

Rector and Vicar for the Diss Team Ministry

Benefice Profile September 2024

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The roles

We are looking for a Rector and Vicar for the Diss Team Ministry.

To serve the parishes of Bressingham St John the Baptist, Burston St Mary, Diss St Mary, Fersfield St Andrew, Gissing St Mary, North Lopham St Nicholas, Roydon St Remigius, Shelfanger All Saints, South Lopham St Andrew, Tivetshall St Mary and St Margaret, Winfarthing St Mary.

The team is led by the Rector in partnership with the Vicar and is committed to the Benedictine emphasis of concentrating on 'Worship, Learning and Hospitality'. This provides us with the focus needed to work towards effective discipleship and effective management of the needs of all parishes.

Are you an inspirational, collaborative leader with a passion for Christian mission and outreach into the community, who will build on our present foundations and inspire us to move forward with vision? If so, please read on.



Our vision

To enable people across our Team to come to know God and His unconditional love, as revealed through His Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. By:

- Ensuring a warm welcome to parishioners, community, visitors, young people and older folk
- Through our prayers, for them and with them
- Being a visible witness in our local parishes, practically involved in community events and projects

Thereby embracing the Diocesan Vision to be:

Prayerful, Pastoral and **Prophetic**

Leading to Growth in Discipleship, Service and Numbers.



What are the tasks?

The Benefice is made up of 11 parishes, the town of Diss and 10 country villages of varying sizes; all see their Church as a vibrant part of the community, whether sited at the centre or on the outskirts.

We are still young, formally becoming an eleven-parish benefice in July 2021. Six of the parishes were united twelve years ago; the extra five joined following the retirement of their incumbent.

There are two posts on offer. The Rector, who will have responsibility for leading on team meetings and vision development and will focus on re-vitalising the church in the busy market town of Diss, reaching out to new residents in the expanding residential areas.

The Vicar will be responsible for the rural village churches to inspire their worship and encourage their local communities, whilst at the same time enabling them to feel valued and included. Both priests will have incumbent status and together will provide the benefice with the impetus to work towards effective discipleship and management of the needs of all parishes.

We need people to help us develop our vision and unite us in our purpose, leaders who will guide our further spiritual journey and enable us to reach out to others in both the town and rural communities and spread the good news of the joy of knowing our loving God. We need priests with enthusiasm for bringing the gospel message alive and inspiring Church members to share their own faith in Christ with others and to celebrate our Christian heritage, whilst not making each parish the same, but enabling it to find its unique way of serving the wider community.



Who are we looking for?

- lively preaching and teaching, relevant to daily life
- being comfortable with Prayer Book and Common Worship
- praying, with us and for us
- encouraging and developing pastoral care across the team
- understanding the challenges of both town and remote rural settings, including the upkeep of ancient buildings
- growing and encouraging links with families, schools and young people
- helping us to engage with the wider communities, sharing your own gifts
- working with us as we seek the best way forward for our benefice
- looking with fresh eyes to discern how we might do some things better while perhaps letting others go
- being ready to learn from others, having fun and enjoying the company of others.



Location

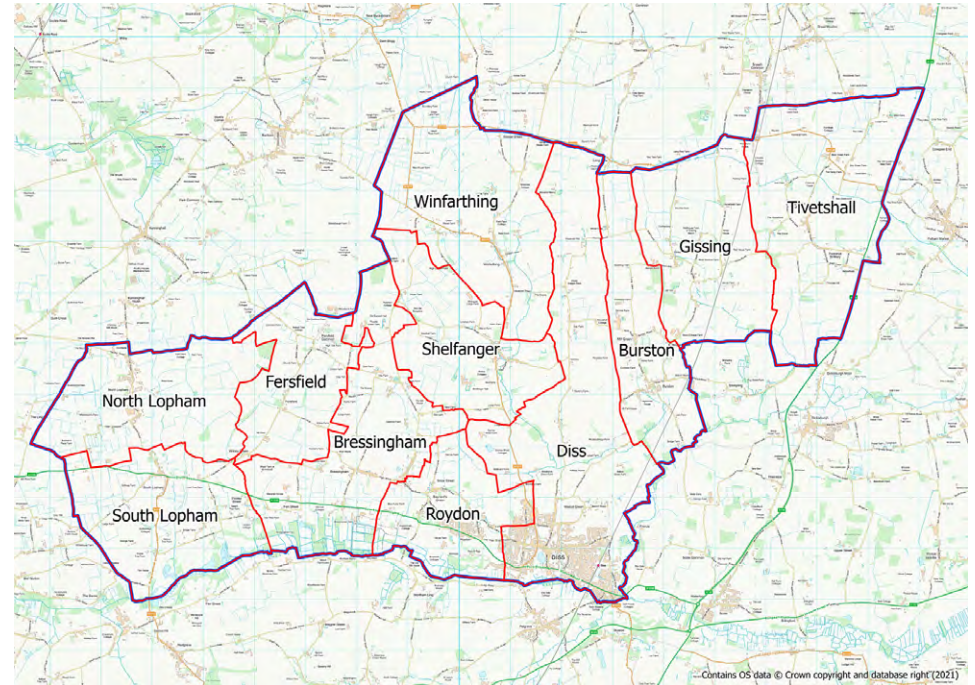
A geographically fan shaped benefice of 11 parishes in South Norfolk, with Diss at the hub. St Mary's in Diss is the largest church and currently the one most used for benefice services. The Diss Team Ministry is part of the Redenhall Deanery within the Diocese of Norwich.

Diss is a pretty market town with the Mere at its centre and numerous facilities on offer. There is an excellent range of traditional, local and national shops, pubs restaurants, cafes, together with sporting facilities, health centre, library, auction room and a museum. School provision covers all age ranges from nursery to sixth form.

Slightly further afield is Norwich, the most complete medieval city in the UK. It is home to the University of East Anglia, the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and the John Innes Centre. It is a renowned centre for arts, music and culture.

There are good communication links with a mainline railway station and frequent trains north to Norwich and south to Ipswich and on to London Liverpool Street. The main trunk roads into the area are mainly good dual carriageways which are being upgraded. The stunning, long coastline of Norfolk and Suffolk is easily accessible about one hour away.

Whilst there may be a misconception that Norfolk is sleepy and remote, its appeal is such that those who do venture here usually stay and grow to love the friendliness of the people, the beautiful skies and the landscape of the coast, the Broads and the Waveney Valley.



The Parishes



The Coronation Cover of our magazine included pictures of all eleven Churches.

Bressingham St John The Baptist

Parish

Bressingham is a large village with about 600 people. The Parish Council and Village Hall are shared with Fersfield. We have a good primary school and twice a year the school holds services in the church to celebrate harvest and Christmas.

Church

Services in our church may be few in number but life carries on. Coffee Mornings are well attended and there is a real goodwill towards the church. Recently the cost of major work on four lime trees was paid for by three local residents and a loan from a village charity. The Friends of the church support work on the church fabric as well as helping with cleaning.

Community

The village is a farming community with small industrial sites as well plus a steam museum and garden centre. We still enjoy the luxury of a Village Shop where home made cooked items are also available.

Burston St Mary

Church

The Parish Church, in the centre of the village has reduced services due to the interregnum but would hope to return to a service each week with one service as a Home Team.

We added a Kitchen and Disabled toilet in the mid 90's and offer the church for hire. A lottery grant of £200,000 some years ago fixed the roof but we had problems with the Vestry and Porch. the congregation is basically the PCC and this is the area we need to focus on going forward.

Community

We have an active Friends group, Fish & Chip Supper Safari Supper and other events through the year. Youth for Christ run a Thursday afternoon group for the young people in the village and we had a Luncheon Club once a month before Covid that we are trying to re-establish. Good links with the village school

Diss St Mary

Parish

A delightful town enjoying a beautiful natural Mere at its centre. Our estimated population is 11,000 with a rural catchment area of 4,000. St Mary's from its prominent position overlooks the bustling main thoroughfare and weekly market.

Church

Open daily and welcomes visitors throughout the year. There are a range of services on Sundays, mid-week Eucharist and daily prayer, and hope to continue our choral tradition. We enjoy excellent relationships with the other Christian denominations in the town. There is an active Churches Together which shares a Lent Course, then a Walk through the town on Good Friday, ending with a service at St Mary's. The Salvation Army band has put on concerts for us, as well as playing at the Big Sing event.

Community

There is a Friday market, the Sales Ground holds weekly auctions attracting a wide range of collectors and our Corn Hall is a successful Arts/Education/ Entertainment centre. With an Annual Carnival, Gigs in the Park, newly developed Boardwalk, sports facilities and local Radio we are blessed.

Fersfield St Andrew

Parish

Ours is the smallest parish in the benefice, but with a lively group of supporters alongside the PCC.

Church

The church is the only public building, so is greatly valued as a hub for the whole village. Visitors come long distances to see the unique wooden effigy of Robert du Bois, and the memorial to the Rev Francis Blomefield, who wrote his famous History of Norfolk while he was Rector in the 18th century.

Community

It is used for Parish Council meetings and for community events in and around it. Services for special occasions are followed by refreshments and time to chat. Successful events such as plant sales and craft fairs involve the whole community. The support group maintain the grounds and keep the inside of the building sparkling, with a welcoming atmosphere.

Gissing St Mary

Parish

Gissing sits about 4 miles to the northeast of Diss and is home to about 250 people, most of whom fall into the 'active retired' category.

The Church

An active 'Friends Group' who fundraise to pay its running costs, apart from the ecclesiastical bills. The PCC, despite a small and ageing congregation, has managed to pay the parish share in recent years. The church has undergone an extensive renovation with heating and improved and lighting installed. It is a round towered church with a rare double hammer-beamed roof with carved angels on its posts, dating from the 15th century.

Community

the centre of Gissing has a new Community Centre, which serves as a social hub for the surrounding area, a pub/restaurant and the Gissing Children's Centre, rated excellent by OFSTED. On the village outskirts, High Oaks care home for people with mental health issues takes part in some village activities.

North Lopham St Nicholas

Parish

One of the smaller ones in the Team, at the Western end of the benefice, but the church has a big heart, seeking to welcome everyone who enters, regardless of age or background.

Church

Regular family services are led by our Home Team; during the vacancy Holy Communion is currently held once, bimonthly. On Sundays when there is no service, an e-letter takes the Gospel reading, a message, prayers and hymn words to all members. When structural problems in the SW corner have been addressed, we plan to install 'amenities'

Community

As the only public building in the village open to all every day, the PCC aims to make the church a hub for activities for all ages; coffee mornings, exhibitions and concerts by talented local youngsters. We have strong links with the local Church School, welcoming them for worship every half term, and displaying their craft work.

Roydon St Remigius

Parish

Roydon is close to Diss but we do have a special village spirit in which the church plays a leading part covering all ages from the Doughnut Church for children to our monthly coffee mornings.

Church

The church is open daily and currently we have two services per month and every other month one of these is a Holy Communion.

Community

We have a Parish Room, attached to the church, built about 20 years ago, which lets us host other organisations and also helps with our income allowing us to keep the church in excellent state of repair. Roydon has an excellent modern Village Hall with plenty going on and a thriving village school with which the church has an excellent relationship.

Shelfanger All Saints

Parish

Our village has an exceptional community spirit. Its 370 souls care mightily for their historic little church and self-built village hall. We've just raised the roof in a flower-filled and crowded Harvest Festival, organised by the PCC.

Church

Our present service pattern is a monthly Morning Worship and a bi-monthly Holy Communion. The church is open daily for private prayer and hosts talks, concerts and exhibitions. Its members are involved in virtually all parish activities.

Community

A churchyard mowing team, excellent cleaners and flower arrangers, backed by a vigorous 'Friends' organisation too. Wider interests from yoga, through Art, a community café, a railway modelling club to crib playing, quizzing and a beer at the bar, are available at the village hall.

South Lopham St Andrew

Church

St Andrew's is a very significant Church in the County with its magnificent central tower, but more importantly it is a very special place for many local people, it has nine members on the PCC, very enthusiastic and determined that this beautiful, historic place of worship remains open and more importantly, has a regular pattern of services. Services are held monthly and for special occasions. The PCC is thrilled to have a team of enthusiasts caring for the building and extensive graveyard.

Community

Friends of South Lopham Church raise money towards the Fabric of the building, these groups all bringing the village community together. The church was the venue for a very successful Diss Quilting Exhibition in September with the tower open raising funds.

Tivetshall St Mary & St Margaret

Church

The church of St Margaret is situated outside of the main village. Surrounded by farmland it is well cared for by its small congregation. It contains a fine and rare example of an Elizabethan tympanum which people from far and wide come to see. The lack of electricity and water add to its rural charm. Last year the village primary school held its Harvest Festival there for the first time and also, after a gap of a few years, a Christingle service which was enjoyed by both children and parents. We are keen to develop a good relationship and encourage them to use the church.

Community

The grounds of St Mary's ruins are well maintained and an annual service of Remembrance held there each November. This service was reintroduced several years ago after the war memorial had been renovated and is exceptionally well attended.

Winfarthing St Mary

Parish

Winfarthing has an ancient history, with evidence of an Anglo-Saxon settlement and burial ground – the subject of a recent Time Team investigation.

Church

Our service pattern is varied, with an informal 'Village Church' once a month; and a Morning Prayer, often taken by the Home Team. During the vacancy we have been 'buddying-up' with our close neighbours in Shelfanger, hosting Holy Communion in alternate months, instead of each month. All Saints School is situated next to the church and we are pleased to welcome the school community into the church on a regular basis.

Community

There is a very active group in the village working towards raising the funds to develop a visitor centre in St Mary's Church. This will not only aim to tell the story of the Anglo-Saxon treasure and its origin, but also incorporate a comfortable new meeting space for local groups, complete with facilities. We also hold monthly coffee mornings where we sell home-made cakes and crafts.

Our Schools

The eight primary schools across the benefice feed into Diss High Academy.

Two are VA, one is VC, the others are community schools, but all enjoy good relations with their local church, as do pre-schools and uniformed groups where these exist.

Churches are the preferred venue for festival services; some of the church schools held regular worship in church, led by ministry team members, pre-pandemic. Until March 2020, the church schools in Diss and North Lopham welcomed regular visits by the Open the Book team. They have asked for visits to resume. There is a real opportunity to extend and encourage this work.



How we work together

The Ministry Team

The Rector, The Vicar a Licensed Lay Minister and two Authorised Worship Assistants.

Our service pattern may be found at www.dissteamministry.org.uk

We have a planned programme of learning through Discover Groups, meeting in venues across the Team. They meet regularly to plan, share ideas and experiences and give each other mutual support. Their most recent innovation is Stations of the Cross outside a different Church each day for the last two weeks of Lent.

We are blessed to have a number of retired clergy, including a retired bishop, who live in the benefice and offer invaluable support.



During the week

Please refer to the 'Our Churches' section on page eight for specific parish information.

Cock Crow Magazine

A bi-monthly publication, with a clergy letter, funded by the PCCs of the nine smallest parishes and delivered free to all homes in the those villages. It is published in full on the website and includes details of the Sunday services and churchwardens in every parish.

The Diss Team Ministry Website

The source of information about the Team Ministry, including services, safeguarding, events, a who's who and the information about the individual parishes.

www.dissteamministry.org.uk

Live Streaming

Thanks to the efforts of a dedicated team, the main Sunday Eucharist in St Mary's, Diss, is live-streamed to those who are unable to attend in person.



What we can offer you

The Ministry Team

- The Rector
- Team Vicar
- A Licensed Lay Minister
- Two Authorised Worship Assistants.

Our service pattern may be found at www.dissteamministry.org.uk

The Benefice Council

This group, mainly church wardens together with other significant individuals meets to discuss and agree matters of importance to the whole team, such as safeguarding, service patterns, benefice finance and matters referred from the diocese and deanery. This leaves individual parishes free to focus on their own fabric, finances and fundraising.

The Team Office

This is adjacent to Diss Church and has regular opening hours.

The Administrator deals with regular church business, such as rota management and service sheets, alongside administration for baptisms, weddings and funerals, plus general enquiries about church matters. The telephone number is 01379 643783. We have an excellent relationship with the local funeral directors.

Clergy Wellbeing

The wellbeing of our clergy is a priority. We are passionate about ensuring they have the resources they need to deliver their ministry with regular time off to enjoy their home life, while developing as people and priests.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is vitally important and all the relevant policies are adopted by the parishes.

We are committed to being safer parishes and aim to make our churches places where the value and dignity of every human being is affirmed, with special regard for the most vulnerable, the youngest, the elderly and those with special needs or disabilities. We strive to ensure that staff and volunteers have appropriate safeguarding training and all necessary checks have been carried out. We have a named Safeguarding link person in each Parish and a Benefice Safeguarding Officer. The successful candidates will be subject to pre-appointment checks.

Our Safeguarding Policy can be seen on our website www.dissteamministry.org.uk

Finance

We aim to meet our parish share ask each year but recognise that this is becoming a greater burden with each passing year. We have a good record and we are proud and delighted that in 2022 we paid 98% of the total ask. Each parish contributes in full to the clergy expenses and office costs.

The Rectory

The Rectory is a recently purchased property, pictured below, a spacious modern house with an easily managed garden, ideally situated for access to all eleven parishes.

The Vicarage

Currently occupied by the Team Vicar, is a modern house meeting parsonage requirements, conveniently situated near Diss town centre.



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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