



The Rutland Water Benefice Profile





We thank you for considering this profile of The Rutland Water Benefice group of parishes as a place where God may be calling you to serve Him, His Word, and His People as our Rector.

In this Benefice profile we aim to share an understanding of who we are, what we are doing, how we are addressing some of our current challenges and, of course, our aspirations.

At the end of this profile you will find a full description of each of our villages and their churches. You can find out more on our Benefice website www.rutlandwaterbenefice.info

Our Mission Statement: "Working together to share the love of God with all"

Our location

The Rutland Water Benefice lies in the centre of Rutland in a tranquil Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Benefice stretches 8 miles from Empingham southwest to Ridlington. The main towns of Oakham and Uppingham are a short distance away and Peterborough, on the East Coast mainline railway to London or the north, is about 25 miles to the east.

The ten parishes surround Rutland Water which offers ample opportunity for leisure pursuits such as walking, cycling, sailing and birdwatching.

There are just over 1500 households in the Benefice, with additional accommodation in St George's Barracks in Edith Weston. The largest village is Empingham with 420 households and the smallest is Pilton with 16. Some of the villages in the Benefice have shops and pubs and most have village halls. There are three primary schools in the Benefice; in North Luffenham, Edith Weston and Empingham.

All the villages in the Benefice have strong local communities, individual identities, and have a range of social activities.

Our area

The County of Rutland



The Benefice surrounds Rutland Water in the centre of the county.

Shopping facilities are available in Oakham, Uppingham, Stamford and Corby, whilst Leicester, Peterborough and Cambridge our closest cities.

There are doctors surgeries in Empingham, Uppingham and Oakham (where there is also an out of hours urgent treatment centre). Peterborough, Leicester and Kettering Hospitals cover the area.

The A1 and A47 provide respectively north-south and east-west access by road. Rail connections from Stamford or Oakham provide access to Birmingham and Cambridge whilst a 30 minute drive to Peterborough connects with the East Coast mainline (c.50mins to London).

There are three primary school (ages 4–11) within the Benefice – in North Luffenham, Edith Weston and Empingham – all judged by recent OFSTED reports to be 'Good'.

Other schooling is to be found just outside the Benefice. There is also an excellent selection of fee paying schools in the area.

Other local schools	Ages	OFSTED rating
Ketton C of E Primary School	4-11	Good (2023)
Great Casterton C of E Primary School	4-11	Outstanding (2016)
Exton and Greetham C of E Primary School	4-11	Good (2022)
Malcolm Sargent Primary School, Stamford	4-11	Good (2019)
Casterton College	11-16	Good (2023)
Stamford Welland Academy	11-18	Good (2021)
Uppingham Community College	11-16	Good (2023)
Catmose School, Oakham	11-16	Outstanding (2024)
Harington School	16-18	Outstanding (2017)
The King's School, Peterborough	11-18	Outstanding (2024)



Empingham Primary School Christingle Service

The Benefice

The Benefice will be led by a Rector in association with an Associate Priest (House for Duty), yet to be appointed. Together with a Reader, this makes a viable ministry team to lead our group of 10 churches. Three of the parishes are very small and currently have only occasional services.

The ministry team is supported by a group of twelve churchwardens who meet regularly, and who work well together to support the Benefice as well as their own individual churches.

Churchmanship across the Benefice varies; both Common Worship and the Book of Common Prayer are used. Prior to the Vacancy, every parish had a service of Holy Communion at least once a month. Morning Prayer services are sometimes led by lay people.

We value time spent in outreach and other mission activities such as walking groups, communal meals, Bible study, prayer groups, coffee mornings. We also contribute to school assemblies, support children's holiday activities and some churches also promote fundraising concerts.

To meet the needs of families with young children, three of our parishes have an "All Age worship" service once a month. This is informal and includes modern worship songs.

In the recent past the Rector has disseminated information about the next Sunday's services and key forthcoming events. This has also included a copy of the readings using the translation of the Revised Standard Version Bible. Hymns are recommended to suit the lectionary. The Benefice generally uses email as our preferred method of communication.

The Benefice has three excellent primary schools. Those in North Luffenham and Empingham are Church of England schools. Edith Weston primary school is a part of an academy trust.



A Benefice magazine is produced monthly. It is delivered free of charge to the majority of households in the Benefice and is funded by advertisements. The Rector, or a member of the ministry team, writes an introductory article in each issue. Each village can add their own announcements and news alongside the monthly service rota. It is currently prepared by a volunteer.

Current rota of services for the month

	1 st Sunday	2 nd Sunday	3 rd Sunday	4 th Sunday
Edith Weston				9.30am Holy Communion
Empingham	9.30am All Age Church		9.30am Holy Communion	
Lyndon	11.00am Holy Communion	9.30am Morning Prayer		
Manton		9.30am All Age Church		11.00am Holy Communion
North Luffenham			9.30am All Age Church	9.30am Holy Communion
Pilton			11.00am Holy Communion	
Preston	4.00pm <i>Evening Prayer</i>	11.00am Holy Communion		11.00am <i>Prayer & Praise</i>
Ridlington	9.30am <i>Morning Prayer</i>	9.30am Holy Communion		9.30am <i>Morning Prayer</i>
Whitwell			11.00am Holy Communion	
Wing	9.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Morning Prayer		9.30am <i>Morning Prayer</i>

When there is a fifth Sunday in the month there is a communion service for the whole Benefice

Those services in italics are lay-led

Finance and Statistics:

The Benefice endeavours to pay its annual parish share in full, and all clergy expenses are covered by the parishes through the Benefice Treasurer.

In 2024 the total Parish Share is £90,264. The Benefice Treasurer calculates the breakdown of the Parish Share and collects it from each PCC. Several churches in the Benefice have to use reserved funds to meet their parish share costs.

There is a Benefice account and a separate magazine account. The magazine cost is financed by advertisements.

The total Average Sunday Attendance is 74. This ranges from two in the smallest village to an average of 13 in several of the larger churches.

Across the Benefice

Total number on electoral roll: 210

Total number attending a service on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day: 193

Total number attending worship on Easter Sunday: 70

In 2023 there were:

5 Baptisms

5 weddings

6 confirmations

16 funerals

Accommodation

A 5 bedroomed Rectory in North Luffenham is available to the new incumbent.



There is also a house in Edith Weston available for a House for Duty Associate Priest.

The Rectory floor plan



The Role of the Rector

What you'll be doing

We are looking for a confident, energetic and experienced Rector to lead our team of Clergy, lay-reader, PCC members, Church Wardens and volunteers. We need you to encourage collaborative working across the wider team to support, sustain and grow our Benefice.

We aim to be generous, inclusive churches; working together to share the love of God with all.

We would like our Rector to be able to:

- Lead, nurture and build our team, growing our diverse strengths and gifts, to share the love of God with all.
- Be the key player in recruiting and supporting a Duty Associate Priest.
- Preach with sensitivity and understanding, communicating God's love through a Gospel centred programme in a relevant, incisive and engaging way. Encourage and be comfortable with both formal and informal worship that is positive, open and inclusive.
- Actively be involved in and extend our ministry with local schools, children and young families.
- Use their experience, values and passion to deliver parish ministry, accepting the different models of church, whilst having the creativity and openness to do things differently.
- Further develop sustainable stewardship to support us in growing our Benefice.
- Collaborate with colleagues and the wider community and enable them to thrive in their ministries.
- Enjoy living and working in a village benefice, engaging with the wider community, developing local relationships and showing faith through what they do here.
- Offer sensitive pastoral care and be committed to the social life of the churches.

About You: Required Qualifications & Training

- Ordained priest within the Church of England, or a Church in communion with it, or a Church whose orders it recognises.
- Completed Initial Ministerial Education.
- Experience in a Church of England multi-site parish.
- Up-to-date Safeguarding Training to Leadership level, with a strong understanding of safeguarding practices and policies.
- Actively seeks professional development through formal and informal means.

Desirable Qualifications & Training

- Experience of leading a parish or equivalent leadership role.
- Evidence of further professional development.

Required Experience

- Collaborative leadership with experience working with others and sharing leadership with the wider ministry team (lay and ordained).
- Track record of developing congregational talents for ministry and mission.
- Preaching, teaching, and leading worship to inspire and grow the faith and confidence of the church community.
- Community engagement to strengthen the church's place within the local community.
- Understanding of working across many congregations in one parish/benefice/area.

Desirable Experience

- Experience of leading or journeying with congregations through change and transformation.
- Experience of service in the wider church/community.

Required Knowledge, Skills, and Competencies

- Wisdom and enthusiasm to inspire vision, understanding God's call and plan in your role, and leading growth in discipleship.
- Engaging preacher with accessible, lively, and positively challenging ministry, embracing a variety of worship styles.
- Creative thinker willing to find new ways to engage with distinctive parish communities and increase engagement.
- Ability to build links and engage with children, young people, and those who work with them in school, church, and community contexts.
- Team player, able to build relationships and work together with people inside and outside benefice.
- Proficient in using IT for management, organisation, communication, and presentation.

General Attributes

- Evidence of prayerful ministry, knowledge of scripture, and ability to draw on a wide range of spiritual resources.
- Approachable, willing to listen and learn to understand the needs within churches and parish communities. Commitment to spending time with, listening to, nurturing, enabling, and encouraging people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.
- Strong communicator and influencer.
- Empathy in others demonstrated in pastoral role – emotionally intelligent.
- Sense of humour positive outlook.
- Organised, focused and able to time manage.

We all enjoy living in this lovely area and are sure you would too.
If you feel this might be a stimulating and worthwhile place to be for the next stage of your ministry please obtain further information from our Archdeacon.

If you would like to find out more about us our website can be found at
www.rutlandwaterbenefice.info

Informal contact can be made with the Rural Dean The Revd Canon Jane Baxter Email :
revjanebaxter@gmail.com
Phone : 01572 822717 or 07487 509 807

Or

The Archdeacon of Oakham The Venerable Alison Booker:
Archdeacon.Oakham@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

Archdeacon's office:
Cheryl Cullen (PA)
Tel 01733 887019 Pa.archdeacons@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

An application form can be obtained from the Diocesan website, vacancies section,
www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/vacancies2

Deanery of Rutland

There are 53 parishes in the deanery all, except three, are in the county of Rutland (with Carlby in Lincolnshire, Harringworth and Duddington in Northamptonshire). Three former parishes churches are redundant and Thistleton is now a Chapel-of-ease of Cottesmore. In recent years the deanery has undergone organisational changes with the formation of nine benefices: there are possibly some changes still to be made. The deanery has a growth action plan and speakers at deanery synod frequently support actions in the plan.

The deanery, one of 12 in the diocese, has a proud record of paying in excess of 97% of its requested parish share, regularly in the top three contributors of all deaneries.

Rutland Deanery Synod is active with 50 lay members and 10 clergy. There are four meetings each year plus an annual Deanery Eucharist. We hold the two winter meetings on Zoom, a move which has proved popular with members. All our meetings are 'open' and we have a full programme for 2024, set by a small Mission & Pastoral Committee. The deanery also takes an active role at Diocesan Synod through elected members, the Rural Dean and Lay Chair.

There is a well-attended Clergy Chapter which meets six times a year. Meetings usually start with a Eucharist and are followed by lunch. Sometimes the meetings include a speaker but a chance to meet and chat with colleagues is also much appreciated.

The Churches of the Rutland Water Benefice



Edith Weston



Empingham



Lyndon



Manton



North Luffenham



Pilton



Preston



Ridlington



Whitwell



Wing

The Villages and Churches of the Rutland Water Benefice

EDITH WESTON

Edith Weston Village lies on the south side of Rutland Water. The Parish includes the adjacent small community of Normanton. It has a very well stocked Village shop and Post Office with a charming coffee cabin next to it. The village primary school, Edith Weston Academy, has approximately 80 children including a thriving preschool.

There are approximately 200 houses.

There is a public house, the Wheatsheaf, which serves meals and has a good reputation. The village Memorial Hall is used for a wide variety of regular and social events and hire for private functions.

Rutland Sailing Club is adjacent to the village and has the country's finest disabled sailing facilities and hosts international able bodied and disabled sailing events. At the other end of the village there are fishing activities which are centred at the Fishing Lodge. In addition there is a thriving cycle shop and hire business. Two popular golf courses are within the Parish.

St Georges Barracks – the MoD are due to leave the barracks, but not the married quarters, within this decade (plans can change). Plans are under discussion for the future use of this land.

St Mary the Virgin, Edith Weston

The church dates from c.1170. It has a Samuel Green organ, built in 1787, of interest to organ enthusiasts. There is a set of six bells which are rung regularly. The church is in a good state of repair.

The church is open every day and, being on the tourist route around Rutland Water, attracts many visitors, including families of personnel based here during World War II.

The “Holy Dusters” and “Holy Weeders” maintain its well-kept appearance. The whole village supports functions to raise funds for the church. The main annual fund raising functions are the Harvest Supper, Safari Supper and Village Barbecue.

From 2020 to 2022 Edith Weston PCC had to find £13,500 to pay for roof repairs following theft of the lead, which was raised through fund-raising and reserves.





We have also made progress in obtaining income from villagers through planned giving, but fund-raising remains a formidable task. It was agreed by the Benefice that the Share in 2021 need not be paid, but from 2024 we have been paying our full Share once more. However, this is not sustainable for our small village and income through planned giving and fund raising will have to be augmented through a reversion to reserves in future years. We have one service a month of Holy Communion, which attracts about 10 people, and weddings from time to time.

Over the last 2 years we have been working closely with Edith Weston primary school, running interactive, fun and lively assemblies where the children enjoy acting out key Bible stories. We hold a traditional carol service the weekend before Christmas, finishing with wine and mince pies, where families are made very welcome. This attracts over 100 residents from the village and we have recently added a 'dress up and take part' element for the children.

EMPINGHAM

Empingham is a compact village consisting of stone and thatch cottages and brick houses built by the Ancaster estate. Recent new building has consisted of mainly 5 bedroom houses. Old council houses have been rebuilt and new 'affordable' houses added. The Parish Council meets to monitor new house development.

There is a Medical Centre in the centre of the village. Staff and consulting rooms were recently added as the catchment area was extended to much of Stamford.

There is a general store and antique shop, together with the White Horse public house/hotel, under recent new management.

Regular events are as follows: On Monday afternoons the Methodist Church serves refreshments and hosts a travelling Post Office. On Wednesday mornings St Peter's Church provides "Drop-in Coffee and Cakes". Monthly on Fridays the Cricket and Social Club provides a "Pie Night" and the Village Hall provides a monthly Saturday "Social Breakfast". Other village groups include the Girls Night Out, The Mens Shed, The Garden Club and the Allotment Association. There is an Empingham Together Committee to coordinate and promote special events.



St Peter's Church, Empingham

Visitors often remark, on entering the church for the first time, of the friendly and bright ambience. Friendly because of the comfortable chairs and bright because of only one stained glass window.

We welcome anyone to join our worship or simply to relax from the stress of life.



Each month there is one communion service and also a service particularly for families with young children. "All Age Church" is informal and this photograph shows people sitting at tables with their coffee cups and a game played. Attendance at normal communion services is not large but we delight in having a full church for Christmas services, particularly a "living nativity" event. Baptisms and Weddings often bring families and friends in large numbers.

The parish church is one of the largest churches in Rutland, dating mainly from the 14th century. It is in a very good condition, as recorded in the quinquennial inspection of 2020. The building is warmed by gas convector heaters, thus maintaining a reasonable temperature at services and events.

In December 2003 the then unused south porch was converted into a toilet and servery, facilitating the provision of hospitality. 200 chairs including 100 folding provide a flexibility of layout to suit concerts or the regular "drop in" coffee session each Wednesday morning. This is an example of our desire to make the church available to the village in various ways.

We give a leaflet "Welcome to Empingham" to newcomers. This carries details of all village organisations and contacts, and is updated regularly.

There is a peal of 6 bells regularly rung for services. We are fortunate in having a large band of flower arrangers to decorate the church particularly for festivals.





Fundraising for special projects invariably meets with a good response when concerts and other functions are arranged. The Parish Share has always been paid in full mainly funded by 26 contributors to the PGS direct giving scheme. We are very conscious that the age profile of the PCC is not sustainable and we need help with this.

Developing contact with those attending the All Age Church is a challenge. There has been a large increase in young families moving into the village during the Covid years.

This photograph shows schoolchildren coming to learn how an organ works. A Heritage Lottery grant funded a community project to do this and also a major renovation of the organ.

Empingham is unique in the benefice in that there is also a Methodist Church. An important chapel within the Stamford Circuit where there is a variety of regular services including a toddlers group.

There is a combined service each year on Remembrance Sunday, alternating between the two churches. We think that working with the Methodist congregation in Empingham is important. Joint functions include Lent lunches, Christian Aid collecting and delivering a card to every home with details of the Christmas period services. An ecumenical prayer and bible study group meets fortnightly.



Empingham School with 75 children on the roll is a Church Aided School. Each term the children come into the church for a service. The Rector has held assemblies and has been assisted in this by Phil Jones the Methodist Circuit Mission Enabler.

We are very satisfied with the present arrangement of administrative duties between parish and the benefice. We would welcome a new Rector who would maintain this and organise major outreach events for the benefice.

LYNDON

Our village is unusual in being mostly an Estate Village. The two Halls, surrounding land and all the older properties belong to the Conant family; the Halls having been built by the Barker brothers in the 17th century. Thomas Barker, the meteorologist, is buried in the churchyard. Sir Edward Conant, who lives in the village, is a patron of the living.

There are 42 dwellings with 31 of these on shorthold tenancies. The population of the village therefore changes a good deal, although there are usually about 75 people. The age range of the villagers is wide and the number of children very variable. Residents often work from home or have their own businesses, but some travel large distance

St Martin of Tours, Lyndon



The church dates back to the 14th century, but there is an even older font which was discovered buried in the churchyard. The building is listed as Grade 2*. The church was greatly restored in the 19th century and the Henry Willis organ was installed at the same time.

Following an appeal launched in 2000 a considerable amount of restoration work was done on the tower and a new east window was installed. In the last phase of the work a new Clipsham stone floor was laid in 2005. New electrical heating was also installed at this time.

Although the church is aisled, it is fairly small. We are currently considering how best to deal with problems regarding rainwater goods and drainage. We are

due for the next quinquennial inspection in 2026.

In recent years the church has had one service of Holy Communion a month and also a service of Morning Prayer, taken by a churchwarden, on one of the other Sundays.

We have traditionally had a candlelit Carol Service on Christmas Eve which attracts large congregations of over 80 people, but currently the attendance at regular services is often in single figures.

Our major fund raising event is our annual Harvest Service and Supper followed by a Harvest Auction. This is also well attended and is an opportunity for the clergy to meet parishioners.

Because of its location there are many visitors to the church and we consider it an important part of our mission to keep it tidy and unlocked every day in order to welcome people. Our mission statement would be that we are here to serve the community in any way we can.

MANTON

The village of Manton sits on the south shore of Rutland Water. It is a community of around 150 houses and 360 people. The Rutland Water cycle route passes through the village.

Manton is served by a daytime bus service every two hours, Monday to Friday, between Oakham and Corby.

As well as the Church, the village amenities include a thriving village hall used for many village events and hires including weddings. There is also a village gym and rehabilitation centre. In 2023 the children's play area was updated and now includes a zip wire and skate ramps. There are thriving allotments. The Horse and Jockey is the only pub on the cycle route around Rutland Water and has recently added a high terraced area.

There is a residential care home, Manton House, in the village which caters for up to 25 residents. Regular short acts of worship for the residents are held there by local parishioners and available clergy.

Many activities take place in the village, a number organised by the Church – annual Safari Supper, coffee mornings, book club, open gardens, hog roasts, bridge groups, concerts, children's sports days and a Christmas party.



St Mary the Virgin, Manton



St Mary the Virgin in Manton is an unusual building, with no tower – rare in this area. In the 14th century, a chantry college was founded inside the church. The Parish Church is situated in the heart of the village referred to in the Domesday book. It dates from 12th century, originally being built as a Chantry Chapel from local ironstone, honey coloured stone and Collyweston slate. The church is very pretty with its double bellcote.

The Church has a bible study and Prayer group meeting fortnightly in peoples homes covering diverse courses, most recently studying the Book of Acts. This is open to the whole benefice.

The Church has an active PCC who have recently organized a contactless payment device to allow for donations at Church events and from visitors to the Church. The PCC have always paid their Parish Share in full although have been using reserves for a number of years

There is a Book Stall in the church which is well used and brings in additional funds.

Recent work on the church has been the removal of plasterwork at the east end to reveal stonework. This has eased the damp problems and looks great!

The last Quinquennial Report was in July 2019 and all issues have been addressed.

The local Foodbank is actively supported.

Manton has a long tradition of holding monthly family services, generally led by Church members. The Christmas Crib and Easter services are very well attended by the growing number of young families and children in the village.

The church garden adjoining the long closed churchyard is kept to a very high standards, including beautiful flower beds and a well maintained herb garden for use by the villagers.

BENEFICE LINKS

The congregation of Manton are used to having two services a month in their own church. They will move around the Benefice on other Sundays to attend services in different parishes and usually coordinate transport for this.

The All Age Worship Services are supported by a Benefice Whatsapp group.

NORTH LUFFENHAM

This is a warm and welcoming village. Its central core of old stone cottages is surrounded by modern development and is mixed in terms of age, social and economic groups. It has a beautiful central recreation area with many old trees and nearby thriving allotments. Many residents work from home but most work in local towns or cities or commute to London. One arable and livestock farm is still viable but others have diversified.

The village has one pub (local owner and strongly community focussed). We have many village groups including cricket, outdoor and carpet bowls clubs, a Good Companions group, scout troops with children of all ages, gardening club and Good Neighbour Scheme.

St John the Baptist, North Luffenham



Our large fine Grade One listed parish church dates mostly 13th & 14th centuries, seats over 200, has an organ and a peal of 6 historic bells. The capacious chancel contains a noteworthy sedilia and a brass plate to our famous Elizabethan incumbent, Archdeacon Johnson and also some of the oldest stained glass in Rutland. The Nave has ancient roof angels.

The maintenance of the church fabric is helped by an annual grant from the village charitable trust. Our boiler has failed and we are in the throes of decommissioning it and replacing it with a lower carbon emitting electrically powered system. This system will use low light far infrared heaters initially within the chancel. A new sound system will be installed at the same time. We are planning to plant wild flowers in the older parts of the graveyard to improve biodiversity. We are about to update our giving and stewardship scheme to make use of the Parish Giving scheme.

The St Mary and St John CEVA Primary School in North Luffenham which is adjacent to the church has a reputation for happy and close relations with the church and over the last few years this included a course run by the Rector that prepares children for Holy Communion. The school is especially keen that pastoral oversight and collective weekly worship in church is maintained.

A community centre, closely integrated with the school, is a very valuable social asset, providing a venue free of charge for a wide range of church-related (such as our breakfast church and PCC meetings) and village activities.

Funerals, weddings and baptisms give us an opportunity for outreach and to extend a friendly welcome to the many residents who rarely come to church. Our informal Carol Service is always popular. The Remembrance Service is one of the largest in the area, with the Services and Scouts represented. Wreaths are laid in our Commonwealth War Graves plot at the end of the service where RAF, Army and Commonwealth servicemen are laid to rest – many overseas relatives come to visit.

We are acutely aware that we must expand our support base and grow our mission to all who live in the village.

PILTON

Pilton is the smallest village in the Benefice, and is indeed the smallest village in the smallest county in England! It comprises 16 households, all but one being situated around the church in the centre. The exception is a smallholding about a half mile from the village. The total population is about 30 people, and 25% of the houses are rented accommodation. Only a handful of villagers play an active part in church life, those that do being the 10 members of the PCC. Half the houses are owned by retirees, several of whom still work in some capacity. Just under half are working couples, ranging in age from their thirties to their fifties. There are currently two young teenagers and one child of about 7 years old in the village.

St Nicholas, Pilton

At the moment we just have a morning Holy Communion service once a month. This service is BCP and usually attracts a congregation of 7–10, many from outside our parish. Church officers and members of the PCC are long-standing.

We usually hold special services for Harvest and St Nicholas, the latter proving popular with the whole Benefice.

We no longer plan any events on a regular basis and are mainly supported by planned giving.

We do not have a formal mission plan as such but we try to be available to anyone who needs support, to offer a warm welcome to any who visit our church or move into the village and show a general caring concern for the community.



PRESTON

Preston is a beautiful village of around seventy five houses, mostly stone built, with a population of under two hundred, situated beside the main road from Oakham to Uppingham. We have a thriving village community with an active Village Meeting which looks to establishing new initiatives to involve residents. Our Village Hall has recently been refurbished to a high standard and now hosts a weekly table tennis evening and a monthly coffee morning which is proving very popular and raises money for charity.

St Peter and St Paul, Preston



Thanks to large grants from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the organ was completely renovated in 2014 and the bells refurbished in 2020. This included our fifteenth century sanctus bell. We enjoy groups of visiting bell ringers to our church on a regular basis and they are rung by local bell ringers on special festive occasions.

Our principal aim is to try to maintain the Church at the centre of village life, welcoming both regular churchgoers and also those who do not yet attend services. Our Carol Service is followed by mulled wine and mince pies, our Harvest Festival by supper in the Village Hall and both attract an increased congregation and help to generate goodwill towards the church. Special services such as Remembrance Day bring village residents to church.

Recently monthly craft afternoons have been established in church which have proved very popular with non regular church goers.

We provide a "Welcome Pack" for new arrivals in the village giving them details of local surgeries, transport etc., and have also compiled a pamphlet entitled "Preston Church – Our Aims and Objects" stressing that the church is there for everybody in the village.

We have recently joined the Parish Giving Scheme and have an active campaign to encourage new, and renewed, regular giving. We are constantly seeking fund raising ideas.



We have an active and interested PCC and a Fabric subcommittee, looking after the upkeep of the church and churchyard. Preston has always had a reputation for friendliness, caring for anybody who is ill or in trouble.

With more families having recently moved into the village one of our aims is to encourage young families to become involved with the church. We have a regular and committed congregation and are keen to ensure our church and the Christian way of life will continue in Preston.

RIDLINGTON

Ridlington is a small village with conservation status (population approx 250), with 84 houses including two working farms. It is on the western boundary of the Rutland Water Benefice, on a no-through road, two miles north-west of Uppingham and at 600 feet above sea level looks down into the Chater valley.

It is an ancient village with Rutland's only scheduled pre-historic site, a Bronze Age hill fort, lying to the west of the village centre. Historically, the village would have been self-sufficient with its own butcher, forge, post office, pub and school but these have all now closed.

The former school is now the village hall which hosts the polling station, parish council meetings, occasional quizzes, summer Sunday teas in aid of the church, four coffee mornings a year, a fund raiser for the British Legion in November and a Christmas social. The village also benefits from the playing field where there are 5-a-side football nets and a cricket net although the days of the village football team and cricket team are long since gone. As a commemoration of the eight villagers who died whilst on active service during WW1 oaks from Delville Wood on the Somme are planted on the playing field together with horse chestnuts from Admiral Nelson's Norfolk village.

St Mary Magdalene and St Andrew, Ridlington



The church is a Grade 2* listed building in the centre of the village and was subject to Victorian restoration.

We have a modern organ as well as the ability to play pre-recorded music to accompany services. We have four bells and a band of ringers from outside the village try to ring every month for one of our three services – one of Holy Communion and at least one lay-led with four households taking turns to lead the service with another household involved with intercessions.

Our regular Sunday service attendance is 10 and above and with two young church going families recently moved into the village we are looking at ways to improve provision for children and the children's corner in church.

We follow each service and our monthly walk with refreshments – usually home made cake with Fair Trade tea and coffee.

We have a varied fundraising programme – concerts, afternoon teas, open gardens and talks and are able to pay our Parish Share in full.

We benefit from the support of many community volunteers – opening and closing the church daily, providing flower arrangements, mowing the churchyard in accordance with our agreed management plan (we have achieved a silver Eco Church award and are working towards the gold award), providing monthly nature notes and undertaking general maintenance tasks.



We provide:

- rehearsal space for the Ridlington Singers
- space for the community library
- the collection point for the FoodBank and used stamps for RNIB
- We also support Smalls for All with an annual collection of lightly used bras and new knickers.



WHITWELL

Whitwell is famous for being unofficially twinned with Paris, a fund raising event from 1981, and still remembered with a French film crew visiting in 2023 to learn the story. Along with the Church there is a Public House, 27 dwellings and 1 under construction. The village is a conservation area with only 2 dwellings sitting beyond it. The character of the village has changed over the years with farm barns being converted to private dwellings, and small infill plots of land being developed. There is very little scope now to increase the number of dwellings and the adult population is around 53 with 4 children. The village is in the catchment area of the Church of England Primary School in Empingham. The majority of the working population tend to be self-employed professionals.

St Michael and All Angels Whitwell



The church is one of the oldest in the County being one of only three mentioned in the Domesday Book. It has a 13th Century Bell Cote a Saxon Font and all of its windows are stained glass, some of which are Medieval others Victorian. It has a seating capacity of around 90 but can hold more, but with only one doorway we have to be mindful of the risk, and take appropriate actions to mitigate a safety issue.

Our last quinquennial inspection was in April 2024 and we await the report, however the Architect's comment was "he was very much encouraged by what work had been done since his last inspection in 2019". We have used the same Architect for our Quinquennial Inspection since 2008 so he is well acquainted with the building. Although there is work still to do it is minor rather than major.

The Nave and Chancel roofs are tiled while the South Aisle roof is now terne coated stainless steel after the lead was stolen in 2018. It was of great benefit to receive assistance from the Churchwarden of Manton to help us through the process, using her experience of what Manton had done when some of their lead had been stolen some years earlier, and replaced with terne coated stainless steel.

During the last 18 months £13,000 has been spent on restoration and repairs, and a further £8,000 is allocated for the restoration and repair of the bells and bell frame. This will leave sufficient funds to cover any unplanned repairs. By way of fund raising we endeavour to raise a minimum of 50% of the cost of any restoration project and appeal for grants for the other 50%. We have been very fortunate over several years now to receive generous help from the Rutland Historic Churches Preservation Trust their most recent grant being £9,000 in 2023.

We have one morning service a month which is a Eucharist.

Our Carol Service on Christmas Eve attracts a congregation of 50 plus, mainly from the village, and the children are encouraged to take part.

The village has two claims to fame in that the church was the first if not the only church in Rutland to house a mobile phone antenna, and the village to be unofficially twinned with Paris.

In 2014 we purchased a Hymnal 300 music box with the first rental payment from O2, which enables us to sing at every service. Our late 19th Century harmonium which was gifted to us from Normanton Church was beyond repair and disposed of in 2023.

The church is the only community building in the village and therefore also used for fund raising events, and village meetings. It is financially supported by 90% of the dwellings, but only 10% of the population attend the monthly church service. The licence fee contributes 50% towards our annual running costs, which has enabled us to pay in full our share of the Benefice Share since 2013. We are confident we can meet our annual running costs for the foreseeable future.

The churchyard is still open for burials, and maintained voluntarily by one of our residents. We celebrated the Queen's Green Canopy by planting an Olive tree on each side of the churchyard entrance.

There has been a place of worship in the village since the 11th century and we, the current custodians, take this responsibility very seriously. We seek and pray for an incumbent who will share in our hope and desire to leave a church for future generations in which to worship and meet.

WING

Wing has a population of about 330 – a very balanced population of both young and old – it has the reputation of being a very friendly and active village. There is an excellent Village Hall which is well booked up with events nearly every week. The WI is very active and meets in the Hall on a monthly basis.

A recent innovation is 'Wing draws Wing' an art group; this has proved very popular and has been a talking point in the village. There is a great spirit of pastoral care with many volunteers who help aged or sick people and maintain their involvement in the community. Regular community meals are also organised by both the church and village hall committees with the aim of creating an harmonious and caring community spirit.



recent community meals



St Peter and St Paul, Wing



The parish church, dedicated to St Peter and St Paul, is 11th/ 12th century: it is in good condition, containing five bells dating from 1789 (with a small but growing team of ringers). There is a strong musical tradition in the church with the singing of a simple mass setting at communion services and with an occasional choir singing for key festivals.

There are currently 39 members on the electoral roll. One service a month is often led by a member of our congregation. Our strong belief is that the Church is for all the people of Wing and we try to encourage their support and involvement whether they are regular churchgoers or not.

We have biennial safari supper which is enjoyed by many residents and is also a major fundraiser for the church.

The churchyard working parties attract help and assistance from those beyond the church community, keen to create an attractive environment for both people and wildlife in the centre of the village. As a church we aim to be at the centre of a well connected community



For some years, we have supported the Mtunthama Orphanage in Malawi and besides other donations, the collection from our Harvest Evensong is given to support the purchase of the seed to grow their crops.