



The Church of England
Diocese of Ely

The Parish of St Mary's Buckden

Parish Profile 2025



Welcome to St Mary's Buckden, a thriving village parish, in Cambridgeshire. We hope you enjoy reading about us and discovering the depth and breadth of our church life.



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St Mary's, Church Street, Buckden PE19 5TL

A message from Bishop Dagmar, acting Bishop of Ely:

Priest in Charge (0.6 fte) of Buckden (Vicar designate)

Thank you for taking an interest in this lovely post in the Deanery of St Neots. We are offering this post as a half stipend appointment, equating to Sundays plus 3 days. We do not expect you to work more than that! Initially the post will be as Priest in Charge, but that will change to vicar as soon as possible. My senior colleagues will support and work with you to ensure that this role is life giving and sustainable for you and any family you may have.

Ely Diocese has been going through a time of change and now has a new Diocesan Secretary and, soon we hope, a new Diocesan Bishop. Nonetheless our strategy is clear: we aim to support our clergy with great housing, hopeful chapters, strong investment in training and supervision, and targeted support to grow new disciples, especially among children and families.

Buckden is a perfect location to see this come together. The parish has one of the best church schools in the diocese. The village has a strong sense of identity, and the church is highly valued. There is a good PCC, with a LLM and another in training and 2 authorised lay ministers. There are good ecumenical relationships to build upon, and strong connections across the deanery and diocese.

We pride ourselves, as a diocese, on having a high percentage of women in incumbent posts, and we are working to grow numbers of Global Majority Heritage clergy. We are actively working to ensure that our clergy receive the best support and care that we can achieve.

We want you to thrive, to belong, to grow with us and contribute to our life together. If you would like to find out more about this post, or life in the diocese please speak to:



Ven Richard Harlow, Archdeacon of Huntingdon & Wisbech, Tel: 07415 757527 e: archdeacon.handw@elydiocese.org

or

**Rev Lynda Davies, Dean of Women's Ministry,
e: revlyndadavies559@gmail.com**



Summary



The beautiful village of Buckden is located approximately 20 miles to the north-west of Cambridge and 5 miles from the market towns of St Neots and Huntingdon. We have excellent transport links, being on the A1 just south of the A1/A14 junction and having mainline railway stations nearby in both Huntingdon and St Neots. As well as the village, the Parish includes a popular riverside marina with weekend and holiday lodges. A former granary and flour mill as well as an adjacent boat yard, have been converted into residential apartments and park homes.

St Mary's (the A1 church) is located at the centre of the village and has an overall weekly congregation of about sixty across our Sunday and midweek services. We have excellent links with the Church of England primary school in the village and with Hardwick Dene residential care home. We are part of an active ecumenical group (Buckden & District Churches Together) and, as the Parish Church, host large village services at Remembrance and Christmas.



We have an Eco-Church Bronze Award and have recently been recipients of a Stage-1 Carbon Net-Zero Demonstrator Church Grant to develop a new scheme for power, heating and lighting in the church and floodlighting of the church.

For many years our vision statement has mentioned that we are a “loving and inclusive church” and, in 2025, we have started to have discussions with and within the congregation, to discern whether we want to formalise this by joining Inclusive Church Group.

We are looking for a forward-thinking and flexible priest-in-charge who will help us on our journey, nurture all within our congregation and community, and lead us into deeper Christian discipleship in our daily lives.

Vision for the future

- **To be visible as a church, central and relevant to village life**
- **To be loving, inclusive and welcoming to all**
- **To attract families, children and young people**
- **To adapt and develop our church for this and future generations**
- **To continue our journey towards sustainability**
- **To continue to develop our use of technology**
- **To engage with the wider world**

What We Are Looking For

A new Priest-in-Charge for St Mary's Buckden.

This will be a part-time (0.6fte) position in a newly formed single parish benefice.

We are looking to appoint a forward-thinking, energetic priest who will:-

In the wider community

- grow our missional impact by engaging with everyone in the village community
- energise children and young people and build on our relationship with Buckden CE Primary Academy
- support and enrich our existing pastoral and ecumenical activities
- lead our involvement in Deanery, Chapter & Diocesan life.

In our worship

- be loving, inclusive and welcoming to all
- be open and embrace a range of styles of worship, including intergenerational worship, and activities to attract young people and families
- be sympathetic to the diverse liturgical traditions of those within our church
- encourage the development of all those involved in ministry (lay & ordained)

In the church

- work with us to grow our church
- support us in our aim to become carbon net zero and to increase the sustainability of our church
- encourage and support all our volunteers
- work to increase the effectiveness of our fund-raising and outreach activities.
- help us to adapt and develop our church for this and future generations

Good communication skills, organisational skills and a pastoral heart are essential.

The candidate must be able to engage well with people of all ages, backgrounds and outlooks.

Delegation will be important for this part-time position. There are many and varied talents within the congregation which can be utilised and nurtured. Many supportive and active volunteers organise a range of social and fund-raising activities which attract people to St Mary's from Buckden and further afield.

People and contacts

Ministry team: In addition to the priest-in-charge, within the Parish there is currently one retired ordained minister who takes one Sunday and one Wednesday service each month; one LLM (employed as a Hospital Chaplain); one LLM in-training (to be licensed October 2025); one ALM music (also worship leader); and one ALM parish evangelism (also waterways chaplain). There is a rota of lay people for Sunday Services which includes reading and leading intercessions.



Revd Miles Falla



LLM: Roger Cresswell



ALMs: Chris Bylett & Richard Noble



Churchwardens: Vasanthi Mowat & Anne Carter (LLM in training)

Governance and management:

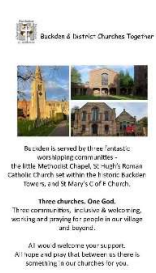


Our PCC can have up to 9 elected members and currently operates with 6 (which includes two Deanery Synod representatives, our Parish Safeguarding Officer and our pastoral care co-ordinator) plus our two churchwardens and the treasurer. There are sub-committees for ministry, management & finance, communications & administration. Monthly PCC meetings (except in August and December) are normally chaired by the priest-in-charge.

The Diocese : We have strong relationships with both Ely Diocese and St Neots Deanery. We have two Deanery Synod representatives on our PCC. The previous two priests-in-charge have also undertaken specific Diocesan roles, one social justice and one vocations.

Safeguarding: Our Parish Safeguarding Officer, Sammy Riley, works with the Diocesan safeguarding team to ensure that all of our volunteers are safeguarding trained and DBS checked. All our activities have a risk assessment and PCC routinely monitors the safeguarding dashboard (Level 2).

Ecumenical activities: We have excellent relationships with the Roman Catholic and Methodist churches in the village and work together under the banner Buckden and District Churches Together (BDCT). A new covenant between our churches was signed and BDCT relaunched at Pentecost 2025. With BDCT, we run a weekly youth club at Buckden Towers and a monthly discussion group "Where is God in all of this?" at a local pub. We also have good relationships with nearby Baptist churches in Perry (across the A1) and Godmanchester (where the foodbank is located).



The Parish of Buckden

St Mary's (the A1 church) is located at the centre of the village of Buckden. The village has a wide range of facilities with more than 50 clubs and societies. The High Street has shops, one with a Post Office counter, two hotels (former coaching inns) and a pub. Near the village green there are more shops, a pharmacy, a primary school and a day nursery. The village also has a doctors' surgery, a dentist, a care home, almshouses, three churches and a major recreational centre based around the Village Hall. This houses the library, a pre-school play group, Parish office, Buckden Village Club, a large hall and multipurpose rooms for hire. There is also a five-acre playing field, sports pavilion, children's play area, bowls club & tennis club.

Buckden is surrounded by farmland. Nearby recreational facilities include a network of footpaths, woods, three golf courses, a marina on the River Great Ouse, a large nature reserve



to the south and, at Grafham Water, sailing, off road cycling and an activity centre. Buckden village, and its church, were mentioned in the Domesday Book. Buckden has an historic centre which is a conservation area with over 60 listed buildings and a scheduled ancient monument, Buckden Towers, the former palace of the Bishops of Lincoln now owned by the Claretian Religious Order. Catherine of Aragon was held here under house arrest before being transferred to Kimbolton where she died in 1534. 2021 census data for Buckden Ward, which is a larger area than

Buckden Parish, shows a current population of around 3,400 (living in about 1500 dwellings) with the majority within the age range 35 to 74. Most houses are owner-occupied. There are a number of small businesses including shops and hotels/pubs based in the village, and farms in the surrounding area, but no industrial units other than a few premises west of the A1. Most residents are either in employment 55% or retired 33%.

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/localarea?compare=E07000011,E92000001>

Buckden Church of England Primary Academy We are very proud of our village school. It has a PAN of 350 and takes children from Reception through to Year 6. As a Church of England school, it places emphasis on the development of the whole child, both academically and spiritually. It has a strong Christian ethos underpinned by a core set of aims and values. These values are delivered through both Collective Worship and the curriculum, which is based on the Sustainable Development Goals. They visit church at least once a term and use the church and the expertise of the priest to help teach many aspects of the RE Curriculum. The school has been rated good by Ofsted and recently passed a SIAMS inspection. Our priest will be a foundation governor and lead weekly collective worship at the school.



Secondary school children generally attend Hinchingsbrooke School in Huntingdon, King's (The Cathedral) School in Peterborough, or Kimbolton School (independent).

Worship at St Mary's



We would describe ourselves as being a 'middle of the road' Anglican church with a congregation of varied backgrounds and traditions. The number on the electoral roll is currently 67 which reflects well the overall size of the worshipping community.

There is a service every Sunday at 11am and every Wednesday at 10am, with 8am Holy Communion and 6pm Evensong services on some Sundays. The 11am service on the first Sunday of the month is labelled as All-Age and is supported by Angel Voices, our informal

choir, with music on guitar and piano, rather than recorded organ music. The 11am Sunday Service is normally streamed via YouTube



The majority of our services (pre-vacancy) were Eucharistic with the priest robed. We make weekly use of both the Book of Common Prayer, and Common Worship.

Service Pattern (pre-vacancy)		
First Sunday	8am Holy Communion BCP	11am All-Age Holy Communion CW
Second Sunday	11am Holy Communion CW	6pm Evensong BCP
Third Sunday	8am Holy Communion BCP	11am Holy Communion CW
Fourth Sunday	11am Holy Communion CW	4pm 4 th @4 informal art-based service
Fifth Sunday	11am Holy Communion CW	
Wednesday	10am Holy Communion BCP	

During the vacancy, the service pattern has been adapted to include a wider variety of services, some of which can then be led by our lay ministers and churchwardens.

Music: For most services we use recorded music played through the sound system. We have the full hymn book CAHON (Combined Anglican Hymns Ancient and Modern) available as mp3 files. The hymns are chosen by a hymn-choosing team who meet every few months. On the 1st Sunday each month the music is guitar, piano and Angel Voices (our informal choir) organised by our music ALM. Our active team of bell-ringers ring every Sunday and practice every Monday evening. Although we do not currently have a regular organist, we do have a number of organists we can call on for weddings, funerals and other occasions.



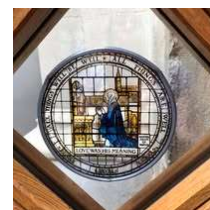
Lay Participation: In addition to our lay ministers, there is good lay participation within the Sunday services, with a rota for welcoming, sacristan/offertory, server/crucifer, reading, leading intercessions. A number of people act as vergers to assist with weddings and funerals.

Ministry at St Mary's

Prayer: The Daily Office was (pre-vacancy) said in Church Monday to Thursday 9am and 5pm. There is a monthly Julian Meeting, half an hour of silent



contemplative prayer in the evening. We encourage individuals to take part in Thy Kingdom Come (praying for five) each year. There are two prayer stations in church, one by a small altar to the right of the nave with prayer cards to pick and a box to leave written prayers in; the other a prayer board in the carpeted area at the back of the nave, where prayers can be added. A small group meet every week on Zoom to pray for the world.



Home Communion: Home Communion is offered and is regularly taken to individuals in the village as well as to Hardwick Dene (residential care home).

Bible Study: A monthly lunchtime bible study is run by one of our ALMs. Additional bible study groups are organised during Lent or Advent

Small Groups: A group of “those who live alone” organise a monthly Sunday Lunch out. Angel Voices singing group is run by one of our ALMs and leads on a 1st Sunday. Other small groups have included Ground Floor Group, Pilgrim, Getting Active.

Pastoral support: Our pastoral care co-ordinator keeps in touch with members of the congregation through times of need and provides an important and confidential link.

Children's ministry: Sunday Club is not currently running due to low numbers of children attending but is ready to start again as soon as there is a need. Our children's team keep an active eye out to help families during Sunday and occasional services and we have activity packs that can be used for an impromptu Sunday Club, as well as toys, books and games for children in a carpeted area at the back of church. The team are also very much involved in running the weekly Youth Club, organised by Buckden & District Churches Together and held at Buckden Towers.

Occasional Offices:

As in many churches, these have not yet returned to pre-lockdown levels. During 2024 in St Mary's there have been eight baptisms, eight funerals, four burials of ashes in the churchyard, one memorial service, one wedding blessing, and one wedding. There are three weddings currently booked for 2025 and two for 2026.



St Mary's Photo Gallery



Mission at St Mary's

Local Community: St Mary's is central to village life in Buckden. ALL villagers and visitors are welcome to come to the church whenever they wish. The church is open during daylight hours (CCTV provides security). As the Parish Church, it has been a popular choice for weddings, baptisms and funerals and village-wide services such as Christingle, Carol Service and Remembrance Sunday.

St Mary's has a regular page in the Buckden Roundabout, a monthly magazine which is distributed within the village and available



online. Many members of the congregation are involved in village community activities beyond the church including Buckden Roundabout, Buckfest music festival, Aragon Singers, History Society, and the Almshouses.

Children: Our link with Buckden CE Primary Academy is covered on page 6. In addition, there are two pre-school groups, Buckden Day Nursery and Pre-School Playgroup who visit for services at major festivals throughout the year.

Care Home: We have links with a residential care home Hardwick Dene and take communion to residents there.

Charitable giving: St Mary's supports Godmanchester Food Bank. The Priest-in-Charge and one churchwarden are voucher-holders and we also deliver the food donations each week from our collection boxes in church and the local Nisa shop. Members of the congregation are invited to nominate and promote a favourite charity in church for a 2-month period, often inviting someone from the charity to come and speak to us and organising fund-raising activities.



Through Buckden & District Churches Together, we also support Christian Aid, Royal British Legion, Children's Society and local charities at particular times of the year.

Chaplaincy: We have links with the chaplaincy teams at Littlehey Prison and at Hinchingbrooke Hospital. One of our ALMs is also a Waterways Chaplain and our LLM is a Hospital Chaplain.



Friends In Deed: this group of volunteers, supported by St Mary's, offers visits and transports to those in need in our village and runs a monthly Community Café in the church.



Social & Fund-Raising Events: organised by members of the congregation provide essential outreach as well as funds. Over the past year we have had various concerts, pop-up pubs, table-top sales, auctions (of pre-loved items and of promises), open gardens, VE Day celebrations as well as our regular monthly Saturday Coffee & Cakes and Wednesday Community Café. By the time this is published we will also have had a flower festival and art exhibition.



St Mary's Church Buildings

St Mary's is Grade I listed and considered a Major Church. A Church in Buckden was first recorded in 1086, in the Domesday Book, although no traces of the original Saxon church survive. The church is set against Buckden Towers, the former Palace of the Bishops of Lincoln. The structure of St Mary's today is almost unchanged from when it was rebuilt between 1435 and 1440.



The fabric of the church building is generally in good repair. An extension (the Living Stones Room) situated at the rear of the church was completed in 2011 and provides modern kitchen and toilet facilities as well as a meeting/social room which can also be let out. There is a vestry off the chancel and an office/storeroom on the ground floor of the tower.

There are six bells which range in age from the beginning of the 16th century to 1997. In 1997 the bell frame was renewed, and the ringing chamber repositioned to form a gallery into the body of the church. The bells are rung before the main Sunday service and on special occasions, including weddings both at St Mary's and at the neighbouring catholic church. The organ is a rare Nicholson and Lord pipe organ, 3 manual and pedal board, tracker action instrument and is serviced annually.



Major works in recent years have included repairs to the bell tower and chancel roof, refurbishment of the clock and renovation of the vestry exterior. The last Quinquennial Inspection was in 2024.



There are two carpeted areas at the rear of the nave, where the pews have been moved to create a café style / children's area and a chapel / prayer space. The pews can be moved back into rows and extra chairs added as required for larger services and concerts.



Heating / Sustainability / Net Zero Carbon: Last summer we successfully secured a place on the Church of England Carbon Net Zero Demonstrator programme and have been awarded a grant of up to £15k to develop a scheme to reduce our church's carbon emissions to net zero or as close to this as reasonably possible. The majority of our carbon emissions are associated with our heating and floodlighting and experts in these areas have recently been appointed to develop a proposal for us. At this early stage the solution is expected to include air source heat pumps, photo-voltaic panels on the roof and potentially some auxiliary heating equipment for localised heating. Floodlighting is likely to change from its current full coverage of the south and west elevations to more targeted localised lighting (possibly including the entire spire). It is expected that as we are part of the Net Zero Demonstrator programme the Cof E will fund 50% of any capital works and they have provided a grant consultant to help secure funds for the remainder of the cost.



We have achieved an Eco-church bronze award and the Parish Council are working towards a Churchyard Conservation Award.

The churchyard here has been closed since the 1890s and it is managed and maintained by Buckden Parish Council. A small area is reserved for the interment of ashes. Burials take place in a separate cemetery located in the village and managed by Buckden Parish Council.

Housing

The vicarage is situated adjacent to St Mary's Church. Built in 1981, it is a centrally-heated four-bedroom house with two reception rooms, kitchen, bathroom, utility room and a large study with toilet facilities and separate access.

It is a comfortable family home, having been refurbished during a previous vacancy in 2014.



*Thank you for viewing our Parish Profile and learning about our church.
We pray that God will light a fire in your heart to come and work with us. We look forward to meeting you.*