

**PROFILE OF THE BENEFICE OF:**  
**ST MARY'S CAPEL ST MARY,**  
**ST JOHN'S, GREAT WENHAM**  
**& ALL SAINTS, LITTLE WENHAM.**



St Mary's, Capel St Mary



St John's, Great Wenham

***With prayer & faith in God we  
seek to engage with the community -***

***inside we enrich & equip:  
outside we give & care.***



All Saints, Little Wenham is under the  
care of the Churches Conservation Trust

## THE CHURCHES

### ST MARY'S, CAPEL ST MARY



This Medieval Church which is grade II listed was extended in 1990 to provide a well-equipped hall on the North side. The hall provides a meeting place with an upper meeting room, and a kitchen which was updated recently and toilets.

The hall is a popular venue for various village organisations and is hired out and provides income to help the Church meet its commitments.

The hall is used for Pilates sessions, the Art for Fun group, dance classes, brownies and rainbows.

The Church was reordered in January 2015. Under floor and fan heaters were installed, pews were replaced with comfortable chairs, the audio-visual system was up-dated and walls were redecorated.

The flexibility seating in the church enables it to be used for visiting concerts and choir events, and at Christmas time we have our notable Craft Fair and Christmas Coffee Morning – all major fund-raising events for the parish.

In 2022 major repairs were made to the nave roof and pending a Quinquennial Inspection due in 2023, the fabric appears to be in very good condition and well maintained by the PCC.

- We run a monthly lunch club for 45 people;
- a Compassionate Bereavement café;
- Monthly prayer services with the Methodist and Community Church;
- Children's Activity Days and regular school services;
- Advent and Lent courses attended on an ecumenical basis with other village churches;
- Courses for lay elders and people exploring new faith;
- Monthly soup and lunch;
- Community based events such as: wreath making & flower arranging demonstrations.



(Left) Christmas Craft Fair



(Above) Grace Notes concert 2022

## **St John's, Great Wenham**



The church of St John the Evangelist is a Grade II\*listed building. It is small (seating for about 100), it is simple and fairly unremarkable but very well supported by a committed congregation and cared for by an unusually loyal and generous wider community.

According to the 2017 Quinquennial Report the building is in "good repair". The tower is 15<sup>th</sup> century, but the nave and chancel were built between c1220 and 1300. The inside was refurbished and reordered to a very high standard by the Reverend Daniel Whalley in the 1860s. It remains as a testament to Victorian thoroughness. The pews, pulpit and reading desk are of oak with carving and linenfold panelling. There are medieval tiles in the sanctuary and a medieval "poppyhead" in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

The pride of the parish is the fine three manual listed organ by Thomas C Lewis which was also installed by the Rev. Whalley together with the choir stalls beneath it.



It is used every Sunday but also for recitals which raise funds for an assortment of charities each year.

The church has hosted four organists from St Paul's Cathedral and one from Westminster Abbey within the last 15 years. The last one in 2018 raised £3,000 for Somersham Ward at Ipswich Hospital. The boy choristers from St Pauls have also performed as has the choir of Jesus College and Collegium Regale (Choral scholars from Kings Cambridge).

The churchyard contains the grave of John Constable's aunt who lived in Little Wenham in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The church is not able to afford loos but two well cared for portaloos are installed in the churchyard discreetly screened by bushes! There are 17 regular worshippers including 4 children aged 6 and 4.

Our special services such as Remembrance Sunday, Carol Service, Harvest and Christingle are very well supported by the wider community and now the church is unlocked each day during daylight hours we find visitors do come and, some return to join us for services.

## **ALL SAINTS, LITTLE WENHAM**

All Saints, Little Wenham is part of the benefice but has been cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust since the 1950's. It is fairly remote and difficult to access for anyone not able to climb a steep flight of steps.

Inside the church there is little furniture as it has been the target of thieves on several occasions. There is no electricity and only a harmonium for music. It has some good medieval wall paintings which do attract visitors and students. Indeed, its location makes it a very special place for a lot of visitors who know and love it.

An annual evensong takes place in June. It is however always opened and manned on the Saturday of the annual sponsored Bike Ride for Suffolk Historic Churches Trust as indeed are both St John's and St Mary's. In fact St John's is famous for the tea and cakes which are provided throughout the day for the participants!

(Below) annual picnic and evensong at All Saints



## **CURRENT BENEFICE SERVICES**

(Maybe subject to change with a part-time post)

### **Sunday 10.45am, ST MARY'S**

*First, second and fourth Sundays of Month - Parish Communion*

*Third Sunday – Family Service*

*Wednesday 10.00am – Midweek Benefice Communion*

### **Sunday 9.30am at ST JOHN'S**

*First Sunday of month – Parish Communion.*

*Second and third Sunday – Morning Prayer*

*Fourth Sunday – Family Service*

*Fifth Sunday – Celtic Prayer.*

## **VICARAGE**

A good modern (1992) purpose built four-bedroom house with a double garage and manageable garden. There is parking for several cars. It is within five minutes' walk of St Mary's Church.

## **BENEFICE PCC'S ASSESSMENT OF PARISH STRENGTHS**

- Church and hall in excellent condition;
- Active Friends of St Mary's;
- Caring congregations and feeling of belonging to our families;
- Welcoming Churches, newcomers made to feel at home and engaged in conversation & coffee post-service;
- Desire to serve the community and use the Church Building;
- Congregational help in worship, readings and lessons;
- Elders and other Laity assist worship and exercise spiritual gifts such as prayer ministry;
- Extensively-read benefice magazine issued fortnightly;
- Pro-active pastoral care in the communities; and
- Experienced standing committee backed by lively PCCs

## **BENEFICE PCC'S ASSESSMENT OF PARISH WEAKNESS**

- An ongoing need to encourage young families to become involved regularly in church affairs;
- A need to build stronger & ongoing relationships with baptism families and newly married couples;
- A need to adapt to the new culture which comes from an awareness of pressures on families at weekends; and

## **Religion**

Capel St Mary | (England)

No religion **38.7%** (36.7%)

Christian **54.8%** (46.3%)

Buddhist **0.2%** (0.5%)

Hindu **0.4%** (1.8%)

Jewish **0.1%** (0.5%)

Muslim **0.3%** (6.7%)

Sikh **0.0%** (0.9%)

Other religion **0.4%** (0.6%)

Not answered **5.1%** (6.0%)

% of all people

- The urgent need to address an increase in *Giving* from both existing congregants and non-church goers to meet the intended 70% increase in share quota. .

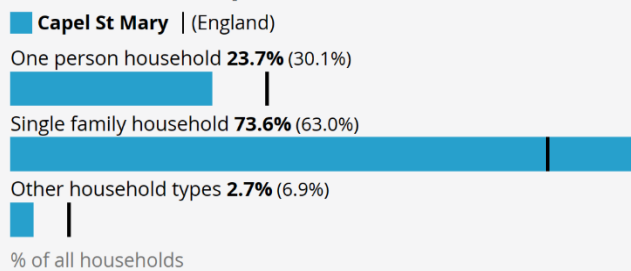
## **THE AREA**

Capel St Mary is a growing, vibrant commuter village serving Ipswich, Colchester and also London. It was developed from the 1960s providing modern accommodation, consisting of three, four and five-bed roomed houses with a selection of smaller starter homes and bungalows. There are some houses provided by Housing Associations as well as a small number of older timber-framed cottages in the original part of the village.

Recently, Babergh District Council has identified Capel St Mary as a **Core Village** because it has a range of facilities and services, such as a primary school, doctors, dentists and shopping facilities.

Capel St Mary has already seen 97 new homes built by Hopkins Homes on Days Road, a further 100 homes approved and currently being built on land off Little Tufts, 22 new homes at Boundary Oaks, a further nine dwellings on The Drift, plus additional one-off builds.

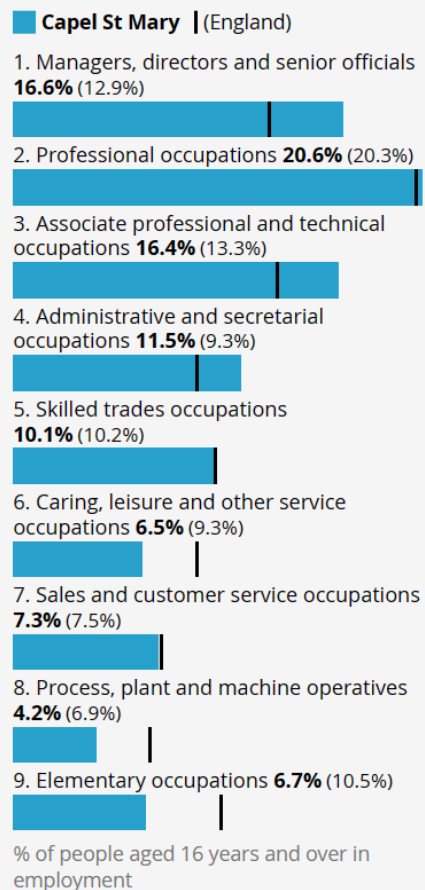
### Household composition



The occupation status of residents is somewhat higher than elsewhere in England. For example, in the managers, directors and senior officials category of the 2021 census the occupation level was 16.6% compared to 12.9% in England as a whole.

Similarly, the quality of housing, represented by detached builds, exceeds the county and national medians significantly (see below) while at around £260,000 & £400,000 per unit respectively, the property price of semi-detached and detached houses matches the national median.

### Occupation

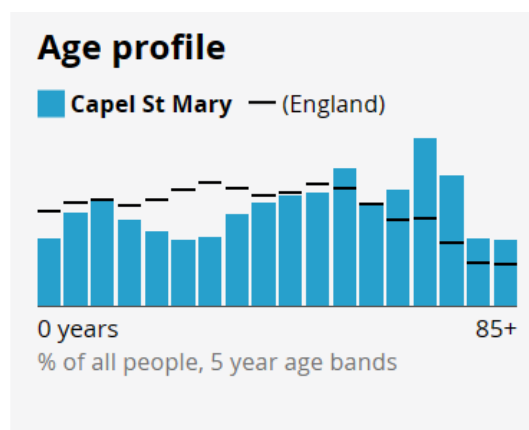


At the time of the 2021 census the population was 3,100 (Suffolk 760,700) but since that time there has been significant, and ongoing, housing development and consequent population growth.




## **EMPLOYMENT**

There is no industry in Capel itself and most people are employed in the Ipswich and Colchester locality and some commute to London. The main employments are insurance, public services, British Telecom and office work. Employment locally is in a pie-making company, two computer outlets, shops, two restaurants, a garden centre, a travel lodge and two garages either side of the nearby A12. Otherwise the area is largely given over to farming.

In recent years the average age profile of the area has risen in tandem with property prices in the district. For example, in the 30-34 age range the percentage is 3.9% compared to 7.0% for England overall. 40 to 44 age range this rises to 5.8% (England 6.3%), 55-59 range, 7.8% (England 6.7%), 65-69 range, 6.6% (England 4.9%).



## **PRIMARY SCHOOL**



**Capel St Mary CEVC  
Primary School**

With faith as small as a mustard seed, you can move mountains. - Matthew 13  
verses 31 - 35

There is a modern primary school serving both villages which has VCP status with representation from the Church on the Board of Governors.

Historically the Priest in Charge has been a member of the Board of Governors and has taken a weekly school assembly. End of Term Assemblies are taken at the Church when the whole school and many parents attend. In addition, at Harvest, Christmas and Easter (Easter Experience) services are held at the church.



The head teacher, Sean Cornish, is committed to supporting the Church of England and on occasions leads family services at St Mary's.

Secondary Education for both villages is provided at East Bergholt High School and Sixth Formers have a choice of schools in Ipswich and Colchester. There is however no opportunity to attend assemblies at the High School.

## **THE COMMUNITY**



Shopping precinct



Community Centre

In Capel there is a Community Centre which includes a large hall with a bar, and a library which is open most days. The *Friends of the Library* raise funds for the library and as a fund-raising effort show films once a month.

The Community Centre is a meeting place for a number of organisations, including a sports club for all ages including garden club, strength and balance class, dog training, trampoline club, coffee shop, carpet bowls and dancing classes. The local drama group (Orchard Players) produces a pantomime and Summer Show each year

There is a private Bowls Club situated in the corner of the playing field at the north end of the village.

The Parish Council meets in the library section of the Community Centre.

There is a thriving allotment association.

The Scout and Guide Movement is represented in the village and in the past several Church Members have been involved in their leadership.



Capel St Mary library



Constable Country Medical Practice



Near the Community Centre is a shopping centre that includes a co-op with post office within and a cash machine outside, baker, Chinese takeaway, Indian takeaway, newsagent, hairdresser and an insurance broker. Near to the co-op is a doctor's surgery which includes a pharmacy.

To the north of the village is a dentist, large nursery, Turkish restaurant and an Indian restaurant.

There is a public house in Great Wenham serving food. The two garages both have convenience shops.

Capel has an hourly bus service to Ipswich and Colchester. Great Wenham no longer has a bus service.

### ***The Samford Deanery - Message from the Rural Dean***

Samford Deanery is a small deanery comprising five benefices and a total of 19 parishes. Historically, the deanery was designated as a group, at that time, to be able to appoint a part time deanery training officer. Today it means that we can be a little more inventive about how we act as a Deanery

As ordained and lay people together, we seek to attend to the needs of our deanery and develop mission in an organic way, open our varied benefice activities to each other and organise a yearly deanery marriage preparation day.

We have written a new deanery plan in the context of *Growing in God*, the Diocesan growth strategy. This is a living document which will be updated regularly.

Chapter is made up of the incumbents in the deanery. We are committed to active participation at our monthly meetings and mutual support.

Deanery synod meets three times per year and is seen as a seedbed for mission. Speakers are invited to our meetings to share their expertise in the context of mission and inspire members to reflect on the subject at hand for their own parish or benefice context.

Synod welcomes all who are interested in the subject of the evening regardless of whether they are parish representatives.

As a deanery we are excited to find out about the gifts and talents you will bring to enrich our collective mission and ministry.

*Brian C Rogerson, Lay Chair*

*Revd Jenny Seggar, Acting Rural Dean*

## **Appendix:**

### ***The Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich***

#### ***Where are we?***

The Diocese covers the county of Suffolk, excluding the area around Lowestoft in the north-east, and one parish in Essex. It is a mainly rural Diocese with a large number of small villages, plus market towns including Woodbridge, Halesworth, Sudbury and Beccles and the cathedral town of Bury St Edmunds with its historic ruins of the old Abbey. Ipswich is the county town with a population of about 137,000. Suffolk's population is c 650,000.

The county embraces historic places of interest such as Sutton Hoo, culture at Snape with the famous annual Aldeburgh music festival, is on the Heritage Coast and is a haven for lovers of natural history and birdlife. The busy port of Felixstowe is at the end of the A14 which runs via Cambridge to the Midlands and the A12 which gives access to London and the Norfolk Broads.

#### ***Who are we?***

We are often known as 'the Church of England in Suffolk'. The diocesan bishop is the Right Reverend Martin Seeley, and the suffragan bishop is the Right Reverend Dr Mike Harrison. Both work from the Bishop's House in Ipswich.

They work together closely to help us shape our vision and strategy, and amongst a plethora of other tasks offer regular teaching mornings to nurture the faith of people in our congregations – and a regular Vlog which can be found on Facebook.

There are three archdeaconries and over 450 churches where visitors will find a wide range of worshipping styles, from the traditional to contemporary, as well as Fresh Expressions and growing numbers of 'Lightwave' groups for those who haven't connected with traditional church previously.

The Cathedral of St Edmund and St James in Bury St Edmunds is the mother church of the Diocese and is proactive in offering support to clergy and parishes including welcoming parishes on pilgrimage. We also work closely with our 88 Church of England primary schools.

All this is, of course, supported by a small and committed diocesan staff based in the diocesan office in Ipswich.

#### ***What is our vision?***

Our diocesan vision is to be '*Growing in God*', aiming to grow 'flourishing congregations making a difference'. This vision was accepted by Diocesan Synod in 2014 and since then we have been focussing on four key priorities:

- Growing in Depth: responding to the call of Christ in every part of our lives;
- Growing in Number: drawing the contacts we have into the life of God's kingdom;
- Growing in Influence: reaching beyond ourselves in our impact on the wider world; and
- Growing Younger; building churches whose age-range reflects our communities.

# Growing in God

Parishes are encouraged to use a simple Mission Action Planning tool to help us all to focus on these priorities and how they might be worked out in each different context. We are trusting God that this vision, underpinned by a commitment to Christian stewardship, will bear fruit as we look to the future.

As part of this vision, we have recently received Strategic Development Funding for two major projects: Inspiring Ipswich, overseen by the Archdeacon of Ipswich which aims to grow the church in Ipswich through church planting and reaching out to those who live in the town, and 'Growing God in the Countryside', overseen by the Archdeacon for Rural Mission.

This focusses on nurturing and discipling new Christians through small Lightwave groups and hubs such as the one being established at Bungay. (The Growing in God in the Countryside project plan is available among the documents at [www.light-wave.org/vacancies](http://www.light-wave.org/vacancies))

We have also been part of a pilot scheme exploring how we can use our church buildings more creatively both for those who worship regularly and for the benefit of our communities and many churches have benefitted from this.

We are broadening our vision through a growing partnership with the Diocese of Kagera in Tanzania, with fruitful visits and links being established.

## ***How can we fulfil our "Growing in God" vision?***

We value our huge range of different ministries: we have over 100 stipendiary clergy, plus many SSM and PTO clergy as well as lay and ordained chaplains who can be found in such diverse places as schools, prisons, hospitals, hospices, the army, RAF and the police. Some clergy are ordained to serve in their local benefice through our pioneering 'auxiliary ordination pathway' which enables people's vocations to ordained ministry to be discerned within the Diocese.

All clergy work alongside lay ministers – Readers, elders, and the growing number people exercising recently introduced licensed ministries: pioneer ministers, evangelists, youth ministers and children's and family workers. Our ministry deployment principles encourage teams or clusters of lay and ordained ministers to work together so that clergy feel less isolated and ministry resources the mission of the church more effectively. We are just beginning to develop the principle of 'local ministers' in our benefices, releasing people's gifts to serve in their locality.

We are excited about these new developments which are playing an important part in our diocesan vision of Growing in God.

## ***So, in summary:***

As our *Growing in God* vision states, we aspire to be people who know that 'God is with us, gathering us as Christ-centred communities, calling us to make Christian disciples, sending us in loving service, empowering us by the Holy Spirit'.