



St Benedict's Newsletter 306

17 October 2025



Catholic Social Teaching

This week we have turned to look at another strand of Catholic Social Teaching: **Creation and the Environment**. The world around us is one of God’s greatest gifts, a sign of His beauty, creativity, and love. From the mountains and oceans to the smallest living creature, all of creation speaks of the care and generosity of our Creator. As human beings, we have been entrusted with this gift, not to use it carelessly, but to nurture, protect, and share it responsibly.

Our assemblies have encouraged us to think deeply about *environmental justice*, the call to protect both the Earth and the people most affected by its misuse. We are reminded that how we treat creation reflects how we value God’s gift to us and to one another.

“When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required.” Luke 12:48

This scripture reminds us that our responsibility to care for creation is not optional, it is part of our discipleship. God has entrusted us with a world full of wonder and life. With this

blessing comes the duty to use our resources wisely, reduce waste, and live in ways that allow all creation to flourish.

Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si'*, tells us that, "The Earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor." Caring for creation, then, is not only about recycling or saving energy (the first thoughts that often fill our mind when looking at this theme) but it's about justice, compassion, and gratitude. The cry of the Earth is deeply connected to the cry of the poor. When we waste, pollute, or consume without care, it is often the poorest communities who suffer most.

Pope Leo XIV reminds us that: "Nature itself is reduced at times to a bargaining chip, a commodity to be bartered for economic or political gain ... God's creation turns into a battleground for the control of vital resources." His words call us to examine our attitudes toward the environment and to remember that creation is not ours to exploit, but God's gift to cherish.

Around the world, the spread of wealth and resources is deeply unequal. Some countries have more than they need, while others struggle to meet basic needs for food, clean water, and shelter. The world's population may be spread across many nations, but the opportunity to live well and safely is not shared equally. This calls us to think about *fairness*, how our choices, habits, and lifestyles affect others we may never meet.

At St Benedict's, we can live out our call to care for creation by making environmental justice part of our everyday choices, in school, at home, and in our community. When we act to protect the Earth, we are also standing up for fairness and dignity for all of God's people.

Throughout the week we can show an understanding of this in small meaningful ways;

- **Wisdom:** Recognising that every choice we make, what we buy, how we travel, what we waste, has an impact on others and on the planet.
- **Compassion:** Seeing the connection between care for creation and care for people. Environmental damage affects the poorest first.
- **Resilience:** Being persistent in caring for our common home, even when it feels like our small actions won't make a difference.

As we reflect over this week, we are challenged to look deep within ourselves. Each of us has been "given much", from clean water and safe homes to the education and opportunities we receive. The challenge for us is simple but profound:

What will you do with what you've been given?

Take time this week to notice the beauty of creation, the changing leaves, the sound of rain, the freshness of the air. Give thanks for the world God has entrusted to you. Then, ask yourself: What have I been given and how am I using it? Do my actions show gratitude and care for the gifts of creation, or do they take them for granted?

As you think about the world beyond our school, reflect on fairness: how can we live so that others also share in the beauty and resources of creation?

Take up the challenge to think about a pledge on how you will change the world. Every act of stewardship planting, reusing, conserving, adds up to lasting change. These small steps remind us that creation care begins close to home.

Prayer

Creator God,

You have blessed us with a world full of beauty and wonder.

Teach us to care for the Earth as you care for us.

Help us to use wisely what we have been given,

to live simply, act justly, and love deeply.

May we protect our common home,

so that all creation may sing your praise.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Careers Update

Careers Talk: A Career in Ecology

On Wednesday 15th October, students (and staff) were invited by Beatrix (*Bea*) Hayter-Gare to explore the world of Ecology and Conservation through an engaging and interactive careers talk. Bea works as an Ecologist for Suffolk County Council, a role which had not been her first choice of career (she had originally begun studying Physics at university), but one that meets her passion for wildlife and caring for the environment. Bea travelled throughout the UK as well as overseas, exploring the flora and fauna in our world, and after a foray into Marine Biology (she is a competent scuba diver), she decided that Environmental Science was the way forward.

Whilst her work involves surveying natural habitats outdoors and ensuring land development does not disturb or destroy these, Bea noted her equally important indoor work in report writing, emailing and general paperwork that support her duties.

Throughout her talk, Bea tested our knowledge of the natural world, offering prizes for the greatest number of correct answers (a very popular move!). We discovered that only recently (in the last few years) have Ecologists found that bats live in trees, and if you have them in your roof and actively move to disturb them, you are breaking the law!

Students were so engaged that we ran out of time for their questions... which sounds like a great reason to invite Bea to return to St. Benedict's again to share more of her insights!

Student Opportunities

Virtual Insight Solicitor Apprenticeship Programme with Linklaters for Y12 and Y13 Aspiring Law Students

Tuesday 21st October 2025

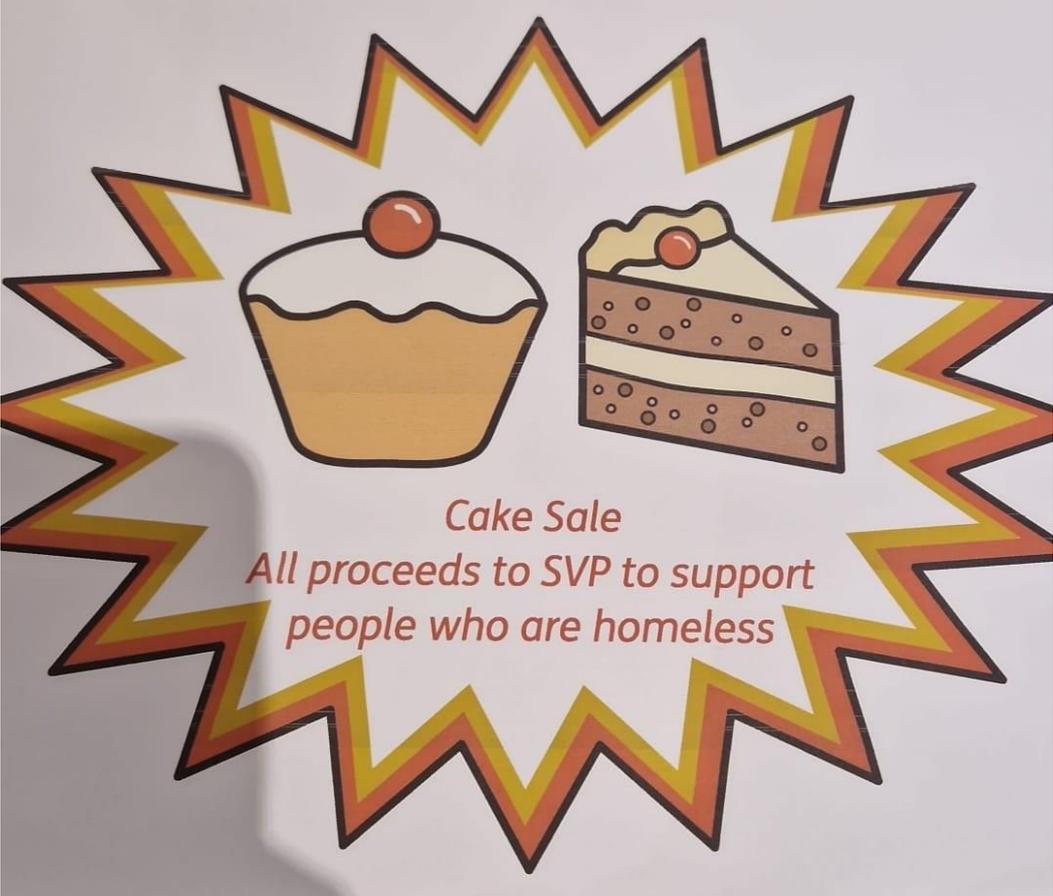
5.00pm - 6.30pm

Linklaters is one of the world's leading global law firms and forms part of the Magic Circle group (one of the top five firms in the UK). Students will be introduced to the firm's corporate law practice alongside their work experience schemes, internships, and solicitor apprenticeships on offer for this year. Applications can be made if of interest.

Register at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Linklaters_Virt

Ms Hahn

Youth SVP Big Sleep Out Cake Sale



Cake Sale
All proceeds to SVP to support
people who are homeless

A hand-drawn illustration of a cupcake and a slice of cake is centered within a large, multi-colored starburst shape. The cupcake has white frosting and a red cherry on top. The slice of cake has three layers: a top layer of white frosting with a cherry, a middle layer of brown cake with white dots, and a bottom layer of brown cake with white dots. The starburst shape is composed of multiple overlapping lines in shades of yellow, orange, and red, creating a jagged, sunburst-like effect.

On Sunday 12th October, Genevieve D'Mello, Clara Martinez and Hattie Baldock from 8L ran cake sales after two masses at St Edmund's Catholic Church to raise money for the Youth SVP, as they had participated in the Youth SVP Big Sleep Out on the school field a few weeks earlier. They were ably assisted by one of our ex-students Sofia Lyons who kindly gave up her time to help. Altogether, the cake sales raised £165, which means the total amount the school has raised for the Saint Vincent de Paul society from the Big Sleep Out is now close to £1,000. This was a fantastic achievement by the girls as they planned the event independently from start to finish. In doing so, they realised the Youth SVP's aim for its members 'to use their creativity, resources and energy to engage in their communities and take part in social action...not only making a difference, but learning new skills, building lasting friendships and growing in faith.'

Mr Murphy

Year 12 Residential

Last week we took 50 year 12 students to Essex Outdoors, Bradwell-on-Sea, for our first year 12 residential pilgrimage. We set off from St Benedict's on Monday morning with a surprising amount of kit for only two nights away, I blame Matt Spiller for packing all his hair styling equipment.

We arrived with enough time to enjoy lunch and find space for the many bags. We were blessed with clear skies and a light wind, perfect conditions for sailing, dragon boat racing and climbing the high ropes course.

The high ropes course included a leap-of-faith (see the photos), which involved climbing up a pole to stand on a small wobbly platform and leap to catch a trapeze bar, not everyone's cup of tea but I am pleased to say that all the teachers managed it! Dragon Boat racing takes place in large Canadian style canoes with space for 10 paddlers and a drummer who beats the paddle rhythm. The team needs to work together and win the race. Some boats were more successful than others and some people got wetter than others! The last activity was sailing, the instructors were very knowledgeable and everyone had a go at taking the helm, no one capsized!

After a busy afternoon outside in perfect conditions we headed back in for dinner, a bit of time to relax and then some team party games. I won't try and explain the games but do look at the photos and see if you can work out what they were trying to do.

The weather wasn't quite as perfect on Tuesday but it didn't rain and it wasn't too windy for getting on the water. The groups were split again with half of them completing the activities in the morning whilst the rest took part in the pilgrimage to the Chapel of St-Peter-on-the-Wall. In the afternoon the groups swapped over so everyone completed all the activities as well as the pilgrimage.

The pilgrimage was an hour walk along the coastal path to the ancient chapel. The chapel was first established by Cedd in 653 after he'd sailed down the coast from Lindisfarne and built the chapel on a ruined Roman Fort. Once inside the chapel we were lucky enough to be joined by some members of Ignite (including our ex-student, Luc Wallace), who led the group in quiet reflection and prayer.

Tuesday evening was karaoke, which was surprisingly popular and less about individual performances and more of a mass sing-a-long.

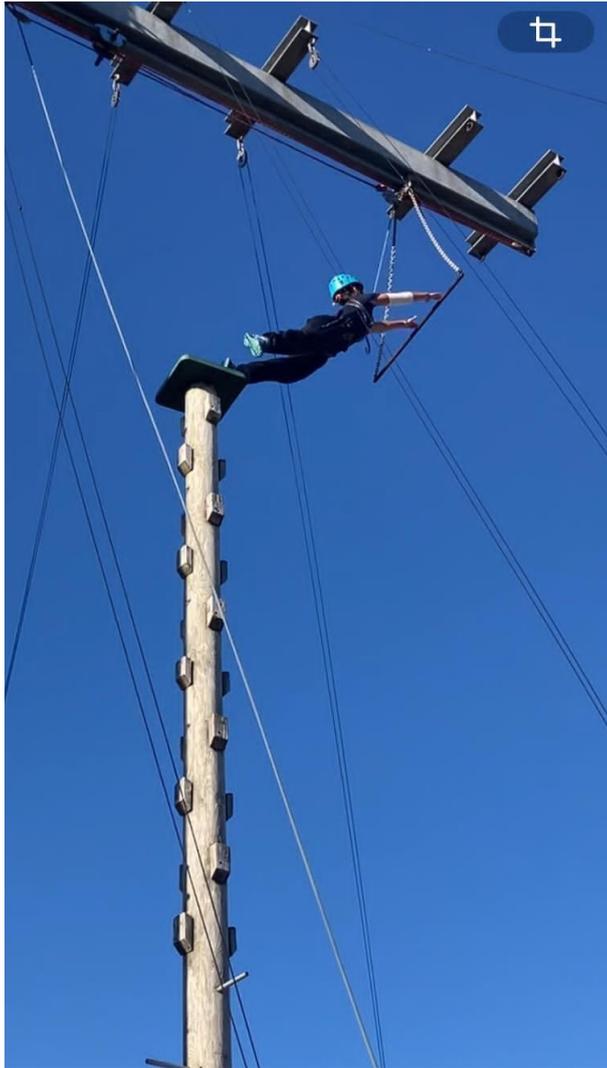
Wednesday saw the students enjoy a huge, cooked breakfast before getting back on the coach to head back to school in time for period three.

The trip was a wonderful opportunity for the new year 12s to bond as a year group and we're looking forward to repeating the trip in years to come.

Mrs Slater











Articulation Prize

The annual Articulation Prize invites students aged 16-19 to **deliver a 10-minute presentation to an audience about a work of art, architecture or an artefact of their choice**. [Adjudicators](#) then assess each presentation as a whole, looking at content, structure, delivery and the speaker's original approach and unique potential. You don't have to study art to join the programme.

St Benedict's have applied to run an internal heat to become part of the regional trials and final competition at the National Gallery this year.

How do I get involved?

October 20th 2025:

1) If you are interested in participating please email Ms Chacksfield before Monday 20 October:

cchacksfield@st-benedict's.suffolk.sch.uk

2) Think about an artwork of your choice that you might want to make a presentation on. This could be inspired by visits that you have made to local galleries or studios.

Weds 26th November 2025

10 x Students who have expressed their interest will be invited to attend the **Articulation Discovery Day at Magdalene College, Cambridge** on Wednesday 26 November, 10am - 3:30pm.

Benefits of taking part in Articulation

- Develops public speaking, independent research and presentation skills
- Development of visual analysis and critical thinking
- Increases confidence and interview skills
- Supports academic accreditation and UCAS applications
- Prepares you for employability and using transferable skills

Ms Chacksfield

Dance/Gymnastics Success

Roxy Byrne (7L) has just returned from her end of season Nationals 2025 competition along with her team Synergy Majorettes. They take part in many competitions throughout the year performing routines with baton twirling, pom-poms, flags and more.

At the weekend Roxy was awarded a 4th place medal against 11 other national teams for her individual leader performance in her Pom routine, and as a team they came home with 16 trophies.

They are now starting new routines ready for the first nationals next year in April.



British Schools Orienteering Score Championships – A Winning Performance



On Saturday 11th October, George Wightman (11A) competed in the British Schools Orienteering Score Championships, which were held at Gnoll Country Park in Neath, Wales and won! This is a fantastic achievement as he also won the same championships in a younger age group when he was in Year 9 when they were held at Martinshaw Woods in Leicestershire.

To excel in orienteering score championships you don't just need to be incredibly fit, but also mentally agile as strategy and navigational skills are also very important. Participants are given a map and a set of controls to find in a set of amount of time, and can choose the order that they visit the controls with the ones which are furthest away, or most difficult to find, being worth more points. The person who visits the most controls within the time limit and scores the most points wins, although there is a point penalty for each minute late.

The course was very hilly and the controls were very difficult to find due to thick undergrowth. Nevertheless, George managed to visit 26 of the 29 controls and returned to the start with two and a half minutes to spare. He knew that he was in the vicinity of one of the three missing controls but was unable to locate it and made a calculated decision not to try to visit the other two as they were a long way away, as he feared incurring a penalty point.

Once they had finished, George and the other competitors faced an anxious wait for the final results. However, when they were released, George was extremely happy to come in first place with 260 points, followed by a student from Ffynone House School in second (225

points) and another student from Ffynone tying with a student from Bishopstone Comprehensive for third.

This was another excellent performance from George and we wish him every success in future events.

Mr Murphy



Roadworks Update

Phase two

What will we be doing?

Phase two will involve widening the inner gyratory.

On what dates will we be working?

Phase two will commence once phase one is complete, no later than Monday 13 October. We anticipate this phase will finish in early to mid-January 2026, with a break over the Christmas period.

At what times will we be working?

These works will be carried out during the daytime. Traffic management will be in place at all times.

What traffic management will be in place?

- **The inner lane of the gyratory will be closed.** Temporary traffic signals will also be in place. This closure will result in several changes for road users:- **Southern loop closure:** The southern loop of the gyratory will be closed. This means road users travelling clockwise will be required to continue southbound along Fornham Road towards Compiegne Way.- **Travelling from Mildenhall Road on to Tollgate Lane:** To reduce disruption caused by the closure of the southern loop, traffic will be able to

turn right from Mildenhall Road on to Tollgate Lane. Temporary signage will be placed on-site to ensure road users are aware of this change.- **Access to and from Bell Meadow and Layham Drive:** Due to the closure of the southern loop, road users exiting Bell Meadow will need to turn left on to Fornham Road southbound. Bell Meadow will remain accessible by following the gyratory clockwise as normal. We have written to residents of Bell Meadow and Layham Drive to inform them of this change.

- The B1106 (Thetford Road) will remain closed travelling towards Bury St Edmunds only from Monday 29 September, for 24 hours per day. While this closure is in place, traffic towards Bury St Edmunds will be diverted via B1106, A134, A143 and no vice versa.

Further updates

We will continue to provide updates regarding progress on the scheme, and will notify you of changes brought about by future phases before they commence.

We have also attached an artist's impression illustrating the final road layout, once the scheme is complete.

If you need more information, please call us on **0345 606 6171** or email customer.services@suffolk.gov.uk



Data Collection Sheet Updates

It is important that the information we hold about your child is kept up-to-date.

Please remember that as a parent/guardian/carer, you can check, amend and update most of your child's information on Arbor, including changing your mobile number and address or adding information such as religion, family contacts, medical information and transport method.

If you are struggling to do this please email Arbor@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk where we will be able to help you.

Thanks

Mrs Defew

Reporting Absences

Reporting your child's absence

If your child is unwell or has an appointment e.g. dentist/doctor could you please leave a message by 9.00am including the reason for the absence via:

Phone: 01284 753512 and Choose option 1:

And then choose option 1 for students in year 7-11 and option 2 for students in the sixth form

OR

Email: attendance@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk

For information on what to do if your child has COVID-like symptoms please see the following link for NHS guidance:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Just a reminder that if you do not inform us by 9.00am or use the above phone/email address, you will receive an email requesting the reason for your child's absence. All unexplained absences will be marked as unauthorised and there will be a follow-up phone call from the Attendance Officer. Please note the school operates a first-day response to absences.

If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to be absent from school during term time, you should complete a **leave of absence application form (please see link below)**, at least three weeks in advance, stating the reason why the absence must be taken in term time. Please note that the Fixed Penalty Fine is now £80 per legal guardian for unauthorised absences of 10 sessions (5 days) or more.

<https://www.st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=74&type=pdf>

Thank you very much.

Mrs Wesley - Attendance Officer

Dates for your Diary



21 October - Careers Workshops for Years 8-11 with a Provider of Technical Education, Training and Apprenticeships

21 October - Sixth Form Open Evening (6.30 - 8pm, no need to book)

24 October - Break up for half term

[Term Dates](#)

Contact Us



St Benedict's Catholic School

Beetons Way

Bury St Edmunds, IP32 6RH

01284 753512

enquiries@st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk

www.st-benedicts.suffolk.sch.uk

[Instagram](#)