



**B THE BARROW BENEFICE**  
Churches of Barrow, Denham, Risby, Great & Little Saxham





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## The Benefice

We are a rural benefice made up of five parishes – All Saints', Barrow; St Giles, Risby; St Nicholas, Little Saxham; St Andrew's, Great Saxham, and St Mary's, Denham. The Benefice is part of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. Each is a short distance from one another and located within 2 miles of the A14. The benefice is part of the Thingoe Deanery and in its present form dates back to 2005 and works well together to maintain a regular service pattern with an incumbent, lay leaders and visiting clergy.

The 1950's rectory is situated alongside the Church in Barrow. It has four bedrooms, kitchen, Dining/sitting room, study, bathroom and downstairs cloakroom. Outside there is a single garage and stabling and it is set in approximately an acre of land.





## Barrow Benefice Profile

There is a willingness on the part of the five congregations to work together and benefit from each other's experience whilst recognising and maintaining the individual identity of the churches and the communities around them. Worship across the benefice reflects both the desire for traditional worship and the need for All Age All Together Services to make the Church accessible to all. Joint Benefice services are held on the fifth Sunday, for patronal festivals and other special occasions and are well supported by representatives from the 5 churches within the Benefice. Services for mid-week feast days are hosted around the benefice, including Holy Week. "Beating the Bounds" for rogation is a shared activity and has taken various forms.

Barrow and Risby villages have voluntary aided Church of England primary schools, and preschools and there is a private prep school and a private nursery also in the benefice. There is a mix of excellent secondary education and the West Suffolk college in Bury St Edmunds.

**SERVICES FOR THE BARROW BENEFICE**  
 ~ ~ ~ April 2024 ~ ~ ~

Date	Time	Service	Location	Minister
Sunday, 7 <sup>th</sup> April Easter 2	1000	Benefice Holy Communion	Denham	Revs Lynda & Nicola
Sunday, 14 <sup>th</sup> April Easter 3	0900	Holy Communion (Traditional language)	Denham	Rev Lawrence
	0930	Holy Communion (Traditional language)	Gr Saxham	Revd Nicola
	1100	Parish Eucharist	Risby	Revd Lynda
Sunday, 21 <sup>st</sup> April Easter 4	0900	Matins	Denham	Rev Lawrence
	0930	Holy Communion (Traditional language)	Lt Saxham	Rev Lynda
	1100	Family Service	Risby	Annie
	1100	Parish Eucharist	Barrow	Rev Lynda
Sunday, 28 <sup>th</sup> April Easter 5	0900	Holy Communion (Traditional language)	Denham	Rev Nicola
	0930	Holy Communion (Traditional language)	Gr Saxham	Rev Lynda
	1100	Parish Eucharist	Risby	Rev Nicola
Sunday, 5 <sup>th</sup> May Easter 6 ROGATION SUNDAY	0945	Benefice Rogation Service with Holy Communion * Meet outside St Giles from 0930. The walk will commence at 0945 followed by a special service of Holy Communion at 1100	Risby	The ministry team

**EVERY WEDNESDAY AT 0930 in Barrow Church,  
 a short service of Holy Communion.  
 ALL WELCOME!**

Further details about any of our services or to have a chat,  
 please contact Rev Lynda 01284 811280 or email: revlyndasebbage@gmail.com

You can find our website here: [www.barrowbenefice.org.uk](http://www.barrowbenefice.org.uk)

### What we are looking for in a new Benefice Incumbent

- \* A person of deep faith and spirituality.
- \* A person with a heart for rural ministry.
- \* A person who relates well to people across the age range, especially children and young people and who is committed to pastoral care.
- \* A person who is happy and willing to be involved in the life of our communities, helping the church become more accessible, encouraging growth.
- \* A good communicator who can delegate and who will value developing and supporting a team.
- \* A person who will maintain the life of the benefice while respecting the diversity of the individual parishes.



## **Our Commitment to a New Benefice Incumbent**

- \* Warm and amicable congregations who are excited to welcome their new rector in a spirit of friendship.
- \* A team of lay readers willing to assist with services and other duties across the benefice.
- \* People trained in pastoral visiting and home communion.
- \* Churches which maintain excellent communications with each other throughout the benefice.
- \* A substantial home with a beautiful garden adjacent to All Saints Church in Barrow.



## **Development**

We want to continue developing our All Age services and continue with Bible study and introduce prayer meetings. We particularly want to continue to develop our outreach activities in the village finding ways of introducing new residents especially those with children into church life.



## **Barrow**

Barrow is the largest of the villages in the Benefice situated 6 miles west of Bury St Edmunds, it is designated as a Key Service Centre featuring two grocery shops, post office, two pubs, a fish and chips shop and doctors' surgery with a pharmacy.

It has approximately 2000 residents, three new developments of houses with further growth in the planning stages which could see 150 + properties being built as well as other social and commercial facilities.

The history of the village, which is mentioned in the Domesday Book, stretches back to the bronze age.

There is a voluntary aided Church of England primary school, a preschool and a Montessori nursery.

There is a newly opened antiques centre which houses a small café. A range of clubs and societies are active within the village using mainly the excellent village hall which has well maintained and comprehensive facilities. The Town Estate Room is a recently refurbished listed building in the centre of the village currently used as a nursery school.

## The Church



All Saints Church sits on the outskirts of Barrow and is the largest church in the benefice.

The history of All Saints can be traced from the Norman and Early English period, the oldest part is the north wall which has two Norman windows, in one of which are medieval paintings of musicians.

The tower houses six bells that are rung occasionally by a team of ringers.

The stained-glass window under the pointed arch on the east wall was installed in 1848 and is a splendid backdrop for the high altar and the font dates from 1401.

Other notable features are memorials to members of the Heigham family in the chancel, the brasses to John Crosier, a sixteen-century rector and benefactor to the village, the stone carving by Eric Gill near the priest's stall, and the side chapel dedicated to St Michael.

In 2010 a 'green' WC was installed behind the church and a new organ was re-sited at the west end.

The church community is friendly, spiritually committed and supportive of each other with 37 people on the electoral roll.

There is a dedicated PCC and the laity assist in worship and organising activities in the parish.



## Barrow Benefice Profile

Services held during the month include Parish or Benefice Holy Communion on Sundays and a short Holy Communion or Morning Prayer held on Wednesday mornings, Home Communion is also available for house-bound parishioners and Evening Prayer takes place via Zoom on a regular basis.

Special services are held on feast days and festivals, such as Easter, Harvest and remembrance as well as Patronal.

On Christmas Eve the church has very well attended crib and carol services. We are pleased to welcome the school for services for Harvest, Christmas, Easter and a leavers' celebration at the end of the summer term.





## Parish Life

The church has an established relationship with the mother and toddler group, nursery, preschool and primary school.

An open the book team attends the school on a regular weekly basis alongside the clergy attending school assemblies.

The church also joins the school at "Barrow Bears" for story-telling and singing as well as outreach to parents and carers.

Very successful monthly "Big Breakfasts" are hosted in the village hall and well attended by a regular group of around 40 parishioners of all ages with new visitors always made welcome.



The church alternates with Risby to host harvest supper and other such special events in the village hall with upwards of 65 people attending.

A lunch club meets regularly in the village hall and coffee mornings, hosted by the Good Neighbour Scheme and the WI, both take place monthly.

The Good Neighbour Scheme was introduced in recent years and offers support for those requiring transport to the hospital and surgeries etc as well as minor DIY and other appropriate assistance.



## Development

We wish to continue developing all of our services, we particularly want to extend our outreach activities in the village, finding ways of introducing new residents, especially those with children, into church life.

We are in the process of altering the layout of part of the church interior to open it out and make the area of the eastern end of the nave by the pulpit more flexible thus allowing its use by different groups of people for a variety of activities.

Café church will also be developed over coming months and will be held in the church itself rather than the school.







## Risby

The village of Risby has a population of approximately 1200 living in mixed housing.

The village hall is excellently refurbished and well used by the many local clubs and associations, it provides not only excellent indoor facilities but also has a Pétanque pitch, cricket pitch and playground which are well used.

There is a thriving village pub, a plant nursery and farm shop, an Antiques Centre and a cafe.

The beautiful round tower church, dedicated to St Giles, has Saxon origins and medieval wall paintings, the earliest of which can be traced to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and features a rare and intricate 15th century rood screen.

We are members of the [Round Tower Churches Society](#) and [Suffolk Historic Churches Trust](#).

We are often visited by interested groups and visitors, as well as individuals seeking peace and comfort and so the church is kept open daily.

The building is in good repair and the churchyard is still open for burials and includes one Commonwealth War Grave.

The West Suffolk Crematorium which serves Bury St Edmunds and the surrounding area is situated at the edge of the village.

St Giles Church is floodlit after dark, paid for by anyone who wishes to sponsor a week to celebrate an occasion or remember a life.



## The Church

Our average congregation is 20 and we use Hymns Old and New (New Anglican Edition) to support our services.



We have All Age Family Services which attract families from the whole Benefice. We also enjoy occasional Songs of Praise evening services which are always well supported by the whole Benefice.

## Parish Life

We have two Nursing homes in the parish with a monthly prayer service. We have an excellent and friendly relationship with Risby CEVC school with weekly assemblies run alternately by our curate, Reverend Nicola, and by our Open the Book Team.

We encourage visits to the church by the children and are proud of the fact that in the summer Risby won the ECO church Gold award. (Only the second one to be awarded in the Diocese).



Our Eco Church team works hard to promote eco-friendly practices and to forge links between church and the village community. Apart from working with the children at school, and with the nursing homes, they have undertaken to approach every household in the village to take part in the “Risbee-line” with information about which insect friendly plants are best for our gardens.



## Barrow Benefice Profile

They have also provided a bench and a sensory garden in the churchyard, for passers-by and anyone needed a quiet seat

The church also has strong links with the privately run Brookes Cambridge School which, along with Risby school, make use of the church for their end of term services and at Harvest time.

We are a friendly, caring and solvent parish with a warm church and a welcoming congregation.

We would like to continue to develop our All Age services, and to reach out to the whole village.







## Great Saxham

St Andrew's Church is located in the village of Great Saxham, 5 miles South West of Bury St Edmunds. It stands close to 18th Century Saxham Hall, is open daily and has a car park by courtesy of the Hall.

Sir Nikolaus Pevsner described St. Andrew's as "one of the prettiest churches in the county, both in itself and it's setting".



There are 54 houses in the village with a population of 270 with 39 on the Electoral Roll.

The church is the only community building in the village and is the venue for various village and fund raising activities.

Activities the church is used for include fetes, garden parties, concerts, lectures, films and treasure hunts, in addition, many in the village are involved in carol singing in Advent.



## The Church

The Chancel dates from the 13th century; there are two Norman doorways and the tower is 15th century. By the late 18th century the church building was in poor condition, so, in 1798 Thomas Mills, the patron of the living and Lord of the manor paid for a major refurbishment.

The church has very special glass in the East and West windows dating from the 16th & 17th century, which was brought back from former French and Swiss monasteries by William Mills in 1815 and installed in the church by his father.

There is an important bust and a fine brass plaque in the church of John Eldred who was the first person to import nutmegs into this country. This made him one of the richest men in the land in the 16th century. He built Nutmeg Hall on the site where the present Hall stands

The church seats about 110 and is always unlocked. Some pews have been removed for easier circulation. The Vestry doubles as a kitchen. A rota ensures that the Church is very well cared for by the community.



## Parish Life

Services are currently held on the first three Sundays of each month and are mainly traditional. On the fourth Sunday parishioners join the congregation of Little Saxham for Benefice Holy Communion. There are special services for children at Christmas and Easter. The hymn book used is Common Praise. The organ is well maintained by a Cambridge company and used by our regular organist. For weekly services congregations average 20. A combination of planned giving, collections and fund raising produce a sound financial position which enables the PCC to meet it's parish share. There are 3 bells in the tower which can be rung every Sunday. There are also toilet facilities available.



## Little Saxham

The village of Little Saxham is quite spread out, with two of the houses being on the Ickworth Estate, there are 35 houses in total with a population of approximately 86.

Little Saxham has no school, shop or pub, the church being the only building where the community can meet.

The mostly arable land is worked by both owners and tenant farmers. The majority of residents are 50+ and there are 5 families with children. There is a bus service which runs daily from Bury st. Edmunds to Newmarket via Barrow.



## The Church

St. Nicholas is the second round tower church in the benefice, with one bell in the tower and the lower part of the church dates back to Saxon times.

We belong to the Round Tower Society and The Suffolk Historic Churches Trust and get regular visits from them, the U3A and other interested groups.



Other highlights of the church are the Medieval pew ends and an exceptional Baroque monument in the Crofts Chapel, which has been restored to its original purpose a few months ago.

The church is always unlocked, there is a war memorial in the churchyard with two war graves and the churchyard is open for burials.

We keep part of the churchyard unmown from autumn to late summer, and have a flourishing patch of the rare Meadow Saxifrage. We were the first church in the benefice to win an Eco award.

## **Parish Life**

St. Nicholas' average congregation is seven although at festivals such as our Carol Service the church is almost full.

We like to use the Book of Common Prayer for our services and our hymn book is Common Praise. We alternate services with Great Saxham for Holy Communion about twice a month.

We have a fine organ which is tuned annually and a wonderful organist.

We also have a ramp at the entrance that folds away when not needed. There are 12 on the Electoral Roll at present. There is no water in the church and so after special services such as our Patronal, Christmas, and Harvest Festival, we offer glasses of wine and fruit juice plus 'nibbles' rather than coffee and biscuits. We have twice yearly work parties to clean and tidy inside and outside which are very well supported. The residents of Little Saxham are very fond of our church, even if they don't actually attend. Any fund raising event is very well supported. We do our best to meet our parish share and have succeeded in the last few years.



## Denham

St Mary's lies in the centre of the small village of Denham, a linear settlement. As the only communal building it is occasionally used for meetings and as a Polling Station. Our regular services are Holy Communion BCP on the second and fourth Sundays in a month and Morning Prayer BCP on the third with occasional CW benefice services hosted on a rota.

There are about 60 dwellings, mostly privately owned, of the population of c120, over a third are employed or self-employed, c20 are in retirement and a small number of unemployed. There are usually about 6 families with children living at home.







Feast and notable days are marked with specially devised services attracting participants from throughout and beyond the benefice, we usually use this as an opportunity to offer hospitality.

Our patronal service in August includes the benefice and celebrates the feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Congregation all receive sprigs of rosemary.

We use the harvest and carol services to offer a traditional sung evensong or trial all age services. We have recently started using the chancel/nave crossing for the communion table.

We have an excellent organist whose music can lift the rafters when necessary, the organ is well-restored and maintained. We have a choice of hymn books.

We have about one baptism, one wedding and one funeral each year which brings the wider community into our church. On Remembrance Sunday we read a short summary of the lives of the men of our village who died during WWI who are commemorated on a brass plaque. This ensures we remember them.

Our Quinquennial repairs are up to date with works carried out in 2022. In anticipation of the next report the failed wooden flooring in the nave has recently been replaced with pamment floor tiles.

This necessitated removing the pews, as they had already been taken up once before in the last 50 years for the same reason, it was found that they were not in a condition to be replaced. They have been removed and we are in the process of obtaining wooden chairs as a more versatile replacement. This gives us an open area at the front of the nave which can be used for meetings, refreshments and other communal uses.





## Thingoe Deanery

Situated in the West of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, Thingoe Deanery encompasses the parishes found both within and around the Cathedral town of Bury St Edmunds. As such our deanery mirrors the diocese in offering a wonderful mix of both urban and rural life and ministry.

Bury St Edmunds itself is a historic market town with a range of shops, businesses, schools, and housing. And there are many new and growing housing estates in and around the town, offering the various challenges and opportunities that new populations present to both the church and others alike. Equally many of our parishes are based around villages found in the beautiful countryside of Suffolk, with the joys and other issues that such smaller communities bring.

As a deanery we have a good and supportive chapter made up of both incumbents and ministers engaged in chaplaincies located in Bury St Edmunds and the surrounding area. We meet every other month, to offer mutual support and a listening ear to one another. And at least twice a year we gather for purely social reasons. Deanery Synod meets three times a year. As well as engaging in discussion of issues of import in the life of the church in the deanery and beyond, synod members hear from a variety of speakers invited by our Deanery Officers to offer insight into mission and social action in our region. In recent times this has included such topics as local chaplaincy, help for those who are sleeping rough and safeguarding.

As a Deanery we continue to engage with the Diocesan Missional Strategy of Growing in God, not least via meetings of the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee. The result of this has been a recent update to the Deanery Plan for Growth where our main aim in both the short and medium term is to focus on our identity and unity as Thingoe Deanery across our varied settings. Naturally, this Deanery Plan for Growth is updated and reviewed regularly.

We very much look forward to welcoming you to our deanery to join us as we seek to learn more of God and His plans for growth of the kingdom here in our delightful part of Suffolk.

*Revd Dr Andrew Miller Rural Dean*

*Dr Sarah Cooledge Deanery Lay Chair*