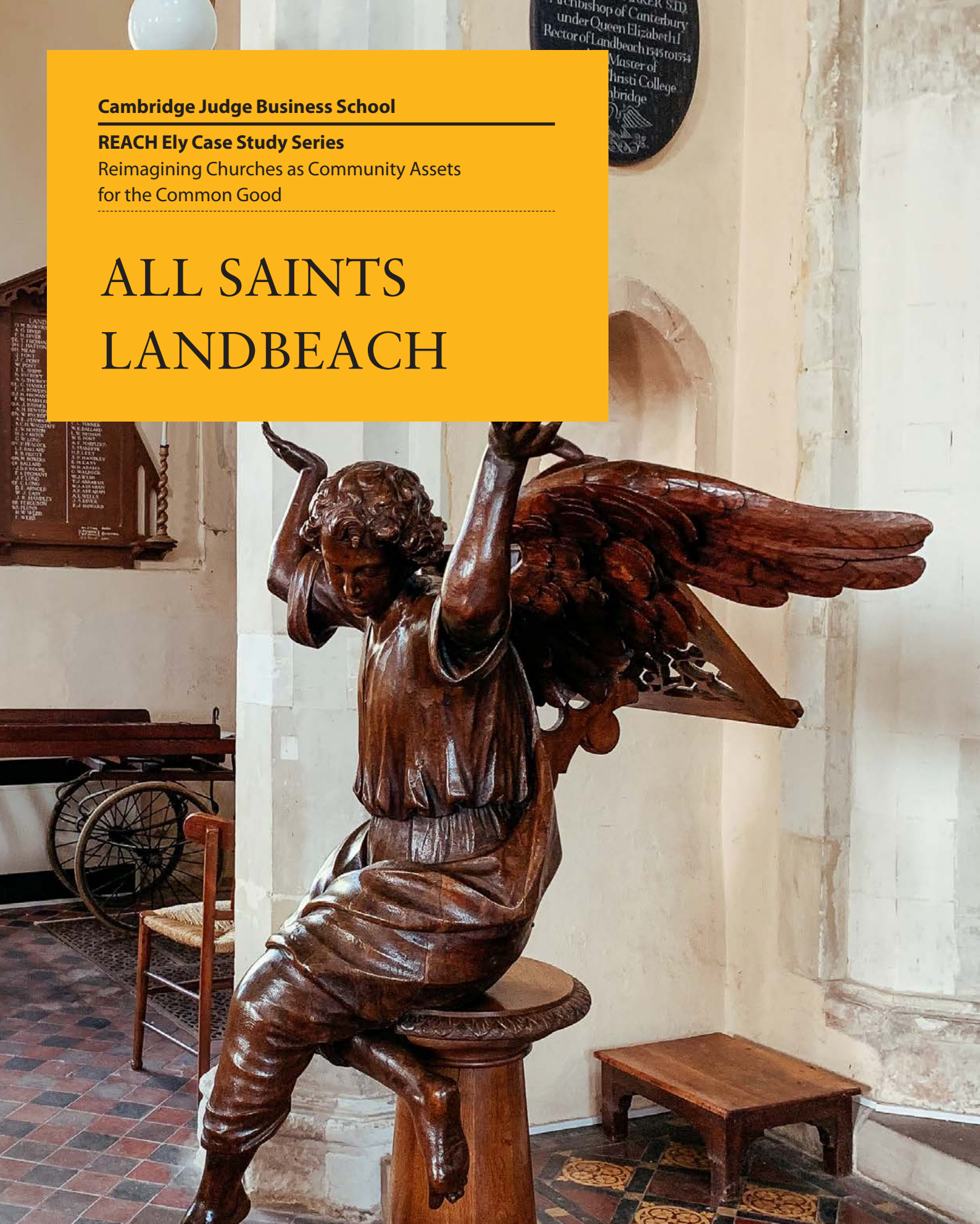


Cambridge Judge Business School

REACH Ely Case Study Series

Reimagining Churches as Community Assets
for the Common Good

ALL SAINTS LANDBEACH



Text, design, photography

Dr Timur Alexandrov

Cambridge Centre for Social Innovation
Cambridge Judge Business School

**REACH Ely (Reimagining Churches as
Community Assets for the Common Good)**
is a multi-partner research project that
aims to help communities make fuller use
of their churches.

Editorial board

Dr Helen Haugh

Cambridge Centre for Social Innovation
Cambridge Judge Business School

Geoffrey Hunter

Diocese of Ely

The project is implemented by

**Centre for Social Innovation at
Cambridge Judge Business School
and the Diocese of Ely**

*with the generous support of Allchurches Trust
and Historic England*

www.reachely.org

The challenges facing church communities and their buildings have been extensively studied in the light of declining church attendance in the United Kingdom over several decades. REACH Ely aims to address the less-well-understood opportunities for churches to engage and reconnect with the 97.7 per cent of the local communities in the Diocese of Ely who do not attend their parish churches.

With the absence of universal determinants of success and failure of churches in the community engagement context, the REACH Ely project will provide an understanding of the relationship between communities and wider use of church buildings as well as the contribution that churches make to the common good. The project will determine community values, needs and opportunities that can be used in the most effective way to ensure a win-win outcome for communities and sustainable future of church buildings.

The **case study series** is based on in-depth interviews and observations about church building use with informants from a subset of deaneries and parishes in the Diocese of Ely, supplemented with secondary information about the communities they represent. The purpose of the case study is to unearth various church experiences in renovating and envisioning their buildings as missional and social spaces, engaging with local and wider communities, addressing current challenges, and learning from their practice.

The **Glossary** is a separate document that accompanies the case study series. It is available as a download from the project's website www.reachely.org

On the cover: The Angel Lectern carved in oak.

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ALL SAINTS LANDBEACH

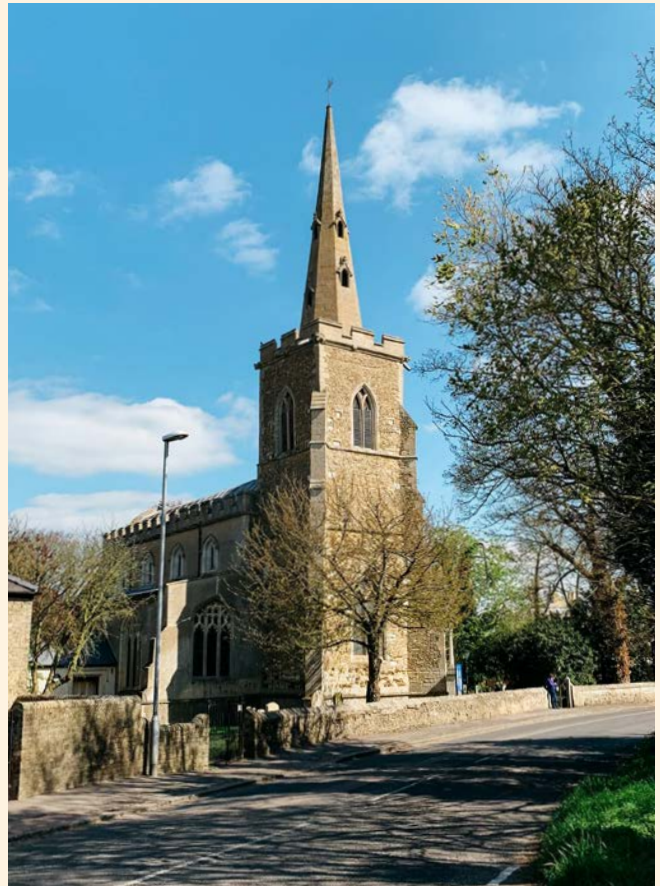
Church Category: Rural

Deanery: North Stowe

Address: Green End, Landbeach, Cambridge
CB25 9FD

Website: [www.landbeach.org.uk/
groups/198-all-saints-church](http://www.landbeach.org.uk/groups/198-all-saints-church)

**Landbeach and Waterbeach Parishes
website:** <http://stjohns-waterbeach.org.uk>



Summary

Buildings and Artefacts: Grade I listed; Facilities and kitchenette in a new build extension; Jacobean tables; Vine scroll wall decorations; Angel lectern; Elaborate furniture woodwork

Congregation to Population Ratio: 14 / 841

Fundraising: Reconstruction project fundraising campaign in 2006

Income Generation: Regular giving; Summer Garden Party; Pudding Evening; Concerts and flower festivals

Communications: Two parishes website and Facebook; Village and church website; Village magazine; Church weekly pamphlet; Noticeboard; Books

Community Engagement: Landbeach Village Society; Breakfast Church; Summer Garden Party; Pudding Evening; Coffee mornings; Painting and drawing groups; Heritage promotion; International church exchange visit.

ROOTS

Profile

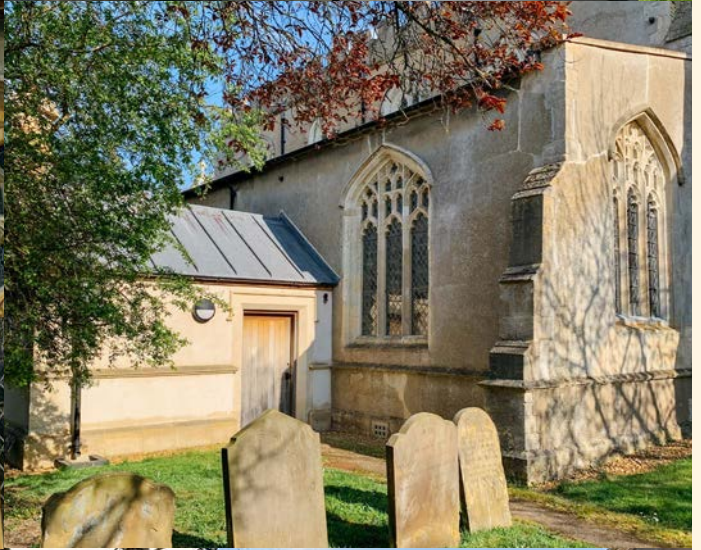
Landbeach is a small fen-edge village with a population of 841 people (2018), located five miles north of Cambridge between the city and the fens. Although a commuter village, Landbeach has very poor public transport connections and is a short drive from the Cambridge Science Park. Landbeach and its sister village Waterbeach are on either side of a major road connecting Cambridge and Ely. The 'beach' in the names of the villages reflect the period when they were at the edge of the Wash before the fens were drained.

Two archaeological sites in Landbeach form a protected national monument – the Manor of Brays and the Manor of Chamberlains – and are presently marked by mounds and moats. The historic road, the Mere Way (also called Akeman Street), that passes through Landbeach is one of the oldest Roman roads in England and connects Cambridge to Ely.

The village amenities include a modernised and expanded Village Hall with Sports and Social Club, and two children's nurseries. Cambridge Innovation Park and an Emmaus charity community with a café are located in the north of the village. Next to All Saints is the only remaining Tithe Barn in Cambridgeshire that is still in its original condition with thatched roof, timber frame and granary floor. The Tithe Barn is supported by a local Trust and a not-for-profit volunteer group which plans to restore and convert it into another community social space.

Other churches in the area are the Church of St John the Evangelist, Waterbeach (See *REACH Ely case study: Waterbeach*) and the Landbeach & Milton Baptist Church.





Clockwise: Church tower; North wall with extension housing facilities; View of the south wall with a churchyard.

Building

All Saints Landbeach has been the centre of Christian worship and community life for more than 900 years. The present church building is Grade I listed and stands in the middle of the old village while the newer part of the village spreads down to the south and east. The Norman stone in some of the walls indicate an earlier church on the site. The earliest parts of the church building, namely the tower and chancel, date back to the 13th century. Since the mid-14th century, the Patron of All Saints has been Corpus Christi College of the University of Cambridge whose coat of arms can be seen in the church. In 1439, the church was named All Saints. The church building has been altered and extended, for example, installing a clerestory and south porch, raising the roof and, adding a vestry and an organ chamber from a converted Lady Chapel.

In 1976, All Saints Landbeach was at the risk of closure due to poor physical condition of the church building. However, a new Rector and strong village support launched a major campaign to raise funds for a new roof and to bring the building back into good working condition.

The most recent developments include the construction of the north porch in 2006 and the installation of wheelchair accessible WC facilities, kitchenette, and efficient heating and sound systems. More recently, some of the pews at the west of the church have been removed to provide more social space, for example, for after-service refreshments, coffee mornings and children's activities.

From the fields surrounding the village, All Saints steeple dominates the skyline and Landbeach residents raised funds

to install floodlighting in the churchyard in 2000 to mark the new millennium. The church building is open during daylight hours.

Artefacts

During renovations fragments of Norman masonry were discovered and suggest that a stone church stood on the site in the 12th century. On the west, south and east walls of the church building are chevron marks from this period. There are several examples of fine 16th century woodwork in the church: a rood screen, timbers, pulpit, and pews in the south aisle that all came from Jesus College Chapel in 1787; two pairs of 14th century misericords in the choir stalls; and medieval benches, one featuring blacksmith symbols.

In addition, the Angel Lectern in the form of a seated angel, carved in oak with extended wings, holding the book-rest, was described by architectural historian Nikolaus Pevsner (1902-1983) as "splendid, utterly un-English". The lectern is attributed to 17th century Dutch craftsmanship. Other artefacts include fragments of the medieval glass in windows and a jumble of fragments believed to have come from Wimborne Minster in the 18th century, medieval gargoyles, carved faces on the building and the tower, marble family and war monuments, a medieval coffin lid, and a bier funded by the Landbeach Women's Institute that has been kept in the church since 1929. The organ was built and installed by Walker & Sons in 1906. Delicate traces of 14th century vine-like wall paintings can be seen behind the wooden pulpit. A war memorial is in the churchyard.





Top: Chancel view from the nave. Middle: High Altar and the rood screen in the chancel. Bottom: Sitting arrangement in the nave.

RUNNING

Team

The church is held in plurality with St John the Evangelist in Waterbeach. All Saints Landbeach has shared the Associate Vicar with Waterbeach since the 1970s, with the Rector of Milton as Priest-in-Charge. The team also includes two churchwardens, a treasurer, and a trainee pioneer lay minister.

Religious Services

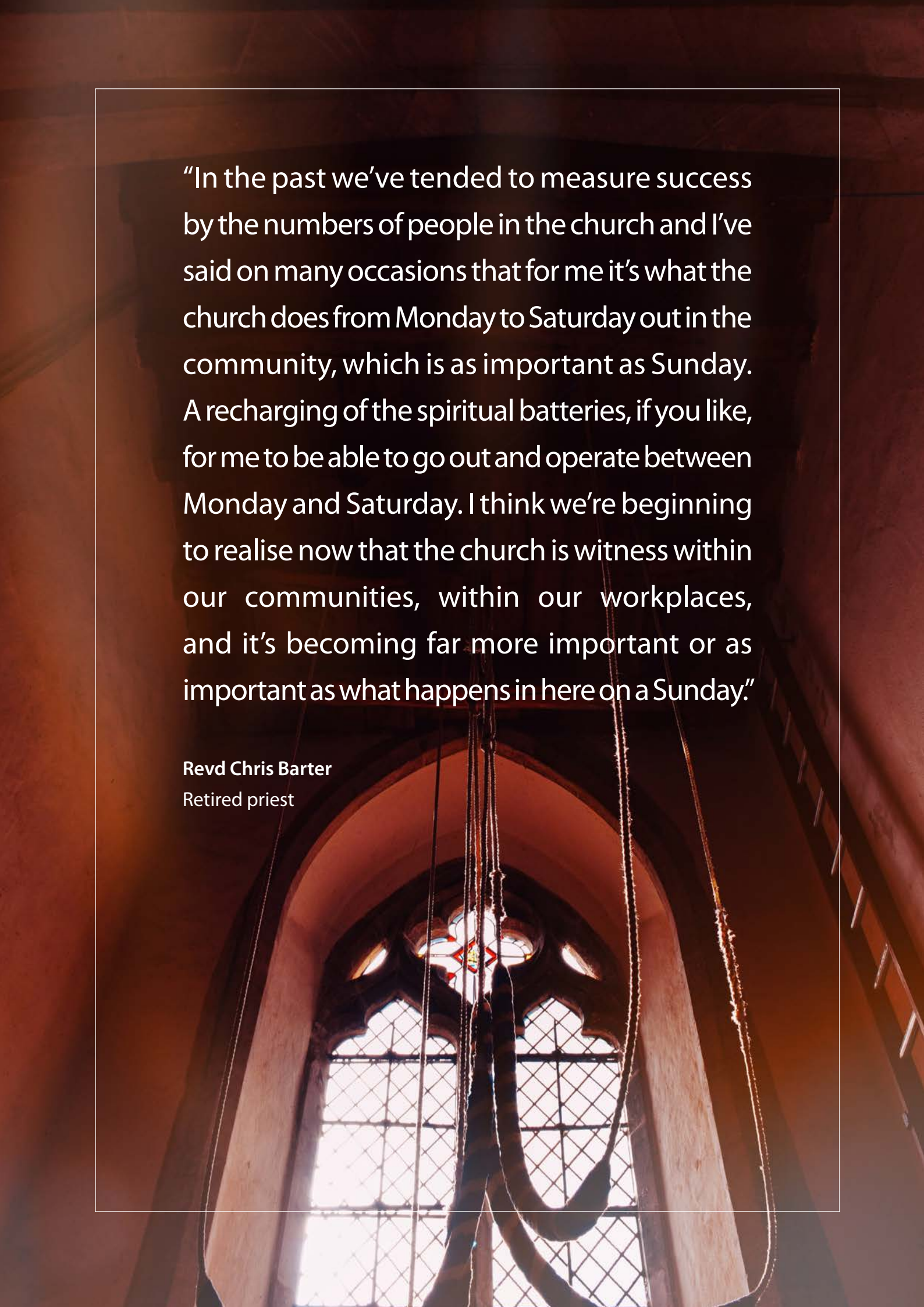
On the first Sunday morning of each month the church holds an All Age service for families with children. Traditional services are delivered on other Sundays. For the third Sunday of the month, the church introduced after service short discussions, with refreshments, for members of the congregation to review and reflect on the delivered sermon and address their questions to the preacher. The discussion topics are announced monthly in advance in the village magazine. All Saints changed the time of all morning services from 9.15 to 10.00 o'clock to make the church available for those who found the earlier start difficult.

Once a month in the evenings, All Saints holds a Book of Common Prayer service, and a quiet and contemplative Taizé service is held in alternate months. There is also a United Bible Study Group that meets in the nearby Old School on alternate Tuesday evenings. On a quarterly basis, All Saints hosts a pre-school Messy Church.

Together with the Landbeach and Milton Baptist Church, All Saints holds bi-monthly Songs of Praise, a Good Friday united walk, as well as joint services on Remembrance Sunday and major church festivals. For services, some families from Waterbeach visit Landbeach to support the church and alternate All Age benefice Services with St Johns Waterbeach on fifth Sundays. Social coffee mornings are also organised on the first Saturday every month.

Parish Share

In 2018, the parish share expenditure was £11,235.90.



“In the past we’ve tended to measure success by the numbers of people in the church and I’ve said on many occasions that for me it’s what the church does from Monday to Saturday out in the community, which is as important as Sunday. A recharging of the spiritual batteries, if you like, for me to be able to go out and operate between Monday and Saturday. I think we’re beginning to realise now that the church is witness within our communities, within our workplaces, and it’s becoming far more important or as important as what happens in here on a Sunday.”

Revd Chris Barter
Retired priest



Fundraising

Raising funds for reconstruction project. For the construction of the north porch in 2006, the church secured funds from several church supporting grant bodies. The majority of funds were provided by Waste Recycling Environmental (WREN), a community action fund that supports community-improving and environmental projects within ten miles of a WREN landfill site.

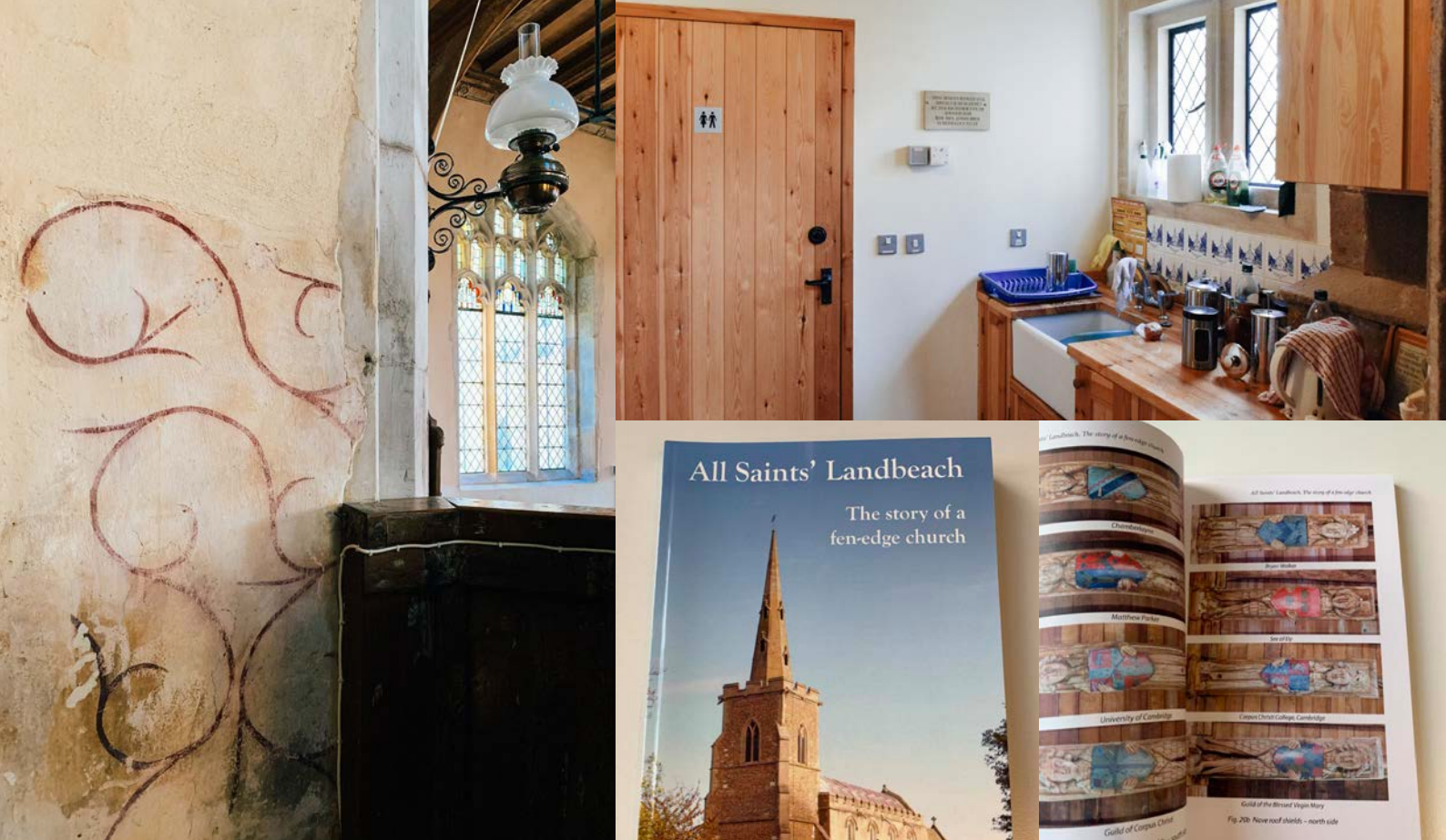
Income Generation

Regular giving by the members of the congregation with the Gift Aid and Parish Giving Scheme using a direct debit helps generate unrestricted income for the church.

Concerts and flower festivals provide ticket income for All Saints Landbeach general fund.

Summer Garden Party. Since 2017, the church has organised a garden party annually in July. The free event offers entertainment, cakes, home produce, and a book sale. Proceeds from the event go to the current Servery development project.

Pudding Evening. In the autumn All Saints invites people to the church for a pudding evening – the event includes a quiz, variety of hot and cold puddings, and tea and coffee. A ticket costs £5 and, on average, a pudding evening helps to raise £300 for church funds. The funds contribute to maintenance costs and diocese commitments.



Communications

All Saints Landbeach events are posted on the **joint website** of the parish and village of Landbeach and a joint website and **Facebook page** of Landbeach and Waterbeach parishes. A Church **weekly pamphlet** is jointly published with Waterbeach that lists services and events on both churches; the free publication is available in Landbeach and Waterbeach churches and on the parishes website. The **Village newsletter** *What's On in Landbeach*, replacing a church magazine, is distributed monthly to every household in the community. A bright blue **church noticeboard** is set in front of the church.

Books. Churchwarden and Reader Dr Ray Gambell, a former whale biologist and resident of Landbeach since 1976, has published four books: *Landbeach Then and Now* (2015), *Landbeach – a Guide to the Historic Buildings* (2011), *All Saints' Landbeach: The Story of a Fen-edge Church* (2010), *All Saints' Church Explored: An illustrated Guide to Some of Our Treasures* (2005). The books document historical accounts of the church from its early days to the present time as well as photographs of All Saints, artefacts and village life. There are plans to produce a **one-page leaflet** listing key events and explaining a brief history of All Saints.

Opposite page, clockwise: Area for planned Served in the back of the nave (Photo by Timur Alexandrov); Concert in church; Bell ringing social event; Arts and Craft exhibition (Photo by Landbeach church). On this page, clockwise: 14th century wall paintings behind the pulpit; Kitchenette and WC facilities in the north porch; Ray Gambell's book on the history of All Saints Landbeach.

REACH

Community

Church Action Plan. In 2017, All Saints Landbeach produced an Action Plan document that lists all imperative objectives in accordance with the Ely 2025 strategic levers of change. The objectives were designed using the SMART goal method and identified people, resource implications and measures of success.

Servery development project. The PCC is planning to alter the area between the north and south porches to make a more open and flexible social space. The estimated cost of the project is about £30,000, which the church is planning to raise via grants and donations, as part of a wider maintenance and restoration programme.

Events

Community Breakfast Church. To attract more people who do not generally attend church services, All Saints Landbeach introduced a Community Breakfast Church in May 2019. Advertised in the village magazine, the informal free event

replaced a church service but retains a religious content. The event is designed to enable local residents to meet each other, share breakfast, crafts and activities, and discuss Bible stories and recent events. Building on the success of the first event, the July Community Breakfast Church was attended by 45 adults and 15 children.

Summer Garden Party & Pudding Evening (*See Income Generation*).

Activity Groups. Messy Church is run on a quarterly basis. An active group of bell-ringers practise every Friday and ring at services, and flower arrangers decorate the church for festivals and special events.

Activities for wider community. The main midweek activity within the church is the organisation of a painting and drawing group that meets every two weeks and uses the space at the back of the nave. Coffee mornings have become popular and attract more non-regular congregation members. A monthly Knit and Natter morning is a popular event. The PCC is open to the idea to holding choir, music, and conference events in the church after the Servery is installed.

“All these things are possible, but we haven’t just got the drive at the moment, we’re doing one thing at a time and they’re lying in the future.”

Dr Ray Gambell
Churchwarden



Clockwise from top-left: Coffee morning events; Church cleaning and churchyard maintenance day; Drawing and painting group; Pudding Evening; Teas in the churchyard (Photo by Landbeach church).

Engagement

Focus on families and children. All Saints actively seeks opportunities and events to bring a wider population into the church. A member of the PCC is training at All Saints Landbeach for licenced pioneer ministry and aims to reach out to people who do not attend church and so better meet their needs. In response to a request from the Landbeach Nursery to use the church more often, the PCC organised regular Messy Church activities, an initiative taken by the trainee pioneer lay minister. Further, Explore Science, finger painting, and music events have brought people from Waterbeach and other villages to All Saints Landbeach.

Village Society. All Saints churchwarden Dr Ray Gambell is Chairman of the Village Society for all interested in the history and the environment of the village. Activities include lectures, talks, visits to places of interest, and social events. Although the Village Society's regular meetings are held in the village hall, some events and the annual summer lunch are held in the All Saints church. However, competition with the village hall to host events is avoided – the church wishes not to be seen as reducing the use and income of the village hall.

Swifts. Sixteen swift nest boxes in the tower are well frequented, and two fitted with cameras, viewed on a screen in the church, have provided considerable education and interest during the nesting season as the eggs have hatched and the chicks raised.

Heritage promotion. With the support of the Lottery Heritage Fund, the PCC plans to recruit a manager to enhance and capitalise on the heritage aspects of the church building.

“We’re becoming more aware in society as a whole that heritage is important. We went through a period in the 1970-80’s when heritage didn’t seem to matter so much, and we lost quite a lot of our churches in that period. Now we’re beginning to realise how valuable heritage is, and I think there’s a greater will to maintain that. Heritage is a factor that has a long-term possibility, and also the coupling with the new town development [in Waterbeach], the developers are very keen to latch onto that element, to counter their newness with the old that’s here. They want to have cycle trails, walks and things like that to link these places together – and we could be a part of that.”

Revd Chris Barter, Retired priest
Dr Ray Gambell, Churchwarden



REFLECTIONS

Challenges

Youth engagement

The Landbeach church congregation, with its mainly older demographic profile, is trying to reach out to younger people and families with the support of the Waterbeach families.

Church location

The A10 road from Cambridge to Ely separates Landbeach from Waterbeach and cuts off All Saints Landbeach from many who might find it difficult to walk there by crossing the major road. The planned expansion of the road by constructing a second carriageway will exacerbate this difficulty. Meanwhile, approved development plans to build a new town to the north of Waterbeach in the 2020s could make All Saints Landbeach a heritage site for the new town.

Church building condition

Because of the damp in the north west wall, the church is planning to remove the plaster inside and the cement on the outside, let the walls dry out and make them permeable. In addition, All Saints church roof is bat roosting space. Although churches and churchyards offer rich habitat for wildlife, bat roosts cause major cleanliness problems and the pew cushions are protected in the summer months. The lack of a car park near the church has prevented holding big social events but may, in the future, be overcome by working in partnership with the village hall to use its car parking facilities.

Community attachment to church fixtures

The PCC accepts that there might be concerns from the community with regard to the potential replacement of remaining pews with chairs, especially the historic south aisle pews from Jesus College Chapel. However, after the removal of two pews in the back of the church, views might change in relation to how much the planned Served space is used by the community.

Lessons Learned

To adapt the church building for more flexible and a wider use

The small kitchenette in the north porch is not efficient and safe enough for providing hot drinks at community events. The PCC envisions that the new Served in the back of the church with sink, water, and electricity will enable food and hot drinks to be served in a better way during after-service coffee, coffee mornings and social, children, and music events.

To be open and responsive

All Saints has experience in church exchange. In the 1980s, All Saints welcomed a US church from Cincinnati with choir members who stayed in homes of Landbeach villagers and performed in the All Saints church. Later, Landbeach village members visited their American friends in the US. All Saints Landbeach is considering repeating the exchange in the future.

To allow sufficient time for new initiatives to be introduced

During the construction of the new porch extension in the north wall for kitchenette and WC facilities, several unmarked graves were disturbed. The construction process required more time to make special provision to get the foundations clear of unknown burials.

To integrate the church and the community

Since the 1975 the parish of Landbeach has shared a priest with Waterbeach. While it has taken time for the parish to accept lay help, this is welcomed as a way of growing the church.

“I think the church is very often the last place that stays at the heart of the community. You lose your post office, you lose your school... I think the church building is the last place to go, and there’s an element of that here in Landbeach. There’s life in the church here and there’s outreach whereas so much else has disappeared.”

Rev Chris Barter
Retired priest



PRO PATRIA

IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF
THE MEN OF LANDBEACH
WHO FOUGHT AND FELL IN
THE GREAT WAR 1914-1919

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|
| PTE. F. GALLARD | A. S. C. |
| PTE. H. M. BOWERS | SUFFOLK |
| PTE. P. FERGUSON | CAMBS. |
| BOMB. E. T. FROMANT | R. I. A. |
| PTE. J. H. FROMANT | SUFFOLK |
| CPL. L. C. HANDLEY | M. G. C. |
| PTE. H. J. HATTON | D. L. I. |
| PTE. H. J. HATTON | R. F. A. |
| PTE. F. C. LONG | SUFFOLK |
| PTE. W. S. LONG | R. HUSK. |
| SGT. H. MEAD | SUFFOLK |
| PTE. V. P. PEACOCK | SUFFOLK |
| PTE. S. PLUMB | SUFFOLK |
| PTE. A. J. RAYNER | BEDS. |
| 2 ND PL. N. WYNN | RYCROFT BEDS. |
| PTE. E. WALDOCK | NORTHANTS |

“From the church point of view, we are a living witness to our faith and our belief and that is maintained. We continue with services even when there are four or five people. We have worship and this is fundamental, the purpose of the church, but at the same time we want to reach out to the wider community to spread that gospel, but also to serve them as well as a community. I think those are the thoughts that light the back of everything that we’re doing.”

Dr Ray Gambell
Churchwarden

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Cambridge Centre for Social Innovation

Cambridge Judge Business School
University of Cambridge
Trumpington Street
Cambridge CB2 1AG
socialinnovation@jbs.cam.ac.uk
www.jbs.cam.ac.uk

Diocese of Ely

Ely Diocesan Office
Bishop Woodford House
Barton Road
Ely CB7 4DX
T: +44 (0) 1353 652701
www.elydiocese.org

www.reachely.org