



HUNDRED RIVER and WAINFORD BENEFICE PROFILE

February 2023



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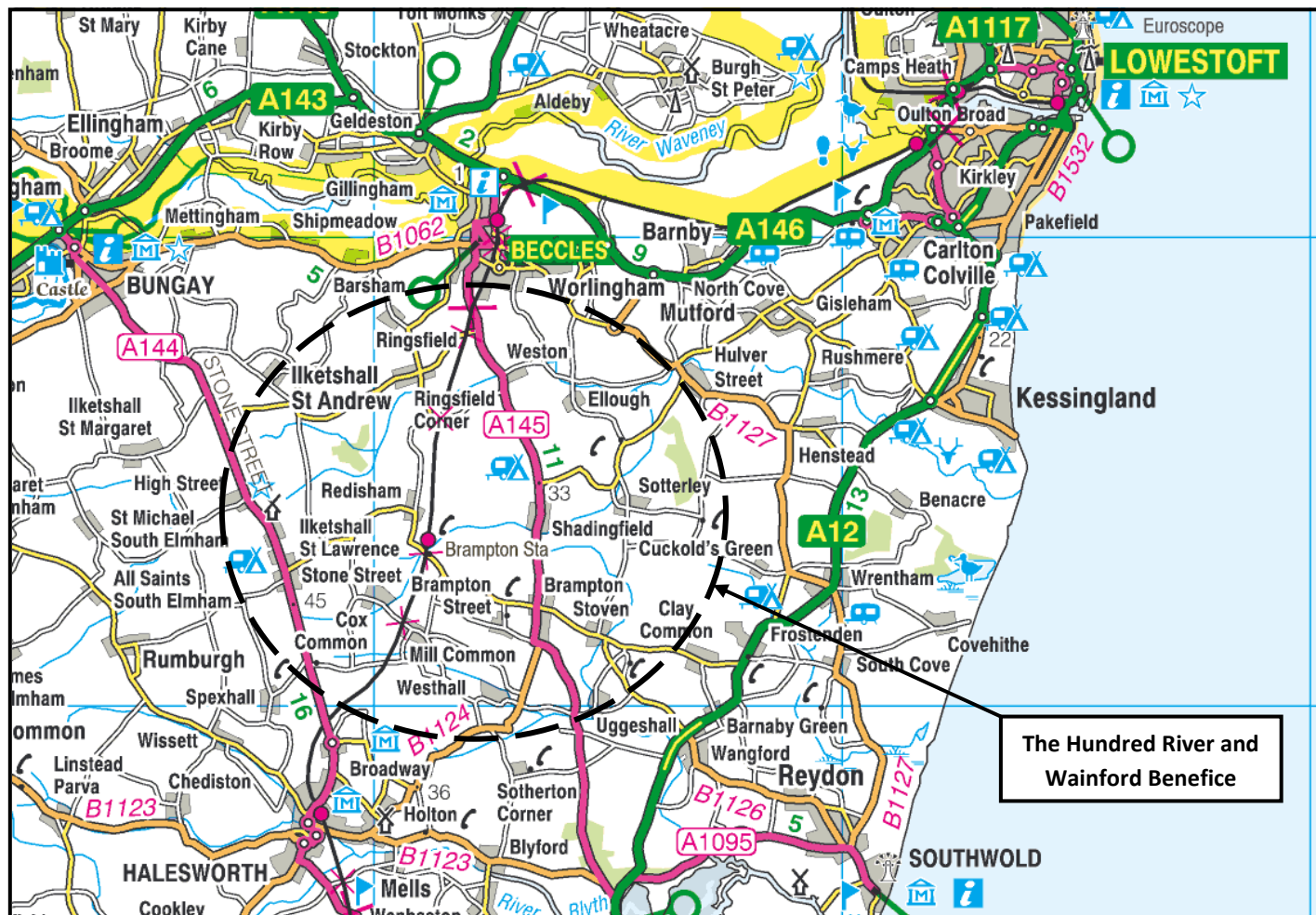
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We are here waiting to welcome you!



The Benefice



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Introduction

Welcome to the latest revision of our Benefice Profile, and thank you for taking an interest in our varied group of churches. We hope that you enjoy reading about us, and would love you to apply to be our new priest in charge if you feel God is calling you to join us.

We are looking for someone who will lead us in our vision to forge closer links with the whole community, both young and old, and investigate new forms of worship that may boost our congregations. The Lightwave movement is described later in this Profile and there is a Lightwave hub at nearby Bungay. We are pleased to report that the Benefice is already working with Lightwave on some projects.

Unfortunately, we find that we are unable to meet the cost of a full time priest, however we are pleased to offer a part time position covering three weekdays and Sunday. We are hopeful of meeting the cost of some administrative assistance or a part time children and families worker, and can offer a modern rectory.

Worship within the Benefice is currently arranged through to May 2023 and will be catered for by a team led by Revd Helen Kerridge, who was ordained as SSM deacon in 2022 and due to be ordained priest in July 2023, supported by three retired priests with permission to officiate and a team of lay elders.

Lay Elders regularly lead worship at our churches, and one, Mrs Ann Hastings-Payne is leading school assemblies each week at both Brampton and Ringsfield during the vacancy.

We also have a Benefice Treasurer who deals with the administration of all fees and expenses.

Our Benefice is in rural northeast Suffolk between the market towns of Beccles, Halesworth and Bungay. The popular coastal town of Southwold is just 7 miles to the east. The East Suffolk Railway line runs through the Benefice, there is a station at Brampton with an hourly service to London.

Nearby attractions include the RSPB Bird Reserve at Minsmere, the Norfolk Broads, Snape Maltings (the home of the Aldeburgh Festival) and Henham Park where the annual Latitude Music Festival is staged.

The Benefice comprises the following villages: Westhall, Brampton, Stoven, Redisham, Shadingfield with Upper Willingham, Sotterley with Lower Willingham, Weston with Ellough, Ilketshall St Andrew and Ringsfield.

The Benefice is in the Waveney and Blyth Deanery within the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. The following pages describe the Benefice, the Deanery, and the Diocese. Individual villages give an account of their church life, activities and what they have to offer to, and what they expect from, the new priest.

Our two Church of England Schools and the Ringsfield Hall Eco Centre have also contributed to the profile.



Southwold



Snape Maltings Concert Hall



Beccles Quay at Sunset



Our New Priest

The qualities we are seeking in our new Priest include:-

- To be a person of prayer and mature faith who is both committed and enthusiastic in leading God's mission in this benefice.
- Someone who will enjoy working in our schools and who will develop and deepen work with families and young people throughout the benefice.
- Someone who will provide pastoral care to those in need and visit them.
- An effective leader who will listen to us, and work collaboratively to achieve agreed goals.
- The ability to enjoy rural life and a desire to be part of village life and activities.
- To be comfortable with both traditional and informal worship styles.
- Probably be from a central churchmanship background.

In addition to the usual duties, the priest would be asked to do the following: -

- Governor of Ringsfield Primary School
- Governor of Brampton Primary School
- Trustee of Shadingfield Village Hall Committee - one meeting per year
- Trustee of the Ringsfield Hall Eco Centre
- Trustee of the Sotterley Chapel Preservation Trust
- Trustee of the Sotterley Charitable Trust
- Build on existing links with the Parish of Beccles.

What can we offer?

- An established Benefice with active and varied congregations with a range of worship
- A supportive ministry team including a SSM Deacon (to be ordained Priest in July 23), Lay Reader, retired clergy and a team of lay elders.
- A 0.5 funded post (3 weekdays + Sunday) with modern Rectory
- Part-time administrative support.
- Good local primary and high schools.
- Easy access to local towns for shopping and medical facilities.
- A beautiful countryside environment with many opportunities for sporting and leisure pursuits.
- A warm Suffolk Welcome!

The Benefice Council

The Benefice Council meets quarterly at Shadingfield Village Hall. The Council aims to foster cooperation between the parishes regarding the co-ordination of special services and general patterns of worship, together with fund raising activities.

The priest usually discusses Diocesan and Deanery matters and inform council members of opportunities to attend events in the wider area. The Council also agrees the division of parish Share within the Benefice.

Unfortunately, our villages drifted apart during the covid pandemic. However, a **"Benefice Away Day"** held in June 2022 established that we have much to celebrate and have a desire to work closer together. A key

first step for the new priest in charge will be to review the outcomes of the Away Day and accelerate progress on the many suggestions put forward.

The Benefice recognises the time limits that will be placed upon the new priest and is already discussing some joint working within the parishes to reduce the burden.

Communications and Publicity

The Benefice has a website [Home | HR Wainford Churches \(hundredriverandwainfordbenefice.org.uk\)](http://Home | HR Wainford Churches (hundredriverandwainfordbenefice.org.uk)). The site contains information on all our churches, together with details of upcoming services and events. The new priest will be invited to suggest ways the site can be improved, and to contribute articles.

The "Sheaf" Magazine covers both community and church news and is circulated each month to around 1000 homes throughout the Benefice and beyond to reflect previous Benefice boundaries. The new priest will be invited to contribute to the magazine.

Church goers receive a weekly pew sheet confirming the service pattern and giving details of the following week's services. The sheet contains news and events and a prayer list.

Service Pattern

The current service pattern is shown below – **we are open to change as we move forward.**

	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
Brampton				9.30am HC	
Ilketshall St Andrew	9.30am HC		4.30pm FS		
Redisham		9.30am HC		9.30am MP	
Ringsfield	8.00am HC 10.00am FS	10.00am FHC	10.00am MP	10.00am HC	Benefice Service
Shadingfield	11.00am WFA	11.00am HC	11.00am MP	11.00am HC	
Sotterley		9.30am HC		9.30am MP (bcp)	
Stoven		3.00pm EP			
Westhall	11.15 FHC		11.15 FS VH		
Weston	4.00pm EP (bcp)		11.00am MP		

Key:-

HC Holy Communion

FHC Family Holy Communion

FS Family Service

MP Morning Prayer

EP Evening Prayer

MP Morning Prayer

WFA Worship for All - an Elder led service

VH Service in Village Hall

Your New Home - Ringsfield Rectory

Ringsfield Rectory is near the centre of the village adjacent to the primary school. It is just two miles from Beccles Rectory, which is a factor in enabling closer ties with Beccles Parish.

The accommodation comprises:-

A study, sitting room, dining room, large kitchen, cloakroom, bathroom and four bedrooms.



Our Schools

We have two Church of England primary schools in the Benefice, Brampton and Ringsfield, who operate as an Association along with Bramfield School, under the leadership of Mrs Vicky Allen, Executive Head Teacher. Both Brampton and Ringsfield are part of the St Edmundsbury and Ipswich Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust. Detailed information on each may be obtained at www.ringsfield.suffolk.sch.uk and www.brampton.suffolk.sch.uk

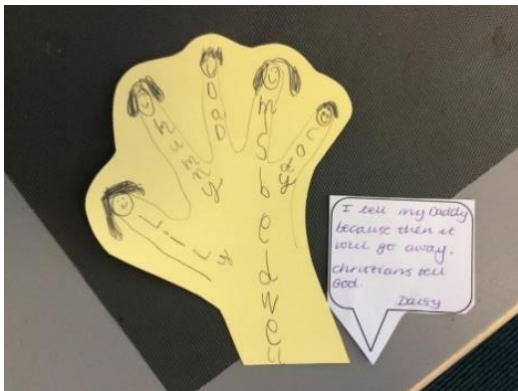
As a Governor of the Association of three schools, the schools have enjoyed a weekly visit from the Priest and Ann Hastings-Payne to lead collective worship. There is a series of Christian values set out by the school which is the focus. In addition, support is sometimes needed with Religious Education lessons and Governor duties. The children of the schools look forward to worshipping in their own village church for Harvest, Easter and other celebrations.



Brampton Primary School



Ringsfield Primary School



SECONDARY SCHOOLS

There is a good selection of secondary schools within a short distance from the Rectory. Further details can be found out by visiting their websites.

The Sir John Leman High School, Ringsfield Road, Beccles.

www.shlhs.suffolk.sch.uk

Bungay High School, Queens Road, Bungay, Suffolk.

www.bungayhigh.co.uk

Seckford Education Trust, Castle Hill, Beccles

www.seckfordeducation.org.uk



The Ringsfield Hall Trust offers support for visiting groups of children and young adults. Our new priest will be encouraged to become involved with the work of the Trust.

The following is an extract from the Trust's Website www.ringsfield-hall.co.uk

Changing lives, mindsets and wellbeing through Nature Connection, Creation Care, Therapy and Community

We are a charity which provides spaces for children and young people to experience freedom, imagination, active hope, and develop a care and knowledge of the natural world.

The Ringsfield Hall Trust is a thriving Outdoor Education, Nature Conservation and Christian Retreat Charity, operating from a 55-bed country house and farm, based in wonderfully biodiverse 15 acres of woodland and meadows within the Suffolk countryside.

Here at Ringsfield Hall we use the transformative impact of time spent in the natural world, to positively impact lives and futures.

We have been helping and changing children's lives for over 50 years, and welcome 3000 young people per year to experience the natural world with us

The Ringsfield Hall Trust is a partner in action of Arocha UK and we actively conserve the land to celebrate God's creation and increase biodiversity

AIMS

To support the physical, emotional and spiritual development of children and young people through re-connection with nature.

To provide training and reflection for adults and leaders for their work with young people.

Research and development for transformative learning and spirituality.

To provide a space for dynamic Christian youth engagement and instruction.

The Trust aims, from its Christian foundation, to be engaged in dialogue and enquiry with those of all faiths and none. We do not seek to impose our faith on anyone. All are welcome to experience the atmosphere and hospitality of this delightful place.

Sotterley Cemetery and Chapel

Sotterley Cemetery and its Chapel were consecrated by The Bishop of Norwich in 1883. They were provided, at the instigation of the Barne family, to replace the burial facilities of the parish churchyard at St Margaret's Church.

Built in the Gothic style, the octagonal Chapel's local red brickwork, stone buttresses and tiled roof all needed renovation by the start of the new millennium. The chapel has been lovingly restored by the Sotterley Chapel Preservation Trust. This Trust was formed to ensure that the Chapel could continue to serve the parish for many years to come. The cemetery is maintained for the Parish Council by the Trust as an area for wildlife and wildflowers as well as providing a place for tranquil repose.



The Trust has a programme of activities throughout the year, and the Chapel is a venue for religious and secular community activities. There are services for Easter, Rogation, Harvest, Armistice and Lessons and Carols. It continues to be used for funeral services.

The Trust also attracts people from a wide area for its secular activities such as the popular Wildflower Festival Weekend. It supports the Rural Coffee Caravan, a local initiative to combat loneliness and isolation. The Trust reaches out into the community through posters and leaflets, and the Facebook page:

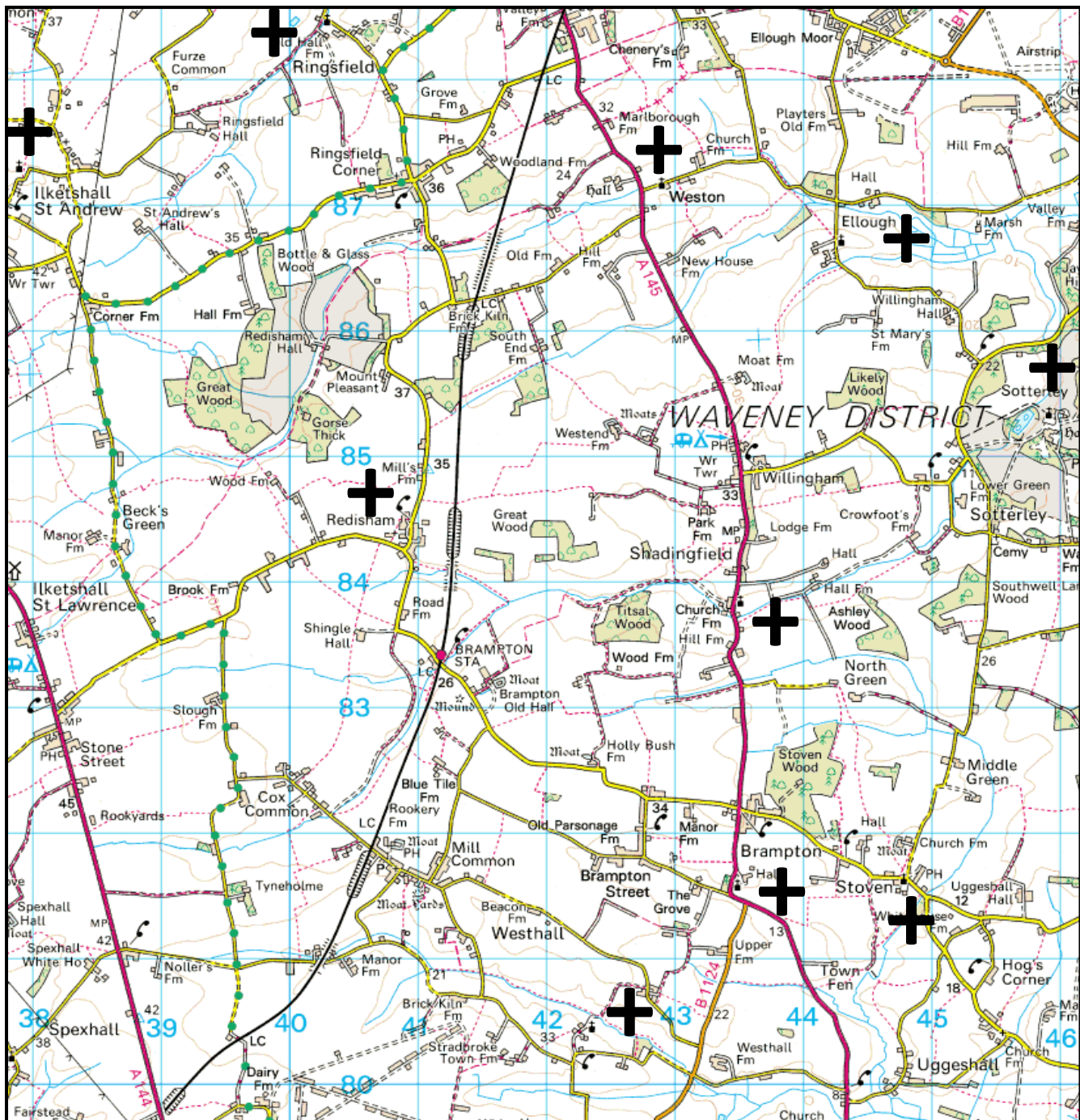
www.facebook.com/Sotterley.Chapel.Preservation.Trust/

Crematorium

The Waveney Memorial Park and Crematorium is located on Warrens Lane at Ellough; it is a privately funded crematorium facility within the geographical area of our Benefice. Cremation services are offered to people of all faiths or none.



Church Locations



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Our Churches

In the following pages our parishes describe their village, church building, activities and hopes for the future.

Brampton St Peter

Our rural community consists of about 340 people of all age groups and is equidistant between three local market towns, Beccles, Halesworth and the seaside town of Southwold. The village is divided into three areas, Low Road with its farms and cottages, the area near the crossroads where the Brampton Dog is situated with Southwold Road leading to Brampton School and a variety of housing. A large area of farmland off Southwold Road is scheduled for development soon. A well-managed Village Hall is situated near the crossroads alongside the bowling green.

The final part of the village grew up in the nineteenth century with the arrival of the railway. There are hourly services from Brampton Station to Lowestoft and Ipswich. We have a thriving Church of England Primary School which is detailed on page 6 of this profile.

St Peter's Church is a landmark on the Beccles to Blythburgh road, sitting as it does on a small rise of land next to Brampton Hall. Built from the 12th century it is particularly beautiful in spring when it is surrounded by primroses. It has a famously long aisle and a pervasive sense of peace. It is never locked, and the visitor's book testifies to the fact that people visit. The church is reasonably well maintained, and a part refurbishment of the electrical installation has just been completed.

A small congregation attends services which are held just once a month. At the current time there is no PCC and the church is struggling to maintain a congregation. However, a group in the village are keen to boost numbers and re-establish a PCC, or perhaps combine with another village. Notably a retired priest is very willing to work with the new priest to revitalise the church. Efforts to boost the congregation will be hampered by the fact that the church is positioned on a very dangerous bend which does deter worshippers and visitors alike. In this case we feel that worship in the Village Hall is possible, as happens in neighbouring Westhall.



The Church



Brampton Plough Day – A Local Fund Raiser

Redisham St Peter

St Peter's Church dates back to the 11th or 12th Century with its most notable feature, a Norman arch over the South Door. It seats about 60 people, making it one of the smallest in Suffolk. It is open every day until dusk, which is much appreciated by those who visit and leave positive messages in the Visitor's Book. The churchyard is well maintained with a lovely display of wild flowers in the spring.



The Church has two Services each month at 09.30. On the second Sunday is Holy Communion, and Morning Prayer is on the fourth Sunday. In 2022 special services were held for Mothering Sunday, Easter, Harvest and Remembrance Day. At Christmas there was a very well supported Carol Service, followed by the Grand Draw and refreshments.



The church is also used for various fundraising events throughout the year, such as Coffee Mornings. A beautiful Flower Festival was held to celebrate the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022. The PCC is also involved in organising the village's Summer Fete and Dog Show, and supports other events, such as the Snowdrop Festival at Gable House, which features a nationally important collection of snowdrop varieties.

The interior of the Church was completely redecorated in 2015. The Quinquennial Review carried out in September 2021 highlights the need for a range of reasonably small repairs to be carried out to the fabric of the church (primarily the porch) over the next five years, but no major structural issues were highlighted. The PCC is a small, enthusiastic group of church members who work together to maintain and run the Church for the use of all.



Ringsfield All Saints

Our Church is an attractive thatched church substantially remodelled by the Victorians with a capacity of around 100 people (with a bit of a squeeze). It stands in a group of eight houses which are just under a mile from the main part of the village. The fabric of the building is in good order with a Quinquennial Inspection carried out in August 2022. After seventy years the church is due to be re-thatched in May 2023 with plans to mark and celebrate this special occasion being discussed. A working party of church and non-church people have carried out extensive works in churchyard and adjacent wood with plans for further enhancements. There are four bells which are rung occasionally, and the church is supported by a group of "Friends" set up in 1950 following some national media publicity about a family of robins which nested in the lectern.



Congregation

We have a small, core, but aging congregation drawn primarily from the village. There is a main service each week; an informal one, two CW Holy Communion and a BCP Morning Worship as well as an 8am BCP Holy Communion once a month. Average congregations for the weekly services are now around 8 - 12. We have one lay elder living in the parish, one retired clergyman who takes a leading role in running services plus the Curate (SSM) also lives in the village and will be ordained priest in July 2023. In addition to the church wardens, we have a small but dedicated group of people who help with cleaning, flowers, refreshments and who organise and lead services.

Services and Events

In addition to our regular services, we have a range of special services which not only involve many more than our normal congregation but also help raise money for other charities. These include a Good Friday Service of Devotion, an annual Friends' evensong, a Masons' evensong, carol service and a graveyard service plus Ringsfield Primary School hold three services a year at Easter, harvest festival and a leavers' service in July. After school club, 'Feast on Friday', proved popular until Covid and has yet to be revived. Outside the church, we now hold our Act of Remembrance on the village



Act of Remembrance on the Village Green

green, which has proved very successful, and on Christmas Eve the village hosts the ever popular "Carols on the Green" when the community comes together to sing. We have held heritage days when the parish registers and village scrap books are on display, a coffee and craft morning and snowdrop days allowing people to come and enjoy the wonderful display of flowers in the churchyard and adjacent wood. The PCC

is keen to expand taking church 'out' to the village. We have good working relationship with the Parish Council and have joined and do join together for events.

Village

The village has a population of around 350 with a mix of age groups, modern and period housing together with a small number of "affordable" houses and around six working farms. The village is some two miles from the market town of Beccles, the southern gateway to the Norfolk Broads. The rectory is in the main part of the village next to the primary school where our previous rector took an assembly once a week and where he was also a school governor. There is a good secondary school within cycling distance. Also within the parish boundary is Ringsfield Hall Woodland Activity and Retreat Centre, an eco-activity and Christian retreat centre (www.ringsfield-hall.co.uk). We have two tennis courts, a children's playground, football and cricket pitches and a well-used village hall which hosts a multitude of events which include social, cultural, and physical activities. There is also a village pub and a limited bus service.

Sotterley St Margaret of Antioch

Our church, St Margaret of Antioch, is situated in the park next to Sotterley Hall. It has Grade 1 status and was built in the 14th century.

Amongst the church's fine features is the 15th century screen and some wonderful brasses. We have frequent visitors and there is a clearly marked footpath to the church across the park.

St Margaret's is a favourite venue for local weddings and has easy access to the church with plenty of parking. We have one service a month but at Easter on Palm Sunday the other eight churches in our group join us in a procession through the park, pausing on the way for readings, before entering the church for a service.

We are a very small hamlet of 100 people. As well as the church there is a war memorial and a chapel which has services at Christmas, Easter, and Harvest Festival. It is well supported.

Our fundraising each year consists of the Hall gardens in February being open for the public to come and admire the snowdrops, and in May we have a fete and garden opening again. This is always well attended.

As a PCC we work hard to keep the church open and used. At present plans are under discussion to carry out essential repairs to the tower.

As a PCC we are very willing to share meetings with another PCC to cut down time for the new priest when he or she comes. Hopefully this will make life easier.





Palm Sunday Procession

Ilketshall St Andrew

St Andrew's Church has served the rural community of our village since the early 12th century. It contains a number of features which are reminders of our rich heritage; these include a Norman doorway, a Royal Coat of Arms and related Garter Boards, a 16th century carved pew and an Ogee Arch among others. In 2001, while redecorating the church, several 12th and 14th century wall paintings were discovered and a grant from English Heritage made it possible to uncover a section of these unique paintings. This was widely publicised in the press at the time and has, and continues to bring, many visitors to our church. We have an open church so access to visitors is not restricted. We frequently welcome groups from Universities and Local History Societies and have sponsored several Heritage lectures.



Our Community

Ilketshall St Andrew is at the western edge of the Benefice. It is a spread out rural village, containing 7 separate common lands, the largest of which is Great Common. An active Land Management Committee is responsible for the upkeep of the commons and encourages wildlife conservation and supports bee keeping on one of the commons. Several villagers are recorders for the bird and butterfly counts.

There are 120 households scattered around the various commons with a population of c. 280. There are 5 large farms within the boundaries of the village. These are mainly arable with some livestock and one farm has a large dairy herd. There are 23 allotments on land owned jointly by the church and the Town Trust which are for the sole use of village residents. The village has few young families, the majority of the population is in the middle age bracket with circa 20% over 65. Children attend the primary school in Ringsfield.

There is no village centre. The church and nearby village hall are the only communal buildings. The village hall is a modern building with excellent facilities, including a large kitchen and function rooms, a licensed bar

and a large car park. Adjacent to the hall is a children's playground. The fund-raising and social functions of the community generally take place in the hall where there are several regular activities including weekly indoor bowls, a monthly sewing bee and a monthly support group was established during the pandemic. There is a good working relationship between the church members and village hall committee but only one main fund-raising event at Christmas where funds are shared between the village hall and church.



Our Church Community

Our Electoral Roll numbers c.20, but regular attendance at our two services per month varies from 4 - 15 adults. We serve refreshments after each service which encourages fellowship and sharing church and village news. The attendance is much larger at our Harvest Festival, Christmas Carol Service, Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve and the Easter Service with Blossoming of the Cross. We give to charities regularly through collections at our Harvest and Carol Service as well as the proceeds from our annual Lent Lunches.

Though our active membership is small, we have a devoted group of people who look after the regular maintenance and cleaning of the church, providing flowers each month, as well as maintaining the church yard and adjacent cemetery. We have five dedicated PCC members (all women) who have cared for the building and the spiritual aspects of the church for many years. We no longer have Church Wardens. We have 1 Lay Elder who is a PCC member but no longer lives in the village. Pre-pandemic we organised regular fund raising events, primarily Coffee mornings and Cream Teas in the summer. Post pandemic we have been unable to pay our full quota to the Diocese each year.

Challenges

Although the interior of our church is sound and has underpew heating throughout most of the church, as well as a carpeted area at the back of the nave for socialising, we do not have water or toilet facilities (although we can use the village hall which is just 300 yards away).

We have two major challenges ahead of us:

- The re-roofing of the church as the terracotta tiles are nearing the end of their life (over 100 years old)
- Making safe the access to the roof of the tower and the structure which supports the 3 bells. At present access to the bells and tower is not allowed.

We have just instructed our architect to prepare a full specification for all 'high level' repairs to the church roof and tower. Once the full cost of these works is estimated we need to decide which works to undertake. The architect has advised us that all the roof tiles appear (from drone footage) to require replacement.

Westhall St Andrew

Lying at the southern end of the Benefice the parish is closely tied in with Halesworth geographically but separated from it by the wartime airfield which is home to a turkey factory and large wind turbines.

Like much of the Benefice the people profile has been an aging one but we are at a stage where the older group are moving on and, like other parishes, we expect an influx of new build houses in the next few years.

Westhall has very strong sense of community and is a very active village. The community has recently taken over the redundant Racehorse Inn, refurbished it and reopened it as a Community Pub. This venture is proving very successful, attracting people from a wide area to events including Carols at Christmas.

The Community Council, who own the playing field and the village hall,



The Community at the Racehorse Reopening

have invited local football teams to use their pitches and changing rooms. This has led to a surge in visitors on a Sunday. The Village Hall is used by many groups and is the venue for a monthly Lay Elder led café style service.

The Village Hall is also home to the Monday Club which meets monthly. The club is led by church members, and is an opportunity for boys and girls to meet up for craft, cooking and games. Parents and grandparents are encouraged to stay and join in, or to simply sit and have coffee and a chat.

Our Church

Our church is special. Those looking for a classic Suffolk church will be stunned by the magnificence of the building that they find. Described by Simon Knott as one of the finest in Suffolk, and on a par with Blythburgh, it comprises three churches in one with the south aisle being the basis of a Norman church with main nave C13 and the chancel C14. This combination leads to a church with some special attributes – un-weathered Norman doorway hidden in the tower, the famous font still with gesso work, wall paintings (including a 'horned' Moses), the screen with the unique panels of the Transfiguration.



The church was originally built by the side of substantial stream, or even river, with the village to the East. This site was abandoned following the Black Death in the late C13 and the current village grew up on the higher land to the north where farms and windmills were sited. The arrival of the railway in the C19 brought labouring men for its construction and some settled here.



The Seven Sacrament Font



Part of the Screen

Strengths

- A strong local community that will gather in numbers to support a local cause –
- A congregation that comes to church in large numbers for the major services.
- A great affection for the church building which has restored the fabric in recent years resulting in "a well-kept church, lovingly maintained and well-used" in the words of Simon Knott. The Quinquennial review revealed few issues of major importance after the work of recent years.
- An active village hall well used by various groups. The church holds a popular 'Café style' service there once a month. The Hall could be used for further alternative styles of worship.
- Formation of good links with the neighbouring parish of Brampton with a lay reader from there leading a joint service in Westhall village hall. Further joint services are being discussed.
- Recent development of a car park to the church so that non-residents can arrive by vehicle and use the church more for non-religious events – concerts, exhibitions, etc.
- The PCC has received a legacy which will enable it to install a kitchen and toilet within the church. The DAC are involved and helping with the planning. This will enable us to host concerts, weddings and other events within the parish and boost the income.

Challenges

- The community's love for its church building is not nearly so strong as for the Church itself. Past incumbents were much loved, and well respected, but the presence of a Wesleyan chapel (though now a house), and the football field, reflects more the minds the local people. Also there was a major dispute between certain villagers and the Church over the sale of what was the local school which has still some difficult memories for the older generation. This is now passing.
- The distance of the church from the village means the village hall is the centre of activity rather than the church.
- The need to encourage children and their parents to participate in the Church. And to reclaim those that were churchgoers to come back and join in. This was a feature some years ago but that group have grown up and moved on to senior schools, higher education, and into the workforce.

Weston St Peter and Ellough All Saints

Weston is a dispersed village of approximately 100 houses and 250 people. There is no distinct village centre but houses are spread singly or in small clusters throughout the parish. The main industry is farming.

St. Peter's Church is a lovely, simple, quite plain small church which has stood for almost 1,000 years beside the River Hundred. It is blessed with one of thirteen surviving Seven Sacrament fonts in Suffolk and it is believed some of the characters representing the sacraments were damaged by a contingent of Oliver Cromwell's men when they stabled their horses there. The church can seat around 100 people, has two services a month with 8-10 attendants but has large congregations on special days such as Easter, Carol service, midnight Christmas Eve service



St Peter Weston



All Saints Ellough

and quite a lot of large funerals and Weddings. We hope so much to keep the door open and represent the Lord Jesus both now and in the future. Funds are low and some repairs needed. There are few young people but we are determined to survive. We hold monthly coffee mornings in the church during the warmer months and hold an Annual Parish Supper and Quiz night in the Autumn.

Weston once had its own historic pub, school and reading room, all long since gone. Without the Church there would be nothing to speak for us in the Community.

We have been joined with Ellough, the next village, for many years now and we support each other where

possible. The church at Ellough has been redundant for some years but we have an occasional service there (Easter sunrise, Ascension Day and Starlight Carols).

We realise there have been big changes in Society over the last few decades and church attendance has declined but a Bible-believing hub is most essential to any place for its salt and light.

Shadingfield St John the Baptist

The church building watches over the A145 road from Beccles to Blythburgh adjacent to a large car park. It has Norman origins with a 15th century tower, and a handsome Tudor brick porch. Inside, the font bowl is 15th century on an earlier base, and there are carvings, and fragments of medieval wall paintings.



St John the Baptist Shadingfield

The village of Shadingfield consists of some 60 dwellings, but the parish boundary with Willingham St Mary divides the main centre of population, and the number of people served by Shadingfield church almost doubles when that part of Willingham is included. The church of Willingham St Mary did not survive the religious upheavals of the 17th century, and although it has been officially joined with Sotterley since the 1800's, several residents worship regularly at Shadingfield.



Presentation of Cheque to Cancer Research

We have an active PCC and, prior to the covid pandemic were able to pay our Parish Share in full. Our fund raising ability is now restored and we do not envisage share short falls going forward. We take pride in our giving, and in 2022 were able to donate £2,700 to charity, including £2,390 to Cancer research.

Maintenance of the fabric is ongoing, and since the year 2000 we have repaired and conserved the Tudor brick porch, re-roofed the nave and chancel, replaced the pew floor and wall panelling on the south side of the church and redecorated the nave and tower room/vestry. A quinquennial inspection completed in 2022 identified the requirement for minor repair works only.

The Village Hall, known locally as the Abbey, (although no-one can remember why), was originally built as a Mission Hall in the late 1890's and was gifted to the Parish for the "furtherance of Christian Worship". The freehold is held by the Diocese and the property leased to the Village Hall Management Group, several of

whom are also members of the PCC. The hall is well used, however there is scope to encourage further use.

Strengths

- A congregation with a love of both God and the building.
- A forward-looking PCC which is very open to new ideas
- Lay elder led worship works well in our church.
- We socialise as a church community and enjoy life!
- We are ready, willing, and able to support our new priest.

Challenges

- Increasing regular giving
- Extending outreach to attract a wider age range
- Maintain the church fabric and, in the long term, improve facilities to encourage a wider use of the building.

Stoven - St Margaret

At just under 750 acres and with only 32 dwellings, Stoven is the smallest village in the Hundred River and Wainford Benefice. St Margaret's Church is situated to the southeast of the village and is a Victorian restoration completed in the late 1850's. The building retains its original 11th Century Norman doorways, and because the village name is Anglo Saxon in origin it is possible an earlier church may have stood on the same site.

The church had been closed for several years with the then small congregation attending services at nearby St Peter's church in Brampton. When, however, the threat of demolition was imposed on St Margaret's by the Diocese in 1996, the local residents came together to form a new PCC to try and save what was, and through their perseverance, still is an important Grade 2* listed building.



Stoven St Margaret

Following intensive fund raising and grants from EH and SHCT amongst others, the church was re-roofed, heating put in and monthly services re-instated.

Sadly, enthusiasm has waned and the monthly service attendance has fallen to two or three. The parish has no PCC and the future of St Margaret's is again in doubt.

Waveney and Blyth Deanery



The Waveney and Blyth Deanery sits in the northeast corner of Suffolk and comprises 51 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.

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 with Worlingham, North Cove & Barnby | Hundred River & Wainford

Bungay | The Saints + Lightwave Rural Hub

Blyth Valley Team | Heveningham, Huntingfield & Cookley

Sole Bay Team | Wrentham Benefice

In 2019 we developed a deanery plan that is a working and evolving document. The plan reflects the diocesan priorities in our context and highlights that through clergy chapter, deanery synod, and the deanery learning hub, how we seek to be collaborative and missional as we work together, sharing gifts, talents, and resources where possible.

A copy of the deanery planning document is available from the rural dean.



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The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Where are we?

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

Who are we?

We are often known as 'the Church of England in Suffolk'. The 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 3 archdeaconries and over 450 churches where

visitors will find a wide range of worshipping styles, from the traditional to contemporary, as well as Fresh Expressions and growing numbers of 'Lightwave' groups for those who haven't connected with traditional church previously. The Cathedral of St Edmund and St James in Bury St Edmunds is the mother church of the Diocese and is proactive in offering support to clergy and parishes including welcoming parishes on pilgrimage. We also work closely with our 88 Church of England primary schools. All this is, of course, supported by a small and committed diocesan staff based in the diocesan office in Ipswich.

What is our vision?

Our diocesan vision is to be 'Growing in God', aiming to grow 'flourishing congregations making a difference'. This vision was accepted by Diocesan Synod in 2014 and since then we have been focussing on four key priorities:



- Growing in Depth: responding to the call of Christ in every part of our lives
- Growing in Number: drawing the contacts we have into the life of God's kingdom
- Growing in Influence: reaching beyond ourselves in our impact on the wider world
- Growing Younger; building churches whose age-range reflects our communities

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. This focusses on nurturing and discipling new Christians through small Lightwave groups and hubs such as the one being in Bungay within the Waveney and Blyth Deanery.

We have also been part of a pilot scheme exploring how we can use our church buildings more creatively both for those who worship regularly and for the benefit of our communities and many churches have benefitted from this.

We are broadening our vision through a growing partnership with the Diocese of Kagera in Tanzania, with fruitful visits and links being established.

How can we fulfil our "Growing in God" vision?

We value our huge range of different ministries: we have over 100 stipendiary clergy, plus many SSM and PTO clergy as well as lay and ordained chaplains who can be found in such diverse places as schools, prisons, hospitals, hospices, the army, RAF and the police. Some clergy are ordained to serve in their local benefice through our pioneering 'auxiliary ordination pathway' which enables people's vocations to ordained ministry to be discerned within the Diocese.

All clergy work alongside lay ministers – Readers, elders, and the growing number people exercising recently introduced licensed ministries: pioneer ministers, evangelists, youth ministers and children's and family workers. Our ministry deployment principles encourage teams or clusters of lay and ordained ministers to work together so that clergy feel less isolated and ministry resources the mission of the church more

effectively. We are just beginning to develop the principle of 'local ministers' in our benefices, releasing people's gifts to serve in their locality.

We are excited about these new developments which are playing an important part in our diocesan vision of Growing in God.

So, in summary:

As our Growing in God vision states, we aspire to be people who know that 'God is with us, gathering us as Christ-centred communities, calling us to make Christian disciples, sending us in loving service, empowering us by the Holy Spirit'.



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.

Each lightwave group aims to do one activity together to bless their local community and to share faith in their locality or network. Each group receives support and training in their outreach through a growing network of coaches. Each is mainly concerned to bless people who are exploring faith for the first time, while simultaneously cooperating closely with local parish churches and others. The Lightwave Community is being developed through a Project called "Growing in God in the Countryside" funded by the Strategic Development Unit of the Church Commissioners until 2025. While both urban and rural Christians are part of this community, there is a particular focus on helping 1500 new disciples come to faith in rural areas in the period of the funding. Many Lightwave groups are planting fresh expressions of Church. The understanding is that such fresh expressions of Church will be new or different ways of being established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church.

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.



making Jesus visible through loving action

Loverural – 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 3 strands:-

- a) Drawing attention to the enormous role of the rural Christianity in building social capital
- b) Acting as a convenor for projects and congregations in the countryside including those of of different streams and denominations so that good rural practice can be shared and mutual support offered
- c) 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

www.light-wave.org