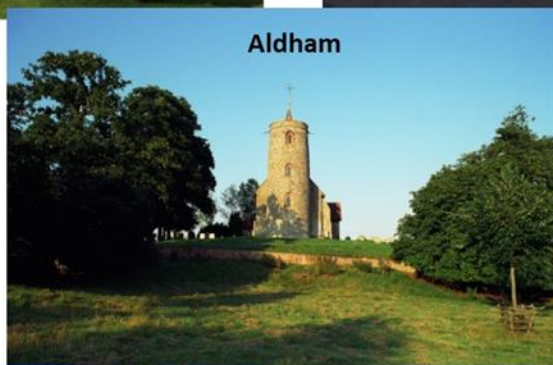


Elmsett with Aldham, Hintlesham, Chattisham and Kersey



Benefice Profile 2017



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of St Edmundsbury
and Ipswich

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The Vacancy

Where we are located



We are 4 parishes located in the heart of the South Suffolk Countryside to the west of the A12 and to the south of the A14, easily accessible to London, Cambridge and Norwich by road and rail, as well as more locally to Ipswich, Sudbury, Colchester and Bury St Edmunds (where the Cathedral of the Diocese is located); all offer good shopping facilities.

The Suffolk Coast is a 50-mile stretch of heritage coastline and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with nature reserves, beaches, coastal towns and water sport opportunities.

South Suffolk is famous for its medieval wool towns and villages with timbered buildings and striking churches whilst the Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty has been immortalised through the paintings of John Constable and Thomas Gainsborough.

Suffolk is welcoming, family-friendly and one of the Country's best kept secrets!

What we are looking for in our new priest

We are looking for a spiritual team leader, committed to prioritising time spent engaged with people. In consultation with the Ministry Team, he or she will be able to delegate non-priestly duties to encourage all to grow in faith.

Our ideal leader:

- Is experienced in rural multi-parish ministry, and can demonstrate an affinity with the opportunities and challenges arising in such a context.
- Is mission-orientated, wanting to grow the Church by being ready to meet people at their point of need and by bringing God's love into the everyday lives of all their parishioners.
- Will be enthusiastic about working with our 3 VCP Primary schools and about bringing children and families into church activities, while continuing to engage with the existing older congregations.
- Is at ease with using a wide variety of service styles (including BCP, CW, Messy Church etc), and appreciates and values music in church.
- Is happy working as part of a team with the benefice lay readers and elders, helping to build up their ministry, and encouraging lay people to serve their congregations in different ways.
- Is able to manage change with sensitivity.
- Is an enthusiastic and energetic 'people person' with a sense of humour, able to take on the challenge of 4 different and distinct parishes and become, as far as is possible, an integrated member of our four communities.
- Has good organisational skills and time management.
- Is computer literate and has own transport.

What we can offer you:

- A warm welcome!
- Friendly caring people with a good team spirit and a group identity.
- 3 vibrant and successful Church primary schools within the benefice. (There is also a well regarded high school in Hadleigh.)
- Supportive PCCs that can deal with the finances and fabric of churches.
- Committed Elders and support where needed to help plan services.
- Many active lay people looking forward to a new phase of spiritual growth, outreach and service within the benefice.
- The opportunity to minister in a sought after rural location close to urban centres with good rail networks.
- A well-kept modern, four bedroom detached family house as the Rectory in Elmsett, with garage and large garden.
- Administrative support if required.

The Rectory at Elmsett (see Appendix 3, page 23 for more details)



The Benefice

The Benefice was formed in 2002 following a Deanery reorganisation, when Hintlesham with Chattisham joined Elmsett, Aldham and Kersey.

The Benefice is rural in character, with a total population of 2128 (2017 figures) and straddles the A1071 joining the nearby thriving market town of Hadleigh to the county town of Ipswich. There is easy access to the A12 and A14 trunk roads and thereby to London or the Midlands. There are regular train services to London from nearby Manningtree, Ipswich and Colchester. Local bus services link the villages with Hadleigh and Ipswich.

Benefice strengths:

- Every church has the full complement of wardens, except for Aldham.
- All four PCCs have lay vice-chairmen able and willing to chair meetings.
- A lay ministry team operates in every parish.
- There is a strong sense of community in the parishes.
- Village newsletters cover each parish and include a letter from the incumbent.
- There are three VCP schools in which the incumbent and lay ministry team members are actively involved. The schools are all in the same 'cluster', with Kersey & Hintlesham sharing a headteacher. Recent practice in this benefice has been for the incumbent to spend time visiting the schools, taking some assemblies and RE lessons and leading prayers at special festivals and Eucharist rather than serving on any of the governing bodies.
- There is a wide range of services within each parish (see Appendix 1) in which music forms an enjoyable and integral part.
- The existing regular meetings of the parish elders and wardens with the incumbent are successful forums for planning, exchange of notices, news, ideas and support.

- While each parish values its own individuality, we enjoy coming together to worship on an occasional basis.

Benefice Challenges:

- The parishes are spread over a wide geographical area and there are practical obstacles to closer integration.
- For the parish priest to encourage, enable and develop the Lay Ministry Teams, especially in meeting with them regularly to teach, pray and plan.
- To “see and be seen” in the day-to-day life of everyone in each parish, underlining the relevance of the church in the modern world.
- To encourage more people from all sectors into the church, especially young families, men and teenagers.
- To develop children’s work.
- To make all the church buildings welcoming and accessible.
- For the benefice to help the priest enjoy the work in our four parishes without being swamped by administrative duties which could be delegated to the laity.

St Peter's, Elmsett



The parish:

The village has 778 inhabitants, the highest proportion living in owner-occupied houses on estates developed over the last 30 years and two small estates of housing association properties. There is a village hall, a well-stocked shop including Post Office and a pub with catering facilities. A travelling library visits as does a mobile fishmonger. A small commercial airfield and industrial estate provides some employment. Otherwise people work largely in Ipswich, Colchester or Hadleigh, and London is within a commutable distance.

Good shopping facilities are to be found in Hadleigh and Ipswich. There is a thriving CofE VCP primary school with two PCC members on the Governing body, an Early Years/Pre-School and Stepping Stones group. Secondary schooling is mostly undertaken in Hadleigh or Sudbury. The primary school is keen to maintain and build on its close links with the parish church.

Village organisations include: Circuit Methodist church (running Girls' Friendship Club and Ranger Boys' Groups), Over 60's, WI, Carpet bowls, Zumba and Football clubs, Elmsett Brass Band, Elmsett Players (with a Panto group meeting in the winter months).

The Church

- Grade 1. Early 12c Romanesque nave, 12-13c tower, 13c porch, 14c chancel. All well maintained.
- An ambitious restoration programme was completed in 1997 (new nave roof, electric heating and lighting - cost £130,000).
- Chancel roof north side has been retiled but south side in need of some restoration.
- A north extension has been built during 2016/17 to add a kitchen and disabled toilet.
- A sound system has been installed including a hearing loop.
- Belfry renovated, and a ring of 5 bells installed between 2003-2015.
- Seating for 100.
- 2017 Parish Share £13,540 paid in full to date.



*Our Needlework Extravaganza
Weekend in St Peter's*

Churchmanship

- Eucharistic, middle of the road BCP and CW with a healthy core of active members, a small ladies' choir and a strong music tradition. There is a desire to continue to work closely with the Methodist church whilst maintaining a clear Anglican identity.
- Special services: Remembrance Service, Harvest, Crib, Midnight etc.
- Monthly ecumenical service with the Methodist church, with a focus on youth and the Girls' Friendship Club and Ranger Boys'. This service alternates between St Peter's and the Methodist church.
- The incumbent is also expected to be chaplain to Elmsett airfield.
- There are 2 lay Elders.
- Monthly social coffee mornings take place in members' homes.

- A Christmas Fayre, Summer Fete and other fundraising activities, are held at regular intervals throughout the year.
- A Lent house group is shared with the Methodist church.
- The village school uses St Peter's for Easter, Harvest, Christmas and end of term services.
- The school leavers attend a special project morning, service and picnic each year.
- The Open the Book team attend monthly.
- Monthly Messy Church sessions and fortnightly Toddler group is held jointly with the Methodist church and is hosted by them.

PCC assessment of strengths and challenges

- High degree of mutual support.
- Tangible good-will within the village generally towards St Peter's.
- Parish responds positively to good leadership.
- Churchyard maintained as a conservation area by volunteers (not all active church members).
- The recent completion of domestic facilities will enable more varied use of the church.
- Average age of current congregation - reaching retirement, however we provide for and welcome families.



Enjoying a social afternoon at our Garden Party on the Green with a "human fruit machine"

St Mary's, Aldham

The parish:

Aldham is a small parish 3 miles north of Hadleigh and 10 miles from Ipswich. About 180 inhabitants (including only a few “young people”) live in mainly private housing spread over a wide area, surrounded predominantly by agricultural land. Most working residents commute outside the village. There is no obvious village “centre” and Aldham shares the village hall in Elmsett (which also has the nearest post office, school and pub).

The Church



- A small 14c church, Grade 1 listed, with an unusual round tower with Saxon and Norman traces and widespread refurbishments in the late nineteenth and mid twentieth centuries. It is situated up a lane away from the road in an attractive rural setting.
- Seating for 112.
- Average weekly attendance is about 20. There are 31 people on the electoral roll. The PCC has 10 members and Aldham has two Deanery Synod representatives.
- We have a well-appointed lavatory, and the adjacent Parish Room in the churchyard also serves as the parish polling station at elections.
- The tower contains a fitted “kitchen” area which is used to support basic catering for social events.
- 2017 Parish Share £9,308. The Parish Share has always been paid in full but in recent years expenditure has exceeded income.

Churchmanship

- Low to middle church. Service every Sunday at 11 am.
- Service pattern per month is generally: 1 Holy Communion (alternative months BCP and CW), two Morning Prayer (BCP) and one Family Service (informal structure) and we would aim to preserve this cycle so as to offer a welcoming range of options to all.
- The use of the Book of Common Prayer is important, and has proved to be attractive to several from outside the parish (there are more members of the congregation from outside the parish than there are from within).
- Special services: Good Friday, Easter, Harvest with shared lunch, Carol service with sherry and mince pies, Christmas and occasional choir.
- There is a monthly Family service followed by refreshments.
- There is a joint Lent discussion group with Elmsett and a series of discussion groups on an ad hoc basis at other times of year.
- There are 2 Lay Elders who can lead services where appropriate.



The Queen's Jubilee celebration was centred on St Mary's and adjacent Aldham Hall

Strengths and challenges

- Sense of community and support within parish for church fundraising events (much of which relates to the church building rather than the spiritual aspect).
- Co-operation with other parishes in the benefice.
- One Elder who has been in Aldham for over 45 years and the other commissioned over 10 years ago.
- The less formal Family Service attracts several people who do not normally attend other forms of service (although children attend only very occasionally).
- Supportive PCC, with fabric committee, who together undertake most of building management issues for the Priest in Charge.
- We have an ageing congregation and there are relatively few children or teenagers living in the parish.
- Apparently declining interest within the parish for regular church activities.

St Mary's, Kersey



The parish:

Kersey is claimed to be one of the prettiest villages in the country and has visitors from all over the world. It is known for its medieval houses, most of which have been faithfully restored and renovated. There are few modern properties as the village is in a conservation area; planning for more houses and extensions is restricted and rulings are often fought vigorously – as a result the population demographic is fairly static. There are some council houses and retirement bungalows, but they are mainly owner occupied now – house prices and rentals command a premium here. There are also several “holiday let” properties.

The village is surrounded by agricultural land, but most of those who work do so in Hadleigh, Ipswich, Colchester, Sudbury or London. The parish includes the outlying areas of Kersey Tye, Kersey Uplands and Wickerstreet Green and a very large proportion of adult parishioners are pensioners.

There are many families living here with connections to the village going back generations however the majority of newcomers tend to be retired couples or working professional people – many of whom are committed to the village and stay for many years. There are few people aged between 19-30 and very few from ethnic minority backgrounds.

There is a well-kept Village Hall, a playing field on The Glebe used regularly by the school, and allotments; The Grays Trust is a well-endowed educational charity. The many organisations include the Village Produce Association with its

annual flower and vegetable show, Tuesday club, table tennis, Forgetmenots and the Kersey Society.

The CofE VCP school adjacent to the church has 72 pupils and uses the church building at least three times a week for assemblies, village-invited services and plays. The incumbent is encouraged to be an inspirational presence in the life of the school. Kersey would welcome a new incumbent onto the governing body of this 'outstanding' school but is aware that the level of commitment required may impact on the role of incumbent. A PCC member represents the Church as a Foundation Governor.

The Church

- Our church attracts many visitors and their comments on the peace and tranquillity of the building and its upkeep are encouraging.
- Grade 1 12c building with a peal of 8 bells. The Chancel is the responsibility of King's College Cambridge.
- Heating, lighting and floodlighting have been updated and there is a sound system. Substantial repairs to the church tower will be undertaken in the near future.
- Spacious, well-equipped kitchen and toilet facilities.
- Seating for 150.
- 2017 Parish share £12,580 paid in full to date.

Churchmanship

- Middle of the road, embracing BCP, CW, regular Sunday services and mid-week morning prayer, informal and special services, clergy or lay led.
- There is 1 Elder (who moved to Lavenham 8 years ago) and 1 voluntary organist .
- Church organisations include Forgetmenots (tea parties/coffee mornings/ lunches/outings for the elderly of the village) and bellringing.
- Lent groups are sometimes held jointly with other parishes.



The view of the village from the church steps.

PCC assessment of strengths

- Lay involvement through 1 Elder who is willing to lead or assist at services.
- Willingness to keep under review forms of service, timings and location to suit changing make-up of congregation and the demands of modern family life.
- Peal of 8 bells rung almost every Sunday (practice on Thurs. evenings).
- Very small, committed, good humoured PCC willing to accept administrative responsibility.
- Sense of community and pool of talent and goodwill in the parish which could be tapped for the benefit of the church and will respond positively to a new, charismatic leader.
- Church is central to school and village life.
- Support for fundraising within the parish.
- Villagers who support the church on 'high days and holidays' and services of national celebration and who enjoy traditional church hymns and music. Recent increases in number of families with young children has led to well attended Mini Messy Church services & closer links with school giving an excellent foundation for new incumbent to build on.
- Music forms integral part of all services but needs encouragement.
- Healthy support for fundraising in the village.

PCC assessment of challenges

- Although there is good support for fundraising in the parish which could be expanded, there is uncertain financial support from the small community for the demands of the ever-increasing Parish Share.
- A need for pastoral work within the village especially among ageing parishioners.
- An urgent need to re-engage with and 'reach-out' to those villagers who have lost interest in regular worship: the active congregation is a lot fewer than the electoral roll of 46 may suggest.
- A need to find the 'next generation' of people to take on church offices as there is much reliance on a small group of ageing pensioners.
- Need to lower the average age of the congregation by encouraging teenagers, young adults (25-35) and young men to contribute to church life; a demographic few in number in the village.
- With improved heating and new kitchen and toilet facilities there should be more ways of using the church building.
- Music needs help and encouragement.
- A slightly disheartened PCC, overwhelmed by fundraising demands and feeling unable to row against the tide of secularity of the nation looking for a church leader who will make Christianity relevant to the life of our villagers.



A social gathering in our new kitchen area

St Nicholas's, Hintlesham with All Saints' and St Margaret's, Chattisham (United Parish)



St Nicholas's, Hintlesham

The parish:

The two villages, 5 miles from Ipswich, have worked as one community for many years. Chattisham is a hamlet of around 170 people, with no facilities except for the church. Hintlesham, with a population of 650, has a Community Hall, a CofE VCP school, pub, motor sales and repair shop, golf club with restaurant, a prestigious hotel and a church.

Homes are mainly owner occupied with an estate, in Hintlesham, with mixed housing including purpose built bungalows, council owned, for the elderly and newly built Housing Association homes. Both villages are linear with a mix of old and new houses lining the roads, with some outlying farms and cottages. Several local businesses provide employment, but most people commute to Ipswich, Hadleigh or London.

There is a strong sense of community with many flourishing organisations – carpet bowls, badminton, gardening club, a women's group and a keep fit group. The Parish Council and Community Council work closely together and following the purchase of the village playing field are now working towards a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA).

The church is represented on the Governing body of the school, which has 95 pupils and recently appointed a new head, who is also head of Kersey school. The school is an "Outstanding" school which has a developing and growing relationship with the church. End of Term and Harvest services are held in Hintlesham church, as well as occasional assemblies. A PCC group leads regular "Open the Book" sessions at Hintlesham & Kersey Schools. Visits are made by

class groups for curriculum reasons to the building which are always welcome, with churchwardens on hand to help. The school contributes art work to the church.

The churches

- **Hintlesham** is a large Grade II listed predominantly 13c church with a 15c tower, clerestories and a large open chancel area.
- The church is fitted with a sound system and the tower has a peal of 6 bells.
- The East window has been restored and some internal decoration has taken place. Work on the chancel roof is due to start in January 2018.
- Seating for 150
- **Chattisham** is a small Grade II listed 13c church with Victorian and modern restoration.
- Major repairs are needed in future.
- Seating for 80.
- *We stress Hintlesham with Chattisham is one united parish with services alternating between the two church buildings.*
- 2017 Parish Share £20,915 paid in full.

*The Church fete at Chattisham –
one of several fundraising events that
take place each year.*



Churchmanship

- Middle of the road based on Common Worship.
- At present the Lay Ministry team of 5 elders help lead services. The laity, including the young, take part by reading, leading prayers at all services and leading activities during Mini Messy Church.
The Elders take home communion to housebound church members.
- We feel it is vital that a service of worship, which alternates between the churches, is held in the parish every Sunday (except 5th Sundays). Our monthly All-Age Eucharist has enabled children to grow up appreciating the Eucharist as they read lessons and prepare prayers alongside more experienced Christians. Mini Messy Church is now held instead of Family services.
- Several special services are held during the year including: Songs of Praise in the Community Hall, Vocations service, Women's World Day of Prayer, Christingle, Celtic Prayer (esp. at Easter) and a Time to Remember.
- Church led Organisations include – Coffee Stop (once a fortnight), Lunch club for the elderly (once a month), Holiday Club, an annual event which attracts 35 – 50 children, and a new group for primary age children and their parents/carers which has replaced the toddler group.
- Lent Groups and other occasional discussion groups take place.
- A singing group enhances our worship at Festivals.

PCC assessment of strengths

- We are a prayerful community and have been greatly blessed by the response to our 'Growing in God' initiative. Mini Messy Church is now an established monthly Sunday morning congregation of young families who do not, as yet, attend other services. The resulting contact and relationships between different age groups has spin offs in many ways; from supporting social events to growing new leaders.
- An ongoing and treasured ministry to children, which started with the August Holiday Club week 36 years ago, has been a significant ministry. We currently have 2 church led after school clubs and a new evening club for young teenagers which it is hoped will lead to confirmation for some. We still have a loose connection to older children and young adults who were brought to confirmation and keep in contact.

- We aim to be a supportive and inclusive church by working in teams to enable us to draw in new people and encourage them to grow into leadership roles.
- The church school in the parish is greatly valued with members of the congregation working there on a voluntary basis, some of whom are Governors. The church building is used for school services & curriculum activities and an Open the Book team goes in twice per half term.
- We always pay our parish share and expect to finance mission within the parish. We have an active treasurer who quietly encourages realistic giving with annual increments.
- Pastoral Care is led by the LMT but very much shared by members of the congregation.



Storytelling at Holiday Club

PCC assessment of challenges:

- The time constraint on the priest after Sunday services limits the opportunity for members of the congregation to socialise with them.
- To address this we would like the priest to be available in the parish on a regular basis – at Hall Lunch, Coffee Stop, Mini Messy Church & the School to get to know people of all ages.
- At Hintlesham with Chattisham we are happy and ready to encourage children to take communion (after instruction). This has been raised in the Benefice.
- Two medieval churches to maintain is a challenge, neither of them has “facilities”, although Hintlesham has water and a sink.
- The 'Friends of the Churches' organises fund raising events and the proceeds are split equally between the two church buildings.

Appendix 1

Weekly Sunday Services in the Benefice 2017

Week	Time	Place	Led by Rector	Lay Led
1	8.00 9.30 11.00 11.00	Elmsett Chattisham Kersey Aldham	Holy Communion (BCP) Parish Eucharist (CW) Holy Communion (CW)	Morning Prayer (BCP)
2	9.30 9.30 11.00 11.00	Elmsett Hintlesham Aldham Kersey	Family Service (CW) Holy Communion CW – Clergy or Lay led	Mini Messy Church CW – Lay or Clergy led
3	9.30 9.30 11.00 11.00	Chattisham Elmsett Aldham Kersey	Holy Communion (CW) Mini Messy Church/Café Church	Communion by Extension (CW) Morning Prayer (BCP)
4	9.30 9.30 11.00 4.00pm 6.30pm	Elmsett Hintlesham Aldham Kersey Kersey	All Age Eucharist (CW) Family Service Evensong (BCP) Oct- March Evensong (BCP) April - Sept	Service of the Word (CW)
5	10.30	Services rotate around the Deanery	Deanery Holy Communion	

Occasional Offices

2016

	Elmsett	Aldham	Kersey	Hint w Chatt	TOTAL
Baptisms	4	1	5	4	14
Weddings	1	1	3	4	9
Funerals	5	1	1	5	12

2015

	Elmsett	Aldham	Kersey	Hint w Chatt	TOTAL
Baptisms	2	1	0	2	5
Weddings	1	0	3	3	7
Funerals	3	1	5	6	15

2014

	Elmsett	Aldham	Kersey	Hint w Chatt	TOTAL
Baptisms	1	1	3	5	10
Weddings	2	3	5	2	12
Funerals	0	2	3	4	9

There have been no Confirmations during this period

Appendix 2 – Church Electoral Rolls as at 2017 AGMs

Parish	Village Population	Church Electoral Roll
Elmsett	778	42
Aldham	180	31
Kersey	350	46
Hintlesham w Chattisham	820	76

Appendix 3 - The Rectory



The Rectory is located in the village of Elmsett, approximately 3 miles from the market town of Hadleigh with its range of shops and services, including supermarkets, chemists, a doctors' surgery and dentists.

There is a primary school in the village; secondary education is mainly undertaken in Hadleigh.

Inside: The front door opens into the entrance lobby with access to the office/study, ground floor shower room with lavatory, and the central hallway.

Off the central hallway there is a sitting room with open fire, dining room (both looking out onto the garden) kitchen and separate utility room.

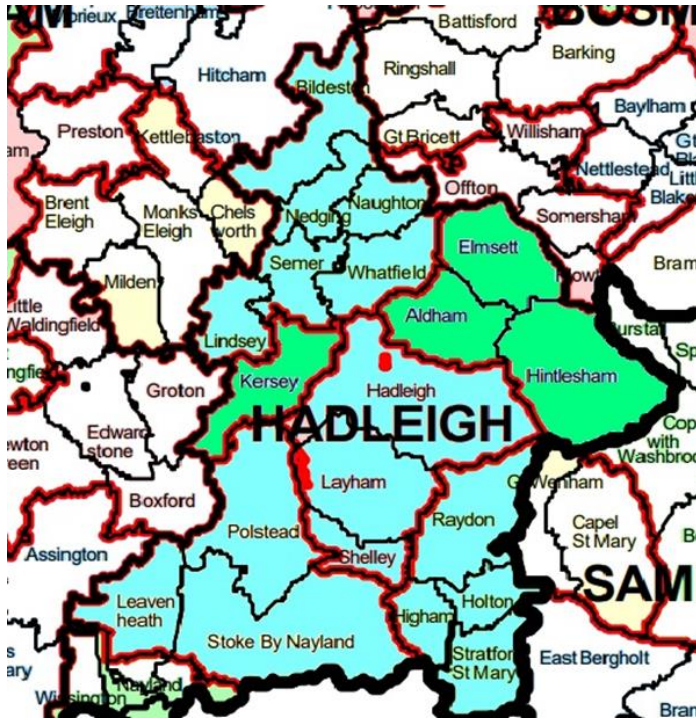
A staircase leads from the hallway to a balustraded landing on the first floor. There are four good-sized bedrooms (some with wardrobes) and a separate bath/shower room with lavatory.

Mains water, electricity and drainage are connected. The central heating is oil-fired.

Outside: The large driveway has parking for a number of cars and there is an attached double garage. The large garden, allotment area and greenhouse are located to the rear of the property, and are accessed from the sitting room.



Hadleigh Deanery



The Benefice is one of 5 in the Hadleigh Deanery currently led by the Rural Dean, Revd Rosalind Paul, who co-Chairs the Deanery Synod with the Lay Chair, Mrs Karin Norman-Butler. The Deanery Organiser, Mr Jeff Delves, plays a strategic role in helping us to plan our budgets and allocate Parish Share.

This is an exciting time in Hadleigh Deanery, and the person appointed will have a formative role to play in helping to shape it for the future. It has already been agreed that all vacancies in the Deanery, as they come up, will have the presentation to their livings suspended and Priests in Charge will be appointed. This is to allow maximum flexibility for pastoral reorganisation in the Deanery, which will be needed in the next few years in order to cope with the decline in clergy numbers. This is not a counsel of despair; rather it gives us the opportunity to think creatively and imaginatively about how we can fully involve both clergy and laity in finding the best ways to serve our people across the Deanery by working together for God's mission in ways that will lead to growth.

In recent years, as a result of this forward thinking, the 5 benefices have drawn closer together and now worship together every 5th Sunday in one of the 5

large churches across the Deanery. We also hold various social and training events together and are trying to learn from each other's skills.

The person who is appointed to this post will be involved, as part of a small Chapter, in proposing and implementing plans for the future. Chapter works well together, and members are open to each other's ideas. Chapter Meetings are held at least monthly (sometimes more often) for prayer, discussion and mutual support. These meetings are regarded as essential for communication and for sharing, and attendance is regarded as a priority in our diaries.

The Deanery Synod meets 3 times a year and meetings include speakers and discussions on various subjects. These meetings are planned by the Standing Committee, which includes both clergy and lay members. The Deanery Quota Allocation Working Party meets twice a year to consider how the Parish Share should be divided between the benefices, and each parish is represented at these meetings by its Treasurer. Careful discussion takes place so that all can hear and understand the needs and struggles of the various parishes around the Deanery. Recommendations are then made to the Deanery Synod, which makes the final decision.

The retired priests, Readers and Elders who form the Greater Chapter are invited to an annual Quiet Day in the spring and to a summer Garden Party.

The Archdeacon's Visitation takes place in May/June and is held in a different church each year, with refreshments to follow. The clergy attend to present their Churchwardens, and many laity support this service too.

The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich was founded in 1914 and includes the county of Suffolk, except for an area of North East Suffolk around Lowestoft, and one parish in the county of Essex. It serves about 631,000 people living in a geographical area of more than 1,400 square miles. Out of this population, around 20,000 identify themselves with the Church of England by being members of the church electoral roll. An average of over 14,000 attend Anglican Church activities weekly (20,000 including other denominations). Over 12,000 attend an Anglican service of worship each Sunday (18,000 including all denominations). A wide range of communities exists in the diocese – from small rural villages to urban centres such as Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds, Stowmarket, Haverhill, Sudbury and Beccles. The region has many sites of historic interest among which are Sutton Hoo, the Saxon village at West Stow and the ruins of the old Abbey at Bury St Edmunds – famously where, in 1214, the barons of England met and swore to force King John to accept the Charter of Liberties, later known as the Magna Carta. The whole county, together with its Heritage coastline, is also a haven of delight for lovers of natural history.

Oversight and Mission

The diocese is overseen by the Bishop of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, the Right Revd. Martin Seeley, supported by the Bishop of Dunwich, the Right Revd. Dr. Mike Harrison. The Cathedral Church of St James and St Edmund, the mother church of the diocese, has been a place of pilgrimage and tourism for centuries and remains today a focal point for the Christian faith in Suffolk.

The communities of the diocese are served by 454 parishes with 125 benefices and 18 deaneries. There are 478 church buildings of which 457 are listed. There are around 118 stipendiary clergy and 44 self-supporting ministers, some 180 Lay Licensed Ministers, including 172 Readers and a few Licensed Lay Pastors and Local Evangelists and 570 commissioned lay assistants (Lay Elders) in the parishes. There are 88 Church of England Controlled and Aided schools in the diocese. The Anglican churches across the diocese seek to develop close links with other Christian denominations and to build understanding with members of other faiths. The diocese also has close ties with churches across the world, most especially with the Diocese of Kagera in West Tanzania.

Administration

The diocese works through the synodical structures and is served by a small team of diocesan office staff led by the Diocesan Secretary, most of whom are based in modern offices in the centre of Ipswich. The diocese has a total annual revenue budget in excess of £8 million and the Diocesan Board of Finance manages a total balance sheet of £80 million. The office staff provide administrative, financial, secretarial, property, communication and general support to clergy and parishes as well as supporting the Church of England schools across the county.

As part of the body of Christ in Suffolk, staff strive to encapsulate the Diocesan vision for Growing in God by helping the parishes, schools and community of Suffolk to flourish and develop by leading Christ-centred lives enriched by the Holy Spirit. Through work in the four key areas of Faith and Discipleship, Vocation and Ministry, Resources and Buildings, and Relationships and Structures staff at the Diocesan Office are committed to ensuring congregations increase in number, youth, influence and depth.

Mission and Pastoral Policy

As a diocese we seek to live by the Five Marks of Mission of the Anglican Communion:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

The Diocesan Mission and Pastoral Committee works to policies approved by the Diocesan Synod which seeks to encourage Church growth and allocate resources across the diocese in order to provide leadership in mission and ministry in all its communities. The policies encourage collaboration and the diocese and/or region provides training and support for local and licensed ministries, ordained and lay. Lay and ordained officers and parochial clergy work collaboratively, sharing ministry with all types of ministers both lay and ordained, to encourage and nurture vocation to various ministries both formal and informal.

Centenary Share

Centenary share enables all the people of the parishes to contribute towards costs, with a priority of maintaining mission and ministry across the whole diocese. Occasionally there are genuine financial difficulties in parishes, but parishes are expected to pay the parish share in full. Lay and ordained officers and parochial clergy encourage realistic and sacrificial giving by upholding, teaching and preaching this Gospel.