

Additional Information for the Associate Priest and Chaplain to Debenham High School

The Benefice of Debenham and Helmingham is situated in the heart of Suffolk. A county overflowing with natural beauty, stunning countryside and charming villages steeped in history. It is also considered to be one of the safest counties in the country in which to live.

The benefice consists of seven parishes: Aspall, Debenham, Framsdon, Helmingham, Kenton, Pettaugh and Winston with a combined population of about 4000.

Debenham is by far the largest parish (pop. approx. 2750) and is close to the source of the River Deben from which it appears to derive its name from Old English words meaning the village in a deep valley.



St Mary Magdalene, Debenham

The Benefice is about 15 miles north of Ipswich and 25 miles from our Cathedral in the lovely town of Bury St Edmunds, with its cafes, shops and markets. We are within 45 minutes of Suffolk's Heritage Coast set in an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There is a regular high speed rail link to London and Norwich from Ipswich and cross-country links to Cambridge and Peterborough. The Benefice is a rural agricultural community with some small businesses mainly located in Debenham.



Fruits of the Spirit at family@church

Worship in Debenham is a Common Worship Holy Communion 3 Sundays of the month. Attendance is about 45. The first Sunday is family@church, an informal, fun, interactive service for 'the young and the not so young', with breakfast in the church before the service and craft activities for the children. We have several young families and several young people join in

this service with an attendance of around 70 -80 at the moment. The fifth Sunday of the month is a 'roaming' benefice service. We meet in the church for morning prayer each Wednesday morning.

As of July this year we have had 16 funerals, 14 weddings and 5 baptisms. We enjoy all the usual church festivals and hold other occasional services such as our recent Pimm's and Praise service.



Wednesday is also the day that the Parish Pantry is in the church, providing a bag of groceries for £3. Alongside this is the Parish Café in the adjacent Dove Cottage (church rooms) where a cuppa and cake are offered for a donation.

As a church we are very keen to be involved in, support and serve our community. As such the church

building is used for an art exhibition, various music concerts, a wedding fayre, a fashion show, a Christmas market, community jumble sale and we did have a fitness class for a term or two! We also support and are involved in community events such as Debenham Day, Debfest, the primary school Summer Sizzler and the High School 40th Anniversary fete.

This Summer term we started a youth café called The Corner Café. It is run by and is for ages 11-17. We have about 20 young people using the café. We have recently been awarded a grant from the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich to develop this further.

We are also very keen to support and encourage our links with the Diocese of Kagera in Tanzania. Rev Susan visited in 2023 and Bishop Darlington joined us in June 2024. We have annual fundraising events to support our brothers and sisters in Kagera.

Debenham is a thriving community with several shops on the High Street including a Co-op, butcher, green grocer, baker / coffee shop, café, jeweller, fish and chip shop, antiques, florist, iron monger and craft shop. Zeera Indian Takeaway is in the village along with two well used pubs! We have a doctors' surgery and vet's practice also in the village. There are two schools in the village, Sir Robert Hitcham CEVA Primary School www.sirroberthitcham.suffolk.sch.uk, and Debenham High School (see below).

The Debenham Sports and Leisure Centre has a gym, various classes, badminton and squash courts, football pitches (with various youth and adult teams). There is also a bowls' club in the village and a golf course within a 20 minute drive. There are lots of wonderful footpaths to explore and lanes to cycle.

The village has many clubs and societies including Debenham Green Team, Brownies, Guides, Scouts, Explorers, Beavers, History Society, Gardening Club and walking group.

The Debenham Project which is closely linked to the parish church offers many services, groups, and activities for people with dementia and their carers. Debenham is proud to have been accredited as one of the very first "dementia friendly communities" in the country.

Benefice Website: www.achurchnearyou.com/debenham

Debenham High School (www.debenhamhigh.co.uk) is a Church of England Academy and is consistently ranked as one of the best state secondary schools without a 6th form in the country. It was marked 'good' in its last OfSTED report. It has about 700 pupils. Please do visit the school website to learn about it's aims and values.

The school has strong links with both the wider diocese and Debenham parish church. The Rev Susan is a governor, leads collective worship and is in school at least once a week. She has been working closely with the school to develop the Christian Ethos and the Chaplaincy provision over the last few years. There are two other Chaplains who both visit for one day a week and focus on one-to-one pastoral work with students. We hold a Eucharist service in school once a month.

The school worship at the parish church several times a year: for a Remembrance Service, school carol services and Easter and Pentecost services, as well as visiting the building for part of the RE syllabus. There is an annual Prayer Space event in the school organised by The Forge Community Church.



We envisage that the Chaplaincy role advertised here has an element of traditional school chaplaincy (without teaching) and as such will further develop and deepen the Chaplaincy provision across the whole school, for students and for staff. There will be a certain amount of one-to-one pastoral work, but the Chaplain will also help

embed the Christian ethos and school vision and will be a visible Christian presence in the school, attending as many school events as possible. The Chaplain will further deepen the relationship with the school and the wider church and community.



We also envisage the Chaplain developing lunchtime and perhaps afterschool clubs and activities, perhaps running a course for young people to explore the Christian faith, confirmation classes and, importantly,

over time seeking to develop some form of worshipping community for young people, either in the school or the church.

As an Associate Priest, the role will include leading Sunday worship across the benefice and assisting with occasional offices and community events, attending Debenham PCC, Deanery Chapter meetings and will have a remit to develop our ministry with children and young people.

We are aware this is a new role and, as such, will need commitment and creativity: faith and prayerfulness. It will be for the Associate Priest, working with the support of the Incumbent and Head Teacher to develop this new and exciting role which aims to work alongside the Holy Spirit in caring for our young people and growing their knowledge of and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Please contact Rev Susan Taylor about this exciting and important role:
01728 860222**



THE BENEFICE OF
DEBENHAM & HELMINGHAM