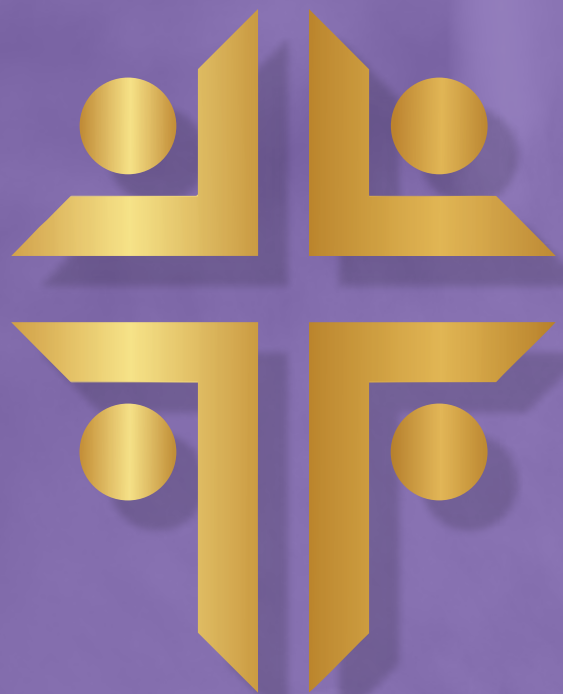




Mulbarton Benefice

The Parishes of Bracon Ash, Flordon,
Hethel and Mulbarton

Executive Summary

An attractive benefice for a Rector with a missional heart.

An opportunity for a motivated and energetic leader, who can build, nurture, and prioritise in order to broaden and develop the connections that the four churches of the Benefice enjoy with the community; for an integrator who will enhance fellowship, interaction, and mission between the four parishes, and who will develop links with the parish and deanery.

What is the role?

We are looking for a Rector to lead the Mulbarton Benefice:

Four parishes rooted in Scripture and reaching out in love to their communities in South Norfolk, six miles south-west of Norwich city centre.

Our Vision

“Following Jesus, sharing the journey” is our established benefice vision, and the compass for everything we do. We long to be churches genuinely rooted in Christ, growing in faith, and actively engaged with our communities.

Our vision in practice means:

- To know Jesus more deeply – through prayer, Scripture and worship – and to make him known to others, especially those in our villages who have no church connection
- To grow as a community of disciples who equip and send one another into everyday life as witnesses
- To serve our communities with love and practical action, caring for all ages, and building relationships across the benefice and beyond.

Our Values

1. Living in the love of the Father (Love, Protection)
2. Knowing Jesus (Unity, Community)
3. Growing in the unity of the Holy Spirit (Glory, Unity)
4. Being guided by the Bible (Truth)
5. Sharing life with our communities (Community, Engaging with the World)
6. Finding joy in the journey (Joy)



What is the task?

The Rector will lead a diverse and active benefice through a period of growth and opportunity.

Key tasks are:

- Preach and teach the Gospel across four parishes, nurturing a congregation spanning many traditions
- Reach the many new families who have moved into Mulbarton and surrounding villages and have not yet connected with the church
- Lead and develop children's, youth and family work in the church and working with schools and communities
- Build on existing community engagement: including the Community Pantry, Fairtrade, Alpha, Hanover Gardens, Flordon Community Centre, Eco-church, Mardlers, and strong lay volunteer networks
- Work with the four PCCs to develop a shared benefice vision and a 5–10 year strategic plan for growth
- Ensure that the church buildings in the Benefice meet the evolving needs of worship and community in the 21st century – lead, guide and develop building projects in line with this objective, whilst prioritising parish share payments.



Who are we looking for?

It is helpful to distinguish two things: the personal qualities we want in the individual; and the way that they will need to operate to be effective in our rural, multi-parish context.

Both matter.

Personal faith and character

- Someone who loves God first – prayerful, rooted in Scripture, close to Jesus, empowered by the Holy Spirit
- Kind, patient, compassionate and joyful – to all in the community, young and old
- A good Bible teacher, able to make Scripture relevant and alive for today
- A genuine pastoral heart – willing to visit the ill, the lonely, and the bereaved
- Able to nurture the congregational talents and capabilities, and encourage a wider pool of people to become active Christians and take part in church life
- A commitment to church growth

Operating effectively in our context

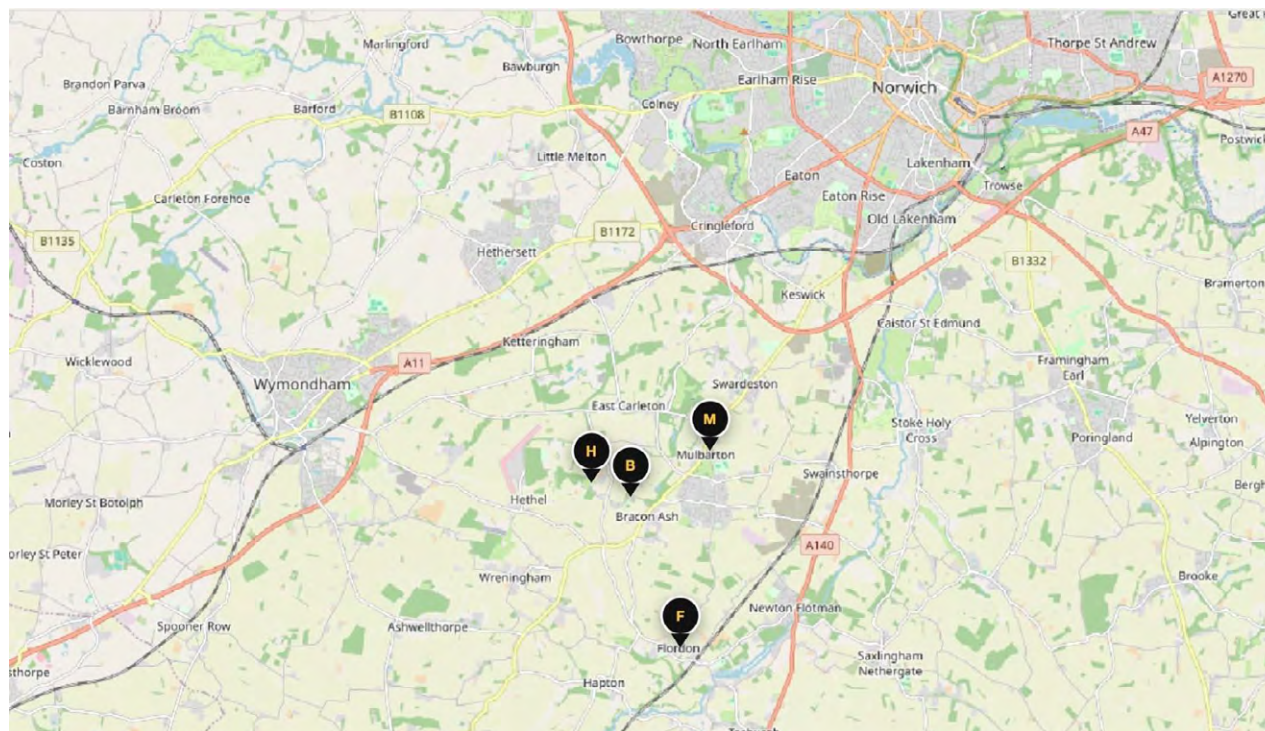
- Good communicator both internally and externally
- Mobile and visible across all four churches and villages
- Strong enough to work with a degree of independence (no curate, no ordained colleague) while actively building a strong lay support team
- Able to delegate responsibility and nurture and support those in positions of responsibility
- Comfortable across the full range of traditions in the benefice: BCP [Book of Common Prayer] to contemporary, formal to informal
- Someone who honours what is already here, including DRC Congo and Nepal missions, Eco-church, Fairtrade, varied worship, committed lay people
- A working knowledge of national safeguarding framework
- Strong IT skills would be an advantage

Location

The Mulbarton Benefice is situated approximately six miles south-west of Norwich. The four parishes – Mulbarton, Bracon Ash, Flordon and Hethel – are within about two miles of one another, set in beautiful south Norfolk countryside, yet within easy reach of the city.

Norwich is one of England's most historic cities, with a population of 195,000, an international airport NWI, a major hospital NNUH, two cathedrals, Norwich City College, two universities, a research park, excellent schools and a thriving cultural scene. The mainline railway station and the A11 dual carriageway give fast access to Cambridge and London. There is a half-hourly bus service from Mulbarton and Bracon Ash to Norwich; the other villages have infrequent or no bus service, making a car essential.

For more information on Norfolk, see:
www.DofN.org/vacancies and
www.norfolk.gov.uk



- M** Norwich to **Mulbarton** (St Mary Magdalen): about 6 miles
- H** Norwich to **Hethel** (All Saints): about 7-8 miles
- B** Norwich to **Bracon** Ash (St Nicholas): about 6-7 miles
- F** Norwich to **Flordon** (St Michael and All Angels): about 9 miles

Mulbarton

Facilities

Mulbarton is a large village of just over 4000, popular with families who want a proper village feel without being far from the city (15–25-minute drive).

It has a primary school for 4–11-year-olds, a large doctors' surgery (part of the Humbleyard practice with facilities in Mulbarton, Hethersett and Cringleford), a pharmacy, dentist, a privately run care home and a large private sheltered housing estate, a village pub, a village / community hall with sports facilities, a Coop supermarket, a further convenience store & post office, Chinese and Fish & Chip takeaways, and a local garage (repairs not fuel). A medium-sized Tesco is 10 minutes away by car.

The nearest hospital is the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital NNUH at Colney, about 20 minutes' drive by car.

Schools

Mulbarton Primary School (URN: 120990) is the village's one primary school - age range 4 to 11, on The Common (NR14 8JG). Latest Ofsted inspection 23 February 2022, Good in every category (quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development, leadership and management, early years provision). Previous inspection 1 July 2015, also Good. Consistent performance. The school also has pre- and after-school club provision.

There is a range of good secondary schools within 5 – 8 miles. Norwich High School, Town Close and Norwich School are the nearest independent school options.

Community

There are sports clubs, including a successful football club (Mulbarton Wanderers & Belles) covering all ages and genders, gymnastics, uniform groups, a bowls club, a gardening club, allotments, a social club and regular social activities at the village hall, including some run by members of the church. There is an excellent village choir – initiated by a previous curate - with around 70 members meeting weekly for practice and which regularly holds concerts in the village and beyond.

Note that the Benefice vision is shown at the Mulbarton football ground:



Flordon

Flordon is a small village approximately one mile from the A140, with a (2021) population of 298.

Today's population covers a range of ages with some of our older residents having lived in the village all their lives. In recent years we have welcomed new families, some with young children, who have chosen to make this quiet friendly village their new home.

The village has a Common which is a designated biological Site of Special Scientific Interest. At the village end of the Common there is a play area suitable for children of all ages, which has recently been revamped with new equipment, mainly funded by grants obtained by the Parish Council.

We enjoy a good community spirit where people care about others and are willing to help each other out. Social media platforms allow the majority of villagers to keep connected and communicate village news and matters of interest /importance.

The Church building doubles as the local community hub allowing the opportunity for locals to come together for various activities and events such as Film Club, Gardening Club and food themed evenings. The centre is also available for private hire.

Bracon Ash

Bracon Ash is a village divided by the B1113 road. The church, one of the oldest in East Anglia, is situated down a lane to the west and backs on to fields.

A public footpath runs through the churchyard to the fields, attracting walkers, cyclists and riders. Many of these visit the church and enjoy its peace and charm. A number of wildflowers flourish around the church.

On the north wall of the church is attached a privately owned mausoleum. Our patron's family is responsible for its upkeep.

Nearby is a large and very well-equipped playing field attracting many families with children.

The village hall in the centre of the village is very well used for a variety of activities, and a bar opens once a week. Outside it stands the war memorial to Bracon Ash and Hethel servicemen where we hold our annual Remembrance Day service. The village telephone box houses books and photos.

There is an active WhatsApp group which keeps everyone in touch with each other. In addition, there is a WhatsApp group, Wild About Hethel and Bracon Ash.

Planning permission has been granted for a number of new houses as you leave the village south bound.

Hethel

Hethel is a rural parish without a village centre. Hethel currently comprises about 30 houses scattered around the perimeter of what was once a wood covering about 1000 acres.

Today there are six working farms, three livery establishments and, on the western boundary, a significant industrial development that includes Group Lotus and the Hethel Engineering Centre. There is projected growth between Hethel and Wymondham.

Residents of Hethel are mainly professional or retired professional incomers, the majority of whom are well into the second halves of their lives. There are more than a dozen children and young people in the parish.

We celebrate and enjoy creation and run events connected with the countryside around us, such as bat surveys and bat walks. In recent years South Norfolk Council Rangers helped us make bumblebee nest boxes and their ecologist led a walk in the area.

Norfolk Wildlife Trust volunteers help us manage the churchyard, cutting and raking the grass annually so that orchids and other wildflowers flourish in summer. In 2019 Hethel won a silver Eco Church award.

Many of the walkers, dog walkers and cyclists drop into the church and often express their appreciation of its peace and beauty in the visitor's book. We provide Christian literature that can be freely borrowed and a selection of information leaflets on such subjects as alcohol abuse and domestic violence; the take-up suggests that these are valued by visitors or those they know.

We have been keen to connect with the farming community through such events as Rogation/Beating the Bounds and Blessing the Plough, and to offer other events that might interest local people such as concerts, talks, activities and exhibitions, often linked to wildlife, local history, art or music.

Such events have served several purposes over recent years: inviting people to enjoy our church, to cross its threshold and to meet its members in a relaxed and down-to-earth environment. A useful side effect has been raising money for church projects and for chosen charities.

The church is close to the site of one of the many WWII airfields in East Anglia, which today is home to the USAAF 389 Bomb Group Memorial Exhibition and a most unusual wartime chapel. The memorial stone to those from the Group lost in action is in the churchyard and the Book of Remembrance is in the church; these links also result in a significant number of visitors to the church. Lotus has developed portions of the runways and taxiways as a test track for their cars.



Our Churches

St Mary Magdalen, Mulbarton

The Common, Mulbarton,
NR14 8JS

St Mary Magdalen (Charity No. 1156897) is the only place of Christian worship in the village of Mulbarton and stands in a conservation area next to the Rectory.

Worshipping community 65; Electoral Roll 35; Usual Sunday 28 adults, 2 children; average weekly 51; Christmas 2024: 214



Harvest House

A detached house with a wrap-around garden and car park, owned by the church, situated next-door-but-one to the church building. It is used on Sundays for serving refreshments after the Sunday morning and before the Sunday evening meditative services.

The church office and administrator are based there. It is used during the week by the church for PCC and other smaller church meetings. Other offices and spaces of Harvest House are let every day on a commercial basis to several local businesses, and for local activities such as Cross Stitch Companions, Boppity Bunnies, Strong Mother Fitness, Mulbarton Book Club, Mulbarton Rangers, Central Norfolk Walking for Health, a board games group, a business hot desk meet up and a variety of one-offs from charity fund raisers to family parties, band rehearsals to committee meetings.

The entrepreneurial approach by the previous Rector has caused Harvest House to now be a profit centre for the PCC.

Hanover Gardens

Sheltered housing for over-60s; there is an established (14 years ago) monthly “Church at Hanover” service on a Sunday (attended by 30–35) and a monthly Thursday afternoon communion. This is a fresh expression of church, initiated by residents and supported by Mulbarton Church.

Building project

Creating kitchen and toilet facilities at St Mary Magdalen are in the early stages of planning in collaboration with an architect; this project will also involve the font relocation, and replacing the oak pews with more flexible seating, so that the church building can have greater community use.

Churchyard / burial ground:

With 400+ years of use, it has been extended, but is now nearing capacity; the annual maintenance is around £3,000; the imminent decisions on future management are not without complexity.

Occasional Offices, 2024–2026

Weddings, baptisms, funerals and burials of ashes across the four parishes.

More data on the Benefice website at mulbchurch.org.uk/resources#Statistics

*2026 data as at 31 July 2026	Bracon Ash			Flordon			Hethel			Mulbarton		
	2024	2025	2026*	2024	2025	2026*	2024	2025	2026*	2024	2025	2026*
Weddings	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	0
Baptism	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	10	4	3
Funerals	4	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	15	15	4
Burial of ashes	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	6	3

St Nicholas, Bracon Ash

School Road, Bracon Ash,
NR14 8HJ

Bracon Ash is a small rural village with a Grade 1 listed church building offering two Services monthly.

It has a Worshipping community of 10; an Electoral Roll 11; Usual Sunday 8 adults, average weekly 4; Christmas 2025: 22

The church of St Nicholas, Bracon Ash is one of the oldest churches in East Anglia.

The church is a Grade 1 listed building with a nave dating from the 14th century and a 15th century chancel. It is not the first church to stand on the site as the Domesday Book of 1086 records a church and rectory. The mausoleum attached to the church was built by and belongs to the church patron's family.



South aisle restoration is in progress (£40,000 faculty). The Quinquennial report recommends that we should prioritise the re-glazing of the east window. This has two lovely features, a stained-glass cross commissioned by Rev Andrew North as a parting gift, and a large Christmas star which shines out across the fields during Christmas time.



St Michael and All Angels, Flordon

Long Lane, Flordon, NR15 1RP

St. Michael and All Angels Church is a Grade II listed building, sitting in the heart of the village. Flordon is a small quiet village, population 298. Anglo-Saxon masonry.

Nave converted 2013 into Flordon Church and Community Centre (kitchen, toilet). Flordon Community Trust provides 50% of running costs. The Church building doubles as a community hub.

There is a Worshipping community of 6; An Electoral Roll of 8; Usual Sunday 6 adults, average weekly 6; Christmas 2024: 7



Following almost eight years of fundraising, extensive conversion work of the nave was carried out. This included the removal of pews, the construction of a kitchen area at the back of the church and a toilet installed in the old vestry. Thus, transforming St Michael and All Angels into Flordon Church and Community Centre. This was officially opened by the Rt Hon Richard Bacon MP on 6th July 2013.

A trust was formed which has the responsibility for hiring out the Community Centre, with the Rector and PCC having the power to veto any activity which they believe to be unsuitable.



All Saints, Hethel

Church Lane, Hethel, NR14 8HE

Hethel is a small rural parish without a village centre. People are attracted to All Saints Hethel Church by the simplicity of the traditional form of service, the friendliness of the congregation, the uncluttered beauty of the interior and the opportunities to get involved in parish life. The churchyard, which is still open for burials, has been managed as a wildlife meadow by the local nature group for several decades. The result is not only active links with people outside the parish but the enhancement of the church's unspoilt rural environment. This draws both visitors from afar and regulars in search of a place of peaceful reflection.

There is a Worshipping community of 12; an Electoral Roll of 12 (2026); Usual Sunday 9 adults, average weekly 5; Christmas 2024: 12

All the church buildings in the Benefice are open during the day, except Flordon which is open on Saturdays and by arrangement

Hethel's PCC has agreed that:

- we want Hethel Church to be a place of welcome and hospitality for casual passers-by, as well as for casual church-attenders and regular worshippers;
- we affirm the building as a place of stillness and prayerfulness;
- we affirm our location as one that allows the celebration of creation because of its local flora and fauna, and through the study and exploration of local ecological issues to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, to sustain and to renew the life of the earth;
- we want to play our part in the benefice by offering different but complementary events and activities, which may be offered by other parishes to their members and not-yet-members in the same way that we aim to publicise other churches' events in Hethel.

Our aim is to give a tithe to charity. We believe it is important for a church to be seen as a generous, giving institution and through prayer and faith have managed to cultivate that image.

A toilet and small kitchen facility have been installed to enable hospitality. Extensive work, funded by significant grants, has now been completed in the bell tower and John the Bell has been restored to working use. We are currently looking for a Bell Captain.

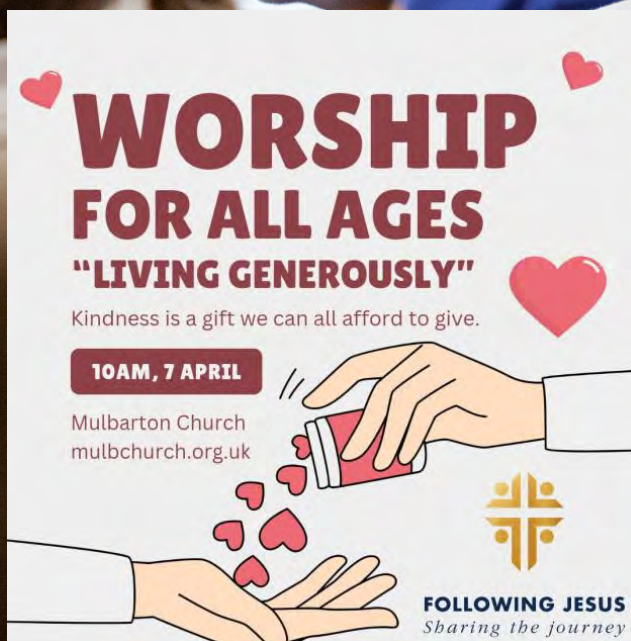


Our Schools

Children from across the benefice attend Mulbarton Primary School in the village, as well as many other schools in the area.

Priorities for developing school links include:

- Holiday Club – a fully-subscribed (40 children, 10 helpers) and very well received community event, connecting families across the village; to be built upon
- Assembly visits and RE support at Mulbarton Primary School
- Open the Book OTB storytelling and school chaplaincy presence: OTB ran for about 8 years in the school and was very popular with the pupils
- school visits to the church and churchyard as part of their curriculum
- pre-school and play-group Christmas services



Sundays with us

The benefice offers a wide and varied pattern of Sunday worship serving different traditions:

At St Mary Magdalen, Mulbarton (weekly)

- Contemporary modern worship – main Sunday gathering (28-51 adults weekly)
- All-age services with school links
- Wild Church and eco-themed services
- Reflective and Celtic-style services
- “Church at Hanover” – monthly at Hanover Gardens sheltered housing

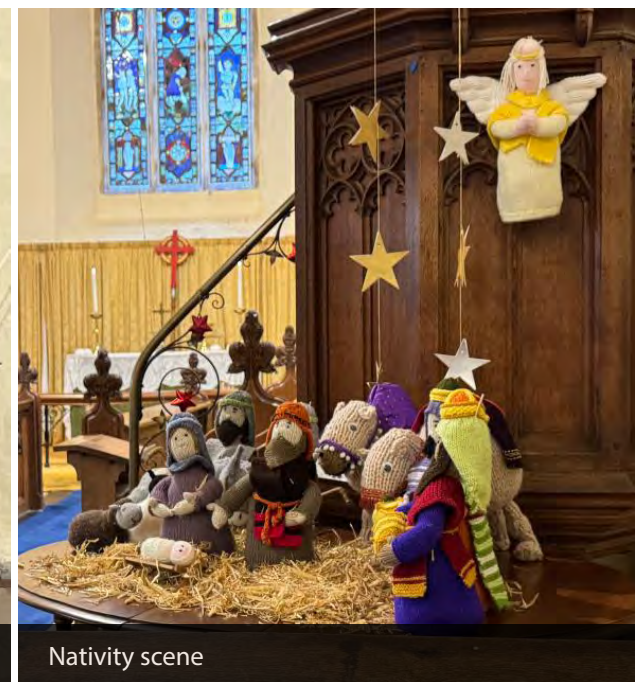
At the smaller churches
(once or twice monthly)

- St Nicholas, Bracon Ash:
Morning Prayer (1st Sunday) and Holy Communion (3rd Sunday)
- St Michael, Flordon:
BCP Evening Prayer (2nd Sunday) and Holy Communion (4th Thursday)
- All Saints, Hethel: Holy Communion monthly (Common Worship Order Two)

Major festivals rotate across all four churches. The congregation spans open evangelical to BCP traditional; the new Rector must lead confidently across this full range.



All-age service



Nativity scene



A wedding at St Mary Magdalen



Capability of streaming services from Mulbarton since lockdown

During the week

Faith in Action

- Mulbarton Community Pantry – food support for those in need
- Fairtrade church – a longstanding commitment

Home Groups and Prayer

- Three active house groups meeting weekly for Bible study, prayer and mutual support, and ad hoc seasonal groups (eg lent devotional)
- Weekly Bible Study and Prayer Meeting; prayer chain supported across denominations
- Alpha Course runs periodically; aspiration to develop more small groups and prayer gatherings

Social Events and Community

- Mardlers at Mulbarton – a popular afternoon group for mainly the older generation and especially for those who are on their own
- Mulbarton Community Hub participation
- Contributions to the 3 civil parish magazines that are delivered to every home in the Benefice
- Flordon: Film Club, Gardening Club, Harvest Supper
- Hethel: Rogation walks, wildlife and ecology events, “Hethel Specials” fundraising
- Bracon Ash: T Pot Tuesday; Christmas concerts by the patron
- Norfolk Churches Trust cycle ride hospitality across all the churches
- “Cream Teas” at Hethel - summer Sunday afternoons 2pm:
- Mardle – the church Newsletter distributed to the Benefice church family and various locations around the community (and available as a PDF online at <https://mulbchurch.org.uk/resources#Newsletters>)
- The Community Choir was initiated by a previous curate - with around 70 members - meeting weekly for practice and which regularly holds concerts in the village and



During the week

Youth and Outreach

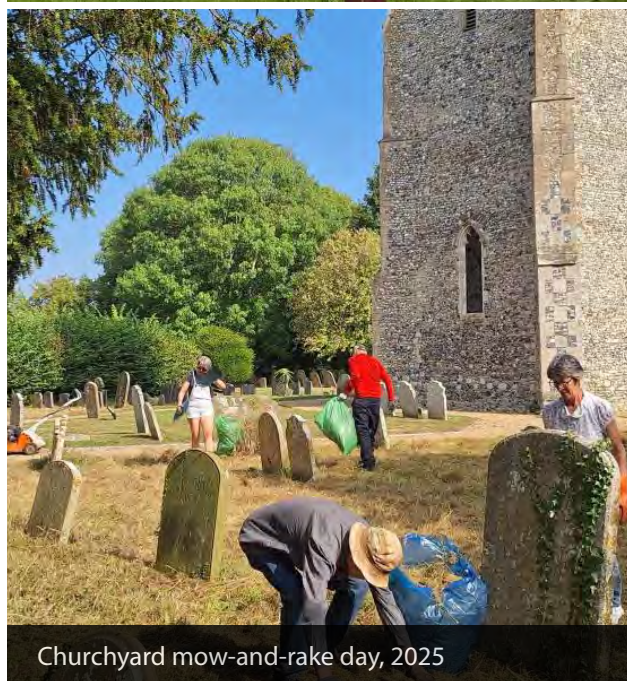
- Holiday Club – a fully subscribed (40 children, 10 helpers) and very well received community event, connecting families across the village – to be built upon
- Wild Church – nature-based outdoor church every 2 months (Mulbarton churchyard, Mulbarton Common or Hethel)

Eco Church

- Hethel: Silver Eco Church award (2019); churchyard as wildlife meadow managed by NWT volunteers from Wymondham Nature Group
- Mulbarton: Bronze A Rocha EcoChurch award (2026)
 - working towards Silver; air-source heat pump; LED lighting
 - Churchyard managed per NWT Norfolk Wildlife Trust advice: conservation areas mowed and raked annually; bird boxes and bug hotels (made by Girl Guide Rangers); moth counts; NWT events hosted
 - Working with Mulbarton Parish Council on September 2026 recycling event



Receiving the Bronze Eco Church award



Churchyard mow-and-rake day, 2025



Moth count 2026

What we can offer

Ministry Team and PCC Support.

During the interregnum, Sunday worship continues with help from a retired priest and a Baptist minister, local retired clergy, and lay ministers (two Authorized Worship Assistants across the benefice)

In addition

- Part-time paid administrator and volunteer administrator (both at Harvest House, Mulbarton)
- Experienced lay leaders in house groups, prayer, and pastoral care
- Church Wardens

PCC Support

- Mulbarton PCC: 6 Members including the Churchwarden. 1 vacancy for a deanery synod representative
- Bracon Ash PCC: 4 members, including the Church Warden
- Flordon PCC: 6 members; Safeguarding Officer in post; no current Churchwarden
- Hethel PCC: 7 members; shared Safeguarding Officer with Bracon Ash; no current Churchwarden

Clergy Wellbeing and Safeguarding

We want to support our new Rector to flourish. We recognise that this is a demanding role: four churches, four PCCs, no ordained colleague.

Safeguarding

The Diocese of Norwich and the Mulbarton Benefice are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Policy:

www.dioceseofnorwich.org/safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility

The Diocese of Norwich is committed to the safeguarding, care and nurture of everyone within our church community.

The Bishop of Norwich,
the Rt Revd Graham Usher says:

"The Diocese of Norwich is committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults to worship and grow in Christ safely. I take that commitment very seriously and believe that making our churches safe for all is everyone's responsibility. To enable that, our diocesan safeguarding team provides professional advice and training, as well as supporting those who may have suffered abuse. I commend to you the important policies and procedures detailed here. It is my prayer that they will help to ensure that all can flourish."

In Mulbarton Benefice, we are committed to protecting children, young people and adults at risk. We are guided by the Diocesan Safeguarding Framework and have adopted the Church of England's 'Promoting a Safer Church' policy.

We have 3 Parish Safeguarding Officers (PSOs) covering the 4 churches plus a Benefice Safeguarding Administrator who manages DBS applications and follows up with workers to ensure training is undertaken and renewed across the benefice.

Contact details for our PSOs are posted on each church's notice board and also on the church's group website at:

mulbchurch.org.uk/safeguarding

Our safeguarding policies can also be found on our church website at:

mulbchurch.org.uk/resources#Safeguarding

What we can offer

The Rectory

The Rectory, The Common, Mulbarton, Norfolk, NR14 8JS

The modern 168 m2 Rectory stands next to St Mary Magdalen Church, close to the village duck-pond and the large Common, in a conservation area with direct access to the church from the garden

- Dining room, lounge, study/lounge, medium-sized kitchen, utility room, four bedrooms, spacious loft room, drive, double garage
- Large, sheltered gardens, needing a little TLC!
- A very recent new boiler and heating system

Energy rating is E (4 May 2031)

Energy performance certificate (EPC) number 9809-0025-3620-0175-3206

The Diocese of Norwich is responsible for Rectory maintenance.

All parish expenses are reimbursed in full.



Any other business

Deanery

Mulbarton Benefice has recently (2025) joined Depwade Deanery. No immediate pastoral re-organisation planned in the near future. The Benefice looks forward to closer cooperation with the Deanery.



Helpful links

Mulbarton Benefice

www.mulbchurch.org.uk

Benefice statistics

<https://mulbchurch.org.uk/resources#Statistics>

Diocese of Norwich / vacancies

www.dioceseofnorwich.org/vacancies

Church of England

www.churchofengland.org

Living in Norfolk:

www.norfolk.gov.uk/jobs-training-and-volunteering/living-and-working-in-norfolk

Mulbarton Group of Churches

www.facebook.com/search/top?q=mulbarton%20group%20of%20churches

Mulbarton Church Family

www.facebook.com/groups/325450474194569

Wild about Hethel (and Bracon Ash)

www.facebook.com/groups/wildabouthethel/

Set up by Hethel Church for the benefit of the community

Hethel facebook page

www.facebook.com/groups/211497813287075

For informal enquiries about the post, please contact
The Rt Revd Ian Bishop,
Bishop of Thetford

bishop.thetford@dioceseofnorwich.org

07715 102519

Thank you

Thank you for reading this parish profile. We look forward to hearing from you.

The background of the entire page is a purple-tinted image of a large stained glass window. The window features several panels depicting religious figures, likely saints or apostles, in various poses. Some are seated and holding books, while others are standing. The intricate leaded glass patterns and the variety of figures create a rich, historical visual texture.

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of Norwich

Diocesan House, 109 Dereham Road, Easton, Norwich NR9 5ES

www.dioceseofnorwich.org   

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