



THE BENEFICES OF STALHAM AND SMALLBURGH

comprising the parishes of

- Ingham, Stalham (including Brunstead and East Ruston), and Sutton
- Dilham, Honing with Crostwight, and Smallburgh

BENEFICES PROFILE 2022



INTRODUCTION

This Profile has been compiled and agreed jointly by the Benefices of Stalham and Smallburgh. Each Benefice (and its individual parishes) has, however, produced its own description and statement of needs, and has done so in its own way and in its own voice. We are, though, united in our need of pastoral leadership. So we look forward to welcoming into our community a new rector who will take us forward through the spiritual journey of our lives, bringing more of our local populations to joyful knowledge of Jesus Christ.

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The Parochial Church Councils of

- Dilham
- Honing with Crostwight
- Ingham
- Smallburgh
- Stalham
- Sutton

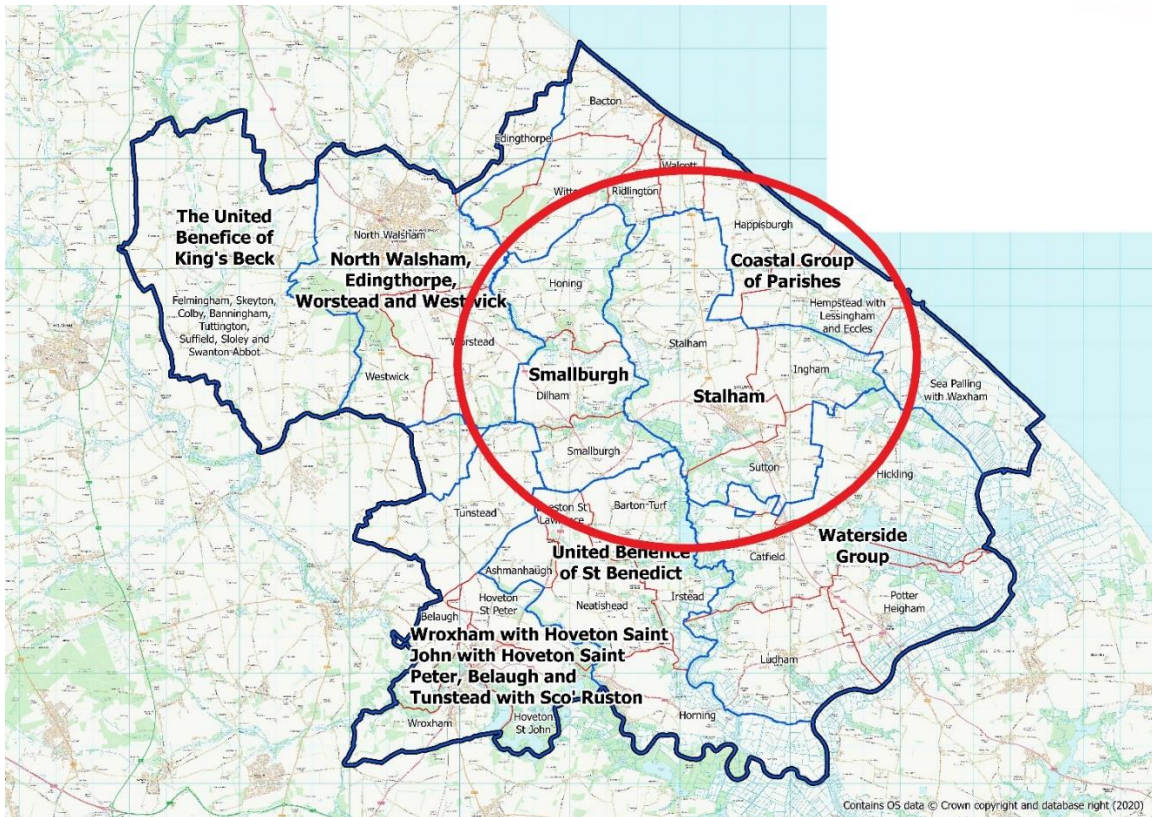
February 2022

1: OVERVIEW OF THE TWO BENEFICES

Where we are



The Diocese of Norwich



The Deanery of St Benet at Waxham with Tunstead showing The Smallburgh and Stalham Benefices

Why we are here

Our two Benefices exist to spread the Word of God, making the Church and God's mission accessible to all who live in our communities, to seed and nurture their faith, to provide them with comfort and succour when they need and request it, to express in worship our own love of God and by doing so to reveal His love for our neighbours and for all people.

What we are looking for

We are looking for a new rector, following the recent retirement of the previous incumbent, to provide us with the help and leadership that will allow our Benefices to thrive.

We want someone with enthusiasm for bringing the gospel message alive, sharing the good news within our communities and enabling the members of our churches to feel empowered to share their faith in Christ.

We need someone who understands the challenges of rural ministry, the joys that this can bring and the sense of community that can be established through parish life.

In return we will do our best to support and encourage our rector in the joint venture of refreshing the church's role and meaning in this part of Norfolk, anchoring God in our community.

The two Benefices

Our two Benefices were entirely separate until 2015, when the retirement of the Rector of Smallburgh led to the Rector of Stalham accepting the vacant incumbency, the Benefices to be held in plurality. They lie in the north-east of Norfolk, at the top of the Broads, a short distance from the sea at Happisburgh and with easy access to Norwich. Between them the two Benefices extend roughly seven miles east to west and five miles north to south. The populations of the six parishes are not large: only Stalham and Sutton have more than a thousand inhabitants. The other parishes each have around 300 inhabitants.

Both Benefices have separate and distinctive identities, reflecting their histories as well as their geographical and demographic characteristics. The Smallburgh Benefice comprises the three village parishes of Dilham, Honing with Crostwight, and Smallburgh, set in an agricultural landscape, while the Stalham Benefice, centred on the small but growing town of Stalham, includes the two nearby village parishes of Ingham and Sutton; the two villages of East Ruston and Brunstead are also included within the Stalham Parish.

How we work together

Our two Benefices come together for joint services from time to time and are very alert to the opportunities that co-operation can bring. While we generally live self-sufficient lives, serving our local communities, we nevertheless look for synergies where they are available and believed to be beneficial. Our friendly co-existence recognises that sharing a rector requires mutual generosity of spirit and a lot of realism. We are, though, blessed with a shared Ministry Team which provides excellent support. This is one of our greatest strengths and is evident in the love and mutual respect that we have for one another, particularly when we come together to worship in Holy Communion. We believe that with careful organisation and the best use of our human and physical resources, much can be achieved in the coming years.

Our organisation and Ministry Team

The two Benefices share a single Ministry Team. At present the Team consists of

- The Reverend Andrew Bevan, part-time non-stipendiary assistant curate
- The Reverend Richard Jackson, retired with PTO
- The Reverend Sue Egerton, retired with PTO
- The Reverend Jeanette Crafer, retired with PTO
- Four Licensed Lay Ministers: Betty Lacey and Mary Shepherd (both with PTO), Jeanette Boardman and Martyn Egerton
- Four Authorised Worship Assistants: Mavis Smith and David Nichols (Stalham), and June Cutting and Geoffrey Dixon (Smallburgh)
- A number of lay members authorised by the Bishop of Norwich to assist with the communion. Lay members also assist with the distribution of communion to the sick, elderly or infirm in their homes.

The parishes in the Stalham Benefice normally have one Sunday service a week each, while those in the Smallburgh Benefice share a service among them. Further information about the patterns of services can be found later in this Profile.

What we are looking for together

Our two Benefices hope, together in common, that our new rector will

- see an important function being to lead and help the congregations (and others) in their spiritual journey through life, from birth to death;
- be a mission-focused minister who is keen to promote and lead the Church's engagement with community activities and organisations;
- have a working knowledge of ways of developing effective relationships with all age groups, and to this end will wish to work with both the younger and older members of our community, in fresh ways which will engage people in the Gospel;

- value the opportunities presented by rural ministry to build Christian fellowship in our parishes;
- wish to work ecumenically with the various denominations in our Benefices;
- be comfortable leading worship using both modern and traditional liturgies (Common Worship and the Book of Common Prayer) within a mainstream Anglican culture;
- have personal experience of working collegially with a team of ordained and lay colleagues and supporting and encouraging all its members;
- be personable and approachable.

What we can offer together

- opportunities to engage local communities with a revived Christian message;
- a peaceful and pleasant part of the country in which to live and work;
- good schools for all ages;
- full commitment to the Covenant for Clergy Care and Wellbeing;
- an experienced, enthusiastic and dedicated Ministry Team that is looking forward to the leadership and opportunities that a new rector can bring;
- a dedicated team of churchwardens who love their parishes and serve them faithfully;
- effective administrative and ministry support;
- a harmonious working relationship between the two Benefices;
- the opportunity to work in a supportive, forward-looking diocese full of interesting challenges.



The Rectory

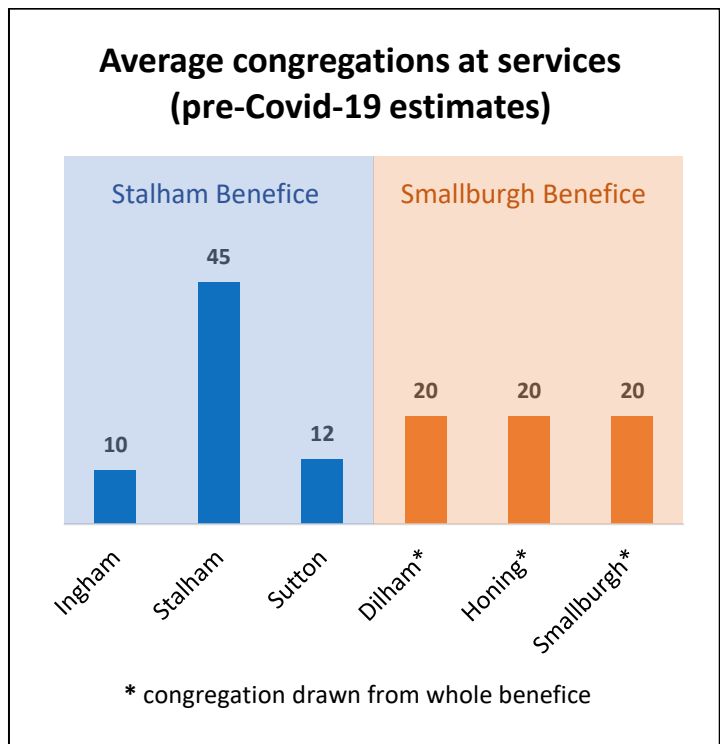
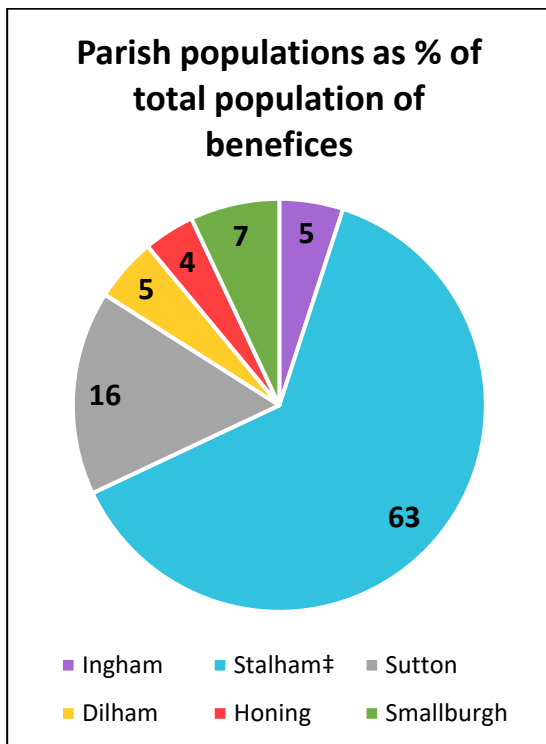
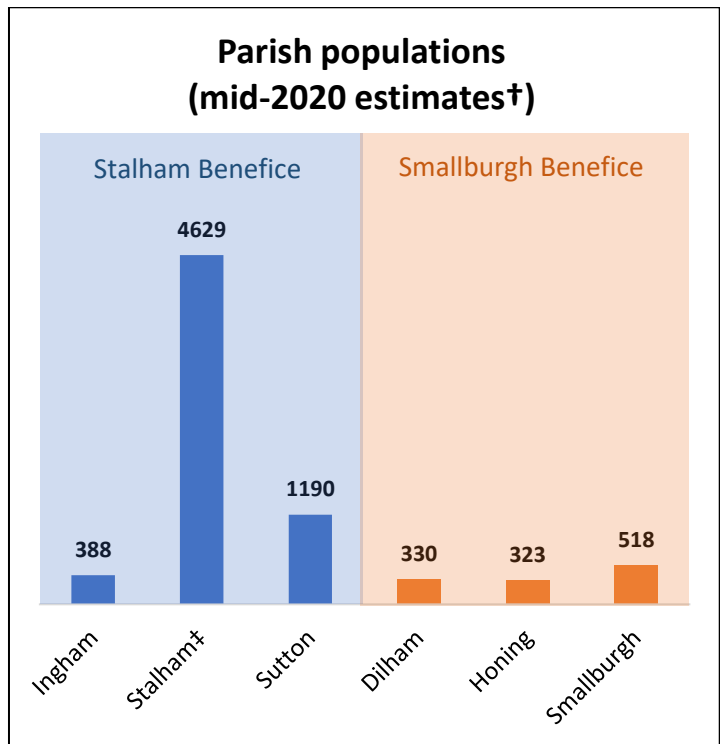
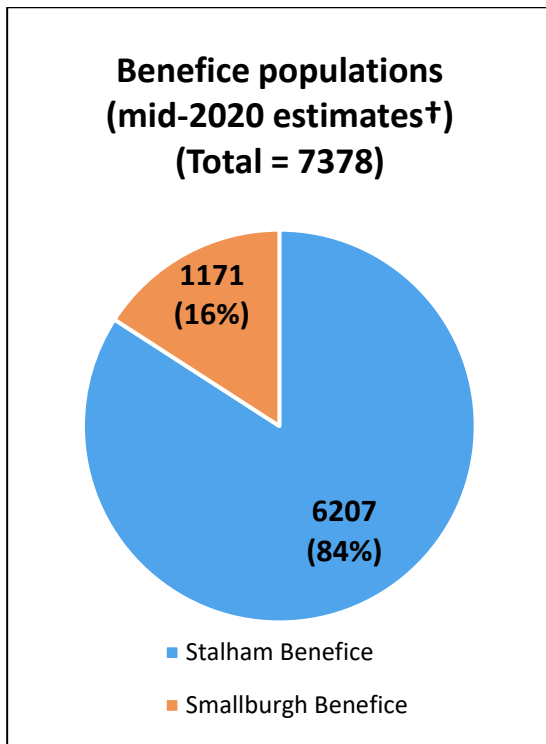
The Benefice Rectory was built in 1983 and is about 200 metres from St Mary's, Stalham. It is a large four-bedroomed house with an additional guest/storage room built under the eaves. There are two reception rooms and a large study/office. The ample kitchen has a utility room and access to a large single garage leading from it.

At the back are easily maintained gardens of lawn and trees. To the front is a drive with some lawn and trees and plenty of parking space. The Rectory has full oil-fired central heating.



The Rectory, Camping Field Lane, Stalham

Populations and congregations



† Data from ONS (2021) 'Parish Population estimates for mid-2011 to mid-2020 based on best-fitting of output areas to parishes', available at <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/adhocs/13843parishpopulationestimatesformid2011tomid2020basedonbestfittingofoutputareasto-parishes> (accessed 18 February 2022).

‡ The ecclesiastical parish of Stalham includes the civil parishes of Brunstead and East Ruston.

2: THE STALHAM BENEFICE

Introduction

The Stalham Benefice (population c. 6,207) comprises the three parishes of Stalham, Sutton, and Ingham. It is situated close to the Norfolk Broads, about 15 miles from the ancient cathedral city of Norwich and the resort of Great Yarmouth. The coastline, with its long stretches of beach, is just a few miles away. The broads and rivers, with their wildlife and conservation areas, appeal to a variety of tourists and the Benefice adjoins them. The parish of Stalham covers not only the town itself, but also extends to the outlying villages of East Ruston and Brunstead.



Rainbow over Stalham



Boating on the Broads at Stalham

Stalham is a small market town, and Sutton, Ingham, East Ruston and Brunstead are surrounding villages set in an agricultural environment. (For parish population sizes see page 7.) The main industries across the Benefice are agriculture and tourism, though Stalham does support some light industry and commerce.

Schools and family

Stalham, Sutton and East Ruston between them provide infant schools (ages 4-7) and there are junior (ages 7-11) and high schools in Stalham. All the schools are highly regarded and very much seen as part of the community. Sutton First School is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled School. Good links and relationships exist between the Benefice and all the schools. There are many benefits of raising children in this rural context: wildlife is everywhere, on the Broads and by the coast; our communities are welcoming and mutually supportive; and there is little anti-social behaviour.

Road and rail connections

There are good road links to the nearby centres of Wroxham and North Walsham. Trains from Wroxham and North Walsham run to Norwich and Cromer every hour with frequent onward connections from Norwich to London (under two hours), Cambridge (approx. one hour), the Midlands and North-west. Buses offer services to Norwich and Great Yarmouth via the surrounding villages and services to Cromer via North Walsham. The A11 is the major road artery linking into the national motorway system.

Benefice history and church buildings

The Benefice covers an area of about 20 square miles and was formed through a Pastoral Measure in November 2000. The three parishes had been working together for some time prior to this, and generally work together very well, though of course there are always areas where church and community links between the parishes could be strengthened.

All three churches are Grade 1 or Grade 2* listed buildings. St Mary's East Ruston is redundant and cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust, though its churchyard remains open and is the responsibility of Stalham PCC. Brunstead church is cared for by the Norwich Diocesan Churches Trust and has three services a year.



A beautiful rural benefice

Services and church tradition

There is a range of service styles within the parishes and our church tradition can be considered 'central' in general, with vestments being worn at the Eucharist. A team of servers assisted at the Eucharist before Covid-19 hit us, and has yet to be revived. Lay participation plays an important part in our worship. Also pre Covid-19, occasional informal worship was

conducted in East Ruston village hall. Services are streamed from St Mary's Stalham and a weekly 'Pews News' is distributed widely, both by email and in hard copy. The Benefice also holds regular House Groups in Lent and at other times as arranged.

The Patrons are the Bishop of Norwich and the Diocesan Board of Patronage.



Coffee and cake, knit and natter, Stalham church

Other places of worship

Other churches located in the Benefice include the Baptist Church in Stalham and a Methodist Church in Sutton. A newer addition is the Orthodox Church, which has recently bought and redeveloped the town's Police Station. The Roman Catholic Church is based in nearby North Walsham and Hoveton. The Roman Catholic Church holds an annual mass in St Mary's, to which all are invited.

Descriptions of each of the three parishes, provided by their PCCs, are appended at the end of the Profile.

3: THE SMALLBURGH BENEFICE

Introduction

The Smallburgh Benefice (population c. 1,160) lies to the west of Stalham, to one side of the Norfolk Broads. It is made up of three separate parishes of roughly equal size: Honing with Crostwight, Dilham, and Smallburgh, running north to south. It is productive agricultural country. For several decades, from the union of the parishes until 2015, the Benefice had its own rector, with a rectory in Honing. Each parish is centred round a small village with limited social facilities. Smallburgh and Dilham both have a pub and a village hall; Honing has just a village hall. There are no shops or post offices (other than a mobile Post Office in Smallburgh). Primary schools are in adjacent parishes, and the nearest secondary schools are in North Walsham and Stalham. In all three villages the church takes a prominent role in community activities, with village weekends, talks, exhibitions and displays – all with tea and cake!



An agricultural benefice

Although organised as three parishes, the Benefice functions in many ways as a single unit. There is just one service each Sunday, alternating between Holy Communion and Morning Prayer and rotating among the parishes on a three-weekly cycle. This removes the need for clergy to be present in every church each week. There are also occasional joint services with the Stalham Benefice. The Book of Common Prayer has a regular place in the service schedule, although Common Worship is mostly used. In normal times coffee follows the service.

The Benefice has one lay minister, Mrs Betty Lacey, and two Authorised Worship Assistants; it relies on clergy from the Ministry Team, based in Stalham, to preside at the fortnightly Holy Communion services. Otherwise the services have been organised and run from within the

Benefice. There are no church groups or provision for children and, apart from Sunday services, baptisms, weddings and funerals, the church buildings themselves are used only for occasional fundraising events.

Parish co-operation

The churches work harmoniously together: we attend each others' social events (e.g. Twelfth Night and Summer Parties, Bring and Share lunches etc) and respect one another's traditions and preferences. While the churches largely manage themselves on a day-to-day basis through their churchwardens and PCCs, there are collective activities such as the monthly 'Good News' newsletter, and meetings to agree (for example) the location and format of festival services and to deal with matters requiring a Benefice response. There is a separate Benefice Treasurer and bank account and each parish contributes to the shared expenses. The churchwardens and the local lay ministry team help each other and have started to meet to discuss matters of mutual interest.



A friendly and cheerful benefice

Congregation

In common with many rural parishes, the age profile of our congregation tends towards the upper deciles: children are rarely seen in church on Sundays. In effect we have a single peripatetic congregation, and we normally expect to see between 15 and 25 people at our service each week. Some people will only attend their local church, but others visit all of them regularly and our congregation numbers have remained steady in recent years. We are also very fortunate to have an organist, and an organ (or harmonium) in every church although, unfortunately, no choir at present.

Opportunities

From the foregoing description it might be assumed that the Benefice is largely self-sufficient and, for the most part, that would be true. It is equally true, however, that owing to circumstances, this has been largely unavoidable; and the Benefice is hoping that a new rector will be able – and will wish – to provide enhanced spiritual and pastoral leadership within our parishes. So we are looking for someone who will include Smallburgh as part of their overall vision of the rector’s role and not just a benefice which is supported at a distance. In particular, we feel that young people are not provided for and deserve better. There is a significant number of youngsters aged up to 17 (believed to be about 160 in the whole Benefice), whom we will probably only see once a year at the Crib or Christingle Services, if at all. We would also welcome a slightly more formal approach to the general oversight of the Benefice, with a re-institution of the Benefice Council, which has fallen into disuse in recent years.

Vision

An incumbent coming to these two Benefices will discover that Smallburgh has a strong local identity, which it values highly and wishes to preserve, and that while it recognises that it is much smaller than its friends and neighbours at Stalham, the time is right to look at its mission afresh: we hope to find a rector to help build new relationships with the community. The Benefice has the desire and potential, with imaginative leadership, to refocus its vision, grow the church and provide a bright beacon of faith for its village communities in this lovely corner of north-east Norfolk.

The joint Patrons of the Benefice are the Bishop of Norwich, Dr Geoffrey Cubitt and J C Wickham Esq.

Descriptions of each of the three parishes, provided by their PCCs, are at the end of this Profile.



A beacon of faith in the community

4: CONCLUSION

The incoming rector of our two Benefices will be faced with the usual opportunities and challenges that face every incumbent in a rural setting. It will be hard work and will need a strong belief in the power of the Holy Spirit. But the task is infinitely worthwhile; our congregations, though small, are willing and able, and our volunteers are committed to maintaining and growing the Church in this endlessly interesting part of Norfolk. They need to be supported and nurtured.

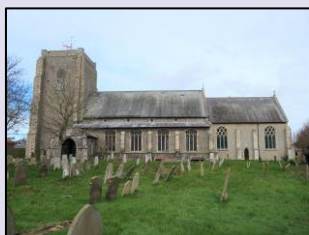
We hope that this benefices Profile provides a snapshot into the Christian lives of the people of Stalham and Smallburgh. We also hope that it will encourage candidates to apply for the position who would like to help strengthen these two communities and see the result of their labours translated into joyful, fulfilled and resilient Church- and Christ-loving bodies of people.



Stalham, looking east towards the sea. © John Fielding

APPENDIX

PARISH DESCRIPTIONS



Stalham Benefice: The Parish of the Priory Church of The Holy Trinity, Ingham

Ingham is a sprawling Parish and is the least populated in the Stalham Benefice. The village is made up of three or four hamlets in an area between the Norfolk Broads and the sea, just to the north of Stalham. It is mostly farming/holiday country and has an eclectic mix of farms, old cottages, estate workers' houses, big old houses, barn conversions and holiday second homes, many owned now by people moving in from out of the area. The population of nearly 400 includes an interesting mix of ages, abilities and interests and seems ever changing. At least half the population is above retirement age. There are about 12 children in the parish. Most residents identify themselves as Christian, including the C of E, Jehovah's Witnesses, non-denominational and/or Pentecostal churchgoers and some worshipping in 'Home Church' settings.

Though our congregation is small with an average of 10 at Sunday services, as a percentage of our village population it represents a significant engagement by our community in the life of the church. At major festivals it is not unusual to have attendances representing over 25% of our village population. There have been new members of the congregation in recent years who have quickly become actively engaged in community and church life. There are 22 names on the electoral roll. The PCC has seven elected lay members, in addition to the sole churchwarden.



Holy Trinity, Ingham

The church, which is Grade 1 listed, is designated 'of significant historical interest' by English Heritage, which provided a grant in 2013 to re-roof the chancel. It is an imposing medieval building and an identifying feature of Ingham. It has withstood much since 1250 when its building was begun on the site of the 'round tower' Saxon church listed in Domesday Book. By 1360 it included a Priory to be the mother house of the Trinitarian Order founded by Oliver De Ingham. The Trinitarian Brothers left before the Reformation and it is now

essentially a beautiful medieval church with a strong Victorian overlay. It is open 365 days a year for community and visitors to use as a quiet place for prayer or reflection. Whilst maintaining such a large historic building creates many challenges, it contributes to the importance of the church in local life and its physical presence serves as a beacon to the message of Christ for all who see it as they travel through our village.



Beating the bounds at Ingham

Services alternate between Holy Communion (1st and 3rd Sundays) and Morning Prayer (2nd and 4th Sundays). All our services are at 9.15 am. On 5th Sundays we have a joint Eucharist with the other parishes in the Benefice, with the location rotated among them. The service type is traditional 'middle of the road' C of E. We only reluctantly gave up BCP in the last decade and now follow Common Worship services. Each Monday during Lent, Compline is said at Holy Trinity at 9pm. We also have occasional Taizé services.

Financially, Holy Trinity ticks over and, pre-pandemic, paid its way. Until 2018 the Parish Share request was met unflinchingly, and then the lighting failed. The church's reserves were all used up to pay for this.

The church reaches out to the community, organising events like 'Open Gardens', history talks and exhibitions and the summer fete. We have links with English Heritage through history talks with the Norfolk Churches Trust and the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, and are part of the latter Trust's Churchyard Conservation Scheme. We hold bat watches and moth evenings in season. We believe that, as in pre-Covid times, and now as we emerge from restrictions, these events will help to reduce isolation and foster community identity.

The Friends of Ingham Church operate under the umbrella of the PCC, to reach out to all locals and visitors who are interested in its wealth of history and its architectural beauty and wish to help to support the upkeep of the fabric. An enthusiastic group of cleaners called The Holy Dusters work on a rota to keep the church bright and welcoming, while flower arrangers keep their vases filled with garden flowers and greenery year round. Most do not

attend church regularly. It is an Ingham paradox (and will be a challenge for our new incumbent) that fewer people worship regularly than work willingly in the church during the week and for the annual fete. Holiday residents are active with us in the summer. We are limited by the lack of heating, toilet and kitchen facilities and intend to improve this situation, once we manage to meet the Parish Share again annually.

The church has a good relationship with the Village Hall: each year the Hall committee co-opts a member of the PCC. We have the use of the field for the fete and hope to be holding one in 2022.



Ingham church fete

As we emerge from the restrictions of the pandemic, we are looking for new ways to serve and engage our little community. There is much energy, enthusiasm and goodwill among us and we have to find ways to harness and share it. The modern communications technology offers possibilities to explore new worship and activities via Zoom etc and we believe there is much to be developed in its use to involve a wider congregation.

We don't wish to become homogenised with all the churches in the wider Benefice, but hope that we can develop ways of sharing ideas, activities, services and fellowship, while recognising our differences and embracing our similarities as children of God.

We look forward to welcoming a rector to guide, teach and lead us.

Stalham Benefice: The Parish of St Mary , Stalham



St Mary the Virgin, Stalham

St Mary the Virgin is the parish church for the town of Stalham and also serves its neighbouring villages of East Ruston and Brunstead. The church is a grade 2* listed building, which celebrated its 600th anniversary in 2020, although a church in Stalham is mentioned in the Domesday Book. There are many blessings associated with such an ancient church, but of course there are many challenges too. St Mary's has recently had a quinquennial inspection. The fabric is in good condition, and the recommendations made for small improvements have been met. The church has two closed churchyards, which are maintained by the Parish Council, with whom we have a very good working relationship.

We have church rooms in one of the churchyards. Although the toilets are still in use, the main hall has failed a safety inspection, so is not being used. It is hoped to raise money for necessary repairs, but Covid has stopped us proceeding with large gatherings at present. When in use, this room was regularly rented out.

As the church is in a prominent position on the High Street, it was previously open seven days a week from sunrise to sunset during the summer months, though recently, owing to Covid, the opening hours have necessarily been curtailed. Nonetheless, it attracts many visitors. The town has many facilities, including a Tesco supermarket, chemist, doctors' surgeries, newsagents, post office, vets and several hairdressers and other local amenities.

The average attendance at services throughout the year was 45 before Covid. Since Covid it has been about 16. Most of the congregation is over 65. There are 52 members on the electoral roll. Sunday services alternate between Holy Communion and Morning Prayer, except when there are five Sundays in the month, when there is a Benefice service of Holy Communion which rotates around the churches of the Benefice. We use Common Worship. Services are also streamed from St Mary's every week. The organ is used only rarely, as is the piano; usually we have recorded music. Though we used to have a music group, we now have neither group nor choir.



Norfolk Wherry Brass at the Remembrance Sunday service

The church has a good relationship with the local Baptist church. Ministers from both churches meet regularly for prayer and exchange of information. We hold a combined shoebox service each November and the Baptist Minister reads at the community's Remembrance service held at St Mary's on 11 November. The Baptist church also takes part in St Mary's annual community carol service. St Mary's takes a full part in the two annual 'Street Fairs' organised by the Stalham Business Forum. Musical performances take place in the church building and the church provides refreshments for purchase by the general public.

Currently there are 10 people on the PCC, which meets monthly. There are two churchwardens. The parish share is £26,206, which was always paid in full until last year, when Covid struck. We aim to balance our books.

There are many fundraising events in the church throughout the year, all being designed to encourage members of the public to come in and join us. For example, weekly coffee mornings, fetes, exhibitions, a flower festival, and a Christmas tree festival. All these helped the church to pay the Parish Share in full (until this year). There was also a monthly lunch in the church rooms which was open to church members and non churchgoers alike. We now recognise the need to engage further with those visitors to help them feel more involved in church and parish life. We need our new rector to look afresh at our events and build upon them to make them more accessible and improve the mission opportunity.

Again, before the pandemic, we enjoyed community celebrations of Harvest Supper, Burns Night and St Patrick's night, which drew in people who don't usually come to church. We would like to have more social events in future. In addition, we offer a warm community of Christian fellowship, and a talented team of lay and ordained ministers. We have established connections with the schools, particularly in primary education. We always have a ready pool of volunteers for providing food and assistance for any social events.



Christmas Tree Festival, St Mary, Stalham

We are hoping that our new rector will be:

- a mission-focused minister who is keen to build on existing community relationships to demonstrate the role of Christ beyond the church door;
- a minister who recognises the importance of lay ministry and who is willing to develop and encourage our congregations in the service of Christ. We are all part of the body of Christ, and we are all called to serve in different ways. Rural ministry cannot be a one-person show;
- someone who values rural ministry and who recognises the challenges of serving communities over a large geographical area, and communities who may not have regular contact with the church.



Candlemass 2022, from the live stream from St Mary, Stalham

Stalham Benefice: The Parish of St Michael and All Angels, Sutton



St Michael and All Angels, Sutton

The medieval parish church of Sutton is situated away from the village centre on Church Road, which runs parallel to The Street, the main road through the village. There has been a church here since the early Saxon period, but the present building dates to the late 12th century, with the addition of a large 14th century west tower. The tower holds a ring of three bells which are used every Sunday.

Very few alterations have been made to the church's exterior since then, and despite the Victorian restoration, St Michael's has been remarkably unchanged since the medieval period. That said, the PCC, together with the Friends of St Michael's Church, have been fundraising to build a kitchen in the tower and an extension housing a toilet and a small vestry. Permissions have been granted and it is expected work will go ahead in late spring 2022.

We are a small congregation at Sutton (23 on the electoral roll and an average of 12 souls at services), whose members work extremely well together, very much focused on keeping our little church building open and available to everyone in our parish. The PCC is a cooperative and harmonious body, even if members may occasionally vary in their views, feeling it essential to hear and ponder others' ideas. In general it has a receptive attitude to new ideas, especially if they will bring new people into the church. It has seven elected lay members and normally meets six times a year.

We should like our incumbent to be outgoing, with a flexible mind-set, who would accept - at least initially - the very good arrangements we have at the moment. This does not mean we would be against measured change, achieved through consensus agreement with the PCC. Certainly we feel that a good sense of humour will be an essential quality of our new incumbent.



Playgroup visiting Sutton church

The parish's finances are normally in balance, with the Parish Share being easily the largest item of expenditure. Until this year we have paid the Share in full, although it has been hard and sometimes quite laborious so to do. The parish raises funds enthusiastically (if a trifle warily at times), and we hope soon to see some of the fruits of these efforts in the forthcoming improvements to our facilities.



Sutton C. of E. School Christingle

We enjoy being part of a multi-parish benefice and look forward to our united services which are held in rotation around the Benefice when there is a fifth Sunday in the month. The parishes work well together, helping each other when need arises. We also welcome the Smallburgh Benefice on occasion, enjoying the fellowship we share together.

Overall, we feel that we are part of an homogenous group of parishes with much in common, and our similarities far outweigh our differences.

Smallburgh Benefice: The Parish of St Nicholas, Dilham

The village of Dilham which lies approximately ½ mile to the south east of the church, has a population of 330 (2020), and is situated at the upper reaches of the Norfolk Broads. Dilham staithe is the northern limit of navigation on the Broads network. The village lies just off the main A149, which is served by a regular bus service to North Walsham, Stalham, Great Yarmouth and Norwich. The Cross Keys public house lies in the centre of the village, as do the village hall and playing field.

The village hall committee and PCC organise a range of social activities throughout the year that are enjoyed by churchgoers and non-churchgoers alike. Regular film shows are held in the village hall and it is the venue for the Smallburgh & District Women's Institute meetings. The Worstead Weavers are based in the village and meet in their own building adjacent to the village hall.



St Nicholas, Dilham

St Nicholas' Church is the 4th on the site and was built in 1930. It is one of the last works by architect Cecil Greenwood Hare. Hare created a dignified church of flint and Clipsham stone with a single cell nave, chancel and south porch. To the north of the chancel are clergy and choir vestries, the latter now used as a Lady Chapel. The building's crowning glory is the single hammerbeam roof which even fooled Pevsner into thinking it contained old materials. In earlier times it had a high church tradition and there is still evidence of this in some of the church's furnishings, for example the stations of the cross and an aumbry. The vestry houses a full set of vestments and the Benefice photocopier, which is used to print the monthly 'Good News' newsletter. The building is open at all times and is in a good state of repair.

There are 12 names on the church's electoral roll and eight members of the PCC, which meets four times per year. We use Common Worship for all our services.



Good Friday procession, Dilham

Our finances are reasonably sound, and we have always been able to pay our Parish Share in full. Along with the other parishes in the Benefice, we are hoping that our rector will take a real interest in our spiritual wellbeing and offer us pastoral support and leadership, which we will gratefully receive.



Roof angel at St Nicholas, Dilham

Smallburgh Benefice: The Parish of St Peter and St Paul, Honing, with All Saints, Crostwight

The once-separate parishes of Honing and Crostwight, long a single incumbency, were united in 1996 into the Parish of Honing with Crostwight. We therefore have two parish churches, St Peter and St Paul standing prominently on the edge of Honing village, and All Saints, isolated in fields in the north of the parish, about a mile away, in the former parish of Crostwight. Ours is the most northerly of the three parishes in the Smallburgh Benefice.



Saints Peter and Paul, Honing

The parish has a population of about 320 (2020), of whom about 275 live in the village itself and the remainder in the surrounding countryside. It is a predominantly agricultural parish, though there are several small enterprises in and around it; Honing church and the village hall (with its weekly social club) are now the only remaining community facilities. For shops and services it looks mainly to North Walsham and also to Stalham; Norwich is, of course, the local urban centre.



All Saints, Crostwight

There are 24 names on the electoral roll and the PCC has seven elected lay members. A service is held in one of the churches every three weeks: between Mothering Sunday and All Saints' Day the services alternate between Honing and Crostwight. As the latter has no heating or electricity, there are no Crostwight services in winter, apart from a candlelit carol service at Christmas. There are a number of young people in the parish, but none of them comes to our services, except for the annual candlelit Christmas Eve Crib Service, when the church is full.



Christmas Eve Crib Service, Honing

The churches are open all day, every day. Both of them are greatly valued by the parishioners, many of whom take a personal interest in them even if they don't attend services. The two churches are, in their different ways, both remarkable. Honing, grade 2*, is a medieval church that was extensively remodelled in 1795. In 2016 it was repaired and given a new roof, drainage and heating with the aid of a Heritage Lottery Fund grant. It is now in good repair and we are starting to plan the installation of a kitchen and lavatory in the church.

Crostwight church (All Saints') is listed Grade I. It is approximately 700 years old, and retains many medieval features, including a nationally-significant series of late 14th century wall paintings. The fragile state of the paintings has caused the church to be placed on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register, but fundraising to conserve them is well advanced and it is hoped that the most urgent repairs can be undertaken during the summer of 2022.

All Saints' recent (2021) Quinquennial Inspection Report identified, in addition to the vulnerability of the wall paintings, the need for some repairs to the building's structure. These will form a separate project for which the PCC will shortly be seeking funding. The repairs are being managed by a committee of PCC members, in co-operation with the church's architect and an accredited wall paintings conservator.



Talk on the Crostwight wall paintings

All the services at Honing church use Common Worship, while those at Crostwight use only the Book of Common Prayer. This combination of ancient and modern liturgies is appreciated by the congregation. Fundraising events are well-supported and there is usually no shortage of people wanting to help with their organisation.



Honing Village Weekend

The PCC meets four times a year, alternately with its Standing Committee. We have two churchwardens who are fully committed to their roles. While not a wealthy parish, our finances are managed prudently and the Parish Share has always been paid in full. There are two restricted fabric funds, one for Honing and the other for Crostwight. In normal years we undertake a programme of fundraising events, such as talks, landscape walks, and tractor rides along a remarkable mile of daffodils, which generate enough to keep the General Fund in the black.



Blessing the tractor, Honing Village Weekend

Both churches participate in the Norfolk Wildlife Trust's Churchyard Conservation Scheme.



Churchyard maintenance: volunteer working party, Honing

Our relations with the other parishes in the Benefice are excellent, reflecting the respect we all have for our separate identities, while recognising the synergy and mutual interdependency we also enjoy.

We hope that our new rector will want to engage with us as a congregation and as individuals, taking an interest in our collective development as a church community and leading us through our spiritual lives.

Smallburgh Benefice: The Parish of St Peter, Smallburgh

Smallburgh is a rather scattered village presenting a peaceful agricultural landscape intersected by two very busy roads. It has a population of 518 (2020 figure) and a happy balance of ages. It is a busy village and enjoys the facilities of a playing field, with space for football, tennis and bowls, a busy village hall, a public house, a garage, mobile Post Office and bus services.

Smallburgh's church is reasonably central. It is a largely early 15th century structure, compact and of flint construction, with a slate roof and a bell-cote instead of a tower. It is in very good condition. The churchyard is bordered by trees and, with a recent gift of land, has provision for many years to come. The active PCC organises cleaning and care of our church and churchyard.



St Peter, Smallburgh

There are 15 names on the church's electoral roll. The PCC has six elected lay members and meets four times each year. We use Common Worship for our Holy Communion services and the Book of Common Prayer at Morning Prayer.

We are fortunate in having a modest financial endowment and a small amount of land that is leased, which means that our finances are at present sound and we have always been able to pay our Parish Share in full.

We work well with the other two parishes in the Benefice, sharing the monthly newsletter 'Good News' as well as helping each other in whatever way we can and is needed.



Harvest Bring and Share lunch, Smallburgh village hall



Palm Sunday procession, Smallburgh

We are looking forward to welcoming a new rector who can take a lead in providing pastoral support to all in our parish and Benefice.