

Sprowston & North Norwich

Benefice Profile 2025



The Vision for the role

We are looking and praying for an enthusiastic, energetic and experienced priest.

This exciting post offers an opportunity to lead and shape mission and ministry as part of a team that has been recently formed for the Sprowston and North Norwich area.

The team ministry comprises four parishes:

Sprowston, St Mary Magdalene, Christchurch New Catton and St Luke's with St Augustine's New Catton.

The scope of the job is to encourage collaborative mission and ministry across the team with specific responsibility for pastoral ministry in Sprowston parish.

The successful candidate would live in a new Rectory in the heart of the parish.

This post is open to ordained priests within the Church of England.



Context

The Diocese of Norwich covers a large geographic area, but a third of the population are based in the city of Norwich. It is divided into three areas, each of which has a Bishop and an Archdeacon. This post falls in the Norwich Archdeaconry, in the deanery of Norwich North.

In September 2021 a new Team Ministry was formed in an urban setting covering the New Catton and Sprowston areas of Norwich. Uniting four single-parish benefices, it creates a team of five stipendiary clergy, in addition to lay ministers.

The area of this benefice between the inner and outer ring road to the North of Norwich is served by three parishes (four churches). These were originally carved out of a relatively small geographical area, with parish boundaries tending to follow the radial roads so that parish shapes were roughly triangular.

In most of the parishes it is hard to see where 'the centre' would be – there are densely packed terraces or maisonette blocks with local shops and pubs dotted around. There are a number of schools in the area whose catchment areas do not correlate with parish boundaries. Sprowston (to the north of the ring road) is a much bigger parish, both in terms of population and area and is rapidly increasing in population through the building of large housing estates. There are two churches and a strong sense of team across the parish. There are some natural links between Sprowston and the Catton area, particularly in the northern part of Christ Church parish.

Who are we?

The Sprowston and North Norwich Team is an enthusiastic group of people who are passionate about growing our churches, enjoy working together and for whom collaboration is essential.

It is a new team for whom ways of working are still evolving, and we would welcome you to be part of that journey. We want to grow both inherited and new ways of being Church, rooted in and engaged with our local communities.

We aim to be generous, inclusive churches – spanning Liberal Catholic and Sacramental to Open Evangelical theology and worship.

The task

- Take a lead in building and developing our Team Ministry which is in its early stages.
- Help build a vision for the Team and Sprowston, which draws on our diverse strengths and gifts.
- Help us grow the mission and ministry of the church, and specifically among the new housing developments in Sprowston. You will be key player in the recruitment and support of a Pioneer Team Vicar who will take a lead in this outreach.
- Be actively involved in our ministry with schools, children and young people.
- Grow and oversee lay ministries including leading worship and pastoral care.
- Share with the rest of the staff team in taking occasional offices; making the most of these opportunities to offer pastoral care and connect with the wider community of Sprowston.
- Develop our administration and stewardship.
- Maintain and grow community links, sustaining a good working relationship with Sprowston Town Council.
- Undertake the role of Chaplain to the East of England Showmen's Guild or delegate to another member of the team. There is a showman's site in the Parish, and amongst other opportunities for outreach, the Chaplain conducts a number of baptisms, weddings and funerals for that community.

Person specification

- a person who values parish ministry, traditional models of church, and has the creativity and openness to do things differently.
- a person with the flexibility to lead and encourage formal and informal worship that is open and inclusive.
- a person with the skill and aptitude to collaborate with colleagues and enable them to thrive in their ministries – coaching/mentoring/supervision skills would be welcome.
- a good communicator and preacher
- a pastoral heart, who will be committed to the social life of the churches.
- Resilient with a 'can do' attitude.
- Well-organised, able to take the lead where needed and see things through.

Diocesan Vision and Strategy

The Diocese of Norwich's vision is to be

Transformed by Christ: Prayerful, Pastoral, Prophetic.

You can find out more information about this at

www.DofN.org/vision-and-priorities

Work is well underway on the nine priority areas that will help us live out and deliver this vision. The Team Rector will be someone who is excited by this vision and who is able to see ways in which it can be made a lived reality in the benefices.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is of vital importance, and the Sprowston and North Norwich team and PCCs are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We have adopted the CofE Safeguarding policy, and this is displayed in all our churches and other premises.

Ministry team

Vacant

Team Rector

Revd Dean Akrill

Team Vicar with responsibility for Sprowston

Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs

Team Vicar with responsibility for St Luke w. St Augustine's

Revd Tim Yau

Interim Associate Priest

Revd Carol Pritchard, SSM

Priest-in-Charge
St Mary Magdalene, Silver Road

Revd Lucy Dallas – PtO

Revd Melanie Hider – SSM with PtO

Revd Heather Wright – PtO

Revd Phil Charlesworth – PtO

Licensed Lay Ministers

Margaret Gray

Pastoral minister to
Christ Church New Catton

Stephanie Grand – PtO

Andy Hudson – PtO

About the Parishes

Sprowston



Sprowston is a suburban community, now designated a Town, on the northern edge of Norwich.

The Parish Church of St Mary & St Margaret was built in the 14th century in a rural location which is close to the former Sprowston Hall (now called “Sprowston Manor” and part of the Marriott Hotels chain). During the 19th century New Sprowston was built at the southern edge of the parish around the local brickworks. In the 1880s St Cuthbert’s Church was built as a chapel-of-ease to serve the new community, with a large Vicarage next to it.

During the 20th century Sprowston increased in population from 3,000 to currently around 20,000 and is still growing. There has been extensive housing construction at the northern edge of the parish and there are plans for further development. The ecclesiastical parish also includes the hamlet of Beeston St Andrew, which no longer has a church building.

There are eight schools: three infant, two junior, one primary (which acts as a hub), and a high school. Except for the high school there is full involvement with regular assemblies at least monthly, with some school visits to the churches to comply with their religious study syllabus. We would like to build on this. Special school events are held in the churches at Harvest and Christmas. The primary school is on a new estate with some social deprivation and financial difficulties. An ecumenical drop-in coffee morning is held there weekly and there are further opportunities for outreach. “Messy Church” takes place at Easter, Harvest and Christmas and these are publicised in the local schools and are well attended. There is some residual involvement with the high school, but it has been difficult to maintain an area for development there. In the city are the Norwich University of the Arts and Norwich City College, and on the southern outskirts there is the University of East Anglia.



The parish has a large elderly population living in bungalows, and there are two residential homes. Pastoral visits take place to these and the housebound. A weekly "Tuesday Break" coffee morning in the Parish Church and similar monthly Saturday event in St Cuthbert's hall provide valuable fellowship and pastoral support for Church members and the wider community.

Sprowston community facilities include a community centre (with another under 4 development), and a Senior Citizens' club. There are doctors' and dentists' surgeries, one public house, a sport & social club, cricket club and a golf course (at Sprowston Manor).

There are several parks and green spaces. A number of small shops are scattered around the parish, also two garden centres, a retail park, Lidl and large Tesco supermarkets.

The centre of Norwich, an historic city, is approximately two miles away. It has a thriving arts scene including the Norfolk & Norwich festival in May each year. There are cinemas and theatres, including an international receiving theatre (The Theatre Royal), and a dedicated puppet theatre.

There is also the Norwich City football ground. The Cathedral and Bishop's and Archdeacon's houses are less than two miles from the parish, which ensures that Diocesan events and activities are within easy reach.

Services

The pattern of Sunday services is currently: St Cuthbert's, 9.30am and St Mary & St Margaret's, 10.30am. Morning prayer is said on weekdays at St Cuthbert's, where there is also a regular mid-week Communion service.

Additional services are held throughout the year, for example Remembrance Sunday and Bereavement services, as well as less formal occasions such as Christingle and pet services. Post-Covid the number of baptisms has dropped from its 2019 level. A significant number of funerals are held in church and at the crematoria and burial sites; many of these services



take place at St Mary & St Margaret's, as the Town Cemetery is adjacent to the now closed churchyard. There are good relationships with the local funeral directors. Weddings also usually take place at St Mary & Margaret's, especially of couples who live on the new estate. There is an annual wedding preparation day, and contact is maintained with the couples.

Our Churches

Sprowston is part of the Sprowston and North Norwich Ministry Team, in the Deanery of Norwich North and the Archdeaconry of Norwich.

Both St Mary & St Margaret's and St Cuthbert's come from a broad church/central tradition, but each has its own unique identity. They provide homes for two distinctive congregations who share a common bond, often coming together for both worship and fellowship. We aim to be an inclusive, affirming and welcoming Church family, taking seriously the Diocesan vision to

be Prayerful, Pastoral and Prophetic, focusing on the needs of the local community and the wider world. Our Electoral Roll currently stands at 120. We have an open Baptism policy and do marry divorcees, after consultation with the Incumbent. Following whole-church preparation, this is a parish where some children have been admitted to Communion before Confirmation.

St Cuthbert's



At St Cuthbert's we are quite broad and diverse in terms of age, background, ethnicity and ability.

The worship is varied, with an organist and music group who play in a variety of styles both traditional and contemporary. The atmosphere is informal, and currently the clergy tend not to robe.

Sunday worship alternates between All-Age (typically led by lay members), Holy Communion, and a simpler Communion service with one-to-one prayers for healing and wholeness (which has been especially valued post-Covid). This family orientated, inclusive approach to worship has evolved considerably over the last twelve years and is open to further experimentation, with an emphasis on the varied needs of the congregation and wider community. On average Sunday attendance is about 40. We have recently experienced a modest increase in the number of families with young children attending worship here.

Most of the youth work takes place at St Cuthbert's: Brownies, Guides, Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs and Scouts meet on the premises, as does the Sprowston Youth Engagement Programme (SYEP), and there are links with these organisations.

St Cuthbert's church building has been adapted to form a flexible, multi-purpose space for worship and the performing arts.

The building complex also includes a side chapel, vestry, a large hall, kitchen, toilets, large annexe, and Benefice office. There is a small car park.

A property maintained by the Diocese is adjacent, and currently houses a member of the Benefice team.

St Mary & St Margaret's



St Mary & St Margaret's, the Parish Church, is traditional Anglican with an organist and a small voluntary choir.

Music has been important and well supported in the past. At present the regular Sunday service alternates between a Sung Eucharist and Morning Prayer, often lead by our Lay Ministers. It generally attracts an older congregation than St Cuthbert's, is well attended and appreciated and has enjoyed modest growth in recent years. Average Sunday attendance is about 40.

We would welcome a new Rector who would encourage gentle innovation which is sympathetic to the needs of a mostly older congregation and all who seek a welcoming spiritual home, with an emphasis on fellowship and pastoral care.

Because of its tradition and beautiful medieval architecture, St Mary & St Margaret's plays host to the majority of weddings, baptisms and funerals, and is an important community focus for civic events such as Remembrance Sunday.

The building has a large Victorian vestry/meeting room, and a kitchen and toilet extension was added in the 1990s. There is a public car park nearby. There are currently plans to improve and extend the Churchyard footpaths, and accommodate wedding and funeral vehicles within the church grounds. The Team Vicar's house was acquired by the Diocese in 2008 and is about ten minutes' walk from this church.

Activities within the Parish

We enjoy a good relationship with other denominations in the area. Our clergy regularly have lunch with colleagues from the local Methodist Church, Chapel (Free Church), and Roman Catholic Church.

As well as coming together for united services at key times of the year, our congregations have worked in partnership on a number of outreach projects. These include Café Church, the Garden Church study and prayer group, and coffee mornings held at a school on the recent housing development.

Study groups meet for periods throughout the year, most notably in Lent, focusing on everything from mental wellbeing, Art and The Bible, the prayer course, our response to the environmental crisis, and inclusive welcome.

At other times of the year we have held discussion groups based on that Sunday's Lectionary readings, and a number of our members have hosted prayer groups.

We have also held Christian Basics courses, and Confirmation preparation drawing on material from a number of sources including Emmaus and Garden Church. As well as pre-prepared courses we have been fortunate to benefit from original material especially prepared for our local context, and we are always open to fresh ideas and new insights.

Of particular importance to us has been to the need to engage spiritually with people from our local community. Our former Pioneer Curate led prayer and study groups on the new housing development.



Our Team Vicar opened a "Pub Church" at a public house near to St Cuthbert's, an extension of his work in the Arts. This welcomed people who for a variety of reasons did not feel comfortable with traditional church. Post-Covid it has proved difficult to maintain these projects, and we would welcome fresh ideas and new directions.

The Sprowston branch of the Mothers' Union hold monthly meetings at St Cuthbert's.

The social aspect of the Church is very important to our congregations and is seen as an integral part of maintaining our Church family and reaching out to the community.

There is a desire to see this built upon, through fêtes, meals, coffee mornings, drama productions etc, and for the incumbent to be actively involved.

Sprowston Parish Players is a drama group established by the Church but involving both Church members and the wider community. It rehearses and performs in St Cuthbert's, usually presenting pantomimes, plays and musical events.

Hellesdon & Sprowston Brass is a lively and thriving local band which sometimes participates in worship, as does the Norwich Community

Choir, particularly at Christmas and on Remembrance Sunday.

Bertie's Babes is a thriving toddler group, instigated by the Church which meets weekly in St. Cuthbert's main hall (and also holds monthly church services). A Lunch Club for the elderly, initially set up by the Church and now run by volunteers, also meets weekly in the main hall.



St Luke's with St Augustine's

About us

St Luke's and St Augustine's describe themselves as:

- Two branches of the same family who love to worship God but in different ways.
- Exploring the Word of God is an important part of our worship.
- Our churches include those exploring faith as well as those who have been Christians for many years (and people at all stages in-between).
- We don't wear robes and we don't have pews.
- We see our faith as living, changing and evolving as we seek to connect with God, each other and others outside our immediate community.
- We love to use our gifts and talents for God both in church and in the community, many of us are involved in all aspects of leading worship.
- We have a lot of questions – we don't pretend we know all the answers!



Leadership

The Revd Graham Kirk-Spriggs is our Team Vicar, who has been in post for three years. Both churches have considerable lay leadership who take an active role in leading and preaching. We also have Revd Heather Cracknell

and Revd Liz Cannon who worship at St Augustine's and have PTO. We are two churches, but one parish. We have a joint PCC and two DCC's (District Church Councils) that handle the day-to-day governance of each Church individually.



St Luke's Church Centre

Built in the late 1980s and opened in 1990, it is multi-purpose and includes a worship space, function rooms, and we are currently in partnership with the YMCA who rent our space from us. There has been a church on this site since 1915, after much prayer and fundraising the old church was demolished.

We try to embody 'a safe space to explore faith and spirituality, holding a diversity of views without judgement'. The worship is open, relaxed and low church in style with a music group and technical support.

The Church is hired by a wide range of groups from ME Support to a Local Choir. We have recently renovated our kitchen and are still discerning how this can be more utilised for the local community.

We are a welcoming community largely made up of mature Christians, but some newer Christians too.

We are good at developing individual spiritual growth. We try to be an inclusive community where people are welcomed, befriended, supported and not judged. We believe that by following Jesus' example and teachings, we can practically and spiritually demonstrate the power of his teaching by what we say and do.

St Luke's is a member of Inclusive Church and has a number of LGBT+ people that are part of our community. We are also part of the 'Norwich Inclusive Churches Network' which offers a roving Eucharist for the LGBT+ Community once a month.

The environment is important to us. We were awarded Bronze Eco Church Status in 2018. Our energy (where possible) comes from renewable sources through Eco-Tricity.

Some thoughts about St Luke's

We asked 'what do you value about St Luke's?' Here are some responses:

"We are all very friendly. Just one big happy family and are concerned for each other."

"As a new Christian and a member of the LGBT+ Community, I have been welcomed, included and thoroughly made to feel part of the St Luke's family. I've tried other churches but none of them feel like home, St Luke's does."

"I've been going to church since 1973, St Luke's is fit for purpose and the best Church I've ever been to."

St Augustine's Church

St Augustine's Church has been meeting in the Church Hall since the Medieval Church was made redundant in the 1990's.

The Old Church is in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust, with which the parish has a good relationship. We use the Medieval church occasionally for services, such as Midnight Mass. Our hall is also used by the community for lots of different activities. We see this as an act of service for the surrounding area. We run a lunch club and have events throughout the year that we invite the local community to.

We are a welcoming and open-hearted church. We have a contemplative approach to worship, with a mixture of Taizé, Iona and Celtic Spiritualities. Our music group uses a blend of traditional and more contemporary music. Silence and space are important to us. We see ourselves as a spiritual oasis for those who come.



A high proportion of our congregation are neuro-diverse. We encourage lay-leadership of services and have many congregation members who both lead and preach.

We are a church that encourages people in their faith, and we welcome people whoever they are, and however much they would like to engage.

Some Thoughts About St Augustine's

"St Augustine's conforms to the basics of the Church of England but has an interest in Celtic Christianity and the mystics, particularly Julian of Norwich. This is reflected in our liturgy and worship generally, and we are fortunate in having a number of AWAs in our congregation who are able to facilitate this, as well as some excellent musicians. We are non-judgmental and encouraging, and we focus on the love of Jesus." **Tim**

"I value our gentle contemplative style of worship with its' Celtic roots and emphasis on listening to God. Also, the willingness we have as a community to respect each other's journeys, holding difference of opinion and giftings in love whilst valuing them and embracing paradox. I enjoy our eclectic use of music in worship and the celebration of differing gifts and talents in this respect." **Carrie**

"What I really value about St Augustine's:

- *Worship isn't priest-centred, but God-centred. There's Not a lot of dogma.*
- *Humility and mutual openness shown by attenders. Everyone is encouraged to be gentle and listening.*
- *Worship is often a time of rest rather than hard effort and there are no particular expectations laid on attenders. Not to say that there are not challenges from time to time.*
- *The strong sense that we are all (corporately and individually) on a journey of faith, however far along the road, and that we all can support and learn from each other. From week to week, it feels more important that we are united where we are going (i.e. direction) than where we are (i.e. place).*
- *Not having a crumbling medieval edifice to look after is a huge relief!"* **Matt**

Christ Church, New Catton

At Christ Church, we are committed to loving Jesus, loving one another, and to sharing the message and love of Jesus with those around us.

Christ Church has a small welcoming, friendly congregation. Worship alternates between Common Worship Holy Communion Services on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month and a more informal Service of the Word on 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays.

Midweek activities include an annual Lent Course and a monthly prayer meeting to pray for the church and parish. In addition, a monthly service is held in a local dementia home.

Many of the congregation have faithfully worshipped at Christ Church for decades and can recall when it was a thriving family church in the evangelical tradition. They all have a great loyalty to their church and most church members attend faithfully each week.

Whilst many church members are over 80, they are keen to support their church and serve in various ways including helping to maintain the church grounds, serving tea and coffee, reading and leading the intercessions.

Since the retirement of a long-standing incumbent in 2016, the church has experienced ministerial changes and extended periods of interregnum. LLM Margaret Gray was licensed as Pastoral Minister for Christ Church in August 2021 with responsibility for leading the congregation at Christ Church. Margaret chairs the PCC and offers pastoral support through visits, phone calls and by distributing Holy Communion to the housebound.





Services of the Word are led by Margaret whilst Holy Communion services are the responsibility of Revd Phil Charlesworth, a SSM who been supporting the church as Eucharistic Minister since December 2022.

Christ Church is centrally located in the Catton part of the team and consists of a spacious Victorian building with an adjacent Church Centre. The Church Centre needs refurbishment but is well-used by community groups. Although church membership is declining because church members are becoming increasingly elderly, the Church Centre offers potential as a base for outreach.

For many years, the church has relied on rental income from the Church Centre to help meet its parish share. The need to carry out essential maintenance has meant that the church is currently unable to meet its full parish share.

There is a desire to grow the church and increase links with families but with an ageing congregation, opportunities to do so are limited. The PCC has agreed a vision statement that recognises our desire to grow in our own discipleship and in our welcome and outreach to those around us.

Our key aims are to:

- Grow as disciples of Jesus Christ
- Grow our welcome to newcomers
- Grow new believers
- Grow our links with families

Currently, the church hosts a Book Swap Coffee morning in the Church Centre that is well-attended by the local community. A weekly Friendship Group attracts a small number of regular attendees.

Christ Church has good links with the Brownie Pack that meets in the Church Centre. Many of the Brownies and their families have joined us for informal services on Mothering Sunday, Harvest and Christingle. Christingle, in particular, was well attended by the community.

St Mary Magdalene with St James

The parish of St Mary Magdalene with St James has a population of some 6,600 people. The population is younger than typical for the deanery and the diocese, as more than 50% are aged 15-44.

Levels of education closely match national figures. Religious affiliation is untypical for the diocese, with more people reporting no religion than Christian faith. There are approximately twice the number of people with non-Christian religious affiliation as typical for the diocese. 7% of residents are BAME compared to 4% for the diocese. 1000 households live in social rented properties, 900 in privately rented stock and there are 1450 owner-occupied households. The new development on the Jarrold site next to the river is in the parish.

We have a regular congregation of between 30 to 40 people who are mainly in the 60-80 age group. Currently, our priest in charge is a self-supporting minister who works 3 days a week, lives in her own house and the vicarage is rented out. There are four other priests with PTO, two are retired incumbents and two are OLMs, who are all involved in taking the services and some are involved in pastoral care. The PCC has 10 members, including the priest in charge and two church wardens.



In common with other parts of North Norwich the parish lacks a 'town centre'. Our church hall is one of a number of community venues used by politically or socially active residents and it is used by a variety of local groups in the community. The hall becomes a Polling Station during local and national elections. Church activities include a café, run by members of the congregation, for those who live with, and support people with dementia.

St Mary Magdalene church was once described as 'a warm place with open doors.' This remains true to its description, especially since new heating was installed several years ago, and the church community continue to be welcoming and inclusive!



The west end of the church is currently undergoing repairs deemed pressing by our quinquennial report. We are able to cover the cost of these repairs, but the report also highlighted further, less urgent, issues for which we do not have sufficient resources.

Worship follows a liberal catholic tradition, with a 9.30am Sung Eucharist every Sunday with vestments and incense and a 10.00am Eucharist every Wednesday; Morning Prayer is said every day Monday to Saturday. We join as a benefice each Tuesday to say morning prayer, visiting each church in rotation for a month. The sacrament is reserved according to Diocesan guidelines.

Services are well-supported by lay involvement, with church members serving at the altar, reading lessons and writing intercessions for services, as well as teams who welcome visitors on a Sunday morning, and serve refreshments after the service.

There is a small (confidential) prayer group, who meet to pray for those in crisis, a flower arranging group and a church magazine is produced monthly.

St Mary Magdalene is well supported with musical accompaniment on the organ, and a small music group who occasionally

sing at special services. We use the Ancient and Modern Anglican 'hymns and songs for refreshing worship' book and occasionally Mission Praise.

As part of the newly-formed Sprowston and North Norwich Team Ministry, St Mary Magdalene looks forward with the other churches to sharing the good news of the gospel together. On Maundy Thursday this year we hosted the Eucharist of the Last Supper, with Foot Washing and Watch of Prayer for the other churches in this benefice.

We have enjoyed getting together for a Lent Group, a post-service Discussion Group and a Summer Group this year; we met once a week for a month each time to discuss a bible passage or the sermon, to explore our responses and to pray together. We are also in the early stages of developing a pastoral team using the Diocesan APA materials for the training and we have been granted funding by Norfolk County Council to set up a weekly Stay and Play to serve the community.

The church community at St Mary Magdalene looks forward to the appointment of a team rector/priest who will nourish and encourage us in working together with the other parishes in the team, whilst honouring our long-held tradition of sacramental worship.

The Vicarage

The Vicarage is 62 Avocet Rise, Norwich, NR7 8ES.

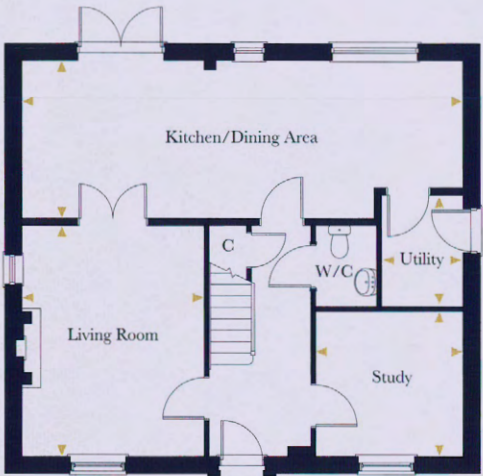
This property is a modern home recently built on the Manor Park Development by Hopkins Homes. It is centrally located for the parish of Sprowston and has an EPC rating of C making it very energy efficient.

It has generously proportioned accommodation and has been the subject of much improvement in recent years.

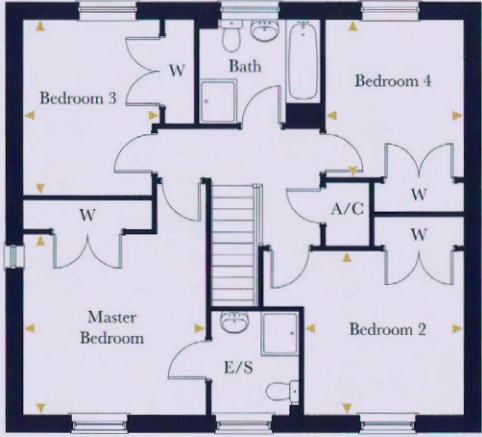


The Oxburgh

A 4 bedroom detached home



Ground Floor



First Floor