



Suicide survivor tells story of hope

Fifteen years ago, **Steve Foyster** jumped off the top of St Andrew's car park, aiming to kill himself. He survived and has now written a book about his on-going road to recovery. **Helen Baldry** reports.

Suicide survivor Steve's book – *Cry to be Heard: My Road to Recovery* – is launched in Norwich on September 10, World Suicide Prevention Day.

Incredibly, Steve survived his car park jump on May 16, 1986, and has now detailed the story of the long and hard road to recovery for his battered body and his fragile mental health.

Steve's humour and resilience shines through his narrative, as he battles through enormous physical challenges and faces up to the demons that drove him off the car park roof.

A focus of the book is on hope and despair. Steve said: "Clockwise was one of my favourite films of the 1980s. The plot revolves around an obsessively punctual headmaster, Brian Stimpson, played by John Cleese, desperately trying to get to a headteacher's conference in Norwich. The plot becomes excessively convoluted. The scene that sticks in my mind is Cleese sitting on the verge of a roadway dressed as a monk with the car that is his only means of transport disappearing over the horizon. He turns to Laura the pupil he has coerced into driving him to the conference and says, 'It's not the despair, I can stand the despair, it's the hope'.

"Having suffered from severe depression in the mid 1980s and more recently a high level of anxiety, I can resonate with the idea of hope seeming so elusive, that thinking it's within reach is almost unbearable. Surely



it's better to concentrate on dealing with the despair, unless the level takes us to a life threatening void? Recently I read from Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians, chapter 4: 'We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed'. Sometimes it might not seem that way, but in my darkest times I cling on to the fact that the Son of God and Man suffered in every way that we do, within His intertwined divine/mortal nature."

Since 2016 Steve has co-facilitated courses on mindfulness and understanding and managing anxiety as a peer tutor for the Recovery College based

within Hellesdon Hospital, Norwich. He brings his lived experience of mental health issues alongside a clinician and promotes the concept of hope as one of the key ways to move forward. He said: "Hope can sometimes seem as beyond reach as car keys dropped deep into a drain or the England football team triumphing at penalties. I try to treasure a sense of humour, having lost it completely for nearly two years."

Talking about mental health is less taboo these days, with celebrities and even royalty speaking openly, finding new ways such as podcasts to reach tens of thousands, many of whom might be suffering from mental distress or caring for

those who do.

Steve said: "Saint John reassures us the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it. Furthermore Jesus Christ offers the greatest of hope that surely He is with us always, even to the very end of the age. Amen to that!"

If you would like to attend the book launch at Revelation on Friday September 10 from 4.30 - 6pm please email enquiry@revelation-norwich.co.uk or ring 01603 619731. Entry is free.

Publisher Paul Dickson will speak about his involvement and Steve Foyster will read extracts and sign copies. £1 from each sold will go to Norfolk & Waveney Mind. You can also order *Cry to be Heard!* at www.allthingsnorfolk.com



Fiona Gosden.

Norfolk churches urged to give warm welcome to disabled

A wheelchair-using Christian has urged Norfolk churches to consider how welcoming and accessible they really are.

■ Fiona Gosden is the Church Inclusion Coordinator at Through the Roof, a charity that provides opportunities for disabled people as well as equipping the Christian community to fully involve disabled people.

The charity's name comes from the Bible account where some men break through the roof of a house help their disabled friend meet Jesus (Luke 5).

Through the Roof has recently launched a map tool to enable people to find churches that are positive about disability inclusion and two Norwich churches have already signed up – Ipswich Road URC and Norwich Central Baptist Church are both now listed.

Fiona said: "I'm a Christian, and a wheelchair user. Many churches don't realise how difficult it can be for disabled people to find a church to belong to. Having recently moved to Norwich, I'm looking forward to exploring new churches, and excited about using our own new map to help me! I'd love to know if I would receive a warm welcome at your church and find a community where I can belong and play my part in God's kingdom — so please do visit the map, and submit your own church so we can tell others about you."

When Fiona first became a Christian, she was apprehensive about finding a church that she could belong to as a wheelchair user. She found that information was available on Google Maps, but it didn't necessarily assure her that she would be welcomed.

Fiona said: "Joining the map doesn't mean your church has perfect access and gets everything right, it means that you are wanting to welcome disabled people and to respond by enabling them to be part of your church."

Churches can welcome disabled people by appointing a Roofbreaker (disability champion) and by joining the Roofbreaker online map. You can do both at www.throughtheroof.org

GOOD NEWS

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Norwich MU to welcome Afghans

■ The Mothers' Union Norwich Diocese has committed to extend the work it has done over the past five years welcoming Syrian refugee families to Norfolk to help those escaping the current turmoil in Afghanistan.

For five years Mothers Union Norwich Diocese has been supporting vulnerable families who are cleared by the UNHCR to come to Britain from the borders of Syria, through the Home Office scheme, working in partnership with the County Council said Jenny Holcombe, Trustee, MU Project Development: "We are also committed to help families escaping from Afghanistan and to date have helped three such families who have come to Norwich".

MU members help prepare local homes to receive refugee families providing funding and item such as bedding.

"Please keep these families in your prayers as they prepare and travel," said Jenny.

Donations 'For Refugees' Resettlement' may be by cheque made payable to 'Mothers' Union Norwich Diocese' and sent to the MU Office, Diocesan House 109 Dereham Road Easton NR9 5ES.

"If you feel inspired to help support these efforts with your time, Mothers' Union invites help for the small team that buys the bedding and makes up the beds. You will be Norwich-based and keep confidential the settings found for our new neighbours," said Jenny.

Please contact Jenny via the Mother's Union Office – as above or 01603 882330.

Building a better post-pandemic future



Norfolk Christian writer and speaker Jane Walters, looks forward to building a brighter future after the pandemic.

■ Build Back Better is the motto of the government's latest scheme to grow and develop the UK economy, but I wonder what the phrase means to you?

Is it just another sound-bite – all hype but no substance? Or is it something that sets your heart stirring, your mind working?

The picture that sprang to my mind was of childhood days on the beach making sand-castles. I remember how I would tap the base of the upturned bucket with my spade, holding my breath and wishing, only for a sibling or friend to take a mean swipe at it, reducing it back to grit. I've often thought it's the perfect illustration of how life can go!

Whether you were affected by the pandemic slightly or catastrophically, we're all in the process of re-building. For you, it might mean tweaking your routine; or perhaps completely re-thinking everything you'd previously known. Whatever the situation, it will require

dedication, patience, perseverance and wisdom.

I'm constantly grateful for the role that faith plays in my life, for being able to turn to God for help. A verse I've clung to through many a tricky situation is Isaiah 58:12. The Message translation says: You'll use the rubble of past lives to build anew, rebuild the foundations from out of your past.

I love that it seems to be saying that nothing is wasted. If our walls are smashed, the bricks can be salvaged and re-purposed. Even our very foundations can be re-established so that we can truly build back better.

And here's the thing about foundations: their shape and depth determines the entire size of the building.

Let's take this opportunity to dig deeper, plan bigger and entrust our lives to God, the Master Architect, the very rock on which we stand.

Ex-sailor is new pastor

Former sailor and nurse, David Humphries, has been inducted as the new pastor at Carleton Rode Baptist Church in South Norfolk, Keith Morris reports.

Steven Halstead, from CRBC, said: "After an interregnum that lasted for 2½ years and much searching and prayer, the Lord has sent us David, who began his ministry here with us on May 24. We had David's induction service on June 26 when the Chapel was full to capacity, and we were pleased to welcome friends of David and his wife Sue who had come to be part of the service. There were also friends of the chapel, members of the Anglican community as well as our congregation.

"We praise and thank God for this new chapter in the life of our chapel and look forward to the future with renewed enthusiasm."

David was born and grew up in Fareham, Hampshire, and became a Christian at a men's breakfast when he was 19 and was training to be a deck officer in the Merchant Navy. After leaving the Navy he went to work in North Wales at a Christian outdoor centre where he met Sue. They were married in 1986 and have two grown-up children.

After completing nurse training in Leicester, the couple moved to Mexborough where David helped plant a church. After working in the NHS for a further nine years, David started training as a Baptist minister and was ordained in 2001; serving as a student minister and then full-time minister at Scapegoat Hill Baptist Church.

In 2009, the family moved to Leeds when David became the minister of Blenheim



David and Sue Humphries outside Carleton Rode Baptist Church.

Baptist Church, set amongst the universities in Leeds. During a break from ministry due to ill health, David worked as a gardener and bus driver and working on a local charity farm called 'Caring for Life' until they were called to Carleton Rode.

David said: "Having been here a few weeks, it has been exciting learning of all that the Lord has been doing over the years at Carleton Rode Baptist Church. His wonderful provision to the fellowship in both people and finance. There is a real spiritual maturity in the fellowship which

bears testimony to the Lord Jesus and previous pastorates and we are looking forward to seeing what the Lord has planned for the future."

David and Sue have taken up residence in the Manse at Bunwell and are busy settling into their new home and getting to know the area as they enjoy dog walking, bird watching and being in the outdoors.

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Michael is High Sheriff and new Deputy Lord Lieutenant



Earlier this year, Her Majesty the Queen approved the appointment of **Michael Gurney** as a new Deputy Lieutenant for the county of Norfolk and he is also serving as its High Sheriff for a year. **Eldred Willey** reports.

Michael Gurney in his Deputy Lieutenant uniform.



Michael said: "Having taken my declaration on April 5, I am looking forward to serving all of Norfolk as High Sheriff for the next year. As well as supporting the judiciary and the police, the traditional role of the High Sheriff, I want to focus on helping the vulnerable young from all communities which is especially important post pandemic.

"I hope to support all the statutory and voluntary organisations working to make young people's lives better."

Michael lives in Northrepps near Cromer. Born and raised in

North Norfolk, he was commissioned into The Blues and Royals in 1973 from Sandhurst and served for 13 years in Northern Ireland, Germany, Oman, Norway, Denmark, Canada, Turkey, and Jamaica.

On return to England in 1985 he went into advertising and in 1987 he joined an agency in Hingham, where he lived for seven years and was treasurer of the PCC. In 1994, he formed The Point marketing communications agency in Norwich with two colleagues and moved with his wife Georgina back to live on the family farm at Northrepps.

It was here that his three children grew up – two are now married and he has four grandchildren.

Michael worships at St Mary's Northrepps, which is a member of the Poppyland Benefice. It currently has a building project to modernise the church for the next century. He started the Diocese of Norwich PCC News publication and was responsible for its development. It helps communicate with all PCC members across the Diocese, spreading good ideas and best practice.

He retired from The Point in 2019 after 25 years. He is a partner

of the family farm and set up the North Norfolk Business Centre.

Michael has served for five years as a trustee of the Norfolk Community Foundation, was for over 10 years on the Norwich Diocesan Board of Finance, and was for a time Chairman of WiSpire.

He has also served on the advisory boards of the Norwich Business School and Norwich4Jobs; was a board member of the Local Economic Growth Initiative in Norwich and Deputy Chair of the Norfolk Reserve Forces Association.

Deputy Lieutenants support the

work of the Lieutenancy and represent the Lord-Lieutenant at various events throughout the county. Having been chosen on the basis of service already given, a Deputy Lieutenant will continue to serve the community both within and outside the framework of the Lieutenancy. Their post nominals are DL.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Norfolk, Lady Philippa Dannatt, said: "I am pleased to welcome Michael to the Lieutenancy, a role to which he will bring a wealth of world experience and local knowledge and I know I can rely on him to use all of his skills to maximum effect."

'Miracle' MBE for genocide survivor Marie-Lyse

Rwandan genocide survivor Marie-Lyse Numuhoza has been made an MBE for services to human rights and the community in Norfolk. Helen Baldry reports.

■ Marie-Lyse came to the UK as a refugee, having witnessed much suffering and killing in the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 when she was a child.

She gives talks about her experiences and works tirelessly to ensure provision for refugees in Norfolk. She believes that in her escape to the UK she was given a second chance to live because she was meant to serve God, and she has been doing just that ever since. She was recognised in the Queen's birthday honours list in June.

Marie-Lyse said, "The MBE honour was a miracle to me, something I wouldn't have expected in a million years. I appreciate the honour from the bottom of my heart. It is an answer to my prayers to be the Light of God's wisdom and happiness in the world. It is also a sign that our prayers are answered but not always in the ways that we would expect. In the 20 years that I have lived in the UK I carried out all my duties guided by Jesus' message to humanity to "love one another as he loved us".

Surviving the Rwandan genocide was the beginning of a journey to a different life in the UK for Marie-Lyse, and one where she had to continue to fight against racism and as an advocate for other refugees, lobbying the local authority to support refugees in Norfolk.

Marie-Lyse said: "The MBE honour has made me stronger to be the voice for people working and living together in harmony. I hope to continue to inspire and empower many in this country, a country that has given me shelter and safety. I am forever proud and thankful to my family, friends and most importantly my colleagues in all the organisations that I am involved with and all the work we do dedicated to building a better future for the future generation. I will continue to pray that we all continue to shine the light of love and care to all God's creations".

Marie-Lyse is a board member of the Mother's Union in Norwich, a Lay Canon at Norwich Cathedral and campaigner for women's rights.



Marie-Lyse Numuhoza.

Monk in the marketplace

Ray Simpson, the founding pastor of the ecumenical church in Bowthorpe, has published an autobiography called *Monk in the Marketplace*. Eldred Willey reports

■ The book begins with Ray's war-time childhood and then maps his early ministry assignments and his calling to be a pastor, which became reality in the 'divine experiment' of Bowthorpe.

Bowthorpe Church was launched in a packed village hall during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January 1978. Ray Simpson was commissioned by the Anglicans, Baptists, Catholics, Methodists, Quakers and United Reformed churches, accompanied by the Salvation Army Band, with the Pentecostal and Community Church leaders offering the right hand of fellowship, 'to establish one family of Christians for one neighbourhood.'

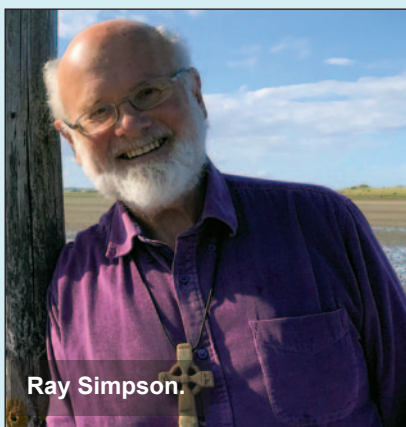
The Anglican Diocese purchased an empty shop unit in Clover Hill, and Ray initially lived above it, opening it daily for prayer, newspapers, and coffee. He named it The Open Door, and it became the first home of the family of Christians.

Those involved in the project decided to form Bowthorpe Community Trust as a separate entity. They turned derelict stables into wood workshops and a shop, sponsored a listening and counselling service and opened a house of prayer, run by Franciscan Tertiary who offered refuge to battered women or pilgrims.

After the church was constructed, Ray set up daily morning and evening prayer, and asked a Norwich museum to donate an ancient Bowthorpe church bell from centuries back. It was tolled daily at 9am and 7pm.

After a decade in Bowthorpe, he was granted a sabbatical leave and visited the cell of Brother Klaus, Switzerland's patron saint. It was during this time of retreat that he had the inspiration to turn a derelict forge next to the vicarage into a prayer cell dedicated to St Walstan.

Ray's interest in Celtic Christianity drew him towards Lindisfarne in Northumbria, the tidal island from which St Aidan launched the Celtic Church in England. When the time came for him to feel that his mission in Bowthorpe was fulfilled, Ray moved to the island and founded the Community of Aidan and Hilda.



Ray Simpson.

Churches up and running



A running club set up at three churches in the Brundall area during pandemic restrictions has now started running together as a group. Tony Rothe reports.

The Yare Valley Churches running club was set up right at the start of the third national lockdown in January this year, using an app called Strava which enabled runners to track and time their runs, but also see other people's runs, as well as motivate and encourage each other.

Once it was all up and running, the group set themselves a challenge to run 500km as a collective, in just one week, with the target of raising £500 for a local charity. Progress was tracked on the Strava group, and the runners went above and beyond in both their fundraising efforts and their distances. The group ended up covering 800Km and almost trebling their fund-raising target.

Tom Woods, sports minister at Yare Valley Churches explains, "We had various plans to start up several different sporting activities, but with restrictions and lockdowns it became increasingly difficult to plan and organise. As a church we were and still are very keen to have a real positive impact in the community using sport as well as many other avenues, and so we started up the running club online."

"The running group has turned into a real community for people of all ages and abilities, with currently 23 members. With restrictions being slightly relaxed we were excited to meet and run as a group for the first time on May 29 at Brundall Countryside Park. The run was met with really positive feedback, with lots of excitement around the use of the churches' new catering pod which served drinks and cakes after the event. We're hoping to do a similar event at some point in the near future."

Tom was also invited by Brundall Primary School to run various football themed provisions during National football week at the end of May. Activities included football-based PE Lessons, lunchtime tournaments, assemblies as well as a skills challenge for all the children to take part in. This was also linked to the National Schools Against Racism Campaign, which involved some very well decorated posters, more football skills, learning more about racism alongside values such as respect, inclusion, and valuing everyone.

The Yare Valley Churches comprises the parish churches of Braydeston, Brundall and Postwick.

■ www.yarevalleychurches.org.uk



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A Norfolk man who spent over six months in hospital in Norwich with pancreatitis and Covid-19 is now home. He attributes his recovery to God's healing and faithful answer to his wife's prayers. **Helen Baldry** reports.

Sean and Jennie Hunte at their home in Norwich.



Sean survives his six-month battle with Covid

During the first Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, Jennie and Sean Hunte enjoyed spending time together as a family at their house in Norwich, with their two boys Joshua and Steven.

Things changed dramatically just after Christmas when Sean began to feel unwell. Jennie convinced him to go and see the doctor. Bloods were taken and Sean was diagnosed as diabetic. Less than a week later he was feeling very unwell and the family had to call an ambulance to take him to hospital.

Sean's blood sugar was off the scale and he had acute pancreatitis. The consultant said it was highly likely that Sean wouldn't survive, and if he did he would be on dialysis three times a week, housebound with little quality of life. Jennie said: "I didn't take in what that meant. I was terrified. I prayed for a miracle."

This wasn't the first time that Sean and Jennie had been in such a desperate situation, asking God to intervene. Sean survived a horrific brain haemorrhage 20 years ago. The couple believe his recovery was miraculous. Jennie said: "Here I was again asking for another miracle." Sean and Jennie are members of Norwich Central Baptist Church and there were many people from the church and friends of the family who were praying for healing.

The outlook wasn't positive. Sean was in intensive care and in addition to pancreatitis, he had caught Covid-19 at the unit. He wasn't conscious, he had multi-organ failure and his breathing was shallow. A

palliative care consultant talked Jennie through the drugs used in the process of end-of-life care and the family was called in to say their goodbyes, limited to just two people due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Jennie said: "All the news I was getting was really bad. I tried to be positive all the way through, but I was terrified. I was not ready to let him go. I told the consultant 'I'm still praying for a miracle. I'm a Christian and I believe God's going to do a miracle.'"

Sean was given a tracheostomy, put back on a ventilator and prepared for high risk surgery. During the day of the first surgery, Jennie prayed and fasted. Sean subsequently underwent seven surgeries, and describes his recovery as a 'rollercoaster'; some days there would be good news, other days his health deteriorated.

Sean said: "I didn't think I would get through. I tried to be upbeat for my family. I wanted to make sure there was a decent memory of me, but I honestly didn't think I would get off that [operating] table."

Despite feeling fearful, Jennie felt a sense of peace. She knew God is faithful and she never gave up hope. She said: "For a long time when I was praying I was afraid to pray 'thy will be done' in case it wasn't God's will for Sean to survive. I didn't want to lose him. That kept weighing on me. I felt I had to be obedient so I began to pray that prayer. I knew I was asking for yet another miracle."

Sean was in the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital for a total of 208 days, and half of

that time was in critical care.

Sean is a vibrant person; he loves life and loves to talk. The tracheostomy prevented him from speaking, which was very difficult for him and there were times when he wanted to die. He said: "My brain was fine but no-one could understand me. It made me feel mad. I couldn't talk, I couldn't write. It was too much."

"I had some serious delusions on the drugs... I had a boxing match, I won a horse race!" Sean also thought he had been stabbed, which is how his brain made sense of the stomach scarring from the operation. He said: "These were actual clear memories, I didn't know they were delusions."

On one occasion when Jennie and Steven visited Sean he looked blank, it was as if he didn't recognise them. They started singing Redemption Song by Bob Marley and Sean's eyes lit up; he was still there.

Sean and Jennie are grateful for the care of the hospital staff. One of Jennie's prayers was that Sean would have Christians around him. One of the intensive care nurses was a Christian as well as Sean's physiotherapist. Jennie said: "God is so faithful and he answers prayer. Without my faith there is no way I would have got through this. I felt God walking beside me all the way."

Sean said: "I'm back! It was a strange time. The majority of the time in hospital I was in a bay with no window. I didn't know if it was night or day. It was horrible. It's so nice to be back at home. God is good - I'm getting there."



John is new YMCA Norfolk chief

YMCA Norfolk has named its new CEO as John Lee, who has worked with the Matthew Project and Spurgeons Norwich Connect and is a senior leader with Proclaimers church in Norwich.

■ John joins from Spurgeons Norwich Connect where he set up, led and tested the pioneering "Whole Picture, Whole Family" approach to domestic abuse.

He previously worked as the Head of Services and Quality at the Matthew Project, leading their work with young people and veterans affected by substance misuse.

While at Norfolk Family Carers, John set up Norfolk's first Young Adult Carers service supporting young people to achieve their goals while providing unpaid care for a family member.

John said: "At a time when the challenges young people and their families face are increasing, the mission of YMCA Norfolk to enable the transformation of young people is absolutely vital. The barriers to young people and families accessing housing, education and employment support have increased due to Covid-19."

"I am honoured to lead YMCA Norfolk's response to breaking down the barriers which hinder young people from reaching their full potential. YMCA Norfolk has an incredible legacy over the last 175 years and most recently under the leadership of Tim Sweeting. I look forward to working with the team and building on this legacy to ensure that young people have a hope filled future."

John says he is passionate about breaking down the barriers for young people and families accessing support and enabling them to reach their full potential. He has previously served as a trustee for YMCA Norfolk. He is on the senior leadership team at Proclaimers church in Norwich.

Philip Macdonald, who led the recruitment process on behalf of the board of trustees, said: "As a Board of Trustees, we are very excited to have appointed John Lee to lead the YMCA forward in this next season. His broad range of skills and passion to make a difference to the lives of young people shone through in an intensive selection process involving a national field of candidates."

"There are huge pressures on Norfolk's young people and families, and the YMCA is needed more than ever to support their well-being as we emerge from lockdown."



Pictured are (left to right) Mike Cadman, Angie Baldwin and Pete and Tricia Gillett

Boost for Waterways Chaplaincy team

The Waterways Chaplaincy Team has doubled in size with the appointment of Pete and Tricia Gillett from Eastgate Ministries in Thirby.

■ The Norfolk and Suffolk Broads team has been operational since March 2020 and the existing chaplains are Angie Baldwin and Mike Cadman.

They are part of the nationwide Waterways Chaplaincy, which has been working for many years assisting those who live and work on or near the waterways of the UK.

Mike said: "The venture into the Broads was a new concept, as it is very much a holiday area. But it is surprising how lives revolve around the Broads rivers. There are lots of liveaboards, both who move from mooring to mooring and those who live in the marinas and the numbers grow all the time.

"It has been so good to see how coming alongside people really works in practice and makes such a difference in the lives of those who struggle a little at times, for example, if their houseboat sinks or they have no heating or have just been lonely during lockdown."

All chaplains cover the whole of the Broads but have regular places to patrol. Pete and Tricia can be found at Oulton Broad with Angie at Upton and Brundall and Mike at Loddon and Stalham.

"Our duties involve everything from directing holiday makers and helping cruiser hirers to moor up to taking the water hose to their boats, directing people to the shops, and listening to the bereaved. Outboard motors have been taken for repair, bus passes and letters delivered, and some good chats have happened over the odd cup of coffee taken to the boat.

"We get to know the fisherman especially in the quiet season when they are out enjoying the fresh air and hopefully catching fish, but also meet those with real concerns for which we can provide a listening ear and sometimes information as to how to get a problem resolved," said Mike.

If you are a Christian, love helping people, have a caring heart and would like to find out more about joining the team, visit: www.waterwayschaplaincy.org.uk or email Mike on mcjpbds@btinternet.com



Boy from council the Lord Mayor

After growing up on a council estate, St John's Catholic Cathedral parishioner **Kevin Maguire** has become Lord Mayor of Norwich. Here he shares a little of his vision for the city.

I am so proud to have been elected as Lord Mayor of this city. I was going to say "greatest city in the world" but that is not the Norwich way: one of the reasons I love Norwich so much is that it does not boast; it is a wonderful place of understatement where superlatives only detract.

I will use my year to give voice to everyone in the city. That will include promotion of the city's fantastic commercial, scientific, and innovative industries. To this end, the Sheriff and I will work particularly hard in strengthening the links with our twinned cities in both Europe and beyond.

I want to say a little bit about my background in order to explain my plans for the year. I grew up on a council estate. As a Roman Catholic, I became the beneficiary of a peerless, state-funded education provided by Jesuits.

My faith has been an important guide throughout my life, especially in relation to ethics and action. And the civic life is all about helping others.

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Cllr Kevin Maguire, Lord Mayor of Norwich on the balcony of City Hall. Picture from Norwich City Council.

estate becomes of Norwich

It is for this reason that I want, during my year, to call upon the major faiths in Norwich plus the Humanist Society to provide members of a seminar group to meet three times over the year to discuss some of the ethical dilemmas faced in public service. I see them as the modern equivalent of the long-pensioned-off office of Lord Mayor’s Chaplain.

I have learnt over my life how essential education is. For a truly inclusive society, everyone must get the best start: they have a right to reach their full potential. It breaks down the class system and gives opportunity for a person to make their full contribution to our society.

It is for these reasons that I want, during the Civic Year to promote Early Years Education and, to this effect, I am writing to Norwich’s Higher Education Institutes

(which includes two world-leading universities) and ask them to support a series of Lord Mayor’s Lectures. The lectures will be there to promote to everyone interested major aspects of early-year development.

■ Labour councillor Kevin Maguire became Lord Mayor in a joint ceremony in which Caroline Jarrold, Community Affairs Adviser at Jarrold and Sons, was appointed Sheriff of Norwich. They replace councillor Vaughan Thomas and Dr Marian Prinsley respectively. The ceremony was the first in two years, since the pandemic had forced the former Lord Mayor and High Sheriff to stay in post.

Kevin is an active member of St John’s Cathedral in Norwich. His four children all attended Catholic Schools. Three went to university (UEA, Durham, Oxford), and he now has two granddaughters.

Walk honours Covid foodbank volunteer

A fundraising walk for Wymondham Foodbank on Saturday August 7 raised £1,695 in memory of Siobhan O’Keeffe, who passed away with Covid during lockdown.

■ Siobhan O’Keeffe was a parish-ioner of St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic church in Wymondham and a volunteer at the Help Point foodbank, which is based at the church. She died unexpectedly last November after a positive Covid test.

“We are overwhelmed at every-one’s kindness,” said Susan Latham, who as a former colleague of Sioban at Crown Commercial Service helped to organise the walk. “Siobhan would be so pleased with this.”

“It was good for the soul,” commented another colleague who was on the walk.

“As a volunteer with our Outreach Project at our foodbank, Siobhan served everyone who requested help with great kindness,” said Arnie McConnell, Coordinator of the Wymondham Outreach Project. “She passionately believed in our obligation to serve the poor and marginalised.”

Her former colleagues at Crown Commercial Service organised the fundraising walk in her memory. Teams in several places across the country, including Norwich, London, Liverpool and Scotland took part and all funds raised are being forwarded to Wymondham Foodbank.

Customers at the Crown Commercial Ser-



vice commented that Siobhan was “rock solid, full of integrity and had your back”. She would have celebrated a significant birthday on 6 May, which made colleagues think about the idea of a walk to honour her. Dogs were especially welcome on the walk, as this was the year Siobhan had planned to get a puppy.

“She was a team player. She is held in the highest esteem by all who worked with her.” To make a donation, please go to www.just-giving.com/crowdfunding/walk-talk-connect

■ Pictured above is Siobhan O’Keeffe and, below, the Norwich group setting off on the sponsored walk from the Crown Commercial office.





Andy and Jo Woodman.

Church initiative at the crossroads

Andy Woodman is appealing for support as he takes up a new mission as vicar of St Anne's Earlham in Norwich and chaplain to the University of East Anglia.

■ For the last four years Andy and his wife Jo have been part of the Mitre Benefice, and he has been site pastor at St Thomas on Earlham Road.

"For the last year or so we were getting that sense that God was calling us out," said Andy, "and we've been exploring in the last year what that might look like."

Andy has chosen the name Crossroads for the new initiative.

"We will begin by starting a new contemporary service," he said, "to reach primarily young adults – but of course anyone is welcome – over the next few months and we want to create a space that is welcoming to all. This will work alongside all of the other things that are happening currently in Earlham."

Andy is appealing for support as he launches the new venture. "Most importantly we need your prayers," he said. "It is so exciting to be at the start of an adventure, but also scary. Our heart is to reach those we are not currently reaching and to meet people where they are at, so music and media are key. We would love your support to see God's church advance."

Andy is also inviting people to consider whether God might be calling them to be part of this new venture and to help start this new worshipping community. "Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you would like to find out more," he said. "We would love to hear from you."

"The parish of Earlham has some really weird statistics compared to the rest of the diocese," he added. "In the diocese parishes have an average of 32% young adults. In Earlham it is 53% young adults. It's a massive, massive mission field."

"We've lived in Earlham for the last four years," said Jo, "and have got to know the area. For comparison, the whole of the Mitre Benefice has 14,000 people. Earlham has 22,000 people."

"I'm sure I'm not the only one who meets so many people who think that church is just completely dead, boring or irrelevant to their life," commented Andy. "Or maybe they think their life is too messy, too chaotic, that they are unworthy... that if they walked into a church building the roof would fall down on their head."

"But Jesus met people at the fringes of society, the least, the last and the lost. It's not about filling my church or your church. It's about filling heaven."

Andy will be licensed for the new role on September 12.

You can find out more at: www.stn.org.uk/crossroads

■ Darren Thornton, meanwhile, who has been Anglican chaplain at the UEA, will be taking on the role of Anglican chaplain at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, where he has already been assisting.

An empowering mission for a struggling community in Zimbabwe struck an immediate chord with **Carolyn Skittrall** who supports several South Norfolk churches to bring change and growth through practical initiative and insight. **Sandie Shirley** reports.



Pictured is Carolyn Skittrall in Zimbabwe with Archdeacon Tapiwa Chatikobo, his wife Obvious and their son.

An African mission

Carolyn's homeland is Zimbabwe; she knew the depths of poverty and the heights of prosperity and yearned to be involved with a mission to ease suffering and injustice but no doors opened until she moved to England 28 years ago.

When she joined the Upper Tas Valley Benefice in her neighbourhood she learnt of its strong historic links with a church mission in Africa.

"I knew it was not a coincidence; I had a knowledge of the country and its unique challenges and difficulties and it could not be ignored since God has put us here to be their family," says Carolyn, an effective connection between the Norfolk and African churches, who helps raise awareness and rally support.

The international mission was set up by Rev James Hay Upcher almost 125 years ago and named All Saints Wreningham because his father was Rector of Wreningham and Ashwellthorpe.

Church warden and treasurer, Christine Minns, born next door to Wreningham Church and who has been a member of its PCC for 45 years, has seen a resurgence of heart for the African Anglican mission. It came over 30 years ago, when James Hay Upcher's great niece from Sheringham approached the church making it aware of the continuing mission in Zimbabwe and its needs explains Christine.

As a result, the benefice helped finance a new primary school and church (a delegation from Norfolk attended the church dedication service in 1997) and continues to aid hardship with encouragement and funds for a community that includes orphans and subsistence farmers.

The support helps enhance living standards, education, and health where the



Church warden Christine Minns.

mortality rate is high; disease, including AIDS, Covid and malnutrition is evident, and essential needs are often unmet.

But its quest is also to bring self-empowerment in a country where there is unimaginable soaring inflation and a failing health service.

The mission near the village of Chivhu has been bolstered through ongoing communication and reciprocal visits including the arrival of Bishop Godfrey Tawonezwi in 2013 who led a Wreningham church service celebrating the international associations.

Carolyn visited four years ago and met Archdeacon Tapiwa Chatikobo, his wife Obvious and family after their growing communication. Over the years, she has helped forge benefice links with various new and changing priests. Friendships have developed by exchanging letters, parcels, telephone calls and WhatsApp messages.

Her visit highlighted the grim realities as the political situation continues to hamper welfare and reform for the poor and marginalised.

Many parents, some of them teachers, cannot afford the school fees or uniforms so children are denied an education perpetuating the poverty cycle. School resources are meagre and outdated; books are torn, faded and fragile.

Transport is non-existent, so children walk miles in the dust and heat to attend lessons while the new school curriculum is impossible to implement without expensive modern technology.

Rev Watson Mapurazini and his family joined the mission as the new priest just after Covid struck last year. His modest salary does not cover basic needs, let alone postage and internet for a mobile phone, explains Carolyn, who has been instrumental in boosting finances to cover living expenses. In recognition of her supportive liaison Watson, and his wife Esther, named their fourth child after Carolyn.

There is still crying need and big hopes for solar panels, running water, electricity, repairs, and school resources including a vegetable garden so the children can eat the produce and learn about gardening.

"But with God's resources we can find a way to make a difference and work with them to see their potential, achieve their goals and see them rise above their circumstances," says Carolyn, who is planning a future visit.

A fundraising coffee morning will take place on September 18, 10.30am – 12noon at All Saints Church, Ashwellthorpe.

For more information email:

cjskittrall@gmail.com

www.masvingo.anglican.org

Minister's prodigal son returns to faith

Rev Nigel Fox, former minister at Wroxham Road Methodist Church, recently had the joy of baptising his son Tom, who dramatically returned to faith from a criminal lifestyle. **Eldred Willey** reports.

Speaking at the baptism on August 1, Nigel said: "I've often struggled in ministry. I've often struggled in parenthood... but today is a testimony to the power of prayer. It's a testimony of the power of the grace of God to turn things around in ways which are beyond our understanding."

The celebration took place at Bowthorpe Road Church, home to the Chinese Methodist congregation in Norwich.

Afterwards Tom, or Tomasio as he prefers to be called, spoke of his journey: "My parents split up soon after I was born. My Mum Stevi then met Nigel, and they married when I was two years old. He adopted me and raised me as his son.

"I struggled with authority and felt like the black sheep of the family. The shame I felt made me rebel, and after the family moved to Oldham I ran away from home while studying for my A levels.

"With my southern accent, smart appearance and good schooling, I found it easy to con, lie and deceive my way into any job or woman's life and to gain money fraudulently. I was drawn into a life of drugs, and to finance my party lifestyle I started to sell drugs and to steal.

"During this dark period my Mum died of cancer. Her faith in God made me feel I didn't want to carry on living like I was, but I was scared to face the problems: the list was so long by now. I smoked weed to get some sleep, ecstasy to feel loved and cocaine to stay awake.

"Now I look back I'm amazed I'm alive. There were so many points where I could have been shot dead, stabbed or overdosed. I had what I used to think at the time were spider senses: don't do that deal here, not yet, and it literally saved my life on several occasions. Now I look back I realise it was God's hand on my life, and people that were praying for me.

"I met Shelley, who was the first woman to see through my lies, and she told me I could leave my act at her door. I opened up to her, being honest about my life and feelings.

"I had been on the run from the police for several years and ended up sleeping rough on Mousehold Heath. I was hungry and felt completely hopeless.

"One evening I arranged to go to



Tomasio Fox, below being baptised by his father Rev Nigel Fox (left) and Rev Andy Burrows.



Nigel's house. At the door he said: 'Come in, son, let's put the kettle on.' People who know me wouldn't believe I said: 'No thanks. I don't want a coffee. I need prayer.' I knew I needed to give my life to Jesus and make things right. That night I experienced deliverance and such a sense of peace.

"I moved into the House of Genesis, a home for ex-offenders, and received treatments that almost cleaned up my life. Months later I bumped into Shelley and after a few years of ups and downs, we were married at Wroxham Road Methodist Church by Nigel.

"But the years of abuse of my body started to catch up. I had an MRI on my spine and my GP told me it was red marrow proliferation. Shelley and I Googled it, and every answer came out as cancer. I was in incredible pain and lost the feeling in both arms.

"I took enough painkillers to put an elephant down, and we went to Mauritius for a two-week break. I was a wreck in paradise. A Hindu lady noticed I was up every morning, and

asked me to join her on the beach, where she prayed for me.

"A few days later I went back with her to the hotel, where she brought me a coffee. To my surprise, I could feel the

heat. I was in shock. I started to jump up and down. A miracle had happened. I was like a child all day, swimming, throwing water about, running.

"On our return to the UK the Covid pandemic was just breaking. I carried on working but found that some jobs nipped my nerves. This kept happening until one day I couldn't move or see daylight. I got to my knees and started to pray. I said: 'God, I've made such a mess of my life. It's your turn.'

"Nigel came round a few days later and just before he left, he said the Priest's Blessing in Hebrew over me. Then he said, 'Let me know what happens.'

"Well, my eyes were opened to the spiritual realm. I saw angels and demons. The Holy Spirit started guiding my Bible studies. I started to do things like sell my beloved Mercedes to pay for someone's care and give my designer clothes to the homeless.

"I have died to my old self. My whole life has changed. I have Jesus at my centre. He is my Lord, Saviour and friend."

Norfolk's first-ever recovery hub provides a safe space

■ Norfolk-based charity, the Matthew Project, has worked in innovative ways together with people and communities affected by substance misuse and associated issues for over 37 years.

It supports children, teenagers, adults and military veterans to receive professional advice, information, counselling, care and education.



Matthew Project staff and volunteers.

Fundraising and events officer Sarah King said: "We have workers based across the county in both rural and urban areas. Our work takes place in a variety of settings including schools, youth venues, police stations, courts, in the community and at our own award-winning Next Steps centre based in the heart of Norwich.

"The centre is Norfolk's first ever community recovery hub, providing a safe space for those in recovery from addiction to learn new skills, build community and maintain their recovery. The centre also provides additional support for affected others, veterans, and NEET young people (not in education, employment or training). Next Steps has quickly become a valuable community asset, remaining open throughout the pandemic."

Despite lockdown, from April 2020 to April 2021 the centre saw 43 adults in recovery from addiction taking part in its Recovery Support Programme, 1,807 telephone calls were made for advice and support, 185 drop-in sessions were delivered, 8 members went on to volunteer and provide peer support, 12 veterans took part in the weekly drop-in café and 15 young people attended Hangout evening groups.

To find out more visit: www.matthewproject.org, call 01603 626123 or email enquiries@matthewproject.org

NORFOLK REMEMBERS

A service to remember those lost and suffering due to substance misuse and associated issues

Thursday 23rd September, 2021 from 7pm to 8.30pm
The Church of St Peter Mancroft, Norwich NR2 1QZ



To book your free tickets or for more information, scan this QR code or go to www.matthewproject.org/norfolkremembers



This event offers time for reflection to anyone struggling or grieving as a result of drug and alcohol addiction and is free to attend. Wherever you are on this journey you are welcome to join us.

Contact details
Telephone: 01603 626123
Email: enquiries@matthewproject.org
www.matthewproject.org

SPM
St Peter Mancroft

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Finding hope together

Baptism of fire for new Norfolk church pastor

Barbara McLellan had a baptism of fire when she was appointed as the new pastor of **Alive Church in Wymondham** one year ago, right in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Church pastor, Barbara McLellan.



Charity manager Barbara started the role in August 2020, at a hugely challenging time for all churches, when they could not meet in person.

Barbara had lived in Wymondham and been part of the church for 12 years and before becoming its pastor she served in various aspects of church life including Sunday School, the worship band and later leading the prayer team for the church. "I have also been involved for a number of years with healing on the streets, which I think is one of the most exciting things you could do as a Christian," said Barbara.

She trained at Westminster Theology College, gaining a post-graduate diploma: "Which was a real blessing because I learned a lot and met people from different walks of life."

Barbara also works as a Governance and Compliance Manager for a charity in Norwich. "The charity works mainly with children and young people, so for me that really fits in with what I see as a service. But you never switch off from being a pastor because it is not like a nine-to-five job."

Married to civil servant, Fillan, for 30 years, the couple have two sons, the older

one is a solicitor in Manchester and the younger son is at university.

"My hopes and plans for the church are that it continues to be a welcoming place where everyone can play a part and use their God-given skills and abilities," said Barbara. "I want to see us continue to grow as a community church and impact the lives of people in Wymondham. Like all churches we are working our way out of the impact of all the restrictions, but also with the acknowledgement that things will not be business as usual."

"I am hoping for a church that looks and feels different but remains relevant to people in this season. A church that carries the message of the gospel but also lives it out in a practical way – being able to help people who need help and by doing that pointing them to Jesus."

"All across the country, people are slowly returning to face-to-face church services and we are no different, but I am also hoping to see new faces, people who have had an encounter with Jesus during lockdown and want to be a part of a church family," said Barbara.

Part of the Evangelical Alliance, Alive Church meet at Central Hall, Back Lane, Wymondham every Sunday at 10.30am.

Email: barbara@alivechurch.org.uk

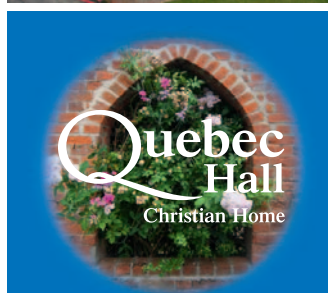
Open Day



and Service of Thanksgiving

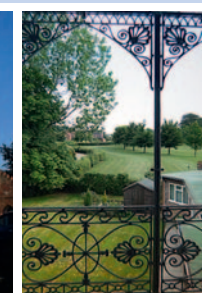
- ★ Tea in the picturesque gardens or in the marquee
- ★ Tour the Hall...visit the Bungalows
- ★ Enjoy the Fellowship

Saturday 18th September at 3pm



For further information, please contact:

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e info@quebechall.co.uk
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Providing retirement care with a Christian ethos

Care and retirement homes in Norfolk are providing loving care with a Christian ethos.

Christian retirement home Quebec Hall at Dereham, in Mid Norfolk, is to hold an Open Day and Service of Thanksgiving on September 18.

Providing a home for retired Christians for around 60 years, the management and staff aim to provide a secure, home-from-home atmosphere coupled with personal care and attention. Above all, they wish the home to be one in which the love of God is readily apparent from the care shown.

The Open Day, to which everyone is welcome, will take place on Saturday September 18 with the Service of Thanksgiving at 3pm. Tea can be taken in the picturesque gardens or in the marquee and you will be able to tour the Hall and visit the Bungalows.

The Hall has 19 rooms and all are bright, airy and en-suite. The Hall has two large lounges, one of which features a balcony that affords good views of the gardens and beyond. The lounge on the ground floor is used extensively for the majority of the Hall's activities including the weekly services.

There are also 43 sheltered bungalows situated in the grounds of Quebec Hall. The self-contained bungalows are well suited to those who are seeking peace in their later years and who wish to maintain their independence.

For more information visit www.quebechall.co.uk or contact manager Mark Woodgett on 01362 692504 or via email at: info@quebechall.co.uk

Quebec Hall is to be found at Quebec Road, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 2QY

■ Excellent loving care and support is provided at Corton House, a care home with a Christian ethos located in the heart of Norwich.

Situated close to Norwich city centre, Corton House is easily accessible for the city and travel links. Residents enjoy peaceful surrounding and large secure gardens. Accommodation includes good-sized living space and en-suite facilities, wheelchair access and newly-refurbished communal spaces.

Current residents describe Corton House as 'a very happy place' and say that 'food and care are second to none'. Resi-



staff and residents at Eckling Grange retirement home.

dents appreciate the professionalism and genuine loving care provided by the staff team, who help them to be as independent as they choose to be and receive the support they need when they need it. The home was awarded 'Good' across all areas by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in May 2021.

Corton House has fostered links with local churches over many years. There are regular services for those that want to participate, the opportunity to receive communion and pray with the resident chaplain.

Anybody interested in finding out more can arrange a tour. Call 01603 620119 or email manager@cortonhouse.co.uk www.cortonhouse.co.uk

■ Eckling Grange, near Dereham, has been providing Christian Care since 1963 and its Christian values remain at the forefront of everything it does, according to General Manager Stewart Barber.

"Despite everything that has been thrown at the care industry during the pandemic, we continue to provide Residential and Dementia Care, Sheltered Accommodation and Domiciliary Care, all within the six acres of beautiful gardens," said Stewart. The Care and Management Team is headed up by committed Christians, and the Pastor.

But what does Christian Care mean – what makes it different? "In the case of Eckling Grange there is a strong focus on spiritual care, as well

as the physical, holistic care in the complete sense," said Stewart. "Our Pastor, Ian Mason, heads up a team of resident volunteers, all living on-site, whose prime focus is Spiritual Ministry and support for our residents and staff. This includes regular worship services, Bible studies, prayer groups, fellowship times, one-to-one support, staff training and even a YouTube channel so recorded worship/events can be viewed at any time. 135 Christians living together, covering many different denominations gives a rare sense of true Christian unity."

To make an enquiry email enquiries@ecklinggrange.org.uk or call 01362 692520.

Visit: www.ecklinggrange.org.uk

More Norfolk churches house the homeless

Christian charity **Hope into Action** (HIA), which enables churches to house the homeless, is expanding its work across Norfolk with new homes in Sheringham and Gorleston. **Tony Rothe** reports.

■ HIA operates in Peterborough, Norwich, Cambridge and Nottingham, working with 50 churches to provide 87 houses for over 270 tenants.

In Norfolk the charity offers 44 beds across the county to tenants ranging from refugee families to those recovering from addiction. From those fleeing domestic violence, to rough sleepers. What every tenant has in common is a desire to start a new, fresh chapter of their life, and address whatever obstacles may have been in their way to securing their own accommodation.

Tony Gray, leader of the Norwich Hope into Action team, explains: "Lighthouse Community Church in Sheringham has responded to the homeless need they see by opening a house with HIA near their church. The house is in the final stages of refurbishment with members of the church helping with decorating and preparing it to become a wonderful home, which will open shortly. As a church with such enthusiasm for the work and a range of skills, they will be brilliant at walking alongside the tenants in that house."

Ian Savory, senior leader at the Sheringham church, said: "Lighthouse Community Church is very much looking forward to our partnership with Hope into Action – We have huge respect for all the organisation does in bringing the reality of community that changes lives for the better. One of our values is Transforming Communities, and HIA brings a whole new level to that goal, one person or family at a time."

This will be house number 13 for HIA in Norfolk. The house in Gorleston, recently opened with St Mary Magdalene Church, is now established and has taken two tenants. Church members have supported them in many practical ways and involved them in the local community.

The Norwich team is now partnering with Wellspring Church to open a house in Dereham, and are in the process of buying a property.


Kate Doran-Smith, Head of Network for HIA UK, said: "To see every one of those 44 people in Norfolk offered love, prayer and support from local Christian volunteers, who want to put their hope into action, is a sheer delight. Watching Tony and the local team empower not only the tenants, but also their church partners just proves that even a global pandemic can't lockdown the hope and determination of God's people."

If you or your church would like to know more, call 01733 558301, email tony.gray@hopeintoaction.org.uk or visit: www.hopeintoaction.org.uk



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GREAT LOCATION IN THE HEART OF NORWICH CLOSE TO TRAIN/BUS STATION

New Norwich vicar is ex RAF intelligence officer

■ Former RAF intelligence officer Tom Eagles who, with his wife Charlotte, has planted a church in Coventry, has been appointed as the new vicar at St Thomas Norwich (STN) and the Mitre Benefice in the city.

The couple, who have two children, Tobias (5) and Barnabas (6), planted St Mark's in Coventry out of the well-known Gas Street church in Birmingham. So it is a sister Holy Trinity Brompton church plant to STN. "It was a bit of an adventure," said Tom.

Tom travelled widely with the RAF, including experience of a couple of wars. Charlotte is an NHS occupational therapist, specialising in mental health, who comes from Norwich. More recently she has worked on the evangelisation team at Soul Survivor.

Tom said: "It does feel like God has been calling us to Norwich for eight or nine years and now is the time. We love the city, feel at home and have family in the area.

"We are outward-looking and want to bring everybody into a place of encounter with Jesus. Ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit is a big part of who we are and we want to make space to listen to God's voice. We believe he speaks today and he heals today, we believe in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

"We see church as a family, to connect with each other, be real with each other and to learn and journey together."

STN Interim Vicar, Dave Lloyd, said: "We are thrilled that God has been calling Tom and his wife Charlotte to ministry in Norwich for some time and we are all looking forward in faith to the next chapter of the adventure that is STN!"

Tom was licensed at STN on July 31.



Nurturing change and growing hope as a beacon of light on a **Thetford** housing estate is a mission that **Rev Matt Houghton** wholeheartedly embraces. **Sandie Shirley** reports.



Beacon of hope in Thetford

Matt became Team Vicar of Cloverfield Church last November and alongside the church's leadership team has been steering it through the Covid pandemic.

He says: "I have a heart for discipleship and mission and making Jesus known by relevant means."

This church cum community centre began nearly 30 years ago and is a local ecumenical partnership between the Diocese of Norwich and the United Reformed Church. It was planted on the edge of an expanding housing estate in Thetford which has residents of diverse culture, age, and social standing.

Matt's life journey has helped prepare him for this role in a town of "much need and potential." Personal hardship and difficulties have bred empathy. He has been out of work on three occasions during his life and knows the challenges of limited funds, uncertainty, and the expectations of providing for a young growing family.

"I needed to make sense of what God was doing," reflects Matt. Several years ago, he was involved with voluntary work in Essex including Christians Against Poverty and Foodbank, before embarking on a five-year pathway to ordination as an Anglican priest, something he felt called to do from the age of 21.

Matt's faith was grounded during childhood and as a young man he followed in his father's spiritual footsteps and example to pursue faith, enterprise, and Christian service.

He became a church youth worker and pioneer for young people working in various churches around the country as well as with a nationwide youth charity. Now he is plan-

ning to channel that experience into exploring vision, discipling and growing community geared to their needs and growth.

With the rising issues following the pandemic one of the courses Matt is keen to run for the local community is 'The Wellbeing Journey' – a course exploring issues surrounding mental health to help those of faith or no faith address key issues including emotional, spiritual, relational, and vocational wellbeing with contributions from leading experts in their field.

'Silver Threads' – a church group run by Moya Brown – provides a vital source of hope for older folk in the community, hosting teas, outings, visiting speakers and musicians. During lockdown, the church became a welcome voice of comfort and friendship with regular supportive telephone calls.

Existing church and community partnerships are now gaining traction following the lifting of lockdown restrictions. They include the return of various community groups which are based in the church building. These include Thetford and District Dementia Support group, a weekly drop-in centre, providing support and fellowship for those with dementia and their families, friends and carers.

Prayer is the power and ignition behind every venture: it changes everything endorses Matt. Throughout the year a weekly prayer rota covers every road on the estate which is plotted on a map.

Says Matt: "In the autumn I am hoping to engage the church in a process of conversation, prayer and seeking God for our future." www.cloverfieldchurch.org

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www.ymcanorfolk.org



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