

THE CLAYDON BENEFICE PROFILE 2023



**St Mary's & St Peter's
Church**

Claydon & Barham



St Mary's Church

Great Blakenham



St Peter's Church

Henley

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WHO WE ARE

The Claydon Benefice covers four civil parishes five miles from the county town of Ipswich. It is crossed by the A14 trunk road, the main London trainline and the River Gipping.

The Benefice is less than 20 miles from the Suffolk coast and only an hour's train journey to London from nearby Ipswich.

Our four parishes have all previously been part of different Benefices. Following the closure of St Peter, Claydon in 1975 (now owned by the Churches Conservation Trust), Barham became the parish church of St Mary and St Peter, serving both civil parishes.



St Peter, Henley joined in 1995. St Mary, Great Blakenham joined in 2002. A legal Benefice was established in 2019. The Benefice went into vacancy just as the pandemic started in 2020, and for part of 2021 –22 we had an Interim Priest-in-Charge.

The incumbent is supported by a strong Ministry Team, consisting of one self-supporting Minister, three Permission to Officiate, three Readers, one Evangelist and two Elders, who work across the Benefice. There are two Churchwardens at Henley; two at Barham, with an Assistant Churchwarden; one Churchwarden at Great Blakenham, with two Assistant Churchwardens.

There is a wide range of services across the Benefice, including special services during Holy Week, Pentecost and Carol services. During the pandemic, Zoom worship was introduced and remains a key part of our Benefice worship.

Each parish works hard at developing mission and outreach in the community, through school visits, community activities, major festivals and children's activities.

The Claydon Benefice sits within the Gipping Valley Deanery. The Deanery was formed three years ago by the merger of two smaller Deaneries. The 'new' Deanery comprises ten Benefices, with a total of forty-two churches.

WHO WE ARE

There is an eagerness to develop mission and ministry to reflect the growth in young families. Examples are noted in each parish entry.

New housing developments have exploded in recent years.

Within each of the parishes, housing developments have either been built or are underway, leading to some increase in congregation numbers, in particular in Great Blakenham, and hopefully in the future for Barham and Henley.



New developments approved at Barham will include provision of additional land for the Church. Much work has been done in the last few years to strengthen relationships across the Benefice, and there is a desire to develop ecumenical links with the local Baptist church at Great Blakenham.

There are two active Mothers' Union branches within the Benefice. Both Henley and Claydon & Barham branches are ecumenical and have around 18 members each. With the focus on fellowship, support of families, fundraising and prayer, each branch carries out a number of regular activities such as providing baptism and anniversary cards for both children and adults. In Claydon & Barham the MU Young Families group meets on alternate Thursday mornings and has been running for 30 years.

There are three open churchyards, and one closed, with one civil cemetery.

Within the Benefice there are significant employment opportunities, including business and retail, industrial, agricultural, construction, hospitality and education. There are three hotels and four pubs across the Benefice.

There are two pre-schools, two primary schools and a high school in the Benefice. Both Claydon and Henley have thriving pre-schools. The Benefice has strong links with all of the schools, including holding regular assemblies. An *Open the Book* team has restarted following the pandemic.

We have links with the two care homes and the two sheltered housing schemes in our Benefice.

WE OFFER

We offer our new incumbent:

- Our prayers for your ministry
- The support of a strong Ministry Team and hardworking PCCs
- An established safeguarding team and policies
- A belief in the *Growing in God* aims of the Diocese
- A well-maintained Rectory in the centre of the community, very close to the primary and secondary schools and shops in Claydon
- Three churches with no major maintenance issues
- A supportive wider community
- Active Pastoral Groups across the Benefice
- Strong links with local care homes
- Congregations that support national charities, including Christian Aid and UNICEF
- Congregations that support local charities, such as Families in Need, Stowmarket Foodbank, Lighthouse Women's Aid and Ipswich soup kitchen
- Strong connections with the Link Diocese in Kagera, with Diocesan Link co-ordinators in Henley church
- Established links with schools
- A well-established annual Church holiday club for 5-11 year-olds
- Established links to build on with young families through Families@4.30, Young Families, children's workshops and baptisms
- Lots of new residents for outreach and mission
- A variety of worship styles and a willingness to try new things
- Three churches that support each other and co-operate well
- Two active Mothers' Union branches
- Prompt payment of expenses
- Recognition of time off to be with family and friends

WE NEED

- An experienced, supportive priest who is familiar with a multi-parish Benefice, who can inspire young and old alike, continue God's work out in the wider community, and lead the way by the word of God
- Who is visible and approachable
- A firm, wise and sensitive leader
- A skilled and confident leader (enabling and developing vision, gifts, evangelism)
- A good communicator
- Willing to share leadership with others, and to delegate
- Willing to draw on Benefice-wide resources
- Prepared to listen, and work through disagreements sensitively
- Strong enough to handle different opinions creatively and with sensitivity.

We need you to help us to...

- Deepen our faith and spirituality
- Preach and teach the word of God
- Work together, but respecting and nurturing individual parishes' character and strengths
- Develop mission, particularly to new housing developments
- Work in schools and with families

OUR CHURCHES

ST MARY'S AND ST PETER'S, CLAYDON AND BARHAM

Location

For local government purposes, Claydon and Barham are separate villages but share facilities such as schools, village hall, community centre, pharmacy, bakery, shops and obviously the Church. There is also a shared identity and sense of community. There are three public houses, a fish and chip shop, a community café amongst others serving the parish. There is also a Best Western Hotel and a Premier Inn.

The boundary between the two villages runs through the middle of a large housing estate. Local folklore also suggests some houses have some rooms in one village and some in the other.

Already with a population in excess of 3,500, three large new developments have started or are planned. These will provide potential for new regular worshippers and increased life event services. The Barham Church Lane housing development scheme will also bring safer and easier vehicular and pedestrian access to the Church and bring the village closer to the Church.

The church building

A Grade 1 listed building with a rector's list dating back to the 13th century. Its most famous possession is a Henry Moore 'Madonna and Child' as a war memorial. It has one of the largest Churchyards in Suffolk. The Church and Churchyard are well maintained by members of the local community and Church. The Church is currently separated from the main residential area by fields but this is about to change.

The Church hall includes toilets and a kitchen. Connected to the church by the choir vestry it was built in 1985 giving opportunity for socialising after services and is available for hire. It opens onto a large grass area which is ideal for fetes, BBQs and the annual holiday club. There is ample parking at the church and this will be increased as part of the planned housing development.

A few years ago the bell tower underwent major repairs and, in 2020, reordered to accommodate the hanging of two new bells in addition to the four existing ones which had to be refurbished. This brought financial pressures during the pandemic, but they do sound wonderful. The first peal since 1947 was rung in 2021.



Carol Service at Barham Church.

OUR CHURCHES

ST MARY'S AND ST PETER'S, CLAYDON AND BARHAM

The church in the community

The church enjoys a really good relationship with the wider community. We have many popular events such as the open air band concert, church fete and Christmas experience which boost income, connect us with the wider community and demonstrate our philosophy that the life of the church should be about fun and fellowship as well as faith. We treat all our fundraising events as opportunities for outreach, especially those we are able to hold on the church site. We work hard to maintain the goodwill of the community with significant success. As an example, a local free book exchange library in the village, established by a couple of residents in their garden during the pandemic, has a box out for donations to the Church Bell Fund. Within a year they collected about £1,000. Our Annual Open Air Picnic Band Concert in the grounds of Barham Hall opposite the church regularly sells out with 450 attendees mainly from the local community.

Many of the PCC, Ministry Team and church members also play a very active role in the wider community in their involvement with the Community Centre, schools, Scouting, drama group etc.

The future

Both lockdowns and the bells project have placed a strain on what was previously a healthy financial position. However, we are working hard to recover from this and the other effects of the pandemic. We recognise the need to build on our contact with the children and young families that we have achieved through the annual J-Team Holiday Club, Families@4:30, mid-week Young Families Group/Sunshine services to grow younger. We equally recognise the importance of still serving and meeting the needs of those at the other end of the age spectrum. In our newly refurbished and enhanced bells, we see an opportunity to bring others into the wider church family through bell ringing.



J-Team holiday club.

OUR CHURCHES

ST MARY'S, GREAT BLAKENHAM

Great Blakenham is a growing village which is divided by the main railway line.

There is a local pub, situated opposite the church with whom we have a strong relationship; a large village hall and a well-supported church-owned Parish Room, both of which are well used by villagers and the wider community. Attached to the village hall is a recreation ground with a children's play area. There is also a local football team, an active cycle speedway team and a popular outdoor bowling club. The area is covered by many local walking routes which are frequently used. A shop was built in 2018, serving the local community.

Housing

In 2020 there was an estimated population of 2,255. Within the village there is a mixture of privately owned, rented and affordable housing. It is estimated that the total number of homes may now be in the region of 1,200. There is also a residential park-home development, with 80 residential homes for people over the age of 50, all of which are privately owned.

There is a care home for nine people with special needs which is run by Cephass Care Ltd. Several residents and carers attend church regularly, when possible.

The church building

The Church is a c950 year old Grade 1 listed building. The interior is small with a capacity of 70+, and has a serene and peaceful atmosphere. There is a 200 Lottery Club which raises money to enable the fabric of the church to be kept in good repair. The church has recently been awarded Bronze Eco Church Award in recognition of the efforts of the PCC to care for God's earth. The churchyard is closed.

Parish Room

Separate to the Church, is the Parish Room which is owned by the Church and run by a small committee. This room is well used by members of the parish and wider community. An Art group, Craft group, Sewing group, Over 50s' group, Ballet classes, plus the Church's own regular gatherings are just a few of the groups who regularly use this facility.



Historical evening at Great Blakenham.

OUR CHURCHES

ST MARY'S, GREAT BLAKENHAM

The Church in the Community

The Church is experiencing an upturn in attendance; the PCC remains positive in its approach to try and help with this by also holding many community functions, most of which are well supported. The Church has a well-supported community Coffee Morning on the second Saturday of the month in the Parish Room: this is a good time to meet other villagers, enjoy coffee and cake and share fellowship in a relaxed atmosphere. The Harvest Supper is well supported.

Other events include an Easter Fayre; seed and plant swap; Doggy Day; Pet Service; village carol singing, Christmas Festival and Fayre, and Christingle Service. There has been much interest in recent months for Baptisms from families from the new housing estates.

The Future

The PCC is delighted to welcome new members to the small team. It is keen to implement flexible patterns of worship to include all ages and cater for all peoples' needs with both traditional and modern worship.

The PCC and Church welcomers ensure that all feel welcome and are able to find their way through what may be unfamiliar worship.

We would like to develop mission and ministry. With new housing estates and other ongoing development we wish to have a presence among the new housing developments, outside of the regular church activities, ensuring wider community awareness of and engagement with the church's role.

The PCC would like to develop its pastoral care role within the local community and wishes to expand this ministry.



Midnight Mass at Great Blakenham.

OUR CHURCHES

ST PETER'S, HENLEY

The village

Henley is a small village with several outlying hamlets. The Church has a visible presence in the centre of the village: the churchyard is a thoroughfare from one side of the village to the other.

Amenities

There is a large, modern community centre with a playing field which is home to Henley AFC. The community centre hosts a number of other sports and activities, and has a bar. The village pub has been closed for some time, but now has new owners and we are waiting to see how they develop the business.

The church building

The Church is a beautiful 13th Century, Grade I listed building. It has a large vestry which includes toilet and kitchen facilities. A project to reorder the back of the church and area under the tower is in the planning stage.

The church in the community

Christmas and Good Friday children's workshops attract children from the wider community. Henley primary school uses the church for Harvest and Christmas services and there is some church involvement with school assemblies. The crib service brings in large numbers, and other popular events include barn dances, jigsaw puzzle evenings and open air concerts. Our Pastoral Team periodically holds 'Meet up and Mingle' events, where we invite people from all parts of the village and beyond. We have a small ecumenical prayer group which meets monthly, and our active MU group is also ecumenical.

The churchyard is well used for outreach events such as Spuds & Sparklers and the Christmas carol singing and tree lighting evening. The PCC has recently had advice from Suffolk Wildlife Trust on how to make the churchyard more wildlife friendly, so various changes are in progress – bird boxes, areas for long grass, tree planting etc.



Concert gathering in Henley churchyard.

OUR CHURCHES

ST PETER'S, HENLEY

Parish strengths

We offer a variety of styles of worship and are very open to looking at other ways to 'do church'. We are growing links with the community centre – outdoor carol service, jubilee celebrations. We have an active pastoral care team. We have regular musicians: an organist/pianist who plays for most services and can facilitate using music creatively, and another musician who joins in to form a band for many services.

We have eight bells. Ringers come in from other villages, and we plan to create a local ringing team.

The future

We currently have no youth or children's congregation, and would like to explore ways of connecting with these age groups. We would really like to improve our commitment to travelling between the churches in our Benefice and participating in faith-based events other than services (e.g. Lent groups). We are trying to find new and creative ways to engage with people and show the presence of God in our community.

We are well along the road to open up the space under the tower and at the back of the church by removing pews and moving the font. This should open good opportunities for the mission of the church in new ways.



Mothering Sunday posy making.

WORSHIP

Worship across the Benefice

With our strong Ministry Team and others, we are able to offer and support, a range of services.

Our worship, whether it be in our church buildings, churchyards, in a farmer's barn or on a Rogationtide walk, whether it be traditional or contemporary, whether it be within a large or small congregation, is intended to honour God. Our strength is that our churches are of differing sizes, but all share a willingness to reach out, and across a month, there is a fairly wide choice.

The present worship pattern, covered by the whole of the Ministry Team is:

Claydon and Barham enjoys two services each Sunday: over the course of a month one service is Morning Praise, all others are Eucharist; a midweek Eucharist is held on Wednesday mornings.

Great Blakenham is currently the only church offering a monthly morning family service 'family@blakenham', plus two Eucharist services and one Morning Praise.

Henley has two Eucharist services each month, one of which is a said service, there is one Morning Praise Service, a Café Church service and a monthly BCP Evensong.

Fifth Sundays are usually a Benefice Eucharist service, hosted in turn by each Church.

A Benefice 'Families@4:30' event is held each month at Barham, offering sessions of activities and crafts, followed by informal worship and ending with a hot meal

Twice a year services are held in the closed church of St Peter in Claydon.

Monthly services are held in one care home, and in two sheltered accommodation schemes.

A monthly Sunshine Service is held for parents with babies and young children.

Barham's organist has recently moved away - it is hoped to appoint a replacement soon, and other musicians are playing; Henley is fortunate in regularly enjoying the skills of an organist/flautist and a violinist. Great Blakenham has an electronic piano/music system.

Zoom

From October 2020 the Claydon Benefice has embraced the possibilities offered by Zoom with a Zoom team who provide live online worship for the Benefice. As lockdowns have lifted, this provision has continued as we recognised its ongoing value to those unable to get to physical church. In order to make good use of resources we work in collaboration with the neighbouring North Bosmere Benefice, between us offering a weekly Sunday morning service, and services on weekday special occasions. We have welcomed a range of cathedral and diocesan senior staff and officers as preachers to these services.

Home Groups

Having moved to Zoom early in the pandemic, the pre-existing Home Group continues to meet each week via Zoom. In Lent 2022 two Lent Groups were held on Zoom in addition to the three physical groups taking place as we continue to provide for those for whom attendance at a physical group is not preferred or possible. Since Summer 2022 an *Exploring the Bible* group has met fortnightly.

SUNDAY SERVICE PATTERN

	Claydon & Barham	Great Blakenham	Henley
1st Sunday	8:00 Holy Communion 10:00 Parish Communion	11:00 family@blakenham	9:30 Parish Communion
2nd Sunday	8:00 Holy Communion 10:00 Parish Communion	11:00 Parish Communion	9:30 Morning Praise
3rd Sunday	8:00 Holy Communion 10:00 Morning Praise	11:00 Morning Praise	9:30 Parish Communion
4th Sunday	08:00 Holy Communion 10:00 Parish Communion	11:00 Parish Communion	9:30 Café Church 18:30 Benefice Evensong

5th Sunday Benefice Eucharist rotates at each church

Zoom worship every Sunday at 9:30

GROWING IN GOD

 Growing in God

 Growing in God

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

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

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

As part of this vision, we have recently received Strategic Development Funding for two major projects: Inspiring Ipswich, overseen by the Archdeacon of Ipswich which aims to grow the church in Ipswich through church planting and reaching out to those who live in the town, and 'Growing God in the Countryside', overseen by the Archdeacon for Rural Mission. 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.

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'.

COMMUNICATIONS

Benefice communications

A small Benefice Comms Team works with the incumbent to disseminate advertising of parish and benefice events across the benefice and beyond, via the following:

- ◆ a weekly "Pew Sheet" and a monthly "Calendar", both circulated electronically via an email list and the benefice Facebook page (see below), and in hard copy in each of the three churches of Barham, Great Blakenham and Henley
- ◆ an email list to which users can subscribe in order to receive the Pew Sheet and Calendar (see above), and posters for parish and Benefice events
- ◆ the Benefice Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/claydonchurches> which has a feed onto the benefice website
- ◆ the Benefice website <https://claydonbenefice.com/>
- ◆ individual village Facebook pages and mailing lists
- ◆ each parish's page on *A Church Near You*
- ◆ email to other specific contacts when relevant, such as local schools
- ◆ the local editions of the Suffolk "In Touch" magazine, available both via their website, and in hard copy delivered to homes and church porches
- ◆ posters on church noticeboards and around the villages
- ◆ door-to-door delivery of leaflets for major festivals and events



THE RECTORY

The Rectory

The Rectory, built in the late 1960s, is a modern spacious house with ample parking in the centre of Claydon, near to schools, local shops and amenities.

There is a large garden mostly laid to lawn, with a gated entrance.

There is a double garage.



The accommodation

Ground floor

Entrance Lobby

Study 12'11 x 10'9 (3.9m x 3.3m)

Main hallway with stairs off to a galleried landing

Sitting Room 20'1 x 12'11 (6.12m x 3.9m)

Dining Room 15'1 x 12' (4.6m x 3.7m)

Kitchen 13'1 x 10'1 (4m x 3.1m)

Utility Room

Rear Lobby/Boot Room

First floor

Bedroom One 13' x 20' (4m x 6.1m)

Box Room/Study

Bedroom Two 13' x 10'11 (4m x 3.3m)

Bedroom Three 11'10 x 11' (3.6m x 3.4m)

Separate WC

Bedroom Four 11'3 x 8'7 (3.4m x 2.6m)

Family Bathroom



APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Church Statistics, Village Population, Housing, Businesses and Assets

Village	Usual Sunday Attendance	Electoral Roll	Services per Month	Occasional offices per year	Fund Raising Events per year	Number on PCC	Population	Housing	Any large scale housing developments (No. of houses)	Village Hall
Claydon and Barham	35	88	12 Sunday 8am & 10am Wednesday 10am	29 inc Crematorium services	4	15	3,100 As per 2011 census and growing	1,590	Planning permission for c300 near Church. Smaller developments of <50 in progress	Community Centre with bar, Village Hall, & Church Hall
Great Blakenham	15	17	4 Sunday 11am	10 inc. Crematorium services	19	6	2,255 As at June 2020	C1,200	Two recently completed – Masons Drive c350 and Gipping Mill c130	Village Hall with facilities for hire and church-owned Parish Room
Henley	15	41	5	10 inc. Crematorium services	8	10	560 As per 2011 census	225 houses with majority in private ownership	Small development (11) in progress	Henley Community Centre. Facilities for hire Capacity: 100 with smaller room 35

APPENDICES



Appendix 2

Church Buildings

Parish	Age of Church	Location (Postcode)	Capacity	Musical capability	Hymn Book	Prayer Book	Recent Major projects
Claydon and Barham	13 th Century with major 19 th Century restoration and additions. Church on this site is recorded Domesday Book. Rector list dates back to 1227. Extension for hall, toilets and kitchen added in 1983	IP6 0PT	300 at a stretch	Pipe Organ, Piano in Extension. Organist & small choir. Some guitar accompanied singing	Complete Anglican Hymns Old & New	Common Worship plus Service sheets	Bells refurbished, enhanced from 4 to 6 bells and hung in new frame in 2020. CCTV and Audio system installed 2019
Great Blakenham	11 th Century - Nave and Chancel built between 1070-1180, tower added in 14 th century, vestry added in 1931.	IP6 0LP	70	Electric piano/music system but no regular pianist. Professionally-produced backing tracks to the hymn book.	Singing the Faith	Common Worship plus Service sheets	None
Henley	13 th Century with Victorian additions, on site of earlier church C11th. Tower added early C16th. Chancel demolished and rebuilt late C19th. Eight bells with two dating to 1480	IP6 0RQ	80	Electric piano for regular use, organist/pianist, violinist and flautist, with professionally-produced backing tracks to the hymn book for use when musicians are unavailable.	Singing the Faith	Common Worship plus Service sheets	CCTV to relay services into Vestry when Church is full Vestry refurbished and modernised in 2012

APPENDICES

Appendix 3

Church Finances 2021

Parish	Parish Share	Proportion paid	Annual income*	Annual outgoings (incl. Parish share)	Reserves 31 December 2021	Future projects (Fabric)	Budget and start year
Claydon and Barham	£37,943	84.3% First year not paid in full	Unrestricted £39,662 Restricted £26,332 Inc Grants	£39,573	Unrestricted £3,181 Restricted £80,928 but bills of £66,254 O/S	Bell Project Phase 2 – New tower porch doors and disabled access. Extension of Church Grounds as part of adjacent Housing Development	Not committed Funded by Developer
Great Blakenham	£12,985	38.5%	Unrestricted £4,597 Restricted £1,937 Inc. Grants	£7,982	Unrestricted £2,193 Restricted £21,589	Re-ordering project: relocation of font, installation of kitchen and toilet.	£140,000 - on hold due to pandemic.
Henley	£18,781	100%	Unrestricted £23,270 Restricted £12,536	£27,644	Unrestricted £16,700 Restricted £176,601	Reordering the West End incl. refurbishing the West door and access, creating a permanent disabled access and a flexible space at rear of Nave Net Zero Carbon: Modernising and modifying heating controls and upgrading lighting	£70,000 Q3 2022 £8,000 FY.2023

Note: All income and outgoing figures are for 2021 and were therefore impacted by pandemic restrictions