



# ST DENYS BULLETIN

October 2026



## Directory:

### **Vicar of Sleaford**

The Rev'd Philip Johnson  
[vicar.sleafordparishchurch.co.uk](mailto:vicar.sleafordparishchurch.co.uk)

### **The Parish Office**

Parish Administrator  
Paula Ireland  
Market Place, Sleaford,  
NG34 7SH  
[admin@sleafordparishchurch.co.uk](mailto:admin@sleafordparishchurch.co.uk)  
01529 413607  
Mon, Weds, Fri 9-11am

### **Churchwardens**

Richard Clash  
07714 565678  
Sarah Stentiford  
07707 513225

### **Safeguarding Officer**

Angela Clash 01529 410065  
or 0303 003 1111

### **Director of Music**

Lee Mitton-Rooke  
[lee.rooke@googlemail.com](mailto:lee.rooke@googlemail.com)

### **St Denys Bellringers**

[sylvia.bird860@gmail.com](mailto:sylvia.bird860@gmail.com)

### **PCC Treasurer**

Brenda Hitchcock  
01529 302775

## WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND?

What is the 'Church of England'? It seems like an easy question to answer, but a couple of stories that have hit the news in the past few days have caused me to reflect – once again – on what the CofE is, and what it is not. Two headlines, both taken from the BBC news website: "Government to end ban on Catholic and Jewish PMs' involvement in Church appointments"

"Archbishop of Canterbury withdraws award from Muslim cleric who praised Osama bin Laden"

Both of these news stories imply certain things about the Church of England, which are commonly assumed to be true, but are actually false. The Church of England does not exist! Well, it does not exist in a legal sense. Neither Companies House nor the Charity Commission website have any record of a legal entity called the Church of England. My stipend comes from the Church Commissioners (which is a legal entity). The General Synod is the legislative and governance structure of the Church of England but in reality, it is a quasi-subcommittee of Parliament. Membership of the General Synod (to which elections are currently taking place) are nominated representatives from each diocese. The Church of England is little more than an umbrella term for the Anglican Dioceses in England and the collaborative structure by which they work together. It has often been said that the two most powerful positions in the Church of England are a diocesan bishop and a priest with the parish living (that is security of tenure in office rather than a licence for 3 or 5 years).

So, to the first headline. A bishop is appointed by the crown, but there is a process before any names get presented to the king. The Crown Nominations Committee is a subcommittee of General Synod and includes a representative of the Cabinet Office. It is this committee that does all of the work. This committee presents two names (as a 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> choice) to the Prime Minister, who can reverse the order or reject both names before a name is put to the King. The prime ministerial role in this process is minimal. The ban on Jewish and Catholic Prime Ministers involvement in this process

*ctd on next page*

*ctd from front page*

is ancient and probably should have been updated to include other religions or revoked decades ago. A Hindu Prime Minister (Sunak) was able to play a role in the appointment of bishops which makes the continuing ban on Catholics seem farcical. This political involvement in senior church appointments is part of what it means to be the Established Church. Why was this not dealt with years ago? The simple answer is that until we had a Catholic or Jewish PM nobody probably thought about it. General Synod and parliament have much more important things to worry about.

The second story, about the Archbishop, subtly implies that the Archbishop and the Church of England are synonymous. They are not! For a start there are two archbishops in England. The Archbishop has a public platform and a high profile but they cannot speak or act for the whole Church of England in the way the Pope embodies the Catholic Church. However, negative stories in the press about the Archbishop can and does affect the way a non-church-going public thinks about the Church of England.

The counterbalance to this is the local parish church. It is through the local church that most people encounter the Church of England. Frequently I hear people comment that their experience of the local church bears little relation to how The Church is presented on the national stage. Perhaps this is why, centuries ago, the importance of a priest in a parish was considered the most important aspect of the Church of England.

*Fr Philip*

### **St Matthew 16.18 (NRSV)**

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

### **Collect for Ember Days (Common Worship)**

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and truth to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



### **Funerals and Memorial Services**

*Please remember in your prayers*

James Christopher Pennock  
Aged 80 years

### **PATRONAL FESTIVAL THOUGHTS**

We are familiar with the fate of St Denys and his companions and the head-carrying from Montmartre to Saint-Denis. But what happened afterwards?

The tradition is as follows. The bodies were thrown into the Seine, but local Christian woman, Catulla, retrieved them and buried them. The local authorities tried to seize the bodies but, even though it was October, a miraculous crop of wheat grew over the graves.

Over the centuries, their relics were spread over many lands. The best known are preserved in three magnificent reliquaries in the Cathedral-Basilica of Saint-Denis and can be seen till this day.

On this patronal festival, spare a thought for Catulla and the bravery of her actions in the teeth of the pagan authorities' persecution of Christians.

*Douglas Hoare*

# Church Services

(Morning prayer is usually at 8.45am on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday)  
Said Communion every Wednesday at 10am (1st Weds of the month is BCP)

## OCTOBER

**Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> October**

10am Harvest

**Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> October**

10am Patronal Festival

**Sunday, 18<sup>th</sup> October**

10am St Luke

**Sunday, 25<sup>th</sup> October**

Trinity XX1 / Bible Sunday

**Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> November**

10am All Saints Day

3pm All Souls Service

## HARVEST LUNCH

**Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> October**

12.30pm in the Church Hall

£10 per head to include a hot main course, pudding and tea / coffee

All proceeds to church funds

To book : [admin@sleafordparishchurch.co.uk](mailto:admin@sleafordparishchurch.co.uk) / 01529

413607 or complete the sheet at the back of church

## FROM THE CHURCHWARDENS

### CHURCH GUTTERS

During September we were able to complete the task of clearing all of the church gutters. A big thank you must go to Steve Shanahan-Kluth who valiantly helped out. We filled at least 15 black sacks of debris. During October it is planned to complete some minor repairs to the south-transept roof.

### NEW DOOR

Many of you may have noticed that the interior of the church has gained a new door behind the toilet pods (the South-East corner). This has created a secure area for storing various items. The door and its surrounds will be varnished and painted during the autumn. Also, the light switches and pew heater switches will be relocated next to the notice board.

### BOILER IN CHURCH

This summer it became apparent that the church boiler needed some urgent attention. The boiler itself is OK but various associated parts were either corroded or malfunctioning. It is hoped these problems will be resolved before the cold weather kicks in.

### CHURCH CLOCK

Also, during September, the church clock decided to take a break at five-twenty (at least it was showing the correct time twice a day). This has now been resolved and, hopefully, the clock will continue to faithfully show the time and chime the quarter and hour spots.

**HARVEST LUNCH - 4th October, 12 noon for 12:30, in the Parish Rooms**

There is a list on the church notice board for signing up if you intend to support the Harvest Lunch. You need to indicate from the list on the sheet your choice of menu. Please bring your own

drinks. In the past our lunches have proved to be good fun and we hope as many people as possible can attend this year's lunch.

### BEETLE DRIVE

It was unfortunate that, due to insufficient numbers, we had to cancel the planned Beetle Drive. There was no particular reason why this event didn't captivate people's interest but if you feel the timing of the event was not right, or whatever, please let us know. Many people did ask the question: "What is a Beetle Drive?". Basically, it's a bit like playing cards and we assure you there are no live beetles involved.

### NORTH KESTEVEN DEANERY

Just for information one of the Churchwardens has been elected to the North Kesteven Deanery. Richard Clash put his name forward at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting, together with Brenda Hitchcock, who has been our deanery representative for some time.

### WEDDINGS

This summer and autumn there has been a glut of weddings at St Denys. We are of the opinion, and it is only an opinion, this may be due to the fact the church building provides an excellent backdrop for such occasions - devoid of any cars parked outside the church. Whatever one's opinion of the reordered Market Place it is nice to see various events taking place, unhindered with rows of motor vehicles.

### ... and finally

Extract from Churchwardens log book  
January 2015: DAC Heating Adviser visit. Richard Taylor came to review and compile a report regarding possibility of installing under-pew heaters.

### COMMUNICANTS' GUILD

We shall be meeting in the Church Room on **Tuesday 20th October** at 2 pm. Our speaker will be Rich Dutton, Editor of "Your Local Lincs".

You are most welcome to join us.

### SLEAFORD KESWICK BIBLE MINISTRY

**Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> October at 7.30pm**

Riverside Church  
Jonathan Lamb – author and Bible teacher

### ALL SOULS SERVICE Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> November

3pm in church  
There will be the opportunity to remember a loved one by the lighting of a candle

### CONFIRMATION SERVICE

There will be a Confirmation Service on **Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> November at 7pm.**

If you are interested in being confirmed please contact the Parish Office or Rev'd Philip Johnson (contact details on front page)



[www.sleafordparishchurch.co.uk](http://www.sleafordparishchurch.co.uk) / [admin@sleafordparishchurch.co.uk](mailto:admin@sleafordparishchurch.co.uk)

The church is open daily from 9am  
During 2025, it cost £2330 per week to run the church