Elloe Fen Benefice

Serving the parishes of Whaplode Drove, Gedney Hill
Sutton St Edmund and Sutton St James

Sutton St James
Holy Trinity, Gedney Hill

Sutton St Edmund
St John the Evangelist, Whaplode Drove
The Elloe Fen Benefice.

The Elloe Fen benefice was only formally recognised in 2016 but it has been functioning as a single benefice under one incumbent since 2014. It consists of the 4 small rural parishes of St John the Evangelist, Whaplode Drove; Holy Trinity with St Polycarp’s, Gedney Hill; Sutton St Edmund and Suttons St James. Whaplode Drove and Gedney Hill have been a benefice in their own right for the past 50 years; the last 18 of them with a single incumbent. Sutton St Edmund and Sutton St James look forward to a period of stability having twice moved benefice and having had several changes of incumbent in the recent past.

The benefice benefits from the additional ministry of a Reader who currently ministers chiefly in Sutton St James where she lives.

The benefice Church Wardens have been meeting regularly with the Rural Dean throughout the vacancy and have made some significant changes to the way they work together. They have introduced some more accessible orders of service for Sunday worship and have been committed to continuing to grow and develop throughout the vacancy; they are full of hope for the future.

Due to the size of the benefice, the average Sunday attendance at the churches, and the relatively low number of pastoral offices, all the parishes were consulted and came to an agreement that the post is an ideal opportunity to offer a House for Duty post for the right person who is able to offer Sunday duties plus 2 days a week.

This is a House for Duty post for someone who understands the nature of rural ministry, has a real heart for people and is passionate about helping us continue to grow and develop.

2017 ACCOUNTS FOR ALL THE CHURCHES IN THE BENEFICE ARE AVAILABLE TO VIEW IF REQUIRED

For an informal conversation about this post please contact:
The Ven Justine Allain Chapman (Archdeacon of Boston) – archdeacon.boston@lincoln.snglican.org
Tel - 01522 504039

or Rev’d Rosamund Seal (Rural Dean of Elloe East) – rosamund.seal@btinternet.com
Tel – 01406 424989

Closing Date: Monday 25th June

Interview Date: Tuesday 24th July in Lincoln – time tbc plus an informal tour of the benefice and shared meal Monday 23rd July – details tbc.
Job/Person Profile

Our Vision for the future is to:

- Hold our communities together and build on their goodwill
- Work together to build up the benefice as a unit of mission
- Grow our churches as All-Age communities
- Deepen our faith and discipleship
- Capitalise on the many pastoral offices that come our way

To help us with this we are looking for someone who will:

- Have a real heart for rural ministry and people
- Embrace the communities we serve
- Work alongside us
- Identify and build up the gifts of lay people

Person Specification - Skills and Abilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car driver</td>
<td>An engaging preacher and teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer literate</td>
<td>A good sense of humour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proven experience in rural ministry</td>
<td>A particular gift, interest or enthusiasm that can be offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A desire to share their faith with those as</td>
<td>for the benefit of the whole deanery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yet unchurched</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to prioritise and delegate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to be able to communicate with young</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and old alike</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What we offer

- 4 welcoming and friendly congregations
- Enthusiasm and an openness to new ideas
- Well organised social events with lots of good food
- Committed and supportive church officers
- Full expenses of office

An enhanced DBS check is required and will need to be in place prior to the appointment. All parishes have adopted the current Diocesan policies on child protection and vulnerable adults.

Full expenses of office will be reimbursed via a formula agreed by all the parishes. It is expected that the priest will have a regular weekly day off as well as taking their annual holiday entitlement. The importance of study leave and an annual retreat is recognised. They will be encouraged to use this provision to enhance their ministry and our own.
The Vicarage

The previous Vicarage situated in Whapldoe Drove is no longer considered fit for purpose and is due to be sold. A new vicarage is due to be built on diocesan land adjacent to the church hall in Sutton St James. It is not envisaged that this will be built and ready for occupation until 2020 and so meanwhile, alternative temporary housing will need to be found for the new Incumbent. The options for this can be discussed with the archdeacon.

Introduction to South Holland

Lincolnshire is the second largest county in England, stretching from the Humber in the North to the Wash in the South and from Nottinghamshire and Rutland in the West to the coast of the North Sea in the East. The county is coterminous with the Diocese of Lincoln. It has a huge variety of landscapes, from the industrial North with towns like Scunthorpe and Grimsby, to the rolling Wolds, and from the mother church of the diocese, the Cathedral, situated at the top of Steep Hill in Lincoln, to long flat coastlines and the fens to the east and south.

South Holland is in the south-east corner of the county, and like its namesake across the North Sea is largely reclaimed from the sea, flat and criss-crossed with a network of drainage channels, dykes and roads. The wide horizons give both spectacular sunsets and sunrises. A great variety of cereals, vegetables, bulbs and flowers are grown in the fertile fields. A comprehensive network of footpaths, bridleways and little used minor roads make it an excellent area for walking (with or without dogs) and cycling.

Spalding is the principal town in the district with many Georgian houses, shops and a market. Tree-lined footpaths follow the River Welland and a water taxi runs from the town centre to Springfields Shopping Outlet on the edge of the town. The sea coast, including the lovely resorts of North Norfolk, is within easy reach, being 30 miles or so by car.

The towns of Wisbech and Kings Lynn in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk respectively, are also close and used by those who live in Sutton St Edmund and Gedney Hill.

The communities are largely rural with little unemployment, though much of the work is low paid. Some are employed in farming and the large number of food processing industries in the area, whilst other people commute to the surrounding larger towns, or even to London. Many of the newcomers, who are retired, come from the south, chiefly because the housing is more affordable and they have found a warm welcome from the people of the Fens. As an area previously renowned for growing tulips there are several spectacular and very well-supported church flower festivals in South Holland.

The area has also attracted a large number of migrant workers from Eastern Europe, Spain and Portugal, a great deal of whom work in the farming, haulage and food processing industries and many of whom now run successful local businesses or are utilising their professional skills.
Local Facilities

Medical Care
There are chemists and doctors’ surgeries in Holbeach, Wisbech, Long Sutton, Parson’s Drove and Crowland. NHS hospitals which serve the area are the Queen Elizabeth in Kings Lynn (Norfolk) the Peterborough City Hospital in Peterborough, the Pilgrim Hospital in Boston and the Johnson Community Hospital in Spalding. Holbeach has a highly regarded Cottage Hospital run by a charitable trust, which offers respite and end of life care and care for the elderly.

Education
The children within the parishes generally attend their local primary schools. There is a County Primary School in Sutton St James (95 on roll)) and a Church of England Primary School in Gedney Hill (62 on roll) which is federated under an executive head teacher with a County Primary School in Shepeau Stow (74 on roll). All three primary schools are OFSTED graded good. There are Pre-schools adjacent to Suttons St James and Gedney Hill schools.

Lincolnshire still maintains a selective system at 11+ and pupils travel into Spalding Grammar School (for boys) and Spalding High School (for girls). Other local secondary schools are the University of Lincoln Academy in Holbeach, Spalding Academy and the Peele Community College in Long Sutton. There is an independent fee-paying Grammar School in Wisbech, catering for children up to age 18 with an infant section for age 4+. There is also a secondary school for children with moderate learning difficulties and a 4-18 school for those with severe learning difficulties in Spalding.

Communications
Apart from the A17 (Kings Lynn to Sleaford), the A16 (Peterborough to Boston) and the A47 (Wisbech to Peterborough), the roads are largely rural and used by agricultural, domestic, and an increasing amount of commercial traffic serving the local food producing industry. Rail connections to London and the Midlands are from Spalding, Kings Lynn and Peterborough. The journey to Kings Cross takes 50 minutes from Peterborough. There is a bus service which runs between Kings Lynn and Spalding and one which runs between Sutton St James and Spalding and another from Gedney Hill to Spalding. For outlying villages, Call-Connect is an ‘on demand’ bus service that operates in response to pre-booked requests. There is no fixed timetable as the route the bus takes is defined by passenger demand and can differ each day.

The major city centres of Peterborough (20 miles), Lincoln (50 miles) and Cambridge (50 miles) are within reach by road. There are good shopping areas in Spalding, Holbeach, Kings Lynn and Wisbech and, slightly further afield, in Boston and Peterborough

There are three crematoria which serve the Elloe Fen Benefice: The South Lincolnshire Crematorium near Spalding (15 miles), Mintlyn Crematorium near Kings Lynn (20 miles) and the Fenland Crematorium at March (15 miles).
2017 Parish statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Population 2011 census</th>
<th>Elect Roll</th>
<th>Av Sun Attend</th>
<th>Baptisms</th>
<th>Weddings</th>
<th>Funerals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whaplode Drove</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gedney Hill</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutton St James</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutton St Edmund</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current Benefice Service Pattern

The current service pattern which is operating across the benefice during the vacancy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whapdloe Drove</th>
<th>Gedney Hill</th>
<th>Sutton St James</th>
<th>Sutton St Edmund</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Sun</td>
<td>11.00 Communion</td>
<td>10.00 Morning Prayer</td>
<td>9.30 Morning Prayer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Sun</td>
<td>8.00 Communion</td>
<td>10.00 Communion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Sun</td>
<td>11.00 Morning Prayer</td>
<td>10.00 Communion</td>
<td>10.00 Morning Prayer</td>
<td>9.30 Morning Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Sun</td>
<td>11.00 Family Get together</td>
<td>9.30 St Polycarp Morning Prayer</td>
<td>9.00 Communion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Sun</td>
<td>10.00 Benefice Holy Communion – rotated round the parishes and Holbeach Drove Methodist Church</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The service pattern that was put in place when the benefice first became a single unit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whapdloe Drove</th>
<th>Gedney Hill</th>
<th>Sutton St James</th>
<th>Sutton St Edmund</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st Sun</td>
<td>11.00 am Holy Communion</td>
<td>9.30 am Holy Communion – St Polycarp’s</td>
<td>10.00 am Morning Prayer (Reader)</td>
<td>9.15 am Morning Prayer (Lay led)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Sun</td>
<td>8.00 am Said Holy Communion</td>
<td>4.00 pm Evensong Holy Trinity</td>
<td>10am Holy Communion</td>
<td>9.15 am Holy Communion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3rd Sun</td>
<td>11.00 am Holy Communion</td>
<td>9.30 am Holy Communion – Holy Trinity</td>
<td>10.00 am Morning Prayer (Reader)</td>
<td>9.15 am Morning Prayer (Lay led)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th Sun</td>
<td>11.00 am Family Service (Lay led)</td>
<td>9.30 am Morning Prayer (Reader) – Holy Trinity</td>
<td>10.00 am Holy Communion</td>
<td>9.15 am Holy Communion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th Sun</td>
<td>10.00 Benefice Holy Communion – rotated round the parishes &amp; Holbeach Drove Methodist Church</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Map of the Parish Boundaries

Diocese of Lincoln
The Ellow Fen Group
The parish of Sutton St James

Sutton St James is about 12 miles away from Spalding, and has a thriving population of some 1,118 (census 2011) and is still growing. Planning permission is under consideration for a further 28 houses in addition to the 489 already in situ.

Both the village school (95 on roll) and the pre-school are rated as good by OFSTED. The village has a wide variety of shops including a well-stocked convenience store, a butchers and bakers, a gun store, a hairdresser, a garage with petrol pumps and a public house famed for its steak nights. There is a large and impressive Village Hall used for a variety of activities such as Rainbows and Brownies, the twice monthly community bingo, the Good Companions Club, line dancing, Pilates, martial arts and youth club in the winter, as well as funeral teas and family celebrations. There is a smaller, older Church Hall, currently with a paddock behind it, which is used for the Mother and Toddler group and the youth club all summer, as well as the many and varied church fundraising activities including lunches and coffee mornings. There is an all-indoor bowling facility in the village.

Apart from the farmers and large horticultural businesses growing and trading in flowers, there are also several haulage firms which operate on the outskirts of the village. A large industrial electrical contractor has recently based their business in the village and is taking on apprentices. There are other smaller electrical contractors as well as plumbers, carpenters, plasterers and builders. A horticultural systems contractor has recently taken over premises opposite the church and there are some very large grain storage facilities. There are two catering firms employing a number of local people and a curtain/dress maker. In addition, there are several gardeners and landscaping firms.

The Church Building

The original church was built around 1300, with the tower added in the 15th century. Large parts of the church are believed to have fallen into dilapidation during Cromwell's Protectorate. Parts were later rebuilt in 1879. The church has several unusual features, not least being the missing nave section between the tower and the chancel which is what remains of the building. In 2010 a new kitchen and toilet was installed. The church is fully accessible to disabled visitors. The most recent Quinquennial was carried out in 2013 and states that the church is in generally good order. Some minor repairs to interior plasterwork and redecorating will be completed before the next quinquennial in 2018 and plans are being drawn up to replace the carpeting.

Bells 2000 was a millennium project, to restore the tower bells funded by money raised by the parish. Five new bells were cast and one retuned making a peal of six which were re-hung in a new steel frame. There is an established band of bell-ringers based here who ring for services.

The Church Community

Our electoral roll currently stands at 68. There are two Churchwardens, one of whom is also a licensed Reader, and an organist. There is a very active fundraising committee and a committed and functioning PCC. The current service pattern is two services of Morning Prayer led by the Reader, and a parish Eucharist
every month. We use Common Worship Order 1 and Hymns Old & New. The total number of worshippers can reach as many as 23 at a normal Eucharist but is usually around 13. Morning Prayer is usually attended by 10. There are currently no worshippers under 16. Our average Sunday attendance has halved since 2011 when it was 24, due largely to the deaths of regular worshippers who have not been replaced. There is significant work to do here.

As is common in rural communities our Harvest festival and Carol Services are very popular. We run a very popular flower festival on the Whitsun Bank Holiday which involves the school and many of the village groups. In 2017, we re-started our annual art exhibition after a break of a few years. Our annual church BBQ in the church hall paddock regularly attracts 90 people. At Remembrance we alternate and share services with the Baptist chapel.

We hope there will be considerable scope for working much more closely with the Baptist Chapel as they have recently appointed a new and enthusiastic Minister who is working hard to increase the current attendance from between 3 – 6. The Reader and the Baptist Minister have started to meet regularly to pray together and hope to form a prayer group.

The church maintains an active link with the County Primary School and the Reader takes an assembly every Wednesday and runs a Messy Church type after-school club every Friday which began in the spring of 2017. She is also a school governor with responsibility for pastoral care, faith, ethnicity and diversity. She also started the very popular youth club for 10 to 14s which has run on a Friday night in the Church Hall since June 2015. The mother and toddler group, which meets twice a week, is also run by a PCC member as is the Women’s Group which meets monthly in the church hall.
The Parish of Sutton St Edmund

Sutton St. Edmund is some three and a half miles from Sutton St James and a similar distance from Gedney Hill. It is located along the Cambridgeshire border, about 9 miles north of the town of Wisbech. With a population of about 600 it is the smallest and generally quietest of the 4 villages. The parish area is very large with housing widely scattered and includes the Saxon hamlet of Throckenholt. The village has had little recent housing development and there is no longer a shop, public house, school or Post Office. These are all available close by in Gedney Hill or Sutton St James. There is a small tourist Caravan Site with open club-room facilities. The village has shown a good sense of community and in the past has supported major projects such as; building the Village Hall, the creation of the New Century Fun Field and in 2005 the extensive restoration of the church tower.

The Village Hall is the base for a very active Short Mat Bowls Club and venue for regular Bingo. The management committee was revitalised in September 2017 with several new members and are beginning to introduce a range of additional activities which the church is actively supporting. We are very encouraged by this and hope to capitalise on this relationship in the future.

The Church Building

The Grade II listed Parish Church of St Edmund (King and Martyr) was rebuilt in the 1795 Georgian style, on the site of a former church. Internally the building is largely original and retains most of the box pews. It has a ceiling and balcony. The comfortable capacity is about 170. There is a toilet and limited kitchen facilities. The 2017 Quinquennial confirmed that the church is in generally good order. A Burma Star Remembrance garden is maintained within the spacious churchyard.

The Church Community

There are two Churchwardens and an organist, together with a supportive and functional PCC. The parish has an Authorised Lay Minister and a serving member on the Deanery Synod.

The current service pattern is two services of Morning Prayer led by the ALM and one Communion every month, together with Joint or special services.
Our average Sunday attendance is has grown from a low of 5 in 2013 to 9 in 2017 but rises substantially for festivals and joint services. We run a Summer Fair with a display of Vintage cars and a Songs of Praise each year and our patronal Festival and Plough Sunday are important services for us along with our annual Harvest Festival and Carol Service.
The Parish of Gedney Hill

Gedney Hill is designated as an expansion village on the local plan with a large number of residents having settled here in the last 10-15 years and a population of about 800 people. The parish is largely an agricultural and horticultural working community but also supports other smaller businesses. There is a golf course, fishing lakes, a printing business, a garage, a Day Nursery, a florist and a well-supported village shop with a bakery and post office. Playing its part in the community is our large village hall with good modern facilities which provides leisure groups for keep fit, the Golden Link over 60’s club, a thriving Women’s Institute group, Mums and Tots sessions, dances, quiz nights, Karate classes, Bingo sessions and also acts as a venue for parties and weddings and is available to the local community for almost any social event.

We have a strong link with our local church maintained primary school, (62 pupils on roll) which is rated Good by OFSTED and federated with Shepeau Stow school (74 on roll) in neighbouring Whaplode Drove. Both schools share the same Head and board of governors and one of the strengths noted by OFSTED in its latest report was the strong Christian leadership from within the benefice to both schools. Collective worship is taken regularly in both schools by an experienced Authorised Lay Minister from Whaplode Drove who is also one of the school governors.

The Church Buildings

Our 14th Century Grade 11 listed church of Holy Trinity, one of only two in the country with a timber supported nave is a delightful building which can seat 300 people and has a tower which houses 5 bells. It was heavily restored in 1874-75, by James Fowler of Louth, which included the entire rebuilding of the outer walls. A listed 15th century cross, restored in 1918, is sited in the churchyard.

St Polycarps, an ex-Mission School Church, was built next to Lambert Bridge in the village of Holbeach Drove in 1870. The Church building is a well-recognised landmark and it has a very special place in the life and memories of families still living in the local community. This tiny Church was used daily both as a school and place of worship. The original pews, which convert into school desks, and a neat little fireplace still remain in situ in this quaint rural church.

The Church Community

The church community is a welcoming, friendly and prayerful one which enjoys services of Communion, Morning Prayer and Evensong supported by between 12-16 people. We have the benefit of three competent organists we can call on to support our singing.

St Polycarp’s currently has only one service a month with a congregation of 6-12 people but it is well supported at harvest and for there is standing room only at their popular Christmas Carol Service.

In 2017 we decided, in association with the Village Hall, to put on a very successful Christmas Fair.
The Parish of Whaplode Drove

Whaplode Drove is a small farming community with a population of about 710. We are a caring and vibrant community, and although we may be small in number, there is a lot going on.

The village has a shop-come-post office, a garage, fishing lakes, and a social club that has a football team, they also run pool teams, cribbage and darts. There is also a bowling green with an enthusiastic bowls team.

Our primary school is in the hamlet of Shepeau Stow (74 on roll) and has a very good reputation.

The Elizabethan Centre is our grandly titled Village Hall which hosts social functions, bingo, crib, darts and Pool. It is also used to put on Amateur Dramatics and local Musicals.

The Church Building

Saint John the Baptist church is a very important part of our village. The present church was built in the mid 1800s and is the third one built on this site. We have regular Sunday services ranging from traditional Eucharist to a Family service, we have regular exhibitions in the church for festival services which are very well supported by the local community and certainly help to draw our community together.

The porch was rebuilt and extended in the late 1990s and now has a toilet, and tea making area which makes it large enough for meetings and coffee mornings.

The Church Community

We are a regular worshipping community of 12-18 regulars, but this number is augmented at our Family Get Together service.

We have 2 organists who regularly play for our service.

We have a church hall that is regularly used for parish lunches which are a great outreach for our church. In 2017 we began a new venture – holding Messy Church in our church hall once a month. At our first session we had 6 children and 10 adults and we now have up to 14 children and 25 adults ranging over three generations. The PCC has generously supported this work with £400, the diocesan Transformation Fund with £200 and the local community and Gedney Hill church have donated a number of toys and resources.

As well as hiring out the church hall for parties and concerts, we put on a fund-raising lunch once a month in order to support a project in Gambia with whom one of our members has a link, along with other local charities and the church building projects.

One of our young Mums who is very interested in local history has introduced a parish magazine for the village and developed a facebook page and website for the church hall. She is also collecting local history material from the villagers and is compiling a local history archive.
The Deanery of Elloe East

The Deanery of Elloe East consists of 18 parishes organised into 6 benefices. Another benefice, besides this one, is also vacant. There is a stipendiary curate based in Holbeach, in her second year, who is currently helping out in the other vacancy, and there are two (OLM) locally ordained priests, one of whom works part time as a hospital chaplain. There are four Readers and one active retired priest. The Vicar of Holbeach is also the Rural Dean.

The deanery has undergone considerable changes in personnel since 2013 and is beginning to think of ways to develop a new pattern of working together. Any new incumbent will be invited to take a full part in how we organise ourselves. We are also in the process of trying to get together some funding so that we can appoint a deanery administrator during the course of 2018. We anticipate that this will make the deanery more efficient and free up clergy time for more active ministry.

Over the last 12 years, the deanery has been proactive in using diocesan courses to train Authorised Lay Ministers using local tutors. This has resulted in lay people working with those from other parishes and sharing experiences, and in some cases continuing to work together after they have been authorised and this has significantly contributed to the good working relationships that exist between parishes. Nearly all the parishes in the deanery have a number of Authorised Lay Ministers actively involved in leading worship and providing pastoral care. With a number of new clergy joining the deanery in recent years we need to look again at how we nurture and train another tranche of lay ministers and provide continuing training for those we already have.

In the recent past the deanery has run a very successful deanery schools mission and an annual drama project, using a professional youth drama group to lead workshops and put on a performance in a handful of venues each year. However a local charitable trust has recently appointed a children’s worker with a remit to work in 7 of the parishes who are beneficiaries of the trust and it is hoped that there might be a knock on effect in the other 11 parishes as time goes by and allow us to develop new and sustainable areas of work with children and young people.