

Church leaders or PCC members interested in requesting support from the Housing Project team, or who would like to share their own experience of providing housing, should email [HousingProject@churchofengland.org](mailto:HousingProject@churchofengland.org).

## Bishop Smitha leads positive conversations about faith this Lent

The public conversations have been between the Rt Revd Smitha Prasadam, Bishop of Huddersfield, and a range of guest, talking about faith in the public square.

The 2025 series of talks began with a discussion with Dr Edward Kessler, a Cambridge academic and expert on the Abrahamic Faiths, talking about interfaith work and the possibility of positive change when given time and courage.

Bishop Smitha then spoke with Professor Adeeba Malik, High Sheriff of West Yorkshire.

Bishop Smitha also spoke to Alison Lowe MBE, a passionate black woman from Yorkshire with two gay children and who has served as Chief Executive of Touchstone, a mental health and wellbeing charity, Chair of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel, and represented Armley as an Elected Member on Leeds City Council.

The final session was with Baroness Sayeeda Warsi, lawyer, politician, and a member of the House of Lords, and who served as Co-chairwoman of the Conservative party from 2010 – 2012 and is a former Minister of State for Faith and Communities.



# Special events to celebrate our ministry to children and young people



Building on last year's success, the Diocesan Children, Young People and Families Team is hosting TEND 2025 events to celebrate and support everyone involved in this vital area of churches' ministry.

"Sharing Stories" is the theme of this year's events that will gather people together to:

- Thank them for all that they do
- Encourage confidence and equip them in this work
- Provide a space in which people can Network and share with one another
- Enable people to reflect on what they will do next

"TEND events give an opportunity for us to thank, affirm and celebrate the many volunteers, leaders and employed workers from churches across our diocese," said Liz Morton Children, Young People and Families Team Leader.

"Every year it is wonderful to meet new volunteers as well as welcome back people who have attended before – the workshops and speakers give a

chance for us to learn together and share ideas, whilst the opportunity to meet others with similar interests to share ideas and stories is exciting. We are really looking forward to the days."

"Sharing Stories" will explore ways that we share the Christian story with children and young people, considering how we are encouraging one another with stories of what God is doing and how we share the story of children's/youth ministry with the wider church.

There will be a range of workshops exploring these topics, as well as a keynote talk from Huw Thomas, Director of Education for the Diocese of Sheffield, spaces to chat and share with others involved in this work, opportunities for prayer and reflection, and delicious refreshments.

The events this year are taking place on:

- Saturday, June 7 at Christ Church, Skipton (BD23 2NB)
- Saturday, September 6 at St George's Church, Lupset (WF2 8AA)

Both events are identical, so people can go to whichever one is more convenient, and they are free to attend.

Get support with applications to the National Lottery Heritage Fund this spring



How your church can make the best application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for their support for building works is the topic of two upcoming support sessions hosted by the Diocese of Leeds.

The diocese wants to encourage parishes to grasp such opportunities with confidence, and to support them in their efforts, in line with our Barnabas strategy, which is why we have organised these sessions with Sarah Ledjmi, Heritage Fund Engagement Manager.

The Heritage 2033 strategy has included the introduction of four new investment principles to guide decision making through open funding programmes, and you can learn more about these, as well as good practice guidance and tips on how to apply to the NLHF, at one of two workshops being hosted by the diocese this spring.

The two sessions are at:

- St Giles Pontefract on Thursday, May 15, 6pm – 8pm
- St Mary Masham on Tuesday, May 20, 2pm – 4pm

## Give thanks for the sheep

Revd Stephen Dawson  
Vicar of Langcliffe with  
Stainforth & Horton

Sheep are part of our landscape, and they created the views we enjoy today by strimming up after fussier cows.

A Swaledale tup symbolises the national park but we heard at St Oswald's lambing service that the ancestor of all sheep is the meaty Mouflon of Mesopotamia. It was brought here by Neolithic farmers and their domesticated animals replaced hunter-gathering. Later the Romans brought 'woollies' and by the Middle Ages wool had become white gold. Cities were built on its trade and monasteries ran flocks that uncovered limestone pavements.

In 1800 the focus shifted back to meat. Victorian farmers with 250 sheep and farmhands were regarded as rich but today the same farms struggle to break even with 850 sheep and no staff. Farms have merged or offer holidays in old shepherds' huts. The future is uncertain as the consumption of meat has fallen since 2012 due to



changing diets and concerns about over-grazing.

For their part, churches value farmers and their work in tending the landscape. Farms with one cut of grass enable other species, from wildflowers to curlews, to flourish and the National Farmers' Union reminds us that farming families fill rural schools with children and serve as governors, councillors and churchwardens. They rarely go on holiday and help their communities in myriad other ways. It would be tragic if industrialised farms, producing more from the same acreage, led to people leaving the Dales.

As Easter gives way to Rogationtide churches give thanks for all who work the land and hold lambing services. We will recall Biblical ancestors like Moses, moving sheep when he came across someone guarding an eternal flame, and King David who wrote, 'The Lord's My Shepherd.' Both those characters were given new jobs in changing times.

## Trinity MAT wins Green Trust of the Year Award



One of our Multi Academy Trusts has won the Multi Academy Trust Association Green Trust of the Year Award.

The Trinity Multi Academy Trust covers six secondary schools, four primary schools, and a post-16 college, with 1300 staff and 8000 pupils across West Yorkshire.

In 2022 they launched their Earthshot Initiative, aiming to build a waste-free world by ensuring all school waste is reused or recycled, fix the climate by achieving Eco-Schools Green Flag Accreditation, revive oceans by eradicating all single-use plastic within Trinity MAT, clean the air by incentivising the buying of an electric vehicle for all staff and protect nature by decreasing the number of staff and pupils opting for meat dishes.

Their hard work has been recognised by the Multi Academy Trust Association, with their recent win of the Green Trust of the Year Award.