

Are You Ready To Take This Journey With Us?



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THE DIOCESE OF ST EDMUNDSBURY AND IPSWICH:

JOINT PROFILE OF THE BECK ROW GROUP

Details of the Post

Role title: Priest in Charge/Team Vicar Designate.

Location: The Beck Row Group of parishes in north-west Suffolk, comprising Beck Row with Kenny Hill; Eriswell; Icklingham; Tuddenham with Cavenham, Herringswell and Red Lodge.

Deanery: Mildenhall.

Archdeaconry: Sudbury.

The Role Description

The successful candidate is promised a varied, interesting and challenging role as the parish priest to a mixed group of semi-urban and rural parishes. He or she will be the Priest in Charge of the Beck Row Group and reside in the vicarage in Beck Row.

Moreover, it is envisaged that in due course the Beck Row Group will join with another 10 parishes in the Mildenhall Deanery and become part of a newly formed Forest Heath Team. The other principal components of the Team will be –

- The town of Mildenhall;
- The Lark and Lee Group, which is formed of the parishes of Barton Mills, Freckenham, West Row and Worlington;
- The Dalham benefice, which is formed of the parishes of Dalham, Gazeley, Higham, Kentford and Moulton.
- Each of these will have their own full-time priests, one of whom will be designated the Team Rector.

Where are we?

The six parishes in the Beck Row Group serve seven villages in an arc to the north, east and south of Mildenhall in north-west Suffolk where it borders Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. The combined population of these parishes at 2011 was approximately 10,000, which we estimate has grown to 14,000 and is still growing in Beck Row, Eriswell & Red Lodge. The largest of them is Beck Row and the vicarage is situated there.

Mildenhall is a small but well-served market town and its population also numbers about 10,000. Measured from Beck Row, Bury St Edmunds, which has recently been named by The Times as one of the top 20 market towns in the country, lies some 17 miles to the south-east. Newmarket, which is the headquarters of the UK's horseracing and bloodstock industries, is about 15 miles to the south-west.

Slightly further afield, Cambridge and the cathedral city Norwich can all be reached in less than an hour. The A11 and A14 trunk roads provide ready access to the national motorway network. Also within easy striking distance are Thetford Forest and several Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, including those on the coasts of Norfolk and Suffolk, the Norfolk Broads and the Stour Valley.

The railway station in Ely has a frequent mainline service to London and connecting services throughout East Anglia, to the Midlands and beyond. For foreign travel, our local airports are Luton, Norwich, Stansted and Southend and there are ferry services from Harwich.

What do we have to offer?

The new incumbent and his/her family (if any) will benefit from -

- The support, fellowship and collaboration of the two Team Vicars, both of whom are highly experienced and well established in their present posts.
- Friendly and welcoming congregations who work well together
- A willingness on the part of our congregations to be flexible and to experiment with new styles of worship – particularly with a view to attracting more children and younger worshippers.
- A recognition that our congregations must be outward looking and innovative in order to interact more closely with the communities that we serve and to make our churches more attractive and relevant.

- The chance to live in a beautiful part of the country, with excellent transport links and close to all amenities.



- The use of a well-appointed vicarage with four bedrooms and a separate study.
- Access to educational facilities. (The closest primary school to the vicarage is in Beck Row and secondary schools and sixth form colleges are to be found in Mildenhall).
- Administrative assistance is anticipated to be available.

What are we looking for in candidates?

To lead us in the Beck Row Group we would like to find a person –

- Whose love of God shines through to all they meet.
- Who has empathy, compassion, and an ability to communicate with, motivate and enthuse (not least from the pulpit) people of all ages and backgrounds.
- Who has previously worked in a benefice with differing styles of worship.
- Who can show evidence of growing congregations and widening participation in the life of the Church in previous parishes.
- Who will embrace the joys of multi-parish ministry.
- Who is able to forge relationships with children and their parents through the local schools and thereby encourage the growth of the church family.
- Who understands and is willing to take forward the Diocese's vision for growth "*Growing in God*".
- Who embraces collaborative ministry with fellow clergy and the wider support team.
- A good communicator both in spoken word and through social media.

An Overview of the Group

The six parishes of Beck Row with Kenny Hill; Eriswell; Icklingham; Tuddenham with Cavenham, Herringswell and Red Lodge came together as a group in January 2014. In order to create a sense of identity within the proposed new Forest Heath Team, we decided to call ourselves the “Beck Row Group”. To increase further the cohesiveness of the group, we had begun to produce our own monthly parish magazine entitled “*Saints Together*” but this has lapsed during the vacancy and it would be very welcome if the new incumbent could revive it.

Our churches take turns to host well-supported, joint “Cluster Services” and we share other activities such as Lent courses and fund-raising events. The group is working very well, with a great appreciation of the diversity of worship on offer and a recognition of the increased strength gained through working together. In 2015, we had our first Sea Sunday outing to Cromer.

The US air base at RAF Mildenhall is a huge presence in the parish of Beck Row, as is RAF Lakenheath in Eriswell, and the economy of the whole area is closely linked to the fortunes of these bases. The uncertainty that was generated by the proposed run down and closure of RAF Mildenhall has been partially alleviated by the recent announcement that this will not now take place until 2024 at the earliest.

If and when it does happen, (although it is envisaged that some expansion would take place at RAF Lakenheath), this would not wholly make up for the loss of employment opportunities. The area, which already has pockets of significant deprivation, would be likely to face challenging times.

Ministers

The new incumbent will have the immediate support of one PTO and two Lay Elders. However, one of these, who is also an organist, has just started his training as an Ordinand.

The Current Pattern of Sunday Worship

Parish	Time	1 ST	2 ND	3 RD	4 TH
Beck Row	11am	All Age	HC	All Age	HC
Eriswell	9.30am	HC	HC	All Age	HC
Icklingham	9.30am		HC		HC
Tuddenham	9.30am	HC			

Notes: (a) The Cluster Service rotates between the churches in the group when there is a fifth Sunday in the month.

(b) This table does not include Red Lodge, which is a Local Ecumenical Partnership with the Methodists with whom services alternate, or Cavenham and Herringswell where services are held 4 times a year for the festivals.

Table showing Occasional Offices for 2017 in this Group & Usual Sunday Attendance

Parish	Baptisms	Weddings	Funerals: [Church/Other]	USA
St John's Beck Row	1	1	6/1	15
St Andrew's Cavenham	0	0	1/0	
St Laurence's Eriswell	2	1	1/0	13
St Ethelbert's Herringswell	0	2	2/0	11
St James' Icklingham	2	0	3/0	11
St Christopher's Red Lodge LEP	0	0	0	35
St Mary's Tuddenham	0	0	0	8
Totals	5	4	13/1	93

Our Individual Parishes

Beck Row

The Community



The village has a population of approximately 4,500 and is continuing to grow, with over two hundred new houses having been built within the past two years. Many of these are starter homes and have been occupied by young families. In view of its proximity to the RAF Mildenhall, perhaps as many as 20% of the residents of the village are US service personnel or their dependants.

There is one state pre-school and primary school and one privately owned pre-school/nursery. A new village Hub has recently opened to replace the Community Centre that was formerly shared with the primary school which, with an expanding roll, needed additional space. This has enabled the school to open two more classrooms.



Other amenities include a hotel with a restaurant and bars, a pub/restaurant, and a few small shops. The main sources of employment locally are connected with the air bases, in agriculture or the service industries. Many people commute to work elsewhere due to good road links.

St. John's Church



Originally, St John's was the daughter church of St Mary's Mildenhall and marriages were only performed there from 1957 onwards. The building is late Victorian. During the war years, the church had strong links with the local RAF stations and the churchyard contains the largest collection of Commonwealth War Graves in Suffolk. One notable burial is that of an Australian, Pilot

Officer Ron Middleton, who flew with Bomber Command and was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross.

With the handover of RAF Mildenhall to the USAF, the links diminished. Most of the Americans tend to worship either in their own chapel on the base or in the small, American-based church groups which meet in and around the village. We do, however, maintain close contacts with Beck Row Methodist church.

St John's considers its strengths to be congregational participation in a wide range of activities and willingness to try new things and new forms of worship. Our church family is friendly and welcoming of newcomers. The church is actively involved in the pastoral care of the village. The church building is in good repair and adjacent to it is a church hall with kitchen and toilet facilities.

St John's main challenge is reaching out into the community and attracting young families into the church.

Eriswell

The Community



500 houses previously leased by RAF Lakenheath now come into Eriswell village and being sold, already $\frac{3}{4}$ have been sold some to be re-let to American service personnel but a large proportion to British people, often young couples and young families.

Eriswell has a barber's shop, ladies' hairdressers, an antique shop, car dealership, farm shop and a thriving pub.

Several of the village houses are being sold off by the Elveden Estate so the majority of the villagers are no longer retired, and many newcomers will be arriving.

Val Bibbey Churchwarden writes;

When Andrew and I moved to Eriswell we were overwhelmed by the welcome we received from everyone in the church. From the beautiful and beautifully kept churchyard, with its combination of grasses, wild flowers and more formal garden areas to the upkeep of the Church itself, everyone works together pooling skills to make the best use of resources. As well as this we have a very talented organist and the small congregation throws themselves with enthusiasm, into singing both traditional and modern hymns. We are so excited to be welcoming a new incumbent and look forward to being led into a time of great change here as we work to encourage the large number of people living in new homes on the edge of the village into our community and prayerfully into our congregation.

St Laurence's Church



This is a 13th century building consisting of chancel, nave, south aisle and Lady Chapel. The church and the churchyard are well maintained.

Recently the organ has been significantly renovated and upgraded and a new heating system installed. Being the church of an estate village historically meant that its upkeep was virtually guaranteed. The financial support from the Estate is no longer as generous as it was but a sum is donated each year towards the cost of insurance.



St. Laurence's considers its strength to be its depth of congregational commitment to the church and willingness to take part in services. The church is actively involved in the pastoral care of the village. A large majority of the congregation gift aid their giving. The congregation enjoys a healthy social relationship with the village.

St Laurence's considers its challenge to be encouraging new members into the church family.

Icklingham

The Community

With a population of about 400, the village lies along the A1101 road between Bury St. Edmunds and Mildenhall. It has links with the Elveden Estate but is not an estate village in the same sense as Eriswell. Several estate farms fall within the parish and there is a large grain mill adjacent to the church. There is little employment in the village itself other than in agriculture, with many commuting away to Newmarket, Bury St Edmunds or Thetford.

The village has ancient origins and is named after an Iron Age tribe, the Iceni, which was once ruled by Queen Boudicca. The Black Ditches boundary ditch runs to the south of the village and is believed to be the most easterly of a series of early Anglo Saxon defensive earthworks built across the Icknield Way – an ancient trackway running all the way from Wiltshire to Norfolk.

Being on the southern fringe of the area of sandy heaths and forests known as The Brecks, the parish is home to a number of important natural habitats and the village is surrounded by Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Amenities in the village are unfortunately very limited. There is no school or shop but a pub is being refurbished and is expected to open at Easter 2019. There is a community centre which is privately owned.

St. James's Church



This is a 13th century building consisting of chancel and nave. The building is in good order. Work was carried out to the roof of the chancel in 2015 after the theft of a large quantity of lead.

St. James' considers that its **strength** is in being welcoming without being intrusive. We keep the community in our prayers, especially those who are ill or bereaved. "Project St James" carries out fund-raising in aid of the church. Its latest achievement has been the installation of a kitchen and toilet and a number of groups now use the church for their events in preference to the community centre.

St. James' considers its **challenge** to be in drawing younger people into the church and encouraging them to take an active part in church life.

Although St James' is the parish church, it is worth noting that a second church, All Saints', stands at the opposite end of the village. All Saints' was declared redundant in the 1970's and is now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. This delightful building is the jewel in the crown of redundant churches in Suffolk and with its thatched roof draws visitors from far and wide. Special services are held there twice a year.

Tuddenham with Cavenham

The Communities

The villages of Tuddenham and Cavenham lie very close together between the A11 and A14 trunk roads and are effectively treated as one community.



Tuddenham has a population of about 460 with a wide demographic, including families with young and school age children. Cavenham's population is about 130 with a similar demographic. Both villages are surrounded by farmland but most of those of working age commute to jobs elsewhere.

Many of the amenities are concentrated in Tuddenham. It has a village hall; children's play area and a good-sized playing field with football, cricket and bowls clubs. There is also a plant nursery/cafe, a pub/restaurant, and a country house hotel in the former water mill which has become a well-known wedding venue. The village holds a community coffee morning once a month, and there is a thriving baby & toddlers' group along with a number of other village groups which meet either in the village hall or in the church. Amenities in Cavenham include a village community center and children's play area.

Like Icklingham, Cavenham has several Sites of Special Scientific Interest and a section of the Black Ditches Anglo Saxon earthworks runs through it.

The Churches

St Mary's Tuddenham



This is a substantial medieval church in the centre of the village. It is in fair order and actively maintained with the dedicated support of The Friends of Tuddenham St. Mary's Church. The extensive space at the back of the Church has been used to seat large audiences for music concerts and the Church also houses biannual three-day art exhibition.

The churchmanship is modern, using Common Worship. Although regular attendances are only about 8-10, family services held four times a year attract congregations of 50-80 and for weddings, funerals and baptisms attendances can be well over 100.

St Andrew's Cavenham



This too is a medieval church but is now little used with only a handful of services being held through the year. However, Harvest Festival and Christmas are celebrated annually and are reasonably well attended, with the Christmas Carol services in particular attracting congregations of 30 or so. Of note is a small window set in the south wall that has only one of three surviving prayer requests in insular French (i.e. Anglo-Norman) in stained glass anywhere in the UK. The inscription reads "Priez pur Adam la vicarie", a dedication to Adam the vicar (1318) in the time of Edward 11.

Herringswell

The Community



Herringswell is a small village of about 300 inhabitants which retains its quiet, rural character. It is proud to have three mentions in the Little Domesday book for East Anglia. There is a refurbished village hall which is available for hire.

St Ethelbert's Herringswell



The Church, which is Grade II listed, stands on a prominent site in the centre of the village. The original medieval building was largely destroyed by fire in 1869 and had to be rebuilt. The reconstruction included some stunning stained-glass windows of the Arts and Crafts movement. The church is often visited by window enthusiasts, especially for the three windows by Christopher Whall. St Ethelbert's is also frequently visited by bell ringers and has an interesting and unmodified (but refurbished) chamber organ. The churchyard is a managed wildlife site and welcomes swifts with a calling system and boxes. The church can be opened at almost any time for visitors by available keyholders, who live close by.

Although the Church is now little used for regular services, which take place only about once a quarter, it is much in demand for weddings and baptisms and is considered an attractive alternative to the modern church at Red Lodge. The church has no church wardens but has a fully functioning body which acts as the PCC (also known as Herringswell District Church Committee-HDCC) under the plan put in place several years ago. The minimum of 4-5 services during the year are designed to be inclusive and welcoming to all and child friendly. The festival services attract attendances of over 30 and on occasions many more. The church is also used whenever possible for social gatherings to enable people to feel welcome in the church – such events are well attended by villagers. There are 6 on the electoral roll and St Ethelbert's has continued to pay the Centenary share in full

Red Lodge

The Community

Over the past century Red Lodge has developed on the site of a former rabbit warren belonging to the Manor of Freckenham from virtually nothing into a large village of over 4,000 people. Major house-building is still taking place.

There are few employment opportunities in the immediate area and most residents have to commute. A significant proportion of them are US service personnel attached to the bases at RAF Mildenhall and RAF Lakenheath.

Community facilities now include a village hall and venue (known as the Millennium Centre), a sports pavilion with tennis courts, a five-a-side football pitch, a children's play area and allotments. The new shopping centre has a convenience store, fast food outlets, a pharmacy and an estate agency. The village also has doctors' and dentists' surgeries. The Red Lodge pub and restaurant re-opened recently after extensive refurbishment of the original building which is the oldest recorded in the village.

St Christopher's CEVP Primary School opened in September 2012 to replace Tuddenham School and the capacity has doubled already. A second school has had to be built called The Pines and is due to open September 2018.

St Christopher's Red Lodge



This operates as a Local Ecumenical Partnership with the Methodist Church. Anglican and Methodist services are held on alternate Sundays. The denominations work in close co-operation and they have exciting plans to enhance their ministry in this rapidly developing community. A full-time lay worker has been employed as a Mission enabler since September 2017 who lives and works in the village. The post is provisionally for 3 years and is funded by both denominations as an ecumenical project.

To date this work has involved setting up an after school children's group on a Wednesday afternoon called Blaze at St Christopher's School, a youth group called Wired that meets on a Friday evening at the Millennium Centre, a new youth worship called Wired2Worship once a quarter, Christmas and Easter Experiences in the church with the school which saw over 200 pupils on each occasion over several days coming into church, with relationships being built with other churches, help has been forthcoming to support this work which continues to grow. With the current outreach work the Church is a recognized group that provides a valuable resource to the community.

The Church has average Sunday congregations of about 35 - 40, typically 10 of these being children and the worship currently includes a 10-minute section specifically for young people's worship time before Sunday School and Junior Church activities. Messy church has been successfully running for several years with average attendance of over 20 children (not all church people.) The main hirer of the Church hall is a Pre-school group and after school group that operates during term time.

