

Team Vicar in the Tas Valley Team Ministry

Person Specification & Benefice Profile 2014

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www.tasvalley.org

Person specification: Team Vicar in the Tas Valley Team Ministry

Purpose of the Work:	To share in the servant leadership of the Christian communities of this team - in prayer, worship, evangelism, practical and pastoral care.
Statement of Particulars	Issued by the Diocese of Norwich (Full Time Post)
Place of Work	The whole of the Tas Valley Team but with particular responsibility for designated churches and parishes
Housing	Saxlingham Rectory - an attractive 4 bed property near to the church and village centre

Key tasks

1. To lead the ministry and mission of the churches in Saxlingham and Shotesham, as the parish priest. It is envisaged that in the first year of appointment the Team Vicar will concentrate on building relationships and facilitating the churches in incarnational mission in these two villages. This includes fostering links with the village schools,, old people's home, almshouses, village hall and village organisations such as scouts and residents associations.
2. To share in the Leadership of the Tas Valley Cell Church (BMO) and to engage in its missionary activities, development, training and growth..
3. After the first year, or at a time agreed between the Team Rector and Team Vicar to take on a further responsibilities in the team, reflecting the full time nature of this post eg. leadership of The Tas Valley Cell Church and parish priest responsibilities in Tharston or Swainsthorpe. The nature of these responsibilities to be agreed between the Team Rector and Team Vicar as part of a mutual annual review process involving consultation with representatives of the churches in the Team Ministry.
4. To actively and prayerfully play a full part in the leadership team across the Team Ministry as it develops

Personal Qualities

- A growing disciple of Jesus Christ, a person of prayer open to the Holy Spirit.
- Committed to growing in numbers in both traditional and fresh expressions of church, including cell church.
- Ready to enjoy and to learn about the rural context and different styles of rural mission
- A heart for evangelism and discipleship
- Pastorally caring. Loves people of all ages and abilities.
- Enthusiastic about the bible and placing a high value on its authority
- Seeking personal integrity, open communication and mutual accountability
- Good sense of humour
- An enabler who can resource and develop people to exercise their gifts
- A good listener who enjoys being part of a team and sharing ministry with others.
- Able to lead change in a well organised and sensitive way.

Personal Development, Training and Support

The Team Vicar and Team Rector will seek to exercise mutual accountability together with other lay and ordained ministers in the team. Sharing in the daily office and meeting at least weekly to review and plan together.

The Team Rector will give priority to support time with the Team Vicar. At the beginning this is likely to be an hour a week of one-to-one time. As time goes by, the frequency of these meetings will be reviewed together. Support meetings are separate and in addition to meeting for prayer/the office and weekly planning. The Team Rector and Team Vicar will agree a Working Agreement with each other and will also seek to support each other through an annual review with the wardens or Trustees of each church in the Team.

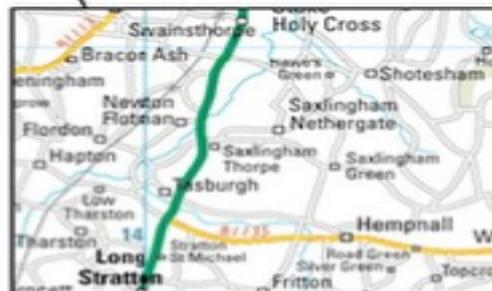
Prayer and reliance on God in our weakness is the foundation of our ministry. The team members seek to encourage each other in discipleship, to value family, people and activities outside work and to discourage workaholism so that the whole of our lives can be a sign and celebration of God's grace. We want to be friends as well as colleagues.

The Team Vicar is joining a team where we are all learning and changing. We seek to give growing in character and discipleship more priority than the acquisition of skills, without neglecting key competencies needed in ministry. The Team includes people exploring various forms of authorised ministry and a stipendiary pioneer curate. The Team Vicar 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. We all wish to grow in spiritual disciplines and discover helpful structures of support which will be good foundations for ongoing life and ministry. For stipendiary clergy it is expected that this will include at least an annual retreat, a regular meeting with a spiritual director and appropriate time for study and training, including training in leading Fresh Expressions and the Cell Church Model in particular.

Contact

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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.

Populations of these parishes (including children) at the 2011 census were as follows

Newton Flotman:	1489
Swainsthorpe	360
Tasburgh	1149
Tharston	1300 (Parish Spotlight figures for ecclesiastical parish. Estimate from census figures for the civil parish of Tharston and Hapton - 600)
Saxlingham	688
Shotesham	562

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 visiting 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 13th 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 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 small village; just north of Newton Flotman with whom it shares the primary school. Most of the village is to the west of the main A140 Norwich to Ipswich road. The village 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 a pub about to reopen after refurbishment (the Dunn Cow) and a farm-engineering contractor. There are no shops. The church has been recently reordered and is the nave is leased to Swainsthorpe Charity Trust for use as a Community Centre. It is centrally situated 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, 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. Standards at the school are outstanding with a warm and caring ethos.
- Village hall with excellent facilities, including a social club and post office (Tuesday morning & Thursday afternoon).
- All weather, multi-purpose sports facility and small skate park
- 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 Eurolink - twinned with Linden in Belgium
- 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 older part of the parish is wholly rural and includes several farms.

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. Another new development of about 120 homes is likely to take place in the next few years. 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.



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

The parish of Saxlingham Nethergate is situated eight miles south of Norwich and includes Saxlingham Thorpe, Foxhole and Saxlingham Green. The village is rural and 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, which was 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. There is a feed mill in Saxlingham Thorpe, which employs some local people and several people work from home. 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 are some council houses but their occupants have bought many of these and so there is little social housing.

The village has a small Voluntary Controlled Primary school and a nursery. A mobile library comes to the village once a month. One of the local medical practices has a surgery in the village. Saxlingham Nethergate Parish Council meets monthly in the village hall and undertakes the usual local government business. There is a regular bus service to Norwich, though most people travel by car. The nearest shopping centre is at Long Stratton, 6 miles away, and there is a large supermarket, 6 miles in the opposite direction on the outskirts of Norwich. There are small local shops and post offices in nearby villages

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. In all, Saxlingham is a very close and supportive community with plenty of activities and events drawing people together.

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 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 a joinery shop several local tradesmen 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 generous in their support to both church and village. The village has a strong Village Association and Conservation Group, a Cross-stitch and patchwork group, as group 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 seven years ago. The Village Association organise regular well-supported village activities. Four or five time a year there is a lively 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 have 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. The Tas Valley Cell Church has charitable status and its place in the Team Ministry is defined by 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 (2013)
Newton Flotman, St Mary	32	23 adults, 10 children
Swainsthorpe, St Peter	14	14 adults 3 children
Tasburgh, St Mary	30	23 adults, 8 children
Tharston, St Mary	16	10
Saxlingham, St Mary	27	16 adults, 2 children
Shotesham, All Saints & St Mary	20	14 adults,
Tas Valley Cell Church	45 adults (16 +), 35 children	40 adults, 18 children

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
Newton Flotman	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. 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.
Swainsthorpe	9.30 Holy Communion	6.30pm Benefice Praise Service	9.30am - Holy Communion	9.30am Cafe Church	
Tasburgh	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"	
Tharston		8am Holy Communion (1662)	8am Holy Communion (1662)		
Saxlingham	9.30 am - Family Communion	11am – Matins and "Finders Seekers"	9.30am - Holy Communion	8am - Holy Communion 11am – All Age Worship	
Shotesham	11am- Holy Communion - at St. Mary's	9.30am – Morning Worship	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 (11-15) meet on Monday evenings. Four adult cells meet on Wednesday evenings and one on a Thursday evening. "Special Me" for people with special educational needs and their families on Saturdays. There is 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 "and in depth bible teaching. Many cell members attend the monthly praise service at Swainsthorpe.

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.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Wardens: Jean Wilson and William Ball

PCC: Enthusiastic, committed and hardworking with many good ideas.

Social Events: Different every year. In recent years, we have hosted an Angel Festival, display of wedding and christening gowns as well as two Easter concerts from ARTS. Coffee Stop has hosted a Royal Wedding celebration and “Give & Take”, a recycling initiative. We work with the Village Centre by having a representative on their Committee, taking an active role in the Annual Village Fete.



Building: St Mary’s church was first built in the perpendicular and decorated styles in the early 14th 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. The largest of these 15th century bells is dedicated to St Edmund, the 9th century King of East Anglia. The restoration of 1890 introduced a new roof, new pews (some with medieval poppy heads), a pulpit and a reredos. In the chancel is a fine memorial and inscription to Thomas Blundeville and his family. The building is in generally good condition with some urgent work required to the interior of the church tower. Floodlights illuminate the church at night. The church has a modern sound system. The Church has a small meeting room with kitchen and lavatory. This is used for “Church Mice” (parent and toddlers), “Coffee Stop” (weekly Saturday morning coffee and cakes), “Special Agents” children’s work and regular bookings from the local Allotments Society and Parish Council, as well as children’s parties.

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.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

Our Sunday service pattern is well established and accommodates a 9.30am service on the first Sunday of the month with breakfast being served from 9am. Called “First Sunday”, Sally and a lay team plan and lead the service and invitations are sent out to extended church members and those who have had youngsters baptised at St Mary’s. The worship is active and the worship band lead a mix of traditional and ‘new’ worship songs. The aim is to encourage families to attend and it is a ‘seeker’ service. The breakfast is funded by donations from congregation members. The pattern of the other Sunday services remains as it was with family communion on the second Sunday, Communion on the third Sunday with the fourth Sunday Morning Prayer being led by a lay person and lay reader. We have two lay members working towards being Authorised Worship Assistants. We are very grateful to our pianist and youth band who accompany the singing at services. Overall, average attendance on a normal Sunday is about 30 adults and children, with more attending on the first Sunday of the month.

Special Agents Special Agents (children’s church) runs for the sermon slot in the second Sunday Family Communion service and extended Special Agents runs on all other Sundays aside from First Sunday. They meet in the Church Room for a simple service and activities, joining the main congregation towards the end of the main service. Numbers attending vary but there are a core of nine youngsters aged 2-11 that attend regularly.

Special Services include our Carol Service with specially formed choir, Palm Sunday Procession, Good Friday Meditation, Harvest, “Remembering Loved Ones” and Christingle.

24-7 Prayer has been located in Newton Flotman on three occasions and has had an especially profound effect on members of our congregation.

MISSION AND SERVICE

Church Mice – Church Mice is the parent and toddler group which started in September 2007. It meets on alternate Thursday mornings in the “Room for All” at St Mary’s Church, Newton Flotman and has proved to be a popular outreach. There are toys, craft activities & music for the toddlers to enjoy and occasionally toddler services to celebrate special events. For the parents, a chance to have a drink and a chat is greatly appreciated.

Partnership, is the monthly newsletter for Newton and Swainsthorpe sponsored by the PCC and edited

and distributed by volunteers.

Pastoral care: The readers and clergy are involved in taking communion to the housebound and in taking a monthly service at Olive House residential home.

Alpha – Newton Flotman supports Benefice Alpha courses.

Charity support – Thanks to Richard Smith for coordinating our wonderful team of Christian Aid collectors. There have been special collections for the Children's Society and British Legion and Harvest gifts were gratefully received at Norwich Food Bank. The Carol Service and village carol-singing raise money for local charities.

Special Me Group is a fortnightly service, led by a team headed by Wayne Doman, for those with special needs and their families. This takes place in the School.

Newton Flotman (CofE) Primary School- There are exceptionally close links between school and church through foundation governors, staff members, parents and children. Assemblies are regularly taken by Sally Gaze and lay volunteers along with Open the Book. The school holds end of term services at St. Mary's and Sally continues to lead workshops in the school prior to this to help the children prepare for the service. A monthly "Film Fun Friday" takes place during term time and there has been an after school Christian club and Messy Church. The school is the venue for annual benefice Easter and Advent workshops.

Coffee Stop Fantastic home-baking with fair-trade tea and coffee and good conversation every Saturday morning from 10-12. On an average week 25 people drop in for refreshments and a chat. Local traders often visit (eg greetings cards) and Give & Take recycling events have taken place during Coffee Stop. People's contributions have also raised funds towards practical needs of the Church, such as Christmas Tree and blinds, as well as fabric repairs.

Food Bank Regular donations are made by the church family in support of Norwich Food Bank, in conjunction with Shotesham.

Olive House – David Sochon leads monthly services of Holy Communion at Olive House, a home for the elderly.

HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

- A Deeper Life of Prayer through such initiatives as House of Prayer.
- To develop a stronger link between the Church family and the wider community.
- The recently launched "Friends of St Mary's" initiative is seeking to involve the village in looking after the fabric of "their" church.
- More in depth study the Christian faith including study of the Bible and its historical background
- Continue to grow in generosity/ giving
- Develop lay leadership through AWA.
- Grow in numbers attending worship, serving our local community and becoming disciples.
- Jean Wilson and William Ball (due to retire April 2014)
- We are currently undertaking a "Growing for the Future" Programme and further ideas are emerging for mission in the local community including wider use of the Church and Church Room.

Swainsthorpe – St Peter's Church.

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Churchwarden: Christopher Duffield

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

Congregation: Averaging 7 for a Communion service on the 1st & 3rd Sundays each month; averaging 20 for more informal services on the 2nd & 4th Sundays. This year, we are delighted to be joined by Jessie Walrond, who has moved to Norfolk to become a Rural Evangelist based in Swainsthorpe.

Church building and churchyard: Originally there were two churches in Swainsthorpe because there were two manors. St Peter's church is Saxon in origin, its round tower being a distinctive early Norman feature throughout East Anglia. A north aisle and porch were added later. The roofs have carvings of angels carrying various objects. The angels are medieval, but the wings may well be more recent replacements. The church is kept very clean and tidy, and the flowers look beautiful. At the end of 2012, the nave was re-ordered, with the Swainsthorpe Charity Trust raising the necessary funds. The pews were sold and replaced by 80 stackable chairs. The heating has been



replaced and a sound loop was fitted. The church now serves as a community centre - as there isn't a village hall in Swainsthorpe. There is a kitchen area with running water, and an outside toilet.

Finance: Following a "Growing for the Future" mission in June and July 2013, finances are much improved and all expenses should be met in 2014. English Heritage has funded an overhaul of the church tower in 2013. Funds are still needed for essential repairs to the roof of the main building.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

Holy Communion (new format) is held twice a month. As a result of the growth mission a monthly evening service of praise and a monthly breakfast café started at the end of 2013, both are well attended. The annual Christmas Carol service is very popular and often includes the Newton Flotman Christmas Choir. Other festival services are well supported. Our Songs of Praise service, is a great finale to the Art Exhibition and Flower festival, and has become an annual event.

MISSION AND SERVICE

Churchyard Conservation Scheme The churchyard is still a conservation area which is managed by Andy Haggith and his team of volunteers.

Community Centre – is hired out by the Swainsthorpe Charity Trust. The PIGs run community events in the building which has led to a more vibrant active community. The PIGs have organized the following events in 2013: a monthly youth group, Antique Valuation day, the village fete, an Art Exhibition & Flower Festival, a chilly & quiz night, a 60's night, a Christmas Coffee morning with crafts and a children's Christmas party, and Carols Around the Tree on the village green on Christmas Eve.

PCC – hold an annual Easter coffee morning with children's craft activities and an Easter egg hunt on the green. They are planning to host a Maundy Thursday supper, a harvest supper and a Christmas Coffee morning, during 2014.

Church Mice – Church Mice is a new parent and toddler group which started in December 2013. It meets on alternate Thursday mornings in the church. There are toys, craft activities & music for the toddlers to enjoy. For the parents, it's a chance to have a drink and a chat.

HOPES FOR THE FUTURE FROM OUR GROWTH PLAN

Continue to serve the village and build community spirit within it especially through developing the church building for use as community centre

Grow in prayer and discipleship ourselves

Grow in numbers attending worship and becoming disciples

Continue to welcome all who come to the church

Grow in generosity/giving

St Mary's Church, Tasburgh

Wardens: Julia Orpin and Kate Cakebread

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.

Church building. St. Mary the Virgin is a Saxon round tower church built in about 1050. The interior can accommodate a range of activities including choirs, concerts and other performances. There are 5 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.

WORSHIP & PRAYER

St Mary's Tasburgh 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.

There are two Houses of Prayer in the village and every week members of one visit homes in a different road in the village and ask for prayer requests which is well received.

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.

MISSION AND SERVICE

Coffee Pot - a meeting for cake and chat weekly provides a haven for some in the local community.

School Links 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, invitations to special church events for young families, expand village Posada project. Like Newton Flotman, we are currently reviewing our activities and vision through a "Growing for the Future" programme.



Tharston – St Mary's Church

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

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.

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 supportive villagers and church members who give very generously of their time and money.



WORSHIP

We have two 8am Holy Communion Services each month from the Book of Common Prayer. There are additional services for special occasions such as Mothering Sunday, Holy Week and Easter, Harvest and Christmas. 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.

MISSION AND SERVICE The church is open daily and many people contribute to our collection for Norwich Foodbank. The main village social events of the year are the Harvest Supper and the Church Fete. 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

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Wardens: Geoff Blyth and Lynn Roberts. As well as the Church wardens there are two assistant Churchwardens who help in the running of the church. There are rotas for sidespersons, flower arranging, cleaning of the church and the church room and the daily opening of the church.

PCC There are 13 lay members on the Parochial Church Council. It meets on average once a quarter.

Congregation: The average congregation on a communion Sunday is 30-35 people, including a small choir. The majority of people who attend are middle aged or older and there has been no Sunday school for several years. Due to an increasing number of pre-school children attending services with their parents, there are activities for them twice a month. At the moment, there are plans to have a rota of non-parents helping to look after children for the other two services.

St Mary’s Church Building and Church Room St Mary’s Church stands on the Church Green opposite the village school. It is a medieval grey flint building with a square tower, seating about 120 people. The fourteenth century tower contains a ring of eight bells (all bells were recently recast or are brand new) and the one-handed clock with sundial is dated 1794. The clock is wound by hand weekly. In recent years the organ has been rebuilt and repair work done to the roof and tower. Much of the stained glass dates back to medieval times and is some of the oldest in the county. 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 always open for the Churches Open Week.

Social Events A Fete is usually held in the summer and is the main fund-raising event. The support we receive from the parishioners at the annual church fete reflects the high regard for the church held by so many living in the village. There are also additional smaller events, such as an annual quiz, a casserole evening, and usually a bi-annual Flower Festival.

Choir and Organists: The Church has a predominately female robed Choir which sings at the Communion Services and at other special services. Kate Smith, the enthusiastic choir mistress, leads them. They practice fortnightly on a Friday either in the Church in the summer or in one of the choir members’ homes in the winter. Two excellent organists Geoffrey Blyth and Ken Elphick provide musical accompaniment at Sunday Services, weddings and funerals.

Bells: A new peal of eight bells has recently been installed in the tower. There is a band of bell ringers made up of ringers from several surrounding parishes. They practise on a Wednesday evening and try to ring for the Communion Services as well as special occasions. As there are few eight bell peals in South Norfolk several visiting bands come to the church throughout the year.

Ecumenical Links We have established strong links with the thriving non-denominational chapel in the village.

Finances. We pay our parish share in full. We encourage people to use tax efficient giving. There is concern over a decline of general 'giving' to the church and it is difficult to meet the ongoing increasing maintenance costs.

WORSHIP AND PRAYER

The church is open in daylight hours so that parishioners and visitors can have easy access to it for prayer. The PCC is delighted that support from the wider village enables this to happen and comments in the Visitors’ Book show that this is appreciated by visitors.

The communion services at 9.30 a.m. on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month involve our robed choir and are more popular than the 11 o’clock services. All Sunday services are followed by coffee and biscuits, which encourages fellowship. Special services include the annual High Mass at Candlemas and Evensong in the ruins of the old church of St Mary Magdalene, held close to her feast day. Remembrance Sunday is attended by local scouts and guides. On Mothering Sunday children are provided with flowers for their mothers, and a Christingle service is held to support the work of the Children’s Society.

In March we are starting a monthly “House of Prayer” meeting in Saxlingham to pray for our village, with the help of the cell which meets in the village.



MISSION AND SERVICE (Saxlingham cont)

Saxlingham Primary School is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled School. There are two Foundation Governors in place and an active Open the Book Team who lead collective worship every week. Occasional services for the children have been held in the church, in particular a carol service and the school has worked in partnership with the church for the annual christingle service. The school is keen to promote close links with the church.

Saxlingham Hall is a registered Nursing Home for about 40 residents, which is situated at Saxlingham Green. Rev'd David Sochon has become their recognised chaplain and visits monthly to provide communion for the residents.

Alpha: A number of Saxlingham parishioners have been active in benefice Alpha courses and are part of the cell groups.

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, church service times, a clergy letter and a report from the Churchwardens. It is also used for local advertising. 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.

Out of Parish Links. Operation Christmas Child - the filling of shoe boxes for children in Europe receives significant support from Saxlingham church. Similarly, Educate Peru, a charity founded by a Saxlingham resident receives good support

Monday Mardle – These weekly gatherings in the church room, started almost 10 years ago, allow a diverse group of people able to get together socially and transport is arranged for anyone requiring it. Their activities are listed in Contact.

HOPES FOR THE FUTURE FROM OUR GROWTH PLAN

To deepen and develop our prayer life.

To encourage more lay participation in our acts of worship.

To encourage more people to join the congregation and cells.

Explore ways of reaching younger people in the village, through links with the church school and in partnership with the chapel.



Shotesham – Church – St Mary’s and All Saints

OUR CHURCH FAMILY

Wardens: John Torbitt and Jane Blease assisted by Sandra Coles and the PCC

PCC and Congregation are enthusiastic and hardworking. Tea or coffee is served after each service this gives valuable time for extended fellowship.

Church Buildings. We have two churches in regular use.

St Mary’s dating from 1486 has a seating capacity of approximately 120 and has recently been extensively renovated. Heating is by warm air from a gas heater and a heat pump. Fresh water and mains electricity have recently been installed together with a toilet and modest kitchen facilities cleverly disguised as an oak chest for robes.

All Saints’, dating from 1192, has a seating capacity of approximately 150. It has several magnificent medieval wall paintings that have been uncovered and stabilized. 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 comprising a small meeting room, kitchen, and toilet. We encourage the use of this by the Shotesham community. The fine peal of five bells is rung regularly.

Both churches are in good serviceable condition and have fine audio facilities recently installed.

The PCC are also responsible for two churches in ruins. St Botolphs largely destroyed at the time of the Reformation and St Martins which has been derelict for generations. We are indebted to the people of Shotesham, the Lottery fund, and others who contributed to vital repairs at St Martins to preserve it for future generations and to the Conservation Group who provide muscle and expertise in the maintenance of these historic places

WORSHIP (Shotesham cont)

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 are always open to fresh ideas for our services. The annual candlelit Christmas Carol Service and Tenebrae at St Mary’s are atmospheric and well attended. Traditional country services are a feature of the worship at St Mary’s where the churchyard (with its many rare plants) is a nature conservation area of the Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

MISSION & SERVICE

The churches provide a focus for the parish social activities. Concerts are held in All Saints from time to time together with occasional activities in Trinity Hall. On Christmas Eve together with the Village Association we host Carols round the tree, then retire to the church for more carols and entertainment. These provide further 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 the Norwich Foodbank. Trinity Almshouses is supported by the church both in prayer and by visits to the residents.

Future Hopes: - We hope to use our new facilities to further develop 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. It's 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 2014 there are over 40 adults and about 25 young people involved in the Tas Valley Cell Church on a regular basis. At present cells meet on Mondays (3 youth cells), 3 cells on Wednesday eves, 2 on Thursday evening. Every other Saturday a cell-like team 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.

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. In 2013 we became a Charity and were granted 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, 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.

In 2013, we have begun a Rural Evangelism Project, enabling a young evangelist to have an internship based in one of our villages and working across Norfolk. In this we are partners with Rural Ministries and the Fountain of Life Network.

HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

- To grow in prayer - continue and build upon Prayer 24/7 weeks and the House of Prayer Initiative
- 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

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.

The staff team have in the past met regularly with the leaders of Saxlingham Chapel for prayer. It is hoped that an occasion can be found to renew a regular prayer time together, perhaps through the Saxlingham House of Prayer.

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.

Local Houses of Prayer - In 2012, 25 people 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 was provided. In 2013, this evolved in to small communities of prayer (“local houses of prayer”) who have a rhythm and pattern of prayer for blessing on their local area.

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. We are currently reviewing the membership to include focal ministers in each place including Authorised Worship Assistants.– 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 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

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 250 shoe boxes, containing gifts for Children in need internationally are sent annually 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.

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 14) and a daughter, Katie (aged 5). 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. 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.



Stipendiary Curate: Rev'd Captain Martin Hartley Martin is married to Rach and they have four children at home - Dorrie, Willow, Noah and Honey. Martin also has two grown up daughters. After studying the two years that Ridley Hall in Cambridge he was ordained in June 2013. Before ordination Martin worked as a Community Evangelist with Church Army in Bedfordshire. He is a pioneer curate which means that at least half his time will be spent reaching out beyond the bounds of traditional church with the aim of developing fresh expressions of church.



Ordained Local Minister (PTO): Rev'd 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.



Retired Priest (PTO) Rev'd Jenny Cooper - Jenny is a recently retired priest, who served as a Reader and Ordained Local Minister in the Upper Tas Valley Benefice, and now lives in Tasburgh and is fully involved with the Team. She has recently taken on the role of being a point of contact for the Local Houses of Prayer with the 'Call to Prayer' which based at St Edmund's Church Fishergate.

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 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.



Voluntary Evangelist (Jessie Walrond) Jessie is working part time with the Tas Valley Cell Church, particularly working with the community in Swainsthorpe. She is also a Speech and Language therapist. She helps rural churches across Norfolk to reach out to their communities and share their faith and love. She is currently establishing a network of Christian 18-30s who live in rural parts of the county. She loves talking, singing, cooking, eating and Jesus!



We are a happy team who laugh a lot and enjoy each other's company. We look forward to welcoming the new team vicar.