

# Discover the Parish of Felixstowe at St John's the Baptist with St Edmunds: A vibrant coastal parish



# Introduction

Welcome to the parish profile for St. John's Felixstowe, a community deeply rooted in the Anglo-Catholic tradition and committed to living out our mission: Open to God. Open to All.

Are you a modern, dynamic Anglo-Catholic priest who feels called to serve in Felixstowe?

As we look to the future, we are seeking a new priest who will share our vision and help us grow in faith, outreach, and connection. This profile introduces not only what we're looking for in our next priest but also what we as a parish can offer in return—a warm, vibrant, and welcoming church family ready to partner with you in ministry.

At St. John's and St. Edmund's, we are united in our mission:

**Open to God. Open to All.**

What We're Looking for in Our New Priest

Are you a modern, dynamic Anglo-Catholic priest who feels called to serve in Felixstowe?

We're seeking someone who embodies the following qualities:

- **Open and Inclusive:** You value tradition but are also inspired by our ethos: Open to God. Open to all.
- **Approachable and Present:** Someone who is visible in the community, not just on Sundays, and connects with people of all ages and backgrounds.
- **Collaborative Leader:** You'll work alongside our non-stipendiary team, fostering a spirit of partnership and shared ministry.
- **A Visionary with Practical Skills:** You see the potential for growth, especially with new housing developments in the wider area, and know how to inspire and engage others to seize opportunities.
- **A People Person:** Warm, down-to-earth, and ready to build relationships, you're a good communicator who listens as much as you lead.
- **Focused and Balanced:** Someone who knows their limits, delegates effectively, and brings energy without burnout.
- **Inspirational Preacher and Teacher:** Your sermons resonate and challenge, and you'll help deepen our faith as individuals and as a community.

- **Family and Youth-Oriented:** You'll help us engage with younger people and families, making our church a vibrant, intergenerational space.
- **Financially Aware:** You're comfortable discussing stewardship and encouraging giving in a way that inspires generosity.
- **Cheerful and Loving:** A leader with a light touch, who brings joy and genuine care to their ministry.

As you explore the pages ahead, we hope you catch a glimpse of the faith, enthusiasm, and dedication that make St. John's a unique and fulfilling place to serve. We are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead and are prayerfully searching for a priest who will lead, inspire, and journey with us as we continue to live out our mission. Could you be the person God is calling to join us in this exciting chapter of ministry?



# A Thriving, Inclusive Church Community

At St. John's Church, we embody a unique blend of tradition and inclusivity, rooted in the vibrant heritage of Felixstowe. With an active congregation and a ministry enriched by reverent liturgy, meaningful outreach, and robust fellowship, we offer a warm and welcoming environment for both worship and service. Whether it's the splendid tones of our pipe organ, the lively gatherings of Messy Church, or the compassionate outreach through our Parish Pantry and Pitstop programmes, our community is a place where faith is both celebrated and lived. Join us and bring your gifts to a church committed to honouring the past while embracing the future.

## Our Church Community

### St. John's Church

St. John's Church is the heart of modern Anglo-Catholic worship in Felixstowe, combining inclusivity with tradition. With 144 members on our Electoral Roll, we are a thriving church offering reverent liturgy enriched by candles, sanctuary bells, and incense on special occasions. Our rebuilt three-manual pipe organ, played weekly by our talented organist, along with our robed choir adds depth to our worship. The church's modern facilities include a refurbished kitchen and toilets.

The church has a space for the interment of ashes and doesn't have an open graveyard.

We actively involve lay members in worship through intercessions and readings, and we fly the inclusion flag, alongside other symbols, to reflect our mission of openness and love. Beyond worship, St. John's hosts civic services, Music in Felixstowe concerts, and other community events, cementing our role as a hub of worship and connection.



<https://facebook.com/felixparish>



<https://felixparish.com/>

## The Vicarage

The vicarage in Felixstowe is a spacious and well-appointed home, designed to offer comfort and practicality for a busy parish life. On the ground floor, the entrance hallway, accessed via a glazed wooden door, leads to a well-lit study with fitted shelves, perfect for quiet work or reflection. There is an accessible cloakroom with grab rails and a modern toilet. The inner hallway provides access to the rear garden and leads to a well-equipped kitchen with ample storage, space for appliances, and an adjoining utility room. The dining room, with its large south-facing windows, enjoys views of the garden, while the sitting room is a generous space with dual-aspect views and a central (display-only) fireplace, making it ideal for relaxation or hosting guests.

Upstairs, the landing houses a practical airing cupboard and leads to four bedrooms. The primary bedroom is a spacious double with fitted storage, an en-suite bathroom, and north-facing views. A second large double bedroom overlooks the south-facing garden, while the third and fourth bedrooms provide flexibility for family or guests. A separate toilet and family bathroom with a pedestal sink and bath complete the first floor.



## St. Edmund's Church

A daughter church to St. John's, St. Edmund's is a simple, red-brick building close to Langer Road Primary School, where we maintain strong ties. Adjacent to it is St. Edmund's Hall, a thriving community hub used by our Pitstop team.



# Our Worship and Ministry

Our ministry team is made up of six clergy (1 licensed and 5 PTO) all self supporting with wide experience of life and different worship styles. They along with our retired clergy, all play a range of roles within our church and community life including taking on a variety of chaplaincies and spiritual roles. We offer a rich variety of services:

- Sundays: An 8 a.m. BCP service and a 10 a.m. Sung Eucharist, attracting an average of 70 attendees.
- Weekdays: Daily Morning Prayer, Holy Communion (Monday evenings and Thursday mornings) attracting an average of 7 – 10 attendees, and a quarterly Family Service.
- Messy Church: Monthly gatherings for all ages, with activities and a hot meal, drawing 45 attendees.

We prioritise outreach, including;

- visiting care homes monthly to offer Communion and companionship.
- Lark Rise Retreats where three members of our ministry team run quiet days in Felixstowe and retreats further afield. Themes have included Come & Sing, Celtic Christianity, Advent and Ruth
- Involvement in Churches Together in Felixstowe for example Good Friday and Easter sunrise services overlooking the sea.



## Support for ministry

At St. John's, the new priest will be welcomed by a proactive and dedicated lay team who share in the church's mission. This team includes:

- A dedicated hands-on PCC made up of 11 members who have a strong dynamic work ethic
- An employed administrator (7 hours per week) and volunteers to assist with administrative responsibilities.
- A sacristan and small team of servers who support communion services.
- A fabric team focused on the maintenance and upkeep of the church building who have recently overseen our new lighting project.
- A social and fundraising group organising events that foster fellowship and raise essential funds.
- A newly appointed treasurer who has the ideas, ability and enthusiasm to take us forward in our vision
- Dedicated teams of volunteers for Pitstop and the Parish Pantry, ensuring these outreach programs run smoothly and serve those in need.

Throughout the vacancy, this team has demonstrated their commitment, advancing various projects and maintaining the services we offer to both our worshipping community and the wider public.

# Fellowship and Community Events

Fellowship is central to our church life. Through coffee mornings, craft fairs, quizzes, and meals like our Easter Agape, we create opportunities for connection and fundraising. Our church buildings are community assets, hosting numerous organisations and events that strengthen ties between the church and the local community.

In addition we also have three well attended home groups that offer an opportunity to grow and learn more about God's love in a welcoming and relaxed atmosphere.



## Reaching Out to the Community

Pitstop, the Parish Pantry and our Welfare Fund reflects our commitment to living out Christ's call to love and serve one another and being Open to God, Open to All.

### **Pitstop: Practical Support for Families**

Pitstop, based at St. Edmund's Hall, is a cornerstone of our mission to serve the community. It offers essential support to families through initiatives like:

- Providing free meals, clothing including school uniforms, and household items.
- Running workshops and activities that foster skills and community connections.
- Offering a listening ear and signposting families to additional resources and support.

Through Pitstop, we address the practical and emotional needs of families, serving on average 250 families a month, creating a space where everyone feels valued and supported.

### **The Parish Pantry: Feeding Our Community**

In the spirit of Christ's call to care for the hungry, our free Parish Pantry operates daily from St. John's and St Edmunds Church. It provides free food and essential items to those struggling in our community, ensuring no one is left without. The pantry is a lifeline for many, offering not just sustenance but a sense of dignity and hope.

### **Our Welfare Fund: Practical Support in an Emergency**

Our parish Welfare Fund stands as a beacon of hope for families and individuals facing unexpected hardships. With compassion at its heart, the fund provides immediate assistance in the form of grocery vouchers ensuring that those in need can find relief during challenging times.



<https://facebook.com/felixparishpitstop>

## Langer Primary School: A Growing Relationship

While not a Church of England school, our growing partnership with Langer Primary School is an important aspect of our mission. We support the school prayerfully and materially, and this evolving relationship offers new opportunities to connect with the wider community.



<https://www.langer.org.uk/>

## Broader Community Support

We prayerfully and financially support several local organisations and national charities. Examples are Mission to Seafarers, the Mayor's Charities, Christian Aid, Sea cadets and RNIB.



<https://felixstowe.gov.uk/about-felixstowe-tc/town-mayor/mayors-charities>

## A Church on Mission

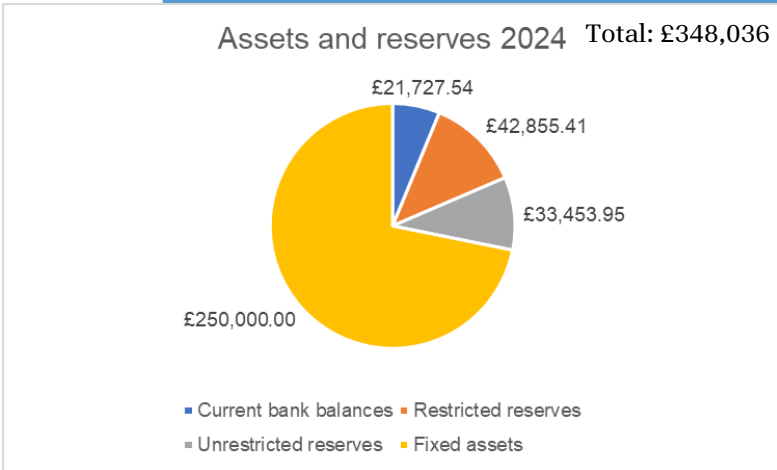
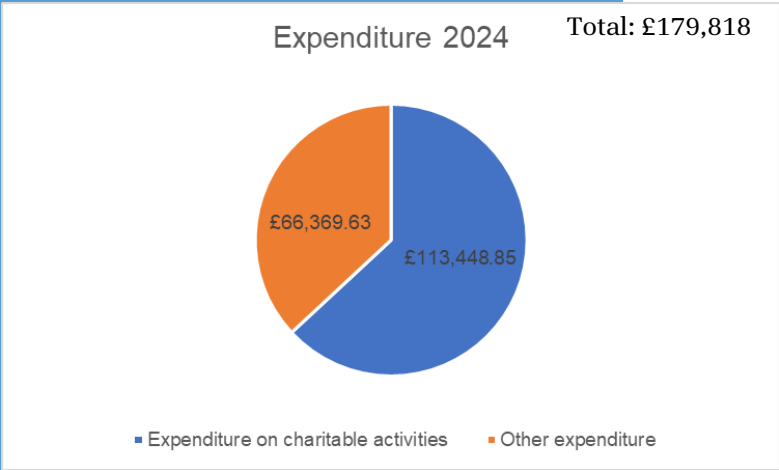
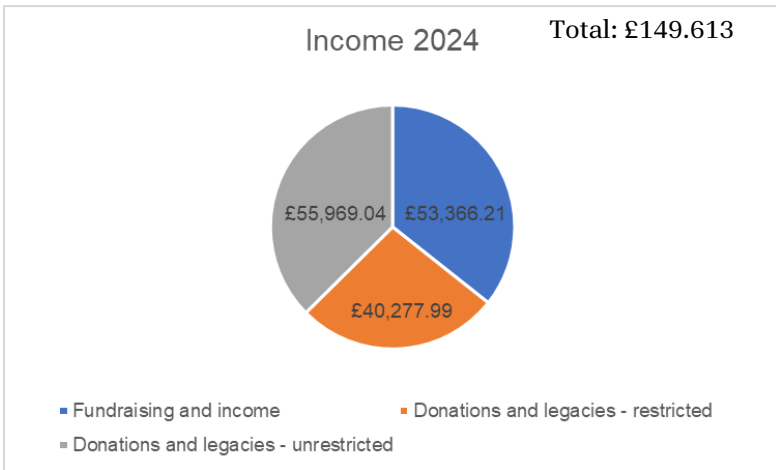
Our fellowship and community events, as well as our outreach programs, are an extension of our mission work. They create opportunities for individuals in the community who may not attend worship to engage with the church's mission, strengthening connections and broadening our reach. At St. John's, we welcome all to join us in living out Christ's love in practical and meaningful ways.





# Our Finances

2024\*



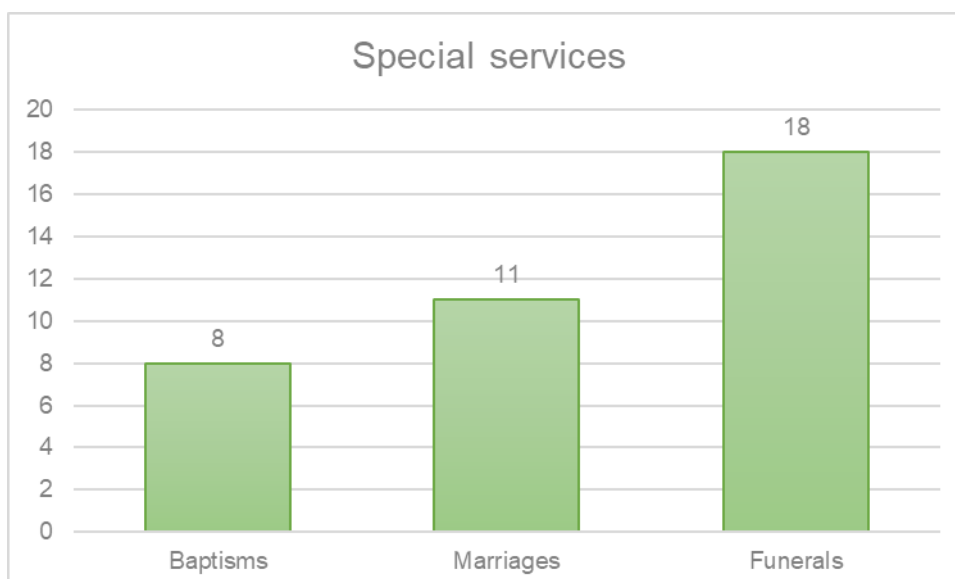
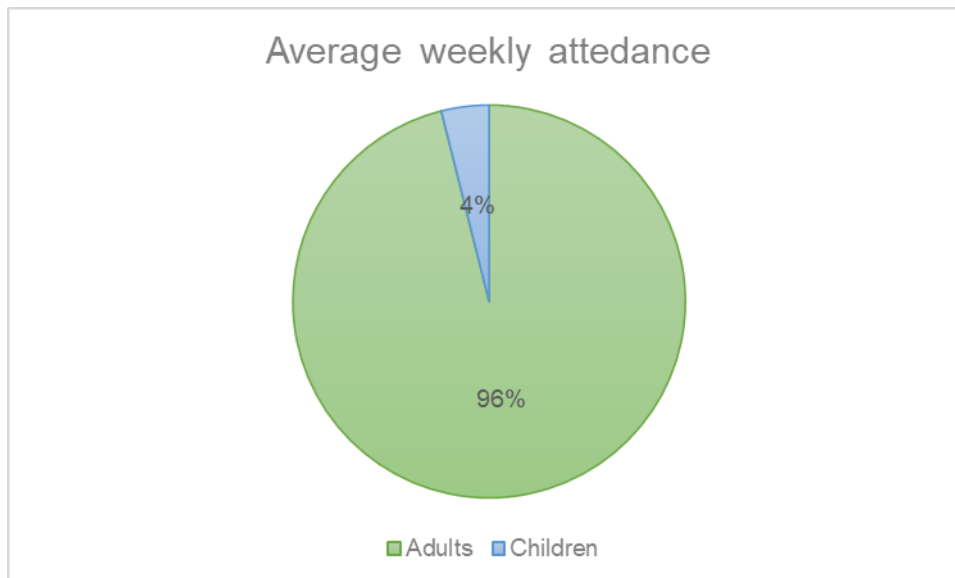
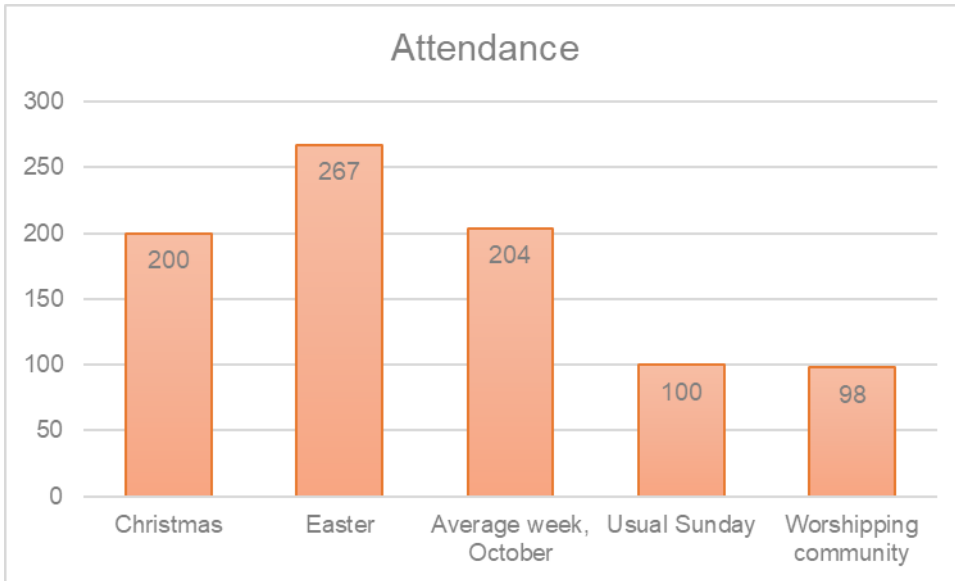
Our parish is blessed with a vibrant community and a strong foundation of financial assets, providing a firm platform for future growth and ministry. While we currently face a deficit, with total income of £149,613 against an expenditure of £179,818, our situation is far from precarious. We are fortunate to hold relatively healthy reserves and assets, which offer security and room for strategic development.

We recognise the importance of addressing the current deficit and are actively implementing a plan to achieve financial balance over 2025. This plan includes exploring new fundraising opportunities, fostering stewardship within the congregation, and identifying areas for prudent cost management. With God’s guidance and the dedication of our community, we are confident in our ability to strengthen our financial position while continuing to grow in faith and service.

\* unaudited

# Statistics for mission

2024



Electoral roll: 144

## A Thriving Town with Coastal Charm

Felixstowe is a dynamic and growing town on Suffolk's stunning coast. With a population of over 24,000 (2021 census), its growth continues, supported by new housing and infrastructure. Recognized as one of the UK's star locations by The Sunday Times in 2022 and celebrated by The Telegraph as a top coastal commuting town, Felixstowe blends convenience with seaside allure.

The town features a Blue Flag beach that stretches five miles along a beautiful promenade, leading to Felixstowe Ferry, a quaint fishing hamlet near a renowned golf course. Felixstowe's landmarks include the historic Landguard Fort, a nature reserve, and one of the UK's busiest container ports, providing a fascinating backdrop for residents and visitors alike.

Convenient travel with regular trains to Ipswich and onward to London Liverpool Street, plus frequent bus services into Ipswich.



## A Town Alive with Culture and Community

Felixstowe's vibrant cultural scene includes the Spa Pavilion Theatre and The Triangle, hosting various community and religious events year-round. The town boasts a 2 screen cinema, unique shops, and a welcoming mix of local and national retailers. Education is well-supported with six primary schools, a junior school, and the OFSTED-rated "Good" Felixstowe School. Units of all major uniformed youth groups are represented. Healthcare is conveniently close, with two GP surgeries near the vicarage and a cottage hospital in town. Several sporting clubs, a sailing club and a well equipped leisure centre provides many recreational and exercise opportunities.



# The Colneys Deanery

Colneys deanery is within the diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich and lies in the extreme south-east of Suffolk, bounded by the estuaries of two rivers, the Deben on its north-east and the Orwell on its south-west. Ipswich, the County town of Suffolk, bounds the northwest; the North Sea borders Felixstowe in the southeast, and the market town of Woodbridge lies to the northeast.

It is approximately twelve miles from Felixstowe to Ipswich. Some of the deanery is rural, but there are three significant centres of population: Felixstowe, Walton and the Trimleys, Kesgrave and Martlesham. New houses are currently being built in most of these areas, which will increase the population significantly.



Led by the deanery leadership team, we support and encourage one another. We meet for chapter once a month, often over lunch, where we pray and discuss any issues and share things to celebrate. Sometimes we include other licensed ministers for social activities. Deanery Synod is held once a quarter, and we are keen to ensure that no parish feels alone. We discuss ways in which we can support one another.

Recently we have begun the process of creating a new deanery plan which places emphasis on how we support each other in the diocesan 'Growing in God' strategy. The aim is not just to produce another document but for it to be a workable and practical plan. As such, we have effectively started from the beginning, and all parishes are involved in building connections that will be meaningful and long-lasting.

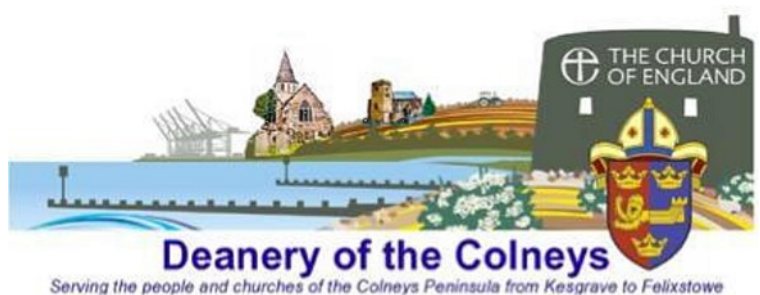
Please feel free to contact the Rural Dean, Rev, Chris Hood, using the details below;



07849 305821



revchris@oldfelixstoweparish.org.uk



# The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

## Where are we?

The Diocese covers the county of Suffolk, excluding the area around Lowestoft in the north-east, and one parish in Essex. It is a mainly rural Diocese with a large number of small villages, plus market towns including Woodbridge, Halesworth, Sudbury and Beccles and the cathedral town of Bury St Edmunds with its historic ruins of the old Abbey. Ipswich is the county town with a population of about 137,000. Suffolk's population is c 650,000. The county embraces historic places of interest such as Sutton Hoo, culture at Snape with the famous annual Aldeburgh music festival, is on the Heritage coast and is a haven for lovers of natural history and birdlife. The busy port of Felixstowe is at the end of the A14 which runs via Cambridge to the Midlands and the A12 which gives access to London and the Norfolk Broads.

## Who are we?

We are often known as 'the Church of England in Suffolk'. The Right Reverend Martin Seeley retired as diocesan Bishop at the end of February 2025; the leadership of the diocese is now with The Right Revd Graeme Knowles. Bishop Graeme is acting diocesan Bishop until a new appointment is made. There are 3 archdeaconries and over 450 churches where visitors will find a wide range of worshipping styles, from the traditional to contemporary, as well as Fresh Expressions and growing numbers of 'Lightwave' groups for those who haven't connected with traditional church previously. The Cathedral of St Edmund and St James in Bury St Edmunds is the mother church of the Diocese and is proactive in offering support to clergy and parishes including welcoming parishes on pilgrimage. We also work closely with our 88 Church of England primary schools. All this is, of course, supported by a small and committed diocesan staff based in the diocesan office in Ipswich.



## Growing in God

### What is our vision?

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 focusing 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 received Strategic Development Funding for two major projects: Inspiring Ipswich, overseen by the Acting 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 established at Bungay. (The Growing in God in the Countryside project plan is available among the documents at [www.light-wave.org/vacancies](http://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.

#### **So, in 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'.