

The Benefice of Holkham, Wells, Warham and Wighton

A Coastal Benefice with Heart, Heritage, and Hope

BENEFICE PROFILE 2025



1. Overview

The Role

The Benefice of Holkham, Wells, Warham and Wighton is seeking a full-time Priest with a secure and active faith to lead our churches with joy, commitment, and a willingness to engage with all people - churchgoers, the wider community, and those exploring faith.

The Benefice includes four parishes and five churches (one of which is a chapel of ease), located along the stunning North Norfolk coast. It encompasses an historic family estate, a vibrant seaside town, and two rural villages, each with its own distinctive character and story.

Who We Are

We are a friendly, outward-looking Benefice, seeking to serve God through prayer, worship, and generosity. We aim to live out our faith with love and care, through practical service and pastoral support.

- **Inclusive and welcoming:** Our churches are open to all and best described as central in church tradition.
- **Congregations:** While the age profile is mainly retired, we seek to welcome all who come through our doors from the youngest to the oldest
- **Visitors:** Our population increases considerably in the holiday season and we actively welcome those who visit us irrespective of whether they come on a regular or occasional basis
- **Pastoral Care:** We care for one another and make sure those no longer able to worship in person are offered support.
- **Community Support:** Goodwill toward our churches has grown, seen in increased numbers at seasonal services and volunteers from outside the congregation helping with events, fundraising, and care of churchyards.

An example of this support was the Celebration of the Restoration of St Nicholas, Wells-next-the-Sea, led by the Bishop of Norwich, which united church and community in thanksgiving.



We also enjoy strong ecumenical fellowship, especially in Wells, where representatives of the Methodist, Catholic, Quaker, and Anglican churches work together as Wells Churches Together. This partnership organises shared activities and services, supported musically by the flourishing Churches Together Singers.

Our Vision

We seek to grow as a prayerful, inclusive, and outward-facing Benefice. Together we aim to:

- Nurture our own faith through time and space for prayer, learning, and discussion.
- Broaden our congregations by prioritising engagement with local families and those in need and developing a ministry to visitors and holiday-makers.
- Respond more effectively to human need, both through prayer and through the establishment of a dedicated pastoral team.
- Raise awareness of injustice and pray for peace and justice in the wider world.
- Deepen our commitment to safeguarding and care for creation.
- Build on the goodwill that has grown between church and community in recent years.

What We Can Offer Our New Priest

We promise our new Priest a warm welcome, practical support, and ongoing prayer for their ministry and well-being. Specifically, we offer:

- An enthusiastic team of volunteers who contribute to services, events, and community outreach.
- Committed Churchwardens and strong PCCs, working collaboratively with skilled officers.
- Fine historic and well-maintained church buildings in all of our Parishes.
- A modern, spacious five-bedroom Rectory, only a short walk from St Nicholas Church, in a town with excellent amenities and services.
- Respect for their time of rest, relaxation, and renewal.

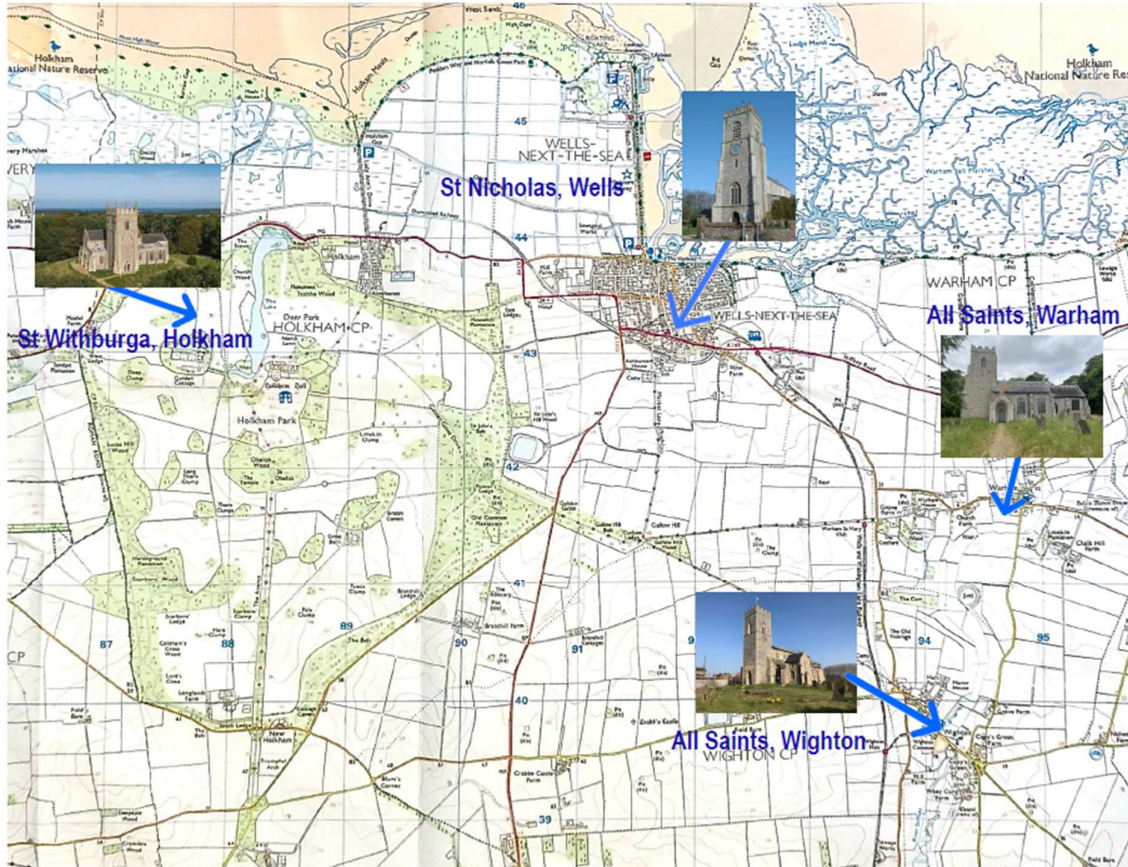
What We Hope For in Our New Priest

As a Benefice with energy and goodwill, we are eager to deepen our discipleship. We pray for a Priest who will guide us with:

- A secure, joyful, and active faith, combining deep spirituality with practical leadership.
- Strong communication skills and the ability to work collaboratively.
- A flexible approach to different styles of worship.
- A commitment to inclusion, justice, and care for the environment.
- A pastoral heart, ensuring safety and well-being across the Benefice.
- Willingness to engage with schools and the wider community, with a focus on children and families.
- Appreciation of the many volunteers from within and beyond our congregations who support our churches.
- Above all kindness, a smile and a sense of humour.

2. About Our Benefice

Where We Are (our Parish Churches)



Our Benefice sits at a central point along the North Norfolk coast, between Hunstanton and Cromer, in an **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**. It includes the 25,500 acre Holkham Estate, the historic fishing town of Wells-next-the-Sea and the villages of Warham and Wighton a little further inland, both mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 and each with their own proud agricultural heritage.

Population and Economic Background

The population of the Benefice is just under 2,800:

218 in Holkham, 2,165 in Wells, 222 in Wighton and 193 in Warham.

The privately-owned Holkham Estate supports a diverse workforce employed in farming, conservation, tourism, hospitality and heritage management. Other residents of Holkham village commute to Wells and nearby villages to work in retail, fishing, education and healthcare.

Wells-next-the-Sea has evolved from a small town centred around the fishing, farming and malting industries to a popular tourist centre and the employment of residents reflects this. Alongside relatively prosperous retirees and second homeowners, Wells has a level of high deprivation which is four times the national average and a level of medium deprivation which is six times the national average.

The villages of Warham and Wighton are still working agricultural communities, with some residents working in tourism and hospitality or commuting to nearby towns to work in services, healthcare and education. The villages also attract an increasing number of retirees and remote workers.

Benefice Support: The Ministry Team

The Rector is currently supported by:

- Two Authorised Worship Assistants who lead 'Worship for All', Morning and Evening prayer and Taizé services.
- One retired clergy-person who has a very limited ministry due to increasing frailty.
- One of the churchwardens who leads Evening Prayer, if no clergy-person is available.
- Lay volunteers who regularly assist with intercessions and readings and who administer the chalice at Holy Communion.

Safeguarding

The Benefice takes its responsibility for children, young people and vulnerable adults very seriously and their welfare is paramount in all areas of church life.

We have one Safeguarding Officer whose duties include overseeing the completion of the training in all the parishes in the Benefice. She is supported by an excellent Diocesan Safeguarding Team and is available to support those who need it in the Benefice.

The Safeguarding Officer has completed all the Certificates, Induction courses and Training required for this role and ensures that our Safeguarding Policy is displayed publicly in all our churches.

The clergy, lay staff, volunteers and members of the congregation working with vulnerable adults and children, are properly recruited, screened, trained and supported.

Stewardship

All parishes aspire to fulfil the **Benefice Parish Share** as agreed between themselves. The **Parish Share** was paid in full in 2024 and will be fully met in 2025. With the exception of Warham, all parishes have now joined the **Parish Giving Scheme** to provide a stronger foundation for financial

stability; each church has, or has plans in place, for electronic card readers to encourage visitor donations.

Environmental Awards

Both St Nicholas, Wells and All Saints, Wighton hold A Rocha UK Bronze Eco Awards and hope to work towards achieving Silver status.

3. Worship With Us

Our current worship style varies according to the preferences of each Parish, moving smoothly from traditional BCP services to informal and less structured Worship for All celebrations, so that all members of our congregations can find opportunities to worship and pray in a way that is comfortable for them.

Services at Holkham, Wells and Wighton are laid out below. At Warham there is currently no regular Sunday congregation but the community engages with special services through the year.

Occasional services include an outdoor 'Canine Carols' at Holkham Hall!



There are several Churches Together services and events through the church year and the clergy and church leaders of the denominations work together in mutual support.

Patterns of Worship

Sunday Services:	
9.30am alternates between St Withburga, Holkham and All Saints, Wighton	Holkham: a traditional language Common Worship Holy Communion alternates with BCP Sung Matins Wighton: Common Worship Holy Communion
11am in St Nicholas, Wells-next-the-Sea	The majority of services are Common Worship Holy Communion with a mix of formal and less formal liturgies. Once a month there is Worship for All
6.30pm in St Nicholas, Wells-next-the-Sea	Rotates ecumenical Taizé, Healing, Holy Communion/BCP Evening Prayer and Celtic Worship
Weekday Services:	
Wednesday 10am, Methodist Church, Wells-next-the-Sea	Service of Prayer and Praise for Anglican and Methodist congregations (Anglican HC once a month)
Additional Services: Services in Schools Services in Care Homes (fortnightly/monthly) Home Communions Harvest Festivals	
RNLI Services Carol services “Canine Carols” at Holkham Seasonal Songs of Praise	
Occasional Offices*: Baptisms - less than 5 per year Weddings – up to 10 per year Funerals – average 20 per year • these are approximate numbers for the last 2-3 years across the Benefice as a whole	

4. Our Parishes

The Parish of Wells-next-the-Sea

A Living Church in a Vibrant Coastal Community

Setting

Wells-next-the-Sea is the largest parish in the Benefice, a beautiful and historic seaside town known for its strong community spirit and year-round vitality. While it attracts many visitors during the holiday seasons, Wells is also home to a busy working population.

At the heart of the town lies its natural harbour. Once a hub of maritime trade, the harbour today supports a small but active shell-fishing fleet, as well as numerous leisure sailing and motor vessels. To the north stretches one of the UK's most stunning beaches, while the harbour itself houses a state-of-the-art RNLI station with both an all-weather lifeboat and a rigid inshore lifeboat. A volunteer Coastwatch Lookout also keeps watch.

The landscape surrounding the harbour reflects the richness of the local environment: to the west, farmland and the Holkham National Nature Reserve (NNR); to the east, extensive salt marshes, also part of the NNR.

The many local amenities make Wells a convenient and attractive place to live. Services include a Health Centre, Pharmacy, Post Office and Library, and The Wells Maltings Arts Centre. In addition there is a small supermarket and a wide range of independent shops, restaurants and cafés, including one of the finest fish and chip shops in the UK!

Our Schools

Wells has two schools: **Wells Nursery and Primary School** and **Alderman Peel High School (APHS)**. In addition there is a small independent Nursery.

- The Primary School maintains close links with St Nicholas Church, welcoming visits for collective worship several times each term. Pupils and their parents also attend services such as Harvest and Christingle.
- Engagement with APHS has been more limited, though connections have been fostered through the previous incumbent's role as Chaplain to Wells Sea Cadets, who are based at the school. We hope this link will continue with her successor. The school also leads the Community Carol Service at St Nicholas.

A Community with Spirit

Wells is distinguished by its strong sense of energy and community. This is most visible during the **annual Wells Carnival**, which brings people together in celebration.



Volunteers play a crucial role in supporting many local organisations, such as:

- Wells United Charities
- RNLI
- Heritage House Day Centre
- The Community Hub
- Coastwatch
- The Nelson Social Club
- Wells Maltings Arts Centre
- The Women's Institute
- Men's Shed
- Wells Action for Fairtrade

These groups help enhance both the quality and safety of life in Wells, contributing to the town's reputation as a warm and friendly community.

Although rising demand for holiday accommodation and the town's popularity with retirees has increased housing pressures, organisations such as **Homes for Wells** and **Wells Town Council** work hard to advocate for and fund affordable housing.

St. Nicholas supports the Wells Community Hub, for those experiencing hardship, by hosting the Community Shop weekly in the church. The church also hosts a food bank collection point.

The town cares for its older residents through **two care homes** and **Heritage House Day Centre**, where the Rector and other ministers lead services twice a month. These regular visits are valued by residents and their families.

St Nicholas Church: History and Presence

St Nicholas Church is a **large Grade II* listed building** set in a Conservation Area near the town centre.

The original fifteenth-century church was largely destroyed by fire after a lightning strike in 1879. By 1883, the nave and most of the building had been rebuilt.

A major restoration project has recently been completed on the church, following generous support from across the Benefice and a significant donation from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The major elements of the project comprised repairing the walls of the tower, re-leading the tower roof and the south aisle roof, and overhauling much of the church's rainwater goods. The works, at a cost of approximately £500,000, were carried out over several years and there have been many expressions of delight from the community of Wells to have their church fully open again.



Today, St Nicholas remains open daily, offering more than just worship. Visitors can enjoy a well-equipped children's area, a comfortable quiet corner, a book exchange, and a coffee station.

The congregation actively contributes to community life through initiatives such as the weekly **Community Lunch** and fundraising events including concerts and open gardens. St Nicholas is committed to being a Fairtrade church.



Churches Together in Wells

St Nicholas maintains strong ecumenical relationships through **Churches Together in Wells and District**, alongside the Methodist, Roman Catholic, Quaker, and Congregational communities. Shared activities include:

- Lent study groups and lunches
- The Walk of Witness
- Easter Dawn
- All Souls services
- The annual Lifeboat Service

The **Churches Together Singers** enrich worship at these community gatherings as well as at weddings and funerals in the churches.

The People of St Nicholas

The warmth of St Nicholas is reflected in comments from its visitors' book, such as the following:

'Beautiful, calm and peaceful church, a MUST visit - Good to see the church open and researched family tree too! Churchwarden very helpful'

'Lit a candle and bought a beautiful artwork'. God bless you and your community'.

'Most beautiful church, music recital was an added bonus. Thank you for the free "Help yourself to Tea/Coffee".'

'A place to ponder in and one of the most beautiful churches; I've been in. Thank you for being open for us.'

'Super children's piano concert. A touching experience.'

'An inclusive church for all ages. Lovely children's area, Jesus's story brought to life. The most cosy church we have been to'.

'I really enjoyed the fantastic toy area.'

Though still largely an older congregation, there are encouraging signs of growth and diversity.

- **Electoral Roll:** 61 members (an increase of eight in the past year).
- **Music:** The congregation loves to sing, supported by two talented organists. The bell-ringing group is reforming, adding another joyful dimension to worship.
- **Study and Prayer:** A house prayer and Bible study group of 8 people, led by the attendees, meets twice monthly in a church member's home, alongside joint Lent studies hosted with other churches.

Families are also beginning to feel more at home at St Nicholas, engaging in new activities that bring together different generations.

Reaching Out to Families

Recent initiatives reflect a growing commitment to inclusivity and intergenerational connection:

1. **The Saturday Social** – launched by young mums from the toddler group *Little Fishes*. Families enjoy activities, often with a biblical theme, while older members share conversation over coffee, bacon rolls, and cake.



2. **Wildlife Sessions** – run in partnership with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust in the churchyard. These events encourage families to explore nature and develop an appreciation of conservation.
3. **Fairtrade Treasure Trail** – a family-friendly event raising awareness about justice and global inequality.

Such initiatives have proved popular and meaningful, offering opportunities for learning, fellowship, and fun.

Music, Festivals, and Fundraising

Music plays a central role in the life of St Nicholas. The **annual summer concert season** showcases local talent of all ages, followed by afternoon tea. To ensure accessibility, these concerts are free, though other concerts throughout the year raise funds for church upkeep.



The church also supports charitable work through events such as the **Shrovetide party** and **summer BBQ**, raising funds for **Christian Aid**, **Mission to Seafarers**, **USPG**, and **The Children's Society**.

Governance

The **PCC** has ten members including two dedicated churchwardens, a secretary, treasurer and fabric officer. They meet regularly at least six times per year.

Future challenges include funding work identified in the **2025 Quinquennial Inspection Report**, mainly in respect of re-leading windows as well as repairs to the historic church organ.

Looking Ahead

St Nicholas is both a historic church and a living community of faith. While it faces challenges such as engaging younger generations, supporting those in need and sustaining finances, it also enjoys many blessings: a committed congregation, strong ecumenical partnerships, and a growing number of family-friendly initiatives.

Above all, St Nicholas remains a place of welcome, worship, and witness, serving both the people of Wells and the many who visit this unique seaside town.

The Parish of Holkham

A Rural Parish at the Heart of a Historic Estate

Setting

The village of **Holkham** sits alongside Holkham Park, the historic seat of the **Earl of Leicester**. The **Holkham Estate** owns land across the Benefice and beyond, much of it tenanted, as well as the pine plantations and marshes that form much of the renowned **Holkham National Nature Reserve (NNR)**.

At the heart of the parish lies **Holkham Hall**, a magnificent Palladian mansion set within extensive parkland. The Hall is open to the public for much of the year and is well known for its seasonal highlight, *Christmas at Holkham*. Both the Hall and Park also serve as venues for open-air concerts and large community events.

The parish is rural and peaceful. The main village contains around **70 houses**, along with the **Victoria Hotel** (20 bedrooms), the **Adnams Cellar and Kitchen shop**, and an **electric cycle hire shop**.

Holkham Park

To the south of the village lies **Holkham Park**, which is home to the parish church of **St Withburga's** (one of only two churches in England with this dedication). Withburga, the church's patron saint, was the daughter of a Saxon king.

Nearby, the Hall provides facilities for visitors, including car parking, cycle hire, a café, a museum, a wedding and events venue, and estate offices.

Further into the Park lies **Longlands**, a hamlet of eight families and the base for the estate's building maintenance department. In 2015, Longlands was developed to include **commercial office space**, now housing several tenants. The largest of these is the jeweller **Monica Vinader**, employing around 45 staff.

To the south of the Park, the hamlets of **New Holkham, Egmere, and Quarles** each contain around 8–12 houses, contributing to the dispersed but close-knit feel of the parish.

History

The **Coke family** (pronounced *Cook*) have been associated with Holkham since 1609 and took up residence there in 1612. **Holkham Hall** was built between 1734 and 1764, a project that took 30 years to complete. Its builder, **Thomas Coke**, was granted the title *Earl of Leicester* in 1755. His great-nephew, Thomas William, later had the title re-granted in 1837.

Over the years, the estate has evolved considerably. From employing around 50 staff in the 1990s, it now supports over **350 employees**. This growth reflects diversification into **tourism and leisure**, including the Victoria Hotel, caravan parks, cafés, car parks, and a full calendar of events in the Park.

This expansion has significantly increased visitor numbers:

- 45,000 annually through the Hall
- 250,000 into the Park
- Around 1 million to the Beach and Nature Reserve

St Withburga's Church

St Withburga's Church is set within Holkham Park, close to the Hall. It is used regularly from **Easter through to Remembrance Sunday**. During the winter months, services are held in the warmer **chapel at Holkham Hall**, by kind permission of the Earl of Leicester.



The church is kept open throughout the year, providing a quiet, prayerful space for both local residents and the many visitors to Holkham Park. Its peace and solitude are greatly valued.

Governance

The **PCC** is active and effective, meeting regularly to oversee parish life. It benefits from the commitment of:

- Two Churchwardens
- Two Sidespersons
- A Treasurer
- A Secretary

This dedicated team works hard to ensure the smooth running of services and the upkeep of the building.

Weddings and Occasional Offices

Holkham Hall and its associated wedding venue host around **20–25 weddings each year**. While most are civil ceremonies, approximately a quarter include a church wedding at St Withburga's, even for couples who do not reside within the Benefice. This is possible due to the long-standing association many couples have with Holkham through holidays or family ties.

These weddings often form a continuing connection: many couples return to worship at St Withburga's when visiting the area in future years. This has brought fresh faces into the congregation and strengthened the parish's wider network of relationships.

Mission and Ministry

Holkham's unique context offers both opportunities and challenges for mission. The estate attracts large numbers of visitors each year, providing the church with an ongoing opportunity to offer welcome, hospitality, and spiritual encounter to people from all over the world.

The balance between serving a small resident population and ministering to many visitors requires creativity, but it also brings richness to the parish's life. The commitment of the PCC and congregation ensures that the church remains a living witness within the heart of the estate.

Looking Ahead

Holkham is a parish rooted in history yet open to growth and change. The presence of the Hall, Park, and Nature Reserve ensures that the church is placed within a context of great visibility and influence.

The challenge is to maintain vibrant worship and pastoral care for the small resident community, while also developing ways of engaging with the thousands of visitors who pass through each year. St Withburga's, together with its seasonal use of the Hall chapel, is well placed to continue as a place of worship, welcome, and witness at the centre of this remarkable estate.

The Parish of Wighton

A Faithful Rural Community with a Rich Heritage

The Village of Wighton

Wighton lies two and a half miles from Wells and retains its character as a small but active rural village. It has:

- Three working farms, one of which produces prize-winning cheeses
- An art gallery
- A gastropub
- A Methodist museum
- A new village hall (opened in 2023), adjacent to the children's playground and playing field
- Three small camp and caravan sites

The village is changing, with a growing proportion of houses used as second homes or holiday cottages. While many second-home owners actively support village events, holiday cottage landlords are often absent. Despite this, Wighton retains a strong core of residents who are deeply committed to community life.

Annual highlights include the **Scarecrow Festival** in May and the **Duck Races** on the River Stiffkey in August, both of which attract many visitors.

The new village hall has quickly become a hub for community life. It hosts two **community lunches each month** (except August), drawing around 30 people and providing opportunities for residents to connect across the village.

All Saints Church

All Saints is a **Grade I listed medieval church** with a light and airy interior. The tower, which collapsed in a storm in 1965, was rebuilt in the 1970s thanks to a gift from a Canadian businessman who traced his ancestors to the village.



Ahead of the church's **600th anniversary in 2017**, major renovation work was carried out, including re-roofing, funded by grants and local fundraising. This work revealed the roof line of the pre-1417 building.

The church also reflects the agricultural heritage of Wighton, with old farm implements displayed permanently inside.

The church benefits from a **peal of six bells**, rung at weddings and by visiting bell-ringers.

The **churchyard** combines a small mown area with wilder spaces, supporting biodiversity and winning environmental awards. Visitor trails encourage exploration and reflection.

Worship and Congregation

Services are held fortnightly, with a **loyal congregation of 8–16**. Numbers are often supplemented by holidaymakers and returning visitors with family connections to the village.

- **Communion Services:** Fortnightly, followed by fellowship over coffee and biscuits.
- **Carol Service:** Traditionally held at 6:30pm on Christmas Eve, preceded by mulled wine. This popular service regularly attracts more than 80 worshippers.
- **Harvest Festival:** Celebrated with ploughman's lunches, drawing large attendances.

The church also has a **children's play corner**, with hopes of attracting more young families to services.

The worship style is “**middle of the road**,” reflecting the diverse backgrounds of the congregation, from Anglo-Catholic to Methodist. The community is open to exploring new formats and values worship that stimulates intellectual engagement.

Community and Events

All Saints plays an active role in the cultural life of Wighton:

- **Concerts:** The church's excellent acoustics make it a sought-after venue for choral performances.
- **Exhibitions:** Since 2022, the church has hosted the **North Norfolk Exhibition Project** each July, showcasing the work of local artists. This has proved highly successful and is expected to become a regular feature.
- **Fundraising Events:** Organised throughout the year, strengthening both parish finances and community bonds.

Governance

The **PCC** has eight members and meets at least four times a year. Together with the wider congregation, they ensure that church duties are covered and that the **Churchwarden** is well supported.

Pastoral Care

Given the age profile of the congregation and wider village community, **pastoral care** is increasingly important. The church seeks to provide support, companionship, and spiritual encouragement to those in need.

Looking Ahead

All Saints, Wighton, combines a beautiful historic building, a faithful worshipping community, and a vibrant village life. The challenge is to nurture growth—particularly among younger people—while continuing to serve both long-standing residents and the many visitors who are drawn to the church's welcome, heritage, and peace.

The Parish of Warham

(including St Mary Magdalene Chapel)

The Village of Warham

Warham lies two miles inland from Wells-next-the-Sea and is home to around **200 residents**. The village is centred around a crossroads, with dwellings radiating outward into the surrounding countryside.

Like other villages in the area, Warham has a notable proportion of **second homes and holiday lets**. However, a recent development of **11 affordable homes** has brought new working families into the community, strengthening its resident base.

The **Three Horseshoes pub** is a popular hub for both villagers and visitors, offering food, hospitality, and now chalet accommodation. The **Reading Room**, recently renovated with support from the National Lottery, provides an excellent community space for quizzes, bingo evenings, the annual **village fete** (July), fitness classes, and family events.

Other traditions include the annual **duck race** on the River Stiffkey, which draws wide participation and enjoyment.

The Churches of Warham

All Saints Parish Church



All Saints is the main parish church, used for:

- Sunday worship
- Weddings
- Baptisms
- Funerals

The church is open daily and has a churchyard managed for both nature and people. Mown paths and wildflower meadows create a welcoming, eco-friendly space.

St Mary Magdalene Chapel

St Mary's is a historic chapel of ease, without an electricity supply. It is still cherished locally and used for:

- **Annual Patronal Festival** (July)
- **Candlelit Carols** (December)

The chapel is currently the focus of a **fundraising campaign for urgent repairs**. Like All Saints, it is open daily and its churchyard is being managed with conservation in mind. Since 2023, the **Norfolk Wildlife Trust** has carried out ecological surveys at both sites.

Worship and Community Life

At present, there is **no regular Sunday congregation** in Warham. However, the community strongly supports **special seasonal services** at All Saints, particularly at:

- Easter
- Harvest
- Christmas

These gatherings demonstrate that, while small in numbers, the church continues to hold spiritual and cultural significance for the village.

Governance

In recent years, Warham has moved from having no functioning PCC to now having **three members** who support decision-making and planning. The Treasurer from Wighton PCC assists with routine bill payments.

Small volunteer teams care for both **church buildings and churchyards**, ensuring they remain well maintained and open to visitors.

Looking Ahead

Warham's churches are well loved and supported by the wider community, even without a regular Sunday congregation. The priority in the immediate future is the repair and preservation of **St Mary Magdalene Chapel**.

The presence of new affordable housing offers the possibility of a more stable resident base, which may in time contribute to **reviving regular worship**. For now, All Saints and St Mary's continue to serve as places of prayer, celebration, and quiet welcome in this rural parish.

5. The Rectory

The **Rectory**, built around ten years ago, is a large contemporary brick house with garden, located at Staithe Place in Wells-next-the-Sea, just a five-minute walk from **St Nicholas Church**.

Location and Setting

- The house is set back from the road, facing onto a green managed as a wildflower meadow.
- The drive offers parking for several vehicles and there is a two-door double garage.
- To the rear is an enclosed private garden with a summer house and greenhouse, together with six well-established fruit trees.



Accommodation

The Rectory is generously proportioned, offering flexible space for ministry and family life:

- **Ground Floor:**
 - A spacious office with adjoining toilet
 - Large kitchen with fitted fridge/freezer, dishwasher, five-ring gas hob, electric double ovens and grill
 - Utility room with washing machine
 - Dining room with French doors opening onto the garden
 - Large living room with windows to front and back, plus a wood burner
- **First Floor:**
 - Three double bedrooms (one with en-suite)
 - One single bedroom
 - Family bathroom
 - A very large additional room with bathroom beyond
 - Another versatile room above the garage (bedroom/study)

Communications and Outreach

- A **monthly article** for *The Quay* magazine provides regular outreach into the community.
- A **weekly sheet**, prepared by one of the AWAs, is circulated to more than 100 recipients.
- The **St Nicholas website** and *A Church Near You* pages are updated with service information and have further potential for development as communication tools.

6. The Burnham & Walsingham Deanery and the Diocese of Norwich

The Deanery

The Benefice belongs to the **Burnham & Walsingham Deanery**, led by the Rural Dean and Lay Chair. The Deanery covers a wide rural area, including the towns of Burnham Market, Fakenham, Walsingham and Wells, with **43 parishes** in total.

- The Deanery Synod meets three times a year.
- St Nicholas is represented on both the **Deanery Synod** and its **Standing Committee**, and the PCC has a representative on **Diocesan Synod**.
- Each year, parishioners are invited to a **social event with worship**. In 2024, a group of 30 visited Norwich Cathedral for a guided tour, evensong, and tea with the Dean.
- The Deanery Lay Chair initiated the creation of the **Walsingham Pilgrim Way**, part of Norwich Cathedral's ecumenical contribution to the European Green Pilgrimage Network.

The Diocese of Norwich

The Diocese has adopted a strategic vision of being “**Transformed by Christ**”, lived out through being:

- **Prayerful**
- **Pastoral**
- **Prophetic**

While our Benefice has not been able to take part in all diocesan consultations due to time constraints, we have benefitted greatly from diocesan resources and advice, particularly regarding finance, building maintenance, and occasional clergy cover.

We are fortunate to have the **Bishop of Lynn** nearby for advice and support. In May 2025, the **Bishop of Norwich** led our **Day of Celebration** marking the completion of the five-year restoration of St Nicholas, Wells-next-the-Sea. He preached to a 200-strong congregation and spent the day engaging with the wider community — a memorable sign of diocesan care and encouragement.

7. Closing Summary

The Benefice of Holkham, Wells, Wighton and Warham offers a unique opportunity to serve God and community in a place of natural beauty, deep history, and vibrant community spirit. We are looking forward with faith and hope, eager to welcome a new Priest who will share our vision and walk alongside us on our journey.

We pray for a leader who will help us nurture faith, grow our congregations, care for our communities, and bear witness to the love of Christ in this special corner of Norfolk.