

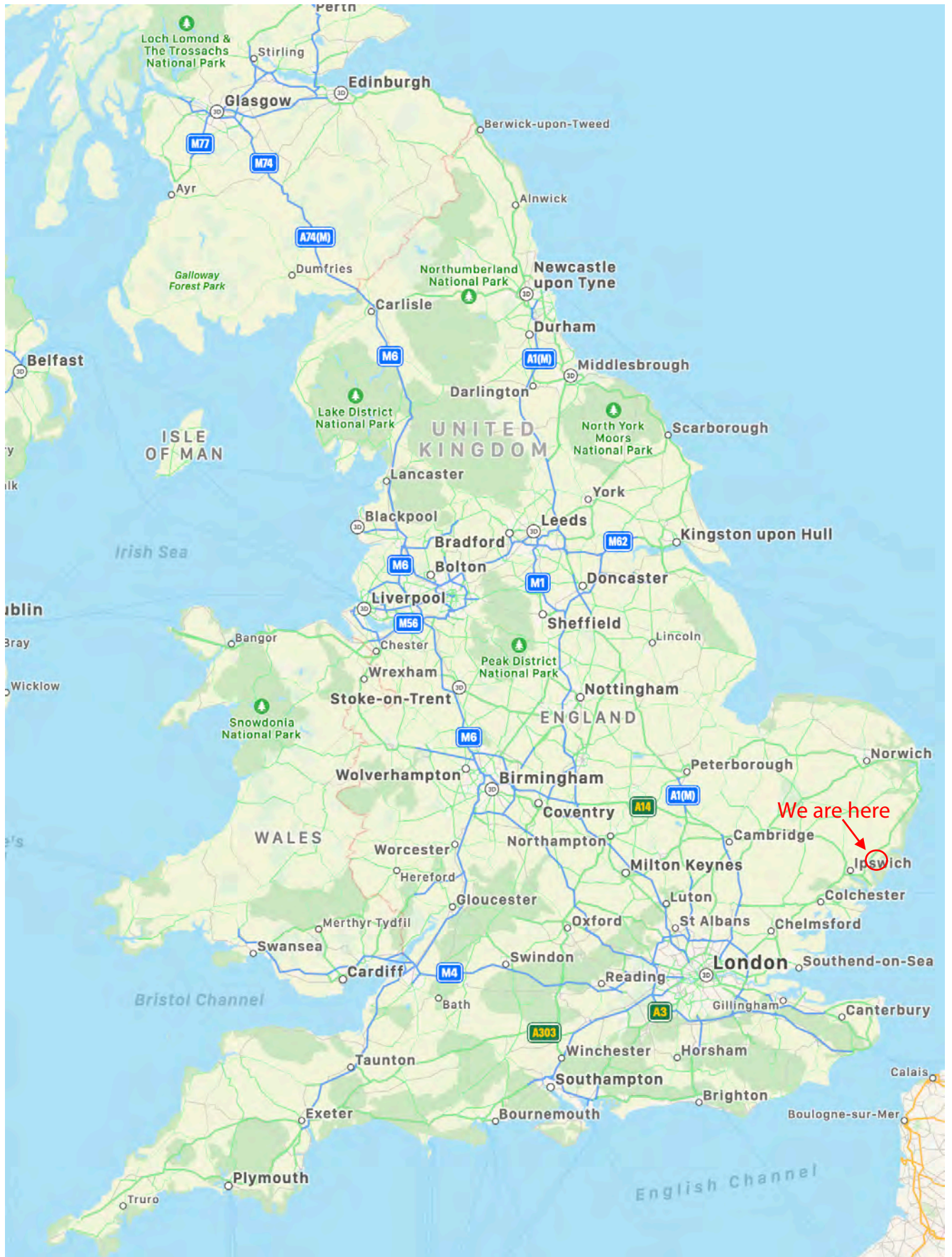


LOVING GOD, LOVING PEOPLE, SHARING JESUS



CORNERSTONE OF THE COMMUNITY

Benefice Profile
St John's Woodbridge and St Andrew's Bredfield



Served by good trunk roads to London and the south, to the west connecting to the north

Contents

Overview	4
Services	5
Reflections from the church	6
Our new Vicar.....	7
Children and families	8
Youth	10
Parish ministry	11
Mission, festivals and events.....	12
Church structures	14
Safeguarding	14
Teams	14
Parishes and local communities.....	15
History of the churches and buildings	16
Churches together	17
Our response to the covid-19 pandemic	18
Woodbridge and Bredfield	20
Woodbridge.....	20
Bredfield	20
The Diocese	21
General information.....	25
Further information	25
Other websites for further information	25

Overview

Thank you for showing interest in our Benefice profile. Is God inviting you to explore becoming our vicar?

Our Benefice is made up of two parishes: St Andrew's Bredfield, a middle of the road village church and St John's Woodbridge, a lively open evangelical gently charismatic market town church. We long to grow spiritually and numerically.

The parishes have prayed and thought carefully about the skills and gifts we would like our new vicar to have. We are praying for a person who :

- ❖ Is a good communicator, spiritually wise and rooted in their faith and who will bring their own skills and experience to inspire the life of both churches.
- ❖ Has a heart for mission and will reach out to and nurture the faith of young and old alike.
- ❖ Has a genuine interest in the two churches and their role and place in the town and village communities.
- ❖ Is emotionally intelligent, empathetic and adaptable to the differing needs of the two parishes.
- ❖ Will be seen out and about in the parishes, be recognised and will engage with and get to know the parishioners
- ❖ Is someone to whom people within and without the church family can turn to for support, whether spiritual or pastoral.
- ❖ Is willing to work with other Christian groups in both town and village to foster good relationships
- ❖ Is willing to work collaboratively with Diocese on Lightwave and Loverural outreach initiatives

What can we offer our new vicar?

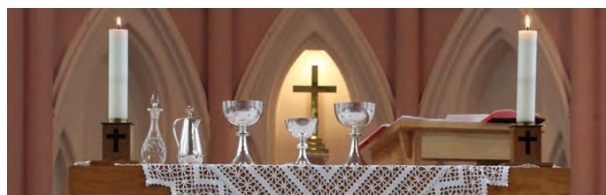
In turn we can offer you :

- ❖ Supportive and welcoming PCCs and supportive lay and ordained staff
- ❖ Welcoming and supportive congregations and communities who will offer their various skills to work with you in your ministry
- ❖ A Benefice office based in the Old Vicarage in Woodbridge
- ❖ A modern five bedroomed vicarage in an historic area of Woodbridge but close to the church and the town centre.
- ❖ Regular days off, retreats, CMD and holidays
- ❖ Full-time stipendiary post with working expenses paid by both PCCs
- ❖ And not least, Woodbridge takes top spot for East of England in "The Sunday Times Best Places to Live guide."

Still interested and want to know more? Read on . . .

Services

The Benefice offers an extensive variety of services to cater for many styles of worship which allow people to engage with God in a variety of ways. These include services of Holy Communion through to "Presence": a twice monthly service of informal worship and waiting on the Holy Spirit.



Our services are currently:

<i>St Andrew's Bredfield</i>	Pre-Covid		Now	
	Adults	Children	Adults	Children
Sunday Morning Holy Communion [9:15am on 1 st] – with hymns and led by the organ	~10	0	~15	0
Sunday Morning Prayer [9:15am on 3 rd] – with hymns and led by the organ	~10	0	~15	0

<i>St John's Woodbridge</i>	Pre-Covid		Now	
	Adults	Children	Adults	Children
Sunday Morning Service [10:30am] - An accessible service for different age groups with either communion or all ages together - Music led by groups, with organ for the occasional hymn.	~140	~25	~80	0
Sunday Afternoon Praise [4:00pm on alternate weeks] - Focused on children and families. This new trial service has come as a result of consultation with families	n/a	n/a	tbc	tbc
Sunday Evening Presence [6:30pm on alternate weeks] - A trial opportunity for us to spend time with God, no service plan or agenda, just allowing the Holy Spirit to work	n/a	n/a	~35	2
Live streaming of Sunday Morning services for those unable to attend in person. The count is the number of family logins *	n/a	n/a	~15	n/a
Catch up on YouTube of Sunday Morning services for those unable to attend in person or the live streaming. The count, once again, is the number of family logins *	n/a	n/a	~40	n/a
Every other Wednesday communion [BCP] service [10:30am] – with hymns led by the organ	~30	0	~30	0
Friday Night Youth gathering	0	~15	0	~15
Sunday Afternoon Youth meeting	0	~7	0	~7

The children and youth no longer attend the Sunday morning Services at St John's as they have their own services/events. The youth events are within St John's Hall.

* This count could mean that one person is watching or more. This is not currently measured although the names of the individual people/families joining are known.

Reflections from the church

The foundations of St John's and St Andrew's are strong, but have been shaken over the past few years. St John's has long been a spiritual home for many mature Christians, but both the congregational and service numbers have decreased. At St Andrew's, the numbers have increased, however, the number of services has reduced from weekly to two a month.

We are excited that God is bringing "new things" into the Benefice. This verse from Isaiah 43 v 18-19 has been given to both churches during a joint PCC away day. "...Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past, See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; Do you not perceive it?".

In preparing our Parish Profile the congregations of both St John's and St Andrew's, including our children and young people, were invited to share their thoughts and prayers about their churches. The diagram below is a SWOT analysis which attempts to reflect the responses received.

Strengths

Caring - we have strong pastoral teams
Supportive - throughout Lockdown we have kept in touch the members within our churches
Prayerful - we have a daily prayer diary, weekly prayer meetings and regular prayer days
Spiritually open - we have been listening to what God is saying to us
Working together - we have a real sense of unity as we move forward
Life groups - rooting us in teaching, fellowship and love
Diverse - different styles of worship
Bredfield Church Fete - supported by people from far and wide

Weaknesses

Reticent - we can be slow to come forward and get involved
Leaving to others - we may wait for someone else to volunteer
Critical - we have been critical of others in the past
Diverse - we try to please everyone in our services
Relying on paid staff - slow to take ownership of different activities and jobs
Known - Vicar not well enough known in Local communities. Someone to talk to in both village and town

Opportunities

Trying new things - we are open and excited about new ideas and ways of worship
Taking risks - we don't want to stagnate
Growing leaders - we want to encourage people's gifts, develop and strengthen our ministry teams
Deepening faith - we want everyone to grow in maturity
Reaching out - we long for our community to grow in their love for God.
Cornerstone - engage St Andrew's more with village life
Growing Younger - connecting with new families and growing our work with young people

Threats

Too many cooks - sometimes we think we know better
Many styles - different traditions of worship, from BCP to New Wine
Growing older - many retire to area and young people move away
Taking what we have for granted - we are blessed with many resources
Finance - reduction of income due to the covid pandemic

Our new Vicar

What our congregations said

- ❖ A person who will walk and guide us as we explore the vision God has promised and will harness the sense of excitement at St John's and St Andrew's about where God is leading us.
- ❖ A collaborative team player who is prayerful, servant hearted and compassionate, approachable, friendly and has emotional intelligence and a genuine interest in people, families and the wider town and village community
- ❖ Is sympathetic to different styles of worship and expressions of church
- ❖ Is interested in the needs and views of all congregations and communities and is able to listen with empathy, and willing to use and develop new skills within the congregations to enable people to experience God
- ❖ Has a passion for the Gospel, is spiritually wise and able to communicate, teach and inspire others to grow in faith by showing them how to apply the Bible to modern life
- ❖ A person who will walk with us and we paraphrase "...even when we are old and grey do not forsake us O God, till we declare your power to the next generation, Your might to all who are to come....". Psalm 71:18
- ❖ Has the ability to empower and motivate a staff team and a wide range of volunteers, has a 'coaching' style and can manage the expectations of what is possible from one person.
- ❖ Is a good shepherd who enables pastoral care and support for all to take place.
- ❖ Is someone who can discern the path that God is calling us to take and who encourages change sensitively through innovation, creativity and willingness to take risks.
- ❖ Is able to communicate and can manage difficult conversations and conflict in an appropriate caring manner across age ranges

Children and families

St John's has traditionally had a large number of young families within the congregation. During recent years we have seen a decline in attendance and we are keen to regrow this ministry.



At St Andrew's, prior to the pandemic, we held regular seasonal events for families including informal services for Palm Sunday and Pentecost and a well-attended nativity service on Christmas Eve.



Regular groups and events at St John's include:

- Thriving weekly toddler group
- After school club for primary school children [new in 2021]
- Annual holiday club
- Assemblies in four local primary schools
- Seasonal activities such as the Pumpkin Party (alternative to Halloween) and Easter Egg Hunt.

We regularly partner with other churches and groups in the town to run activities and events for children and families.

As new families come to the village, we hope to reach to them through this ministry when we are able to, and we pray that we will continue to see it grow and thrive.



Hello!

We are excited that you are thinking about applying to be our new vicar at St John's.

Some of the things we really like about our church are our children's groups, times when we have food together, the worship band, and having a special children's area.

We hope our new vicar will take time to come and meet us, and be willing to help out in practical ways at church.

The most important thing we would like is someone who is kind and welcoming.

Thank you for reading our profile.
We are praying that God will guide you to the right place.

From the children at St John's

Youth

The young people love meeting together at the Church Hall to socialise, play games, cook and eat together and grow in faith together. Years 6-13s meet on Friday evenings [fortnightly] and Years 10-13s meet [also fortnightly] on Sunday early evenings.



One young person runs a weekly on-line bible study for young people on Sunday mornings. Several of the older youth help out with running evening activities and those who are musical, play and sing at services.



Making Pancakes



Try this at home.... Eating an After Eight mint without hands



Mummified youngsters

Parish ministry

St. John's

Prayer Ministry

St John's have a strong belief and culture surrounding the importance of prayer as an absolute foundation in everything we do. There is a prayer ministry team who have received training to support others and are available around service times and the Pastoral Team also prays regularly for those identified with any specific needs. There are a number of organised prayer events held throughout the month, with church members encouraged to attend at least one weekly prayer meeting.

Groups

- ❖ Lifegroups are the heart and lifeline of the church where spiritual formation takes place through worship, studying the word, prayer and encouragement from others, and in that process, we learn to become more like Jesus in our daily lives. 66% of the church members attend one of the 14 groups.
- ❖ Pastoral Team provides prayer and practical support to those in need. Their primary mission is to listen. The team supports Hub Café; Highlands Residential Home and Suffolk Place, sheltered housing accommodation in the parish
- ❖ Bereavement Support Team has been running since 1987 supporting church members and parishioners through difficult days following bereavement
- ❖ The Men's Group is the vehicle for men of the church to pray and share fellowship together. There are up to 15 members currently who, on occasion, join with men from other churches
- ❖ Likewise, Link Up is for the women to pray and share fellowship together with women from other churches. There are up to 12 members

Courses

We have a history of running a number of courses

- ❖ Alpha course which has been held over past years and held once online during the pandemic.
- ❖ Marriage Course and All out for Love for those who have been married a while and those preparing for marriage
- ❖ Divorce Recovery Workshop is a National Charity that offers workshops comprising six weekly sessions, based on a Christian foundation

St Andrew's

Groups

- ❖ Ecumenical prayer circle and occasional Bible study group
- Many other groups have suffered as a result of the pandemic including
- ❖ Bell ringing, but carefully restarting
 - ❖ Amblers not Ramblers, inclusive walking group
 - ❖ Come and Meet Each Other

Courses

We also have a history of running a number of courses

- ❖ Alpha course which has been held over past years
- ❖ Listening course as a one-off

Mission, festivals and events

How we share the good news is really important to both churches

St John's

Local outreach and social activities

- Just42
 - A Christian organisation born out of St John's which is a charity in its own right, running after school clubs, Christian Unions holiday clubs and mentoring schemes.
- Prison Fellowship
 - Hollesley Bay Prison, a category D prison 7 miles from Woodbridge
 - Zacchaeus Programme a national Christian course in prisons
 - Finny Music was also born out of St John's, taking a team into prisons around the country to witness through music and testimony.
- Hub Café
 - A community pop up cafe held either outdoors at a local pub or indoors in St John's Hall between 10 and 11.45 every Monday
- Repair Café
 - A joint venture with St John's and Transition Woodbridge linked to Hub Café, held once every two months.
 - 20 repairers from members of St John's and outside servicing ~40 faulty pieces each session
- Lightwave
 - Some members of St. John's are exploring new ways of doing church through a small group, shining Christ's Light all over Suffolk
- Church Holiday
 - Once every two years, the church family go on holiday together at Sizewell Hall to enjoy fun, food and fellowship

Worldwide mission

The church sponsors financially; spiritually; prayerfully and practically our link missionaries

- Former members of St John's, who now work for OMF in UK and abroad
 - David and Manuela Pawson who are serving in Japan and Heather Cox in UK
- John and Gillian Robinson who have been serving in Bangkok since 2009 working with the underprivileged, especially those in prisons supported via CrossLinks.
- Cry in the Dark serves vulnerable children and adults in Romania. Many of our young people have travelled to Bacau with the team to support their ongoing work

Local Mission Partners

St John's and its members actively support a number of other charities including

- The Bible Society; Walk through the Bible; CPAS; Good News for Everyone [formerly Gideons]; Open Doors; Salvation Army; Christian Aid and Tear Fund to name but a few.

The budget for mission within St John's is set at 15% of St John's annual budget, which equates to between £30,000-40,000 annually. The first £3,000 is allocated for diocesan/deanery initiatives. The remainder is allocated on a ratio of 2:1 between the World Mission Action Group [WMAG] led mission support and Just42. See the website links on General Information for more information

St Andrew's

In Lent, St Andrew's processes through the village on Palm Sunday [right].



The Annual Bredfield Church Fete is a major event in the St Andrew's calendar and in the area. It is a whole village event set in the atmospheric grounds of the Old Rectory, a major fund raiser for the Church and supported by people from far and wide.

There is also band concert held in the village in aid of the Samaritans

In the autumn, the annual churchyard "clear up" in Bredfield offers fellowship to many villagers in preparation for the ecumenical Act of remembrance with Bredfield chapel in November.



Joint



Both churches support the Ride and Stride annual event, in September, to raise funds for the historic churches of Suffolk. St John's and St Andrew's join together to Beat the Bounds in a pleasant walk centred around the Bredfield parish

Church structures

Safeguarding

Each parish has adopted the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy and each parish has a nominated Safeguarding Officer

Teams

The Benefice draws on the resources of a very capable Lay and Ordained team, with 1 ordained minister – SSM [Bill], two Readers [Alan and Gay]; one Lay Elder [Roger]; two active PTO clergy [Garrie and Graham] and one active PTO reader [David].

The Ministry team consider themselves servants and play an active role in many unseen activities – pastoral work, worship group, prayer ministry, catering etc. St John's has a track record of encouraging people to move forward into leadership and formal training. During the last 10 years eight people have completed formal ministry training, Bill and Gay are still with us, but most have left to join parishes at home and abroad.



The PCCs of both churches currently meet four times a year, as individual churches, as do the respective Standing Committees [at St John's this also incorporates the Finance Committee]. St John's PCC consists of 5 Teams; Journeying, Caring, Growing Younger, Reaching Out and Resourcing. Each Team meets separately between PCC meetings, enabling the ministry of the church to keep its momentum all year round, allowing new initiatives to be born and grow, with regular reporting to the whole group through the PCC area of the church website and a fuller discussion and agreement at whole PCC meetings. St Andrew's has a small team focused on planning and providing Sunday services and the Standing Committee attends to the care of the fabric.

It has long been recognised that in order to grow, resources need to be invested, and through generous giving over the years, we have been able to employ staff to develop that vision, as well as meeting the cost of our stipendiary post through Parish Share payments. A full time paid Children and Families Worker, who works with children of ages 11 and under, is employed to develop and grow connections within a school context and running events and services within the churches.

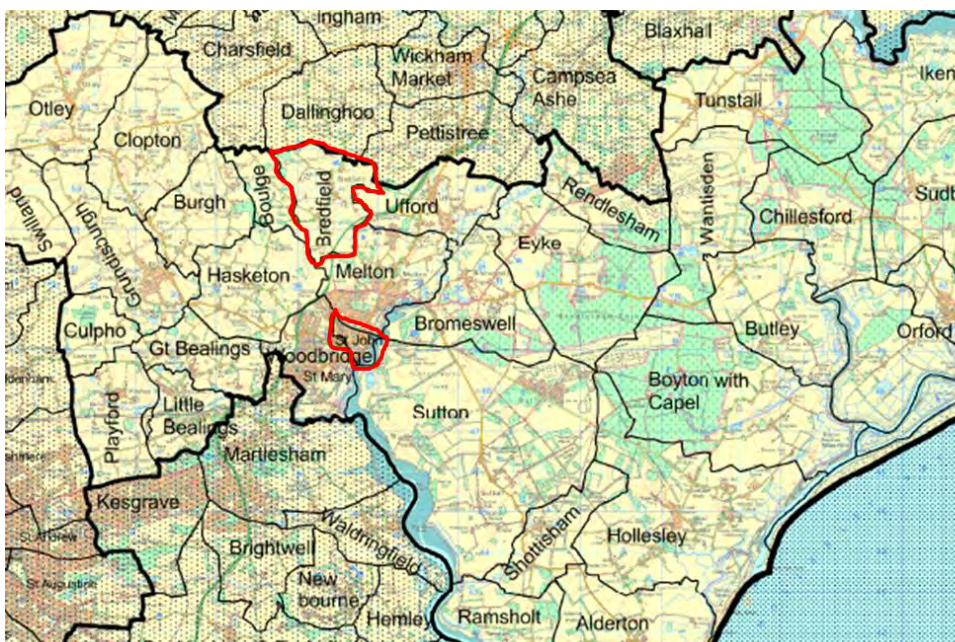
St John's Church Office, which supports both Churches in the Benefice, has part-time staff teams of Operations Manager, Church Administrator, Cleaner and Maintenance person. At St Andrew's the church cleaning is a voluntary rota.

Parishes and local communities

St John's is located close to Woodbridge town centre, but attracts congregations from a much wider area, with only 44 out of an electoral role of 214 located within the parish [Population of parish 1,575] in a town with a total population of ~8,000. Whilst St Andrew's is a rural Church where there is provision in ALL services for children and young families although only a few children attend services. The Electoral Roll currently stands at 47, with 5 outside the Parish [Population 340].

Both churches in the Benefice have a history of full payment of parish share. Indeed, it has been possible for St John's to support up to 3 parishes in the past within the deanery. St John's is part of a formal Group ministry with St Mary's, Woodbridge linked with St Mary's, Great Bealings and St Andrew's, Melton linked with St Mary of the Assumption, Ufford.

There are a number of other places of worship in the locality: Woodbridge Methodist Church; Quay Church; Salvation Army; St Mary's Church; St Thomas' Catholic Church; Warwick Avenue Free church and Quakers just within the town of Woodbridge itself and Bredfield Chapel in Bredfield village. Within Woodbridge, there are good relations with all the churches within Woodbridge and Melton through "Churches Together" and longstanding ties between the church and chapel in Bredfield.



Whilst St John's has no primary school within its parish, we have a particularly strong connection with Woodbridge Primary School, which was previously in the parish prior to relocation in 2009. The town has a number of other primary schools; a private and high school which also are not in our parish. The Children and Families Worker has good connections with three other primary schools: Kyson, St Mary's and Eyke where assemblies are run.

Several care homes and supported living settings are visited by Church members for services or to take Communion to the residents.

History of the churches and buildings

St John's [right] was born from a church plant as St Mary's was drawing large congregations and in 1839 the church was overflowing with people. The foundation stone was laid in 1842, but the building then took some years to erect. Eventually, it was ready for consecration on 27 August 1846. The building was designed to seat 800 people. Today the pews have largely been replaced with chairs reducing maximum capacity to 300 but has now become a flexible space. The balcony has the original box pews which remain as a historic record.

The Old Vicarage, adjacent to the Church, houses the Church office and a number of meeting rooms.



The Church Hall is a 2 minute walk away, and is used for youth and children's work and various activities during the week by the wider community.

The Vicarage [left] was built in 1984 is adjacent to St John's Church, has 5 bedrooms and is in excellent order.

St Andrew's [right] is situated in the centre of the village within easy walking distance of the village hall/shop.

In 2010 the church room with facilities was built next to the church and provides a base for both St Andrew's ministry and community activities.

There has been a church on the same site since before the time of the Domesday Book. There are still traces of the medieval origins within the typical Suffolk flint-clad 14th Century building and later restoration work



Churches together

The churches in Woodbridge and Melton work together to serve our community in many ways often being asked by the Town Council and others to take a lead in public events. Joint services are held in our churches and in the open air.

Representatives from the eight worshipping communities in Woodbridge and nearby Melton meet four times a year to plan and mutually support joint ventures. These include events such as the Big Family Day Out, Open Air Services during Woodbridge Regatta, Harvest Celebration, Carols and Climate Sunday.

Before the Pandemic, Town Pastors were serving on the streets every Friday night, Open The Book went into the Primary Schools and a joint Christmas Card was sent to every home.

St John's join the Walk of Witness in Woodbridge by Churches Together on Good Friday [right]



An annual Easter Sunday sunrise service by the River Deben [left] attracted over 60 worshippers before the pandemic. Churches Together have put on Passion Plays in the local park and cinema, with full costume and audience participation through singing hymns following the action.

Collecting food for the Salvation Army Foodbank at Harvest service on Kingston Field [right]



Our response to the covid-19 pandemic

St John's and St Andrew's took a different approach to each other. St John's has gone and remains online for those unable or choose not to attend the services in the church building. St Andrew's introduced outdoor services and extended communion allowing for fellowship between its members to flourish after the lockdowns.



Followed by the opportunity to join for an on-line chat after the service. We learned a whole new verb, "To Zoom".



Tuesday Evening Prayer Meeting at 7.30pm

Joining together in Prayer is the basis for everything we do as a church family. A space where we celebrate together, look to God for the future together, and support one another in prayer.

We would love you to come and join us this evening as we meet together, on Zoom, to pray for God's guidance and grace as we move into this time of interregnum, praying also for each other as we walk through life's challenges together.



We would you to join with us
on Zoom every Tuesday
Evening at 7.30pm
ID 937 1772 6932

But moreover, to pray for the world, those in authority during the difficult days and for the scientists who were achieving amazing results and also the members of the congregation who were suffering

Encouraging the congregations of St John's and St Andrew's to keep in touch regularly with others during the pandemic

We all love to hear from someone when we are feeling anxious or alone. To stay connected and to beat loneliness throughout this new Lockdown why not commit to picking up your phone and calling two members of our Church Family each week throughout lockdown just to see how they are and to let them know they are not alone, it could just make their day!



how do you spell love?
- piglet



you don't spell it.
you feel it.
- pooh

Issue 1



2 April 2020

Living God, Living People, Sharing Jesus

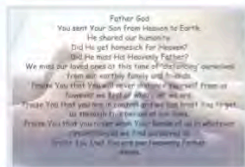
Connected

Welcome to our first issue of Connected for those with no access to St John's website and news.

A place for us to connect and tell each other our stories

A place to read a message of encouragement from God

And a place for us to ask for help if needed or to volunteer to help others.



Weekly Prayer- Tuesday evenings between 7:30pm-8:30pm



Mary Howard who co-ordinates the St John's Prayer meeting on Tuesday evenings at St John's would like to encourage our church family to continue to pray and fast on Tuesdays during the day or evening. As you are all aware due to the Government advice, we have to close the church building until further notice, so as a symbol of our continuing in prayer, the building will be illuminated during the evening. Each week we will be holding a special hour of stay/home prayer on Tuesday evenings between 7:30pm-8:30pm. We invite all of you to participate and ask that you light a candle or use a safe light and place it in your window at 7:30. Please join us in prayer, Mary says "Please pray for a miracle, that as God's people humble themselves God will heal our land and that lives will be spared."

People are kept up to date and informed via E-News and Connected [St John's], and The Lantern [St Andrew's] - available on paper and various electronic media. The Lantern is a traditional parish magazine

THE LANTERN

~AUGUST 2021~

NEWS OF THE PARISH OF ST ANDREW'S BREDFIELD



Cutoff for SEPTEMBER issue:

15th AUGUST 2021

Please submit entries to
Alison Cannard

lantern.bredfield@gmail.com
01473 737707

Inside this issue:

From our Ministry	2
Team	
Diary Dates	3
News from Bredfield	6

Many within both churches supported foodbanks either locally or nationally through Salvation Army and other Churches



The Little Free Pantry [outside St John's Church Hall] is up and running and is being used. It is for available for all to allow those who are struggling to put food on their tables to take what they need.

Woodbridge and Bredfield

Woodbridge

Woodbridge combines excellent shops with superb pubs and restaurants and numerous activities both indoors and out. On the edge of an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Woodbridge is the perfect base from which to explore the Suffolk Coast and its many tourist attractions.

Woodbridge lies along the River Deben, and about 8 miles from the coast. It is associated with the most important Anglo-Saxon site in the UK; Sutton Hoo. Chronicled most recently in the Netflix series film 'The Dig', in 1938-39 archaeologists unearthed an Anglo-Saxon ship burial with a wealth of artefacts and treasure, most of which now reside in the British Museum. A number of church members volunteer there.

Woodbridge is well known for its boating marina and tide mill, on the edge of the Suffolk Coast and Heath Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It has a history of rope-making, sail-making and boat-building and Sir Francis Drake had his fighting ships built at Woodbridge. The town's tide mill is one of two in the UK that still works.

Woodbridge has a whole range of housing from pre-Victorian, Victorian, all through the 20th century, including Social housing, right up to more recent builds. The town has a high proportion of retired people with local links and many others who have moved into the area.

<https://www.thesuffolkcoastco.uk/suffolk-coast-towns-and-villages/woodbridge>

Bredfield

Bredfield, a "broad clearing" in old English, has evidence of Romano-British and Saxon settlement. This attractive village grew around a crossroads about three miles north of Woodbridge and is set in 400 hectares of fertile agricultural land.

In the village, there are links and associations with St Andrew's church

- The orchard and wildflower meadow was purchased and planted by the community on former Glebe land with support from the PCC – as with the churchyard, members of the community can often be found in quiet contemplation of the wonderful surroundings
- Bredfield Community shop – an important hub regularly visited by a previous incumbent so as to be known in the village
- The Village Hall is well used by many local groups and the playing fields, with a much loved children's play area, provide opportunities for football matches, bowls, tennis.

Bredfield has had a number of famous residents over the centuries but perhaps its most famous son is the poet Edward Fitzgerald [1809-1883], who translated 'The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam' and in more recent times, George Burley, Scotland & Ipswich football manager lived here during an eight-year reign [1994-2002] at the club.

<http://bredfield.onesuffolk.net/our-village/>

Woodbridge Deanery

There are 32 parishes working in 5 benefices in this part of beautiful East Suffolk. The major centre of population is the Market Town of Woodbridge, recently named as the number one place to live in East Anglia. There is a train station linking the town to Ipswich and London Liverpool Street and the A12 runs through the deanery giving an easy link to Southwold, Aldeburgh and Snape - famous for its Maltings Concert hall. This is a place of wide skies, beautiful coast and amazing heaths, rivers and forests. You are never far away from an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or of Special Scientific Interest!

Chapter

Over the last couple of years three benefices have become vacant due to clergy retirements and we have welcomed three newly appointed colleagues into Chapter along with a Light Wave group leader, bringing fresh ideas and energy to our work together. We aim to meet monthly and this has worked well over Zoom through the pandemic and now we are enjoying meeting face to face. In time, I think we shall use both methods of meeting. We have all committed to support and pray for each other at these challenging times of recovery. We are looking forward to welcoming a new colleague at St John's, Woodbridge and St Andrew's, Bredfield.

We are well supported by retired PTO clergy across the deanery and plan to meet a couple of times each year in a wider group including LLMs and Readers for learning and encouragement.

Deanery Synod

A new Deanery Synod was elected in 2020 and as I write we have been meeting over Zoom with very good attendances. Our first 'in person' meeting is to be a focussed workshop to look at creating a deanery plan to encourage working together as far as possible. (Our plan was put on hold for a while with all the recent clergy retirements.)

We hope and pray for flourishing congregations in all our settings, building on the diocesan vision Growing in God.

This is an exciting time of development and opportunity for the Woodbridge Deanery as we seek to share the Good News of the gospel with people who live and work in this amazing area.

The Ven. Annette Cooper
Rural Dean of Woodbridge



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Who are we?

The Diocese covers the county of Suffolk, excluding the area around Lowestoft in the north-east, and one parish in Essex. It is a mainly rural Diocese with a large number of small villages, plus market towns including Woodbridge, Halesworth, Sudbury and Beccles and the cathedral town of Bury St Edmunds with its historic ruins of the old Abbey. Ipswich is the county town with a population of about 137,000. Suffolk's population is c 650,000. The county embraces historic places of interest such as Sutton Hoo, culture at Snape with the famous annual Aldeburgh music festival, is on the Heritage coast and is a haven for lovers of natural history and birdlife. The busy port of Felixstowe is at the end of the A14 which runs via Cambridge to the Midlands and the A12 which gives access to London and the Norfolk Broads.

Where are we?

We are often known as 'the Church of England in Suffolk'. The diocesan bishop is the Right Reverend Martin Seeley, and the suffragan bishop is the Right Reverend Dr Mike Harrison. Both work from the Bishop's House in Ipswich. They work together closely to help us shape our vision and strategy, and amongst a plethora of other tasks offer regular teaching mornings to nurture the faith of people in our congregations – and a regular Vlog which can be found on Facebook. There are 3 archdeaconries and over 450 churches where visitors will find a wide range of worshipping styles, from the traditional to contemporary, as well as Fresh Expressions and growing numbers of 'Lightwave' groups for those who haven't connected with traditional church previously. The Cathedral of St Edmund and St James in Bury St Edmunds is the mother church of the Diocese and is proactive in offering support to clergy and parishes including welcoming parishes on pilgrimage. We also work closely with our 88 Church of England primary schools. All this is, of course, supported by a small and committed diocesan staff based in the diocesan office in Ipswich.

What is our vision?

Our diocesan vision is to be 'Growing in God', aiming to grow 'flourishing congregations making a difference'. This vision was accepted by Diocesan Synod in 2014 and since then we have been focussing on four key priorities:

- ❖ Growing in Depth: responding to the call of Christ in every part of our lives
- ❖ Growing in Number: drawing the contacts we have into the life of God's kingdom
- ❖ Growing in Influence: reaching beyond ourselves in our impact on the wider world
- ❖ Growing Younger; building churches whose age-range reflects our communities

Parishes are encouraged to use a simple Mission Action Planning tool to help us all to focus on these priorities and how they might be worked out in each different context. We are trusting God that this vision, underpinned by a commitment to Christian stewardship, will bear fruit as we look to the future.

As part of this vision, we have recently received Strategic Development Funding for two major projects: Inspiring Ipswich, overseen by the Archdeacon of Ipswich which aims to grow the church in Ipswich through church planting and reaching out to those who live in the town, and 'Growing God in the Countryside', overseen by the Archdeacon for Rural Mission, which focusses on developing Rural Resourcing Churches and nurturing and discipling new Christians through small Lightwave groups.

We have also been part of a pilot scheme exploring how we can use our church buildings more creatively both for those who worship regularly and for the benefit of our communities and many churches have benefitted from this.

We are broadening our vision through a growing partnership with the Diocese of Kagera in Tanzania, with fruitful visits and links being established.

How can we do this?

We value our huge range of different ministries: we have over 100 stipendiary clergy, plus many SSM and PTO clergy as well as lay and ordained chaplains who can be found in such diverse places as schools, prisons, hospitals, hospices, the army, RAF and the police. Some clergy are ordained to serve in their local benefice through our pioneering 'auxiliary ordination pathway' which enables people's vocations to ordained ministry to be discerned within the Diocese.

All clergy work alongside lay ministers – Readers, elders, and the growing number people exercising recently introduced licensed ministries: pioneer ministers, evangelists, youth ministers and children's and family workers. Our ministry deployment principles encourage teams or clusters of lay and ordained ministers to work together so that clergy feel less isolated and ministry resources the mission of the church more effectively. We are just beginning to develop the principle of 'local ministers' in our benefices, releasing people's gifts to serve in their locality.

We are excited about these new developments which are playing an important part in our diocesan vision of Growing in God.

So, in summary:

As our Growing in God vision states, we aspire to be people who know that 'God is with us, gathering us as Christ-centred communities, calling us to make Christian disciples, sending us in loving service, empowering us by the Holy Spirit'.



The diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich strongly encourages all incumbents to promote the growth of small missional groups and fresh expressions of Church in their benefices. “Lightwave” has been created with a diocese-wide Bishops Mission Order in order to support clergy and lay people to work together in mission-shaped communities, reaching out in innovative ways.

The Lightwave Community meets in small groups in homes, pubs, offices, schools and other places and complements other ways of being church. The name of the community comes from the idea of lightwaves being the way in which light spreads into dark places. Lightwave is committed to shining the light of Jesus in Suffolk through acts of kindness and practical service as well as worship and witness.

Each lightwave group aims to do one activity together to bless their local community and to share faith in their locality or network. Each group receives support and training in their outreach through a growing network of coaches. Each is mainly concerned to bless people who are exploring faith for the first time, while simultaneously cooperating closely with local parish churches and others. The Lightwave Community is being developed through a Project called “Growing in God in the Countryside” funded by the Strategic Development Unit of the Church Commissioners until 2025. While both urban and rural Christians are part of this community, there is a particular focus on helping 1500 new disciples come to faith in rural areas in the period of the funding. Many Lightwave groups are planting fresh expressions of Church. The understanding is that such fresh expressions of Church will be new or different ways of being established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church.

The Lightwave Community is developing three Rural Resourcing Churches, in different parts of Rural Suffolk to create and support the development of the small missional groups in their area and to intentionally provide sufficient critical mass for particular ministries which are currently under-represented in rural churches, for example with young adults and those in lower income brackets. Every part of the Lightwave Community has a vision for the great wave of God’s love, bringing light to our county.



making Jesus visible through loving action

Loverural – is about “making Jesus visible through loving action” in the Suffolk Countryside. It is part of the diocese’s strong commitment to rural areas. Loverural has 3 strands:

- ❖ Drawing attention to the enormous role of the rural Christianity in building social capital
- ❖ Acting as a convenor for projects and congregations in the countryside including those of different streams and denominations so that good rural practice can be shared and mutual support offered
- ❖ Enabling those engaged in Christian-based social action to gain confidence and wisdom in how to make exploration of the Christian faith accessible to those engaging with their initiatives

General information

Thank you for reading this. We hope you have found it useful.

Below you will find further links which you might find helpful as you discern God's will.

We will be continuing to pray for God's wisdom and guidance.

Further information

Further information about St John's Woodbridge and St Andrew's Bredfield Benefice can be found on our website

https://stjohnswoodbridge.org.uk/Groups/264795/St_Johns_Woodbridge.aspx

Other websites for further information

Mission websites

Just 42	https://www.just42.org.uk/
Finnymusic	https://www.facebook.com/pg/finnymusicministry/posts/
John and Gillian Robinson	https://www.crosslinks.org/people-and-places/asia/john-and-gillian-robinson/
Cry in the Dark	https://www.cryinthedark.org/
Lightwave	https://www.light-wave.org/

Other websites

Diocese	www.cofesuffolk.org
St Andrew's Church	http://bredfield.onesuffolk.net/our-village/st-andrew-s-church/
Churches Together	https://ctwm.org.uk/
Transition Woodbridge	https://transitionwoodbridge.org.uk/
Hub Café Video Facebook	@thehubcafestjohns
Church Pastoral Aid Society	https://www.cpas.org.uk/
The Times – Best place to live in the East of England	https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/woodbridge-suffolk-best-place-to-live-east-uk-rr7lq5mrb

