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September 2025

Dear Friends,

### **Interim Priest-in-Charge: Coxfords and Toftrees**

Thank you for looking at the information for the post of interim priest-in-charge of the Coxfords and Toftrees. This benefice has had a longer vacancy than would have been desirable and we seek earnestly now for the right priest to take forward the ministry of the church in these parishes.

The benefice earnestly desires to grow in faith, in outreach and community service, and in the size of the worshipping community. We seek a priest who will lead God's people here into a deeper knowledge of Christ and who will help them bear witness to the Lord in the wider community. We hope for a priest who is pastoral, yet with enthusiasm for the ministerial calling and with the skills to rejuvenate the church especially in East and West Rudham.

Norfolk is both blessed and burdened with wonderful historic buildings whose maintenance is costly. The lay people of these parishes are committed to leading in the care of the buildings. A major National Lottery grant has just been secured for Toftrees church so that necessary work can take place there. There have also been recent significant Heritage Fund grants for the care of St Martin's, South Raynham and the ruins of St Margaret's in West Raynham. Building care should not fall therefore on the new parish priest, whose support and involvement will, of course, be essential. The cost of buildings does, of course, impact the financial resource available for mission and ministry. Nevertheless, there are generous individuals within the benefice and many more, I suspect, who would contribute to the life of a church whose priest placed it at the centre of village life through outreach, seasonal, excellent and accessible worship and pastoral care.

### **The Parishes and this ministry**

There are eight parishes in the Coxfords Group, plus Toftrees : East Raynham, West Raynham, South Raynham, East Rudham, Tattersett, Tatterford, Helhoughton and Houghton, with Toftrees in the process of formally joining the Group. The population of the benefice is small, with a combined total of under 3,500 across all the parishes.

You will see from the profile that the parishes have expressed their commitment to working with their new priest. You will be a person of wisdom and patience, working with the parishes in prayerfully discerning and implementing vision and a new future. However, in rural ministry, the old ways remain good and much that is traditional in parish life will be part of the future to which the parishes look forward. The Diocese of Norwich's vision is to be Transformed by Christ: Prayerful, Pastoral, Prophetic. A vision of parish ministry forming a prayerful people in the congregations, exercising pastoral care in the communities and reaching out to those who are deprived and marginalised, would fit well with the ethos of the benefice profile.

The profile indicates that a new house is being purchased. This has now happened so that the new parish priest will enjoy high quality accommodation in a good location.

### **This Diocese and Deanery**

The Diocese of Norwich has embraced the national church's three strategic aims and are currently focusing on developing a younger and more diverse church, with a parish system revitalised for mission so that churches can reach and serve everyone in their community. We believe that this is the kind of mission which will resonate with our rural benefices, including the Coxford Group, and enable priests and people across the Diocese to work to a common end.

The Coxford Group and Toftrees fall within the Archdeaconry of Lynn, and so under the care of the Bishop of Lynn and the Archdeacon of Lynn. The benefice is in the Burnham & Walsingham Deanery. The post of Rural Dean is currently vacant. 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.

The parishes of this benefice are not petitioning, do not wish to become petitioning, and welcome the ministry of women as priests and the ministry of Jane, Bishop of Lynn. Parishes within the benefice look positively on the possible use of the Prayers of Love and Faith. Any priest of traditionalist conviction who applied would be expected to work with the Archdeacon, the Venerable Catherine Dobson, and to receive the ministry of the Bishop of Norwich, for example in confirmation. Invitations to the Bishop of Lynn would be appreciated and there would be no expectation that the priest would receive communion.

Should any applicant for this post not have served a full stipendiary title in the Church of England, we would look to appoint the neighbouring incumbent, the Revd Clive Wylie, as priest-in-charge with a successful applicant as Curate for the period of an interim ministry (three years in the first instance).

### **Housing**

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

## **Enquiries, Applications and Interviews**

Any priest wanting an informal discussion before deciding whether to apply is welcome to be in touch by telephone or e-mail with the Archdeacon. Completed application forms are to be submitted to:

Mrs Ann Whittet (PA to the Bishop and Archdeacon of Lynn), the Bishop's Office, Lynn House, Commercial Road, Dereham NR191AE by noon on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October.

With grace and peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jane Steen', written in a cursive style.

**The Rt Revd Dr Jane Steen, Bishop of Lynn**