



 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Norwich

South Launditch, Norfolk

Parish Profile 2026

Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in our profile. The South Launditch group of churches are looking for a priest to take us forward as a new benefice after a period of change.

Our parishes are currently part of the Launditch & Upper Nar Team Ministry. The Bishop and Archdeacon of Lynn have worked with us to discern smaller benefices to enable us to go forward in mission and ministry. Consultation on the pastoral scheme is underway. Our new benefice will comprise the parishes of **Great and Little Fransham, Great and Little Dunham, Beeston-next-Mileham and Bittering Parva**.

On our journey, we began working well together and are excited about our new benefice. After a period of uncertainty over the last two years, we are committed to moving forward with a strong supportive lay team. We are optimistic about the future possibilities for mission as a smaller benefice and are looking forward to this new chapter in our life together. We feel comfortable and get on well together, have similar views and are willing to be flexible and make changes. We meet regularly to discuss the future and the kind of ministry we wish to offer and receive (see photo 1).

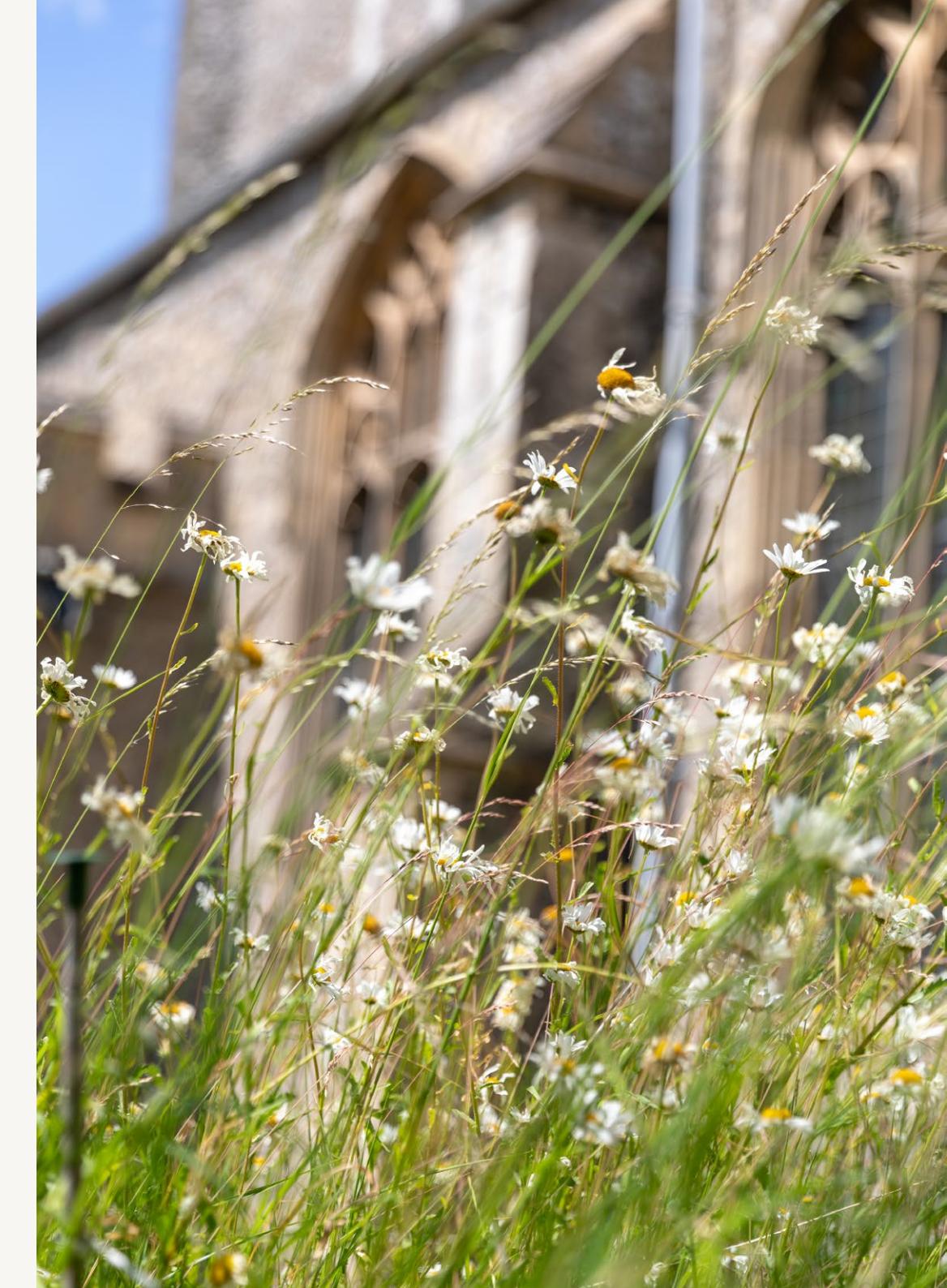


Photo 1: Members of our church community invite you to read our profile

Our Vision

Is to use the opportunity of our newly-established benefice to develop new, strong, relevant and permanent relationships rooted in Christ and our communities

Building on our strong foundations, our Priest will lead us on our forward journey. We acknowledge that our small group of parishes has limited funding to support a house-for-duty position at this moment in time and appreciate the commitment of the diocesan board of finance to meet the difference in the short term. However, we have a plan for growth over the next five years and we will work on this with our new Priest. We set out below the task and explain how we will achieve our vision by supporting our Priest with both friendship and resources.



The Task

Our Priest will:

- be a figurehead for the Church, promoting Christian life relevant to modern living, active and well-known in our communities. After a time of vacancies and changes in clergy we need a sense of stability and caring leadership.
- provide pastoral support, reaching out into our communities to those in need or supporting life events. Our voluntary ministry team of retired clergy, authorised worship assistants and churchwardens have provided a sense of continuity for services but we need to build a pastoral care presence in our communities.
- maintain a pattern of regular Sunday services: Holy Communion, Morning Prayer Family Services and festivals at special times. We are looking for opportunities to create a new worshipping community so that we are able to grow in the breadth of our provision and become younger and more diverse as a church family.
- be keen to encourage families, children and young adults in the life of the Church, and build on links with the 2 schools in our parishes
- offer baptism, marriage and funeral services at each church and actively seek to build on these opportunities for growth.
- be well-supported in these tasks by the laity including PCCs, churchwardens and the wider community. The laity, with current support from voluntary ministry team, are fulfilling these roles at present and maintain a full calendar of services and events to ensure the Church life is maintained throughout the vacancy.

Who are we looking for?

We pray for a priest with a warm personality who will:

- be rooted in prayer, combine imagination and common sense and have a good sense of humour. We feel our team have this and it has allowed us to be pragmatic and forward looking.
- have good people skills, and energy. Over the past 10 years, we have had several changes in clergy and the shape and size of our benefice. We have built a strong team but need leadership and vision to take this forward.
- honour the needs of those who prefer traditional worship yet have a sympathetic attitude to change and relevance to today's world. We hold a range of services across the benefice so that people have choice.
- be sensitive to, and understanding of, modern rural life. As a rural benefice we face a range of issues as well as opportunities, many of the farming issues are playing out in Parliament. Rural poverty, isolation, climate change and access to technology all play a role.
- be up for the challenge of reinvigorating our parishes in their new grouping and help us to discern God's will for us all.
- be keen to encourage families, children and young adults in the life of the Church. and develop links with our two schools.

Safeguarding

Promoting a Safer Church

The PCCs of the parishes are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All post holders and volunteers are expected to share this.

All appointments are subject to acceptable pre-appointment checks, including a satisfactory Enhanced DBS Check.

The location

Our Priest will:

- The priest will be based at the newly-built Little Dunham vicarage in West Norfolk.
- Our benefice is 1hr 30 minutes from the M1 and 30 minutes from stations with direct trains to London and Stansted. These are in the mediaeval centres of Norwich and King's Lynn, both in their own right thriving and interesting places.
- This is a beautiful area of traditional farming land with plenty of country walking and less than an hour away from the famous Norfolk Broads (see photo 2) and over 100 miles of coastline. East Anglia is one of thirty locations Lonely Planet revealed as the must-visit places around the world to see in 2025 – and the only one in the UK.
- Our community is made up of farmers, smallholders, proprietors of small business, some with employees and some one-man operations, plus employees of urban and rural businesses of many kinds.
- Although we are in a rural area, the makeup of our villages is increasingly that of people who have switched from urban to rural life. Our villages vary in population size from 250 to over 500 and are all a good mix of people from across the UK and from Norfolk, and of all age ranges. There is also social housing within the benefice and a third of those who live here are retired. We have very few holiday homes and little turnover providing stable strong communities.
- New house building within the parishes means there is more opportunity for growth and involvement with the Churches.
- Education: In addition to the local Primary and Secondary schools, detailed below, there are Sixth forms in Dereham, Swaffham, Downham Market and King's Lynn as well as several colleges. Higher education includes the University of East Anglia and University of the Arts in Norwich.
- Health Care: There are surgeries in Litcham, Swaffham, Necton and Dereham and Accident and Emergency facilities at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn and the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital in Norwich.
- There are convenience stores in the neighbouring villages of Litcham, Sporle and Necton and supermarkets in Swaffham (10 mins), Fakenham (30 mins) and Dereham (15 mins).
- Culture: Norfolk has a thriving arts and music scene and there are cinemas (mainstream and arthouse) in the towns and local villages hold 'flix in the stix' screenings. In Westacre, Anthony Gormley is patron of the theatre there. Norwich has two dedicated music venues at the UEA and Waterfront and two theatres.



Photo 2: The beautiful Norfolk Broads are not far away

Our Churches

Map locations of our Churches are shown by what three words (WTW):

Little Dunham

St Margaret's Church (WTW organist.good.middle) sits in a peaceful parkland setting adjoining the Old Rectory on the edge of the Village. Extensive restoration has taken place over the last 25 years including repairs to the tower, renewing the nave, chancel and north aisle roof, replacement of lights and renewal of rainwater goods and drains. There is ample car parking in the drive.

Great Dunham

St Andrew's Church (WTW welfare.port.idealistic) is a rare example of a Saxo-Norman building, dating from around 1070 AD. As such, it is regularly visited by Church preservation and historical learned societies. Recent repairs have been undertaken with Heritage Lottery funding (HLF), which has also supported our 'Heritage Trail' information booklet and outreach activities.

Great Fransham

All Saints Church (WTW bookcases.bless.loans) stands in a prime position adjacent to the Village Hall with car parking on the Village Hall meadow. There is a splendid brass of Galfridus, a Knight of Fransham, within the Church which dates from 1414. Extensive renovation works have taken place within the last ten years.

Little Fransham

St Mary's Church (WTW richer.waking.fingertip) is situated at the end of a gravel drive which leads on to the original rectory now called Fransham Place. The church is surrounded by a new housing development and some farmland. Limited parking is available in front of the church.

Beeston

St Mary the Virgin's Church (WTW promising.onlookers.award) is situated out of the village centre with its spire dominating the surrounding landscape. Much of the church dates from the 1200s. Recent restoration projects have included the wonderful hammerbeam roof, replacement roofs and extensive work on the spire and bell tower, a project which won an architecture award (see photo 4).

Bittering Parva

St Peter and St Paul's Church (WTW package.prouder stepping) was declared redundant in the 70s and is cared for by the Norwich Diocesan Churches Trust, managed day to day through the Diocesan Church Care team. The church building is a tranquil place a few hundred metres from the road and is described as a place of peace by visitors and walkers who pass that way.

Our Schools

The two primary schools in our parishes at Beeston and Gt Dunham are part of the Unity-Education Trust Academy. In recent years, members of our PCCs and clergy have been involved with the life of the schools including governance and assemblies. We can support our Priest to continue mission with these, building on the excellent work funded through 'leading your church into growth'. With a mission of "Be all you can be!", the Beeston primary school ethos is to "plan for every child to fulfil their potential with us...whether academic, sporting or just being a great citizen, we want your child to be all that they can be..."

There are currently around 90 children on roll at Beeston. Gt Dunham primary was recently converted into a Special Needs school with about 15 on roll at present.

The church playing field is currently leased to them by the Diocese and could potentially be developed as a forest school. In the neighbouring parish, Litcham School is all-through Primary and Secondary Phase located on two sites.



Our Services

We have a range of services including Book of Common Prayer, Iona and modern worship with audiovisuals.

- All parishes are happy to share in lay-led services. At Gt. Dunham, we have been using excellent resources available from the Diocese of Ely.
- We have had joint services recently. For example, Gt Dunham has joint services with Beeston at Christmas, Easter and Harvest. Fransham and Gt Dunham have also had joint remembrance services.
- It would be great if one or two services a year could be taken at Bittering.
- We have experimented with new forms of worship including pet services, All Souls services, Harvest Festival in a former cart shed, Rogation Sunday service on a parish boundary and carol services in pubs; these have been successful in attracting new people and we hope to build on this in the future.
- The Priest will be introduced to the Garden Church established previously within the wider LUN benefice that will continue with weekly meetings and provide new opportunities for mission. This initiative has provided the opportunity for studying scripture and developing spiritual growth.
- Our Christingle services generally have our churches packed with children and parents whereas our well-attended Remembrance services are a time to reflect on the meaning of life, and death, and of greater things to come.
- Our approach is flexible and our new priest will find us interested and supportive to any policy that will support and increase our congregations.



Photo 3: Audiovisual equipment at St Andrew's, Great Dunham, put to good use at our Carol Service

During the week

There are many community activities taking place during the week at which the friendly face of our Priest would be most welcome:

- At Beeston, the village hall and playing field are a base for cricket teams, for Brownies and Rainbows, keep-fit and yoga classes, bingo and quiz nights, Parish Council meetings, coffee mornings and fabulous Summer Fêtes.
- In Little Dunham, there is the Crown care home to which communion may be taken. We have encouraged use of the Church as a village resource, with evening talks, BBQs, quiz trails etc. to widen ownership of the building throughout the village.
- At Great Dunham Village Hall, we run Table Tennis club, Art group, Curling, Whist, 'Knit and Natter', 'quiz and chips' and a monthly pop-up pub.
- Great Dunham PCC has a local authority small lottery license that can be used for fundraising by all parishes.
- Fransham village hall is used for Parish Council Meetings, Dog Training, quiz nights, voting and weekly Keep Fit Classes and an annual Harvest Supper.

What we can offer

Facilities

- There are village halls available for events and possibly Sunday School or Messy Church in Fransham, Beeston and Gt. and Little Dunham. Gt. Dunham village hall was recently constructed in 2010 to high environmental standards and has WiFi and a licensed bar. In Beeston, the Village Hall has a large playing field and playground.
- The parishes share resources such as tables, chairs, gazebos and PA systems for fêtes and other events.
- At St Andrew's Gt. Dunham, we have installed audiovisual equipment and WiFi through the church revitalisation fund; we are using these excellent facilities for services and community events (see photo 3).
- We are lucky to have volunteers who help to keep the churches running, decorate for festivals and the year round, care for our graves and churchyards, and to assist with visitor enquiries.
- In Fransham, Curds Hall Barn is a wedding venue and we have good relationships with the owners who are part of the church family.

What we can offer

Support

- We care deeply about the well-being of clergy and the need for rest, study, recreation, retreat and holiday.
- Our parishes are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone but especially of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We have a trained safeguarding officer at Beeston, Mrs Sue Wheeler, who acts for all our parishes. Her contact details are included on the current LUN benefice website. Our Churchwardens have completed safeguarding training and we are doing all we can to ensure our churches are safe and for all.
- The PCCs are very supportive and can provide a wide variety of expertise, knowledge and contacts to ensure that the Priest-in-Charge is quickly integrated into our communities.
- PCC teams represent a wide range of skills that can support our Priest if needed, including technology, writing/publicity and teaching experience.
- We have two organists, Mrs Sue Davis and Mrs Sue Wheeler, based in Great Dunham and Beeston respectively.

What we can offer

Home

A brand new four-bedroomed vicarage with study and manageable garden (example shown here).

The house has been built to exceptionally high comfort and environmental standards with a heat pump and solar panels and an EPC rating of A+. Energy expenditure will be minimal.

The parishes are geographically close to each other which reduces the need for travel, improves accessibility and reduces environmental impact.

The Diocese of Norwich offers a small stipend for House for Duty posts. This is currently £3,471.

Council tax, water rates and maintenance are provided through the Diocesan Property team.



Example show-home images

Any other business

Parish share, church charities, patronage, overseas links

- The combined Diocesan Parish Share for 2026 is £30,208. In future years we have committed to an increase of 5% over the inflationary increase per year until we are able to meet the full cost of ministry without support from the Diocesan Board of Finance. The parishes have mostly paid their agreed share in full over the last few years. The ministry expenses of our priest are met in full.
- Money is raised by regular giving, collections and fundraising events.
- We have identified areas where the income could be increased, and we would work with our Priest towards the full amount over five years. In particular, we would target Great and Little Fransham as priorities for increased growth and funding.
- New house building within the parishes means there is more opportunity for growth and involvement with the churches. The Franshams have a lot of new housing, a new wedding venue and the Canary and Linnet public house is being refurbished; these developments present opportunities for new mission. In Beeston, villagers revived the Ploughshare which is now a thriving community pub.
- In Beeston, the American War Memorial stands on the main road into the village. USAF 392nd Bomber Group flew B24 Liberators from the Wendling Airbase, that was mainly in Beeston. Connections between the 392nd Bomb Group memorial Association and the village remain strong and visits from the 392nd BGMA continue and their programme includes a service in St Mary's, the spire of which provided a welcome sight for their aircrew after a nighttime bombing raid (see photo 4).

- In support of our Christian mission and increased funding, we have been in contact with the patrons for advice and support. For the Franshams, we have two patrons: Reverend Sarah Atkins, Dean of Chapel, Magdalene College, Cambridge CB3 0AG and Reverend Anthony Buckley at Hertford College Oxford, also Vicar of St Michael at the North Gate City Rector. Both Sarah and Anthony are enthusiastic in supporting our vision. For both Beeston and Great Dunham, the patron is the Church Society Trust.



*Photo 4: Beeston church –
a welcome sight for returning airmen during world war 2*

Thank you

Thank you for reading our profile.
Please be assured of our prayers as
you consider us further. We look
forward to hearing from you.

Helpful links

Diocese of Norwich

www.dioceseofnorwich.org

Church of England

www.churchofengland.org

Living and working in Norfolk – Norfolk County Council

[www.norfolk.gov.uk/jobs-training-and-volunteering/
living-and-working-in-norfolk](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/jobs-training-and-volunteering/living-and-working-in-norfolk)





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