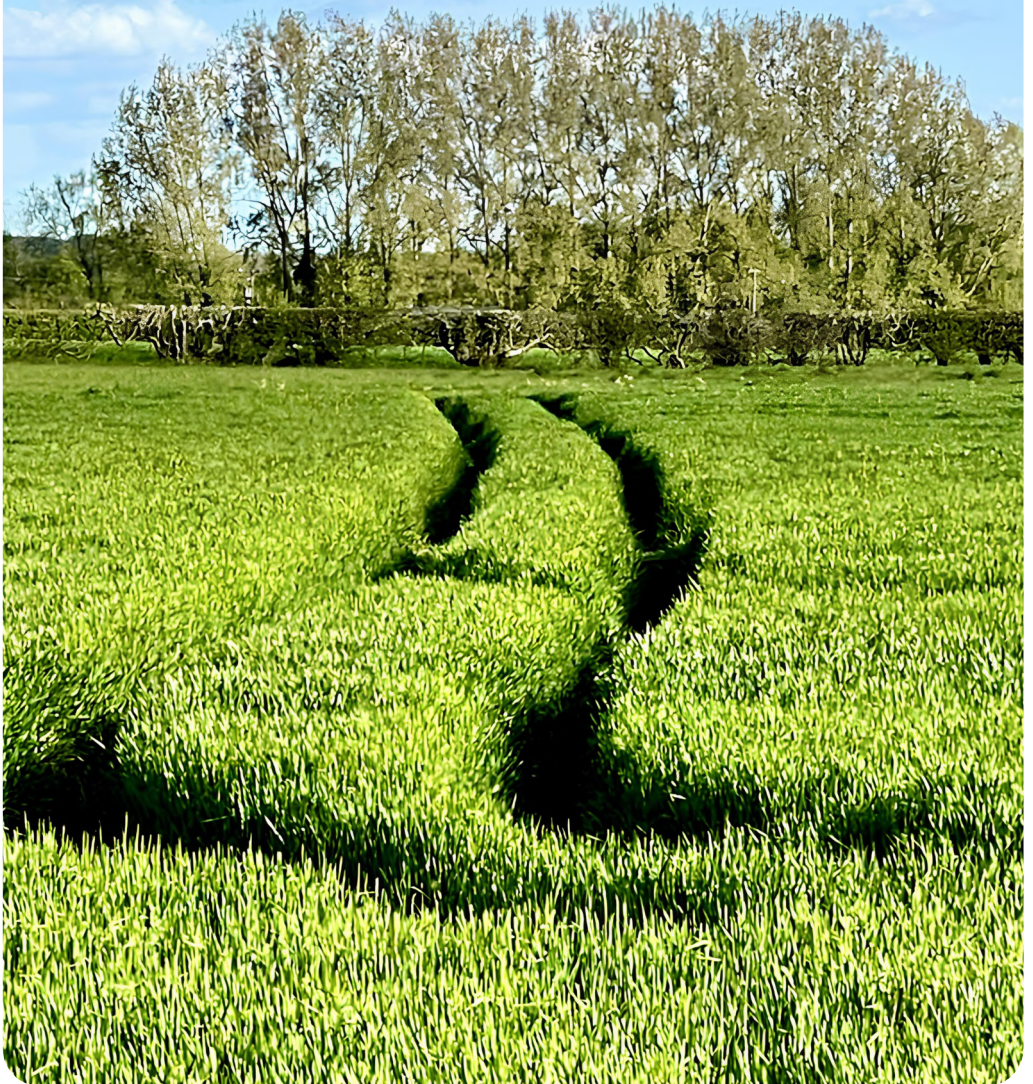




WISSEY VALLEY  
& GRIMSHOE  
BENEFICES

# NEWS FROM THE PEWS

July 2026



## WELCOME TO THE JULY EDITION OF 'NEWS FROM THE PEWS'

Let us be thankful for our parishes in Wissey Valley and Grimshoe

Golden sunlight floods the sapphire sky, birdsong drifts on the warm breeze, reeds rustle as the dragonfly's dance, and the bees hum a summer song for us.

Evenings linger below a purple sky. That is our July.



Look what we have for you in this month's issue!

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We try to be open and transparent for the whole community and we would welcome your feedback about this magazine  
[beneficeneewsuk@gmail.com](mailto:beneficeneewsuk@gmail.com)



If you'd like to receive the next issue of your magazine digitally instead of in print

Scan the QR code on the left or visit

<https://news-from-the-pews.kit.com/82de9e2841>

# News from the Parishes

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## *Admission of Churchwardens 2026*

8 of our WVG Benefice Churchwardens along with their supporters - parishioners from their church and family, joined 300 other churchwardens from the diocesan Ely Cathedral on Sunday 14th June for a service of Choral Evensong and Admission. It was a moving service, the music was wonderful and sermon by the Archdeacon of Cambridge was particularly fitting and inspiring. The service can be watched on Ely Diocese YouTube channel

The remaining 3 churchwardens were admitted by Archdeacon Richard Harlow at the joint Benefice PCC meeting in All Saints Church, Whittington on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June.

Both events marked the beginning of our Churchwarden's tenure for the coming year, affirming their commitment to serve, and receiving encouragement for the year ahead.

Churchwardens have a unique and valued ministry within the life of the Church. As the Bishop's officers in the parish, they work closely with the clergy and PCC to support worship, mission, pastoral care, and the day-to-day life of the church.

They also share responsibility for the care of our church buildings and for ensuring that our churches remain welcoming places of prayer and community.

We are deeply grateful to those who have accepted this responsibility on behalf of our parishes.

Their willingness to serve is a gift to us all, and we thank them for the time, energy, and commitment they give so generously. Please keep our Churchwardens in your prayers as they undertake this important ministry.



# Being a Baptism Co-ordinator

With Tammy Wright and Susan Parker-Smith



Tammy Wright

## What are the biggest challenges you face when coordinating baptismal services?

Tammy:

Last minute baptisms are not a favourite - I often have families that would like one in a few weeks and this is virtually impossible when liaising with Church wardens and Vicars.

Susan:

The biggest challenge I face, once I've been given the families contact details, is getting them to reply to me to set a date to meet them.

## Can adults be baptised?

Tammy and Susan:

Definitely - you are never too old! The preparation is a little different but all are welcome.

## If people are not regular attendees to church - would the church still baptise them?

Tammy and Susan:

We are happy to baptise anyone who wants to start their faith journey and be welcomed into the Christian family.

## How do you prepare parents and godparents for a baptism?

Tammy:

I start with email or telephone conversations; I then organise a face-to-face meeting. Sometimes extra meetings are arranged if wanted.

Susan:

I meet them, chat about family, ask why they want a baptism, gently correcting false assumptions like 'so they can get married in church', we read through the service sheet and I point out how important the responses are and I answer any questions.

## Does a godparent have to be baptized to be a godparent?

Tammy:

Godparents are required to be baptized (christened) and ideally confirmed. However, if someone is not baptized, they can often still be involved as "supporting friends" or "sponsors" in the service. The Vicar will offer advice on this.

Susan:

Yes, but I offer to have them baptised first or, provided 2 are, say the others can be 'sponsors' but no one at the service will see them treated differently.

### **How do you support families who have little previous experience with the church?**

Tammy:

Informal meetings are a great way to support and introduce the church to people. Meeting at the church is amazing, to show them around and when not in a service it is less daunting. It is often after the baptism that more questions are asked and a gentle support is given to come back again.

Susan:

I encourage folks to meet me, and hopefully the churchwarden and clergy if available, in church to look around, see the font and where they will sit etc. It's especially important if it's a young child rather than a baby being baptised as the font can look scary if you can't see inside!

### **Given the unpredictability of babies and children, what has been the funniest moment you have encountered?**

Tammy:

I have heard of a dummy falling into the holy water and for one anxious child their toy dinosaur was baptised first to show them there was nothing to be worried about.

Susan:

The vicar baptising his granddaughter and letting her splash her feet in the font. The youngster who burst into tears and hid when the water was poured into the font...her mum casually said 'Oh, she's terrified of water!'

### **What moments in baptisms or children's ministry have been especially meaningful to you?**

Tammy:

When I see a family grow and they ask to have their new babies baptised .

When I meet families in the community who ask me about baptism or my faith and then later they choose to start their or their families journey into faith - this doesn't have to be a baptism but seeing them in church is lovely.

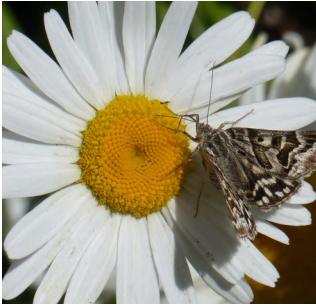
Susan:

When a family organising baby baptism, having had our meeting, asked to have adults baptised too and hearing that they joined their local church



Susan Parker-Smith

# *Beachamwell Open Gardens*



Beachamwell held the first Open Gardens of 2026 on 7th June. A total of 14 gardens were open, and lunches and afternoon tea and cakes were served from the village hall. The day was blessed with fine, dry weather, and visitors came from as far away as Lavenham, Thetford and Norwich.

We estimate that some 300 visitors enjoyed the day, which raised a record sum of money for the church, up on last year's total. As well as opening gardens we ran the now annual voluntary scarecrow making competition, won this year by a scarecrow on a parachute, in a tree.

Thank you to all from the benefice who were able to visit Beachamwell and add to such an enjoyable day. Next year we will be the last Open Garden, on the last Sunday in June 2027, do come again.



# *Boughton Open Gardens*

We were blessed with a warm and dry day on Sunday 14th June for our annual Open Gardens. As well as eight beautiful gardens to enjoy there were also displays of classic motorbikes, WW2 vehicles and classic cars.



There was floral bracelet making and other activities for the children, a tombola, a gardening and plant stall, book sales and even wildfowl seed to feed the ducks on our village pond.



The alpacas are always a popular attraction at the event and draw in the crowds, and along with lunches, refreshments and a table overflowing with homemade cakes in the church we hope that there was something for everybody to enjoy.

Thank you to everyone who helped to make the afternoon so enjoyable. Your support has helped to raise vital funds for All Saints Church.  
Liz Simons.



# Wereham Open Gardens

**A most successful day!**

**The predicted rain showers stayed away and a gentle breeze was most welcome.**

Over a hundred visitors from near and far enjoyed looking round our nine varied gardens. One of the best things about opening your garden is that you meet so many lovely, appreciative people. As always, their comments about the gardens, the gardeners and the village itself were very complimentary.

Once again the lunches and teas served in the village hall throughout the afternoon received top marks for both quality and quantity.

To those kind folk who opened their gardens and all those involved in the

smooth running of the day, our sincerest thanks.

The publicity, posters, printing, catering, baking, meeting and greeting, running the raffle, tombola and serving Pimm's all rely on the goodwill, time and energy of village volunteers and without them Open Gardens could not function. Our grateful thanks to you all.  
Wereham PCC.



# Barton Bendish Open Gardens

It's not usually necessary to pray for cooler weather in June but, as Open Gardens approached and the temperature climbed to well over 30 degrees, we began to worry that people would stay indoors and miss one of West Norfolk's finest days out.

This year 15 gardens were open, and we were joined for the first time by The Old Workshop, where various beauty treatments are on offer and where the management are very keen to be part of a very close community.

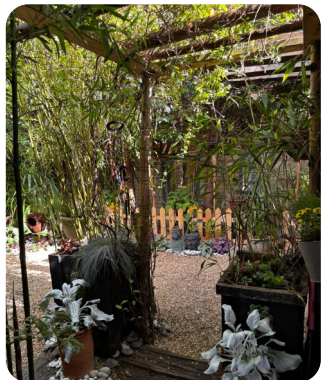


As ever, the roving public enjoyed a Pimms Tent, a huge collection of Classic Cars, delicious cakes, superb catering and wonderful company.



As ever, visitors commented on what a remarkable and hospitable village Barton Bendish is. We are lucky to have such a dedicated PCC who organise this event for the benefit of St Andrew's. Their small army of regular volunteers must be congratulated too.

Another memorable day.  
Andrew Stephen.



# New Bishop of Ely

**R**ight Reverend Sarah Elizabeth Clark was installed as the 70th Bishop of Ely during a special service held at Ely Cathedral on 21st June.



Friends, family, clergy, lay leaders, education and business leaders and colleagues from civic society across the Diocese and beyond joined Bishop Sarah for the celebration.

Bishop Sarah swore oaths with her hand on an ancient copy of the Gospels from the late sixth century.



Bishop Sarah strikes the door three times with her Pastoral Staff as a powerful symbol of humility, servitude, and pilgrimage. By asking for entry, the new leader demonstrates that they are entering not as a harsh master, but as a humble servant and shepherd of the flock



The bishop was questioned by youth from the diocese, to declare their identity and why they have come.



## A Message from Bishop Sarah

I have been met with such warmth and kindness since my appointment was announced and received support from many, for which I am really grateful.

I am so glad to finally be here in Ely Diocese and full of hope for all that lies ahead for us as we serve Christ together.



# Nancy's Choir

We are looking for singers who can commit to rehearsing between now and Nancy's arrival, to train together as a Benefice Choir at the Investiture Service.



Sister Act - Touchstone

The Service will be officiated by the Bishop of Ely, +Sarah Clark and held at St George's Church Methwold, led by Organist Chris Young.


We anticipate the Service will occur within the next few months – so practising together is key.

You don't have to be a member of the PCC to be in the choir – we welcome any congregation, parishioner or villager in the benefices of Wissey Valley and Grimshoe to join; you just have to enjoy singing and be able to commit to regular practices.

If you have interest please email the administrator at [wisseygrimshoebenefice@gmail.com](mailto:wisseygrimshoebenefice@gmail.com) with your name and also a contact number.

## Eco Church Support Zoom drop-in

For this session, we are delighted to be joined by Jacob Kidd (Environment Group at Great St Mary's) who will talk about setting up an Eco Church committee. Then Rev'd Imogen Nay (Bishop's Advisor on Climate) will address responding to some of the trickier questions in the Eco Church survey, in particular in the lifestyle section.

 Tuesday 14 July

 6-7pm  Zoom

 Register here: [elydatabase.org/events](https://elydatabase.org/events)

 The Church of England  
Diocese of Ely

 ECO CHURCH  
A N A ROCHA UK PROJECT

# Poetry Corner

To smell the thrilling-sweet and rotten  
Unforgettable, unforgotten

River-smell, and hear the breeze  
Sobbing in the little trees.

Say, do the elm-clumps greatly stand Still  
guardians of that holy land?

The chestnuts shades, in reverend dream,  
The yet unacademic stream?

Is dawn a secret shy and cold  
Anadyomene, silver-gold?

And sunset still a golden sea  
From Haslingfield to Madingley?

And after, ere the night is born,  
Do hares come out about the corn?

Oh, is the water sweet and cool,  
Gentle and brown, above the pool?

And laughs the immortal river still  
Under the mill, under the mill?

Say, is there Beauty yet to find?  
And Certainty? And Quiet kind?

Deep meadows yet, for to forget  
The lies, and truths, and pain? ...oh! Yet

Stands the Church clock at ten to three?  
And is there honey still for tea?

Message from  
Rev'd Joan Horan

Included in her parting gift from  
Grimshoe Benefice,  
Joan was given a couple of roses.  
Here is an update on their progress!

*“Rambling Rector and Sweet Child  
of Mine are now thriving in the  
front garden here in Fakenham.*

*Eventually I will see the Rector  
rambling cover up all the wall  
which will be fantastic.”*

Joan



## Help Wanted

for Brunch Church,  
on Sunday 26th July, 11am.  
Boughton, All Saints

If you can help  
with the cooking and preparing,  
please let Pippa know.

Full English Breakfast  
with coffee, juice, toast.  
Followed by a reading and chat.



# Strawberry Afternoon Tea

All Saints Church, Wretton  
Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July at 2pm  
*(No Coffee Morning at 10am)*



With Prize Raffle

*Please come along and enjoy some treats!*

Call Helaine on 01366 500165,  
Anita on 07815 593065 or  
Elaine on 07770 896607  
for more details

All proceeds to Church funds

# Pop-Up Café

Barton Bendish Village Hall  
(PE33 9GF)



## Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 12 pm – 2.30 pm



Drop by for lunch or afternoon tea and  
have a chat with friends.

Everyone welcome. No need to book.



The profits from the July  
Pop-up Café will be given to  
**Anglian Vipers Wheelchair  
Rugby League**



[bartonbendishevents@gmail.com](mailto:bartonbendishevents@gmail.com)

## St Andrew's - West Dereham

**Family  
Breakfast  
Church**  
Sunday  
26th July  
9.30am

Songs

Crafts

Breakfast

Story

**Everyone Welcome**  
**Free breakfast from 9.30am**  
**Just come along!**



## Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2026

### Riverside



With Refreshments and a Tombola

Join us at 4pm at Grange Farm,  
Whittington PE33 9TF

///delight.quality.elevates

**Everyone is welcome.**

*Please bring a chair if you are able.*

Please send hymn requests by 26<sup>th</sup> July to  
Susan by email: [wvbsusan@gmail.com](mailto:wvbsusan@gmail.com) or  
phone Elaine on 07770 896607



20260610RiversideET

**Wisbech & West Norfolk  
Churches  
Festival  
Fortnight**

**27 July to  
9 August**

*A celebration of our wonderful churches,  
bringing communities together through  
shared events, and open doors.*



**Feltwell, St. Mary's**

Art exhibition of pictures by our local school children that were entered into the Norfolk Churches Trust Schools Art Competition.

The pictures will be on display for the whole fortnight.

Our coffee mornings will be on Wednesdays 29th July and 5th August.

**Northwold, St Andrew's**

Church history display and close-up photos of the angel roof in St Andrew's for the last two weeks in July.

From 4th August each afternoon, there will be extra displays and some one to show visitors round and offer tea and cakes.



**St George's  
Church  
Methwold**

**COFFEE  
MORNING**

*Every 2nd and 4th  
Tuesday of the Month  
from 10 till 12 noon at the  
Church*



**ST ANDREW'S CHURCH  
NORTHWOLD**



**COFFEE MORNING**

**JOIN US IN THE CHURCH**

**ON THURSDAY 16<sup>th</sup> JULY**

**AT 10.30am**



**TEA & COFFEE**

**HOMEMADE CAKES**

**RAFFLE**

**BOOKS & JIGSAWS**





THE COMMUNITY SPACE IN  
ST. MARY'S CHURCH, FELTWELL



## QUIZ NIGHT

Saturday  
1<sup>st</sup> August  
7.30 pm



St. Mary's Church, Feltwell

£8 to Include Supper

Please bring you own plates, cutlery, glasses, drinks and nibbles.

All proceeds to Church Clock Fund

FMI Contact Chris Parker

[cmparker@talktalk.net](mailto:cmparker@talktalk.net)

07910 195360

### THE FOOD PANTRY

open to all villages in the Benefice.

Tuesdays 9 – 10am,

Wednesdays 9 – 11.30 am,

Saturdays 10 – 11 am

### COMMUNITY COFFEE MORNING

Wednesdays 9 – 11.30am

### TECH SKILLS

coaches from Norfolk County Council offering advice about technology

Thursday 2nd July 10am – 12pm

BEATLES - THE WHO - LED ZEPPELIN - DEEP PURPLE - SMALL FACES & MORE

## BRITISH ROCK EXPERIENCE

**TICKETS**

**METHWOLD  
ST GEORGE'S CHURCH**

**SAT 18TH JULY**  
**£15 ENTRY - 7:30PM START**

[WWW.PORRIDGEPOTPROMOTIONS.COM](http://WWW.PORRIDGEPOTPROMOTIONS.COM) TEL: 01366 - 727168

## Family Fun Day

Sat 4 July - 1.30 - 5.00pm

St Mary's Church, Weeting

- Treasure Hunt 3.00pm
- Dog Show: Bring your pet pooch Prizes and Rewards 2.00pm
- \*Prizes\* \*Raffle\* \*Book Sale\* \*Refreshments\*
- Horse Racing: Activity for all the family 1.30 - 5.00pm
- Suggested Donations £1.00 per activity

For the latest Service list please go to A Church Near You, Details on back page.

## Sunday 5th July - Trinity 5

Feltwell	St Mary's	9:15am	Service of the Word	JT
Methwold	St George's	9:30am	Holy Communion	Rev RB
Wretton	All Saints	11am	Holy Communion	Rev KW
Weeting	St Mary's	11am	Service of the Word	JT
Wereham	St Margaret's	6pm	Evensong	TM

## Saturday 11th July

Beachamwell	St Mary's	11am	Service of the Word	TM
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## Sunday 12th July - Trinity 6

Hockwold	St James'	9.15am	Service of the Word	MP
Methwold	St George's	9:30am	Service of the Word	DM
Whittington	Christ-Church	9:30am	Service of the Word	TM
West Dereham	St Andrew's	9:30am	A Celtic Morning	JT
Boughton	All Saints	11am	Holy Communion	Rev PB
Northwold	St Andrew's	11am	Service of the Word	MP

## Sunday 19th July - Trinity 7

Feltwell	St Mary's	9:15am	Holy Communion	Rev KW
Methwold	St George's	9:30am	Holy Communion	Rev RB
Wretton	All Saints	9:30am	Coffee Church	TM
Weeting	St Mary's	11am	Holy Communion	Rev KW
Wereham	St Margaret's	11am	Holy Communion	Rev PB
Barton Bendish	St Andrew's	5pm	Evensong	Rev RB

## Sunday 26th July - Trinity 8

Hockwold	St James'	9:15am	Holy Communion	Rev RF
West Dereham	St Andrew's	9:30am	Breakfast Church	JT/MP
Boughton	All Saints	11am	Brunch Church	Rev PB
Northwold	St Andrew's	11am	Holy Communion	Rev RF

# Week Day Services

## Morning Prayer

Tuesday		
Hockwold	St James'	9:30am
Wednesday		
Wretton/SF	AllSaint's	9:00am
Thursday		
Methwold	St George's	8:30am

## Evening Prayer

Tuesday		
Methwold	St George's	5pm
Wednesday		
online Compline		
<a href="https://bit.ly/WisseyValleyCompline">https://bit.ly/WisseyValleyCompline</a>		
		5:30pm

## Holy Communion

1st and 3rd Thursdays (3rd July Cancelled, 16th July)  
 Boughton All Saint's 10am

Tuesday Prayer Group 5pm  
<https://bit.ly/WVBTuesdayPrayer>

Sunday Online  
 Welcome to our Online Church

Every Sunday at 6:30pm  
<https://bit.ly/OneinChristJesus>

Rev PB	Rev Pippa Blackall	MP	Michael Poole ALM
Rev RB	Rev Ray Burman	CM	Chris Murray ALM
Rev KW	Rev Ken Waters		
Rev RF	Rev Richard Fordham	JT	Janet Tanton LLM
Rev IS	Rev Ian Savage	DM	Diane Mantle LLM

## Bible Readings - July

Day	Old Testament	New Testament	Gospel
5th	Genesis 24:34-38,42-49,58-67	Romans 7:15-25a	Matthew 11:16-19,25-30
12th	Genesis 25:19-34	Romans 8:1-11	Matthew 13:1-9,18-23
19th	Genesis 28:10-19a	Romans 8:12-25	Matthew 13:24-30,36-43
26th	Genesis 29:15-28	Romans 8:26-39	Matthew 13:31-33,44-52



*“I’m not sure about that, Joyce.”*

## Book Suggestions for July

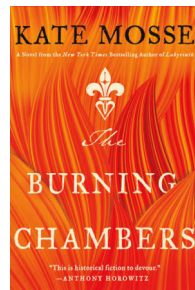


An Almighty Passion - by Alan Hargrave  
Recommended by Janet Tanton

Alan Hargrave has led an interesting life: an agricultural missionary in South America, vicar of a church in a deprived area of Cambridge and later serving as Canon Missioner at Ely Cathedral. The book contains stories from his life and ministry. Some are joyful, others will move you to tears. All of them remind us that God is always with us.

The Burning Chambers by Kate Mosse  
Recommended by Karen Rodgers

Set in Carcassonne in 1562 on the eve of the wars that will tear France apart, this book reveals a chance encounter between Minou Joubert, a young Catholic girl and Piet Reydon, a Huguenot, who profoundly reshapes her destiny. A gripping story of religion, love, betrayal, war and conspiracy.





**1 Barton Bendish, St Andrew's,**  
Linda Webster    linntim@btinternet.com

**2 Beachamwell, St Mary the Virgin**  
Peter Berendt    petesout@hotmail.com

**3 West Dereham, St Andrew's,**  
Open daily 10am - 4pm  
Graeme Pressley    graemepressley@live.co.uk

**4 Boughton, All Saints.**  
churchwardenboughton@gmail.com

**5 Wreham, St Margaret of Antioch**  
Open daily 10am - 3pm  
Karen Rodgers    karen\_rodgers@live.co.uk

**6 Wretton, All Saints with Stoke Ferry**  
open daily  
Anita Horgan    anita.tyler@hotmail.co.uk  
Elaine Taylor    etelainetaylor1@gmail.com

**7 Whittington, Christ-Church**  
Elaine Taylor    etelainetaylor1@gmail.com

**8 Methwold, St George**  
Open every weekend  
Alan Burbridge    alanburbridge@btinternet.com  
Paul Smith    paulsmith50@msn.com

**9 Northwold, St Andrew's**  
Open daily 9am - Dusk  
Ann Howarth    ann15howarth@gmail.com

**10 Feltwell, St Mary the Virgin**  
Open daily 9am - 4pm  
Christine Parker  
grimshoebeneficeoffice@gmail.com

**11 Hockwold cum Wilton, St James**  
Sue Annear    sue.annear@gmail.com

**12 Weeting, St Mary the Virgin**  
Tommy Seward    weetingpcc@gmail.com

## YOUR CHURCH CONTACTS

Weddings, Funerals, Interments  
and Memorials

Benefice Administrator:

Fiona Hearn

[wisseygrimshoebenefice@gmail.com](mailto:wisseygrimshoebenefice@gmail.com)

07817 821316

Baptisms/Christenings

Baptism Co-ordinators:

Tammy Wright

[grimshoebaptism@gmail.com](mailto:grimshoebaptism@gmail.com)

or

Susan Parker-Smith

[wvbsusan@gmail.com](mailto:wvbsusan@gmail.com)

for specific church contacts  
please see page 19

Back page photo

St Mary's  
Feltwell



WISSEY VALLEY  
& GRIMSHOE  
BENEFICES