

DIOCESE OF ST EDMUNDSBURY AND IPSWICH



Parish of Sudbury St Gregory, with St Peter & Chilton



Parish of All Saints' Sudbury with Ballingdon and Brundon

These two principal church parishes are seeking a new Rector following the retirement of the Revd Canon Cheryl Collins, who served both parishes and our wider community with a deeply caring mission, gentle spirit and profound faith.

Our churches are currently part of the Sudbury Group (alongside St Andrew's, Great Cornard) but we are expecting the group to be dissolved and are committed to working towards the creation of a two-parish united benefice. Both churches are committed to providing for the spiritual needs of the people of Sudbury, united in purpose yet each with our very different and distinctive expressions of worship. We are seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance and strength for our future growth and ministry in the Sudbury area and wish to build closer links with one another and identify areas where we can work together on outreach and service to the local community. For example, both churches are supportive of the recruitment of a Parish Nurse, where St Gregory's would provide the start-up salary from a legacy and All Saints' would provide their small meeting room as a nurse's surgery/office. We would want the new incumbent to provide spiritual guidance and support for the nurse appointed.

Both churches are Bronze level Eco Churches, working towards silver and both embrace Fair-Trade in church as part of a Fair-Trade town.

Both churches are well represented at Deanery and Diocesan level and are looking for encouragement in their mission to work towards the objectives of the Sudbury Deanery Plan and the Diocesan 'Growing in God' initiative. The four priorities of which are -

- 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

Our new Rector –

- Will be able to minister effectively to both congregations, honouring the distinctive traditions of each while encouraging greater interaction between the two parishes, especially in worship
- Lives and can communicate a simple, deep and thinking faith
- Will deepen discipleship by example, by teaching and preaching rooted in scripture and by encouraging loving service in the local community
- Can relate well to all parishioners and community members
- Will encourage lay participation and leadership in the mission and ministry of both churches
- Can challenge, reinvigorate us and help us to grow younger
- Will be a visible presence across the communities covered by the benefice
- Has a sensitive attitude to the existing congregation in encouraging, supporting and renewing our faith including younger spiritual leadership
- Will be energetic, organised and well prepared, with good IT skills
- Is interested in and understands social media and modern forms of communication (being able to utilise iknowchurch software will be an advantage to them and to the parish)

What we can offer -

- Active and keen support for the incumbent and the ministry of the Church
- A sizeable and committed Ministry team
- Effective PCCs
- Welcoming, caring, supportive and affirming congregations
- Flexibility over pattern of services moving forward as the parishes learn to work together
- A vibrant community, looking to embrace new ideas to grow and develop
- A good modern Rectory conveniently situated in quiet street in the centre of Sudbury
- Effective administrative support
- An attractive, warm and friendly market town

Sudbury - The Community

The market town of Sudbury has an estimated population of 12,000. The main geographical body of the town falls within St Gregory's parish with a population of about 10,000, whilst All Saints', in the south-west corner of the town, has an estimated population of 2,000. The town has expanded considerably over the last fifty years with housing developments and light industry on the outskirts. A new 1,150 home estate is being built in the Chilton area on the northern outskirts of the town, partly in St Gregory's parish. There is also recent new housing to the south in All Saints' parish and the parish also includes housing for vulnerable people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Sudbury is an ancient market town first recorded as the place where Bishop Aelfhun died in 798. It was largely founded on the wool and cloth trade. There are still many weavers' cottages in the town and today it still has three silk mills. Sudbury, the birthplace of Thomas Gainsborough, is bordered by lovely water meadows and closely surrounded by 'Constable country'. A five-minute walk from either church or the Rectory brings you to open country.

Improvements to rail and road links now make Sudbury a desirable commuter town, with London just 80 minutes away by train. Consequently, Sudbury contains a wide social spread and range of occupations, covering professionals, farming, industry, commerce as well as those reliant on financial support, social housing and benefits. Parishioners from both churches have helped in the work of the Christopher Centre, No. 72 Family and Community Network, Storehouse Foodbank and with Town Pastors to provide support at critical times.

Like many other small market towns Sudbury has experienced the impact of supermarkets and chain retail shops resulting in the closure of many family-owned shops and businesses. However, there remains a good range of shops alongside several charity shops, eating places, take away food outlets and the twice weekly local market.

Sudbury also offers a wide variety of sport and leisure activities, including the small but active Quay Theatre. Within the parish boundaries can be found a dance school along with clubs for gymnastics, cricket, hockey, tennis, croquet, bowls, rowing and canoeing. There is also AFC Sudbury football club, the River Stour Trust, Scouts, a Baptists' Mother and Toddler Group and "The Bridge" which is a training centre for adults with learning difficulties.

Sudbury has a good range of schools available for all ages and needs in the area. There are four primary schools, of which two are church primary schools, one secondary school and Hillside Special School within the town, all of which have had contacts with St Gregory's and All Saints' churches. St Gregory's has a link with both CEVC primary schools, providing a



presence on their board of governors as well as holding regular assemblies and hosting their Easter, Harvest, Christmas and end of academic year services. Although not in their parish, All Saints' Church also provides governors to two of the local schools. Recently both churches have been involving the children from the two CEVC primary schools in Eco projects in their churchyards.

There are also several residential care homes where the church Elders regularly visit and take communion to residents.

In line with society in general, there is a swathe of disinterest in 'church' but not necessarily in faith or religion. However, attendance at services celebrating Christmas and to a lesser extent, Easter, is often boosted by individuals who might count themselves among this group. In addition, St Gregory's is used for the town's special occasions including Civic and Remembrance services which represent untapped potential for the broader life of the church. There is a large and comparatively new area on the northern side of Sudbury which is sparsely represented in our congregations.



Both St Gregory's and All Saints' are actively involved in "Churches Together in Sudbury and District" (CTiSD) which encompasses almost all Christian denominations in the town and surrounding districts, supporting its work and encouraging parishioners to get involved in the Sudbury mission led programmes which include –

- Quarterly United Sunday Evening Services held at different church venues.
- Support of "Future Vision" and "Open the Book" providing Christian input to local schools.
- Regular prayer breakfasts.
- Urban Saints groups.
- Town pastors – St Gregory's provide both Pastors on the street and a regular presence at prayer base.
- Future Vision - An ecumenical project to take the word of God into schools and headed up by Faith Marsden, SSM Rector of Acton and Great Waldingfield. All Saints' and St Gregory's support this project financially and through prayer.
- Eden's Non-Alcoholic Café & Youth Bar. All Saints' has been very much involved in this project from its inception to its now thriving role both as a place for young people in the town to meet and as a place for the nurturing and encouragement of local young Christians. All Saints' and St Gregory's have a financial commitment to this ecumenical project in addition to giving prayer support. Eden's is very much a "resource" where the youngsters who attend need to be encouraged to become members of local churches. St Gregory's are encouraging this through Meadow Church. Our links need to remain very close if the transition from attending Eden's to feeling part of a church community is to be achieved.

All Saints' has an annual joint service with an exchange of pulpits with the Sudbury Baptist Church and St Gregory's often welcome members from the local Catholic church to Christian meditation sessions. Since the closure of St Gregory's church hall, the local Muslim community have been provided with a place to pray by the Friends Meeting House.

Among the challenges facing Sudbury is an excess consumption of alcohol or drugs which can lead to feelings of fear, anxiety, intimidation and violence. Sudbury Town Pastors have done a great deal over the last few years to work with young and vulnerable people in these situations particularly on a Friday and Saturday night.

Whilst Sudbury approximately follows the county and national average in terms of social statistics, (age, health, employment and education), since the economic downturn and the pandemic the demand on the local Storehouse Foodbank (supported by both churches) has increased. In the Sudbury community, much generosity and support continue to be widely shown to those who are struggling at this time.

St Gregory's Parish

St Gregory's, a 14th century Grade 1 listed church which is the mother church for the market town of Sudbury, is situated in a walled churchyard on the Croft overlooking the ancient water meadows.



The church is in good order, having substantial renovations done in 2015 to include toilets and servery area. In 2018 the church hall was declared unfit for use and the site was sold. Some of the proceeds have provided an upgrading of the heating and lighting systems which are due for completion early in 2022, while some was shared with All Saints' to help with their hall refurbishment. The peal of eight bells are rung every week, but these require an overhaul and planned work is ongoing. We are currently working on a Heritage Lottery grant

application to provide access to and annotate the story of Simon of Sudbury, Archbishop and Chancellor whose head has resided in St Gregory's vestry since his murder in 1381. The PCC is considering the implications that this access may have on the prayer life of an active church.

There are two redundant churches in the parish:

St Peter's in the centre of the town, occupies a dominant position on Market Hill. It is under the care of the [Churches Conservation Trust](#) and is currently closed as it is undergoing major refurbishment. When re-opened it will host a variety of concerts, exhibitions and local markets. In its stead St Gregory's will host the Rotary Club's Annual Christmas Tree Festival 2021.

St Mary's Chilton is in the care of the [Churches Conservation Trust](#) and run by a strong group of independent trustees. The Rector of St Gregory's automatically becomes a trustee at St Mary's, Chilton and the trustees of St Mary's hope that the new priest will be able to embrace the needs of St Mary's for occasional services and be happy to work with the trustees in promoting the church in the local community. Chilton has a major new housing development, so it could be that St Mary's may need to be brought back into more regular use both as a church and as a meeting point for the village.

St Gregory's walled churchyard is closed. The town council maintain it but have allowed areas to remain wild under St Gregory's Conservation Management Plan for eco work and for Meadow Church with young people. To one side (adjacent to the site of the old poor house) is the paupers' graveyard which is being encouraged as a wild-flower meadow. There is a public access footpath through the graveyard. Sudbury has a Town Cemetery managed by the Town Council. St Mary's Chilton is still an open graveyard, but all plots are already owned.

St Gregory's has two retired priests with permission to officiate and five Elders along with a potential ordinand who will work with St Gregory's until September 2022. The churchwardens are Susan Attride and Antony Arbuthnot, both re-elected for a further term at the APCM in May 2021.

Since October 2020 Merli Harding-Payne has been the St Gregory's Parish Administrator, working for the incumbent of both parishes. This is a paid position. Merli runs the church management and life events diary through the "iknowchurch" software. It is hoped that our new incumbent will also work with this system in order to ease administrative workload.



At St Gregory's there were 142 on the electoral roll in 2021 of which 27 are non-resident in the parish. Pre-pandemic average Sunday attendance was around 70 with weekday service attendance about 25-30. Average pre-pandemic figures for occasional services are 19 baptisms, 4 weddings and 38 funerals. St Gregory's Church has always paid its Parish Share in full (£46,531 for 2021).

St Gregory's worship is structured and liturgical, and predominantly Eucharistic. The church year is important to our worship; the different seasons are given different moods and liturgies. The congregation is encouraged in the observance of Lent and especially the days of Holy Week, prior to the celebration of Easter beginning with a sunrise service of light. The church is open for private prayer every day from 10am to 3pm, to light a candle and use of the prayer corner is an important part of our worship.

At present -

- Sunday service is a Common Worship Eucharist with Hymns (Old and New). We try to involve more people in reading and interceding in all our services and have Welcome rotas for all services.
- Sunday 8.00am service is BCP except in the Easter and Christmas seasons with an attendance of about 10.
- Tuesday 8.30am, Morning Prayer using 'Wild Goose' booklet. Usual current attendance 3.
- Wednesday 11.00am Common Worship Eucharist, shortened to about 30 minutes, including a brief sermon. No music.
- Christian Meditation with quiet music and an explanatory introduction leading into 25 minutes of silent meditation. St Gregory's prayer corner and the power of prayer is an important part of worship.
- We encourage people to join our services regardless of who they are.
- We are working towards the Deanery plan, actively encouraging new mission-based projects, such as Meadow Church, a parish nurse and setting up a history project.
- Spiritual Growth is encouraged through Lent groups, retreats, quiet days and pilgrimage.

Music is an important part of worship at St Gregory's Church and is traditional in style. Prior to the pandemic, the St Gregory's choir sang every Sunday morning and rehearsed on Friday evenings. The choir had a cohort of twelve regular ladies with others available to help to perform SATB music for festivals and special services. Following the recent departure of St Gregory's Director of Music, we have been without a Choir Director, but were fortunate to have a good organist available most of the time. The PCC has pledged to the choir that they will appoint a new Director of Music to lead the choir and will work with the new incumbent to bring this about.



At St Gregory's, people feel comfortable to come in just to sit peacefully and in time join a service that suits them. St Gregory's tag-line "Your Community, your Church" gives emphasis to our friendly warmth and welcome. This, and the number of prayer requests which continue in St Gregory's prayer corner, reflects a prevalent view that what goes on inside our church is of value.

All Saints' Parish

All Saints', in the south-west corner of the town, is situated in Church Street on the southern edge of Sudbury, bordering with Essex. It is a large "wool" church, mostly 15th century, but with a 12th century chancel. It is Grade 1 listed.

Since 1970 extensive restoration work has been undertaken, amounting to approx. £600,000 with work to the rooves, strengthening the tower and in 2004 renewal of lighting. The North aisle has been re-ordered, removing pews, restoring the floor and installing a server area. Most recently (2020) with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the East and North Windows have been totally restored. No major works are outstanding. The tower houses eight bells which were rung for the first time in forty years in 2003 and are now regularly rung by the Suffolk Guild of Ringers.



All Saints' walled churchyard is closed. It is being used for eco interest sessions with children from St Gregory's School and it has a public access footpath through it.

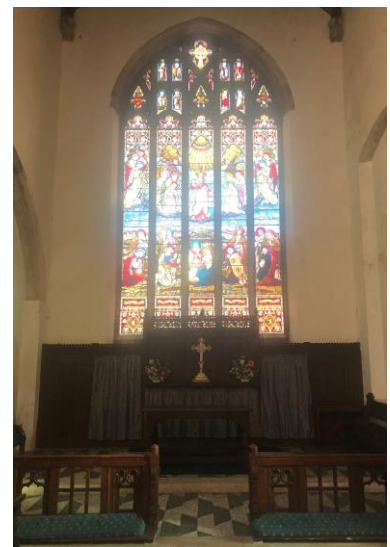
All Saints' Church Hall is a Victorian Grade II listed building, formally a Victorian School, which is situated on the opposite side of the road from the church. The main hall and small meeting room have just been refurbished and are in regular use for church functions and also by the wider community and for non-church related activities. As well as external work, it has been completely redecorated and provides disabled toilet and baby changing facilities, electric heating, secondary double glazing and blinds. Further work is required to the small hall at the rear of the property. There is a private walled garden behind the Hall which has been recently replanted to better encourage bees and wildlife in general.



All Saints' has one retired Clergy, one Licensed Reader, one Licensed Evangelist, one (Liturgical) Elder and two ordained Baptist Ministers with Bishop's permission to lead and preach. All Saints' has a well-functioning PCC but is currently without churchwardens. Mr. Robert Fish, a Licensed Reader, acts as the Parish Administrator. He is also Assistant Warden of Readers for the Sudbury, Lavenham and Clare Deaneries and Chair of the Diocesan Discernment Panel for Reader Selection.

At All Saints' there were 66 on the electoral roll in 2021 and 10am Sunday services pre-pandemic (2019) had an average weekly attendance of 40. In 2019, there were 3 funerals, 1 wedding and no baptisms. About half of the electoral roll members come from outside the parish boundary preferring to worship within the evangelical style offered by All Saints'. The congregation is a broad mix of social backgrounds and ages, many with a strong and lively faith. All Saints' Church Parish Share of £35,487 in 2021 has been reduced with a subsidy. Despite not being an affluent congregation, giving is higher than the average for Suffolk and our ambition is to meet our Parish share each year.

All Saints' is of the open evangelical tradition. Its welcoming approach, however, does allow a broader range of churchmanship to feel comfortable. We are a church that wishes to share the love of Jesus with others, welcoming all including those who feel lost, excluded or alone. We value the Bible as our authority and guide in life and have a commitment to prayer and pastoral work including a prayer circle. We want all people to be an active part of God's glorious work and encourage people of all ages and abilities to actively participate in services. There is particular hospitality to those with special needs. Flags, shakers and tambourines are frequently available for all to use so that even those who cannot easily access worship through the spoken word or those who simply wish to worship the Lord in an outward demonstration of praise are able to do so.



All Saints' currently has –

- 8am Holy Communion on the 1st Sunday of the month.
- 10am Holy Communion on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month.
- 10am Service of the Word available on Zoom for the 1st and 3rd Sundays and also a service in church on the 3rd Sunday of the month.
- Joint services with St Gregory's and St Andrew's, Great Cornard on 5th Sundays on a rotation basis.
- Causeway group – a monthly mid-week group for adults with learning disabilities.
- Solos' lunches (providing a monthly Sunday lunch for those who live alone in the community).

All Saints' Church encourages a diversity of musical styles bringing a richness to the worship through a small music group. Songs of Fellowship is currently used.

APPENDIX

The Rectory



St Gregory's Rectory is very well placed, in a quiet street in the centre of Sudbury, with St Gregory's Church, All Saints' Church, local schools and shops all within easy walking distance. It is a spacious modern 4-bedroom house, with an office separated from the main living accommodation. There is a double garage, large driveway and a peaceful walled garden.

