

Working with us in the Diocese of Lincoln

Clergy recruitment pack
2024

Vicar of the Alford Group



A letter from the Bishop

A Time to Change Together (TTCT) is a vision of our shared future in the Diocese of Lincoln. As a family of churches, serving one another and reaching our local communities with the good news of God's kingdom, we are committed to collaborative partnerships, relationships of generosity, and growth.

Now that the groundwork has been laid, we are in the happy position of recruiting clergy to a range of creative and adventurous ministerial posts. Therefore, in this recruitment pack, we are beginning to articulate both what we are looking for in our clergy and also what we can offer you in return.

We are committed to continue to build a culture of trust in a time of uncertainty in the Church and in the world. This demands from all of us the qualities of kindness and candour, rooted in personal and theological integrity. We are looking for colleagues who will model these qualities themselves and seek to grow them in others.

The Diocese of Lincoln needs clergy who are:

Confident – rooted in prayer and scripture, with a story to tell of their faith.

Mission focused – passionate about growth in depth of discipleship and numbers.

Collaborative – genuinely open and willing to work with and learn from others.

Adventurous – seeking to proclaim our historic faith afresh in this generation.

Resilient – knowing when to take risks, accept failure and try again.

Capable – demonstrating reliability in the skilled serving of transformation in Christ through the Five Marks of Mission within Local Mission Partnerships.

If you feel you have those attributes and would like to join us in our journey, we would love to hear from you.

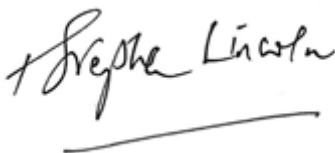
Our offer to you is founded on:

- ◆ A diocesan strategy which seeks **grassroots renewal and flourishing**, not top-down restructuring.
- ◆ A vision for ministry which is about **gifts and calling**, not trying to do 'everything, everywhere, all at once.'
- ◆ **Leadership** which prioritises the life of our parishes and the wellbeing of our ministers.
- ◆ A reputation for, and commitment to, **excellence** in our clergy housing and maintenance.
- ◆ An approach to the common fund which is about **covenant and generosity**.

As you read through this recruitment pack, you will discover so much more that our Diocese can offer to you, as you consider the next stage of your journey in the service of God's Church.

I hope that you will take seriously the invitation to join us and explore the opportunities to serve in the Diocese of Lincoln.

Yours ever in Christ,



What we offer

The Diocese of Lincoln is a family of hundreds of local churches, schools, chaplaincies and projects across the historic county of Lincolnshire offering worship, growth in faith and discipleship and wide-ranging care and support to young and old in its communities.

Our aim is to grow the Church, in both numbers and depth, through attention to what we see as our core tasks of faithful worship, confident discipleship and joyful service, with the vision of being a healthy, vibrant, sustainable church which leads to transformed lives and communities across greater Lincolnshire making a difference in God's world. To that end as a diocese we shall support, encourage and enable local parishes, schools and mission partnerships to fulfil, within this framework, their own unique calling to serve in mission the community in which they are set.



Edward King House



2023 Racial Justice Sunday service at Lincoln Cathedral



A clear vision for our shared future as a diocese



A Bishop's Staff team and colleagues in the Parish Support Office who are committed to you



Beautiful countryside in which to live and work



Top 10 Dioceses for stipends



48 hours time away recommended each month



Supported annual retreat



Access to Employee Support Programme (EAP)



Programme of installation of solar panels and electric car charging points at vicarages



Garden maintenance support



Total redecoration on appointment including carpeting of public rooms in vicarages



Direct access to the Diocesan Registrar

A Time to Change Together

The Diocese's major change programme

The Diocese's vision is to be a healthy, vibrant and sustainable church transforming lives in Lincolnshire. Recent years have been challenging for the diocese. In response to this, we have developed effective programmes which offer the opportunity to both Lincoln Diocesan Trust and Board of Finance Ltd (LDTBF) staff and those in the parish focused colleagues to contribute together significant, positive change towards our vision. We hope that you will want to come to the Diocese and join in this exciting work that is Kingdom-focused and that, while demanding, we believe to be deeply fulfilling.



Bishop Stephen's enthronement

Time to Change Together, an integrated approach to growth, deployment, staffing, costs, investments, and voluntary giving launched in 2022, is starting to deliver major benefits in terms of working practice and support for our voluntary and paid staff in the parishes, and in levels of income and in care of our precious and vast range of church buildings, that they better



Worship for everyone at St Faiths in Lincoln

serve the community in which they are set. Resourcing the Urban Church is applying modern approaches and external and internal funding to planting and revitalising churches in the urban centres of the diocese. Over the next decade it will drive numerical growth and strengthened care in major centres such as Scunthorpe, Grimsby, Lincoln and Grantham as well as to market towns across the diocese.

More information about our new Deanery Partnerships, Local Mission Partnerships and other elements of Time to Change Together can be found on www.lincoln.anglican.org. This includes detailed information about our new approach to oversight and focal ministry, which is locally discerned and coordinated by the Deanery Partnerships, and is helping clergy and lay colleagues to re-picture their ministry according to God's call today.

Our Values

OUR VALUES

The Diocese of Lincoln is the Church of England in Lincolnshire, North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire. The diocese covers 2,670 square miles and has a population of a little over 1 million. Our vision is to serve our communities in such a way that people may come to know the love of God and have their lives transformed. In order to do this, we know that we need to be a healthy, vibrant and sustainable church.

Our values are that we need, as a diocese, to be faithful in worship, confident in discipleship and joyful in service. The LDTBF, known as the Parish Support office, is here to support that vision and those values cost effectively with the highest quality of customer service.

ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE STRATEGY

The diocese through its churches, chaplaincies and projects is deeply committed to the flourishing of the whole population and embedded in every community across Greater Lincolnshire. Through, for example, our church schools growing children, young people and households we are committed to healthy, inclusive structures in society. The diocesan environmental policy, including a commitment to carbon net zero by 2030, informs all our work from buildings and investments to ministerial and faith training. We have a carefully implemented ethical investment policy for our historic assets. The diocese invests heavily in continuously improving the quality of our safeguarding performance.



Worship in the Diocese of Lincoln

LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The LDTBF has a good record of supporting staff in their professional development. Equally, parish focused colleagues are encouraged through the College of St Hugh to develop their skills, including through degree or further degree level study, both to help their performance in role and to enhance their opportunities for career and ministry progression.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION STRATEGY

The LDTBF continues to work on its performance in terms of equality, diversity and inclusion, particularly in monitoring, training and review. There is a regular forum for Global Majority Heritage clergy and ministers and the diocese is currently establishing chaplaincy for LGBTQIA+ colleagues. The majority of the LDTBF team are women and we are particularly looking to support women clergy to take oversight roles. A Time to Change Together's emphasis on partnership includes commitment to partnership between congregations and ministers of different church traditions. Respect is key to us, as is the valuing of conscience and an approach to diversity and inclusion that is rooted in the gospel rather than in statistics or quotas.

How will I be supported?

Wellbeing and Continuing Ministerial Development



WELLBEING

We offer many initiatives that safeguard your spiritual and mental health, including:

- Employee assistance program (EAP) with free access to a 24/7, 365 helpline, with calls answered by experienced in-house counsellors, legal and financial specialists.
- Local counselling sessions accessed through the Wellbeing and CMD Officer.
- We run regular Wellbeing training events.
- We recommend you take all of your annual leave, take your day off regularly, and take two consecutive days off once a month.
- We encourage all parishes in vacancy to consider how they will support the wellbeing of their prospective clergy and their family through engagement with the Covenant for the Care and Wellbeing of Clergy document 'Big Conversation Document for the Local Church'. (The Covenant was affirmed and adopted by Diocesan Synod in 2021).
- A clear and agreed policy of parental leave.

CONTINUING MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT

Our Wellbeing and CMD Officer, who is a member of the College of St Hugh staff team, can offer advice and assist with a wealth of support and training including:

- Care, wellbeing and flourishing for ministers & their families at all stages.
- Ongoing training of ordained and lay ministers.
- Supervision, mentoring, coaching, and consultancy opportunities.
- Resources for developing vocational gifts and skills.
- Ministerial Development Review programme.
- Sabbatical planning for clergy; funding for study and retreats.
- Our new peer and lay facilitated MDR process includes significant focus on the wellbeing, flourishing, and thriving of the clergy person and their family.
- We provide opportunity for all clergy to join a facilitated Reflective Practice/Pastoral Supervision Group.
- We offer access to Coaches, Work Consultants and Mentors.
- From 2024 we will begin a new 3 year First Incumbency Support and Training process.
- We offer sabbatical planning, funding and retreats
- Regular opportunities to gather as colleagues within a large diocese, to offer mutual support.

The Bishops and our Vision

The Diocese is served by three Bishops. The Bishop of Lincoln the Rt Revd Stephen Conway is the Diocesan Bishop.

Our Suffragans are the Rt Revd Dr David Court, Bishop of Grimsby and The Rt Revd Dr Nicholas Chamberlain, Bishop of Grantham. Each Bishop has an office based at Edward King House in Lincoln and our Suffragans are also focused respectively in the North and South of the county.

They work together along with the Senior Team and Parish Support Office to lead and serve the people of the Diocese of Lincoln.

More information can be found on
www.lincoln.anglican.org



As bishops, our vision is to grow and develop us all as deeply Scriptural, praying and worshipping communities and ministers. We want to look outside of ourselves to love the people of our parishes, so that we can share with them the joy, light, hope and love of Jesus. Our covenant is to work together as a team, so that we may use our gifts with you to:



- Grow in numbers and in faith.
- Encourage new and occasional worshipers to become committed disciples.
- Continue with, and develop engagement with children, young people and families in our community, through church, and in our Church schools.
- Offer ourselves and our church building to bring our community together, and meet the challenges of a growing population.

Our aspiration is for the Church in Greater Lincolnshire to be faith-filled, open, active and deeply invitational. Our calling from God is to love, lead, teach and guard the people of our communities prayerfully and practically, as Christ loves them, and to call them to follow Him. We seek to be friendly, approachable, prayerful and helpful.

Your role

Every post has an understanding of its role that is shaped according to its context, alongside the Statement of Particulars that is required by law. A central feature of A Time to Change Together has been to gather information about the needs and aspirations of the over 600 different church communities of the diocese and to shape the distribution of ministers accordingly. In this way, new teams of Authorised Lay and Licensed Lay Ministers (Readers), together with other volunteers such as church wardens or clergy and Readers with Permission to Officiate are being built across Greater Lincolnshire.



OVERSIGHT MINISTRY IN LINCOLN

Oversight ministers have the legal and pastoral responsibility for all the churches to which they are licensed – their Parish Partnership. They also share the strategic leadership of their Local Mission Partnership with other Oversight Ministers and some lay leaders. Generally each Oversight Minister will also be the Focal Minister (practically leading a particular church) of 1 or 2 churches in their Parish Partnership, but not the Focal Minister of all churches in their oversight. Find out more about Oversight Ministry in Lincoln at Lincoln.anglican.org

THE CORE PRINCIPLES OF TIME TO CHANGE TOGETHER

- churches working together with complementary strengths in wider mission partnerships
- equal valuing of all ministries
- no-one ministers alone
- as much responsibility as possible is devolved or delegated to the local area
- every church has an incumbent but few have their own incumbent

Being an Oversight Minister in Lincoln means: •

- equipping the people of God for the mission & ministry of God
- being the wider church in the local communities and churches
- having authority to shape worship, nurture and mission in a group of churches
- providing sacramental ministry along with others
- identifying, discerning & developing focal and other leaders
- delegating & clarifying responsibilities
- building collaborative and mutually supportive teams in your places of oversight
- collaborating in the Local Mission Partnership to create a richer pattern of churches
- supporting, resourcing & overseeing leaders
- establishing healthy patterns of relationship at every level
- modelling a prayerful, self-caring, generous but realistic model of life and leadership

In this phase of Time to Change Together, we are therefore working to release incumbents and others with oversight responsibility by discerning who might hold focal roles in our different communities. In this way we are moving beyond what can be the debilitating impact of Multi-parish Benefices and building a more genuinely collaborative, supportive and missional future.

YOUTH WORK

The Diocese has a new team of youth and children's enablers, working in parishes and across Deanery Partnerships, with a co-ordinator in the College of St Hugh.

MISSION

Every Deanery Partnership now has a Mission Enabler who will work with Bishop David to support the growth of the Church in Mission in Greater Lincolnshire.

The Coastal Local Mission Partnership

Introduction

The Coastal Local Mission Partnership as the name suggests, occupies part of the coastal area of East Lindsey, but also the rural areas of villages and the market town of Alford lying inland. It has a total population of c43,000. There are 23 churches in total. The Local Mission Partnership is made up of two different types of communities. The coastal area is naturally dominated by the tourist industry, with the major resorts of Skegness and Mablethorpe and smaller resorts of Sutton on Sea and Chapel St Leonards. Inland lies an intensive and prosperous farming area.

The Alford Group is part of the “North Node” of the LMP along with the Mablethorpe and Sutton on Sea Benefices (held in plurality). The two villages of Theddlethorpe may be added to this node (from Louth LMP).

It is envisaged that the two paid clergy of the North Node will collaborate in agreed areas where their particular giftings are relevant.

Similar arrangements are envisaged for the two paid clergy in the South Node (one based in Skegness, the other in Chapel St Leonards).

The whole LMP has benefitted significantly from Linc Funding (low income communities), particularly because of the problems of older traditional seaside resorts. This will enable 4 full-time stipendiary posts, 2 in each of the Nodes. Within each of the two nodes it is intended that there should be strong collaborative working, sharing of ideas and resources. This is already well established in the Northern node with the two halves working closely in partnership during Alford’s interregnum.

We also look forward to a growth in the overall life of the Deanery with the recent appointment of a new Rural Dean. The Deanery also includes the “Society” benefice of Burgh le Marsh and Wainfleet whilst not part of this LMP does actively seek participate in existing Deanery and Diocesan structures in a meaningful and collaborative way.

Local Mission Churches: these provide a focus for worship, mission, and belonging.

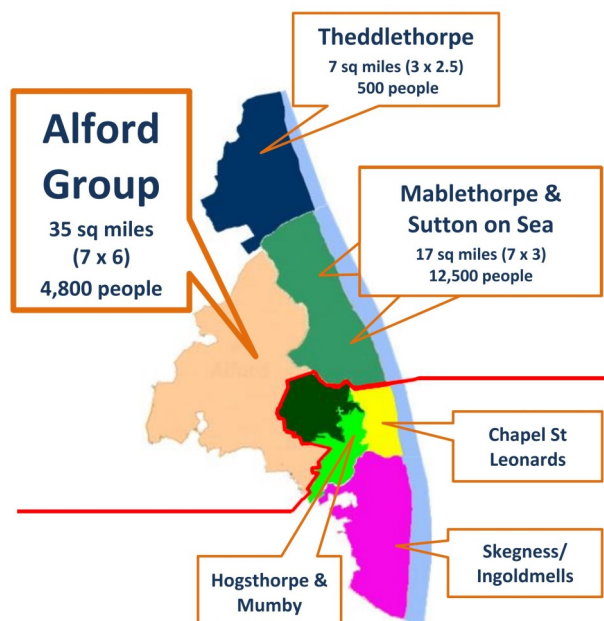
Community Churches: these provide local centres for prayer and worship.

As part of the Coastal Local Mission Partnership. All churches in the Diocese of Lincoln have been invited to identify their distinctive calling using five types:

- Alford is a **Local Mission Church**
- Beesby, Bilsby, Hannah cum Hagnaby & Willoughby are **Community Churches**
- Farlesthorpe, Markby, Rigsby, Ulceby and Well, are **Festival Churches**
- Saleby

The incumbent will hold the cure of souls and the associated legalities and governance for these churches.

Festival Churches: these provide occasional services and remain open for prayer and support to community life.



The Alford Group

We are seeking a parish priest for the
Alford Group



WHO WE ARE

The Alford Group of Parishes consists of 11 rural churches. It is centred on the market town of Alford, with the other churches in the villages surrounding it. Alford itself sits at the foot of the beautiful Lincolnshire Wolds at its junction with the coastal area. The majority of the villages that form the group are located out into this coastal area, with two further back onto the edge of the Wolds. The Group, however, is compact with none of the villages being more than 15 minutes drive from Alford. In such a rural area there is obviously a focus on the farming industry, but it is also regarded as an attractive retirement area. There is also some light and service industry.

The parishes function as a United Benefice with a single PCC. Alford, the four community churches and one of the festival churches (Ulceby) have their own DCC. All of these six churches are functioning very well and have continued to do so through our three year interregnum.

OUR MISSION

As a Group of Churches, our calling from God is to be inviting and welcoming Christian fellowships, havens of peace and prayer, offering care, support and help to anyone who have need in the communities in which we are set.



They all have active churchwardens and strong lay involvement. Of the six festival churches, Ulceby has shown encouraging new life in the last 1-2 years. Rigsby is no longer able to function independently and has been brought under the wing of Alford as a daughter church.

The church at Saleby, though still holding occasional services, is exploring closure.



Your Team

THE CLERGY WORKING PATTERN

Alford is the only church that has a service on every Sunday of the month. Three of these will be Eucharist services, at which the new priest or the PTO will be expected to officiate. The 1st Sunday Worship @ 10 is currently lay-led, but hopefully our new priest will join in this, having experience in all-age worship. There is also a BCP Communion on the 1st Sunday. The new priest will also need to officiate at the monthly communion at Willoughby and occasionally elsewhere in the group. Bilsby and Willoughby have two services a month, one of which is Holy Communion. Beesby has two services of Evening Prayer a month and Hannah a single Evening Prayer a month. All the Services of the Word here are currently led either by ALMs or by a churchwarden. The 5th Sunday is a Group Service, usually Holy Communion and usually at one of the village churches.

There is also a monthly Healing Service, which is shared across the northern node of the LMP.

The new priest will be an ex-officio Governor of Willoughby C of E Primary. There are strong links with the school and further involvement by the new priest we are sure will be welcomed.

COLLABORATIVE WORKING

It is envisaged that there will be good collaborative working with clergy across the northern node of LMP, i.e. with Mablethorpe and Sutton. This is in part because of the way Linc funding is being shared to enable 2 full time clergy posts across the node. However, the foundations for this are already in place. During the interregnum the Alford Group has been under pastoral oversight from the Rector of Mablethorpe and Sutton on Sea and this has worked exceptionally well. A very warm working relationship has been established and we hope that this will continue once a new priest at the Alford Group is in place. Ideally, the skills and specialisms of the clergy will complement each other enabling them to minister across the whole of the node. This might be particularly effective if our new priest has some experience in schools or young people's ministry.

Across our 10 churches, we are working with:

- **2 Retired Priests** with PTO (taking Eucharist services at Alford, Willoughby and Bilsby. Also funerals at Alford & Willoughby.
- **3 active Authorised Lay Ministers** (who take services of the word, morning prayer and assisting leading the Forest Church Team)
- **4 Lay team members** that plan & lead all age worship at Alford and Forest Church at Willoughby
- **A Churchwarden** who shares in preaching ministry at Alford

Two further ALM's are currently in training and will focus on pastoral work and ministry respectively.

OCCASIONAL OFFICES

The Group shares in the life events of the community and clearly each of these takes time and pastoral care from the priest. But we believe that these represent the most valuable pastoral opportunities for reaching into the community beyond the usual congregation.

2023	Alford	Other Group
Funerals	13	9
Crem only service	5	
Baptisms	3	2
Weddings	3	1

With funerals in particular the priest may look for support from the PTO.

Example Sunday Service Rota

This rota is largely based on current practice to give an idea of the likely commitment for a priest but also what else generally happens in a normal month. Week 5 services have rotated around the group of Festival churches open to all. In any month, there could also be, for example, additional lay led services, a forest church or other activity as well as mid-week activity.

Churches	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
<i>Alford</i>	8:00am BCP Communion 10:00am Worship @ 10	10 am Eucharist	10 am Eucharist	10 am Eucharist Week 5 Group Service
<i>Bilsby</i>		11 am Mattins BCP		11 am Holy Communion Week 5 Group Service
<i>Willoughby</i>		11 am Morning Prayer	3:00pm Forest Church	11:30 am Holy Communion Week 5 Group Service
<i>Beesby</i>		3 pm Evening Worship		3 pm Evening Worship Week 5 Group Service
<i>Hannah</i>	3 pm Evening Worship			Week 5 Group Service

- Bilsby – Wednesday 9:30am Morning Prayer (weekly);
- Holy Communion led by a retired PTO
- Services of the Word at Bilsby, Beesby, Hannah led by ALMs
- Worship @ 10 and Forest Church led by lay-teams.

Administration & Finance

ADMINISTRATION

There will be strong administrative support for the new priest. There is a parish office in Alford Church Hall with a paid part-time Administrator operating two mornings per week. This now covers the administration for the whole of the northern node of the LMP. It is exceptionally well run! The administrator Mrs Jen Cooper, covers:

- All arrangements and admin for baptisms, weddings and funerals
- Is Safeguarding officer and covers all safeguarding admin. All safeguarding training and protocols are fully in place and up-to-date across the group.
- Is Treasurer to the PCC
- Along with a host of other things, e.g., ordering, publicity, service orders etc. We can assure the new priest that they will find this invaluable!

The Alford Group has consistently met the target for what was formerly the Parish Share for a number of years. St Wilfrid's, as the hub church of the group, has covenanted to a year-on-year increase in its contribution. The Group will receive some Linc funding in recognition that it shares something of the deprivation of the coastal towns. Together this amounts to circa 2/3 of what is required for a full time incumbent. However, the Mablethorpe and Sutton on Sea benefice is in receipt of much larger Linc funding. Therefore, this is being shared so as to provide for two full time posts across the northern node of the LMP. This is the financial basis for collaborative working by the clergy across the northern node.



It seemed initially that the combined Linc funding would also provide an excess which we hoped would seed a part-time lay post, possibly for a part-time youth or family worker. There is now doubt about the availability of the excess but there is a definite aim to explore other sources of funding. This is very much a live issue for the northern node.

Our Pledge, Your Qualities



Welcome and help the priest and the priest's family settle in and become part of our communities.



Continue to **work together** to the benefit of our churches and communities, utilising our lay resources in all ways that are appropriate



Support and work alongside the priest in seeking to become a **missional community**.



Listen, encourage and support the priest as they develop their own ideas.



Commit to **generosity** in our covenants.



Communicate with, and **listen** to, our priest.



Support the priest in taking proper days off and holidays.



Support the priest if he or she wishes to take an **annual retreat**.



Commit to deepening our own faith and discipleship as we journey together.



Above all pray for our priest and the leadership and life of our churches.

The Alford Group is fully supportive of the ordination of women and would welcome interest from men or women looking to share this vision.

- A Church of England ordained priest who is forward looking and has a strong vision of what our churches could be.
- Holds prayer at the centre of their life and can lead others in strengthening their life of prayer.
- Is a good communicator with strong preaching skills and a sound Bible based teaching ministry that matches an appetite for God's word.
- Is at ease with both traditional or more contemporary styles of worship and is able to lead the church into change where appropriate.
- Will discern the good things that are already happening in our parish and will be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit to move us forward.
- Can relate effectively to young people and will encourage and develop further the existing all-age worship and schools work.
- Is able to encourage and facilitate people to develop their gifts and to work with the existing lay team in the church; also to work collaboratively across the LMP with other clergy.
- The ability to lead the church in outreach and with a heart for mission, seeking new ways of reaching into the community.
- Has a heart for the pastoral needs of God's people, a listening ear and who understands the importance of being a visible and compassionate presence in the church and the community.
- A commitment to maintain their own spiritual growth by giving time to study, prayer and training.
- a full driving licence and access to a vehicle

Our Parish

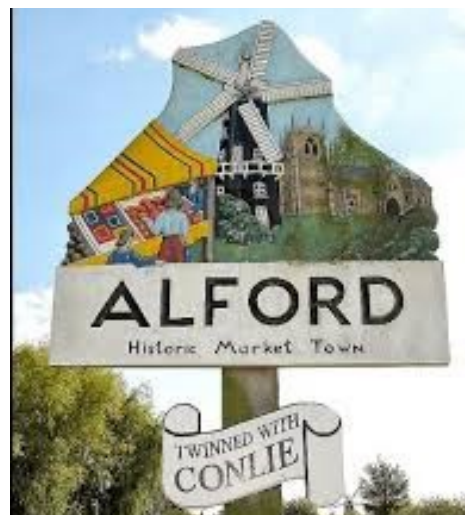
Alford

The Town

Alford is a small historic market town at the meeting point of the Lincolnshire Wolds and the coastal area, and so enjoys the advantages of both coast and country. It sits at the foot of the Wolds, which are rightly designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty with much opportunity for walking. At the same time it is only 7 miles from the coast at Sutton on Sea, with superb beaches and the more commercial resorts of Mablethorpe and Skegness a little further away.

Alford has a population of around 4,000. It is surrounded by a rich farming area, has a small amount of light service industry, shares in some degree the tourist industry of the coastal area and has a significant retired population. It is a true market town, acting as a centre for the surrounding rural area. There is a twice weekly market, a Co-op supermarket and a range of independent shops. It also has a doctor's surgery, a pharmacy and a NHS dentist and there are three nursing homes in the town. Education is well provided for, with Queen Elizabeth Grammar (a state mixed Grammar) and John Spendluffe Academy (11 – 16yrs). There is both a local primary school in Alford and also a CofE primary in the neighbouring village of Willoughby with which the church has strong links, and there is also good pre-school provision within the town. There are a full range of youth organisations in the town, in particular the Boys and the Girls Brigades which are strongly linked to the Church.

The town hosts a number of events during the year, particularly the massively successful 1940s weekend, which draws large numbers into the town, and also hosts major Craft Markets. The Church is open for refreshments during these events and attracts a large number of visitors on Bank Holidays.



Much of this is centred at the large thatched Manor House, a major feature of the town, which is the base for a very active Civic Trust. It also contains a small rural life museum and hosts some arts events. The Manor House, together with the Alford Five Sailed Windmill which is currently being restored, have recently received grants of £3m from Government levelling-up funding to develop their facilities which should further strengthen the tourist industry in the town.

There is a wide range of leisure and sports provision in the town, with football, cricket, squash and bowling clubs. There are various societies and the town boasts a fine Silver Band and an excellent choir in the Elizabethan Singers.

The larger market town of Louth is 15 – 20 minutes away and has a wider range of shops, a bigger market, a swimming pool and theatre. The major centre of the area, Lincoln, is roughly an hour's drive.

There are some aspects which are characteristic of such a rural area. Public transport provision is not good, the nearest major hospital with full A & E facilities is at Boston – 40 minutes away, although there are smaller hospitals at Louth and Skegness. It is true that the town suffers from the deprivation that is more severe along the coastal strip. It is in recognition of this that the parish receives its central Linc funding from the Church Commissioners.

Nevertheless, it is no exaggeration to say that this is a small town with a clear sense of a warm and friendly community that many people consider to be a good place to live.

Our Parish

Alford

THE CHURCH

St Wilfrid's is a Grade 1 Listed Building, mainly of the 14th century. One great advantage is that it is absolutely central to the town, standing on the main through road directly opposite to the Market Place. It has a presence in the life of the town. Within the Diocese TTCT framework it is a Type 2 Local Mission Church. The building is in very good condition with no major problems.

There is a service on every Sunday, on 3 out of 4 Sundays this is a Eucharist with an average congregation of 30 – 40. This is a mainly retired congregation, though there is a little movement in a younger direction. It is, though, a faithful, welcoming and stable worshipping congregation. There is also a small BCP communion on the 1st Sunday of the month. However the main growth point is Worship @ 10, the all-age service on the 1st Sunday of each month. The church is developing increasingly strong links with its Girls and Boys Brigades. The young people, their leaders and parents support this service on a regular basis and the congregation ranges from 50 – 70. It is a contemporary service with much participation from the young people. It also incorporates both the Harvest Service and Christingle. It is led by a small lay team, most of whom are experienced in young people's work. It is essential that our new priest should feel at home with this work to continue its development.



It is significant that the Church has not just held its own but begun to experience modest growth during its 3 year long interregnum. In fact the electoral role has grown by 20% in the past 2 years. Our worship, particularly since Covid, has moved gently in a less traditional direction, for example with the use of a nave altar. There is a strong and active DCC, that has managed the Church during this time. The Church is kept open on a daily basis and we are well aware that it is used by members of the community seeking quietness and reflection in its prayer area.

The major festivals are well celebrated, on Palm Sunday we process from the Market Place to the church behind our faithful donkey, Pumpkin. There is an Agape meal and communion on Maundy Thursday and a Churches together



Walk of Witness incorporating some drama on Good Friday. The Harvest Festival is still of great significance in a farming community. There are a range of Christmas services, including the Crib Service which draws a large congregation, and we also host the town's Remembrance Service which totally fills our capacity. The church also hosts usually 2 or 3 concerts each year.

As the hub of the Alford group, we seek to support the other village churches. There is a group service usually at a village church on the 5th Sunday of the month and members are particularly involved in 2 ventures at Willoughby. We provide most of the team for assemblies at Willoughby C of E Primary School using the Bible Society's Open the Book material on a fortnightly basis, and the team also works at Withern C of E Primary which is outside the group. Again, we provide most of the team for the innovative Forest Church at Willoughby on the 3rd Sunday afternoon.



Our Parish

Alford

THE CHURCH

We have very good Ecumenical relations with the town's other 2 churches, Alford Storehouse and the small Methodist congregation. We combine for 3 main events each year, the above mentioned Good Friday Walk of Witness, the Summer Celebration in the grounds of the Manor House and a joint Carol Service, also at the Manor House. We also work together to provide an outreach stall at the town's Christmas Extravaganza. The Storehouse runs the town's Food Bank and we support them in this important work.

The Church has just completed the project to add a sizeable car park which was much needed for weddings and funerals. There is a major re-ordering project in hand for the Church, wi-fi and cameras are already in place allowing streaming of services, again particularly for weddings and funerals. We are planning to remove pews from the rear-most part of the church to create a more flexible space; to add a much needed toilet and also servery area under the tower; to add external glass doors in the south porch and an interior glass porch for the north door to make the Church more accessible. These improvements have been accepted in principle. We were blessed with a major bequest 2 years ago so all this is fully funded. We would like to add a screen and projection system, though this is still under discussion. We believe all of these improvements will facilitate the mission of the Church.



The Church Hall is a very active and well-used facility. The Church runs a Monday Lunch Club here, and it is the home of the Boys Brigade. We host a range of community groups ranging from karate to walking netball and swing dancing. In contrast, it is also the venue for the Deanery Synod. A member of the DCC works hard as Hall Manager.

The Group has a paid part-time administrator and a well run church office, and we also have a genuinely excellent paid organist/pianist who contributes very much to our worship.



We also enjoy a good social life together, and events organised by our Social Team regularly include quiz nights, rambles, games afternoons, ten pin bowling and a summer BBQ – fun that knits us together.

Despite all that has been said here, it may not convey the real heart of the Church. We truly believe we are a warm and friendly church. There is a strong and effective sense of informal pastoral care and bond which is a deep part of the character of the fellowship. At the same time, there is an increasing sense of hunger for God's word. For example, there is a strong home Bible study group. There is a desire for a Priest with a strong Bible-based teaching ministry. This is a Church in which we feel the Holy Spirit is beginning to move and we hope and expect to see both growth in numbers but also in the depth of our spiritual life and worship. We need a priest who can lead us into this.



Our Parish Church

Willoughby St Helena

THE VILLAGE

Willoughby with Sloothby is a small rural village with a church, village hall, pub, garage and village green. Population c. 600 with majority aged over 50. There is a Church of England primary school (see under Church for more details), which has c.130 pupils of all abilities. Pupils usually transfer to Alford's secondary schools after year 6. An incumbent would hold 'ex officio' status on Board of Governors where there is currently one Foundation Governor with a vacancy for a second.

Willoughby and District History Group holds very popular monthly talks in the Village Hall on a wide variety of subjects of local interest. A local committee (based in The Willoughby Arms) organises an annual Village Fete in July inviting local and district groups to take part (e.g. Fire Brigade (Alford's retained firefighters), National Coastwatch, Boys Brigade (Alford), local businesses etc. St Helena's lends chairs and tables for use on the Green and provides light refreshments in the church building; the Village Hall hosts art and crafts sellers, and the pub hosts a barbecue.

Willoughby is the birthplace of John Smith (1580- 1631) a soldier/explorer who helped establish the settlement of Jamestown, in Virginia, USA.



Key Activities:

- One Morning Service per month (ALM led – 2nd Sunday)
- One Holy Communion per month (when clergy available – 4th Sunday)
- Home of the Alford Group's 'Forest Church' (lay) led by Group Team (3rd Sunday) monthly service except December
- All major church festivals are celebrated
- Hosts monthly Coffee Morning in the Village Hall (proceeds
- Holders of Eco Church's Bronze Award and working up to Silver/Gold
- Members of 'Caring for God's Acre'
- Staunch supporters of Lincs Wold and Coast Churches Festival
- Holds termly services for CofE Primary School (and parents); Harvest, Christingle & end of school year).
- Open the Book Team (from within the Alford Group) visits School monthly.
- Village Book Exchange in the church building (and parents); Harvest, Christingle & end of school year).
- Open the Book Team (from within the Alford Group) visits School monthly.

Our Parish Church

Willoughby with Sloothby St Helena

THE CHURCH

St Helena's is a Grade 1 listed building with open churchyard; organ (no regular organist) 6 bells (no regular bell-ringers). There are no kitchen or toilet facilities. There are modern stained-glass windows reflecting the life of Captain John Smith and the Jamestown Community.

Dry rot led to the removal of existing pews but this has provided St Helena's with a large flexible space which better accommodates Willoughby's Church of England Primary School's 'whole school' services (usually once per term) and their families; it's also useful if there are large attendances at weddings or funerals. This year, there have been 2 funerals and 3 weddings.

There is a large churchyard; the north side remains open for burials while the south side was cleared of headstones in the 1930s and provides a large open space for activities. There is a Churchyard Project (alongside 'Caring for God's Acre') which hopes to attract a wider community involvement in caring for the site. There is a meadow area set aside for the summer months with locally sourced perennial wildflowers. Recently re-discovered headstones are providing opportunities for family history research.



The main use of the churchyard is for Forest Church (started in 2021, held each month except December) which originally started as a Fresh Expression to encounter God through Creation, craft activities, prayer and song, in conjunction with School. While this is still well supported by Alford Group Church members, few school families continued to attend after the few months. Future plans, with the right support, might see the School element re-emerge as an after-school club in the summer term.

'Open the Book' remains a successful collaboration with School. The OTB Team is made up from the Alford Group and introduces Bible stories usually in the form of short dramas. OTB sessions are very popular and in 2023, Forest Church and OTB combined for a 'Forest Church Day' when year groups enjoyed an OTB session in the churchyard (so, 5 sessions over the course of a day).

St Helena's has a full DCC but only 1 churchwarden (who is also an ALM).

Our Parish Church

Bilsby Holy Trinity

VILLAGE LIFE

Bilsby is a small friendly village of approximately 400 inhabitants that connects directly with Alford. There are a number of farms surrounding it and a mixed demographic population. It has a petrol station with a shop and post office. The church is used for village events, Parish Council meetings and as a polling station.

THE CHURCH

Holy Trinity is approximately 800 years old and is situated on a slight rise on the main Road. It was reordered several years ago. Pews were removed so that the Nave can be used for social events and to vary services, for example we have had some 'cafe style' services. We also installed a toilet and small servery for hot drinks.

At present we are dealing with dry rot but everything, including finances, is in hand.

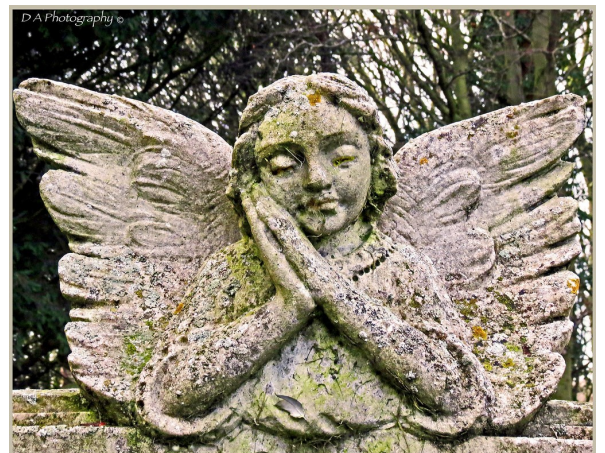
We have two services a month. BCP Matins on the second Sunday, and Eucharist on the fourth Sunday led by a retired vicar who lives in the village. His wife plays the organ for us and we have a sound system with microphones and a music centre if needed. We also have a midweek prayer meeting, lasting around 20 minutes followed by coffee and a chat.



We also have extra services at e.g. Christmas and Easter if they do not fall on the usual Sundays, as well as our very popular 'Carols and Mince pies' at Christmas. Our congregation is regularly about 14/ 18 members and we recently have attracted new people and are regularly visited by people from different local parishes and holiday makers. We join the open churches weekends.

We have a well maintained working grave yard that is visited by relatives of those interred there. It also has a war memorial and two war graves.

We have a small but thriving and committed DCC and look forward to having a new Priest to help us develop our work.



Our Parish Church

Farlesthorpe St Andrew

Farlesthorpe is a small farming hamlet which lies 2 – 3 miles south-east of Alford. It is somewhat isolated and stretches along a minor road. It has, however, a small attractive church which dates originally from 1800 but there was further restoration in the C20 and the building is in good order, with access through adjacent farmyard. It has no main electricity.

It is again a typical Festival Church, with its annual services being Harvest and a Christmas Carol service. These are, however, well supported by the small community. It does have some reserves and is able to meet its essential costs and will be able to continue to serve its small community.



Saleby St Margaret



Saleby is a hamlet that lies 2 – 3 miles north of Alford. It is just off the main route that leads to the resort of Mablethorpe, but is somewhat tucked away. It has a population of around 100 comprised mainly of older retired people with few working families or school age children. In one sense, in the absence of any village shop, pub and no through bus service, the church is the only focal point of the community. Saleby is also linked with the even smaller neighbouring hamlet of Thoresthorpe, which has only a population of 40.

The church is a mid Victorian building. Internally it does suffer from damp plaster but otherwise is in good condition. Unlike some of our other smaller village churches, it does have mains electricity.

It is a typical Festival Church, with only 3 – 4 services each year at Easter, Harvest and Christmas. The Christmas Carol Service is well attended, but otherwise only 5 – 6 residents attend with some support from other churches in the group. The financial situation is serious with very limited funds and no other reserves. The only income is from the occasional service. An open public meeting was held following a service to decide the direction of the church and the chosen option was “exploring closure”. The church does currently have churchwardens, but they will not be seeking re-election in which case, like Rigsby, the church will need to be brought for the present under the umbrella of the Alford DCC and wardens.



Our Parish Church

Rigsby St James

Rigsby is a hamlet of farms and holiday cottages. It stands on the slope of the Wolds, 2 miles outside Alford. The church is in a secluded and peaceful setting with sweeping views down to the coast.

It no longer has its own churchwardens, but has been brought as a daughter church under the DCC and churchwardens of Alford. Extensive repairs of the bell turret were carried out 2 years ago, possible because of a bequest so the church is in good condition. It has no electricity or water. However, a recent Sunday afternoon communion service, the first service held for some time, was well supported and it is a much loved church. It has an open churchyard.



Well St Margaret

Well is an estate village, associated with Well hall. It lies on the slope of the Lincolnshire Wolds about 2 miles outside Alford. It has a population of around 160 and is a small but active community.

St Margarets is a Grade 1 listed church. It is an outstanding early Georgian church, modelled directly on St Pauls Covent Garden, with a classical portico and collegiate style seating. It stands in the parkland of the Hall, looking directly down towards it. It is included in Simon Jenkin's "England's Thousand Best Churches". It is a Festival Church. Until recently it held Harvest and Carol Services, which attracted both residents and visitors and a full congregation. The Carol Service was truly by candlelight since the church has no electricity. It has an open churchyard. Unfortunately services are not taking place at present since we are currently experiencing difficulties with vehicular access after a change of ownership of the Hall. This is being dealt with by the Highways Department, Lincolnshire County Council.



Our Parish Church

Ulceby All Saints

Ulceby is a village with a warm and tightly-knit community. It lies stretched out along a side road that branches off the main route towards Skegness. It has a population of around 130. It has a retired population but is also an active farming community. It is the home of the famous Lincolnshire Poacher cheese and the farm that produces it. Consequently the village received a royal visit in Summer 2023 when King Charles came to look over the farm and its work.

All Saints is a Festival Church that is coming back to life. The church itself is a Victorian building that stands in a well-kept and most attractive churchyard. It now once again has active churchwardens and a functioning DCC, the only one of our Festival Churches to do so. It is increasingly a hub for the community. It has the usual Festival Church services at Easter, Harvest and Christmas, and all of these function as significant social events for the village, particularly the Carol Service. The church also sometimes hosts the 5th Sunday Group Service and this year has also seen two baptisms which have been an encouragement. Although it is a Festival Church, Ulceby is now playing much more of a part in the life of the Group.



Markby St Peter



Markby is a hamlet 3 miles from Alford, situated along the busy road leading to the resort of Sutton on Sea. It is surrounded by farmland and under 100 people live there today, and the village residents have mixed employment.

St Peters is a wonderfully idiosyncratic church. It lies off the main road, down a lane to a farm which is happy to allow parking. It stands in a lovely churchyard in what was originally the moated area of Markby Priory and is built of stone from the vanished Priory. It is the only thatched church in Lincolnshire and as such attracts visitors. It also retains its box pews. It features in Jenkins' "Thousand Best churches of England".

It fell into decay in late Victorian times but was restore and re-roofed in the 1960s and after much fundraising was re-thatched again in 2010 and is in good order. It usually hold two services each year, a Carol Service and one of the 5th Sunday Group services during the summer. This took place recently and was full to overflowing. It is a church that is loved and treasured.

Our Parish Church

Hannah St Andrew

Hannah is a hamlet that lies 4 – 5 miles outside Alford, but on the main road to the resort of Sutton on Sea. It has a population of less than 100 but nevertheless possesses in St Andrews a superb Grade 1 listed Georgian church. The church stands on a rare piece of higher ground in the marshland, with sweeping views around. It possesses a range of interesting features, including its original box pews, a two-decker pulpit and an unusual three-sided communion rail. Unlike some of the other smaller churches, it has both electricity and toilet facilities and good parking courtesy of a local farmer.

There is just one service a month, an afternoon service of Evening Prayer on the 1st Sunday, at present usually led by the churchwarden. This, though, has a congregation of 20 – 30 and is regularly supported by those from other churches in the group and elsewhere. The church is extremely well cared for. It hosts a very fine annual Flower Festival, which draws visitors from a wide area. The festival services at Harvest and Christmas can be full to overflowing and the church spectacularly decorated. It also hosts 5th Sunday Group Services.



Beesby St Andrew



This is a genuinely warm and welcoming church with a dedicated team of helpers. It is a church with a unique atmosphere all of its own.

Beesby is a village lying to the north of Alford along the route to Mablethorpe. It has a population of around 100 with a mixture of retired people and working farms.

St Andrews itself is situated along a lane at the edge of the village. It is a simple but Grade II listed church. It was restored most recent at the beginning of the C21 and is in good order. The restoration included the addition of toilet facilities and a small well-appointed kitchen. This allows the church itself to act in some way as a village hall and it is used on a regular basis by various groups including Music Makers and yoga. It has modern seating and so is a flexible space.

There are two services per month of Evening Prayer on a Sunday afternoon, at present led regularly by an ALM. It has a congregation usually of 15-20 with a faithful group from the village supported by others from group churches. There are 2 churchwardens in office and the church is well run. Festival services at Harvest and Christmas are significant village events. One of its most unusual features is that the font stands outside by the main door and there was an outdoor baptism earlier this year. The church is surrounded by a large grassed churchyard used for a popular open air service in summer.

The Rectory

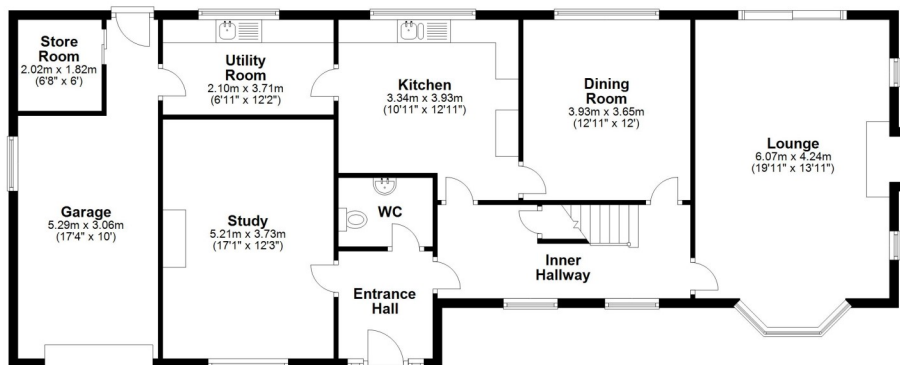
Your Family Home

- Well appointed 4 bedroom Rectory
- Separate family accommodation
- Large Garage
- Part of Diocesan net zero carbon initiative (Solar Panel Installation)
- Gas Powered central Heating
- Intruder Alarm
- Based in a large village with excellent road links and amenities
- Fully maintained property
- Garden maintenance package
- Dedicated diocesan property team



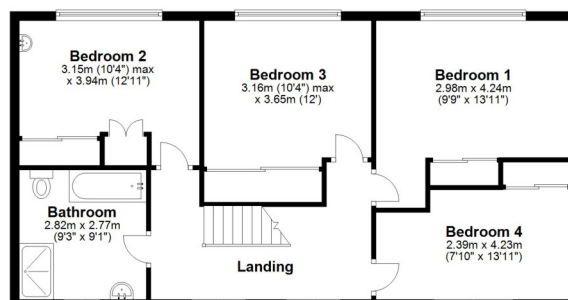
Ground Floor

Approx. 127.6 sq. metres (1373.1 sq. feet)



First Floor

Approx. 73.0 sq. metres (786.2 sq. feet)



This plan is for layout guidance only. Not drawn to scale unless stated. Windows and door openings are approximate. Whilst every care is taken in the preparation of this plan, please check all dimensions, shapes and compass bearings before making any decisions reliant upon them. All interested parties must verify their accuracy independently.
Plan produced using PlanUp.

