

THE BENEFICE

ST EDMUND'S KESSINGLAND



ST MICHAEL'S RUSHMERE



HOLY TRINITY GISLEHAM



The Benefice consists of three Parishes - St Edmund's Kessingland, Holy Trinity Gisleham and St Michael's Rushmere.

All are within a 2-mile radius of each other.

The benefice is part of the Lothingland deanery in the Diocese of Norwich.

OUR VISION

Our Vision is to:

- Support each other with prayer
- Continue to support and develop our work with young people and their spiritual development.
- Expand our pastoral care team to support the infirm and those who have fallen on hard times.
- Further bring our benefice and communities together through strengthening of our current links and developing new community links.
- Reach out and encourage all age groups, understanding the need for old and new traditions in our community.
- Continue to develop informal Bible Study and Prayer and introduce House groups.
- Work towards a fully integrated benefice while respecting the individuality of each church.
- Encourage and train new leaders.
- Address our commitment to the parish share.

OUR NEW INCUMBENT

We would look forward to a person

- *Who will faithfully and consistently preach the word of God helping us to develop creative ways to teach and reach*
- *Who will be warm, friendly and welcoming to all ages.*
- *Who will lead and help us to develop and grow our vision*
- *Who will share our passion to reach those in the community who are seeking new meaning in life and certainty in an uncertain world.*
- *Who will have a targeted and efficient pastoral ministry, and confident approach.*
- *Who will help us to continue to build up a togetherness in the benefice*
- *Who, in this changing world, will help us to bring the church and the community together*
- *Who will share with us and delegate to us.*
- *Who will be family orientated - friendly and approachable to all people and have a good sense of humour.*

We pray that our new Incumbent will share God's vision for the future.

We have drawn close as an interregnum team, sharing tasks easily and enthusiastically between Coordinators, Wardens and our licensed pastoral assistant. We look forward to supporting our next Rector in a close pastoral relationship with those within the church and those in need of outreach. We can offer you a strong lay leadership team to support you and will respect your time off so your ministry is sustainable.

OUR BENEFICE

Close to the Norfolk Broads and the attractive 'Waveney Valley' with its picturesque villages, and the beautiful Suffolk Heritage coast stretching from Lowestoft to Felixstowe, with National Trust, English Nature and RSPB wildlife reserves (Minsmere, as featured on BBC's Spring Autumn watch) and close to the town of Southwold, the benefice of Kessingland, Rushmere and Gisleham provides a wonderful opportunity to exercise a caring Christian ministry in three rural, but active, villages.

The doctor's surgery is in the heart of Kessingland village whilst the local hospital, The James Paget University Hospital, is at Gorleston (8miles); regular transport is available.

There are 2 crematoriums in the area one at Gorleston [8miles] and one at Ellough which is approx. 4 miles from St Edmunds.
Local cemeteries are in North & South Lowestoft

KESSINGLAND BEACH

Kessingland has a wonderful, wild atmospheric beach, which is dog-walking friendly all year long, with the most spectacular sunrises in the country.



Across the Benefice

Safeguarding:

We have a Benefice Safeguarding Officer and the Benefice greatly recognises the need for safeguarding across the parishes. The policies, procedures, and contact details are readily available on the church notice board, and the contact details are on the weekly newssheet to take home.

Whilst the church finds new and innovative ways to put the message of love and salvation across, it becomes the target (like every other body), of those trying to influence, harm or exploit others.

Social media can be a source of attack, and steps have been taken to administer those platforms that are under our control.

LOCAL TOWNS

LOWESTOFT (4 MILES)

Lowestoft is the most easterly point in the British Isles. It is a seaside town situated close to the Norfolk border. The South beaches regularly receive awards for their clean water and sands, this helps to promote the tourist industry. The railway station is in the centre of the town with a regular service to the City of Norwich (35miles) and to London.

SOUTHWOLD (7 MILES)

Southwold is a small, picturesque town to the south of Kessingland. It is famous for Adnam's Brewery & Inns, and the Southwold Pier. Here property is very expensive, mostly owned by Londoners as second homes, the several hotels and bars are serving good food and wines and have become a popular venue for the rich & famous. The harbour area provides opportunities for sailing and offshore fishing, the local catch usually on sale daily.

BECCELES (8 MILES)

Beccles is a small market town with a variety of small, interesting shops and places to eat.

ST EDMUND'S KESSINGLAND

St Edmund's, Kessingland is situated on the East Anglian Heritage Coastline. The 2023 population was 3940 (reduced since the last census) with about 2000 houses. Approximate percentages from last census are

Under 18	14%
65+ yrs.	51%
18 -65 yrs.	35%

During the summer season the population almost doubles with the arrival of holidaymakers visiting the holiday camps and camp sites. The award-winning beach, the coastline and countryside bring families back year after year.

Kessingland has no large industry though there is a small engineering works, building company, motor repairs and garage and the local farming community plus the seasonal holiday trade. There are some small businesses including convenience stores one of which provides the Post Office service, Chemist, Veterinary clinic and various take-aways and pubs. Africa Alive Wild Life Park is a huge attraction to tourists and locals- it is open all year round.



The Workingman's Club and Community Centre both provide venues for local groups. There is an active bowls club with a first- class green and a football team. Marram Green is a purpose-built sheltered housing complex also housing the village library the local Parish Council Offices and a café; it is also the venue for various groups.

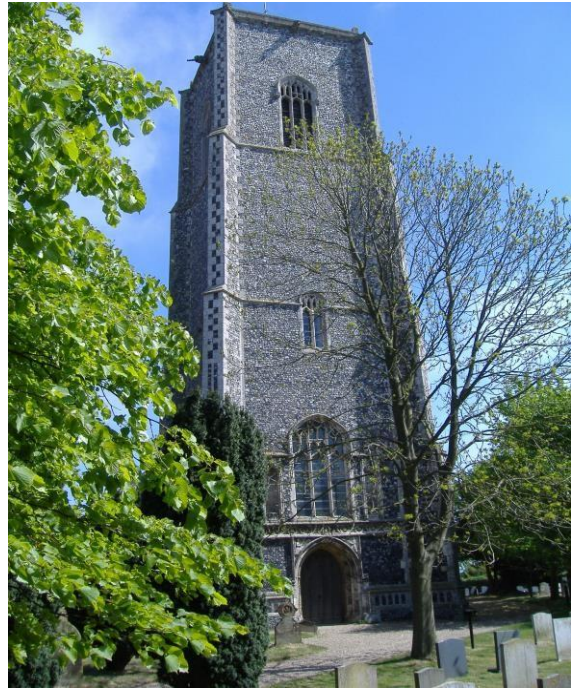
There is one other place of worship in the village, The Methodist Church

THE CHURCH

St Edmund's is a middle of the road sacramental church and dates back to the late 14th century when it was part of a convent. The tower which is 98ft tall is one of the tallest in East Suffolk. The tower is opened to the public for one day each year- an active group of bell ringers led by the tower captain ring and maintain the 6 bells throughout the year.

The Church has a single aisle and three magnificent stained-glass windows. The roof has recently been re-thatched and was part funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The attached vestry with toilets and small kitchen was added in 1988.

St Edmund's is a five-minute walk from the rectory.



The last Quinquennial report was carried out in 2022 which highlighted various necessary repairs most of which have been completed. Trust funds are available to contribute towards the maintenance of the fabric of the church

The churchyard is open for burials

PERSONNEL

- 2 Church wardens
- Choir Master/Organist
- 2 Chalice administrators/servers
- 1 Licensed Pastoral assistant
- AWA: In May 2024 an Authorized Worship Assistant (AWA) was commissioned at Gisleham.

P.C.C.

There are 65 people on the electoral roll with an average Sunday attendance of 45-50 people. Our PCC is composed of 9 elected members, 1 honorary life member after many years' service and 2 Church wardens. 1 church member represents St Edmund's at Deanery Synod.

We have a retired priest and his retired lay-reader wife heading up intercession.

REGULAR SERVICES AT ST EDMUND'S

	Sunday	Wednesday	
	10-45am	9-00am	3-00pm
Week1	Holy Communion	Prayer opportunity	Bible Study
Week2	Holy Communion	Prayer opportunity	Bible Study
Week3	Holy Communion	Prayer opportunity	Bible Study
Week4	Holy Communion	Prayer opportunity	Bible Study
Week 5	10:30am Benefice Service Rushmere	Prayer opportunity	Bible Study
Average attendance	45	1-2	8

Festivals and special services are celebrated throughout the year.

Young church holds Messy Church services on different days in the holidays
30-40 people attend every time.

We have a choir who enhance our worship at most services accompanied by our fine two-manual pipe organ. Anthems are sung at special services.

The church closed in January 2023 for repairs and re-opened at Easter 2024. Worship took place in the church centre, where our Bible study now takes place.
We have a small but faithful congregation, mainly of advanced years

THE CHURCHYARD

St Edmund's has a large Churchyard - at the moment the maintenance is shared with a Volunteer and a Community Pay Back group.

The village War Memorial is situated in the Churchyard; the annual Remembrance service is held here with the local Parish Council and village uniformed groups.

THE CHURCH CENTRE

The Church Centre is opposite the Church and is the venue for all Church social functions and many fund-raising events.

The Guides, Brownies, Rainbows, Local Gardening Club and Keep Fit regularly meet. It is also used as the local polling station.

The Centre can be rented for private functions etc.



FUND RAISING & SOCIAL

.We have two major fund-raising events each year; the Summer Fete, and the Christmas Bazaar. Smaller events are held throughout the year, some of which are social, enabling the community to come together in a happy atmosphere. Next year we plan to hold a flower festival, which was a major event in the village prior to Covid shutdown.

The Church Centre is the venue for a Saturday Coffee morning with the sale of refreshments – books and bric-a-brac etc. - this is run throughout the year and has become an excellent outreach to the community.

F.I.S.H. [Food in School Holidays] meet once every school holiday including half terms. This is organized by volunteers from Kessingland School, funded by Kessingland Help in Need Trust and supported by volunteers from St Edmunds.



FINANCE

		2024				2023		
	Requested	Received	%rcvd	O/S	Requested	Received	%rcvd	O/S
Gisleham	£4261	0	0	£4261	£4058	£3258	80%	£799
Kessingland	£61095	£23500	38%	£37595	£58174	£6420	11%	£51754
Rushmere	£2841	£500	18%	£2341	£2705	£1548	57%	£1157
Total	£68197	£24000	35%	£44197	£64937	£11227	17%	£53710
		2023				2022		
	Requested	Received	%rcvd	O/S	Requested	Received	%rcvd	O/S
Gisleham	£4058	£3258	80%	£799	£3240	£3828	118%	£-588
Kessingland	£58174	£6420	11%	£51754	£46446	£26254	57%	£20192
Rushmere	£2705	£1548	57%	£1157	£2160	£1000	46%	£1160
Total	£64937	£11227	17%	£53710	£51845	£31082	60%	£20763
		2022				2021		
	Requested	Received	%rcvd	O/S	Requested	Received	%rcvd	O/S
Gisleham	£3240	£3828	118%	£-588	£3209	£3333	104%	£-124
Kessingland	£46446	£26254	57%	£20192	£46000	£23312	51%	£22689
Rushmere	£2160	£1000	46%	£1160	£2139	£1000	47%	£1139
Total	£51845	£31082	60%	£20763	£51348	£27644	54%	£23704

Kessingland Church closed Jan 2023 to March 31st 2024 REPAIRS, All 3 churches closed/restricted 2020-2022 COVID

After closure for Covid in March 2020 the church only re-opened for a few months, some of those months with a cautious congregation, reluctant to come out after the lockdown had become a way of life. The church was then closed again for the roof re-thatching and other repairs.

We were fortunate in being able to use our church centre for weekly worship but unable to carry out weddings, funerals and baptisms, which are a large part of our income.

We have some restricted trust funds that help towards the upkeep of the fabric of the church/ churchyard and any educational needs. Other income is from donations, offerings and fund raising.

At present, our finances are beginning to recover from a series of unfortunate situations. Covid had a huge impact and was followed by the closure of the church for 13 months for major roof repairs and complete rethatching.

Unfortunately, we have not been able to fulfill our parish share during these times but are hopeful that we will start to get back on track during 2024.

St Edmund's supports certain charities, local & national, at special services such as Christingle, with proceeds to the Children's Society, and the Remembrance Service, with proceeds to the Royal British Legion. The Church is a collection point for the Food Bank.

Donations of food are generously given by the Church members and taken weekly to the main food bank in Lowestoft.

YOUNG CHURCH

Historically the children's work was struggling for survival, and during difficult seasons when churches were closed, a sense of community was sustained through church communication being kept open with creative use of social media, phone calls and rector-led pastoral care and visibility.

In 2021 a voluntary young church coordinator worked alongside the incumbent until the latter's retirement assisting with school visits and overseeing the potential growth and development of children's activities in church, school and in the wider community. Some of our team have been Safeguarding trained in school in addition to the Diocesan safeguarding training, which allows us to join them on school outings, and help in assemblies and themed days. The school really value our involvement.

During the roof project, many opportunities were used to involve our wonderful local school. They designed large advertising posters, made video news bulletins for Facebook, and designed and made large permanent displays for the churchyard. They had educational visits from the thatcher and contributed to the celebrations at the excellent re-opening of the church with the Blessing of the roof by Bishop Ian, with one of our uniformed Guides being interviewed for the local television news. They also placed a time capsule filled with school related items in the top of the thatch. This can be seen in the footage in 'the true Kessingland benefice' on Youtube.

<https://youtu.be/CvwiyhqL5NI?feature=shared>

Having struggled to survive after lockdowns, the very committed and long-standing leaders of our local brownies and guides, were helped by the church to grow stronger than before. In September they will have 12 guides and 10 brownies. They have recently started a rainbows group. They are a brilliant asset to us as they advertise and support our events and services and join our Messy church team. They attend formal and council events in church and at the memorial.

A parent and toddler group started back then has been thriving with up to 20 children and families, attending the church centre every Friday morning. We have a strong, gifted and committed team of leaders in young church. Messy church has been successfully developed in the last year. We meet, if possible, every half term on Saturday. Families attend regularly, and some of them attend a church service on the following day if there is a connection of theme. Very few of the families normally attend church on a Sunday.

We are currently looking to improve provision for our young children's area in church. It is difficult to accommodate and staff a regular Sunday class in the church building, so we are considering the possibility of holding a shorter separate family friendly meeting in the church centre, as long as the church can provide a communion service for the benefice. We continue to strengthen our links through the community and receive support from groups outside our church as there is a strong desire across the village to support community involvement. We are all excited for the future.

Young church



The JOY of small wonders



One of our guides involved in local ITV news report on new thatch- celebration with Bishop Ian



Messy church outreach so much family fun



Permanent display boards made by our wonderful school for the war graves



Kessingland Church of England Primary Academy

Headteacher: Mr Adrian Crossland

Field Lane, Kessingland, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR33 7QA Tel: 01502 740223

Email: office@kessingland.dneat.org Web: www.kessingland.dneat.org



Diocese of Norwich
Education and
Academies Trust



Welcome to Kessingland Church of England Primary Academy

Kessingland Church of England Primary Academy currently has 217 pupils on roll. It joined the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust in 2014 and serves a community who work tirelessly to make Kessingland a wonderful place to be part of. At the time of joining the Trust, it was a school that had just received a 'Special Measures' judgement by Ofsted. Since then, the school has been on an incredible improvement journey and it is now judged to be a 'Good' school after its latest Ofsted and SIAMs visits.

Leadership was also judged to be 'Outstanding' during the SIAMs visit. The current Headteacher will be moving on in September 2024 and the school will be working in partnership with Hopton Church of England Primary Academy for the autumn term.

We are a welcoming, inclusive primary school, whose Christian principles are at the heart of all we do. Together we aim to foster our core values of: Respect, Responsibility, Perseverance, Aspiration and Compassion. We want everyone to 'Be the best you can be' and 'live life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). We believe that each learner is created by God and is unique and special. Our vision is rooted in the idea that everyone as a child of God should be supported and encouraged to flourish and reach their full potential.

Academic standards have continued to improve and so has the curriculum and range of clubs and opportunities on offer. The school has established fabulous partnerships with both St Edmund's Church and Kessingland Parish Council and both help to support the school to enrich its curriculum offer. The school and St Edmund's Church have worked in partnership to celebrate key events in the church calendar – Christingle, Harvest, Remembrance Sunday, Easter and more. There are regular opportunities for collaboration and most recently the school were involved in the 'Raise the Roof Project'. One of the highlights was watching the children's broadcasts updating the local community on the progress of the project.

The Parish Council also annually commits to giving the school a significant amount of funding to ensure that we can continue to offer a curriculum that is both ambitious and memorable. The Friends of the School also bring much to the school. It is a very active membership and organises a number of events for our pupils and families to enjoy, whilst raising significant funds for the school.

The school currently holds a number of additional awards in recognition for the support it gives to the pupils and the curriculum on offer. These include: ArtsMark Gold, SportsMark Gold, Music Mark and the Support for Young Carers Gold Award. However, we are most proud of our Inclusion Quality Mark, Centre of Excellence Award. Fewer than 250 schools have achieved this status and it is recognition for the school's inclusivity.

Kessingland Church of England Primary Academy is a very special place. The staff team are extremely committed and hard-working and our children are amazing young people who are working hard to 'be the best they can be'.

Diocese of Norwich Multi-Academy Trust Registered Office: Orchard House, Hall Lane, East Tuddenham, Norfolk NR20 3LR
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Artsmark
Gold Award
Awarded by Arts
Council England



HOLY TRINITY, GISLEHAM



The church of Holy Trinity prides itself upon its 'openness' to all. We offer a truly warm and friendly welcome to all seeking a spiritual path, be they practicing Christians or those seeking/exploring Christianity maybe for the first time. We are proud to say that our Church is never locked but is open for prayer or quiet reflection at all times.

Our place of worship, which is Grade 1 listed, is an ancient Saxon round towered building of flint with stone dressing; originally thatched, the roof was changed by the Victorians to slate. The building is in an good state of repair, much work having been carried out in the last few years, including complete re-roofing of the chancel in 2003 and complete restoration to the tower floors and



timber louvers to the 13th century octagonal roof. A new roof beam has been undertaken, as it was found to be potentially unsafe. This took place around 2017 / 2018.



We have a large churchyard, which like our church is well cared for. The grass is cut on a regular basis, some areas being left for wildflowers which are in abundance, and wildlife. Once a year volunteers help to maintain the church grounds in a working party. This year many daffodils were planted in the grounds.

Like many rural parishes Gisleham covers a very large area but has a small population in proportion, currently 774 (2021 Census). There is a good mix of housing which reflects the diversity of the parish with older style cottages, and mid-20th century bungalows/semi-detached houses. The village also has its share of traditional farm properties including the site of a rare double moated manor house mentioned in the doomsday book. There is also a 1990's built, housing development on the most northern village boundary. The church is situated in the centre of the village. Most people living within the village now follow occupations in neighbouring towns and cities. One of the barns at Lodge Farm being converted to two holiday cottages in 2011, bringing some tourism to the area.

The Pattern of Services

2nd Sunday 9.15am Holy Communion with hymns and address. Common Worship
 4th Sunday 9.15am Holy Communion with hymns and address. Common Worship
 5th Sunday No service. Benefice service at St. Michael's, Rushmere

The average attendance for services at Holy Trinity is 14/15. This number increases slightly for festivals, including Candlemas, Easter, Harvest Thanksgiving and the pre-Christmas carol service.

Over the previous twelve months we have conducted:

Baptisms	0
Weddings	1
Funerals	8 including interment of ashes

Additional Services

- Good Friday - An hour by the Cross
- Candlemas

Music

Holy Trinity has a well-maintained pipe organ, which can be used for all of our traditional services. For our Singalong's, we have many and varied instrumentation.

Although we have some fine choir stalls, we have no formal choir.

The church has a good sound system and has a loop installed for the hard of hearing. The purchase of some new pew cushions has been a welcome addition, especially in the winter.

Members of the congregation read the lessons, Intercessions and are encouraged to play an active role where appropriate. Many church members and volunteers are involved with the day to day running of the church. Cleaning brasses, flower arranging, dusting and sweeping.

Pastoral Care

Although very scattered, the very strong sense of community within the Church family is one that we are all very aware of. The 'Family' works together in many ways; to pray and work for the care of the housebound, the elderly, those who are critically ill in hospital, and those who are recently bereaved. We are always quickly aware of those who need help, and in what capacity. We work closely with the 'Gisleham Help In Need' charity, which is usually chaired by the incumbent as ex officio chair and has a Gisleham PCC member as one its trustees as well.

Fund Raising

There are various bazaars and coffee and cake events over the years as well as sing-a-longs and the Jazz events. These various social and fund-raising activities draw in fringe members of the church.



Finances

Despite ever increasing rises in the Parish Share, we have endeavored to pay our requested portion of the share. We are acutely aware of our financial commitments. Church members who are taxpayers are encouraged to gift aid their donations.

Holy Trinity always supports many charities each year, both local and national. We are regular supporters of Christian Aid, The Children's Society and Fair Trade and local food bank.

The Community

Gisleham has a small but very well appointed and equipped village hall, affectionately known as the 'Hut'. It is constantly in use by groups both within the village and beyond, growing in use after COVID. The room is overseen and run by the Gisleham Room Committee, who has a member of the Holy Trinity PCC on it to aid greater integration between the church and local community. On the third Tuesday of the month there is a Coffee Morning, which has occasional talks from members of our local community e.g. H&J chocolatiers, Police, defibrillator training, etc., and has 25-30 regular attendees. On the first Tuesday of the month there is a 'fish and chip' lunch run by 'Gisleham Help In Need' charity, which has about 30 regular attendees.

The 'Stitch and Natter' group meet there once a week. Each month, on Friday evenings, there are community activities e.g. Bingo, beetle drive, etc. The Hut is the centre for many other fund-raising activities including an annual fete.



St. Michael's and All Angels Rushmere

Rushmere St Michael's Church is situated on the outskirts of the village of Rushmere, 2.5 miles west of Kessingland and 1.8 miles from Holy Trinity Church, Gisleham.



The River Hundred forms the southern boundary of the village which has thirty-two dwellings spread over an attractive rural area. Much of the land in the parish is given to agricultural use. The number of residents in the village is approximately 60 adults and 10 children of all ages, with the main group of houses being located along "The Street" which backs onto marshland and the river.

The church, dedicated to St. Michael and All Angels, is situated to the north of the parish, close to the boundary on the west side of the village. The community was recorded in the Domesday Book and the church, which has a round tower, dates to the Norman / Saxon period. It is a Grade 1 listed building. The majority of the building is medieval. In the 1960's the building fell into disrepair and was threatened with redundancy. Nevertheless, following the rethatching of the church roof it was lovingly restored by the local community and reopened in 1994. It is now used for services and is a key part of the village life.

There are no other public buildings in the village therefore the church takes on the important role as a place of worship but also as a place where the community can meet and come together.

Following the repair and restoration work, the church pews were removed and altered to become free standing. As a result, it is possible to make the space flexible therefore the church is able to be arranged in different ways in order to meet the requirements of special services such as baptisms and weddings. It is also used for social fund raising events such as an annual Quiz Night and Gift Aid coffee mornings.

Services are held approximately seven times a year. They occur at Christmas, Easter and Harvest Thanksgiving along with Benefice Services that are held on the fifth Sunday in the five week months. The services are well attended, supported by the community and friends from within and beyond the parish. Homemade refreshments are often served after services which enables everyone to catch up and chat, something we know is appreciated and enjoyed and presents another opportunity for everyone to get together.

Over the last three years the church has officiated 1 wedding, 4 baptisms and 2 funerals. On each of these occasions and for every service of worship, the church is prepared and decorated to welcome congregations and to make each event a special and meaningful one. Sunrise services have also been held in the church grounds at Easter.



The fabric of the church building itself is in a reasonable state of repair. In 2023 some minor repair work took place on the thatched roof at which time it became apparent that the whole roof will require rethatching within the next three to five years. The woodwork, however, has been deemed as sound.

The upkeep of the church, along with its grounds is maintained by the hard working and committed seven members of the Parochial Church Council. The PCC meet regularly throughout the year and are able to encourage others to lend a hand when special occasions are being arranged. They also work closely with colleagues and friends from the other churches within the benefice, supporting fund raising events and services.

In addition, the team encourage adults and children in the village to join them in taking part in the annual Suffolk and Norfolk Churches Bike Ride, which is part of the national "Ride and Stride" scheme, raising money for the Suffolk Historic Churches Trust. Up to 20 bike riders set off from Rushmere Church in September 2023, the youngest passenger being less than 2 years old, the youngest cyclist being 5 years old and the eldest over 75! The PCC also arrange an annual "Picnic in the Field" event, bringing the village community together for a relaxing and fun gathering.



THE RECTORY



The rectory was purpose built in the early seventies. It is a spacious five-bedroom detached house with a garage and ample parking. There is a large, secluded garden with a small greenhouse, and peaceful lawns.

Quite recently new double glazed UPVC windows were installed and the walls and roof were fully insulated –it has full oil fired central heating. UPVC windows were installed and the walls



