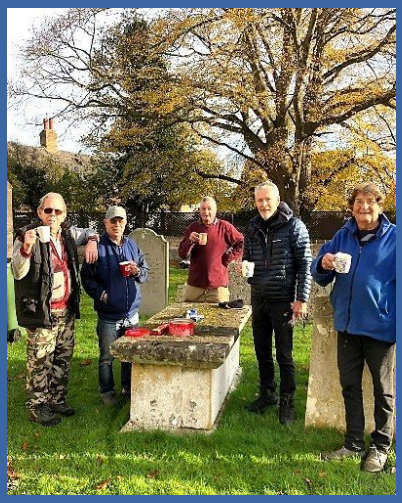
DIOCESE OF ELY · DEANERY OF ST NEOTS

Welcome to...

The Benefice of the Paxtons with Southoe, Diddington & the Offords

Benefice Profile







Holy Trinity	St James	St Lawrence	All Saints	St Leonard
Great Paxton	Little Paxton	Diddington	Offord Cluny	Southoe & Midloe

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At a glance

THE POST

Rector (incumbent) of the Benefice of the Paxtons with Southoe, Diddington & the Offords

WHERE

Deanery of St Neots, in the south west of the Diocese of Ely

THE BENEFICE

Five churches, following recent pastoral reorganisation; all five parishes lie along the River Great Ouse

HOUSING

Four-bedroom vicarage in Little Paxton, about 300m from the church

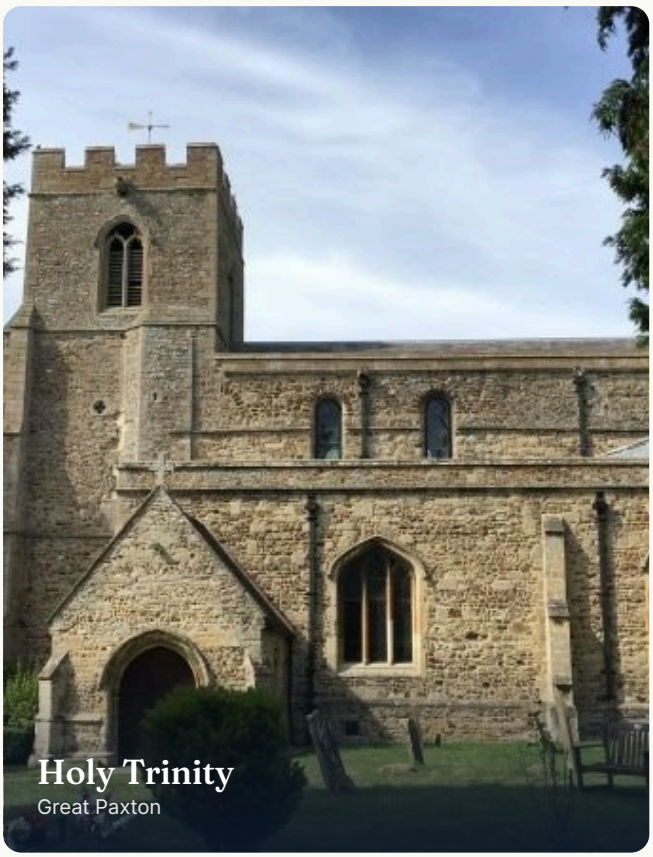
TEAM

Three LLMs and one ALM, 9 churchwardens and a Benefice Administrator (12 hours a week)

VILLAGE	POPULATION
Little Paxton St James	4,031 2021 Census
Great Paxton Holy Trinity	1,001 2021 Census
Southoe & Midloe St Leonard	379 2021 Census
Diddington St Lawrence	140 2021 Census
The Offords All Saints	1,376 2021 Census

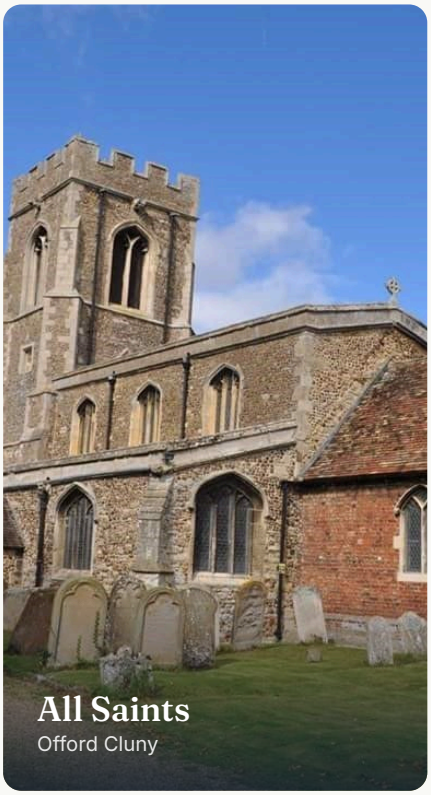
WELCOME

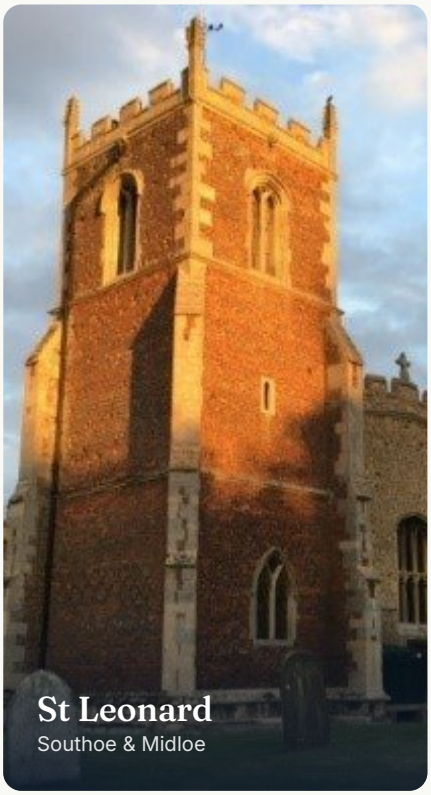
Our five churches











WELCOME

Welcome to incumbency in the Diocese of Ely

Whether this is your first incumbency or your last, you will find a warm welcome and significant support in the diocese. We offer incumbents pastoral supervision, coaching, regular CPD, clergy retreats, and great backing from buildings, pastoral and legal teams. We are investing extra in support for rural multi-parish benefices, such as this, so that our clergy flourish alongside lay ministers and administrators.

We have just completed pastoral re-organisation in this benefice, and so you can expect stability to grow the church and bless these villages.



The Rt Rev Sarah Clark, Bishop of Ely

303	82	100+	⅔
parishes	church schools	stipendiary clergy	of our parishes are in multi-parish benefices

SUPPORT FROM THE DIOCESE

Strengthening Multi-Parish Benefices

In October 2025, Diocesan Synod approved up to £750,000 over five years for the Strengthening Multi-Parish Benefices programme. Its aim is for multi-parish benefices to be welcoming places for people to grow and serve as followers of Jesus, and happy places for their clergy to lead and work.

Simpler governance

Help to simplify how several parishes are governed, including Joint Council models

Shared care of buildings

Friends Groups and Project Teams to share the work of looking after church buildings

Operational support

Support for locally appointed roles in operations, projects or business, lightening the load on clergy

Equipping leaders

Mentoring for incumbents leading change, and training for lay leaders, including Authorised Local Leaders

Benefices that join the programme agree a five-year plan with the diocese, and their incumbents share an online workspace and resource library as a cohort.

NEW INCUMBENTS' GROUP

Led by Archdeacon Richard Harlow, the group meets regularly to support clergy who have moved into incumbency in the diocese.

FOR INFORMAL CONVERSATION CONTACT

The Ven Richard Harlow

Archdeacon of Huntingdon & Wisbech

07415 757527

THE POST

The role we offer

> *Welcome to our Benefice Profile and thank you for your interest in us. We are delighted that you are enquiring about the position of incumbent of the Benefice of the Paxtons with Southoe, Diddington & the Offords.*

We are a warm, active and community-rooted benefice of five churches, each with its own character yet increasingly working together. Following recent pastoral reorganisation, we are entering a new and stable chapter with real opportunity for growth in faith, discipleship and mission.

Our buildings are generally in good condition and widely used, enabling our new Rector to focus on people, relationships and outreach, while also giving wise oversight to significant projects and future sustainability.

We are seeking a Rector who will help us grow as followers of Jesus and as welcoming communities, with particular attention to nurturing the next generation.

The qualities we seek

A relational and pastoral leader

- Warm, approachable and at ease with people of all ages
- A good listener who builds trust across communities
- Visible and engaged in village life

A leader in discipleship and mission

- Passionate about helping people grow as followers of Jesus
- Committed to engaging children, young people and families
- Able to connect faith with everyday life and local community

A collaborative and enabling priest

- A team player who values and develops lay ministry
- Works well across parish boundaries with PCCs and leaders
- Encourages others to use their gifts confidently

A wise and hopeful leader of change

- Able to articulate a clear and realistic vision
- Comfortable leading change while taking people with them
- Organised, resilient and grounded in prayer

THE POST

Our three priorities

1 Deepening discipleship and growing younger

We want to be a benefice where faith is nurtured, explored and lived out at every stage of life. Alongside this, we recognise the need to grow younger and to engage meaningfully with children, young people and families.

WE HOPE OUR NEW RECTOR WILL

- Help us deepen Christian discipleship through teaching, prayer and encouragement
- Strengthen links with schools, families and young people across the benefice
- Develop pathways for people to explore faith and grow in confidence as disciples
- Encourage forms of worship and church life that are accessible, engaging and relevant to younger generations

2 Reaching out and building belonging

We already have strong links within our communities through events, schools and regular gatherings, and we want to build on this to draw more people into the life of the church.

THIS INCLUDES

- Connecting community activity with faith and invitation
- Using both in-person and digital engagement to reach beyond our regular congregations
- Building welcoming, inclusive and visible churches in every parish
- Ensuring all who come feel they belong and can grow spiritually

3 Strengthening the benefice and leading sustainable change

As a newly configured benefice, we are learning to work more closely together while supporting each parish's distinct identity. We also face the realities of finance, staffing and buildings with honesty and hope.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR LEADERSHIP THAT WILL

- Build unity and shared purpose across the five churches
- Lead us towards financial and numerical sustainability
- Guide us through change with clarity, sensitivity and faith
- Enable and develop our lay leaders and volunteers
- Offer wise oversight of building projects and future planning

Our Benefice

Our Benefice, along with the St Neots team ministry and four other groups of villages, is in the Deanery of St Neots, in the south west of the Diocese of Ely.



The Benefice of the Paxtons with Southoe, Diddington & the Offords



Little Paxton village lies about 60 miles north of London, with Southoe and Diddington to the north and Great Paxton and the Offords to the east. While surrounded by countryside and farmland, we have excellent transport links. The A1 runs through the Parishes of Little Paxton, Southoe and Diddington, and there is easy access to the A14 and rail links.

The market town of St Neots is 2 miles south of Little Paxton; Cambridge is around 20 miles to the east; and other nearby towns are Huntingdon, Peterborough, Bedford and Stevenage. All five parishes lie along the River Great Ouse. There are gravel pits between the A1 and the river, many of which now provide leisure activities; a nature reserve lies to the north and east of Little Paxton village; and Grafham Water reservoir is just to the north-west.

OUR BENEFICE

Typical monthly pattern of services throughout the Benefice

FIRST SUNDAY

9.00am	Holy Communion	Great Paxton
9.30am	All Age Worship	Offord
10.45am	All Age Worship with refreshments	Little Paxton

SECOND SUNDAY

9.15am	Holy Communion	Little Paxton
9.30am	Holy Communion	Offord
11.00am	All Age Worship	Great Paxton

THIRD SUNDAY

9.15am	Morning Prayer	Little Paxton
11.00am	Holy Communion	Great Paxton
4.00pm	All Age Worship	Southoe
6.00pm	Songs of Praise	Offord

FOURTH SUNDAY

9.15am	Holy Communion	Little Paxton
9.30am	Holy Communion	Offord
11.00am	Morning Prayer led by an LLM	Great Paxton
11.15am	All Age Worship	Diddington

FIFTH SUNDAY

10.30am	Benefice Songs of Praise	Alternating venues

These services could not run without the assistance of retired clergy and benefice LLM/ALMs.

Staff in our Benefice

Alongside our incumbent, we currently have the following team members:

- Three LLMs and one ALM across all five parishes
- Benefice Administrator currently contracted for 12 hours a week
- Safeguarding Officer for All Saints, Offord Cluny
- Healthy PCCs across all five parishes, including 5 PCC secretaries
- 9 Churchwardens across all five parishes
- Benefice Safeguarding Officer across four parishes, plus a DBS Administrator
- Community Space Manager at St James, Little Paxton
- A small group of dedicated Benefice bell ringers

OUR BENEFICE

Services and church attendance

Little Paxton

3,086 total footfall in 2025

2025 was a busy year at St James, with a total footfall of 3,086. All Age Worship continues to be a real highlight, with particularly encouraging numbers, and our live-streamed services remain popular. Even through the vacancy that began in summer 2025, attendance has stayed positive.

Our online ministry reaches well beyond the church walls. The YouTube figures below show how much our livestreams and recordings are valued, with most people watching after the service in their own time. The livestreaming facility is also regularly used for Baptisms, Funerals and Weddings, and many services include photograph presentations projected onto a screen.

Thanks to a great deal of fundraising and significant lottery grants for community activities, we paid our full Ministry Share at the end of 2025.

DATE	SERVICE	YOUTUBE VIEWING
12th January 2025	Holy Communion	60
16th February 2025	Morning Prayer	64
18th April 2025	Devotional Hour (Holy Week)	39
4th July 2025	Memorial Service	88
6th July 2025	All Age Worship	234
13th July 2025	Holy Communion	214
28th September 2025	Holy Communion	29
26th October 2025	All Souls Service	77



SERVICES AND CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Great Paxton

3 weddings and 2 baptisms in 2026

Life at Holy Trinity carried on strongly through 2025, even with the church in vacancy for half the year. Regular services continued, occasional offices took place, and Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas were all well attended, whatever the weather. 2026 has included three weddings and two baptisms at Holy Trinity.

The whole school community joins us in church for end-of-term services at Easter, the end of the school year in July, and Christmas. On a typical Sunday, a faithful congregation of between 6 and 12 gathers for worship.

Winter is our main challenge: the church gets very cold, and with electricity prices high, the heating can only be used for occasional offices, which does not encourage a bigger congregation in the colder months.

We are blessed with generous supporters. Our fundraising and social events have been a vital lifeline, and we are very grateful to everyone who organised and supported them. Above all, the 100 Club has raised an incredible sum over the last 15 years and has played a vital part in keeping Holy Trinity an open church.





Diddington

Christingle the church is typically full





Worship at St Lawrence has continued throughout the vacancy, with our LLM and ALM leading All Age Worship.

Our congregations love interactive services, which bring a real sense of connection and shared experience. A highlight every year is our **Pet Service**, when parishioners bring their beloved animals along – a joyful and meaningful occasion as we celebrate the important part pets play in our mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Each Remembrance Sunday we hold a special short service in memory of those from our village who fell in the wars – always a poignant time of reflection together.

Fellowship often continues after the service over informal refreshments, with time to catch up with one another and chat with the Vicar in a relaxed setting – moments that help strengthen the bonds within our church family.

Our Christingle service has become something of a local legend. Gentle and child-friendly, it captures the magic and meaning of Christmas; the church is typically full, and we finish with festive refreshments and a wonderful sense of shared celebration.

Offord

Faculty in place for a new roof

We gather for worship every Sunday. Our All Age Worship services are usually followed by refreshments, with plenty of involvement from worship leaders of all levels and the congregation alike. Our 6pm service on the third Sunday draws our biggest congregations, and special services such as Remembrance and Christingle are all very well attended.

The church needs refurbishment, and we have clear plans in place. After the lead was stolen from the roof several years ago, we now have the faculty to replace it with a steel roof, and we are raising the funds and looking at grants to help. Plans have also been drawn up to install a WC and water – facilities the church does not have at present – together with restoration of the fabric of the building and better disabled access, if we can secure the funding. Together, these will let us make better use of the church and grow our ministry to the village.



Southoe

Re-ordering complete grand opening in September 2026

St Leonard's has been through an exciting transformation. The Hub re-ordering project began at the end of October 2025, the first phase was completed in summer 2026, and we celebrated with a grand opening in early September. New heating has now been installed too, giving the village a warm, welcoming and flexible church for worship and community life.

The register records 9 services in 2025, including one funeral, and we average 12–15 people at our main services, with more at festivals.

Community life has carried on regardless. During 2025 many events raised money for both PCC funds and the Hub Project, and Kay (Churchwarden) and Charlie run monthly coffee mornings in church. The Southonian Singers rehearse in church on most Tuesday nights and hold fundraising concerts, and Fiona Flynn organised a very well-attended flute concert last year. The Hub Group puts on a great variety of events, from quiz nights and a wine and cheese night to monthly talks – and our two biggest events, the May plant sale and the Christmas Light Switch-on, still went ahead despite the closure.

The building works made fundraising harder for a time, but the PCC and Hub Group kept going wherever possible. With the work now complete, we are looking forward to the re-ordered church bringing many more people into our beautiful building, for worship and for a whole array of community events and activities.





HOUSING

The Vicarage – Little Paxton



Front of vicarage and front garden

The vicarage is a lovely four-bedroom family home, situated about 300m from the Church, in the desirable area of St James' Road, Little Paxton. Downstairs, the house has a good-sized lounge and a second reception room useful for meetings; a large kitchen/diner with patio doors opening onto the rear garden; a utility room; a large study area; and a cloakroom.

Upstairs are four bedrooms.

There is a garage with space for a small car or bicycles or very useful for storage, and a driveway with parking for 3–4 cars. There are good-sized mature gardens front and back.

The Doctor's surgery, village hall, children's playground and playing field (used for village events and sports) are a couple of minutes' walk away; the school, village shops, conservatory village area and the family-friendly village pub are all within 10 minutes' walk; and the lovely Paxton Pits Nature Reserve, with its walking, sailing and water sports facilities, is just a few minutes more.

Grafham Water, with further facilities for water activities and fishing, can be easily reached by car or bicycle.

The drive to any of the other four Benefice churches takes around ten to fifteen minutes, and St Neots town centre, railway station and secondary schools are just a couple of miles away.







Beautiful nature reserve nearby



View of rear garden from patio doors

OUR CHURCHES · LITTLE PAXTON

St James Church

Little Paxton



A major refurbishment in 2010–11 included underfloor heating and radiators, modern power points and lighting. Victorian pews were replaced by oak stackable chairs in order to create a more flexible space, and the Church can now seat about 120 people. *"The venture generated a lot of interest in Little Paxton. The building is being used far more widely than we could ever have imagined. So many people come in here, for some reason, during the week, they get to know the place and they feel very at home."* (Annette Reed, 2020)

We have Services every Sunday and the building is used frequently during the week by various groups, giving many opportunities to engage with and serve the community: there are regular Church-run groups such as coffee mornings, tots group, Simply Saturday (monthly shared lunch and entertainment), history group, fish & chip lunches and film afternoons; and other groups use the space too.

There are also occasional Church events such as children's events, talks, Pop-Up Tearoom and Christmas Market; and other groups choose to hold meetings here thanks to the warm, bright and comfortable surroundings. We have a good relationship with the local uniformed groups, who attend some services and use the community space for certain activities; and families with a Church connection sometimes hire the space for birthday parties.

Because of recent and continuing growth of the village, we have a real opportunity to further bring the community together around the Church as the beating heart of the village. Also, as many of the congregation on a Sunday are senior citizens, we still have a challenge to extend our engagement with the younger community.

We consistently support a number of charities throughout the year, and a night shelter in Cambridge, to whom we also deliver collected gifts (usually toiletries and non-perishable goods) at Harvest Time.





Flexible space for different activities and events



Pull-down cinema screen beneath ringing floor





Glass & oak screen to vestry and ringing floor above

The village of Little Paxton





Little Paxton (listed in the Domesday Book as 'Pachestone', which probably means "Sheep's Town") is now a thriving village of about 1,900 dwellings, including some dating from the 17th & 18th centuries, many built in the 1960s and 70s, and two more recent developments of houses and flats. At the 2021 Census, the population of Little Paxton was 4,031. There is a mix of all age groups, from many young families to quite a few nonagenarians.

Village amenities include a Primary School, with a Pre-School and Out of School Club on site; a Doctors' surgery; shops including hairdresser's, pharmacy, Chinese takeaway and newsagent/convenience store; 'The Anchor' Public House; and, in the 'Conservatory Village' at the western edge of the village, several small businesses and shops including a Chinese Restaurant and a Co-op store. There is a mobile Post Office which visits the village weekly; the main Post Office, banks and larger shops are all available in St Neots. As well as the Parish Church of St James there is Kingfisher Church, an offshoot of St Neots Evangelical Church, which meets at the school. There is a residential home for the elderly at Paxton Hall.

Paxton Pits Nature Reserve provides a wildlife reserve with many different habitats, miles of walks and nature trails enjoyed by birdwatchers, dog walkers and families; and a variety of water sports including sailing and water skiing, and fishing. There is a Visitor Centre with refreshment area, and an Environmental Education Centre. The village also has allotments and a small community garden; there is a Gardening Club; and the Parish Council runs an annual Flower and Vegetable Show in the Autumn in addition to the popular summer Fete, 'Paxfest'.

The large Queen Elizabeth II Playing Field is used by Football, Cricket and Netball teams and has an artificial cricket surface, a children's playpark, outdoor gym equipment, a petanque area, a Multi-Use Games Area with floodlights, and a sports pavilion; the 'Youth Club' bus visits weekly. Nearby are the Village Hall, a Scout Hut used by the various village scouting and guiding groups, and cricket pavilion. There is also a Community Hub sited in one of the newer areas of the village, along with a further football field. Many village groups meet in these various facilities, and in the Church.





OUR CHURCHES · GREAT PAXTON

Holy Trinity

Great Paxton



The Minster Church of the Holy Trinity, Great Paxton is a Grade I listed, cruciform Saxon church dating from about 1020 AD in the reign of King Canute, and is one of the few remaining Saxon churches in England.

In past centuries Holy Trinity Church acted as a mission centre for the entire area, from which clergy would go out and serve neighbouring hamlets. The fact that it is built of stone (unusual for an Anglo-Saxon church) means that it was likely to have housed a monastic foundation. Externally it looks unremarkable, but the nave is of unusual height and it has a clerestory with round-headed windows – this church is one of only three surviving Anglo-Saxon aisled churches in England and is the only place in England where you can see arcades that are formed of carved piers and columns. In cross section the pillars are quatrefoil in shape and it is interesting to note the geometric perfection of the curves of each arch as well as of the pillars. All the signs are that the Anglo-Saxon work was carried out by the best masons available.

The original church would probably have had a central tower and it certainly had two transepts. It was a true cruciform church with aisles – both great rarities in pre-Conquest Britain. The surviving arch to what would have been the north transept is possibly "the highest unsupported Anglo-Saxon arch in Europe". The chancel was probably rebuilt in the 13th century, and the 15th century saw extensive rebuilding that produced the present aisles and the western tower and also, of course, the demolition of the supposed central tower. The church was restored again in 1880, when the vestry was added.

The oldest recorded bell in the present tower is dated 1400 and is still in use today. Other bells have been added, or recast, over the years to make up the six now here, with number six being added as part of the Bell Project in 2017/18. In June 2021, the late 19th-century Bevington Organ was cleaned and refurbished.

In 2020 the villagers planned a 1000-year celebration which had to be postponed due to the Coronavirus lockdowns; however, this went ahead over a weekend in summer 2022 with a living history encampment in the Churchyard with historical re-enactors, storytelling, stalls and activities such as archery, weaving, maypole and stocks. On the Sunday there were special celebratory services and a musical written especially for the occasion, performed by a local music academy.







The village of Great Paxton





Great Paxton is a thriving village community and a multiple winner of the prestigious East Anglia Village of the Year competition, held every 3 years since 1955. First listed in the Domesday Book in 1086, which records that there were 69 households, the name of the settlement was written as *Pachstone* and *Parchestune*. Despite its name, Great Paxton is now somewhat smaller than Little Paxton. In the 2021 Census, the population of the village was recorded at 1,001.

Great Paxton lies on the B1043 that runs north from St Neots to Godmanchester, near Huntingdon. It is well connected nationally by the nearby A1 and A14 roads; the East Coast Main Line railway line between London and Edinburgh passes through the parish, with the nearest station 2.6 miles (4.2 km) away at St Neots. Trains run around every half hour to London St Pancras.

At the northern end of the village is the Minster Church of the Holy Trinity. There is also a Church of England primary school with around 100 pupils aged from 4 to 11.

Great Paxton has a pub, The Bell, situated in the centre of the village. It has a large room attached which functions as a restaurant for several days a week and as a group meeting room at other times. It is very much the heart of the community, with many different groups and societies using it as a meeting place.

There is a community village shop run by friendly volunteers which is open every day, sharing the car park with the pub. It was opened in November 2017 and has become a part of the village – not just for the convenience of being able to buy food without getting into the car – but as a point of information and social interaction for many clubs, societies and local businesses. It sells a variety of mainly groceries, including fresh bread, milk, vegetables and meat, much of which is from local suppliers.

The **village has a local history group, and a Friendship Group** (with 'tea, coffee and cake and a lot of chat'), both of which meet in The Bell. There are also local Rainbows, Brownies and Guides.

Even today the village lies in almost exactly the same shape and location that it has for over 1,000 years.

Great Paxton (CofE) Primary School

Great Paxton (CofE) Primary School is a small, vibrant and lively school in the heart of a thriving community. Please see our website for more information about us: www.greatpaxton.cambs.sch.uk

Our School Council has prepared the following information to help you get to know us.

> **I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.**
> PHILIPPIANS 4:13

- ♥ We're believers
- ♥ We're friendly and kind
- ♥ We're compassionate and loving
- ♥ We're creative and curious
- ♥ We're courageous and brave
- ♥ We're forgiving and achieving

Reverend wanted for our School Family and our Collective Worships! Apply if you are or can be...



Our Reverend

- † Be loving
- † Retell Bible stories through games, songs and plays
- † Be an active listener
- † Sing super hymns
- † Dress up and wear funny hats!
- † Have fun!
- † Share super stories
- † Be a believer
- † Have surprises
- † Include our wondrous Worship Leaders
- † Worship at church all together
- † Be passionate

OUR CHURCHES · THE OFFORDS

All Saints

Offord Cluny



All Saints Church was mentioned in the Domesday Survey in 1086, but the earliest parts now standing are the nave arcades c. 1260. The tower was added in the 15th century, and the chancel in 1726. There is a stained-glass window commemorating the Pathfinder squadron of the Second World War, who were based between Offord and Graveley. All Saints houses the official memorial to 35 Squadron: the stunning stained-glass window designed and installed by Gordon Monaghan. This brings a number of people from the UK and overseas to visit the church.

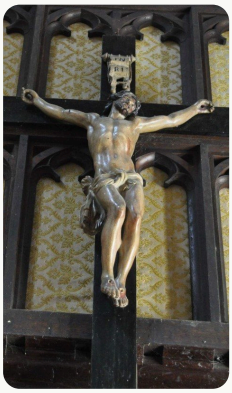
We hold a service of worship every Sunday, with support from Chris Bylett and Angel Voices at some services. Chris is an Authorised Lay Music Minister & Worship Leader. The first Sunday service is normally followed by refreshments. All our services are at 9.30 currently (apart from 3rd Sunday at 6pm), although a later time would be appreciated by some of the present congregation and by others who have indicated that they would attend a later service. Music is provided by a music box, which allows us great flexibility in the music we can offer, not only for Sunday services but for weddings, funerals and baptisms.

All Saints has only a small congregation. We currently join with St Mary's Buckden for things like the Lent meetings, prayer groups, Bible studies etc, but the majority of our ministry to the wider community comes through our regular events like the Bacon Butty morning in the village hall, which is well attended by the wider community, and the fact that we are a small village and readily hear if people are in need and there is always someone who can help out.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Many members of our congregation are involved in or run many of the activities in the village hall, serve on the village council, etc, and the fundraising committee organise many events throughout the year. One of the most popular is our Bacon Butties morning, once a month in the village hall. Other fundraising events include the Summer Fete, which is run together with the village school, Christmas Tree festival and fayre, barbecues etc. Unfortunately, due to our small congregation, our opportunities for mission are limited and would definitely be an area to be improved upon. We do, however, contribute to the Godmanchester food bank, and a member of the congregation is a voucher holder for this and is also very heavily involved in the running of the food bank.









The villages of Offord D'Arcy and Offord Cluny





The village was originally two separate villages, which were mentioned in the Domesday Book. They were officially merged into one in 2010. Offord D'Arcy is the larger of the two. There is a closed church, St Peter's, in D'Arcy, where we hold a few services each year, but the majority of worship takes place in All Saints. There is a well-known pub and a village shop, and two garages for car sales, repairs, MOT, etc.

There are many different organisations, including indoor bowls, WI, gardening, line dancing, Offord Tots, Ballroom Dancing, Senior Citizens, etc, who meet in the village hall. This stands adjacent to and shares a car park with the church. There is also a guide/brownie/rainbows group who sometimes participate in our all-age service on the first Sunday of the month.

25% of the population is aged over 65. There are around 90 children currently attending the village school for primary age children. A strong link has been established with the school, with regular assemblies taken by the incumbent, and it is important that this continues.

Our village magazine, *Out and About*, is delivered to every house in the Offords (650 copies) 6 times a year and is also available online (peterborough-print.co.uk/pages/offord). This developed from the church magazine of many years ago. It is currently run by 4 members of the church and delivered by volunteers. We have a Facebook page, facebook.com/AllSaintsOfford, and we use A Church Near You.

St Peter's Church

St Peter's Church is a redundant Anglican church in the village of Offord D'Arcy, Cambridgeshire, England. It is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade I listed building and is under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust.

Services are held there on occasional Sundays during the year, including the very popular Carols by Candlelight. The church is managed day to day by the Friends of St Peter's (FOSP), who have their own committee that support and fundraise during the year. The Chair and secretary of FOSP are members of the All Saints congregation and there is close cooperation to avoid clashes between activities at the two churches.





OUR CHURCHES · SOUTHOE

St Leonard's Church

Southoe



- Grade I listed Norman church, recently re-ordered through the Community Hub Project
- Stands in a prominent position in the centre of the small rural village of Southoe
- Home to the Southonian Singers, a thriving community choir
- Grand opening of the re-ordered church in September 2026

Standing within an attractive closed churchyard, the stone and brick church in Southoe has stood on the present site since the 12th century. The first stone church was built on the site in 1180, a simple structure but richly decorated. The arch above the south entrance is one of the most elaborately carved of its time in the country. Additions and alterations have been made at numerous points in history. The chancel was lengthened, the nave rebuilt and finally the tower was added in the late 16th century. Before its newly completed re-ordering, the church was last restored in 1859.

The church's unusual square floorplan has lent itself perfectly to the Hub re-ordering project, overseen by an enthusiastic group of PCC members and village residents and now successfully completed. The first phase of the work – opening up the nave, creating level access into the building and introducing toilet facilities with a new ringing floor above, along with extensive repairs to the South Aisle roof and the porch – was completed in summer 2026, and a grand opening followed in early September.

A bank of solar panels has been installed, and the second phase, bringing modern, efficient heating into the building, has just been completed. St Leonard's now offers a warm and welcoming place for a wide variety of events and activities for the whole community.









The village of Southoe



Southoe around 1900



The same view more recently

The village of Southoe and the hamlet of Midloe form a civil parish lying north of Little Paxton and six miles southwest of Huntingdon. Southoe is a dormitory and agricultural village on the west of the A1 Great North Road, with a population of 379 at the 2021 Census. The village has a long history and has been known variously as Sutham (6th century), Sutho, Suho and Southogh. A homestead moat to the east probably marks the site of the house of the Lovetot family, which they made their chief home in 1298. The present village and church give little indication of the parish's illustrious past.

Midloe is a hamlet to the west of Southoe, in the fields at the end of a track. Midloe only consists of a scattering of cottages beside the 16th-century Grange, a farmhouse on a moated site, probably built for Robert Payne of St Neots c. 1590. The parish is bounded on the east by the River Ouse, which divides it from Great Paxton. There are a number of sand and gravel pits, some of which have now been converted for leisure facilities. The quiet and peaceful village is surrounded by beautiful countryside and farmers' fields; it is close to Grafham Water, Paxton Pits nature reserve and the town of St Neots, with access to the East Coast Main Line railway. The village lies just off National Cycle Route 12 that runs from Enfield Lock to Peterborough.

Southoe has a small Village Hall that was built in 1979 following much fundraising by local people. Southoe Jubilee Park to the rear of the Village Hall was opened in 2002. It comprises a playground of swings, slides and climbing frame. There is a large tarmac area and a general grassed area for use for sports, barbecues etc. Southoe village is a friendly place with village events such as a Christmas Light Switch-on, Easter egg hunts, quizzes, concerts, coffee mornings and more, mostly taking place at the church. With the Hub now complete, more events are planned, including regular talks, craft sessions, toddler groups and music workshops.







OUR CHURCHES · DIDDINGTON

St Lawrence

Diddington



Although a traditional Parish Church, St Lawrence sits within a private estate of approximately 35 homes and 80 residents, many of whom are over 50. Historically a village of agricultural workers, Diddington is now home to a diverse mix of both long-standing and newer residents. While we currently hold around six services a year attended by the 'dedicated few', our Christingle Service has in recent years attracted almost 100 people.

Thanks to the efforts of our committed Parochial Church Council and volunteers, St Lawrence has in recent years become a hub of community activity. We host a thriving and growing calendar of events, including monthly **Community Coffee, Cake, and a Chat**, regular **quiz nights**, and a variety of **music performances**, attracting visiting choirs and musicians. Our **History Talk events** attract people from far and wide, and later this year we plan to host a very traditional Village Fete. The funds raised are reinvested into the upkeep of our beautiful church, ensuring its legacy for generations to come.

History: There is a Church mentioned in the tiny village of Diddington in the Domesday Book (1086), and the present Church of St Lawrence dates from the first half of the 13th century. The more recent history of the village, from the First World War, has been lovingly chronicled by local residents and currently occupies approximately 35 files, and an enormous collection of photographs depicting the important role both the church and the village played during the Second World War, when it provided a dedicated Polish encampment and hospital. Regular talks are performed in the Church to audiences from not only the local area but visitors from as far as America and Poland.

The church with its wonderful stained glass windows is a haven of peace, a sanctuary where people can enjoy moments of prayer, quiet contemplation or enjoyment of the history. As well as easy parking, it is also on the footpath network and, being always open, walkers often call in; for other travellers the church represents a lovely view on their journey along the A1.









The village of Diddington







Nestled in the heart of Cambridgeshire, Diddington holds the distinction of being the smallest village in the county. What it may lack in size, it more than makes up for in character, history, and a strong sense of community. The village has a modest footprint but a wonderfully diverse and close-knit population, where people genuinely know and support one another.

Diddington's history runs deep. The village is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086, and its past is still very much alive in the present. At the centre of the village stands the **Church of St Lawrence**, a peaceful and enduring presence dating back to the early 13th century. The church's beautiful architecture and stained-glass windows make it a place of quiet reflection and spiritual grounding. It is always open – a simple yet powerful symbol of the village's openness and welcome.

The 20th century brought notable chapters to Diddington's story. Local residents have carefully preserved the village's contributions to both World Wars through archives of photographs, documents, and personal accounts. Particularly significant is the role Diddington played in hosting a Polish encampment and hospital on land adjacent to the church. Between 1946 and 1948, the site served as both a convalescence centre for Polish military personnel and a maternity unit where **1,073 Polish babies were born**. A school for Polish children was also established, and this period remains an important part of the village's shared heritage.

Today, Diddington is a place where tradition and tranquillity meet. A recently improved network of local walking routes brings visitors through the surrounding countryside, encouraging them to pause, reflect, and discover the village's quiet charm. At its heart, the Church of St Lawrence continues to be a vital and cherished space – not just for worship, but for gathering, remembering, and celebrating.











Come and join us!

The Benefice of the Paxtons with Southoe, Diddington & the Offords











