

The Rt Revd Ian Bishop
Bishop of Thetford
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April 2024

Half-time priest-in-charge of the Somerleyton benefice

Dear colleague,

Thank you for the interest in the parishes of the Somerleyton benefice.

You will probably by now have read the benefice profile and you can't fail to have noted that the parishes are very focused on wanting their new Priest in Charge to thrive. They promise support and care and they have a particular concern for your well-being. This is a place that wants to make the experience of leading a benefice to be a fulfilling one.

Somerleyton is, as the name implies, a lovely place to live and there are all sorts of challenges that will keep the next minister fully occupied. The parishes want to develop their discipleship, see work with families and young people grow and generally see growth – can you help them do that? There is a desire to grow younger, grow in faith and grow in number. If you think you can help them develop the right strategy for that then you could be the person they seek.

Financially the parishes struggle to cover parish share and you will need to work with them to find ways to increase income and cover the gaps. This will need genuine collaborative ministry and the ability to encourage and nurture the vocation of the lay members of our churches, recognising that ministry and mission belong to all God's people.

This rural benefice is mostly situated in a beautiful part of Suffolk in the south-east corner of the Diocese, with the profile giving a good description of the life of the benefice.

It has, for many years, been formed of six parishes, but we have taken the decision to remove the parish of Lound from the benefice which has Petitioned the Bishop under the *House of Bishops Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (2014)* and is now under the care of the Bishop of

Richborough. The remaining five parishes (Ashby, Blundeston, Fritton, Herringfleet and Somerleyton) are keen to build on their history of working together. The churches are of central church tradition, but with each having its own cherished and distinctive identity in worship.

We would hope that the new priest would build on the links with Blundeston CofE VC Primary School. Although Lound will be linked with Hemsby in Great Yarmouth Deanery, the only other traditional catholic petitioning parish in the Archdeaconry, it is hoped that friendly links with the five neighbouring churches of the benefice will continue.

This post is advertised as a half-time appointment (Sunday plus three days), but the appointment could be on a house-for-duty basis (Sunday plus two days) if preferred.

The Diocese is at an interesting and exciting point with a new vision emerging under a still relatively new diocesan bishop, and much work is currently underway on 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 Somerleyton 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 Lothingland deanery, with a Rural Dean, the Revd Helen Jary, and an Assistant Rural Dean, the Revd Sharon Lord. There are 8 posts of incumbent status in the Deanery, along with 3 Assistant Curates, 7 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

There is a modern, four-bedroomed Rectory with spacious gardens and views overlooking the Somerleyton estate, and this is described more fully in the Benefice Profile. Please direct questions about the house to the Archdeacon of Norfolk (archdeacon.norfolk@dioceseofnorwich.org).

The Patrons of the benefice of Somerleyton are The Rt Hon Hugh Francis Savile, Baron Somerleyton and the Society for the Maintenance of the Faith.

Enquiries, Applications and Interviews

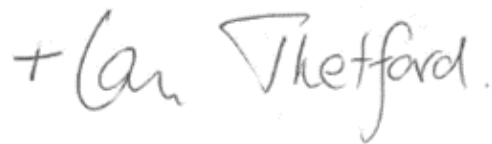
An application can be made through Pathways at [Diocese of Norwich Vacancies | Church of England](#) or the Diocese of Norwich website at [Vacancies - Diocese of Norwich](#).

The form, after we have removed the confidential declarations for safeguarding and other purposes (Section 7 to the end), will be forwarded to the Patron(s) if appropriate.

The closing date for applications is 10th May at 11.59pm, with interviews to be held on 11th June.

Any priest wanting an informal discussion before deciding whether to apply is welcome to be in touch by telephone or e-mail with me.

Yours faithfully,

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

The Rt Revd Ian Bishop

Bishop of Thetford