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Will is livin' the Cliff dream after healing

Norfolk-based Cliff Richard lookalike and tribute act **Will Chandler** has launched a brand-new show for church mission, entitled, "Walking in the Light", following complete recovery from a recent cancer scare. **Tony Rothe** reports.

The 'Cliff As If' show contains lots of the big Cliff Richard hits that most people of a certain age are familiar with, like Summer Holiday, Livin' Doll and Miss You Nights. It also has a few of the old Gospel songs that Cliff used to sing on his own tours to churches with 'Crusaders' many years ago. Will also shares a vibrant living testimony of how God has healed him from cancer after being told that he had a terminal illness and that now there is no longer any evidence of the disease.

Will has been a Christian since the age of nine and has been involved with Christian ministry in one form or another for most of his life since then, including 10 years as a pastor of two churches.

The act known as 'Cliff As If' began in 2007 and has taken Will all over the UK and across much of Europe. He has performed in theatres, holiday centres, cruise ships, clubs, concert halls, churches, and at many private functions for some famous people. He has been described as "one of the world's best-loved tribute acts." When Sir Cliff Richard met Will in 2008, he was astonished at how much Will looked like him. Cliff said, "it is great to meet me!"

Will's show went on hold in April 2022, when he was diagnosed with malignant Melanoma cancer and given a terminal prognosis of six months to two years, following a seizure while out running a few months earlier.

Will said, "I was not moved at all to any state of panic or fear about what lay ahead of me when I received the news, because having experienced God move in my life many times, this was just another faith hurdle to get over. I never had any doubt that I would survive and told everyone that would be the case.

"I was even given a platform at a few church services in Cromer to testify of what the Lord Jesus had done for me. So it was of no great surprise to me when in April 2024 after two scans I was informed that there was no evidence of disease." He is determined to maintain



Will Chandler performing his Cliff Richard tribute act at Sheringham's Lighthouse Church. Picture by Gareth Gabriel.

his good health as he eats a vegetarian diet, and runs up to four miles a day.

Despite entertaining thousands of people over the past 18 years Will's heart has always been in mission and evangelism. Sharing the Gospel is his passion and that is why he is relaunching this initiative. Many churches who have taken on the show have used it not only for mission but for fundraising too. Cromer Parish Church used the show to raise money for Tearfund in 2023, when over 300 people attended and £2,500

was raised.

Will explained that he is still seeking the Lord's guidance as to how much he should perform his 'Cliff As If' act, as he now has agents knocking at his door asking him to do shows all over the UK. "I would still like to think that there is mileage in doing church shows for mission and fundraising. The events I've done with church groups over the years have been such a blessing to me, and reports of growth in church attendance

■ Story continues on page 2.

Free media training offer for Norfolk churches

A series of free media workshops for churches and Christians across Norfolk is set to be run as part of the Network Norfolk Christian news website's 20th anniversary year, and you can sign up now.

■ The first has been arranged for Thursday March 27 between 10 am – 12 noon to run at St Paul's Church, Salisbury Road in Great Yarmouth. The training is free, and open to all churches and Christians in east Norfolk and the east of Suffolk including Lowestoft and Beccles.

Further workshops are set to run in:

■ **Norwich**, Wed April 23, 10am to 1pm, YMCA Norfolk Community Hub, Aylsham Road.

■ **Sheringham**, Wed April 30, 10.30am to 1pm, Lighthouse Church

■ **King's Lynn**, Wednesday May 7, 10am and 12noon, Gaywood Church Rooms

Website editor, Keith Morris, said: "In line with our mission as an charity, we want our anniversary celebrations to both help equip the Norfolk Christian community to communicate more effectively and to highlight much of its great work.

"To this end we are holding a series of free media training events for our supporters and readers, giving them the opportunity to learn more about digital communications, writing news stories and press releases, taking great news pictures and some of the secrets of social media."

The workshops will cover topics aimed at helping churches and Christian organisations communicate their great work more effectively. It will be run by Keith, who is an experienced journalist, editor and communications director, and local Network Norfolk content editors.

Keith explains: "Each workshop can be tailored to those attending it and it works best if people come with ideas about what they want to communicate."

Topics will include some of:

- How to tell your faith stories more effectively
- What is a news story and how to write it.
- Tips on writing a press release
- Using different media channels to get your message out.
- How to compose, take and edit a news picture.
- Image and content copyright
- The local media landscape
- How to write for the web

Places are free, but will be limited to make sure that we can engage fully with participants to help them get the most out of the interactive workshops.

You can register your place by emailing web@networknorwich.co.uk and stating your name and organisation / church and preferred workshop location

GOOD NEWS

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Award-winning Norfolk designer, surfer and adventurer, **Colin Howell**, always relies on the same guide on his travels – Jesus. **Tony Rothe** reports.



Designer, surfer and adventurer, Colin Howell.

Adventurer Colin has only one guide – Jesus

As well as being an award-winning designer at a company that designs banknotes, Colin is an adventurer who leads coastal explorations and takes his family on world-wide expeditions. But above all he is a Christian, and has always relied on Jesus to guide him.

Colin has always had a passion for art and design, and started training with Harrisons, a company who designed banknotes and passports, when he left university. Although that training was strict, he progressed well and, after ten years working in High Wycombe, started travelling overseas with his work. His love of travelling the world had started!

Colin had become a Christian at the age of 14, giving his life to Jesus on the school bus! During his time in High Wycombe, he started getting involved in church life and ministry at Kings Church, which continued through his twenties. Work was also progressing well, with Colin promoted to a senior design post.

But as he travelled around the world with his work, and also to pursue his passion for surfing, his attendance at church started to fade. "I guess you could call those my wilderness years," he says. "I never lost faith in Jesus, and continued to pray, but became too busy for church".

His travelling also took him to dangerous places, such as Afghanistan and Libya, and he recalls the time he narrowly escaped from the militia when sight-seeing in a bunker that had been used by Colonel Gaddafi. "But I'm convinced that it was God who was watching over me and kept me safe during those adventures," he says.

It was when surfing with his brother in Newquay in Cornwall that he met Ben Kewell, and the two went on to become firm friends. When Colin and his brother bought a flat in Cromer, where they found the surfing less commercialised, they invited Ben to stay with them.

Colin and his brother started attending Mount Zion Church in Norwich, which later became Soul Church. Jon Norman was leading the Friday youth group, and Colin got involved with that. He invited Ben to come with him to church, and he became a Christian. Ben went on to run youth work in Cromer, and set up a surf school there.

In 2003, Colin met Miriam, and following a whirlwind romance they married in Sicily. They now have five children, who are all being home schooled. "They are all adventurers," said Colin, "and home schooling enables us to enhance their education with adventures around the world. We both want to instil a Godly confidence in our children."

Colin was appointed as Missions Director at Mount Zion, and started doing missions abroad. He took a six-month sabbatical from his work and went to Africa on mission, with three months in Mozambique, then touring the rest of Africa. At one stage they were held at gunpoint, but is convinced that God enabled them to escape.

Colin is also Creative Manager at The Coastal Exploration Company, which gives people the opportunity to explore the Norfolk coast in their fleet of traditional wooden sailing boats under sail. He says: "We offer experiences that go beyond mere adventure, deeply rooted in the rhythms of nature and the richness of history. These journeys are designed to reconnect people with nature, recharge your spirit, and embrace a lifestyle that prioritizes slow and sustainable living."

In his "day job", Colin is now Head Designer at HID Global and has won several prestigious design awards, including the Red Dot Design Award in 2024. "This is the best of the best! This is the one everyone wants in the design industry – I'm so thankful to God for this blessing!

"I have always relied on Jesus for opportunities and openings in life, and these have often been miraculous." coastalexplorationcompany.co.uk

New chaplains are needed by Norfolk Police says Rev Ian

Former military policeman and army pilot, **Rev Ian Byrne**, is the new lead chaplain for Norfolk Police and is keen to recruit new chaplains to join his team. **Keith Morris** reports.

Ian took over the key role with Norfolk Constabulary following the death of former lead chaplain, Richard Whall, last May.

A former Royal Military Policeman and army pilot, Ian served mainly in Germany and Northern Ireland, with short tours in Canada and a post Gulf War deployment with 42 Commando to the Caribbean.

After five years employed as a military advisor and project manager to the government Centre for Defence Analysis in Farnborough, Ian retired from the Army in 2001 to train for ministry in the Church of England.

For 11 years prior to retirement, Ian had been an active lay member of the Army Archdeaconry Synod, its role at the time being to provide moral, spiritual, and ethical advice and support to military decision makers as and when requested.

After two years of ministerial training based in Oxford, Ian, wife Ann and their three girls, moved to Suffolk in 2003 where he held various ministry and chaplaincy posts before retiring to Wymondham in October 2020.

Ian has experience of working closely with various civilian police forces in varying overt and covert roles during his military career and has been a voluntary police chaplain for around 20 years.

"With three paramedics and a serving police officer in my immediate family, together with my own life experiences, I understand the pressures and the reality of life in uniform and in the service of others and am clear on the need for chaplains to support the Police service," said Ian.

"Police work has become increasingly complex and demanding. It is often daunting and sometimes dangerous. It is recognised that, more than ever, at times individuals may need some help to be able to keep things in perspective.

"Police work can affect us, our physical and mental well-being, as well as, perhaps, our own deeply held standards and beliefs. Chaplains are available as a confidential listening ear to anyone who needs us, in

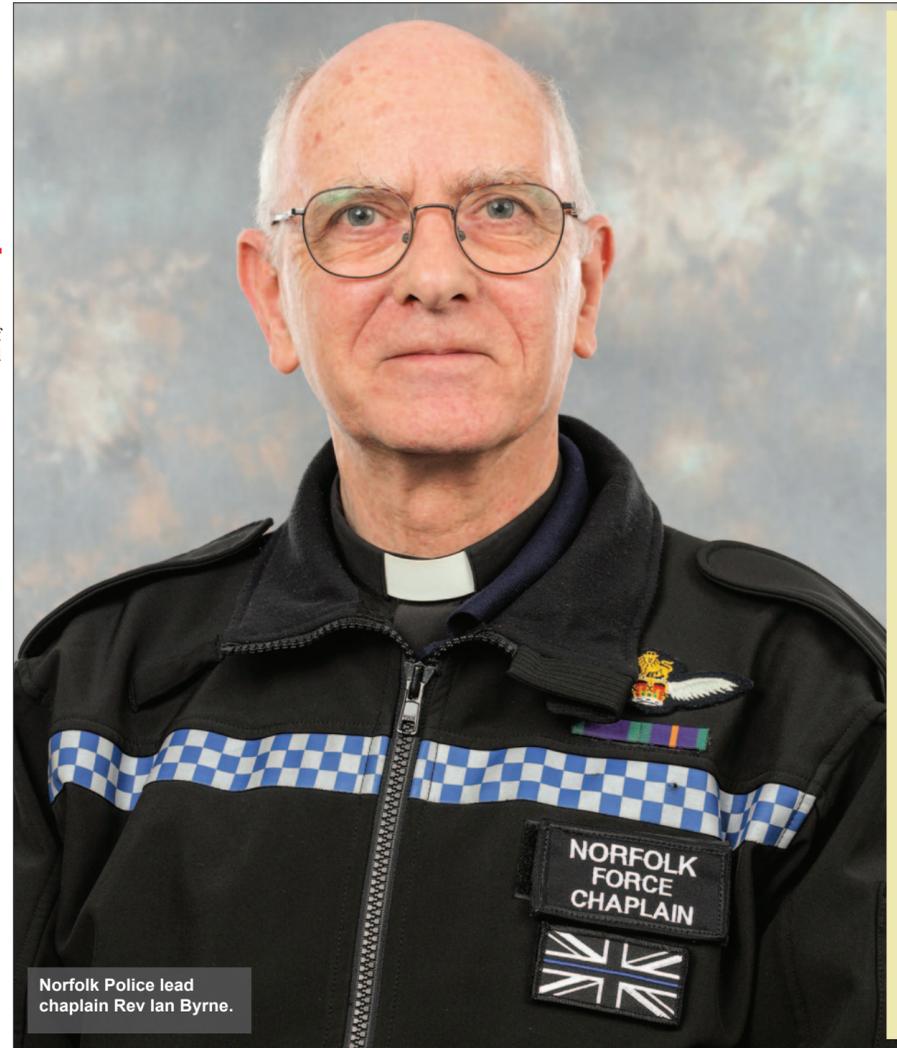
whatever way that might be."

Ian is Lead Chaplain for Norfolk Constabulary as well providing regular support to its Headquarters at Wymondham Police Station and Investigation Centre, and the police training establishment at Hethersett.

Ian said: "I am keen to establish wider contacts within church and voluntary groups in the Norwich area, and would be happy to provide a short introduction to police chaplaincy and hear from anyone who is interested in finding out more."

Currently there are nine voluntary police chaplains supporting Norfolk Constabulary across the county. Not all are in full-time ministry or necessarily ordained ministers; but all are appropriately qualified and willing to give time to the role.

Anyone interested in the role is welcome to make initial contact with Ian at: norfolkchaplain@gmail.com www.policechaplaincy.uk



Norfolk Police lead chaplain Rev Ian Byrne.

So what do chaplains do?

According to Police Chaplaincy UK, chaplains are committed to:

- Supporting and encouraging officers, staff and their families confidentially and discreetly.
- Respecting and reflecting the diversity of belief within the service and the wider community.
- Valuing each individual as a complete person in body, mind and spirit.
- Caring for, and supporting the organisation, contributing when appropriate in the decision-making processes.

What do chaplains do?

- Build relationships based on trust
- Get to know the people we serve and understand the job they do
- Support officers and staff in all aspects of their professional lives
- Develop clear and strong links with operational policing

How do chaplains do this?

- By visiting police stations and specialist units
- Attending training sessions
- Responding to major and critical incidents
- Being alongside people in the most challenging times of life – spending time on duty with officers and police staff
- Being a non-judgemental listening ear, a silent, compassionate presence, someone who affirms who you are and cares about what you believe
- Being representative practitioners who, true to their own faith or belief, engage openly and honestly with those of all faiths and none

Will is livin' the Cliff dream

■ Story continues from page 1. through the shows I've done have been very encouraging. I had a church gig near Burnley in Lancashire at the end of October, which went very well. After doing the show on Saturday night we were able to almost double the congregation size on the Sunday."

Will also presents a Christian music show, 'Gotta Get Gospel', on Poppyland Radio, based in nearby North-repps, every Sunday at 9am, and currently has more listeners than any of the other shows aired from the station. The show is full of Christian music old and new. It also has a section featuring new artists. The show can be accessed at poppylandradio.co.uk.

But Will's main focus at the moment is his new "Walking in the Light" show, because he believes that a good way of getting family members, friends and neighbours into church is by inviting them to a Cliff Richard Tribute Show.

"All the church needs to do is to provide the building and invite people and leave the show up to me" says Will. "I'll provide the lights, sound and entertainment."

Find out more about Will's tribute act at www.cliffasif.co.uk



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Bruno to retire from royal role

Norfolk's royal pageantmaster Bruno Peek, from Gorleston, will step down from his role in May, after 40 years of serving the Royal Family. He attributes his success to God's grace. **Anna Heydon** reports.



Picture courtesy of Bruno Peek. Story courtesy of Gorleston Community Magazine, Martin Wilkes and David Yaxley.

Bruno was asked to become pageantmaster over 40 years ago, after a meeting with the Royal Family when they visited Great Yarmouth.

He has been responsible for organising events marking special occasions nationally and internationally, including Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee and 90th birthday, and most recently the 80th anniversary of D-Day in 2024. His final event before retiring will be the 80th VE day celebrations this May.

Following his appointment as pageantmaster, Bruno was made a member, lieutenant, and finally a commander in the Royal Victorian Order; honours which only the monarch can bestow. Bruno is the only person to be honoured three times.

In spite of all his successes, Bruno's attitude is humble: "God's given me a gift to bring people together," he says, "I will never ever abuse it."

He hopes his gravestone will bear a testament to his love for his wife Moira, and says that his final wish is that: "Through the grace and goodness of God, I hope that I have served my country well."

Bruno and his twin brother George, were born in King's Lynn to Polish parents, before being abandoned and placed in a children's home. However, they

were then adopted by a Christian couple.

As Bruno recalls: "me and my brother were hanging out the window in the home and saw these two people walking up the drive, and one of us shouted, 'Have you come for us?' because originally they were only gonna adopt one, but they just fell in love with us straight away. So we were adopted together and they spent their lives basically looking

after us and bringing us up in a good Christian way."

Things didn't always go smoothly for Bruno's family. He explains that while he joined a pop group called Train, his twin brother George joined a heavy rock band and got into drugs. Bruno recalls one tragic night when he had been playing a gig.

He returned home to see that all the lights were on, and wondered whether his brother had waited up for him. However, he recalls: "when I got in, it was my poor father saying that my brother had committed suicide and jumped in the river."

Bruno admits that the tragedies in his life have affected him deeply: "people think I've got a lot of confidence, but I still lack confidence. I still like to be loved because for some reason, I felt I was not loved and that's why they dumped us."

Bruno's first big event was a procession from Great Yarmouth seafront all the way to the Gorleston cliffs. There a celebration took place including newly launched Radio Norfolk on a large stage, and helicopter rides.

"That was the start of it," explains Bruno. Bruno's first national spectacle, in 1981, was a chain of 90 beacons along the English coastline which were part of an English Tourist Board campaign. The Yarmouth beacon was lit by a descendant of Lord Nelson.

Yarmouth is now home for globe-trotting vicar Richard

Globe-trotting vicar, Rev Richard Washington, who has lived in a number of countries across the world, has decided to make Great Yarmouth his home for the foreseeable future. **Anna Heydon** reports.



Rev Richard Washington, the new Team Vicar for the Parish of Great Yarmouth.

Richard, who was ordained as Team Vicar for the Parish of Great Yarmouth in November, hasn't always lived in Norfolk. Having been born to a Dutch mother with Caribbean heritage and an English father, Richard's life was multicultural from the start.

As well as the Netherlands, Richard's study and work have also taken him to France, Belgium, Poland and the United States, and he is able to speak French and Polish fluently.

Nevertheless, Richard is excited to make connections between his birthplace of Rotterdam and his new home in Great Yarmouth: "Coming to Yarmouth actually means that the only thing that separates me from my birthplace is this sea. And the wonderful thing about the story of this town is that that sea used to be a highway. In the Middle Ages, it was quicker on good days to get to my birthplace than it was to get to London. So the connection with the Netherlands here is really, really strong."

Richard is already able to see the value of his past travels and language fluency in his current role in the parish. Part of Richard's job is pastoral care at the Pathway Café and Resource Centre which provides hot meals, crisis food parcels and signposting, and he describes how his fluency in Polish has enabled him to communicate with some of the Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian and Ukrainian visitors. Richard said that his travel experience not only helps him to be able to converse with them, but also to begin to understand how "bewildering" and "disorientating" it can be to live in a country where you don't understand the language, systems or culture.

Richard is able to identify a clear sense of direction and calling in his life. He describes how in his childhood he "felt very called by God, very held by Jesus, very understood, very valued, very loved." Although he describes his teenage years as "complicated and difficult" he explains that at university "faith provided me with an anchor and a sense of being held and loved, but in a less confident way than I had been when I was younger." Although he felt called to ministry, he eventually decided to go into the theatre instead.

As he pursued an acting career, Richard experienced a time of great challenge. "I

think a lot of my life at that time was about trying to fill hollow spaces in myself, and I imagined that theatre and the applause of people and entertaining people would fill those vacant spaces. What I discovered was that it's not the case at all. Exposing yourself in that way and performing often just digs more of that vacant space... I didn't have the anchor of faith. I didn't have that sense of being valued and loved."

A time of homelessness and unemployment followed. Richard is grateful for the friends who supported him and allowed him to stay with them, and recognises that without that safety net "I could easily have slipped into a much, much more dangerous place." Again, Richard uses these experiences to relate to some of the people he meets at Pathway. "It doesn't take much for the floor to collapse... I don't see such a big distinction between me and the people we're supporting. I don't want to say 'me' and 'them', because it's 'us'."

Richard's return to faith came about during his subsequent time in Poland. He observes that "nobody's embarrassed about faith in Poland". He particularly pinpoints the influence of a woman he met whilst recovering from illness, who "talked to me a lot about my faith and what she saw in me, what she felt God was trying to say through me. And that helped me break through this kind of mesh of those layers of

life that block you from seeing. And I had what I would call a reconversion, and a very strong sense at that moment that I was being called to something."

From there Richard embarked on a journey to ordination which he compares to Jonah's flight from God, but which ended with him enrolling in the Eastern Region Ministry course, from there completing his curacy in Attleborough, and finally arriving in Great Yarmouth.

Much of Richard's spare time is spent exploring Great Yarmouth and looking after his dog, Maks. But his strength derives from the time he spends each morning with God, which he describes as "reassembling of the pieces with His help." Richard is in no hurry to return to travelling the globe, and believes that his calling is now to work alongside people in Great Yarmouth, recognising and nurturing the goodness which God has placed in the town and people.

"I think this is a town of immense possibility" he observes, "God is dying to enable all sorts of beautiful things to happen in this town... what an amazing place."

We know how the story ends at Easter

Norfolk Christian author **Jane Walters** asks: would you have wanted to be present at the crucifixion?



■ There's a song that starts, "Were you there when they crucified my Lord?" I'm picturing it as I saw it once on Songs of Praise, the small group of vocalists, each one singing with a pained facial expression – completely understandably.

I once asked my home group, by way of an ice-breaker, "Would you have wanted to be present at the crucifixion?" The short answer is that no one did. In fact, most of them recoiled at the very idea of eye-witnessing such horror. I readily agreed.

The trouble with reading our biblical texts is we know how the story ends. Whenever we take an episode, it's never in isolation because we see the whole context all the time. Good Friday is bearable for us because we know that Easter Sunday is coming.

The people there at the time knew no such thing. Would I have wanted to watch my Lord die, fully believing it was game over? The very thought is crushing.

A telling question for me is this: whose side would I have been on? Of course, I want to have been one of the women who refused to leave Jesus alone, both in life and death. I want to have taken care of His lifeless body, and returned at dawn on the Sunday, bearing spices, finding myself witness to the resurrection.

But what if, instead, I was part of the crowd baying for Jesus' death?

Or one of the disciples who ran away? Would I – could I – have even denied Him?

Thankfully, it's only speculation. We don't need to have actually been there to receive the salvation Jesus paid such a high price for. We can simply stand, remembering the cross and the empty tomb, and offer our gratitude and awe.

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Knitted Bible Exhibition to visit Norwich

■ The nationally-known Knitted Bible Exhibition is coming to a Norwich church this summer with its 38 knitted exhibits telling various Bible stories.

Chapel Field Road Methodist Church has booked the exhibition from Monday June 23 to Saturday July 19.

The exhibition tells various biblical stories in 38 knitted exhibits – and it has been touring the country with some success for over a few years now.

Minister Rev Matthew Olanrewaju said: "We believe this is an important opportunity to talk to unchurched people and friends of different backgrounds.

"The local community, schools and people of other faiths are invited to 'come and see' as the Bible becomes real and alive in an artistic and imaginative way.

"The story of salvation is God's story and not our story, we are an invited participants in this salvific events and this biblical characters knitted by a group of ordinary people allows us to see, reflect and recognise our role in sharing God's story of salvation," said Rev Matthew.

"The stories the exhibition tells form the basis of our faith and what Christianity involves. Each scene has a short explanation about what it represents and the Bible story behind it."



There will be a formal opening on Monday June 23 and the exhibition will be open to the public from 11.00 to 16.00 each day, except Sunday. The congregation will accommodate the exhibition in its midst for worship for the period it is on display.

There will be refreshments served each day and churches and Christian groups are invited to either book a time to visit or just drop in.

Schools and RE departments bringing a large number of pupils, both primary and secondary, are advised to book in advance so that guides and stewards may be available to help and support.

People can ring the Church Office on 01603 632535 to book or with enquiries or email Stephen Osborn at: sdosborn5@outlook.com

Transforming lives at Teen Challenge

Two years ago Christian rehab charity **Teen Challenge** was given **Drayton Hall** as its premises to intensively support men with addictions. **Helen Baldry** went to visit and find out what has happened since.

Drayton Hall is stunning; it has winding carpeted staircases, high ceilings, beautiful furniture and an impressive terrace backing onto manicured gardens. More remarkable is what happens in the building, which is home to 28 men – all in recovery from addiction.

I am shown around by project leader Javier Lesta Candal and outreach co-ordinator Rev Vic Ready.

I was surprised to learn that the guys were not allowed to have phones, access to the internet or newspapers. When they first enter the rehab they are searched, and in the first phase of their stay – there are four phases in total spanning 17 months – they are not allowed to go anywhere unaccompanied.

Later on, they are permitted visitors and to go off-site to visit family and accountability is built into the programme. The men are kept occupied with regular sessions on topics including behavioural issues such as anger, personal studies, personal rights, accepting themselves, attitudes, growing

through failure. Spiritual subjects include biblical studies such as the history of the Bible starting with general information, followed by Old and New Testament studies, biblical inspiration, the Holy Spirit etc.

On each of these subjects there is a test – which would be far from easy for even mature Christians!

There is a well-equipped gym, games and space to meet, talk together, pray and to meet in private.

What struck me, as I met a few of the guys as I was shown around Drayton Hall, was their focus on God's transforming power. They all testified to how their lives had been changed. They spoke unprompted, and with confidence and conviction, about the difference in their lives.

The programme at Drayton Hall is steeped in God's word and the results are evident. There is a wall of photos of when the men first came in and the physical changes are astonishing. Sunken faces and clouded eyes are exchanged for a healthy brightness. However, it's clear that the real transformation is a spiritual one.

Javier said: "The only answer is Jesus Christ. He breaks chains and oppression. He breaks curses. We want to keep the gospel of Jesus Christ at the centre of everything we do."

Javier talked about Teen Challenge's refusal to compromise on Christian principles. Many organisations weaken when opportunities arise, such as grant

funding, which results in the diminishing of the gospel because of the need to meet funders' requirements and to be unable to share Christian truths. This is why Vic is keen to inspire local churches to pray for, and financially support, the ministry.

At the 5:17 coffee shop around the corner, run by Teen Challenge, I met Tommy who talked about the need to soften during rehab as opposed to being hardened while he was in addiction. The charity, which is linked with Teen Challenge London, also has a reuse centre at Ilford which provides employment opportunities and they do meaningful work including house clearance and sale of furniture. Plans for Norwich include extending the rehab to 35 beds and setting up a bakery to support the coffee shop and where the men can learn a trade.

Vic said: "The forward vision now is one of continuous expansion, which means making space for many more men to come and join the programme. To enable us to achieve this goal, we want to take the ministry to as many churches in Norwich and Norfolk as possible. So people can hear firsthand about the ministry and the testimonies from the men themselves and support it."

How to get involved

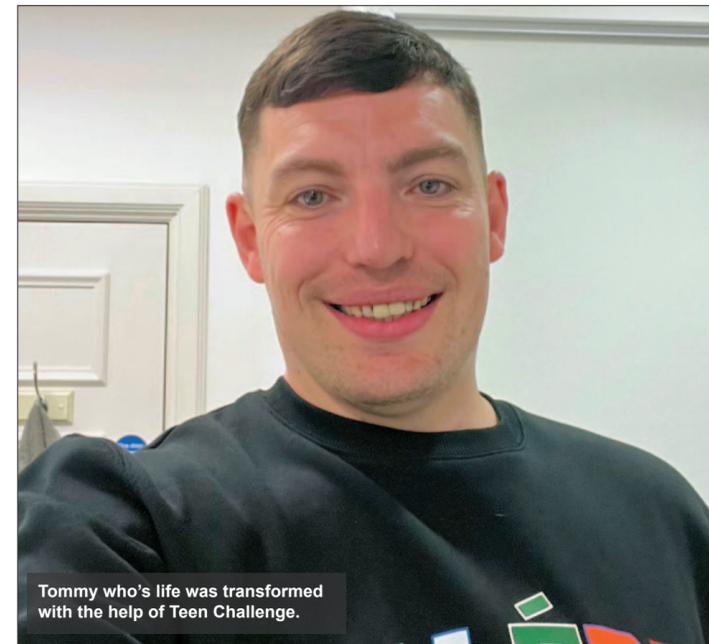
- Invite a speaker to your church.
- Donate towards to the work of Teen Challenge, www.tclondon.org.uk
- Pray for the ministry as young men replace their addiction to substances for a relationship with the living God.

Contact Vic on 07799 000066 vic@drayton-hall.org.uk



Teen Challenge Outreach co-ordinator Rev Vic Ready (left) and project leader Javier Lesta Candal.

Ex-addict Tommy's goes from hopelessness to a brighter future



Tommy who's life was transformed with the help of Teen Challenge.

Tommy's experience at **Teen Challenge** in Norwich, shows how lives can truly be transformed thanks to God and a supportive community, reports **Helen Baldry**.

By the age of 35, Tommy had spent a total of 14 years in prison. His first appearance in Crown Court was at the age of 11 for criminal damage. By this time Tommy, like many others, was taking drugs and suffering the consequences of addiction.

Although Tommy's mother had become a Christian and was taking him to church, his life of crime and addiction had begun. In total he served nine prison sentences, going from young offenders' to an adult prison at the age of 18. Although Tommy wanted to change and have the faith of his mum, it seemed to be impossible to get the help he needed.

The beginning of the change came when he left Wayland Prison. Tommy stood outside the gates and began to cry. Not tears of relief to be out, but because

he felt more secure and confident in prison and was afraid of what would come next.

Tommy has a familiar story to many of the men who are on the Teen Challenge programme. His prison gate experience of fear and a desire to change is recognisable to Vic Ready, who now works as Outreach Co-ordinator at Drayton. Teen Challenge is a Christian rehabilitation programme for men – not just teenagers – experiencing addiction and related problems. Previously Vic worked as prison chaplain at Wayland and Norwich prison and got to know many like Tommy, desperately looking for break the cycle of addiction.

Vic explains what happened to Tommy next: "After his release he was on licence, but suffered a recall when probation said he had failed to answer his phone when they tried to contact him. The truth was that he had rung that morning and told them he would be late as he couldn't get a lift until later, that was accepted, but the message not passed on (quite a common situation!)"

"He was recalled and sent to HMP, The Mount, to finish the second half of his sentence. It was here that a chaplain

ministered to him, he cried out to Jesus and felt an incredible warmth and in his own words, "went from hopelessness to hope!"

Upon release, Tommy joined a church in Essex and his pastor referred him to Teen Challenge. Vic said: "I have personally watched Tommy develop since being with us and grow as a Christian, lose every vestige of addictive behaviour or desire, minister to other men on the programme and be in every way, a disciple of the Lord."

Tommy's life has changed radically. He said: "First of all, Jesus is in my life and has transformed my life. Now I have a present and future and not just a past." Tommy has total freedom from his drug addiction and complete restoration with his family, including with his daughter. He is currently working in ministry for God at the 5:17 Coffee Shop in Drayton.

Tommy feels passionately that young people need to hear this message of hope. A downward spiral of addiction often begins at school, whether that is drink, drugs and, especially now, pornography.

One of the reasons why Tommy received the help he needed was

because his pastor Katie knew about Teen Challenge and referred him. Vic is appealing to churches and individuals in Norfolk to engage with the charity by finding out about what they offer, by praying for them and supporting them financially to helping them expand so more men can join the programme.

Vic said: "For the last year I have been part of the counselling team, and during that time I have seen some truly remarkable transformations in the lives of the men on the programme. They arrive often with a troubled past which always includes addiction of one form or another.

"Many of your readers will have visited the 5:17 Coffee Shop in Drayton, (taken from 2 Cor. 5:17). In doing so they will have met several of the men who are employed at the café towards the end of their time at Teen Challenge. The feedback we receive from customers who meet the staff at the café is always positive, and very gratifying. We are looking to include a bakery with all produce made on site by fully trained catering team who are on the programme."

Vic can be contacted on vic@drayton-hall.org.uk. Or on: 07799 000066.

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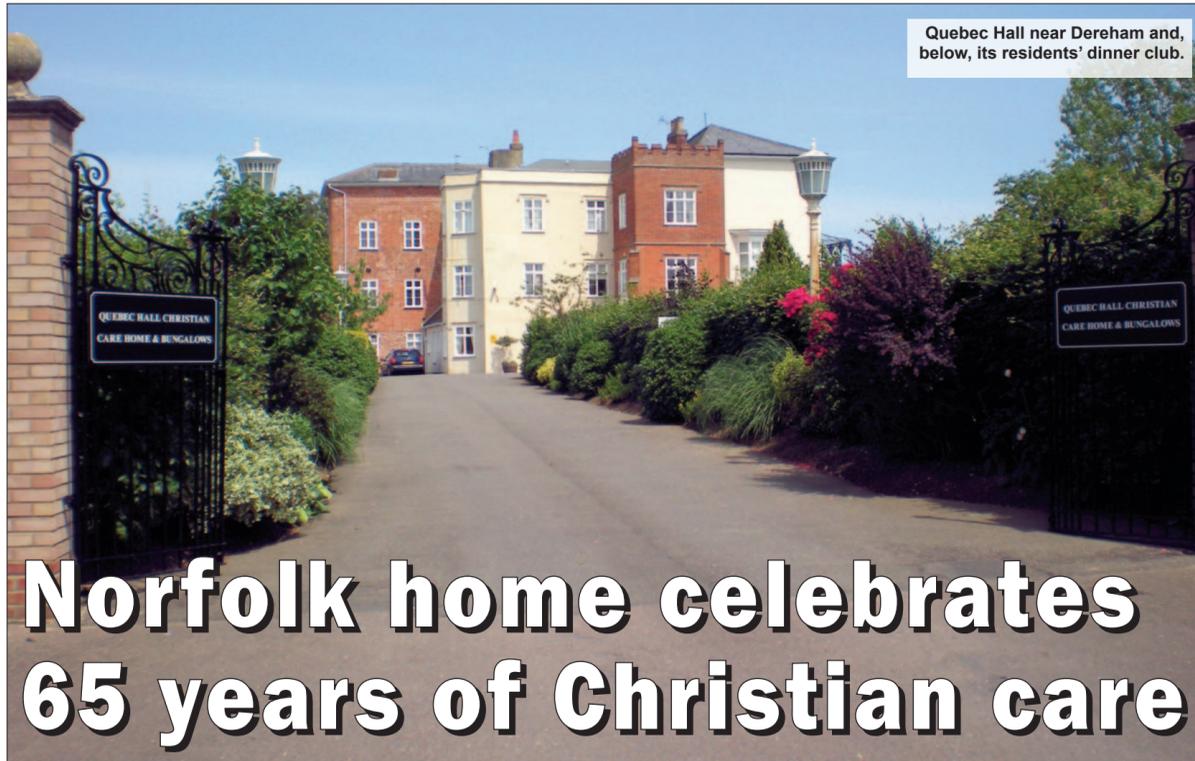
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Quebec Hall, the Christian residential care home and bungalow complex in Dereham, will be celebrating its 65th anniversary this summer with an open day and service of thanksgiving. **Tony Rothe** reports.



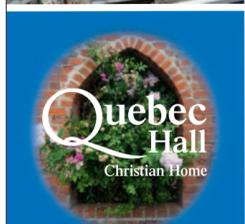
Norfolk home celebrates 65 years of Christian care

65th Anniversary Open Day



and Service of Thanksgiving

- ★ Tea in the picturesque gardens or in the marquee
 - ★ Tour the Hall...visit the Bungalows
 - ★ Enjoy the Fellowship
- Speaker: Sam Leinster**
Saturday, 19th July at 3pm



Quebec Hall
Christian Home

For further information, please contact:
Mark Woodgett (Manager)
Quebec Hall Limited
Quebec Road, Dereham
Norfolk NR19 2QY
t 01362 692504
e info@quebechall.co.uk
w www.quebechall.co.uk



The centre, situated in countryside on the edge of Dereham, comprises 43 bungalows with 19 residents in the hall itself. It has been described as a place of peace for those who wish to come and live in a Christian environment.

The open day on Saturday, July 19, will provide an opportunity for visitors to tour Quebec Hall and visit the bungalows, and take tea in the picturesque gardens or in the marquee. The fellowship speaker at 3pm will be Professor Sam Leinster, who is the former Dean of the Medical School at the University of East Anglia.

Quebec Hall was built in 1759, and named after the siege of Quebec in Canada. It has served people through the ages through both world wars, originally as a school, and then bought and refurbished by David Potter who built 44 bungalows for retired Christians. The complex was officially opened on May 25, 1960 by Lieutenant General Sir William Dobbie.

Manager Mark Woodgett describes Quebec Hall as a place of peace and friendship, and says: "We encourage one another especially through our weekly and monthly events, ranging from cream teas to barbecues, quiz nights to themed evenings mostly centred around food!"

"We value people and look forward to getting to know everyone who comes to live here – we try to ensure that everybody feels at home.

"We also see Quebec Hall as a place of rest where you can relax and enjoy the wonderful surroundings – the character

of the hall and the peace and tranquillity of walking around the gardens, perhaps resting in one of the lounges or in the summer house retreat."

Importantly, the centre is a place of fellowship, with weekly services to explore the Word of God, share communion together and pray. They hold a weekly sing and share morning and a monthly prayer meeting.

Professor Sam Leinster pioneered the undergraduate course at the UEA's med-



ical school in order to centre on a patient's needs and wishes, to ensure an effective integration of science and patient care at all stages of a doctor's training.

He describes himself as an active committed Christian, and was a regular worshipper at Dereham Baptist Church, as well as preaching at various churches around the area.

For further information about Quebec Hall or the open day, visit www.quebechall.co.uk

Or contact: Mark Woodgett at info@quebechall.co.uk or ring 01362 692504.

West Norfolk couple plan escape to the courthouse

A Norfolk couple are taking a leap of faith and trusting God with the last decade of their working lives by turning a derelict West Norfolk courthouse into a community and spiritual hub. **Peter Bending** reports.



Denise and Matthew, a couple of empty nesters both still working full-time, are attempting to become Norfolk's answer to Dick and Angel from hit Channel 4 tv series, *Escape to the Chateau*.

The journey began in the spring of 2023 when Denise and Matthew decided to take some time off work to explore what God might have in store for them next. They ended up travelling for six months where they walked the Camino way in Spain, worked with Iris Global in Eswatini, volunteered with Worldwide Opportunities on organic farms and travelled across the UK and Ireland.

During this time, themes of community, new monasticism and pilgrimage began to take hold.

Denise said: "An opportunity arose – maybe an invitation or a calling. A former police station and courthouse in West Norfolk came up for sale.

"We went to view them and decided that if both were still for sale when we got back from our travels, we would put our house on the market and make an offer for the courthouse – which was already a dwelling."

And they did just that. In January 2024, Denise and Matthew moved into the courthouse, which lacked heating, and began working on the design and renovation of the building. Leaving no funds to secure the police station as well,

they offered to lease it but were turned down and it was sold to a developer.

"We are currently renovating the courthouse. We've been living in a building site for a year, the roof leaks and it's hard to find a clean surface to put laundry on.

"We will look to live in a part of it and have a community / public bit in the other part: including a large room, en-suite guest rooms, kitchenette and prayer room.

"We have the idea to develop a spiritual community to support a community hub in the former police station. We've been told its sold but it is still empty, three years plus now. Planning has gone in and been withdrawn.

"It has huge potential for a community hub, food hub, training, accommodation, or a creative space. Picture an old monastery – a holy community side supporting the community hub provision

side, two distinct parts making up one whole," said Denise.

Living by faith in a building site comes with its challenges.

"I thought by now I would be skipping gaily along the pilgrim path, humming a happy tune in the sunshiny light of God's smile but instead its always raining. I can't see the path for the weeds and my cagoule is leaking," reflects Denise.

"We are learning about dependence, believing / moving without knowing the end and that God works in mysterious ways. And that we are blessed with a life of adventure."

Denise and Matthew don't know quite where this adventure will take them, but by walking by faith and not by sight, but they are enjoying the journey.

Follow the adventure on Instagram [@courtorders_ps127](https://www.instagram.com/courtorders_ps127)

Free way to raise vital extra funds for your church

Do you have big plans for the year to come that could use some extra funding? Many churches and organisations are benefiting from free, unrestricted funding via easyfundraising.

Becky Coleman from easyfundraising explains: "Unlike time consuming grant applications, requesting donations or big events to organise, this method is as it sounds, much easier! It's completely free, simple to use and every member of the congregation can get involved, by collecting a free donation whenever they shop online – at no extra cost to anyone."

"All the big name retailers are on there, including M&S, John Lewis and many more, all standing by to donate as a thank you for shopping with them. You can track your total, and every three months the funds generated will be paid directly into your church or organisation bank account – easy for treasurers too!"

"Our friendly team are on hand to help too – they have a host of guides and resources, including a dedicated over the phone advice line," said Becky.

It's trusted by more than 800 Christian churches and organisations, with almost £60m raised for all kinds of good causes nationwide. Find out more and sign up today:

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- 2 Shop**
Every time your congregation shop online, they visit easyfundraising first
- 3 Raise**
Shop as normal & the retailer will give a donation to your church or group for free!







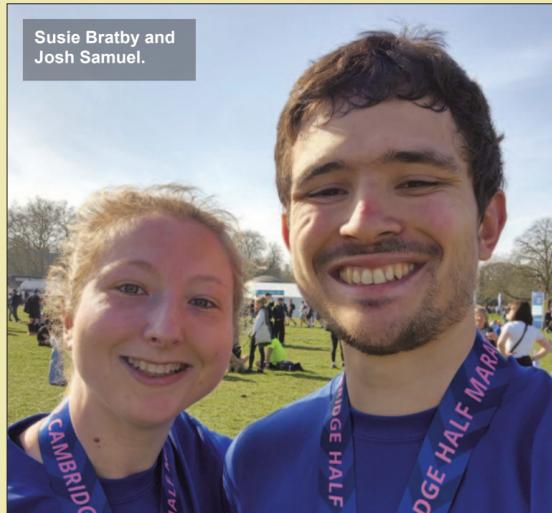





+8000 other retailers

Sports ministers run for funding

Two young sports ministers in Thetford have been running to raise funds as they seek to secure the future of the Sports Factory in the town.



Susie Bratby and Josh Samuel.

Susie Bratby and Josh Samuel completed the Cambridge half marathon in March for the the Sports Factory initiative, which originally began in Norwich to connect the church and the community through sport and to share the love of Jesus.

Started by Ruth Anderson a decade ago, the Sports Factory has recently become a charity. Ruth said: "In 2014, I had the privilege of doing some research for Scripture Union looking into sports ministry. I had previously worked in sports ministry and when I returned to Norwich, I felt God was stirring me to start a new sports ministry through the local church. I was given Ian Dyble's phone number and had a chat with him. He was really keen and so The Sports Factory was birthed from that."

Having previously interned for the Sports Factory in Norwich, Susie was employed by Thetford Team Ministry (TTM) in 2022 as their Sports and Community Minister.

Susie said: "When I started during a Covid lockdown, I had lots of Zoom coffees with people from schools and charities which gave me a good idea of the community in Thetford. This was helpful as I was then able to tailor sessions to the different community groups and estates. This is really important in Thetford as it is a very diverse community and so there are different needs across the town."

"In Thetford we have a number of sessions each week," said Susie. "In schools we run

active RE, lunch clubs, an after-school club specifically for SEND children, and sports after-school clubs. I also provide sport once a month at Integrate Youth For Christ's drop-in youth café, Pulse. For adults we run social football, four fitness classes, and Stretch and Pray."

From small beginnings in Thetford, the last two and a half years has seen hundreds of people in the area engage with the sports ministry and hear the Good News about Jesus.

Susie said: "One of the clear fruits of this has been Josh, who joined the adult social football sessions and was invited to a termly men's breakfast event. From here, Josh attended Christianity Explored and committed to following Jesus soon after."

Having qualified as a Personal Trainer, Josh was employed by TTM in July 2024 as an Associate Sports Minister to start the fitness classes and run adult social football.

With both contracts coming to an end this year, Thetford Team Ministry are looking to raise funds to employ Susie and Josh for a further three years.

"We rejoice to see people exploring faith, coming to faith and growing as Christians through this outreach, and we pray for God's continued work through it," said Susie.

Support the work in Thetford at: www.thetfordteamministry.org.uk/sports-donations

To find out more about The Sports Factory visit www.sportsfactory.org.uk

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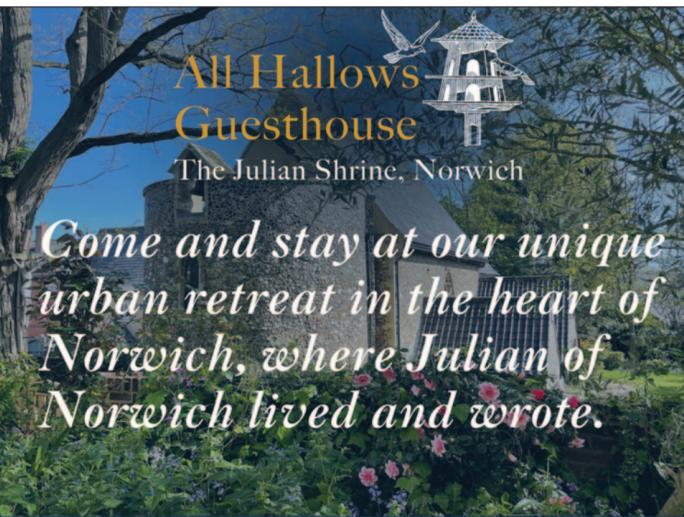
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Centres offer a warm welcome

Christian conference, activity, holiday and retreat centres across Norfolk and North Suffolk are warmly welcoming guests who are looking for something a little different.

Horstead Centre

■ The Horstead Centre, near Coltishall, is a well-established residential outdoor activity centre and group venue, with a strong affiliation to the Diocese of Norwich.

The centre offers affordable retreats, family stays, tailored activity days and residential adventurous breaks; a warm welcome is guaranteed.

"If you're planning a break for your family, church, charity or youth project in 2025, we would love you to consider a visit to us here at the Horstead Centre," said Centre Manager Will Mills. You can simply hire the venue and cater for yourself, making the most of our space for your own programme of activities or we can take the stress out of it and provide everything for you in a full board visit with outdoor activities, the choice is yours."

"The Horstead Centre takes full advantage of its wonderful setting. The house and gardens nestle amongst woodland which stretches down to the River Bure. If you choose to have activities, you can spend some quality time together on the water, with laugh-out-loud enjoyment as you delight in building rafts, canoeing, or paddle-boarding. There are on-land activities



available too, including archery and caving, geocaching, rock climbing and the zipline.

"We believe that adventure with friends and family should be accessible and so the centre has kept prices as low as possible for families and groups. A stay here may be more affordable than you think. Please contact us to book or to explore options," said Will. www.horsteadcentre.org.uk

All Hallows Guesthouse

■ All Hallows Guesthouse is a unique urban retreat in the heart of Norwich offering peace and tranquility in the midst of a vibrant and historic city.

Tucked away just outside the centre of town, next to St Julian's Church and forming part of the Julian Shrine in Norwich, it offers guests rest and refreshment where Julian of Norwich lived and wrote her Revelations of



Divine Love, over 650 years ago.

Equipped with seven comfortable bedrooms, spotlessly clean shared shower and toilet facilities, and a state-of-the-art self-catering kitchen, this refurbished former convent is ideal for quiet retreats with all the perks and amenities that come with easy access to a thriving city.

Catering for individual guests as well as group bookings, visitors can find rest in the house chapel, study library, or curl up in the cosy sitting room (with log fire in the winter months).

There is a delightful garden with plentiful wildlife, as well as private access to St Julian's churchyard next door.

Ideal for self-guided retreats, All Hallows is a haven of restful hospitality,

managed with a passionately eco-friendly ethos.

Next door, St Julian's offers up to four daily services including morning and evening prayer and a daily Mass. www.allhallowsnorwich.co.uk

Quiet Waters

■ Located on the Norfolk/Suffolk border on the edge of Bungay, Quiet Waters is a Christian retreat house providing a friendly guest house experience for tired and weary Christians seeking a time of spiritual refreshment, those seeking God's direction or those simply wanting to spend time in His presence.

Chair of trustees, Paul Dunning, said: "We provide an opportunity for Christians to seek God in a quiet, peaceful and safe environment that allows freedom and space to experience God's love."

Quiet Waters is a large Georgian house nestled in two acres of grounds with its gardens going down to the River Waveney. There is comfortable accommodation for up to 16 guests in 9 bedrooms with two spacious living rooms, dining room (serving delicious home-cooked meals) and a Chapel. The accommodation includes two ground floor bedrooms (with shared wet room) providing easy access.

Our valued and well-used Creative Space, the 'log cabin' in the woods, is equipped with resources for guests to use. It is ideal for individuals or small groups to explore various forms of creativity such as writing, composing, painting, worship and more.

"The mature gardens are a guest favourite, consisting of varied landscapes, including a woodland walk, walled garden and natural meadow overlooking the river and open fields beyond. There is also a summerhouse from where our resident kingfisher is occasionally spotted. You will discover ample space to find peace and simply be."

"Our guests cherish the fellowship of chatting over meal times and the kitchen enjoys a five star food hygiene rating. From full-board to day visitor our guests are well fed with generous continental breakfasts, delicious home-cooked lunches and picnic suppers.



"The house is run by a team who live on site and are available to support guests through prayer, worship or simply by listening. We have daily times of reflection and worship to which guests are warmly welcome. As well as offering peace and quiet for the individual we are also ideal for day groups of up to 20 people; perfect for those in church leadership seeking His direction," said Paul.

www.quietwaters.org.uk

Letton Hall

■ Christian Conference Centre Letton Hall, located near Shipdham in mid-Norfolk, is fully open to groups, churches and families.

The centre has 73 beds in the main house, and nine in the Norfolk Wing. The nearby Stables has 54 beds, including two ten-bed dormitories and several three or four-bed rooms.

www.lettonhall.org

The Pleasaunce

■ The Pleasaunce Christian Endeavour Holiday Centre, on the North Norfolk coast near Cromer, provides quality accommodation and programmes including a range of activities, evening entertainment and times of prayer and worship.

Standing in six acres of grounds, The Pleasaunce can accommodate up to 80 visitors, making it perfect for large parties. The centre is in an ideal location for all holidaymakers, conferences, groups, school parties and retreats.

www.cehc.org.uk

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Nestling in the beautiful Waveney Valley along the Norfolk and Suffolk border, we offer a warm welcome, wholesome home-cooked meals and a comfortable home to relax in.

We'd love to welcome you – individuals, friends, church groups, residential or day guests. Come, find peace and simply be.



01986 893201

mail@quietwaters.org.uk

www.quietwaters.org.uk

National accolade for YMCA

Already well-known across East Anglia, **YMCA Norfolk** has also now won national recognition by being named as “YMCA of the Year” across England and Wales. **Keith Morris** reports.

The accolade was given at the national Youth Matters Awards 2024, held on November 15 at City Central at the HAC in London when YMCA Norfolk was named ‘YMCA of the Year,’ recognising its transformative work supporting over 21,500 individuals across Norfolk in the past year.

Hosted by well-known TV personality Scarlett Moffatt, the Youth Matters Awards honour the incredible work of YMCAs and young people across England and Wales. YMCA Norfolk stood out among over 80 YMCAs nationwide, showcasing its impact as a driving force for empowerment and community support in Norfolk.

John Lee, CEO of YMCA Norfolk, talking about what the national award meant to him, said: “This award is truly for every staff member and volunteer of YMCA Norfolk. It’s their hard work, passion and belief in our young people that this award represents.”

John reflected on the evening’s inspiring atmosphere, sharing, “You can’t leave a night like tonight not feeling inspired and hope-filled for the future. It’s been an amazing night hearing about so many projects and from so many fantastic, inspiring people.”

Marketing and Fundraising Manager, Susie Knights, said: “Having worked for YMCA Norfolk for 24 years and having seen the dedication, commitment, innovation and passion that staff, volunteers, supporters and trustees pour into supporting young people, families and our

communities across the county I truly believe this award is well deserved and is shared by all those in Norfolk who support and pray for us.”

Not content with the main award, YMCA Norfolk also took home two additional awards for two of its teams:

It was also named Training and Education Project of the Year for its ground-breaking E-Learning Service, which provides tailored online education to students facing barriers such as medical issues, mental health challenges, and special educational needs.

Last year alone, ELS supported 312 students, helping them continue their education and thrive despite significant obstacles.

It also won the Family and Youth Project of the Year award for its Umbrella Housing project, offering secure accommodation and intensive family support to young single-parent families. The programme has provided life-changing support to 20 families this year, with every resident reporting positive transformation in their lives.

YMCA Norfolk’s recognition stems

from its comprehensive and diverse support services.

In the last year, it has:

- Housed 382 young people who would otherwise be homeless or living in vulnerable situations.
 - Delivered over 700 counselling sessions and 590 therapeutic sessions to young people and families in crisis.
 - Enabled 345 young people to receive therapeutic support, who would have otherwise remained on an NHS waiting list.
 - Welcomed over 60,000 visitors to its Community Hub on Aylsham Road encompassing Williams’ Kitchen Café, Explorers Soft Play, and Muddy Puddles Nursery, fostering a sense of community (and something!) Looking to the Future
- With three major national awards now under its belt, YMCA Norfolk’s commitment to transforming lives continues stronger than ever.
- As CEO John emphasized: “This award is a reflection of the hard work, passion, and dedication of all our staff and volunteers. Together, we’re making Norfolk a place where every young person can belong, contribute and thrive.”



Pictured are some of the YMCA Norfolk staff – named YMCA Team of the Year.

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Mission partnership unites four Norfolk churches

■ Four United Reformed Churches in the Norwich area have formed the first ‘Mission Partnership’ in the Eastern Region, to work together to focus on mission.

Over the next four years the Eastern Synod is seeking to establish 19 Mission Partnerships across Norfolk, Suffolk and most of Essex, Cambridgeshire and parts of Hertfordshire.

The first such Mission Partnership was

established in July 2024 and this linked together four congregations: namely Wymondhams, Wroxham & Hoveton, St Peters LEP and Ipswich Road, Norwich.

These four congregations are now able to begin the process of calling a new minister and will also be seeking to build a mission team which will hopefully include the future resourcing of a children’s and family staff worker.

Rev Alex Jacob, Synod Transitional Minister (Mission Partnerships), said, “There are several Biblical principles which help shape these emerging Mission Partnerships, namely an emphasis on mission and discipleship, teamwork and sharing and releasing resources together.

“Please do pray for these four congregations and for these plans.”

Contact Alex at stm@urceastern.org