



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

Lark Valley & North Bury Team

House for Duty Team Vicar



www.northburychurches.org.uk

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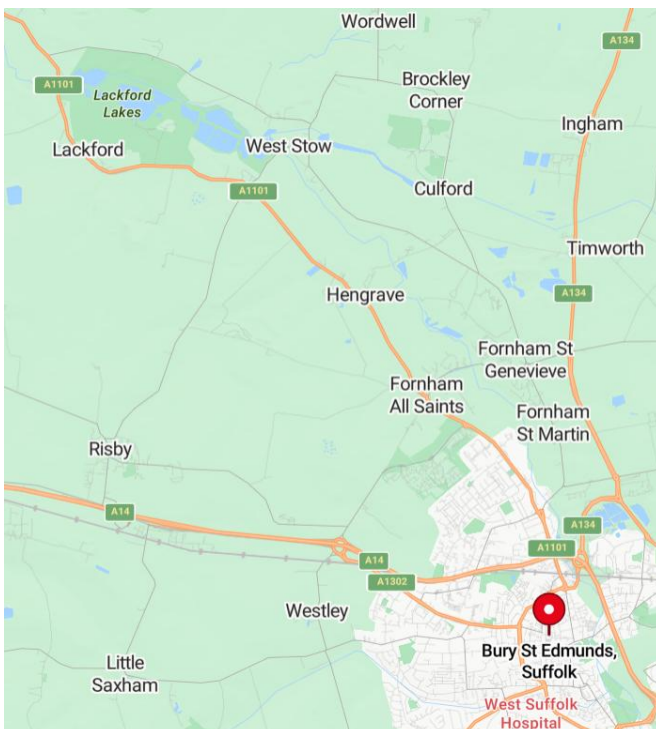
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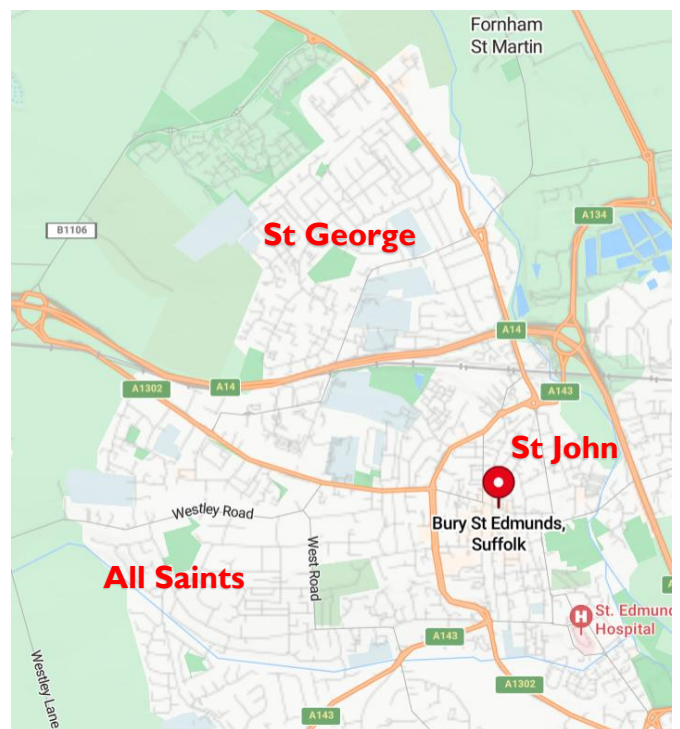
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The Lark Valley and North Bury Team

The Lark Valley and North Bury Team (LVNB Team) is a significant benefice within the life of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich being situated in the cathedral town of Bury St Edmunds and the surrounding area. It contains a range of rural and urban parishes offering a variety of worship and breadth of tradition, although overall sacramental. There are 10 parishes in the Team; within the town of Bury St Edmunds these are All Saints, St George and St John the Evangelist and within the villages, Culford: St Mary, Flempton with Hengrave: St Catherine of Alexandria, Fornham All Saints: All Saints, Fornham St Martin cum St Genevieve: St Martin, Lackford: St Lawrence, Timworth: St Andrew and West Stow and Wordwell: St Mary.



Villages in the LVNB Team



Town Parishes in the LVNB Team

Bury St Edmunds is an attractive market and cathedral town whose population continues to expand and is now approximately 45,000. The town is generally prosperous, although the benefice has some wards that are more deprived as described by Church Urban Fund data.

The North Bury Team came into being in 2002, and comprises the three parishes of All Saints, St George and St John the Evangelist, with a population of approximately 26,000 in the northern half of the town and includes the relatively new housing development of Marham Park, with other housing projects currently in progress such as the Tayfen Road development.

The Lark Valley Benefice, with its seven churches and population of approximately 3000, was a united benefice from 1997, and has been run together with the North Bury Team since December 2014. The LVNB Team with its 10 churches, became a legal formality in 2019. The church of All Saints in Wordwell (maintained by the Churches Conservation Trust) is also found in the Lark Valley within the parish of West Stow and Wordwell. The

ancient church of St John Lateran is found within the grounds of Hengrave Hall and we are often invited to conduct blessings of marriages following civil ceremonies.

Within the town parishes there are several primary schools (one a Church of England Voluntary Aided Academy) several upper schools (one Church of England, one Roman Catholic) Abbeygate Sixth Form College and West Suffolk College and University Campus. There are no schools in the Lark Valley parishes, apart from Culford School (part of the Methodist Independent Schools Trust), and few amenities, with most people here looking to Bury St Edmunds for these.

Our new Team Vicar

We are looking for someone who:

- is prayerful and deeply rooted in their faith with a heart for incarnational ministry
- has a pastoral, inclusive and compassionate heart
- is an experienced priest who is adaptable and can work comfortably across a range of traditions
- can thrive in both urban and rural communities working with people of all ages and in a variety of contexts
- is naturally collaborative and willing to be a supportive, cheerful, and fun colleague
- is an engaging and creative communicator, able to nurture and encourage the faith of others

The expectation is that our House for Duty Team Vicar will spend the equivalent of Sunday and 2 days per week in discharging the duties of this office.

We offer:

- A supportive team of clergy colleagues consisting of
 - a full time Team Rector (who is also Rural Dean)
 - a full time Team Vicar (who is also the Diocesan Advisor for Women's Ministry)
 - several clergy with Permission to Officiate
- Lay ministry support in the form of
 - two Lay Elders and a Reader Emeritus
 - supportive church officers
- A part time paid administrator working three days a week in the office at All Saints Church, providing administrative support across the Team, as well as acting as Bookings Co-ordinator for the parish of All Saints in Bury St Edmunds.
- A beautiful place to live in a purpose-built modern vicarage as part of a community that has a long and well-established relationship with the church. (See page 5 for further details of St George's Vicarage).

Our new Team Vicar can be assured that the wellbeing of our clergy is of great importance to all in the Team and we will support them in protecting their time off, their need for an annual retreat and their holiday time.

St George's Vicarage



St George's Vicarage is a modern four-bedroomed detached property located next to the church and in a popular residential estate near to the town of Bury St Edmunds. There is good off-street parking plus many local amenities, both nearby and in Bury St Edmunds.



The Parishes of the Lark Valley and North Bury Team

Bury St Edmunds: All Saints



The church is on Park Road, at a high point of the town near the water tower and serves the western and more suburban area of the town. The parish was founded in 1953, worshipping initially in what is now the hall. The current church building was first used in 1963. It was our delight to welcome the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich to our Jubilee celebrations in 2023. Sunday services include BCP Holy Communion and Common Worship Holy Eucharist held on every Sunday and alternating during the week. The church also hosts an All-Age service once a month, often involving Godly Play story telling. The annual LVNB Team Memorial Service is held within All Saints. Regular coffee mornings are appreciated by the local community. The church has a missional focus and a desire to grow in outreach, and has an Events Committee and a Mission Group. There are a number of care homes and schools within the parish. Lay people from All Saints visit Sextons Manor Community Primary School fortnightly as part of the *Open the Book Project*, which presents Bible stories as part of collective worship. The church also hosts Sextons Manor Primary for their seasonal services – with the whole school attending. The church and hall buildings also host many community activities and this desire to be a local hub is a large part of the church's ethos and indeed income. Choirs and musicians often choose All Saints for their performances because it is warm, comfortable and has a car park!



Bury St Edmunds: St George



The church opened in 1951 and serves two post-war former council-housing estates (Mildenhall Road & Howard), and it includes the new development at Marham Park. The congregation is small but dedicated and gathers for a weekly Eucharist. Evening Prayer is hosted for the Team every Wednesday. St George's has a welcoming heart and hosts events for the community, such as concerts (including the popular Mead Singers), coffee mornings, and seasonal services (the Norton Salvation Army Band are invited annually). There are schools and care homes associated with this parish. The church is connected to the Anselm Centre, a community hall run by the Mildenhall Road Estate Community Association, with members of the church serving as trustees.

Bury St Edmunds: St John the Evangelist



The parish church of St John the Evangelist is near the centre and market place of Bury St Edmunds, on St John's Street. It was built in 1841 and serves the town's retail and transport quarter, not least through being open every day for quiet prayer and reflection. Of the three town churches, St John's has the most obvious identity. It developed a Tractarian tradition in the nineteenth century, and now represents the affirming and inclusive strands of the Anglo-Catholic tradition. It is a member of the Inclusive Church Network. We have a dedicated lay team of servers.

St John's observes all feast days and hosts combined seasonal services and times of devotion for the LVNB Team (Epiphany and Advent carol services, Stations of the Cross during Lent, the Easter Eve Vigil) as well as a monthly celebration of Adoration and Benediction. St John's has a developed spirituality with a weekly pattern of prayer and worship. The Eucharist is celebrated on Wednesdays and Fridays. Meditation and the Daily Office are observed in the church at varying times in the week.

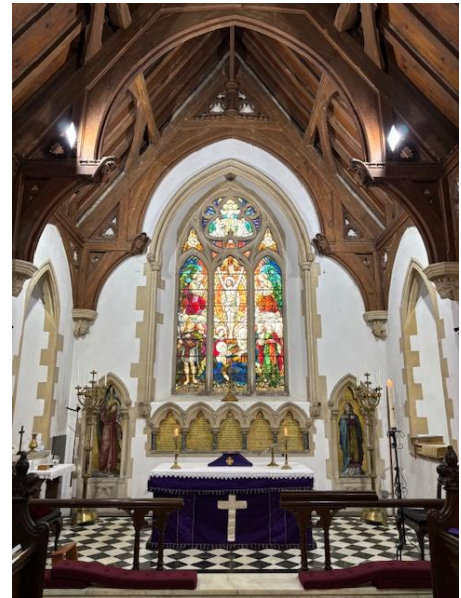
St John's hosts the local C of E School for seasonal services and lessons, and lay members have been involved in a project sewing kneelers with one of the community primary schools. Like other town parishes care homes are found within St John's parish.



St John's is a growing diverse congregation with a mixed age range and is known for its welcome and hospitality – it likes a party! Due to its excellent acoustics the church is used by several choirs and organisations. St John's are committed to Eco-church and every year has a large number of swifts descend upon the spire to make use of the nesting boxes.

The former St John's Infant School, now The Centre, is a well-appointed venue and community space. It is run by an ecumenical trust, and hosts a wide variety of groups with educational, recreational and well-being objectives. The popular Old School Café is housed within The Centre.

Culford: St Mary



The church is situated in the park surrounding Culford School and is unusual in that it is also frequently used for worship by the school, which has a Methodist Foundation. This benefits the parish financially and provides good opportunities for liaison between church and school. Many pupils return to get married and have their children baptised.

The church is open at all times and is accessible via the public footpaths. Pilgrims make their way to Culford, on route to Walsingham as part of the London to Walsingham Camino. There is a stamp for pilgrims in the church.

The friendly and active PCC organises fund-raising events including providing refreshments for triathlons held in the park and cream teas at the annual classic cars show. These events are well supported by villagers who bake and serve. The events form part of outreach to the community. The churchyard is open for burials. The church takes part in “no mow May” and the annual Churches Count on Nature. In 2024, 27 species of wildflower were discovered and a wide variety of insect and bird life. We are working towards an Eco-church silver award and have bat and swift boxes, a hedgehog box, an insect house and a blue tit nesting box.

Two regular services are held in the church each month: 8am BCP Holy Communion and 10am CW Holy Eucharist. Occasional services including a Carol Service are also held. One of the Lark Valley Lay Elders lives in the village and, as well as visiting and serving home communion to people in the Lark Valley, is also the Sacristan for the church.

Flempton with Hengrave: St Catherine of Alexandria



St Catherine's is the parish church for the villages of Flempton and Hengrave. It sits on the crossroads in Flempton and is the only community space in the village. It is open for private prayer at all times. There is a monthly BCP Holy Communion attended by a small but dedicated congregation. Special seasonal services are also held, with St Catherine's regularly holding the Lark Valley united service on the First Sunday of Christmas. The open churchyard is managed for wildlife and is home to many wildflowers, insects, birds, lizards and bats – including slow worms and the Serotine bat.



Also within the parish is Hengrave Hall, where many civil wedding celebrations take place and where we are frequently asked to take wedding blessings in the church of St John Lateran also found on the site.

Fornham All Saints: All Saints



All Saints is the only Grade I listed church within the LVNB Team. This 13th Century building occupies a prominent position in the village and is well cared for by the community. All Saints churchyard is closed (except for ashes in a designated Garden of Remembrance) and church members are trustees of the Fornham All Saints Cemetery Trust. Each year the church keeps “no mow May” and keeps the Churches Count on Nature.

The village itself has a pub, pizzeria, coffee shop, business park and All Saints Hotel complex which is often used for wedding receptions and wakes. Improvements to the church over the years include individual pew heating, kitchen area, toilet extension, floodlights, and a recently replastered and decorated ceiling. The church is open every day for quiet reflection.

All Saints has an All-Age Service at the start of each month with a worship band and a CWV Eucharist on the third Sunday. All Saints hosts seasonal services and the popular LVNB Team “Hymns and Pimms” evening.

An independent living complex, Thingoe Lodge, is located behind the church. There is a monthly Songs of Praise Service here which is well supported by residents and villagers.

The Church is a popular venue for weddings, baptisms, funerals, coffee mornings and other social events. The cakes are very plentiful and popular at All Saints!



Fornham St Martin cum St Genevieve: St Martin



The present church building is 14th Century replacing an earlier 12th Century one, with a combination of pews and chairs, and is situated on the main road through the village, next to The Woolpack pub. The churchyard is open and well maintained. It has wild areas and bird feeders and recently appeared on the diocesan website as part of the “Love Your Yew Week” campaign. The first impression on entering the church through the red brick Tudor porch, is the mass of brightly coloured hassocks on all the pews, made by parishioners in about 1983, and a warm welcome awaits, as well as a spiritual peace with the church open every day. Most worshippers are over 50, for the weekly CW Eucharist services on Sundays or Tuesdays. The church family is active in the village community, with regular services in the Fornham House Residential Home. Social fund-raising events like Book Sales, Coffee and Cakes, Quizzes and concerts are held throughout the year.

The recent major project has been to restore and enhance the bells in the tower, with improvements to the belfry, which has been possible thanks to much support from the Guild of Ringers. It is very pleasing to be able to have peals regularly and to be able to call people to services after so many years. We have just appointed a Tower Captain and look forward to welcoming the Bishop and benefactors to the Service of Dedication of the Bells in May.



Lackford: St Lawrence



The church is situated on the eastern edge of the village of Lackford, overlooking Suffolk Wildlife Trust's Lackford Lakes site. The open churchyard is a haven for wildlife and is very popular amongst visitors looking for peace and tranquillity.

The church (electoral role 11), is the only public building in the village; it was re-ordered in 2017 to include a kitchenette, toilet and small meeting room and at that time the heating was upgraded to the all-electric under-pew type.

Lackford has a history of firsts in the Lark Valley: 1st to hold a Bring-and-Share Harvest lunch (to become known as 'the Pie Feast') in the church in 1986, 1st to hold an outdoor Pet service in 1998, 1st to hold a Christingle in 2005 and now 1st to host Wonder Club an All-Age service based around Godly Play storytelling, craft activities, prayer and cake! This brings families from across the benefice together on a Sunday afternoon, once a month, and goes from strength to strength.



Timworth: St Andrew



The church is situated at the end of Church Lane, which is just off the road through the small village of Timworth. It is located in a beautiful isolated rural setting, where dog walkers and ramblers often sit and rest on the bench within the well-maintained open churchyard, as it is such a peaceful spot. Timworth is the smallest village in the team, however numbers attending worship are growing not least due to the friendly and welcoming engagement of congregation members with new residents in the village.

Timworth has a long-standing tradition of providing Prayer Book services, celebrating Holy Communion and Matins each month and using the KJV Bible. Timworth also hosts the Team Harvest Evensong service, usually involving a guest preacher which is very popular and well attended by people from across the parishes – as is the BCP Nine Lessons and Carols service.

Timworth is very hospitable, famous for its refreshments which are served after each service, providing the opportunity for the congregation to socialise and to welcome anyone attending for the first time. Refreshments are even served after PCC Meetings as well!



West Stow and Wordwell: St Mary



The church is a mainly 14th and 15th Century building sitting in the heart of the village, which is in a conservation area and situated in beautiful open countryside. The church has a peal of six bells and an open churchyard of some three acres that is managed for wildlife. The servery in the vestry has been upgraded, a composting lavatory has been installed, and the west end of the church has been reordered to provide a flexible space with accompanying modern furniture.

There are two Eucharistic services each month one of which follows a parish breakfast. The church is very much part of the community and has a well-attended “Carols round the tree” service each year. An events committee organises fund-raising events which have recently included a Beetle Drive and wine tasting event. A monthly coffee morning is held, with proceeds going to various charitable organisations.



In the tiny village of Wordwell, All Saints Church is in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. It is well worth a visit and can usually be accessed. Each year an LVNB Team Evensong is held on a Sunday close to midsummer (this date chosen to counter the absence of electricity) which is well attended. Afterwards refreshment are enjoyed in the beautiful churchyard – as are the views of the fabulous surrounding countryside.

Ministry and Mission in the Lark Valley and North Bury Team

Worship

Worship in the LVNB Team is predominantly sacramental, however we do have a variety of services and traditions across the parishes. Seasonal changes and additions are as announced, with the full keeping of Holy Week. Services are ably supported by the small team of clergy and lay ministers mentioned earlier. All our churches welcome the full ordained ministry of women.

Occasional Offices

There are around 50 funerals conducted in the LVNB Team each year many of which are at the local West Suffolk Crematorium. However, with 6 village parishes having open churchyards, burials are also common. There are also civic cemeteries within and near to our parishes, plus a woodland burial site.

The Team Rector and Vicar are extremely welcoming to those who wish to marry in our churches, including those who have previously been divorced and are delighted to offer prayers of blessing for same sex couples.

Baptism ministry is small but growing. We welcome all enquiries regarding this and admission to Holy Communion before confirmation.

It has been a real delight to see an increase in numbers coming forward for confirmation each year, with us having hosted a confirmation for the last three years. Delightfully, several of those who have been confirmed have gone on to become regular members of our congregations, PCCs, servers and officers in our parishes!

Schools Ministry

Engagement with schools is a high priority for us and our main engagement with children. The clergy have considerable input into several schools via regular Collective Worship and other classroom involvement (often involving the use of Godly Play) and are building and developing links with schools within the town and also with Culford School in that village. Clergy and lay members of our churches also serve on several school governing bodies. Further lay involvement in schools is via the previously mentioned Open the Book team which attends Sextons Manor Community Primary School. Wonderfully, as indicated, two of the primary schools now hold seasonal services in team churches. Thanks to the efforts of the Team Vicar regular chaplaincy sessions are offered at Abbeygate Sixth Form College.

Care Homes and Home Visits

Clergy and Lay Elders visit many of the local residential homes regularly to hold services for residents and also take Holy Communion to the homes of those who are sick or housebound.

Nurturing faith

We are committed to developing the faith and spirituality of the congregations and beyond. As well as our regular worship and devotions we hold an annual LVNB Team Lent course, which is very well attended (between 30-40 people have interacted with these) and over recent years has taken the form of various Ignatian retreats, the “Bread of Life” course and this year “Searched Me Out and Known Me” by Charlie Bell. St John the Evangelist, All Saints and Fornham St Martin all have a full stock of ‘Gospel Imprint’ leaflets.

Communications

Services are advertised across the benefice every month in both hard copy and online via our website, A Church Near You and various social media. We also have the excellent weekly magazine “The Viral Bulletin” emailed out with news, services details, events and devotional items (including a sermon slot). There is also a caption competition! In the Lark Valley there is a bimonthly church magazine serving all seven Lark Valley villages.

Stewardship and Contacts

The Full Measure Project is an important part of church life for St John the Evangelist and St George in Bury St Edmunds. It encompasses Christian stewardship of money and ensures every member of the church has someone they can contact if needed. All Saints in Bury similarly has a contact scheme for church members. As for all parishes, those in the Lark Valley are constantly addressing regular and committed giving alongside legacy encouragement. We maintain a strong ‘Praying Together’ monthly prayer-cycle of all ten electoral rolls and ‘wider belonging’, alongside daily prayers for particular parts of the communities we seek to serve.

Parish Share and Expenses

In recent years Parish Share contributions have increased across the parishes with the hope that the full share request will be met within the next few years. In this we are indebted to the generosity of those who come to worship with us. Clergy expenses are also paid in full.

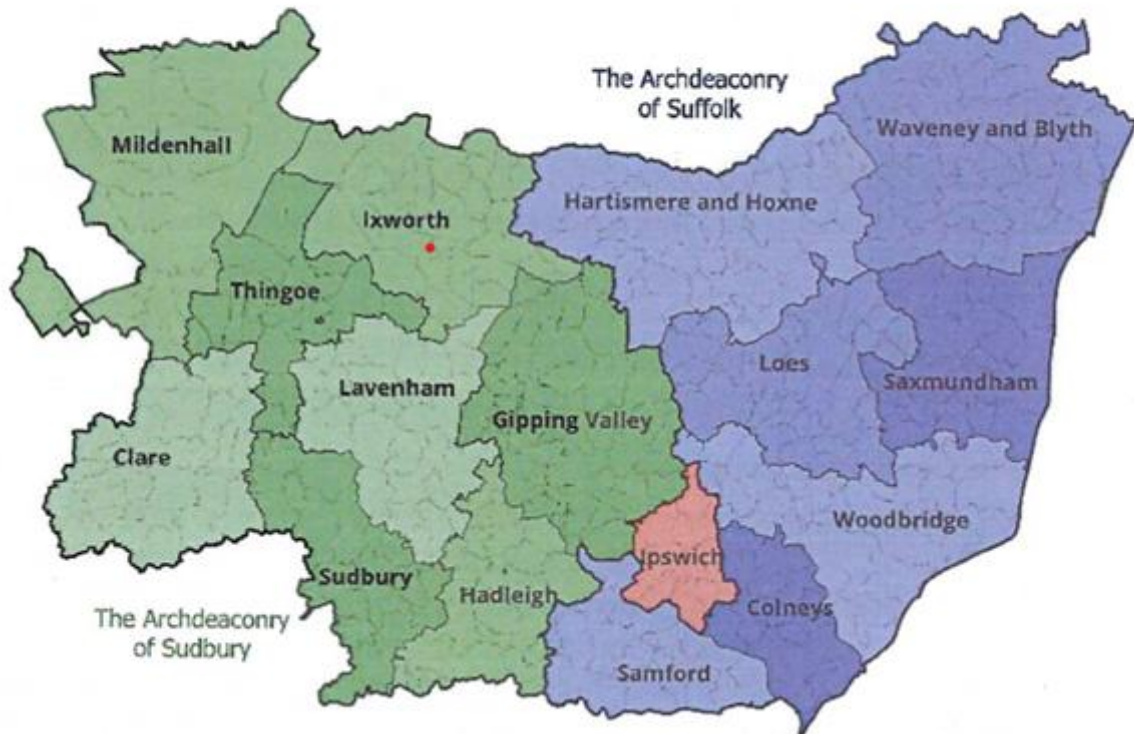
Parish, Deanery and other organisations

St John the Evangelist has a strong Marian spirituality and therefore hosts a Walsingham Cell. However as mentioned before it is an inclusive church strongly advocating the ministry of women. It has links with Affirming Catholicism and Inclusive Church and the Society of Catholic Priests. Laity and clergy play an active part in the deanery and in Churches Together in Bury St Edmunds and District, where we are involved in Christian Aid and regular learning events and courses. People from all our churches are involved in other organisations, including Mothers' Union, Samaritans, the Drop In Centre for people who are unhoused, various choirs and the local hospice.

Thingoe Deanery



Archdeaconry and Deanery Map



Situated in the West of the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, Thingoe Deanery encompasses the parishes found both within and around the Cathedral town of Bury St Edmunds. As such our deanery mirrors the diocese in offering a wonderful mix of both urban and rural life and ministry. Bury St Edmunds is a historic market town with a range of shops, businesses, schools, and housing. There are many new and growing housing estates in and around the town, offering the various challenges and opportunities that new populations present to both the church and others alike. Equally many of our parishes are based around villages found in the beautiful countryside of Suffolk, with the joys and other issues that such smaller communities bring.

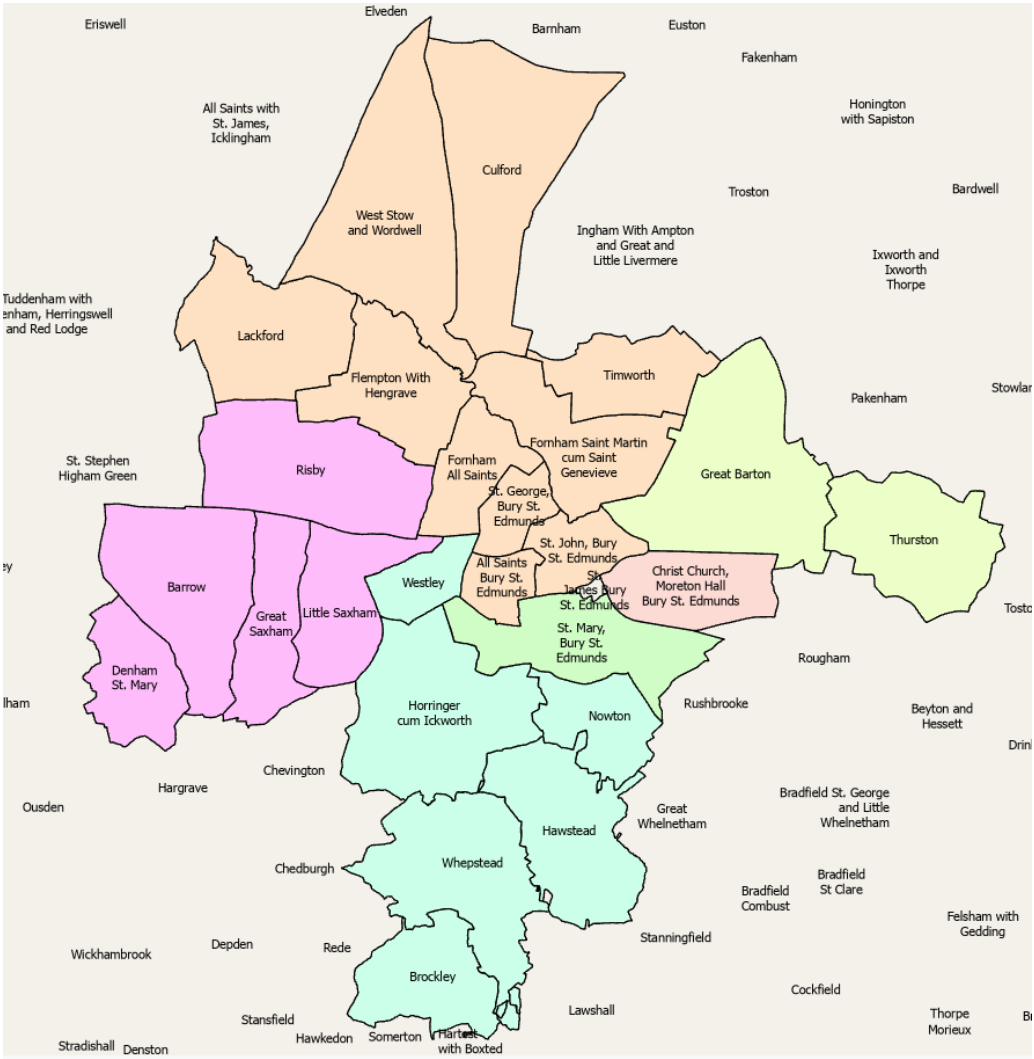
As a deanery we have a good and supportive chapter made up of both incumbents and ministers engaged in chaplaincies located in Bury St Edmunds and the surrounding area. We meet every other month, to offer mutual support and a listening ear to one another. And at least twice a year we gather for purely social reasons. Deanery Synod meets three times a year. As well as engaging in discussion of issues of import in the life of the church in the deanery and beyond, synod members hear from a variety of speakers invited by our Deanery Officers to offer insight into mission and social action in our region. In recent times this has included such topics as local chaplaincy, help for those who are sleeping rough and safeguarding. As a deanery we continue to engage with the diocesan missional strategy of Growing in God, not least via meetings of the Deanery Mission and Pastoral Committee. The result of this has been a recent update to the Deanery Plan for Growth where our main aim in both the short and medium term is to focus on our identity and

unity as Thingoe Deanery across our varied settings. Naturally, this Deanery Plan for Growth is updated and reviewed regularly.

We very much look forward to welcoming you to our deanery to join us as we seek to learn more of God and His plans for growth of the kingdom here in our delightful part of Suffolk.

Revd Dr Andrew Miller Rural Dean

Dr Sarah Cooledge Deanery Lay Chair



Thingoe Deanery

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 Right Reverend Martin Seeley retired as diocesan Bishop at the end of February 2025; the leadership of the diocese is now with The Right Revd Graeme Knowles. Bishop Graeme is acting diocesan Bishop until a new appointment is made. 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

Growing in God

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 received Strategic Development Funding for two major projects: Inspiring Ipswich, overseen by the Acting 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 established at Bungay. (The Growing in God in the Countryside project plan is available among the documents at www.light-wave.org/vacancies)

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'.