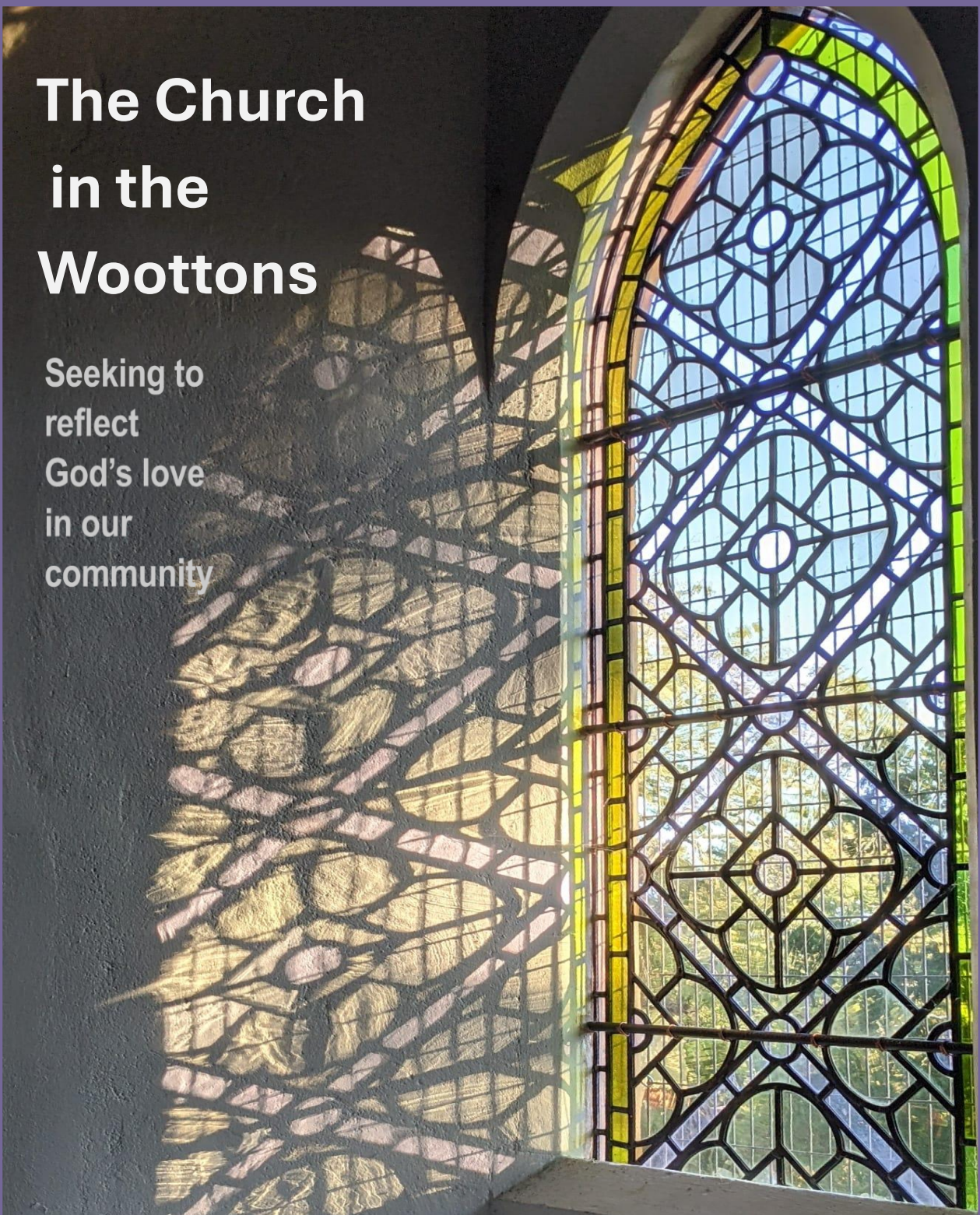


The Church in the Woottons

Seeking to
reflect
God's love
in our
community



PARISH PROFILE 2025

All Saints, North Wootton
St Mary's, South Wootton

 THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Norwich



Love



Grow



Serve

Committed to God - through worship, prayer and learning

Committed to Growth – through knowing God and one another

Committed to Community – through service and support

As Christians we believe that everyone can enjoy a relationship with God the Father through knowing Jesus Christ and by the activity of his Holy Spirit. In practice we come to know Jesus Christ through worship, prayer, study and spending time together.

We believe that God is passionately concerned about every aspect of our lives and that he longs for each one of us to live our lives in a way that honours him and demonstrates respect for other people and for the wonderful world he has created.

We believe that the Christian Church has a vital role to play, acting in partnership with God to see his kingdom established on earth. The word “Church” in this context refers to a gathering of believers who meet together to grow in their relationship with God and to seek how best to serve him in the world.

The Church in the Woottons is there for everyone who wants to explore his or her relationship with God. The Church is there too for all looking for support, friendship or advice, and it is here to serve the local community in the name of Jesus Christ.

THANK YOU FOR CONSIDERING WHETHER GOD IS CALLING YOU TO SERVE HIM HERE

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The Task

To grow the Church in the Woottons by:

- further developing relationships with our three schools, uniformed organisations, care homes and the local community.
- helping us to realise the potential for mission to the new housing developments within the parish.
- valuing and developing our strengths and leading us to embrace new things as our church grows.
- exploring new expressions of worship to meet the changing needs of the parish.
- deepening our discipleship and spiritual growth.

Our New Priest

We are we looking for someone who:

- Will recognise the importance of prayer, variety in worship, and lead a broad tradition of worship from evangelical to catholic.
- Is an empathetic and warm leader, able to lead spiritually and practically, and show the pastoral heart of Jesus.
- Will be a good communicator, able to engage with different age groups, and be a visible presence, developing links with the community.
- Has the ability to encourage, train and equip others, including in pastoral care within and outside the church, and is happy to delegate.
- Can be innovative and energetic, and has discernment and wisdom.
- The potential to be a training incumbent, given that a curate's house is available within the parish.

Location

The parish is located on the northern edge of the market town of King's Lynn, in close proximity to the Sandringham Estate with its wooded walks. The parish incorporates woodland and farmland, and also extends to the Wash, a very important nature reserve. Just a short drive away are the long, sandy beaches of the beautiful North West Norfolk coast with its abundant wildlife and peaceful atmosphere.



King's Lynn has a rich heritage as a Hanseatic town and was an important port from as early as the 12th Century. It offers a pedestrianised shopping centre, restaurants, a swimming pool, sports and leisure facilities and an impressive entertainment venue in the Corn Exchange. The town has three high schools and a College of further education. There is a direct train link to Cambridge and London among other good transport options.

Within the parish there are two supermarkets, village pubs, takeaways, and a GP surgery. There is good provision for education with two pre-schools, a primary school plus an infant and junior school. There are lots of clubs, community events, and a good local bus service.

We think the Woottons is a great place to be!

The Parish

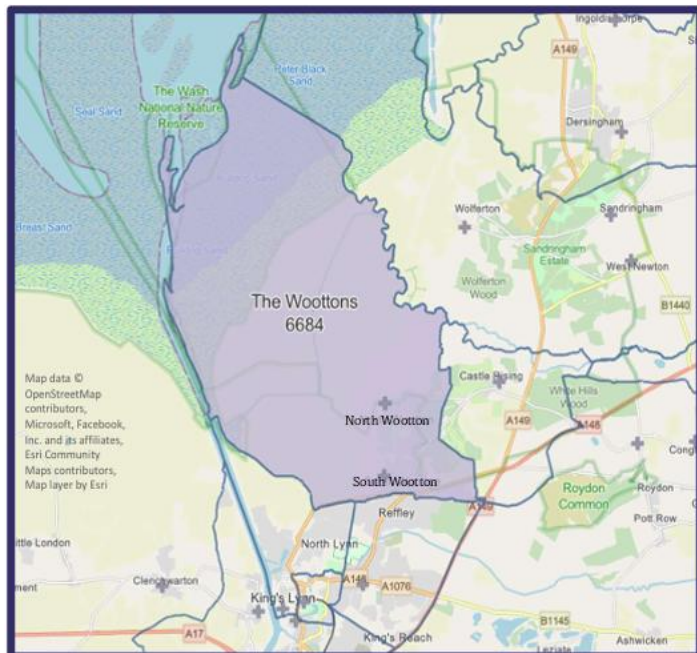
The parish serves two distinct villages on the outskirts of King’s Lynn, North and South Wootton, comprised mostly of professional and business people as well as a significant retired population. Currently the parish has over 7,500 residents. However, due to the current development of around 1000 new homes, the population is set to increase significantly.

The 2021 census records a population of 90%+ White British, 59% Christian, and 38.5% no religion. The area around the churches is predominantly owner-occupied housing. The age profile shows that 20% of the population are aged 19 or under which is similar to the nation as a whole. 58% are aged 20-59 and 22% are aged 70% or over. There is an infant and junior school in very close proximity to St Mary’s, and a primary school in North Wootton. Each village has a village hall, both of which have been used by the church for services and/or regular community outreach events. There are three residential care homes and a large adult day care centre.

There is one PCC for both churches and we have a good, enthusiastic and cooperative team. The PCC treasurer and deputy treasurer manage all income and outgoings, including the planned giving. We have a parish administrator who currently works six hours per week. Her employment is managed by the Minster, which we reimburse. The office, located in St Mary’s vestry, is well equipped with an excellent photocopier, telephone system, laptop, and ample storage.

The parish is part of Lynn Deanery which includes some very deprived areas as well as churches with a variety of church styles. Two adjacent benefices are run in partnership with the Methodists.

The villages in the parish have a well-established sense of community with a wide variety of social activities taking place, which many members of the congregation also participate in, including community social forums, clubs, and societies.



Our Churches

St Mary's, South Wootton

The medieval church of St Mary's dates back to the 12th century and features stunning architecture and a tranquil churchyard. It is a warm church, is in good repair and has been repainted very recently. The spacious vestry is currently also serving as the parish office. The church has a small kitchen and a toilet. It also has a beautiful garden.



All Saints, North Wootton

All Saints' Church was built in 1852, replacing a medieval church on the site. This Victorian church boasts very fine Art Nouveau lamp standards and the windows have 19th century stained glass which recently underwent restoration. The church is also warm and well maintained, with a kitchen, toilet and beautiful upper room which is used as a sacred prayer space. The church is set in very attractive surroundings.



Both churchyards are closed for burials except for the interment of ashes. The Parish Councils are responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the churchyards.

Church life

We are one church with two buildings, a friendly church, trying to welcome all and including people from many different church backgrounds. Our worship is centred around Holy Communion which we offer on the basis of an open table.

You will find slightly different styles of worship in our two church buildings. All Saints has a fairly contemporary style whereas St Mary's enjoys a more traditional approach. Clergy robe for most services. While this distinctiveness has been maintained, the congregations see themselves as a united body of worshippers.

The Sunday Holy Communion services commence at 10.30am and alternate between the two churches and therefore many in the church community attend both of the churches on a regular basis. Once a month, Holy Communion is replaced by a Service of the Word which is led by our Licensed Lay Minister or Authorised Worship Assistant.

Every other week an informal, all-age breakfast service is held at All Saints at 9.00am which is attended by several children and adults who prefer a more relaxed, family atmosphere.



Hymns and worship songs are generally accompanied by the organ or piano. At St Mary's, more formal, traditional hymns are preferred whereas the music at All Saints tends to be more contemporary and relaxed, with a music group playing monthly. Once or twice a year we have held Taizé services.

Mid-week, a quiet, reflective, communion service is followed by fresh coffee, tea, biscuits and chatter. Three house groups provide the opportunity for additional bible study, prayer, and fellowship.

Members of the Church in the Woottons enjoy meeting together and there are many opportunities provided to enable this to happen; we enjoy coffee and biscuits/cake after the Sunday morning service and most people stay for a chat and to share fellowship. We organise coffee mornings, shared lunches, and away days. We aim to be caring and supportive and over the years, loving and supportive relationships have been built.

Members of the congregation are involved as sacristans, servers, readers, flower arrangers, intercessors, and chalice bearers. We have two wardens for each church.

Safeguarding

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of everyone but especially of children, young adults and vulnerable adults. We have two fully trained Safeguarding Officers. Our Safeguarding Policy, which is based on the Church of England's, is on display at both churches. Volunteers carry out the relevant level of training for their role.



“Breakfast Church has a really happy atmosphere, and the crafts help you to absorb the bible story.”

“I’ve always thought of us as a broad church and an inclusive church, recognising the important things and not focusing on the minor issues.”

“I have been a member of this happy friendly church for 15 years and I’m looking forward to seeing what the future holds as we move forward together.”

Mission

'Dropin'

The church organises a weekly Dropin at North Wootton Village Hall for anyone looking for friendship and conversation, coffee and cake. Volunteers from the churches run these gatherings. The Dropin is dementia-friendly.



Friendship Coffee Mornings

These are held on the second Thursday of the month and offer friendship and company to anyone who would like to come. Lifts are offered if required.

Mothers Union

We have an active Mothers Union in the parish which works in partnership with us to serve the local community and support family life.

Scouting and Guiding links

The Scouts and Guides Headquarters building is in Station Road, North Wootton, close to All Saints' Church. The young people join us on Remembrance Sunday and on some other occasions during the year. The HQ building is used by the churches for some meetings and celebrations. Several church members are long-standing leaders in the groups.

Care Homes

There are three within the Parish: Wyndham House, next to All Saints' Church, and Woodlands and Manor Farm both on Grimston Road. Clergy and members of the congregation have been visiting monthly to take Holy Communion to gatherings of the residents. Crossroads, a huge day care centre, also lies within the parish.

Special Services

There are some services throughout the year that are very well attended by the wider community. These include Remembrance Sunday, Commemoration services, Christingles, Carol Services and Carol singing.

Parish Magazine

We produce a Parish magazine called 'Contact' with which we keep in touch with the wider community. It is produced monthly and delivered to those who subscribe and spare copies are available in the churches and in the post office. It includes a letter from the rector, a prayer for the month, details of our services, weddings, funerals and baptisms as well as many other items of interest to the community.

Other Events

From time to time, the church has held other events which serve as a form of outreach. There are many artistic people within the congregation and this enabled us to hold art and craft exhibitions. We have also organised Ceilidh evenings which are popular.

Community service

The church has been very involved in supporting the homeless through the King's Lynn Night Shelter, both in terms of financial support and volunteering. This is equally applicable to the King's Lynn Food bank.

The parish is one of the four partner churches running the King's Lynn Debt Centre which operates in liaison with Christians against Poverty and is a member of Churches Together in King's Lynn.



Art and Soul Exhibition in St Mary's

Schools

There are three schools within the parish boundary whose headteachers are supportive and whose pupils and their parents come to the churches for Easter, Christmas, Harvest, and end of term celebrations.

NORTH WOOTTON ACADEMY is a 15 minute walk from All Saints
Academy sponsor-led
326 children Aged 4-11

SOUTH WOOTTON INFANT SCHOOL is a 2 minute walk from St Mary's
Local Authority maintained
177 children Aged 4 to 7

SOUTH WOOTTON JUNIOR SCHOOL is a 5 minute walk from St Mary's
Local Authority maintained
240 children; Aged 7 to 11

The High School is The King Edward VII Academy, in Kings Lynn, which has 1,220 pupils. Around half of these students are likely to live in the parish.

There is a rich history of the clergy maintaining close contact with the schools by conducting regular assemblies, assisting with RE teaching at South Wootton Junior School and serving on governing boards.

“South Wootton Infant and Junior Schools really value and appreciate the close relationship we have with the local church and vicar. We regularly visit the church for different occasions throughout the year and look forward to visits for assemblies and RE among other events.”

*Georgie Earl, Executive Headteacher,
South Wootton Federation*

“All Saints has been an important part of school life for many years with the vicar leading assemblies, sitting as a Governor and providing guidance through some very difficult periods, particularly COVID. The church hosts a number of key events and we have also visited for curricular matters. I genuinely believe that in a small community such as NW, close links between the church and our young people is hugely beneficial for all.”

*James Grimsby, Principal,
North Wootton Academy*

Finances

We have been fortunate to have been in a financial position to pay our parish share in full for several years but this was not possible for 2024, partly due to a decline in fundraising events in the run up to vacancy but also due to the rise in energy costs etc. With regard to energy, we are currently liaising with the net zero advisor from the Diocesan Church Team. Whilst our current financial position is reasonable, there is a need to increase income in order to sustain our life in the years ahead. We have a Gift day planned which historically has been very successful in raising funds, and we have various other fund raising events in the pipeline. St Mary's is a good venue for concerts. We operate an envelope scheme and are meticulous about claiming Gift Aid. We have recently installed a card reader by the door of St Mary's. We have been blessed to have received several legacies in recent years. Another source of income is the parish magazine. Outgoings include utilities, insurance, village hall hire, organist costs, and salary for the administrator. No major building projects have been approved which will be a major charge to reserves within the next few years.

Financial position for 2023 and 2024

	2022	2023	2024
No. on Electoral Roll	165	165	
Parish Share Paid	65000	67000	41500
Parish Share Paid %	100	100	59
Planned Giving	39000	38000	39000
No. of Planned Givers	78	71	64
Clergy Expenses / Admin Wages	2000	1000	2000
Income	90000	92000	74000
Expenditure	99000	94000	73500
Gift aid received	13500	13000	12000
Legacies received	(2)22000	(1)2000	(1)5000
Unrestricted reserves	15000	12000	15000
Restricted reserves	23000	4000	7000

- All figures are calculated to nearest £500.
- Full accounts for 2024 will be made available on request.
- £5000 of the current restricted reserves are held for All Saints.
- It is the policy of the PCC to pay incumbent and curate expenses as agreed.
- We have also employed an admin assistant since April 2024 costing us £4000 p.a. at present.
- As of Feb 2025 there are the early signs that income may be improving. There are plans for some fundraising and the treasurers are hoping that in 2025 all expenditure will be met with an absolute minimum of £50,000 paid towards Parish Share, with further improvements in 2026/27.

Our challenges

Discipleship and Spiritual Growth

We seek to grow in faith and deepen our understanding of what it means to live our lives committed to God. We long to draw people into the faith and support them in lifelong discipleship, both through our worship and through developing small groups.

Ageing congregation

Most of the congregation are over 60. There is a risk of burn-out as people are asked to do more and more. There has been a reduction in regular giving as people have died or retire and move away. Unless younger people join the church, we will inevitably face a decline in the number of people being able to serve at the same level, and a decline in our financial position. The energy needed for new initiatives would be a factor that needed to be taken into account going forward.

Openness to change

Although church members come from a variety of church backgrounds, some of us have been members of the Church of England for many years. Particularly in St Mary's we generally like the liturgy and quite traditional forms of worship but appreciate the need for change if we are to be more accessible to younger families and the un-churched. Such change may be difficult for some of us and will need to be introduced with sensitivity.

Culture and diversity

Over the years loving and supportive relationships have been built in the church. Many people would characterise us as a very friendly church and this is one of our strengths. Visitors seem to enjoy our Christingles and carol singing services. But we are aware that as a congregation, we are typically a group of white, middle-class, well-educated, older people. This does not represent the whole of the parish. We are aware we need to attract a wider range of people so we can embrace and share the love of God in Christ with all.

At present our church accepts the prayerful authority of General Synod in the administration of the sacraments for all who genuinely seek to honour Christ in their lives. We accept the call to minister Christ to all, including those struggling with complex personal issues of sexuality. Our aim is compassion with unity.

What we can offer

Clergy wellbeing

The PCC fully supports and has adopted the Covenant for Clergy Care & Wellbeing. We expect and will facilitate our Vicar having a regular day off each week, taking their full allocation of holidays and time for retreat. Our treasurers will reimburse clergy expenses promptly.

Parish Team



Jonathan Dossetor – Churchwarden (St Mary’s)

I have been a warden here for 14 years now. Before that I worked for 26 years as a Consultant Pediatrician at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Kings Lynn. My wife Penny and I have three children, one lives in Barcelona, one in Morpeth and one in London. We have five grandchildren.



Angela Clarke – Churchwarden (St Mary’s)

I came from Enfield to the Woottons in 1986 and had a career in the care system; my Christian faith has always been my mainstay in life. I enjoy my involvement at church and appreciate being able to meet so many people. I have 6 grandchildren which is wonderful. Another pleasure is art which helps to bring out and reflect God's presence for me.



Janet Keir – Churchwarden (All Saints)

I came to faith after attending a christening in 2011 and once I sat down at All Saints I decided to stay. I became a churchwarden in 2018 and continue to serve today. Our church members are easy to pray and worship with and it is a privilege to serve them.



Julian Hallett – Churchwarden (All Saints)

My wife Maxine and I live in South Wootton. I practiced as a solicitor in King's Lynn for thirty years. After retirement I was instrumental in setting up the King's Lynn Night Shelter and served as a trustee for the first six years of its existence. I am now a trustee of the King's Lynn CAP Debt Centre where I represent The Church In The Woottons as one of the four sponsoring churches of the debt centre.



Margaret Ojelade – Licensed Lay Minister

I was born and grew up in the North East of England but have lived in King's Lynn for 35 years, working within the NHS. I have 3 grown up children and 1 granddaughter. I was drawn to this church about 10 years ago and appreciated immediately how welcoming people were and how the church allows for different viewpoints. I was licensed as a Lay Minister in 2022.



Linda Ashby – Ordained Local Minister with Permission to Officiate

Married with 4 children & 9 grandchildren. I was a teacher for many years and during that time became an Ordained Local Minister serving in South & North Wootton. Now retired, I have permission to officiate so am able to help out. I love how friendly our churches are and coffee after midweek communion is a highlight.



Nigel Day – Authorised Worship Assistant

Originally from Spalding, Lincolnshire, I spent over 30 years in NHS management moving to the Woottons in 1986. After leaving the NHS I established a consultancy and two small businesses before retiring. I am married with two daughters. I was licensed as a Worship Assistant in 2023.



Chris Symes – Piano and Organ

I'm Chris Symes, pianist and organist. My husband Roger and I moved to The Woottons from Surrey in 2011 and have been part of the church family here ever since. I see music (singing and playing) as part of my service to God and my ministry to the church.



David Hill – Organ

I have been playing at St Mary's for over ten years. I began learning the organ at age 13 and have been playing ever since. Although I studied music at university, I now work as a psychotherapist but continue to play locally, including at King's Lynn Community Choir which is directed by my wife, Charlotte.

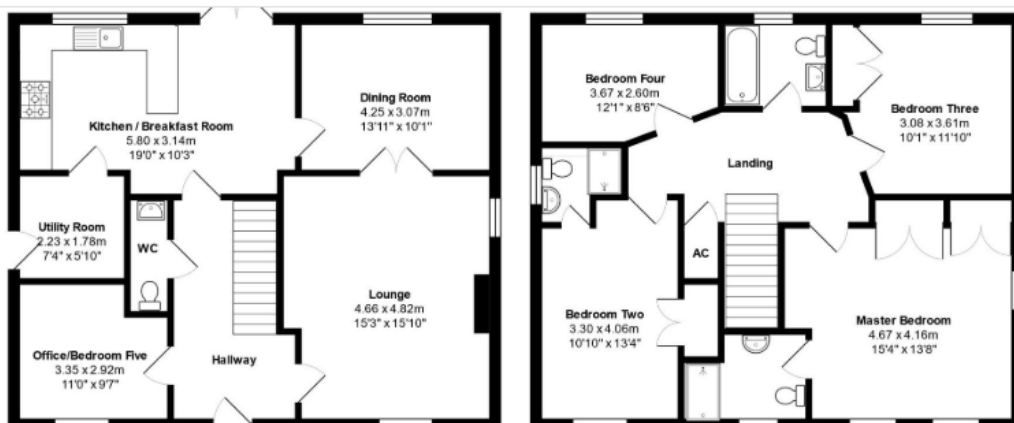


Catherine Knox – Administrator

I have worked as the administrator since April 2024 following my retirement from the NHS. I enjoy working with the team and supporting the work of the church in the community. I also enjoy spending time with my family and friends, walking in the Norfolk country side and keeping fit.

Your home

Your home will be a modern, attractive four-bedroomed house which is in the heart of the parish, equidistant between the two churches. It has a double garage and a generous garden. The energy efficiency rating is B.



Thank you for reading our profile. We hope you will apply.