

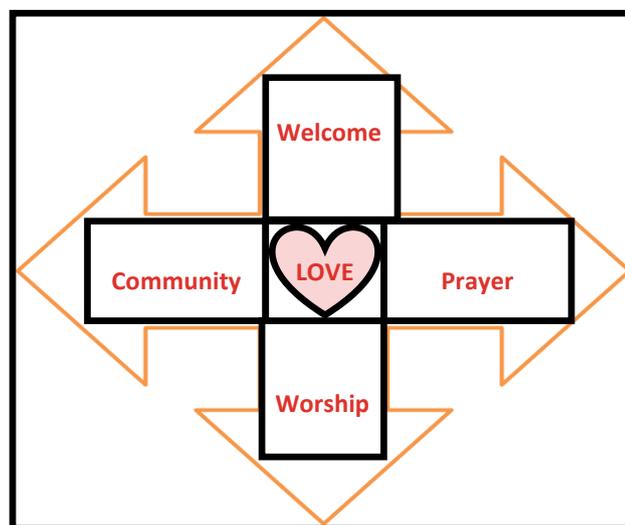
TEAM RECTOR AND PRIEST IN CHARGE

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

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



CHURCH IN COMMUNITY – COMMUNITY IN CHURCH



Deanery of Waveney and Blyth
Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

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11th February 2020



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

The role of Team Rector and Priest in Charge

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

The Cluster when fully staffed is blessed with an allocated stipendiary staff of Team Rector (and Priest in Charge) and Team Vicar, plus a House for Duty post, and there are in addition three Assistant Curates, three retired clergy, two Lay Readers, a Reader in Training and eight Lay Elders. The ministry team meet twice a month. The Team Council, which acts as the overarching governance body for the Team and Cluster has a representative of every parish on it and is Chaired by the Rector and a Lay Chair, supported by the Team Treasurer. The Cluster is also supported by an extremely able part-time Team Administrator.

We need an enthusiastic and committed Team Rector and Priest in Charge to support and take forward the Cluster's ambitious and forward-thinking vision and plan to become "Church in Community and Community in Church".

He/she will be an enabling and encouraging priest, able to lead through collaboration, to inspire and hold steady, to share our inclusive church principles, to be visible and accessible, to nurture and care for people, to promote our values and value our priorities and to hold the eucharist central within many varied forms of worship tradition. They will build, sustain, and increase Christian discipleship, growth, and reach out into our varied and wonderful communities.

- ✓ Clergy are licensed to the whole cluster and share ministry across all our parishes.
- ✓ A central rota ensures that our worship is well led by the clergy team, supported by the laity and retired staff.
- ✓ A team approach with lots of shared activity across, between and amongst our parishes.
- ✓ A shared and inclusive ethos and culture with strong values and principles.
- ✓ A gently liberal catholic tradition of worship.
- ✓ A history of encouraging, developing and supporting ministry vocations, lay and ordained.
- ✓ A wonderful mixed diet of forms of worship including fresh expressions of church.
- ✓ Book of Common Prayer services are provided in at least one church weekly.
- ✓ Parish share is met between 94%-100% each year and the better-off support the less well-off - a positive approach to "doing our best to pay" despite the challenges.
- ✓ Priests' expenses paid in full through Team budget.
- ✓ A widely distributed, professionally produced and popular monthly Team Magazine *Blyth Valley Times*, provides good communication across the area.
- ✓ A Team website www.blythvalleychurches.org.uk
- ✓ Supporting environmentally sustainable ways to "be church".

The churches in this cluster are looking for someone able to exercise a local episcopal leadership role. Personable and approachable, you will be experienced, mature in approach, young in outlook, wise, confident, creative and articulate in faith (and in daily life), flexible and energetic. Steeped in prayer, scripture and spirituality, you will be equally able to preach and teach and relate to a wide range of people and places. You will be willing and able to take responsibility for the formation and training of others. Conflict management skills will inevitably be needed, as will the ability to negotiate compromise and drive progress without disregarding tradition and loyalty. An understanding of the Growing in God programme and LIGHTWAVE initiatives is helpful, as is a proven track record of supporting growth in depth, number, youth and influence.

The Blyth Valley Team Ministry Benefice

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

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

The Heveningham with Ubbeston, Huntingfield and Cookley Benefice

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

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

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

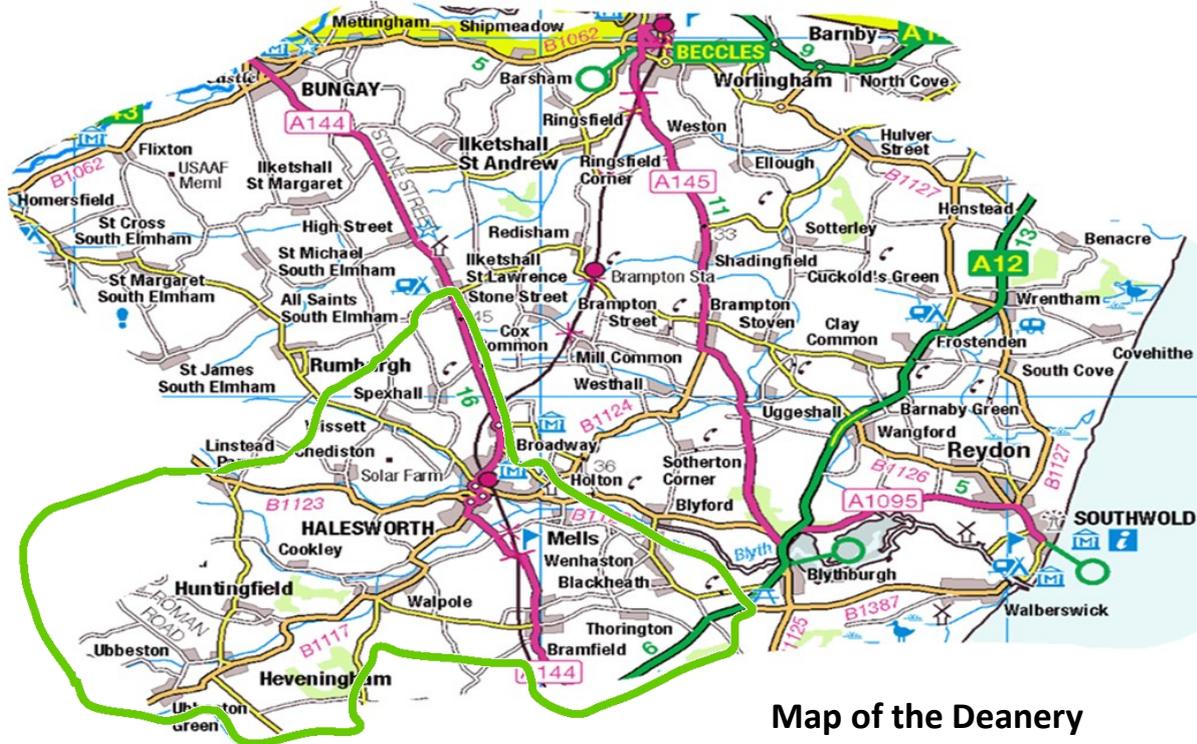
The local setting

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

Accommodation

The Rectory is a well-situated 1970's building in the centre of Halesworth 10 minutes walk from St Mary's Church. A primary school is within walking distance. It is part of a purpose-built housing estate. It is suitable for a family, and has a large garden and good parking. Overall it is in good condition. A spacious study is available and the house meets clergy accommodation standards.

As there is also a Team Vicar post vacant, the Cluster may be prepared to consider applications from a clergy couple, but this would be entirely dependent on circumstances at the time.



Map of the Deanery

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

The Team Council

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

There are a number of thriving Team Wide Organisations and regular activities.

- ✓ **The Bell Ringers** - The Tower Captain oversees the regional tower teams – and there are active tower teams ringing at six churches with peals of bells.
- ✓ **The Team Choir** - a strong and growing choir, which sings at Team services, special Team occasions and the monthly choral evensong.
- ✓ **Mothers’ Union** - An enthusiastic group which is underpinned by prayer and works to support families.
- ✓ **The Foodbank** - The team hosts the foodbank at St Mary’s Halesworth and our churches act as dropping off points.
- ✓ **The Samaritans** - A monthly drop in session at St Mary’s.
- ✓ **Church Mice** - A weekly children’s session in St Mary’s.
- ✓ **Regular Assemblies** at three primary schools, and regular input into a fourth as well as regular visits to the local Pupil Referral Unit
- ✓ **The Community Picnics** - A new fresh expression of church – quarterly community meals in St Mary’s run jointly with Halesworth Volunteer Centre.
- ✓ **EXPLORE!** - A fresh expression of church at Ilketshall St Lawrence Primary School – a monthly outdoor church after-school club with an average of 35 children each month led by a small Lightwave missional group.
- ✓ **Open the Book** - With Anglican-led teams going into Bramfield and Holton and URC-led teams into Wenhaston and Edgar Sewter, Halesworth.
- ✓ **The Team Pastoral Care group** - Weekly prayer list and allocated pastoral visiting co-ordinated from the Team office as well as support to our two Care Homes and our NHS community.
- ✓ **The Team Bible Study Group** (monthly) plus several Advent and Lent study groups.
- ✓ **The Annual Team Posada**, which goes to every church and school and many homes following the Star!

There are a number of thriving Team-wide Organisations and regular activities (*continued*)

- ✓ **A bi-monthly young people's film night** for 8-12 year olds.
- ✓ **Friends of St Mary's** - fund-raising activities to support the maintenance and promotion of St Mary's as a community resource and to fund the regeneration.

Challenges

Most congregations are stable but growing older, although several are getting smaller and also older. Walpole is currently not functioning as an open church - but is providing funerals. Ubbeston has no church.

- ✓ **Meeting the share** is a constant challenge as is the cost of maintaining beautiful but often isolated and inconvenient churches.
- ✓ **The number of PCCs** is a drain on resources and volunteers. Early conversations about joining Parishes together are taking place, with some positive views about the potential being expressed.
- ✓ **The absence of children and young people** within our worshipping communities reflects the demographic make up but also raises questions about our current accessibility to families.
- ✓ **Fresh expressions** are in the early stages of development and developing capacity to drive this forward is an issue.
- ✓ **Our churches are loved and cared for** by villagers and are very well used at festivals and occasional offices but regular worshipping congregations are small.
- ✓ **We have seen considerable growth in vocations** to formal ministry, including ordained ministry. The challenge is to continue on that trajectory given the number of churches.
- ✓ **The regeneration of St Mary's** has been planned for 30 years but has only really got going in the last 15 months and is a huge, if exciting, challenge in the near future.
- ✓ **Walpole church** has no PCC, and has remained open for funerals and an annual Christmas service. Future options are to be explored.

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

Rota Template - Sunday Worship in the Blyth Valley

	FIRST SUNDAY	SECOND SUNDAY	THIRD SUNDAY	FOURTH SUNDAY
BLYFORD ALL SAINTS	10.00 Team Eucharist at Halesworth	18.30 Team Evensong at one of the churches	09.30 to Wenhaston	09.30 alt months Eucharist/Morning Worship
BRAMFIELD ST ANDREW	10.00 Team Eucharist at Halesworth	11.15 Eucharist alt months (alternating with Wenhaston)	11.15 Eucharist (BCP or CW alt months)	Services available across the cluster
CHEDISTON ST MARY	10.00 Team Eucharist at Halesworth	09.30 Morning Worship	09.30 alt Village Service or Eucharist at Chediston or Linstead	09.30 Morning worship or Eucharist depending on previous week
HALESWORTH ST MARY	10.00 Team Eucharist	08.00 Eucharist (BCP) 10.00 Late Breakfast Church	09.30 Parish Eucharist	08.00 Eucharist (BCP) 09.30 Parish Eucharist
HOLTON ST PETER	10.00 Team Eucharist at Halesworth	11.15 Parish Eucharist	11.15 Iona Morning Worship	11.15 Parish Eucharist or Morning Worship alt months
LINSTEAD ST MARGARET	10.00 Team Eucharist at Halesworth	09.30 Morning Prayer (BCP)	09.30 alt Village Service or Eucharist at Chediston or Linstead	09.30 Morning Worship or Eucharist depending on previous week
SPEXHALL ST PETER	10.00 Team Eucharist at Halesworth	11.15 Eucharist alt months with Wissett	11.15 to Iona Morning Worship, Holton	11.15 Morning worship / or EXPLORE2 alt weeks
THORINGTON ST PETER	10.00 Team Eucharist at Halesworth	Services across the cluster		
WENHASTON ST PETER	10.00 Team Eucharist at Halesworth	09.30 Eucharist alt months with Bramfield	09.30 Morning Prayer	11.15 Pause for Thought with coffee
WISSETT ST ANDREW	10.00 Team Eucharist at Halesworth	09.30 Parish Eucharist alt months with Spexhall	09.30 Morning Worship	09.30 Breakfast Church
HEVENINGHAM ST MARGARET	10.00 Team Eucharist at Halesworth	Services available across the cluster	Services available across the cluster	09.30 Eucharist (BCP)
HUNTINGFIELD ST MARY	10.00 Team Eucharist at Halesworth	09.30 Eucharist (BCP)	Services available across the cluster	Services available across the cluster
COOKLEY ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS			09.30 Eucharist (BCP)	

The Team Development Plan

We aim to meet annually as a whole team for worship, reflection, quiet time and planning purposes at our Team away-day. In 2019 we agreed a new approach to our plans for “Growing in God”.

OUR VISION and MISSION

CHURCH IN COMMUNITY – COMMUNITY IN CHURCH

OUR VALUES

- ✓ Welcome; Prayer; Christ-centred love; Worship; Community.

Worship:

We are working to grow deeper and to:

- ✓ Broaden, deepen and develop our forms of worship.
- ✓ Develop ways and places of worship that reach those who will not “come to church” (Lightwave).

Pastoral Care:

We are working to grow in influence and to:

- ✓ To develop a co-ordinated, supervised pastoral care team and way to meet need.
- ✓ To support parishes and the wider ministry team through training in pastoral ministry skills.
- ✓ To work closely with the GP practice, Halesworth Volunteer Centre, The Peartree Fund, Dementia Carers etc and identify whether we need to develop parish nursing/town pastors/chaplaincy services in the Team.

Young People and Children:

We are working to grow younger and to:

- ✓ Develop a young people’s volunteer scheme.
- ✓ Support and extend the work of Open the Book and start reflective story telling.
- ✓ Build and extend EXPLORE! into at least a second school.
- ✓ Extend and build the Film Club in Wenhaston.
- ✓ Become active members of the Young People’s Partnership Group.

Adults and Older People:

We are working to grow in number and to:

- ✓ Build our links to the Men’s Shed and develop opportunities for men to meet together.
- ✓ Support Mothers’ Union and WI activity and look for shared activity and common ground.
- ✓ Support and become involved in the HVC Isolation Busters scheme.
- ✓ Restore strong links with residential care and sheltered housing.
- ✓ Develop dementia friends schemes across our churches.

St Mary's Regeneration Project

A five-stage project with the first stage funded and underway.



We are working to regenerate St Mary's Halesworth to:

- ✓ Provide a warm, welcoming, flexible and safe church, open to all, inclusive, accessible and pleasant to spend time in.
- ✓ Create a sacred heart to the Market Place area.
- ✓ Allow for multi-purpose use including theatre and music performance.
- ✓ Become the thriving heritage and community centre of Halesworth and the core church of the Team.

Heveningham, Huntingfield and Cookley are joining us as a new cluster and we will revise our Team Plan jointly together when the new Rector and Priest in Charge has arrived.

A full action plan is available from the Team Office.

The Church of All Saints Blyford

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

There were no weddings or baptisms

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



The Church of St Andrew Bramfield

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

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



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

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

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

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

Fresh expressions: Carols and a pint in the pub – a start to regular “pub talks”

In 2019 we had one baptism, one wedding and three funerals and one burial of ashes

Content contributed by Victoria Page, PCC Secretary

The Church of St Mary Chediston

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



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



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



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

Church services and events include:

- ✓ An average of two services per month, usually the second and fourth Sundays.
- ✓ A third service alternates between Chediston and our neighbours at Linstead.
- ✓ The enormously popular Christmas Eve Candlelit Carol Service.
- ✓ Mothering Sunday, Harvest Thanksgiving (and lunch!), and Remembrance Sunday.
- ✓ An active band of ringers who 'call the faithful to church'.
- ✓ A talented organist.
- ✓ Music and poetry evenings.
- ✓ Recitals - singing and organ.
- ✓ A Reader in training.



**In 2019 there were two weddings, two baptisms and four funerals.
Content contributed by Graeme Williams, Churchwarden**

The Church of St Mary Halesworth

Church in Community - Community in Church

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

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



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



Pattern of Services

Monday: 9am Morning Prayer
First Sunday: 10am Team Eucharist
Second & Fourth Sunday: 8am BCP
Second Sunday: Team Evensong
Second Sunday: 10am Breakfast Church
Third & Fourth Sunday: 9.30am Eucharist
Fifth Sunday: Team Eucharist
Wednesday: 10am Eucharist

Fresh Expressions

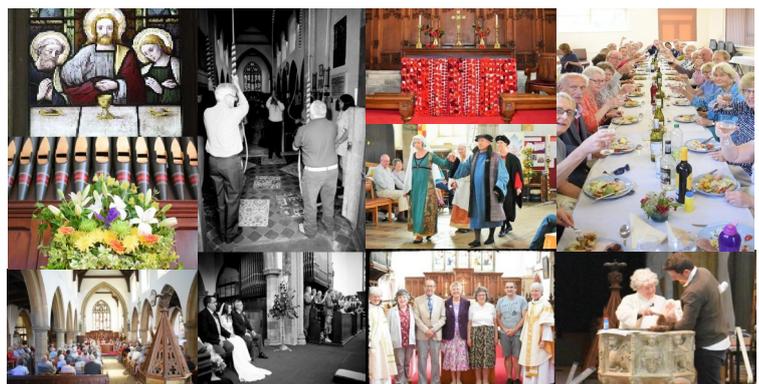
Friends of St. Mary's (FOSM)
Church Cafe
Foodbank 50/50 Club
Church Mice Team Choir
Churches Together INCLUSIVE
Monthly Recitals

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



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

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



The Church of St Peter Holton

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

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



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

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

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



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



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



The Church of St Margaret of Antioch Linstead

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

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

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



We welcome baptisms and weddings

Content contributed by Malcolm Heath, Lay Elder and Churchwarden

The Church of St Peter Spexhall

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

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



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

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

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



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

Content contributed by Spexhall PCC



The Church of St Peter Thorington

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

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

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

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

- ✓ Fundraising has included Art exhibitions and concerts at the church.
- ✓ Innovative artistic fundraising events - including concerts, there are plans for more events in 2020.
- ✓ This year we are short on funds and struggling to meet the share.
- ✓ An appeal to restore our Roof bosses – all angels – is underway.

In 2019 there were no funerals, weddings or baptisms

Content contributed by Trish Gower, Churchwarden



The Church of St Peter Wenhaston

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



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

Mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086, parts of the present St Peter's Church dates back to Norman times. Although it is a traditional building, the removal of the pews a few decades ago means that it is a flexible space, able to host the annual Harvest Lunch and monthly hot lunches for vulnerable older people in the village.

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

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

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

Content contributed by Jonathan Alder, Churchwarden

The Church of St Andrew Wissett

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



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

(Photo: NS Restorations)

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



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

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

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



The Church of St Margaret Heveningham with Ubbeston

St Margaret's Church stands on a mound above the roadside and village street of Heveningham. Since the closure of St Peter's Church Ubbeston, St Margaret's serves both parishes. The population of the two villages is about 180 people, scattered widely over a large area. There are no public buildings other than the Church.



To the east of Heveningham village lies the house and estate of Heveningham Hall, whose owners have been very influential in the history of the village and church.

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



- ✓ 32 people on the electoral roll, with an average of 15 at regular services.
- ✓ Since the informal attachment to the Blyth Valley Team, one Eucharist a month (BCP) - although we hope to return to some non-Eucharistic services in addition.
- ✓ Occasional services such as Harvest Festival, Remembrance Sunday, Carol Service and Mothering Sunday are always very well attended.
- ✓ We have always paid our share in full, with many fund-raising events, but are struggling this year.
- ✓ A tradition of live music in our services with a small but valiant choir.
- ✓ A policy of organising events which bring the community together in the absence of a village hall, such as our Harvest Songs of Praise, followed by Harvest Supper in the church and our Candlelit Carol Service.
- ✓ The PCC and congregation provide volunteers at the annual Heveningham Hall Country Fair, receiving from the HHCF Trust several capital grants for work on the Church.
- ✓ We hold a Christmas Fair on site at the Hall's annual Christmas Market.
- ✓ We have willing and able volunteers and a PCC who together ensure the upkeep of the Church, churchyard, which is renowned for its spring flowers and the Glebe.

In 2019 we had no baptisms, funerals or weddings

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



The Church of St Mary the Virgin Huntingfield

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



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



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



In 2019 there were three weddings and two funerals

Content contributed by Emma Ward, Churchwarden

and David Burrows, PCC Secretary and Treasurer

The Church of St Michael and All Angels Cookley

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



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

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

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

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

Content contributed by Jane Evers, Churchwarden



 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Where are we?

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

Who are we?

What is our vision? We are often known as 'the Church of England in Suffolk'. The Diocesan Bishop is the Right Reverend Martin Seeley, and the suffragan bishop is the Right Reverend Dr Mike Harrison. Both work from the Bishop's House in Ipswich. They work together closely to help us shape our vision and strategy, and amongst a plethora of other tasks offer regular teaching mornings to nurture the faith of people in our congregations – and a regular Vlog which can be found on Facebook. There are three archdeaconries and over 450 churches where visitors will find a wide range of worshipping styles, from the traditional to contemporary, as well as Fresh Expressions and growing numbers of 'Lightwave' groups for those who haven't connected with traditional church previously. The Cathedral of St Edmund and St James in Bury St Edmunds is the mother church of the Diocese and is proactive in offering support to clergy and parishes including welcoming parishes on pilgrimage. We also work closely with our 88 Church of England primary schools. All this is, of course, supported by a small and committed diocesan staff based in the diocesan office in Ipswich.

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

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

Parishes are encouraged to use a simple Mission Action Planning tool to help us all to focus on these priorities and how they might be worked out in each different context. We are trusting God that this vision, underpinned by a commitment to Christian stewardship, will bear fruit as we look to the future.

As part of this vision, we have recently received Strategic Development Funding for two major projects: Inspiring Ipswich, overseen by the Archdeacon of Ipswich which aims to grow the church in Ipswich through church planting and reaching out to those who live in the town, and 'Growing God in the Countryside', overseen by the Archdeacon for Rural Mission, which focusses on developing Rural Resourcing Churches and nurturing and discipling new Christians through small Lightwave groups.

We have also been part of a pilot scheme exploring how we can use our church buildings more creatively

both for those who worship regularly and for the benefit of our communities; and many churches have benefitted from this.

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

How can we do this?

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

All clergy work alongside lay ministers – Readers, elders, and the growing number people exercising recently introduced licensed ministries: pioneer ministers, evangelists, youth ministers and children's and family workers. Our ministry deployment principles encourage teams or clusters of lay and ordained ministers to work together so that clergy feel less isolated and ministry resources the mission of the church more effectively. We are just beginning to develop the principle of 'local ministers' in our benefices, releasing people's gifts to serve in their locality.

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

So, in summary:

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

We hope you will come and join us on our journey!

To find out more, visit www.cofesuffolk.org



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



God's Light Shines in Suffolk

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

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

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

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



making Jesus visible through loving action

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

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

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

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

Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

The Deanery Churches

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

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

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

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

Clusters

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



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



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

Our Cluster partnerships are:

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

Deanery Planning

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

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

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

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

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

Deanery Chapter

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

Deanery Synod

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

Summary

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

Revd Rich Henderson, Rural Dean
01502 349143.

Email: richhenderson@btinternet.com

CHURCHES IN THE BLYTH VALLEY TEAM MINISTRY



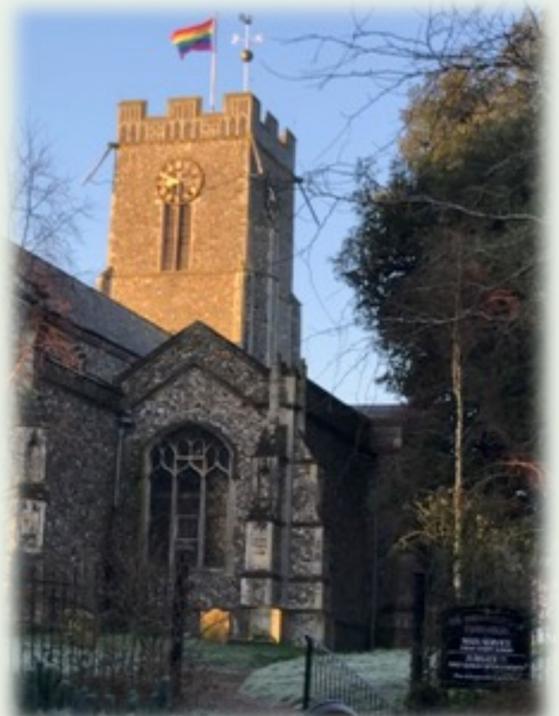
All Saints Blyford



St Andrew's Bramfield



St Mary's Chediston



St Mary's Halesworth

CHURCHES IN THE BLYTH VALLEY TEAM MINISTRY



St Peter's Holton



St Margaret's Linstead



St Peter's Spexhall



St Peter's Thorington



St Mary's Walpole

CHURCHES IN THE BLYTH VALLEY TEAM MINISTRY



St Andrew's Wissett



St Peter's Wenhaston

CLUSTER CHURCHES IN THE BLYTH VALLEY TEAM MINISTRY



St Michael's and All Angels Cookley



St Mary's Heveningham with Ubbeston



St Margaret's Huntingfield