



# Combs and Finborough Benefice Profile 2021



## Things that are important to us:

**Worshipping God:** Developing and cherishing a wide range of worship including traditional (BCP) services, Common Worship and modern and accessible services for both adults and children.

**Working together:** Working collaboratively as a benefice, allowing the gifts of all to be respected, recognised and used.

**Growing our congregations:** Especially encouraging children and families, and growing links with those in new housing within the benefice.

**Reaching out to others:** Maintaining and developing the links we have with our communities, schools, residential homes and with the elderly and lonely.

**Caring for our churches:** Looking after our beautiful churches and our faithful congregations, putting our PCCs on a sounder financial footing and maintaining and improving our buildings.

## What we hope for in you:

Someone who will:

- believe in all that we profess in our creed and will encourage us to deepen our faith through worship, the study of scripture, prayer and teaching, helping us learn and share that faith with our communities, and more widely, in a gentle and respectful way
- support and encourage our lay and ordained teams
- collaborate and communicate well
- lead us in maintaining and extending work in the schools and in the community with children and young people; and in building relationships with families
- strive to develop a fresh communication strategy, especially through the facility of new media, as we build on all that has been achieved virtually in our benefice during the coronavirus emergency
- feel an affinity for rural life and be willing to participate in the things that matter to us.

## What we can offer you:

- A supportive and diverse Ministry Group, which includes an experienced Associate Priest, a priest (PTO) working mainly in Combs, three Readers (PTO) and nine Elders.
- Welcoming and supportive parishes who work hard to meet their financial responsibilities, while keeping a pastoral presence in their communities and trying to develop the Kingdom of God.
- Administrative assistance.
- Well maintained church buildings and churchyards.
- Two Churchwardens in nearly every parish.
- Parish share paid in full.
- The post is in an attractive, mainly rural, location but with good road and rail access to London, the Midlands, the North, Cambridge and the coast.
- Resolution under Section 3(1) or (2) of the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993: all parishes agreed that they were happy to accept a woman incumbent.
- Access to good schools in Stowmarket, Stowupland and Great Finborough.

## The Rectory



Combs Rectory (135 Poplar Hill, Stowmarket IP14 2AY) is located in a central position in Combs and sits on a large corner plot. It is a large traditional 1920's 6 bedroom house with a dressing room to bed 4 and with bathroom including shower and separate WC. To the ground floor there is a good sized study, visitors' cloakroom, large lounge, dining room, kitchen, scullery and utility room with additional family WC. To the front, side and rear are large gardens, mainly laid to lawn with parking for several cars, and there is a detached garage to the side. Heating is by gas, the Rectory also has the benefit of solar panels. There are good views from several rooms over the surrounding countryside, including of Combs Church, which is a few minutes drive away.

There is a range of shops and other facilities nearby including a supermarket, a health centre, pharmacy, pubs and petrol station at Combs Ford. Stowmarket is approximately 5 minutes drive away, and a larger out of town supermarket less than 10 minutes away.

Trinity C of E VA Primary School ([www.trinityprimaryschool.com](http://www.trinityprimaryschool.com)) , Great Finborough C of E VC Primary ([finboroughprimary.co.uk](http://finboroughprimary.co.uk)) and the secondary schools of Stowmarket High School ([www.stowhigh.com](http://www.stowhigh.com)) and Stowupland High School([www.stowuplandhighschool.co.uk](http://www.stowuplandhighschool.co.uk)) are all nearby.

The historic towns of Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich are both about 25 minutes away by car. Other areas of interest, for example Lavenham and Minsmere nature reserve, are all within easy reach.





## St Mary's, Buxhall

Buxhall consists of a population of around 450 people in about 175 homes of a wide variety: local and ex-local authority housing, four individual new-build houses and barn conversions (all occupied in 2020), four small developments (one still under completion) as well as older houses and cottages. These are mainly grouped around the 'Candlestick', although there are also some more isolated houses.



The village has no shop or school, but the local primary school is in Great Finborough, just over a mile away, along with a separate private school: Buxhall church has been regularly used for both schools' Christmas services. The Buxhall Crown, renowned for good food, is currently on the market and it is hoped a community buyout might be possible. Buxhall has a well-used Village Hall which hosts several community events each year and is the meeting place of a very popular WI and the monthly lunches for the over 60s. A village Community Council arranges events such as an annual Fireworks display, and the Candlestick Club arranges social meetings and outings for the over 60s. There are several businesses based in Buxhall, from a small online gift shop to warehousing for a national packaging company, and it is also home to Granary Crafts museum, a collection of vehicles and rural life exhibits. The parish magazine, the Buxhall Broadcast, is distributed free of charge to every household. It is generously supported by the Parish Council and through advertising. A good link between church and community is the annual Parish Supper, co-ordinated by the choir.



St Mary's church stands on the edge of the village. It has a good sized car park. Burials are still allowed in the west part of the churchyard, but the east side has been managed for wildlife since 2007. The north churchyard is laid to grass and is used, along with the contiguous grounds of Copinger Hall, as the location for the very successful annual church fete. The church seats approximately 200 people and is in good repair. The west end was re-ordered in 2008 to provide a kitchenette, toilet with disabled access, and an open space for worship, meetings, and fellowship after service. The heating has

been augmented making the building useable throughout the year in comfort, although the current oil-fired boiler may soon need replacing. The church regularly raises funds for donation to charities including ActionAid and WaterAid, regular fundraising events include the Lent Lunch (held in church) and Christmas handbell ringing.

Music is an integral part of worship at Buxhall. There is a well-regarded robed SATB choir which leads the monthly Sung Communion and Evensong services, and Festal services at Buxhall and in other churches of the benefice. The organ (Manders 1958 single manual) is maintained in good working order. There is also an enthusiastic band of ringers; the current ring of six bells is due to be augmented to eight following a bequest in 2019. Another legacy in 2020 left the church two houses in the village, both in need of major restoration – this is an on-going project.

Worship is in the traditional style, using the Book of Common Prayer for the monthly sung communion (to Merbecke's setting) which normally attracts a congregation of around 35, sung Matins, about 10 people, and Evensong, about 18. Common Praise is used as the hymn book. Annual services include Plough

Sunday and Remembrance Sunday, the latter usually with support from the Salvation Army band.

Our great challenge for the future is to draw more children and younger adults into our worshipping community, as there have been no children as regular members of the congregation for several years. We are also aware of the need to find ways to encourage more church members from the village itself, as the vast majority of our congregations come in from the surrounding area.

## St Mary's, Combs

### The Parish

- The rural village of Combs and the suburban area of Combs Ford
- Health centre, shops, primary schools, pubs are located in Combs Ford, which is within walking distance to Stowmarket
- Large church with medieval features still present with a modern kitchen and toilet
- Rectory
- A capable and hardworking PCC
- A well-used and maintained church hall



### Worship



- A variety of services throughout the month including Common Worship Order One; Family Worship with the Children's Rite; Messy Church; services including choir and Sunday School
- Saturday morning prayers followed by open church with coffee
- Zoom services during lockdown across the Benefice
- Zoom prayer groups and bible study during lockdown
- Music for worship includes organ; choir; New Anglican Edition of Hymns Old and New; traditional and contemporary music

### Children and Young people

- Close links with Trinity CEVAP school where we, for example, co-host St Mary's Trinity Toddler Group, have monthly church school lunches, share a Christmas Fair, and contribute to regular church school activities of collective worship
- Messy Church, sometimes in the church and more recently in the church hall
- Sunday School, catering for a range of ages
- Children's work during lockdown, for example, socially distanced treasure hunts and themed packs delivered to children's homes.
- Guides and Brownies in the church hall

### Outreach and Community

- Open church for private prayer and visitors
- Friendship Club with speakers, outings, dinners, teas and theatre
- Knit and Natter, knitting for charity and special occasions
- A monthly invitation to older people of the parish for lunch at Trinity CEVAP School

- Fundraising events for the church and charities, e.g. cake stalls
- ‘Meet up Mondays’ in collaboration with Age UK
- ‘Monday at 4’ social gathering on Zoom
- A variety of community clubs using the church hall

### Current Projects

- Bell restoration and re-hanging
- Refurbishment of the south aisle floor to create an open area for multiple uses

## St Andrew’s, Great Finborough

Great Finborough is an appealing rural village two miles outside Stowmarket, with a rising population. There is an eclectic mix of property, ranging from Grade II listed ‘chocolate box’ cottages, to brand new residences on small housing developments. The church has strong links with Great Finborough C of E VC Primary School, Finborough School (Independent Day and Boarding) and the residential and respite care home Finborough Court (Pilgrims’ Friend Society). There is an 18 hole golf course and a managed woodland close to the church. **Our website: <http://www.standrewsgtfinborough.co.uk>**



We have a growing congregation at our services, with receptiveness to exploring new worship ideas and developing existing ones. Our church is open and accessible every day; a friendly welcome awaits. There is high village and benefice attendance for special services. With a strong core of 47 on the electoral roll, many other locals take an active role in supporting everything that is going on and needs doing.



Our worship is reverent but relaxed, with a willingness to embrace less formal styles. We enjoy singing traditional hymns but try to introduce more modern ones to attract and appeal to new members of the congregation, using ‘Ancient & Modern’ Hymns and Songs for Refreshing Worship. Music is an integral part of worship at Great Finborough. A regular organist accompanies services, occasionally sharing the duties with other members of the Benefice music team. In addition to an

electric organ, the church has the benefit of a well-maintained upright piano. St Andrew’s welcomes visiting musicians and the benefice choirs on festal occasions in the church calendar. After Sunday services, we enjoy fellowship over coffee and homemade cake. Messy Church is led by experienced and enthusiastic volunteers, with a notable increase in involvement during the pandemic, providing family activities in conjunction with the children’s team at Combs church. We have high hopes for maintaining this important work with children post lockdown. Weekly bible study group sessions are held at Finborough Court. St Andrew’s church community has excellent relationships with the parish council and village organisations, with a proven track record of various successful and enjoyable social, fundraising and charity events, well supported by our congregation, villagers and members of the other benefice parishes. These include monthly coffee mornings in the church increasing fellowship and raising money for church and other charities,, Open Gardens, craft fairs and legendary parish suppers in the Pettward Hall. We have a full complement of church wardens and PCC officers, an enthusiastic, effective and multi-



talented cohort, working purposefully under the leadership of our benefice ministry team to promote spiritual growth in our village community, whilst ensuring the church is a secure, safe and welcoming place for all.

We take pride in our well-maintained church and grounds, which are highly valued by the village community and appreciated by visitors. St Andrew's is an attractive Grade II listed building, largely rebuilt to a high standard in the 1870s with a fine ring of six bells. Major restoration was completed in 2006 on the landmark spire, tower and stonework. The roof and guttering were refurbished in 2016, with internal redecoration and carpeting. 2018 saw the completion of work providing bespoke kitchen and toilet facilities. Current PCC projects for investment are new modern heating and sound systems, as both these utilities need to be upgraded. Our parish share is paid in full. The church has seating for 150+ with under pew heating.

## St Augustine's, Harleston

Harleston is one of the smaller villages in the benefice, having no shops, schools or meeting places, but what we do have is a beautiful church, with its unique thatched roof (there being only about 100 in England). It's set back from the road, with access across pretty, well maintained meadowland.



Its simple interior has an intricate 14th century carved wooden screen, separating the nave from the chancel.

In 1992, mains electricity was brought to the church, allowing lighting, heating and power points to be installed. Just recently, after much fund-raising, work has been carried out on the bellcote, which was in a very bad state of repair. We were fortunate that we had a builder in the village, who was pleased to be asked to carry out the work.

We are very proud of our immaculate churchyard, and fortunate that we have a band of volunteers who take on the tasks of maintaining, both the outside and interior of our church.

To boost our funds, we have a monthly village 'lottery' which is very popular, and helps with the fabric fund.



After Lent the church is overflowing with lilies, all financed by people in the village who 'sponsor' a lily in remembrance of a loved one, who are mentioned in a book of remembrance on the altar.

Although our population is quite small, we encourage 'get togethers' as much as possible. We even managed a Christmas service on the village green during the lockdown in 2020, with help from the Buxhall bellringers - this was very well attended despite the freezing temperatures.

In the summer, we enjoy an outdoor church service on our village green every year, with music supplied by a silver band, followed by bacon butties and coffee. This is followed later in the afternoon by a picnic/BBQ which is well attended by younger families.



Every new year, we have a village lunch at the local golf club, which brings us all together again in the long winter months.

We have a monthly magazine (shared with Onehouse and Shelland) called the OHSMAG. This is free to all residents, and keeps everyone up to date with everything that's going on in the three villages.

We look forward to welcoming a new Rector, and our PCC will offer them all the support we can. We hope that they bring with them new thoughts and ideas, but will also be mindful that Harleston is mostly made up of worshippers who prefer the more traditional type of worship using the Book of Common Prayer (always followed by tea/coffee and cakes!).

## St Mary's, Little Finborough

**The Parish:** Little Finborough is a small parish which lies between Combs and Battisford. The Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils' Yearbook (July 2013) records the population of the civil parish as 45, but the population of the ecclesiastical parish is somewhat lower, at about 30.



**The Church:** St Mary's is a very small church, but it represents an enduring Christian presence in this parish. It now serves an active and enthusiastic congregation, drawn from a wider area. Situated amid the fields of rural Suffolk, the church's isolation and restrained simplicity contribute to an atmosphere of calm and tranquillity, which is conducive to reflection and meditation. In 2009 the Suffolk Wildlife Trust helped to establish a management scheme for areas of the churchyard to encourage wild flowers. The range of flora was identified as being of local significance, and includes wild orchids.

The church is a Grade II\* listed building. It was renovated in the Victorian era and in the twentieth century, but it retains a few medieval features. The interior has little ornamentation; but it is neither inhospitable nor austere. Its committed worshippers diligently care for the church.

In 2012, a kitchen unit was installed at the back of the church, and an all-access lavatory built in the churchyard, with access available to passers by when the church is open. An automatic door lock has been fitted, allowing the church to be kept unlocked during daylight hours. More recently, a new lighting system was installed, including LED uplighters. Work is now necessary to replace damaged Victorian floor tiles through the nave and lower the step around the font, thereby levelling the floor over much of the church. Grants are being applied for so that the project can be finalised later this year.

**Worship:** The regular church services are traditional, based on the Book of Common Prayer but with variations for special services. During normal times, the church has a regular service every Sunday, alternating between Holy Communion and Evensong. Refreshments are usually offered after the Communion service. The occasional special services and events are usually very successful, and they attract many people who do not normally worship here. A 'Festival of the Kings' was held in January 2015, which included a procession from the local community pub, which proved so successful we have continued celebrating Epiphany with a procession since. In addition, we hold special event services at





Palm Sunday, Easter and Harvest; often combining the latter with an animal service. The annual Christmas Candlelight Carol Service is a local 'must go' event, with more than 100 people celebrating the start of Christmas. Whilst we do not have a Sunday School, children are actively encouraged to be involved in services; helping to make an Easter garden, attending summer holiday family picnic events, and reading at the Carol Service

**Church life:** Fund raising events are very important to the life of the church, not only for the funds raised, but as an opportunity to socialise, and advance the Christian message. There is no other public building in the parish to use as a community facility. Where possible, we use the church, churchyard, and its rural surroundings for events. An enthusiastic fund raising team organises several events throughout the year, including lecture suppers, Easter egg hunts, walks with refreshments in church afterwards, and family picnics with activities for children in key stages 1 and 2, along with their younger siblings. We have also held flower festivals, safari lunches and ran the refreshments tent at the local fete.

### **Parish Strengths**

- The church has a dedicated congregation, who like the traditional forms of service, but are not constrained by over formality, being especially keen to continue using the Book of Common Prayer. This attracts people from other parishes to services
- There is a competent group of parish officers and an enthusiastic PCC, with a wide range of abilities and contacts
- The church has good acoustics, a sound system, and is well heated. The fabric is well maintained. The kitchen unit and accessible toilet make it welcoming to everyone
- There is deep affection for the church and the churchyard among much of the local population, and many who do not regularly worship here still regard it as 'their little church' It is considered by many to be 'small with a big heart'!

## **St John the Baptist, Onehouse**

Onehouse, the only parish in England with this name, adjoins Stowmarket, and is very much a village in two parts – Lower Road and Forest Road with the Northfield housing estate.

**The Church Building:** The church of St John the Baptist is a beautiful small flint, stone and brick structure, with a round tower containing two bells.



This church sits in the fields, midway between Lower and Forest Road, close by the ancient site of Onehouse Hall.



The church has no electricity or running water. Light is provided by overhead oil lamps and heating is provided by portable gas heaters. There is an excellent digital piano and a PA system, both powered from batteries. The church seats about seventy. The sizeable, well maintained churchyard, includes two ashes plots, a conservation area and one Commonwealth War Grave.

**Church Tradition:** We use Order 1 as well as individually written liturgies and activities for Family services, and on other special occasions we generally use Mission Praise or Hymns Ancient & Modern New Standard.

Afternoon and evening services can only be held comfortably in the church from late spring to early autumn. After the Christmas services, most services are then usually transferred to the Trinity Hall, until a return to Church for Mothering Sunday.

### Parish Strengths

- A picturesque and well-maintained church building with two bells, set in open country – a wonderful ambiance and acoustics for musical events
- a church family and buildings which welcome members and visitors alike
- church members having a strong community spirit, organising social functions and being involved in other parish groups, especially the Good Neighbour scheme which organises the weekly coffee mornings.
- lay involvement in services
- strong and pro-active PCC
- group of people who contribute to the upkeep, maintenance and good order of the church, churchyard, Trinity Hall and car park
- willingness to trial changes to service patterns, co-operate with other benefice churches and to look at new ideas - as demonstrated through adapting to and supporting 'Zoom Services' and outdoor 'Churchyard Services' during the 2020-2021 pandemic
- a caring congregation who look after, help and support one another

### The Trinity Hall - shared facility for Onehouse, Harleston and Shelland

- A small hall, accommodating up to fifty people seated, it is used regularly, hired on a single/weekly/monthly basis to host group meetings
- located on Forest Road, a real asset for Onehouse and neighbouring villages, providing for a strong social events programme for both the church and the village communities
- a major redevelopment of the Hall is underway to refurbish the



building, to make it more attractive and to provide excellent, modern facilities for the disabled, elderly and families alike

- some group meetings, such as the weekly 'Coffee Morning', are focal points in village life
- an adaptable space which lends itself to more flexible church services, particularly family services

## King Charles the Martyr, Shelland

Shelland is a very small village within this rural area with stunning countryside with a high level of safety and low crime rate.

The Church is Shelland's only community building, acting as the social centre as well as spiritual. It has a strong sense of individuality being dedicated to King Charles the Martyr – one of only six churches in the country so dedicated – and regularly using a very rare, ancient barrel organ for musical accompaniment in services. The church also has an interesting history and many stories behind its internal features; box pews, wig stands, ancient font and multi-coloured interior paint to name a few.



Shelland PCC is made up of a good balance of individuals, young and less young, who work well together on all church matters and each contribute to meetings keenly. There is a core of committed and dynamic people within the church community who are welcoming to all.

We have relatively strong financial stability with a good group of regular contributors and supporters who also provide opportunities for fund raising throughout the year, including the annual Fete which has successfully been run jointly with Buxhall Church for many years.

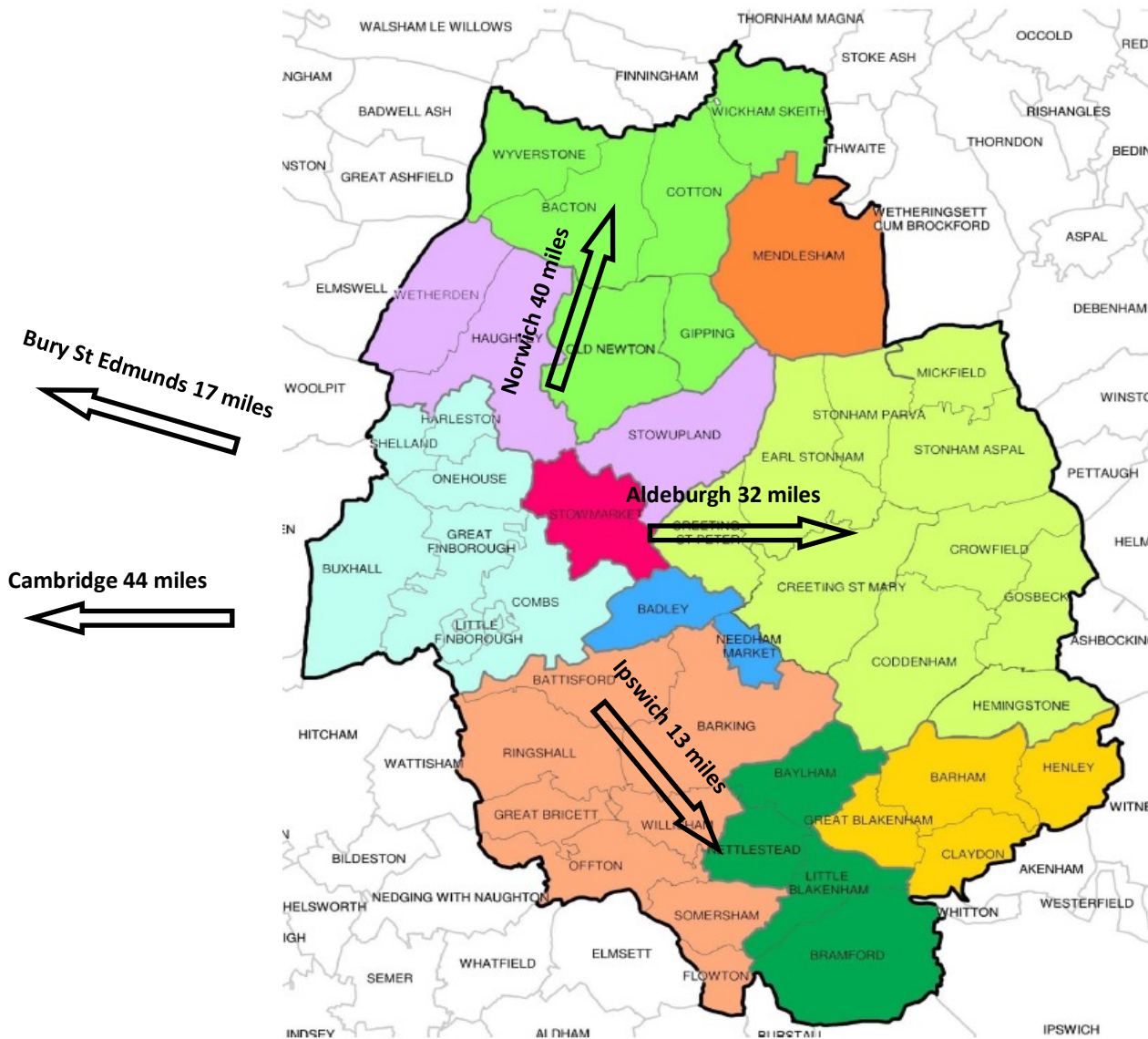
Shelland Church is actively working towards Eco church status and we maintain the churchyard in an attractive but ecologically sensitive manner.

Shelland is particularly proud of being a welcoming little church with after service refreshments, able to cater for all comers. We were open for private prayer during the 2020-21 coronavirus pandemic.

Our special services, including Mothering Sunday, Harvest and Christmas celebration are particularly well supported and enjoyed. Services are mainly based on Book of Common Prayer. Our Reflective Prayer is a more informal approach. Holy Communion is Common Worship Order 2. We have a range of special services with children participating where possible.



# The Benefice of Combs and Finborough in the Gipping Valley Deanery



The benefice is made up of seven parishes: Buxhall, Combs, Great Finborough, Harleston, Little Finborough, Onehouse, and Shelland, shown in light blue on the map of the Gipping Valley Deanery above. Two benefices, Combs and Little Finborough, and Great Finborough, Buxhall, Shelland, Onehouse and Harleston, were served by a single Priest-in-Charge from 2018 and the benefice of Combs and Finborough was officially formed in 2020 when the Priest-in-Charge became Rector. We have the benefit of an experienced Associate Priest (House for Duty) who lives in Onehouse, a priest with PTO based at Combs, three Readers with PTO, nine Elders across the benefice and three Children’s Workers at Combs and Great Finborough. We have three Safeguarding Officers covering the seven parishes.

Benefice activities include Bible Study sessions held throughout the year, usually meeting weekly at the rectories in Combs and Onehouse, and also the retirement home in Great Finborough, but latterly by Zoom. Messy Church is held at Great Finborough and Combs churches, and there is also an annual Holiday Club as well as a benefice Sunday School.

## The Gipping Valley Deanery

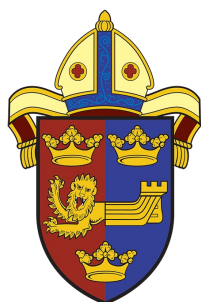
The Benefice of Combs and Finborough is in the Gipping Valley Deanery, which was formed in October 2020 from the merging of the previous Deaneries of Stowmarket and Bosmere. It is situated in the centre of the county of Suffolk, midway between Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds. There are ten benefices across the deanery and 42 churches (with an additional three churches in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust, used occasionally for services).

There are nine stipendiary full-time posts and two house for duty posts, one stipendiary curate and three self-supporting clergy. There are several retired clergy with PTO who help enormously and a number of Readers, Elders and other Licensed Lay Ministers (e.g. Licensed Evangelist).



The benefice is situated in the beautiful Suffolk countryside at the heart of the county. It is easily accessible from the A14, which is the main east-west route, and close to main line railway services. The area is well served for shopping, cultural and medical services.

## The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich



The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich was founded in 1914 and includes the county of Suffolk, with the exceptions of an area of North East Suffolk around Lowestoft, and one parish in the county of Essex.

Our diocese is led by Bishop Martin Seeley (Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich), assisted by Bishop Mike Harrison (Suffragan Bishop of Dunwich). The Diocese is divided into three archdeaconries (Ipswich, Sudbury and Suffolk).

Serving about 631,000 people living in a geographical area of more than 1,400 square miles, the communities of the diocese are served by 443 parishes within 16 deaneries, with stipendiary and self-supporting clergy, licensed lay ministers including Readers, Lay Pastors, Licensed Evangelists, Licensed Pioneers, Children's and Families Ministers and Licensed Youth Ministers, and about 500 Lay Elders (commissioned lay assistants) in the parishes.

The Anglican churches across the diocese seek to develop close links with other Christian denominations and to build understanding with members of other faiths, the diocese also has close ties with churches across the world, most notably with the Diocese of Kagera in West Tanzania.

The diocese has a well-established tradition of witness to the Gospel, of outreach work in the community and a wide-ranging support and development programme for both clergy and lay members of the church.

About 4.3% of the population is on the church electoral rolls and just over 3% attends a church service every Sunday.

The Cathedral Church of St James and St Edmund is in Bury St Edmunds, in the centre of the town. Most of the diocesan administration is based in modern offices in the Suffolk county town of Ipswich, about 25 miles to the east of Bury St Edmunds. Here a small team provides general support to the parishes and ministers including mission and ministry, schools, finance and property.

## Response to the Covid-19 pandemic



The response of our benefice to the onset of the pandemic was very strong. In the early stages of the lockdown, the Ministry Team quickly set up firstly YouTube recorded sermons with suggested music, which soon became a live Zoom service of spiritual communion each week with a pew sheet and live hymn music, which allowed the congregations from across the Benefice to come together in worship. Many people who are not usually in our congregations have also joined us to make a congregation of about 70 each week. Pastoral care switched from personal visits to conversations over the phone, emails, cards and letters including the pew sheet and printed sermon posted to over 20 parishioners who are not on email. Throughout our rural communities, neighbours have looked out for neighbours—collecting shopping and prescriptions. Some churches remained open for private prayer, others set up prayer porches. Some activities have had to be put on hold, but we are planning for the future and are eager to look at how we take forward a new way of worship and incorporate it into existing traditions

to benefit existing and new congregations.

During the pandemic, the leaders of our two Messy Church teams from Combs and Great Finborough have worked together providing amongst other things two Treasure Hunts based on 'God's Love' in two churchyards. We plan on Zoom and send out about 55 activity packs for festivals. We are considering how to work more closely when planning activities in both Combs and Great Finborough churches for the benefit of the benefice. We are considering how best to facilitate the move back into our churches whilst maintaining our contact with our 'activity pack families'.



Weekly bible study sessions are held at Finborough Court Residential Home open to all the benefice. It takes place on Zoom at present. This has become an Advent and then Lent group when appropriate.

Contributions are made in most parishes to Stowmarket Food Bank which has been well supported during lockdown.

During the Covid pandemic lockdowns, Evening Prayer services were held in some churchyards in the summer months, followed by an outdoor Harvest Festival and Carol Services, with music provided by the Battsford Free Church Band and the Buxhall handbell ringers.





## Benefice statistics

Village	Ecclesiastical parish population (approx)	Housing	Number on electoral roll (2020)
Buxhall	450	Mixture, mostly owner occupied	34
Combs	5500	Mixed, privately owned, significant areas of social housing, private estates	52
Great Finborough	900	Mixed, mainly privately owned, some local authority, private estates, sheltered housing trust	47
Harleston	148	Mix of housing	13
Little Finborough	35	Privately owned	32
Onehouse	800	Mixed housing, mostly owner-occupied. Significant development planned (under construction)	25
Shelland	48	24 dwellings, mainly privately owned	17

## Pattern of Sunday Worship with average attendances (pre-Covid)

	Buxhall	Combs	Great Finborough	Harleston	Little Finborough	Onehouse	Shelland
1st Sunday	Sung Eucharist (BCP) 9.30am	Family worship with Messy Church 11.00am	Holy Communion (Order 1) 11.00am	With Onehouse	Holy Communion (BCP) 9.00am	Holy Communion (Order 1) 11.00am	Reflective Morning Prayer 9.30am
Av. number	31	55	20		16	12	8
2nd Sunday	Matins 9.30am	Holy Communion (CW) 11.00am	Evensong 6.00pm	Holy Communion (Order 1) 9.30am	Evensong (BCP) 3.00 or 6.00pm	With Harleston	Holy Communion (BCP) 9.30am
Av. number	13	51	12	9	11		10
3rd Sunday	Sung Evensong 6.30pm	Family Communion 11.00am	Holy Communion 11.00am	Morning Worship 11.00am	Holy Communion (BCP) 9.00am	With Harleston	Matins 9.30am
Av. number	15	56	20	7	16		9
4th Sunday	Said Communion (BCP) 9.30am	Holy Communion (CW) 11.00am	Morning Worship 11.00am	With Onehouse	Evensong (BCP) 3.00 or 6.00pm	Holy Communion (Order 1) 11.00am	
Av. number	15	51	15	8	11	10	
5th Sunday	Combined benefice service 10.30am						
Av. number	50+						

## Occasional Offices in the benefice in 2019 and 2020

	Baptism		Wedding		Blessing		Funeral		Interment of Ashes	
	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020	2019	2020
Buxhall	3	1	0	1	0	0	5	3	0	1
Combs	6	5	8	10	1	1	7	7	3	0
Great Finborough	7	0	3	1	0	0	4	9	0	1
Harleston	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	1
Little Finborough	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	1	0
Onehouse	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	1
Shelland	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0

## Services at the crematoria for the benefice

2019: 12

2020: 29

