

WELCOME TO THE BOX RIVER BENEFICE

WE WANT YOU TO FIND A HOME HERE



**YOU ARE
A PRIEST
WHO IS:**

- Self-motivated and committed to Pastoral Care
- A good communicator and listener who can inspire and lead others
- A prayerful teacher with a calling for God's work
- Interested in offering a diverse ministry to a wide range of people and parishes
- Not a saint!

**YOU
WANT:**

- To be Rector of a Benefice that needs you
- To play an active part in a welcoming and thriving community
- To be called to a rural ministry in an iconic part of Suffolk
- An exciting opportunity to lead and shape a developing Benefice
- To create a structure that works well and to promote a collaborative approach to God's ministry

WHAT WE CAN OFFER YOU

- Support for the Rector, their family and their ministry
- An attractive rural location in Gainsborough Country
- Sizeable, secluded Rectory at the heart of a village close to shops, CofE school, sports, pubs and a range of activities
- The possibility for wide and diverse ministry given flexible and adaptable church service schedule
- Huge opportunity to engage with families, the local school (recently Ofsted rated good with a successful church school inspection), youth groups and active local clubs and societies
- A Joint Benefice Council which promotes cooperation whilst respecting the character of the individual parishes
- A Benefice working hard to meet its Parish Share commitments
- PCCs that are sufficiently endowed, with some funds targeted at building upkeep



WE ARE:



The Box River Benefice
*Boxford, Edwardstone, Groton,
Little Waldingfield and Newton*

ST MARY, BOXFORD

**ST MARY THE VIRGIN
EDWARDSTONE**

**ST BARTHOLOMEW,
GROTON**

**ST LAWRENCE, LITTLE
WALDINGFIELD**

ALL SAINTS, NEWTON

Who want you!

GROWING IN GOD



BENEFICE TEAM

MINISTRY TEAM

(1) Rev James Ridge, Associate Priest

(2) Maggie Cogan, Lay Minister

(3) Rev Diana Garfield, PTO

(4) David Ball, Lay Minister

“A wonderful array of personalities and preaching as well as personal support for congregations and the wider community.”

OTHER KEY SUPPORT

(5) Liz Potter, Benefice Administrator

(6) Nancy Roser, Organist

(7) Tom Cogan, Organist & Choirmaster

(8) Tom Bowen, Safeguarding Officer



(7)



(2)



(4)



(3)



(1)



(5)



(6)

COMMUNITY AND CONGREGATION SUPPORT

- Scouts and Brownies participate in special services
- Volunteers for flowers, cleaning, building and churchyard maintenance and church events
- Supportive Parish and Community Councils
- Committed PCCs
- Local musician concerts



Boxford Church Fundraising Concert

String Quartet Concert

Music by
Mendelssohn & Reinecke

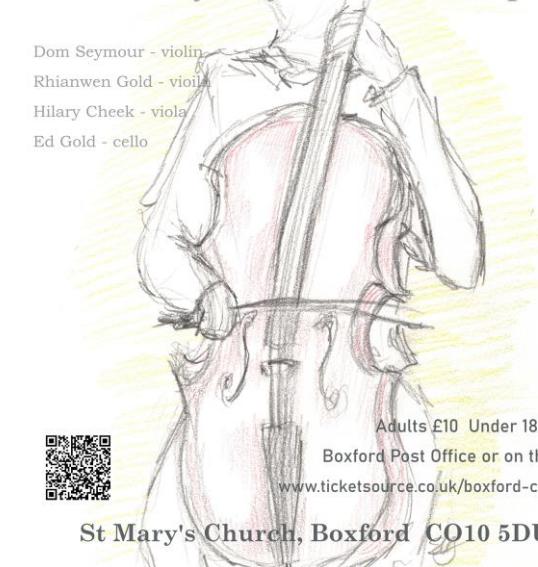
Saturday May 10th 2025 4.00 pm

Dom Seymour - violin

Rhianwen Gold - violin

Hilary Cheek - viola

Ed Gold - cello



Adults £10 Under 18s FREE

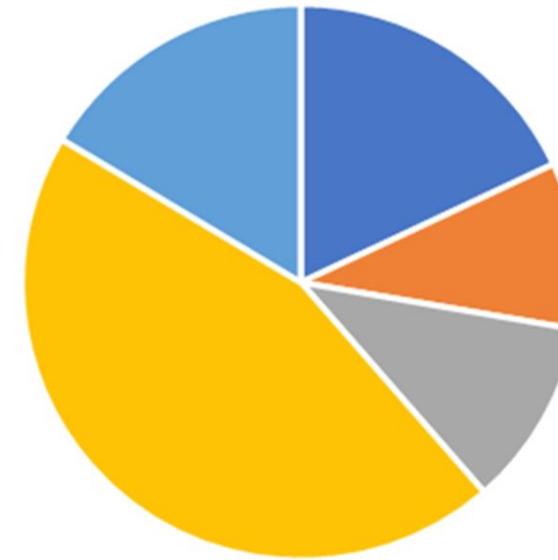
Boxford Post Office or on the door

www.ticketsource.co.uk/boxford-concerts

St Mary's Church, Boxford CO10 5DU



WHAT WE PARTICULARLY VALUE IN OUR CHURCHES AND WORSHIP



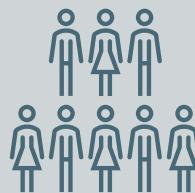
- Style of Services/Good Liturgy 18%
- Always open and available 10.9%
- Reinforcement of faith 16.4%
- Guidance and opportunity to learn 9.7%
- Community and fellowship 45%



OUR BENEFICE



The Joint Council, comprising two members from each church, has done much to improve cooperation and promote a spirit of solidarity. Joint issues are decided together, including service schedules.



The service on the fifth Sunday of the month is rotated amongst the churches in the Benefice so that the whole Benefice can gather, share communion and build connections. There is interest in doing more Benefice-wide services and events.



Box River News, a free community magazine, includes Benefice news and church services and activities as well as a ministry column and is distributed monthly to Benefice and surrounding village households.

BENEFICE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Engaging with and attracting people to our PCCs

Continuing effective communication with each other and with our communities

Financial sustainability across all churches

Increasing attendance, especially younger people and families

Getting volunteers to commit to supporting roles and run with new ideas

Widening the variety of services

Ensuring children (and their parents) know they are welcome

Keeping our churches open, welcoming and accessible

Continuing to be safe, inclusive and representative

Improving and streamlining structures to bring the benefice together

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BENEFICE CALENDAR



Benefice Palm
Sunday
procession

Midnight mass
Christmas eve

Carol services

Pancake Races
and Shrove
Tuesday

Christmas fairs



Easter

Patronal Festivals

Pet service

Harvest Festivals

Remembrance
services

ACTIVITIES AROUND THE BENEFICE



St. Bartholomew's Church Groton



Bellringing
Quiz nights
Food bank
Harvest lunches and dinners



Craft fairs

Wine & Cheese tastings
Christmas fairs



Quiz Night
Little Waldingfield Parish Room

Coffee mornings
Open gardens
Musical events
Flower festivals



WHAT WE'D LIKE FROM YOU

Vision on how a multi-church benefice can operate more effectively

Strong commitment to pastoral care

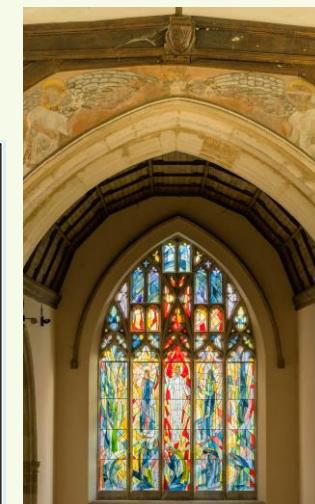
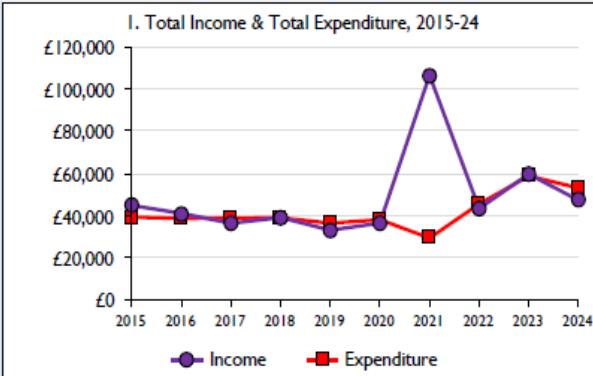
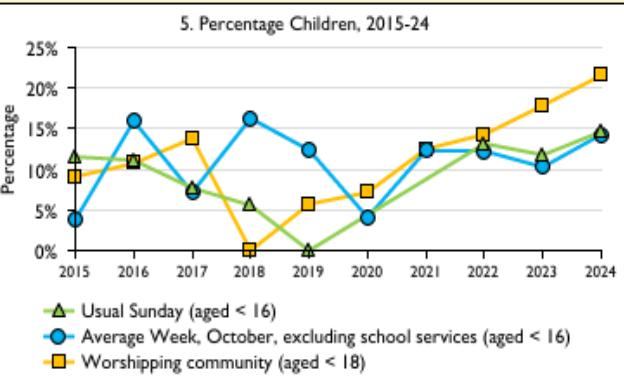
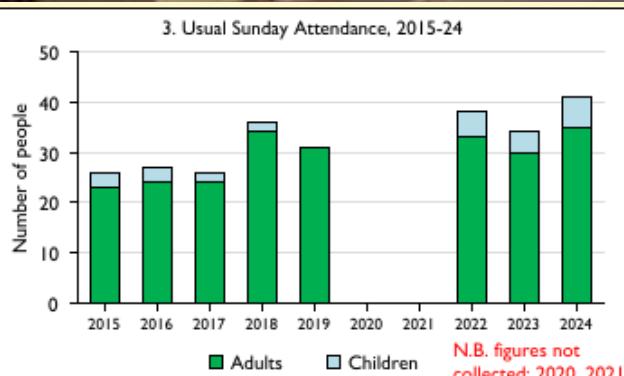
Leader who can inspire

Flexible and adaptable to a widespread and diverse ministry

Able to manage time, be well organised and delegate

Strong interpersonal skills and ability to communicate effectively with patience, empathy and humour.

St Mary's Boxford at a Glance



St Mary's Boxford

Church Description

- The grade 1 listed building dates from the early 15th century. Important wall paintings were revealed in the 1970's. The building has a well-lit interior and seats 250 people.
- The important, although degraded, wooden North Porch is 14th century and was removed from the South Door to enable a more elaborate memorial porch to be built in Caen stone in the early 16th century. An extensive restoration was carried out in 1989-91.
- The sound system was upgraded in 2024 and includes a sound loop. There is a fine William Hill organ which was installed in 1888 and a lovely 18th century Broadwood piano has been on loan to the church for many years.
- The church is unlocked during daylight hours and is popular with tourists, in part due to the stained-glass window by a local Suffolk artist.



- Work has begun on a Church Masterplan - to improve the Church's facilities and make it more usable, not only for Church purposes, but also for use by the wider community. Village consultation has taken place and plans developed with an architect. There is still some disagreement concerning a definitive reordering - the new Rector will need to own the

project and provide direction, although the architect that has been retained is supposed to project manage the project.

Church Services

- Services are held at Boxford every Sunday at 11.00 am (except the fifth Sunday). Occasionally services of Morning Praise, Matins and BCP Common Prayer are held.



- Evensong is the second Sunday of every month and services are held in the village on Wednesday mornings.
- Boxford is blessed with a small but stalwart choir of 9 singers so two Sundays are Eucharist with choir.
- The fourth Sunday has been geared towards families. St Mary's Church has a dedicated children's corner, equipped with activities and toys.
- Midnight Mass at Christmas is particularly well attended; regular Sunday attendance is between 10 and 25 people.

Team Members

- Popular Organist and Choirmaster who has built up the repertoire and musicality of the choir
- An efficient and effective Treasurer whose acumen has also been helpful in improving our financial position.
- St Mary's PCC has 7 members

St Mary's Boxford

- Another organist plays on the first Sunday and a pianist accompanies services on the fourth Sunday.
- Bellringing Captain in charge of the bells and leads various bellringing groups on Wednesday evenings.
- One Churchwarden who works full-time and travels frequently.

Activities / Organisations

- Monthly coffee mornings in the church, regularly attended by around 20 people, including dog walkers.
- The major fundraiser is the annual Open Gardens, a popular event that engages village enterprises.
- Christmas Tree festival, with trees decorated by local groups. The children's 'snowman' trail and raffle are popular.
- Local amateur and professional musicians regularly hold concerts in St Mary's, including the Suffolk Villages Festival.
- Activities are only possible through the efforts of the Churchwarden and a small group of elderly volunteers.

Parish Support

- Boxford's Church of England School services and activities in the church and the Rector was a governor of the [School](#).
- Not necessarily reflected in attendance, the villagers are proud of their church and have strong opinions about it.
- A rota of villagers ensures that the church is open during daylight hours and locked during hours of darkness. Volunteers help with church flowers when they can.
- The Brownies clean the church once or twice a year and the Scouts and Girl Guides participate in Remembrance Services.
- The Parish Council is supportive of the church; in addition to its care of the churchyard, it has provided grants towards insurance costs of the church.
- The Community Council has also worked with the church.

Financial State

- St Mary's aims to pay at least 60% of its parish share, the largest in the Benefice
- St Mary's has a significant amount of funds designated for the fabric and furnishings of the church
- Our income and expenditure are roughly balanced this year

About Boxford

- Boxford is a village of roughly 1400 inhabitants, with two pubs, a coffee shop/wine bar, two village shops and a butcher. Community amenities include a village hall, playing fields with recently upgraded pavilion and children's play area and easy access to Primrose Wood, a picturesque 22-acre pastureland, part of which is now a designated County Wildlife Site. There are numerous country walks around the village and active youth and social groups.
- The major rail stations are at Colchester (10 miles) and Ipswich (16 miles). A branch station connecting to the main line is at Sudbury (6 miles). Shopping towns are typically Hadleigh, Sudbury, Colchester, Ipswich & Bury St. Edmunds. There is a local bus service to Hadleigh, Sudbury & Ipswich.



St Mary the Virgin Edwardstone

At a Glance

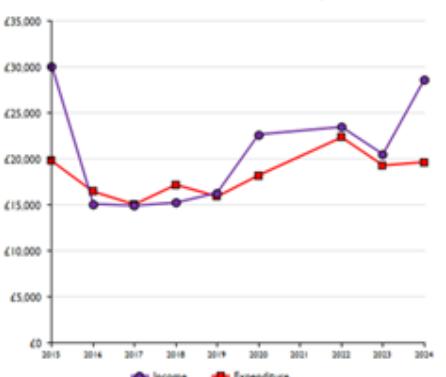


Key strengths

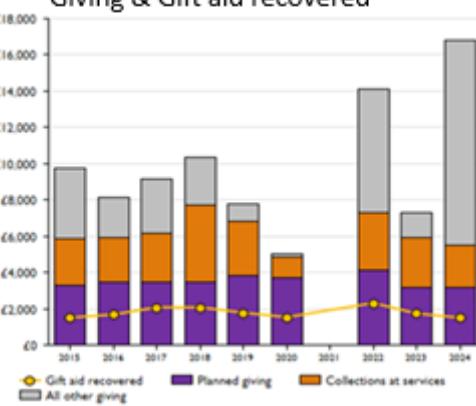
- Christmas Eve Carol service
- Financially stable
- Lucrative annual Christmas Fair
- Rising service attendances
- Well supported one-off services
- Strong community involvement



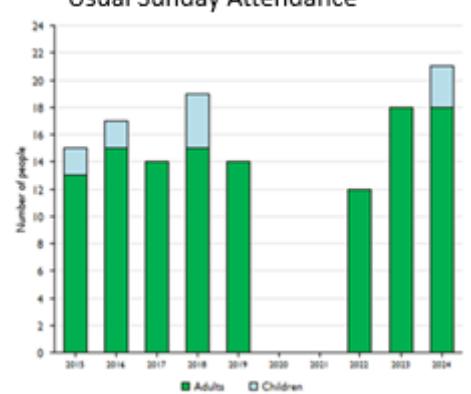
Total Income & Total Expenditure



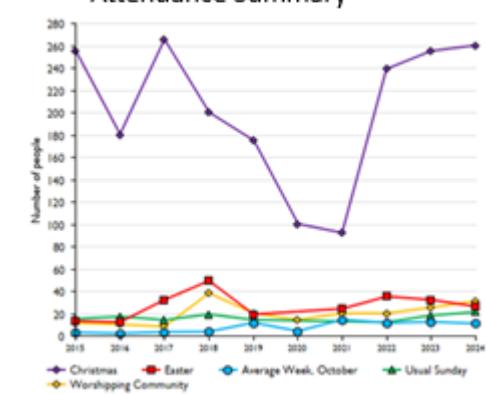
Giving & Gift aid recovered



Usual Sunday Attendance



Attendance Summary



St Mary the Virgin Edwardstone

Edwardstone is a small village comprising 4 hamlets set in the gently rolling Suffolk countryside of the upper valley of the River Box. There are three hundred or so residents with amenities including a village hall, the White Horse public house and a community area, a millennium green with woodland walks and children's play areas.

The 13th century Church is in good repair with a recent quinquennial assessment detailing only minor rectification and remediation. It is highly regarded as an ideal and preferred wedding location for parishioners of the village and further afield. The church yard is well maintained with a plethora of wild flowers and stunning views across open farmland.



There is an air of peace and tranquillity both inside and outside this magnificent building which has a stunning interior; features include the unusual brass to Benjamin and Elizabeth Brand, the ancestors of the founder of Morden College, Blackheath. Strong ties continue to this day with the College trustees contributing to the upkeep and structural integrity of the church through the Dame Susan Brand Trust.

Other treasures include the reredos behind the altar, the wrought iron chandeliers (recently refurbished and rewired) entwined with oak and maple leaves, the 17th century pulpit and many beautiful stained-glass windows. In addition, the peal of six bells was restored in 1986 whilst the organ was fully refurbished in 1998. It was made by Martin in 1870 although some of the pipework originates from a late 17th century Father Smith organ, in the Sheldonian. In 2014, a kitchen facility was incorporated into the church and in 2016 a portaloo was acquired which



St Mary the Virgin Edwardstone

is situated on a friendly neighbour's land. The church is never locked and attracts many visitors from across the world all of whom go away impressed and enchanted by its beauty and serenity.

The PCC currently consists of six members three of whom are relatively new. Unfortunately, at this time there is no Church Warden. There is an enthusiastic group of flower arrangers, cleaners and other helpers who ensure the day-to-day appearance is maintained.

There are adequate reserves and for the last five years or so, the church has roughly broken even or made a surplus, maintaining its reserves/endowment whilst ensuring appropriate, essential repairs, improvements and decorations have been effected. The parish has had a history of effective and innovative fund raising from Christmas Fairs to concerts, musical evenings, tennis tournaments, thank you parties, and one-off events all with an emphasis on appealing to and involving the local community.

Services are currently down to under two per month with attendances varying but with an average of 15 to 20. These are Holy Communion (or occasionally a Morning Service) held on the 3rd Sunday of the month. Five Villages services swell these numbers to 25-30. There is a well-attended Harvest Festival each September and an equally well supported Palm Sunday service with a donkey procession from the Temple Bar whilst the highlight of the year is the Christmas Eve carol service which is always fully attended with congregations exceeding 180 from whom the collection provides over 8% of the annual income.

The village has a good number of younger families with children who enjoy the one-off big occasion services and the PCC is anxious to extend this attendance and enjoyment of Living with God into a more regular programme. An innovative, engaging, open and inclusive incumbent would, we are sure, enjoy the challenge and subsequent reward of a greater participation from the local community .



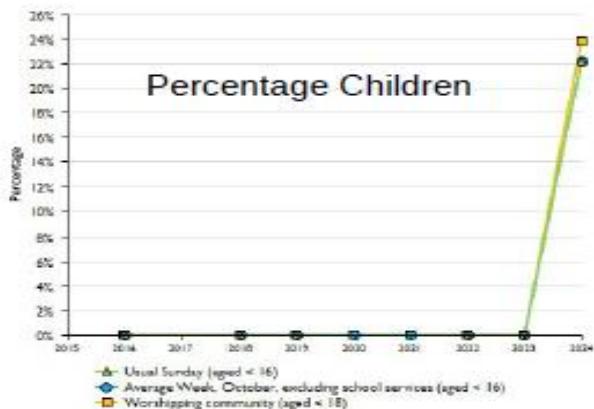
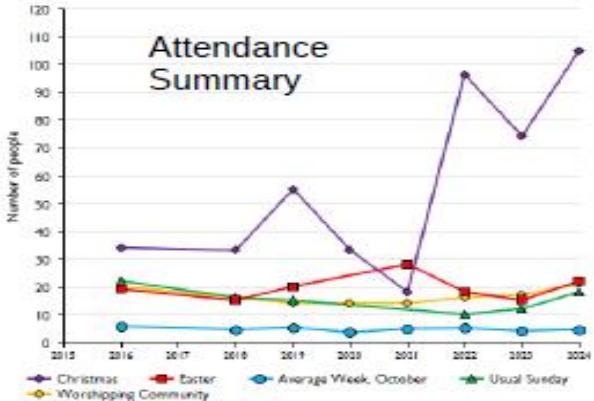
St Bartholomew's Groton at a Glance



The Winthrop Ladies memorial window



St Bartholomew's. View of East end.





Faith & Charity



St Bartholomew's. View of West end

The Grade 1 listed Church dates from the 13th century. The tower is home to 5 chiming bells. Memorials provide evidence of well-established links to the Winthrop and Clopton families in the United States. John Winthrop, former Lord of the Manor of Groton and one of the leading Pilgrim Fathers, sailed to New England in 1630 and became the first Governor of Massachusetts. The stained-glass east window installed in 1875 commemorates this. The links are very much still alive and valued today. The current John Winthrop visited in 2023 and the PCC hosted a informal concert with lunch in the Church for all who wished to meet him.

Accompanied by its Henry 'Father' Willis organ, St Bartholomew's hosts a regular morning service on the second Sunday in the month. On average, attendance is 10 - 16. On a positive note, we have seen an increase in the number of younger people with children attending our services.

The Church building is in reasonable order. Roof repairs in 2018, financed by a Government grant, replaced lead stolen in 2015. Work to provide a toilet in the churchyard together with kitchen servery facilities under the tower was completed in 2020 enabling the Church to be used for community events as well as for worship. A quinquennial inspection has just been carried out by a newly appointed architect, young and full of ideas to take St. Bartholomew's forward to a greener, more sustainable future. The Church is kept open 24/7 and comments in the visitors' book frequently indicate that people really do appreciate finding it open.

St Bartholomew's Groton

In terms of population, Groton is the smallest village in the Benefice with some 125 houses (about 280 people). It is a dispersed village, comprising a number of hamlets, and is essentially rural in character, set in attractive, rolling countryside. The population is a blend of people from varied backgrounds living in houses and households of all sizes. Many work locally and some commute, a significant number are retired but there is also a good number of young families. Some dwellings are second homes and there are three working farms.

As well as St Bartholomew's Church, other focal points in the village are the Village Hall, a popular venue for local events and close to the church is the traditional and well-patronised Fox and Hounds public house.





Fund-raising concert

A small but happy team, Groton PCC has a strong focus on pastoral care within the village.

The PCC includes two churchwardens and we share an administration clerk with the other four parishes in the Benefice.

The village of Groton has a strong community spirit and many other residents, including non-churchgoers, are involved in supporting activities such as cleaning, flower arranging and maintaining the churchyard.

We periodically hold fundraising events including garden parties, barn dancing, fish and chip quiz, concerts, cheese and wine parties and a bank holiday weekend flower festival that coincides with St. Bartholomew's Patronal Day.



A welcoming church!

In answer to the question: What do you look for in a new Rector? This would be our answer:

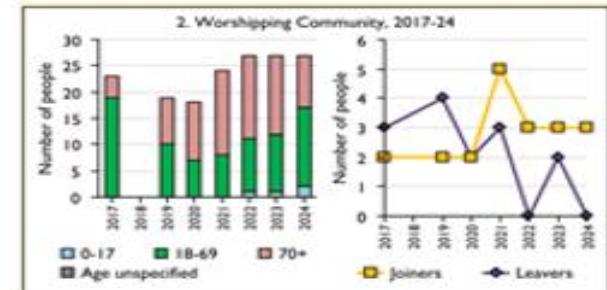
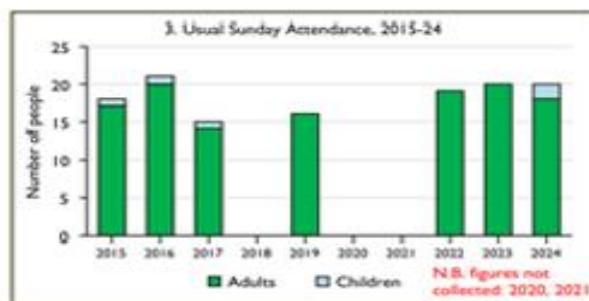
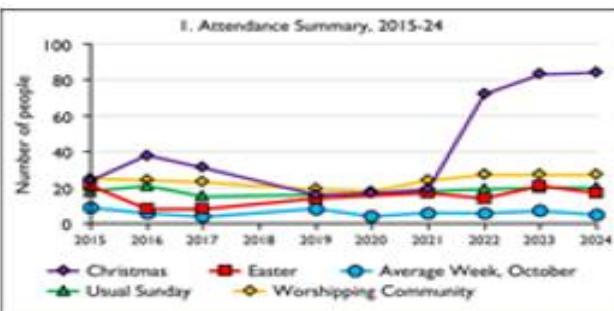
The Rector should promote faith and pastoral care and be able to respect and accept the differences that are bound to be encountered in a group of different parishes. A pastor to the whole flock.



John and Libby Winthrop opening new toilet facilities in the churchyard



St. Lawrence Little Waldingfield at a glance.



- Little Waldingfield is a friendly, welcoming village with a population of 364 (2021 census).

It is situated approximately 5 miles from Boxford. The community of the village is quite diverse, made up mostly of older inhabitants with a sprinkling of young families.

- Our church is a 'wool' church and, consequently large, being able to seat about 200 people. It is situated in the centre of the village and is permanently open. In accordance with a bequest, it is floodlit every evening.

• We have 27 on our Electoral Roll and have regular congregations of 12 – 25 people. Refreshments are provided after every service and we have a regular organist who also plays at other churches in the Benefice.

- We have several special events each year – a 'Festive Drinks and Nibbles' evening in December, Lent lunch, a flower festival every two years with Open Gardens in the intervening years.

Each of these is well attended by villagers and friends from other Parishes in the Benefice. We have, in the past, held concerts as the acoustics are excellent.

- We are very fortunate in having significant support from villagers in many ways e.g. financially, with flower arranging and catering.
- The proceeds from the sale of an inherited cottage is helping us to meet our ongoing financial obligations.



All Saints' Church Newton at a Glance



Key Strengths

- PCC membership
- Good team spirit
- Community support
- Increase in attendance at services
- Fortnightly coffee mornings
- Ride & Stride well supported
- Well attended fundraising events
- Financial Management



During the post-Covid period, Newton continued to place emphasis on managing finances.

Income of £5,611 in 2024 was up by 24% on the previous year, helped by an uplift in regular giving, weddings, funerals and fundraising events. Local expenses (excluding parish share) have been reduced in recent years. This trend of stronger income and tighter expenses continues in 2025.

Actions to improve financial management include a move to internet banking, use of higher-rate deposits, negotiating a three-year fixed electricity contract, obtaining retrospective gift-aid tax refunds and trials of contactless donations.

Over the 2022-25 period, there has been an increase year-on-year in our parish share contribution.



All Saints' Church Newton

Our 14C, Grade II listed church is situated a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile off the A134 in Newton at the end of Church Road. The village consists of approximately 250 homes situated around 40 acres of green space managed by The Newton Trust. The church is nestled in a rural setting between the two historic buildings of Newton Hall and Butlers Farm, both of which have connections with the church, dating back many centuries.

The church architecture is unpretentious with a quiet dignity. The West Tower is of the Perpendicular period with a belfry containing five bells.

The Nave is owned by The Churches Conservation Trust with whom we work alongside. The Nave is divided from the Chancel by a glass and wooden opening partition. The acoustics in the Nave are often described as 'some of the best in Suffolk' and as a result musicians and singers are keen to perform there.

The Chancel offers a warm, intimate place for worship. The large East window dominates the space with its shades of white and pale green glass, flooding the Chancel with light. The upper portion has beautiful tracery of seven heraldic shields, all connected in some way to families of Newton and its church.

The church is open every day of the year and this is valued as seen in our Visitors Book which has received comments from families as far afield as Australia, Canada and USA. Many of these visitors have connections to the church from past generations.



The monthly Box River News which is delivered to each household in the Benefice (and beyond) contains reports and service schedules. This is a link with the church and community and is valued for advertising church events.

The congregation averages a modes 17 people but numbers increase significantly during our Joint Benefice Services which are held in rotation when there are five Sundays in the month. Also, numbers increase for the festivals of Easter, Harvest and Christmas.

For our Remembrance Services we hold the traditional service in church, followed by an open-air service at the War Memorial on the village green for everyone.

The PCC consists of five members which includes two Churchwardens, a Treasurer and Secretary. There are many other villagers who support the church in a variety of ways.



EXAMPLE OF BOX RIVER BENEFICE SERVICE SCHEDULE

Wednesday, 1st October	10.00	<i>Communion & Coffee</i>	Mary's House
Sunday, 5th October Trinity 16	09.30	<i>Harvest Festival</i>	St Lawrence's, Lt Waldingfield
	11.00	<i>Sunday Eucharist</i>	St Mary's, Boxford
Wednesday, 8th October	10.00	<i>Communion & Coffee</i>	Mary's House
Sunday, 12th October Trinity 17 Prison Sunday	09.30	<i>Harvest Festival</i>	St Bartholomew's, Groton
	11.00	<i>Harvest Festival with Choir</i>	St Mary's, Boxford
	17.00	<i>BCP Evensong</i>	St Mary's, Boxford
Wednesday, 15th October	10.00	<i>Communion & Coffee</i>	Mary's House
Sunday, 19th October Trinity 18	09.30	<i>Harvest Festival</i>	St Mary the Virgin, Edwardstone
	11.00	<i>Sunday Eucharist with Choir</i>	St Mary's, Boxford
Wednesday, 22nd October	10.00	<i>Communion & Coffee</i>	Mary's House
Sunday, 26th October Last Sunday after Trinity	11.00	<i>Sunday Eucharist</i>	All Saints', Newton Green
	11.00	<i>Family Service</i>	St Mary's, Boxford
Wednesday, 29th October	10.00	<i>Communion & Coffee</i>	Mary's House