

# Henham, Elsenham & Ugley Parish Profiles

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ESSEX



2021

## **The Parishes of Henham and Elsenham with Ugley**

### **Welcome**

Welcome. We are looking forward to meeting, and serving with, the person whom the Lord is calling to minister to our three parishes. We hope that the information which follows will help in your own discernment as you see something of our common life with all its joys as well as its challenges.

### **Mission Statement**

Henham, Elsenham and Ugley are three parishes with one vicar and are regarded as being 'held together in plurality' (we are not a United Benefice although we refer to the three parishes as 'the benefice'). We exist to glorify God and are committed to living as God's people, under his Word, building up all believers in the Christian faith. We express God's love by caring for our communities and sharing the Good News to bring others to confess Christ as Saviour and Lord.

### **The Benefice**

The benefice is part of the Diocese of Chelmsford within the Colchester Episcopal Area and the Deanery of Saffron Walden. The Patrons are (respectively) the Church Society Trust, the Bishop of Chelmsford and Christ's Hospital. However, because the post of Bishop of Chelmsford was vacant when we entered our interregnum, the Crown has appointed the Bishop of Barking as its representative, and the Crown does not share presentation with anyone. Nevertheless, the Bishop of Barking has graciously agreed to consult with the other patrons on this occasion.

The Diocese of Chelmsford has struggled financially in recent times, and is actively reducing the number of clergy involved in pastoral ministry. The Area Bishop has confirmed that there are no specific or detailed plans for pastoral reorganisation which have been fully formed, and has stated that any subsequent pastoral reorganisation is unlikely to be affected by the appointment of a vicar. He has confirmed that it has not been necessary to suspend the Patrons' rights of presentation to this benefice. He has advised that we should let applicants know that the post could become subject to some form of pastoral reorganisation in the future if pressures continue to be placed on diocesan finances.

We are located in north west Essex in the District of Uttlesford. Uttlesford is an affluent area. Currently, the benefice is semi-rural in character, with pretty countryside and vibrant villages. It is situated between the towns of Saffron Walden to the north and Bishop's Stortford to the south. Near Stansted Airport and the M11, the three villages are served by Elsenham station, on the main railway line from London Liverpool St to Cambridge.

The total population of the benefice is estimated at around 5,200 (Henham 1,200, Elsenham 3,600, Ugley 400). In the last few years some 50 homes have been built in Henham, and about 550 in Elsenham, with many more in the pipeline.

All three parishes have for many decades been of 'Bible-based Evangelical' churchmanship, though each has its own individual style and character.

However, this consensus is becoming more strained in several areas. The issue of the ordination of women priests and bishops is particularly contentious within the individual PCCs with different views strongly held on both sides of the debate. Both Henham and Elsenham PCCs continue to request that special arrangements are maintained for them in accordance with the House of Bishops' Declaration on the Ministry of Bishops and Priests (currently by the Bishop of Maidstone). Ugley PCC, on the other hand, takes a different view, and would wish this appointment to be open to men and women.

The other areas that will need addressing are the deep divisions and wounds relating to the departure of the previous vicar. Whilst some of these divisions are due to doctrine, others are due to the manner of the departure.

Sadly we have lost some members of our congregations. There has been damage to the reputation of the Church in our community. The wounds are beginning to heal, but this will take time.

In summary, the benefice needs someone who can help us to unite under the Lord Jesus, and who will help us to help ourselves to address the areas of hurt and of conflict. We need to forgive what is past, to become more accepting of one another, and above all, to be more outward-looking.

### **Accommodation**

The 1960s four-bedroomed vicarage is located in the village of Henham. There are large areas of garden to the rear, side and front, mostly laid to grass, but with several trees, a veg garden and an old apple orchard at the rear (total approx. ½ acre) with dog-proof fencing. It is quietly located with a 10-acre hay meadow to the rear. The primary school is just a five-minute walk away. In addition to a recently refurbished kitchen, large lounge, a toilet and a dining/family room, there is an office plus a reading room/library, all of which are located downstairs. The family bathroom has a bath and a separate shower. Decoration of the vicarage has been properly maintained.

Children from our villages attend a variety of secondary schools in Bishop's Stortford, Stansted Mountfitchet, Newport and Saffron Walden. These schools are well respected and we are fortunate to have such a choice. Stort Valley Schools Trust (one of our mission partners) works in many of these schools to provide Christian input to lessons and collective worship, as well as to offer pastoral support and encouragement to staff and students.



### **Mission and Ministry**

#### **Joint Ventures**

The three parishes enjoy close co-operation with one another, with each taking primary responsibility for mission and ministry in their particular geographical areas. This co-operation has recently been demonstrated by the active continuation of worship and ministry during the Covid pandemic. Since

the beginning of lockdown, benefice-wide Sunday services have been available on Zoom and YouTube. PCC meetings and prayer meetings have continued on Zoom. Since May 2021 we have returned to face-to-face services.

There are two joint PCC meetings a year at which decisions are made regarding the 'HEU Joint Benefice Account' from which parish share and ministry costs are met.

There are periodic Joint Benefice services to enable the wider family of God to recognise one another and to worship together. There is a monthly Benefice Prayer Meeting, incorporating supper beforehand (when we are not constrained by Covid), and a 'Start the week with Prayer' meeting each Monday morning.

At present there are over a dozen Bible study home groups. These are largely lay-led and each group organises its own programme. Membership of these groups crosses parish boundaries.

Moore College Extension Studies courses have been run regularly in the benefice over the last twenty years, under lay leadership, and a number of parishioners have attended the Cornhill Training Course in recent years.

Occasional 'church family' social events are held, particularly in the summer months, providing an opportunity for friendships to grow and for new people to be invited to low-key events.

There is a long tradition of having parish weekends away, the last being held in 2020 in conjunction with neighbouring parishes.

A church-run lunch club meets twice a month providing food and fellowship to senior citizens in Elsenham. Likewise, there are monthly afternoon teas for seniors in the benefice, held in Henham.

Evangelistic activities are often organised on a benefice basis, though one parish may take the lead responsibility, with support from the others. In the past these have included: running regular Christianity Explored groups, men's breakfasts, ladies' pudding evenings with speaker, and themed Family Fun-days.

In total across the benefice the following services were taking place (pre-Covid) on a weekly basis on a Sunday:

- 8.00 am St Mary's Henham (monthly)
- 8.45 am St Mary's Elsenham
- 10.00 am St Peter's Ugley
- 10.15 am Village Hall Elsenham
- 11.15 am St Mary's Henham
- 6.00 pm St Mary's Henham (joint benefice youth service)

In addition, we join together for additional *ad hoc* festival services.

### **Joint buildings**

Old Frank's is a two-storey building situated on the High Street in Elsenham, opposite the village school. There is a meeting room on the first floor where Elsenham Sunday Club and Explorers meet. Downstairs there is a large meeting space, and the administration office is situated there. This building is owned by a separate charity, but is made available for the use of the benefice for a nominal rent. The charity also owns a house in Elsenham which was also made available in order to accommodate an Associate Minister who was working in the benefice until March 2021.

There is a church hall close to the vicarage in Henham, which is nearing the end of its useful life. Henham Little Fishes and Sunday Club meet there.

## **Joint committees**

**Staff Committee** oversees the employment of the church staff e.g. the benefice administrator.

**Youth and Children's Committee** oversees the youth work in the benefice.

**Care Committee** oversees care of church members and others; it makes suggestions for action by PCCs and congregations and occasionally organises special events, such as an annual Service of Remembrance and Thanksgiving for the bereaved.

**Mission Support Committee** recommends recipients of donations, subject to PCC approval, usually on an annual basis. The benefice policy is to donate around 10% of donations received to missions. In recent years the benefice has supported the Barnabas Fund, Eurasian Ministries (part of People International), Wycliffe Bible Translators, Christian Hope International, The Christian Institute, Sat-7, Mission Aviation Fellowship, Stort Valley Schools Trust, SASRA and Oak Hill College.

**Joint Finance Committee** comprises the three PCC treasurers, the treasurer of the HEU Benefice Account and is chaired by the vicar. Reports from this committee are sent regularly to the PCC Meetings and all financial policy for the benefice is approved by each PCC before it is implemented.

## **Youth and Children's Work**

The benefice runs Bible teaching for children of all ages, with an aim to make young and adult disciples for Jesus. The youth and children's work is staffed by volunteer teams.

There is a **weekly Benefice Youth Service** at 6.00pm at St Mary's Henham. It typically attracts 30 adults plus 15 or so teenagers from across the benefice. The service is very informal and friendly in style and the music is contemporary, accompanied by keyboard and a band of lay members. Bible readings are often taken by older children and prayers are written & presented by lay members. Holy Communion is held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday.

The Pathfinders (11 – 14yrs) and Crammin' (14 – 18yrs) groups start in the service but then leave after the talk to have teaching and food in their respective groups.

Each village has a group for children of primary school age connected to its Sunday morning services.

Midweek, there are two Little Fishes groups for carers and toddlers/babies.

There are currently Bible study groups for young adults and members of Crammin'.

The benefice has in the past run regular holiday clubs and other events during the summer holidays. Each year a number of our youth attend Sparkford 2 CYFA venture, along with adults who help to lead or cook, etc.

Elsenham School is a Church of England Primary School and there are two members of Elsenham's congregation who serve as school governors. There is a long history of involvement of the church in the life of the school, with the vicar being invited to deliver assemblies regularly, Christian after-school clubs, etc. A new head has been appointed for September, who we believe to be supportive of the continuation of this partnership. Relationships with Henham and Ugley School are less strong and we would love to see them rebuilt.

During Covid some youth and children activities were suspended entirely, some went on to Zoom (and have since re-started in person) and some material was delivered to children and their parents either electronically or in hard copy.

We are conscious that we have fewer younger children and their parents in our congregations than was the case five or ten years ago. This is a sadness to us, and we want to reconnect to these people.

## **Occasional Offices**

On average, four marriages are conducted from across the benefice per year, and about twenty funerals.

There are irregular requests for baptisms (presently an annual average of five). We make considerable effort, often through *Christianity Explored*, to ensure that families and candidates understand the gospel and the nature of Christian commitment as fully as possible. Baptisms normally take place during a main Sunday service.

Confirmations, when they take place in the Benefice, have been conducted by the Bishop of Maidstone.

## **Wider Church links**

The Benefice has current links with ReNew, the Proclamation Trust, Oak Hill Theological College, the East Anglian Gospel Partnership, the Chelmsford Diocesan Evangelical Association and the Chelmsford Anglican Bible Conference.

The parishes are part of the Saffron Walden Mission and Ministry Unit. A number of lay people from the benefice support Saffron Walden Bible Focus, with the aim of encouraging and strengthening Christians in their faith through Bible teaching, and providing a forum for fellowship and meeting other believers from across the surrounding area.

## **Finance and Funding**

The annual Parish Share payable to the Diocese is around £76,000 and all payments are up to date as at August 2021. The benefice has in recent years accumulated a healthy surplus which has been helpful as we have recently seen a decline in giving, in part due to Covid and partly due to the difficulties of the last two years. We have in the past been able to finance an additional full-time minister and it is hoped that under the right circumstances that funds would again be available to expand the ministry team. However, a modest deficit is projected for 2021.

Henham, Elsenham and Ugley PCCs each appoint their own treasurers who manage parish-specific income and expenditure. There is an HEU Joint Benefice Account which pays all central expenses such as salaries, expenses and Parish Share.

All the vicar's expenses of office are met in full. We encourage our vicars to take time away to study, reflect and pray, and we are delighted to pay the costs of them attending ministry conferences, etc.

## **Personnel**

### **Part-time**

Benefice Administrator. The administrator works part-time in the church office in Elsenham (Old Frank's – though from home during Covid), and is the first point of contact for people making enquiries about our churches. The administrator provides support to the vicar and the lay teams.

**Revd. Stephen Bazlinton** is an NSM with the Bishop's 'permission to officiate'. He lives in Stebbing, but attends church at Henham and is available to take services and preach. Stephen is sometimes also able to help out with weddings and funerals. He is a co-opted member of Henham PCC.

## **Lay Teams**

There are five lay preachers (in addition to Stephen Bazlinton) operating under a scheme originally approved by the Bishop of Chelmsford in the 1970s. The preachers meet on a monthly basis for training and review. They preach regularly within the benefice itself and occasionally help at other churches outside the benefice.

The benefice enjoys the input of numerous lay volunteers in all areas of Church life, exercising a range of gifts from the administrative through to leading services and prayers, youth work and evangelism as well as the practical matters of day-to-day care for one another.



## **The condition, traditions and needs of the Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Elsenham**

Until recently, Elsenham was a typical small Essex village. New building, particularly in the 1960s and 70s and more recently, has changed the character of the village with the population becoming more transient, and it is set to grow rapidly as further houses have been granted planning consent and/or are in the process of being constructed.

From being a very tight-knit community, Elsenham has therefore grown within living memory to something of a commuter community, with the station and nearby M11 providing ready access to London and Cambridge.

The village has a pub (the Crown), a Tesco Local shop, a hairdressers, a post office, a newsagent/cafe by the station and a fish & chip shop. There is also some light industry, a leisure/golf club, a hotel, and offices within and on the outskirts of the village.

The village has a Voluntary Controlled Church of England primary school (which has recently doubled in size to become two-form entry) and the vicar sits on the board of Governors, together with two Foundation Governors. Currently, the vicar takes a weekly assembly, and church members also run after-school clubs.

The churches in the benefice support the work of the Bishop's Stortford Food Bank with large quantities of food being collected each week. Elsenham School's Harvest Festival regularly generates more than 400 kg of donated food.

There is a considerable number of village events which the church makes a point of being involved with. Under the auspices of the Elsenham Community Association there is a monthly magazine delivered free to every household, a summer fete, flower and craft show, open gardens event, and a Christmas event aimed at children. There is an active Open Spaces committee which arranges walks and conservation activities, and a thriving WI group, as well as Cubs, Brownies, Beavers, Guides etc and a large number of sports teams. The Bowls Club (with its own clubhouse) and the Tennis Club are the centres of many social activities.

From a pastoral point of view, there is an acceptance, and expectation, of the church's role in all areas of community activity. This has been amply demonstrated in the work that has been undertaken in recent years with the residents of the 550 new homes in the village.

### **Traditions**

#### **General**

In normal times there are two congregations meeting in Elsenham on Sunday mornings: 8.45am at St Mary's Church and 10.15am in the Village Hall. The timing of these services has been arranged so that one preacher can be at both. Since the spring of 2020, because of Covid-19 restrictions, both of these services have been replaced by meetings taking place via Zoom. In addition, a third service has been produced and posted on YouTube.

Both congregations enjoy a considerable degree of lay leadership of services and sermons by members of the Preachers' Group. Communion services at both venues are led by an ordained minister.

The congregation at both services is in good heart and they actively seek ways in which to engage in evangelism and service to the village.

The financial condition of the parish is sound with sufficient funds available to meet anticipated expenditure.

### St Mary's (8.45am)



St Mary's is located on the outskirts of the village, about half a mile from the junction with the Crown public house. It is easily accessible by road and there is adequate parking. The very attractive Grade 1 Listed building, much of which is Norman, is generally in good repair. The churchyard is closed, but there is an active adjacent burial area maintained by the Parish Council, for which the church keeps the records. The PCC is developing proposals for the provision of a toilet and refreshment facilities.

Members of the congregation and other villagers run an active church Fabric Fund, which organises events to raise money to support the fabric of the church. These events also help to broaden perception of the church family within the village and raise the profile of the church community. The events include a popular annual Christmas tree festival, together with other social events including concerts and flower festivals. The monies raised have helped with several projects, including installing a lightning conductor, improving car parking and repairs to the stonework and windows.

Congregations on a Sunday morning are typically 20-30 adults.

The preferred tradition at St Mary's is the Book of Common Prayer, with Communion twice a month. Services generally last about 55 minutes, following which refreshments are served.

### The Village Hall (10.15am)

This congregation meets in the Village Hall, a joint-use building shared with the school and the village, in a more central location. There is good parking in the school grounds and access to toilets, a kitchen and side rooms for a crèche. During these services, children's work takes place across the road at Old Frank's.

Congregations are typically 30-40 adults and 6 children (under 12s).



The services are generally more informal, with more modern songs accompanied by a music group. Services typically last about an hour, followed by refreshments. Clergy do not robe for these services.

### Co-ordination and co-operation



Both congregations currently join together for the main festivals (Easter, Harvest, and Christmas). There are also occasional joint open-air services, for example on Good Friday, Remembrance Day and Christmas Eve, the latter two attracting significant numbers (150 - 400) of villagers.

### Needs

The church in Elsenham has been and is determined to be involved in the village community and to reach out with the gospel. There have been several initiatives over the years, for example the Jesus Video Project, a Bible distribution to the whole village in 2009 and a whole series of events in 2010 to celebrate the 900th anniversary of the church building. More recently, during the pandemic, innovative ways of keeping in touch with the village have been sought, such as giving every household a Christmas tree decoration,

involving children in 'make your own Christingle' and hiding knitted angels around the village for children to find.

Despite all these efforts, involvement in village life and organisations remains challenging, evangelism is often difficult with responses being minimal, and there are clear gaps in the outreach. The congregations, for example, do not reflect the breadth of social mix found in the village as a whole, there is difficulty in retaining older teens in the church and currently a lack amongst those of upper-primary age. (Sunday morning activities for children have been identified as an issue affecting church attendance across the Deanery.) The churches have also suffered something of a 'revolving-door' syndrome, with new arrivals failing to stick.

Nevertheless, there is a widespread determination to press on, though fresh insights and inspiration would be welcome.

There is also a clear need in the wider community within the benefice to promote Christian values in marriage, family life and lifestyle, as well as providing support and guidance to children and teenagers. It is considered that this can be facilitated by helping our Church family in these aspects of their lives, so they can reach out to, care for and encourage others.

The benefice is no 'rural backwater' where one can have a relaxing time. The work is challenging, the needs are great, but the opportunities are as many as personal energy will allow.

The church wishes to maintain its strengths (high levels of engagement in Bible study groups, a good depth and spread of Biblical knowledge, good children's work, etc.) and address its weaknesses (support for families, co-ordination of activities, communication, etc.).



## The condition, traditions and needs of the Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Henham

Henham is a rural parish with a population of approximately 1200 adults. The majority of the 550 houses are within the main village but the parish also includes the nearby hamlets of Old Mead Road/Old Mead Lane, Little Henham and Pledgdon Green.

Transport links are good with easy road and rail access to London and Cambridge. Locally there are regular bus services and many footpaths linking the villages.

The village has a popular primary and nursery school serving Henham and Ugley with approximately 200 pupils aged from 3½ to 11yrs. There is a small community-run general store that opens daily, a part-time Post Office and a village pub. There are four meeting halls of varying sizes where a good number of community events and regular clubs take place. There is also an active tennis club, nearby rugby club, biennial 10k fun run and village fete.



There is a broad social make-up, including those working on the three main farms, some longstanding resident families, commuters (many now working from home) and many new incoming families seeking the benefits of village life, good schools and good transport links. However, housing is pricey and young couples find it hard to afford homes here. There is a village monthly magazine, *The Dragon*, which includes a regular prominent editorial piece written by the vicar. It also lists services and other church-related activities and meetings, supplementing the main village news sections.

Our village website contains a wealth of information about all aspects of the village at [www.henham.org](http://www.henham.org) and there is a well-used village Facebook page. There are a good variety of clubs that are well attended by people within and outside the church.

### St Mary's Church

The church, which dates from the 13<sup>th</sup> century, is supported by a significant fabric fund and is well maintained. It can hold up to 250 people. The churchyard is closed for burials, which now take place in the village cemetery towards the north-east end of the village. Plans are well advanced to add an extension to the building and to re-order the interior. This will provide (amongst other things), more flexible seating, kitchen and toilet facilities, better heating, lighting and audio-visual facilities and better facilities for youth and children. There is a Church extension and re-ordering sub-committee that has overseen this project over the last several years. All necessary permissions have been granted, and the work is currently out to tender.



As a result of some large bequests, Henham has sizeable resources in its fabric fund from which the planned works can be financed.

Currently there are 79 members on the electoral roll with some from outside the parish and others that rarely attend services.

### Traditions

#### Pattern of Services

**8am Service – monthly** Prayer Book Morning Prayer. Typical attendance – 3 adults. The clergy robe for this service.

**11.15am Service – weekly** The service is reasonably informal in style and the music is a blend of traditional and contemporary, accompanied by keyboard/organ. Members of the congregation play a significant part in the running of this service. The clergy do not robe for this service. Holy Communion is held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month and follows the pattern in *Common Worship Order 'C'*. Typical attendance at this service is 25-30 adults plus pre-school children. Additionally, the **Henham Sunday Club / Explorers** meets at the Church Hall / OSCA from 11am. and both join us after the service for refreshments. There are facilities for a small crèche in the tower, which is run informally and on demand. It is planned that once the re-ordering and extension of the church is completed, these groups will be much better catered for.



**Festival Services** Services held to celebrate Christmas, especially the carol service, and Remembrance are particularly popular and present opportunities to share the gospel with local residents. The church also hosts special services for the school community at Harvest and Christmas, plus Christingle services to encourage young families.

**Lay Participation** Clergy or lay members lead either service each week; lay members also lead the prayers and read from the Bible. They have responsibility for setting up the church before services, welcoming people and preparing refreshments. The preaching is undertaken by the clergy or lay preachers. All these responsibilities are organised on a three-monthly advanced schedule.

**The PCC** The vicar chairs the 14-member PCC, and meetings are held eight times a year.

**Commitment to Involvement in the Community** The church is committed to involvement in the local community, building relationships with other groups such as the school, pub, shop, Parish Council and magazine, and joining their activities as well as inviting them to ours. Our regular 'Little Fishes' group for carers and pre-schoolers including babies has been a big attraction to non-church families and an opportunity for all ages to hear the gospel.

### **Needs**

There is a real diversity of people, ages, attitudes and groupings within the village: some older residents, some living alone, some empty nesters still active and social, some younger families, all with different and overlapping social networks.

Henham is an affluent village embracing a broad range of ages; housing is expensive and therefore as younger people get older they tend either to live with parents or to move away. Some recent new housing has brought new families to the village, presenting new opportunities to encourage church attendance and involvement. But underneath the overall prosperity there are those with great individual need.

Prior to the departure of the previous vicar there was a perception in some areas of a disconnection between the church and the village community, and some suggesting a desire for a more 'traditional' style of worship and ministry. As referred to in the earlier section the handling of the previous vicar's departure has caused severe reputational damage to the Church in Henham and this needs to be addressed.

However, as with many churches, fundamentally the real struggle is to add new members to the church family and explain what church is really all about.

## **The condition, tradition and needs of the Parish of St Peter's, Ugley**

Ugley has an adult population of 363 occupying some 152 dwellings, as at December 2020. It has no single centre, but houses are widely scattered along the main Cambridge - Bishop's Stortford road, with a large settlement at Ugley Green, a smaller one at Patmore End, and some more distant houses on North Hall Road.

The population includes some elderly residents who have lived here all their lives, and incomers of middle age or younger, some with families. There is a small number of former council houses on the edge of Elsenham, and travelling families occasionally occupy a grass verge near Patmore End.

There is no separate primary school in Ugley. Children from the parish are in the catchment area of Henham and Ugley CP School, situated in Henham.

The only pub has recently closed and there are no shops, although there is a monthly Farmers' Market at the Village Hall. The nearest shops are in Elsenham or Stansted. There are some small industrial units in Fieldgate Lane, Ugley Green; a livery stables at Ugley Green; a family firm dealing with groundworks and plant hire at North Hall Road; and a great deal of arable and mixed farming. There is a group of club houses by the railway at Henham Archway used mainly on Sundays by cycling clubs from east London. The Home Farm Trust in Pound Lane is a residential home for adults with learning disabilities and their carers.

### **Tradition**

St Peter's is a small village church built on a cruciform pattern, with a tower. A small part of the nave wall dates from the 13th century, the tower dates from the 16th century, while the rest of the church was restored 1862-5. It has a small tracker organ which was installed in 1877. It has a peal of three bells which were recently refurbished and are now in use for the first time in nearly 50 years. There is a small churchyard which is surrounded on three sides by neighbouring buildings belonging to Ugley Hall and Ugley Hall Farm. The church's east window was recently identified as being the work of Morris & Company. The window features designs by Sir Edward Burne-Jones and Pozzi. It contains three panels, *A Multitude of the Heavenly Host*, *The Adoration of the Magi* and *The Flight into Egypt*.

The church is in good repair, and is in the process of ongoing Quinquennial repairs. The churchyard, which is open, is well-maintained, and has a public right of way through it.

St Peter's has always attracted people from more distant parishes.

Members of the congregation are on the Village Hall Committee and belong to the local WI, as well as on the PCC, Deanery Synod and benefice-wide committees. St Peter's PCC has six lay members as well as *ex officio* members, and meets regularly every other month; it also meets with the Henham and Elsenham PCCs for two Joint PCCs meetings per year to deal with financial matters.

The regular Sunday meeting at St Peter's takes place at 10am every week and is usually attended by about 20 adults and about 5 children. There is Holy Communion on the first Sunday, and a morning service on the other Sundays. There is a strong tradition of lay leadership of the services, including parts of Holy Communion. The preacher is drawn from a rota within the benefice. Clergy robe for the services. Hymns are chosen from *Hymns Old & New (Anglican edition)* and are sung to organ accompaniment. Services usually last about an hour, with coffee and fellowship to follow, for about half an hour more.

Children are encouraged to take part in Junior Church, which meets in the vestry during the Sunday service.

There is a full cleaning/flower arranging/reading/Junior Church helping/welcoming rota in operation. The *Ugley Church News* is edited and distributed by a team of volunteers. Some members of the congregation also lead or attend Bible study home groups. There is also a monthly Prayer Meeting, with lunch, to pray for the needs and mission of Ugley. A few years ago each household in the parish was given the opportunity to be visited by church members in an effort to evangelise. From that work several contacts have been followed up, and a series of Men's Pub Evenings has stemmed from it.

The main festivals, Easter, Harvest, Mothering Sunday, Remembrance and Christmas attract a much larger congregation, with about 120 for the Carol Service.

## **Needs**

As the majority of the dwellings in Ugley are in small widely-spaced groups, community spirit and cohesion are not easy to maintain, especially as there is no pub now. Nevertheless, there is much friendliness and goodwill, as any visit to the monthly Farmers' 'Market at the Village Hall will reveal. There are friendship networks and good neighbourly relationships within the various groups of houses, not least around the Green, which is the main settlement, accounting for about one quarter of the housing.

As most of our congregation now come from outside the village, the Church does not have much part in secular village life. The Village Hall is the venue for a number of clubs and societies. One of our church members organises the annual Christmas Eve Carols on the Green, and another hosts drinks and mince pies after our Carol Service.

Getting to hospital (Cambridge or Harlow) is a concern for some, but there is a good bus service to Bishop's Stortford and Saffron Walden, with some going to the airport. Elsenham train station is not far from Ugley Green.

The village has been free so far of the large housing developments that have been permitted in neighbouring Elsenham and Stansted, although it is at present dealing with two development applications on its border with Elsenham. These are: one development on the south side of Bedwell Road, next to the M11 motorway, for 50 dwellings, and another development north of Bedwell Road, behind the existing houses, for 220 dwellings, on land which is partly in Ugley parish and partly in Henham. This may potentially be the source of many more villagers requiring our ministry.

The church itself needs help in engaging effectively with the local community. There seems to be a general goodwill which shows at times like Harvest Festival and Christmas, and there are also some requests for baptisms and other occasional offices. Nevertheless, growth has been very difficult to achieve and sustain: this needs to be addressed.

The Ugley PCC recently passed a resolution that a man or woman would be equally acceptable as vicar in our parish.

We should like to attract more families and encourage them to be regular in attending our services. We should like to build upon our outreach and so increase the number and age range of our congregation to hear the Good News about Jesus.



## **The person we are looking for**

### **The person we are looking for will be someone...**

- who receives the Bible as the inspired word of God, and will ensure that it directs our ministry
- who will work positively within the framework of the Church of England
- who knows, or can readily adapt to, the special features of village-based ministry, including its expectations of the church and its ministers; who is a willing visitor, a good listener, and able to build bridges with other Christians not of our denomination living in the benefice; and who is sensitive to the worship preferences of the different congregations
- with strong pastoral skills
- who leads by example to motivate, energise and facilitate the ministry of the churches within the benefice; who has the administrative skills and personal character to work with others, including the existing ministry team, to train others to share in the ministry of the churches, and to delegate responsibility
- who will teach the scriptures to all (young and old in faith, as well as those yet to believe) in a faithful and relevant manner
- who is an evangelist
- who is approachable and can relate to children, and who will reach out in love to all in the villages
- who has developed personal habits of holiness and prayer.

### **What we will offer is a church family that...**

- is struggling with the demands of modern life and the world
- is willing to consider new initiatives
- is one whose members are active and committed Christians
- is united in their belief in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord.

### **and supports our vicar by...**

- being open to their leadership to help our communities
- offering a warm welcome to our church family and village communities
- listening to and supporting them however we can
- providing for the resources they need, both at work and at home
- making provision for their own pastoral needs and spiritual renewal through time set aside for continuing ministerial education, conferences, reading and so on
- praying for them.

## **Further Information**

For further background information and informal conversations please feel free to contact:

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