

Anglesey Group of Parishes Benefice Profile 2023



Anglesey Group Benefice Profile

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Our Benefice is looking for a new vicar who can develop the solid links that already tie our parishes.

Our vicarage is at the heart of the village of Bottisham, which has excellent schools and other amenities, and lies close to Cambridge. Our five churches work exceptionally well together, and our congregations represent a great base for growth.

With the support of our new vicar, we aim to continue striving to represent God's love for every member of the community.

Introduction to the Benefice

The Anglesey Group is a Benefice of five village parishes, each with its own church, within the Diocese of Ely, Archdeaconry of Cambridge, and Deanery of Fordham & Quy. The five villages lie between Cambridge and Newmarket, to the north of the main A14 road. They are surrounded by farmland both on the chalk heathland to the south-east and upon the fenland stretching to the river Cam on the north-west. Although it is a rural Benefice, most of the population of working age are employed in Cambridge, which has a vibrant high-technology industry as well as the two universities. Within the Benefice are several places of interest including the National Trust property of Anglesey Abbey and Quy Fen, which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

All five villages, apart from Swaffham Prior, have a shop and post office. The vicarage is in the centre of Bottisham, which is the largest village in our Benefice.

Our website is at <https://angleseygroupparishes.co.uk/> and our entry on the Church of England's A Church Near You website is at <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/benefice/14-004CW/>

Our hopes for the future

- That the church should be a centre of outreach and welcome for all, where people can hear the gospel and see it in action.
- To establish a pattern of worship that provides spaces for everyone, old and young, to encounter the saving love of Christ.
- To strengthen lay contribution to ministry.
- That sermons should be used as an opportunity to expound and reveal the truths in the day's Lectionary readings or other Bible readings in a way that provokes thought and relates them to listeners' daily lives.
- To integrate more closely with the activities of school and youth activities and provide encouragement to parents and children.

Ideal personal attributes for our new vicar

We are praying that we will find a vicar who:

- Is forward thinking and inclusive with an energy to take the church prayerfully into the future, so that we remain relevant despite the cultural shifts in the wider society, while staying faithful to God's word.
- Is a good team leader/delegator and can communicate well the truth of God's love, with both small and large groups, both to those with strong faith and those still seeking.
- Can identify the gifts of the congregations and empower them to serve the church and wider community.
- Is supportive of Bible study and prayer groups.
- Has a heart and vision for bringing village and church communities together.
- Has a desire to engage with local schools and organisations.
- Is supportive of our link with Mara in Tanzania.
- Provides a leadership that is supportive of the lay ministry, their training and involvement in services.
- Is sensitive to those who appreciate different styles of worship.
- Is supportive of those who desire to show God's love for the sick and elderly by encouraging pastoral care in others.
- Has the experience and enthusiasm to enable him/her to take on the challenge of running five parishes, working collaboratively with church officers and volunteers in each place.

Things that are going well

There are many areas where we feel that the parishes and congregations within the Benefice are working well, and we are looking forward to working with our new vicar to maintain the momentum in these activities.

Worship and Prayer

Home and Prayer Groups

There are several home groups within the Benefice, meeting for Bible study and prayer on a fortnightly or monthly basis. Our Lent groups are also well attended.

Work with children, young people, and families

Play & praise for preschool children and their parents takes place twice weekly in Bottisham (Tuesdays) and Lode (Fridays) during term time.

Film Church – a small group of teenagers meet fortnightly for games and to watch films. This maintains this cohort's connection with the church in a social gathering.

Family Service – a short, family-friendly service, suitable for those new to church or preferring a less formal format. Children participate in the service performing a sketch, leading prayers and reading the gospel.

Worshipping together

The Sunday services rotate around the parishes, so each church has one or two services each month. We would all love to have more services in our own villages, but people are generally happy to travel to another village to worship, and it has been very good to form bonds across the whole Benefice. The restrictions during Covid, when we could only see each other on Zoom, helped to encourage these links.

Work with schools

Our vicar has the opportunity to lead a fortnightly Collective Worship in both CofE primary schools – see later in this profile for information about the schools.

Work with the Community

Mothers' Union

Our villages have had Mothers' Union Groups for many years. We became the Anglesey Benefice Group in the early 2000s. We are a committee led group. We meet once a month for a time of prayer followed by guest speakers, craft activities, fundraising events and social gatherings.

We support worldwide campaigns and local causes including Women's refuge Centres, AFIA (away from it all) holidays. Diocesan members are trained to work in our local prisons and run courses for new parents dealing with parenting issues.

Our Deanery Groups come together to worship for Lady Day in March and Advent. We also hold the occasional fundraising Coffee Morning.

Reaction to local hardship

Our villages lie in a reasonably affluent area, but there are still families who have financial difficulties, and they have suffered during Covid and the more recent cost of living crisis. We have teamed up with the local schools to provide 'food parcels' for some families during half-term and holiday breaks and also provided self-service 'food pantries' in our churches during Covid, where people could come and take what they needed from items donated by the congregations.

Link with Diocese of Mara in Tanzania

We have a very good link with Mara, which brings benefits to both parties – see later in this profile for information about our Mara link.

Environmental aspects of churchyards.

Ely Diocese has a Churchyard Conservation Award Scheme as part of its 'Caring for Creation' initiative. Our churchyards have participated in this scheme, and some have been awarded Bronze level certificates.

Other Areas

Finances

The parishes are all financially solvent and have traditionally been able to pay their ministry share. The church buildings are expensive to maintain and heat, but we have been able to fund improvements, helped by donations from the wider village communities.

Cooperation between parishes

The churchwardens meet regularly, and we have a part-time administrator who acts as a central point of contact.

Reaction to Covid restrictions

Even though we all hope that Covid restrictions are now behind us, it was very encouraging to see how virtually all members of the congregations, including the very elderly, were able and willing to adapt to worshipping online on Zoom. We hold 'talk over coffee' sessions at the end of Zoom services, and these proved to be a great way to maintain social contact during those dark times. Zoom services are still a great comfort to some house-bound parishioners, as well as those who are travelling away.

Technical aspects

We have people within our congregations who have (or are willing to learn) the technical skills needed to communicate our message effectively to the outside world. We have our own website and would welcome suggestions for its improvement from a new vicar. We also try to keep our pages on A Church Near You and Facebook up to date.

We have projectors, screens and sound systems in the churches and have 'live streamed' services over Zoom, though only from Swaffham Prior church, so far.

Social Events

All our parishes have a range of social activities, including summer and Christmas fairs, concerts and other musical events, coffee mornings and pop-up cafés. These activities also serve as a form of outreach.

Areas that we recognise need development

There are some areas of our church life where we recognise that we can do better, and we would very much welcome a new vicar who can help us to improve and grow.

Encouraging spiritual growth among congregations

We want to continue growing spiritually through greater knowledge of the Bible and praying together so as to deepen our personal experience of God. We would like help from our vicar on how to develop praying and reading scripture outside of formal services.

Reaching out with God's love to those outside the church.

The churches' social outreach has been quite active, with local events such as pop-up teasheps, lunch club, music and drama presentations, fetes and a local food bank (during Covid). The deeper challenge is how these events could be bridges leading to greater engagement with Christ and His church. The people in our congregations are well integrated into their communities but need help to know how to talk about their faith in these relationships and overcome the feeling that perhaps we shouldn't discuss our faith. We also need to encourage a culture of invitation to enable us to ask those outside the church to come and participate in services or other events.

Links with the wider church

In recent times, we have had very good relations and shared services with the Free church in Swaffham Bulbeck and the Baptist congregation in Lode, but the former has now closed, and the latter is struggling with a much-reduced congregation. We would be very keen to form links with Christians locally who worship at other churches to provide mutual encouragement in the worship and service of God.

Creating an environment so families and children feel welcomed and valued

Even though some work with children is going well, as described in the last section, we have not been able to attract families to our services on a consistent basis, apart from the Family Service in Swaffham Prior. We would like assistance from our new vicar to improve the welcome we give to families across all our churches and establish children's groups across the benefice.

Regular services and events in the Benefice

This is a list of services and other events currently held across the Benefice on a weekly or monthly basis. The number and type of services have changed over the years, especially during Covid, and we are open to further alterations to match the aspirations of a new vicar.

Sunday Services

Online service (Zoom) – Each Sunday, 9.00am, led by the vicar or one of the LLMs, using material prepared for the 10.30am service on that day. There are usually 15 – 25 screens participating, some single worshippers, some couples and, on occasion, some families.

Church services – Each Sunday, rotating around the Benefice churches as shown. Holy Communion services and the Family service are led by the vicar, while most others are lay led. The Village Worship in Quay village hall is led by Revd Canon Dave Male, Director of Evangelism & Discipleship of the Church of England.

Week of month	Time	Village	Service	Attendance
First	10.30am 4.00pm	Bottisham Quay (village hall)	Holy Communion Village Worship	30 – 40 15 – 20
Second	9.00am 10.30am	Quay Swaffham Prior	Holy Communion Family Service	17 – 25 20 – 40
Third	9.00am 10.30am 10.30am	Quay Swaffham Bulbeck Bottisham	Morning Prayer Holy Communion Morning Prayer	7 – 10 30 – 40 15 – 20
Fourth	10.30am	Swaffham Prior	Holy Communion	20 – 40
Fifth	10.30am 6.00pm	Lode Swaffham Prior	Holy Communion Evensong	30 – 40 10 – 20

Weekday Services

Holy Communion – Weekly on Thursdays, 10.30am, St James', Lode, attendance 15 – 20.

C by C (Compline by Candlelight): a short lay led contemplative service – Monthly on first Wednesday, 8pm, currently on Zoom.

Other regular worship and study events

Film Church – Fortnightly on Sundays in term time, 5-6.30pm, St James', Lode for Year 6+

Play + Praise for pre-school children – Weekly in term time on Tuesdays in Bottisham and Fridays in Lode, 9.30am

Home Study Group, monthly on first Monday, 10.30am

Bible Study, fortnightly on Wednesday mornings, 10.30am

Bible Study, fortnightly on second/fourth Wednesday evenings, 7.30pm

Occasional Services in the Benefice

Baptisms, weddings, and funerals

The number of these services vary considerably from year to year and have been hugely affected by Covid. However, an estimate for the approximate annual number of these services across the Benefice is:

- Baptisms – 8
- Weddings – 8
- Funerals – 30

Other occasional services

There are several additional services held in our churches:

Both Swaffham Bulbeck and Swaffham Prior primary schools have separate church services throughout the year: Harvest, Christmas carols, Easter, and a service for leavers in the summer.

Bottisham holds an Armed Services service in conjunction with the Royal British Legion.

We hold special services from time to time to mark events of national or local significance.

Information about the Benefice

Churches and PCCs

The Benefice was formed in 2003 by amalgamating two earlier Benefices. Since then, the congregations of the five churches have worked together in an increasingly collaborative manner. Under our last vicar we moved to the situation where all services are considered 'Benefice services'.

There are still five independent PCCs, but the frequency of meetings for each has been reduced to minimise the amount of time the vicar needs to spend on administrative tasks. We are open to exploring further streamlining of governance. The churchwardens and treasurers of the five parishes collaborate actively to ensure that we act as a single Benefice. Although each parish maintains its own independent finances, all contribute to a central Benefice bank account for expenses payments and other centralised costs. Trinity College, patron of Bottisham church, has a fund which is available to support the expenses of our vicar. All PCC members across the Benefice are Safeguarding trained, to try to ensure that the Church is a safe place for everyone, from all walks of life.

We have a part-time Benefice administrator, who produces a weekly notice sheet that is used by all the churches and emailed to the members of the congregations each Friday. She also produces minutes from Benefice meetings, coordinates the production of parish Annual Reports, updates our 'A Church Near You' webpages, produces outlines for the quarterly rotas and deals with initial wedding and baptism enquiries.

There are five church buildings, described in later sections of this document. Four are Grade I listed mediaeval churches and St James' in Lode is a Grade II Victorian building. We would be delighted if our new vicar is interested in ancient buildings and their upkeep, but there is no expectation that this will be the case, as each village has people who are happy to look after the upkeep of the structures.

There are two licenced lay ministers (LLM) and an authorised lay minister (ALM) worship leader within the Benefice, and they are active in taking non-eucharistic services. In the past we have had curates to assist the vicar and we have links with theological colleges in Cambridge where students come and assist with services. There is a good network of retired clergy who can step in to take services, and we have been able to maintain our current pattern of eucharistic services during this vacancy thanks to their help.

There are several home groups for Bible study and fellowship in the parishes, drawing their members from across the Benefice, as well as prayer groups which convene in response to particular situations in the world or local community.

Each year there are study groups during Lent, often lay led. We have generally based these on standard study books, and they have covered a wide range of topics and styles. We are always open to new ideas for future Lent courses.

There is a single website for the Benefice as well as a Facebook page, which provide more information about the life of the five parishes, though we have found that the 'A Church Near You' website is the route that most people use when they want to get in contact.

Each year the Benefice churches produce a Christmas Card that is distributed to every household, listing the services during Advent and Christmas. The artwork is created by children in the primary schools and the final choice is selected in a competition.

We keep all the churches, apart from Quy, open during daylight hours to allow access for private prayer.

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Bottisham, Swaffham Bulbeck and Swaffham Prior churches each have a ringable peal of bells. There is ringing for all Sunday services, in addition to weddings, funerals etc. Although each church has its own tower captain and band, the ringing is a very good example of enthusiastic inter-parish cooperation, both as regards formal ringing for services and at the nine or so practices each month.

Location Maps

In the maps below, the churches are indicated by red dots, and the vicarage by a blue dot.

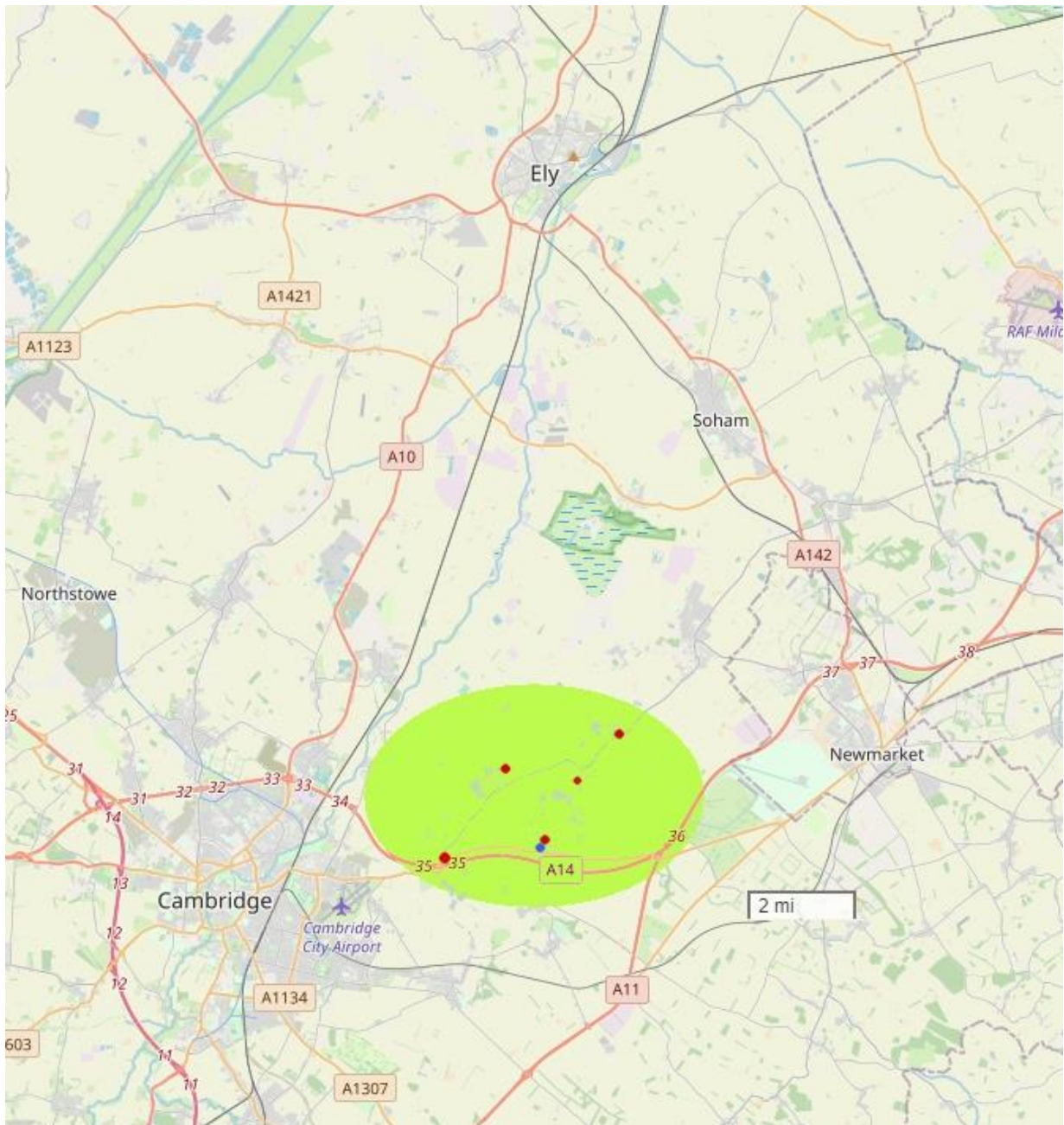


Figure 1 - Map showing location of the Benefice with respect to Cambridge, Newmarket, and Ely

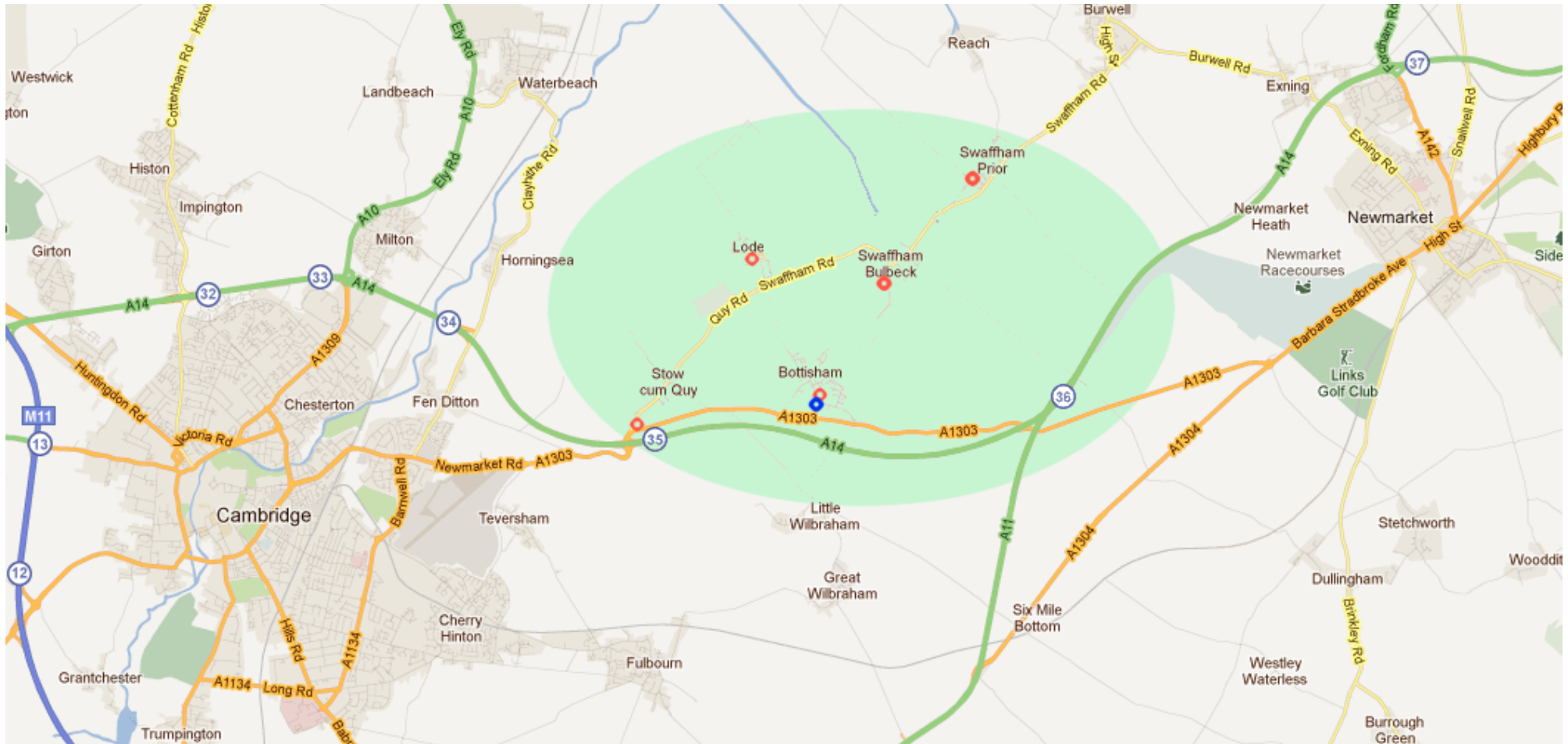


Figure 2 - More detailed map showing villages

Schools

There are primary schools in Bottisham, Swaffham Bulbeck and Swaffham Prior, and a secondary school (to age 16, called the Village College) in Bottisham. All the schools have good OFSTED reports and are very popular, drawing pupils from some of the surrounding villages. There are also excellent sixth-form colleges in Cambridge for older pupils.

The primary schools in Swaffham Bulbeck and Swaffham Prior are both Church of England (controlled). They share one Executive Headteacher and one overarching Governing Body, of which the vicar is an ex-officio member, within the Diocese of Ely Multi-Academy Trust. Both schools retain their own individual identity, with a strong vision at the core of each, Swaffham Bulbeck's centred on Matthew 5:16 and Swaffham Prior's centred on the Parable of the Sower. There is a collaborative approach to curriculum development and resourcing and staff work co-operatively to meet the needs of the children in their classes. Each school has approximately one hundred pupils on roll.

Swaffham Prior has recently received good inspections for both OFSTED and SIAMs. Swaffham Bulbeck is expecting both inspections this year, previously have received Outstanding in both.

Both schools hold their special services in church – Harvest, Easter, Christmas, and the Year 6 Leavers' Service in July. These are led by the vicar and are also attended by members of the community. In both parishes, there are members of the congregation who support the vicar with collective worship and other activities helping the children explore spirituality.

The relationships are mutual beneficial, and the work of pupils can be seen within both churches. In Swaffham Prior, the pupils designed a 'fourth' window as part of the 100-year celebrations of the war windows; In Swaffham Bulbeck, younger members of the congregation can enjoy activity shoe bags created collaboratively between the congregation and the children.

School news is currently given at each PCC meeting and there are joint projects and shared visiting speakers – for example, Operation Christmas Child, and the link with Mara in Tanzania, which is firmly embedded in both schools and forms part of the Geography and History curriculums.

Care Homes

There are three care homes in Bottisham. In two, Oaklands (Dementia Care) and Hilton Park, the previous vicar held monthly holy communion services. At present a simple morning service is undertaken at each on a monthly basis by members of the local congregation. A third home, Queens Court, has its own chaplain.

Link with Diocese of Mara in Tanzania

Since 2007, our Benefice has had a link with the Anglican Diocese of Mara in Tanzania. Mara is an extremely poor district in the north of the country, between Lake Victoria and the Serengeti Nature Reserve. Two groups of parishioners have been to Tanzania to see the church in action, and we have hosted visits from various members of the Mara team, including the previous and current bishops, +Hilkiah and +George.

The church in Tanzania provides a holistic ministry, and it is uplifting and inspiring to see the many ways in which they provide the people of the region with very practical help in all areas of their lives. We have raised funds to help them with various projects, focused on

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- Assistance with building materials for churches and schools. The local people can make simple mud bricks but need assistance to buy cement for floors and walls as well as timber and corrugated iron sheets for roofs.
- Funds to dig wells to remove the need for women and children to walk miles each day to retrieve water.
- Bicycles and motor scooters for clergy to enable them to visit parishioners across their extended parishes.
- Safe House for girls at risk of female genital mutilation (FGM), providing them with money for food for the girls. FGM is illegal in Tanzania but is still sometimes carried out, despite teams from the diocese of Mara visiting local villages to educate people. The Safe House provides sanctuary and training to girls who are particularly at risk.
- Practical support for the Girls' School in Bunda, especially equipping the library and science laboratories. The diocese started a school in Bunda, the second largest town in Mara, in order to provide safe secondary education for girls. The number of pupils has grown rapidly, and we have been able to provide some support with educational material.
- Sponsorship of poor girls to allow them to attend school in Bunda. The church needs to charge fees for the school and though these are low, they are still beyond the means of many local people.

We have found that there is a lot of support in the wider community in our villages for the work that is done in support of women and girls, and we would appreciate any help from our new vicar to build up links between our churches, the local communities, and the people of Mara.

We also provide separate sponsorship through the CMS of Heather Johnstone, who works to provide support for women in Mara. She leads the Rehema project which aims to train women in business and practical skills by running a café and crafts business. Heather also works to help with support for other families in distress, and she is often able to draw our attention to situations where we can provide money to help – we hold specific fundraising efforts for these, especially around Lent.



Figure 3 - Latest arrivals at the Safe House in Mara, Tanzania

Locations of Churches and Vicarage

The postcode and what3words locations of the vicarage and five churches are as follows:

Vicarage	CB25 9BA	mirror.daily.confetti
Holy Trinity, Bottisham	CB25 9BA	senior.sunbeam.escalates
St James, Lode	CB25 9EH	hotdog.meals.bookings
St Mary, Quay	CB25 9AF	sedative.glad.tanked
St Mary, Swaffham Bulbeck	CB25 0LX	youths.regulates.hint
St Mary, Swaffham Prior	CB25 0LD	yards.rolled.fashion

Accommodation

The Vicarage, built 1938-39, is set in a large garden, mainly lawn, and situated directly opposite Holy Trinity church in Bottisham. The accommodation is spacious (5 bedrooms), with central heating and double glazing throughout.



Figure 4 - The Vicarage, Bottisham, photographed from the tower of Holy Trinity

Our Five Parishes

Introduction

Around 5600 people live in the five parishes of our benefice – about 40% live in Bottisham, 10% in Quay and the remainder are evenly distributed across the other parishes. The age distribution of each village can be seen in the bar chart below, with data taken from the 2021 government census.

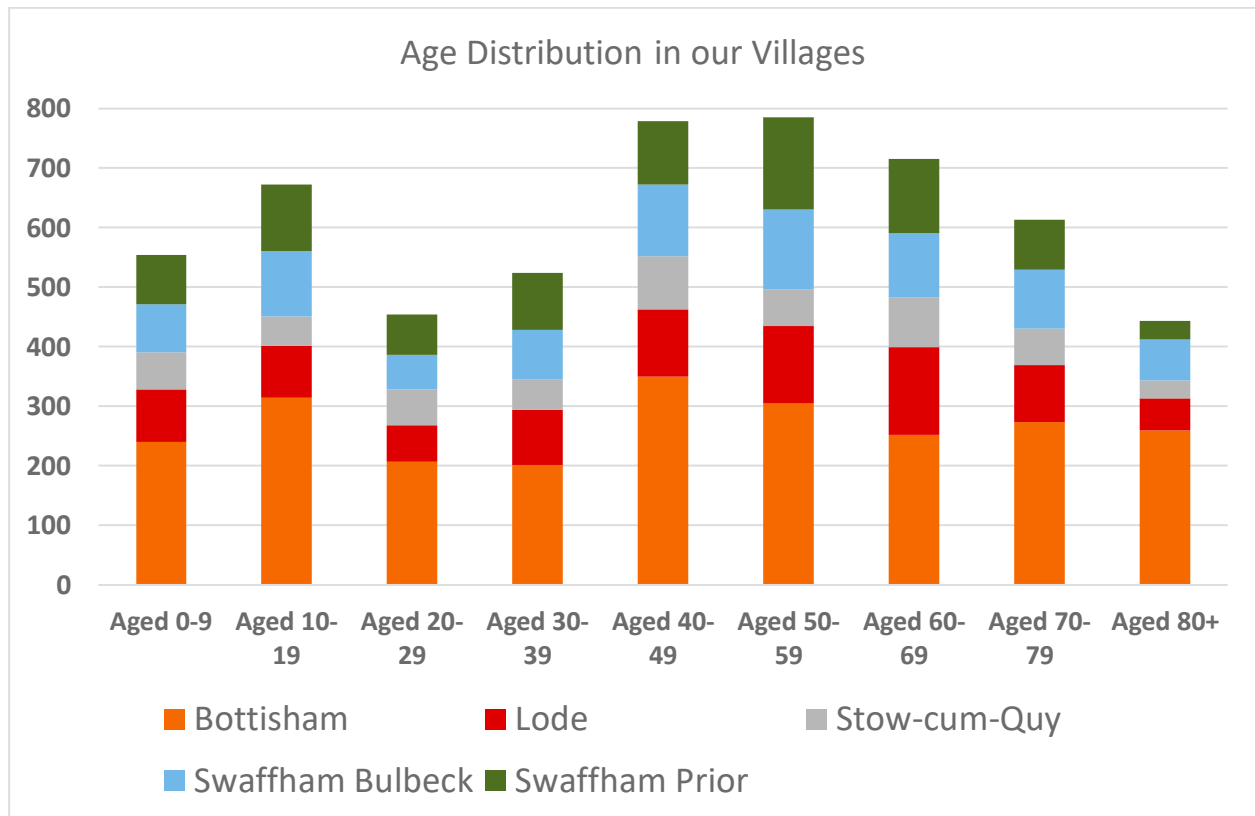


Figure 5 - Age Distribution in our Five Villages

Parish of Holy Trinity, Bottisham



Figure 6 - Holy Trinity, Bottisham

Parish church

Holy Trinity is a Grade I listed building, described by Nikolaus Pevsner as ‘one of the most interesting churches in Cambridgeshire’. More recently, Simon Jenkins in ‘England’s thousand best churches’ gave it a three-star rating. The tower and west porch (Galilee), an unusual feature, date from the 13th century, but the fine nave, aisles and clerestory were all built together in the early 14th century. The stone chancel screen is probably from the late 15th century, whereas the chancel itself has features from the 13th, 15th and 19th centuries. The nave contains three ‘superb post Reformation monuments’ (Jenkins). There is a screened chapel (Fairhaven Chapel) at the west end of the south aisle.

The last Quinquennial Inspection was carried out in July 2019 (church architect Jeremy Lander). A number of urgent items for repair were identified and most of these have been done, although lockdown delayed a number. Major work on the North Aisle dry rot, gullies, and gutters with removal of pew and floor with replacement with solid flooring was completed in 2020 and cost £40,000. Permission has now been given for permanent removal of most of the previously fixed pews to allow more space for community events and socialising after services. The clunch church walls of the south aisle and clerestory and previous render repairs continue to deteriorate and some work to these should be carried out soon. The major memorials are in need of work being done to them if they are not to be lost.

In the last five years other projects completed include: Installation of a new alarm system on the roofs of the Galilee Porch, the N & S aisles and the chancel (2017); Fabrication and installation of new clappers for tenor and 5th bells (2019); Remedial work to bring Holy Trinity electrical circuits and floodlights up to current safety standards June (2020); Replacement of Notice Board (2022); Replacement Sound System + Installation of Hearing Loop Installation (April 2022);. Emergency work to repair a number of holes in the north aisle and north nave roofs was done in December 2022 as well as the installation of a credit card reader.

At the present time work is being done on the replacement of the halogen church external floodlighting by LEDs to reduce the electricity costs and environmental impact - funded by a generous donor.

Services and other events

Regular services in Holy Trinity include a monthly Benefice Holy Communion on the first Sunday and an ALM led Morning Prayer on the third Sunday of the month. "C by C", a short meditative service based on Compline, is held on the first Wednesday of the month, now online. There are 37 people on the Electoral Role. In term time a toddler group meets in the church on a Tuesday morning.

In the last year, a series of Coffee and Cake concerts on Saturday mornings attracted large appreciative audiences. Three community choir concerts were held in the church in 2022 raising money for Ukraine and the needy at Christmas. The church and vicarage garden were the venues for a highly successful Platinum Jubilee Celebration and exhibition followed by a church service and the previous year an exhibition of craft, hobbies and photographs was held in the church again followed by a garden party in the vicarage gardens. Plans are in hand to celebrate the Coronation with a Coronation Celebration service on 7th May. A small Bible study House Group meets fortnightly and there are teams of enthusiastic flower arrangers and bell ringers, and many belong to the Anglesey Group Mothers' Union.

It was good to welcome back the local primary school for their candlelit carol concert after two years absence due to Covid. Holy Trinity is working towards the Bronze Churchyard Conservation award and was recently successful in being granted a community award which enabled hundreds of spring bulbs to be planted.

The church can seat about 250. The Fairhaven Chapel, which is occasionally used, seats 10. There is a toilet and a kitchen. Coffee and tea are served after Sunday services. The church can be heated by a dual system of under-seat (choir and Fairhaven Chapel) and pew heaters (nave central aisle) and night-storage heaters. There is a fine electronic organ with speakers in the chancel and high in the rear of the church, which is used for the regular services. There is also a C19th Grade II* listed organ, but this needs considerable expense to renovate.

Church finance

The Parish Share and the expenses of the ministry team have been paid in full over the last three financial years. A very simplified overview of income and expenditure for the financial year 2021 is given below – these are not the audited accounts:

Total Income £43,172 (Including general income £35,324 and Investment gains £7848)

Expenditure £43,196 (Including Parish Share, Benefice Expenses, general repairs, final dry rot expenses, insurance and electricity).

Deficit for 2021 £24

There was no Easter Gift Day in 2020 and 2021 (due to Covid) or in 2022, due to fundraising for Ukraine, but in 2019 it raised £3585. It is planned to hold an Easter Gift Day in 2023.

Local Community

The church serves a growing village of approximately 850 houses (population 2021 around 2,428: 0-17years 22%, 18-64 years 50%, 65+ years 27%). Most of the working population are commuters, primarily to Cambridge (7 miles) or one of the several nearby centres of hi-tech enterprises. The village has excellent facilities, including a large Village College (secondary to age 16), a Primary

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School (not C of E), medical surgery, a good village shop cum Post Office, a Community Sports & Social centre, a swimming pool & sports centre and takeaway eateries to suit all tastes. The Sports and Social Club hosts numerous village activities and a Leisure Group, based at the Village College hosts numerous sporting activities.



Figure 7 - Remembrance Day Parade at Bottisham

Parish of St James, Lode



Figure 8 - St James' Church, Lode

Congregation and styles of worship

The population of Lode with Longmeadow is 865. There are currently 29 people on the church electoral roll. Since the pandemic the pattern of our services has changed. We started a weekly midweek Communion service which takes place in St James' church at 10.30 am on a Thursday. Between 15 – 20 people attend the service. We host the annual All Souls Service for the Benefice.

A large proportion of the congregation are on rotas to be sidesmen, read lessons, arrange flowers and clean the church and brasses.

Hymns are taken from New English Hymnal and Song of Fellowship (stocks of these are shared with Bottisham as required). Responses during the Communion service are sung using St Thomas Mass. We share our organist with Bottisham. A weekly service of Compline is held during Lent which is lay led.

About 30 people support the main festival services during the year which reflects that there is still need for the church in the life of the parish.

Teaching

We do not have a school in the village, the primary age children go to the schools in the neighbouring villages and the majority of secondary age children go to Bottisham Village College.

We run a toddler Play and Praise group weekly in the church. The families enjoy singing, listening to a Bible story, craft activities and social time with the other families.

In the past we have run Christmas Parties and Pancake Parties which have been very successful.

Confirmation classes are arranged as required. Two of our regular congregation were confirmed last year.

Other study groups are organised throughout the Benefice. Please see Benefice section of the profile.

Finance

Ministry Share is paid by direct debit in ten monthly instalments and has been paid in full for the last ten years. The parish currently pays 16% of the total clergy benefice expenses.

Every effort is made to pay the share in full each year through planned giving and fund raising. If there are shortfalls the balance is met from reserves. Eleven regular givers have joined the Parish Giving Scheme.

We have a Goodbox electronic card reader near the offertory box which is used regularly. Our main sources of income are planned giving, fund raising (up to twelve events a year), tax refunds, collections and one-off donations. In 2022 we raised just over £3000 through sales and social events.

We have two restricted funds for the maintenance of the church buildings and grounds, and one unrestricted bequest. These are detailed in the annual accounts.

Ecumenical

We have hosted joint services with Lode Baptist Chapel but since the pandemic their service pattern has changed, and we now concentrate on our Thursday morning communion service.

Local Community

The village has a Post Office cum shop, a pub/restaurant, and a sports pavilion on the Fassage playing field, next to the children's play area. The pavilion has a good-sized meeting room that is used by a Montessori nursery on weekdays. The Baptist Chapel is hired for the weekly Village Coffee Morning, a photographic group, and Lode WI on a regular basis. The village is adjacent to Anglesey Abbey, a popular National Trust property. Some of the houses in the village are owned by the National Trust and are rented to some of the employees. There are seventeen miles of footpaths around the village and a cycle path that links the village to Cambridge and Wicken Fen, another NT site. We have a Tennis Club, a joint Lode/ Bottisham Cricket Club, and several book clubs.

As with many villages we have a shortage of affordable family homes. There is very little social housing for rent.

The church organises a variety of events during the course of the year including the Weekly Coffee morning, Pancake Party for children, Summer BBQ, Harvest Supper and church cafés during the spring and summer.

Since removing the church pews in the nave in 2019 we have been able to host a variety of services and fundraising events. We were the first church in the Benefice to hold live communion services after the strict Covid restrictions were lifted as we could easily comply with social distancing requirements. Twice a year we hold community jumble sales that raise over £1500. Money from these goes to the church and village organisations. Play and Praise children enjoy using all the nave for their meetings.

Parish Church

St James' Church was built in 1853 in a Gothic style, with a Chancel and Nave in a locally quarried clunch stone. There is an open wooden porch on the south side, a vestry, toilet, kitchen area and small meeting room on the north side and a side chapel on the south side which can seat 25 people on the five rows of mahogany pews.

A fine single manual and pedal pipe organ was donated to the church by the present Lord Fairhaven in 1977, in memory of his father and uncle.

Anglesey Group Benefice Profile

The nave pews were removed in 2019 and replaced with light weight wooden stacking chairs.

The six stained glass windows are dedicated to members of Rev'd Hailstone's family and the late Lord Fairhaven's forebears.

The churchyard is closed for burial. Burials in the parish are now accommodated in the nearby civil cemetery, administered by Lode Parish Council.

The churchyard is tended by one paid person.

A quinquennial report was carried out in February 2022. The church is generally in good repair. Some pointing up of the external clunch is required.



Figure 9 - Jumble Sale in Lode



Figure 10 - Quy to Lode Cycle Path opening party March 2018

Parish of St Mary, Stow cum Quy



Figure 11 - St Mary's Church, Stow-cum-Quy

Parish church

The church of St Mary's is a Grade I listed building and is situated just off the A14 on the old Cambridge to Newmarket road. It stands four miles northeast of Cambridge on a gentle high point at the southern end of the village. It is accessible by two wide gravel paths and has ample off-road parking facility.

Most of the building is of flint and pebble rubble with fragments of a 12th century building in the south east end of the nave. The much restored medieval screen remains, as well as fragments of wall paintings of which only part of the St Christopher is recognizable.

The set of five bells from 1670 are struck, not rung.

In recent years the church was robbed of its lead roof which caused considerable damage from rainwater. Extensive repairs were needed which took a period of 2 years to complete which included a new roof.

The church has both kitchen and toilet facilities situated in the West end of the South Aisle.

The heating system has recently been upgraded with under pew heaters as well as overhead heaters.

The churchyard is still "open" although most burials take place in the adjacent Parish Council cemetery. Regular working parties are held in order to maintain the churchyard.

Village Summary.

Stow-cum-Quy is predominately an estate village, with the Francis family owning most of the land and, until the last 50 years, virtually all the houses. The population now is around 550. There are approx. 220 houses in the village, at least half of which are privately owned by the people living in them. Half of the rest are council or housing association houses. The church is fortunate that there are still quite a few of the old established villagers left who feel an allegiance to Quy church and are happy to help when necessary either by work or donations. There is a Post Office/Village Store, a recreation ground and a pub in the village. Most children attend the schools in Bottisham. Quy Mill Hotel, which is a popular venue for wedding receptions, is located close by and so we often receive requests from couples asking to be married in our church.

Congregation and styles of services

There are currently 42 people on the church electoral roll. At present we have one churchwarden and six members of the PCC as well as a PCC secretary. The PCC are very committed and have worked hard to maintain the Church. Like all old churches it is a challenging and expensive building to maintain.

Pattern of Services

At present there are two services held each month. A communion service held at 9am on the 2nd Sunday of each month. The average attendance for this service at present is between 20 and 30. A Morning Worship is held at 9am on the 3rd Sunday. The attendance for this varies but is generally quite small. The church has a regular organist. Coffee and biscuits are served following each service. The attendance increases for additional services held throughout the year such as Easter, Christmas and Harvest.

A Village Worship service is held at 4pm on the first Sunday of every month in the Village Hall. There are between 15 and 20 regularly attending these services which is part of our mission plan to reach those who would not normally attend church services. It is an informal service and refreshments are served afterwards. It is hoped that more child friendly activities will start in the near future.

Finances and Fund Raising

The Ministry Share has been paid in full each year. A summary of the accounts are as follows:

Un-restricted Funds – Account balance £1,844. Receipts £11,963. Expenditure £12,280.

Endowment Funds total £82,670.

A yearly Easter Day Gift Aid Appeal is sent out to all houses in the village. A church fete is held every summer which is always well supported. We also run a 100 lottery club from which the church benefits each year. We also have several parishioners who have set up a monthly direct debit donation.

Quy Church Trust

The trust was set up in 1994 for the upkeep and maintenance of the church. Money is made available to the PCC on request for work on the building and contents.

The Future

We are lucky that villagers are always there to support the church if asked, but we are finding it challenging to build up our congregation or maintain sufficient volunteers to do the day-to-day tasks to keep the church clean and in repair. We are looking forward to working with our new vicar to try and encourage a new generation of worshippers into our church and to introduce more child-friendly activities.

Parish of St Mary, Swaffham Bulbeck

Parish church

St Mary's church is a Grade I listed building which was built in the 13th and 14th centuries. It is a bright and uncluttered church with very little stained glass. The 36 open pews date from the 15th century and are decorated with interesting animals on the bench-ends. The roofs of the nave and aisles are also from the late 15th century. The church has a capacity of around 250, but this can be supplemented by additional seating.



Figure 12 - St Mary's Church Swaffham Bulbeck

The churchyard was closed for burial in December 1885 when the Parish Council opened the current village cemetery.

Major works in the past few years have been:

- Millennium project to restore and increase the number of bells to eight (from six), which are now rung 'full circle'. The restored bell tower is now a great attraction to visiting bands of bell-ringers and there is a resident band that practices on Wednesdays and rings before Sunday services each week.
- The nave and aisle roofs were repaired in a major project over 2007-9, after the roof beams were found to be seriously deteriorated. This work was supported by English Heritage, but also involved major local fund-raising.
- Extension to the ringing floor to improve conditions for the bell ringers.
- Installation of toilet facilities.

The most recent quinquennial report dated October 2021 highlighted "A" items with a potential cost of £15,400 and "B" items at £37,500. With the exception of the reconstruction of the table top tombs in the churchyard which is the responsibility of the Local Authority almost all of the "A"

items have been dealt with. We will reconsider the “B” items in the light of available funds and future reports.

The PCC has always diligently dealt with “A” items and the church building is generally in very good order. However, there are two table-top tombs which require urgent masonry repair to avoid danger of collapse. Finances for this work had been promised by the local authority (who have responsibility for closed churchyards) but the money has not yet been made available.

Future aspirations for the church building include replacement of the existing oil fuelled heating system with electric under-pew heaters powered by renewable energy.

Congregation and styles of services

The village has a population of 860 and there are currently 41 people on the church electoral roll, all but one of whom live in the parish. Before the pandemic attendance at the main Sunday service was around 20 - 25 adults each week – with the same regular group attending both communion and non-eucharistic services.

A large proportion of the congregation are on rotas to act as sidesmen, read lessons, lead intercessory prayers, arrange flowers and make coffee after services. There are also seven licensed chalice-bearers.

Hymns are taken from A&M and Mission Praise hymn books and responses are sung during Eucharistic services (excluding the BCP service which is ‘said’).

Christmas and Easter services attract around thirty communicants, and the annual candlelit Christmas Carol service fills the church to capacity, as it is well supported by the whole village. Baptism is generally administered as part of the main Sunday service.



Figure 13 - Candlelit Carol Service in Swaffham Bulbeck

Church finance

Before the pandemic the church had been in the fortunate position of being able to meet its obligations to pay Ministry Share and all clergy expenses, as well as paying for upkeep of the building, from regular giving and proceeds of Gift Aid Tax. However, in 2022 for the first time in

living memory, we were only able to pay around 70% of our Ministry share. This was largely due to the inability to run social events on a scale that we had done so before and the reduction of plate collections.

The Social Committee have in the past and continue where possible to organise regular fund-raising events, such as musical talks, barn dances, amateur dramatic productions, jumble sales, open gardens, bridge drives and safari suppers. In 2022, these raised £3822. Other fundraising for specific charities (such as our Benefice link with Mara in Tanzania) raised £2101

The Ministry Share was £11,988.60 in 2020, £12,214.70 in 2021 and £14,047 in 2022..

In 2022, the income to the general fund was £26,676 and expenditure was £24,990

Teaching

One of the benefice's three Bible study groups meets in Swaffham Bulbeck.

Over many years, there have been good links between Swaffham Bulbeck school and St Mary's church. Seasonal activities for children, such as Good Friday workshops, Christingle and Christmas Crib services have been well supported, and we hope to translate this into more long-term regular involvement.

A 'children's church guide' has recently been produced in association with the school. It is available free of charge for visitors at the back of the church. The aim is to make young children feel that the church building is a natural and friendly place to visit.

Local Community

The village has a shop and a pub. Most houses are owner-occupied although there are some housing association houses and a sheltered housing scheme for elderly residents. In common with many villages in the area, there is a shortage of affordable housing for young people in the area. There is a strong sense of community, with several sports clubs (football, cricket, bowls, carpet bowls) attracting a good following. There are also cultural activities including the Summer Theatre, which stages a Gilbert and Sullivan production each June.

The PCC has collaborated with the village parish council to produce a 'welcome' booklet that is provided to all new Swaffham Bulbeck residents, informing them of various aspects of the village, including the church.

Parish of St Mary, Swaffham Prior

Local Community

Swaffham Prior is a small village with a big punch. An attractive village built along the chalk escarpment between Cambridge and Newmarket, its mixed population is around 860, with a very strong sense of community. There is a good church school (which shares a headteacher and governing body with Swaffham Bulbeck) which is well respected both in and around the village; a prize-winning magazine delivered to every household; a village pub and a well-equipped and well used village hall, and two windmills, one of which produces flour. A pioneering village-wide district heating scheme, instigated by motivated members of the village community, is currently rolling out, allowing villagers to move from dependence on oil for heating.



Figure 14 - St Mary's Church, Swaffham Prior (with redundant St Cyriac's Church in background)

We have a great deal of talent in the village, and good networks which rise to special occasions really well – from street parties to Quiz nights. The church plays an active part in our community organising a varied programme of monthly events around the village which are normally well attended. Covid put a brake on many communal activities, but we are gradually reintroducing the communal gatherings we have had in the past. Harvest Suppers and Strawberry Teas were maintained by individual orders and delivery to homes throughout. Benefice Zoom services were held throughout the period, and were beneficial in cementing the feeling of being a part of the wider church as well as getting to know familiar people from other villages by name! We have an efficient team of helpers for our activities, drawing on the talents of the wider village community as well as church members.

Parish church

The dominant feature of the village is its two churches within the same boundary fence. Both were established in Norman times and have had a chequered history, but currently St Mary's is the main place of worship while St Cyriac's is now administered by the Churches Conservation Trust. We contributed to the installation of kitchen and toilet facilities in St Cyriac's, as it was unfeasible to install these in St Mary's, so these are being used by both the church and the village for events and special occasions. Both churches are Grade I listed and are open all day and every day, and have many visitors throughout the year to look at their particular features, especially the First World War commemorative windows in St Mary's. <https://www.swaffhampriorww1.org/>

Congregation and styles of services

Our church is both traditional and forward-looking. We currently have regular fortnightly services at 10.30am: our Family Service on second Sundays is an inclusive and welcoming service for all ages, with the involvement of children and families throughout the service. On fourth Sundays we have a Holy Communion service in traditional language. We always have refreshments after our morning services, and this is an important part of our fellowship. We hold a traditional Evensong quarterly on a fifth Sunday, and this attracts a particular following.

Our celebratory and special services are very well attended, for example Remembrance Day and the Christmas services. The large Scout Pack in Swaffham Prior (now comprising Beavers, Cubs, Scouts and Explorers) swells the numbers at the former. We also have an annual Advent service with Ian de Massini and The Cambridge Voices, which brings a wider congregation and makes use of the special acoustics of both churches.

We have good links with the school, which uses the church for curriculum visits and special services. We have a member of the school governing body on our PCC. Before Covid, the vicar and one of our churchwardens ran a lunchtime club in the school. It would be good to restart this.



Figure 15 - Chirstingle in Swaffham Prior

Church finance

Our church is well managed financially. Many people give by the Parish Giving Scheme, some by standing order, and online giving is now possible in Church. We have an efficient, fundraising Social

Anglesey Group Benefice Profile

Working Group which produces a programme of monthly events throughout the year. This enables us to pay our dues to the diocese in full. We also have in place a scheme supported by nonchurch members of the village, to care for the fabric of the church building. Particular events support different charitable causes: Christingle supports The Children's Society; Remembrance the Royal British Legion; Harvest Supper, the Mara project; Christmas Coffee morning, Jimmy's Night Shelter, to name but a few. We have continuing links with churches in the Mara in Tanzania, contributing to a well building project in Karukekere, support for the Girls' School in Bunda, the Rehema Café which is an outlet for women and their crafts, and a safe house. We get regular updates from there. We have seen many changes over the past ten years, and there are many challenges for the future, but with God's help we will continue to be a presence in our community.