

# The Church of England

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# Diocese of Ely

## Deanery Change Leader and Priest-in-Charge Benefice of ORCHARD-WELLE Deanery of Wisbech Lynn Marshland



All Saints', Elm



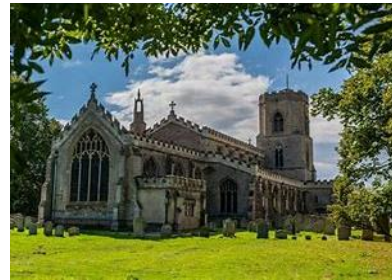
St Edmund's, Emneth



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 Deanery Change Leader and Priest-in-Charge of the Orchard Welle benefice is a strategically important post as we move from past models of church to something sustainable and hopeful for 2024 and beyond.

This post is held on interim common tenure terms, meaning that it is for an initial period of 3 years, which may be extended for a maximum of 3 more years. During that time, you will have effected significant change, working with PCCs and other clergy across the deanery, but especially within your benefice of Orchard Welle (comprising 5 former parishes: Upwell, Outwell, Elm, Emneth and Friday Bridge). We expect your time to be split 50/50 between benefice responsibilities and the wider change-management brief.

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.

We expect that you will already have significant change-management experience, ideally within parish settings. 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, in your own benefice as well as elsewhere in the deanery, alongside the experienced Rural Dean and Lay Chair.

We offer you an excellent home to live in (a little outside the benefice – see Appendix), a stipend of £30,000+, 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 both aspects of this role: the brief regarding change, and the strengths and challenges of the parishes.



If you think this role fits your gifts, personality and vocation, then please get in touch with the Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech, Ven Richard Harlow, on 07415757527 or [archdeacon.handw@elydiocese.org](mailto:archdeacon.handw@elydiocese.org) or apply using the application form herewith.

# Change Leader - Wisbech Lynn Marshland Deanery

## Role description and Person Specification

### 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.

The Change Leader can draw on:

- Training for lay leaders across various disciplines (preaching, worship, pastoral work, schools 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.

## Role description

The purpose of the Deanery Change Leader's work is to help WLM's Anglicans bring into dialogue, on the one hand, their passionate commitment to a tradition that has blessed their towns and villages and, on the other, their hard-headed recognition that things need to change.

Supported by & in collaboration with the Rural Dean and diocesan colleagues, the Change Leader will work with church leaders across the Deanery, so that, during the next three years, the church in WLM:

- Identifies and builds up hub churches, where weekly worship can be sustained, alongside new worshipping communities that invite children, families and those unfamiliar or uncomfortable with traditional Anglican worship;
- Supports smaller churches to explore sustainable patterns of worship and weekly life which are inter-dependent with the neighbouring parishes of their benefice, including new relations to hub churches;
- Invites and develops lay leadership in hub churches and in the smaller Christian communities around them, including Authorised Lay Leaders where appropriate;
- Promotes realistic financial giving and planning;
- Seeks alternative uses or funding streams for *some* churches;
- Promotes adoption of simplified administrative and governance structures;

By this means, the Interim Change Leader will play a central role in assisting the deanery to implement or revise its October 2023 Deanery Development plan and in developing a shared vision of a sustainable future - involving less administration and focus on fabric, less anxiety and strain, and with more people across more congregations participating in a revived local church life and mission.

## Person Specification

The right person for this role will

- display God-given skills of empathy and pastoral discernment and demonstrate proven ability to inspire confidence and trust among small but eager and devoted congregations.
- need empathy for rural Anglicanism (even while recognising how it needs to change), which is very likely to arise from lived experience in country churches.
- have an informed experience of 'mixed ecology' church, and confidence about initiating and nurturing development of fresh forms of Anglican church life and mission.
- have experience of managing congregational change in a rural setting, and the personal 'tool-kit' of different approaches for the task.
- have experience of holding together differences of view and personal preference in matters ethical, liturgical, and musical, in order to achieve creative outcomes.
- have demonstrated during earlier ministerial experience, the personal resilience required in times of disagreement and resistance to agreed change.
- not necessarily have high-level finance skills but will have experience of preparing and working within budgets and financial plans.
- both develop teams of local volunteers but also draw upon relevant expertise from other areas when required.

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

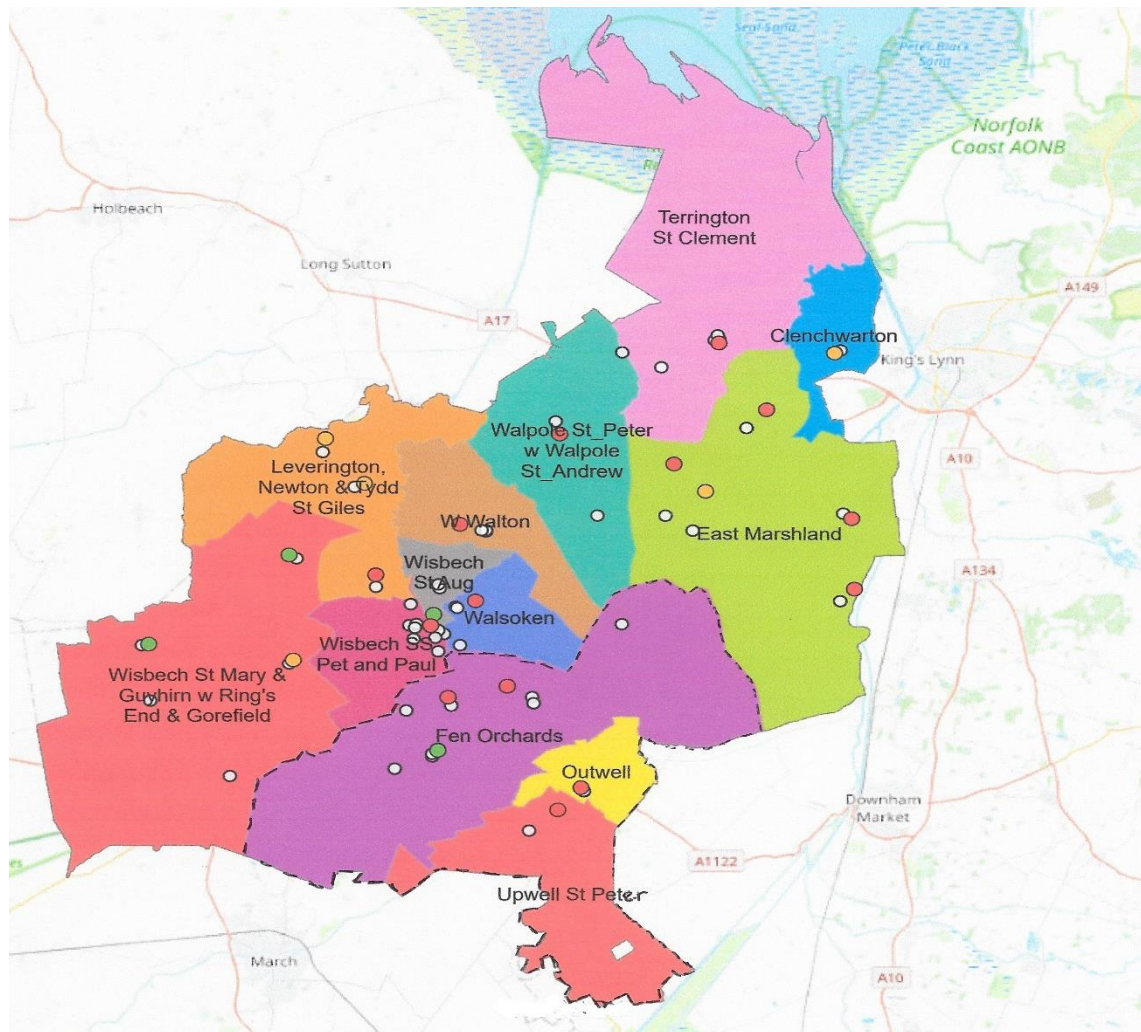
## Could you:

- 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 and wider Deanery?**



**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 17<sup>th</sup> century Sportsman pub on a warm evening.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 13<sup>th</sup> 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 recent quinquennial report described the church as 'largely structurally sound', though a faculty is in place to upgrade rainwater disposal using funds raised through a 'Tower Appeal' and possible grant funding.

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, and on an occasional extra Sunday, being part of a three-way rotation system with the two other former 'Fen Orchards' churches.

Visiting clergy preside at Holy Communion when possible, or a 'Service of the Word' is conducted by Churchwarden Jane Feaviour-Clarke or ALM Vicki Smith.

Members of the congregation regularly attend services in the other churches in the rotational group.

Every Monday a team of volunteers run 'The Lunch Bunch' which offers a simple lunch and fellowship in the church community room for 8 to 12 people and a special Christmas Lunch served 23 people in 2023.

All Saints has an active 'Friends' group who hold regular fundraising events in church. These have recently included a concert by a professional Simon and Garfunkel tribute act, an Autumn Food and Craft Fayre and a quiz night.

Children from Elm (DEMAT: Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust) Church of England Primary School are welcomed into church for their Easter, Harvest and Christmas services but don't attend church services on a regular basis.

### Church finance

All Saints Elm's income has slightly exceeded its annual expenditure in recent years. The church contributed 60% of the requested parish share to Diocese in 2023. It has 10 parishioners who give regularly via PGS or standing order.

### Challenges

- A lack of available parking near the church is a barrier to some.
- The church has an old, inefficient heating system and dampness inside the church 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 & the Open-the-Book team intends to extend its work to include Elm primary school this summer.
- 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](mailto:janefeaviourclarke@btinternet.com)

### Community activities at All Saints



Craft & Food Fayre



'Simon & Garfunkel' in action



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 1500 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 15<sup>th</sup> 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 system, St Edmund's hosts one or sometimes two services per month.

The church has established and developed a relationship with the local 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 has attended school assembly on our behalf during the current period of vacancy.

It has not proved possible to establish a similar relationship with the DEMAT primary school in Marshland St James, which is geographically much closer to their local Methodist chapel.

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 Edmund's has an ALM, Brenda Humphrey, who ministered to the residents of Hickathrift House nursing home until the advent of the Covid pandemic.



## Church Finance

St Edmund's income has slightly exceeded its expenditure over the past few years, but it has struggled to pay a significant contribution to its parish share request (16.6%).

## 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.
- Fundraising activities stopped during the Covid pandemic and have been slow to restart, producing a paucity of funds.

## 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 – Churchwarden 01945 583181 [bob.minerva@talk21.com](mailto:bob.minerva@talk21.com)

David Page – Churchwarden 07850695432 [DavidCPage@Outlook.com](mailto:DavidCPage@Outlook.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 with an attached coffee-shop cum restaurant and a village hall where local clubs and societies meet.

It has a small but lively primary school of around 100 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. The church was re-roofed a decade ago and has recently had a new, all-electric heating system installed 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 and 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 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 10 electoral role members. An 'Open-the-Book' benefice team has operated in Friday Bridge primary school over the past year which has brought a significant increase in attendance by children and their families to festival services such as Palm Sunday and Christmas. In addition, the school uses the church for their own special Harvest and Christmas services.

There is an intention to extend 'Open-the-Book' to both Elm and Emneth schools.

## **Church Finance**

St Mark's expenditure has exceeded its income over the past few years allowing St Mark's to pay approximately 50% of the 'Parish share' request to Diocese. 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 exacerbated by the Covid pandemic.
- A lack of younger people to help move the church forward in a vibrant way.

## Vision and plans for the future

St Mark's has two ALMs, a church warden and five PCC members.

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:

Michelle Bradbury - ALM (worship leader) [michelle.bradbury@icloud.com](mailto:michelle.bradbury@icloud.com)

01945 860094

John Reach - Church warden [johnreach1940@gmail.com](mailto:johnreach1940@gmail.com)

01945 960533

Vicki Smith ALM (worship leader) PCC sec [vkerrsmith@gmail.com](mailto:vkerrsmith@gmail.com)

07957642138



Front view of St Mark's church



Churchyard cross and arbour



A service with Bishop Stephen Conway

The Open The Book Team



## **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 12<sup>th</sup> 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. Much remains to be done, however, and discussions with Heritage England and the National Lottery are on-going.

### **Church Life**

St Clement's hosts a Tuesday, 10am Holy Communion service, with Associate Priest Rev. Daphne Calvert presiding, followed by 'coffee and cake' for the local community and there is a Holy Communion service on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday each month. The church is available for weddings, baptisms and funerals and currently has 18 people on its electoral roll.

Prior to the Covid pandemic, more regular community events were held in church, such as special interest group meetings, concerts, cake sales and an annual Christmas fayre, some of which are now enjoying a resurgence.

St Clement's shares the services of an ALM, Raine Thorrold with its sister church, Upwell St Peter. Raine makes regular visits to Beaupre school for assemblies and Christian festivals and school classes visit the church for talks on its history and uses.

The church acts as a collection point, at harvest time, for food to be donated to the Trussell Trust which runs a food bank in the near-by town of Wisbech.

## Church Finance

The church's expenditure over the past three years has greatly exceeded its income, due to the restoration work undertaken.

The parish paid between 50 and 60% of the parish share request to Diocese in the past three years.

## 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 stopped during Covid) which enhanced community engagement, while providing a valuable service to the local community.

## Get in touch:

Rev. Daphne Calvert (Associate Priest)– 01945 772171 [dcalvert5559@gmail.com](mailto:dcalvert5559@gmail.com)

Edna Hollands (Churchwarden) 01945 772723 [13redejh@gmail.com](mailto:13redejh@gmail.com)



## 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 4734 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 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 13<sup>th</sup> century and is known for its 'carved angel' roof. A guide booklet, available in church, details its full history. In recent years the building was extended to provide kitchen and toilet facilities and a major project undertaken to restore high level masonry and replace defective rainwater goods. This year a major, grant-funded, drainage improvement project is underway. 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 Licensed Lay Minister, Charlie Houlder-Moat, who transferred from Norwich Diocese in 2023, and has a working agreement which currently includes preaching, Bible reading and leading

intercessions in church, and by Authorised Lay Minister Raine Thorrold who is welcomed into the local primary school to present assemblies and foster links between school, faith and church.

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

### Church Finance

St Peter's expenditure has slightly exceeded its income over the past few years. It has contributed 70% of the requested parish share to Diocese during that time.

### 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
- Rebuilding the work of the Messy Church group
- 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](mailto:peterhartley41@icloud.com)

Tony Clingo (Churchwarden) – 01945 772502 [tony@arclingofunerals.co.uk](mailto:tony@arclingofunerals.co.uk)



Preparations for the  
Christingle service



Children's work in church  
for Easter and  
Remembrance Sunday

