

St Peter's Church Stoke Park Ipswich

PARISH PROFILE



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
SUFFOLK



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**PARISH
PROFILE
2022**

About us



Some of our wellbeing group

Welcome to St Peter's!

We are an innovative and creative community who are passionate about sharing God's love in our community.

Here you will find a congregation that is...

- friendly, faithful, and committed
- welcoming and inclusive of all
- creative in mission and outreach and keen to embrace change
- open to new and exciting ways to engage with the community
- passionate about sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ

We have a small but committed team who are actively finding ways to love and serve through new and dynamic worshipping communities with a vision to bring the community closer to God.

We are looking for a full-time Priest-in-Charge for five years.

The hope is to continue the post after five years, on a full-time or part-time basis, depending on the level of parish share reached at that time.

We are looking for someone

- in their first post of responsibility, ie having just finished their curacy (as this is a condition of the funding to pay for this exciting new mission post)
- to help us develop our vision and deepen our faith
- with a heart for mission, evangelism and nurturing new disciples
- who cares about social justice with a passion for community engagement
- who is able to help us make disciple-making disciples
- who can help us start at least two more new worshipping communities
- who can help to turn around our finances
- who will help us continue to 'grow younger'
- who likes to work in a team and is good at encouraging others

Could you be this person?

Who are we?



We have a small Sunday congregation (which began life in the 1970s as a church plant from St Mary's Stoke in Ipswich) and a number of other worshipping communities (fresh expressions of church) which meet during the week.

We have a population of roughly 8,800 people in the parish and we are situated next to the beautiful Bourne Park, one of the largest parks in Ipswich. The parish includes The Willows Family Hub, The Willows Primary School and an independent school, St Joseph's College. It also contains Avocet Court Care Home and two retirement homes – Walsingham Court and Vinnicombe Court. The main shopping needs are served by an ASDA store, with a pharmacy, dentist, convenience store and GP surgery alongside it.

A new beginning

On the 1st August 2021 we became our own parish. Prior to this we were one of three churches within the South West Ipswich Team Ministry (SWITM). We are excited by this new opportunity to focus on the local community of Stoke Park. As you will see, we are exploring some innovative ideas to engage with the 'Inspiring Ipswich' vision of reaching new people in new ways through mission and outreach.



Messy Church in the pandemic



As the world entered the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 we were keen to serve our families in whatever way we could.



A candle of hope was placed in our church window

We provided families with 'Messy Church in a bag'

Bible story videos were placed on our Facebook page for families to watch

We offered prayers and crafts and checked in with our families



In a bag

Messy Church



We are passionate about families and young people here at St Peter's. Our Messy Church (now back in person) is held on the first Friday of the month from 3.30pm with between 30 and 75 people attending. Our team includes six teenage young leaders.



Over 200 people like or follow our Facebook page



"It has been such a joy to see new people feel part of our fellowship."

Alicia, Churchwarden

Wellsprings Pilates



Wellsprings Pilates launched in February 2022 as a new worshipping community, with a focus on sharing God's love through Pilates.

Every week there is an hour of Pilates (with our qualified Pilates instructor, Jill). This is followed by tea and fellowship and half an hour of optional accessible worship. This initiative has been affected by the Covid-19 within the Leadership team, but this enabled us to explore how we can mitigate absence within the team and maintain the group. The attendance varies from week to week, from 5 to 14 with an average of 9 people each week.

There is a range of ages, from those in their 20s to those in their 60s. Overall we have welcomed 25 participants. It is a great opportunity for people to enjoy exercising within a friendly, supportive community and also to draw near to and worship God.



"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers." 3 John 1:2

Wellsprings Wellbeing Hub



"A space where it is ok not to be ok"

Wellsprings began during the pandemic as two well-being groups which were held on Zoom running courses like Kintsugi Hope with an optional half-hour of worship. Several new people have come to faith through attending Wellsprings. We started to meet in person in October 2021 (every Thursday 10am-2:30pm) with the aim of providing a safe space in our community. Everyone is welcome, particularly those who feel battered and bruised by the storms of life.

It is a place in the heart of the Stoke Park community where we aim to make everyone feel welcome and valued.

We are building links with local social prescribers.

It is a place to make friends, be friends and bring friends

Recently bereaved people have been welcomed to our safe space.



Alpha

**Tea, coffee &
Refreshments**

**Bring a hobby,
share a hobby**

Wellbeing group

Optional Worship

**"We have been
excited to welcome
new people and to see
them gradually
developing a faith in
Jesus" Rowena (PCC)**



Top Up Shop



The pandemic presented an unforeseen opportunity to serve our local community through starting a weekly Top up Shop (www.ipswichtopupshops.co.uk). Along with nine other Anglican churches in Ipswich we have the privilege of serving and welcoming those in our community encountering food insecurity.

Customers and volunteers are invited to take part in '5 Minutes Peace' a short time of prayer in our prayer room.

Every Wednesday



Those who come along are encouraged to enjoy tea, coffee and homemade cakes before the shop opens.

Top Up Shop

We have a strong team of volunteers, many of who are customers and/or unemployed and find a great sense of purpose being part of the Top Up team. Nearly all the team members are also in church at other times of the week and are part of our worshipping communities.

"We are dedicated to serving and building a community where all are welcome."



Our Top up Shop co-ordinator has been nominated for a Radio Suffolk 'Make a Difference' Award.

Our Worship

We have a range of services and worshipping opportunities during the week which serve the needs of many of our community.

The worship on Sundays at St Peter's is evangelical in style and aims to be accessible, with a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. We believe the less formal approach to our worship and our inclusivity helps to create a warm and welcoming environment. An increasing number of people from many different walks of life are finding a spiritual home. On Sundays, the worship music comprises a mixture of modern worship songs and traditional hymns.



During Covid we moved our services to Zoom. These were incredibly successful so much so that we delayed returning to in person worship until August 2021. This gave us a symbolic new start to worship at the same time as the launch of our new parish. We continue to run a weekly prayer meeting on Zoom

Our Sunday Services at present

1st, 2nd and 4th Sunday - A service of the Word
3rd and 5th Sundays - Holy Communion

Our Worship cont'd

As a result of Covid we also formed a WhatsApp group which became (and still is) a wonderful source of encouragement where prayer requests were shared and the sense of isolation was eased.

We have re-launched the Sunday morning children's activities during the service as 'I wonder...' Godly Play Workshops.

It's been amazing to welcome several new individuals and families since we returned to 'in person' worship and we have four new disciples keen to be confirmed soon.

Although, we do not have many occasional offices at the moment, we hope that through our engagement with the local community this will grow.



Festivals

We also enjoy celebrating festivals together, often inviting those from our other worshipping communities and the local uniformed organisations which meet either in our building or in the Scout Hut next door.

A particular favourite is our annual Christingle Service held on a weeknight in order to fit in with the usual time of Brownies, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts. Last year we welcomed over 80 people.



We had a good crowd when we joined Radio Suffolk for Doorstep Carols which in our case was Carols under the Oak Tree. It was great to see a mixture of those who come on a Sunday morning, those from Messy Church as well as some from our Top up Shop.



Our building

We have a large and wonderfully versatile worship space which is well suited to the many different activities which take place during the week. We have recently had a Quinquennial Inspection and know where money needs to be spent.

We have some ideas on how we can repurpose the church building so we can provide a comfortable café-style space; it could be used as a café, for example, which would also support a more accessible form of worship.



We are keen to improve our kitchen and toilet facilities in order to build on our work within the community to provide a community hub.



The church is readily accessible with a car park and is linked to the town centre by bus routes and cycle lanes.



Developing our vision

We have a vision to develop St Peter's as a community hub. We are seeking to 'make a difference' within the local community so new people can be welcomed into God's family in new ways. We aim to share Jesus with every age group in our community.



By 'doing life' together and meeting up to serve in our teams new disciples as well as old are growing in faith and a beautiful community is forming."

Alicia, Churchwarden.

Community Connections

We have many community groups within our parish who we are re-engaging with as well as building new relationships.

We have healthy relationships with the Scout group and Guide groups. They attend Parade Services several times a year. We are looking to explore ways we can support them further.



We also have links with New South West disabled community, the Community Resources Centre and Selig (Suffolk) Trust's engagement with the homeless.

We hope to take part in 'Inspiring Ipswich' Wellbeing Bags for Care Homes initiative in the summer in order to build a relationship with Avocet Court Care Home.

In the longer term we hope to be invited to deliver Messy Vintage sessions there on a monthly basis.

Our church hall is the home to Bright Sparks nursery so we are planning to develop our links with them.

In early December we hosted 2 very popular wreath making sessions with a reflection about the true meaning of Christmas.



Ministry Team

Our leadership team includes a SSM Associate Priest, two churchwardens, two Readers, a Lead Pioneer Developer employed by Inspiring Ipswich until 2025) and two others. We are a team which enjoys working together and understands that a job is made easier if it is a job shared.

Rev Merv Dye - SSM

Rev Merv was licensed as a Reader in the former SWITM team in 2002 and retired from his full-time role as a Finance Systems Accountant at the end of 2013. Since retiring he has championed the setting up of a 'Hope into Action' franchise for housing the homeless. Merv was ordained priest in 2019 serving as a part-time self-supporting minister with a focus on St Peter Stoke Park. He coordinates our Sunday worship, midweek prayer, discipleship courses and adds support to other events. He seeks to enable others to use their God-given gifts in loving service and has enthused others to seize the opportunities of the newly created parish.



Ministry Team cont'd

Readers

We have 2 Readers, Andrew and Clive, who are actively involved in leading and preaching at Sunday worship. They are core members of the Leadership Team and embrace the roles of Music Lead and Parish Safeguarding Officer.



Some of our PCC including Clive far left and Andrew, far right

Lead Pioneer Developer - Alicia Holmes

Alicia started her role as Lead Pioneer Developer with 'Inspiring Ipswich' in August 2019 and joined St Peter's around about the same time. Alicia is passionate about helping people to understand that God loves them and has a purpose for their lives. She loves being part of the church community here and helping new people to feel that they belong to God's family too.

Alicia co-leads Wellsprings Wellbeing Hub and Messy Church in order to reach out to new people with God's love in new ways and is currently our Churchwarden. She also works across the Deanery to enable others to start new worshipping communities.



The Vicarage



St Peter's house is well-situated very near to the church and is a 4 bedroomed detached property, with a double garage.

There is a study at the front of the property which is accessed from the entrance hall and is separated from the main living accommodation.



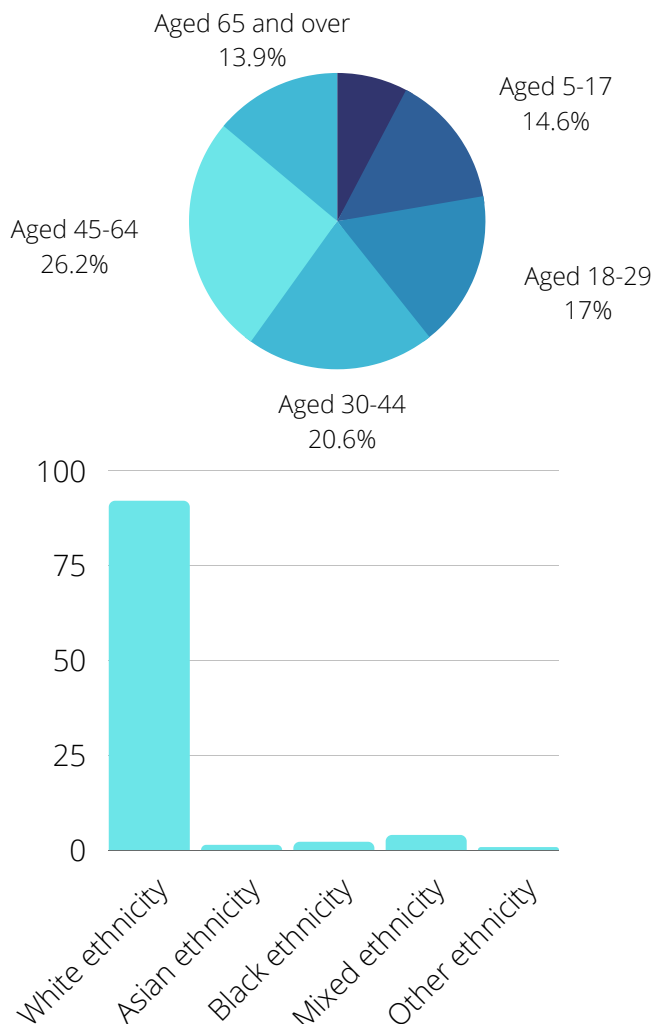
The property sits in an L-shaped garden with woodland to one side and an open aspect. It has a separate lounge, dining room and kitchen. Central heating is gas powered. There are solar panels on the roof which contribute to electricity provision.

**"By wisdom
a house is built, and by
understanding it is established; by
knowledge the rooms are filled with
all precious and pleasant riches."
Proverbs 24:3-4**

Finances

Historically the church in South West Ipswich has struggled to meet its Parish Share request. St Peter Stoke Park, though small, had the highest per person giving level. Levels of giving in the new parish are still evolving, with the most recent stewardship (including Gift Aid) running at about £900 per month. Rental income from Bright Sparks Nursery is also significant but had not been reviewed for several years and this is one part of the ongoing discussions emanating from our new parish status. For 2022 the Parish Share has been set at £5,000. At 31st December Unrestricted Reserves stood at about £16,000. The parish also has an Endowment Fund of about £73,000 and there is ongoing dialogue with the Diocese on the extent and manner in which this can be used in the parish.

Parish Statistics



This post is being funded partly by a substantial one-off grant from Inspiring Ipswich and partly by a one-off substantial grant from the national church which can only be used for those in their 'first position of responsibility'. For the post to continue after 5 years the parish share would need to grow from £5kpa to £35k for a half-time post and from £5k to £65k for a full-time post. Achieving this financial step-change will be an important part of a new priest-in-charge's role.

Since May 2021 the Top up Shop has received £12,500 in grants from the Suffolk Community Foundation. The money has been used to buy supermarket vouchers and to help customers pay fuel bills and other essential household expenses.

Are you the right person for us?

Are you innovative, excited by change and new ideas, prepared to take risks, but also prayerful, missional, compassionate and prepared to listen?

We are looking for a full-time priest-in-charge (who is currently a curate) able to lead us in our evangelical outlook, who is a team player, has a good sense of humour and wants to walk alongside us while we discern God's plans for our church. Our challenges include our historic low parish share contribution and small Sunday morning congregation, which we are praying will grow.

We would love someone who is:

- ambitious for God's living and active presence in our people and community and ready to discern God's vision for His people here, with us, and pursue that with courage and love
- keen to know Jesus for all that He is and is able to help people learn how to hold onto His Word and the guidance and strength of His Spirit
- able to preach and teach well, remaining faithful to the Bible while applying it to today's context
- ready and able to engage and connect with people of every generation, level of faith and gifting and have a genuine commitment to the wellbeing of the whole church
- enthusiastic about Inspiring Ipswich and its activities to grow new disciples
- positive about our mixed ecology and able to initiate further new worshipping communities
- entrepreneurial and able to help us turn around our finances to help us reach out in the future

“I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.” Matthew 25.35

Diocesan Information



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
**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 135,000. 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.



Diocesan Information



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
**Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich**

Who are we?

We are often known as 'the Church of England in Suffolk'. The diocesan bishop is the Right Reverend Martin Seeley, and the suffragan bishop is the Right Reverend Dr Mike Harrison (pictured below). Both work from the Bishop's House in Ipswich. They work together closely to help us shape our vision and strategy, and amongst a plethora of other tasks offer regular teaching mornings to nurture the faith of people in our congregations – and a regular Vlog which can be found on Facebook.

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. 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.



Diocesan Information



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

**Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich**

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 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



Diocesan Information

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 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, which focusses on developing Rural Resourcing Churches and nurturing and discipling new Christians through small Lightwave groups.

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.

Diocesan Information

How can we do this?

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'.

We hope you will come and join us on our journey!

To find out more, visit www.cofesuffolk.org

Inspiring Ipswich Information



Inspiring Ipswich is an imaginative and exciting initiative of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. It spans seven years from early 2019 to early 2026 and during this period it seeks to strengthen the existing 24 churches within the deanery of Ipswich, helping them 'to communicate good news and make new disciples', as well as adding 25 new worshipping communities into the mix. Front and central is the overall aim of praying for and nurturing the faith of 1500 new Christians across the town.



With the help of a substantial and unprecedented grant from the Church Commissioners, and a small central Inspiring Ipswich team the project has helped most parishes in the deanery to have a Mission Accompanier to energise a local learning community. Central courses such as 'Leading your Church into Growth', 'Mission-Shaped Ministry', Evangelist training, Alpha training and the 'Growing Leaders' course are part of the offer and the support of two full-time Deanery Pioneer Developers is available for those leading fresh expressions of Church.

Inspiring Ipswich Information



One of the primary goals of *Inspiring Ipswich* is to help at least 5% of the population (around 7,500 people) enjoy an opportunity to explore faith, and our prayer is to offer Alpha or an equivalent course to over 1000 people.

Inspiring Ipswich is also helping congregations to set up new worshipping communities, such as Wellbeing churches, Messy Church and a number of church plants such as River Church, LRCC and Bridge Church.



It is an exciting and friendly deanery to be in. In short, we believe that any prospective Priest-in-Charge at St Peter's would not only find themselves warmly welcomed within the church and parish but would also find themselves at the heart of an inspiring vision and team in the deanery.

What next?

We hope you have been inspired by what you have read and that you will consider applying for this exciting post.

For an informal conversation about the parish please contact Archdeacon Rhiannon on archdeacon.rhiannon@cofesuffolk.org

For an application form and to see the Role Description please go to the Diocesan Website www.cofesuffolk.org

Address:

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Stoke Park Drive,
Ipswich
IP2 9TH

Inspiring Ipswich Prayer

God of Mission,
who alone brings growth to your Church
Send your Holy Spirit to give
vision to our planning, wisdom to our actions
and power to our witness.
Help your Church here in Ipswich to grow leaders,
to grow younger, to grow in numbers,
in spiritual commitment to you
and in service to our local community,
Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.