

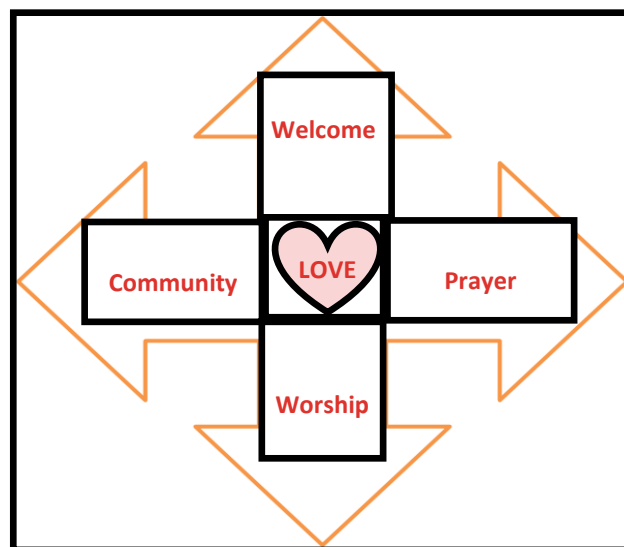
TEAM VICAR AND ASSOCIATE PRIEST

BLYTH VALLEY TEAM MINISTRY WITH HEVENINGHAM with UBBESTON, HUNTINGFIELD AND COOKLEY

Blyford - Bramfield - Chediston - Cookley - Halesworth
Heveningham - Holton - Huntingfield - Linstead - Spexhall
Thorington - Ubbeston - Walpole - Wenhaston - Wissett



CHURCH IN COMMUNITY – COMMUNITY IN CHURCH



Welcome to the Blyth Valley Cluster

This role is an exciting opportunity to see your ministry flourish as part of a diverse and inclusive team. The Blyth Valley and Cluster is an inspiring 15 parish rural benefices on the Suffolk coast. The Eucharist is at the centre of our community in church and church in community. It inspires and fulfils our mission and ministry. St Mary's, Halesworth, is joined by the distinctive communities and buildings of our adjoining parishes. Leadership and involvement with liturgy, pastoral care and parish responsibilities are shared amongst the Ministry Team.

St Mary's Halesworth has recently been re-ordered creating a large, accessible, public space. The Church Hall has, for now, been given over to the Community Larder, a collaboration with Halesworth Volunteer Centre that grew in response to the Government's Covid-19 food box scheme. Our Environment Group is seeking to develop its COP26, Swift and Commons interventions by involving young people contacted through schools.

We would love to hear from you if you feel called here to join us in God's work of supporting life enhancing community activities. The role will have a focus of listening for evidence of gaps in provision or skills being offered and you will give voice, roles and presence to people otherwise excluded, as we worship and walk the way together.

With thanks for your interest

Revd Dominic Doble (Team Rector)

and Geoffrey Kiddy (Lay Chair)

On behalf of Blyth Valley Team Council



November 2021

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Who are we?

Two benefices, 15 very diverse and interesting parishes working together in one of the most beautiful and rural parts of Suffolk. We have 14 beautiful and much-loved churches, all listed buildings, and all but the Hub Church St Mary's Halesworth, located in lovely Suffolk villages. Each Church is supported by dedicated and hard-working Churchwardens and Parochial Church Councils of varying sizes.

The Cluster is blessed with an allocated stipendiary staff of Team Rector (and Priest in Charge) (*appointed in 2021*) and Team Vicar (and Associate Priest) (*this post*) and there are, in addition, two Assistant Curates, three Honorary Associate Priests, one PTO Priest, two Readers and eight Elders. The ministry team meets weekly. The Team Council as constituted, which acts as the overarching governance body for the Team and Cluster of 14 different churches, (variously traditional/inclusive/modern) in approach has a representative of every parish on it and is chaired by the Rector and a Lay Chair, supported by the Team Treasurer. The Cluster is also supported by an extremely able part-time Team Administrator.

The Role

We are seeking an enthusiastic and committed Team Vicar and Associate Priest to engage with the Cluster's ambitious and forward-thinking vision and plan to become "Church in Community and Community in Church".

Are you a caring and inspiring priest, keen to collaborate and able to challenge, to share our inclusive church principles and passion for justice, to be visible and accessible, to nurture people and the environment, to hold Holy Communion central within many varied forms of worship tradition? Could you will assist in the development of missional dialogue within our communities, searching out and supporting what is good, initiating and facilitating where there is need or gifting?

Dominic, the Team Rector is looking for someone to lead, head up and manage our Church in Community Working Group dealing with the Diocesan programme themes of Growing Younger and Growing in Number. This is one of four springing from our recent Team Away Day answerable to Team Council. The other working groups that would welcome your input are Governance, Community in Church and Environment and Justice.

Dominic writes:

You will also be the main pastoral point of contact for the St Peter's Cluster of Parishes comprising St Peter Holton, St Peter Wenhaston, St Peter Thorington, St Andrew Bramfield and All Saints Blyford. Though pastoral involvement in other parishes would also be welcome.

Being at the centre of my and our corporate spirituality, it would be good to work alongside someone who is sustained by participation in Daily Office and Holy Communion.

The post is designed to be flexible and creative so avoids routine governance, financial and other responsibilities. However, from time to time cover may be required and/or offered as learning experiences.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE POSITIVES WE OFFER:

- ✓ Clergy are licensed to the whole cluster and share ministry across all our parishes.
- ✓ Our worship is well led by our clergy and lay teams and retired staff.
- ✓ A team approach with lots of shared activity across, between and amongst our parishes.
- ✓ A shared and inclusive ethos and culture with strong values and principles.
- ✓ A gently liberal catholic tradition of worship.
- ✓ A history of encouraging, developing and supporting ministry vocations, lay and ordained.
- ✓ A wonderful mixed diet of forms of worship including fresh expressions of church.
- ✓ Book of Common Prayer services are provided in at least one church weekly.
- ✓ Hybrid in person services involve people through Zoom and are livestreamed.
- ✓ Priests' expenses paid in full through Team budget.
- ✓ A widely distributed, professionally produced and popular monthly Team magazine *Blyth Valley Times*, provides good communication across the area.
- ✓ A Team website: www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk
- ✓ Supporting environmentally sustainable ways to "be church".
- ✓ A part-time Team Administrator.
- ✓  Find us on Facebook: [blythvalleychurchessuffolk](https://www.facebook.com/blythvalleychurchessuffolk)

The Blyth Valley Team Ministry Benefice

The BVTM has 11 churches and three church buildings, and a population of 8,500 due to grow to at least 9,500 as up to 750 new houses are to be built over the next 10 years. The churches are located in and around the town of Halesworth in north-east Suffolk over an area of approximately 10 miles by 13 miles. The area has an unusual demographic in that the population is mostly older than similar areas, but with a significant and growing number of under 18's.

The churches are open every day and are open in heart too. All are welcome – no conditions, no exceptions. As a liberal and inclusive church family we pride ourselves on taking people just as they are, just like God does. The ethos is that we don't 'tell you how it is' – rather we go on a pilgrimage together. We hope to be defined by our care for one another and for others. Our worship is based mainly around the Eucharist (Holy Communion, Mass) in obedience to Jesus's command: 'Do this!'

The Heveningham with Ubbeston, Huntingfield and Cookley Benefice

The Heveningham, Huntingfield and Cookley Benefice consists of three ancient and beautiful rural churches in three small villages to the west of the Blyth Valley Team. The population of the area is approximately 650. It has very recently agreed to become part of a cluster with the Blyth Valley Team, after a long interregnum. There are three churches, each of historic significance. All three churches are in beautiful settings, and all three have some contact with Heveningham Hall and the Hunt family, who are generous supporters.

The three churches have worked together to ensure scarce resources are used well although each operates as a distinct and separate entity. Until they joined the cluster they supported their own administration and PCCs. They have had a long tradition of Book of Common Prayer worship, and until recently all three had taken the relevant resolutions with regard to accepting male priests only. During the interregnum they have only had one service a month each. Two of the three churches have now agreed to women's priestly ministry, with services at Cookley continue to be taken by male Diocesan priests.

To find out more: <https://www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk>

The Team Development Plan

We aim to meet annually as a whole team for worship, reflection, quiet time and planning purposes at our Team away-day. In 2021 we agreed a new approach to our plans for “Growing in God”.

OUR VISION and MISSION

CHURCH IN COMMUNITY – COMMUNITY IN CHURCH

Following our recent Team Away Day, we are setting up four Working Groups to sustain our response to our core values of:

Good governance – led by the Team Rector to address the challenges of

- the Team Council constitution
- decision making
- merging the parishes
- merging the benefices

Being Church in Community – led by you to address the challenges faced by

- older people
- young families
- people facing death or bereavement
- people in poverty

Being Community in Church – led by an Assistant Curate to sustain

- Open the Book joint group going into local schools under Churches Together
- liturgy development and Bible study
- nurturing our own and seeking out vocations
- Communion in care homes

Taking action for Environment and Justice – led by an Assistant Curate

- Prisoner rehabilitation
- COP 26 Summit Exhibition and Swift Project
- Afghanistan
- Rural deprivation

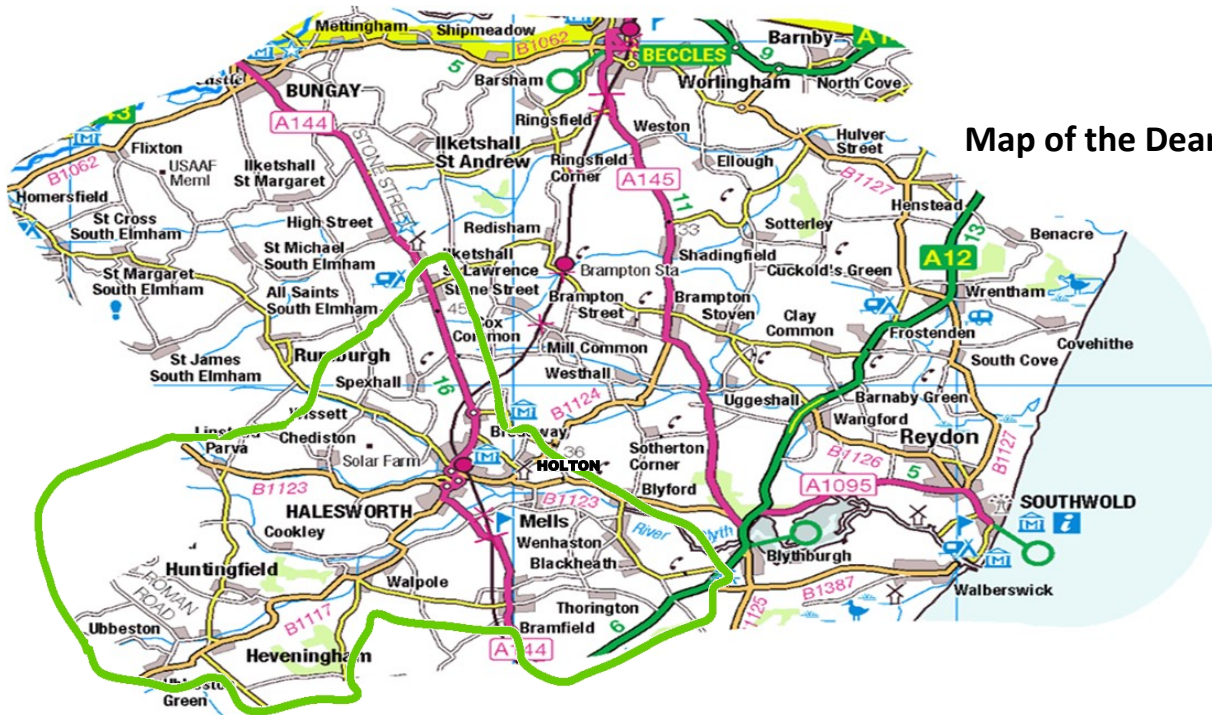
The local setting

- ✓ **Halesworth** – The centre of the Cluster. An attractive ancient market town with a thriving market on Wednesdays, a Farmers’ Market once a month, a great park and Town Meadow and a Thoroughfare, with lots of independent shops and cafés.
- ✓ **Education** - Five primary schools – one (Bramfield) Church of England Academy which is part of the Diocesan MAT, and four academy schools (Ilketshall St Lawrence, Halesworth, Holton and Wenhaston) which are part of ASSETT MAT - a primary school trust based in Ipswich. A children’s centre and a number of under-5 day care providers. A pupil referral unit at Walpole and also Bramfield House school - an independently funded specialist residential school. Bungay High School is our nearest secondary school.
- ✓ **Primary medical care** – A community-focussed GP practice with a range of community health care services serving the whole cluster, Acute Hospital provision and A&E at James Paget in Great Yarmouth, the Norfolk and Norwich in Norwich or Ipswich Hospital, plus two care homes, three Sheltered Housing Providers, a new Palliative Care Centre, and plans to develop a Day Centre.
- ✓ **Employment** – Food processing, farming and market gardens, light Industry, tourism and home-based small businesses as well as a small but significant number of London commuters.
- ✓ **Socio-Economic status** – High number of very dependent over 80s, significant social isolation, especially young single parents in isolated rural settings, a transient social needs population in Halesworth. Some parts of the team are areas of social deprivation, some are, overall, wealthy. A predominantly white British community although this is beginning to change.
- ✓ **Housing Stock** – Mixed stock with some small areas of social housing in Halesworth, high number of bungalows and retirement properties, and a high number of holiday lets and second homes, plus a number of privately-owned large estates including Heveningham Hall. The local plan will draw a significant number of younger families to the area as new family properties are built.
- ✓ **Culture** – A thriving Arts scene, with a multi-purpose Art Centre (The Cut) – theatre, art, cinema, music, several community choirs. Also a significant interest in environmental issues, walking etc, with a range of walking groups, and leisure activities and some excellent restaurants. Headquarters of the World Land Trust and several significant conservation groups.
- ✓ **Close to the most beautiful coastline** – Southwold, Covehithe, Dunwich and the Heath, Aldeburgh – and wonderful attractions including RSPB Minsmere, Snape and the Aldeburgh Festival, Orford Castle, Framlingham Castle, fabulous seafood (Southwold Harbour).
- ✓ **Transport** – A major issue for our communities, transport links are relatively poor, but journeys are very beautiful. The A12 is the main link to Ipswich and the south, and the A143 to the west and north. There is a direct stopping train to Ipswich, where mainline trains can be caught. Two voluntary organisations provide community transport.
- ✓ **Community** – The Parishes, Town and District Councils are working together to develop a community partnership. There is a strong, growing and caring voluntary sector and good relationships between the church and the sector.
- ✓ **Churches Together** – A strong and collaborative Churches Together in the Blyth Valley Partnership – (Anglican, URC, Roman Catholic and Methodist) - which does a lot together, including monthly prayer meetings, Pentecost, Advent, the Week of Christian Unity, and a range of other activities.

Accommodation

A good size four bedroom family house situated in a very pleasant position on the outskirts of the village of Holton. The village has a primary school and a village hall which hosts numerous clubs, a farm shop at the edge of the village which provides a variety of fresh produce as well as a popular garden centre with cafe. Regular buses run to Halesworth, Southwold and Beccles and Halesworth railway station, about 1.5 miles away, has regular trains to Lowestoft, Ipswich and London.

The property is approached by a sweeping private track, which leads off the public highway. This leads to a parking area in front of the property and provides parking for numerous vehicles. In front of the driveway is a single garage and beyond this is the oil tank. To the sides and rear of the property, there is a very good size garden that is laid predominantly to grass but which is partly bordered by mature trees and hedgerows.



Map of the Deanery

The Cluster is part of the East Suffolk Council area, and straddles three East Suffolk Community Partnerships. It sits inland from the outstanding coastal area and is quieter and more rural than the villages east of the A12. The landscape is varied but largely rolling arable farmland, with woodlands, some heathland, water meadows and scattered farms and villages, connected by a network of small lanes, some of which are very ancient. The land has been continuously inhabited and farmed since the Mesolithic and there are many archaeological finds and sites in the area. Each village has a significant number of mediaeval buildings located in and around them. Farming (with many family farms) is still vitally important to the area. Each Parish Council has good and close links with its Parish church, and both the Town Council and District Council are supportive and engaged with us. Whilst attendances do not always reflect it, the village churches are much loved by their communities.

**Working in partnership with the
Halesworth Volunteer Service/Covid response team**

Phone trees / buddy & good neighbour schemes

ZOOM Bible study group

Listening ear service

Community Larder / Foodbank

Churches together in the Blyth Valley online worship

Wednesdays Cafe Church via ZOOM

Maintained contact with our schools and care homes

Community partnerships in our villages

'LEAF' - Lived experience advisory forum

Sunday worship live streamed on Zoom and Facebook

PRAYER - WORSHIP - COMMUNITY - LOVE



OUR CHURCHES' RESPONSE TO COVID-19

JOY in the grace of a community that cares, that prays, and that worships whatever the challenge

Monthly mail shot sent out to those not 'online'

www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk
All service sheets/prayer lists available to print/use/request

All Team Churches OPEN daily for Private Prayer

Volunteers to shop/get medication

Pastoral ministry prayer daily

Morning/Evening & Night Prayer live-streamed daily at [blythvalleychurchessuffolk](https://www.facebook.com/blythvalleychurchessuffolk) on Facebook, Zoom and YouTube

Gathered worship in all Team Churches

The Team has been deepened and enriched over the past 18 months by some of the challenges we faced

The Team Council

The Blyth Valley Team Council is the central “governing body” of the team and now the Cluster, and the team provides many activities and events across the whole area. The Team Council agrees team policy, sets our vision, mission and team plans, employs the Team Administrator (who provides enormous help for Churchwardens and Treasurers), undertakes the annual division of the Benefice Share and oversees the production of *Blyth Valley Times*. It also oversees safeguarding, health and safety and other common administrative responsibilities. The office is based in St Mary’s Halesworth. The number of Team services help to foster stronger inter-parish relationships and people feel welcome in on another’s churches. The Team has a highly developed conscience, being active and socially aware. Villagers contribute to Team as well as Parish life.

Team Wide Organisations and regular activities

- ✓ **EXPLORE!** - A fresh expression of church at Ilketshall St Lawrence Primary School – a monthly outdoor church after-school club with an average of 35 children each month led by a small Lightwave missional group.
- ✓ **Friends of St Mary’s** - fund-raising activities to support the maintenance and promotion of St Mary’s as a community resource and to fund the regeneration.
- ✓ **Mothers’ Union** - An enthusiastic group which is underpinned by prayer and works to support families.
- ✓ **Open the Book** - With Anglican-led teams going into Bramfield and Holton and URC-led teams into Wenhaston and Edgar Sewter, Halesworth.
- ✓ **Regular Assemblies** at three primary schools, and regular input into a fourth as well as regular visits to the local Pupil Referral Unit
- ✓ **The Bell Ringers** - There are active tower teams ringing at six churches with peals of bells for services and practices.
- ✓ **The Foodbank** - The Team hosts the foodbank at St Mary’s Halesworth and our churches act as dropping-off points.
- ✓ **The Team Choir** - a strong and growing choir, which sings at Team services, special Team occasions and the monthly choral evensong.
- ✓ **The Team Pastoral Care group** - Weekly prayer list and allocated pastoral visiting co-ordinated from the Team office as well as support to our two Care Homes and our NHS community.

*This is a rota which reflects our current pattern.
In addition there are weekday services in different churches.*

Rota Template - Sunday Worship in the Blyth Valley					
	FIRST SUNDAY	SECOND SUNDAY	THIRD SUNDAY	FOURTH SUNDAY	FIFTH SUNDAY
Halesworth St Mary	8am BCP Holy Communion 10am TEAM Service 6pm Evensong	8am BCP Holy Communion 3pm Civic Remembrance Service 6pm Evensong	8am BCP Holy Communion 10am Eucharist 6pm Evensong	8am BCP Holy Communion 10am Iona Worship 6pm Evensong	8am BCP Holy Communion 10am TEAM Eucharist 6pm Evensong
St Peter Group					
Holton St Peter	To Team Service	10.50am Remembrance	10am Iona Worship	10am Eucharist	To Team Service
Wenhaston St Peter	To Team Service	10.50am Remembrance	10am Pause for Thought	10am Eucharist	To Team Service
Bramfield St Andrew	To Team Service	10.50am Remembrance	To other services	10am Morning Prayer	To Team Service
Blyford All Saints	To Team Service	10.50am Remembrance	To other services	To other services	To Team Service
Thorington St Peter	To Team Service	To other services	To other services	To other services	To Team Service
St Andrew Group					
Chediston St Mary	To Team Service	10.50am Remembrance	10am Morning Worship	10am Eucharist	To Team Service
Wissett St Andrew	To Team Service	10.50am Remembrance	10am Eucharist	10am Morning Worship	To Team Service
Spexhall St Peter	To Team Service	10.50am Remembrance	To other services	To other services	To Team Service
Linstead St Margaret	To Team Service	9.30am Remembrance	To other services	To other services	To Team Service
St Michael Group					
Cookley St Michael	To Team Service	10.50am To Heveningham for Remembrance	9.30am Sunday Eucharist	To other services	To Team Service
Heveningham St Margaret	To Team Service	10.50am Remembrance (with Cookley)	To other services	To other services	To Team Service
Huntingfield St Mary	To Team Service	10.50am Remembrance	To other services	To other services	To Team Service
Walpole St Mary	To Team Service				To Team Service

CHURCHES IN THE BLYTH VALLEY TEAM MINISTRY



All Saints Blyford



St Andrew's Bramfield



St Mary's Chediston



St Mary's Halesworth



St Peter's Holton



St Margaret's Linstead



St Peter's Spexhall



St Peter's Thorington



St Mary's Walpole



St Peter's Wenhaston



St Andrew's Wissett

CLUSTER CHURCHES IN THE BLYTH VALLEY TEAM MINISTRY



St Michael's and All Angels Cookley



**St Margaret's
Heveningham with Ubbeston**



St Mary's Huntingfield

The following pages tell you in more detail about each Parish...

The Church of All Saints Blyford

Blyford is a linear village lining either side of the B1123 road to Southwold. The Church is some distance from the village itself, situated at a crossroads opposite the *Queen's Head Blyford*, a lovely small pub that is well used by people across the area. The village is small, 83 houses and a population of 193. It is close to Southwold, and the Blythburgh marshes.



This delightful Suffolk Church dates back to 1068, with the Chancel being added in the 13th Century and the porch and tower in the 15th Century. Mechanisation of agriculture reduced the need for labour and thus the hamlet has not expanded over the years.

A former Bishop of Norwich is buried in the churchyard. Conversely, a former Rector, the Revd Wm Raymond was ejected by Suffolk Committee for Scandalous Ministry for alleged gross misconduct!

The Church is Grade 1 listed, although modest in comparison to others. The font is 13th Century and the sanctuary has a fine Elizabethan altar table with bulbous carved legs.

Services are held monthly at present and attended by an average of seven people. There are several local volunteers, interested in keeping the Church open, who help out with fund-raising events.

- ✓ A committed small PCC.
- ✓ A fund-raising committee keeping the Church going.
- ✓ An annual cycle of much-loved events.
- ✓ A lay elder.

In 2019 we had four funerals and two burials of ashes.

There were no weddings or baptisms

***Content contributed by Alison Cackett,
Lay Elder and Churchwarden***



The Church of St Andrew Bramfield

The historic and rural village of Bramfield lies just a few miles from the picturesque popular coastal towns of Southwold and Aldeburgh. With good links to Ipswich, London and beyond, this is a well-sized village of 490 folk, where you can enjoy peaceful country life, alongside the bustle of modern life. Bramfield village has a popular butcher's and shop for everyday needs.

The recently refurbished and revived village pub – *The Queen's Head* - is at the centre of the village. The Church of England Primary school serves the surrounding community as well as Bramfield. There is also a village hall and active parish council. The village hall is well appointed and regularly hosts (among other things) indoor bowls, china painting, bingo, Circle 67 rehearsals, Thursday Lunch Club and Halesworth Duplicate Bridge Club.



With its unique detached Norman round tower and thatched roof, the medieval parish church of St Andrew is a must-see delight on any tour of Suffolk churches. Step inside, and the visitor is uplifted by the beautiful painted and carved wooden screen, c.1500. Along with the later monuments and glass in the chancel, this is a church of art historical interest and one which has been the focus of community life in Bramfield for centuries. The church stands opposite the distinctive crinkle-crinkle brick wall marking the boundary of the gardens and grounds of Bramfield Hall. The church itself is in good repair, having

had extensive work done to the thatched roof in recent years, and has just had a new heating boiler installed. The large churchyard is well tended thanks to the generosity of villagers past and present who contribute to the Churchyard Maintenance Fund.

This is a village church which has the potential to thrive and build on its community spirit and togetherness. The Parochial Church Council is working on new initiatives to enable the church to be an active and central part of village life into the future.

- ✓ A strong, recently refreshed PCC.
- ✓ Four school services a year in the Church.
- ✓ Two assemblies a month in school.
- ✓ The Assistant Curate is a Foundation Governor.
- ✓ An annual fete.
- ✓ Open Gardens in Bramfield Hall at the discretion of the owner.
- ✓ Regular worship every Thursday morning.
- ✓ PCC meetings held in the pub – visible to all.
- ✓ A lay elder.

Content contributed by Victoria Page

The Church of St Mary Chediston

Chediston is a pretty village with a population of approximately 160, which is split into four areas: Housing clustered around the church; Chediston Green, about half a mile to the north west of the church; a number of houses along the B1123 towards Harleston, as well as some family farms. The church and Old Church School Room provide the main centre for the community to meet.



Activities there include table tennis, carpet bowls, craft, quizzes, social events and fund-raisers. Chediston has always been a very sociable community-minded village with everyone, church goers and non-church goers, looking out for each other, particularly during the pandemic. In recent years the social highlight of the village year is the New Year's Eve party hosted at Herne Hill Farm, which usually attracts in excess of 150 villagers, with live music, hot buffet and much community merriment. Another much-treasured annual event is the Christmas Fair held in the School Room that has kept the same simple and successful format for many years. Our congregation is quite small, averaging 10-15, but with signs of an upward trend.

Earliest records of a parish church in Chediston date back to the Domesday Survey of 1086, but most likely in its present plan, in the 13th century. Parts of the nave are probably Norman. It was significantly added to in the 14th and 15th centuries and restored in 1895. Most recently, in 2009 repairs to the tower and restoration of the ground-floor ring of six bells took place. The Grade 1 listed church is essentially quite plain in appearance but contains a surprisingly large number of fascinating historical features, including: The Communion rail; a font decorated with wood-wooses and other motifs; Erasmus Paraphrase Bible; Commandments panel; Pulpit.

The churchyard is in current use for burials and interments, and provides valuable environmental green space for wildlife. The wild flower meadow is particularly beautiful in Spring and early Summer.



Church services and events include:



- ✓ An average of two services per month, usually the second and fourth Sundays.
- ✓ A third service alternates between Chediston and our neighbours at Linstead.
- ✓ The enormously popular Christmas Eve Candlelit Carol Service.
- ✓ Mothering Sunday, Harvest Thanksgiving (and lunch!), and Remembrance Sunday.
- ✓ The bells are rung for services and there is monthly ringing practice.
- ✓ Music and poetry evenings.
- ✓ Recitals - singing and organ.

In the summer of 2021 there were three weddings and we are looking forward to two baptisms in November.

Content contributed by the Churchwarden

The Church of St Mary Halesworth

Church in Community - Community in Church

We have a warm and inviting church that has served the community for centuries, which is steeped in history and sits at the heart of the BVTM in the traditional market town of Halesworth. St. Mary's has an active, and welcoming worshipping presence (supported by the Friends of St. Mary's FOSM). We're an inclusive worship community, through Christ-centred worshipping love, using many forms of liturgy including:- The Book of Common Prayer, Common Worship, Iona, Taize, Choral Evensong, Breakfast Church and many more. Imaginative plans to regenerate St. Mary's as the thriving heritage and community centre of Halesworth and the core/mother/hub church of the team are now being laid for today's and tomorrow's needs, which will enable the church to serve the community better, through providing appropriate facilities and opening up the church even more. St. Mary's has open doors all year round. We're an inclusive Church and proud of it. With a thriving lay ministry to spread the good news the future looks very exciting.

The Church sits in the heart of town and is "a fine sight" to behold. The building is being restored stage by stage but is a fine example of 15th Century work. The tower was significantly restored in 1990 and houses eight fine bells. With the Lady Chapel open for daily prayer and with the Team office located behind the grand organ, St Mary's is rarely empty!



The tower was significantly restored in 1990 and houses eight fine bells. With the Lady Chapel open for daily prayer and with the Team office located behind the grand organ, St Mary's is rarely empty!



Pattern of Services
Every Sunday: 8am BCP Holy Communion
6pm Evensong
First Sunday: 10am Team Holy Communion
Second Sunday: 10am BCP Holy Communion
Third Sunday: 10am Holy Communion
Fourth Sunday: 10am Iona
Fifth Sunday: 10am Team Holy Communion
Wednesday: 10am Holy Communion

Fresh Expressions
Friends of St. Mary's (FOSM)
Church Cafe
Foodbank 50/50 Club
Team Choir
Churches Together INCLUSIVE
Monthly Recitals

- ✓ Committed PCC and Friends of St. Mary's.
- ✓ Art, music and regular events/concerts.
- ✓ Social events/fundraising activities.
- ✓ Community focused.
- ✓ Mothers' Union
- ✓ Team Share and Parish Share paid in full.
- ✓ Worship and joy in everything we do.



In 2019 we had one wedding, 17 funerals and three baptisms

**Content contributed by Jason Busby
Lay Elder/Churchwarden/Organist**



The Church of St Peter Holton

Holton is a working village linked by ribbon development along the B1123 with Halesworth. Holton has a population of around 1,100, it is listed in Domesday, and the boundaries were redefined by the Local Government Act of 1972. The village consists of the old village and outlying farms, a post-war council development, and a 1960's development on part of the old Holton Hall estate, together with Upper

Holton comprising scattered houses and a pub. There is a large active village hall with a green, a primary school, and Holton Garden Centre/Market Fields shop. Businesses include Bernard Matthews' turkey processing factory; medium and small businesses located on and near the old Halesworth Airfield site and at Holton Pit (formerly a gravel works); and a number of small bed and breakfast businesses.



The Grade II listed church lies between the old village and the 1970's development. It is a lovely round-towered church with Victorian additions and subtractions and has a regular congregation of some 20 people. There is an open churchyard, and we have an

agreement with the diocese for the use of the adjacent paddock. The church has a good relationship with the Village Hall, using it for our Christmas Fair, Quiz nights, and Carols and a Pint evening. It is the second largest congregation and Church in the Team.

- ✓ 32 people on the electoral roll.
- ✓ Services on the second, third and fourth Sundays.
- ✓ A short morning service on Fridays.*
- ✓ Most regular worshippers live in the village.
- ✓ Parish share paid for the past ten years.*
- ✓ The church is kept in good repair.
- ✓ Grant funding of more than 11k helped pay for repairs costing more than £17.5k.
- ✓ A monthly Iona service which is well-attended.
- ✓ Open the Book in Holton School.*
- ✓ The annual Church Car Boot Sale in May is held on the church paddock.
- ✓ Other annual fund-raising includes the Flower Festival and the Christmas Fair.
- ✓ Two lay elders.

(*Not during 2020)

In 2019 there were four baptisms, one wedding and 14 funerals.

***Content contributed by John Hewlett,
Lay Elder and Churchwarden***





The Church of St Margaret of Antioch Linstead

The two parishes of Linstead Magna and Linstead Parva (these days simply 'Linstead') are the westernmost parishes of the team. Linstead is a typical non-nuclear Suffolk village, a scattering of about 50 households and 120 souls spread over quite a large area. Paradoxically, the very lack of a physical centre means that we have to work that little bit harder to maintain our 'villagedom'. It means, for instance, that it is nearly always possible to identify newcomers and ensure that they are welcomed. We do this with a welcome-pack which is hand delivered. A (secular) village hall enables us to hold social events both church and non-church based (almost always the same people anyway!). We do good barbecues and the Harvest Supper is legendary. In a nutshell, Linstead is small but beautifully formed.

St Margaret of Antioch, Linstead Parva, is a small chapel, dating from the early 13th Century, at the extreme eastern end of the parish. It is in good order (for a 13C structure) and, a huge plus point, is relatively easy to heat. It also has rather a good acoustic.

- ✓ Two services a month, nearly all at 9.30am.
- ✓ We alternate a joint service with Chediston, our neighbouring parish to the east.
- ✓ The services vary in format, but the default service is BCP Matins.
- ✓ Occasional offices usually include a Patronal Festival, held at the village hall and followed by a barbecue.
- ✓ On a biennial basis we meet at Church Farm, Linstead Magna and process to the site of St Peter's, our 'lost' church, for an open-air service.
- ✓ A lay elder.



We welcome baptisms and weddings

Content contributed by Malcolm Heath, Lay Elder and Churchwarden

The Church of St Peter Spexhall

Spexhall is one of the smaller parishes in the benefice and is split into three areas plus several isolated groups of farmhouses. Spexhall Stone Street and Westhall Cross Roads straddle the main road. Old Spexhall Village is a mile to the west of Stone Street. With a population of 190 there are just under 100 houses.

St Peter's is the beating heart of the Spexhall parish, along with the village hall and the parish council. The parishioners, whether regular churchgoers or not, support each other's community activities in a friendly and joyful spirit. The church is very open to changing with the times.



A pretty Grade II* listed parish church whose basic structure dates from around 1150. The north doorway is thought to be 12th century, whilst there is a small 14th century doorway on the south wall. The south porch was probably built in the 15th century and was restored in 1733. The original round tower (probably 12th century) fell down in 1725 and was subsequently rebuilt. Well maintained, the interior of the church shows the extent of late Victorian restoration. It is well-used for baptisms, weddings and funerals and is never locked.

There is a special 'welcome' corner for children. The church is on a footpath and all passing visitors are provided with a table of refreshments and a quiet sitting area.

- ✓ Small but beautifully formed, fit and active PCC (ages 30ish -70ish).
- ✓ Share paid in full.
- ✓ Creative fundraising frequently taking place.
- ✓ A lively outward focussed culture, having fun, laughing a lot.
- ✓ Know the residents in our village.
- ✓ Inform every house in the village of special events being held.
- ✓ A committed flower team - always flowers in church.
- ✓ New residents given an informative 'welcome pack'.
- ✓ Links with St Lawrence School, children and family oriented.
- ✓ An Eco-church – Spexhall churchyard is kept as a sanctuary for wildlife.
- ✓ Applying for the A Rocha Silver award.
- ✓ The Team's agricultural church, keeping all the traditional agricultural festivals – including Rogation and Lammas.
- ✓ The plough kept in the church is blessed on Plough Sunday.
- ✓ Two services a month.
- ✓ Tenebrae, Easter, Christmas and a unique carol service.
- ✓ Thriving pub and football team.



**In 2019 there were two baptisms,
one wedding, two funerals and one burial of ashes**

Content contributed by Spexhall PCC



The Church of St Peter Thorington

Thorington is the smallest of our villages and is a very rural hamlet of about 50 people. A significant number of houses are holiday homes. There is not much to the hamlet of Thorington beyond a few farms and there is no village centre as such. Houses are spread over the whole hamlet. It is the farthest east of our parishes and is just west of the A12 but is not easily found.

The pretty Norman church of St Peter dates to the 11th century, with a striking round tower of flint, and an aisle-less nave and chancel. The church is an important Grade 1 listed building, that is now in reasonably good condition. Given its architectural importance there is a constant need for maintenance and 'keeping on top of things'. The churchyard is maintained by volunteers, who do an excellent job.

The PCC is small. There are two churchwardens, a Secretary and one other at meetings and a suggestion being explored for next year, is to establish Friends of Thorington Church.

There are four services a year, Christmas Eve, Easter, Petertide and Harvest. Small congregation, often about six except Christmas Carols when the church is filled with about 60! We keep worship alive.

- ✓ Fundraising has included Art exhibitions and concerts at the church.
- ✓ Innovative artistic fundraising events - including concerts, there are plans for more events in 2021.
- ✓ This year we are short on funds and struggling to meet the share.
- ✓ An appeal to restore our Roof bosses – all angels – is underway.

In 2019 there were no funerals, weddings or baptisms

Content contributed by Trish Gower, Churchwarden



The Church of St Peter Wenhaston

Wenhaston is a village of 818 people situated on elevated ground to the south side of the River Blyth valley approximately five miles inland from the North Sea at Southwold. The area to the east of Wenhaston is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty rolling down towards the coastal estuary of the Blyth. People have lived in what is now called Wenhaston from about 2000 BC. It has a thriving village hall, with a shop and post office, and a very active Parish Council. St Peter's Church is very much part of the active village community of Wenhaston. Its major services and fund-raising events are well-supported. The church has strong links with the village primary school and is developing outreach work with young people and families. It is also in the process of adapting the church building to include kitchen and toilet facilities.



Worship has been taking place on the site of the current church since Saxon times, and the church building bears many traces of this history. In particular, Wenhaston is well-known for its remarkable Doom painting, which dates back to the late 15th century. Visitors to the Doom frequently comment on the peaceful and welcoming atmosphere of the church. Today the church offers a warm welcome to its services and social events.



Mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, parts of the present St Peter's Church dates back to Norman times. Although it is a traditional building, the removal of the pews a few decades ago means that it is a flexible space.



- ✓ Three Sunday services a month, including one Eucharist.
- ✓ Monthly informal reflective service, Pause for Thought.
- ✓ Positive links with the village Methodist Chapel, including joint services for Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas.
- ✓ Active MU group, which collaborates with other groups in the Team and the local area.
- ✓ Services with the school for Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas.
- ✓ Monthly lunches for vulnerable and isolated older people in the community, run by the church with support from volunteers from the village community.

- ✓ St Peter's Church strives to meet its Parish Share each year.
- ✓ Several successful fund-raising events during the year, in the church and in the village hall.
- ✓ Villagers from outside the church frequently help run these events.
- ✓ The PCC is small, but decisive. Necessary repairs are carried out promptly, often with the assistance of local maintenance firms.
- ✓ The Doom painting attracts a significant number of visitors, including an increasing number of organised groups. Plans are being made to generate more income from this important historical asset.
- ✓ Electoral roll 2019 - 31.

In 2019 we had two baptisms, no weddings, six funerals and one burial of ashes.

Content contributed by Jonathan Alder, Churchwarden

The Church of St Andrew Wissett

Wissett, with about 200 adults and 20 children, is close to but distinct from Halesworth. There is a long village street with a pub and village hall, and outlying farms and houses in the largely arable land. We have a reputation for sociability and communal activities. The church is open all day, and the quiet corner is well-used for prayer and lighting votive candles. It is held in affection by many people who work hard to look after it, and generally come to the 'big services'. The worshipping community is smaller, and the average congregation at regular services is 15. Recently, children have come at Christmas only. Breakfast Church has attracted a few who otherwise come rarely. We value the cycle of times and seasons, in step with the liturgical initiatives of the present Rector. The six bells have been rehung, ring before all services, and are popular with visiting ringers.



(Photo: NS Restorations)

The church, with its 12th century round tower and Romanesque doorways, is in an attractive churchyard by the village street, convenient for the Village Hall. It is high and light, clear from west to east, with traditional furniture, oak pews for about 100, and a good small pipe organ. Through past care it has come down in good structural condition. It is beautifully maintained and cared for.



- ✓ Regular services: three or four each month, usually Common Worship.
- ✓ Breakfast Church – a simple service followed by coffee and croissants set at tables in the nave.
- ✓ Team Evensong, BCP, sung by the team choir on rotation.
- ✓ Fifth Sunday Team Eucharist on rotation.
- ✓ Lots of 'Special' services: candlelit Carol Service; Crib Service; Epiphany Service of light; Shrove Tuesday Clipping; Good Friday Stations of the Cross and 'up the Green Hill' service; Harvest Festival and Supper; All Souls candle-lighting; St Andrew's Day Patronal Festival.
- ✓ An active participant in the Team.
- ✓ Our special services attract numbers from around the Team.
- ✓ Widespread affection for church, and large number of 'helpers'.
- ✓ We are a welcoming, inclusive church.
- ✓ We pay our share.

- ✓ A strong confident amicable PCC.
- ✓ A strong tradition of great hospitality.

Occasional Offices, 2018 - 2019: one baptism, one wedding and four funerals.

Content contributed by Nick Evans, Churchwarden and Geoffrey Kiddy, Churchwarden and Lay Chair of Team Council



The Church of St Margaret Heveningham with Ubbeston

St Margaret's Church stands on a mound above the roadside and village street of Heveningham. Since the closure of St Peter's Church Ubbeston, St Margaret's serves both parishes. The population of the two villages is about 180 people, scattered widely over a large area. There are no public buildings other than the Church. To the east of Heveningham village lies the house and estate of Heveningham Hall, whose owners have been very influential in the history of the village and church.



The Church is Grade 1 listed and is mentioned in the Domesday Book, though the present stone-built Church dates from the 11th and 12th centuries, with many later additions. It has a fine hammerbeam roof, a peal of five bells, donated by George III, a wooden effigy of Sir John Heveningham and a large manorial pew, complete with fireplace. Unusually there are two fonts, one 19th century, and the other, 16th century moved there from St Peter's, Ubbeston.

- ✓ 29 people on the electoral roll, with an average of 12 at regular services.
- ✓ Since the attachment to the Blyth Valley Team, one Eucharist a month (BCP) - although we hope to return to some non-Eucharistic services in addition.
- ✓ Occasional services such as Harvest Festival, Remembrance Sunday, Carol Service and Mothering Sunday are always very well attended.
- ✓ We have always paid our share in full, with many fund-raising events, but are struggling this year because of the effects of the pandemic.
- ✓ A policy of organising events which bring the community together in the absence of a village hall, such as our Harvest Songs of Praise, followed by Harvest Supper in the church and our Candlelit Carol Service.
- ✓ The PCC and congregation provide volunteers at the annual Heveningham Hall Country Fair, receiving from the HHCF Trust several capital grants for work on the Church.
- ✓ We hold a Christmas Fair on site at the Hall's annual Christmas Market.
- ✓ We have willing and able volunteers and a PCC who together ensure the upkeep of the Church, churchyard, which is renowned for its spring flowers and the Glebe.



**In 2020 there was one funeral before shut-down of the church due to Covid-19.
The church has since re-opened.**

***Content contributed by Camilla Warrillow, Churchwarden
and Janet Pleasance, Churchwarden***



The Church of St Mary the Virgin Huntingfield

St Mary's Church sits in a beautiful wooded churchyard in the village of Huntingfield, with a population of 160 parishioners. The village has shrunk considerably from 411 folk in 1851 but has a very active community, with a pub and a new and very well used community centre, The Hub. Although a little way outside the village this beautiful and unique church not only creates a centre for worship but also provides a community setting for plays, children's activities, talks and music.



The Church is an 11th century grade 1 listed building, largely due to its amazing Victorian painted ceiling - a masterpiece of Victorian church decoration, with carved and coloured angels, banners, crowns and shields, in the medieval style and reflecting the ecclesiastical devotion of the late Victorian period and the heightened liturgical practices of the Oxford Movement. The ceiling was painted by Mildred Holland, the wife of the Rector, who was resident for 44 years from 1848 and was restored recently. The church is old, with some fragments of carved stones a Saxon stone coffin and standing cross of the 10th century set into the wall of the tower. There are five bells, with its own team as well as visiting bell-ringing groups.



- ✓ Regular, (once a month) BCP communion, plus family services for Christmas, Easter, Mothering Sunday etc.
- ✓ Exhibitions, musical events, (typically concerts), plays (usually linked to Christmas stories or to the church story) and regular talks about the church – usually to art/book clubs, U3A.
- ✓ Good communication between the church and the village hall in organising events.
- ✓ The priests and organists all participate in the life of this church and members also contribute to the Blyth Valley Team and the new Cluster arrangements.
- ✓ We generally manage to meet our financial commitments
- ✓ The church is in a good condition and is well maintained.
- ✓ General activities are of a high standard and attract wide interest.
- ✓ Security measures are either in place or are being installed.
- ✓ Occasional services include Christingle and Mothering Sunday family services, and an annual Remembrance Day service on the village green.
- ✓ A very popular wedding venue with several large estates providing bespoke wedding packages.
- ✓ Working towards building a wider congregation.
- ✓ Finding ways to improve income in order to maintain this local asset.



In 2019 there were three weddings and two funerals

Content contributed by Emma Ward, Churchwarden

The Church of St Michael and All Angels Cookley

The picturesque church is situated in the middle of Cookley – a small rural village four miles south-west of Halesworth. It consists of 49 houses spread over four miles with a population of approximately 100 souls. It is a popular area for holiday makers seeking rural peace and quiet. About 15 miles inland from the coast with its many attractions including Dunwich and its lost city and forest; it is a largely agricultural community close to several market towns, Halesworth being the closest.



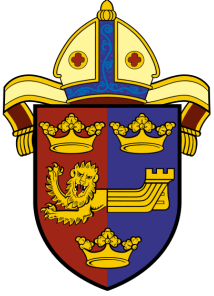
Our medieval church is set on raised ground, well back from the road, standing within its well-managed churchyard and accessed by a footpath through a village garden. St Michael's is small, seating some 50 people and is in excellent condition with a warm, welcoming feel to it. We currently have Mass every third Sunday of the month and services at Easter, Harvest Festival, and Christmas Day morning. One of the three bells is rung and the organ is played at every service.

We use the Book of Common Prayer and the New English Hymnal and have signed the Resolution on Women Priests. We come under the pastoral care of the Bishop of Richborough. Our traditional form of service attracts a regular congregation from a wide area and our average attendance is 14. During the summer we are frequently joined by visitors to the area, who come and worship with us.

- ✓ Upholding traditional worship.
- ✓ A small hard working PCC.
- ✓ Serving our community faithfully.
- ✓ Strong relationships with Heveningham Hall Country Fair.
- ✓ Beneficiary of regular gifts for the fabric from the Fair.
- ✓ Close relationships with our two colleague churches in the benefice.

In 2019 we had one wedding, one funeral and one burial of ashes.

Content contributed by Jane Evers, Churchwarden



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 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?

What is our vision? 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. 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 three 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.

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, 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.

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



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich



God's Light Shines in Suffolk

The diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich strongly encourages all incumbents to promote the growth of small missional groups and fresh expressions of Church in their benefices. "Lightwave" has been created with a diocese-wide Bishops Mission' Order in order to support clergy and lay people to work together in mission-shaped communities, reaching out in innovative ways.

The Lightwave Community meets in small groups in homes, pubs, offices, schools and other places and complements other ways of being church. The name of the community comes from the idea of lightwaves being the way in which light spreads into dark places. Lightwave is committed to shining the light of Jesus in Suffolk through acts of kindness and practical service as well as worship and witness.

The Lightwave Community is developing three Rural Resourcing Churches, in different parts of Rural Suffolk to create and support the development of the small missional groups in their area and to intentionally provide sufficient critical mass for particular ministries which are currently under-represented in rural churches, for example with young adults and those in lower income brackets. Every part of the Lightwave Community has a vision for the great wave of God's love, bringing light to our county.

Further information can be found at: www.light-wave.org



making Jesus visible through loving action

Loverural (to be launched in early 2020) - is about "making Jesus visible through loving action" in the Suffolk Countryside. It is part of the diocese's strong commitment to rural areas. Loverural has three strands:-

Drawing attention to the enormous role of the rural Christianity in building social capital

Acting as a convener for projects and congregations in the countryside including those of different streams and denominations so that good rural practice can be shared and mutual support offered

Enabling those engaged in Christian-based social action to gain confidence and wisdom in how to make exploration of the Christian faith accessible to those engaging with their initiatives.



Introduction

The Waveney and Blyth Deanery sits in the north east corner of Suffolk and comprises 53 parishes. There are four principal areas of population, Beccles, Halesworth, Bungay and Southwold with Reydon. Lowestoft is the nearest large town, but it is in the Diocese of Norwich. Norwich itself is a popular city for shopping, culture and football.

The Deanery is predominately rural. Farming is very important and so is tourism with the coastline between Lowestoft and Felixstowe being an area of outstanding natural beauty. Employment opportunities are provided by light industrial and commercial areas on the outskirts of Beccles, Halesworth and Reydon.

The many parish churches in our Deanery are, like most of East Anglia, listed medieval buildings with much historic interest.

Travelling from Beccles to Norwich takes about 25 minutes by car, whereas Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds are at least an hour away. The East Suffolk Railway Line passes through the Deanery with stations at Beccles, Brampton and Halesworth. London Liverpool Street is about two hours twenty minutes by rail from Beccles.

The charm of the Deanery is the physical beauty of the countryside and coast. The geographic location can contribute to a sense of being a long way from everywhere, which some might consider a good thing!

The Deanery Churches

Many of the rural parishes are characterised by the faithful few sustaining witness and worship in small villages. Our medieval heritage is such that, in common with neighbouring Norfolk there are more than we really need, and most are still open. We are still committed to a Christian presence in every community and there are vibrant shoots of change in many of our churches.



There is a high level of second home ownership in some parts of the Deanery and rural de-population because of falling agricultural employment.

The reduction in stipendiary clergy is leading to a growing awareness of the importance of Lay Ministry in leading worship. There is a growing openness to change, and an awareness that we must all embrace a new future together if the church is to survive, flourish and grow.

In many parishes SSM's, Readers, and particularly Lay Elders, share the pastoral work of the church in the community. We are also blessed by the help of a number of active retired clergy.

Clusters

In recent years the Deanery has been considering at Synod, Clergy Chapter and PCC level the options for offering the best possible ministry and mission with the resources that we have available. In the south of the Deanery there are two team ministries, one based around Southwold called the Sole Bay Team, and the other around Halesworth, called the Blyth Valley Team. Both of these teams now work collaboratively with a small neighbouring benefice.

These teams are legally constituted as benefices, each with a Team Rector and Team Vicars. However it is not proposed to adopt the full legal team structure in the north of the deanery, but instead to recognise the strengths of collegiate team working for clergy, and the benefit of accessing a variety of worship styles and other activities within a team. For example, all clergy could share a part in schools work and children's work. Similarly a variety of worship could be offered across a team that can be accessed by all, and thus appeal to a wider cross section of the community.



The mix of formal team ministries and informal groupings, have the generic title of "Clusters". This implies a larger centre, e.g. Beccles, Bungay, Southwold and Halesworth in which a certain vibrancy of Christian life, witness and worship might offer support and resources for smaller rural parishes to access. It is hoped that clergy will be encouraged and sustained by working in a collegiate system, formal and informal, rather than alone.

Our Cluster partnerships are:

- ❖ Beccles | Hundred River & Wainford | Worlingham, North Cove and Barnby.
- ❖ Bungay | The Saints.
- ❖ Blyth Valley Team | Heveningham with Ubbeston, Huntingfield and Cookley.
- ❖ Sole Bay Team | Wrentham Benefice.

Deanery Planning

A new Deanery Plan was approved in 2019 at a Deanery Synod, this seeks to assist our parishes in delivering the diocesan Growing in God vision. A key part of the plan is to equip people locally, through training, encouragement and support.

An extract from our planning document in referring to our Cluster model -

Clergy / ministry teams / congregations, working together where possible, sharing resources and growing together. Valuing both inherited and innovative forms of church.

- Develop strands for village and town ministry where necessary.
- Draw on the recommendations of the Ministry Deployment Group.
- Develop and support Fresh Expressions / Lightwave groups.

The full Deanery Planning document is available from the Rural Dean.

Deanery Chapter

Chapter meets on alternate months. Stipendiary clergy are expected to attend and take a full part in Chapter meetings. There are several wider chapter events during the year that are open to all forms of ministries.

Deanery Synod

Deanery Synod meets three times a year. We have A full complement of Representatives to Diocesan Synod. Deanery Synod members are encouraged and expected to give a report of Synod business to their PCCs.

Summary

The Deanery seeks to be a supportive structure that enables parishes and individuals to flourish where they are. In our context the sharing of experience, gifts and resources is encouraged.

Revd Rich Henderson, Rural Dean

01502 349143.

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**Find us on Facebook:
blyth valley churches suffolk**

www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk



**THE CHURCH
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