

Cotton Flower Arrangers



Wyverstone Jigsaw Festival



Old Newton School Assembly



The Bacton Benefice PARISH PROFILE

2024



Candlelit Carols Gipping

Drive in service with Bishop Mike,
Red House Farm, Bacton

Led by the Donkey -Palm Sunday
Wickham Skeith

	PAGE
Contents List	2
About us	3
• Our values	3
• Our Priorities	3
• Finance and Administration.	4
• The Team	4
Outreach	4
• Working together within the community	5
• Working with children in the Benefice	6
Worship	7
• Monthly Sunday service pattern	7
We are looking for	8
The Churches in the Bacton Benefice	9
The Parishes	
• St Andrew's Cotton	10
• St. Andrew's Wickham Skeith	11
• St. George's Wyverstone	12
• St. Mary's Bacton	13
• St. Mary's, Old Newton	14
• St. Nicholas Chapel Gipping	15
The Deanery - Gipping Valley Deanery	16
• Stowmarket – Our nearest market town	16
Your home	17
• House	17
• Map	17
• The Locality	17
• Schools and Education	17
Appendices	
1. The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich	18
• Growing In God	19
2. Statistics Chart	20
3. GiG Chart (Handover information from previous incumbent)	21

ABOUT US

The Bacton Benefice comprises a strong cohesive group of parishes each with their own distinct identity but common purpose in the heart of rural Suffolk.

We believe strong parishes make for an even stronger Benefice which enhances our ability to support each other as the need arises. Our Elders and Churchwardens have continued to work faithfully to maintain a wide range of services during a considerable vacancy and are a valuable resource to support the new incumbent in their vision for mission and worship in the Benefice.

We are looking forward to welcoming and working with an inspirational incumbent committed to guiding our spiritual direction and leading our congregations in compelling worship. We trust that by engaging in the social life with us in each and every community he/she will enable our participation in outreach and mission with all our population. With a combined active congregation of around 100 and a population of nearly 4000 growing to 5000 in the next few years, there is a significant challenge but enormous scope for growth.

GROWING RURAL -Three of the parishes took part in a Diocesan initiative to grow rural parishes and have continued to meet with their mentor during the vacancy as a support group.

As a Benefice, as parishes and as individuals we will continue to explore, share and be open to new ways of working. We look forward to hearing your ideas.

OUR VALUES

- a) To model our lives as individuals and Churches on the way of Jesus Christ.
- b) To engage in worship, prayer, learning and loving service.
- c) To participate in the life of our communities, offering widespread pastoral care.
- d) To value and support each other in our parishes and across the Benefice and Deanery, by working collaboratively.
- e) To build relationships characterised by Christ-like love, mutual care and respect.
- f) To nurture the hospitality, thanksgiving, fellowship and welcome in our Church communities.
- g) To use our faith and imagination to be creative in ministry and mission.

OUR PRIORITIES

Growing in God

Follow Daily, Tread gently - to grow and sustain our faith, witness and worship whilst protecting and preserving God's creation.

Care Deeply - to respond to those in need

Grow Boldly - to continue to develop our provision for children and families, to grow in number and in love.

FINANCES AND ADMINISTRATION

The 2023 parish share was paid in full. Some parishes are currently finding full payment difficult, but are taking steps to increase their income. Clergy expenses are paid in full.

Administrative support can be made available when required.

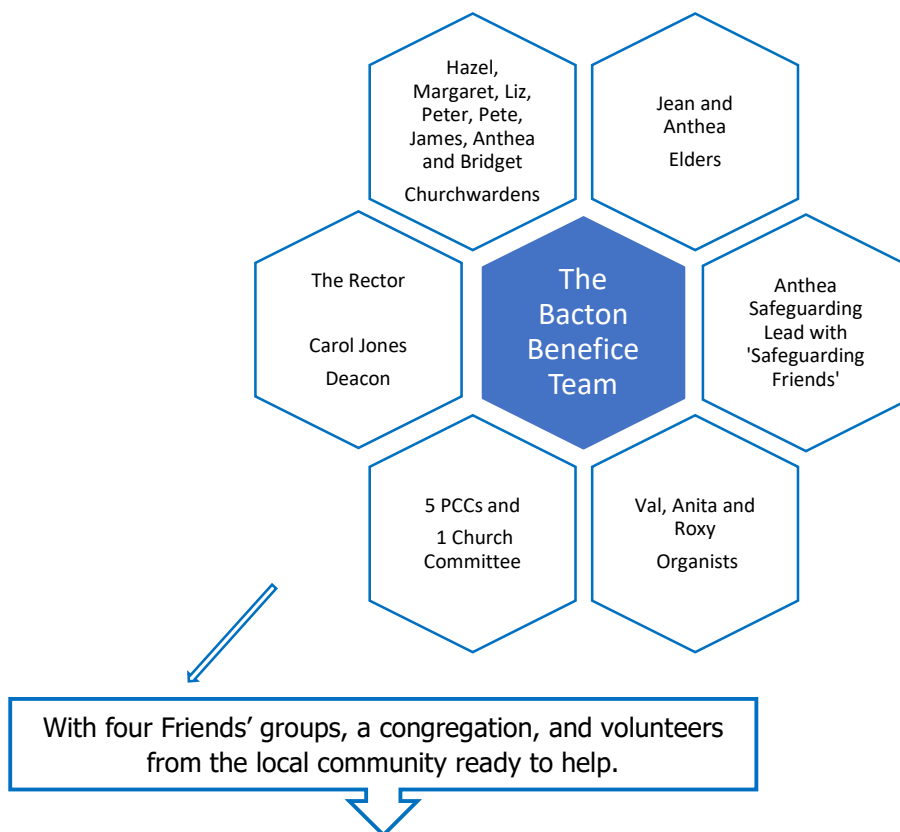
Our previous incumbent helped us to join *The Parish Giving Scheme (PGS)* to help with Gift Aid, regular and one off giving. The guidance, initiatives and resources from the Diocese continue to support us to

- Sustain and increase parish income
- support mission, ministry, and community outreach
- offer a variety of ways to give for a variety of audiences

THE TEAM

The Benefice Ministry Team comprises of two Elders and eight Churchwardens. This team meets on a regular basis to set the programme of services for the Churches within the Benefice. There are five PCC's and a chapel committee who are eager to work collectively to strengthen the Benefice as a whole. Each has a lay chair able to lead meetings if needed.

Carol Jones was ordained as Deacon in June 2024. She is also gaining experience beyond this Benefice. Anthea, our Benefice Safeguarding Lead, is well supported by local 'Safeguarding Friends' who are the eyes and ears in each parish.



OUTREACH

We recognise that the Church community is changing and can no longer wait for people to come to us. We are keen to explore ways to use our Church buildings creatively for the benefit of our community.

WORKING TOGETHER WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

The facilities in each Church vary ranging from Gipping with no water or overhead electric lighting to Bacton with a community space, kitchen area and toilet. As a combined group we share and support each other with fundraising events.

Gipping and Wyverstone have been able to raise funds using the Churches at Old Newton and Bacton respectively as larger venues for an evening entertainment.

The six parishes in the Benefice work both independently and together to seek opportunities offer activities and events beyond our Sunday services to raise awareness in the community. Some of these are self-funding, some sponsored and others raise funds.



Until recently these have included

- Bible Study sessions, weekly in Bacton and Old Newton.
- A Summer Holiday Club in Old Newton Village Hall.
- Messy Church sessions
- A Carol Service in the pub car park in Cotton and on the Green in Wickham Skeith.
- Coffee mornings and Community Lunches
- Home groups
- Joint services with the Old Newton Methodist Church
- An annual service with other Churches in the area for World Day of Prayer (first Friday in March).

The Rector is seen as a valued part of community life and is traditionally invited to join in as time allows.



Our last incumbent arrived just as the COVID pandemic began. With his inspiration, and like many rural communities, we came together to help each other and discover different ways of worshipping.

Many people both locally and further afield discovered Facebook livestreaming, zoom and outdoor services. This experience has given us new tools to reach out.

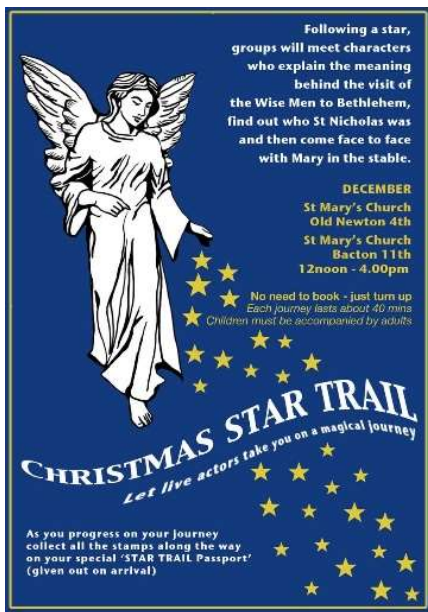
During COVID the Benefice set up a foodbank supporting and supported by all the communities and it has evolved to become a parish pantry located in Bacton and Old Newton Church porches for the Benefice.

In September all six Churches have traditionally supported the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust participating in their annual event.

<https://shct.org.uk/ride-and-stride/>



We have been grateful for grant funding from them and embrace this as an opportunity to give something back whilst welcoming the wider community to explore and find out more about us.



At Christmas various initiatives for the Benefice and both schools have been popular, well supported and valued by the wider community.

Like many Benefices we have an aging congregation that we value for their knowledge and experience. Some of the new initiatives introduced by our previous incumbent helped to bring children to the Church.

We valued these new initiatives that focus on Growing Younger and experience has taught us that we cannot afford to forget that we need both the young and the old.

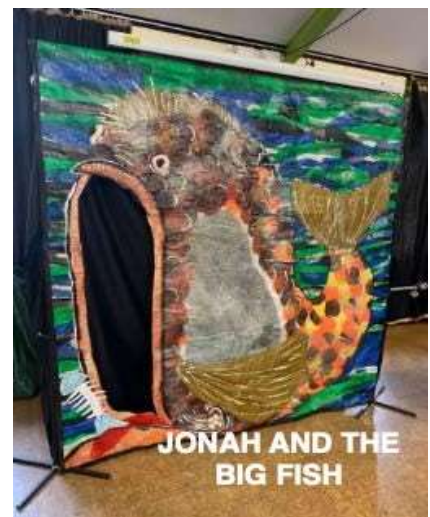
WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN THE BENEFICE

The main focus of this has been building connections with the two primary schools, Bacton Primary School and Old Newton Church of England Primary School.

Both schools are close to their Church and use the buildings and churchyards as venues for activities. Large screens have been provided and are a popular resource being used regularly for school assemblies.

There are two Foundation Governors at Old Newton, who along with other Church members volunteer at the school. The pupils have loved visiting the churchyard as part of their school eco council and Bibles are given to each new year 1 pupil. Leavers' Bibles are given to year 6s at the leavers' assembly at Old Newton.

Open the Book /The Bacton Benefice Storytelling team tell Bible stories in the form of short plays (approx. 10mins.) for the Old Newton Primary School, usually once a month either in the school or Church. It has also taken place for Bacton Primary School. A member of the Team reads the stories whilst others provide the action. Props and costumes made and donated over the years help to make the Bible more accessible, memorable and familiar.





Diddy Disciples has been offered in Bacton Church on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday mornings for 3 years with funding from the Growing in God Growth Fund. It attracted new families with children from babies to pre-school. Parents, grandparents and Church helpers enjoyed the relaxed and friendly group.

The Resources are stored in the Church for future use.

WORSHIP

Having been in vacancy more than once in recent years means that the Churchwardens and PCCs are well practiced at exploring ways to support the Clergy.

We acknowledge that the ministry is no longer left solely to ordained individuals.

Five of our Churchwardens have experience of and are confident to lead a service within the guidance and limitations. They know how to source the relevant readings and a reflection.

We have been able to maintain a regular pattern of worship. Coming together on a fifth Sunday for a Benefice Holy Communion that rotates between the Churches helps us to feel connected and get to know each other better.

Special arrangements are made for festivals and Holy days. Each year we organise a service in March for The World Day of Prayer with the Methodist Chapel in Old Newton and other Churches in the area.

Communion services are generally Common Worship.

Family services, Morning and Evening Prayer and occasional services from the Book of Common Prayer along with informal services such as Praise in the Community and Café Church provide a wide variety of worship opportunities across the Benefice.

A weekly Email which includes the Sunday readings and details of events in the Benefice is sent out.

MONTHLY SUNDAY SERVICE PATTERN (EXISTING)

		Bacton	Wickham Skeith	Cotton	Old Newton	Gipping	Wyverstone
1st Sunday	Team	9.30 am Family Service					6.30 pm Praise in the Community
	Rector		9.30 am Holy Communion	11.00 am Holy Communion		3pm Evening Prayer BCP	
2nd Sunday	Team		9.30am Café Church				
	Rector	9.30 am Holy Communion			11.00 am Holy Communion		
3rd Sunday	Team	10.00 am Café Church			11.00 am Family Service		
	Rector		9.30am Holy Communion	11.00am Holy Communion			

4th Sunday	Team		9.30am Morning Prayer				
	Rector	9.30 am Holy Communion			11.00 am Holy Communion		
5th Sunday	10 am Combined Benefice Holy Communion (Rotating)						

WE ARE LOOKING FOR

Someone who is a good communicator and listener with a caring disposition; a leader who is sociable, approachable, and encouraging to others, helping us to place the Church at the centre of the community.

An incumbent who will share our values and inspire and engage with us, enabling us to develop our priorities in the next stage of our Parish and Benefice life. Someone who will offer Biblical teaching and engage with the wider community across all age groups and all the parishes, responding to individual needs.

A person of faith, prayer and vision whose life and ministry are enlivened by and based on the study of scripture; who can make the Gospel and Christianity relevant to people in the modern age, both in sermons and study groups.

A broad Church tradition, willing and able to value the diversity and range of local Church traditions but able to bring fresh insights and energy to the pastoral and spiritual care of all in our parishes, seeking to build on and grow our congregations.

Someone who can demonstrate consistent gifts of leadership, wisdom, and compassion in developing and supporting the ministry team within the Benefice.

Things I would like in a new rector

- *someone that is good with children*
- *someone whose sermon I can understand and then talk about at home*
- *finally, someone who involves children in their services*

Laila-Mai aged 12

We know that ministry is challenging, but with the enthusiastic support of our parishes we offer you an opportunity to meet those challenges with us. Together, we could really make a difference.



THE CHURCHES

We have six beautiful Churches in our Benefice that are valued and loved, five of which have patrons who are: The Martyrs' Memorial and Church of England Trust, the Lord Chancellor, Church Patronage Trust and J.C.S. Priston Esq. The sixth, St Nicholas Chapel Gipping belongs to the Trustees of Gipping Chapel. Methodists worship locally in Old Newton and other denominations travel to services beyond the Benefice. The Bacton Benefice has evolved over a number of years and has been working together since 2000.

St. Andrew's Wickham Skeith

St. Nicholas' Gipping



St. George's Wyverstone



The Bacton Benefice



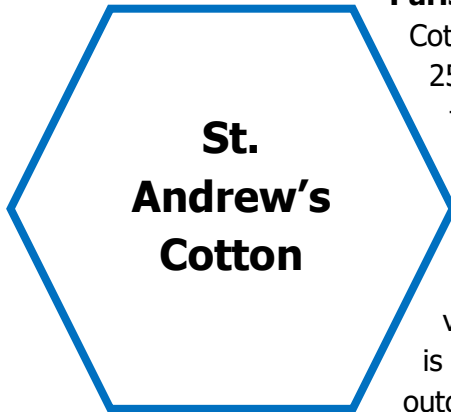
St. Mary's Bacton



St. Mary's Old Newton



St. Andrew's Cotton



**St.
Andrew's
Cotton**

Parish <https://cotton.onesuffolk.net/>

Cotton is a small rural parish with a population of around 250. There is a mixture of retired people and younger families. There is a range of housing. Children in the village travel to local schools.

The village has a number of community outlets, including the Church, the newly restored pub, the village hall and Carter's meadow, a four-acre site which is maintained by local volunteers, and providing an outdoor space for a range of activities, which, in the past have included treasure hunts barbeques and a wedding. The village hall has been refurbished in the past ten years and is the main focus for community activity such as private hire, fitness classes, quizzes, occasional concerts, and drama performances. At the back of the village hall is a recreation field with a newly constructed children's play area and football pitch used regularly by the junior members of a local football club. At the edge of the village is a cafe and gift shop, and opposite, a well-used and popular outlet for a variety of retail shops. <https://www.facebook.com/CottonParishGrapevine/>



St Andrew's Church is a 14thC Grade 1 listed building and has undergone much renovation and conservation work over the last 15 years. It is made of flint and stone and contains three interesting architectural features, firstly, an open bell tower containing 8 bells which are rung occasionally. Secondly, a double hammer - beam roof, and a medieval carved porch doorway with original stone polychrome colours, some of which are still visible. The churchyard and building are reasonably well kept with the resources we have available, and are appreciated by the community. The churchyard remains open for burials and there is a cremated remains facility and memorial. St Andrew's is the largest capacity building in the village, suitable for a wide range of public activities, and we have a

good working relationship with the Parish Council, often working jointly with them to stage events.

We have a regular pattern of services with extra services for special occasions such as Harvest, Remembrance, Carol service and Maundy Thursday.

Strengths: We now have a very small PCC since our Church Warden has, this year been ordained as Deacon, but we are working toward improving the Church through the building of toilet and kitchen facilities so that we can broaden the range of activity within the building. We have previously staged carpet and rug sales and annual art shows as fund raising and various musical events.



St. Andrew's Wickham Skeith

Parish <https://wickhamskeith.suffolk.cloud/>

The centre of the village is the Green & Village Hall with the church on the eastern edge of the village beside Wickham Hall and surrounded by fields.

The well-used Village Hall and the church are

the hub of this warm-hearted, caring community.

The population of the village is approx. 350 including about 60 children. There are about 130 houses of varying size, mainly privately owned, including a few built very recently.

Church <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/2088/>

St Andrew's is the sole place of worship, and the only Grade 1 listed building, in the village. It was built mainly in the 14th century with porches added in the 15th century. A church was noted in the Domesday survey. The interior is plain and light with a single aisle.

The exterior flint walls have been repointed and the roof repaired within the past 40 years.



There is seating in the church for approx. 90 people. It has modern lighting, effective under-pew heating and a modern sound system which aids the 'hard of hearing' and also enables us to use a computer for music as we no longer have a regular organist. A project to repair & restore the gallery, introduce running water and install an accessible toilet and a servery was completed in July 2019. This resulted in some seating in the gallery and we have some chairs on loan from the village hall

which are used in our open area when required.

Average attendance at services is 11, with a greater attendance at festivals. The services include a monthly informal Café Church with lay-led discussion.

Strengths

One of the Benefice Elders is among our church members. We are the newest member of the benefice but have forged strong benefice links.

Visitors comment on the warm welcome and the strong community spirit. Refreshments are served, with time for a chat, after all services.

Our fund-raising and the cleaning & flower rota are supported by a number of non-churchgoers.

We have achieved a Bronze Eco-church award and are working towards Silver. We have a well-maintained churchyard with 2 conservation areas.

Opportunities for development

To encourage more children & young people to attend on a regular basis.

To develop mission outreach, both in the parish and abroad.



St. George's Wyverstone

Parish <https://wyverstone.onesuffolk.net>

Wyverstone has a very strong community network, surprising for a village of only 142 houses. We have a vibrant monthly cafe held at our well-appointed village hall, which acts as a meeting place for many in the village and draws in many others from surrounding villages too. The village hall Committee run a community bar and the venue has good parking and hosts many regular events and classes. Since our beautiful Norman Church is small, most of the community activities gravitate towards the village hall. All these events are possible because we are well supported by a lot of volunteers who enjoy the sense of community which exists.

Church

Recognising the low attendance at formal weekly services, back in the 1990's we introduced a more popular and relaxed 'Praise in the Community', which is often led by members of the community and allows for "Fresh Expressions" and a wider exploration of God's world today. The church and village hall are both located on church road with only a few houses between, together they form a focal point for the community.



Strengths

Wyverstone residents come into their own when it comes to supporting the Church and have worked hard over the years to raise significant funds to maintain this 14th Century flint and stone, single aisled Church. We have a very active Friends of St. George's Church Wyverstone who are constantly helping and fund raising, creating a strong link between the church and village.



A joint committee raised a shared total of £5,400 at the 2024 Jigsaw Festival. There is no shortage of volunteers to help with the flowers and cleaning even

if people do not attend regular worship; and the churchyard is always well kept and tidy, and a Building Committee ensure the Church is kept in good repair.



Our aim for the Church in Wyverstone is more about the people than the building or formalised services; being involved with the Wyverstone community, welcoming all regardless of the depth of their faith and spreading the Word by meeting with people and creating the Church as a community and place for everyone. God never closes His door on anyone, so our church is always open to residents and visitors.

We are looking for a priest who not only has leadership and inspirational qualities but also a sense of humour and a readiness to become involved in this vibrant village's social activities. We feel our mission is helping people living in a very busy 21st century world, to understand how to connect with God in a modern context.

St. Mary's Church Bacton

Parish

A parish magazine is produced in Bacton for Bacton, Cotton and Wyverstone with over 700 copies each month. This is a valued income for the church. A website is now available with specific QR code links to enhanced content for each issue. We are excited to see the opportunities this new development will open up for us.

<https://www.bactoncottonwyverstone.co.uk>

We have financial support for the fabric of the building from the Friends of St Mary's who regularly hold concerts in the church. <https://www.fosmbacton.org.uk>

The Good Neighbours scheme supports the community providing transport to hospitals, health centres, appointments and help with occasional domestic repairs.

Church <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/2074/>

St Mary's is open from 10-4 every day and floodlit from dusk to 11.00pm as a beacon in the community. Our church tradition has been mid-church Anglicanism with the active participation of the congregation in all aspects of our worship. Holy Communion and Family Services alternate through the month with Café Church on each third Sunday. We have the Family@Church programme for our Family Services. Special service books take children through Communion and Baptism services based around a pair of mice called Hattie and Mattie.



The community room at the back of the church is heated separately from

the church and is used by other groups.

Our annual summer lunch takes place in the church in July and we hope to host similar events regularly in the future. It takes its place amongst Quizzes and Garage sales to raise vital funds.

Strengths

We are a very welcoming church. Many visitors have commented on how welcome they have felt when attending events or joining the congregation



The central pews are now removeable to allow greater flexibility. It is used for village events, and has a larger capacity than Bacton village hall.

Opportunities for development

Five large housing developments offer the prospect of new families being introduced to the church and village. We deliver a church Welcome Pack to all new residents as and when they move in and we already have new members of the congregation joining us from these areas.



St Mary's OLD NEWTON

Parish <https://oldnewton.onesuffolk.net/>

There are approximately 512 dwellings and a planned new development of 100+. We have a church primary school for 5 to 11 year olds. We have a village store and Post Office, some light industrial units, farming businesses and a Chinese takeaway. Community institutions include under 5s, Over 60s, Bowls Club, Football Club, Sports and Social Club, W.I., Village Hall and environmental groups. A free community magazine is distributed monthly to every house and contains church news and a church editorial. There is a Good Neighbour

Scheme in which some church members take part.

Our Church of St Mary <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/2084/>

Located central to the eastern part of the village, built on pre-Domesday foundations, a largely medieval building in excellent condition. The surrounding churchyard is lovingly maintained by a small group of volunteers. A section of the churchyard is being managed to encourage greater biodiversity and this project is being supported by the School Eco Council and the Community Environmental Group.

We have also achieved the Eco Bronze Award.

We have a ring of 5 bells, kept in excellent condition. A team of bell ringers ensures that the bells are rung for all main services and we encourage learners of all ages to attend weekly teaching sessions. Seating for approximately 250.



There is an active Friends of the Church that organise fund raising events throughout the year. We have a good relationship with the local Methodist Church which includes some shared services during the year.

Fund raising events include Flower Festivals, Open Gardens and Art Exhibitions. We have good opportunities for outreach through coffee mornings, lunches and a wide range of other fund-raising events and we are keen to encourage and extend the involvement of village people in services and the life of our church in general.

Strengths

We have a good relationship with the school who use the church weekly for an assembly.

Our 4 part robed choir and church organist ensure a high quality of music during regular and special services



The Knitted Bible
Come and see a beautiful collection of
Bible stories depicted in knitted figures.
St Mary's Church,
Old Newton, IP14 4PJ
Friday 1st December - Monday 4th December
between 10.00am and 4pm
contact: muzbrooks@banisterst.com

St. Nicholas' Chapel, GIPPING

PARISH <https://oldnewton.onesuffolk.net/Gipping> has a small population with only 26 dwellings. It is part of the parish of Old Newton benefiting from and contributing to the local community facilities, groups, and committees. All residents receive the free monthly 'Crier' newsletter.

Nestled in the centre of a family farm this small church recommends itself to quiet reflection and private prayer for visitors and passing walkers.

Church <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/2085/>

A small church building, 'a great Suffolk church in miniature', 'a shrine to the Christian faith'.

St Nicholas, built as a private chapel, is now a charity (no255037) run by trustees who usually meet twice a year. The Benefice incumbent will be Chaplain and a trustee. They will also join the two 'churchwardens' on the small church committee (CC not PCC!).

Volunteers have created guide books, notelets, kneelers, and an altar cloth that feature the motifs, initials, emblems, and arms of the Tyrell Family. Visitors, including coach parties, are attracted by the connections to Sir James Tyrell and also offer a source of income.



With the help of a welcome band of non-churchgoers there are usually two annual fundraising events. These are well supported, enjoyed, and valued as social events for the wider community.

The congregation is small and faithful. We enjoy

some informal time together after the monthly service usually with a drink and biscuits.

Strengths

The monthly afternoon service of Evening Prayer has easy to read larger print booklets making the traditional BCP service accessible.

A less formal Family Service is enjoyed at Harvest and Baptisms, and a candlelit Carol Service attracts a much wider audience. Locals both young and old decorate the church at Christmas and Harvest.

The church building and grounds are well maintained offering a warm welcome.

A local gem that is chosen as a more intimate setting for weddings and baptisms.

THE DEANERY

Revd Dan Harrison is our Rural Dean. In October 2020 Stowmarket and Bosmere deaneries were combined to form the Gipping Valley deanery.

The Bacton Benefice <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/benefice/33-008CJ/>
is in the northern part of the Gipping Valley Deanery which is situated in the
centre of the county of Suffolk and of the

Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich - See appendix 1

<https://www.cofesuffolk.org/>

The Gipping Valley Deanery



Stowmarket has a town centre market on Thursdays and Saturdays and a range of supermarkets in and around the town.

<https://stowmarkettowncouncil.gov.uk/your-town/>

Mid Suffolk Leisure Centre has a large gym, swimming pools, Fitness Classes, Soft Play & Climbing Wall
<https://www.everyoneactive.com/centre/mid-suffolk-leisure-centre/>

Stowmarket is a 15 min drive from your home.

It enjoys excellent road and rail communications with the rest of the country and is approximately 30 minutes from Norwich and 75 minutes from London by rail. The main line railway from Norwich to London Liverpool Street is accessible at Stowmarket and trains to Cambridge (approx.59 mins) also stop at nearby Elmswell (see location map on next page)

The market town of Bury St Edmunds is just 15 miles to the west.

The county town of Ipswich is 16 miles to the south east.

There are excellent links to the rest of the country via the A14 trunk road which runs from the Port of Felixstowe, past Ipswich and Stowmarket, towards the M11 (London/Peterborough) and Cambridge and on to Huntingdon the Midlands and the North.

London can also be accessed by car via the A12 at Ipswich or the A14/M11.

Your Home



The Rectory, Church Road, Bacton. IP14 4LJ Google -<https://maps.app.goo.gl/8ghxoyqXgNvv2n1V7>

Your house has

- four bedrooms and a bathroom
- three reception rooms, kitchen, utility room, and downstairs toilet
- a good-sized parking area and a single garage
- an enclosed garden with the Church ride-on mower available to the incumbent.

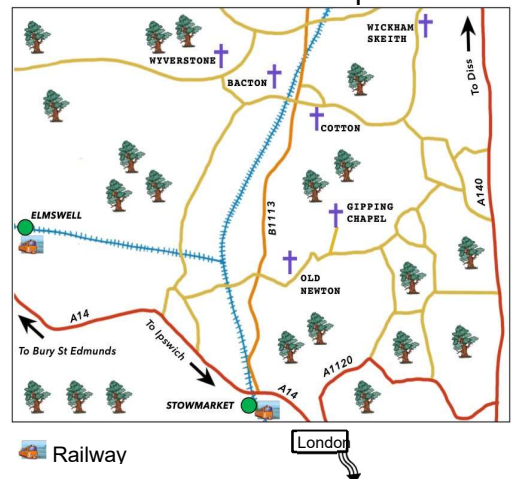
Your six Churches are within a 5 mile radius

Just a short walk across Tailors Green is St Mary's Church, the primary school <https://www.bacton-pri.suffolk.sch.uk/> and Bacton Playcentre. <https://bactonunderfives.co.uk/>

Along Church Road you will find

- Local Pub and restaurant 'Bacton Bull'
- Village Hall with community activities advertised in the monthly magazine <https://www.bactoncottonwyverstone.co.uk>
- Shop, Post Office and Garage
- Bacton Doctors Surgery / Dispensary which is one of the two sites that house the Mendlesham Medical Group <https://www.mendleshamhealthcentre.co.uk>

Location Map



Schools and Education

Old Newton CofE Primary and Bacton Primary Schools feed to Stowupland High School

<https://sites.google.com/tilian.org.uk/oldnewton/> and <https://www.stowuplandhighschool.co.uk/>

Both Bacton and Old Newton villages have provisions offering sessions of government funded early

education. <https://oldnewtonunderfives.co.uk> Suffolk Infolink offers information for families

<https://infolink.suffolk.gov.uk/kb5/suffolk/infolink/family.page?familychannel=0>

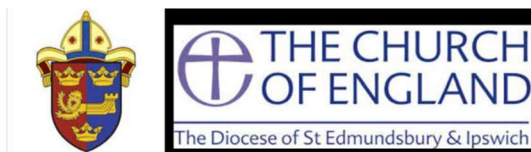
Within a short drive

you will find a good choice of local options, including SEN facilities, afterschool/holiday care, independent schools, and full day care nurseries.

Both full and part-time courses are offered through Ipswich University of Suffolk

<https://www.uos.ac.uk/> and West Suffolk College (Bury St Edmunds) <https://www.wsc.ac.uk>

Appendix 1



The 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. *(due to leave at the end of September and will be installed as Bishop of Exeter on 3 November 2024)*. 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

Growing in God

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. This focusses on nurturing and discipling new Christians through small Lightwave groups and hubs such as the one being established at Bungay. (The Growing in God in the Countryside project plan is available among the documents at www.light-wave.org/vacancies)

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 fulfil our “Growing in God” vision?

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'.

Appendix 2: Statistics

Bacton Benefice Statistics 2023 (2022)								
Note: Interregnum from September 2023								
		Bacton	Cotton	Gipping	Old Newton	Wickham Skeith	Wyverstone	Benefice
Electoral Roll		39 (38)	15 (15)	5 (7)	40 (40)	31 (32)	29 (29)	159 (157)
Usual Sunday	Adults	27 (27)	14 (12)	13 (14)	16 (16)	10 (11)	15 (16)	95 (95)
	Children	0 (3)	0 (1)	0 (0)	2 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (6)
Attendance	Easter	29 (92)	19 (31)	0 (0)	34 (70)	19 (19)	10 (21)	111 (233)
	Advent	121 (111)	35 (25)	64 (0)	57 (178)	57 (47)	29 (54)	363 (415)
	Christmas	192 (247)	22 (22)	0 (74)	51 (218)	29 (24)	0 (25)	294 (610)
	School /Civic	178 (93)	0 (0)	0	Unknown (90)	0 (0)	0 (0)	178 (183)
Worshipping Community	Total	34 (47)	24 (13)	10 (14)	29 (26)	10 (12)	10 (14)	117 (126)
	0-17	6 (11)	2 (1)	0 (0)	2 (2)	0 (0)	0 (1)	10 (15)
	18 – 69	0 (8)	3 (3)	4 (4)	15 (14)	6 (3)	7 (9)	35 (41)
	70+	28 (28)	19 (9)	6 (6)	12 (10)	9 (9)	3 (4)	72 (66)
Occasional Offices	Baptisms	3 (0)	0 (1)	1 (0)	1 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	5 (3)
	Weddings	0 (2)	0 (0)	1 (1)	1 (2)	0 (1)	0 (0)	2 (6)
	Funerals	5 (0)	2 (4)	0 (0)	4 (5)	3 (1)	0 (0)	14 (10)
Fresh Expressions		Café Church	0	0	Café Church	Café Church	Praise in the Community	X4

Appendix 3

Bacton Benefice - Growing in God Priorities

Need to do / On way to doing / Done or Doing

Priority	Groups/Activity	Aims & Goals	Tasks Done
<p>Follow Daily, Tread Gently: to grow and sustain our faith, witness and worship whilst protecting and preserving God's creation.</p> <p><i>We will learn to follow Jesus more closely, as a church, aiming to be true to our beliefs every day of the week. As we go, we will care for and protect all that God has given us.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry Team (Priests, Readers, Elders, Service Leaders) Service rota/pattern Lay leadership Discipleship courses (advent/lent/stewardship) Daily prayer Friends Groups Eco-church project inc churchyards etc Home Groups Journaling group Buildings and Finance Communicating news – magazine/weekly email/pew sheet Flower arrangers Church cleaning/chair Intercessors/Readers Musicians inc Bells, Choirs, Organists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To become an eco-benefice, pushing for silver/gold awards. To use eco resources: https://godforall.org.uk/about/tread-gently/ To promote the environment in our worship and teaching. To hold eco-focused events, such as Walk to Church month, no lighting month etc. To create a sustainable worship pattern and rota. To make use, as a church, of the local green spaces and encourage tree planting etc. Use more Creationtide materials. To observe 'Kingdom Season' leading up to advent. To have a benefice-wide preaching series during Ordinary Time. Use and push the PGS across the benefice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 churches have become eco-churches (bronze)- Jan 2022. Lent PGS campaign – Lent 2022 Lent Course 2022 based on spirituality. Lent challenge focused on raising money for churches. Engage ON school with churchyard care/wildlife area – 2021. Pushed for more volunteers to join rotas (readers, sidesmen etc)
<p>Care Deeply: to respond to those in need.</p> <p><i>We will go out of our way to listen to our communities, to challenge injustice, to support the weak, protect the vulnerable and to transform our communities.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pastoral Team (Elders) Safeguarding/GDPR Home visiting Bereavement/sick care Healing/Home Communion Heat and Eat All Souls' Service Faith and Fellowship Kettle's Calling Six Village Community Fund Live streaming services Support for wedding couples Welcome Teams (in church) Welcome Team (new housing developments) Health and Safety World Day of Prayer 	<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop the work of our BOB foodbank project. To start the Warm Room project. To explore CAMEO. Welcome Packs to new houses. <p>Spiritual</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing baptism, wedding, confirmation courses. Encouraging regulars to attend Advent/Lent courses. To create an environment of Prayer throughout our life together. To grow new Home Groups and study groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food pantry set up in Bacton Church and Old Newton Church – Jan 2022 Introduced Healing and Prayer Ministry at Benefice Services – Feb 2022 New Welcome Team to take welcome packs to new homes – March 2022. Warm Room project started Oct 2021. Push for regulars to attend Lent course 2022. WDP held 3/3/23 – explore possibilities for growth for 2024.
<p>Grow Boldly: to continue to develop our provision for children and families, to grow in number and in love.</p> <p><i>We will be bold in sharing our faith with others, nurturing new disciples and offering a welcome to all.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in schools Bibles4All project Storytelling Diddy Disciples Advent Fun Club Christmas Experiences Easter Experiences Family Services (All Age) Hattie and Mattie project Baptismal ministry New Christians course/Confirmation course Youth group All age events (films etc) Annual Family BBQ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To continue to develop or links with schools. To be as accommodating as possible to them. To establish regular Storytelling sessions and events in and out of schools. To grow Diddy Disciples. To grow a Youth Group for teenagers and develop the youth ministry. To hold more accessible events and socials for all ages, such as film nights, singalongs, family BBQ etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revd Carl in Bacton and ON for CW and RE – March 2022. Church represented on Governing Bodies. Film night/coronation weekend for families. Printed Hattie and Mattie baptism booklets for use in our benefice. Pancake evening with Methodists. Coffee with Bacton school parents – March 2023.