



New Housing Curacy



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

An opportunity for a pioneering curate to lead mission and ministry in an area of significant new housing.

There is a vast amount of new housing in the diocese and it is a priority of the diocese to grow new worshipping communities in these developments.

The Curacy - How it Works

You will be appointed as an assistant curate-in-training in Northstowe, a large new housing development in the diocese, to develop your skills and work under an experienced ordained pioneer minister. You will work closely with the Bishop's Advisor for New Housing who will be the Training Incumbent.

During your second year you will explore being appointed to lead mission and ministry on a new substantial housing development which does not yet have its own minister or worshipping community. You will continue to be supervised by your TI until you are signed off.

During your third year you will be able to explore the option of being appointed as the minister for that new housing development, provided suitable funding was available.



FAQs

Do I need to be a designated Ordained Pioneer Minister to apply?

No – you simply need to have a pioneering spirit and be excited about the possibility of developing new worshipping communities and ministering in areas of new housing.

What is the housing provision?

Initially, a house will be provided in Northstowe. Housing options once you begin ministering on a new housing development would be flexible depending on your personal circumstances. If you are subsequently appointed as the minister of the new housing development (post-curacy), you would be expected to move into the new area.

Will I definitely be appointed to lead mission and ministry on a new housing development in my second year?

Whilst the aim is to establish and develop a leadership pipeline in order to meet this significant missional opportunity, we seek to also respond to the need of the individual. If you, your TI or the Clergy Development Officer feel you are not yet ready, you will continue to serve in Northstowe.



Do I have to become the minister for the new housing development at the end of curacy?

No - It would need to be mutually discerned locally, by the diocese, and yourself, that this would be a good next step. If it is mutually discerned that this would not be a good thing, you would be able to apply for other posts after you have been signed off.

When would I be signed off?

Provided you have shown good evidence of sufficiently inhabiting the qualities expected for IME2 you would be signed off at the same time as other curates – in January of your third year.

What involvement would my TI have in the benefice where I am ‘curate-in-charge’?

Your TI would continue to be your TI and would support you as you develop a Christian presence within the new housing community. Your TI would not be directly involved in the mission and ministry you are leading, but you are encouraged to draw on their expertise and experience. Your TI would continue to offer supervision for you to reflect on your ministry.

Would I need any experience of more traditional parish ministry?

This would be assessed by the Clergy Development Officer. If necessary, a placement could be provided at some point during your curacy to ensure you have some of the skills and experiences of more traditional parish ministry that would equip you for incumbency.



The Curacy Context

Title Post: Northstowe Church Network (Bishop's Mission Order)

Training Incumbent: Revd Dr Beth Cope

About the Parish

We are not a Parish (yet). The Northstowe Church Network is a new network of missional and worshipping communities serving Northstowe, a rapidly growing new town in Cambridgeshire. We currently have 1,600 occupied homes; over 10,000 will be built by the middle of the century. While there is no traditional parish church building, the network functions as a dispersed church, gathering in community spaces, schools, and homes, developing multiple expressions of church life in response to the community's needs.



Following a "service-first model", three small and friendly ecumenical worshipping communities have developed to date. They come together to mark festivals and work in partnership across Northstowe:

- **Pathfinder Church** – The initial worshipping community, which grew out of a partnership with The Pathfinder CofE Primary School and remains the most visible expression of church life.
- **Little Explorers** – A fresh expression of church for preschoolers and their carers, offering “Time for you, your child, and God” on Thursday mornings.
- **The Compline Community** – Leaning into the more contemplative and liturgical traditions within our ecumenical partnership. This is likely to develop significantly, especially if we succeed in our bid for “The Chapel by the Lake”.

We are currently preparing to bid for a hub-site for the whole Network, which will also be the base for one or more worshipping communities and provide dedicated sacred space for prayer, worship, and reflection alongside operating as a community centre for the new town.

We are a network of (maturing) fresh expressions with an inclusive ethos. While influenced by our lead minister's open evangelical background, our theological approach is generous, seeking to hold together deep faith with a posture of welcome and curiosity. Students from Westcott, Ridley, and Westminster have all recognised elements of their traditions in the fresh expressions that are developing here, demonstrating our breadth.



Key Features of Ministry in this Context:

Pioneering in a New Housing Development: Northstowe is the UK's largest planned new town since Milton Keynes, designed to provide for the community largely from within the new boundaries. This provides a unique opportunity to develop both fresh expressions of church and pioneer future inherited modes of church, shaping how worship, discipleship, and mission take root in a new community. With so many new housing areas planned in Ely diocese and nationally, we offer a unique training ground for those with a calling to pioneering ministry in new housing.

Intergenerational Ministry: Northstowe's demographic is very young. Much of our work engages young families, with scope for developing youth and adult discipleship initiatives. The curate will be actively involved in shaping and fostering ministry across all age groups, ensuring the involvement of all in faith exploration and growth.

Ecumenical and Community Engagement: The Northstowe Church Network is a Local Ecumenical Partnership of the Church of England, the Baptist Union, and the United Reformed Church. The curate will join the minister in leading worship according to the rites and practices of all three. Training and ongoing support in ecumenical ministry will be provided, enabling growth in confidence and skill within this rich, collaborative setting. We also work closely with other denominations, local organisations, and civic bodies to foster spiritual and social well-being, with active involvement in building ecumenical relationships, working across traditions, and engaging in local community initiatives.

Public Theology and Presence: As one of four new faith-based organisations in Northstowe, we have a visible role in community events, local advocacy, and civic partnerships. The curate will gain exposure to how the church can engage with the public sphere through social action and presence.

Deanery Participation: We have strong links with our "praying cousins" in the 5folds villages as well as the wider deanery. We have an arrangement with the 5folds that we will use their buildings to host life event services for Northstowe residents. However, given our demographic, we do not see many weddings or funerals. Our deanery colleagues have been very happy to welcome our previous curate to take such services, as well as to cover services, providing additional opportunities to experience the breadth of Church of England eucharistic practice.

Opportunities for involvement in the wider community

Schools: We have strong relationships with The Pathfinder CofE Primary School, where a growing church-school link team is embedded in the life of the school. This includes leading Collective Worship, providing RE support, and, from September 2025, launching the Pathfinder Church Club – exploring intergenerational school-based worshipping communities, run in partnership with the school. We are also occasional visitors at the Martin Bacon Academy (special needs), the new Northstowe Primary, and with Northstowe Secondary and Northstowe Sixth Form.

Groups: Partnerships with community-led initiatives such as the Northstowe Youth Hive (a young people's charity which we founded) and other volunteer groups.

Town Development: Engaging with town and district councils, developers, community organisers, and planners to shape Northstowe's emerging identity.



About the Training Incumbent

The Revd Dr Beth Cope leads the Northstowe Church Network, bringing experience in pioneering ministry and community engagement. Originally trained in quantum physics before working in digital marketing for an engineering company, she has a background in both traditional and fresh expressions of church and a heart for enabling new Christian communities to grow organically. An Anglican Ordained Pioneer Minister, Beth is the Bishop's Advisor for New Housing and part of the national Churches Together England New Housing Areas Group.

Housing

- The house is a spacious house in Northstowe, which is rented by Ely DBF.
- Ely Diocese prides itself on excellent housing provision for all its clergy.



Safer Recruitment in the Diocese of Ely

The Ely Diocesan Board of Finance (EDBF) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults, and expects all employees to undertake safeguarding checks and training relevant to their role and to adhere to the [Church of England's safeguarding policies and procedures](#).

A Diverse and Inclusive Workforce

The Diocese of Ely is committed to creating and sustaining a diverse and inclusive workforce which represents our context and wider community. We are aware that those of Global Majority Heritage/United Kingdom Minority Ethnic (GMH/UKME), women, and disabled people are currently under-represented among our clergy and workforce, and we particularly encourage applications from those with the relevant skills and experience that will increase this representation.

Contact Us

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