

Parish of Great Yarmouth



PARISH PROFILE

Team Vicar 2025



Overview

Benefice: Great Yarmouth Team Ministry comprising Great Yarmouth Minster, St Paul's Newtown and St Mary's Southtown. Parish population c.30,000.

Nature of post: A post for a stipendiary Team Vicar on Common Tenure

Context and Location: Urban – seaport, seaside, market and industrial town

Church Traditions: Sacramental focused; Liberal catholic; Inclusive.

Team Rector: The Revd Canon Simon Ward

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Great Yarmouth is a single parish which operates as a team ministry with three churches: The Minster, St Mary's and St Paul's. An historic town, which in the past was extremely but today it is amongst the most deprived in the country. The Minster Mission is home to Great Yarmouth Café & Support Centre which serves free hot lunches and is a centre for Yarmouth & Magdalen Foodbank.

The parish has traditionally maintained a liberal catholic ethos with vestments at services and the sacrament reserved. The Minster provides a heart and focus for ministry and is a haven of prayer with the daily offices being the foundation of Ministry Team life. Great Yarmouth PCC voted to become part of the Inclusive Church Network in 2022. All 3 churches have received Bronze Eco Church awards.



Our Setting & Context

Great Yarmouth is a town of many sides: A port, a holiday destination, a market town, an ancient town, a deprived community, a business hub, and a place of great beauty. It is located at the mouth of the River Yare, 20 miles east of Norwich. It has been a seaside resort for centuries and is the gateway from the Norfolk Broads to the sea. "The Golden Mile" attracts millions of visitors each year to its sandy beaches, indoor and outdoor attractions and amusement arcades.

For centuries it was a major port but the herring industry suffered a steep decline in the second half of the 20th century, and has now disappeared. The discovery of oil in the North Sea in the 1960s led to a flourishing oil rig supply industry. Today it serves offshore natural gas rigs and more recently, the development of renewable energy sources, especially offshore wind power, has created further opportunities for support services. An aging wind farm is within sight of the town on Scroby Sands while further offshore gigantic sea jacks hoist huge turbines.

The town itself is on a spit sandwiched between the North Sea and River Yare. Its well-known features include the historic rows (narrow streets) and the main tourist sector on the seafront. The urban area that makes up the town of Great Yarmouth has a population approaching 30,000. The wider Borough of Great Yarmouth has a population of around 97,000. In summer the population is boosted by the holiday makers who come to stay in hotels and caravan parks.

The Market Place is the heart to the town's shopping sector and the famous and numerous Yarmouth chip stalls and has recently undergone significant refurbishment. Also, on the Market Place is our wonderful, vibrant church school, St Nicholas Priory VA Junior School serving the centre of Yarmouth.

Great Yarmouth Borough Council have been successful in securing funding and a number of notable new projects give a sense of emerging change: The Market Place redevelopment, a third river crossing, a new leisure centre, planting of many new trees, floodlighting of heritage buildings and renovated boating lake and Waterways. Culturally there are significant changes too: the circus scene is thriving via the Hippodrome and Out There Arts, the BBC Concert Orchestra is in a 3 year residential in the town, new galleries have opened and Banksy visited. There is a lot going on.

However, there is a lack of aspiration and self-belief in the community. Many young people have low aspiration and it's a challenge to enable the community to see that it has many positive attributes. Great Yarmouth is placed at 148 in the deprivation indices of parishes (*1=most deprived, 12,307=least deprived*) which gives some indication of the scale of social issues.

The town offers a range of housing from spacious 4 bedroom detached to multi-occupancy bedsits. People come from a range of ethnic backgrounds with significant groups of Portuguese, Lithuanian and other nationalities. Many migrant workers find work in factories and food processing plants and these communities add great vibrancy to the town.

The town is close to the Norfolk Broads, beautiful Norfolk countryside and smaller seaside villages. Walking routes stretch out from the town along the estuary shores of Breydon Water which is home to enormous flocks of bird life.

The Three Churches

Great Yarmouth Minster

St Nicholas' Church was founded by Herbert de Losinga (Bishop of Norwich) in 1101. It is the largest parish church in the country and the oldest building in Great Yarmouth. In 1942 the church was completely gutted during a German air raid leaving only the Norman tower and the walls standing. The church was rebuilt and re-consecrated in 1961. In 2011 the Bishop of Norwich designated St Nicholas as a Minster Church along with St Margaret's, King's Lynn.



The style of worship is traditional and the Minster has a long choral tradition. The main Sunday service is a choral Eucharist with fortnightly choral evensong. The robed choir sing and servers assist at most Sunday services. There was Sunday School on Sundays during term time but this has not run since the lockdown. However, there are great links with local schools and especially St Nicholas Priory, our wonderful church school. The Minster has teams of bellringers and handbell ringers.

The Minster is an excellent cultural venue and finds wider community use in many ways. There are regular concerts and exhibitions and the church holds a number of civic services during the year which can be huge occasions. At Christmas time a successful Fayre brings thousands through the door over a weekend and many groups and schools come for carol services.

The daily offices are shared by the Ministry Team. The Minster is opened daily by volunteers every morning. The PCC are aware of the need to open the doors to welcome all and the fact that so many visitors to Great Yarmouth do not notice the Minster.

The Minster is also in need of development in terms of heating and facilities and plans are underway with an Expression of Interest having been accepted by NLHF. We hope this will lead to huge development project and plenty of fresh opportunities.

Right: Palm Sunday 2023



St Paul's Newtown

A small community church serving the Newtown area of Great Yarmouth. The church has been re-ordered so that people gather around the altar. Many community groups such as the Brownies and Guides meet here and a large number of social events are held this church which are popular and connect to the local community. The hall provides

a steady revenue and is busy most weekends and evenings.

It was used to host a Warm Space on a Monday and this has continued throughout the year. Opposite the church is a YMCA centre and links have been made there.

The main service is the 9.30am Sunday Eucharist (average 15-20) with a midweek Eucharist every other Wednesday (average 10-12). In 2023 new screens and sound system were introduced which the congregation have appreciated and offer more flexibility in worship.



left: A spring prayer walk from St Paul's



St Mary's Southtown

St Mary Southdown serves as a community church for the areas of Southdown and Cobholm which being over the river, often feel slightly apart from the rest of the town. It has small but dedicated congregation who work hard together to lay on regular fundraising and community events. The main service is the 11am Eucharist on a Sunday (average 15), a fortnightly Wednesday morning Eucharist (average 8-10) and BCP Eucharist on a Thursday. The church is aware of its catholic traditions.

Behind the church is a small but useful church hall that is used by community groups such as the busy, weekly Wednesday Club (a church group), Brownies, Guides and Cadets. A popular Monday craft group was established in 2022. Many groups often enjoy use of the well-maintained gardens around the church. The congregation works hard to lay on community fundraising events.

The Ministry Team share together in leading worship across all three churches.



Minster Mission: Great Yarmouth Pathway Café & Support Centre

The Pathway Café was set up by a group of dedicated volunteers in 2014 and has grown and developed. In 2018 it was set up as an independent charity (charity number: 1178940) and is very much part of the work of the Parish. Presently it serves a free, hot lunch three days each week to about 80-90 visitors. It is funded through grant and community fundraising at an annual cost of over £200k.

Pathway employs a full-time manager and a part time chef as well as benefitting from a loyal and able band of volunteers. It is a Trussell Trust Foodbank in partnership with St Mary Magdalen Church, Gorleston. The project is overseen by a board of trustees. Revd Richard Washington takes a lead for this work.



Staff and Volunteers with Bishop Graham, March 2022

“Pathway is an incredible piece of social outreach doing amazing Kingdom work” Bishop Graham Usher

PCC Organisation

There is one PCC for the Parish of Great Yarmouth with two Churchwardens. The PCC employs a part time administrator to support the whole parish. There is one bank account and one treasurer and one Standing Committee. There are currently four sub committees of the PCC: Safeguarding, Finance, Fabric, Inclusive Church. These may be added to. The PCC has been successful in securing significant grant funding for a variety of projects, both fabric and missional.

Team Vicars attend all meetings of the PCC, Deanery Synod and Chapter apart from unavoidable other duties or holidays. Team Vicars may be asked to lead ad hoc working parties and PCC subcommittees, especially if these are relevant to their particular area of responsibility. A Director of Music, Arts & Culture starts in January 2025. Great Yarmouth has long been a successful training parish and many curates have served here; Currently Liz Dawes.

Members of the Ministry Team work together day by day and share in the leading of worship in all three churches. Team Vicars will have clear areas of ministry in the life of the parish which they will be responsible for. They will be expected to show leadership, imagination and vision in their delegated tasks while sharing in the collegial life of the Ministry Team and the PCC with complementary skills. This way of working will need commitment and empathy as it develops so that both the congregation can embrace change and so that the team can develop and flourish.



Confirmation in the Minster, Easter 2024

Structure for Ministry

A framework for ministry is being adopted from HeartEdge, emanating from St Martin in the Fields, London which offers a network and resources to help churches reimagine themselves and society. The aspiration is to shape ministry according to HeartEdge's 4Cs model. Each "C" to be led by a different member of the Team: Compassion, Culture, Congregation, Commerce. The areas of responsibility will be as follows:

- **Compassion** (Team Vicar 1): Responsible for leading the response of the parish to address social need and increase community engagement beyond the church, especially focussing on the work of Pathway and the outreach of St Paul's and St Mary's.
- **Culture** (Director of Music, Arts & Culture): Responsible for animating the musical and cultural life of the parish with a particular focus on the diverse cultural outreach of the Minster
- **Congregation** (Team Vicar 2): Responsible for developing our congregational life through worship and nurture of all ages with a special focus on the spiritual life of our church school.
- **Commerce** (Team Rector): Responsible for Minster Development generating income and maintaining good systems and structures to allow the work of the Kingdom to grow and flourish.

This is an exciting time to join a team which is seeking to change, grow and develop. The new clergy will need to work effectively together with the Team Rector and others to help navigate the way.

Pattern of Services

The pattern of services has grown in recent times. The PCC noted at a strategy evening that there is scope for the parish to offer a more diverse pattern of worship and embrace different traditions. Therefore, the current pattern may evolve and grow in response to local need and missional opportunities.

At the Minster

Monday to Friday	9.00am Morning Prayer (with Eucharist on Monday)
Saturday	9.30am Morning Prayer
Sunday	10.30am Sung Eucharist with Choir (average attendance 50)
	12noon Holy Baptism
	6pm Evensong (1 st & 3 rd Sundays)

Generally, major festivals are held at the Minster and also a number of larger diocesan and deanery services and events.

At St Paul's & St Mary's

Sunday A Eucharist at each church: St Pauls (9.30am: average attendance 15-20) and St Mary's (11am: average attendance 10-15)

Alternate Wednesdays 10.00am Wednesday Holy Eucharist either at St Paul's or St Mary's

Thursday BCP Eucharist at St Mary's

Occasional Offices

Accompanying people through significant life events is a privilege of ministry. The Ministry Team will share in leading occasional offices. The numbers of these services diminished post pandemic but see opportunity for growth. The PCC feel there is much we could do to build on these links and follow up the warm contacts made through life events.

Baptism & Confirmation

Most Baptisms (around 40-50 per year) take place on Sunday at 12.30pm in the Minster. Baptisms (3-5 per year) can take place at St Paul and St Mary. Baptism preparation is currently the responsibility of the clergy. We have an open baptism policy seeing this as an important part of mission to offer an open door to families and a number of baptisms come from eastern European families. The parish normally presents a number of candidates for confirmation each year.

Weddings

The Minster is a popular venue and many couples come to the Minster because of a qualifying connection. We celebrate around 15-20 weddings per year mostly in the Minster. We offer remarriage to those who have been previously married, observing the House of Bishops guidelines. Preparation for marriage is carried out by the officiating priest.

Funerals

Members of the Ministry Team take about 40 funerals every year. Larger 'town' funerals take place in the Minster and it has been known for 900 people to attend while others gather just a handful of mourners. Funerals also take place in the other churches. Many funerals take place at the Crematorium is Gorleston. The Minster churchyard is closed but there is a large garden of remembrance where many people choose to have the ashes of the loved ones interred. There is a well-supported All Souls service held at the Minster each year.

The Team Rector and Ministry Team

The Revd Canon Simon Ward

Born in Great Yarmouth and brought up in Norwich, Simon worked as a teacher before being ordained in 2000 in the Diocese of Guildford, serving his title in Aldershot. In 2003 he moved with his family to rural Suffolk in the Sole Bay Team Ministry. From 2009 he served as chaplain to the Bishop of Norwich before moving across the city to the Parish of Earlham in 2014. In 2017 he was instituted as Team Rector and recently served as Acting Archdeacon. He enjoys cycling and running and is passionate about rugby and Great Yarmouth.

The Revd Liz Dawes

Liz joined the team in June 2023 and was ordained deacon. She takes a broad range of responsibilities as part of her training portfolio under the direction of the Team Rector. Liz loves a festival and has developed both an Angel and Sea festival. She has a love of all music and enjoys playing with Great Yarmouth Brass.



Revd Richard Washington

Richard was licensed to the team in September 2024 having served his curacy in Attleborough. He has a special responsibility for the community of Pathway and the work of the parish in serving those on the margins. He is also an ADDO in the Diocese.

Team Meetings

Currently the ministry team meets monthly and there is a weekly Monday morning diary meeting to plan.

- The Team Vicar will attend full staff meetings and other such staff meetings as agreed with the other team members.
- Away Days: Team members are committed to team working as we seek to grow and deepen our support of each. A team consultant is used.
- Team Vicars and Team Rector will meet monthly for 1:1 planning, mutual support and supervision.
- Team Vicars shall be ready to deputize for the Team Rector as necessary.
- Monthly Ecumenical: a fraternal meeting for ministers grew in 2023.

Spiritual Life & Work/Life Balance

Parochial ministry in Great Yarmouth is demanding: There will always be something else you could do. Team members need to pay attention to their own work/life balance. Clergy should support each other in taking days off and the Bishop of Norwich hopes all clergy will monthly take an additional day off, ideally next to an existing day off. This requires thoughtful diary management and supportive colleagues.

Taking time day by day for family and personal needs is essential as are hobbies and recreation. The Team Rector leads by example and may be seen running along the seafront at the end of a working day; he expects colleagues to take time for themselves in whatever way is right for them and collectively to look out for each other.

The Ministry Team meet daily for Morning Prayer, often with others joining them. The Ministry Team will attend and share in leading daily offices and to share other team services such as various holy days and festivals.

A personal rhythm of spiritual life is also important and the Team Vicar should seek to take regular quiet days and is encouraged to meet with a spiritual director. Annual retreats, quiet days, conferences and CMD are essential and should be agreed in advance among the team.



General Information

The House

The house is at 18 Royal Avenue which is a very spacious, detached 4 bedroomed property located in the north of the town, nearly a mile from the Minster and close to St Paul's Church. The house is in a very pleasant suburban area of the town and surrounded by mature gardens giving a secluded feeling. There are four reception rooms on the ground floor and a spacious kitchen with patio doors. There is a double garage, a single garage with additional store room and off-road parking spaces. It is within easy walking distance of the beaches and about 20 minutes' walk into the town centre.



Schools

There are schools with walking distance of Royal Ave. The nearest Primary school is Northgate St Andrew School. There is also St Nicholas Priory VA School in the town centre and North Denes School on the northern edge of the town. Great Yarmouth Charter Academy (Inspiration Trust) is nearby and some pupils also go to Caister High School, or senior schools in Gorleston. East Norfolk Sixth Form College is in Gorleston. Some young people travel to Norwich for sixth form education.

Transport links

Within the town there are good bus links. Use of a car is an advantage but not essential. There are also very good bus links to Lowestoft, Norwich and Peterborough. There is a regular train service to Norwich from which it is possible to trains to London, Cambridge and the Midlands.

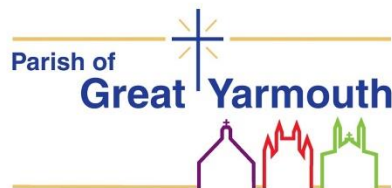
Expenses

Expenses should be submitted on a monthly basis to the Team Treasurer for approval and will be met in full by the PCC from ministry endowment funds.

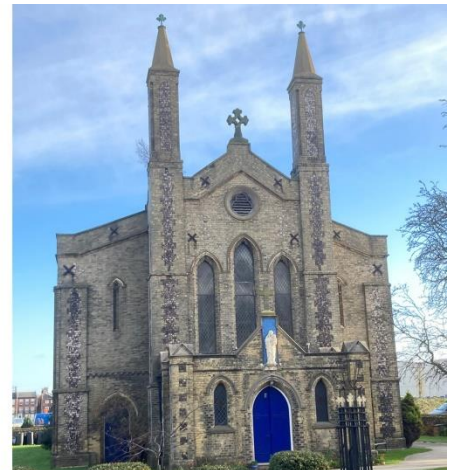


St. Paul's Church, Newtown

Here for everyone...



Great Yarmouth Minster



St. Mary's Church, Southtown

A warm welcome for all...

