Benefice of Fotherby, North Thoresby, and Grainsby with Waithe
Thank you for taking time to look at this particular post within the Diocese of Lincoln. As one of the largest dioceses in the country stretching from the Humber estuary in the North to the Wash in the South, we are home to a population of just over 1,000,000 people. People live in a variety of different settings from the urban centres of Grimsby and Cleethorpes, Scunthorpe and the City of Lincoln to the market towns of Louth and Boston. Lincolnshire has its wonderful coastal strip including Skegness and Mablethorpe, the new housing developments in many of our towns and the many, many small villages which mark our landscape. All are equally important to us, and all we are seeking to serve in making known the good news of Jesus that has been entrusted to us.

In preparation for our recent ‘Peer Review’ we put together our diocesan mission and vision statements and summarised our intention as follows ‘Our aim then is to grow the Church, in both numbers and depth, through attention to what we see as our core tasks of faithful worship, confident discipleship and joyful service with the vision of being a healthy, vibrant, sustainable church which leads to transformed lives and communities across greater Lincolnshire making a difference in God’s world. To that end as a diocese we shall support, encourage and enable local parishes, benefices and mission communities to fulfil, within this framework, their own unique calling to serve in mission the community or communities in which they are set’.

In short we don’t believe in a big top down diocesan master plan. We do believe in supporting and encouraging our parishes to develop their own plans which we will then seek to support and encourage using central diocesan resources as we are able.

To that end we have begun an ambitious programme to try and increase the number of good quality, creative stipendiary clergy in the diocese by almost 50%, and have established a regular pattern of episcopal visitations and MDR to show our support and commitment to those working in parish ministry. We have established the principle that we are a ‘learning diocese’ and are actively creating and investing in ‘learning communities’ according to the different ‘character areas’ we operate in so that we can learn from and support each other. We are committed to the principle of mission action planning and have a small team who can assist parishes with that, and have released some of our historic resources to enable parishes to apply for funding to help them in making those plans a reality, in addition to also using some of those resources to invest in good quality CMD and clergy well-being.

We are not unaware of the challenges we face. The deanery of Louthesk, of which these particular parishes are part, on an average Sunday, connects with 1.1% of its total population, but we are committed to ‘having a go’, to sharing what we know to be the good news of Jesus to the different communities we are here to serve, and if that resonates with you, then please read on with all that follows .........
Map of the benefice

Part of a map by Sarah Lines from A Guide to the Anglican Churches in Lindsey edited by Roger Massingberd-Mundy, 1991
Copyright South Ormsby Group of Parishes, permission granted.

Please click on the map to see an interactive version with census and deprivation index data
The present Bishop of Lincoln was enthroned in 2012 and, after time listening in the Diocese, in 2013 he outlined his vision for the Diocese of Lincoln to be:

- ‘faithful in worship;
- confident in discipleship; and
- joyful in service’,

so that we become ‘a healthy, vibrant and sustainable church, transforming lives in greater Lincolnshire’.

At a diocesan level, much work has gone into reshaping the structures of the Diocese so that they better support the work of parishes in prayer, worship, mission and service. There is a new Strategic Plan which emphasises supporting parishes.

At a local level, parishes were asked to look at their local context to identify ‘Mission Communities’ that would provide the best patterns for partnership in mission and ministry. Each Mission Community was asked to reflect and draw up a vision for its future life and ministry as part of the wider Developing Discipleship Programme. This is now being developed further by establishing Learning Communities of churches in similar situations across the Diocese who can share good practice and support each other.

Building a pattern of ministry for the future

Whilst offering some immediate challenges, the present situation, where three benefices in the Deanery are in vacancy, also provides an opportunity to shape the pattern of ministry in the local church in a way that prepares it for the future. The challenge that faces us is building up rural communities so that they are resourced from the largest communities rather than mimicking other service providers and centralising everything in one place – the need is to build up community rather than chase efficiency. An important aspect of this is to develop a pattern of ministry in which clergy can share in ministry and support whilst retaining the identities of individual churches and the communities they serve.

There are already patterns of partnership working in place that lead to a natural grouping of two pairs of benefices into new Mission Communities: including Louth and Legbourne Woldmarsh, which have shared ministers in the past.

This is a new benefice that is looking forward to working together to serve the spiritual needs of the communities it serves. As we seek to be ‘faithful in worship, confident in discipleship and joyful in service’, we are looking for a new parish priest to help us in:

- Developing opportunities for worship and social events that bring people together across the benefice;
- Providing opportunities for people to discuss their faith and grow in discipleship;
- Improving communication within the benefice and with our Methodist friends;
- Engaging more fully with the primary schools in our communities;
- Encouraging the prayer life of all our church communities; and
- Developing, more fully, provision for Pastoral Care.

We hope that the following provides a picture of the communities in the Fotherby, North Thoresby and Grainsby with Waithe Benefice, the churches that witness to Christ’s presence amongst them, and the work that we feel called to continue among them.

If you feel called to join us, more information can be found by contacting the Rural Dean, Nick Brown, on 07901 852198 or e-mailing nick.brown@teamparishoflouth.org.uk

Or by visiting the Diocese of Lincoln’s website: www.lincoln.anglican.org
and Fotherby/Somercotes, which already share a lay ministry team. The two other benefices in the Deanery (Binbrook and Midmarsh) could naturally join these two groupings to create the following Mission Communities:

- **LOUTH & EAST WOLDS MISSION COMMUNITY**
  - Building on links between the ‘Parish of Louth’ and ‘Legbourne Woldmarsh Benefice’.
  - Develop a group of three benefices providing mutual support by exploring including the ‘Binbrook Benefice’ within this grouping.
  - Develop the identity of the benefices serving the western side of the Deanery.

- **LOTHESK MARSHES MISSION COMMUNITY**
  - Maintaining the existing Ministry Team to serve the new ‘Fotherby & North Thoresby’ and ‘Somercotes & Marshchapel’ benefices.
  - Including the ‘Midmarsh Benefice’ so that there is mutual support for the incumbent serving those parishes.
  - Provide a focus for the parishes serving the Marsh.

Under this pattern each benefice would retain its relationship with an incumbent who would have responsibility for the ‘cure of souls’, whilst collegial patterns of prayer, lay ministry and mutual support would be developed, as appropriate, both within the Mission Communities and the wider deanery.

**The wider Church context**

In the wider context, there is a warm relationship between various parish churches in the Deanery and their partner Methodist chapels, and a number of common interests with Eastgate Union Church in Louth (a Baptist-URC church serving the local area). These existing relationships provide the foundations for exploring how we engage in mission across the local area and develop partnerships that build up local communities.

**INTRODUCTION TO THE BENEFICE**

The new benefice of Fotherby, North Thoresby and Grainsby with Waithe is located to the north of the county Market town of Louth and extends northwards along the A16 towards Grimsby, reaching the northern edge of the Deanery of Louthesk; all of which are located in the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and extending out across some of the neighbouring ‘marsh’ towards the coast.

**Our Vision**

In 2015, as the Mission Community of Fotherby and North Somercotes benefices, we took part in a Developing Discipleship Pilot. From that we felt our vocation was to be a diverse group of people working in the fellowship of Jesus Christ, serving our communities prayerfully and showing God’s hospitality and generosity. Our aim was, with God’s help, to grow in fellowship by having group events and serve our communities through hospitality and outreach into our villages. Following from this vision, the following areas for development were identified:

- It was decided to hold worship services to which all in the benefice were invited and where the benefice choir could enhance the worship. We have done this by holding benefice services at different churches on the 5th Sunday in the month. In the summer, we have had sherry and snacks at Little Grimsby church and a picnic after a benefice service at Marshchapel. A benefice wide social event was also started with a New Years’ Party held at Fotherby and we are holding a thankyou tea and cake for all our volunteers who look after our churches and church yards this September. We hope to continue our relationships with the new Marshchapel, North Somercotes, Grainthorpe and Conisholme benefice.

- We encourage church members to support each other’s events in all the different villages and advertise these in the Benefice news and through notices at church services.

- Another part of our vision was to widen our horizons so that we can serve our communities better, using ‘Puzzling Questions’ and ‘Table Talk’ to stimulate conversations at schools and in the bible study group. We also wanted to advertise the presence of the bible study group which is presently led by Rev Moira Davis, once a month at Fotherby Church. We have not been able to utilise the “Puzzling questions and “Table talk” at
school recently due to lack of people however the bible group has been promoted in the Benefice News, our Benefice newsletter and a small number of people regularly attend.

- We wanted to improve communication across and within the benefices using the Benefice News. Under consideration, was whether to have a monthly newsletter instead of a bimonthly one. At the present time, it remains bimonthly. The newsletter is able to be uploaded onto the ‘Churches near You’ website. Communication with our Methodist friends was also a priority and the Benefice news advertises the Methodist services in Fulstow. Now that the new benefice is formed, the church service rota and events pages in the Benefice News will include North Thoresby and Grainsby.
- We would like to engage more fully with the 3 primary schools in our benefice and with young people. A Christingle service was held for the school in Fulstow at Fulstow church which was led by a lay reader who also contributed to the school’s Easter service. The lay reader is also involved with the Harvest and Ascension Day services with North Somercotes school and Fulstow school.
- Following on from the successful 10 days of prayer ‘Thy Kingdom Come’ when all churches were kept open, some with prayer stations for prayer and meditation, our vision would be to encourage the prayer life in all our church communities, perhaps with Lent and Advent courses.
- Pastoral care is also an important part of our vision. At the moment, this is done informally at Breakfast club (Utterby), Pop-in (Fotherby) and Covenham Café. The retired clergy provide the occasional offices for people in our benefice with assistance from other local clergy. A Lay Reader visits a local residential home monthly. It is hoped that a new pastoral visiting team will be set up to support housebound people in our communities. This has been recently discussed at our PCC meeting in June 2019.
- A new Open the Book team was started in September 2018. A team of six people visit Fulstow Primary School once a month to act out with the pupils, bible stories in a short assembly.

**MINISTRY TEAM AND SERVICE PATTERNS**

**The Ministry Team serving the Louthesk Marshes Mission Community**

At the present time, this comprises of 4 retired priests and 2 Lay readers who work across two of the benefices that make up the Louthesk Marshes Mission Community. However, the wider ministry team consists of our dedicated church wardens, organists, choir members, church cleaners, flower arrangers and volunteers involved in our hospitality outreaches in our communities.

The ministry team allows flexibility in the services and the arrangement for worship services in the new benefice will evolve with time and new personnel. All the ministry team are happy to serve in all the parishes and across benefice boundaries as required.

This is the existing schedule of services inherited from the previous benefices.

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<td>HC at Covenham</td>
<td>HC at North Thoresby</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Sunday</td>
<td>HC at Fotherby</td>
<td>MP at North Thoresby</td>
<td>MP/HC at Ludborough</td>
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<td>3rd Sunday</td>
<td>HC at Fulstow</td>
<td>HC at North Thoresby</td>
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<td>EP at Grainsby</td>
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<td>4th Sunday</td>
<td>MP/HC at Utterby</td>
<td>MP at North Thoresby</td>
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<td>MP at Little Grimsby</td>
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<td>5th Sunday</td>
<td>Benefice Holy Communion within Benefice</td>
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The two monthly services of Morning Prayer at North Thoresby are led by the church wardens and other laity.
We realise that further changes will be necessary once we have full-time minister in place. We will then be able to look at establishing patterns for the future spiritual growth of the Church in our benefice.

**What we can offer you!**

Come and enjoy with us the English countryside as its best. Join in our journey of faith, and minister to us in sacrament, word and care.

Our villages contain much of historic interest in themselves, in the midst of a county rich in culture and history. The city of Lincoln with its Cathedral and Roman founding has a lot to offer the visitor. It has a broad selection of shops, restaurants and is home to a “top twenty” University in addition to the Bishop Grosseteste University, a Church related seat of learning. There are two theatres, and an increasing number of recreational establishments.
We are close to the traditional market town of Louth, famous for its Lincolnshire foods and wide variety of independent shops. Louth has a modern leisure centre, with swimming pool and gymnasium. There is also a theatre and cinema. Horncastle, renowned for its array of antique shops is within easy travelling distance, as is Grimsby, with its fishing heritage museum and public performance auditorium. We are on the edge of the Lincolnshire Wolds, an area of outstanding natural beauty, with a great variety of planned walking routes, including the Viking Way.

If the coast is an attraction to you, we will not disappoint, with blue flag beaches aplenty within easy travelling distance, with much of the coastline being a Site of Special Scientific Interest. There is a good mixture to be had of the busy traditional seaside resorts, at Mablethorpe and Skegness, and more secluded stretches of sandy beach, great for dog walking at some times of year.

We are well served educationally, with an OFSTED outstanding rated Pre-School Playgroup in one of our villages, with good Primary Schools and secondary settings, with Louth having a Grammar School. The area is well served by GP and dental surgeries, and Louth has a small hospital with an urgent care centre. The nearest general hospital is at Grimsby.

We are delighted that presently there are no major structural concerns regarding our church buildings. Our churches are well cared for by dedicated congregations and Churchwardens. All work hard to remain financially sound, and we presently pay the Parish Share to the Diocese in full.

We would support our priest, being mindful of their well-being and expect our Priest to take a regular rest day a week and make use of opportunities for retreats. There are two retreat houses in the Diocese, one at Edenham – one being Franciscan. Our Ministry team which currently works across two benefices would enjoy working in collaboration with our new Priest. And as already mentioned in the Deanery context, it is hoped that the priests in the Louthesk Marshes Mission community would have joint ministry meetings to support each other and exchange fellowship and ideas.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PARISHES AND COMMUNITIES

The Parish Church of St Mary, Fotherby

The church of St Mary was re-built in 1862 on the site of the former church which had fallen into disrepair. It is a fine example of Victorian architecture designed by James Fowler of Louth. It is in a good state of repair and nearly all the recommendations of the last Quinquennial Inspection have been addressed.

There is a regular monthly Holy Communion service held there on the second Sunday of each month, and a Compline service is held on the first Thursday of each month, each attended by our villagers and members of the other churches within the Group Parish.

The church is used by the Parish Council and the Fotherby Jubilee Committee for their monthly meetings as it is the only building in the village that can accommodate a large number of people. The Lay Ministry team meet regularly in the community room. A Bible Study group also meets here each month. It is also used by the District Council as a polling station for elections. Two counsellors use the church for client counselling sessions.
An Outreach Post Office service is based in the church each Wednesday. We hold a weekly Pop-In to coincide with the opening hours of the Post Office, where light lunches are served. This is always very well received and welcomes the wider community into the church. The church regularly holds events for local and overseas charities. Refreshments are always home-made and are legendary within the community! The church is thus at the heart of the community, socially and spiritually.

Quotes from our visitor’s book:

"Beautiful Church, peaceful surroundings, a tonic in time of need"

"Truly the Lord is in this place"

"So lovely to see the church used for the community"

"Beautiful, peaceful church. Thank you for having your doors open"

"A little taste of heaven"

The Parish Church of St Edith, Little Grimsby

The tiny church of St. Edith’s is situated in the grounds of Little Grimsby Hall and dates from 1500. This is carved in the stone over the west door underneath the single bell turret. Little Grimsby is a small hamlet close to Fotherby, with a footpath and road connecting the two villages. It consists of 14 dwellings and consequently has a small population. The church is in a good state of repair and in recent years has been re-roofed.

St. Edith’s shares a District Church Council with St. Mary’s, Fotherby, and has the same Churchwardens. The monthly Morning Prayer service is attended by the villagers of Little Grimsby and Fotherby. Special services include the Harvest Festival and the Carol Service, when the church is full to capacity. The Benefice Good Friday Walk of Witness begins with a devotional service in St. Edith’s. The tranquility and beauty of the church’s setting makes it an ideal venue for quiet days and meditation.
The Parish Church of St Andrew, Utterby

St Andrews, a Grade II* listed church stands in Church Lane, Utterby, in an attractive and dominating position, adjacent to the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

A church was first established on the site in 1220 but the present building dates from the early 14th century, with 15th century additions. Since 2010 pews have been removed from the north aisle, creating a flexible space for events. Water and drainage systems have been added to provide for a fold away kitchen servery and for a toilet in the tower room. Heating is by storage heaters which were installed in 2013. Having received a ‘Places of Worship’ grant, a unique engraved glass screen depicting country life, and a modern-day Parish chest to archive village memorabilia has been installed.

St Andrews Church Utterby serves a village population of 350 and has an electoral roll of 37. The church is used for monthly Sunday worship, Snowdrop and Primrose days, a Christmas tree festival, an annual concert and heritage talks. The congregation is usually middle aged to elderly however increasing numbers of young people and children visit the church to use the Children’s Church Trail and the God’s Acre materials. There are firm links with Utterby Primary School, who use the church for their family services. In addition to its faith role, the church offers a vigorous programme of heritage and social events which also serve as fund raisers.

The church has received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to repair masonry, windows, drainage, interior lighting and these have been completed in 2018.

More information about Utterby is available at info@utterbychurch.co.uk

The Parish Church of St Mary, Covenham St Mary

St Mary’s Church, Covenham is one of two churches in the combined villages of Covenham St Mary and Covenham St. Bartholomew. St Bartholomew’s Church is closed and is looked after a trust.

The two villages of Covenham have a population of about 300. It is mainly residential with a few farms which are both agricultural and livestock based. The pub is now closed but there is a Community Hub, Cov.com who are wanting to buy the pub and make it into a pub/shop/community centre. The incumbent of the parish is chair of the village’s Poor’s Allotment charity which provides grants to people in need.

The church of St Mary’s is well maintained and is spacious. As well as monthly services, it hosts Bingo evenings, one of which is for a local charity, Choral concerts, Harvest supper, a Christmas Fayre and a summer community event. A Covenham coffee shop is held in the church in conjunction with the Community Hub, once a month. Any profits are shared between the church and the community group in the village.
At the present time, a monthly Holy Communion service is held at 9.30 am led by a member of the ministry team.

**The Parish Church of St Lawrence, Fulstow**

The village of Fulstow lies on the Greenwich Meridian Line, some eight miles from Louth and twelve miles from Grimsby. With a population of c550, it is served by a public house, a small primary school (negotiations ongoing to become a Church School) and a village hall.

Grade II listed St Lawrence Church, built in the early English style, was renovated in the 1860's, and bears some traces of earlier buildings, including what is thought to be a thirteenth century font. The roof is in good order, having been replaced in 2011. There is a pipe organ in extremely good order. Overhead radiant heating is installed. There is no piped water provision. The church is surrounded on all sides by a churchyard, still open for burials. There are no major outstanding actions from quinquennial reports.

Presently the only regular service of worship held is on the third Sunday of the month, when Holy Communion is celebrated at 09:30 hrs. This service has organ accompanied hymns. The congregation is usually of around 15, comprising Fulstow residents and worshippers from other parishes in the Group. There is a Methodist service held at the church at 10 am on the first Sunday of each month. Annually a Harvest Festival service and Carol Service are held. The church is usually full at these services. There is a small occasional choir, led by our organist, who sing at these services. Children and staff from Fulstow Primary school (Ofsted Good) use the church for services at Christmas, Harvest and Easter and end of term services. We have a good relationship with the Little Ducklings pre-school (Ofsted Outstanding) who regularly visit the church and the churchyard. Children from the school and Little Ducklings provide decorations for festivals.

**A selection of comments from the Fulstow Visitor Book**

“lovely organ.”

“I’ve come to pay tribute to the good people of Fulstow who refused to build a war memorial for their dead until the life and tragic death of their brave son Charles Kirman could also be honoured. I didn’t expect to find such a lovely church in this peaceful setting.”

“Very interesting and beautiful place to worship.”

“A really lovely church – welcoming and cosy.”

“A small place of peace in a hectic year.”
The Parish Church of St Mary, Ludborough

The original Church was built c1200AD towards the end of the Crusades, and its Bishop witnessed the Magna Carta, however, it has been changed and re-built over time. The current tower dates back to the 14th century, built of local sandstone and has been used as a look out post in times of danger (as recently as the last world war). The tower has three bells.

Currently there is one service a month which alternates between Holy Communion and Morning Prayer. The large space of the church has enabled it to host film evenings, concerts and flower exhibitions. Ludborough Church DCC is very children focused, the Church having a permanent children’s corner and actively encourages children, where possible, to be included in the services.

The village of Ludborough is a small community of largely agricultural and home-business residents. The village has a Public house with an excellent quality restaurant. Ludborough also benefits from an hourly bus service to Louth and Grimsby and a monthly Library Van.

Ludborough is proud of its railway heritage with the Lincolnshire Wolds Railway preserving Lincolnshire’s Railway Steam Heritage at Ludborough Station, the other side of the A16 from the church.

The Parish Church of St Nicholas, Grainsby

The church of St Nicholas, is situated in a small hamlet near the A16, comprising of less than a dozen houses and cottages most of which are owned by Grainsby Farms, who are major farmers in the area. The current owner, also a patron of our church, lives in The Grange which is through the park towards the A18, Barton Street.

The church has a tower which has stood since 11th century, though its west lancet and the double lancet of the top storey belong to the 13th century. The nave has stout and sloping walls perhaps as old as the tower, with a Norman doorway on the south side.

The church was substantially renovated over 7 years 2001-2007, comprising new roof, tower repairs and repointing, chancel outside walls repaired, repointed, inside redecorated and hatchments and boards restored. Funds raised from specific charities including English Heritage, Historic Church Trust totalling over £100,000.

Our church has a service once each month, taking place on the third Sunday when Evensong is held. An organist plays for each service Attendance at monthly service is usually minimum of five with many more attending on the festival days of Harvest and Christmas.
The Parish Church of St Helen, North Thoresby

The church is located on the north side of the village of North Thoresby which is a medium sized village, population 1068, situated on the A16 halfway between Louth and Grimsby. A tower with 3 bells was added in 1200. It has a good heating system and a sound system with induction loop. Grant applications are progressing to install a toilet and servery facility within the church, which will allow more events to be held in the building. The church is in good structural condition, and no major work was recommended at the last Quinquennial Inspection in 2013.

Regular worship takes place every Sunday. On two Sundays a month, a service of communion using Common Worship Order One in Traditional language is held. One Sunday, a service of Matins using traditional texts is led by a churchwarden and on the other Sunday, we hold a service of Morning Worship led by various members of the congregation. Average Sunday attendance is about 15 for non-eucharistic services and 22 for communion services. Music is an important part of our worship, and our organist plays at all services. Lay people play a significant role, serving at communion services, reading lessons, and leading the intercessions.

There is a united service with the Methodist church in the village every Mothering Sunday. Last year, the village school held their carol service in the church and the church also hosted a Snowman Festival. A Christingle Service is held each Christmas Eve, with around 100 in attendance, including around 50 children. The church participates with a themed exhibition and provision of refreshments during the village 1940’s weekend event which is linked with Ludborough Wolds Railway.

North Thoresby has an hourly bus service to Grimsby/Louth. Shops include a convenience store with off licence and news agency, a post office, hairdressing salon, takeaway and well-stocked DIY/home care centre. The village has two public houses, a village hall, a doctor’s surgery and a play park. The primary school, North Thoresby Primary Academy, with 80 pupils is now affiliated with Utterby Primary School, also in our new benefice.
The Rectory, Peppin Lane, Fotherby

The Vicarage is a modern four bedroom detached property with an adjoining single garage.

**Ground Floor**
- Front door leading to Entrance Hall. Downstairs WC
- **Study:** 4.08m x 3.33m with carpet.
- **Dining Room:** 3.79m x 3.48m with carpet.
- **Reception Room:** 6.07m x 3.64m with carpet. Contains a fireplace.
- **Kitchen:** 4.24m x 3.77m, the kitchen consists of a range of wall cupboards and a range of base and wall units with space for dishwasher. Lino floor.
- **Utility Room:** 3.18m x 2.17m a back door leads to a hall, boot room and garage.

**First Floor**
- **Bedroom 1:** 4.55m x 3.53m, a double bedroom with carpet and built in wardrobes.
- **Bedroom 2:** 4.26m x 3.05m, with carpet.
- **Bedroom 3:** 3.78m x 2.57m, with carpet.
- **Bedroom 4:** 3.65m x 2.43m, with carpet.

**Outside:** Single garage. Garden to side and rear with oil tank. Parking to the front of the property. Hardstanding.

*Energy Efficiency Rating*

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*Current | Potential*