

The Rt. Rev'd Dr Jane Steen
Bishop of Lynn
Lynn House, Commercial Road,
Dereham, NR19 1AE
01362 709200
bishop.lynn@dioceseofnorwich.org

PA: Mrs Ann Whittet
ann.whittet@dioceseofnorwich.org

September 2024

Priest in Charge – Swaffham and Sporle benefice

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Benefice and Role

Thank you for inquiring for details for the post of Priest in Charge for the Swaffham and Sporle benefice. You will find much detailed information about the benefice in the profile, and this letter supplements that with further information about the diocese and about the background to the post. If you are exploring this role from outside the diocese, and especially if you do not come from a rural background, let me encourage you to continue in this discernment. I came here from an urban diocese nearly three years ago and I can honestly say that it is wonderful. Norfolk people don't shout about themselves or their county or their diocese, but if you come here, there's a very high chance that you will never wish to leave.

Swaffham is a market town serving the villages of the deanery and beyond. The town centre is principally Georgian and still has buildings from that time. The church is late fourteenth to fifteenth century and is one of the 300 major Churches of England. However, Swaffham also has a range of social issues and there is a real need to show the love of the Lord to those who struggle. The parish is rated overall as ranks 1635 out of 12239, where 1 is the most deprived parish and is therefore among the most deprived of Church of England parishes. The table at the end of these notes is taken from the CUF look-up tool (<https://cuf.org.uk/parish/260490>) and was accessed on 5th September 2024. It gives some insight into the issues the parish is facing. The data for Sporle follows that of Swaffham below. That for Sporle follows. Swaffham has a population of

approaching 9,000 and Sporle of around 1000. Sporle ranks 3874 out of 12239 and so, although relatively deprived, is less so than Swaffham.

The parish of Swaffham has not had an easy few years. The retirement of the previous incumbent has given the opportunity for something of a reset. During the vacancy, four retired clergy and a Licensed Lay Minister have cared for the pastoral, spiritual and sacramental needs of the parish and there have been encouraging signs of growth, some of that as people who left begin to return. However, Swaffham should be one of the Lynn Archdeaconry's flagship parishes, with its situation making it ripe for a vibrant town centre ministry in the modern catholic tradition. It has recent experience of robed choirs, and musical opportunities would be an excellent way to connect more fully with the town. There is a local Anglican evangelical church (Fountain of Life <http://folchurch.co.uk/>) which seeks to plant in Swaffham, and it will be important for the new parish priest of the town to work well with Fountain. However, people come to faith in different ways and there is plenty of scope for lively worship, outreach and church life from more than one church and with more than one spirituality. So, if you discern that God might be calling you to this ministry, do take this seriously as we would be delighted to hear from you.

Diocese and Deanery

The Diocese of Norwich's vision is to be Transformed by Christ: Prayerful, Pastoral, Prophetic. You can find out more information about this [here](#)¹. We are drawing together the strategic project work you will see described there to create a mission and ministry strategy for a sustainable and flourishing future. You can also find out more about us [here](#).²

The Benefice falls within the Archdeaconry of Lynn and within the Breckland Deanery. The Rural Dean is the Revd Stephen Thorp. The Diocese of Norwich operates an informal area scheme, and the Bishop of Lynn's area of oversight is coterminous with the archdeaconry. The Archdeaconry is also cared for by Archdeacon Catherine Dobson who works closely with the bishop for the welfare of the benefices.

There are 6 posts of incumbent status in the Breckland Deanery. There are 7 Licensed Lay Ministers (Readers) and 14 Authorised Worship Assistants (AWAs). The deanery is blessed with the ministry of retired clergy. Attendance at Deanery

¹ <https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/about/vision-and-priorities/>

² <https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/tjs-cofe-media/media-uploads/3/6/job/65/Our%20Life%20Together%202023%20final.pdf>

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

The accommodation provided is described in the profile. Questions about the house should be directed to the Archdeacon of Lynn, the Venerable Catherine Dobson (archdeacon.lynn@dioceseofnorwich.org).

Patronage

Patrons for the benefice are:

The Bishop of Norwich

The Norwich Diocesan Board of Patronage

Enquiries, Applications and Interviews

An application can be made via the diocesan website at

<https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/about/vacancies/>.

The closing date for applications is Tuesday 29th October (9.00am) and interviews will be held on Tuesday 10th December 2024. The post is subject to a Genuine Occupational Requirement and a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure.

If you would like to have an informal discussion before deciding whether to apply, please contact the Bishop and Archdeacon of Lynn's office on 01362 709200 or through the Lynn PA, Mrs Ann Whittet, on ann.whittet@dioceseofnorwich.org.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jane Steen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jane" being more prominent than the last name "Steen".

The Rt Revd Dr Jane Steen
Bishop of Lynn

Percentages and ranks	Least in Nation	Least in Diocese	This parish (Swaffham)	Most in Diocese	Most in Nation
Child Poverty	1%	4%	22% Ranked 1367/12239	42%	58%
Pensioner Poverty	2%	4%	14% Ranked 3072/12239	31%	73%
Working age poverty	1%	3%	16% Ranked 1613/12239	31%	58%
Years	Highest in Nation	Highest in Diocese	This parish (Swaffham)	Lowest in Diocese	Lowest in Nation
Life expectancy (boys)	93yrs	85yrs	79yrs	74yrs	68yrs
Life expectancy (girls)	95yrs	90yrs	82yrs	79yrs	75yrs
Percentages	Least in Nation	Least in Diocese	This parish	Most in Diocese	Most in Nation
No qualifications	0.5%	4.6%	24.6%	32.3%	44.4%
Social housing	0%	0%	19.2%	52.9%	76.1%
Older population	0.3%	8.3%	32.3%	51.2%	65.9%
Ethnic diversity	0%	0%	3.6%	21.5%	96.4%

Percentages and ranks	Least in Nation	Least in Diocese	This parish (Sporle)	Most in Diocese	Most in Nation
Child Poverty ?	1%	4%	14% Ranked 3489/12239	42%	58%
Pensioner Poverty ?	2%	4%	12% Ranked 3971/12239	31%	73%
Working age poverty ?	1%	3%	12% Ranked 2941/12239	31%	58%
Years	Highest in Nation	Highest in Diocese	This parish (Sporle)	Lowest in Diocese	Lowest in Nation
Life expectancy (boys) ?	93yrs	85yrs	80yrs	74yrs	68yrs
Life expectancy (girls) ?	95yrs	90yrs	83yrs	79yrs	75yrs
Percentages	Least in Nation	Least in Diocese	This parish (Sporle)	Most in Diocese	Most in Nation
No qualifications ?	0.5%	4.6%	23.1%	32.3%	44.4%
Social housing ?	0%	0%	16%	52.9%	76.1%
Older population ?	0.3%	8.3%	33.1%	51.2%	65.9%
Ethnic diversity ?	0%	0%	2.2%	21.5%	96.4%

