



# Benefice Profile 2012

A training post for a male or female deacon  
who expects to be ordained priest,  
particularly suitable for a pioneer minister

Incumbent: The Rev'd Sally Gaze  
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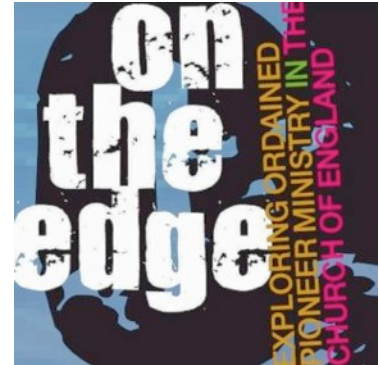
Please contact the Incumbent in the first instance.



# Formation for Ministry in a Mission Shaped Church

This post has developed in response to the recommendation of the “Mission-Shaped Church” Report (2004) that training curacies should be provided for the development of leaders of pioneering missionary projects. (Recommendation 12) This curacy offers the usual experience and training in traditional parish ministry. It also offers experience of developing fresh expressions of church, complementary and parallel to the parish churches.

The Curate and the Incumbent will draw up a working agreement together, in consultation with the Curate’s spouse where appropriate. It will cover the use of time, pastoral responsibilities, days off, holidays, and expenses, mutual expectations, and the professional development needs of the Curate. This will be reviewed after 6 months to include the leading of a particular mission initiative agreed on by the curate and incumbent.



## Person Specification

- A growing disciple of Jesus Christ, a person of prayer open to the Holy Spirit.
- Exploring a vocation to pioneer fresh expressions of church.
- Committed to the “mixed economy” of the Church of England - Able to value all the different styles of “being church” within the benefice family
- Ready to enjoy and to learn about the rural context
- A heart for evangelism and discipleship
- Pastorally caring. Loves people of all ages.
- Enthusiastic about the bible and placing a high value on its authority
- Seeking personal integrity, open communication and mutual accountability
- Good sense of humour

## Training/Personal Development

The Incumbent will give priority to supervision/support time with the Curate. At the beginning this is likely to be an hour a week of one-to-one time. As the Curate gains in confidence, the frequency of individual supervision will be reviewed together. Supervision meetings are separate and in addition to meeting for prayer/the office and weekly planning.

Growing in character and discipleship will be given more priority than the acquisition of skills, without neglecting key competencies need by the parish priest. Prayer and reliance on God in our weakness is the foundation of our ministry. The focus of the supervision meetings will normally be reflection on the activities of the curate, especially on the “mission initiative” mentioned above.

The curate is joining a team where we are all learning and changing, not least the training incumbent. The curate will be expected to contribute their own strengths, to support the development of others and to be willing to learn from lay and ordained people across the parishes. Taking risks and stepping out in faith is respected. Mistakes and failures are to be expected in a risk-taking ministry and we seek to support each other with prayer and encouragement. The team members seek to encourage each other in discipleship, to value family, people and activities outside work and to discourage workaholism so that the whole of our lives can be a sign and celebration of God's grace. We want to be friends as well as colleagues.

This title post is seen as an opportunity to grow in spiritual disciplines and discover helpful structures of support which will be good foundations for future life and ministry. This includes an annual retreat and appropriate time off for study. The curate is expected to have a second mentor outside the parishes, who is an experienced pioneer minister and who can help to broaden and deepen the curate's experience of inculturation and church planting in different contexts. Help will be offered in finding a such a mentor. Participation in other learning opportunities will be warmly encouraged and CME will be treated as a priority.

### **Areas of Particular Responsibility**

1. To be the resident clergy presence in the villages of Tasburgh and Tharston. Particularly fostering links with the school, village hall and local businesses.
2. To be fully involved in the Tas Valley Cell Church and to prayerfully explore possibilities for pioneering new work.
3. Within the first 6 months the curate will be encouraged to identify one particular mission initiative which they will lead – for example, the planting of a new cell on the new estate in Tharston or starting a Messy Church Initiative in Tasburgh
4. To actively and prayerfully play a full part in the leadership team across the benefice as it develops

### **Terms and Conditions**

- Period of appointment – 3-4 years
- Holidays and days off – in accordance with national guidelines.
- Curate's Stipend
- Accommodation – Tasburgh New Rectory (pictured below) - a comfortable 5 bedroomed family bungalow, adjacent to Tasburgh church in heart of the village. It has an office attached to the house but with a separate outdoor entrance .
- Expenses will be paid in full



# The context: the benefice setting



## Six Villages Overview

The Benefice, in the Depwade Deanery of the Diocese of Norwich, covers the six parishes of Newton Flotman, Saxlingham Nethergate, Shotesham, Swainsthorpe, Tasburgh and Tharston. All the villages are mentioned in the Domesday Book. The villages are rural in nature and surrounded by farmland. In a national survey South Norfolk was recently elected the third most desirable place to live in the UK and we think so too. This is a beautiful place to live; people are friendly and care about their communities.

Adult populations of these parishes at the 2001 census were as follows

Newton Flotman: 1197 (PER 1110)

Swainsthorpe 374 (PER 291)

Tasburgh 1074 (PER 908)

Tharston 530 (PER 435)

Saxlingham 676 (PER 543)

Shotesham 539 (PER 435)



The parishes are between 4 and 8 miles south of Norwich, close to the Norwich southern bypass (A47). They are either side of the A140 road to Ipswich. There are regular bus services along the A140 to Norwich and less frequent services through Saxlingham Nethergate and Shotesham. Newton Flotman, Tasburgh and Saxlingham Nethergate have excellent voluntary controlled primary schools who warmly welcome the churches' ministry. For High School, children travel to Long Stratton, Wymondham, Framlingham Earl or Norwich, depending on location and preference. There are residential homes for the elderly in Newton Flotman and Saxlingham and Almshouses in Shotesham. There is a post office in Tasburgh and a dispensing doctors' surgery in Newton Flotman. All the villages have different active local organisations as well as five pubs across the benefice. Most residents commute to Norwich to work, but a minority work in farming or other local businesses.

## Newton Flotman

Newton Flotman is a growing village just off the A140 trunk road. There has probably been a settlement at Newton Flotman since the Bronze Age. The village's most illustrious resident was Thomas Blundeville. His family were lords of the manor from 1294 to 1721 and one of the family was Bishop of Norwich in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The Blundevilles were followed by the Longs who were both lords of the manor and patrons of the parish until 1948.



The village was a farming community for centuries, but since the last world war farming has declined (although there are still two nurseries) and land sold for housing. Today's residents work elsewhere in Norwich and Norfolk and beyond. Duffield's Mill, just across the river at Saxlingham Thorpe, is an animal feed mill, which provides local employment. New housing in the village has brought the population close to 2,000, making it the largest of the villages in the team ministry. There is a mixture of private and social housing.

Facilities include a village centre situated on a playing field. This hosts a pre-school, football club, table tennis and the Women's Institute. The village also has a dance and drama school (ARTS), a pub/restaurant by the river, a modern doctor's surgery and a motorcycle retailer. The nearest shops are in Long Stratton, Mulbarton and a Tesco's superstore is close to the southern bypass. There is a very popular Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School.

## Swainsthorpe

Swainsthorpe is a village of about 350 people; most of the village is to the west of the main A140 Norwich to Ipswich road. The village is just north of Newton Flotman with whom it shares the primary school. It is five miles south of Norwich and two miles south of the city's southern bypass.



The river was navigable until the beginning of the Second World War. It was a major artery to Caistor St Edmund – the site of the Roman town of Venta Icenorum.

Today, the community has moved away from the riverbank and the housing is now gathered around St Peter's church and the railway. There is a separate development at the renovated workhouse and former Vale Hospital on the road to Mulbarton. Apart from the church, there is an old inn (the Dunn Cow) and a farm-engineering contractor. There are no shops. The church is adjacent to a spacious Village Green with play equipment.

The thriving social life of the community is well advertised in the shared monthly magazine for Newton Flotman and Swainsthorpe "Partnership"

## Tasburgh

Tasburgh is an attractive village, of around 1000 inhabitants, situated just off the A140, approximately 10 miles South of Norwich and close to the village of Long Stratton which offers a range of shops and services. A blend of old and new, the village sits in the Tas Valley, alongside the River Tas, on the site of a Bronze Age hill fort. The Church of St. Mary the Virgin and the Rectory are situated at the very heart of the village. There is a strong sense of community and lots of activities are advertised in the quarterly village magazine.

### Tasburgh Facilities:

- Preston Primary School, an extremely popular voluntary controlled Church of England school with approximately 120 pupils. Standards at the school are outstanding with a warm and caring ethos.
- Village hall with excellent facilities, including a social club.
- All weather, multi-purpose sports facility and small skate park
- Post office and shop
- Popular local pub – The Countryman
- Regular bus service to Norwich and Long Stratton – including bus to the high school at Long Stratton.



Groups active within the villages (excluding church led groups) include:

- Craft Group
- Playgroup
- Baby and Toddler Group
- Scout Group - Beavers, Cubs and Sea Scouts
- Short mat bowls club
- Tasburgh Players - a drama group
- Cricket
- Football

## Tharston

Until recent years Tharston had about 350 residents on the Electoral Roll and about 120 properties which are spread over the three parts of the village. There is a small community at Low Tharston grouped around the old water mill, a mile from there is The Street adjoining which is the church. With a scattering of property in between, a further mile takes us to Chequers Road with another small community. The end of Chequers Road adjoins Long Stratton and an ever growing development of new houses straddles the parish boundary between Tharston and Long Stratton. In the last few years this has increased the properties in the village by about 200, and, although this has increased the parish population accordingly, those in the new development generally look towards Long Stratton rather than Tharston. There is a new doctor's surgery serving this new estate just inside our parish boundary. There is also a small light industrial estate nearby which falls within the Tharston parish. Apart from these more recent developments the parish is wholly rural and includes several farms.



Tharston is joined with the neighbouring village of Hapton to form one civil parish. The Parish Council is currently seeking to build a new village hall on land adjacent to Tharston church.

## Saxlingham Nethergate

Saxlingham Nethergate is situated eight miles south of Norwich and includes Saxlingham Thorpe, Foxhole and Saxlingham Green. The village dates back to Saxon times with a population of approximately 750 people. Many of its houses are old, some thatched with reed, others roofed with red pantiles. Many are brick but others timber framed with painted walls. Amongst the interesting buildings in the village are the Old Hall, which dates back to Elizabethan times, and the Old Rectory, built in 18th century by John Soane.



Whilst in the past most of the population worked on the local farms, now the village is primarily a commuter village for Norwich. Two small estates of modern houses were built in the 1960s and 1980s and there has also been some infill. In recent years the population has become increasingly middle-class and elderly. There is little unemployment and some of the people could be described as prosperous. However the attractiveness of the village encourages elderly people to retire here and many young people cannot afford the cost of the houses. This has resulted in some migration. There were council houses but their occupants have bought many of these and so little social housing remains.

The village has a Church of England (VC) Primary school, opposite the church. There is a thriving non-denominational chapel. The Scout and Guide headquarters are situated on the Playing Field and these organisations attract young people from a wide area. There are also thriving cricket, football and bowls clubs at the Playing Field. A successful club, the Saxon Club with licensed bar, is situated in the Playing Field Pavilion. As there is no public house in the centre of the village this is a popular meeting place. The thatched village hall on the street is used by the nursery school, playgroup, indoor bowls club, horticultural society, drama group, art group and for further education classes. There is also a cricket team and Norfolk Wildlife's Natural Connections Project. All this is advertised in the village newsletter "Contact".

## Shotesham – The Village

The parish of Shotesham is geographically one of the largest in the diocese – 3,585 acres. It is situated seven miles to the south south east of Norwich. The population at the last census was 477, but with barn conversions, some building and redevelopment, it has increased a little since then. There are an unusually high number of senior professional administrators and consultant medical practitioners living in the village. The housing profile of privately owned or rented property (with two small local authority developments) reflects a greater affluence than the diocesan average. The village's commercial activity (apart from farming) is two building contractors, some small private businesses and a public house.



The Trinity Hall is a focal point for village meetings. It is in the centre of a group of almshouses run under the aegis of the Mercers' Company who are very generous in their support to both church and village. A strong British Legion group is based at the Trinity. The village has a Wives' Group, a Cross-stitch and patchwork group, a Natural History Society, as well as Gardening and Photographic clubs. There is a thriving bowls club and a football / recreation pitch. The very popular scout / guide group outgrew its headquarters and built new accommodation at Saxlingham five years ago. The village holds a quadrennial village festival run by the Village Association with church representation. The Village Association also organises regular well-supported village activities. These range from the annual fete, walks, kite flying and concerts to the village market.



# The Churches

## Seven churches overview

“Growing in God’s Love” is the tag line at the bottom of our benefice logo – and it expresses what we are about.

The Tas Valley Team Ministry is committed to sustaining and growing the church in its inherited forms alongside developing fresh expressions of church appropriate to our changing context. To that end we a network based cell church begun in 2003 and has become an integral part of the life of the benefice. Both inherited and new approaches are about living out the love of God and include an emphasis on care for our local communities – parish or network.



As a benefice church family, we are growing in both depth of faith and numbers. Some of our congregations are growing through their fringe – but more people without church background are becoming Christian disciples through alpha and cell.

There are seven church buildings and six PCCs within the benefice. In addition, midweek cells operate as a network church across the benefice. (We hope this will soon be formalized with a Bishop’s Mission Order) All the congregations predominantly local people from within the village. Cell membership is based on networks of friends and neighbours. Many cell members are also members of one of the congregations – but for a significant number cell is their primary or only church. Joint decisions are made by the quarterly wardens meeting at which the cell church is represented alongside the parish churches.

CHURCH	ELECTORAL ROLL OR EQUIVALENT (2011)	AVERAGE WEEKLY ATTENDANCE (2011)
Newton Flotman, St Mary	37	24 adults, 11 children
Swainsthorpe, St Peter	13	8 adults
Tasburgh, St Mary	25	26 adults, 9 children
Tharston, St Mary	16	9 adults, 1 child
Saxlingham, St Mary	29	18 adults, 1 child
Shotesham, All Saints & St Mary	21	15 adults, 1 child
Tas Valley Cell Church	45 adults (16 +), 35 children	40 adults, 18 children

(NB Saxlingham and Shotesham have started family services involving new young families since these figures were recorded)

## Occasional Offices: (Numbers in 2011)

baptisms: 23, confirmations: 12, weddings:15, funerals: 21



## Sunday Service Pattern

All the services are shared among the members of the pastoral leadership team, but a special effort is made to give continuity to the larger congregations, with the member of the clergy pastorally responsible for that church leading the majority of services in that church.

SUNDAY SERVICES	1st Sunday	2nd Sunday	3rd Sunday	4th Sunday	Benefice Services
<b>Newton Flotman</b>	8 am Holy Communion 9am "First Sunday" (Breakfast & All Age Worship Event)	11am Family Communion	11am - Holy Communion & "Special Agents" & "FROG"	11am – Morning Prayer & "Special Agents"	Benefice Services rotate round the different parish churches and usually involve coming together for a purpose eg. Archdeacon's Visitation or Confirmation. We are experimenting with a 5th Sunday pattern.  Some benefice services are midweek or additional services on a Sunday evening. We seek not to cancel the normal services in the 4 larger congregations more than 3 times a year.
<b>Swainsthorpe</b>	9.30 Holy Communion	9.30am Swainsthorpe Special	9.30am - Holy Communion	9.30am Swainsthorpe Special	
<b>Tasburgh</b>	9.30am – Morning Prayer, Children's Church & "Sat Nav"	9.30 - Holy Communion & Children's Church	9.30 Family Service	9.30 – Holy Communion, Children's Church & "Sat Nav"	
<b>Tharston</b>	11am - Holy Communion (1662)	11am Village Praise – or other special service once in the month	8am Holy Communion (1662)	-	
<b>Saxlingham</b>	9.30 am - Family Communion	11am – All Age Worship (NEW)	9.30am - Holy Communion	11am – Matins & Children's Church	
<b>Shotesham</b>	11am- Holy Communion - at St. Mary's	9.30am – All Age Worship (NEW)	11am - Holy Communion	9.30am - Morning Worship	

NB "Special Agents" - is a church activity involving prayer, worship, story, discussion & craft/games for children of primary school age and below. "FROG" & "Sat Nav" are similar groups for children of High School age.

The meetings of the cell church form part of the pattern of worship in the benefice but do not fit into the Sunday table. At present youth cells (11-16) meet on Monday evenings. Three adult cells meet on Wednesday evenings and two on a Thursday evening. A multigenerational cell meets on a Friday evening and "Special Me" for people with special educational needs and their families on Saturdays. There is a cell for mums with toddlers on a Thursday morning and a cell for older teens/ young adults on Sunday nights.

Three times a year cells come together for "The Gathering" with contemporary worship led by our worship band "Jacob's Ladder" and in depth bible teaching.

## Ecclesiastical Traditions

People in the Tas Valley are not overly conscious of churchmanship labels. We try to make worship both reverent and accessible, using either Common Worship or the Book of Common Prayer. Family Services are more interactive and consciously focused on the needs of the young but we seek to offer a warm welcome to every age group at all services. In joint benefice services, we are fond of variety – including an annual High Mass and occasional celtic services. Teaching is orthodox/catholic/evangelical and includes teaching on the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Cells are more fluid than congregations but tend to develop their own character in accordance with who is in them. A number of our cells have a majority of members who have become Christians from little or no church background.

## Newton Flotman – St Mary's Church.

**Wardens:** Jean Wilson and William Ball

**PCC:** Enthusiastic and hardworking with lots of good ideas.

**Worship:** Informal and joyful, including simple liturgy and songs with worship band or hymns with organ/piano. Provision is always made for children to worship and learn - either through All Age Service or through "Special Agents" (for primary school/preschool and "F.R.O.G" for secondary school age.) We seek to be accessible and welcoming especially for those unfamiliar with church. The most popular services of the year are the Palm Sunday Donkey

Walk, Easter Day, Remembering Loved Ones (All Souls' Tide), Christingle and Crib Service.

**Social Events:** Different every year. In 2011, we held a great Angels Festival involving the whole village.

**Church Building:** St Mary's church was first built in the perpendicular and decorated styles in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, undergoing restoration in 1385 and more recently in 1890 by the Long family. The stained glass in the east and west windows are the work of Charles Eamer Kempe. The tower's three bells came from a Suffolk church in 1987 and can be struck but not rung. In the chancel is a fine memorial and inscription to Thomas Blundeville and his family. Floodlights illuminate the church at night. The church has a good sound system. There is a much-used meeting room with kitchen and toilet.

**Finance:** - Giving is increasing and the church is financially sound - but we are aware of being over dependent on a small number of generous donors.

**Mission and Service:-** Activities include -

- Coffee Stop (Free coffee and home baked cakes on Sat morning)
- Give and Take (Reuse and recycle initiative)
- Church Mice (parent and tots)
- Links with School - Open the Book, Family Film Night, Prayer Spaces, RE Activity Days
- Links with Olive House (Residential Home for Elderly)
- Christian Aid Involvement
- Producing Partnership Magazine

**Hopes for the Future from our Growth Plan:** - To further improve our ministry of welcome especially through visiting newcomers to village with welcome pack and making necessary changes to the church building so that it can be left open in the day.



## Swainsthorpe – St Peter's Church.

**Churchwarden:** Christopher Duffield

**PCC:** Only 5 lay members, but we are a great team, committed to helping our church grow in numbers and service to the community.

**Worship:** Holy Communion (BCP) is held twice a month. On two other Sundays, we have the Swainsthorpe Special; an informal service, with well-known hymns, a short sermon, and thoughtful prayers, followed by refreshments and time to chat. All the festival services are well supported, especially the Christmas Carol service. Our Songs of Praise service, is a great finale to the Art Exhibition and Flower festival, and has become an annual event.

**Churchbuilding and churchyard:** St Peter's church is Saxon in origin, its round tower being a distinctive early Norman feature throughout East Anglia. The roofs have medieval carvings of angels carrying various objects. The church is kept very clean and tidy, and the flowers look beautiful. The churchyard has been developed as a conservation area and has a much appreciated rose garden of remembrance.

The nave of the church has recently been leased to the Swainsthorpe Community Trust. The PCC and the Community Trust have worked together to raise money for the church to be reordered and renewed installing water, kitchenette and heating. We hope the church building will soon be used as a community facility for the whole village.

**Finances** Giving is improving but we still did not come close to paying our Parish Share in 2011.

**Hopes for the Future from our Growth Plan:-** When the church building reopens, we hope to develop a new monthly all age service with shared tea and develop other community activities.



## St Mary's Church, Tasburgh

**Wardens:** Vivienne Taylor and Julia Orpin

**PCC** – 15 members, prayerful and very supportive of the clergy. There is a real desire to honour God, love each other and serve our local community. Meetings are usually chaired by clergy but there is also a very able vice chair.

**Worship** - St Mary's Congregation has a range of ages and we try to accommodate different Sunday service styles over the course of the month. Family Services are led by a team and are closely linked with the work of the Children's Church & teenage group Sat Nav. Lay people are active in helping to lead and plan other services – especially the small choir. At Christmas and other special occasions, their performance is wonderful. As well as hymns and modern worship songs, there is potential for instrumental leading of celtic and meditative music in other services. St. Mary's is open seven days a week for quiet prayer and meditation. Regular Sunday attendance has fallen in the last four years with several committed people dying and two regular families moving away. The congregation is just beginning to increase again with new Christians from the cells coming along and people moving into the village. There is a recognition that as the congregation grows younger and we seek to attract more people, the balance of worship styles will also change. The visitor's book tells us that people from far and near are visiting the Church for a few minutes of peace and quietness – their comments in the visitor's book tell us that this is much appreciated.

**Church building.** St. Mary the Virgin is a Saxon round tower church built in about 1050. The interior is recently reordered and can accommodate a range of activities including choirs, concerts and other performances. There are 6 bells that are regularly rung for services, festivals and other occasions. A useful extension to the Church can be accessed independently. It has a large, multi-purpose room, plus a small kitchen and a toilet. It is used by both church and wider community.

**Social Events** The Harvest Lunch each year fills the village hall and brings a large cross section of the village together. Other events include musical evenings, Church Support for the village Open Gardens Day, the combined Church and Village Fete, auction of promises Flowers and Art Festival, Quiz Evenings. St Mary's Guild (church based ladies' group - meets monthly) also organise regular fundraising events, including coffee mornings throughout the year..

**Finance** - Giving has improved over the last few years and we now year and we are now paying our parish share in full.

**Mission and Service** Coffee Pot - a meeting for cake and chat weekly provides a haven for some in the local community. There are strong links with Preston Primary School where an Open the Book team from the congregation leads weekly assemblies. Clergy also lead termly workshops and the foundation governors are very active. It is lovely to see the school thriving with a lively Christian ethos. There are strong links with two cells in the cell church who seek to reach out particularly to the community around Tasburgh.

**Hopes for the Future from our Growth Plan:-** Training more people to lead intercessions, improving our sound system, invitations to special church events for young families, expand village Posada project.

Tasburgh congregation consider it a real privilege to have a curate living in our village. We are keen to support him or her in his/her development as a minister and will do all we can to make the curate (and his/her spouse and/or family) welcome and happy.





### Tharston – St Mary's Church

**Wardens:** Sue Hubbard and Pat Read

**PCC** – The PCC is small, friendly and hardworking. There is a strong desire for more younger people to take a more active role.

**Worship** - We worship together on 3 Sundays a month – a popular early morning Holy Communion Service, a late morning Holy Communion service and a new Village Praise service which attracts a slightly larger congregation. Although small in number, and broadly traditional in our form of worship, we are alert and appreciative and we sing lustily. Our Easter, Harvest Festival and Christmas Carol Service congregations are popular.

**Church Building & Facilities:** St Mary's is mainly 14th/15th century; not a very striking or distinguished building, although it stands high in the landscape, but simple and pleasant, with a light interior and some interesting historical monuments. The building has been well cared for and a new welcome space has been developed at the back including space for refreshments and a display of local information. The bells are rung regularly and the sound is a wonderful, widely heard and recognised symbol of Christian presence in the parish. The churchyard, thanks to devoted local care, is extraordinarily attractive. The old church room has been sold to the Parish Council who intend to build a new village centre on the site. St Mary's retains the right of access on all Sundays (including use of toilets, water etc) and free use on six other occasions in the year.

**Finances:** We pay our parish share in full thanks to the faithful few who give very generously of their time and money.

**Mission & Service:** The main village social events of the year are the Harvest Supper, the Church Fete and church barbeque. Tharston today has no school, no shop, no pub and such church-run events are sometimes the only occasions which draw many villagers together.

**Hopes for the Future** - Build up monthly praise services and take up opportunities arising from new village hall



### Saxlingham Nethergate – St Mary's

**ChurchWardens:** Geoff Blyth and Lynn Roberts

**PCC** 13 lay members. Meets quarterly

**Worship:** Holy Communion Services held on the first and third Sunday include a choir. An All Age service on the second Sunday, has quite a different congregation including several families. Morning Prayer (1662) is held on the fourth Sunday with a Sunday School in the church room. After each service we meet for tea and coffee in our Parish room, except for the All Age service on the second Sunday, when we begin with refreshments in the main church building at 11am. Special services include an annual High Mass at Candlemas, an open air service pet service on the green and a service in the ruined church at Saxlingham Thorpe.

**Church Building & facilities** The church is situated opposite the village school. It is a medieval grey flint building with a square tower, seating about 120 people. Much of the stained glass dates back to medieval times and is some of the oldest in the county. There is a peal of eight bells which is rung regularly. The Church has converted a small outbuilding on the edge of the church car park to make a comfortable church room, providing kitchen and toilet facilities as well as space to hold meetings. The churchyard is well cared for. The church is open for prayer in daylight hours and comments in the Visitors' Book show that it is well used.



**Social Events** A popular Fete is held in the summer. A harvest meal is held annually. A Flower Festival has been held every two years, which has been supported by local women many of whom do not normally involve themselves with the church.

#### **Mission & Service**

- Open the Book team from the church and chapel leads collective worship regularly at Saxlingham (CofE) Primary School.
- Saxlingham Hall Nursing Home for about 40 residents is situated at Saxlingham Green. Rev'd David Sochon has become their recognised chaplain and visits monthly with communion
- Contact Magazine: The Church funds Contact, a free monthly newsletter circulated to all houses in the parish. This contains notices and reports of general village activities and societies. The church and chapel alternate in providing a Christian comment.
- Welcome Pack: Put together by church members and delivered to all who move in giving useful information about the village, the church and places of help and local services.
- Educate Peru, a charity founded by a Saxlingham resident receives good support
- Outreach coffee and craft morning being developed with Saxlingham Chapel.
- Monday Mardle - These fortnightly gatherings in the church room allow a diverse group of people able to get together socially and transport is arranged for anyone requiring it. Started 2 years ago, the Mardle is expanding with additional meetings and increased attendance.

**Future Hopes** - To grow in prayer and unity, including the different parts of our congregation and our partnership with the chapel. To develop 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday service and links with families through re-introducing Sunday school on other Sundays.

#### **Shotesham – Church – St Mary's and All Saints**

**Wardens:** John Torbitt and Jane Blease

**PCC:** Enthusiastic and hardworking

**Worship:** Sunday worship is traditional but led in an informal and friendly style. Numbers are around fifteen on an ordinary Sunday but this can rise dramatically for special services and we hope to use this to develop a new family service once a month. The annual candlelit Christmas Carol Service at St Mary's is atmospheric and always crowded. Traditional country services are a feature of the worship at St Mary's where the churchyard (with its several rare plants) is a nature conservation area of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust. In addition, Morning prayer is celebrated at 9.30 every Monday in the Trinity Hall.

**Church Buildings.** There are two church buildings. St Mary's (1486) has a seating capacity of approximately 100. The organ is hand pumped and heating is by our own recently installed gas-powered generator which also provides electricity. There is no water or light. All Saints (1192) has a seating capacity of approximately 150. It has magnificent medieval wall paintings that have recently been uncovered and stabilised. A meeting area and children's corner has been created near the church door by removing some pews. The vestry has recently been turned into the Maisie Benson room which houses a meeting room and toilet. The Saxlingham/Shotesham band rings the bells.

**Mission & Service** The church provides a focus for the parish social activities – concerts are held in All Saints twice a year and there are popular quizzes organised by the church in Trinity Hall. Coupled with the Village Association we host Carols round the tree and the "New Year's Day St. Mary to All Saints Walk" - both followed in church with entertainment. These provide opportunities for us to meet our neighbours and friends in a relaxed atmosphere. We value a close relationship with these "friends of the Church" and with those who attend the village social functions, and we encourage the use of the churches for their activities. We actively support Norwich Foodbank. Trinity Almshouses is supported by the church both in prayer and by visits to the residents. We are joined by many other villagers in conserving St Martin's ruin adjacent to St Mary's.

**Future Hopes** - Using our new facilities to develop a community life and worship involving more young families



## Tas Valley Cell Church

**All Involved; Becoming Disciples; Creating Community; Doing Evangelism; Encountering God.**

The Tas Valley Cell Church began in 2003. Its primary purpose is to enable people that conventional parish churches can't reach, to connect with God and become disciples of Jesus – but many people who love parish church, love to do Cell church alongside too. It is a "church without walls" composed of cells which are small groups (Up to 12 members in each), meeting mostly in people's homes during the week. Members come from across the entire benefice. The name comes from the idea that the Church is the Body of Christ and that all living bodies have cells which multiply – the units of life. In 2011 there were over 50 adults and about 28 young people involved in the Tas Valley Cell Church on a regular basis. At present cells meet on Mondays (2 youth cells), 4 cells on Wednesday eves, one on Thursday morning and one in the evening. On Fri/Sat there are two multigenerational cells one of which leads the Diocesan "Special Me" initiative for families with members who have special needs to explore faith interactively. On Sun eve there is a cell for older teens/young adults.



**WORSHIP AND PRAYER** At a cell meeting we worship and we pray for each other and our local community. Cells don't usually meet on Sundays or in a church building. Worship is quite different from Sunday church - more intimate and often quite meditative using candles and quiet music. Each cell has communion together about once a term and we are beginning to develop our own liturgies within the CofE guidelines. Three times a year the cells come together for "The Gathering" which is a teaching and worship event. We also support benefice services and cells sometimes take on particular responsibilities to help in parish churches - for example the Thursday evening cell designed the church welcome pack for the village of Newton Flotman.

**OUR CHURCH FAMILY** Cells are based on networks - people inviting friends, rather than the geography of a single parish. This means there is a mix of parishes represented in each cell group so that the presence of the cells within the benefice helps the churches in the benefice to grow closer together as a church family.

Cell church places a high value on Creating Community. At the beginning of a cell, there is always time to chat and generally "catch up" over coffee - at some point an ice-breaker question or activity introduces the theme of the meeting. This gives everyone a chance to join in and gives a relaxed feel to the group. We have fun together and support each other. Another key value of Cell Church is Becoming Disciples. At most cell meetings, we read the bible, often looking again at the teaching given in Church on Sunday. We use discussion and activities to help us understand a passage or a subject better. There is an emphasis on how we can put the bible's teaching into practice in our everyday lives rather than knowledge for its own sake.

We believe in Christian Stewardship and since 2005, we have been paying a growing proportion of Benefice share. We are working towards becoming a Bishop's Mission Order.

**MISSION & SERVICE** - Cells try to put faith to work in practical service. and have a lot of fun together - events have included a bonfire party, going to the theatre, a meal out, bowling, kayaking (see youth cells in photo), or cinema. These are great opportunities to invite friends and neighbours who don't normally come to church. Cells also do much of the work and prayer for the benefice Alpha courses, which give people the opportunity to learn about the Christian faith. People who find Sunday worship too formal or structured for them, especially younger generations and those unused to traditional forms of church, often find cells the best way of helping them in their journey of faith. In this way, the cells complement the other forms of church in the benefice so that everyone can grow in God's love.

### HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

- To grow in prayer - continue and build upon Prayer 24/7 weeks
- To continue to see new people coming to faith – especially through regular alpha courses
- To support each other to grow in discipleship esp. those previously unchurched
- To nurture new leaders in a variety of roles
- To obtain a Bishop's Mission Order to support our growth to maturity





# Benefice Wide - The Things We Do Together

## WORSHIP AND PRAYER

Worship and prayer needs to be at the heart of all we do as a benefice. In addition to services at each church, we came together for about three benefice services a year. In Holy Week we share worship in all the churches, holding a service each day in a different village each time.

**Morning prayer** is said at 9.30am:

- Monday – St Mary's, Saxlingham
- Tuesday – St Mary's Tasburgh
- Wednesday – St Mary's Newton Flotman
- Friday – St Mary's Newton Flotman

On Thursdays, prayers are said by the Open the Book Teams in the three church schools.

A monthly early morning prayer time involves leaders in our benefice and the non-denominational chapel in Saxlingham.

**Blessing Project** - In 2012, 25 people have committed themselves to setting aside 1 hour a week for 52 weeks to pray specifically for God to bless our area. A structure for prayer and notes with areas for prayer and news is provided

**24-7 Prayer** - We have been holding a week of continuous prayer (24-7) almost every year since 2006. It takes place in a large tent with the "baton" of prayer being handed on each hour from one person to another. The interior space is designed by the cells to aid prayer – a selection of music to aid worship and contemplation, a book for prayer requests, suggestions for meditative prayer, a paint wall, poetry, a map of the benefice with streets to be coloured in as they were prayed for and creative prayer stations.

## OUR CHURCH FAMILY

**Pastoral Leadership Team** - A team of lay and ordained leaders, each of whom are involved in pastoral ministry over more than one church in the benefice. They meet to support each other in developing their own ministry and to pray, discern and plan the way forward for the benefice as a whole. Currently, there are four members additional to the licensed ministers – William Ball, Kirsten Remer, Jim England and Hannah Pye all of whom are exploring vocation in some way. In each church there are also many people involved in day to day Christian ministry, particularly the wardens and cell leaders

**Wardens Meeting** – Churchwardens and other reps of the cell church have three or four meetings each year to pray and plan. They represent the PCCs/cell leaders in making decisions with the clergy, which affect the whole benefice such as Parish Share, the Worship Plan and new mission initiatives.

**Communications** - We have a monthly news sheet to encourage people from different churches to be aware of, prayer for and support each other and a website - See [www.tasvalley.org](http://www.tasvalley.org)

**Benefice Account** – This account is mainly a way of collecting from the churches their contribution towards clergy expenses. Other benefice expenses such as gifts for newly ordained clergy, benefice holiday club and the benefice website also go through here. Within the account a new Mission Training Fund has been established – the money in this fund comes from the royalties of Sally's book, "Mission-shaped and Rural". It is available for anyone who wants to undertake training for mission.

## MISSION AND SERVICE

**Benefice Holiday Club and Children's Activity Days** - A week-long children's bible holiday club is held each year in Preston Primary School, Tasburgh. About 80 children attend and have a great time. There are occasionally other shared activity days. Volunteer leaders come from round the benefice.

**Samaritans Purse** – Over 100 shoe boxes, containing gifts for Children in need internationally were sent from this benefice.

**Pastoral Care** - The Clergy, Readers and other lay people share in the task of Pastoral Care across the benefice. David Sochon has taken on more responsibility for ministry to the residential homes and home communions. In 2008 there are hopes for some churches of the benefice to take part in a pilot scheme for increasing lay pastoral visiting called "Every home is special".

**Alpha and Confirmations** - It is usual for two adult alpha courses to be run each year and for youth alpha to be run in the youth cells on alternate years. Alpha is the usual preparation for confirmation and adult baptism. The cell groups take the lead in running the courses but they are supported by all churches and advertised across the team. People discovering Jesus for the first time is a great joy every year.

## The Staff Team (Licensed Ministers)

### Team Rector (and Training Incumbent): The Rev'd Sally Gaze.

Sally has been Team Rector in the Tas Valley since September 2002. She leads the team as a whole and has special responsibility for 2 parishes (currently Newton Flotman and Swainsthorpe) and the Tas Valley Cell Church. A quarter of her time is spent as a diocesan fresh expressions facilitator. Sally is married to Chris. They have a son, Matthew (aged 12) and a daughter, Katie (aged 3). She has a passion for Mission within our culture – both in theory and practice. She served as a member of the working group for the Mission-Shaped Church Report and wrote one of the books in the follow-up series “Mission –shaped and rural: Growing churches in the countryside” published in 2006. Sally is a sort of charismatic evangelical – but sits lightly to churchmanship and values the different styles and spiritualities across the benefice. At the time of writing, Sally is on a sabbatical thinking about new monastic communities and family life. Sally, Chris and Matthew live in Newton Flotman Rectory and enjoy having lots of people round to share it with them – from the youth cells and PCCs to participants in the Gaze treasure-hunt parties.



### Team Vicar: The Rev'd Adrian Miller

Adrian became Team Vicar in May 2009, but first joined the Tas Valley team as a curate-in-training in June 2006. He has particular pastoral responsibility for four parishes in the Benefice and also manages the Benefice Web Presence and coordinates the ministry around weddings. Adrian lives in Saxlingham New Rectory with wife Sarah, son Toby (6), and daughter Naomi (3). Adrian has helped us form an active and inspiring partnership with World Shine Ministries in Uganda. He also has a great interest in new creationist theology. He is a member of the Diocesan Deliverance Team and a Trustee of the House of Prayer in Norwich. Adrian is part Italian and when he has spare time, treats us to some wonderful Italian desserts.

### Ordained Local Minister: David Sochon

David Sochon lives in Shotesham with his wife Janet. He served for many years as a reader before being ordained in 2008 and has developed a special ministry across the benefice to the elderly, especially within the Trinity Almshouses and Saxlingham Hall Nursing Home. He also leads worship across the benefice, leading two or three services each month. From time to time, he also takes funerals. David is a retired headteacher and stuns us all with his knowledge of historical detail especially when it comes to the annual benefice quiz. He is also well known for his love of his garden and his dogs.

### Non-Stipendiary Minister: Mark Morgan

Mark lives in Saxlingham Nethergate with his wife Lesley. He has a busy career as a barrister but also finds time to help out, leading Sunday services across the benefice.

### Reader (PTO): David Lancaster

David Lancaster lives in Poringland but is a member of Saxlingham Church with his wife Ros. David takes assemblies at several of the church schools and is also the Child Protection Representative for the Benefice. He also leads an ecumenical bible study group in Saxlingham/Shotesham. David L leads services in all the churches across the team and is involved in taking funerals. David and Ros enjoy walking in the countryside, music (Ros is a very accomplished musician and choir leader) and adore their grandchildren.

We are a happy team who laugh a lot and enjoy each other's company.

We look forward to welcoming the new curate