



Benefice Newsletter February 2026



From Revd Karen

We are almost halfway through my time here at the SCATS benefice. The contract was extended from three years to five and I plan to retire in September 2028. The first half of this transitional ministry post has been about discovering how this part of the North Cotswolds operates as well as digging into the history and culture of the area. This is a very beautiful part of the world to live. What I have noticed is how much the area has changed in the last twenty years. Stow in particular has moved from being a small market town to a significant tourist destination in an experience economy. We are an ageing and small benefice which is no longer viable in its present form. We do however have a wonderful opportunity with our 'alleged' Tolkien Door to increase our engagement with the visitors. We do not have the capacity to do this ourselves so the PCC of St Edward's has made the decision to appoint a director of operations who will look at what we could offer both in terms of mission to those who come to our church and in terms of fundraising. This will be a one-year part time post. The new person will also take on the regulatory and compliance functions of the church warden role. They won't necessarily be in church on a Sunday but they will make sure the boilers are serviced and fire extinguishers checked.

This is a significant step for the Benefice so please hold this new venture in your prayers. We plan to advertise in early February. Please come and talk to any member of the PCC for further information.

A Blessing for Candlemas

from Ruth Burgess
Like Simeon
may I grow old
in hope and wonder.
Like Anna,
may I be in love with you
all my days.
May I be open to truth,
open to surprises.
May I let your Spirit
into my life.
May I let your justice
change your behaviour.
May I live in the brightness
of your joy.

Benefice Contacts

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Website and Social Media for St Edward's

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/14393/>

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/people/St-Edwards-Church-Stow-on-the-Wold/61566790355827/>

Instagram:
https://www.instagram.com/st_edwards_stow/

Online services links

1 February: <https://bit.ly/StEd010226>
8 February: <https://bit.ly/StEd080226>
15 February: <https://bit.ly/StEd150226>
22 February: <https://bit.ly/StEd220226>

From the Cotswold Foodbank

Thank you for joining us in our vision of ending hunger today, together and forever. We are so grateful for your church's donations and support. 22% of our donations came from our local churches in 2025 which enabled North Cotswold Foodbank to give out 1554 food parcels. We couldn't do what we do without your support throughout the year, your donations, and the compassion you're showing in the North Cotswolds. Thank you!

SAVE ST EDWARD'S CLOCK



Tick tock! A campaign is underway to save St Edward's clock. London may have Big Ben but Stow has Little Ed! And Little Ed – our town clock – is in desperate need of a facelift and an update to his clockworks!

The clock sits proudly on our church tower but it's looking a little sad. It would be wonderful if, in this 550 Anniversary year of our town charter, we could restore some civic pride in the town square by restoring our beautiful clock.

Work to update the clock face and mechanism will cost around £25,000 with experts from Derby needing to abseil down the church tower to remove the clock face for repairs. Please chat to Rob Brown who has some fascinating facts about the clock and the repairs.

The women of Closely Knit – who meet for a knit and natter in the church from 10am on Saturday mornings – have chosen to knit for Little Ed this year. They have already raised nearly £4,000. Absolutely fabulous. Thank you and well done. We all appreciate your skill and generosity.

Diane Close, from Closely Knit said: 'Our church clock is at the heart of our town and is loved by townsfolk and visitors. We are determined to help restore our clock to its former glory.'



We are hoping that townspeople, shops and businesses will support the campaign to give Little Ed an update for the 21st Century.

We aim to have a JustGiving page up and running shortly but, in the meantime, if you feel able to support the fund to Save Little Ed, please donate online at <https://givealittle.co/c/StowClock>. Or you can drop cash or a cheque (payable to 'PCC Stow on the Wold') into the red safe just inside the church door, in an envelope marked 'Clock Fund'. If you are a UK taxpayer, just use one of the Gift Aid envelopes available in the church and fill in your details – it increases the donation by 25%.

Thank you for your support. Tick tock for our clock!

Sybil

And speaking of Closely Knit here is a message from them...

Closely Knit would like to say thank you to whoever left a beautiful blanket under the knitting table in the church. It is just amazing. Please call in one Saturday morning and have coffee with us as we would like to thank you in person".



Doing Lent differently



For some of us, perhaps, giving something up for Lent – and perhaps Lent itself as a period of prayer, fasting and ‘almsgiving’ in preparation for Easter - are foreign concepts. We probably know about the tradition of cooking pancakes on the day before Lent kicks off, even if we don’t know why.

But what if the idea were turned on its head and seen as a period of generosity?

That is the aim of ‘40Acts’, a daily series of generosity challenges with varying degrees of ‘pain’. One challenge will be released each day, but none of it is compulsory!

Find out more at <https://www.stewardship.org.uk/40acts>. If you are interested, click on Sign Up and you will receive the daily challenge by email. (You might want to tick the box not to get further updates from Stewardship, who organise 40Acts). There are children’s resources, too. (You can also access 40Acts in the Stewardship ‘Giving’ app that you can download to your iPhone or Android phone, if you wish, and the daily challenges will be added to the Community page in the St Edward’s WhatsApp group.)



RIP

In January we said goodbye to two long term residents of Stow. Frank Williams' life was celebrated

with fond stories of his life. More reminiscences were shared at the Talbot over fish and chips after the service. Jean Wakefield was well known in Stow as she worked in the Organic Shop in the Square. She was a very private person but we still had a goodly sized congregation to say goodbye to her.

May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Mariner's 23rd Psalm

The Lord is my pilot, I shall not go adrift;
He lighteth my passage across the dark channels;
He steereth me through the deep waters,
He keepeth my log.
He guideth me by the evening star for safety's sake.
Yes, though I sail mid the thunders and tempests of life,
I fear no peril, for Thou art with me,
Thy stars and heavens, they comfort me.
The vastness of the sea upholds me.
Surely fair winds and safe harbours shall be found
All the days of my life;
And I shall dock, secure forever.
Amen.

Services

Mondays 9.00am (no service on Monday 9 th)	Morning Prayer in the Lady Chapel at St Edward's Stow
Sunday 1 st February 10.30am	Holy Communion, St Edward's Stow with bells before the service
Thursday 5 th February 11.00am	Holy Communion, Newlands Court
Sunday 8 th February 9.15am	BCP Matins, St Nicholas Condicote
Sunday 8 th February 11.00am	BCP Matins (lay led) St Mary's Upper Swell
Sunday 8 th February 10.30am	Holy Communion, St Edward's Stow
Sunday 15 th February 9.15am	BCP Holy Communion, St Mary's Upper Swell
Sunday 15 th February 10.30am	Morning Service, St Edward's Stow
Sunday 15 th February 2.30pm	Dementia Friendly Service, Edwardstow Court
Wednesday 18 th February 6.30pm	Holy Communion with Ashes, St Edward's Stow
Sunday 22 nd February 9.15am	BCP Holy Communion, St Nicholas Condicote
Sunday 22 nd February 10.30 am	Holy Communion, St Edward's Stow
Wednesday 25 th February 3.00pm	Prayers and hymns at Beechwood Park

Dates for your diary

Sunday 8th February 3pm VIVA LA VIOLA - The Midland Sinfonia

A programme offering centre-stage to the often overlooked yet magnificent viola, part of the Midland Sinfonia's 30th Anniversary Season.

Thursday 19th February 6.45 for 7pm – Film night in church: Far From the Madding Crowd

Regular Events

Wednesday Coffee Club - 9.00-10.30am in Huffkins

Closely Knit - 10am-noon every Saturday in the Church

Mother's Union – Thursday 5th February 2pm – AGM in the Church Room

Cotswold Dementia Café Every 1st and 3rd Friday of the month, 2-4pm at the Baptist Church Hall off Back Walls. A community café offering friendship, support, advice and more for anyone living with or caring for someone with dementia.