

**The Rt Revd Ian Bishop**  
Bishop of Thetford  
Baysfield House, Silfield Road  
Silfield, Wymondham NR18 9NW  
01953 528010  
bishop.thetford@dioceseofnorwich.org  
www.dioceseofnorwich.org

February 2024

## **Rector of the Yare Valley Churches benefice**

Dear colleague,

Thank you for your interest in this post, as together we seek to discern who God may be calling to serve as Rector of the Yare Valley Churches benefice. These notes are intended to supplement the information given in the Benefice Profile, adding a slightly wider perspective and with some further information.

### **The Parishes and this job**

The benefice of Yare Valley Churches describes their tradition as broadly evangelical, encompassing an appreciation of a breadth of Christian spirituality. These churches benefited from an enterprising nine-year incumbency in which significant projects took place, bringing growth and vitality as well as a strong sense of purpose and direction. The profile sets out some of the detail of this, noting some of the resources that have been put to good use, and the culture of growth that has been embedded. There is good lay leadership in the benefice and a well-resourced team. The next incumbent will want to build on these foundations (some of which have missed the presence of an incumbent) recognising the need for continual renewal of the vision as well as support and encouragement for all those active in ministry and mission. A commitment to collaborative ways of working and an ability to lead the team, prayerfully, pastorally and prophetically, are key requirements for the next incumbent.

Recently, the Rector of Yare Valley has also been licensed to the parishes of Woodbastwick and Ranworth within the deanery. This arrangement came into being because the benefice of which Woodbastwick and Ranworth form a part (Broadside benefice) proved to be financially unsustainable. The Rector of Yare Valley and the Rector of Blofield agreed to take on parts of the benefice whilst a longer-term solution is sought. In this, one might say that the Yare Valley Churches, and Brundall in particular, are modelling a rural version of a Resource Church.

It is fair to say that Woodbastwick and Ranworth (both church buildings are in reasonable condition) have been undemanding and grateful for the assistance which has been offered. Woodbastwick Church wishes to be seen as a Festival Church fulfilling only the minimum of six services a year. Ranworth is much visited and has, in the past, had a particular mission to visitors with good facilities available that are currently underused. Ranworth church currently has two services per month, one of which is lay led, and both supported from the Yare Valley Churches.

The developing relationship has been a very amicable one and will be expected to continue for the foreseeable future. However, no further additions are planned or envisaged. It is expected, therefore, that the person appointed as Rector of Yare Valley Churches will also be licensed as an assistant priest in the Broadside benefice with responsibility for Woodbastwick and Ranworth.

Central to the role of all our clergy is the need to encourage and nurture the vocation of the lay members of our churches, recognising that ministry and mission belong to all God's people. In part, this is a theological imperative, but it is also driven by the need to rethink and refocus ministry in a period that is challenging for the church as it is for every other voluntary organisation and business.

The Diocese is at an interesting and exciting point with a new vision emerging under a still relatively new diocesan bishop, and this year will see the development of strategies for the outworking of the vision across the diocese.

We would love to hear from you if you feel that God might be calling you to this new role in this beautiful part of the county, or if you have questions about this role.

### **Diocese and Deanery**

Under the leadership of the Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Revd Graham Usher, a vision is emerging for the Diocese – *Transformed by Christ: Prayerfully, Pastorally and Prophetically*. Work is currently underway on the strategies that will help us live out and deliver this vision.

Bishop Graham has written an Ethos and Culture Statement, available on the diocesan website - <https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/app/uploads/2020/12/Our-Life-Together-2021.pdf> - which gives details of our structures and the character of the Diocese.

The Yare Valley Churches benefice falls within the Archdeaconry of Norfolk, and so under the care of the Bishop of Thetford (The Rt Revd Ian Bishop) and the Archdeacon of Norfolk (The Venerable Steven Betts). The benefice is in the Blofield deanery, with a Rural Dean, the Revd Martin Greenland, and an Assistant Rural Dean, the Revd Kevin Billson. There are 5 posts of incumbent status in the Deanery, along with 1 Assistant Curate, 5 Licensed Lay Ministers (Readers) and a number of PTO clergy and Authorised Worship Assistants.

Attendance at Deanery Synod and Chapter is an expectation, and all diocesan clergy are encouraged to give some part of their time and energies to the wider life of the Diocese.

### **Housing**

A spacious, purpose-built rectory with 5 bedrooms is provided, adjacent to St Laurence Church and the St Laurence Centre and close to the village amenities and is described more fully in the Benefice Profile. Please direct questions about the house to me.

### **Patronage**

The Patrons of the Yare Valley Churches benefice are the Bishop of Norwich and The Martyrs Memorial and Church of England Trust.

### **Enquiries, Applications and Interviews**

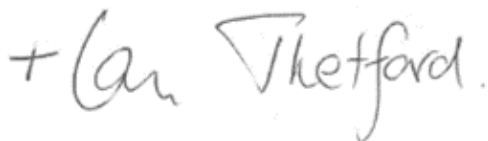
An application can be made through our Diocesan website, at [Vacancies - Diocese of Norwich](#).

The form, after we have removed the confidential declarations for safeguarding and other purposes will be forwarded to the Patron(s) if appropriate.

The closing date for applications is 29<sup>th</sup> February, with interviews to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> March.

Any priest wanting an informal discussion before deciding whether to apply is welcome to be in touch by telephone or e-mail with me (01603 528010 or [bishop.thetford@dioceseofnorwich.org](mailto:bishop.thetford@dioceseofnorwich.org))

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Ian Thetford." The signature is written in a cursive style.

**The Rt Revd Ian Bishop**

Bishop of Thetford