



Welcome to....
**The Benefice of the
Paxtons with Southoe,
Diddington & the
Offords**





Holy Trinity, Great Paxton



St. James, Little Paxton



St. Lawrence, Diddington



All Saints, Offord Cluny



***St. Leonard, Southoe &
Midloe***

Welcome to incumbency in the Diocese of Ely

Whether this is your first incumbency or your last, you will find a warm welcome and significant support in the diocese. We offer incumbents pastoral supervision, coaching, regular CPD, clergy retreats, and great backing from buildings, pastoral and legal teams. We are investing extra in support for rural multi parish benefices, such as this, so that our clergy flourish alongside lay ministers and administrators.

We have just completed pastoral re-organisation in this benefice, and so you can expect stability to grow the church and bless these villages.

For informal conversation contact:

The Ven Richard Harlow,
Archdeacon of Huntingdon & Wisbech.

Tel: 07415 757527



Rt Rev Dr Dagmar Winter, Acting Bishop

Welcome to our Benefice Profile and thank you for your interest in us. We are delighted that you are enquiring about the position of incumbent of the Benefice of the Paxtons with Southoe, Diddington & the Offords.

As you will see from the later descriptions of our Churches and Parishes, most of our buildings are in good condition with refurbishment work having been carried out in recent years, so we can offer our new minister the opportunity to focus on the people.

We face both challenges and opportunities for growth and transformation: we seek a new Incumbent who will embrace these challenges and opportunities; to lead us forward in **reaching those we currently don't**; someone who is approachable; a good listener and committed to working collaboratively with the PCCs to develop a plan for growth.

Our ideal candidate would have the following qualities:

People Person - Have a genuine interest in people and able to communicate effectively with all ages particularly having experience of working with children and young families, be a good listener; have a good sense of humour; be a team player who fosters the talents and enthusiasms of members of every age. Enjoys enabling and encouraging the gifts of others. It is vital you are a person of prayer, faith and inclusion who can encourage, energise and inspire.

Vision - Able to help us develop a vision for a growing and thriving church
Manage growth & change; build partnership; keep us relevant; lead with wisdom & insight; build teams;

Values - both traditional and contemporary forms of worship flexing to meet the needs of the individual parishes

Youth outreach - Develop the ministry to children and young families

IT - competent IT skills, including (but not limited to) Social Media outreach, YouTube regular services, A Church Near You content and Benefice Facebook/website content

Fabric – previous experience of building projects, sourcing of grants and ecclesiastical permissions for building works is preferred.

Our Benefice is dedicated to extending a warm and welcoming hand to those who currently do not attend church services and each of the PCCs has approved the pastoral principles of 'Living in Love and Faith.' Our expectation is that our next Rector will share our values.

We believe that the church should be a place of refuge, community, and spiritual growth for everyone, regardless of their current level of engagement with religious practices.

We seek to be an open and affirming Christian community rooted in the teachings of Jesus and committed to love, justice, and service. We honour the rich traditions of our faith while remaining open to new perspectives.

Our Benefice is dedicated to bridging the gap between the church and those who currently do not attend services. Through a combination of welcoming environments, relevant worship, community outreach and inclusion, digital engagement, and relationship-building, we aim to create a church community where everyone feels valued, connected, and spiritually fulfilled.

We invite you to join us on this journey of faith and community.

Staff in our Benefice:

Alongside our incumbent, we currently have the following team members:

- Three LLMs and one ALM across all five parishes
- 9 Churchwardens across all five parishes
- Benefice Administrator currently contracted for 12 hours a week
- Benefice Safeguarding Officer across four parishes, plus a DBS Administrator
- Safeguarding Officer for All Saints, Offord Cluny
- Community Space Manager at St James, Little Paxton
- Healthy PCCs across all five parishes, including 5 PCC secretaries
- A small group of dedicated Benefice bell ringers

Our Benefice, along with the St Neots team ministry and four other groups of villages, is in the Deanery of St Neots, in the south west of the Diocese of Ely.



Little Paxton village lies about 60 miles North of London, with Southoe and Diddington to the north and Great Paxton and the Offords to the East. While surrounded by countryside and farmland, we have excellent transport links. The A1 runs through the Parishes of Little Paxton, Southoe and Diddington, and there is easy access to the A14 and rail links. The market town of St Neots is 2 miles south of Little Paxton; Cambridge is around 20 miles to the East; and other nearby towns are Huntingdon, Peterborough, Bedford and Stevenage. All five parishes lie along the River Great Ouse. There are gravel pits between the A1 and the river, many of which now provide leisure activities; a nature reserve lies to the north and east of Little Paxton village; and Grafham Water reservoir is just to the north-west.

The Benefice of the Paxtons with Southoe, Diddington & the Offords

Typical Monthly Pattern of Services throughout the Benefice

Subject to change as the Benefice grows from four to five churches.
Offord are included in this list to give an idea of their current pattern.

FIRST SUNDAY

- 9.00am Holy Communion (Great Paxton)
- 9.30am All Age Worship (Offord)
- 10.45am All Age Worship with refreshments (Little Paxton)

SECOND SUNDAY

- 9.15am Holy Communion (Little Paxton)
- 9.30am Holy Communion (Offord)
- 11.00am All Age Worship (Great Paxton)

THIRD SUNDAY

- 9.15am Morning Prayer (Little Paxton)
- 11.00am Holy Communion (Great Paxton)
- 4.00pm All Age Worship (Southoe)
- 6.00pm Songs of Praise (Offord)

FOURTH SUNDAY

- 9.15am Holy Communion (Little Paxton)
- 9.30am Holy Communion (Offord)
- 11.00am Morning Prayer (Great Paxton) with Peter Dunn LLM
- 11.15am All Age Worship (Diddington)

FIFTH SUNDAY

- 10.30AM Benefice Songs of Praise (alternating venues)

These services could not run without the assistance of retired clergy and benefice LLM/ALMs

Little Paxton Services and Church attendance

The total footfall for 2024 was 3283. The numbers at All Age Worship are particularly encouraging. We began livestreaming our Sunday services in January 2022 and have continued to provide live streamed services which are well received. Numbers remain positive moving into 2025. We held 82 services during 2024, with the average number of communicants 30.2. Over two hundred people attended the Christmas services on Christmas Eve/Day.

Some examples of YouTube statistics for numbers engaged with our livestreaming/recordings during 2024 can be seen below. You will see from the figures that our on-line presence is highly valued. Most of these views take place subsequent to the services. Our livestreaming facility continued to be used frequently for Baptisms, Funerals and Weddings together with many services having photograph presentations being projected onto a screen.

With a considerable amount of fundraising and significant lottery grants towards community activities during 2024 & 2025, we were able to pay our Ministry Share with a small cushion at the end of 2024.

Date	Service	YouTube Viewing
21st January 2024	Morning Prayer	142
21st April 2024	Holy Communion	70
16th June 2024	Morning Prayer	42
14th July 2024	Holy Communion	30
22nd September 2024	Holy Communion	65
20th October 2024	Morning Prayer	101
8th December 2024	Carols by Candlelight	101



Great Paxton Services and Church attendance

In 2024 there were 6 church funerals, 3 crematoria funerals, 5 interment of ashes, 2 baptisms and 2 weddings. 60 services were held in total in church with the total footfall 1205 of adults and 352 children. Our annual Remembrance Sunday service is always well supported with in 2024 60 adults and 20 children attending our outdoor service.

The whole school community came into church for their end of term services at Easter, the end of year service in July and Christmas. As a rule, there are between 6 and 12 people at Sunday services.

It must be noted that the degree of cold in the church over winter does not encourage a big congregation and with high prices for electricity, it isn't possible to have the heating on except for occasional offices.

Financially, the various fund raising and social events that took place over the year have been a vital lifeline and we are very grateful to everyone who made these possible and supported them.

The 100 Club, particularly, has brought in an incredible sum of money over the last 15 years for Holy Trinity Church. It is hard to see how Holy Trinity Church would be continuing as an open church if it were not for the 100 Club income.



Diddington Services and Church attendance

In 2024, we held 11 services in our church, including two funerals for long-standing members of the village community.

Each year, we mark Remembrance Sunday with a special short service dedicated to those from our village who fell in the wars. It is always a poignant occasion and a time for collective reflection.

Our congregations tend to embrace the more interactive services, which have brought a sense of connection and shared experience. One highlight of the year continues to be our **Pet Service**, where parishioners are encouraged to bring their beloved animals. These gatherings are both joyful and meaningful, as we explore the important role pets play in supporting our mental health and emotional wellbeing.

We often extend our fellowship beyond the service with informal refreshments, offering time to catch up with one another and speak with the Vicar in a relaxed setting. These moments we believe help strengthen the bonds within our church family.

Our Christingle service has become something of a local legend. Held in a gentle, child-friendly format, it captures the magic and meaning of Christmas. With the church typically full, we celebrate with warmth and joy, concluding the service with festive refreshments and a wonderful sense of shared celebration.



Offord Services and Church attendance

We hold a service of worship every Sunday with varying attendance. Our All Age Worship services are normally followed by refreshments and there is plenty of engagement from worship leaders of all levels plus the congregation. Our larger attendance numbers tend to come from our 6pm service on a 3rd Sunday.

Our special services, such as Remembrance, Christingle, etc, are all very well attended.

The church needs refurbishment. The lead was stolen from the roof several years ago. We have the faculty now to replace this with a steel roof, and the ongoing project is to raise the funds needed to do this. We are currently looking at applying for grants to assist with this. We do not have any facilities such as a WC or water, and plans have been drawn up for those to be installed if we can secure the funding. This project would also include restoration and renovation of the fabric of the building and better disabled access. This would enable us to make better use of the Church building and to expand on our ministry to the village.



Southoe Services and Church attendance

The register records 13 services taking place during 2024 with two funerals. We average 12- 15 people for our main services with more for festival services.

Events during the Year for both PCC funds and Hub Project. During 2024, monthly coffee mornings took place in church in aid of PCC funds, and they continue to be well attended into 2025. The Southonian Singers rehearse on most Tuesday nights in Church with breaks for holidays. A very well attended flute concert was organised in November in aid of PCC funds. The Hub Group put on a great variety of talks and events throughout the year, including quiz nights, a wine and cheese night, monthly talks, the May plant sale and the Christmas Light Switch on. The hire of a temporary toilet in the autumn proved necessary not least for the quizzes!

Due to the continuing fundraising efforts, Southoe PCC was able to pay their portion of the benefice ministry share. Other obligations were also met

Southoe PCC managed to create additional funding of £319.00 on top of £2,895.92 ministry share in 2024 to pay their percentage of the increase needed. It is unfortunate that we have to stress financial matters so much at this time. But we need to be realistic about the challenge so that the benefice can continue to offer an effective and caring Christian ministry across the five villages it serves.



The Vicarage – Little Paxton

The vicarage is a lovely four bedroom family home, situated about 300m from the Church, in the desirable area of St James' Road, Little Paxton. Downstairs, the house has a good sized lounge and a second reception room useful for meetings; a large kitchen/diner with patio doors opening onto the rear garden; a utility room; a large study area; and a cloakroom.

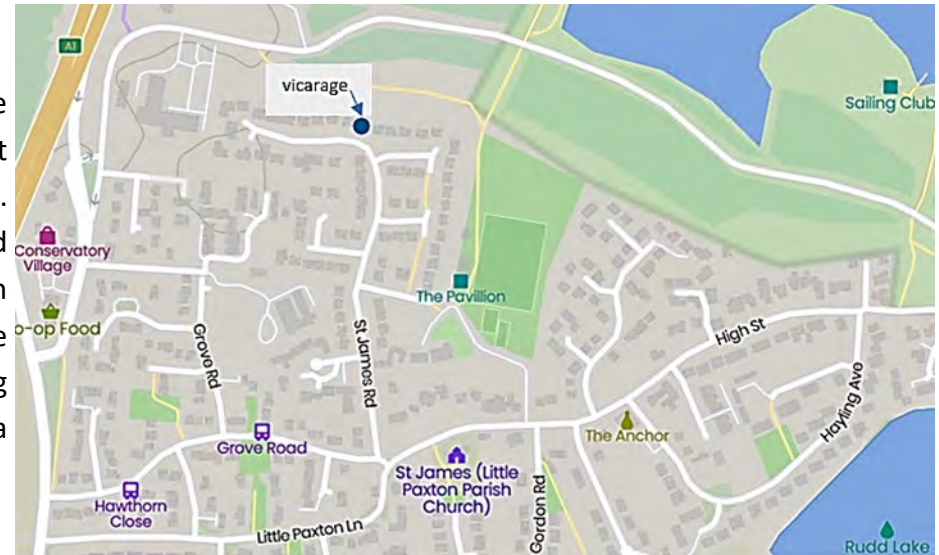
Upstairs are four bedrooms.

There is a garage with space for a small car or bicycles or very useful for storage, and a driveway with parking for 3-4 cars. There are good sized mature gardens front and back.

The Doctor's surgery, village hall, children's playground and playing field (used for village events and sports) are a couple of minutes' walk away, the school, village shops, conservatory village area and the family friendly village pub all within 10 minutes' walk and the lovely Paxton Pits Nature Reserve with its walking, sailing and water sports facilities just a few minutes more.

Grafham Water, with further facilities for water activities and fishing, can be easily reached by car or bicycle.

The drive to any of the other four Benefice Churches takes around ten to fifteen minutes and St Neots town centre, railway station and secondary schools are just a couple of miles away.



Front of vicarage and front garden



Beautiful Nature Reserve nearby



View of rear garden from patio doors

St James Church, Little Paxton

A major refurbishment in 2010–11 included underfloor heating and radiators, modern power points and lighting. Victorian pews were replaced by oak stackable chairs in order to create a more flexible space and the Church can now seat about 120 people. *“The venture generated a lot of interest in Little Paxton. The building is being used far more widely than we could ever have imagined. So many people come in here, for some reason, during the week, they get to know the place and they feel very at home.”* (Annette Reed, 2020)

We have Services every Sunday and the building is used frequently during the week by various groups, giving many opportunities to engage with and serve the community: there are regular Church-run groups such as coffee mornings, tots group, Simply Saturday (monthly shared lunch and entertainment), history group, fish & chip lunches and film afternoons; and other groups use the space too.

There are also occasional Church events such as: children’s events, talks, Pop-Up Tearoom and Christmas Market; and other groups choose to hold meetings here thanks to the warm, bright and comfortable surroundings. We have a good relationship with the local uniformed groups, who attend some services and use the community space for certain activities; and families with a Church connection sometimes hire the space for birthday parties.

Because of recent and continuing growth of the village, we have a real opportunity to further bring the community together around the Church as the beating heart of the village. Also, as many of the congregation on a Sunday are senior citizens, we still have a challenge to extend our engagement with the younger community.

We consistently support a number of charities throughout the year; and a night shelter in Cambridge, to whom we also deliver collected gifts (usually toiletries and non-perishable goods) at Harvest Time.



Flexible space for different activities and events



Pull down cinema screen beneath ringing floor



Glass & oak screen to vestry and ringing floor above.



The village of Little Paxton



Little Paxton (listed in the Domesday book as 'Pachestone' which probably means "Sheep's Town") is now a thriving village of about 1900 dwellings, including some dating from the 17th & 18th centuries, many built in the 1960s and 70s, and two more recent developments of houses and flats. The population of Little Paxton was estimated at about 4,000 in 2020. There is a mix of all age groups from many young families to quite a few nonagenarians. Village amenities include a Primary School, with a Pre-School and Out of School Club on site; a Doctors' surgery; shops including hairdresser's, pharmacy, Chinese takeaway and newsagent/convenience store; 'The Anchor' Public House; and in the 'Conservatory Village' at the western edge of the village,



several small businesses and shops including a Chinese Restaurant and a Co-op store. There is a mobile Post Office which visits the village weekly; the main Post Office, banks and larger shops are all available in St Neots. As well as the Parish Church of St James there is Kingfisher Church, an offshoot of St Neots Evangelical Church, which meets at the school. There is a residential home for the elderly at Paxton Hall.

walkers and families; and a variety of water sports including sailing and water skiing, and fishing. There is a Visitor Centre with refreshment area, and an Environmental Education Centre. The village also has allotments and a small community garden; there is a Gardening Club; and the Parish Council runs an annual Flower and Vegetable show in the Autumn in addition to the popular summer Fete, 'Paxfest'

The large Queen Elizabeth II Playing Field is used by Football, Cricket and Netball teams and has an artificial cricket surface, a children's playpark, outdoor gym equipment, a petanque area, a Multi-Use Games Area with floodlights, and a sports pavilion; the 'Youth Club' bus visits weekly. Nearby are the Village Hall, a Scout Hut used by the various village scouting and guiding groups, and cricket pavilion. There is also a Community Hub sited in one of the newer areas of the village, along with a further football field. Many village groups meet in these various facilities, and in the Church.





Holy Trinity , Great Paxton

The Minster Church of the Holy Trinity, Great Paxton is a grade I listed, cruciform Saxon church dating from about 1020AD in the reign of King Canute and is one of the few remaining Saxon churches in England.

In past centuries Holy Trinity Church acted as a mission centre for the entire area from which clergy would go out and serve neighbouring hamlets. The fact that it is built of stone (unusual for an Anglo-Saxon Church) means that it was likely to have housed a monastic foundation. Externally it looks unremarkable but the nave is of unusual height and it has a clerestory with round-headed windows - this church is one of only three surviving Anglo-Saxon aisled churches in England and is the only place in England where you can see arcades that are formed of carved piers and columns. In cross section the pillars are quatrefoil in shape and it is interesting to note the geometric perfection of the curves of each arch as well as of the pillars. All the signs are that the Anglo-Saxon work was carried out by the best masons available.



The original church would probably have had a central tower and it certainly had two transepts. It was a true cruciform church with aisles - both great rarities in pre-Conquest Britain. The surviving arch to what would have been the north transept is possibly "the highest unsupported Anglo-Saxon arch in Europe". The chancel was probably rebuilt in the 13th century, and the 15th century saw extensive rebuilding that produced the present aisles and the western tower and also, of course, the demolition of the supposed central tower. The church was restored again in 1880 when the vestry was added.

The oldest recorded bell in the present tower is dated 1400 and is still in use today. Other bells have been added, or recast, over the years to make up the six now here, with number six being added as part of the Bell Project in 2017/18. In June 2021, the late 19th Century Bevington Organ was cleaned and

refurbished. In 2020 the villagers planned a 1000 year celebration which had to be postponed due to the Coronavirus lockdowns, however this went ahead over a weekend in summer 2022 with a living history encampment in the Churchyard with historical re-enactors, storytelling, stalls and activities such as archery, weaving, maypole and stocks. On the Sunday there were special celebratory services and a musical written especially for the occasion performed by a local music academy.



The village of Great Paxton

Great Paxton is a thriving village community and a multiple winner of the prestigious East Anglia Village of the Year competition, held every 3 years since 1955. First Listed in the Domesday Book in 1086, which records that there were 69 households, the name of the settlement was written as *Pachstone* and *Parchestune*. Despite its name, Great Paxton is now somewhat smaller than Little Paxton. In the 2011 Census, the population of the village was recorded at 1007.

Great Paxton lies on the B1043 that runs north from St Neots to Godmanchester, near Huntingdon. It is well connected nationally by the nearby A1 and A14 roads; the [East Coast Main Line](#) railway line between London and Edinburgh passes through the parish with the nearest station 2.6 miles (4.2 km) away at St Neots. Trains run around every half hour to London St Pancras.



At the northern end of the village is the Minster Church of the Holy Trinity. There is also a Church of England primary school with around 100 pupils aged from 4 to 11.

Great Paxton has a pub, [The Bell](#), situated in the centre of the village. It has a large room attached which functions as a restaurant for several days a week and as a group meeting room at other times. It is very much the heart of the community with many different groups and societies using it as a meeting place.

There is a community village shop run by friendly volunteers which is open every day, sharing the car park with the pub. It was opened in November 2017 and has become a part of the village – not just for the convenience of being able to buy food without getting into the car – but as point of information and social interaction for many clubs, societies and local business. It sells variety of mainly groceries, including fresh bread, milk, vegetables and meat, much of which is from local suppliers.

The **village has a local history group, and a Friendship Group** (with ‘tea, coffee and cake and a lot of chat’) both of which meet in The Bell. There are also local Rainbows, Brownies and Guides.

Even today the village lies in almost exactly the same shape and location that it has for over 1,000 years.



Great Paxton (CofE) Primary School is a small, vibrant and lively school in the heart of a thriving community. Please see our website for more information about us:

<https://www.greatpaxton.cambs.sch.uk/>

Our School Council has prepared the following information to you get to know us.

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

This is us. This is our song. These are our nurtured thoughts.



**We're
Believers**



**We're compassionate and
loving**



**We're courageous and
brave**



We have a dream, a dream about to start
Our happy minds can lead to happy hearts
And so we try to be the best that we can be
With never-ending possibilities

We're at the start, the start of a new race
We might have fears, but we've got dreams to chase
We love our life and we love the world we're in
When you keep the faith then you can win

It's the beginning of our story, our once upon a time
Here's to being individual but knowing that you're always by my side
With some secrets and surprises, we will always let our kindness show
And there's always room to grow

We open doors that open up our minds
We'll travel far, as long as we are kind
And in this life we'll have adventures of our own
But here and now, with you – this feels like home

Chorus

It's the feeling of belonging, our home away from home
Here we feel invincible, where we are safe and we can always grow
Through the storm clouds and the weeds, every forest starts with just one tree
One seed is all you need



**We're friendly
and kind**



**We're creative and
curious**



**We're forgiving and
achieving**



Reverend Wanted for our School Family and our Collective Worships! Apply if you are or can be...

Be loving

Retell bible stories through
games, songs and plays

Be an active listener



Share super stories

Be a believer

Have surprises

Sing super hymns

Dress up and wear
funny hats!

Have fun!

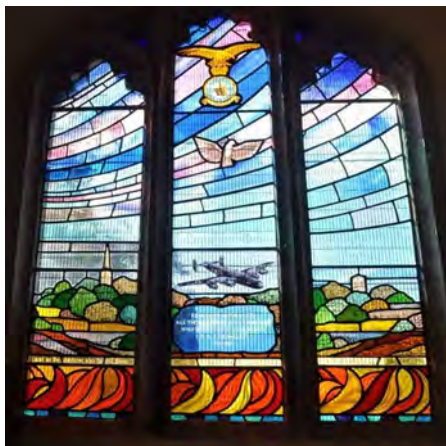
Our Reverent

Include our wondrous
Worship Leaders

Worship at Church
altogether

Be passionate

All Saints, Offord Cluny



All Saints Church was mentioned in the Domesday Survey in 1086, but the earliest parts now standing are the nave arcades c 1260. The tower was added in the 15th century, and the chancel in 1726. There is a stained-glass window commemorating the Pathfinder squadron of the Second World War, who were based between Offord and Gravelly. All Saints houses the official memorial to the 35 Squadron: the stunning stained-glass window designed and installed by Gordon Monaghan. This brings a number of people from the UK and overseas to visit the church.

We hold a service of worship every Sunday, with support from Chris Bylett and Angel Voices at some services. Chris is an Authorised Lay Music Minister & Worship Leader. The first Sunday service is normally followed by refreshments. All our services are at 9.30 currently (apart from 3rd Sunday at 6pm) although a later time would be appreciated by some of the present congregation and by others who have indicated that they would attend a later service. Music is provided by a music box which allows us great flexibility in the music we can offer, not only for Sunday services but for weddings, funerals and baptisms.

All Saints has only a small congregation. We currently join with St. Mary's Buckden for things like the Lent meetings, prayer groups, bible studies etc but the majority of our ministry to the wider community comes through our regular events like the Bacon Butty morning in the village hall which is well attended by the wider community and the fact that we are a small village and readily hear if people are in need and there is always someone who can help out.

Community Involvement

Many members of our congregation are involved in or run many of the activities in the village hall, serve on the village

council, etc, and the fundraising committee organise many events throughout the year. One of the most popular is our Bacon Butties morning, once a month in the village hall. Other fundraising events include the Summer Fete, which is run together with the village school, Christmas Tree festival and fayre, barbeques etc. Unfortunately, due to our small congregation, our opportunities for mission are limited and would definitely be an area to be improved upon. We do, however, contribute to the Godmanchester food bank, and a member of the congregation is a voucher holder for this and is also very heavily involved in the running of the food bank.





The villages of Offord D'Arcy and Offord Cluny

The village was originally two separate villages, which were mentioned in the Domesday book. They were officially merged into one in 2010. Offord Darcy is the larger of the two. There is a closed church, St Peter's, in Darcy, where we hold a few services each year, but the majority of worship takes place in All Saints. There is a well-known pub and a village shop, two garages for car sales, repairs, MOT, etc.

There are many different organisations, including indoor bowls, WI, gardening, line dancing, Offord Tots, Ballroom Dancing, Senior Citizens, etc, who meet in the village hall. This stands adjacent to and shares a car park with the church. There is also a guide/brownie/rainbows group who sometimes participate in our all-age service on the first Sunday of the month.

25% of the population is aged over 65. There are around 90 children currently attending the village school for primary age children. A strong link has been established with the school, with regular assemblies taken by the incumbent, and it is important that this continues.

Our village magazine, Out and About, is delivered to every house in the Offords (650 copies) 6 times a year and is also available online. (peterborough-print.co.uk/pages/offord). This developed from the church magazine of many years ago. It is currently run by 4 members of the church and delivered by volunteers. We have a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/AllSaintsOfford>, and we use A Church Near You.



St Peters Church



St Peter's Church is a redundant Anglican church in the village of Offord D'Arcy, Cambridgeshire, England. It is recorded in the National Heritage List for England as a designated Grade I listed building and is under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust.

Services are held there on occasional Sundays during the year, including the very popular Carols by Candlelight. The church is managed day to day by the Friends of St Peter's (FOSP), who have their own committee that support and fundraise during the year. The Chair and secretary of FOSP are members of the All Saints congregation and there is close cooperation to avoid clashes between activities at the two churches.



St Leonard's Church, Southoe

- Grade I listed Norman church about to undergo re-ordering - The Community Hub Project
- Stands in a prominent position in the centre of the small rural village of Southoe
- Open everyday for visitors to look around and enjoy quiet time for prayer and reflection.
- Home to the Southonian Singers a thriving Community choir



Southoe Church is always open for visitors to look around or for quiet time and prayer in the peaceful surroundings. Though it still has pews at present there are plans for many possible changes, and meanwhile in addition to Sunday services, events such as talks and exhibitions are held. Standing within an attractive old church yard which has recently joined the Cambridgeshire Wildlife Trust Conservation Scheme, a rewilding programme promoting nature diversity, the stone church in Southoe has stood on the present site since the 12th Century. The first stone church was built here in 1180, a simple structure but richly decorated. The south doorway is one of the most elaborately carved of its time in the country. Additions and alterations have been made at numerous points in history. The chancel was lengthened, the nave rebuilt and finally the tower was added in the late 16th century. The present church was restored in 1859. The present church has an unusual square floorplan which lends itself perfectly to the planned Hub project.



The Hub re-ordering project is overseen by an enthusiastic group of PCC members and village residents. Its aim is to open up the nave and bring toilet and kitchen facilities into the building to create a warm and welcoming space to accommodate the whole community and a wide variety of events. A new ringing floor will be created at first floor level to enable the installation of two toilets below, one being fully accessible. In the north isle will be an enclosed kitchen pod with a serving hatch. Pews will be removed and the floor renovated.

New infrared heating, and lighting will also be installed. The south porch floor will be relaid to create step free access. At the time of writing the faculty has been approved and a contractor is selected. Having already accumulated pledges and smaller grants the committee are on the cusp of making applications to major funding bodies.



Southoe around 1900



The same view more recently

The village of Southoe

The village of Southoe and the hamlet of Midloe form a civil parish lying north of Little Paxton and six miles southwest of Huntingdon. Southoe is a dormitory and agricultural village on the west of the A1 Great North road, with a population 380+ residents. The village has a long history and has been known variously as Sutham (6th century), Sutho, Suho and Southogh. A homestead moat to the east probably marks the site of the house of the Lovetot family which they made their chief home in 1298. The present village and church give little indication of the parish's illustrious past.

Midloe is a tiny village to the west of Southoe, in the fields at the end of a track. Midloe only consists of a scattering of cottages beside the 16th-century Grange, a Farmhouse on moated site, probably built for Robert Payne of St Neots c1590.

The parish is bounded on the east by the River Ouse which divides it from Great Paxton. There are a number of sand and gravel pits, some of which have now been converted for leisure facilities. The quiet and peaceful village is surrounded by beautiful countryside and farmers' fields; it is close to Grafham Water, Paxton Pits

nature reserve and the town of St Neots with access to the East Coast Mainline railway. The village lies just off National Cycle Route 12 that runs from Enfield Lock to Peterborough.



Southoe has a small Village Hall that was built in 1979 following much fund raising by local people. Southoe Jubilee Park to the rear of the Village Hall was opened in 2002. It comprises a playground of swings, slides and climbing frame. There is a large tarmac area and a general grassed area for use for sports, barbecues etc.



Southoe village is a friendly place with village events such as a Christmas Light switch on, Easter egg hunts, quizzes, concerts, coffee mornings and more, mostly taking place at the church. More events are planned for when the Hub is completed including regular talks, craft sessions, toddler groups and music workshops.



St Lawrence, Diddington



Although a traditional Parish Church, St Lawrence sits within a private estate of approximately 35 homes and 80 residents, many of whom are over 50. Historically a village of agricultural workers, Diddington is now home to a diverse mix of both long-standing and newer residents. While we currently hold around six services a year attended by the 'dedicated few', our Christingle Service has in recent years attracted almost 100 people.

Thanks to the efforts of our committed Parochial Church Council and volunteers, St Lawrence has in recent years become a hub of community activity. We host a thriving and growing calendar of events, including monthly **Community Coffee, Cake, and a Chat**, regular **quiz nights**, and a variety of **music performances**, attracting visiting choirs and musicians. Our **History Talk events** attract people from far and wide and later this year we plan to host a very traditional Village Fete. The funds raised are reinvested into the upkeep of our beautiful church, ensuring its legacy for generations to come.



History: There is a Church mentioned in the tiny village of Diddington in the Domesday book (1086) and the present Church of St Lawrence dates from the first half of the 13th century. The more recent history of the village, from the first World War, has been lovingly chronicled by local residents and currently occupies approximately 35 files, and an enormous collection of photographs depicting the important role both the church and the village played during the second world war when it provided a dedicated Polish encampment and hospital. Regular talks are performed in the Church to audiences from not only the local area but visitors from as far as America and Poland.



The church with its wonderful stained glass windows is a haven of peace, a sanctuary where people can enjoy moments of prayer, quiet contemplation or enjoyment of the history. As well as easy parking it is also on the footpath network and being always open, walkers often call in; for other travellers the church represents a lovely view on their journey along the A1.





The Village of Diddington

Nestled in the heart of Cambridgeshire, Diddington holds the distinction of being the smallest village in the county. What it may lack in size, it more than makes up for in character, history, and a strong sense of community. The village has a modest footprint but a wonderfully diverse and close-knit population, where people genuinely know and support one another.



Diddington's history runs deep. The village is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086, and its past is still very much alive in the present. At the centre of the village stands the **Church of St Lawrence**, a peaceful and enduring presence dating back to the early 13th century. The church's beautiful architecture and stained-glass windows make it a place of quiet reflection and spiritual grounding. It is always open—a simple yet powerful symbol of the village's openness and welcome.

The 20th century brought notable chapters to Diddington's story. Local residents have carefully preserved the village's contributions to both World Wars through archives of photographs, documents, and personal accounts. Particularly significant is the role Diddington played in hosting a Polish encampment and hospital on land adjacent to the church. Between 1946 and 1948, the site served as both a convalescence centre for Polish military personnel and a maternity unit where **1,073 Polish babies were born**. A school for Polish children was also established, and this period remains an important part of the village's shared heritage.

Today, Diddington is a place where tradition and tranquillity meet. A recently improved network of local walking routes brings visitors through the surrounding countryside, encouraging them to pause, reflect, and discover the village's quiet charm. At its heart, the Church of St Lawrence continues to be a vital and cherished space—not just for worship, but for gathering, remembering, and celebrating.





***Come and join
us.....***

