The Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn

Newsletter

November 2026



Photo: The Norman Tower (The Church Gate)

Welcome to this second digital Newsletter keeping you up to date with *The Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn* project

The information in this newsletter is taken from the minutes of the latest Board Meeting and the Project Management Plan, with other details by way of explanation.

National Lottery Heritage Fund Grant

Wednesday 15 July, 2026, St Edmundsbury Cathedral, West Suffolk Council and English Heritage announced a £7.137m grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, contributing to a total project of £9.83m.

Made possible thanks to National Lottery players, the Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn project reunifies the fragmented 60-acre Abbey of St Edmund site.

Project Board Meeting, October 22nd, 2026

Greene King Community Partner

Greene King is now proudly a Community Partner Sponsor of The Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn.

Photo shows Jo Kreckler (Greene King) and Very Reverend Joe Hawes (St Edmundsbury Cathedral)



Greene King's partnership is a three-year agreement, focussing on community-facing strands of the activity programme – engaging with local residents, building interest and providing regular progress updates. This includes 47 community engagement activities over the three years, many aligned to its values and existing initiatives, including work with underrepresented audiences and young people.

Heritage Fund Update

We have been given permission to start by The National Lottery Heritage Fund. This marks the official commencement of the project, enabling work to begin on the RIBA Stage 4 design plans and the recruitment of new staff to deliver the project.

Project Board composition

Role descriptions have been prepared, and recruitment adverts have been published inviting expressions of interest from suitably qualified candidates. The closing date for applications was Friday 13 November 2026.

More Questions? **If you want to know more about any of the topics discussed at the Board Meeting, then ask for a link to join the Zoom online Q&A session, each month, by emailing alantbaxter@btinternet.com**

St Edmundsbury Cathedral

West Suffolk Council

English Heritage

Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership

Project Board advisory group and working group

The Project Board discussed the proposed governance arrangements alongside potential changes to the AHP Leadership and Core Groups, with the aim of establishing a clear distinction between the Board's governance and oversight responsibilities and the roles of other project groups.

The proposed structure comprises a cross-project Advisory Group, providing specialist expertise, strategic advice and improved communication to support the Project Board, and an operational Working Group, to coordinate day-to-day delivery, manage interdependencies and address emerging challenges.

The Project Board will determine the Advisory Group's roles, responsibilities and chairing arrangements, ensuring clear links with the Project Board. The Board noted that Board member representation on the Advisory Group would help maintain a coherent approach and minimise any disconnect between the two groups.

Abbey Heritage Partnership Autumn reception

The Project Board supports hosting a high-quality reception for around 150 guests at the Guildhall in spring 2027. This would mark the transition from the long-held ambitions of the partnership to the delivery phase of the Project.

Photo: The Guildhall



The event would provide an opportunity to celebrate the partnership, recognise those who have contributed to date and engage future supporters.

Project engagement and resource

+ Meetings have taken place with senior lecturers at West Suffolk College, part of the Eastern Education Group and home to the newly accredited Construction Technical Excellence College (CTEC) for the East of England.
+ Discussions have been held with Bury Town Trust to explore opportunities for developing heritage craft skills and integrating practical activities for students and local communities into the main contract works.
+ The River Lark Catchment Partnership and the Flagship Partnership, involving Anglian Water, the Environment Agency, local developers and landowners, have discussed future opportunities for community engagement focused on the natural environment and biodiversity along the Rivers Lark and Linnet.
+ The Cathedral's Volunteer Manager (Judy Harrision) is now in post and a meeting is being arranged with the Cathedral Learning Manager to review the delivery of the Activity Plan and coordinate priorities.
+ Head of Visitor Experience includes partnership responsibilities. The post being advertised on Friday 6 November.
+ The Project Board emphasised the need to minimise the Communications Plan delivery burden on the Cathedral by making effective use of partners, including West Suffolk Council, the Abbey Heritage Partnership and English Heritage, particularly its PR team. The plan should incorporate regular newsletters and align with RFA's branding brief.

Who are the current Board members?

Mark Rogers, Chair (Volunteer)
The Very Rev'd Joe Hawes, Deputy Chair,St Edmundsbury Cathedral
Canon Matthew Vernon, St Edmundsbury Cathedral
Damien Parker, West Suffolk Council
Alex Sydney, English Heritage (Volunteer)
Alan Baxter, Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership (Volunteer)
Dr Sharron Goddard (Volunteer)
Prof Darryl Newport (Volunteer)

James Mellish is Project Manager

This Newsletter is produced by Alan Baxter (volunteer) for current and potential members of The Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership on behalf of the *Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn* Project Board

Want to find out more on the Abbey of St Edmund, Reborn?

There are websites, with the associated social media that you can follow:

St Edmundsbury Cathedral: https://abbeyofstedmund.com/news/
and/or
The Abbey of St Edmund Heritage Partnership: https://www.abbeyofstedmund.org.uk/

St Edmundsbury Cathedral
West Suffolk Council
ENGLISH HERITAGE
ABBEY OF ST EDMUND HERITAGE PARTNERSHIP