
Week ending 17 May 2025

Connect

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



Bishop Michael writes to MPs ahead of third reading of assisted dying bill

Ahead of the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill debate in Parliament on Friday (16 May 2025), Bishop Michael has written to MPs serving communities across Bath and Wells, assuring them, and all our MPs, of his prayers as they prepare to debate this “complex and difficult issue” and his continued opposition to the proposals.

He says, “Since the Bill received its second reading back in November, there has been much development of its original proposals and much more information has been made available about its likely impact.”

Bishop Michael remains concerned about the proposed safeguards, saying “the Bill’s original proposals have quickly been diluted”. He also draws attention to the impact that the legislation will have on the vulnerable and the NHS.

[Read more.](#)

Sign up now for the Church Money Matters gathering

- Church Money Matters morning for Treasurers, Planned Giving Promoters, Gift Aid Secretaries and other local fundraisers in the Wells Archdeaconry.
- Flourish House, Wells
- Friday 23 May

[Register now](#), or look out for further events in Bath and Taunton in early autumn.

Natalie Wainwright, Lead Giving and Funding Adviser, shares more details in the video below.



Grant funding opportunities

New grant funding opportunities for Net Zero projects are being offered by Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) as part of their [Powering Communities to Net Zero fund](#).

There are two grants available:

- [Low Carbon Technology Fund](#)
- [Physical and Environmental Resilience Fund](#)



A reminder

Bookings for the Budget Consultations taking place from 9 June to 9 July are now open. This is an opportunity for people to attend a session to discuss the plan for a three-year budget for the Diocesan Board of Finance (DBF).

Members of Support Services teams - Secretariat, Finance, Mission Support and Ministry Development, and Education - will be attending the sessions and be available to answer questions.

[Register to attend one of the following sessions.](#)

- 19:00 to 21:00, Monday 9 June – Flourish House, Wells (Wells Archdeaconry)
- 15:00 to 17:00, Tuesday 17 June - Holy Trinity, Nailsea BS48 4NG (Bath Archdeaconry)
- 19:00 – 21:00, Tuesday 17 June – Holy Trinity, Nailsea BS48 4NG (Bath Archdeaconry)
- 14:00 – 16:00 – Thursday 19 June – Holford Village Hall, Holford, Bridgwater TA5 1SD (Taunton Archdeaconry)
- 19:00 – 21:00 – Thursday, 19 June – St Francis of Assisi, Saxon Green, Bridgwater TA6 4JA (Taunton Archdeaconry)
- 9:30 – 11:00 – Thursday 26 June – Zoom online session
- 10:30 – 12:30 on Monday 30 June – Flourish House, Wells (Wells Archdeaconry)
- 19:00 – 20:30 on 7 July – Zoom online session



A message from Bishop Ruth

Following her [farewell service at Wells Cathedral](#) on 15 April and subsequent [welcome service at Liverpool Cathedral](#) on 8 May, Bishop Ruth shared a message to everyone

in the diocese. She gave heartfelt thanks to everyone for "a lovely farewell and for the generous gift and personal cards and good wishes." She said she will be holding everyone in her prayers and asks that we also pray for her as she begins her new role. And she reminds us, "Never forget that you are 'God's chosen ones, holy and beloved' and keep on living and telling the story of Jesus!"

[Read Bishop Ruth's letter in full](#) on the diocesan website.



Bishop of Taunton recruitment: next steps

The work to recruit the next Bishop of Taunton continues. The group of individuals who will advise Bishop Michael on the appointment will be:

- Caroline Mason, Chair of the House of Laity for the Diocese of Bath and Wells Synod
- Roger Driver, Chair of the House of Clergy for the Diocese of Bath and Wells Synod
- Alison Waters, Area Dean and Rector of the Quantock Gate Churches
- Jennifer Duke, Churchwarden, The Blessed Virgin Mary, Luxborough, Exmoor and former High Sherrif of Somerset.
- Dan Wills, Net Zero Enabler for the Diocese of Bath and Wells,
- Farhad Chermahini, Curate, Holy Trinity, Yeovil.

Bishop Michael says, "On this advisory group we have a range of individuals who not only represent the breadth and depth of our diocese, but who I know will bring their own strengths and passions to our discussions which I am sure will, with God's guidance, make for a fruitful discernment process."

Dan Wills, Net Zero Enabler added, "I am excited and privileged to be part of the selection process. Naturally, I am hoping that the next Bishop of Taunton, like the previous one, will have a passion for caring for the environment. I also think it is important that our next bishop is able to engage with younger people and those of all faiths and none, so I am pleased to be in a position to bring that perspective to the table, and I think it says a lot about the diocese that has invited me to do so."



Bishop Michael visits Zambia

Bishop Michael's return visit to Zambia last week proved an invaluable opportunity to talk about the future of the Zambia Bath and Wells link. Speaking about his trip, Bishop Michael said, "This year's visit was much more focused on moving forward with aspects of our life together, and where we can support each other within the link."

On Sunday 4 May, Bishop Michael preached at the morning service in Lusaka Cathedral. A recording of it can be viewed on the [cathedral's Facebook page](#).

During the week, he met Petra and James Blewett and visited the church they are building together with their local community. He also travelled to Livingstone to attend an international meeting focused on the role of churches in malaria control. [Find out more about his visit](#).

This year, [Zambia Bath and Wells Sunday](#) will be celebrated on 6 July. Bishop Michael encourages everyone who can to take part in the celebration.





Parish Safeguarding Officers celebration evening

Parish Safeguarding Officers from across the diocese joined Bishop Michael for Evensong at the cathedral followed by refreshments at the Bishop's Palace this week. This is the first of a series of events planned for the summer to thank all our Parish Safeguarding Officers for everything they do to support safeguarding across our diocese.

David Niven, who heads the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel (DSAP), the body of volunteers who oversee safeguarding work in the diocese, attended the event. He said, "This is a lovely opportunity for Parish Safeguarding Officers to be recognised and I hope realise how vital they are to the fabric of safeguarding in the diocese. The greatest of respect should be given to these vital volunteers, we are so lucky to have so many good ones."

David, like many members of the Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel, has extensive experience of safeguarding, having worked nationally and internationally in the field of social welfare. He hosts [the Social World podcast](#), interviewing experts from the field. The latest episode features Christian Safeguarding Charity [Thirtyone:eight](#), who provide out of hours support to our diocese. Later in the year he will be interviewing Bishop Michael.



Week of Prayer for Children and Young People

7- 11 July 2025

This year's Week of Prayer for Children and Young People will focus on different ages and stages. Churches, schools, small groups and individuals are encouraged to join in praying for the children and young people in our communities.

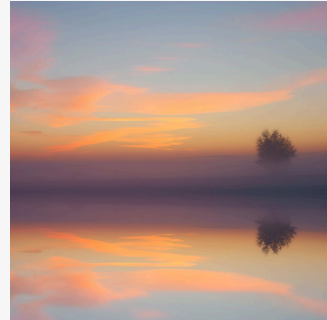
A Prayer Guide, put together by the Go Team, focuses on a different age group each

day.

A simple daily guide offers prayer prompts alongside a written prayer and Bible verse which can be used by individuals and small groups, or to inspire prayers for church services and collective worship.

A short daily video will feature children and young people encouraging us to pray and the themes will be echoed in the Diocesan Prayer Calendar and on social media throughout the week. The Go Team, along with other staff colleagues, will also be gathering online each lunchtime to pray. [Find out more and download the prayer guide.](#)

Interactive Training: Equipping youth leaders to address pornography



Tuesday 20 May, 13:00–16:00. Online.

CEO & Founder of [Naked Truth](#), Ian Henderson, and Schools Associate Mandy Marshall-Taylor will discuss essential tools and strategies to equip your team to engage with young people on the challenging, yet crucial topic of pornography. There will be an opportunity to learn about preparing, planning, and presenting impactful sessions on this topic for youth in church or other Christian contexts.

The session includes a live Q&A and all attendees will receive a PDF resource pack featuring a ready-to-use youth group session outline, scriptures, activities, and talking points. [Please book.](#)



A new Chair for the Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust

We delighted to welcome Andrew Warren to his new role as Chair of the Bath and Wells Multi Academy Trust. Andrew brings more than 40 years of experience in education to his new role. Andrew said “I’m really looking forward to working with the diocese, the Department for Education, the senior team, the trustees, the teachers, school leaders, and the communities across the Bath and Wells Trust.”

Speaking about Andrew’s appointment, Ed Gregory, Bath and Wells Director of

Education, said, "I am delighted to welcome Andrew as Chair of the BWMAT, our Diocesan Multi Academy Trust. Andrew's tremendous experience and passion for education alongside his strong Christian faith brings a great combination to the Trust board." [Read more.](#)

In brief

- St John Ambulance is seeking a voluntary chaplain to support the county of Somerset. In this honorary role, you will provide pastoral care across the county to the St John Units and Networks. [More information can be found online.](#)
- Avon and Somerset Police are seeking individuals to join the team of Police Chaplaincy Volunteers. This is open to both clergy and lay volunteers. [More information is available online.](#)
- Churches Together in Somerset AGM on Friday 23 May at 14:00 by zoom. Guest speakers: Ewen Huffman, Lead Chaplain at Hinkley Point C, and the Revd Chris North, chair of Glastonbury Festival Chaplaincy Team. To register and receive the zoom link, please contact Jonathan Lloyd, ctogethersomerset@gmail.com
- Major Emergencies Plan volunteer training days. Find out how you can help if there was a major incident in your area. Training dates: May 22, Creech St Michael; June 2 Portishead; October 13 Wells. Training is free with no commitment. [Please book online](#) or for more information email allie.white@bathwells.anglican.org
- Family holiday activities at Wells Cathedral 27,28,29 May. 10:30-15:30. An Anthology of Animals. Go 'hunting' for animals hidden in the cathedral and try animal themed crafts.
- Spiritual Walk 17 June, Wimbleball Lake and on Haddon Hill. The walk is 4.5 miles. To book a place please contact stevenwort@hotmail.co.uk or text/call 07557 958013.
- Bookings are now open bathandwells.org.uk/calendar/1250 for Intentionally Intergenerational - a free day conference exploring worship and ministry across the generations. 11 October, 10:00 – 15:00, Wells.

See historic bells up close!

Biddisham's tower bells will be carefully removed for essential repairs this June. The bells were made by a famous bell founder who also made 'one offs' for places like Westminster Abbey. The 19th century bell frame will be mended, and the bells, last rehung in the 1870's, will be restored and returned. Before they go back up everyone is invited to view them on 5 June from 18:00 -19:00.





Lent cross journey

Did you take part in the Lent Cross Challenge? From the responses we received it looks like lots of you did. Crosses were spotted in footpaths, walls, on beaches, country walks and even shoes! Thank you to everyone who shared their images. If you'd like to see any of the crosses that were posted online search [#lentcrosschallenge](#).

The Go Team's invitation encouraged people right across the diocese to take part as we reflected together each day throughout Lent on our journey towards Easter.

Revd Lis Sparrow from St John's Church, Bridgwater said, "The Lent Cross Challenge was taken on by young and not so young, by mobile folk and not so mobile folk. By posting on Facebook each day it was great to find out what others had seen. It was a challenge but also fun and made you look more closely at your surroundings and yourself."

[Find out more about how the challenge captured](#)



Supporting seafarers

[Sea Sunday](#) on 13 July is a time for churches to pray for and think about the men and women who work at sea, far from home. At Royal Portbury and Avonmouth Docks, Bristol, chaplains from the Mission to Seafarers including Revd Lucy Blows and Fr Jeremy Hellier, along with their ecumenical colleagues and volunteers, provide practical help and a compassionate presence to crews from around the globe.

From praying together and providing warm clothing to simply asking, "How are you?", their ministry offers comfort and connection. Many seafarers have limited time ashore, so chaplains will bring supplies directly to ships. Sometimes a small gesture, like a prayer card, can deeply move someone who feels forgotten.

Fr Jeremy reminds us that around 95% of everything we use comes by sea, which means the welfare of seafarers has a strong link to our own lives.

[Read more](#)



Creating joy together

At the recent Axbridge Deanery Synod, something a little different took place, as attendees took part in an afternoon of creativity and connection. The idea was sparked by Revd Gill Sakakini, Pioneer Priest in the Arts. Gill spoke to the group about creativity and God, she reminded them that God is a creator, and that they creators too.

Members gathered in Blackford Village Hall, sharing lunch before stepping into something new. Gill invited everyone to engage their own creativity, despite their nerves and uncertainty.

Caroline Bruce, Deanery Accompanier for Axbridge Deanery, said, "There was something about making something together that brought us a bit closer, it was about remembering God's creativity and being encouraged to join in with it and remembering the power of putting God into everything... that made our morning transformative."

[Read more about the afternoon.](#)

[people's imagination.](#)

Diocese of Bath and Wells

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