

# The Hunstanton and Saxon Shore Benefice

## Priest-in-Charge

## What is the role?

The Hunstanton and Saxon Shore Benefice are looking for an experienced priest to lead the eight unique, but co-existing, churches.

They stretch along, or near to the beautiful north-west Norfolk coast from the Victorian seaside town of Hunstanton through picturesque villages until you reach the village of Burnham Deepdale, a distance of eight miles.

## Our Vision

- To be prayerful, vibrant and welcoming communities of faith.
- To actively seek God's will and to grow in faith together.
- To be outward looking in bearing witness to the Gospel of Jesus.
- To nurture a sense of unity within the benefice.
- To support our communities through our actions and in our prayers.



## What is the task?

- To encourage us to live lives rooted in Christ through prayer and worship.
- Serve the whole community through pastoral and kindly care.
- Be visible, accessible and resilient.
- In a collaborative way, manage and motivate good supportive teams amongst the clergy and laity.
- Be a regular known and supportive presence in our CofE Primary Academy and build on relationships within schools and with the young people of the area.



## Who are we looking for?

The group seeks a priest with experience of a multi-parish benefice who will work together with the Assistant Priest, retired clergy and laity to:

- Take time to discover what is important to us now, but be able to work creatively for the future by providing encouraging leadership to deepen our prayer and spiritual life.
- Be flexible with all styles of worship and comfortable in their application.
- Embrace the opportunities and challenges of a rural and town ministry in this holiday area with energy and enthusiasm.
- Minister to the pastoral needs of the community by encouraging and supporting us in our efforts to reach out to those with needs who include the many isolated elderly.
- Grow and develop our links with families and young people.
- Offer flair and imagination in support of outreach programmes and events, both church and secular, for example collaboration with Hunstanton Town Council and at times with Parish Councils, also with local businesses and charities such as the RNLI and the Hunstanton and District Foodbank so that the uncommitted will see the relevance of the gospel, the church and faith for their lives today.
- Encourage and grow stronger links with other Christian denominations in the local area. There are Roman Catholic, Methodist, Union and other Christian communities within the benefice.



## Location

Our group of eight churches is situated in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in North West Norfolk.

- The area enjoys miles of sandy beaches and working harbours, as well as vast areas of marshland, which are internationally important in supporting a huge variety of wildlife. This is a bird watchers paradise.
- Within the benefice there are 2 outstanding links golf courses.
- The largest centre of population is the west facing seaside resort of Hunstanton, which is complemented by delightful villages.
- Within the villages the population is heavily weighted to the retired and second home owners, while Hunstanton has a more balanced age profile. However throughout the benefice many young families are facing financial hardship. Many have to travel long distances for employment or are in seasonal zero-hours work.
- In contrast, Hunstanton and the villages are visited by many day visitors and those on holiday, notably from east and central parts of England. People return year after year to caravans, campsites and holiday homes to find rest and relaxation in a place that holds special memories for them. Hunstanton becomes a lively seaside town, which includes a theatre offering a variety of shows throughout the year. It is also a big attraction for motor bikers.



## Our Churches

The churches within our benefice date from the pre-conquest through to the Victorian period.

All of the churches are located at the heart of their communities and have been well maintained over the years. A service is held at least twice a month in every church, with some holding a service every Sunday. Alternative styles of worship are used at services such as beach church, lifeboat services, harvest festivals and pet services. We encourage the use of our church buildings for concerts such as The Shanty Men, the Staithe Singers and the annual Deepdale Festival. At times such as Open Gardens and a regular Flower Festival the churches are at the heart of these events. All of our churches are open every day to welcome visitors.

Brief details of each of the 8 churches are as follows.



## St Edmund's Hunstanton

The church is Grade II listed and was the vision of the Le Strange family and was largely built in the 1860s to meet the needs of the growing population of the newly created Victorian town of New Hunstanton.

The church is one of the prominent Victorian buildings in the heart of the town and is surrounded by a large church grounds, which are enjoyed by the many visitors and holidaymakers particularly during the summer season. There is a church hall immediately adjacent to the church, which has a kitchen and toilet facilities. The hall is the base for the Hunstanton and District Foodbank and is used for other church/non-church functions. The church has a regular congregation of around 18 to 25 people. The church is open on a daily basis and we get many compliments on the beauty and peace of the place.

## St Mary's Old Hunstanton

The church dates back to the 14th century and many features remain today, including the impressive Norman font.

In Victorian times various "improvements" were carried out. The Le Strange family, responsible for much of the development of Hunstanton Town, and who occupied Hunstanton Hall, were patrons of the church and tombstones and plaques remain. The church is particularly proud of its Rood Screen, experts regarding it as one of the finest, and this was restored/renovated in 2022.

Services are held every Sunday with a current average of approximately 25. This number swells greatly at Christmas, Easter and Remembrance Sunday. The church has close links with the Emergency Services with an annual Carol Service, in recent years taking place at the RNLI station on the beach. The local Glebe Prep School traditionally hold their Leavers' Service and Carol Service at the church. The church is the focal point of the Old Hunstanton Flower Festival held in July. The church is open to the public every day and ALL ARE WELCOME.

## St Andrew's Ringstead

Much of the church dates back to the early 14th century. Today a small, but active, congregation worship together each Sunday.

The "Friends of St Andrew's" work hard to finance the maintenance of the church building and to keep its equipment up to date and in working order.

## St Mary the Virgin Holme-next-the-Sea

The church is close to a stunning beach and surrounded by nature reserves and farmland.

It is 12th century in origin and a Grade 1 listed building. The nave and chancel are Georgian and unadorned and simple. It is well maintained. The church has 5 bells. A wonderful team of flower arrangers keep the church beautifully decorated especially at festival times. There is a toilet and small kitchenette in the inner porch enabling refreshments to be offered after services and at special services and events. Attendees, averaging 21 come from the local mainly retired population, second home owners and holiday makers. There is an active PCC who with other regular parishioners participate in services.

A family fun event is held in the village every Easter Monday and centres on the church. The annual Open Gardens in July and the church Fete in August cement the sense of community in the village as well as bringing many people from the surrounding area. The church is supported by The Help Holme Church Group whose members enthusiastically fundraise for the fabric of the church putting on social events for the benefit of the parish and community at large. Our finances are currently secure. Major restoration work on the tower is scheduled to take place this year. There is a popular, family friendly pub, The White Horse with an attractive play area for children.

## All Saints Thornham

The church lies in the centre of the village and is Grade I listed dating back to the 13th century.

It has the benefit of a kitchen and toilet and has a welcome area with comfortable seating at the back of church with tea and coffee making facilities. There are toilet facilities in the church. The churchyard is large, but well maintained. There are 8 allotments at the side of the church and a community garden for use by both visitors and villagers. The regular congregation of 8 to 15 is boosted at Easter when the church is usually full with second home owners and visitors.

## St Mary's Titchwell

Titchwell is a village of some 50 houses on the edge of the coastal saltmarshes. It has a large RSPB reserve, 2 hotels and a small round-towered church of Saxon origins.

St Mary's has been a place of worship for over a thousand years. Visitors regularly describe it as peaceful, prayerful, calm and welcoming.

The church has a thriving community, supporting 6 services and 4 "Stillness" groups every month. Services include 2 Book of Common Prayer communion services at 8:30am every month. The congregation are a group of friends, who look forward to sustaining the growth that has been achieved over the last 2 years.



## St Mary the Virgin Brancaster

The principle structures of this church are the typical 14th century arcading and the grandiose 15th century tower, although evidence has been found that a church existed in Brancaster in the 4th/5th century.

The church has a welcome area at the back with tea and coffee making facilities. The small regular congregation is boosted at Easter and Christmas by visitors and second home owners. The "Friends of St Mary's" help to maintain the fabric of the church.

## St Mary's Burnham Deepdale

The church serves the joint villages of Burnham Deepdale and Brancaster Staithe (not to be confused with Brancaster).

It has been a place of worship since the 11th century as witnessed by its Saxon round tower. Other notable features include its Norman square font and its collection of medieval glass. Currently we have 3 services per month – 2 communion services following Common Worship and a well-attended informal Family Service. Our annual Sea Service marks the connection of the village with the harbour and its fishing and recreational activities. We are often complimented on the warmth of our welcome to worshippers and to those who come to find peace and quiet, or to just pop in for a visit. We have a churchyard which is still open.

For more detailed information about each church please use the link below to view the benefice website.

**[saxonshorebenefice.co.uk](https://saxonshorebenefice.co.uk)**

There are also other informative websites which you will find listed on the benefice website.

## Our Schools

**Brancaster CofE Primary Academy** has a roll of about 35 children and is part of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust with Docking Primary School under an Executive Headteacher. The school is graded as “Good” by OFSTED. The Assistant Priest regularly takes assemblies and RE lessons in the school and St Mary’s Brancaster hosts the school’s annual Carol Service. Titchwell church also holds the school Christingle Service.

**Smithdon High School** in Hunstanton has approximately 625 pupils aged 11 to 16 and forms part of the West Norfolk Academies Trust. The school has recently been graded as “Good” following its OFSTED inspection. The previous incumbent was welcomed at the school and was a governor.

**Hunstanton Primary School** is a single form entry infant & junior school over seven classes with approximately 25 children per class. It is very welcoming of Christians and the Benefice Assistant Priest takes assemblies on at least a monthly basis and is a governor. St Edmund’s Hunstanton hosts the school’s Carol Service.

**Glebe House School and Nursery** is an Independent School for children from 6 months to 13 years and comprises about 170 children. Boarding is available from age 7, but, as there is no weekend provision, the pupils are all quite local. St Mary’s Old Hunstanton hosts the school’s Carol Service and Leavers’ Service.

**Some children from the parishes attend secondary schools** in Wells-next-the-Sea (11-16), Fakenham (11-18), King’s Lynn (11-18) & the College of West Anglia in King’s Lynn (post 16).



## Sundays with us

Please see the service rota below for a typical month.

**CW** – Common Worship / **BCP** – Book of Common Prayer / **HC** – Service of Holy Communion / **MP** – service of Morning Prayer

**EP** – Service of Choral Evensong BCP / **Family** – Shorter informal service

Date	Church	Time	Service	Liturgy
<b>Thursday 4th January</b> Midweek communion	Hunstanton	10.00 am	HC	
<b>Sunday 7th January</b> Epiphany	Holme-next-the-Sea	9.00 am	HC	BCP
	Ringstead	9.00 am	HC	CW
	Titchwell	10.30 am	HC for families	CW
	Brancaster	10.45 am	HC (said)	CW
	Old Hunstanton	10.45 am	HC	CW
	Hunstanton	10.45 am	MP	CW
<b>Thursday 11th January</b> Midweek communion	Ringstead	10.00 am	HC	
<b>Sunday 14th January</b> Second after Epiphany	Titchwell	8.30 am	HC	BCP
		10.30 am	HC for families	CW
	Thornham	9.00 am	MP	CW
	Burnham Deepdale	9.00 am	HC	CW
	Ringstead	9.00 am	HC	CW
	Old Hunstanton	10.45 am	HC	CW
	Hunstanton	10.45 am	HC	CW
	Brancaster	4.00 pm	EP	BCP

Date	Church	Time	Service	Liturgy
<b>Thursday 18th January</b> Midweek communion	Hunstanton	10.00 am	HC	
<b>Sunday 21st January</b> Third after Epiphany	Holme-next-the-Sea	9.00 am	HC	CW
	Ringstead	9.00 am	HC	CW
	Burnham Deepdale	10.15 am	Family	CW
	Titchwell	10.30 am	MP family	CW
	Old Hunstanton	10.45 am	MP	CW
	Hunstanton	10.45 am	HC	CW
<b>Conversion of Paul 25th</b>	Hunstanton	10.45 am	HC	CW
<b>Thursday 25th January</b> Midweek communion	Ringstead	10.00 am	HC	
<b>Sunday 28th January</b> Candlemas	Titchwell	8.30 am	HC	BCP
		10.30 am	HC for families	CW
	Thornham	9.00 am	HC	CW
	Burnham Deepdale	9.00 am	HC	CW
	Ringstead	9.00 am	MP	CW
	Hunstanton	10.45 am	HC	CW
	Old Hunstanton	10.45 am	HC	CW

## Other Regular Events

An Evening Prayer service, hosted on Zoom, is held at 6pm each Sunday.

This is led by either clergy or laity and is attended by people from across the Benefice.

On the 2nd Sunday in the month there is an Evening Prayer service at 4pm in St Mary's Brancaster.

Name of Parish	Average Sunday Attendance	Number on Electoral Roll	Number of Weddings	Number of Baptisms	Number of Funerals	Parish Share 2023 £	Parish Share Paid 2023 £	Is there a Churchyard and is it open?
St Edmund's Hunstanton	20	64	0	0	0	19,495	14,042	No
St Mary's Old Hunstanton	25	54	3	0	12	22,987	22,987	Yes and Yes
St Andrew's Ringstead	10	26	1	1	5	12,795	12,795	Yes and Yes
St Mary the Virgin Holme-next-the-Sea	17	20	0	0	1	11,034	11,034	Yes and Yes
All Saints Thornham	8 - 15	17	4	2	2	9,110	9,110	Yes and Yes
St Mary's Titchwell	30	15	1	0	2	5,576	5,576	Yes and Yes
St Mary the Virgin Brancaster	10	20	0	1	6	5,783	5,783	Yes and Yes
St Mary's Burnham Deepdale	17	+30	3	1	3	15,312	15,312	Yes and Yes

## During the week

Our Assistant Priest and clergy enable mid-week communion services to be held in several of the churches.

Innovative lay led worship such as 'Stillness on the Saxon Shore' is held at Titchwell every Friday.

"Making Space": meets every Wednesday between 10am and 12noon in St Edmund's church hall. This church led initiative offers a safe and welcoming environment for the whole community in which to meet and chat. All are welcome. Attendance numbers vary from week to week, but there are usually between 10 and 20 people from the local church congregations and from the wider communities. Visitors to the town often drop in particularly during the summer months.

"Making Time" also meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month between 10am and 12noon in Ringstead Village Hall. This church led initiative offers a safe and welcoming environment for the whole community in which to meet and chat. All are welcome. Attendance numbers vary from week to week, but there are usually between 10 and 20 people from the local church congregations and from the wider communities. Visitors to the town often drop in particularly during the summer months.

In Brancaster Village Hall every Wednesday morning a group of villagers meet for coffee and a chat, which has been a regular event for many years.

There is involvement in local initiatives such as "hot spot" lunches which take place monthly in Brancaster village hall during the winter months.



Interaction happens often with secular organisations such as leading the prayers at Town Council meetings and facilitating thanksgiving for the emergency services.

The Hunstanton and District Foodbank is supported by volunteers and donations from our churches.

Thornham churchyard benefits from 8 well used allotments and a community garden for use by locals and visitors.

Deepdale church offers a series of sociable Lent lunches.

## What we can offer you

### Clergy/administrative assistance

- Our ministry team consists of an Assistant Priest, who is self-supporting, two Authorised Worship Assistants, six retired clergy and churchwardens who lead services.
- Every parish, except one, has at least one churchwarden.
- We have a part time benefice administrator who communicates with the parish magazines and collates the returns to the district registrar.
- We look forward to paying our new priest's expenses on a monthly basis.

### PCC Support

- The Churchwardens and PCCs look forward to giving their full support to our new priest.
- PCC's meet on a regular basis across the benefice. We look forward to working out a pattern of attendance at meetings across the benefice for the new priest, but attendance would not be required at every meeting as these can be lay led. The PCC would report back to the new priest and provide a copy of the meeting minutes.

### Clergy Wellbeing

- We are fully committed to the wellbeing of our clergy and several of the churches have adopted the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing. This is reviewed annually.
- Days off, holidays, training and retreats will be actively encouraged and we look forward to planning the time for these together.
- The parishes are committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults and have adopted the Church of England policies and best practices on safeguarding.

## Where are we

The Hunstanton & Saxon Shore Group of Churches is located in the Heacham and Rising Deanery within the Diocese of Norwich and comprises the parishes of Hunstanton, Old Hunstanton with Ringstead Parva, Ringstead, Holme-next-the-Sea, Thornham, Titchwell with Choseley, Brancaster and Burnham Deepdale.



## What we can offer you

### Accommodation

- A substantial, well appointed, Rectory situated in a beautiful rural setting opposite St Mary's Church in Church Road, Old Hunstanton.
- The Rectory is a modern, purpose built, 5 bedroomed, detached house, with a garage, and is surrounded by a large garden, which borders the picturesque village pond. The Rector's study can be accessed without entering the main part of the house.
- There is ample parking.
- The benefice covers grass cutting services for the Rectory garden.



## Helpful links

Diocese of Norwich

[www.dioceseofnorwich.org](http://www.dioceseofnorwich.org)

Church of England

[www.churchofengland.org](http://www.churchofengland.org)

Living and working in Norfolk – Norfolk County Council

[www.norfolk.gov.uk/jobs-training-and-volunteering/  
living- and-working-in-norfolk](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/jobs-training-and-volunteering/living-and-working-in-norfolk)

## Thank you

Thank you for reading this benefice profile.  
We look forward to hearing from you.







THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of Norwich

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[www.dioceseofnorwich.org](http://www.dioceseofnorwich.org)   

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