



The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Profile for the Parishes of the North Brecks Group within the Forest Heath Team Benefice

Introduction

Details of the Post

Role title: Team Vicar (House for Duty) in the Forest Heath Team Benefice.

Deanery: Mildenhall.

Archdeaconry: Sudbury.

The successful candidate will be primarily responsible for the North Brecks Group, which comprises the 3 parishes of Beck Row and Holywell Row with Kenny Hill, Eriswell and Icklingham and will live in the vicarage at Beck Row.

In addition to the North Brecks Group, the Benefice has four other components, each with its own Team Vicar. These are –

- ✚ The parish of Mildenhall, which is led by the Revd Sue Leathley.
- ✚ The Lark and Lee Group, comprising the parishes of Barton Mills, Freckenham, West Row and Worlington, and led by the Revd Canon Mark McCaghrey.
- ✚ The Kennett Valley and South Brecks Group, comprising the parishes of Dalham, Gazeley, Herringswell, Higham Green, Kentford, Moulton, and Tuddenham with Cavenham, and led by the Team Rector, the Revd Canon Chris Childs.
- ✚ The Parish of Red Lodge led by the Revd Diane Grano who also has Diocesan wide responsibilities for the Lightwave Community, which aims to promote small missional groups and fresh expressions of Church.

Where We Are

The 16 parishes in the Benefice cover an area of roughly 65 square miles in north-west Suffolk, where it borders Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. Taking Barton Mills as its approximate geographical centre, Bury St Edmunds, recently named by The Times as one of the top 20 market towns in the country and home to our Diocesan cathedral, lies some 10 miles to the south-east. Newmarket, which is the headquarters of the UK's horseracing and bloodstock industries, is about 5 miles to the south-west.

Further west, Cambridge with all its attractions is approximately 30 minutes' drive away and the A11 and A14 trunk roads provide ready access to the national motorway network. The cathedral cities of Ely, Norwich and Peterborough and the mediaeval wool towns of Clare, Lavenham and Long Melford can all be reached in less than an hour. Also within easy striking distance are Thetford Forest and several Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including those on the coasts of Norfolk and Suffolk, the Norfolk Broads and the Stour Valley.

The railway stations in Cambridge and Ely have frequent mainline services to London and connecting services throughout East Anglia and to the Midlands and beyond. Our local airports are Luton, Norwich, Stansted and Southend and there are ferry services from Harwich.

Map of the Forest Heath Team Benefice showing the current groupings

Mildenhall

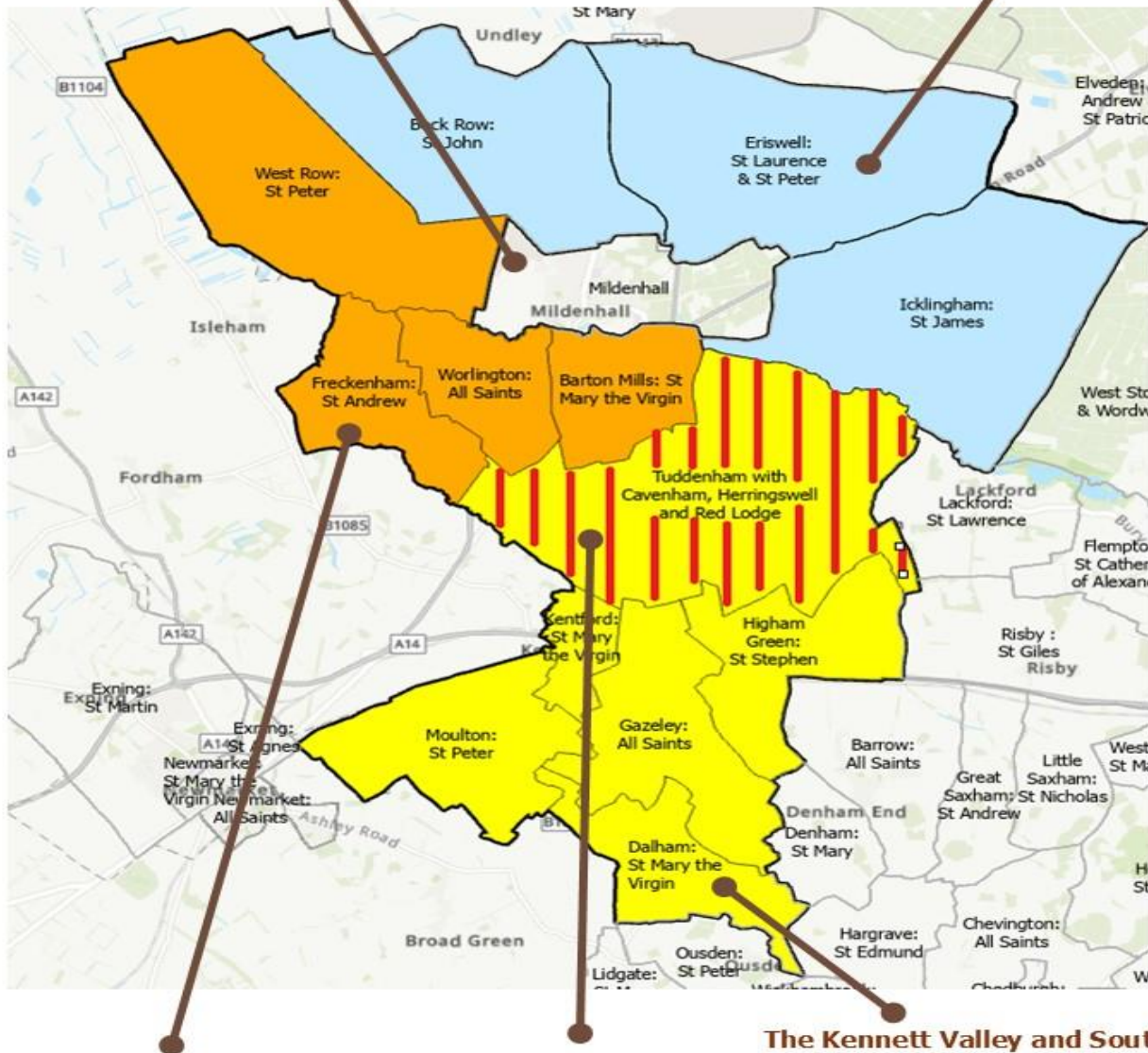
Population c.8,800.

Incumbent: Team Vicar H for D The Revd Sue Leathley.

The North Brecks Group

The parishes of Beck Row with Kenny Hill (population c.5,500*), Eriswell (4,300*), Icklingham (390). Total population, c6,190 (*Includes USAF personnel at RAF Lakenheath/Mildenhall).

Incumbent: Team Vicar H for D Vacant



The Lark and Lee Group

The parishes of Barton Mills (population c.2,300), Freckenham (360), West Row (1900) and Worlington (675). Total population c.5,240.

Incumbent Team Vicar Revd Canon Mark McCaghrey.

Red Lodge

LEP Population c6,300
Rev Diane Grano Half time Mission Priest

The Kennett Valley and South Brecks Group

The parishes of Dalham (population c.220), Gazeley (780), Higham (150), Kentford (1,125), Herringswell (290), Tuddenham St Mary (420), Cavenham (140) and Moulton (920). Total population, c.4,050.

Incumbent: The Revd Canon Chris Childs, Team Rector and Rural Dean.

What we are looking for:

To fill this exciting position, we are looking for a person who is...

- ✚ An inspiring preacher and teacher, rooted in scripture and with a love for pastoral ministry.
- ✚ Experienced in and comfortable with team working in a multi-parish setting.
- ✚ A confident but flexible leader with a willingness to embrace the breadth of traditional and contemporary worship in the parishes of the Benefice and to honour their distinctiveness.
- ✚ A collaborative and supportive partner with the Lightwave children's worker, including their work in Beck Row School and St John's Church.
- ✚ Able to encourage and facilitate appropriate ways in which the diverse parishes may work harmoniously and productively together.
- ✚ An excellent communicator, with an ability to write clearly, accurately and succinctly and proficient in modern IT skills and the use of social media.
- ✚ Willing to be a highly visible presence in the parishes they serve and to engage with all aspects of community life and particularly with local schools.
- ✚ Able to relate to people of all ages and committed not only to ministering to our existing, often elderly congregations but also to attracting the next generations of worshippers - children, young people and families.
- ✚ Keen to nurture others in prayer and discipleship and to encourage and support any who may be seeking to pursue their own vocations or mission.
- ✚ In tune with and capable of taking forward the Diocese's vision for mission and evangelism, "Growing in God", with its four key priorities of growing in depth; growing in number; growing in influence; and growing younger.
- ✚ Supportive of and willing to work with complementary bodies such as the Lightwave Community and the Local Ecumenical Partnership with the Methodist Church in Red Lodge.

What We Can Offer:

The new Team Vicar and their family (if any) will benefit from...

- ✚ The support and fellowship of the Rector, two Team Vicars, a Pioneer Priest, a Stipendiary Curate, and of a number of retired clergy with PTO and Licensed Lay Ministers. One of the retired clergy lives in Beck Row and has years of experience in the parish.
- ✚ Friendly and welcoming congregations.
- ✚ A willingness on the part of our congregations to be flexible and to experiment with new styles of worship – particularly with a view to attracting more children and younger worshippers.
- ✚ A recognition that our congregations must be outward looking and innovative in order to interact more closely with the communities that we serve and to make our churches more attractive and relevant.
- ✚ The chance to live in a beautiful part of the country, with excellent transport links and close to all amenities.

- ✚ The use of a spacious, modern Vicarage.
- ✚ Access to good educational facilities. Schools for all ages are to be found in Mildenhall and there is a primary school in Beck Row.
- ✚ The care and support of the wider Diocese, which is keen to ensure that its clergy maintain a realistic and healthy work/life balance and are given the opportunities and resources to develop further their own vocations and ministries.

The Challenges:

- As the Benefice was only created in late 2020, the new Team is still in its infancy. Whilst the clergy are already working well together, congregations have so far shown little desire to collaborate beyond the boundaries of their own parishes or groups of parishes.
- This appointment will bring the number of full-time equivalent stipendiary clergy in the Benefice to 3, which, sadly, is unaffordable on the basis of the current level of their Parish Share payments.

The principal challenges for the new appointee will therefore be -

- ✚ To encourage a culture of generous giving in these parishes so as to increase significantly their contribution towards the Benefice's total Parish Share payment.
- ✚ To nurture these parishes commitment to growth and to work with them in furthering their engagement with and ministry to the whole community.
- ✚ To devise a Worship Diary that enables the Team Vicar to attend more of the services than the existing pattern (which appears below) allows.

	1 st Sunday	2 nd Sunday	3 rd Sunday	4 th Sunday
St John's, Beck Row.	Encounter	Service of the Word	Breakfast Chat	Holy Communion
St Laurence's, Eriswell.	Service of the Word		Holy Communion	
St James's, Icklingham.		Holy Communion		Service of the Word

Notes

- (i) All services commence at 9.30am.
- (ii) In months with a 5th Sunday and on Holy Days, a Group Service alternates between the three churches.

The Vicarage



2 Oak Drive is situated in the village of Beck Row, close to Mildenhall. The village has a convenience store and Primary School. The Market town of Mildenhall offers a good range of shopping, education and leisure services together with many local places of historical interest and is home to RAF Mildenhall.

Ground Floor

The partially glazed door leads into the L-shaped *Hallway*, with stairs off to first floor. It has a radiator, coat and understairs cupboards, and doors leading to:

- **Study:** 11' x 12'5 (3.65m x 3.87m) plus alcove of 5.5' x 5' (1.55m x 1.62m). North and East. A good size dual aspect room with two double panel radiators, wall mounted convector heater, telephone socket and fitted shelving.
- **Kitchen:** 9' x 12' (2.82m x 3.77m). A pleasant dual aspect room with views over the garden and fitted with a range of base and eye level kitchen units with Formica work surface over, inset with a one and a half bowl, stainless steel sink. Space for electric cooker and under-counter fridge.
- **Dining Room:** 7'5 x 10'5 (2.38m x 3.26m). North and South. A well-proportioned room with radiator and pleasant views over the rear garden.
- **Sitting Room:** 21' x 13' (6.5m x 3.7m). A good size dual aspect room with patio doors to the rear garden and bay window to the front. Feature (display only) brick fireplace and hearth. Two radiators, TV aerial lead and telephone socket.

- *Cloakroom*: Fitted with low flush WC and wash hand basin, radiator and extractor fan.
- *Utility Room*: Fitted with base and eye level kitchen units with Formica work surface over, inset with single drainer, stainless steel sink. Plumbing for washing machine and space for tumble dryer. Worcester oil-fired boiler and heating controls. Partially glazed door to the garden.



First Floor

Stairs from the hallway lead up to the landing with hatch to attic, single panel radiator and with doors off to -

- *Master Bedroom*: 14'5 x 10'5 (4.45m x 3.22m). An excellent size double room with single panel radiator and views over the rear garden. Door to the en-Suite Shower Room, fitted with low flush WC, pedestal wash basin and shower cubicle with Triton electric shower. Extractor fan, shaver light and radiator.
- *Bedroom Two*: 12' x 9'5 (3.72m x 3.01m). A good size double room with single panel radiator and pleasant views to the front.
- *Bedroom Three*: 10'5 x 10'5 (3.30m x 3.26m) plus small alcove. A further double bedroom with single panel radiator and views overlooking the rear garden.
- *Bedroom Four*: 11' x 8'5 (3.47m x 2.57m). A good size bedroom with single panel radiator and views over the rear garden.
- *Airing Cupboard*: With partially lagged hot water tank and slatted shelves.
- *Family Bathroom*: Fitted with low flush WC, pedestal wash basin and bath with mixer tap and separate shower unit. Radiator and extractor fan.

Outside

2 Oak Drive is set back from the public highway and accessed via a shared driveway, with parking and turning area. Beyond the driveway is the attached single garage with up and over door and pedestrian door to the rear. There is a small area of garden to the front with lawn, floral border and footpath. To the rear of the garage, a gate gives access to a pathway, leading to the rear garden, which can also be accessed from the utility room and sitting room.

The garden is of good size and comprises a patio area, with the remainder being laid to grass and edged by borders with shrubs and flowers. There is also a useful garden shed providing additional storage. The oil tank is to the side of the property.



THE NORTH BRECKS GROUP

An Overview

The 3 parishes of the North Brecks Group are Beck Row and Holywell Row with Kenny Hill, Eriswell, Icklingham. They first came together as a larger Group in January 2014 and as a trio in 2025. We took the name of the adjoining area, which is known as “Breckland” or “The Brecks”, in order to give ourselves a common sense of identity within the larger Forest Heath Team.

Our churches take turns on 5th Sundays to host joint Group services and they share other activities such as Lent courses and fund-raising events.

The Churchyards of all three churches are open for burials.

The US air base at RAF Mildenhall is a huge presence in the parish of Beck Row, as is RAF Lakenheath in Eriswell, and the economy of the whole area is closely linked to the fortunes of these bases. The latest position is that, in view of current world events, the bases are safe from closure for the time being, but this issue seems to be constantly under review under successive U.S. Presidencies.

Since January 2019, the statistics for Occasional Offices have been –

Parish	Baptisms	Weddings	Funerals
St John's, Beck Row	8	9	25
St Laurence's, Eriswell	3	3 (and 1 blessing)	5
St James', Icklingham	0	0	7

Beck Row and Holywell Row with Kenny Hill

The Community

The village has a rapidly growing population, with many starter homes occupied by young families. The population in 2021 was 5100 with 29% under the age of 20 and 15% over the age of 60. Since then a large number of starter homes have been built. As it abuts RAF Mildenhall, a third of the residents are US service personnel and their dependants, many living on the base with limited participation in the wider community.

There is one state pre-school and primary school and one privately owned pre-school/nursery. Other facilities are the Parish Hub in the former Rose and Crown pub, a hotel and two pub/restaurants, and a few small shops. The main local sources of employment locally are on the airbases but many people commute elsewhere. There are two Methodist chapels and RAF Mildenhall has a large worship space with military chaplains. There is a settled Traveller community.

St John's Church

St John's was the daughter church of St Mary's Mildenhall, and marriages have only been performed here since 1957. The building is late Victorian. It is in good repair and adjacent to it is a fine church hall with kitchen and toilet facilities.



During the war years, the church had strong links with the local RAF stations and the churchyard contains a large Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery. One notable burial is that of an Australian, Pilot Officer Ron Middleton, who was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.

With the handover of RAF Mildenhall to the USAF, the links diminished. Most of the Americans tend to worship in their own chapel on the base. We do, however, maintain close contacts with Beck Row Methodist church and with Lightwave.

Lightwave was launched in September 2019, as part of the Bishops of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich mission order (BMO) to reach those who would not normally go to church. The team serve alongside the parish churches in rural villages, with a focus on reaching those who are on the edge of church and society.

In October 2024, Lightwave appointed a children's and families' Mission Enabler dedicated to working two days a week in Beck Row as part of the ministry of St John's Church. The work is beginning to see fruit in the afterschool faith clubs (currently have 28 children attending), supporting the mum's and toddlers' group (initiated by the church leadership) and leading two fresh expressions of Church, namely Breakfast Chat on the third Sunday of the month and Encounter on the first Sunday. Lightwave are moving toward integrating into the parish but will operate under the governance of the BMO to maintain the missional spontaneity that is needed. Even so, the links between the congregation and Lightwave are strong and growing.

St John's has a wide footprint in the community given its congregational participation in a wide range of activities which serve the local community. They have a willingness to try new things and new forms of worship.

They host the annual World Day of Prayer; an annual service for those who served in the RAF at Mildenhall; a Remembrance service; and a Christingle/Crib service on Christmas Eve.

The church family is friendly and welcoming of newcomers.

A bible study group meets twice a month and a ladies' club once. Every Tuesday there is an open community lunch or coffee morning and on Wednesdays, "St J's Stay and Play". A wide variety of organisations use the hall, ranging from AA to Bingo.

15 people are named on the Electoral Roll, generally in the 60-85 age group. The PCC suffers from a lack of members, with just 4 people holding the roles of chair, secretary, treasurer and vergers. There are currently no churchwardens, but one is hoping to be elected at the APCM.

Because of the low numbers, the church struggles to meet its financial commitments. The maintenance of the hall is largely funded by community grants.

St John's main challenges are –

- To reach out into the community and attract new people and young families.
- To encourage and support the All-Age Worship Breakfasts led by Lightwave in the hall.

- To promote the integration of those who attend these and the other Lightwave missional sessions into the church.
- To attract new members onto the PCC and to identify suitable candidates to serve as churchwardens.

Eriswell

The Community

Historically, the village mostly served the nearby Elveden Estate, which is owned and managed by the Earls of Iveagh, and is adjacent to RAF Lakenheath, a USAF base. The old village is still mainly owned by the Estate, even though few are now employed by it, but most people live in the Little Eriswell/Lord's Walk area about 2 miles from the Church. This housing estate was used by USAF until 2014 when it was sold on the open market. Even so, nearly ¾ of the 4300 people in the parish are not from the UK.

In 2021, 34% of the population were aged under 20 and 2% aged over 60, The village has several retail units and a pub but no school.

St Laurence's Church

This is a 13th century building consisting of chancel, nave, south aisle and Lady Chapel. The church and the churchyard are well maintained. It has an excellent refurbished organ and a gifted organist. Fortnightly services at 9.30am are mainly traditional in nature with one monthly Communion service.

St. Laurence's considers its strength to be the depth of its congregation's commitment to the church and willingness to take part in services.

The church is actively involved in the pastoral care of the village with many of the congregation also involved in other village organisations.

The congregation enjoys a healthy social relationship with the village.

St Laurence's considers its challenge to be encouraging new members into the church family, especially from the Lord's Walk area of the parish.



Icklingham

The Community

Icklingham has a population of about 400, with two small housing developments in the planning stage. 19% of the population are under the age of 20 and 32% over the age of 60. The village lies along the A1101 road between Bury St. Edmunds and Mildenhall.

There is a large flour mill adjacent to the church but, apart from this, there is little employment in the village itself other than in agriculture or at the village pub, with many of residents commuting to work in Newmarket, Bury St Edmunds or Thetford.

Being on the southern fringe of the Breckland area of sandy heaths and forests, the parish is home to a number of important natural habitats and the village is surrounded by Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

There is one pub but no school or shop. There is a privately owned community centre which can be hired. A quarterly newsletter called “The Villager” is delivered to every house.

St James’ Church

This is a 13th century building consisting of chancel and nave. The building is in good order. Worship is traditional in nature using Common Worship and is fortnightly. The congregation take an active part in service by reading lessons and leading intercessions and there is a recently formed bible study group.

St. James’ considers that its strength is in being welcoming without being intrusive and being outwards looking, taking active care of residents of the village and supporting “Project St James”.



This is a committee which is now in its 28th year of fundraising to maintain the fabric of church and help keep it open. The Project has paid for the installation of under-pew heaters and a kitchen and toilet and has also contributed to roof repairs and the running costs of the church.

There is a monthly coffee morning and a 100 club. Events planned for 2025 are –

- In May: A silver band and barbershop group concert with an afternoon tea.
- In July: A flower festival.
- In September: A Harvest talk and supper.
- In December: Christmas Carols with a band.

St. James’ considers its main challenge to be to draw younger people into the church and to encourage them to take an active part in church life.

THE OTHER GROUPS IN THE BENEFICE

THE LARK and LEE GROUP

Barton Mills – The Church and its Community

Barton Mills is a village of approximately 1,300 residents on the southern outskirts of Mildenhall. There are no shops or schools but two pubs, a village hall, a well-used playing field and playground, and a newly established football club with a refurbished clubhouse. The village continues to grow with a new housing estate having recently added roughly another 80 homes.

St Mary's church is 12th Century and Grade II* listed but has been adapted to modern usage with glass entrance doors and the replacement of pews with chairs. An electronic organ has replaced the pipe organ and the resulting space has been turned into a side chapel for prayer.

The church is open every day during daylight hours and, as well as worship, hosts a range of social and community events.

The prefabricated church room is nearing the end of its life but is used by several community groups, including AA, and we are currently exploring ways to develop a new, purpose-built facility. There is an open graveyard attached to the church which is well maintained and much appreciated by Barton Mills residents.



Freckenham – The Church and its Community

Freckenham is the smallest village in the Group, having only around 350 inhabitants. It is a rural community with a largely settled population and a strong agricultural bias. There is a pub/restaurant and a playing field and playground. The very active village hall is a thriving hub of rural arts, regularly putting on professional theatre or music productions and a monthly film night.

The 12th century church of St Andrew is Grade II* listed and in generally good order. Particular features are the interesting carved mediaeval pew ends. There is an open graveyard attached to the church where we have installed an outdoor, composting toilet.

We have paid our Parish Share in full for the last few years. The electoral roll stands at 12.



Tradition and stability are important to us and to our village. At the same time, we understand the need to make the gospel known to every generation. Therefore, although we hold fast to the BCP and to our beautiful old building, we are also open to trying newer forms of worship.

There is often a Lent group in the village which usually takes the form of a book or film study and is attended by approximately 15 people from across the Group of parishes. This gathering is greatly enjoyed, and we are presently trying to extend it throughout the year on a fortnightly basis.

Our style of worship is "low Anglican", generally using the BCP.

West Row – The Church and its Community

West Row is one of the larger villages in the Group, with a growing population of 1,700.

It has a primary school, a general store, a cafe, a hairdresser, a pub, and a village hall and playground. There is also a well-attended Baptist church.

In April 2019, West Row became a separate civil parish, having formerly been part of the parish of Mildenhall. It is home to the Mildenhall Stadium which is used for speedway and other motor sports. The Mildenhall USAF airbase adjoins the village.

Until the late 1800s, there was no Anglican church in village and residents had to walk to Mildenhall to worship. In 1875, the village school moved to larger premises and the building became St Peter's Church. In recent years, we have removed the pews and replaced them with chairs, creating a much more flexible space. There is an open graveyard at the back of the church and the grounds also house a small, ageing church hall. Discussions are ongoing as to whether to replace the hall and/or to build a kitchenette at the back of the church.

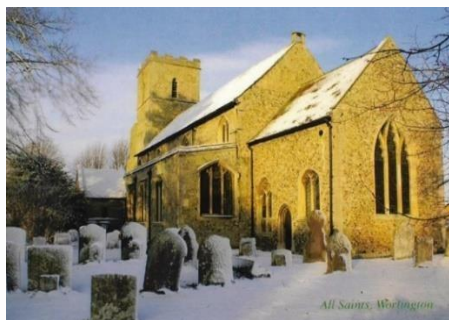
There is a bible study group that meets fortnightly and weekly during Lent. Prayer ministry is available after every Sunday service. Once a month we have a worship group to learn new hymns/songs and practice older ones that we will be singing in upcoming services.

St Peter's is a "gathered" church and at least half congregation comes from outside the village.

Worlington – The Church and its Community

Worlington is a small, rural community of about 950 residents. Amenities include a pub, a country house hotel, a golf course and a village hall. There is also a thriving cricket club. Worlington is home to a number of professional artists and to "The Worlington Movement", which is dedicated to keeping alive the techniques used by the old masters. One of the artists is a Lay Elder at the church and each year we host a show of their work which contributes to church funds.

We work closely with the Parish Council and six times a year we produce a magazine called “The Pump” that is delivered to every household. We hold monthly coffee mornings which are the only free social gatherings to take place in the village. Whenever possible, we also support other groups and organisations, such as the cricket club. Fund-raising events have included afternoon teas and quiz nights with fish and chip suppers, as well as concerts and educational evenings, with lectures about our colonies of swifts and bats. Produce from our Harvest Festival goes to the local food bank and this December we were able to make a generous cash donation to them. Due to a lack of facilities in the church, we are unable to host as many events as we would like. We have plans for the installation of a kitchen unit and toilet but these are on hold at present.



All Saints' is Grade 1 listed and a church on the site is mentioned in the Domesday Book. Parts of the existing building date from the Norman era and we receive many visitors interested in our mediaeval graffiti. The tradition of the church is rather more formal than the other churches in the Group, but the congregation is friendly, open and willing to experiment. For two years we held Messy Church in the village hall.

The church is open every day during daylight hours. There is an open graveyard extension a short distance from the old churchyard.

THE KENNETT VALLEY and SOUTH BRECKS GROUP

Dalham

The Grade I listed church of St Mary the Virgin was built in the 14th century and stands high on a hill about a quarter of a mile from the village, overlooking the mature parkland in front of Dalham Hall. The tower has a peal of eight bells.

The parish of Dalham is a thriving community with some 210 inhabitants of all ages. There is a popular pub, The Affleck Arms, and a modern village hall which is run by an energetic management committee. It hosts monthly film shows and meetings of the Gardening Club and also regular Pilates and Zumba classes.



Dalham is a traditional parish. A Holy Communion service (Common Worship Order Two) with hymns, Bible readings and a sermon is held once a fortnight on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month

with average attendances of about 8-12. St Mary's also regularly hosts Group services. An annual candlelit carol service on the Sunday before Christmas is attended by some 125-140 people.



Dalham PCC meets three or four times a year. A rota of volunteers keeps the church clean, decorated with flowers and cared for. The fabric of the building is regularly inspected. Financially, our position is reasonably secure. Our Parish Share has been paid in full for many years.

Gazeley

The parish of Gazeley is in the middle of the Group and has a population of about 750.

The 14th century church of All Saints', which is the largest of the 8, is Grade I listed and is the focal point of the community, standing in an elevated position in the centre of the village. It was one of the 24 founder members of the "Angels & Pinnacles" network of notable churches in the Diocese and contains a number of architectural treasures.



Barely 20 years ago, the church was at a very low ebb but since then its fortunes have been transformed, with average attendances for our regular Sunday services having risen from single figures to 30 or more and extensive works of repair and improvement being undertaken. We have recently completed major repairs to the roof of the chancel and we are about to embark on a project to install a WC and kitchen in the church.

In spite of the cost of all these works, we have generally been able to pay our Parish Share in full.



Gazeley is a thriving village and its residents greatly value their church. The church is open daily and, as well as for services, it serves as the venue for a wide range of events such as concerts, art shows

and even displays of owls, which are able to fly freely around the church. We make frequent collections for the “Open Door” foodbank in Newmarket.

The other main facilities in the village are a large and well-equipped village hall and a pub/restaurant which sells its own beers that are brewed on the premises. Members of the church are heavily engaged in the life of the village and assist with and support events such as coffee mornings, community lunches, visits by the Rural Coffee Caravan, quiz nights, and one-off celebrations (such as for the Queen’s Jubilee).

Herringswell

Herringswell is a small village of about 275 inhabitants which retains its quiet, rural character. Evidence has been found in the parish of settlements dating back to Roman times. There is a village hall but no other facilities.

St Ethelbert’s Church is Grade II listed and stands on a prominent site in the centre of the village. The original mediaeval building was largely destroyed by fire in 1869 and had to be rebuilt. The reconstruction included some stunning stained-glass windows in the style of the Arts and Crafts movement. The church is often visited by window enthusiasts, especially for the three windows by Christopher Whall. St Ethelbert’s is also frequently visited by bell ringers and has an interesting and unmodified (but refurbished) chamber organ. The churchyard attracts swifts with a calling system and nest boxes. The church can be opened at almost any time for visitors by available key-holders, who live close by. There are 6 on the Electoral Roll.



Although the church now has only 4 or 5 regular services each year, it is much in demand for weddings and baptisms and is considered an attractive alternative to the church at Red Lodge. St. Ethelbert’s has no Churchwardens but has a fully functioning body which acts as the PCC. The regular services are designed to be inclusive and welcoming to all and child friendly. Attendances at the festival services can be 30 or so and, on occasion, many more. The church is also used whenever possible for social gatherings to enable people to feel welcome. Such events are always well attended by villagers.

Higham Green

This is numerically the smallest parish in the Group with a population of only about 150. The village is divided between the Upper, Middle and Lower Greens. Its origins are largely Victorian, as an estate village. Nowadays few estate workers remain and most residents work in neighbouring towns.

St Stephen's church is Grade II listed. It is a beautiful little Victorian building in the Gothic revival style and was designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott, who is better known as the architect of the grand façade of St Pancras Station and the Albert Memorial. He was also responsible for all of the interior fittings and decorations and for some fine stained-glass windows.

The church has an East Anglian flint round tower with a small conical pinnacle which is covered with wooden shingles. Unfortunately, these have been severely damaged by woodpeckers and now have to be completely replaced at a cost of over £80,000. We have always been able to pay our Parish Share in full but the urgent need to raise funds for the repairs to the roof of the tower has made this increasingly difficult.



The monthly BCP Communion is well supported by villagers, supplemented by worshippers from the wider benefice who prefer the traditional liturgy. The congregations for most services exceed a dozen, swelling greatly for the main feasts. The candlelit Christmas carol service is always crowded.

The churchyard is maintained co-operatively by the whole village as a wildflower meadow and, particularly in the spring, is a riot of colour.

Kentford

As a result of significant development within the village, Kentford has quickly become the largest in the Group in terms of population, having grown from just 420 in 2011 to over 1,100 in 2021. It has a Post Office and general store and 2 pubs. The neighbouring village of Kennett has a railway station and is also undergoing rapid growth. Although Kennett lies over the Cambridgeshire border and the parish falls within the Diocese of Ely, the two villages share a playing field with a pavilion and well-equipped hall and we have recently started to hold events jointly with their PCC.

Kentford stands on the ancient crossing point of the Icknield Way over the River Kennett. Our church, which is dedicated to St Mary the Virgin, is Grade II* listed and remains an important landmark on this route.

Until recently, our congregations could be as small as 2 or 3 but they have recovered rapidly since the arrival of the Revd Canon Chris Childs and are now routinely in double figures, with over 40 attending civic and Group services.



We hold a BCP Evensong on the 1st Sunday of the month and a BCP Communion on the 3rd. Each year, we host a popular Christingle, a carol service with the Lakenheath Silver Band, and the Group midnight Communion.

The church, which houses mediaeval wall paintings and unusual box pews, is open every day. In response to the cost-of-living crisis, we have set up a free pantry of essential items and we make regular collections for the local Food Bank. The open churchyard is very well maintained and is home to much wildlife and a beautiful display of oxeye daisies.

For the first time in more than a decade, thanks to our larger congregations and a variety of fundraising events, we are managing to pay our Parish Share in full and, indeed, have increased our contribution substantially.



Money that the developers were required to pay towards community facilities has enabled us to provide a new car park, level access and a water supply for the church. We are about to complete a project to install a WC and kitchen. These will play a vital part in our mission to serve the wider community because, since the demolition of the former village hall, the church is the only public space in the village and it is used, for example, by the Parish Council for its meetings.

Moulton

Moulton is the most westerly parish in the Group and has a population of 1500. The village lies on the River Kennett which is spanned by a fine 15th century packhorse bridge. The church of St Peter dates from the 12th century and has a commanding position overlooking the river valley and surrounding countryside. It is open every day.

Our regular pattern of Sunday worship includes one Family Service and one Communion Service each month. Group services are shared between the 5 churches. The Group's main Family Service on Christmas Day is traditionally held in Moulton and usually attracts a congregation of over 140. It is followed by a shortened Communion for those wishing to stay. Our Christingle and seasonal services for Moulton CEVC Primary School are also very popular and the local Scout and Cub groups have taken part in Remembrance Day services.



By dint of successful fund-raising campaigns over the past few years, we have been able to complete Phases 1 and 2 of our long-term project to restore and enhance the church. These have seen the installation of a new heating system and a roof alarm and the creation of a community space with a WC and kitchen. In Phase 3 of the project, we aim to refurbish the walls and decorate the interior but, before that, we need to carry out significant repairs to the roof and tower to ensure that they are watertight.

The church enjoys strong support from the village. Fund-raising events for the church are always very well attended and we have a "Team St Peter's" whose members apply their time and talents freely to the many tasks involved in running the church and maintaining the churchyard, a proportion of which is set aside as a nature reserve. The churchyard is open and a large extension was consecrated in 2018.

The population of the village includes a broad mix of ages, households and occupations. The main amenities in the village are the Primary School, the Pre-School Group, Moulton Stores and Post Office, and the award-winning Packhorse Inn. There is also an excellent village hall alongside the

sports field, which is home to senior and junior football teams. Moulton Parish Council provides strong leadership and publishes a quarterly magazine, “Moulton Matters”, to which our Churchwardens and the Vicar contribute articles.

In spite of our successes, we recognise that we cannot simply stand still. Our congregations are mainly elderly and we realise that we have much work to do to enhance our mission and outreach to all age groups. In particular, we intend to improve our communications and enhance our skills so that we can explore new missional opportunities and ways of expressing “church” differently.

Tuddenham with Cavenham

The villages of Tuddenham and Cavenham lie very close together between the A11 and A14 trunk roads and are effectively treated as one community. Tuddenham has a population of about 420 and Cavenham only about 140. They are surrounded by farmland and most of those of working age commute to jobs elsewhere.

Amenities are concentrated in Tuddenham which has a new village hall and a good-sized playing field with football, cricket and bowls clubs. There are also a nursery/cafe, a pub/restaurant, and a country house hotel in the former water mill which has become a well-known wedding venue. Like Icklingham, Cavenham has several Sites of Special Scientific Interest and a section of the Anglo-Saxon “Black Ditches” earthworks runs through it.

St Mary’s, Tuddenham is a substantial mediaeval church in the centre of the village. It is in fair order and provision has been made at the back of the church for an accessible toilet and kitchen area. The spacious nave has been used for events such as concerts and art shows. Our style of worship is traditional, using Common Worship. Average attendances for our regular services are about 8-10. Family Services, at which a children’s singing group performs, are usually held at the major festivals and attract an average of 21 adults and 8 children. Our Carol Service in 2022 included a nativity play and was well attended and much enjoyed. We are keen supporters of Eco-church and in the past year we have hosted 3 events for families, with talks on bats, wildlife in churchyards and swifts.



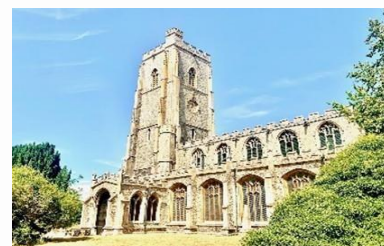
St Andrew’s, Cavenham is also mediaeval but is now used mainly at the principal festivals. Harvest Festival and Christmas are celebrated annually and are reasonably well attended, with the Christmas Carol services in particular attracting congregations of 30 or so. The village community uses the church every other Saturday morning when 20-30 people gather for their well supported Cavenham Community Café.



THE PARISH OF MILDENHALL

St Mary's Church

This is a large, 800-year-old, Grade I listed church which attracts visitors from around the world to see the carved angels on the ceiling and the east window. We are open every day from 10.00am for visitors and prayer times on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. There are emergency store boxes for people to take food and toiletries when in need.



The main Sunday service is at 11.00am – led by the Team Vicar, the Revd Sue Leathley, or the Lay Reader, Andrew Borrett. We also record the service for Facebook and the local radio. The main service may be Holy Communion or Morning worship, plus all-age times with an informal style. There is a monthly, very informal, interactive afternoon service for families.

Since January 2022, we have had 5 baptisms (and 2 thanksgivings); 4 weddings (and 1 re-dedication); and 19 funerals have taken place at St. Mary's with another 3 at the crematorium.



We have very good ecumenical links with 4 other churches in the town which serve the population of around 10,000.

A number of our activities have not resumed fully since the pandemic, and we are rebuilding in many ways. Links with the 2 primary schools and secondary school were re-established during the "Amazing Angels" festival last Christmas. Class assemblies and class visits, and Christmas and Easter trails have re-engaged children from St. Mary's C of E Academy.

RED LODGE

In the last decade, Red Lodge has grown from a small settlement into a large village of over 6,300 people. Major development, which includes a number of affordable homes, is still taking place. The village is situated alongside the A11 and residents mainly commute away for work. Community facilities include a large, modern venue known as the "Millennium Centre", a sports pavilion with sports fields, play areas, and a small shopping centre. There are two primary schools. St Christopher's CEVC School opened in 2012 and The Pines in 2018, reflecting the growth of the village.



St Christopher's Church is a relatively modern building which frankly is already far too small for the community that it serves. It operates as a Local Ecumenical Partnership with the Methodist Church. Alternate weekly services are held and the 2 denominations work closely together.

Until recently, the Methodists employed a part-time lay youth worker, who lived and worked in Red Lodge but the post was only funded until August 2024. However, ministry in this growing community has been enhanced by it's becoming a Rural Resourcing Hub for the Lightwave Project.

Services and activities, several of which are run by Lightwave groups, include monthly Café Church at the Sports Pavilion, Junior Church, a weekly after-school group, an evening youth group and monthly Messy Church.

Average congregations for services at St Christopher's are about 25, typically up to 10 of these being children. The church has links with St. Christopher's Primary School and a C of E assembly is held fortnightly.

The Lightwave Rural Resourcing Hub

In 2019, a Rural Resourcing Hub was established in Red Lodge as part of the Diocesan-wide Bishop's Mission Order known as "the Lightwave Community". It is now led by the Revd Diane Grano, assisted by 1 Licensed Pioneer and 1 Lay Elder. The focus is on promoting and enabling fresh expressions of Church in this area and making Jesus known to the unchurched and to people living on the margins. The project has been funded until 2025/26 by the Strategic Development Fund. To date, the Hub's activities have centred primarily on Red Lodge and Beck Row. Examples have been...

- Opening a Lightwave Café in Red Lodge three days a week which offers different gateways for building relationships with people with varying needs.
- Collaborating closely with St Christopher's church in Red Lodge and with St John's and the Methodist church in Beck Row.
- Reaching out, in partnership with St Christopher's, to the two primary schools in Red Lodge and, with "Newmarket Youth for Christ", to local secondary schools.
- Coordinating deliveries of food and medicine across 6 villages during lockdown and setting up a well-used foodbank.
- Supporting 6 other parishes with particular outreach events and/or mission consultancy.

The outcomes of the Hub's efforts have so far included establishing...

- 12 discipleship groups for adults, meeting weekly with an average attendance of 6.
- A discipleship group for children and young people with an attendance of 40.
- Monthly "Breakfast Chats" ("Let's talk about Jesus") in Red Lodge and in Beck Row which attract an average of 60 adults and children.
- Messy Church sessions, run jointly with St Christopher's, which are attended by 50 children and adults each month.
- A Sunday evening Encounter worship with an average attendance of 20 adults.



The Hub has also...

- Hosted seasonal outreach events and holiday activities in Beck Row and Red Lodge, which have each attracted over 80 children and parents.
- Brought 5 adults to baptism and 7 to confirmation.

Going forward, Lightwave is looking to ensure the financial sustainability of this ministry beyond 2026. The next phase of development in Red Lodge will add 300 more houses at the northern edge of the village and the plans include the provision of a new, multi-use community facility. Negotiations are therefore underway for St Christopher's LEP to move out of the existing church building and to join with Lightwave to share a designated space in the new building. Lightwave's other specific aims are to create a worshipping community for children and young people from across the Forest Heath Team area and to increase its role in resourcing missional opportunities in the other parishes.

