



**A PLACE  
FOR  
EVERYONE**



**PARISH PROFILE  
SPRING 2024**

**Thank you** for taking the time to look at our profile. We hope it gives you a sense of who we are at Yare Valley Churches, where we are and what we hope to be, and that the information we have included will help you discern whether God is calling you to this place. For our part, we are prayerfully seeking a new incumbent as the next chapter opens for our parish and community.

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## Who we are

The parish of Yare Valley Churches contains three churches, two villages and some beautiful Norfolk countryside, our outlook is broadly evangelical and we worship in a variety of mutually supportive congregations across the parish. We believe strongly in the importance of building relationships within our communities, as a basis for service and for mission, and over the years have developed many opportunities and spaces in which this can happen. We aim to encourage the gifts and active involvement in church life of every member of the church.

We are an Eco Church, having being awarded the Bronze level award in December 2021 and are working towards the Silver level. We are committed to work to protect the environment and minimise the harmful impact we have on it, and to take concern for the environment and God’s creation into account in all aspects of church life.

During our period of vacancy which began at Easter 2022 we have continued to work as a team to maintain a regular service pattern and continue to remain active in our community, focusing on mission and outreach.

We have an informal partnership which is reviewed annually (and additionally when a new incumbent is appointed) to encourage and help resource the nearby parishes of Ranworth and Woodbastwick, who are without clergy support.

## Where we are

The parish lies immediately to the east of the city of Norwich and is centred on the busy and growing village of Brundall. This is where the Rectory, the church of St Laurence and our St Laurence Centre meeting room can be found. All Saints church is in Postwick, which is two miles to the west of Brundall and looks to Brundall for many of its day to day needs while retaining a strong sense of community. Our third church building, St Michael and All Angels Braydeston, stands among fields a short walk to the east of Brundall, with views from its lovely churchyard down to the water meadows of the Yare Valley below.

For more information about our villages and our buildings see page 11.

## Becoming Rector of Yare Valley Churches

### Our hopes for the future

- Growing younger and more diverse while valuing longstanding members.
- A thriving, prayerful, faithful worshipping fellowship within church.
- Serving effectively in the wider community.
- Growing in numbers, depth of faith and discipleship.
- Continuing to develop as a welcoming church, being firmly centred in our communities.

### Key Characteristics of a new incumbent

- A good shepherd to all God's people in our parish, leading us to meet the pastoral needs of our community.
- An inspirational, prayerful, and compassionate disciple of Christ, open to the Holy Spirit.
- Someone who is excited by the opportunities and challenges of leading the Yare Valley Churches.
- An appetite to lead different styles of worship.
- Be community minded and work to develop relationships throughout the local area.
- Lead, encourage and build the staff and ministry teams.
- Someone who is approachable and a good listener.
- Someone who can communicate well with all ages.
- Someone who can delegate and share responsibilities.

### Support we will offer

Yare Valley Churches is a welcoming parish which is keen to support our Rector as they enter their new role and help us achieve even more together. We have a ministry team of one Licensed Lay Minister and seven Authorised Lay Ministers. The Rector will be supported by a Leadership Team of five (including two Church wardens) and a PCC that meets regularly and is active in the life of the parish. We are fortunate to have a part-time Resource Manager (paid) and a part-time Parish Administrator (voluntary) in addition to a number of active volunteers.

## Our worship

We recognise that communal worship, prayer and study is vital to us as individuals seeking an ever-closer relationship with God and as a missional church. Our aim has been to develop a pattern of worship across the parish that is Christ focussed and accessible to everyone, that provides a choice of styles and nurtures signs of new growth, and that can be sustained by the resources available to us.

During this period of vacancy we have consolidated some of our services. We currently offer a BCP service with a regular congregation of about eight and a Morning Worship with a congregation of approximately 50. The weekly mid-week service flows into one of our Community Cafés and has proved to be a good way back to church life for some. A monthly Forget Me Not service for those on the dementia pathway and their carers is linked to another of our regular cafés.

Each of the services has a distinct identity but all aim to be welcoming and accessible. Music is provided by our organist, or iSing.

The church at Braydeston is a Festival Church and the services there work well as special opportunities to invite the wider community to join us.

During our vacancy period a group of parishioners meet informally in Postwick Church on two Sundays every month for coffee, fellowship, and prayer. Our 2023 Carol Service was held in Postwick Church on Christmas Eve and was attended by over 100 people.

### Home groups

Beyond the church walls, we have an active Home Group network which meets through the week to study the bible, to pray together and to support one another practically and pastorally.

### Prayer

In the Yare Valley Churches prayer is at the heart of what we do. As a church we have opportunities for prayer & study at occasional retreat days, as well as a monthly Parish Prayer Day to focus on prayer for the needs of the parish and the community.

In the past year we have reinstated Prayer Ministry after our main Sunday service, provided by a small team of volunteers. This is a valuable opportunity for people who wish to be supported in prayer, which had been paused during lockdown restrictions.

## PATTERN OF WORSHIP

**Sunday 8:30am - BCP Morning Prayer or Holy Communion on 1st & 3rd Sunday at St Laurence, Brundall**

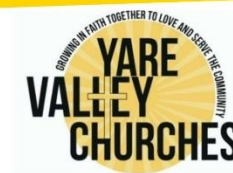
**Sunday 10am - Morning Worship with Active Kids at St Laurence, Brundall**

**Tuesday 2pm - Forget Me Not dementia friendly service on 1st Tuesday of month at St Laurence, Brundall**

**Thursday 9:30am - Midweek Worship at St Laurence**

### Festival Services

- Harvest Festival 2pm on 15th October at St Michaels & All Angels, Braydeston
- Christmas Eve Service 10am at All Saints, Postwick



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*2023 Worship Pattern*

In addition, for a good while now a group of people have undertaken to pray confidentially in their own time and place for the needs of others, in response to requests for prayer which are passed on by email to the team by a co-ordinator.

## Our outreach and mission

We are a parish committed to growth, to being a church of missionary disciples and to being in tune with the diocesan vision of being a prayerful, pastoral and prophetic community. We seek to build on past experience but also to be open to new ways in which to turn this vision into reality.

As part of the learning and discerning process we have been using the Leading your Church into Growth (LyCiG) material for a number of years. We work alongside volunteers and staff members working in our outreach cafés to make the most of opportunities for intentional faith-sharing and invitations to take the next step. We are also working to boost the confidence of the whole church family to be more missional and invitational.

We aim to have an Alpha or similar course every year. In our most recent course participants, drawn principally from the wider community, took part in the six-week course. There were some amazing conversations with seeds sown and participants enabled to travel further on their faith journeys.

### Community Pantry



In response to the cost-of-living crisis of Winter 2022-3, we provided food boxes for families in need, liaising with the local school and nursery. Due to demand this has now evolved into a permanent Community Pantry scheme which sadly continues to be well used. It is stocked from congregation donations, community donations and the local Co-Operative shop. We are in the process of applying for grants to improve and strengthen our offering.

### Our work with children and young people

We aim to cater for all ages at our services. Our contact with young families on a Sunday morning is low and we would love this to develop. We are encouraged by the contacts we made in the past through our Sports Ministry work and our toddler and youth outreach, and we always have an enthusiastic response to our Summer Holiday Club for primary age children and to special services such as the Christmas Crib service.



Our weekly Toddler Café is very well supported and much appreciated by local families.

### Our 'café culture'



Our cafés have become an important part of our mission and outreach, catering for all ages from the very young to the most mature in years. We have the Toddler Café, the Community Café, which meets on two days a week and operates at parkrun regularly via our mobile catering pod, and the Forget-me-not Café (for those on the dementia pathway and for those who care for them). In the recent past we have also successfully run youth cafés.

These cafés are largely staffed by volunteers, who together with our Resource Manager also provide transport for less mobile users in the church vehicle, purchased by the parish to enable us to support the community.

We were nominated and shortlisted for one of the Broadland Community at Heart Awards in October 2021 and were delighted to be runners up in the Community Group of the Year category, highlighting especially the work of our Community Cafés and our Bus Pass Holiday Club.

In our cafés we hope to offer a useful service to the community by bringing people of all



ages together and helping to reduce loneliness and isolation. For the past few years our cafés have participated in the Warm Spaces initiative. The cafés provide opportunities for pastoral work and are also places of missional opportunity (faith conversations, invitations to greater involvement in other

church activities or to appropriate services and 'stepping stones' towards Alpha).

### Work with older people

We have a team of commissioned Anna Chaplains and Friends who minister to the older people in our community and those on the dementia pathway. They offer person-centred spiritual care for older people of strong, little or no faith. This small but dedicated team journey together working to grow and develop their ministry with older people in the parish, taking regular worship, into our four residential care homes, offering pastoral care and end of life care and support to the elderly and their families, reaching approximately 50 people per month. They also lead our weekly Forget Me Not Café with activities for those on the dementia pathway and their carers, and our special monthly service in church for those who attend the café.



Post Covid we became aware that many in our older community were nervous to return to any normality of life so the Anna Chaplaincy team, together with our Resource Manager, launched Bus Pass Holiday Club in August 2021 as a safe place where our older folk can enjoy a week of social activities, lovely lunches, and outings. The emphasis is on fun, friendship and fellowship with their peer group, and the week ends with a Songs of Praise

service in Church. This event has now been running successfully for three summers and the 2024 programme is in the process of being planned.



Bishop Graham, a keen supporter of Anna Chaplaincy ministry, has ensured their presence at Diocesan Synod meetings and it was the subject of one of his recent teaching mornings. One of our Anna Chaplains is the Diocese of Norwich Anna Chaplaincy Convenor which falls within the remit of Archdeacon Keith James. She is responsible for ensuring that the 15 Anna Chaplains and Friends across the diocese are supported both pastorally and in the work they do,

and that their needs are being met. She also encourages and supports those who are exploring whether this ministry is what God is calling them to do.

This is a growing ministry responding to an ever-growing need.

### Safer Churches

Yare Valley Churches is committed to being a safer parish, and the PCC has fully committed to both Safeguarding for Children and Vulnerable Adults, and to Safer Recruiting across our Parish.

We are striving to make sure that staff and volunteers have appropriate Safeguarding training and that all appropriate checks have been carried out. We have a Safeguarding Team comprising two Safeguarding Officers, and administration support provided by our Parish Administrator. Our Parish Administrator and Resource Manager can both undertake DBS checks locally.

## Our people

### Resource Manager

We employ a part-time Resource Manager who is presently line-managed by the chair of the OUT subcommittee. They oversee some of our church administration with a particular focus on our café activities and are responsible for their safe running, compliance with relevant food safety legislation and managing the volunteer rotas to ensure things run smoothly. They assist with managing activities within the Parish and contribute in various ways to the successful running of other operations including managing our Parish vehicle. The Resource Manager and her team of volunteers have been able to ensure that our cafés are able to run self-sufficiently on a regular, well publicized schedule.



### Parish Administrator

We are fortunate to have a volunteer Parish Administrator who is presently line-managed by the chair of the OF subcommittee and who works two mornings a week in the Parish Office and remotely at other times. They manage parish communications and are often the initial point of contact for queries. Their work also includes maintaining our computerised rota system and contacts database, supporting our safeguarding processes, and assisting with other work as the need arises.

### Ministry Experience Scheme

Yare Valley Churches welcomes participants from the Ministry Experience Scheme, and in 2022 supported a participant in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year by covering their housing costs. The scheme benefited us all and the PCC has expressed a continuing interest in the Ministry Experience Scheme in the future.

## Our buildings

Within the Yare Valley Churches Parish, we have a range of different buildings to support both our worship and our mission, including 3 worship centres that have historical and archaeological significance and are at the centre of the communities they support. We are mindful of our responsibilities to maintain these buildings and their role in worship, without becoming consumed by their upkeep. It is more important that our buildings serve us than we serve our buildings.

Maintenance and upkeep of our buildings and churchyards is delegated to a subcommittee, which reports to the PCC and manages scheduled work, including annual testing of equipment and services. Each worship centre has a maintenance plan in place for regular upkeep throughout the year, which is revised with every quinquennial inspection by the Fabric Officer in conjunction with our network of trusted contractors. The buildings generally are in a good state of repair with no major structural concerns. Volunteer working parties organised by the Churchyard Manager attend to churchyard maintenance in the Spring and Autumn.

A short description of each building is provided below, more details available on request.

### St Laurence, Brundall



The church sits in the middle of Brundall, close to the village pub and shops. Parts of the Church date back to c. 1250 and the font is the only lead font in Norfolk. Pew seating is available for up to 70 plus extra seating in the extension (maximum 120), with television screens and AV setup for technology-led worship. The organ is in regular use. A day-timer lock has been fitted to enable the church to remain open daily.

Brundall is also the location for the Rectory and the Saint Laurence Centre, and serves as the base for the church vehicle and catering pod.

### All Saints, Postwick



Mostly dating from 13-14<sup>th</sup> century and restored in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the present building is essentially Norman/Gothic. Pew seating is available for 70. A day-timer lock has been fitted to enable the church to remain open daily.

### St Michael and all Angels, Braydeston (Festival Church)



St. Michael's stands on a hill-top, surrounded by rolling countryside. It is not unusual for an Easter Sunrise service to be interrupted by the sounds of cattle! The church dates primarily from the 13th century and has been classified as a Festival Church. Pew seating is available for 50. A day-timer lock has been fitted and the church is a popular attraction in the summer with walkers.

### St. Laurence Centre (Brundall)



The St. Laurence Centre is a self-contained, purpose-built space within the churchyard at Brundall. It consists of a large meeting space with tables and chairs, a commercial kitchen, and an accessible toilet. It is used by groups both inside and outside the church community, raising income for the PCC and raising the profile of the church within the village.

### Rectory (Brundall)



A spacious, purpose-built rectory adjacent to St. Laurence Church and the St. Laurence Centre is provided, close to the village amenities. Downstairs there is plenty of living space. There is a study with its own external door, which was used by the previous incumbent as a Parish Office. The Rectory has 5 bedrooms and gas-central heating. A garage and generous parking at the front of the property complement an

ample private garden to the rear which leads into the churchyard.

A garden study with electricity, heating and phone connection has been installed in the garden and was used by the previous incumbent as a study space.

## Our finances

Our finances are generally sound, enabling us to meet our commitments and to have the confidence to step into new missional activities. The pandemic years were disruptive, but a good proportion of our voluntary income comes from regular giving by standing order by

members of our congregations and we are actively exploring ways to further strengthen our position. Regular (annual) teaching on Stewardship has been the norm for the parish.

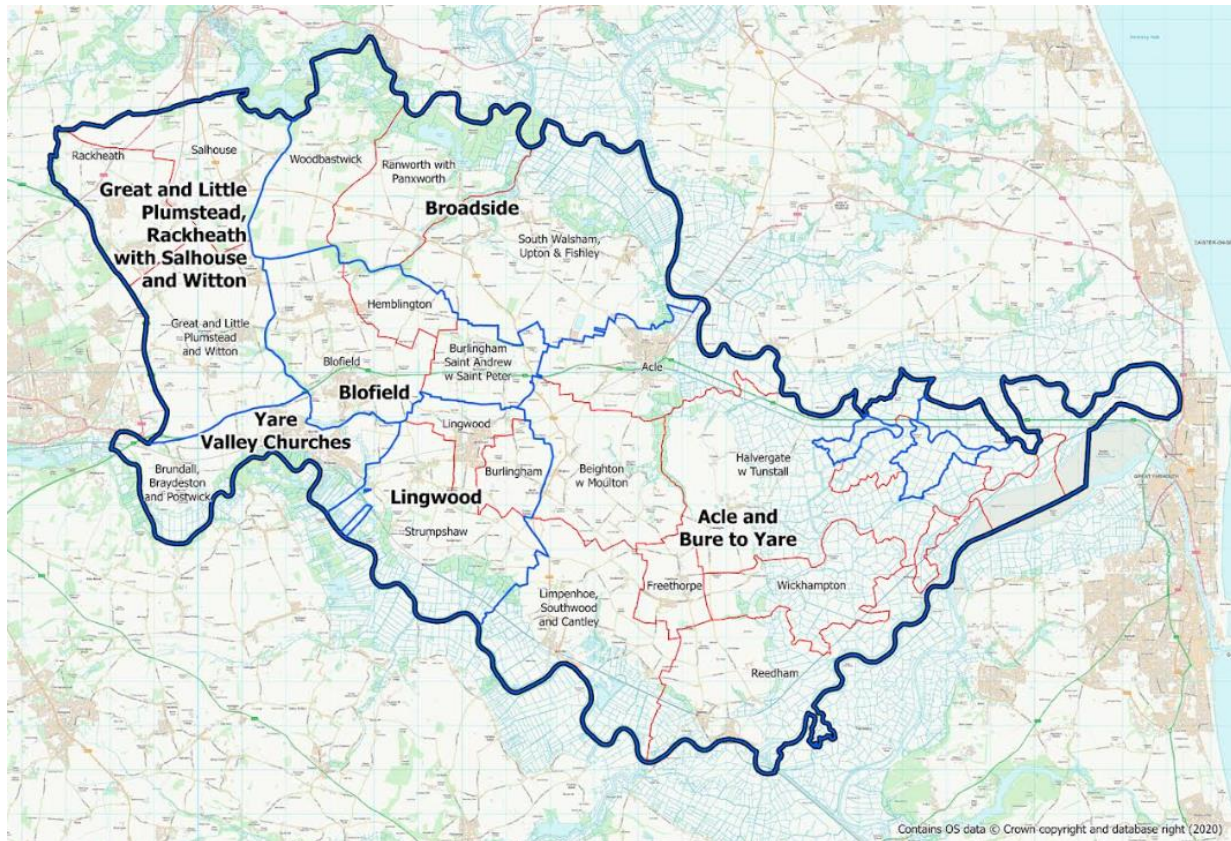
Our various café activities are self-financing.

We have one paid member of staff on our payroll. Our Resource Manager is contracted to work 15 hours per week.

Parish accounts can be made available to any interested applicant.

## Our villages, schools, and surroundings

The parish is part of the Deanery of Blofield and falls within the civil district of Broadland. The River Yare forms the parish's southern boundary with the land lying directly adjacent to the river falling into the executive area of the Broads Authority, which has National Park status.



*Map of Blofield Deanery*

Both Brundall and Postwick are very close to the A47, which runs more or less along the northern border of the parish and gives good access to both Norwich and beyond via the A11, M11 and A14, and to the Broads, the Norfolk coast and Great Yarmouth heading east.

As well as the road links there is a reliable train service from Brundall's two train stations to Norwich, the coast, London, cross country to Birmingham and beyond, and a direct service to Stansted. Bus routes through Brundall connect with local villages and into Norwich and its bus/coach station serving various destinations.

### Brundall

The civil parish has an area of 4.39 km<sup>2</sup> and at the 2021 census had a population of 6,217. The age breakdown of inhabitants is:

- 14.3% under 15s
- 8.0% young people aged 15-24
- 48.7% persons aged 25-64
- 24.9% persons aged 65-84

The village is well-provided with community facilities. The largest is Brundall Memorial Hall which comprises an indoor sports hall, meeting rooms and the Parish Council offices. A wide range of clubs and societies meet at the Memorial Hall: sporting and fitness groups, groups for shared interests and social groups. The parish uses it for social activities such as quiz nights and our harvest barn dance. Next to it is the largest of Brundall's children's play parks and a skate park. YVC have a good working relationship with the Memorial Hall, and our outgoing Rector was chairman of the board of Trustees. There is also a Scout Hut in the village, as well as a Library. In addition to St Laurence Church there is an independent church which meets at Westfield Mission.



*Parish Quiz Evening at Brundall Memorial Hall*

For the outdoor minded there is a thriving allotment community on Postwick Lane, next to the recently established Countryside Park, which is the venue for Brundall's popular parkrun. At the Braydeston end of the village lies the parish nature reserve of Cremer's Meadow. Footpaths from the village lead into the local countryside. There are several slipways for launching boats/canoes within the village and access for fishing at Church Fen a couple of minutes stroll from the Rectory.

Brundall Sports Hub is a new multi-sport 3G pitch with floodlights and on-site parking, containing a community building complete with changing rooms and a multi-use indoor studio/community space (currently under construction). The Sports Hub plays host to various sports clubs, teams and coaching sessions within the local community and surrounding villages.

The village has a health centre and a dentist, and there are four care homes for older people within the parish.

Brundall's shops include two supermarkets, a post office, a pharmacy, a hardware store/garden centre, hairdressers and beauty salons, and a dry cleaners. There is a wide range of pubs, cafés, restaurants and takeaways, and a physiotherapist, both in the village centre and in the riverside area.

Positioned in the Broads area, the village has thriving boatbuilding and boat hire businesses.

### Postwick

The village is a small but growing community, with presently about 300 on the District Parish electoral roll. In the last five years a number of newly built residences, 10 bungalows and 4 properties for social housing have been built.

In spite of its proximity to the A47 and Norwich, the village retains a feeling of tranquil seclusion. It has beautiful open space with a number of sports clubs and other groups making use of the sports pitches and facilities at the village hall, which flourishes as an events venue. A busy Social Club, which is a sub-committee of the Parish Council, meets once a month. The popular coffee shop runs on Tuesdays. The library bus calls once a month. There is a very active 'Friends of Postwick Church' group which has raised money through a variety of events for the upkeep of the building over the last 15 years.

### Schools and further education

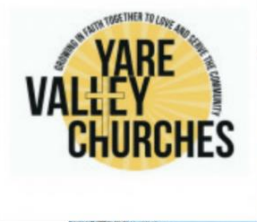
There is a primary school (catering for children across the parish) in Brundall, a nursery and pre-school. School buses take secondary school students from both villages either to Thorpe St Andrew School & Sixth Form on the edge of Norwich or to Acle Academy, and there is a wide choice of other schools catering for all ages in Norwich.

City College in Norwich delivers a wide range of courses for Year 12 and above. Norwich University of the Arts is in central Norwich and the campus of The University of East Anglia is situated on the western edge of the city.

# Appendix

Weblinks to further information about our churches and communities

- Yare Valley Churches: <https://yarevalleychurches.org.uk>
- Yare Valley Churches on Facebook: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/yarevalleychurches>
- Brundall Parish Council <https://brundallpc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk>
- Brundall Memorial Hall: <https://brundallmemorialhall.co.uk/>
- Brundall Ward population statistics:  
<https://www.norfolkinsight.org.uk/population/reports/#/view-report/0e80000fe3664109b42bc3010a02ab7c/E05005760/G7>
- Brundall useful links: <https://brundallpc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/useful-links/>
- Brundall Primary School: <https://www.brundallprimary.com/>
- Postwick Village website: <http://www.postwick.co.uk/oak/>
- Postwick with Witton Parish Council: <https://postwickwithwittonparishcouncil.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/>
- LyCiG: <https://www.leadingyourchurchintogrowth.org.uk/>
- Anna Chaplaincy: <https://www.annachaplaincy.org.uk/>
- Norwich Diocese: <https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org>
- Ranworth Church: <https://www.ranworthchurch.com>
- Woodbastwick Parish Council, incorporating Ranworth and Panxworth: <https://woodbastwickpc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/>



St Laurence, Brundall



St Michael and all Angels, Braydeston



All Saints, Postwick