

The Elizabeth Pathway

Use your gifts to serve God and others in the name of Christ

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
SUFFOLK



Ordained ministers (deacons and priests) are called to represent the church in the wider work. They lead the church's mission and ministry through worship and prayer, preaching and teaching, community engagement and pastoral work.

This booklet relates to ministers training through the Elizabeth Pathway.

Growing in God

The Elizabeth Pathway

The Elizabeth Pathway is a nationally accredited training route for ordained ministry. It is particularly designed for candidates aged between 53 - 67 who would exercise an ordained ministry in their sponsoring parish to build up the body of Christ and show and share their Christian faith where they live.

The focus of the formation is developing awareness of God's presence and activity in the world, and cultivating habits and skills to enable others to develop such awareness. To be ordained to serve among people whom you know, and who know you, is a particular calling and requires particular gifts.

We believe that God is calling people to this expression of ordained ministry at this time to enable the Church to serve God's mission in every community and neighbourhood.



Training

How long does it take?

The Elizabeth Pathway takes two years. The first year is 'The Discernment Year' where potential ordinands will meet regularly with the Diocesan Director of Ordinands (DDO) and their assistant (ADDO). They will attend the national stage 1 and stage 2 panels, and if recommended for training they will proceed onto year two. Ordination will happen at the end of year two and is followed by ongoing formation throughout a curacy which aims to ensure they meet the formation criteria at end of curacy as for any other curate.

Ripon College Cuddeston

The training programme is delivered in conjunction with Ripon College Cuddeston and is being offered as a pilot project in 2026. The programme is validated by the national church. A candidate is chosen for the course following:

- An initial conversation with a member of the Vocations Team such as Director of Ordinands
- Gaining the support of your local parish priest
- Completion of the vocations form.

Year one

This is a year of discernment with a member of the vocations team and attending their stage 1 and stage 2 panels. The year will involve:

- Monthly meetings with a member of the vocations team
- Attendance at the Fellowship of Vocations Group, meeting monthly at Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich or on Teams
- Attendance at the diocesan training modules if they have the capacity to do so
- Three residential weekends at the Rippon college
- If candidates receive a recommendation for further training, they will proceed to the second year of the pathway.

Year two

Those who have completed stage 1 and 2 panels by the end of July in year one will receive a recommendation to continue training in year two. The year two training will involve:

- Attending Bishop's Formation Evenings from September to June every other Thursday. These will be hosted by the IME2 team or a member of senior staff at Westerfield Church Room
- Competing Diocesan training modules: Enhancing Worship, Being Anglican, Permission to Preach, Old Testament and New Testament. Please note prior learning will be taken into consideration
- Two residential weekends at Rippon college.
- Journeying with a Spiritual director.

Residential weekends

- Held in Cuddesdon, Oxford
- Friday evening to Sunday afternoon
- Two-year rolling programme of five weekends
- Costs will be met by the national church.



Who is it for?

This pathway is focused primarily on ordinands who are likely to serve as self-supporting assistant priests in the parish or benefice which sponsors them. They have been identified by the PCC and incumbent, as well as members of the congregations and local community, as potential candidates for ordination and have engaged in a diocesan discernment process.

Once ordained, they will serve as part of a larger team led by an experienced priest. They might serve as local pastors in their home village or neighbourhood, and/or as priests exercising a sacramental ministry across their benefice or in their place of work.

What qualities would you need?

Candidates will have been identified by their incumbent and local church, and recommended in writing by their incumbent with endorsement from the PCCs of their parish or benefice. They will show a lively faith which they naturally share with others; they will be trusted and respected in their communities; they will work collaboratively and not need to be possessive in the ministry they exercise; they will have a life-giving disposition, enabling others in discipleship and ministry and model a learning mindset.



Formation after ordination

In the candidate's diaconal year, and in preparation for priesthood, and throughout the candidate's title curacy, the relationship with the training supervisor is guided by a detailed working agreement.

Candidates are required to take courses for one to three years after ordination to develop their theological and ministerial understanding to equip them for the ministry they have been called to.

The courses each candidate undertakes are worked out in relation to their previous education and experience and the ministerial requirements of their local context.

For more information

Please visit our website cofesuffolk.org and search 'exploring your Christian calling'. Or for resources and training specific to this role please visit: insight.cofesuffolk.org

For enquiries about initial or ongoing training:
The Revd Canon Stuart Batten
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We welcome people of all backgrounds, races, and ethnicities to bring their talents to our team. Our recruitment processes are designed to be fair, transparent, and accessible, ensuring that all candidates have equal opportunities to succeed.

We seek to embed racial justice to our processes and if you would like to contact our Diocesan UKME Vocations Champion for support please email: vocationschampion@cofesuffolk.org

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
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