



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of Norwich

## **Coltishall Group of Parishes**



Welcome to the Benefice Profile  
for the Coltishall Group of Parishes.

Our Benefice is made up of 5 Parishes: Coltishall with  
Great Hautbois, Horstead, Hainford, Frettenham and  
Stratton Strawless.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to the Benefice Profile for the Coltishall Group of Parishes. Our Benefice is made up of 5 Parishes: Coltishall with Great Hautbois, Horstead, Hainford, Frettenham, & Stratton Strawless, each with their own church.

### **Our vision for this Benefice**

We know that the Churches in this Benefice need to be made fit for a changed and changing society. The age-profile of our worshipping communities is worryingly high and the task of evangelism will not be easy, but needs to be addressed.

We are praying for a priest who will

- be a visible presence amongst the communities—listening, knowing and being known.
- work collaboratively with the existing team;
- prayerfully discern vision and lead change;
- actively grasp opportunities for mission and service;
- encourage a younger and more diverse Church through the building of relationships with families, especially through the 3 schools and the Horstead Centre;
- lead meaningful and engaging worship which equips everyday faith
- nurture the faith and witness of the Christian community with teaching and prayer, with a desire to see lives transformed by Christ;
- look at ways to create a mixed economy of church, which is sustainable;
- care for those who have faithfully served their church communities in their life time
- work towards a sustainable financial future
- reflect on the situation of our two failing churches in Frettenham and Stratton Strawless and consider their future roles.

If you are looking for a new job as a priest, we hope you will consider working with us in this Benefice. It will be a challenge! We are made up of small congregations, who are committed and keen to work with you to engage in the great potential to be a Christian presence in this area.

Any qualities which you may have to lead us forward prayerfully will be a blessing to us all!

### **We can offer**

Your colleagues would be retired priests, Rev. Keith Dignum (OLM), Canon Peter Howard, & Rev. Richard Woodham.

We have a Ministerial Team, who have worked well together during the Vacancy enabling worship at Coltishall, Horstead and Hainford. The Ministerial team is made up of the Retired clergy, and Churchwardens from Hainford and Horstead and the Contact person between the Benefice & the Archdeacon.

### **Worship**

Regular services are held weekly in either Coltishall or Horstead Churches; and also at Hainford. Occasional services are held in Frettenham and Stratton Strawless. Services are Holy Communion, Service of the Word or a monthly Family Service at Coltishall with a more informal style. We come together on the 5th Sunday of the month for a Benefice Service. The congregation would normally be about 12-15 people at each service. The Churches are inclusive and welcome all to join the Church.

In 2023 there were 2 baptisms, 8 weddings and 12 funerals.

We recognize the importance of the Parish Share and appreciate this is a challenge we need to address.

During the Vacancy, we have maintained communication with the local Communities via the Marlpit—a free monthly magazine delivered in Horstead and Coltishall, & the Hainford and Stratton Strawless News – a bimonthly magazine also delivered in Hainford and Stratton Strawless.

Our Website can be accessed via ["A Church near you"](#). It has been maintained with information about services, special events, contact details & a weekly prayer calendar.

### **Safeguarding**

Our Coltishall Group of Parishes is committed to safeguarding children, young people and adults from harm. We follow the House of Bishops guidance and policies and have our own Benefice Safeguarding Officer (BSO).

### **Where are we...**

The Coltishall Benefice is in the Ingworth and Sparham Deanery, and is situated in the beautiful area of North East Norfolk. The Benefice is geographically split into two, with Coltishall and Horstead situated on the edge of the Broads' National Park whilst Hainford, Frettenham and Stratton Strawless are in a rural area of woodland and fields.



**Coltishall Rectory.** The house is well-placed in Rectory Road, Coltishall; situated very near Coltishall school, the Surgery and Coltishall Church Rooms; with Coltishall Church a few hundred metres down the road.

The house is a good sized detached 4 bedroom family home with both a family bathroom and separate shower. There is a double garage and parking at the front and a secluded garden to the rear of the house.

The house was built in 1986 and has gas central heating and an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of D62.

### **The Covenant for Clergy Well-being & Care.**

The PCCs value clergy's well-being very highly. We want to support clergy well-being and enable our clergy to take regular time off, holidays and retreat. Clergy expenses will be met in full.

## About Coltishall & Horstead

Coltishall (*population 1500*) and Horstead (*population 1100*) are villages at the head of navigation on the River Bure, West of Wroxham and are located within the Norfolk Broads National Park. This is very much a holiday area, with boats moored by the Common in Coltishall, and many water activities on the River Bure. Above the ruins of Horstead Mill the river becomes much quieter and wilder. There is ample opportunity to enjoy the wildlife either walking local footpaths, fishing or on the water with a canoe, paddleboard or even wild swimming!

The local Surgery is in Coltishall and the villages include a butcher, chemist, Londis village shop, a garage, hairdressers, beauty salons, estate agents. There are 4 welcoming pubs and a cafe in the area, serving alcoholic drinks/ coffees and a good selection of food.

Coltishall has a Pre-school, and a Primary School with 200+ pupils, with an "outstanding" for it's last Ofsted Report. Following a period of ill health, we are now looking to resume our contact with the school, who in the past would visit the Church, and use it for their Christmas service. Some of the children participate in a service at the War Memorial on Remembrance Day.

## St. Johns Church Coltishall & All Saints Church Horstead

Since lockdown both St. Johns and All Saints work closely together, with a small committed regular congregation, who mostly move happily between the two Churches. Worship is at the heart of our weekly time together.

The first Sunday of the month is a Family service with a more informal style of worship at Coltishall, with a weekly Holy Communion service on the remaining Sundays.

### Pentecost at Horstead



**Coltishall Church** is situated on the main road through the village, standing high above the River Bure. Inside the Church is a place of space and light, leading us to believe people have worshipped here for over a 1000 years. It has a thatched roof. Roman bricks can be spotted in the walls.

The large Church tower houses a fine peal of 6 bells. There is an enthusiastic group of bellringers, who are keen to ring before Sunday services and weddings.

The Quinquennial for St. Johns was completed in April 2022. Some of the more urgent work to be done has been completed, but fund raising is needed to bring the building into a good state of repair.

At present there are no Churchwardens but the small committed congregation are keen to support a new incumbent.



Easter Sunday 2024 with praise flags!

**Coltishall Church Room** is to be found up Rectory Road, which is opposite the Church and next door to the Rectory.

The Room is a good venue for smaller groups and there are regular bookings each week.



The Weekly  
Lunch Club at  
Coltishall Church Room

## Coltishall Churchyard



Since 2018 we've been involved in the "Churches for Wildlife" scheme, a collaboration between Norfolk Wildlife Trust and the Diocese of Norwich. We now have 3 areas managed for wildlife which are looked after by a group of local volunteers, to whom we are indebted, as the churchyard is now a place where people from our villages, and beyond, can come & find peace and tranquility in beautiful natural surroundings, which we know are so good for our souls and bodies.



*Picture: The working party from Bure Valley Conservation Group doing work to manage conservation areas in Coltishall Churchyard Wed 27th March 2024.*



*Picture: Memorial Silver Birch tree planted in Coltishall Churchyard 5th May 2024*

Both Coltishall and Horstead Churches are keen to maintain their Churchyards as conservation areas encouraging nature.

Both Parish Councils kindly make donations towards the cost of mowing.

## **All Saints' Church Horstead.**

The church is built of flint and freestone is thought to have been built about 1300. The stained-glass windows are particularly beautiful. With pews having been removed a raised plinth now allows for a nave altar for our worship.

The quinquennial was done July 2023, and now grants are being sought to cover costs of repairs.

All Saints' Church is situated in a unique position. It is in very close proximity to the Horstead Centre, which is the Diocese of Norwich's residential Activity Centre. The Centre is used by a wide range of age groups, including many primary schools.

The Tithe Barn is to the south of the graveyard, fronting on to the Horstead/Buxton Road. This beautifully modernised building has strong links with the Church; is well equipped; has regular bookings for various groups; is a popular venue for parties and wedding receptions.

The Churchyard backs on to the River Bure. It has a public footpath running through it, and the village staithe is down a "loke" which runs down beside the Churchyard. The Church feels it is well placed to extend its ministry to the young people staying at the Horstead Centre.



*Picture shows: Horstead Church to the right. Horstead Centre to the back. Tithe Barn on the left.*

Horstead Church now has a new Churchwarden who will take up her position in July 2024.

We aim to extend our worshipping community by reaching out to the people around us, locals and visitors and provide a small still place in an uncertain world.

As we go forward, we are aiming towards meeting and working more with the Horstead Centre and we wonder what that future will look like.

We aim to extend our partnership with the Horstead Centre, the local schools and conservation groups in response to the need to protect our environment for future generations, educate visitors and locals in the ways we can care for God's creation in small ways, and demonstrate our commitment to using our opportunities in this beautiful part of the world to introduce young people to the love of Creator God.

11th April 2024

As a beginning to working more closely together, Horstead Church joined with the Horstead Activity Centre for a Community Outreach day with some activities in the Centre and some in Church. Refreshments were served in Church.



*There was an exhibition showing the history of Horstead. This was greatly appreciated by residents, who had been brought up in the village.*



All Saints Churchyard has been part of Norfolk Wildlife Churchyard conservation scheme since it's inception in the 1980's.

Regular monthly communion services have been held at Mill House Nursing Home. After a period of ill health, these Services have now resumed. They are led by Canon Peter Howard, who accompanies popular hymns on his keyboard. These services are attended by both residents and staff.



Both Horstead and Coltishall Churches are usually open daily, and welcome all including holiday makers.



*Picture above: cyclists visiting Horstead Church on the Norfolk Churches Trust Annual Bike Ride.*



## **St. Theobold's Church ruins**

St Theobolds was originally built in the 11th Century. The Church ceased to be used for worship approximately 1860, and has been a place of pilgrimage over the years.

The ruins of the Church are situated a short walk from the road at Great Hautbois, near Coltishall.

Now the ruins are cared for by Coltishall Parish Church Council, using monies from various legacies. The Churchyard is consecrated ground and used for occasional burials.



## All Saints Church Hainford

Hainford, (*population 1037*) is a small village with an active and lively village hall. There is a range of clubs and activities for all ages and a strong active committee. The village also has a Church Primary School. It has a busy pub and farms all around. There is a bus link to Norwich and Aylsham, Cromer and Sheringham. It is only 5 miles to Norwich International Airport. The Broads are within easy reach. Norwich has good rail links to London, Cambridge, Peterborough, Liverpool etc. Shops are in the neighbouring villages Buxton, Spixworth and Old Catton on the edge of Norwich. There is a small shop with post office in Horsham St Faiths. The market town of Aylsham is within 7 miles. North Walsham is also close by.

All Saints Hainford is registered as an ECO church and holds the Bronze Award. The Church is surrounded by a garden churchyard. There are four benches, where anyone is welcome to come to enjoy the peace, and listen to the birds and wind in the trees. Plants have been donated. There are a lot of mature trees, squirrels, birds, rabbits and visiting muntjac deer. There is a volunteer gardening group who work to keep it tidy. The war memorial is grade 2 listed. The graveyard is separate on Church Lane, where there is the Old Tower, which was the original Church.

All Saints' Church was built in 1845 using materials from the old Church. The pews have mostly been replaced with chairs, so that it can be used for community events. The Church has a kitchen, which was installed in the south Chapel, using oak to blend with the Church. There is an accessible toilet with baby change.

Hainford has a regular weekly service led either by Rev Keith Dignum or the Churchwardens.

The Hainford Primary Church School, which is situated directly across the road, uses the Church regularly for end of term services and special services like Easter.

*Picture right: Easter 2024 with Rev Keith Dignum*



The Norfolk Churches Trust bike ride is supported annually



Hainford Church say "We are looking for a people person, with a passion for sharing faith, who will include the wider community, while being sympathetic to the needs of the present congregation. There is a core of dedicated people, who attend regularly including 2 Churchwardens—one of whom is the PCC Secretary, and a Treasurer, who will support the new incumbent."

There is a large car park opposite the Church next to the school.

## **St Swithun's Church Frettenham**

Frettenham Village (*population 663*) is a lovely place to live set between Norwich, the Broads and the Coast.

There is a school and a pre-school in the Village. The school has had ties with the Church. Rev Keith Dignum has continued visits to the school during the Vacancy.

Frettenham Village Hall is available for functions, and has regular bookings for a monthly film, "keep fit" classes, short mat bowls, gardening club, and the "Funsters", who meet for table tennis, indoor curling and pool.

There is a football club, a good cricket team, and children's play and adventure area by the Village Hall.

The Rose and Crown public house, is a popular place, and has been supportive of the Church. They have a coffee shop and serve Thai food.

Nearest shopping would be Spixworth, Coltishall or Wroxham, with Norwich not far away.



St. Swithun's Church is situated about half a mile from the village of Frettenham. The Church dates back to the 12th Century.

There has been a small congregation, who have dearly loved their Church, but most are now very elderly and may attend other Churches in the Benefice. The one Church Warden is now stepping down after many years faithfully serving the Church.

The exterior of the Church is in reasonable repair, but there is work to be done on the interior.

We hope a new leader will reflect on the situation of this failing church, and consider its future role. The question is how the Mission of the Church can be addressed with the people of Frettenham.

## **St Margaret's Church. Stratton Strawless**



St Margaret's church is a Grade 1 listed building with a Norman doorway, six bells and strong ties with the historic Marsham family of Stratton Strawless Hall. It sits in a small rural village that has around 600 people. It is a much valued church but is only actively supported by a small number of people with a growing vision to bring Church back to the centre of village life.

In the past, there have been coffee mornings, Jubilee celebrations, hosting Ukrainian families and utilising local gardens to raise money for the church.

At present there is a library of donated books and bric-a-brac stall to aid church funds. Much funding comes from the sale of marmalade and jam made at the adjacent church Farm.

The church is opened every day and the churchyard is well developed in wild flowers as part of the rural churchyard initiative with the Norfolk Wildlife Trust.

Visitors to the church have access to making their own tea or coffee as these are always provided. There is a composting toilet available.

Regular services have not been held in this Church during the Vacancy, but members of the other Churches in the Benefice, look forward to attending St. Margaret's for an occasional Benefice Service.

We hope a new leader will also reflect on the situation of this failing church, and consider its future role. The question is how the Mission of the Church can be addressed with the people of Stratton Strawless.

## **We thank you**

for reading this Benefice profile,  
and look forward to hearing from you.