

A bird, a plane... or a real leap of faith?

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The Bishop of Norwich is no stranger to leaps of faith.

One performed thousands of feet in the air with someone strapped to your back is rather a different matter.

But that is what the Rt Revd Graham James is preparing for to mark the 30th anniversary of Norfolk charity the Matthew Project, a charity which supports people with drug and alcohol issues across the county.

He said: "Christians have often spoken about taking a 'leap of faith'. I'm doing so in a tandem sky dive next May as patron of the Matthew Project.

"When I came to Norwich 14 years ago it was one of the first local organisations to ask me to become its patron.

"Its care for all those affected by drug and alcohol misuse has been a model of social action inspired by Christian principles."

Bishop Graham and his wife, Julie, will leap from the heavens and float to earth on May 17 next year, along with former High Sheriff of Norfolk Henry Cator.

The Matthew Project is calling on other people to sign up to make the skydive a major fundraising event.

Bishop Graham said: "The people who work for the Matthew Project take lots of leaps of faith for their clients and their families. It's the least I can do to take a leap of faith in solidarity with them – and, I hope, to raise some money too."

The Matthew Project hopes to make the skydive one of its monthly fundraising landmarks next year, with a different opportunity every month for fundraisers to make a contribution to the charity.

Also taking part will be Mr Cator, High Sheriff in 2012/13, Bob Rose of Larking Gowen and Mark Jeffries of Mills & Reeve, and as the organisers are hoping to have at least 30 people in total they are looking for others to sign up.

→ For more info www.matthewproject.org. If anyone would like to sponsor the Bishop they can via www.justgiving.com/graham-james1

→ The Matthew Project works with people of all ages who are affected by drugs and alcohol, including parents, carers, and young people whose parents have misuse problems, and is part of the Norfolk Recovery Partnership - the one-stop drug and alcohol service for adults in the county. It has also recently launched Outside the Wire, a service for serving and ex-forces personnel living in Norfolk.

→ The Matthew Project is moving out of its Pottergate offices in Norwich next week. From Monday, the charity's head office will be Nedeham House, 22 St Stephens Road, Norwich NR1 3QU.



■ The Bishop of Norwich, Graham James, is to undertake a parachute jump.

Graphic: ANNETTE HUDSON

Project hands over to the youngsters

The Matthew Project will hand over control of its under-18 service and youth team next week, as it participates in Takeover Day 2013.

On Friday, for one day only, children and young people will be handed the reins as part of the national event which aims to give young people the chance to shadow jobs, get involved in decision-making and offer their opinions on key issues.

Youngsters from Pupil Voice, the school council at the Clare School, in Norwich, will have their say in the two teams, which work in schools, youth clubs, professional and community settings to provide education, training, information and one-to-one support related to

drugs, alcohol and smoking. Naomi Selim, under-18 services manager, said: "As an organisation, the Matthew Project wants to ensure services are accessible to all young people across Norfolk. As part of Takeover Day 2013 the students are going to be helping us come up with new ideas and activities to make access easier for all.

"The students will be in charge of organisation, design, and production of a new resource which will enable more young people easy access to the Matthew Project."

Pupil Voice chairman Paul Spinks, 13, said he was looking forward to the day. "I think it will be quite exciting being the boss – and quite fun."