

Shellrock



High Oak

20 24



Hingham



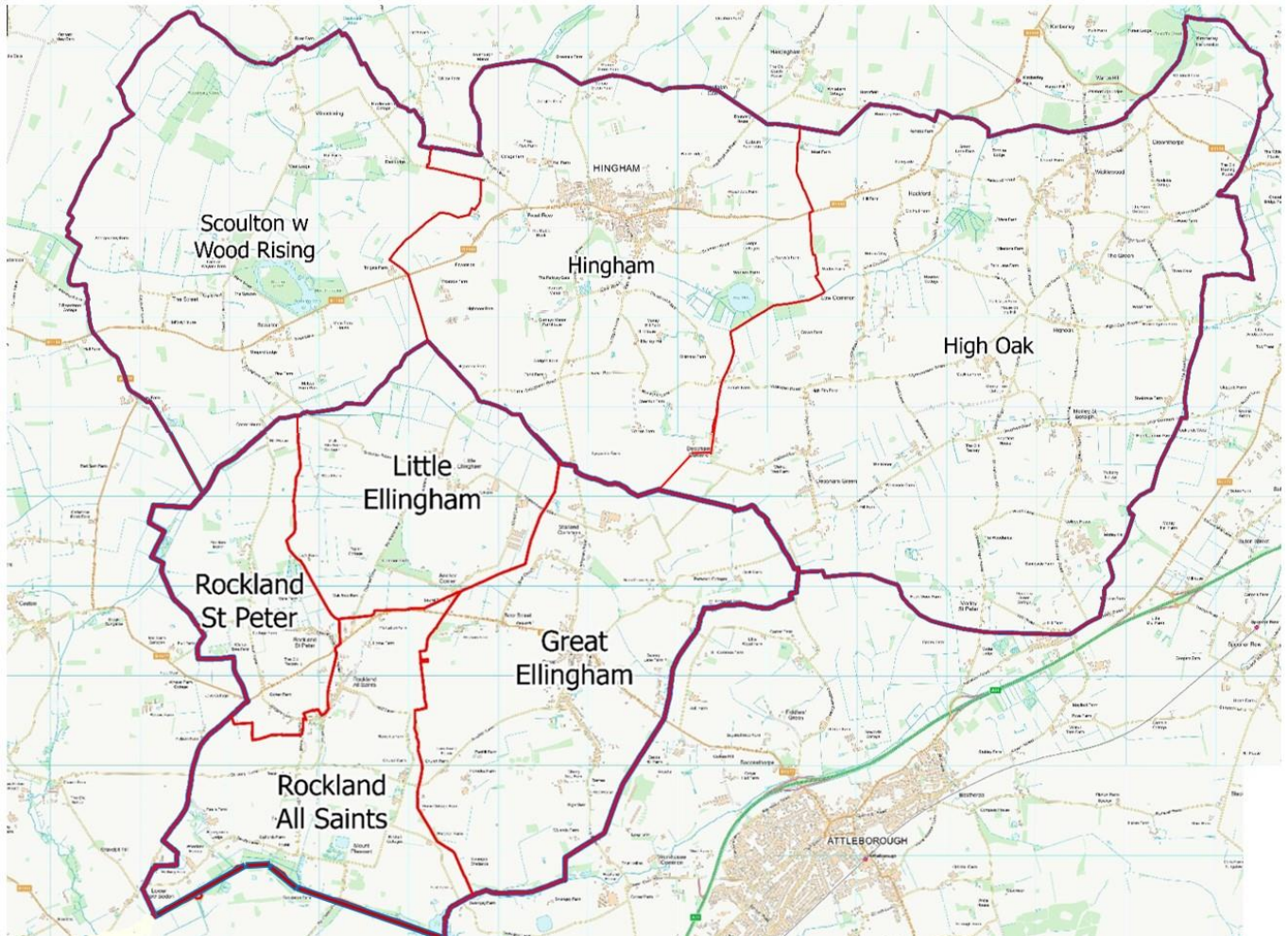
Scoulton &  
Woodrising

**Welcome**

*As we continue our pilgrimage together, we are praying for a Priest-in-Charge (Rector Designate) who will both lead us and walk with us as we unite to worship and live the gospel message amidst the Lord's beauty of rural Norfolk.*

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# 1 General description of our benefices



Our benefices encompassing twelve churches are located in the southern part of Norfolk serving a combined population exceeding 8,000. Great Ellingham is experiencing a near-doubling of population within less than ten years, in keeping with multiple new housing developments along the nearby A11 corridor.

Although the vibrant city of Norwich is only 20 minutes drive away, we are a rural area serving farming communities, small industries, and commuters working in Norwich, Cambridge, and farther afield. There is also a resident population, some of whom have been here all their lives. In addition the new housing being built is bringing in more young couples and families.

The large Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and the University of East Anglia are also close by and are major employers in the area. The adjacent market towns of Wymondham and Attleborough are served by regular rail services to Norwich, Cambridge, and onward to London. Other towns within 10 miles of the vicinity are Thetford, Diss, and Watton.

Our two benefices (the Benefice of High Oak and Hingham with Scoulton and Woodrising, and the Shellrock Benefice) have been working together since March 2022 in preparation for a proposed merger. We now have joint Ministry Team meetings, a single service rota, a streamlined communication system and some migration of clergy between the benefices.

### **The High Oak, Hingham, Scoulton with Woodrising Benefice**

This Benefice was formed in 1992, originally as a team benefice, but latterly staffed by a Rector, ably assisted by a local ministry team consisting of Ordained Local Ministers, Licensed Lay Ministers and retired clergy.

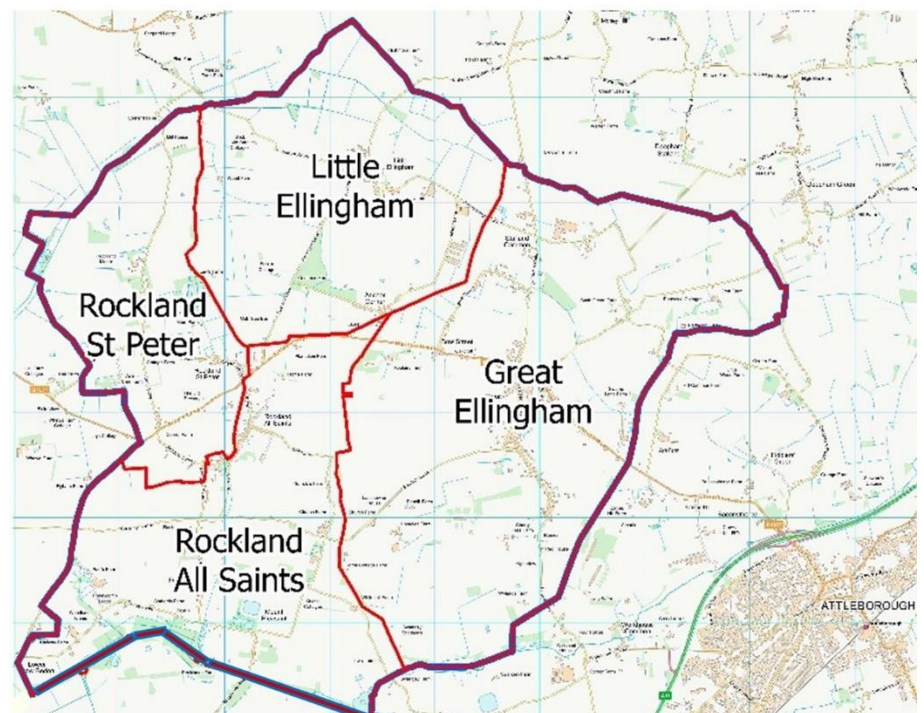
In the centre of the Benefice is Hingham, a small Georgian town with a population of about 2,500. Scoulton with Woodrising is a deeply rural area where the two parish churches serve a total population of fewer than 300. The High Oak parish consists of the former parishes of Morley (St Botolph s Parish Church and St Peter s Chapel-of-ease), Wicklewood, Deopham and Hackford. Parts of the parish are also deeply rural, with new building in other areas, with a total population circa 2,600.



### **The Shellrock Benefice**

This benefice now comprises the four individual parishes of Great Ellingham (pop c. 1150), Little Ellingham (pop c. 250), Rockland All Saints and Rockland St Peter (pop together c. 720). The parish of Shropham with Snetterton has been part of this benefice since its creation, but is in the process of transferring to the benefice lying to the south.

Great Ellingham is a centre of new building. The population is expected to double within the next few years. For a dozen years or so, the care of the parishes was overseen by a priest appointed for House for Duty, followed by a few years where leadership was shared between two retired ordained ministers. Now the Benefice is staffed by a retired ordained minister receiving a small stipend, ably assisted by two Licensed Lay ministers.



## **2 Summary of our needs and opportunities**

This position is an exciting prospect. There is immense potential to bring the two benefices into a closer relationship, sharing resources, combining plans and fundraising, and worshipping together in celebration. At present the regular services are being well maintained, as are the sacraments and pastoral care. The committed teams of ministers and lay people have a vision for growth but need someone who can share this vision, add to it, and carry it forward in a collaborative way. Each group of parishes inevitably has their own culture and tradition. The new incumbent will need to listen and feel their way through to an understanding of how the benefices, and individual parishes, work together now, and will continue to work collaboratively into the future.

### **Benefice of High Oak and Hingham with Scoulton and Woodrising**

In Hingham, our vision is

- Seeking to grow the congregation and work with children and young people
- Stabilising the finances of the parish to be financially secure and independent
- Realising the Facilities Project to encourage the community use of the church

We need to grow and re-establish St Andrew's Church as a community hub. The town is growing, and with lots of young families, we need to begin to engage with the local community. We are currently fundraising for Phase 2 of the Facilities Project (to instal toilets and upgrade the kitchen). The need for toilets inside the church was first identified in 1984, nearly 40 years ago, and it is finally within reach of becoming a reality. Once we have modern facilities, we see the opportunity to welcome more people into the church for community activities, through new and re-invigorated groups. This will go hand in hand with welcoming people to a new programme of Christian outreach activities.

The rural parishes of High Oak, Scoulton and Woodrising need someone committed to maintaining the pattern of worship and pastoral care in smaller communities with love and understanding.

### **Shellrock Benefice**

Most of our churches are in a rural setting where the priority is to maintain regular worship, to be seen to be present in our communities, and to share our faith wherever opportunity provides. In keeping with most of rural east Anglia, attendance at regular church services has declined in the last few years and we need to find new ways of making our churches, both the buildings and the communities, relevant to all our parishioners. We also need to increase income – both to support community involvement in maintaining these wonderful grade 1 listed buildings, and to meet parish share.

There is considerable cross-fertilisation within the benefice, with some PCCs including residents of other parishes, and potentially the opportunity to increase skill-sharing. Organisations drawing membership throughout the benefice include a secular choir, a gardening society, scouts and youth club. A Fellowship Group meets on Tuesday mornings during term times and studies a variety of Christian related topics, and the Shellrock church choir sings at weddings, funerals, and at the Benefice Eucharist which takes place on the fourth Sunday of the month, rotating round the parishes. We are fortunate in that the two primary schools, in Great Ellingham and Rocklands, are federated, sharing a headteacher and some resources; pre-school groups also thrive in both these villages. The Church has

good links with, and churchgoers play a significant role in the running of, these and other local organisations; we need to learn how to build on these opportunities.

Great Ellingham is subject to a large new housing development, still in progress, which is set to double the population within the next five years or so. This offers an opportunity for all of us to reach out to new householders, to help establish community and to engage in appropriate outreach activities.

We believe that we are committed to be open to God's guidance even if this should require change in our accustomed ways and attitudes. We are also committed to prepare for future generations and to ensure that there will be continuing spiritual leadership in years to come.

Our desire is for an incumbent to embrace present practices and work alongside the people of the new, combined Benefice to improve, encourage, and bring a contemporary view to all matters.

### **3 Who could help us?**

First and foremost we are looking for someone with a deep Christian faith. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century many people in Norfolk, just as elsewhere, are sceptical of the truth of Christianity. As our new incumbent we ask that you are a prayerful person who inspires us as a teacher and preacher of the gospel, someone who experiences love and joy in knowing the Lord and shows it in your approach to others.

We have many different styles of worship within the Benefices, but what binds us together is our faith in Christ. We need someone who can appreciate, and work with, the broad churchmanship that is displayed across the proposed new, enlarged Benefice. In this context you will need to be a collaborative leader and work with those who will share with you in ministry. Being skilled in leadership, loving and caring, and able to delegate responsibility to others, including lay people who may be called to share in ministry (in its broadest sense) is required.

We are looking for someone who can work with our rich, diverse, and united Ministry Team, is creative, and able to reach out to people. The ability to bring all comers into a loving fellowship, be conciliatory, cope with differences of opinion – and just differences - is a gift we would love you to have. The ideal is to see *all* parishes sharing resources, worshipping together at certain events, and know others from different parishes – not an easy task but possible with patience and time. In this it is important for you to know that the Ministry Team is caring and supportive towards one another, and welcoming hands of friendship would be extended to our new incumbent.

Children and young people of the combined Benefices particularly need nurturing, as well as those not attending church. We have a number of activities taking place in different churches and we feel there is an opportunity to expand and share the learning to the best effect.

We hope you will be delighted to live in this special part of rural Norfolk. Some of us are incomers, but others of us have been here all our lives. Someone who is sociable and gets involved in our local communities, including schools, community groups and charities, will be very welcome.

We will need someone who feels comfortable teaching about Christian giving. At the moment encouragement and support is needed for some parishes in terms of paying parish share. We are looking for leadership in this area, so that the payment gap can be closed.

In a similar vein, knowledge of church procedures and protocols will be needed just to make sure that in our twelve parishes we are doing all the right things, be it record keeping, safeguarding, APCM procedure, service organisation, or anything else that is required to keep us on the legal track. We already have some knowledgeable people within the Benefices so you would not be on your own.

We have a very broad mixture of musicians with backgrounds of different styles of church music. Shellrock Benefice has an established Benefice Choir, and a Music Group consisting of guitar, flute, tambourine, and singers. Wicklewood has a community-based children's music group who will play for church events, and there are several excellent, top-class organists. We need someone to appreciate and help support the musicians of the Benefice. There are always opportunities to encourage and develop our ministry of music.

Finally, a sense of humour is essential! Seeing the lighter side of life along with a deep, strong faith and passion for ministry is essential when working with such a diverse group of people and parishes, even if it comes down to coping with the worst bats in churches can do, and deciding times of services!

Our greatest wish, however, is for a true priest to lead us with vision, work with us by seeing the potential in our worship and pastoral ministry and, together, develop a strategy for growth.

The future is exciting, lots of opportunity and potential. In return, you would receive a warm welcome and support when you need it. One of our ministers has said she would take the job herself if she were 20 years younger!

## 4 Who will help you?

### Our Ministry Team:



The Very Reverend  
Dr John Edmondson  
Retired clergy



The Reverend Prebendary  
Sue Strutt  
Priest Associate



The Reverend  
Peter Trett  
Retired Ordained Local Minister



The Reverend  
Shirley Holt  
Retired Ordained Local Minister



The Reverend  
Gill Wells  
Retired clergy



Dr Dale Southall  
Licensed Lay Minister



Carol Bennett  
Licensed Lay Minister



Colin Thomas  
Licensed Lay Minister



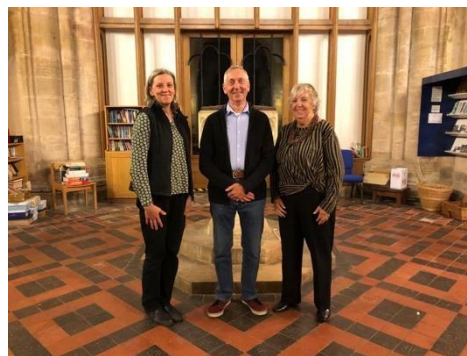
The Reverend Canon Michael  
Stevenson  
Retired clergy

### Our Administrative Assistance

Caroline Money

Colin Thomas

Jane Robson



**And, every churchwarden, treasurer, secretary, PCC member, organist, musician, singer, keyholder, flower arranger, bell ringer, cleaner, historian, churchgoer and church user. You will be amongst friendly, caring, supportive communities. We understand that you cannot do everything between twelve churches. You will be welcomed with open arms.**



## 5 What's going on at each church?

### St Andrew's Church, Hingham

[www.standrewshingham.org.uk](http://www.standrewshingham.org.uk)

St Andrew's is located at the centre of the pretty market town of Hingham, with a population of 2,500 centred around the Georgian houses in the Market Place. The town has its own primary school, doctor's surgery, several local shops and businesses including butchers and bakers, a pub, village hall, and sports facilities.



St Andrew's Church is a very active Christian community with lots of things going on. We have three regular weekly services; midweek communion (CW) and two services on Sunday, 8am Communion (BCP, fortnightly) and 10am Parish Service alternating between Communion (CW) and Morning Prayer. Worshiping in a broad range of music and liturgical styles is part of our culture. Reaching out to the local community and spreading God's word is the heart of what we try to do. We host Community Support initiatives, including St Andrew's Pantry, a Wall of Kindness, a book exchange, and even the Paws for Coffee monthly dog café! We are also launching an SOS email service for Pastoral support.

We are also committed to our building being used for community activities. In addition to church run groups, the building has recently hosted or currently hosts community keep fit, a Dementia Cafe, Music Therapy Groups, local craft fairs, and other festive events. To expand community use, we have recently installed 2 toilets in the church, upgraded and relocated the kitchen, plus removed pews to expand the community space. The excellent acoustics have allowed the church to host several concerts with visiting choirs across the county.

At Christmas, St Andrew's is the focal point for the town's worship, hosting an ecumenical carol service where all of the local churches come together, and the Light of the World Service on Christmas Eve which fills the church to capacity (450).

Our grade 1 listed church is unusually large for a 14th century church. There is a network of volunteers who support the work of the church. A secular charity, St Andrew's Hingham Heritage Fund, contributes to the upkeep of the church fabric.



Finally, we welcome many American visitors due to our links with local US activity in WWII and also to Abraham Lincoln, whose ancestor Samuel Lincoln emigrated from Hingham and founded Hingham, Massachusetts.

## Scoulton with Woodrising: Holy Trinity and St Nicholas Churches



In our modern day, when adherence to the Christian faith is increasingly the exception rather than the rule, we see the maintenance of centres of Christian witness in the Norfolk countryside to be essential, perhaps as never before.

As possibly the smallest element in our new combined benefice, we would be grateful if our new incumbent could simply become a known figure in our villages and lead our worship occasionally. In

return we will continue to do everything we can to maintain our Christian witness here.

With a total population of perhaps 300 and an average congregation of only five, it is a struggle for us to keep our two beautiful medieval churches open for worship. Yet our vision is to do just that! We have several notable features. For examples, St Nicholas Church in Woodrising is home to one of only 3 working Barrel organs in the UK!



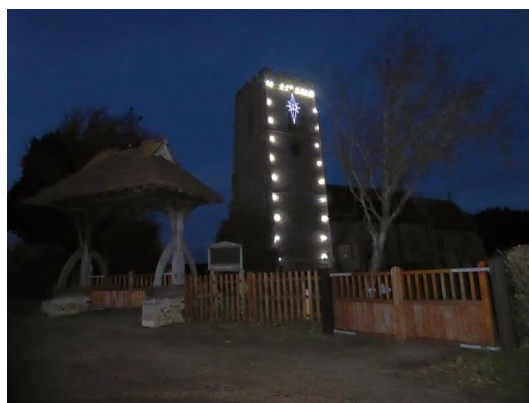
## High Oak Group

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

We are four village churches with one chapel of ease. We were brought together as a Benefice forty years ago and named the High Oak Parish. We are highly supportive of one another's communities and our regular congregation of about two dozen rotates around each of the other churches to maintain a regular pattern of weekly services. We believe it to be absolutely essential that our centres for Christian worship should continue to be at the heart of our communities.

## Hackford St Mary

This is the smallest of the five churches in the High Oak Benefice. St Mary's has been very fortunate that parishioners have donated generously of their time and money. This has enabled completion of many repairs which have enhanced and improved the building. When the chancel arch was repaired medieval paintings were found. Refurbishment of the Church Clock mechanism and a new West Door have recently been completed.



## St Andrew's and All Saints Church, Wicklewood

Unfortunately, we have been closed for worship for two years whilst structural issues have been assessed. However, St. Andrew's and All Saints remains a central focus for community life, enjoying excellent relationships with the local Primary school and community groups. Wicklewood is the largest village in the Benefice with a population of around 755 residents.

We are currently finalising a phased programme for remedial repairs.



## Morley St Botolph Church



This is the parish Church for Morley St Peter and Morley St Botolph. The church was built at the end of the 14th century. As a result of a major fire in 1959, it was repaired and reopened in 1964. It has a Lynchgate which was rebuilt in the Victorian period and was renovated in 2016. Recently, a major restoration project initiated in 2017, was completed the following year and saw the roof tiles replaced and stonework and drainage repaired.

## St. Andrew's Church, Deopham

This is the largest church in the Parish of High Oak and is used for most major yearly services, such as Christmas and Easter. We have hosted concerts and the local primary school's termly services. We are grateful for voluntary help in cleaning the church and maintaining the grounds which contain a wildlife conservation section. A usual comment in the Visitors' Book is that the church is a peaceful, lovely place.

St. Andrew's has problems associated with having been built in the 14th century, but is an imposing and beautiful building with a very tall battlemented tower. A team called the Star group is actively in the Development Phase of applying for NLHF funding in order to make the church not just a place for religious observance, but also to provide a useful and well-maintained community space.



## St Peter's Chapel-of-Ease, Morley St. Peter



This Church is a Chapel-of-Ease to Morley St Botolph and is set in a peaceful rural setting. We enjoy local support and attendance at our services. We have a vision towards installing modern facilities which we see as key to sustaining regular worship and increasing the community use of the church. Wymondham College, a school for boarders and day pupils is nearby, as is a modern Village Hall offering extensive sporting and social facilities.

## Benefice Wide

A Church homegroup meets in Hingham, but draws from across the Benefice. The group meets weekly for study and fellowship.



## Shellrock Benefice

[www.shellrockbenefice.org.uk](http://www.shellrockbenefice.org.uk)

[Facebook – Shellrock Benefice](#)

## St James' Church, Great Ellingham

This is the largest church in our benefice. It is a 14<sup>th</sup> century, Grade 1 listed building set in the middle of the village; the tower is a local landmark in the surrounding countryside, especially when lit at Christmas. Its relatively unadorned interior belies a wealth of interest inside. The PCC is steadily expanding activities as a gesture of welcome to those joining our village from the new housing expansion. The church is very much open daily, housing the village library and community history displays and the village's Thetford foodbank donation point (now sadly also occasionally a retrieval point), as well as providing a venue for various social groups. We do love a gathering at St James'.

Regular worship includes an All Age Café Church each month, led by the music group. It is a great opportunity for sharing fellowship. The congregation loves any excuse to share food, extend a welcome, and friendship. Services are held weekly with at least one Eucharist each month.



In addition to the annual Great Ellingham Teddy Bear Festival, when St James' houses local art and history exhibitions and various outdoor entertainments, we run an annual Christian Aid 'Big Breakfast', a pancake race, and indoor fairs each spring and autumn. The Village Singers hold capacity-filling concerts in the church twice a year and the school uses the church for an annual Shakespeare production, as well as acts of worship – harvest, nativity, carol service – as do the Scouts, including their presence at the Remembrance Sunday service.



Our worship styles stretch from traditional with our two-manual electronic organ and when available, choir to the contemporary accompanied by flute, guitar, and percussion, and we use a mixture of hymn books and projection. We have chairs for seating which allows us great flexibility in layout and use of the various parts of St James, catering for both differing styles of worship and congregational sizes.

### **St Peter's Church, Little Ellingham**

This attractive 13<sup>th</sup> century church is located in the middle of the village, with a population of 250 people. It was extensively restored in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, after a fire. The PCC is assisted in maintenance of the church by the Friends of St Peter. Due to their diligent fundraising a new kitchen has recently been installed in the church, which is used with Fellowship after services and for meetings. The kitchen also gives us the facility to hold meetings in the church.

There are two services a month – a nine o'clock alternating said Holy Communion / Morning Prayer, and an evening Prayer and Praise which draws congregation from across the benefice. Typically the church hosts a Flower Festival, a MacMillan coffee morning, and various other events are planned as joint fundraisers with the Village Hall, usually involving food – a lunch or afternoon tea.

### **All Saints' Church, Rocklands**

Our church stands in a pleasant rural setting, outside the confines of Rockland village, at the top of Church Hill. The church is very involved with local community groups including the Community shop, Little Rockies Toddler group, Rocklanders Youth group, New Beginnings (previously WI), Men's Den. Members of All Saints PCC are very involved with the school, including the Head Teacher. Reciprocally, the community support the church, such as helping remove a fallen tree from the summer storms.



While only hosting one service per month at the moment, special services include Christingle, Candlemas, and a summer Pet Service, as well as joining, and sometimes hosting, the other parishes in the Benefice to mark all important feast days of the Church of England. There is no mains electricity or water, and the organ is manually pumped which all adds to its charm. The church is very involved in local community groups. There are regular fundraising and social events some of which are shared with Rockland St Peter's, such as the Advent Lunch.

## **St Peter's Church, Rockland**

Our church is of great historical interest as it has one of Norfolk's round towers and has a thatched roof. We have many visitors over the year and in 2018 received recognition for being a 'Welcoming Church'. A new heating system was installed which enables us to use the church for events such as the Shellrock Talks to which everyone is welcome, and the facility to hold meetings.



We have an annual Pudsey lunch to raise money for Children in Need which also involves the village Parent and Toddler Group. A small team of dedicated people take pride in presenting the church at its best by keeping it clean and tidy and maintaining floral displays. Our main service each month is a 'light touch' Family Service. Rocklands School celebrates specific services in our church - we truly welcome this level of involvement.

We engage in many fundraising activities to be able to honour our financial commitments. A Thanksgiving Service was held on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022 to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. We had a visit from our County Councillor to plant an oak tree to mark the occasion.

## **6 Ecumenical relationships**

As is often the case in the countryside, our churches offer a warm welcome to Christians from all denominational backgrounds. Hingham has a long history of strong ecumenical partnerships with the Baptist, Methodist and Pentecostal Churches in Hingham. As 'Hingham Churches Together' we regularly hold joint events. This has included the Christmas Carol Singing in the Market Place and more recently the Ukraine Vigil and Lent course.

In Great Ellingham, Christianity is a thread running through village life – members of the Methodist congregation have served on St James' PCC, and the current Baptist minister is a school governor. The only surviving-in-use places of worship in Little Ellingham and Rocklands are the CofE churches.

## **7 Schools in our Benefice**

There are four community primary schools in the combined Benefice, who feed into Attleborough Academy (Secondary School) or Wymondham High Academy (Secondary School). There is one primary academy school; Morley Church of England Primary Academy, who recently joined St Benets Multi Academy Trust. Great Ellingham and Rocklands Primary schools are Federated, sharing one headteacher and governing body. There is also a free school; Wymondham Prep School (Sapienta Trust) which opened in September 2020.

Several of these schools have an excellent relationship with our Ministry Team and visit their local churches on a regular basis which is actively encouraged. We very much hope that our new priest will take an interest in continuing this important aspect of Christian ministry.

### Great Ellingham Primary School

This school was rated Good by Ofsted in 2016. There are currently 181 pupils registered at the school, with a published admission number of 25 pupils for Reception.

### Rocklands Primary School

This school has been rated Good by Ofsted in 2018. This is a small rural school, with 78 pupils registered at the school and a published admission number of 10 pupils for Reception.

### Hingham Primary School

This school was rated Good by Ofsted in 2023 and has capacity for 210 pupils, however there are currently 151 pupils registered at the school. The school has a published admission number of 30 pupils for Reception.

### Morley Church of England Primary Academy

This school was rated Good by Ofsted in 2018 and has capacity for 140 pupils, however there are currently 142 pupils registered at the school. The school has a published admission number of 20 pupils.

### Wicklewood Primary and Nursery School

This school was rated Outstanding by Ofsted in 2015 and has capacity for 210 pupils, however has 217 pupils registered at the school. The school has a published admission number of 30 pupils.

### Wymondham College (Sapienta Trust)

This school is the largest co-educational state boarding and day school in the UK. Rated Outstanding by Ofsted in 2012, it was recently awarded Secondary School of the Year, TES.

### Wymondham College Prep School

This new free school opened in September 2020 and has a published admission number of 60 pupils. There are currently 150 pupils registered at the school.

**The two schools below are outside the benefice but many of the primary schools feed into them:**

Wymondham High School (Enrich Learning Trust) This school was rated Good by Ofsted in 2017.

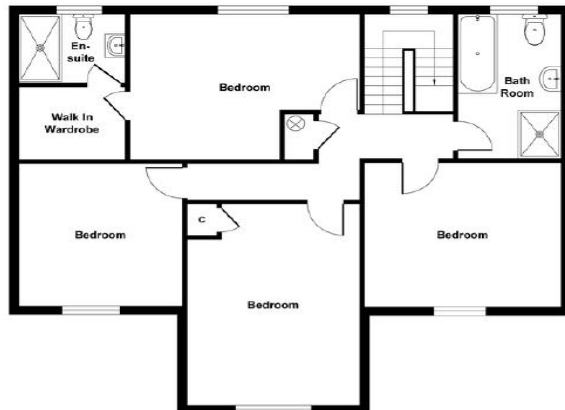
Attleborough High School (Sapienta Trust) This school was rated Good by Ofsted in 2021.

## **8 Where you will live**

A splendid new Vicarage has been bought in Hingham. 3 Lonsdale Crescent, NR9 4ND, was built in the 1990s and is a very substantial (2,200 sq. ft) 4 bed, 2 bath, 3 recep, 2 garage property sitting in 1/3 acre of wraparound gardens with a summerhouse at the end of the garden. Located at the end of a short cul-de-sac just off the main road running through the town, it's a four minute walk from the church. Its



features include a study, a triple-aspect sitting room and a modern kitchen with quartz work surfaces, a separate utility room and is connected to mains drainage and has gas central heating.



First Floor  
Approximate Floor Area  
968 sq. ft  
(89.53 sq. m)



Ground Floor  
Approximate Floor Area  
1194 sq. ft  
(110.52 sq. m)

Approx. Gross Internal Floor Area 2162 sq. ft / 200.85 sq. m



## **9 Safeguarding and wellbeing**

We take safeguarding very seriously in our benefices. We adhere to the House of Bishops' recommendations in all aspects of safeguarding policy and have safeguarding officers in place in both benefices.

Similarly, we will take our new incumbent's wellbeing very seriously. We will encourage you to take your full quota of annual leave in addition to a full day off every week. All agreed working expenses will be reimbursed in full.

## **10 Further information**

None of the PCCs in either Benefice have passed a resolution under the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests.