



The Church of England  
Diocese of Ely

LORDSBRIDGE TEAM  
OF CHURCHES



The parishes of Barton, Caldecote with  
Childerley, Comberton, Coton, Dry Drayton,  
Great and Little Eversden, Hardwick,  
Harlton, Haslingfield and Toft

# A TEAM RECTOR FOR THE BENEFICE OF THE LORDSBRIDGE TEAM

THE PARISHES OF BARTON, CALDECOTE, COMBERTON, COTON, DRY DRAYTON,  
GT EVERSDEN, LT EVERSDEN, HARDWICK, HARLTON, HASLINGFIELD, TOFT



## Welcome

We hope that you will find this profile and appointment pack helpful in deciding whether God is calling you to be Team Rector of the Lordsbridge Team. This post will provide exciting opportunities for someone who is committed to rural and semi-rural ministry and wishes to work collaboratively with a wide range of colleagues and communities. We are looking for an experienced priest who has proven leadership skills, a creative approach to growing the kingdom of God in this area, and a sense of fun!

[www.lordsbridge.org](http://www.lordsbridge.org)

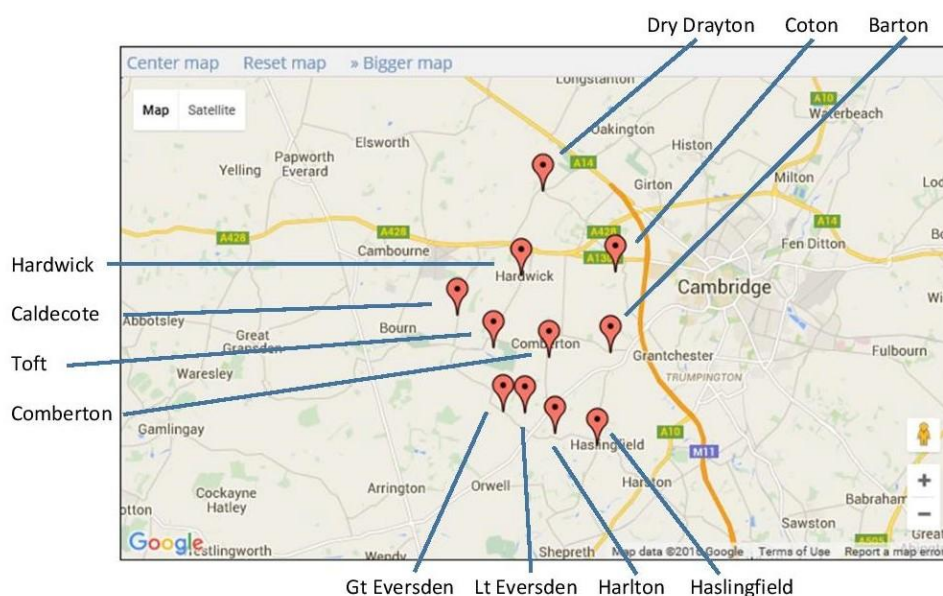
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## 1. Introduction & Overview

The Lordsbridge Team of Churches is a network of worshipping communities, spread over 11 villages, in an area of about 9 by 5 miles west of Cambridge, and served by a Core Team of four incumbent-status clergy and approximately 12 active assistant clergy and LLMs. The work and witness in the parishes is held together and made possible across multiple communities by the framework provided by the Team.



Created from four smaller benefices, the Lordsbridge Team of Churches, now a team ministry, celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2021. Each of the incumbent clergy in the team has responsibility for a particular geographical area so that each village knows who its vicar is. Each also takes the lead in specific ministries and projects across the whole benefice, according to need, interest and expertise. Together they share leadership across the whole patch and the network of worshipping communities.

There are more than 17 worshipping communities or “ecclesial experiments” across the parishes. Eleven of these are congregations worshipping in a more or less traditional way in our ancient parish churches. Other forms of worship include: a gathering for seniors, toddler church, a youth service, Café Church, Wild Church and Forest Church. As a result of the COVID pandemic a regular online congregation has developed using Zoom and online worship resources have also been extended. Other approaches to prayer and worship are developed as opportunities arise.

In 2023, c.2% of the local population was in a Lordsbridge church on an average Sunday and 3% attended a service (including mid-week services, baptisms and harvest celebrations) in any one week in October. Attendance at services in Advent, Christmas and other key festivals is much greater. Although the electoral roll has declined in recent years, the size of the Lordsbridge worshipping community has remained stable at approx. 420 (from ‘Statistics for Mission’ data).

## 2. Our Ethos

The Team exists to support and enable the mission and ministry of the parishes.  
Principally through:

- **Praying and Partying Together**

Creating opportunities to celebrate together and to build relationships: through fifth Sunday Team Services; through Team Ministers' Gatherings; and through groups and courses run across parishes. Long ago the Team Council expressed the desire that prayer would be the 'engine house' of the team.

- **Enabling Collaboration and Partnership**

Through the sharing of ideas and resources across the Benefice; through helping volunteers and church officers collaborate and support one another.

- **Providing Support for our Parishes**

Through the work of our Team Administrator, who provides support for parish officers, for services, life events, safeguarding, and much more.

- **Creating Support for the Lead Ministers**

Through our weekly 'Core' meetings where we can plan together, pray together, ask advice, hold ourselves accountable and offer mutual support.

We have evolved together becoming a mutually supportive network that retains the local strengths and essence of its individual parishes while encouraging collaboration.

Across the Benefice we seek to encourage the parishes to:

- Develop a 'Mixed Ecology' that nurtures the traditional and embraces new initiatives.
- Partner with others of goodwill in the parishes to identify and tackle social need, and work for the common good.
- Empower volunteers.
- Share ideas, resources and skills across the benefice.
- Enjoy life together.

We actively support 'mixed ecology ministry' and in our context this means continuing with a traditional parish ministry of services, pastoral care, and community involvement, whilst also developing new mission initiatives. These are some of our Recent Initiatives:





### 3. The Person We Are Looking For

In addition to the prayer life, preaching & teaching, pastoral and leadership skills that are essential for any Team Rector, we feel that there are some things that are distinctive to this post. The person appointed will have the experience to lead an unusually large multi-parish team.

We are looking for someone who will enjoy working with us and will help us to flourish. That person will:

- feel called to work in a rural and semi-rural setting.
- help us to build upon our strengths so that God's love becomes more prominent throughout our communities.
- have the ability to reflect theologically on current practice and new ideas.
- have enthusiasm for working collaboratively.
- be confident and comfortable with a variety of worship styles.
- be financially literate and be able to apply this strategically.
- have the energy and creativity to develop and implement change sensitively.
- have the experience to further develop relationships across parish, team and deanery boundaries.

### 4. Team Rector Role and Responsibilities

#### Team Leadership

- To take responsibility for the spiritual leadership of the Team as a whole, sharing this with the Core Team, leaving space for each incumbent to shape and lead the ministry and mission in the particular communities for which they are responsible.
- To embody, shape and promote the vision for and shared identity of the Team across all parishes and worshipping communities and with the Lordsbridge Chapter.
- To work collaboratively to build and sustain the Team; and to maintain it as a model of excellence and as a flagship multi-parish, multi-minister, mixed ecology Team of rural parishes in the diocese.
- To safeguard and develop the principles, values and ethos of the Team.
- To have oversight of the medium-term sustainability of the mission and ministry of the Team.
- To be sensitive to the well-being of the members of the Core Team.
- To sustain the Team as a valued training benefice for lay and ordained ministerial students and for curates.

## Team Roles

- To convene and chair the Team Council, and work with the Team Treasurer to maintain Team finances.
- To convene and informally chair the weekly Core Team meeting as the primary touching point for the members of the Team - for prayer, development of ideas, vision “compass setting”, mutual support, Q&A, shared decision making and accountability.
- To have shared oversight and delivery of the practical and organisational tasks that work best across the whole Team and ensure that what is required is in place.
- To have management responsibility for the Team Administrator and the support provided to the ministers, parishes and church communities; to ensure that payroll and employment responsibilities are fulfilled.

## Team Development

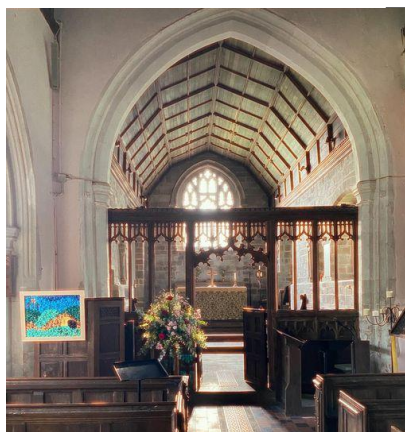
- To recruit Team Vicars in partnership with the Bishop and in consultation with the parishes and worshipping communities; to recruit, or ensure recruitment, of other Core Team members.
- To ensure the development and deployment of the Chapter of lay and ordained ministers so that skills are shared and ministers are enabled to flourish.
- To encourage the development of further vocations to ordained, LLM, ALM or other forms of mission and ministry in the Team.
- To support ministers and others in contributing to research and to national conversations about the vision and strategy for the C of E.

## Safeguarding

- To ensure that safeguarding responsibilities are fulfilled at parish and at Team level.

## Local Responsibilities

The Team Rector will also be the parish priest of at least two of the Lordsbridge parishes.



Children's Easter Artwork at  
St Peter's Coton

Café Church in Caldecote



## 5. The Ministry Team

Lordsbridge has an active and collaborative Core Ministry Team which operates around the principle of shared leadership, shared support, and shared accountability. The Team consists of three stipendiary clergy of incumbent status - a Team Rector and two Team Vicars – and a minister in secular employment as a fourth incumbent. Our Team Curate and Team Administrator are also part of this Core Team. Each incumbent member of this Core Team takes responsibility for particular geographic parishes – he or she is their Vicar - and takes the lead for particular projects and activities that are cross-Team. The Team Curate works across some but not all the villages.

The day-to-day functioning of the Lordsbridge Team is overseen by this Core Team of incumbent-status 'lead ministers' who, with the Team Curate and Team Administrator, meet weekly to pray and plan tasks and activities.

The members of the Core Team and their parish responsibilities are as follows:

- Vacant – Team Rector – Lead Minister in Comberton and Toft.
- Revd Clare Coates – Team Vicar; Lead Minister in Caldecote with Childerley, Dry Drayton and Hardwick (Acting Team Rector).
- Revd Claire Robertson – Team Vicar; Lead Minister for Barton, Coton, Harlton and Haslingfield.
- Revd Charles Fraser – Team MSE; Lead Minister in Great Eversden and Little Eversden. Charles is also Head of Divinity at The Leys School in Cambridge.
- Revd Barnabas Leeke – Team Curate; based in Coton and working across the Team.

There is a wider ministry team which consists of:

- Lordsbridge Team Chapter - We have a strong, committed wider team of self-supporting and retired clergy, and LLMs (Licensed Lay Ministers or Readers). Some of these have a peripatetic role and some serve in a specific local church ministry team.
- Local Ministry Teams – These meet at parish level and, as well as lay and ordained members of the Team Chapter, also include Authorised Lay Ministers (ALMs), churchwardens and others. They function in different ways in different church communities depending on both the context and the mix of ministers and other roles serving within that church.
- Students - We offer attachments and placements to ordinands, curates and trainee lay ministers wanting to explore Team ministry and/or ministry and mission based in villages.



## 6. Administration

- Emily Griffiths – Team Administrator, working 15 hours a week providing administrative support for the Team Rector/Vicars, as well as for weddings, funerals, communications, and safeguarding.

## 7. The Local Area

The communities of the Lordsbridge area range in size from a few hundred to nearly three thousand. The congregations similarly vary in size, although some of the smaller villages maintain a very active church life.

Each village is self-contained, set in mostly arable farmland and, though linked by ancient bridle paths, they are several miles apart by road and there is little or no public transport between them. All have established and individual identities and most have strong community spirit which, along with the rural environment, is very popular with local inhabitants. There are many beautiful, listed buildings (including the churches). The village populations and congregations are diverse – from manual and agricultural workers to professionals and academics, from local families with historic links with particular villages to newcomers, some of whom may be here for a temporary period.

Different villages have expanded with new housing at different times. Some development has been extensive (e.g. Hardwick in the 1980s and at present, and Caldecote's Highfields development around 2000) bringing in new families and changing the demography. This means that the location of some churches represents historical village centres rather than the present population distribution. New housing developments are on-going with a number of edge-of-village and in-fill developments underway. In addition, there is a planned major development to the immediate northwest of the Lordsbridge Team's area (along the A428) and within the deanery which will drive significant local population growth. This is presently on hold.

While rural in many ways, all the villages of the Team are influenced by their proximity to Cambridge. Cambridge is a vibrant city (population c146,000) within the agricultural countryside of East Anglia. It is internationally renowned for its universities, Addenbrookes and Royal Papworth Hospitals (with the largest Biomedical Campus in Europe) and the high-technology Silicon Fen concentration of bioscience and software businesses. Cambridge is the base for three Church of England Theological Education Institutions (TEIs): Ridley Hall, Westcott House and the Eastern Region Ministry Course (ERMC).

There are many employment opportunities locally, and Cambridge and other local stations have excellent transport links, with fast trains to London, Stansted and Peterborough (for East Coast Mainline and the Midlands) and there is easy access to the M11, A1 and A14. The area is one of the most economically buoyant and fast-

growing in the country, which may be affected by the proposed East West Rail (EWR) link, whose current planned route is through the middle of our area.

Local schools include the seven village primary schools in the Lordsbridge Team area, four of which are Church schools. At secondary level Comberton Village College and Comberton Sixth Form (both rated highly by OFSTED inspections) are in the benefice, and St Bede's is a church secondary school in Cambridge. There are other sixth form options in Cambridge too and various independent schools ranging from pre-prep to sixth form. There is also a Village College at Cambourne. The Lordsbridge Team of Churches work with the West Cambridge Christian Youth Ministries (WCCYM) on mission strategies for young people.

There are good ecumenical partnerships with local Baptists (Comberton, Barton & Hardwick), Methodists (Haslingfield) and Roman Catholics (gathering in Cambourne or Cambridge). Until recently Toft had an LEP between the Methodists and the Anglicans, this unfortunately ended in Aug 25 with the closure of the Methodist Chapel in the village. There are local projects and opportunities to work together in each of these villages.

Though some villages are short of public space, across the area there are a range of cafes, shops and pubs which reach beyond their immediate locality, e.g. Coton Orchard Café, Flock at Burwash Manor in Barton, various village pubs, cafes and restaurants. There are a number of farm and village shops and village Post Offices with three small supermarkets.

This is a beautiful and diverse setting in which to live and minister, with much potential for growing mission and Christian presence.



Palm Sunday Procession at  
Harlton Church



Sunday Morning Prayer at  
St Helen's, Little Eversden



Spring Feast at  
St Andrew's,  
Toft



A Celebration of Lay  
Ministry at St Peter's, Barton



Art Exhibition at  
St Mary's, Comberton



Communion Service at  
Dry Drayton Church



Church Fete at  
St Mary's, Hardwick



## 8. Worship Across the Villages

Every Sunday (except fifth Sundays) there are at least ten main services of worship across the Team including BCP and CW Holy Communion, All Age Worship, Morning Prayer and Evensong. In addition to these are the fresh expressions of church with different meeting times and formats. Clergy and lay people lead collective worship on a regular basis in all the church schools and some of the community schools.

	Population 2021	Usual Sunday Attendance 2023	Regular Worshipping Community 2023 <sup>1</sup>	Electoral Roll	Youth	Schools	Other churches	Fresh Expressions
Barton	819	27	40	47	-	Church primary	Barton Baptist Church	Monthly Forest Church
Caldecote & Childerley	2050	10	10	25	-	Community primary	-	Monthly Café Church
Comberton	2250	43	66	89	-	Community primary	Comberton Baptist Church	Monthly Oasis Teas
Coton	952	12	27	24	-	Church primary	-	Monthly "Messy Church"
Dry Drayton	698	28	69	32	-	Church primary	Quakers	Monthly Forest Church
Great & Little Eversden	797	8	20	27	-	-	-	-
Hardwick	2658	26	71	49	-	Community primary	Hardwick Evangelical Church	Monthly Wild Church Weekly Toddler Church
Harlton	316	15	20	29	-	-	-	-
Haslingfield	1531	35	76	66	Café Saintz	Endowed primary	Haslingfield Methodist Church	Monthly Forest Church
Toft	572	13	30	29	-	-	-	-
Lordsbridge-wide					West Cambridge Christian Youth Ministries (WCCYM)	Comberton Village College (CVC) & Sixth Form		Thirst (WCCYM) Zoom Worship at Home

<sup>1</sup>Regular worshipping community is one worshipping at least once a month including children

## 9. Team Council

In order to oversee Team-wide activities, there is a Team Council, comprising a lay representative from each parish and the members of the Core Ministry Team, which meets three times a year. This supports Team-wide vision setting, coordinates Ministry Share, employs the administrative staff, oversees youthwork, Team communications and other Team-wide projects. Each parish has its own PCC and its own finances, to support decision making at a local level.

## Team-Wide Activities and Projects

Team-wide activities provide ways in which pooling resources can lead to outcomes that would not be possible at an individual parish level and opportunities to bind our parishes together for worship and shared events:

- **Supporting Prayer and Spirituality:** An annual Prayer Pilgrimage (now part of "Thy Kingdom Come") encourages congregation members prayerfully to visit other churches in the Team. Prayer stations and quiet mornings are held to offer the experience of (and demonstrate) a different way of nourishing our spiritual lives. Since the COVID pandemic we have also offered Zoom Night Prayer.
- **Being a Training Benefice:** We have a good reputation both as a supportive environment for students for village-based Team ministry and as a place for innovative practices. Members of the wider ministry team are encouraged to contribute, for example, to thinking in pastoral theology and to the national conversation around sustainable rural Fresh Expressions of Church. The Team was part of a PhD study into the 'mixed ecology of church', started in 2021.
- **Developing Mission:** We have been exploring and implementing patterns of mission and ministry that reach beyond 'inherited' approaches to being church. In the recent past we had a Pioneer Curate in the Team who led this work. We are also conscious of the need to respond to the edge of village developments taking place.
- **Resourcing Worship:** Final agreement for the allocation of ministers for Sunday services is made at Core Team level, so that any absences or other gaps are covered, and responsibility is shared. Worship resources created locally are made available for adaptation by colleagues via Dropbox. During the COVID pandemic we developed Zoom services, which have continued since then, serving a congregation who find travel to a church difficult. We produce a weekly reflection based on the lectionary readings.
- **Administering Weddings and Funerals:** The Team Administrator organises weddings, including banns and invoicing, and couples have been invited to an



annual Marriage Preparation event run by the incumbents. The Team Administrator is also responsible for much of the standard administration for funerals.

- **Communicating Team-Wide:** The Team Administrator updates the website regularly and a monthly newsletter is produced highlighting worship and social events across the Team.
- **Working with Young People:** We are a member of West Cambridge Christian Youth Ministries (WCCYM), an organisation of local churches and youth workers, who run groups in the secondary school and sixth form, host a monthly area-wide youth service, an annual youth weekend and a summer camp. In the past the Team Rector has been invited to be a trustee of WCCYM. There are a number of worship and social activities aimed at families and young people throughout the Team e.g. Cafe Saintz, Wild Church, Forest Church, Toddler group etc. The Team has close links with the Primary Schools across the villages.
- **Worshipping and Celebrating Together:** Fifth Sundays are Lordsbridge Sundays and we invite congregations to "worship with friends or make new ones" at a single service, where we take the opportunity to pool musical and other resources, and have some fun together, in choral, contemporary, or some other style. Ascension Day is a well-established occasion for shared evening worship. Once a year, working together with WCCYM, all the churches of the area gather for an area-wide multi-denominational celebration with an invited speaker.



Lordsbridge Team Pilgrimage at  
St Mary's, Great Eversden



Preparing Mothers' Day Flowers  
for the Haslingfield Village Service

## 10. The Parishes

### St Mary's Comberton

#### Who We Are



Church at St Mary's is very much about prayer, partnership and proclamation. It is about people, relationships and community well-being. Currently we have 69 people on our electoral role (April 2025). The average size of our congregation in 2024 was 37 adults and 2 children.

The church family understands the missional imperative to share the good news of Jesus, both in actions and words. Many of the members are involved in community organisations and groups, providing a positive impact on life in the village. The church's annual events, including coffee mornings and seasonal fairs, also bring the church into village life.



Some of the St Mary's Church Congregation, Summer 2023

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#### Ministry Team

Our current team at St Mary's includes the Team Curate, two Associate Priests (SSMs) two Licensed Lay Ministers (LLMs) and a retired priest.

Members of the congregation are fully involved in helping to lead worship.

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#### The Church Building



St Mary's Church, Comberton

The grade 1 listed church is situated on high ground about half a mile south of the village centre and dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Music is provided by a small pipe organ given in memory of those who fell in the First World War, or an electronic keyboard can be used. The 14<sup>th</sup> century tower has four bells which swing chime and are hung from the original 15<sup>th</sup> century frame.

In 2007 a new porch was built on the north side comprising an entrance lobby with level access direct from the car park and accessible toilet facilities. In 2012 a servery was installed in the northwest corner of the church to provide refreshments.

The church has an old but effective oil-fired heating system. The sound system has been updated in the last 12 months and there is a projector and electronically operated screen. There is a hearing loop in good working order.

Recommendations from the Quinquennial inspection in April 2024 are being progressed. Roof repairs are in the process of being completed. This work is being funded by The Friends of St Mary's. A grant was secured from our Patron Jesus College to fund the refurbishing of the car park to include 4 disabled parking spaces.

The parish own a small barn on land adjacent to the churchyard which is leased from the local farmer.

In May 2022 we were awarded the Silver award from the Wildlife Trust's Churchyard Conservation Award Scheme.



Spring Meadow at St Mary's

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## What We Do

- Weekly (Holy Communion or Morning Worship) at 9.30am and fortnightly BCP Holy Communion at 8.00am.
- Lordsbridge Team Zoom Service at 11am.
- Tuesday Morning Prayer on Zoom at 9.30am.
- Wednesday Compline on Zoom at 8.00pm.
- Fortnightly Home Groups – Thursday morning, afternoon or evening.
- Monthly Oasis Tea activity for Seniors, held in the Village Hall partnering with Comberton Baptist Church.
- Social and fund raising events throughout the year.
- Annual art exhibition
- Time to Talk listening service in collaboration with local GP surgery.
- Periodic Away mornings. The last one in April this year led to a sermon series on prayer, partnership and proclamation which is being lived out in service to our community including collaboration with Comberton Baptist Church at the recent village Festival.
- Comberton Shed – weekly on Wednesdays.



Easter Garden at St Mary's



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## Where We Are

Comberton is an historic rural village approximately 5 miles southwest of Cambridge with a population of around 2,500. Comberton is twinned with Le Vaudreuil, near Rouen in Haute-Normandie in northern France. The village has:



Comberton Village Centre

- Village hall used for community events, sales, plays, cinema, etc.
- Three Horseshoes pub, which serves real ale and meals and opens as a café during the day.
- Doctors' surgery.
- Local businesses including dentist, accountant, Solicitor, hairdresser, village shops, post office, caravan and camping site.
- Sporting facilities including football pitches, bowling green, tennis courts and an outdoor swimming pool.
- Nursery school, Meridian Primary School, Comberton Village College and Sixth Form.

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## What We Want To Do Next

To continue working on prayer, partnership and proclamation of the gospel including making our building and activities accessible and welcoming to all regardless of ability.

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## Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a high priority, and we are well served by our parish safeguarding officer (PSO) and Lordsbridge Team Administrator, supported by the Diocesan Safeguarding Team and dashboards.

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## The Friends of St Mary's

St Mary's is supported financially by The Friends of St Mary's (FOSM) a charitable organisation who organise fundraising specifically for the upkeep of the fabric of the building and churchyard.



**Do come  
and join  
our team!**

### Where We Are

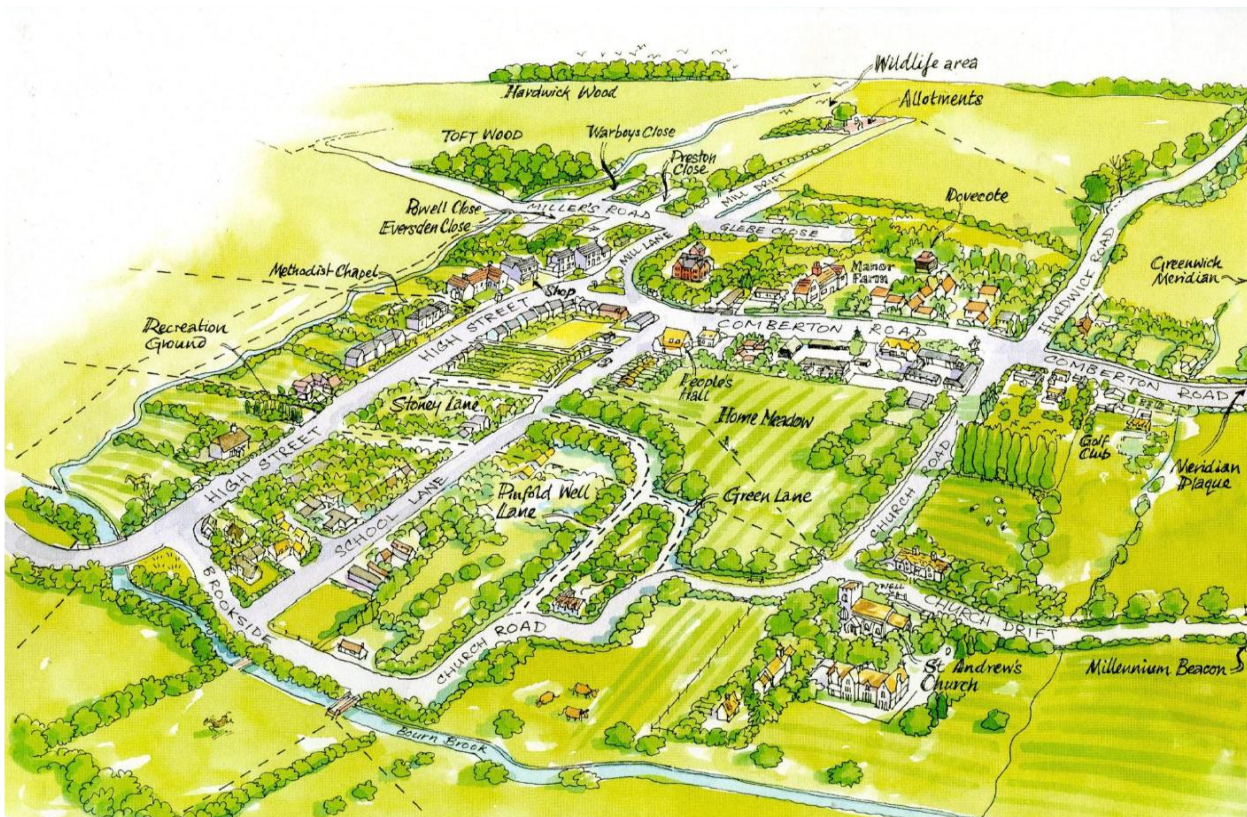
Toft Parish, South Cambridgeshire District Council, County of Cambridgeshire



Toft is a small village of 1285 acres, set astride the B1046, seven miles west of Cambridge with a population of about 600. Its southern boundary is Bourn Brook. Housing is mixed in size and type, and there are some council houses, though many of these are now privately owned.

The majority of houses are grouped in a rectangle made up of two roads, with a small housing estate to the north of the village green and a small separate group of houses adjacent to the Church which does not stand in the heart of the village. There is a separate part of the Parish, which adjoins Comberton to the west, where the Village College is to be found. Opposite to the Village College is a new development of 90 houses, recently completed, known as Birdlings.

However, the residents in this part do not naturally turn to Toft, but rather to Comberton although they are pleased to be part of Toft Parish if asked.





Before the Second World War, most of the villagers worked on the land, but now there are none; the majority find work outside Toft in Cambridge, London, Bedford and Peterborough. There are quite a number of retired people. At the 2011 census the village had the highest average age in the old County. However, since then a number of our elderly villagers have died or moved into care homes and we have been delighted to welcome new families with children. Attempts to build any major development are fiercely fought, as only 'infilling' is supposed to be allowed. The Parish Council is active and caring.

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## Village Life

There is no Primary School in the village. The majority of primary age go to the Meridian School, Comberton (there is a school bus). Secondary education is largely provided by Comberton Village College situated on the eastern edge of the Parish. A number of children go to schools in Cambridge, mostly privately.

Within the village there are a number of voluntary or semi-voluntary groups: Brownie, Guide and Ranger units (Scouting is available in villages all around); a Friendship Club for over fifties, a weekly warm hub in the winter months, a Photography Club, a drama group, a drawing and painting class, an Historical Society and a village choir

There are also a variety of music groups, all loosely bound together including a group for young musicians, a guitar group and Toft/Session/Gallery Band.

There is a village Post Office and Stores, which gives great support to village activities; the previous pub which sold Chinese food and fish & chips has recently closed. There is a small area of light industry in the centre of the village at the Mount, and another small group of firms at the eastern end of the village built on what was one of our farms. Also, various folk run businesses from their homes e.g. Business Weekly, Tebbit Illustration and Graphic Design. There is a home for the elderly called *Home Meadow* in the centre of the village; originally a Social Services home it is now in private ownership. Although some staff come from the village, the bulk of those working there come from outside the village, in particular from Eastern Europe. There is no surgery in the village, but two Doctor's practices are available, one based in Bourn and the other in Comberton. Both surgeries offer a wide range of health-care services and both have their own dispensaries. The Cambridge Meridian Golf Club can be found on former farmland and occupies about one sixth of the village acreage. Set up by the Woodland Trust, there is wood on the edge of the village.

In November 1999, the People's Hall, created from the School building when the school was closed in 1959, was re-opened. It has undergone a major re-build and now has two rooms upstairs, a good-sized hall, fully equipped kitchen and Social Club downstairs. The Club is open every Thursday and Friday and many Saturdays, and offers, as well as a licensed Bar, social evenings including carpet bowls, quizzes, evenings built round a specific theme, monthly food night, an evening to celebrate Chinese New Year and so on. The People's Hall is equipped to transform into a theatre, which it does from time to time. It also has the technology to become a cinema with a full sized screen and shows

films on a regular basis. Musical acts are booked and put on excellent evenings as well as local home-grown music. Every Wednesday morning there is a community Café, with a club for toddlers. There is also a well-equipped recreation ground, where it is possible to play football. Adjacent to this is a newly acquired piece of public ground – Lot Meadow – which, thanks to much hard work, has been transformed with orchard, picnic seats, wild-flower garden and woodland.

The Parish Church distributes a monthly 'Village Calendar', which gives details of forthcoming events and notices of importance, free to every household. It is partially financed by advertising published four times a year. It always contains pages from the Parish Council who pay for their contributions.



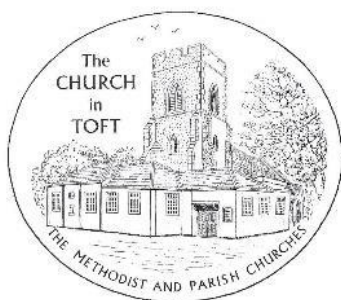
*The Peoples Hall*



*Spring Feast – St. Andrew's full of pompoms*

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## Ministry and Worship



Christianity has been present in Toft for around a thousand years and the church building dates from the C13th. In 2003 the Anglican and Methodist churches in the village formed a Local Ecumenical Partnership. Both church and chapel were retained as places of worship and services alternated Sunday by Sunday between these buildings. The members of both denominations however, regarded themselves then and still today, as belonging to The Church in Toft, doing everything in unity with one

another. Sadly this LEP partnership has recently come to an end because of the fragility of the Methodist presence in the village. This has resulted in the closure of the Methodist chapel. Consequently on August 31<sup>st</sup> 2025 the parish church offered an ecumenical welcome to those Methodists who wished to join.

In terms of worship the parish church offers an 8.30am BCP Communion, (2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays) sharing this with Comberton. Our main Sunday service is at 11.00am and offers Morning Worship or Eucharist depending on clergy availability. Occasional invitations will be given to visiting Methodist clergy and to a Methodist Local Preacher who is also a congregation member. We are sustained at present by the services of LLMs, and by retired and non-stipendiary clergy of both denominations. Our other regular act of worship is held every Wednesday morning at 9.30am when there is a half-hour service of Morning Prayer led by a mixed group of lay people and clergy.

We hold a number of special services during the year. Examples of these are Mothering Sunday, Harvest, and the Spring Feast/May Day celebration in the village, a major event to which we contribute two Sunday services (one open air, one in the church) designed to attract people from the whole community. We have always taken a key role in this community celebration.

We also hold a very popular Christmas Tree, Christingle and Gift service. This is one of our largest and most special services every year with organisations and individuals decorating trees, and everyone bringing presents for the Women's Refuge in Cambridge which we have supported for over 30 years. The candlelight Lessons and Carols service is also very well attended.



We have a dawn open air service every Easter morning and an annual Remembrance Day service with the British Legion presence alternating each year between Toft and Comberton. Troops no longer attend this but there are large numbers of young people from the uniformed organisations present and the congregation is often over 150. (Toft is a Thankful Village, that is a village to which all its menfolk returned at the end of WWI.)



Easter sunrise service of light

When possible we create and lead a service at All Souls for the bereaved. The Methodist Covenant service is celebrated at the start of each new year. These services are enhanced by our regular Advent and Lent groups held in a church member's home. We participate in the Joint Churches ecumenical service held annually at Comberton Village College.

We use our own printed forms of Common Worship for services of Holy Communion and Morning Prayer and have also devised our own booklet of varied short services for Wednesday mornings. We have sufficient copies of Common Worship for general use



and a set of the Methodist Worship Book. Our hymns are drawn from A & M Revised, New Hymns and Worship Songs and Singing the Faith. The Churchwarden draws up a monthly rota organising who is doing what at each service. We have a prayer list, highlighting some aspect of Toft life for each day of the month. Music can be provided by either of the 2 pipe organs in the church. At present the church has no regular organist. We have to employ an external organist for weddings. However the church has a good sound system for playing recorded music and hymns.

The village choir, comprising both church and non-church people, hold twice yearly concerts in the church and also sing for occasional special Evensongs.

At present at Sunday worship and other key services there is one sidesman/woman present to welcome people and one reader.



The minister wears surplice and stole or a cassock Alb with stole for all services. The parish has a wedding cope used also for high festivals.

Baptisms usually take place during or immediately after an 11.00 service. Marriages/services of thanksgiving average about one every two years. There have been several remarriages after divorce in the church. The PCC discussed this and agreed that remarriage after divorce should be permitted, provided the incumbent felt it to be acceptable and it was within the Diocesan and national guidelines. All such couples are offered a service of blessing if remarriage does not seem suitable, or our Reader is taking the service. Funerals are more frequent with quite a number wishing to be buried or for the ashes to be buried in our garden of remembrance. The churchyard at present has space.

The Church in Toft has close ties to its village community and all its activities. From late October through to the changing of clocks in the Spring, every Monday morning we run a Warm Hub for all comers where we offer free refreshments and a range of activities. This is well attended and a good place for those in need of conversation and good company. Free food given by the shop is offered to participants and the church also has a 'give and take' mini food bank for locals in the church porch. Food collected by customers of the shop is taken to a food hub in Cambridge as well as the Women's refuge. Christians in the village participate in activities for toddlers and parents held in



The Peoples' Hall and as volunteers at the pop-up cafe runs there weekly. The church supports a number of charities. Our Minister visits Home Meadow care home at least once a month and church members sing carols there each year.

The congregation takes an active part in the upkeep of the parish church and in the care and life of the Church. Coffee is routinely served after all 11.00 services. There is a rota for flower arranging and several people care for the silver and clean the Church.

The P.C.C. meets four (sometimes five) times a year; there is a finance and a standing committee who meet when required. One representative regularly represents the Parish at Deanery Synod, at Lordsbridge Team meetings, on the People's Hall committee and the Social Club Committee. Toft has had links with Caldecote Parish since 1793; and more recently shared in the Benefice with Hardwick. Since 2005 we have been linked with Comberton. The Electoral roll currently stands at 29. The average attendance of people over 16 on Sundays is around 12 to 20.

The church building originally dates from 13th Century, though there was extensive rebuilding in the 19th Century. There are three bells of ancient origin, to which has been added a fourth bell from Hardwick, and a newly struck bell in 1999 named Richard Howard with Ringing in the Millennium grant money. To this was added in 2001 a sixth bell, John Vince gifted from a parishioner's estate. We no longer have a Toft band but ringers from the village practice with those from the Eversdens and we support each other when bells are requested for weddings for instance. Toft tower is very popular and we have many visiting bands who come to ring regularly under the keen eye of our tower captain James Wrycroft.

The PCC made the decision in 1996, that as the Parish Church was the largest public building in the village it should be made fit for the 21st century. To that end, in 1999, a tea and coffee making facility was added in the South aisle, which also houses the Church's china and cutlery, sufficient to cater for 100 people; the front pew on either side was removed to enable concerts, nativity plays etc. to have more space; a sound and loop system was installed and the pulpit was lowered. The roof of the tower was also redone, including resetting the parapets. These works were funded by donations, a lot of hard work fund-raising and very successful grant applications for funds from various sources.

The Church is justly proud of the fact that it is in excellent condition, and that during the winter months parishioners are kept reasonably warm. A new first-class heating system, with external wall-hung boilers was installed in 2001, giving warmth whenever it is required; flexible in the number of radiators that are switched on it has the facility to be pre-set a week ahead. This has proved not only excellent for our worship but it uses much less oil than its predecessor whilst being on a great deal more often; with a frost-proof automatic switch on the Church does not get nearly so cold and damp as it used to. In 2009 a North porch to balance the south porch was built to house a lavatory. It is disability user-friendly and has baby changing facilities. A quinquennial inspection has just taken place and whilst the East window needs serious attention, there are sufficient funds to cover the costs.

The churchyard is looked after by volunteers who mow it regularly throughout the growing season. There is a bequest for exclusive use in the churchyard. The northern



churchyard wall was rebuilt in the traditional way and during lock-down, with magnificent help from villagers and an expert from Barton, a large section of the west and south wall was rebuilt. The trees, 12 limes, in the old traditional planting for the 12 apostles, and a giant redwood are professionally cared for at some expense. There is an original village well near the church boundary. This was restored by Church members and is now part of the Spring Feast ritual.

An Annual Report and financial statements are presented at the General Meeting (2024s accounts attached). Parishioners are encouraged to contribute to the upkeep of the Church and the Treasurer is very active in promoting the use of Gift Aid both for regular contributors and one-off donations. The PCC opted for accounts to be prepared on an accruals basis as this makes it easier to budget and identify trends of income and expenditure more rapidly. An annual thank you letter to donors is written by the Rector, which the Treasurer distributes. The Parish Share is paid in instalments and in full. The PCC has an annual Budget to control income and expenditure, which is tightly monitored. A percentage of the year's income has traditionally been donated to charity. Fund-raising events in aid of general funds always include a Church Fête or similar and a Christmas Fayre.



The Bishop of Ely and Revd Dr Brian Beck, former President of the Methodist

#### Our Key Aims Are

- Growing in faith and the love of God
- Offering a place of prayer and a welcome to all.
- Using our building and its grounds creatively for the welfare, enjoyment and support of the whole community
- Working collaboratively as an integral part of the community
- Trying to further the 5 Marks of Mission in our own context.



Spring Feast at the well



Procession from St Andrew's to the Methodist Church to Celebrate 10 years of our LEP with Gallery Band

## 11. The Rectory

Comberton Rectory is a spacious four-bedroom home situated in a quiet cul-de-sac in the centre of the village and is in walking distance of the church and all other village amenities. Cambridge is nearby and accessible by bus.

The property has a private driveway and rear garden. There is a separate garage with storage space above. The downstairs study/office is situated in an annex accessible from within the house and has a separate front door and entrance hall from the exterior.



The Rectory



The Kitchen



Living Room



Dining Room



The Study



Master Bedroom

## 12. Bourn Deanery

Lordsbridge is part of the Bourn deanery which, as well as the Lordsbridge Team, consists of the Papworth Team Ministry and Cambourne Church, a four-way ecumenical partnership in a nearby new settlement. The Ven Hugh McCurdy, a retired archdeacon is our Rural Dean. Because of the unusual make-up of the deanery, deanery meetings other than synod are rare. The Rural Dean provides support for the Deanery Chapter and aids communication between the diocese and the parishes.

There are two large new settlements planned within the deanery. One is an extension of 2350 houses to Cambourne (an existing new town) to the west and the other is a self-contained settlement of 3500 houses on an old airfield, known as Bourn airfield, on the northwest boundary of the Lordsbridge Team. There are further new housing developments, on a smaller scale, within some of the Lordsbridge villages.

The diocese has started a Deanery Planning exercise linked to the Living Ely 2025 documentation. Full details of this can be found on the Diocesan website: [www.elydiocese.org](http://www.elydiocese.org). The Diocese of Ely recognizes the importance of good relationships with clergy and laity, and places an emphasis on well-being. Bishop's Study Days and CME grants provide opportunities for clergy to meet together and continue to develop their knowledge and skills.

## 13. And Finally...

We asked some of the children and young people in our Team for their thoughts on what our new Team Rector should be like. In their own words:

*A leader should be someone who can preach well. They should have a good sense of music and be open to different types of music in the church. A Team Rector should make each church feel considered and that they matter. They should make churches fun and sociable. It is important they value children's work and working with WCCYM to support young people. Older people and younger people should be included equally. We want someone who is funny and nice but serious when they need to be.*

West of Cambridge  
Churches Joint Service at  
Comberton Leisure

