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October 2026

## **Rector, The Briston and Briningham Benefice**

Dear Friends in Christ,

### **Benefice and Role**

Thank you for inquiring for details for this post. You will find much detailed information about the parishes in the profile, and this letter supplements that with further information about the diocese and about the background to the post.

There are ten parishes in the Briston and Briningham benefice, which came together five years ago under one incumbent. Briston is one of the most deprived parishes in the country but the PCC has worked hard to enable community in the village in the last few years and to put in train a major reordering project for the building. It is close to the other large population centre in the benefice, Melton Constable, but, as the profile makes clear, the two have distinct identities.

The priest who will flourish in this new benefice will be someone who values community and who builds, works with, shepherds and leads lay teams. You will find hard working and able colleagues both lay and ordained in the benefice, who will welcome your care and who will work with and support a new colleague. You will delight in traditional and new worship styles and relate well to people of all ages and backgrounds in a variety of contexts: schools, the community café, Messy Saints and so on. The benefice will look to your own faith and pastoral care to help the current congregations deepen their faith and discipleship as well as finding new ways to draw people together to hear about the Lord. You will be someone who allows colleagues to flourish as they use the gifts they have been given, ensuring good governance and oversight while ensuring that there is space for everyone. If you are a person who hopes to put down roots, perhaps embarking on your first incumbency, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Rural Norfolk includes areas of considerable affluence and also surprisingly high deprivation. As you explore the possibility of a call to this role, you might wish to consult the Church Urban Fund tool (<https://cuf.org.uk/lookup-tool>) and the most recent census data (available at

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/data-services>) for more insight into the parishes. The Bishop and Archdeacon of Lynn are keen to see more parishes engage in social action as part of their mission and would welcome a priest keen to take this forward, not least in the light of the Briston project.

## **Diocese and Deanery**

The Diocese of Norwich's vision is to be Transformed by Christ: Prayerful, Pastoral, Prophetic. This is the vision on which our diocesan strategy is based and you can find more information at <https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/about/vision/>.

The strategy is being developed to enable us to have a sustainable and flourishing future. At Pentecost, we launched the first phase of our STREAMS programme, and you can find out more about that either by following the link on the diocesan website, or directly at <https://www.exploringstreams.org>. The website presents STREAMS stories of hope and transformation from Norfolk and Waveney as a way of offering encouragement and of inspiring people to begin to feel able to reflect on and share their own story. STREAMS is an idea unique to Norfolk in which, over time, every benefice is invited to become part of a learning community receiving input and finding support through a year-long course followed by ongoing support and community. It will launch with its first cohorts in the first half of 2027.

We are a diocese which is realistic about where we are and excited by where God is calling us to go next- the church we are called to be, the lives we are called to connect with, the service we are called to offer, the disciples we are invited to become. One of the STREAMS communities will explicitly and intentionally work with fallow churches, small rural churches no longer able to sustain what they once could, so that fallow times can be times of rest, recreation and, by the grace of God, resurrection in ways that are appropriate to the people and resources in the area. Another will work with those who are seeing promising shoots and would like help to take this further, and others with larger (and perhaps less rural) congregations.

The Diocese is blessed in the churchwardens, PCC members and others who serve their village church and parish. Retired clergy give amazingly to ensuring the continued provision of pastoral care and sacramental worship. We have, however, also established ways in which other lay people can participate in pastoral care and in leading worship, including as LLMs but also as Authorised Worship Assistants and Authorised Pastoral Assistants. You can find out more about these at <https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/mission-and-ministry/ministry/lay-ministry/>.

The Benefice falls within the Archdeaconry and Area of Lynn and within the Holt Deanery. The Deanery is predominantly rural but includes the market town of Dereham. The Bishop of Lynn's area of oversight is coterminous with the archdeaconry and both the Venerable Catherine Dobson and the Rt Revd Dr Jane Steen are committed to the flourishing of rural benefices. The Rural Dean is the Revd David Longe under whose leadership, Holt is beginning to work with its

neighbouring deanery of Burnham & Walsingham in shared chapter and occasional shared Synod meetings to enhance mutual support, share best practice and increase opportunities.

There are 6 posts of incumbent status in the Deanery and 1 Licensed Lay Minister (LLM). There are 4 Authorised Worship Assistants (AWAs) across the deanery, and 2 Authorised Pastoral Assistants (APAs).

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.

### **Housing**

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

### **Patronage**

The Bishop of Norwich

The Rt Hon Delaval Thomas Harrold Astley, Baron Hastings

Cathedral Church of the Holy and Undivided Trinity of Norwich

Norwich Diocesan Board of Patronage

If you are exploring this role from outside the diocese, and especially if you do not come from a rural background, let me encourage you to continue in this discernment. Norfolk people don't shout about themselves or their county or their diocese, but if you come here, you will find a warm welcome and a supportive diocese. Those who do come from elsewhere remark upon the positive reception they have received, including the excellence of the Parish Support Team including in mission and ministry, safeguarding and property.

The closing date for applications is *9<sup>th</sup> November (9.00am)* and interviews will be held on 9<sup>th</sup> December. The post is subject to a Genuine Occupational Requirement and a satisfactory enhanced DBS disclosure.

If you would like to have an informal discussion before deciding whether to apply, please contact Ann Whittet (PA to the Bishop and Archdeacon of Lynn) at [ann.whittet@dioceseofnorwich.org](mailto:ann.whittet@dioceseofnorwich.org) or phone the office on 01362 709200.

With grace and peace as you discern the role to which God is calling you,

Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Jane Steen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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