

The Profile for the Benefice of Somersham, Pidley, Woodhurst & Old Hurst



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Introduction from acting Bishop of Ely, Rt Rev Dr Dagmar Winter

Thank you for showing an interest in this lovely post in the diocese of Ely. These 4 parishes in Cambridgeshire require energetic, kind, enabling leadership. You will be working with a loyal and able team of retired clergy, paid children & family worker, licensed ministers and churchwardens.

The Diocese of Ely has over 100 stipendiary clergy serving its 303 parishes, 82 church schools and chaplaincies. We aspire to be a diocese marked by excellent support for our clergy, with great CPD, well maintained parsonages, pastoral supervision and flourishing networks as well as deanery chapters.

It has taken the CNC longer than we hoped to appoint the next Diocesan Bishop, but still we have opened a new diocesan office and set ourselves challenging targets around growing younger, growing congregations in areas of new housing, and supporting multi parish benefices. We are a diocese with deep pockets and significant ambitions.

We are also a diocese that has long cherished the leadership of women priests, with one of the highest percentages of female incumbents. We aspire to grow the number of GMH clergy in our diocese, and welcome applicants from overseas and GMH backgrounds.

I hope that you will come and see what our diocese has to offer, as a place to serve, grow and flourish. If you would like to have an informal conversation about this post, please contact:

The Ven Richard Harlow,
Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech.

Tel: 07415 757527

Email: archdeacon.handw@elydiocese.org



A welcome from the Deanery of St Ives

If you are feeling called to respond to this profile and are appointed to the Somersham benefice then you will be one five incumbents one curate and eight active retired clergy, who meet bimonthly to share and pray together, supporting one another in the joys and pressures of pastoral ministry.

We have learned to be open and honest with each other as we share vision and frustrations, it is that spirit of openness that we would welcome and pray for you as you join us in the discovery of what the Lord has in store for us in the coming years.

Every blessing
Canon Fred Kilner

Email: kilner@btinternet.com
Tel: 07447 454851



Is God drawing you to ministry in our Benefice?

We are four churches that are deeply embedded within and passionate about the communities we serve. We need someone who will both lead us and be alongside us as we develop our mission. Our former incumbent was with us for ten years and we have moved a long way in that time. Now we are looking for someone who will continue the journey of faith with us and bring a new passion to our communities and our worship.

Is that person you?

Are you the person that will:

Be a strong, enthusiastic pastoral leader, able to communicate sensitively and effectively with all ages -within and outside the congregation?

Be a visible presence in all four villages in the Benefice, embracing the life of our communities and be responsive in times of need?

Have the vision, inspiration and new ideas to guide us in growing our faith, helping us develop our outreach in the Benefice.

Have the leadership skills and confidence to empower, support and manage volunteers and paid workers to use their talents, enthusiasm and skills for God's work in the life of our churches and communities?

Be able to make teaching about our faith accessible and meaningful to all?

Be happy to develop a variety of worship styles and music to suit the diverse needs of our existing and new congregation across the benefice?

Build on the strengths of our locally resident retired clergy and our lay ministry team?

Be inclusive, outgoing, cheerful and have a sense of fun?

You will be out in the community more than in your study, be willing to get your hands dirty, and be an inspirational leader of our rural benefice. Cambridgeshire is a hub for research, technology, advanced manufacturing, and bio-medical sciences, if you were conversant with any of these fields, together with new technology and social media, and if you had familiarity with and empathy for rural life and farming communities that would truly be a bonus.

We can offer you...

The opportunity to minister in a rural community, but within easy reach of Cambridge, Ely and London.

An exciting opportunity to deliver God's plan in partnership with four motivated and collaborative PCCs, as we discern together His calling for our communities.

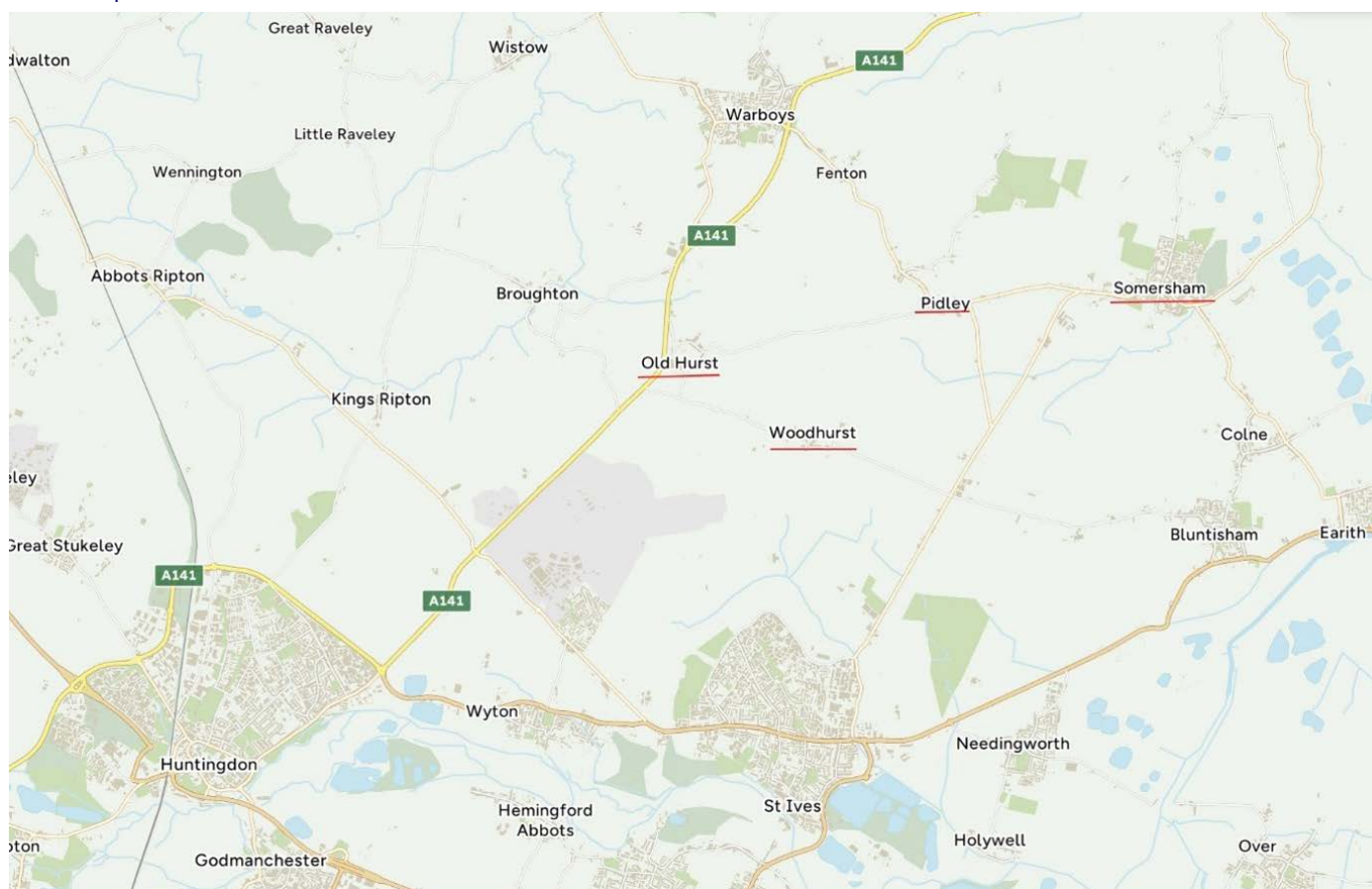
Excellent accommodation comprising a modern, purpose built, four bedroomed detached Rectory, with a mature garden, situated in a quiet cul-de-sac, within walking distance of St John's Church Somersham.

A supportive Diocese and Deanery. The current Rural Dean lives in Somersham.

Who and where we are as a Benefice

We are a Benefice of four parishes; each has a strong sense of its own identity and traditions, and all want to be at the centre of their respective communities.

The map below shows where we are located:



The four parishes are in the triangle between Huntingdon, Cambridge and Ely, In the East of England, just on the edge of fenland. The four villages are close to each other. Only a few minutes apart by car. Huntingdon has a good train service to London (Kings Cross or St Pancras).

What are we good at?

Safeguarding

- » We have a reliable and approachable Safeguarding Officer for the whole Benefice
- » Good systems and processes are in place
- » We have a strong ranking on the Diocesan Safeguarding Dashboard

Hospitality

- » All churches provide refreshments after the main service – and sometimes before it.
- » We hold many events across the benefice which welcome in our local community. See under 'fundraising'

Worship/Study

- » There is a regular pattern of services held in each church in the Benefice supported by our ministry team as well as local, retired clergy. They comprise a mixture of Holy Communion, All Age services and Services of the Word.
- » There are well-attended special services at Christmas, Easter, Harvest and Remembrance Sunday.
- » We hold several special services including a remembering service, crib service, Easter dawn outdoor service and services for the local schools.
- » There is a benefice-wide home group that meets fortnightly on Tuesday Evenings.

Children's Ministry

- » We are blessed to have a funded part-time children's worker, funded by a trust within the Benefice
- » Ecumenical Open the Book teams visit the primary school every six weeks
- » There is an explorers' group which meets weekly in the primary school at the end of the school day
- » Holiday clubs for about 30 children are organised to coincide with school holidays.
- » A thriving Toddlers' group (Little Acorns) operates weekly during term time.
- » A well-attended messy church service is held monthly
- » We work with our local Baptist church to deliver a youth club for older children

Fundraising

- » All four churches hold popular fund-raising events which raise money to support the mission of the church
- » These include concerts, barbecues, flower and Christmas tree festivals, exhibitions, coffee mornings, Burns Night, Easter and Harvest suppers. In 2024 we raised over £12,000 and hope to better this in 2025

Eco focus

All the benefice churches are planning for climate change and how to reduce their carbon footprint. For example: Somersham church has a relatively new and efficient gas-based central heating system driving fan assisted radiators which heats the church quickly when needed. This suits the usage pattern of the building. Pidley church has infrared heaters which are carbon neutral when powered by renewable electricity sources.

People

- » We have an enthusiastic ministry team of LLMs, ALMs and committed churchwardens
- » We have a pool of willing volunteers
- » We have a benefice-wide choir which sings for special services such as Easter and Christmas.

Where we could improve

- » All our churches have aging congregations; we need to do more to attract younger worshipers.
- » Our church buildings are beautiful but are costly and time consuming to maintain. The Friends of Somersham Parish Church are a significant contributor to the costs of improvement and maintenance.
- » We need a sharper focus on net zero carbon goals and to think of practical ways in which this objective can be achieved.
- » Not everyone welcomes change so there is a need to manage this in a sensitive way.
- » We do not have enough bell ringers to ring regularly for Sunday Services, so we need to use imaginative ways to recruit new bellringers.

St John the Baptist Somersham



A rural community with roots planted in hospitality and servanthood.
Serving God by serving others



St John the Baptist - Somersham

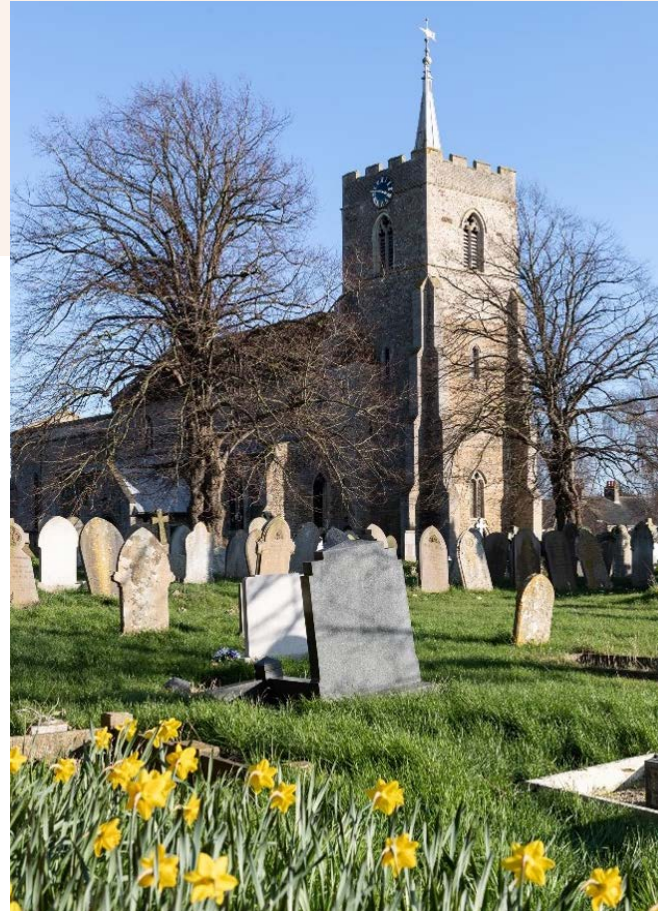
Somersham the largest of the four villages in the benefice. It was once the endowment of the Bishop of Ely and there was an impressive Summer Palace which stood to the south of the village, although nothing remains of it now.

St John's church is situated in the centre of the village, surrounded by a well-kept churchyard which is open for burials. We think that the site on which the church stands has been consecrated for Christian worship since the 7th century although the current building dates from somewhere between 1250 and 1300. It was probably built and paid for by one of the bishops who lived in the palace.

The church is a grade I listed building and is the oldest building in the village. It has been well maintained and is in good condition. It has a refreshment area and toilet. The back of the church has been cleared of pews and houses the refreshment area, a children's play area and tables and chairs.

The church has a modern gas-fired central heating system which is efficient to run and can heat the church from cold in under half an hour. These amenities are essential, making it possible to use the building not only for regular worship but for other purposes such as our toddler group, welcome café, and fund-raising events. Wakes and post-baptism parties have also been held in the church building. The church clock which was installed in 1864 with Westminster chimes that were added in 1895 as working well, having been completely overhauled in 2019.

The church is open every day from 9am to 5pm and is regularly visited by a wide variety of people for private prayer or just some peace & quiet.





Worship - Our regular worship services are as follows:

Our Sunday Services cater for different forms of worship and make effective use of our team of lay ministers and the retired clergy who live in the vicinity. The main 10.30am services are currently:

First Sunday:

A more traditional service of Holy Communion, usually from a service booklet, accompanied by the organ and our small choir.

Second Sunday:

A Service of the Word, usually from the screen, rather than a service booklet with either pre-recorded music or accompanied by the organ

Third Sunday:

A more relaxed service of Holy Communion, usually from the screen, rather than a service booklet with either pre-recorded music or accompanied by the organ.

Fourth Sunday:

A relaxed all-age Service of the Word with children's activities and participation in the service. Usually delivered on-screen and with either pre-recorded music or accompanied by the organ.

Fifth Sunday:

In a month of five Sundays we hold a benefice-wide service, usually in Somersham as the largest building.

All services are followed by refreshments, served at the back of the church. Children are welcomed at all services and the younger ones can play in the children's area at the back of the church which is equipped with a range of books toys and child-size seating

We have embraced different styles of worship and try to cater for both those who like the familiarity of the traditional and those who enjoy the variety of the more modern forms of worship. Our average attendance at a Sunday morning service is between 35 and 40 people. Many of us are getting on in years but we are blessed to have regular attendance from people of all ages.



Other regular services:

- » A service of Holy Communion is held every Wednesday Morning at 9:30. This is a short service without music, usually held at the back of the church and is followed by refreshments. It is regularly attended by between 15 and 18 people.
- » Messy Church is held on Sunday afternoons on the second Sunday of each month. This is well attended with around 12 adults and 14 children attending



Festival services:

Ash Wednesday: An ashing service is held. Some years we have combined this with the usual morning service of Holy Communion and in others held a separate service in the evening.

On Palm Sunday we have traditionally undertaken a re-enactment of the events leading up to the Crucifixion. Held outside one of the benefice churches if the weather is kind or inside the large cosy barn of one of our farmer parishioners, if not. The re-enactment is followed by Holy Communion and then a light lunch.

On Maundy Thursday we hold an Iona Community style communion meal.

On Good Friday a sung service with the benefice-wide choir.

Services of thanksgiving are held on the Sunday at the end of our annual flower festival and for the harvest.

We host the Royal British Legion Remembrance Parade. Music is provided by our local brass band.

Our Christmas Carol Service goes from strength to strength, in 2024 accompanied by a wind-band, guest organist and visiting choir members to boost the numbers of our benefice-wide choir. Followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

We hold at least two re-enactments of nativity in the church for the local primary school, starring the children themselves. And on Christmas Eve afternoon a further re-enactment in the churchyard, attended by a large number of local children and their parents.

Occasional Offices 2024 - Number of events

Weddings

7

Funerals

6

Baptisms

7



Pastoral Care

We have a committed pastoral care team which includes an Anna Chaplain, ALMs and LLMs trained in pastoral care and ministry to older people. Those who are unable to get to church are visited at home or in care homes where they are offered communion, or just companionship. Several members of our congregation who could not otherwise get to a church service are picked up and dropped off by volunteer drivers.



Creative Minds

Once a month a "creative minds" group meet in the church for an afternoon of craft work and fellowship. This is not an overt worship service and is regularly attended by a mixture of our regular congregation and others who do not attend regular worship.



Bells

The tower of St John the Baptist Parish Church contains a peal of six bells which were cast in 1782 by Edward Arnold of St. Neots and hung in an existing wooden bell frame. They have been rung regularly by Somersham bellringers for over 240 years.

Currently, we have a small but active band of bellringers who aim to ring for Sunday services and special occasions, including weddings, Christmas and Easter services and for Remembrance Sunday when the bells are rung half-muffled to give a solemn sound. The bell ringers practice every Tuesday evening and our tower is regularly visited by touring ringing teams.





Music

We have a small choir who lead the singing at Sunday morning services, accompanied either by our church organ or using pre-recorded music, depending on the style of worship service. One of our retired clergymen is an accomplished musician, organist and choirmaster and he leads a benefice-wide choir which sings for special services. In 2024 our Christmas carol service was supplemented by a number of talented musicians and singers, which we hope is a sign of things to come.

The Church – buildings and resources:

Our beautiful church building is Grade 1 listed, in good repair, but with such a building we must always be ready for expensive repairs.

The Churchwardens manage the day-to-day upkeep of the building and lead the maintenance and repair work. Our most recent quinquennial inspection was conducted in the fourth quarter of 2023 and identified several things needing attention. Some of which will be expensive to carry out. The highest priority items are under-way. We are up to date with our maintenance plan, and we are blessed with a number of local craftspeople in the village who we can call upon to help us with minor works.

The church is supported by an active, independent fund-raising organisation, the 'Friends of Somersham Parish Church.' Set up as a separate registered charity, the Friends raise money specifically to help maintain the church building and churchyard. Their constitution prevents them from directly supporting the mission of the church. This independence provides a vehicle for those who love the building for its own sake to donate money with the certainty that it will be used for its defined purpose. The incumbent of the church is an ex-officio member of the Friends management committee and is automatically a trustee of the organisation.





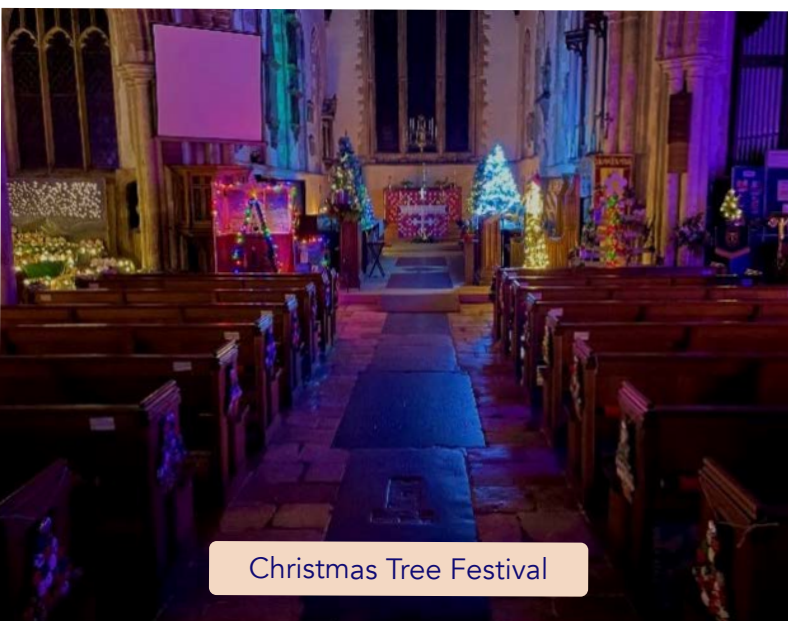
The church itself also has an active programme of fund-raising. In 2024 it raised over £12,000 to support our work. The two main fundraising events each year are our flower festival in the summer and Christmas Tree festival around the time of Advent. We also put on concerts throughout the year, notably our "Blues in the Pews" event in the late summer.



Blues in the Pews



Flower Festival



Christmas Tree Festival



Heritage Exhibition



Finance & Funds

In 2024 St John's made a Parish Contribution to the Diocese of Ely of £ 44,364 which is 100% of our ministry share costs. The benefice as a whole and also the St Ives Denery paid its parish share in full.

At the end of 2024 St John's had amounts totalling £90,163 in various funds, as shown in the table:

Unrestricted General Funds	14893
Unrestricted Designated Funds	15122
Restricted Funds	34479
Endowment Fund	1556
CBF Shares	694
Old School Shares	23419
	90163

The Village of Somersham

Somersham is the largest village in the benefice with the meridian line of zero longitude running directly through its centre. Its population is around 4000 people (2021 census 3673). It is a friendly and welcoming place to live with good amenities

- Somersham primary school (<https://www.somershamprimary.co.uk>) is rated outstanding by Ofsted and there is also an excellent private primary school, Whitehall School (<https://www.whitehallschool.com>) in the village.
- There are two pubs, both very good, the Rose and Crown ideally located in the centre of the village and the Windmill a short walk outside serving excellent food. We even have our own micro-brewery (www.ivobrewery.co.uk)
- Besides St John's there is a thriving Baptist chapel with whom we collaborate.
- The village is blessed with a small but well stocked Tesco, a post office, two convenience stores, several hair salons, a florist, a great coffee shop and an eclectic gift shop, Vintage Peacock.





- Somersham Town Band, the local brass band, goes from strength to strength, playing at local events and in particular for our Remembrance Day service as well as our prom and carols by candlelight concerts.
- We have a beautiful nature reserve centred on a lake which is at the eastern end of the village.
- There are three village halls which host multiple organisations and events.
- There is a health centre which is part of a group with surgeries in St Ives and Fenstanton as well as in Somersham and also a dentist and pharmacy.
- The nearest hospital is Hinchingsbrooke in Huntingdon and we are roughly equidistant to Addenbrookes in Cambridge, one of the country's leading teaching hospitals, Peterborough City Hospital. The Royal Papworth Hospital, internationally famous for Heart & Lung medicine is also on the Addenbrookes site.
- Somersham has squash courts, a private spa which is available to rent and a local football team, Somersham Town which plays in the Cambs County League.
- A bus service runs in morning and evening rush hours with occasional buses during the day.
- There is a small library which operates under the auspices of Cambridgeshire County Council Library Services and run by volunteers.



The Windmill



Somersham Nature Reserve

All Saints Pidley



To make God known in this Parish



The Parish

Pidley-cum-Fenton is a small village and adjoining hamlet in the geographical centre of Cambridgeshire and situated at a high point overlooking the fens to the North, 100 feet above sea level!

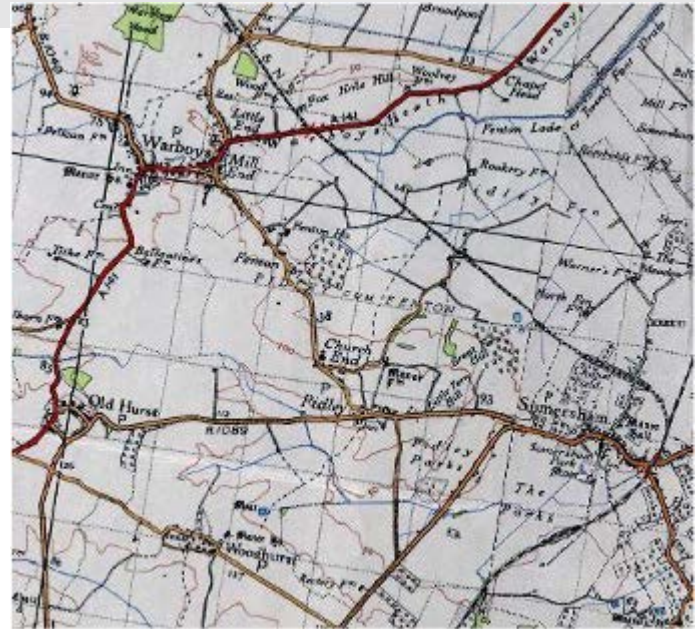
With records dating back to well before the C12th it was once a predominantly farming community; it is believed the name "Pidley" did not refer to the size of the village (which in its Victorian heyday consisted of 550 souls), but to an unknown Saxon called Pidda, who cleared the land to found the village named after him.

Some 350 people live in the Parish now in 150 dwellings; there are over 30 children; a number of families have lived in Pidley for generations, but Pidley's outstanding facilities and proximity to Huntingdon and St. Ives have attracted newcomers to the village, so there is a wide cross section of people in the community.

Pidley, with the hamlet of Fenton, is predominantly a rural community. There are 5 important local farms within the parish and 7 smaller ones, but of course fewer farm workers now. Whilst predominantly arable there are one or two with livestock as well. The Church year therefore revolves significantly around the farming community who are major supporters, and indeed several services throughout the year will take place on farms.

Over the last 25 years 3 other local farmers have converted their land into a golfing, ten pin bowling and health centre complex; a caravan site and restaurant (currently closed), and a popular fishing lake complex with restaurant.

There is a thriving Community Centre (once the Church of England school), with a large hall and fully fitted kitchen, which is regularly used for private functions, and by the village for community events. There is a bar open most nights of the week and was formerly the village social club.





The church is building strong connections with the Community Centre management team and we use these facilities for events as we have no water or significant heating in the church. We feel this relationship can be greatly developed.

The popular Mad Cat pub (previously The White Lion and renamed by regulars in about 1847 after they saw the artist's attempt at a lion on the pub sign!) continue to thrive and provide important venues for villagers and visitors to meet and socialise. There are currently 2 places in Pidley to have a meal out and 4 in which you can have a drink!

Pidley is famous for its Mountain Rescue Team (a charity which provides the disabled with life improving equipment, but is currently dormant), a fact recognised on the road signs upon entering the village, and the Pidley Male Voice Choir, both of which have close links to the Church Community. Our most famous daughter is Charlotte Edwards, former captain of the England ladies cricket team.

Pidley-cum-Fenton may not be a picture postcard village, but it is unspoilt and a vibrant place to live.

The Church

The present building of All Saints dates back to 1865, but there has been a church in Pidley since at least the C13th, and there are features in the present church and churchyard dating back to then. The ancient church of All Saints consisted of a chancel, nave, south porch and bell-turret of wood at the west end. The south doorway of the chancel and the north doorway of the nave were of the 12th century; the south doorway of the nave was late on the same century. The east window was of 14th century and of three lights. The remaining features were of 15th century date.

This church was pulled down in 1863, and a new church was erected on the same site in 1864/5. The present church consists of a chancel with vestry on the north, nave, west tower and south porch. The walls are of stone faced internally with brick, and the roofs, including the spire, are covered with tiles. The only features of the old church which have been preserved are the 14th century square-headed two-light windows reset in the west wall of the vestry, and a scratched circular sun-dial in the north wall, but much of the stone facing is obviously of old material re-used.





The Victorian church was designed in the Early English style, and its size, well-kept churchyard (still open) and attractive design make it a popular venue for weddings, even for people from outside the parish.

There is a relatively modern Baptist Chapel next door, with whose congregation we enjoy a good relationship.

The Church was threatened with closure in 1985 due to its poor condition, particularly the nave roof and tower, but since then villagers and the congregation have raised over £150,000 for its restoration. There is no shortage of volunteers to look after the churchyard, flower arranging and church cleaning and there is great support for our fund-raising events, particularly the annual flower festival.

Because of the ideal and significant facilities in the Community Centre, there has been little impetus for re-ordering or change to the building, but we are not blind to exploring possibilities if this would improve our outreach. This may include the removal of some pews to create an open space for socialising or seating. There is little immediately important work to be done.

New LED lighting was installed some eight years ago replacing the Victorian chandeliers, and last year a new digital organ was purchased as the original pipe organ was beyond economic refurbishment. It remains in place and is unlikely to be removed.

Worship

Day	Time	Service	Style
1st Sunday	09:00	Eucharist	Common Worship
2nd Sunday	09:00	Service of the Word	Common Worship, Occasionally BCP Churchwarden Led
3rd Sunday	10:00	Service of the Word	Common Worship
4th Sunday	10:00	Family Eucharist	Common Worship
5th Sunday		Benefice Service	

We aim to have a service every Sunday (except 5th), and in order to ease the workload one of these is lay led, usually by a Churchwarden, but also by others in the congregation. Resources are provided by the Diocese to aid these services.

Services pre COVID were always at 09:00 but we realised that not all people, especially those



with families, could make that time so we now alternate between 09:00 and 10:00 starts.

One of our primary aims is to take the church to the people rather than the other way round. In recent years we have held services in farmyards, barns, the local community centre, outside (in winter) and have run a toddler group in the local pub.

Additional regular services are:

Plough Sunday (2nd Sunday of January) – this is a service followed by supper at a local farm

Imposition of Ashes

Palm Sunday – recently a Benefice dramatisation of the Passion held in a barn followed by bring and share lunch. We have in previous years organised a walk covering all four churches in the benefice, complete with sustenance along the way.

Good Friday Devotions – an hour at the Cross.

Dawn Service on Easter Sunday – introduced some three years ago and has proved more popular than a traditional Eucharist. It is followed by breakfast in the church.

Songs of Praise during Flower Festival (August Bank Holiday)

Harvest (late September/early October) – Either held in church followed by lunch in the Community Centre or fully in the Community Centre.

Remembrance Sunday

Patronal Festival

Village Carol Service (Christmas Eve) – the most popular service of the year with 100 plus adults and 20 plus children. Pidley Male Voice Choir sing. Congregation encouraged to continue in Community Centre.



Patterns and style of Worship

Common Worship is used for Eucharist services and the use of traditional language was favoured until COVID. During that period several significant changes were necessitated and as a parish we recognise the need for services to be tailored for the whole Benefice and so modern language now predominates. The pipe organ needs significant restoration and following advice from the Diocesan Organ Advisor is unlikely to be restored so a digital organ has been purchased. We do not have a regular organist and so hymns are sung to digital accompaniment. Hymns and Songs for Refreshing Worship is predominantly used (we have full set of music for this book) but the use of new words to traditional hymn tunes and the occasional new hymn, where we can get the music is also widely accepted.



Demography of electoral roll and congregation

The electoral roll as at 17th March 2025 is 20, and this reflects a decline from the last interregnum. This comprises 8 male and 12 female. All but 2 live within the Parish, the others being regular worshippers from outside the Parish. The estimate is that more than 75% of the Electoral roll and congregation are greater than 65 years old. The regular congregation is smaller at 8.



Children/young persons

We currently do not have any children or young persons in regular attendance, though we do have relatives of congregants who attend whilst visiting. This is partly due to the fact that there are not a large number of younger children in the village, but is also because we have not in the past had the





services to attract them. This is a known issue that we would wish to address, albeit some other facilities are available in the Benefice.

Other activities

We have an annual Flower festival during the August Bank Holiday which is well supported by the village and surrounding communities. This is the major fund raiser for the church raising some £2,500 annually and has been running for some 30 years.. This event has been run primarily by people outside of the immediate church congregation and monies raised go towards the fabric of the church rather than the pastoral needs. Whilst it is difficult to attract a Sunday morning congregation, the village is passionate about the church and will do much to help, be it minor repairs, grass cutting or cleaning. The Community Centre is used for any events as there are full facilities.

List of officers

Churchwardens	Mr Simon Thompson	(16 years)
	Mr Andrew Purcell	(5 years)
Secretary	Mrs K Gallimore	(5 years)
Treasurer	Mr K Doyle	(46 years)
Electoral Roll Officer	Mr S Thompson	

PCC consisting of six elected members, plus Deanery Synod representative, licensed lay readers attached to the benefice and ALM's. Given the small numbers in the regular congregation the Churchwardens are elected each year and there is currently no restriction on the number of years served.

The Church and Community

Weddings Funerals Baptisms

Being a small community the number of weddings (average 1 per year), funerals (average 2 per year) and baptisms (average less than 1 per year) is limited.

Groups and activities

We do not have any groups associated with the Church. However through our associated charity The Brocklesby Trust (see below) we support a Children's worker covering the Benefice.



Services offered to the community

We have held special services for the community as required but prefer that our support is made through village activities.

School

There is no longer a school in the village this closed some 30 years ago. The old school building is now the village social club and community hall, offering excellent facilities and a place for Church social activities. The land that adjoins the village hall belongs to the church and is rented to the community

Charitable giving and support

The church has a charitable giving policy and aims to distribute 10% of all unrestricted giving. Collections from Christmas and Harvest are passed in entirety to chosen charities. We also aim to have funds available for International emergencies or disasters and these will be used as the need arises.

The Rector and the two Churchwardens are also trustees of the Brocklesby Trust (314302 - BROCKLESBY'S CHARITY). This is a specific local charity and receives rents from lands owned by Richard Brocklesby and was established through his will of 1713. The objects are somewhat restrictive (The payment of persons appointed to teach the poor children of the town of Pidley their catechism and to read the Holy Bible. The purchase of clothing for the same children) but are in the process of being updated to allow the monies (some £20,000) to be wisely used.

Finances

The church has always paid its Parish share in full each year and has sufficient income and funds to carry out the day to day activities. There is a "restoration" reserve which will cover small eventualities.

St John the Baptist

Woodhurst



We strive, through the love of God to develop pastoral care in this small community to enable it to grow and flourish.



St John the Baptist - Woodhurst

The Parish of Woodhurst lies north of St Ives. The village itself is a small Anglo-Saxon ring village, lying midway between the B1040 (St Ives to Somersham road) and the A141 (Huntingdon to March road). It is 100 feet above sea level a high point for the area.

The village is compact with the church at its centre and there is also a village hall. Residents shop in the nearby towns or larger villages and most rely on their cars to get about although there are two buses on weekdays between Woodhurst and St Ives (from where there is an excellent bus service to Cambridge). Transport in the form of bus or taxi is provided for children to attend schools in Ramsey, Warboys and St Ives. A library van comes once a month and an evening newspaper is delivered.



Worship

Our worship has a mixture of the traditional and the more relaxed. As many children as possible are involved in the Family and special services. There is a small electric organ, which is used for some services, pre-recorded music being used for others.

Regular services are:

2nd Thursday
Communion
at 10am

3rd Sunday
Family
Service
at 4pm

4th Sunday
Evensong
6pm

On months in which there is a 5th Sunday a Benefice-Wide Service is held in one of the four churches.

Special Services are held for Feast Week (June 24th), Harvest, Remembrance, Carol Service and a Midnight Eucharist Service on Christmas Eve. Also for national occasions, for example the Coronation of King Charles III

Attendance at services is static, there is an increase in attendance at the Family Service, and on special days services are well attended. There are 22 people on the electoral roll.



The Church – buildings and resources:

History

Documentary evidence from a Papal Bull in 1229 states that Woodhurst is confirmed as belonging to the Priory of St Ives. This position of belonging to the Church in St Ives continued until 1968 when the Woodhurst chapelry was transferred to the parish of Broughton. In March 1991 Woodhurst became a parish in its own right by an order in Council. The parish was combined with Colne and

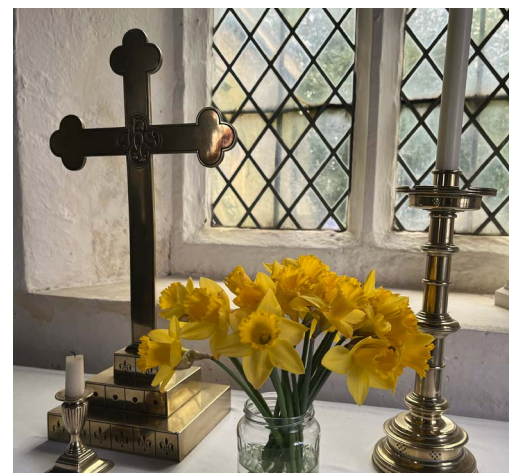
Bluntisham-cum-Earith to form a Benefice. When Holywell cum Needingworth joined this Benefice in 2008 Woodhurst transferred to the Benefice of Somersham, Pidley and Old Hurst.

The Building

This church is a small Grade 2* listed building, seating about 120, using mixture of chairs and traditional pews. The oldest part is said to date back to the 12c. Some features of the church are the pepperpot tower covered with oak shingles, and the double-scissor bell frame, which now only holds one bell. There is a small, closed churchyard in front of the church and a larger graveyard at the rear. These are well looked after by a parishioner.

In the early 1980s there was a strong possibility that the church would have to close, due to the poor state of repair and lack of resources. However, an open meeting of the village decided to do all they could to keep the church open. The hard work and determination of the parishioners plus the leadership of the Rev. Gerry Wood brought the building and the congregation back to life. Further repairs were carried out in 1991 to the east window and the Church wall, and the west window was replaced.

In March 2012 a section of the eastern wall of the nave collapsed. The appeal for funds was very successful, we obtained four grants totalling over £10,000 and this, together with tremendous response from parishioners and people far and wide who had connections with the church, meant that we had sufficient funds for the repair to the



wall and for other work. This included complete internal decoration, an alarm on the lead roof, and work is in hand to clear the graveyard, and restore the bell and the floor of the bell tower. A PA System is installed.

PCC

The PCC meets six times a year. We are a very small committee but work hard to promote our church. The monthly coffee mornings are proving very popular and we are seeing more and more people coming who do not attend church services, but who are very supportive of the church. We want to build on this love of the building and encourage people to take part in our activities and services

The Village of Woodhurst

The 2021 Census showed that the population of Woodhurst was 367. (179 males and 184 females). 20.4% of the population were aged 0-17; 56.9% were 18-64 and 23.7% were 65+ years. Many currently work from home the majority of the time but others travel to the local towns or commute further afield to Cambridge, Peterborough and London. There are 144 houses in the parish, with over half having one or two people living in them.

Education and Health

Children from nursery to secondary age attend a variety of schools, there is no school in the village itself. Secondary schools are in Ramsey, St Ives, Kimbolton, Impington, and Peterborough. Primary Schools are in Warboys, Abbots Ripton, Bluntisham, Somersham and St Ives.

There are no facilities for health care, residents are registered with doctor's surgeries in Warboys, Somersham & several in St Ives.

Community

The Village Hall Management Committee and the Church organise events in the village, both separately and together, including joint events during our annual Feast Week. Not all of these are money





making events. The Village Hall is a prefabricated building, funded by fund-raising efforts of past residents. The committee regularly organise Quiz, Nights and Bar evenings, and there are yoga classes and a craft club. Darts and table tennis evenings have recently been started.

The Church organises various events using both the Church and the Village Hall, including craft fayres, and coffee mornings. The coffee mornings, which include free coffee and a paperback book swop have proved to be very popular and introduce non-church goers to our lovely church. There are also concerts during the year in the church featuring music and poetry.

Horse riding and dog walking are very popular pastimes in the village. There are several stables and well-maintained public footpaths in the surrounding area. Residents generally believe that Woodhurst is a friendly and desirable to live.

The village has an interesting and informative website www.woodhurst-cambs.com which is maintained by one of our parishoners. This includes a section on the history of the church.

Vision for future

We are looking to continue the progress of our church in Woodhurst, to build on the goodwill that has been generated over the past few months and to bring it back to being more involved with the life of the village, and at the heart of the parish. We want to extend our approach to more fully cater for the demands of all ages. We have been bringing children into the life of the church, which also brings in their parents; we want to reach out to them, by expanding the variety of the services and making them more meaningful to them; giving them an understanding of the Christian faith and the love of God.

Style of Leadership we are looking for

We are looking for an enthusiastic pro-active person with excellent communication skills and leadership. A sympathetic innovative person, leading pastoral care to all parishioners. Someone who will understand the past history of our church, but who has a vision for its future within the community.



St Peter's

Old Hurst



We strive, through the love of God to develop pastoral care in this small community to enable it to grow and flourish.



St Peter's Old Hurst

St Peter's Old Hurst aims to be an inclusive, welcoming church whose mission is to spread the word of God to the local and surrounding areas.

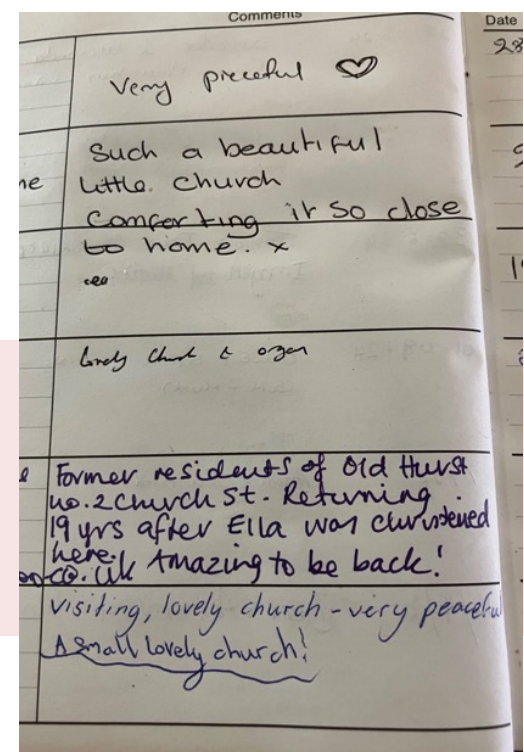
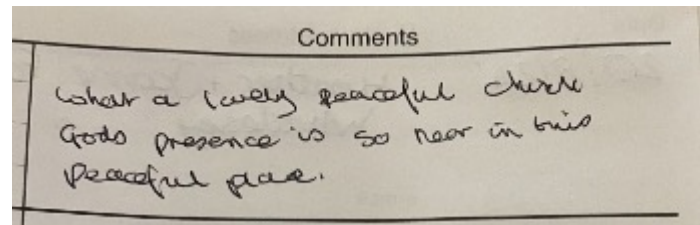
This happens through services but predominately through outreach activities, for example village litter picks, an annual BBQ, coffee mornings and a Burns Night dinner and dance

St Peter's is the smallest of the churches in the Benefice. Situated in the middle of the rural village of Old Hurst, the church was possibly built by Ralph Mowen who is said to have presented it in the reign of Henry II (1154-89). The thickness of the north wall suggests that it is of 12th century date, but the church was practically rebuilt and slightly lengthened late in the 13th century. A considerable restoration took place in 1868, and the east wall was rebuilt in 1903.

The church is a grade II listed building and is the oldest building in the village. It has been well maintained and for its age is in good condition. The chancel is divided from the seating area by a screen thought to have been added in the Victorian era. There is a vestry which was a later addition to the main building. There is no running water or toilet facilities but this is currently overcome by the generosity of the Johnson Family who run a Zoo on a working farm with toilet facilities next door.

The church has overhead electric heaters which provide minimal heat during services and work is ongoing to seek a replacement for these.

The Church provides a venue for 'Voices of Old Hurst' the village singing group who perform on special occasions and to the Parish Council for their regular meetings. The church is open around the clock and is regularly visited for private prayer or just some peace and quiet by a wide variety of people.





Worship

Regular services are:

Our regular worship services are held twice a month on the second and fourth Sundays of the month

9am
Communion Service on the second Sunday

10.30am
Family Service on the fourth Sunday

Services are led by the Benefice Ministry Team and attended regularly by a small congregation. There are services to celebrate Easter and Christmas, and these are attended by a larger number of people. Services are communicated by posting on the Church Notice Board, a quarterly newsletter produced by the Churchwarden, the Benefice Website and posts on Old Hurst Village FaceBook Page

Occasional Offices 2024

» Occasional Office	Number of events
» Weddings	0
» Funerals	1
» Baptisms	0

Pastoral Care

This is provided by the Benefice Team as and when required. The Rector visits those who ask for or are known to need spiritual support. Old Hurst is a small friendly village and word of mouth usually alerts us to the need for a visit.

Bells

The Church of St Peter in Old Hurst has two bells which are clearly visible from the outside. They are a 22½ inch bell cast by James Keene of Woodstock in 1630 and a 23½ inch bell inscribed H HVNSTON R WEST C W 1705. In 2013 both bells were taken down and repaired and a grant was obtained to enable the bells to be rung electronically.



Music

Pre-recorded music is usually used for services and at festival services we seek a volunteer organist.

The Church – buildings and resources:

Our beautiful church building is Grade II listed, in good repair, but ongoing repairs will always be needed. The Churchwarden manages the day-to-day upkeep of the building and leads on co-ordinating maintenance and repair work. Our most recent quinquennial inspection was conducted in 2022 and identified several things needing attention. The highest priority was finding a solution to the damp issue and a Faculty has been granted and funding awarded by the Benefact Trust to carry out this work. We plan to have this completed by June 2025. We are up to date with our maintenance plan, and we are grateful to several people in the village who we can call upon to help us with minor works, keep the church clean and tidy, and maintain the churchyard.

The church itself has an active programme of fund-raising. In 2024 it raised over £2000 to support our work. The main fundraising events each year are the BBQ, Summer and Christmas Coffee Mornings (which includes collecting donations for the St Ives Food Bank) and Burns Night.

We also organise ad hoc litter picks in the village.

Finance & Funds

In 2024 St Peter's made a Parish Contribution to the Diocese of Ely of £3275 which is 51% of our ministry share costs. The benefice as a whole and the St Ives Denery paid its parish share in full and we will therefore receive a rebate in 2025.





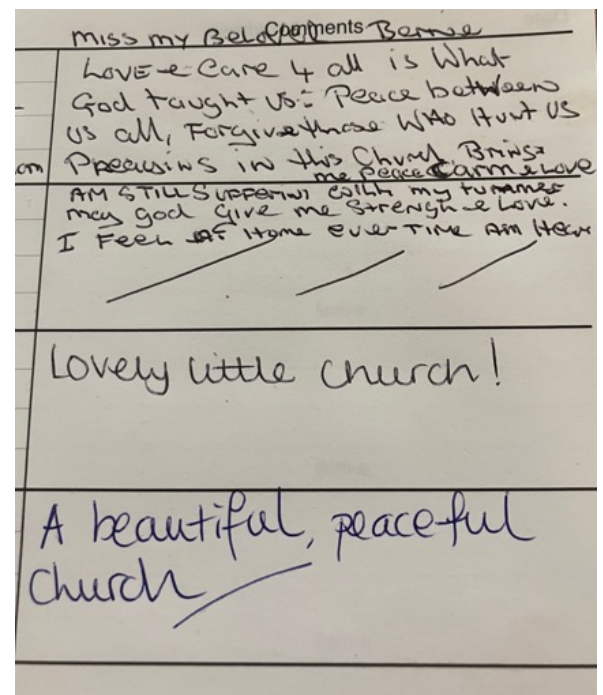
At the end of 2024 St Peter's had amounts totalling £25,397.46 in various funds, as shown in the table below:

- » Unrestricted General Fund £2016.57
- » Restricted Fabirc Fund £5,516.15
- » Restricted Chancel Liability Fund £17,143.50
- » Designated Fund £139.69
- » Memorial Fund £585.55
- » TOTAL £25,397.46

The Village of Old Hurst

Old Hurst is a village and civil parish in Cambridgeshire, England, approximately 5 miles (8 km) north-east of Huntingdon. It is situated within Huntingdonshire which is a non-metropolitan district of Cambridgeshire as well as being a historic county of England. The small Parish Church of St Peter's dates from the 13th century and is a Grade II listed building.

Nowadays it is a small rural area comprising an established round village with additional new builds and a Park Home Facility for people aged 55 years+. It has a population of 260 people with 46.1% (120 people) being over 55 years of age. Data from the OFNS, Census 2021 indicates that 59% of households have a dimension of deprivation and that 56.8% of the population over 16 years of age are economically inactive.



This friendly village has a county wide recognised facility in Johnsons Farm which has a Zoo, Farm Shop, Steakhouse and Tea Rooms. This is next door to the church. Johnsons support church activities by providing a venue for events gratis. They also act as a village shop with an excellent butchers and bakery as well as a gift shop. People visiting Johnsons have since the church has been opened 24 hours used the church as a place for reflection and prayer as shown by the comments in our visitor book.

And finally...

The benefice of Somersham, Pidley cum Fenton, Woodhurst and Old Hurst is a place with its roots planted in hospitality and servanthood. Our community believes that serving God by serving others is vital and strive to make his generous welcome known to all.

Can you help us to build on what we are already doing?

We are not perfect, we know we have gaps in what we do, our work with teenagers has only recently begun, there are still many people in our villages who have not heard news of the Gospel, and we are looking for creative and sensitive leadership to help us reach them.

One of you reading this will be our next Rector.

We look forward to meeting you.



For any questions, please do reach out to Fred Kilner

**Email: kilner@btinternet.com
Mobile: 07447 454851**



**The Profile for the Benefice of
Somersham, Pidley, Woodhurst & Old Hurst**