

# The Benefice of Athelington, Denham, Horham, Hoxne, Redlingfield, Syleham & Wingfield

We are seven small rural parishes, well rooted in our communities, resolved to share the good news of Jesus Christ more effectively with all ages



Athelington



Redlingfield



Wingfield

We are  
Growing in  
God!



Denham



Syleham



Hoxne



Horham

# The Benefice

*A group of parishes resolved to share the good news of Jesus Christ more effectively with all ages*

We are seven small rural parishes in North Suffolk, ranging in population from under 30 to about 900, in a benefice created in 2013. We have learnt to work well together under the direction of our current priest and would want to continue to develop in this way. Two of the parishes already share a monthly service and hold joint PCC meetings, practices that could be encouraged.

Our new priest can be sure of a warm welcome. We are very keen to grow in faith, and to share the good news of Jesus Christ more effectively to all ages. We have a range of worship styles and, whilst we value this heritage and our rural traditions, we aspire to make our worship accessible to all and especially to younger people. A café style service has recently been introduced but we are keen to explore other ways of working with all ages.

These are key visions but, just as importantly, we'd like help to grow our discipleship - including in giving - and to develop our online presence. During the Covid-19 lockdown we have experimented successfully with participative live-streamed Communion and Evening Prayer [facebook.com/WingfieldChurch](https://facebook.com/WingfieldChurch), with Skype/Zoom prayer groups and with Messy Church [facebook.com/HoxneMC](https://facebook.com/HoxneMC) and are now eager to grow these initiatives.

**Could you help us to take these things forward,** with the enthusiastic support of assistant clergy and commissioned Lay Elders ready to respond to an enabling leadership?



As a benefice we run a successful monthly Messy Church, giving us contacts we would like to build on, especially following our Facebook experiment; there is a branch of Mothers' Union and a singing group, known as The Blasters, supports benefice services. A monthly newsletter ensures all are kept informed, while two local magazines bring church events to the notice of the wider community.



We hold Monday prayer breakfasts, variously hosted, and seasonal events have included Lent Lunches, a Live Nativity alternating with a Crib Service, Christingle and a St Edmund Pageant. We have also tentatively explored a home group and have enjoyed reflective labyrinth building days.

We have built a good relationship with The Depperhaugh Home for elderly residents, including several with dementia: our Associate Priest takes a monthly Communion Service, the Mothers' Union organises a rota of visits to residents and we have occasionally taken Messy Church there, too.



# The person we would like to find

*Some characteristics we have discussed*

- An inspirational leader, who can shape and enable a missional ministry team
- A maker of disciples who can then disciple others
- Respectful of current worship traditions but able to lead in new directions
- A good listener and communicator, relating to all age groups
- Keen to foster relationships with the community school
- Willing to understand and embrace rural traditions, values and challenges whilst taking advantage of developments in social media and modern technology
- Able to work collaboratively with benefice, deanery and diocesan colleagues
- Visible, approachable and accessible to the wider community

# What we offer

*A summary of support available*

- The support of an energetic ministry team including an experienced Associate Priest, a SSM Curate, a retired priest with permission to officiate, and commissioned Lay Elders
- Excellent administrative help, paid by the parishes
- Expenses paid in full and on time
- Committed and hardworking PCCs
- A modern, well-designed detached house in a pleasant rural location
- Good leisure opportunities and communications
- Historically significant churches all either Grade I or Grade II\*

# Challenges?

*Some of the issues we face*

- Ageing congregations
- A need for deeper discipleship
- A need to embrace the online world for more effective communication and outreach
- The cost of maintaining our historic churches
- Inability, currently, to meet the cost of a full-time post

# The Local Area

## *A beautiful place to live and work*

Our benefice, with travel time between the widest points of approximately 15 minutes, is situated in undulating and well-wooded countryside under the wide East Anglian skies. It is rural, with farming at the heart - and offers excellent opportunities for dog-walking! Our parishes sit along or near the Waveney Valley in North Suffolk, not far from the A140 Ipswich-Norwich and A143 Bury St Edmunds - Great Yarmouth, and within reach of The Broads.

The Norfolk town of Diss, which has good rail connections, several supermarkets and a golf course, is within 6 miles whilst the smaller towns of Harleston and Eye, with several specialist shops, are nearby. Wingfield has a pub, and a café within a successful equestrian business; Hoxne has a pub and it is hoped the shop/post office/café will continue under new ownership; and Horham has a village shop/post office. Good restaurants and rural cafés are easy to find. Hospitals are at Norwich, Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds but there is a choice of local doctor, dental and veterinary surgeries.

There is a community primary school in Hoxne Village, rated 'good' by Ofsted in 2019, and several CE primaries (all also 'good' or 'outstanding') in the area, which is also served by exceptionally good High Schools.

Stradbroke, about 3 miles distant, has a small and friendly Leisure Centre, with a gym and swimming pool.

# The Rectory



## *"Brilliantly designed"*

The four-bedroom modern clergy house is in the village of Wingfield. It is well-planned as a vicarage, with an 'office' area with its own front door and comprising a study and accessible toilet; a communicating door makes the lounge available for meetings when required, whilst the family kitchen includes a snug for private use. The garden is a good size and the present incumbent describes the house as 'brilliantly designed' for clergy use. Superfast broadband is available.

# The Deanery

## *Working on a strategic mission plan*

Hoxne Deanery comprises 21 rural parishes in three benefices, sharing a Rural Dean, Revd Canon Susan Loxton, with the neighbouring 18 parish deanery of Hartismere; the two work closely together and joint deanery meetings are held three times a year, with a focus on invited speakers on a range of relevant subjects. The Rural Dean convenes monthly chapter meetings for clergy of both deaneries.

The deanery is working on a strategic mission plan, within the overall diocesan plan of Growing in God, and it includes objectives which should support us in meeting the challenges outlined in our benefice profile. Meanwhile, the churches of the deanery meet for shared services for Ash Wednesday, Ascension and Lammas.



*Our Lammas service is held in support of the Addington Fund, a national charity supporting the farming community*

# The Parishes

## Hoxne St Peter & St Paul with St Edmund

*Engaging with a rich history of religious significance*

Hoxne gives its name to the deanery thanks to a history of religious significance. The village is the traditional site of the martyrdom of St Edmund (king of East Anglia and first patron saint of England), and of the palace of the medieval Bishops of Norwich. There is evidence of an established church from 926 but the present building dates from early 1100s and the end of the 15th century.

In the 2011 Census the population of Hoxne was 889. A strong community spirit is maintained – for example, everyone is invited to a Harvest Breakfast on the village green (shown right) - with church members playing an active part in many of the village organisations. Hoxne has a pub, large and well-equipped village hall, a playing field and pavilion with successful football and bowls clubs; it is hoped to save the village shop/post office and possibly its café. The village has one pre-school group and St Edmund's Community Primary School, which holds a termly service in the church. A group under "Open the Book" is active in the school. St Edmund's House is a district council run sheltered accommodation for the elderly.



The church, recently re-dedicated as St Peter and St Paul with St Edmund, maintains three parish services - a Common Worship Holy Communion, a BCP Holy Communion and BCP Morning Prayer - and the monthly benefice café church. A Lay Elder assists by conducting one service a month. Church maintenance and repair is supported by the Friends of St Peter and St Paul, which attracts membership from the wider community and has raised more than £120,000 since it was formed in 1986.



The village has a rich history – hand axes found in the area show that Hoxne was inhabited 400,000 years ago (and as a consequence is believed to be the oldest continuous settlement in the British Isles) and the village was also recently the site of the largest collection of Roman coins ever found in Britain along with other treasure. Building on this history and celebrating its traditional links with St Edmund, Hoxne has ambitious plans to restore and reinvigorate its church to attract more visitors and to be of greater use for the entire community. A new chapel dedicated to St Edmund is planned, with a restored wooden screen by Harry Hems, showing the martyrdom of St Edmund.

*cont.....*



## Hoxne continued

A servery has recently been installed and further improvements, including the restoration of our fine church bells, are planned. The organ is also very fine and plans are being considered to place it in a more appropriate position. With the restored screen, and the marble monument to the Maynard family by Charles Stanley, there are items of national significance in the church.

Find us on  
A Church Near You IP21 5AT

### Statistics 2017-2019

Weddings	6
Baptisms	3
Funerals	9

## Athelington St Peter

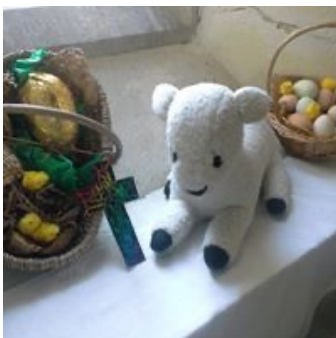
### Tiny and attractive

The smallest of the seven parishes with a population of just 23, Athelington has maintained a regular pattern of monthly services with additional festivals at Easter, St Peter's Patronal, Harvest and Advent all being especially well attended. The church building is in good repair and dates from before 1300; its carved bench ends depicting saints and virtues are particularly noteworthy.



With its attractive rural setting, the church is a popular venue for weddings, with receptions being held at the nearby Athelington Hall.

Good support for the church from long established local families remains strong, especially with fund raising events and appeals for repairs to the fabric and maintenance of the church and its churchyard.



### Easter offerings!

St Peter's attracted enthusiastic cyclists for the local Ride & Stride event in aid of the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust.



Find us on  
A Church Near You IP21 5EL

### Statistics 2017 - 2019

Weddings	3
Baptisms	1
Funerals	1

# Denham, St John the Baptist

## A small and loyal congregation

Denham is a scattered village with a population of about 150 people. The local businesses are predominantly agricultural and the church is surrounded by rolling arable fields. It is first mentioned in the Domesday Book and today remains open for everyone at all times.

The churchyard has been designated a County Wildlife Site as it provides a rich and varied habitat with lots of cowslips and early purple orchids in the spring.



It has a small and loyal congregation who attend Holy Communion at the end of every month, which is a friendly and informal service with cups of coffee and cake before and afterwards. This regular service is augmented through the year on special occasions such as the Service of Light on Easter Eve, Harvest Festival, Remembrance Service, the Carol Service and the biennial benefice Live Nativity held in a farmyard nearby.

The PCC has been raising funds by running a strawberry tea/plant sale and a kubb tournament every summer. In 2010 substantial repairs were carried out to the roof and west wall, thanks to generous local support and various grants. However, cracks in the chancel wall subsequently appeared and will require further work sooner or later.

The church is light and airy with a wide chancel area and, at present, is the only communal meeting place in Denham.



Find us on  
*A Church Near You IP21 5DE*

Statistics 2017 - 2019	
Weddings	1
Baptisms	1
Funerals	1

# Horham St Mary

## Highly commended wildlife churchyard

Horham is an active rural parish, mainly agricultural, consisting of approximately 270 people, with a thriving village shop and post office.

The church, on the main through road, is in the centre of the village and is open for visitors during the day



St Mary's Church is Norman in origin and kept in good repair. It has also won awards for its wildlife churchyard. It has what is believed to be the oldest ring of eight bells in the world.

The Book of Common Prayer is generally used, with one Holy Communion and one lay-led service per month. We also hold a Carol Service in conjunction with our local Baptist Church. They have an active membership and run successful youth programmes.



The church owns The Old School (now the Village Hall) which is leased to a separate management committee. Social events are held here and at The Community Centre opposite, which has its own playing field. Both of these buildings are used by nearby villages.

The 95th Bomb Group Museum and Military Hospital is set on the old WW11 airfield. They share services twice yearly with us.



Find us on  
A Church Near You IP21 5DY

Statistics 2017 - 2019	
Weddings	0
Baptisms	2
Funerals	8



# Redlingfield St Andrew

*A passionate and active PCC*

Redlingfield Church engages very positively with its community and this leads to some imaginative and successful fund raising events. These have included a very popular dog show, a produce show, a sponsored pony ride, sponsored walk, quizzes and cheese and wine evenings. Parishioners share a tidy-up of the whole village including the churchyard and enjoy getting together.



Bishop Martin came to the church in 2016 to dedicate the repaired roof, the first time a bishop had visited Redlingfield since Bishop Nykke of Norwich came in the 16th century to chastise the nuns in the adjoining convent!

The PCC has now secured a £10,000 grant for minor works. Further grants will be required for urgent repairs to the church floor; a plan is in process of being formulated.



St Andrew's holds a monthly Communion Service and Morning Prayer, both Common Worship, and we are experimenting with different kinds of worship.

Doorstep Green, a community area, adjoins the church car park and provides an ideal venue for outdoor fund-raising events and for a summer 'Pub on the Green'. It was also the scene of a very successful open-air harvest festival in 2019.



Find us on  
*A Church Near You IP23 7QY*



<i>Statistics 2017 - 2019</i>	
Weddings	1
Baptisms	2
Funerals	3

# Syleham St Margaret

Tranquil appeal with mission opportunities



We are a friendly village of about 200, on the banks of the River Waveney, with rural values and traditions. Our C14th round tower church is dedicated to St Margaret of Scotland (*great-grandmother of Henry II, known to have received the submission of the rebel Earl Bigod at Syleham in 1174*). It stands in a charming sylvan setting at the end of a winding tree-lined lane and visitors enjoy the surprise as the lane suddenly opens out! Our congregation is small but we take great pride in our well maintained church and churchyard, a County wildlife site.

The church is always open and attracts many comments on the peace and tranquility found here: we are keen to explore creative ideas to develop this as a mission opportunity.

We currently have two services a month and, as some of our congregation cherish the Prayer Book, our Communion Service follows this rite. A wider congregation appreciate the simple Village Praise Service. Both services are followed by time to chat over Fair Trade coffee: Yes! We aspire to be an Eco Church and already have 100% renewable energy.



We would love to grow younger, to strengthen our congregation and our finances: we actively engage in benefice family events and would fully support any new initiatives for all age provision.



Villagers share our pride in our church and happily work with us in flower arranging for festivals and in fund raising events, such as a summer concert and garden fête. The annual carol service, supported by a talented local à cappella choir and followed by generous festive refreshments, is particularly popular.

The attractive village hall, belonging to St Margaret's, is on a long lease to a management committee and its varied uses, including a recently purchased green space, offer numerous opportunities for community engagement.

The hall is available free to the church and we make good use of it as needed for our annual harvest supper and some other fund-raising events. It is also often the venue for deanery and benefice activities such as Lent lunches and, in particular, for the monthly benefice Messy Church.



Find us on  
A Church Near You IP21 4LN

Statistics 2017-2019	
Weddings	4
Baptisms	4
Funerals	3

# Wingfield St Andrew

A living church of today with medieval royal connections



The church occupies a central position in this lively historic village of 300 people. It stands opposite the pub, one of two eating places (the other being a café within the equestrian centre). and is also close to the community arts centre at Wingfield Barns.

A lively events group helps with fund-raising for the church: stand-out events include the biennial open gardens and village fête, as well as the harvest supper and Christmas carols on the green.

St Andrews holds both a monthly Common Worship Holy Communion and a traditional benefice Sung Evensong, usually with a guest preacher. Seasonal services include weekly Compline during Lent and a crib service for the benefice on alternate Christmas Eves. The church is popular for weddings.



Visitors are attracted to the church which contains important tombs, including that of Elizabeth, sister of Richard III. Founded in 1362, the church was served by next-door Wingfield College for Priests (now a private house); today there is a loyal congregation and support from the village community.

The bells have been restored within the last twenty years. They are rung regularly both by our local ringing group and by visiting ringers.

Wingfield PCC carries out regular maintenance projects on the church building.

Find us on  
*A Church Near You IP21 5RA*

<i>Statistics 2017-2019</i>	
Weddings	11
Baptisms	6
Funerals	10



God's Light Shines in Suffolk

The diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich strongly encourages all incumbents to promote the growth of small missional groups and fresh expressions of Church in their benefices. "Lightwave" has been created with a diocese-wide Bishops Mission Order in order to support clergy and lay people to work together in mission-shaped communities, reaching out in innovative ways.

The Lightwave Community meets in small groups in homes, pubs, offices, schools and other places and complements other ways of being church. The name of the community comes from the idea of lightwaves being the way in which light spreads into dark places. Lightwave is committed to shining the light of Jesus in Suffolk through acts of kindness and practical service as well as worship and witness.

Each lightwave group aims to do one activity together to bless their local community and to share faith in their locality or network. Each group receives support and training in their outreach through a growing network of coaches. Each is mainly concerned to bless people who are exploring faith for the first time, while simultaneously cooperating closely with local parish churches and others. The Lightwave Community is being developed through a Project called "Growing in God in the Countryside" funded by the Strategic Development Unit of the Church Commissioners until 2025. While both urban and rural Christians are part of this community, there is a particular focus on helping 1500 new disciples come to faith in rural areas in the period of the funding. Many Lightwave groups are planting fresh expressions of Church. The understanding is that such fresh expressions of Church will be new or different ways of being established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church.

The Lightwave Community is developing three Rural Resourcing Churches, in different parts of Rural Suffolk to create and support the development of the small missional groups in their area and to intentionally provide sufficient critical mass for particular ministries which are currently under-represented in rural churches, for example with young adults and those in lower income brackets. Every part of the Lightwave Community has a vision for the great wave of God's love, bringing light to our county.

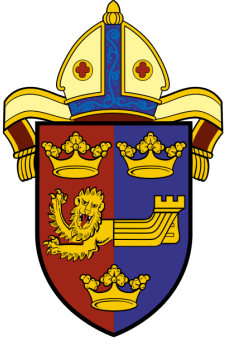


making Jesus visible through loving action

Loverural (to be launched in early 2020) – is about "making Jesus visible through loving action" in the Suffolk Countryside. It is part of the diocese's strong commitment to rural areas. Loverural has 3 strands:-

- a) Drawing attention to the enormous role of the rural Christianity in building social capital
- b) Acting as a convener for projects and congregations in the countryside including those of of different streams and denominations so that good rural practice can be shared and mutual support offered
- c) Enabling those engaged in Christian-based social action to gain confidence and wisdom in how to make exploration of the Christian faith accessible to those engaging with their initiatives

[www.light-wave.org](http://www.light-wave.org)



 THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

# Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

## Where are we?

The Diocese covers the county of Suffolk, excluding the area around Lowestoft in the north-east, and one parish in Essex. It is a mainly rural Diocese with a large number of small villages, plus market towns including Woodbridge, Halesworth, Sudbury and Beccles and the cathedral town of Bury St Edmunds with its historic ruins of the old Abbey. Ipswich is the county town with a population of about 137,000. Suffolk's population is c 650,000. The county embraces historic places of interest such as Sutton Hoo, culture at Snape with the famous annual Aldeburgh music festival, is on the Heritage coast and is a haven for lovers of natural history and birdlife. The busy port of Felixstowe is at the end of the A14 which runs via Cambridge to the Midlands and the A12 which gives access to London and the Norfolk Broads.

## Who are we?

We are often known as 'the Church of England in Suffolk'. The diocesan bishop is the Right Reverend Martin Seeley, and the suffragan bishop is the Right Reverend Dr Mike Harrison. Both work from the Bishop's House in Ipswich. They work together closely to help us shape our vision and strategy, and amongst a plethora of other tasks offer regular teaching mornings to nurture the faith of people in our congregations – and a regular Vlog which can be found on Facebook. There are 3 archdeaconries and over 450 churches where visitors will find a wide range of worshipping styles, from the traditional to contemporary, as well as Fresh Expressions and growing numbers of 'Lightwave' groups for those who haven't connected with traditional church previously. The Cathedral of St Edmund and St James in Bury St Edmunds is the mother church of the Diocese and is proactive in offering support to clergy and parishes including welcoming parishes on pilgrimage. We also work closely with our 88 Church of England primary schools. All this is, of course, supported by a small and committed diocesan staff based in the diocesan office in Ipswich.

## What is our vision?

Our diocesan vision is to be 'Growing in God', aiming to grow 'flourishing congregations making a difference'. This vision was accepted by Diocesan Synod in 2014 and since then we have been focussing on four key priorities:

- ❖ Growing in Depth: responding to the call of Christ in every part of our lives
- ❖ Growing in Number: drawing the contacts we have into the life of God's kingdom
- ❖ Growing in Influence: reaching beyond ourselves in our impact on the wider world
- ❖ Growing Younger; building churches whose age-range reflects our communities

Parishes are encouraged to use a simple Mission Action Planning tool to help us all to focus on these priorities and how they might be worked out in each different context. We are trusting God that this vision, underpinned by a commitment to Christian stewardship, will bear fruit as we look to the future.

As part of this vision, we have recently received Strategic Development Funding for two major projects: Inspiring Ipswich, overseen by the Archdeacon of Ipswich which aims to grow the church in Ipswich through church planting and reaching out to those who live in the town, and 'Growing God in the Countryside', overseen by the Archdeacon for Rural Mission, which focusses on developing Rural Resourcing Churches and nurturing and discipling new Christians through small Lightwave groups.

We have also been part of a pilot scheme exploring how we can use our church buildings more creatively both for those who worship regularly and for the benefit of our communities and many churches have benefitted from this.

We are broadening our vision through a growing partnership with the Diocese of Kagera in Tanzania, with fruitful visits and links being established.

### How can we do this?

We value our huge range of different ministries: we have over 100 stipendiary clergy, plus many SSM and PTO clergy as well as lay and ordained chaplains who can be found in such diverse places as schools, prisons, hospitals, hospices, the army, RAF and the police. Some clergy are ordained to serve in their local benefice through our pioneering 'auxiliary ordination pathway' which enables people's vocations to ordained ministry to be discerned within the Diocese.

All clergy work alongside lay ministers – Readers, elders, and the growing number people exercising recently introduced licensed ministries: pioneer ministers, evangelists, youth ministers and children's and family workers. Our ministry deployment principles encourage teams or clusters of lay and ordained ministers to work together so that clergy feel less isolated and ministry resources the mission of the church more effectively. We are just beginning to develop the principle of 'local ministers' in our benefices, releasing people's gifts to serve in their locality.

We are excited about these new developments which are playing an important part in our diocesan vision of Growing in God.

So, in summary:

As our Growing in God vision states, we aspire to be people who know that 'God is with us, gathering us as Christ-centred communities, calling us to make Christian disciples, sending us in loving service, empowering us by the Holy Spirit'.

**We hope you will come and join us on our journey!**

To find out more, visit [www.cofesuffolk.org](http://www.cofesuffolk.org)