

The Church of England

Diocese of Ely

**Priest-in-Charge (0.6 fte)
(Rector designate)**

Benefice of ORCHARD-WELLE

Deanery of Wisbech Lynn Marshland



All Saints', Elm



St Edmund's, Emneth



St Mark's, Friday Bridge



St Clement's, Outwell



St Peter's, Upwell

The Five Orchard-Welle churches

Situated in the South of Wisbech Lynn Marshland Deanery in the Diocese of Ely, the newly formed Orchard-Welle benefice comprises a group of five parishes serving a population of around fifteen thousand people in a mixture of large & small Fenland villages.

The area is semi-rural, with open fields and big skies and is criss-crossed by the waterways which characterise the Fens.

There are a number of market towns close by, including Wisbech, March, Downham Market & Kings Lynn, several of which have rail links (rail time to London Kings Cross is a little over an hour from Downham Market or March).

Within easy travelling by road are the historic towns of Ely & Cambridge, some of the country's finest beaches on the North Norfolk coast, the Sandringham Estate & the world-renowned Wildfowl & Wetland Trust site at Welney.

Foreword by the Acting Bishop of Ely, Rt Rev Dagmar Winter.



Thank you for taking an interest in this exciting new post in the Diocese of Ely. The role of Priest-in-Charge (Rector, once the pastoral scheme is completed) of the Orchard Welle benefice is an important post as we move from past models of church to something sustainable and hopeful for 2026 and beyond.

This is a half stipend post (meaning Sundays plus 3 days, 0.6 FTE), held on common tenure terms, working within your benefice of Orchard-Welle (comprising 5 former parishes: Upwell, Outwell, Elm, Emneth and Friday Bridge). We will work with you to ensure that the role stays within those time boundaries, so you can have

space to flourish within and outside work.

The main aim of the role is to help bring to birth the church of the future from the prayers and buildings of the past. You will collaborate with ordained and lay colleagues and members of local communities to dream and then build a vibrant expression of church in each place, holding in mind the Church of England vision of 10,000 new worshipping communities and a church that is younger and more diverse.

To thrive in this post, you will need to be:

- Prayerful and articulate – there is significant desire to communicate the Gospel
- Focussed and resilient – there is a significant but sustainable workload
- Faithful and gracious – you will be leading change which matters
- Wise and resourceful – there will be opportunities and challenges.

You will be realistic about what can be achieved and resolute in working in the direction that our situation and the Spirit of God demand. You will work with clergy, churchwardens and PCCs, alongside the experienced Rural Dean and Lay Chair.

In summary, the right person for this role will be a Christ-centred disciple, ever mindful of her/his daily dependence on the inner energising power of God's Holy Spirit: with effective personal organising and time management skills, thereby able wisely to fulfil this demanding but potentially richly rewarding role as the Priest-in-Charge of a new five-parish benefice.

We offer you an excellent home to live in, a half stipend, annual CMD grant, retreat time, clear HR and supportive leadership. You will be able to draw on additional training and support from our Mission and Ministry Department and our Church Buildings Team, as well as Archdeacon and Diocesan Secretary.

The pages that follow will help you understand the strengths and challenges of the parishes in your benefice.



If you think this role fits your gifts, personality and vocation, or would like an informal conversation, please get in touch with the Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech, Ven Richard Harlow, on 07415757527 or archdeacon.handw@elydiocese.org or apply using the application form herewith.

Wisbech Lynn Marshland Deanery

Context

The Deanery of Wisbech Lynn Marshland (WLM) covers an area of 180 square miles, inhabited by 70,000 people. It is an area dominated by agriculture and some light industry. House prices are affordable, with many choosing to retire here from nearer London. We are surrounded by big skies, open fields, waterways and the sea, with bird life in abundance. Kings Lynn is a short drive away, Brancaster beach a little further; Cambridge is less than an hour away, London is just an hour or so beyond.

But in many ways the area is quite deprived. Educational achievement is below expectations. Wages are low. Many rural areas have poor infrastructure. Every parish sits in the lowest quartile according to national standards for deprivation. Yet we have some of the most beautiful churches in the country, relics of a former age when the area was rich from exporting wool and other goods to the continent. Now these medieval buildings present us with the challenge of maintenance and heating, whilst serving as pointers to the majesty of God.

Many of the congregations across the deanery have fallen below a level whereby the challenges of mission, ministry and building maintenance can be sustained. Volunteers are aging and officers are often hard to find. Yet there is a pride and resilience in the people here. Friends' groups have rallied to the support of some churches, schools often look to us for pastoral and religious support, and many local people still want life events and occasional offices to be celebrated in church. There is an openness to the Gospel of Jesus, which is not always evident elsewhere.

In 2023, WLM Deanery Synod approved a Deanery Plan that created 5 benefices from the 23 parishes that make up the deanery. Generous support from the Diocese has assured us that we can staff these benefices, not just for maintenance, but for mission. Already the Diocese, with the Church Commissioners' Strategic Development Fund, has invested over £0.5m in revitalisation, which continues to make inroads amongst schools & young people. Recently the lottery has funded maintenance and development work in some of the churches.

Most of this investment has landed in the market town of Wisbech, leaving rural areas in the deanery struggling to discern a hopeful and sustainable future. While there is no 'recipe' for a sustainable rural benefice, Ely diocese offers various kinds of support that could help WLM's parishes achieve a position of stability and confidence.

Diocesan support includes:

- Training for lay leaders across various disciplines (preaching, worship, pastoral work, school chaplaincy, evangelism);
- A training pathway for Authorised Local Leaders ("focal ministers");
- Support to simplify parish governance;
- Support for maintenance of historic buildings and to reduce the costs of insuring them. While closing parishes churches will remain an enormous undertaking, it is part of the spectrum of options that the diocese can enable.
- A 'hub' framework to support children's and youth work over wider geographies than the parish or benefice.

Priest-in-Charge of The Orchard-Welle Benefice

Are you:

- A strong, forward-thinking leader, with a positive 'can do' attitude.
- Keen to be part of & develop God's work within local communities.
- Approachable & a good listener.

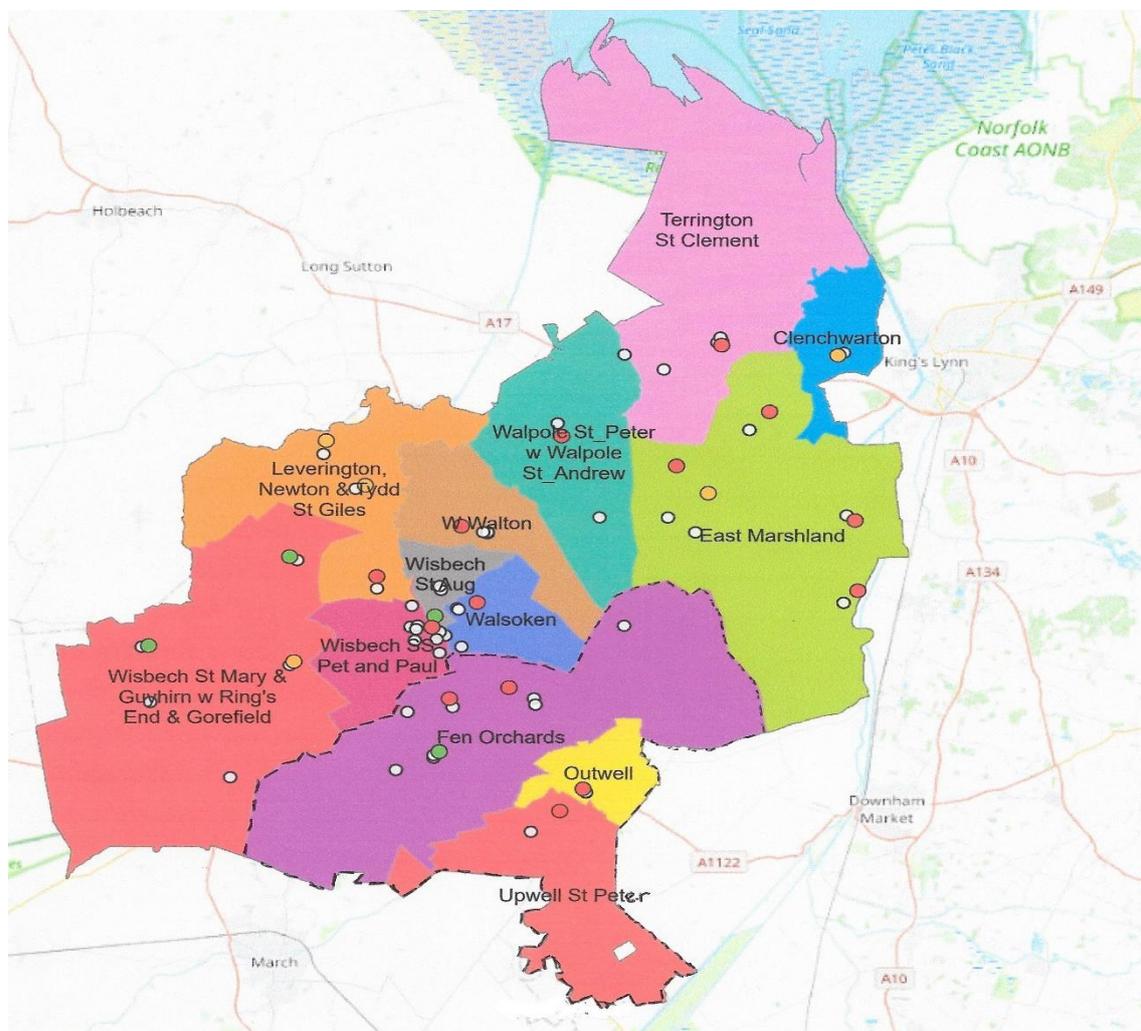
Could you:

- Bring inspiration to & work creatively with laity & local non stipendiary clergy within the benefice.
- Offer flexible churchmanship to accommodate a diversity of worship styles & traditions.

Do you have:

- A sympathetic, prayerful approach.
- A sense of humour!

Could you fulfil this demanding but potentially very rewarding role within our benefice?



Wisbech Lynn Marshland Deanery.

----- marks the boundary of the new Orchard-Welle Benefice

Our Parishes and their churches

All Saints' Church, Elm

The village

Elm is a fairly large village of around 4000 people on the Norfolk/Cambridgeshire border. It has a Church of England primary school, a Post Office within the village shop and two public houses.

It is a 'busy' village with a range of social and private housing, home to a wide range of people who can be seen at all times of the day, walking dogs, popping to the shop, collecting children from school and relaxing outside the 17th century Sportsman pub on a warm evening.

During the 20th century the area was surrounded by apple and pear orchards and although some survive to give a display of Spring blossom, today's fields produce crops of cereals, potatoes, cabbage and cauliflower.

There are pleasant walks locally, including Halfpenny Lane and the former Upwell to Wisbech canal towpath.

Church Building

All Saints church dates from the 13th century, has a large West tower, a broad nave with upper clerestory and an impressive double hammer beam roof with angel carvings. In addition to the traditional wooden pews, chancel and vestry, there is also a community room, a servery with running water, and a toilet with disabled access and baby change facilities.

The last quinquennial report described the church as 'largely structurally sound', though it has been placed by Historic England on its 'Heritage-at-Risk' register. The PCC is already working, with its 'Elm Community Hub' sub-committee, to apply for National Lottery Heritage funding, has obtained a faculty to upgrade and improve rainwater disposal and drainage, and has successfully bid for a £20,000 interest free loan from the Cambridge Historic Churches Trust.

The church bells were restored and rehung in 2015 and are popular with both local and visiting bellringers.

Church Life

All Saints has a Sunday service once every month, being part of a three-way rotation system with the two other former 'Fen Orchards' churches.

Visiting clergy preside at Holy Communion and a 'Service of the Word' is conducted by Churchwarden Jane Feaviour-Clarke each fourth Sunday. Members of the congregation regularly attend services in the other churches in the rotational group, week by week.

Every Monday a team of volunteers runs 'The Lunch Bunch' which offers a simple lunch and fellowship in the church community room for 15 - 20 people and in 2025 received a 'Helping Hands' certificate from the 'Cambridgeshire Community Hubs Network'.

Children from Elm (DEMAT: Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust) Church of England Primary School are welcomed into church for festival services and enjoy 'Open-The-Book' assemblies in school every month.

All Saints has an active 'Friends' group who support fundraising through food & craft fayres and regular quiz nights.

Church finance

All Saints Elm's expenditure has slightly exceeded its annual income in recent years but despite this it has paid 100% of the requested parish share to Diocese in 2025.

Challenges

- A lack of available parking near the church is a barrier to some.
- The church's heating system is old and inefficient which impacts on the use of the building as a community facility.

Vision and plans for the future

- To build the congregation, particularly families, children and young people by offering a different style of 'Family and All-Age' service on the fourth Sunday.
- To improve ties with Elm primary school – work on a Parish School Covenant is ongoing at this time.
- To host more community events to encourage families and children to engage with the church.

Get in touch

Jane Feaviour-Clarke – churchwarden 01945 587385

janefeaviourclarke@btinternet.com

Community activities at All Saints



'Helping Hands' at All Saints



The Lunch Bunch

St Edmund's, Emneth with Marshland St James

The village(s)

Emneth is a popular village which has expanded substantially over time, attracting especially retirees looking to enjoy a rural lifestyle. It sits on the border of Norfolk and Cambridgeshire and has a population of 2750. The adjacent village of Marshland St James, which is part of the parish, also has a growing population, currently around 1,500 and is served by a newly built community centre and playing field facilities.

Emneth is home to a small but stable Methodist congregation, who worship in the village Methodist chapel.

The village has a hall, built by public subscription, a pub, Post Office, a number of shops and take-aways, a garage and an engineering company which is generous in its support for the church. Where the parish borders on Wisbech town there is also a good range of 'out-of-town' superstores.

Church building

The church dates predominantly from the 15th century and underwent restoration in 1866. In the 1980s the 'ringers' gallery' was reinstated and a meeting room created beneath the tower. The magnificent peal of six bells was hung in 1990. An accessible WC was added in 2000.

There is a discreet panel in a window near the south door bearing an image of Thomas the Tank Engine, dedicated to the memory of the author Rev W V Awdrey, who was vicar here from 1953-1965. Eleven of the books were written during his time at the vicarage in Emneth.

Church Life

As part of the three 'Fen Orchard' rotation pattern, St Edmund's hosts one or sometimes two Sunday morning services per month.

The church has established and developed a relationship with the Emneth Academy primary school, holding special services in church for them at Easter and Christingle and the church has worked with the 'Friends of School Association' to host an Easter Activity Day fund-raiser.

In addition, the Rural Dean attends Academy assemblies on our behalf during the current period of vacancy.

A similar relationship with the DEMAT primary school in Marshland St James, which is geographically much closer to their local Methodist chapel, is currently being revived.

The church hosts a good number of occasional offices, being a particularly popular venue for local weddings and the church hall has a number of hirers.

St Edmunds and the current Fen Orchards group benefit greatly from the services of benefice organist, Kate Mould (ALM - Worship Leader/Church Musician).

Church Finance

St Edmund's expenditure has slightly exceeded its income over the past few years. It has contributed about half of the requested parish share request so far in 2025.

Challenges

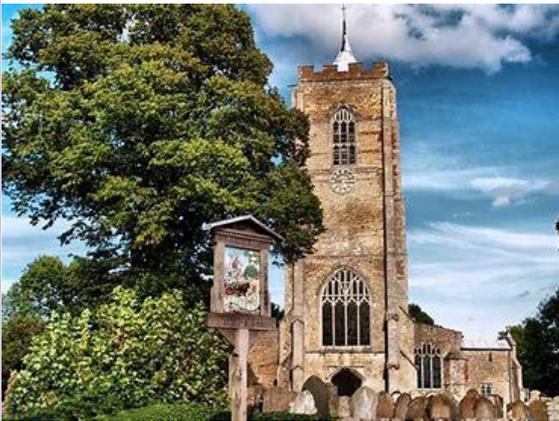
- Declining numbers in the worshipping community contribute to a lowering of the church profile within the wider community.
- Rotation of services between the three parishes within the current benefice has had a detrimental effect on income. In addition, some parishioners refuse to worship in a parish other than their own.

Vision and plans for the future

- We hope it will be a case of '*new vicar, new broom*' as we seek to rejuvenate the church and its position within the community.
- To canvas the parish to ask what people want from their church, giving us a tool to then develop a strategy.
- To investigate options to increase regular giving to counter the reduction in offertory takings.
- To encourage more people to become involved in the running of the church.

Get in touch:

Bob Waterfield – 01945 583181 bob.minerva@talk21.com



St Edmund's Church Emneth



St Mark's, Friday Bridge with Coldham

The Village

Friday Bridge has approximately 2000 residents and is a pleasant and peaceful place to live.

It has a number of well patronised facilities including a Post Office and mini-mart, a village pub and a village hall where local clubs and societies meet.

It has a small but lively primary school of around 60 children and a children's play area central to the village.

Church Building

St Mark's church was built in 1864 and is notable for its bell tower which, although stable, has a significant lean causing it to be listed on the 'Heritage-at-Risk register. The church was re-roofed a decade ago and has an all-electric heating system which requires little or no maintenance & uses 'green energy'.

The church has installed ramps to facilitate wheelchair or pram entry and discussions are underway to reconfigure the seating to provide kitchen and toilet facilities within the church.

The church yard is well maintained with a memorial bench and arbour for public use and a cross used as a focus for the annual remembrance-day service.

Church Life

The current pattern of worship is rotational between the three churches which form the current Fen Orchard Benefice (Friday Bridge, Elm & Emneth) giving St Mark's one Sunday morning service per month, either Lay-led morning worship or Clergy-led Holy Communion. Every fourth Sunday the service again moves between the parishes.

While occasional offices are greatly valued by the village community, this does not necessarily extend to attending regular worship, with just 6 electoral roll members. An 'Open-the-Book' benefice team visits Friday Bridge primary school to celebrate the major church festivals and services in church such as Palm Sunday and Christmas are well attended by local children and families.

Church Finance

Although St Mark's expenditure has exceeded its income over the past few years, St Mark's has paid in full its parish share request to Diocese in 2025.

A recent legacy is proving helpful but will not sustain the church in the long term.

Challenges

- A lack of income and a disconnect between the church and village.
- A lack of younger people to help move the church forward in a vibrant way.

Vision and plans for the future

St Mark's currently has an ALM (worship leader), and a church warden.

It aspires to be a more viable church, increasing its connection with villagers by:

- Beginning a fresh expression of church to encourage a wider congregation;
- Holding Bible study sessions or Alpha;
- Reconfiguring the church building to provide a community space for village use.

Get in touch:

Michele Bradbury – ALM (worship leader), michelle.bradbury@icloud.com

01945 860094

John Reach - Churchwarden johnreach1940@gmail.com

01945 860533



Front view of St Mark's church



Churchyard cross and arbour



St Mark's all ready
for
Christmas



St Clement's, Outwell

The Village

Outwell is a Norfolk village which traces its history back to Anglo-Saxon times and during the middle-ages was home to several religious houses including a Benedictine priory.

The Welle Creek stream, which runs through the village, was formally an important transport link, but is now enjoyed by boaters and fishermen.

Today around 2000 people live in this thriving village, which retains a powerful sense of community. Many of its folk are involved in a variety of special interests, such as fitness classes, gardening club, the Gilbert & Sullivan Operatic Society, a local walking group & the Women's Institute.

Outwell has a village school (Beaupre Community Primary), a post office, several stores and take-aways, a pub and a hotel with restaurant and gym facilities. It has a local bus service and health centre and pharmacy near-by.

Church building

St Clement's is a medieval church, parts of which date back to the 12th century. It has some outstanding features including unique roof carvings recognised as being of national importance.

A programme of repair and restoration, facilitated by an active 'Friends' group in conjunction with the PCC, has been carried out over the last 10 years. This includes substantial roof repairs, the protection of important stained glass, the restoration of Jacobean church furniture and the installation of a toilet and utility room.

St Clement's church is unable to hold weddings, baptisms or funerals at present while investigations into the work required to restore supporting roof beams takes place and a timeline for the work to be carried out is established.

Church Life

Despite the difficulties outlined above, church life continues apace at St Clement's. A Celtic-style morning prayer service is held once a month in the sizeable porch area, with retired priest Diana Penny presiding and rising numbers of attendees. A weekly 'Cake & Coffee' morning, also in the porch, is well supported by the local community, the PCC & the 'Friends of St Clement's' group, as have been 2025's monthly cake stall, Strawberry Fayre, Harvest Fete & outdoor Christmas carols.

The ministry at St Clement's is overseen by Associate Priest Rev. Daphne Calvert & shares the services of LLMs Raine Thorrold & Charlie Houlder-Moat with its sister church, Upwell St Peter. Raine makes regular visits to Beaupre primary school for assemblies and Christian festivals and school classes visit the church for talks on its history and uses.

Church Finance

The parish has paid almost 90% of the parish share request to Diocese in 2025 but expects to reduce this significantly in 2026 due to the potential cost of restoration work to bring the church back into full use.

Challenges

- The advancing age of St Clement's church officers (and congregation) has prevented roles from being sustained.
- The maintenance and repair of this historic church is a source of constant concern.

Vision and plans for the future

- Our vision is for the church to be a united and welcoming family in this community, where together we can welcome God and share the richness of his creation.
- To build up our small congregation while continuing to work together with our supportive 'Friends of Church' group.
- To reinstate in church some of the regular activities which enhanced community engagement.

Get in touch:

Edna Hollands - Churchwarden 01945 772723 13redejh@gmail.com

Kate Jackson - Chair Friends' Group 01945 772364 jacksonkate@live.co.uk



Events, services and historic artefacts at St Clement's Church



St Peter's, Upwell

The Village

Upwell, a historic Norfolk village which is mentioned in The Domesday Book, and two further villages, Three Holes and Lakesend complete the ecclesiastical parish. The village population was 4,734 in the 2021 census, forming a diverse socio-economic group.

Local employment is mostly agriculture related, some seasonal, while travel for work is common. Upwell has several shops including a post office, café, hairdresser, take-away and pub and benefits from a wide range of services offered by Upwell Health Centre.

Within the village is a thriving Academy primary school and pre-school which has around 200 children between ages 4 -11.

Village halls in all three villages are venues for a range of social activities and events from dog obedience training to keep fit and film shows. Upwell playing field is equipped with play equipment for young children and hosts car-boot sales, horse and pony shows and local football teams.

The Welle creek, which runs through the centre of Upwell, offers good fishing and boating, with canoes and paddleboards available for hire.

Church building

St Peter's church is a grade 1 listed building, parts of which date back to the 13th century and is known for its 'carved angel' roof. A guide booklet, available in church, details its full history. The building has been extended to provide kitchen and toilet facilities and in recent years a number of grant-funded, major projects have been undertaken to maintain the integrity of the fabric. The building has an all-lead roof, which is alarmed and an efficient, well maintained heating system. The churchyard is the responsibility of, and is maintained by, the local Borough Council.

Church Life

St Peter's has weekly Sunday services, with Holy Communion on three Sundays per month, a less formal 'Family Service' once a month and a mid-week Holy Communion service on Wednesdays. The 5th Sunday service rotates among the 5 parishes joining together to form the new Orchard-Welle Benefice.

Services are accompanied by organ and choir with piano and guitar in the family service.

St Peter's has 37 on its electoral roll, with average Sunday attendance of 35 and hosts regular weddings, baptisms and funeral services. It has a strong PCC, and a full set of church officers, who work together and meet regularly.

Associate Priest, Daphne Calvert, is assisted in ministry by LLMs Charlie Houlder-Moat, who transferred from Norwich Diocese in 2023, and Raine Thorrold who was licensed in 2025 to work with local families and schoolchildren.

St Peter's church is open every day for quiet prayer and/or church visits and hosts a number of community events, such as concerts and Harvest lunches.

Church Finance

St Peter's has paid in full the requested parish share to Diocese in 2025.

Challenges

- Age, with the majority of the congregation being in the 60+ age bracket

Vision and plans for the future

- Spiritual renewal and a period of stability within the parish
- Building on existing links with the local primary schools
- Enhance outreach to encourage church attendance by children & families.
- As per our mission statement: *'To share with the whole community our faith and commitment in the good news of the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ; and through greater unity with our brothers and sisters in Christ, adopt a more responsible attitude to the use of the resources entrusted to us, by means of God's creation.'*

Get in touch:

Peter Hartley -Churchwarden – 01945 772630 peterhartley41@icloud.com

Liz Ferris - Churchwarden – 01945 774078 ianlizferris@gmail.com



Preparations for the Christingle service



Children's work in church for Easter and Remembrance Sunday

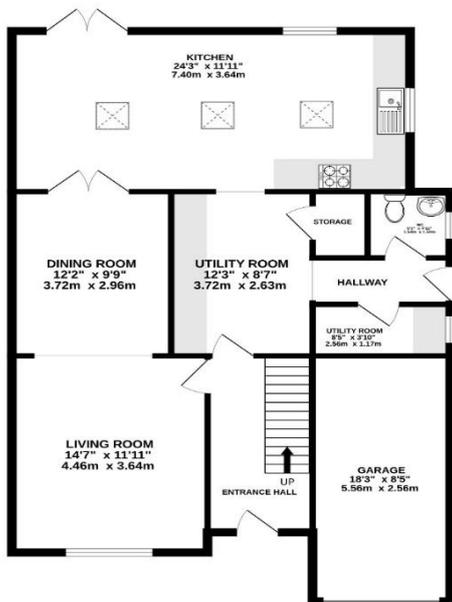
The Rectory

The former rectory (in Emneth) was sold in 2024, and the diocese intends to use the proceeds to purchase a new rectory for the enlarged benefice. It is proposed that the person appointed Priest in Charge will have a stake in deciding where the new rectory is placed, as well as the facilities that make the house fit for ministry and personal/family life in 2026.

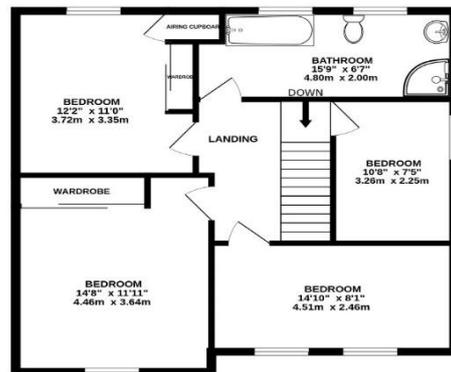
In the meantime, the Priest in Charge will be housed in Peckover Drive, Wisbech, which is just outside the benefice but in easy commuting distance from all 5 church buildings.



GROUND FLOOR
1028 sq. ft. (95.5 sq.m.) approx.



1ST FLOOR
695 sq. ft. (64.5 sq.m.) approx.



17 PECKOVER DRIVE, PE13 2HZ
TOTAL FLOOR AREA: 1722 sq. ft. (160.0 sq.m.) approx.