

THE PARISH PROFILE OF
WALSINGHAM,
HOUGHTON, THE BARSHAMS
AND HEMPTON
WITH PUDDING NORTON



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Introduction

Walsingham has been famous as a place of pilgrimage since the Middle Ages and today has the Anglican Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in the parish of Little Walsingham and, in the parish of Houghton St Giles, the Roman Catholic National Shrine of Our Lady. The two Shrines although separate and distinct from the Benefice inevitably have a considerable impact on the villages and on parish life; additionally, there are also Orthodox and Methodist communities within the Benefice.

The justly famous 15th century Seven Sacraments Font in Walsingham Parish Church may be said to be *emblematic* of the Ministry of the Benefice of Walsingham, Houghton and The Barshams in the early 21st century. A very real commitment to the Sacramental Ministry of the Universal Church underpins all that we do, all that we believe and all that we seek in our new Parish Priest.

Walsingham & Houghton PCC, the PCC of The Barshams and that of Hempton have all resolved to petition the Diocesan Bishop, to the effect that Sacramental Care be provided to the parishes by the Provincial Episcopal Visitors. Arrangements have thus been made by the Bishop of Norwich for the parishes to be under the Sacramental Care of the Bishop of Richborough. During the present interregnum, all three PCCs reviewed the operation of those arrangements, and expressed themselves entirely satisfied with the *status quo*.



This document can only set out some aspects of our Benefice, but hopefully it might stimulate your interest in this appointment sufficiently for you to seek further information which might in due course result in an application. Each parishioner within this Benefice needs a priest to lead them on their Christian pilgrimage and we assure you of our prayers as you study this Parish Profile.

Geographic Location and General Description

The Benefice comprises at present six churches grouped in two Parochial Church Councils. Three of the churches are Listed Grade I and the remaining three are Listed Grade II*. It is located four miles from the beautiful North Norfolk coast, between the market town of Fakenham to the south and the small fishing port and holiday resort of Wells-next-the-Sea to the north.

Pastoral reorganisation is planned to incorporate the neighbouring parish of Hempton with Pudding Norton which is also under the pastoral care of the Bishop of Richborough.

Arable farming is the predominant industry of the area. Virtually all the land and a large number of properties ($\frac{1}{2}$ in Little Walsingham and $\frac{1}{4}$ in Great Walsingham) are owned by the Walsingham Estate Company and there is a council estate in Little Walsingham. The Parish of the Barshams comprises the three villages of East, North and West Barsham.

Little Walsingham has a unique collection of medieval timber framed buildings, laid out on a grid pattern, which are mainly left over from the time before the Reformation when Walsingham was the major centre of pilgrimage in western Christendom. These, together with the Farms Shop and the *Wells & Walsingham Light Railway*, attract large numbers of tourists.

Pilgrimage attracts many hundreds of thousands to the Shrines of Our Lady of Walsingham each year and the Parish's outreach to such pilgrims is naturally a most important dimension to our ministry here.



The Needs of the Benefice

We seek a priest who is:

- God-centred and rooted in Anglo-Catholic prayer and spirituality, with a deep regard for the Seven Sacraments and for the Divine Office, who utilises the opportunities for outreach afforded by the Occasional Offices and who is committed to village community;
- A regular Pilgrim to Walsingham, of traditional churchmanship and ethical outlook, with proven pastoral skills;
- Equipped with a real sense of mission to parishioners, to visitors and to pilgrims;
- Aware of the character of the rural way of life, and able to embrace the particular challenges presented by deeply rural parishes;
- Possessed of an awareness of the variety of the Benefice's liturgical heritage, and committed to its further development;
- A fluent Preacher of the Gospel and Teacher of the Faith;
- Keen to work with, and minister to, the Primary School and the younger residents of the Benefice, whilst at the same time valuing older generations in our communities;
- Convinced that the all-age growth of each of our churches is nothing less than a Gospel imperative;
- Committed to building further collaboration between the seven churches of the planned Benefice, and to strengthening our relationship with the Anglican Shrine, with the Deanery and with the Diocese;
- Prepared to oversee the retired clergy in the Benefice by offering them pastoral care, as well as inviting them to share in his ministry on occasion;
- Committed to the further development of the ecumenical links throughout the Benefice;
- A discreet listener, an effective Spiritual Director and experienced Confessor;
- Committed to visiting all his parishioners in health and in sickness, whether at home, in care, or in hospital and to the necessary Celebration of the Sacraments in their presence, especially for those in end-of-life care;
- Willing and able to travel where necessary at all times of the day or night;
- Interested in, and has an appreciation of, our mediaeval churches, and their maintenance and improvement;
- An efficient administrator who is IT literate and who is prepared to delegate to those willing and able to assist him;
- Approachable, determined to become involved with the wider communities of the Benefice and possessed of an excellent sense of humour.

Demography

The total area of the Benefice is 15.0 square miles, and the populations of the parishes at the time of the 2021 Census were:

Walsingham & Houghton	808
The Barshams	191
Hempton with Pudding Norton	746

The numbers of occupied households were:

Walsingham & Houghton	397
The Barshams	81
Hempton with Pudding Norton	358

The age ranges at the last Census were as follows:

	Walsingham & Houghton	The Barshams	Hempton w/ Pudding Norton
% aged 0-4	2.6	3.0	5.2
% aged 5-19	14.4	14.3	11.9
% aged 20-29	8.5	9.5	13.0
% aged 30-44	14.3	16.9	12.4
% aged 45-69	37.4	36.4	38.3
% aged 70 and over	22.8	19.9	19.2

55.5% of the population in Walsingham & Houghton self-identified as Christian in the 2011 Census, 53.4% in The Barshams and 52.4% in Hempton. A measure of the challenge which the new Parish Priest will face is that, at that time, 36.7%, 40.1% and 40.3% in the three centres self-identified as 'No religion'.

In terms of ethnicity, the Census recorded 98.8% White, 0.2% Asian, 0.0% Black, 0.6% Other and 0.4% Mixed Ethnicity in Walsingham & Houghton. In The Barshams, the category 'White Ethnicity' accounted for 100% of the population. Hempton recorded 98.4% White, 0.8% Asian, 0.4% Black, 0.1% Other and 0.3% Mixed Ethnicity.

(The rural deprivation and poverty evident in this part of the country – alongside some considerable affluence – will be an on-going challenge which the new priest will need to be able to address.)

In terms of deprivation in England, the present parish is ranked 1,745 (1=most deprived, 12,161=least deprived), whilst Hempton is ranked 1,970.

[Source: Church of England Research & Statistics Unit / Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence]

Education

Primary Education

Walsingham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School (see page 18)

Secondary Education

Alderman Peel School, Wells-next-the-Sea (599 on roll)
Fakenham Academy (767 on roll)

Further Education

The College of West Anglia
Easton College, Norwich
Norwich City College

Medical Care

Doctors' Practices

The local practice is based at Fakenham but has a Walsingham Surgery, in Cleaves Drive, which is open on most weekday mornings. There are also practices at Wells and Burnham Market.

Dental Practices

The nearest NHS Dental Practice is in Fakenham.

Hospitals

Our main hospitals are the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital, situated on the outskirts of the city (29 miles), and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn (23 miles). Cromer Hospital provides a wide-range of consultant-led outpatient services, day case operations and a Minor Injuries Unit, along with various diagnostic services including Radiology.

Other Care

Heritage House Day Care Centre, adjacent to Wells Hospital, provides a place where the elderly and frail of the area are able to socialise, have a home cooked meal and escape from the house for a few hours a day. There are numbers of Residential and Care Homes in the area.

Transport

It is a boast of the County of Norfolk that it has not a single mile of Motorway within its borders! As a result, Public Transport is a key feature for many who live in, and who visit, our Benefice.

Mainline Railway Stations

Norwich	(30 miles)
King's Lynn	(25 miles)

Bus Services

An hourly service runs daily between Fakenham and Wells-next-the-Sea, via East Barsham and Little Walsingham. From Wells, services run west along the coast to Hunstanton and King's Lynn, and east to Sheringham and Cromer. From Fakenham, regular services run to Norwich and King's Lynn. (It is worth noting no public transport services serve either North or West Barsham.)



The Churches

Patrons

Little & Great Walsingham and Houghton St Giles	Mrs Gregory Meath Baker
North, East & West Barsham	Mrs Jeremy Soames
Hempton	His Majesty King Charles III

PCCs

Little & Great Walsingham and Houghton St Giles	Vice-Chairman	Mr Stephen Parkinson
North, East & West Barsham	Vice-Chairman	Mrs Grace Howlett
Hempton	Vice-Chairman	Mrs Sylvia Cooper

Parochial History

Little & Great Walsingham and Houghton St Giles have been united parishes since just after the Great War, and the Barshams joined the Benefice in May 1995. The immediate past Incumbent of the Benefice was also Priest-in-Charge of Hempton until his departure in September 2025.

Fabric

Quinquennial Inspections, as required under the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955, were last carried out as follows:

Little Walsingham	2024
Great Walsingham	2025
Houghton St Giles	2025
East Barsham	2023
North Barsham	2023
West Barsham	2020
Hempton	2020

Church Electoral Roll - 2025

Little & Great Walsingham and Houghton St Giles	113	(55 NR)
North, East & West Barsham	27	(16 NR)
Hempton	18	(14 NR)

(It is worth noting that a significant number on the Electoral Rolls are resident in other parishes, and that some travel up to twenty miles each way every Sunday.)

Sacramental Care

Saint Mary, Little Walsingham is a Forward in Faith Parish and is affiliated with The Society under the Patronage of Saint Wilfrid & Saint Hilda.

Non-Stipendiary Clergy

There is no Curate in the Benefice but retired clergy living in the area have been of great assistance over many years and have contributed to the smooth running of the Benefice. Those assisting at the time of writing are:

The Revd Colin Amos
The Revd Dr Trevor Jones
The Revd Stephen Keeble
The Right Revd Robert Ladds
The Revd Frank Nichols
The Revd James Nolan

The Revd Canon Nicholas Court
The Revd Martin Joyce
The Revd Peter Keeling
The Very Revd Jonathan Lean
The Revd Canon Paul Noble
The Revd Leslie Pinfield

In addition, the Priest Administrator of the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, the Revd Ben Eadon, assisted at the present time by the Registrar of the College of Guardians, the Revd Graeme Rowlands, each play as full and active a part in the life and ministry of the Benefice as their posts permit.

Sunday Worship in the Benefice

<i>Time</i>		<i>Location</i>	<i>Service</i>
9.00 am		Saint Peter, Great Walsingham	Parish Eucharist
9.30 am		Holy Trinity, Hempton	Parish Mass
10.00 am	2 nd , 4 th & 5 th Sunday	Saint Giles, Houghton St Giles	Parish Mass
5.30 pm	1 st Sunday		Evensong & Benediction
10.00 am	4 th Sunday	All Saints, North Barsham	Parish Mass
10.00 am	3 rd Sunday	All Saints, East Barsham	Parish Mass
10.00 am	1 st Sunday	The Assumption, West Barsham	BCP Holy Communion
11.00 am		Saint Mary & All Saints, Little Walsingham	Parish Mass



Daily Mass

Time	Day	Location
9.30 am	Monday	The Priory of Our Lady
11.00 am	Tuesday	Saint Mary & All Saints, Little Walsingham
9.30 am	Wednesday	Holy Trinity, Hempton
10.30 am		Saint Giles, Houghton St Giles
7.00 pm	Thursday	Saint Mary & All Saints, Little Walsingham
5.00 pm	Friday	Guild of All Souls Chapel
9.30 am	Saturday	The Priory of Our Lady

Average Sunday Attendance

Saint Mary & All Saints, Little Walsingham	Pilgrimage Season 125	Winter 66
Saint Peter's, Great Walsingham	28	
Saint Giles, Houghton St Giles	13	
All Saints, North Barsham	10	
All Saints, East Barsham	9	
The Assumption, West Barsham	12	
Holy Trinity, Hempton	15	

Statistics 2024 (2023)

Communicants	S. Mary	S. Peter	S. Giles	The Barshams	Hempton
Sunday	6,264 (6,170)	1,428 (1,342)	857 (808)	367 (356)	769 (910)
Weekdays	1,706 (2,186)	0 (0)	752 (786)	0 (0)	510 (489)
Baptisms	3 (3)	0 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Confirmations	3 (0)	0 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Weddings	2 (1)	1 (2)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (1)
Funerals	10 (4)	5 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	2 (3)

Parish Finances

Income	St Mary	St Peter	St Giles	The Barshams	Hempton
2022	£105,828	£51,360	£2,517.47	£10,571	£22,410
2023	£108,360	£24,434	£45,187	£12,408	£19,297
2024	£91,211	£25,477	£21,111	£16,564	£12,894

Parish Share	St Mary	St Peter	St Giles	The Barshams	Hempton**
2022	£35,576	£13,820	£10,911	£5,819	£3,000
2023	£32,056	£14,016	£11,065	£5,902	£4,024
2024	£32,393	£16,901	£8,450	£6,338	£6,338

** Contributions towards the Walsingham Parish Share in 2023 and 2024 of £4,024 and £6,338 respectively were made by Hempton PCC as an acknowledgement of the appointment of the then Vicar of Walsingham as Priest in Charge of Hempton.

(The percentage of the Parish Share paid by the churches of the Benefice is calculated by reference to the size of each church and its number of regular communicants, together with the number of services of all types, 'charged' at £xx per service as a notional reflection of the time spent preparing for and on each service. This formula, expressed in percentage terms, also extends across the whole Benefice where there is common expenditure which needs to be divided between all the churches.)

The Parish Share continues to be paid by all the churches in Walsingham & Houghton and The Barshams each year both on time and in full.

Parish Administrator

The Benefice is richly blessed at the present time by the work and ministry of a paid part-time Administrator, Joe Allen, a PhD Candidate at St Mary's University, Twickenham, who mainly works remotely from his home in London.

Safeguarding

We are committed to maintaining the safety of all who visit our Churches, however frequently or infrequently. Each of our PCCs is of course committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Our safeguarding policies naturally align with the Safeguarding Policies of the Church of England, as well as its Safer Recruitment Policy. Notices to this effect are displayed in each of our churches. Mrs Kate Noble is the Parish Safeguarding Officer for each of our parishes (including Hempton). We regularly review our practices and Safeguarding appears on the agenda at every PCC meeting, when a Report from the Safeguarding Officer is tabled and considered.

Clergy Wellbeing

We understand the need for proper balance in the life of our Parish Priest, the resources necessary to deliver his ministry, as well as the need for regular time off for rest and recreation. Our PCCs are committed to playing their part in realising these aspirations: for example, the swift reimbursement of expenses; making space for their Priest's participation in various Chapters, for Cell Meetings, and for periods of study. The Vicarage should be a place of safety and security, maintained to the highest standards, where the incumbent, along with visitors or family, can both *feel* safe and *be* safe. (To this end, we will be making arrangements for the installation of a *Doorbell Camera* during the present interregnum.) As well as these daily and weekly commitments, the PCCs are committed to ensuring that the incumbent is enabled to take Sabbatical Leave at appropriate intervals and, where necessary, to share in the financial burden of the costs thereof.

Saint Mary & All Saints, Little Walsingham

Churchwardens:

Mrs Maureen Howard &
Mr Stephen Parkinson

A church, originally dedicated to All Saints, has stood on the present site since Saxon times but nothing which now remains is older than the 14th century. At the beginning of the twentieth century, just two items of particular note distinguished the building: the Seven Sacrament Font (15th century) - probably the finest example in East Anglia - and the Tomb of Sir Henry and Lady Jane Sydney (1612). But, following his appointment as Vicar in 1921, Fr Alfred Hope Patten re-established devotion to Our Lady of Walsingham, by setting up a newly carved image and Shrine in the Guilds Chapel of the church in July 1922. Consequently, the village of Walsingham became again a centre of pilgrimage and St Mary's was for nine years the Pilgrimage Church. The statue of Our Lady was translated to the Holy House in the newly-built Shrine Church on 15th October 1931, since which time an integral part of the Weekend Pilgrimage has remained participation by pilgrims in the Parish Mass at Saint Mary's each Sunday morning.

On 14th July 1961, the church was devastated by fire but was rebuilt by the distinguished architect Laurence King and reconsecrated on 8th August 1964. It is a testament to those who restored the church in the 1960s that it is today Listed Grade I. There are six bells in the tower which can be heard when visiting teams perform, although there is no local band at present. More recent work has included a major overhaul of the organ, which is considered to be an undisputed masterpiece; a new Sound System; an improved CCTV system which enables the Organist to see what is happening behind him and the Churchwardens to see what might have been happening at other, quieter times (!); and the installation of a well-equipped Kitchen in the South Porch, which has enabled a much wider range of refreshment options on a much wider range of occasions! And, not to be left behind in this brave, new technological age, the Church is of course connected via Wi-Fi to the internet, thus enabling visitors, pilgrims and worshippers to support our ministry with the aid of their Debit and Credit Cards – for which generosity we are of course tremendously grateful!

The church is firmly Anglo-Catholic in its tradition and the Parish Mass is concelebrated - during the Pilgrimage Season from February until the end of November each year - by an average of 15 concelebrants assisted by teams of servers, cantors and readers. Refreshments are served after Mass and fellowship is enjoyed by all able to participate. Throughout the year all major weekday feasts are celebrated with a Sung Mass, in collaboration with the Shrine Church, with which the Parish Church has an excellent working relationship. On the ecumenical front, there are warm and cordial relations with the Roman Catholic National Shrine and Parish Church, the Methodist Chapel and the Orthodox Church.



Saint Peter, Great Walsingham

Churchwardens: Mr James Woodhouse
& Mrs Kath Booty

The essence of St Peter's is its broad congregational profile encompassing a wide range of ages and backgrounds who come together every Sunday to celebrate our shared faith in Christ Jesus. We have a particular focus on local families, many of whom have grown up within the church, and we cherish the younger members of our congregation with a weekly Sunday School. Our mission is rooted in worship, welcome, and service. We seek to offer a loving Christian presence to all – from long-standing parishioners to occasional visitors, using gentle outreach to draw people into fellowship and faith. Our principal act of worship is the Parish Eucharist each Sunday, during which the Sunday School meets in the vestry, leaving the service having been presented with their Gospel by the Celebrant and returning during the Offertory Hymn to share in the Eucharist. Children have attendance charts, and we love to see them presented with prizes during services. Easter Eggs and Advent Chocolate also feature! After the service, we gather for refreshments - a vital opportunity to nurture fellowship and strengthen community bonds across this dispersed rural parish. We often use this time to mark special occasions such as our Patronal Festival, significant birthdays, and anniversaries. Particular celebrations and events each year include:

- A May Musical Evening, held in conjunction with the Music Therapy Department at Anglia Ruskin University, featuring performances by students and refreshments provided by parish volunteers.
- Harvest Festival, which holds particular meaning for us given our strong connections to farming and food production.
- Carols under the Stars, an outdoor family-oriented carol service born during Covid, now a cherished annual event, complete with festive lights, mince pies, and mulled wine.

St Peter's dates from the 14th Century and is of some renown, which means we are lucky enough to attract many visitors with a particular interest in church architecture. We have the benefit of an automatic locking mechanism, which enables the church to be open daily, thus providing a quiet sanctuary to visitors and locals alike. Looking ahead, we are conscious of the need to improve accessibility to all in our Community as and when funds permit.

We are blessed with a dedicated team of volunteers who support every aspect of church life – from bell ringing and flower arranging to maintenance, service preparation, and hospitality. Occasional offices such as baptisms, weddings, confirmations and funerals are valued opportunities to connect with the wider community and share God's love in times of joy and sorrow. The continued growth of the congregation, especially for those with young children, is vital to our future spiritual health and the ongoing witness of the church within our village.



Saint Giles, Houghton St Giles

Churchwardens: Mr Barry Shipp &
Mr Garry Getley

Houghton St Giles, also known as Houghton in the Dale, is a small village made up of farm cottages and four larger houses, several of which are holiday homes, all beautifully sitting in the Stiffkey Valley. A farming community of around 40

residents, approximately one mile south of Walsingham, St Giles Church is situated toward the northern end of the village, where it is an outstanding landmark. The original building dates back to the 13th Century, by the 1870s the church was declared unsafe and rebuilt by the architect W E Enfield, reusing as much of the original stone as possible, meticulously returning it to its old location. Thus we have a Victorian rebuild retaining its medieval character, some notable stained glass windows were added at this stage, but the salvaged 12 panel painted rood screen remains largely unrestored since its original desecration is of course the subject of much interest



During the last few years we have embarked on a programme of significant improvements, externally installing a disabled access path, removing overgrown conifers and installing traditional iron railings which allow a full view of the church from the main road. Inside the church, improvements include an automated bell-ringing system which tolls the Angelus each day and rings before Services. A basic kitchen has been installed below the tower. A new extension on the North side of the Church provides a new Sacristy and two disabled toilets. We are confident that all this work has helped to create a much more welcoming church.

Our pattern of worship is currently a Parish Mass every second, fourth and fifth Sunday, a Low Mass every Wednesday morning - coffee and time for fellowship follow all services. On the first Sunday of the month, we celebrate Solemn Evensong and Benediction, followed by wine and savouries and, of course, time for fellowship. This service is often supported by a choir, and by members of other Churches across the Benefice.

Fellowship and fundraising go hand in hand! We enjoy Cream Teas every Thursday afternoon throughout the summer months and once a month during the winter. St Giles Patronal Festival is celebrated each year and usually followed by a Parish Lunch.

We always offer a warm welcome to Saint Giles and encourage everyone who might visit to light a candle before Our Lady and to sit a while. The Church is never locked.

All Saints, North Barsham

Churchwardens:
Mr Frank Chapman &
Mrs Sheena White

The ancient and historic church of North Barsham lies both on the Pilgrimage route from King's Lynn to Walsingham and on the London to Walsingham Camino (see page 28), close by the river in '*Stiffkey's fair vale*'. A stone's throw to the Slipper Chapel (the Roman Catholic National Shrine), the church enjoys much footfall from pilgrims, walkers, ramblers and locals all seeking a place of history, respite and peace.



In the late 20th century the church was heavily restored by a local retired priest and his wife who were resident in the old rectory at the time, returning it to full active use within the benefice. This foresight now sees the church permanently open to all and in good condition for worship, community events, music rehearsals, or just as a place of retreat and quiet.

Surrounded by agricultural land and buildings owned by some of the great estates of England, the church has experienced a resurgence of wedding enquiries coming from the local Barns now converted into high quality holiday lets. For those wishing to combine a gathering of family and close friends with an intimate country wedding celebration, All Saints could perhaps fit the bill!

Very few houses surround the small church and largely consists of Estate workers cottages and privately owned 18th century dwellings.

The small but faithful congregation celebrate the Eucharist (Modern Rite) once a month in line with the Mass offered elsewhere within the Benefice, thus creating a necessary and practical unity.

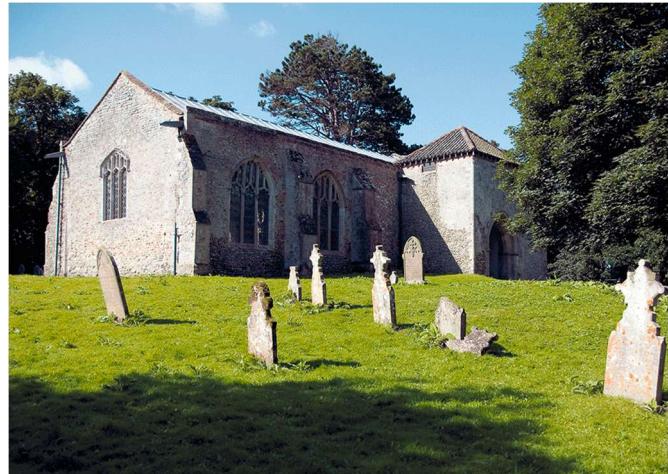
The church, though surrounded by grassland and on a small knoll, is accessible to the disabled visitor and is car-friendly with adequate parking space. Fundraising continues here as elsewhere to update and create new facilities for the needs of the 21st century worshipper, locals and pilgrim visitors alike.

All Saints remains a space with hidden potential for anyone to see and is only revealed to those who are willing to open its ancient oak door and look within.

All Saints, East Barsham

Churchwarden:
Mr David Simmons

The Church lies on the ancient pilgrim route from London to Walsingham and is the final station church and gate-keeper to the domain of the Blessed Virgin Mary and home to the historic statue of Our Lady of Greeting.



Worship has been offered here for over one thousand years and the Mass is still the focus of the community on the third Sunday of the month at 10.00am, attended by a small but loyal group of local parishioners of varied Anglican traditions.

East Barsham village consists of sixty-four houses, three major farms owned by two local families, a village hall (now a dance school), a public house and a Tudor mansion much visited by King Henry VIII and his Queens on their pilgrimage to Walsingham.

The populace consists largely of retired and semi-retired people, some locally employed in Fakenham or on the land, and second home owners.

In 2015 the church suffered a lead theft of half its roof and subsequent water damage has left the plasterwork in a dangerous condition so much so that the architect has lately requested access to the church be limited to services only. Undaunted, the regular congregation continues its fundraising efforts to facilitate a full and comprehensive refurbishment, with the provision of toilets, a kitchen, new flooring, lighting and heating (via solar panels) external paths and lighting giving full disabled access to the site and church building.

It is our common mind that the church building must offer alternative community usage and not remain solely a worship space but become a much-valued working asset.

In 2024 All Saints Church generously received permission from both the Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops for joint usage of the building with the hope that it might yet again become a power-house of worship and prayer for all.

It is therefore now extremely urgent that we utilise the period of the Interregnum to secure funding and to upgrade our efforts to reopen the church and its churchyard making it fully functional once again for the people and pilgrims of East Barsham.

The Assumption of The Blessed Virgin Mary, West Barsham

Churchwardens: Mrs Grace Howlett & Mrs Susanna Soames

West Barsham is one of the three small rural villages which make up the Barsham benefice and has a population of approximately 25 people and at the heart of the village stands the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The church, which has many interesting historical features, was fully restored in the twentieth century, and is in good condition having just recently undergone major renovation works. The church is accessible, is blessed with ample parking for numerous cars, and the churchyard remains open and is well maintained. The benefice of the Barshams lacks a community hub in the absence of a school, public house, shop or post office. Recently, however, the Barsham Brewery opened a Tap Room which does attract some local people. Employment in the village is mainly agricultural, or In hospitality.

West Barsham's monthly Holy Communion is notable across the Benefice, in that it utilises the Book of Common Prayer, which attracts communicants from other villages on a regular basis. Other annual services - Harvest Festival, Christmas Carols etc - rotate between the three Barsham churches. During the year we are pleased to welcome to the church various pilgrims, especially the Ely Leg of the Pilgrim Cross on Good Friday, on their way to Walsingham, bearing their crosses. In recent years, there has been a very welcome increase in weddings in the church and hopefully this will continue.

We are active in our fundraising with different events such as Garden Openings, Summer Suppers or Drinks. In common with all the Churches of the Benefice, our Parish Share is paid in full, and on time!

The Barshams greatly value their links with Walsingham, and indeed petitioned to be part of the Benefice, but equally like to see themselves as distinct.



Photo (right): an image of the BVM in the Church, installed and blessed August 2025.

Holy Trinity, Hempton

Churchwarden:
Mr Ravi Kumar

Hempton's present-day Church dedicated to the Holy Trinity is the successor of several earlier churches and a Priory built on various sites across the district. These fell into disrepair and Hempton was without a Church for several centuries. Holy Trinity opened for worship within the Catholic Tradition as a small Chapel of Ease in 1856. The larger western extension opened in 1955 following a growth in population resulting from the post-war building of Social Housing. Today, the Victorian east end contains the Sanctuary and part of the Nave seating, while the western extension provides further Nave seating, a side Altar, Organ and Sacristy.



Holy Trinity nestles beside The Green, a playing field and children's play area. Access is via an unmade track which also serves Hempton Memorial Hall and the Bowls Club. Other notable buildings nearby are The Bell public house and Fakenham Garden Centre. Holy Trinity has its own church hall within the churchyard which is available for church functions and also for hire to the wider community.

Worship at Holy Trinity continues in the Catholic Tradition. There is a serving team of 3 and Lessons are read by 2 members of the congregation. The Church is graced with a number of Statues and Icons including Our Lady of Walsingham where the Angelus is said at the end of the Sunday Mass. The Church also has a set of Stations of the Cross. Since the re-establishment of the Shrine of Our Lady, Hempton has been on the Pilgrimage route to Walsingham. Hempton became a gathered community Church of those wishing to worship in the style Holy Trinity continues to offer. That is reflected in the current make up of the congregation. About one third live in Hempton and two thirds gather from Fakenham and surrounding villages.

The congregation is mainly in the 50+ age group and includes active members aged over 90! Most services are followed by fellowship over coffee and biscuits. On the first Wednesday of the month from March to December, we hold a fundraising Coffee Morning after Mass which is open to all.

For more than twenty-five years, Hempton has been cared for by Clergy from Walsingham, including Shrine Administrators, Chantry Priests of the Guild of All Souls Chapel and most recently by the Vicar of Walsingham, assisted by numbers of retired clergy. The P.C.C. has recently agreed to closer ties with the Walsingham Benefice, and looks forward to the prospect of eventually becoming an integral part of it.

Walsingham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

On 1st April 2013, Walsingham Primary School became part of the Pilgrim Federation of Church of England Schools, together with Blakeney, Hindringham and Kelling Primary Schools; the first four school Federation in Norfolk. Previously Walsingham had been a Community school but, with the dawn of the Federation, it became a Church of England Voluntary Aided School.



The Executive Headteacher, Tom Snowden, was appointed in 2021. Both he and the Executive Deputy Head, Helen Frier, who is head of teaching and learning, have no class teaching commitment, and work across all schools every week. At present, the school has 28 pupils on roll, in two classes: one consisting of Reception, Yr 1 and Yr 2, the other holds Yrs 3, 4, 5, & 6. There are two teachers, four full/part-time Teaching Assistants, a secretary, 3 midday assistants and a caretaker.

Walsingham had an Ofsted inspection in October 2024 and was deemed '*requires improvement*' - the few issues raised are of course being addressed. The rest of the schools in the Federation were deemed good. SIAMS inspections by the Diocese have also taken place and all the schools received very strong reports.

The Bishop's Appointed Governor has previously been the incumbent and it is hoped the future incumbent will agree to take on the role. The PCC appointed Governor is Joan Joyce.

It is hoped the incumbent, having liaised with the Senior Teacher at the school, will lead Collective Worship at least once a week, lead RE sessions in the classrooms occasionally and organise special services during the year. For example, it has been the custom to have a Mothering 'Friday' Service, a Harvest Thanksgiving in the

Autumn Term, a Christingle Service early in December (usually held in St Peter's Church), a Christmas Nativity & Carols (usually held in St Mary's Church) and an Easter Service (usually held at the Shrine). There is an Open the Book team, led by Sister Carol SSM, who lead Collective Worship once a week at the school. The team also attend the services previously mentioned.

The Pilgrim Federation holds a Founding Day each year, in April. During the years since its inauguration, a variety of venues have been visited, including Norwich Cathedral and Walsingham – taking in the Catholic Shrine, the Anglican Shrine, the Abbey Grounds etc, in order that all the Federation Schools would learn about the Village. The incumbent would help to organise and participate in the day in liaison with the Executive Headteacher and clergy from parishes connected with each of the schools.

An initiative of the previous incumbent, the Prayer & Pizza group, for children aged 8 upwards, meeting in school since the demise of the village hall, has been very successful in drawing the children into church, and has resulted in several confirmations and in the development of young servers. Assisted by parishioners, it is hoped the new incumbent will capitalise on this strong foundation to draw more young people into church. The group has a core membership of about 8, and the maximum attendance reached a peak of 17. Occasional trips out (e.g. bowling, pantomime) were also popular.

We asked the Children of the School what sort of person they hoped their new Vicar might be . . .

The majority wanted him to be kind. They also asked that he be friendly and like children, get on well with them and run clubs to tell them about Jesus.

They wanted him to teach them about the bible, to know Latin, to care about the environment, to explain about Jesus being the light of the world, and to focus on God.

They also want him to be a good sport, able to kick a ball, play games, build Lego, and - very important - never to shout or call people names!

They also asked for someone old (i.e. over 30!) and wise; someone tall, nice, polite and gentle.

They would also like him to be like God.

And finally, they would like a pianist who is also a magician . . .

Parish Organisations

Walsingham

Recreation Trust (Village Hall – rebuilding is due to commence in early 2026))
Parish Hall
Women's Institute
Mothers' Union
Parish Council
Bowls Club
Friends of Walsingham Church of England Primary School

Barsham

Parish Council (Barshams & Houghton)
Mothers' Union
Village Hall

The Village Charities of Great & Little Walsingham

The Vicar is *ex officio* the Chairman of the following Charities.

Cleaves Charity

This Charity includes the Alms Houses & Coal Charity, and owns properties in the High Street, Little Walsingham, together with 40 acres in Snoring and other areas of land. The old Alms Houses have been completely renovated and extended. Behind the original two storey block, facing onto Wells Road, has been constructed a courtyard surrounded on three sides by new residential flats and a meeting room.

Lady Mary Townshend's

This charity provides grants to individuals regarding education, training and apprenticeships.

Bonds Educational Trust

This charity Provide grants to young people of Great and Little Walsingham parishes for the benefit of their education and training.

Little Walsingham Clothing Club

This charity is open to OAPs who subscribe £1 per annum; additional income is from land near Egmere. The money, which is for clothing, can amount to £35, depending on the number of members (30- 40). It is shared among members at Christmas but is restricted to residents of Little Walsingham

Anglican & Ecumenical Links

A pilgrim once said, *"The joy of Walsingham is that it is a Christian place"*. The Benefice enjoys its close links with:

The Anglican Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham

The Anglican Shrine is a separate entity from the Parish but has important historic links with Saint Mary's. In 1921 the Vicar, the Revd Alfred Hope Patten, established a Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in the Parish Church and pilgrimages to Walsingham recommenced. In 1931 the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham was translated to the present Shrine Church which now attracts well over 300,000 pilgrims a year. The Shrine also accommodates 12,000 pilgrims a year, many of whom attend the Parish Mass on Sundays. The Shrine is under the care of the Guardians of The Holy House of Our Lady of Walsingham and is currently administered by the Revd Ben Eadon. There is an excellent and close working relationship between the Parish and the Shrine.



The Priory of Our Lady - Society of St Margaret

In January 1994, the Priory of Our Lady at Walsingham reverted to being an autonomous house of the Society of St Margaret. The Sisters are a Traditional Community whose daily life is centred on the Eucharist and the Daily Office, from which flows their growing involvement in the ministry of healing and reconciliation in the Shrine, local parishes and the wider Church. They welcome guests for short periods of rest, relaxation and retreat, and are available to pilgrims and visitors. The Sisters also work in the Schools Department and Welcome Centre in the Shrine.



The Chantry Chapel of St Michael and the Holy Souls – Guild of All Souls

In 1965 the chapel of St Michael and the Holy Souls, in the grounds of the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, was consecrated. Mass is offered daily in the Chapel, and those whose names are in the Guild of All Souls Anniversary Book are remembered at Mass on their anniversary. In 1973, the Guild appointed its first Chantry Priest. Since 2007, the Chantry Priest, although his appointment is part-time, has had an enhanced role at the Shrine, assisting the Shrine Clergy. Following the recent retirement of Bishop Robert Ladds as Chantry Priest, the Trustees of the Guild are, at the time of writing, taking the opportunity of reviewing some of the detail of the post, prior to the selection of his successor.



The Roman Catholic National Shrine of Our Lady, Walsingham

In 1896 Charlotte Pearson Boyd purchased the 14th century Slipper Chapel at Houghton St Giles, the last of the wayside chapels en-route to Walsingham, and restored it for Roman Catholic use. In 1934 the Slipper Chapel was declared to be the National Shrine of Our Lady for Roman Catholics in England. The Chapel of Reconciliation was consecrated in 1982 and is in the style of a Norfolk Barn. In December 2015, Pope Francis declared the Catholic National Shrine at Walsingham a Minor Basilica. Under the leadership of its Rector, the Revd Dr Robert Billing, it attracts an extremely large number of pilgrims each year and collaborates closely with the Anglican Shrine.



The Roman Catholic Parish of Walsingham and Wells

The Parish Church of the Annunciation, a new and beautiful building designed by Anthony Rossi and Consecrated in 2006, is in Friday Market Place. This together with churches in Wells-next-the-Sea, Burnham Market and Blakeney serves the considerable number of Roman Catholics in the area.



Methodists

Walsingham Methodists are part of the Fakenham, Wells and Holt Circuit and have a very beautiful Georgian Chapel in Little Walsingham. There is a small and dedicated congregation which keep Methodism alive in the Village.



Orthodox

The Parish Church of the Transfiguration is in a converted Methodist Chapel adjacent to the Green in Great Walsingham. The inside has been amazingly converted into a traditional Orthodox Church, while the outside retains its original appearance. There is also a chapel of St Seraphim in the old railway station in Little Walsingham and a Pan Orthodox Chapel in the Anglican Shrine. There is an enthusiastic congregation some of whom live locally and others come from further afield. They play a full part in the religious life of the Village.



The Vicarage

The detached vicarage, built in 1967, is located in Little Walsingham, close to Saint Mary's Church, with a southerly aspect overlooking parkland.

The accommodation comprises:

Ground Floor Entrance Hall, Sitting Room, Dining Room, Study, Kitchen, Utility Room & Cloakroom.

First Floor 5 Bedrooms, Bathroom and separate toilet.

The house is centrally heated by an oil-fired boiler system and fitted with UPVC double glazing. The garden is not over large and is well maintained. A detached double garage is adjacent to the house which is served by a private septic tank system.



Stipend and Expenses

Stipend as per Diocesan Scale.

Removal Expenses - paid by the Diocesan Board of Finance, subject to three tenders being obtained and the lowest price accepted. A resettlement grant is also payable.

Parochial Expenses - the Benefice has adopted the Diocesan policy regarding parochial expenses.

Full details of all the above can be seen on the Diocesan Website.

Further Information

Further information (e.g. APCM Reports etc) regarding this appointment may be obtained from:

Mrs Lynette Sutton
PCC Secretary
33 Cleaves Drive
Walsingham NR22 6EQ
01328-820560
lynnette06@live.co.uk

The following will be happy to have informal conversations with interested clergy:

<i>Little Walsingham</i>	<i>Great Walsingham</i>
Stephen Parkinson	James Woodhouse
01328 820828	01328 820268
stparkinson@aol.com	james.woodhouse@netcom.co.uk

<i>Walsingham C of E Primary School</i>
Joan Joyce
01328 821707
joan.joyce3@gmail.com

<i>Houghton St Giles</i>	<i>The Barshams</i>
Barry Shipp	Grace Howlett
01328 820216	01328 851064
barry.ship@btinternet.com	gracehowlett@tiscali.co.uk

<i>Hempton</i>
Sylvia Cooper
01328 855373
s_acooper@yahoo.co.uk

Other relevant contacts include:

The Rural Dean of Burnham & Walsingham
(presently vacant)

The Archdeacon of Lynn

The Venerable Catherine Dobson
The Annexe
Holly Tree House
Whitwell Road
Sparham
Norwich NR9 5PN
01362 709200
archdeacon.lynn@dioceseofnorwich.org

The Bishop of Richborough

The Right Revd Luke Irvine-Capel SSC
8 Bruce Road,
Southsea,
Hampshire,
PO4 9RL
07447 103358
bishop@seeofrichborough.org.uk

The Bishop of Lynn

The Right Revd Dr Jane Steen
The Bishop's Office
Lynn House
Commercial Road
Dereham NR19 1AE
01362 709200
bishop.lynn@dioceseofnorwich.org

The Bishop of Norwich

The Right Revd Graham Usher
Bishop's House
Norwich NR3 1SB
01603 629001
bishop@dioceseofnorwich.org

Application Process

This appointment will be advertised in *The Church Times* published on 9th January 2026.

The closing date for the receipt of application forms is 12th February 2026.

Interviews will be held on 4th March 2026 when there will be the opportunity to tour the Benefice.

Application forms are available at:

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

Any other enquiries may be directed to:

Mrs Ann Whittet
Lynn House
Commercial Road
Dereham NR19 1AE

Telephone: 01362 709200 Ext no: 3030
Email: ann.whittet@dioceseofnorwich.org

The Norwich Diocesan website has full details of the appointment, including the Parish Profile. Please go to: [Clergy vacancies - Diocese of Norwich](#)



Website Links

The following links might be useful to browse around the Benefice.

Walsingham Village
www.walsinghamvillage.org/

Barsham Parish Council
<https://www.barshampc.info/>

Walsingham Parish Council
<https://www.walsinghamvillage.org/walsingham-parish-council/>

Walsingham Church of England Primary School
www.walsingham.norfolk.sch.uk/

Walsingham Abbey
<https://www.walsinghamabbey.com/>

Walsingham Estate
<https://www.walsinghamestate.co.uk/>

Barsham Brewery
<https://www.barshambrewery.co.uk/>

The Anglican Shrine
www.walsinghamanglican.org.uk/

The Roman Catholic Shrine
www.walsingham.org.uk/

Walsingham, Houghton & The Barshams
www.walsinghamparishes.org.uk/

The Annunciation, Friday Market
www.rcdea.org.uk/location/our-lady-of-the-annunciation-little-walsingham/

The Holy Transfiguration, Great Walsingham
<https://holytransfigurationwalsingham.simdif.com/>

Walsingham Methodist Chapel
[www.eangliamethodist.org.uk/walsingham/](http://eangliamethodist.org.uk/walsingham/)

St. Seraphim's Trust
<https://stseraphimtrust.org.uk/>

The Walsingham Camino
https://www.britishpilgrimage.org/portfolio/london-to-walsingham-camino?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=2241879345&gbraid=0AAAAACWYEJFo8hz0qqQW2gp11NlbwZfdl&gclid=Cj0KCQjwsPzHBhDCARIsALIWNG0BqL2IU6HKffg_OcjoP83HA95RHeTHb6cBvXURnjrlMB7zTztEoaAsCpEALw_wcB