

The Hunstanton and Saxon Shore Benefice

Priest-in-Charge

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What is the role?

The Hunstanton and Saxon Shore Benefice is seeking an experienced priest to lead the church forward into the future that God has for us in our eight parishes.

Our Vision

- To become a stronger, more united benefice better sharing our resources.
- To actively seek God's will and to grow in faith together.
- To be prayerful, vibrant and welcoming communities of faith.
- To be outward looking in bearing witness to the Good News that Jesus brought us.
- To make a difference to our communities by harnessing, and growing, the talents we have to serve others.



What is the task?

- Serve the whole community through pastoral and kindly care.
- Encourage us to live our lives rooted in Christ through prayer and worship.
- Create outreach opportunities among the growing population in the new housing developments in the area.
- Be visible, accessible and resilient.
- In a collaborative way, manage and motivate good supportive teams of clergy and laity.
- Be a regular known and supportive presence in our schools, building relationships with staff, parents and young people of the area.



Who are we looking for?

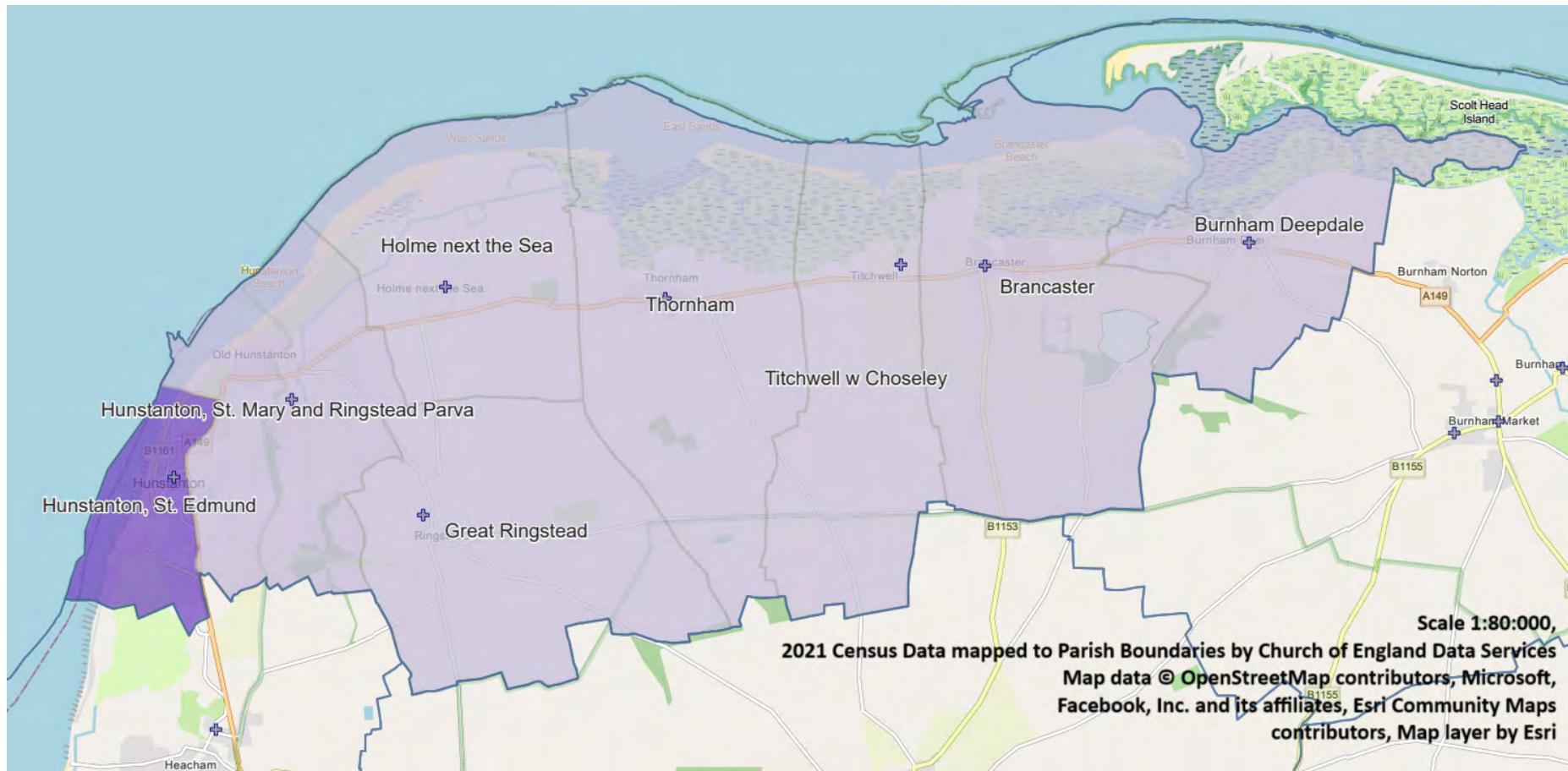
A priest with experience who will work together with the self-supporting Assistant Priest, six retired clergy, a retired Church Army Officer and laity to:

- Take time to discover what is important to us now, and be able to work creatively for the future by providing encouraging leadership to deepen our prayer and spiritual life.
- To be a unifying factor to pull us together as a benefice and enable us to achieve our as yet unrealised potential.
- Be flexible with varying styles of worship and comfortable in their application.
- Embrace the opportunities and challenges of a rural and town ministry in this holiday area with energy and enthusiasm.
- Minister to the needs of the wider communities by encouraging and supporting us in our efforts to reach out to those with pastoral, spiritual and material needs.
- Continue to grow and develop our links with families and young people.
- Offer flair and imagination in support of our outreach programmes and events both church and secular.
- Encourage and grow stronger links with other Christian denominations in the local area through the Churches Together group in Hunstanton.



Where are we – Our place in the Diocese

The Hunstanton & Saxon Shore Group of Churches is located in the Heacham and Rising Deanery within the Diocese of Norwich and comprises the parishes of Hunstanton, Old Hunstanton with Ringstead Parva, Ringstead, Holme-next-the-Sea, Thornham, Titchwell with Choseley, Brancaster and Burnham Deepdale.



Location

Our group of eight churches is situated in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in North West Norfolk.

This part of the Norfolk coastline has so much to offer that visitors come from all parts of the country to enjoy it. The Norfolk Coastal Path and Peddars Way are popular with walkers and link all our parishes. There is something for everyone here from bird watching to water sports, golf courses and fine dining.

The largest centre of population, Hunstanton, is the only west facing resort on the east coast. It is a lively seaside town in summer with a theatre, fun fair, and pitch and putt course. Its famous striped cliffs provide our own Jurassic coastline.

There is a regular bus service, which runs through all of the parishes, with the exception of Ringstead, to Wells-next-the-Sea and to King's Lynn where a train connection takes you to London King's Cross in under two hours. Direct train connections can be made at Ely station to numerous UK locations. It is a good and interesting part of the world in which to live. Most of the population of the benefice are to be found in the town of Hunstanton (c 4,500).

The combined permanent population of the other parishes is 1,553. All parishes have pockets of social housing abutting the properties of the more affluent. Changes in agricultural practices have meant many, especially younger people, leaving in the last few decades to find work elsewhere. Property prices have boomed in recent years, and with the loss of social housing few younger local people can afford to live in the villages. The recent cost of living crisis has highlighted the issue of poverty in this area.

Incoming retirees have in turn markedly increased the average age of the population. Many properties, including a significant number of new-builds, have become second homes or holiday lets, but this should be viewed as an opportunity for outreach.



Our Parishes

The churches within our benefice date from the pre-conquest through to the Victorian period.

All churches in the benefice are focal points in their communities and are well maintained. With the support of six retired clergy, a retired Church Army Officer and a self-supporting Assistant Priest six services are being sustained every week, except on the fifth Sunday in the month when there is a Benefice service. Details of Parish Statistics can be found below. There are also lifeboat services, harvest, sea, pet services and civic services at St Edmund's Hunstanton. While we had clergy, Morning Prayer was said daily in the churches on a weekly rotation. Holy Communion services are conducted in care homes. Evening Prayer is held on Zoom on Sundays from October through to July. This service is prepared by lay people and can be either lay led, or led by one of the retired clergy.

We encourage the use of our churches for recitals and concerts including The Shanty Men, and the Staithe Singers. All of our churches are open every day to welcome visitors. Parish fund-raising activities, such as "Open Gardens", Flower Festivals and Fayres are community events.

The Benefice contributes its Parish Share, which is apportioned between the parishes, to the diocese.

Small congregations are energetically sustaining Church life during the vacancy, and all congregations are boosted by second-home owners and visitors particularly in the summer and at festivals.

Details of each of the 8 churches are as follows.



St Edmund's Hunstanton

Hunstanton, in common with many other coastal communities, is one of the more deprived in the country being on the 9th centile of the Church Urban Fund index of deprivation.

A significant proportion of the children attending state schools live in a large area of social housing situated out of sight of the rest of the town. The population there is far less stable than the national average as employment opportunities are limited locally. Substance abuse is a significant problem in the town.

Hunstanton has a homeless hostel and a women's refuge. There are three complexes of McCarthy and Stone retirement flats and five care homes. A large number of other properties are second homes or holiday lets.

St Edmund's church currently has a loyal but mainly elderly congregation of 18-25. The churchmanship has always been distinctly Anglo-Catholic, though somewhat less so recently. There are services every Sunday morning with several long-standing and loyal members of the congregation arriving with their carers from a nearby nursing home. We are regularly complimented on the welcome received at the church. The church is open daily and many visitors and members of the congregation pass through for times of quiet prayer.

The adjacent church hall is well equipped with facilities and hosts a weekly Warm Space café, attended by people from across the benefice for company as well as support from the Community Support Worker from the adjacent foodbank. A Youth Alpha group run by the assistant priest meets there on Sunday evenings, and it is hired out for various social events. The church has close links with the Town Council.

The church building was constructed in the early 1860s when work began on the town of New Hunstanton. It is therefore fortunate to be in the centre of town within a large green space.

St Mary's Old Hunstanton

Services are held every Sunday with a current average of approximately 25. This number swells greatly at Christmas, Easter and Remembrance Sunday.

The church has close links with the Emergency Services with an annual Carol Service, in recent years, taking place at the RNLI station on the beach. Glebe House Preparatory School traditionally hold their Leavers' Service and Carol Service at the church. The church is the focal point of the Old Hunstanton Flower Festival held in July. The church is open to the public every day and ALL ARE WELCOME.

The church dates back to the 14th century and many features remain today, including the impressive Norman font. In Victorian times various "improvements" were carried out. The Le Strange family, responsible for much of the development of Hunstanton Town, and who occupied Hunstanton Hall, were patrons of the church and tombstones and plaques remain. The church is particularly proud of its Rood Screen, experts regarding it as particularly fine, and this was restored/renovated in 2022.

St Andrew's Ringstead

During the vacancy our small, but active, congregation continue to meet for worship each Sunday and on Thursday mornings twice a month.

Our numbers swell for the major festivals when we welcome many second home owners and visitors. As part of the Saxon Shore we join together for team services and support events across the benefice.

Annual celebrations in Ringstead include an outdoor service for St Peter's Day in front of the ruined round tower. The village community turn out in June to help raise funds for the church on Ringstead Open Gardens, and in early November to tidy the area around the War Memorial ready for Remembrance Sunday. Volunteers also help with churchyard maintenance throughout the year.

The "Friends of St Andrew's" work hard to finance the maintenance of the church building and to keep its equipment up to date and in working order, recently funding restorations to the bell and the clock, but repairs to our church building continue to be a financial challenge.

We look forward to welcoming our new spiritual leader to the Saxon Shore to unite the benefice and to grow the kingdom of God.

St Mary the Virgin Holme-next-the-Sea

The church is close to a stunning beach and surrounded by nature reserves and farmland.

Attendees, averaging 21 come from the local, mainly retired population, second home owners and holiday makers. There is an active PCC, who with other regular parishioners participate in services.

A family fun event is held in the village every Easter Monday and centres on the church. The annual Open Gardens in July and the church Fete in August cement the sense of community in the village as well as bringing many people from the surrounding area.

The church is supported by The Help Holme Church Group whose members enthusiastically fundraise for the fabric of the church.

It is 12th century in origin and is a well maintained Grade 1 listed building. The Georgian nave and chancel are unadorned and simple. The church has 5 bells. A wonderful team of flower arrangers keep the church beautifully decorated especially at festival times. A toilet and small kitchenette enable refreshments to be offered after services and at special events. Our finances are currently secure. Major restoration work on the tower is scheduled to take place in 2025.

All Saints Thornham

The regular congregation of 8 to 15 is boosted at Easter when the church is usually full with second home owners and visitors.

The church lies in the centre of the village and is Grade I listed dating back to the 13th century. It is light and airy in a very pretty setting – consequently it is sought after for weddings. The church has a welcome area with comfortable seating at the back of church with tea and coffee making facilities. A kitchen and toilet add to the facilities for the congregation and visitors.

The churchyard is large, but well maintained with 8 allotments at the side of the church and a community garden for use by both visitors and villagers.

St Mary's Titchwell

Titchwell is the smallest parish in the benefice and consists of some 50 houses, the majority being built as tied cottages for an agricultural estate at the end of the nineteenth century.

The village has a strong sense of community in spite of many properties having sold for the holiday market. The church building has been a place of prayer for over a thousand years and many sense its special atmosphere, describing it as a “thin place”. It is for this reason that a contemplative group, Stillness on the Saxon Shore, was established there some ten years ago. The group continues to thrive and meets every Friday afternoon.

For many years, the parish has hosted the benefice Book of Common Prayer Communion Service first thing every other Sunday morning; remarkably this congregation has grown in recent years. A Common Worship Communion service was started every Sunday morning two years ago, and has a gathered congregation that has grown both in numbers and closeness.

The small church struggles to accommodate the large congregation for the annual Christingle service on Christmas Eve, and regularly hosts wedding services for those holding their receptions at the two hotels in the village.

The church community has a close working link with the secular Titchwell parish meeting and regularly hosts community meals in a marquee on the village green.

Even a cursory glance at the building will reveal its antiquity. The base of the tower may well be 10th century while the newer top is still obviously Saxon. The rest of the building has been worked on in almost every preceding century as evidenced by blocked up Norman windows through to a porch rebuilt in Edwardian times.

The fabric officer is actively working on plans to secure the structure into the next century as well as re-ordering the interior so that it can also serve as a suitable public space for the village. The PCC is currently forming a Friends of Titchwell Church to raise funds for the project.

St Mary the Virgin Brancaster

The church community is currently undergoing a challenging time with a very small congregation at present and no church warden.

However, there is potential for growth as there are large congregations for the termly school services and at Christmas and Easter, the latter being boosted by visitors and second home owners,

As with all the church buildings in the benefice, there is a considerable throughput of tourists, either sightseers or those seeking a time of quiet prayer, many of whom also donate through the card reader. There is a welcome area with self-service tea and coffee making facilities that seems to be much appreciated.

The church community actively supports regular concerts in the church building, as well as a weekly good-friends' community café in the spacious and new-refurbished village hall.

The church building is mainly 14th century with a large 15th century tower. Many of the building stones appear to have come from the nearby Roman fort of Branodunum. The fabric of the building is well maintained with the help of a very active Friends of Brancaster Church charity

St Mary's Burnham Deepdale

Currently we have 3 services per month – 2 communion services following Common Worship and a well-attended informal Family Service, which we hope to grow.

Our annual Sea Service marks the connection of the village with the harbour and its fishing and recreational activities. We are often complimented on the warmth of our welcome to worshippers and to those who come to find peace and quiet, or to just pop in for a visit. We have a churchyard which is still open.

The church serves the joint villages of Burnham Deepdale and Brancaster Staithe (not to be confused with Brancaster). It has been a place of worship since the 11th century as witnessed by its Saxon round tower. Other notable features include its Norman square font and its collection of medieval glass.

For more detailed information about each church please use the link below to view the benefice website.

saxonshorebenefice.co.uk

There are also other informative websites which you will find listed on the benefice website.

Sundays with us

Please see the service rota below for a typical month.

CW – Common Worship / **BCP** – Book of Common Prayer / **HC** – Service of Holy Communion / **MP** – service of Morning Prayer

EP – Service of Choral Evensong BCP / **Family** – Shorter informal service

Date	Church	Time	Service	Liturgy
Thursday 4th January Midweek communion	Hunstanton	10.00 am	HC	
Sunday 7th January Epiphany	Holme-next-the-Sea	9.00 am	HC	BCP
	Ringstead	9.00 am	HC	CW
	Titchwell	10.30 am	HC for families	CW
	Brancaster	10.45 am	HC (said)	CW
	Old Hunstanton	10.45 am	HC	CW
	Hunstanton	10.45 am	MP	CW
Thursday 11th January Midweek communion	Ringstead	10.00 am	HC	
Sunday 14th January Second after Epiphany	Titchwell	8.30 am	HC	BCP
		10.30 am	HC for families	CW
	Thornham	9.00 am	MP	CW
	Burnham Deepdale	9.00 am	HC	CW
	Ringstead	9.00 am	HC	CW
	Old Hunstanton	10.45 am	HC	CW
	Hunstanton	10.45 am	HC	CW
	Brancaster	4.00 pm	EP	BCP

Date	Church	Time	Service	Liturgy
Thursday 18th January Midweek communion	Hunstanton	10.00 am	HC	
Sunday 21st January Third after Epiphany	Holme-next-the-Sea	9.00 am	HC	CW
	Ringstead	9.00 am	HC	CW
	Burnham Deepdale	10.15 am	Family	CW
	Titchwell	10.30 am	MP family	CW
	Old Hunstanton	10.45 am	MP	CW
	Hunstanton	10.45 am	HC	CW
Conversion of Paul 25th	Hunstanton	10.45 am	HC	CW
Thursday 25th January Midweek communion	Ringstead	10.00 am	HC	
Sunday 28th January Candlemas	Titchwell	8.30 am	HC	BCP
		10.30 am	HC for families	CW
	Thornham	9.00 am	HC	CW
	Burnham Deepdale	9.00 am	HC	CW
	Ringstead	9.00 am	MP	CW
	Hunstanton	10.45 am	HC	CW
	Old Hunstanton	10.45 am	HC	CW

Other Regular Events

Name of Parish	Average Sunday Attendance	Number on Electoral Roll	Number of Weddings	Number of Baptisms	Number of Funerals	Parish Share 2023 £	Parish Share Paid 2023 £	Is there a Churchyard and is it open?
St Edmund's Hunstanton	20	64	0	0	0	19,495	14,042	No
St Mary's Old Hunstanton	25	54	3	0	12	22,987	22,987	Yes and Yes
St Andrew's Ringstead	10	26	1	1	5	12,795	12,795	Yes and Yes
St Mary the Virgin Holme-next-the-Sea	17	20	0	0	1	11,034	11,034	Yes and Yes
All Saints Thornham	8 - 15	17	4	2	2	9,110	9,110	Yes and Yes
St Mary's Titchwell	30	15	1	0	2	5,576	5,576	Yes and Yes
St Mary the Virgin Brancaster	10	20	0	1	6	5,783	5,783	Yes and Yes
St Mary's Burnham Deepdale	17	+30	3	1	3	15,312	15,312	Yes and Yes

Our Schools

Brancaster CofE Primary Academy currently has a roll of 24 children and is administered with Docking Primary School under a single Executive Headteacher as part of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust. 25% of the pupils are graded as having special educational needs and 37.5% are in receipt of Pupil Premium (national average 24%). The clergy take assemblies on a weekly basis and also facilitate RE lessons. St Mary's Church in Brancaster hosts a themed school service for pupils and their families every term, with Titchwell Church hosting their Christingle Service at the end of the Autumn term. The school is graded as "Good" by OFSTED. However, the school roll currently stands at 24 making it vulnerable to closure. Note: the school is currently planned to be closed in January 2025, but discussions around this are ongoing in the community.

Smithdon High School, Hunstanton has 581 pupils aged 11 to 16 and is part of the West Norfolk Academies Trust. OFSTED graded as "Good" following its 2023 inspection. Pupils are mainly drawn from larger villages to the south and east of the benefice as well as from the town of Hunstanton.

Hunstanton Primary School is a single form entry infant & junior school with seven classes and a roll of 172. The number of children on Pupil Premium is 38% and Special Educational Needs 33%, both considerably above the national average.

Clergy are welcomed to take assemblies and our Assistant Priest has been a governor with oversight of religious education and pupil wellbeing for the past four years. St Edmund's, Hunstanton is pleased to host the school's Carol Service every year.

Glebe House School Hunstanton is an independent nursery and preparatory school which has a combined roll of 116. Boarding is available from age 7, but, as there is no weekend provision, the pupils are all quite local. St Mary's, Old Hunstanton hosts the school's Carol Service and Leavers' Service at the end of the summer term, the school being within the parish. Incumbents have always had close links with the school.

Some children from the parishes attend secondary schools in Wells-next-the-Sea (11-16), Fakenham (11-18) and King's Lynn (11-18) & the College of West Anglia in King's Lynn (post 16).



During the week

- There are usually mid-week communion services in several of the churches.
- Innovative lay led worship 'Stillness on the Saxon Shore' is held at Titchwell every Friday.
- "Making Space": meets every Wednesday between 10am and 12noon in St Edmund's church hall. This church led initiative offers a safe and welcoming environment for people from the whole community to meet and chat. All are welcome. Attendance numbers vary from week to week, but there are usually around 20 to 30 people from the local church congregations and from the wider communities. Visitors to the town often drop in particularly during the summer months.
- In Brancaster Village Hall every Wednesday morning a group of villagers meet for coffee and a chat, which has been a regular event for many years.
- There are free "hot spot" lunches monthly in Brancaster village hall during the winter months.
- Clergy are invited to lead the prayers at Hunstanton Town Council meetings and, from time to time, facilitate thanksgiving for the local emergency services.
- The Hunstanton and District Foodbank (please see further details below) is based in St Edmund's Church Hall and is supported by volunteers and donations from our churches.
- Thornham churchyard benefits from 8 well used allotments and a community garden for use by locals and visitors.
- Deepdale church offers a series of sociable Lent lunches.
- Clergy are welcomed at all the numerous social events in the town and the village halls, including film evenings, relays of opera and plays. On such occasions contacts can lead to requests to take baptisms, weddings and funerals and build up important contacts with residents and visitors.
- There are two monthly parish magazines, Norfolk Link and Parish News, to which clergy are invited to contribute.



Hunstanton and District Foodbank

Hunstanton Food Bank was founded thirteen years ago to meet a growing local need, and is very much part of the ministry of St Edmund's church being based in part of the church hall. The board of trustees consists of members of churches within the benefice and a local free church minister. Our assistant priest was chair of trustees from its inception until last year. The food bank is a franchise of the Trussell Trust and performs an important but discrete evangelistic ministry, well supported by the other local churches and serving an area wider than the benefice itself. The amount of food distributed and people helped has risen year on year.

The food bank employs a Family Support worker in collaboration with the British Red Cross and a three year grant from the Trussell Trust. This person works closely with food bank clients, local schools and the Helping Hands Community Café. The latter is run by the Town Council, an organisation markedly successful in accessing grants to help the less well off, and hosts a discount community supermarket and Citizens Advice worker as well as numeracy and literacy advisers.

What we can offer you

Clergy/administrative assistance

- Our ministry team consists of an Assistant Priest, who is self-supporting, two Authorised Worship Assistants, six retired clergy, a retired Church Army Officer and churchwardens who lead services.
- The Revd Dr James Monro was ordained in 2012 and served his title in the then Saxon Shore Benefice, before becoming assistant priest to the Hunstanton St Edmund's and Ringstead Benefice in 2016, and continued in post when the two benefices were combined in 2019. He is self-supporting, having previously worked in hospital medicine and then for 22 years as a general practitioner in Somerset. He is no longer in practice, and lives just outside the benefice in Docking.
- Every parish, except one, has at least one churchwarden.
- We have a part time benefice administrator. We expect to pay our new priest's expenses on a monthly basis.

PCC Support

- The Churchwardens and PCCs will give their full support to our new priest.
- PCC's meet on a regular basis across the benefice. We look forward to working out a manageable pattern of meetings with the new priest. Where meetings are lay led the PCC would report back to the new priest and provide a copy of the Minutes.

Clergy Wellbeing

- We are fully committed to the wellbeing of our clergy and several of the churches have adopted the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing. This is reviewed annually.
- Days off, holidays, training and retreats will be encouraged and we would hope to plan the time for these together.
- The parishes are committed to the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults and have adopted the Church of England policies and best practices on safeguarding.



Accommodation

- A substantial, well appointed, Rectory situated in a beautiful rural setting opposite St Mary's Church in Church Road, Old Hunstanton.
- The Rectory is a modern, purpose built, five bedroomed, detached house, with a garage. The Rector's study can be accessed without entering the main part of the house.
- It is surrounded by a large garden, which borders the picturesque village pond, but part of which is secluded and private.
- There is ample parking.
- The benefice covers grass cutting services for the garden.
- Within walking distance is the village shop/post office and a hairdresser, with the beach just a little further away.

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)

Thank you

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





THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND

Diocese of Norwich

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www.dioceseofnorwich.org   

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