

Cambridge Judge Business School

REACH Ely Case Study Series

Reimagining Churches as Community Assets
for the Common Good

ST MARY & ST MICHAEL TRUMPINGTON

Text, design, photography

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**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.

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The project is implemented by

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

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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: View from the nave of Trumpington church towards the chancel and High Altar.

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ST MARY & ST MICHAEL TRUMPINGTON

Church Category: Suburban

Deanery: Cambridge South

Address: Grantchester Road, Trumpington, Cambridgeshire, CB2 9LH

Website: <http://trumpington.church>



Summary

Buildings and Artefacts: Grade I listed building; Bath stone church exterior; Brass of Sir Roger de Trumpington; Stone perpendicular font; Bakehouse – church office and meeting room

Congregation to Population Ratio: 133 / 8,034 in 2011 (properties doubled since then – whole ward electoral figure for 2018 is 13,747 which includes New Town area (outside the parish) but does not include under 18s) (*See Messy Church in Events*)

Fundraising: Donations; Mothers' Union Summer of Hope coffee morning; Harvest Lunch; Giving in Grace appeal; Occasional concerts

Income Generation: Church hall rental; Church magazine advertisements

Communications: Church website; targeted Facebook pages and 'mail chimp' lists; Information boards; Church magazine *The Trumpet*; Visitors' Book

Community Engagement: Harvest Lunch; Christmas Tree Festival; Hands on the Circle (HonC!) stay and play group; Mothers of Pre-schoolers (MOPS) and their creche (Moppets); Music Together Group; Community survey; Church and Community Families Outreach Worker; Church Cornerstone; Collaboration with primary schools including 'Open the Book' assemblies.

ROOTS

Profile

Trumpington parish (population 8,034 in 2011) is situated in the suburbs of Cambridge which in the Middle Ages would have been a truly rural place and lies to the southwest of Cambridge sharing borders with the villages of Grantchester, the Shelfords and Hauxton.

The original heart of Trumpington around the High Street, Church Lane and Maris Lane, was expanded to the east during the 20th century placing the parish church on the west side of the village. In recent years, many new residents moved into the parish as part of the Cambridge Southern Fringe developments.

There is a nucleus of village shops, public houses, supermarket, post office, and a farm. The area has three primary schools, a new secondary community college, and several private schools between Trumpington and the city centre. The local community venues include the Village Hall with two rooms and facilities, opened in 1908, and the Trumpington Pavilion, built in the 1950s and renovated and extended in 2009. The new Clay Farm Community Centre opened in 2018. While the village has excellent transport links to Cambridge and London via the M11 motorway, to the west of Trumpington is a substantial area of farmland, and the Trumpington Meadows Wildlife Trust reserve and Byron's Pool.

In 2012, Trumpington village received media attention when archaeologists working in Trumpington Meadows 100 metres to the south of the church discovered a 7th century Anglo-Saxon bed burial of a young woman with a jewelled gold pectoral cross – presumed to be a member of a wealthy family associated with an Anglo-Saxon settlement.

The parish church dedicated to St Mary and St Michael (previously known as St Mary and St Nicholas) is situated in the historical centre of Trumpington village. The church is featured in Simon Jenkin's book *England's Thousand Best Churches* (2002) and the patron is Trinity College Cambridge. Other churches in the area are St Andrew and St Mary in Grantchester (See *REACH Ely case study: Grantchester*), Christ Church Trumpington and Faithlife Church.



*Brass of Sir Roger de
Trumpington*



Top: North face of the church. Middle: The Bakehouse and the East window of the church. Bottom: River Cam in Grantchester.



Pages 4-5: Panoramic view of the chancel with the south chapel at the right and the nave.

Building

The large Grade I listed church of St Mary and St Michael was built in the early 14th century. The chancel dates from about 1280 and the narrow late Early English windows remain alongside large windows and clear and decorated Victorian glass.

The nave of the church is spacious and height is created by a 'forest of pillars'. The seating arrangements comprise box pews (nave, north and south aisles) and wooden chairs (north chapel). The church building can accommodate approximately 300 people. A children's corner with carpet and toys is set out in the south chapel. A peal of eight bells is housed in the tower. Trumpington church is surrounded by a closed churchyard with tall yews which contains mostly 18th and 19th century memorials, with an open churchyard extension beyond.

St Mary and St Michael church is open daily between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. The entrances are through the west door under the tower and via a ramp at the north door of the church.

Adjacent to the church stands the Bakehouse, a small Georgian style building with one all-access WC and servery (without cooking facilities) which was an outbuilding of the original vicarage. The Bakehouse is currently used as the church office and for meetings (*See Community*). In addition, a 19th century church hall is now leased to Rainbow Day Nursery).

Artefacts

St Mary and St Michael church is rich in artefacts of which we mention three. First, and historically most important is the large engraved memorial and military brass of Sir Roger de Trumpington (d.1289). The trumpet on Sir Roger's shield is repeated in medieval glass in the North aisle. Second, the stone Perpendicular font features quaint 14th century faces on the bases, but stem and bowl are of later work. Finally, the originally 'three-decker' pulpit was bought from Emmanuel College Cambridge in 1677. The church building received much restoration between 1858-67 that included resurfacing the exterior with Bath stone.



Seating arrangement in the nave, north chapel and south aisle; Details of decoration on the 15th century wooden rood screen.

RUNNING

Team

The team includes the vicar (appointed in 2019), two churchwardens, curate, two associate ministers and the church and community families outreach worker (CCFOW).

Religious Services

On Sundays, Trumpington church Holy Communion service is held at 8 a.m. and Parish Communion at 10 a.m. On the third Sunday, Trumpington church holds the informal 'Third Sunday Service' with activity stations around the church and songs accompanied by a music group, and Evensong at 6.30 p.m. Holy Communion is on Wednesdays at 10.30 a.m.

St Mary and St Michael Trumpington holds a joint service of Holy Communion on fifth Sundays with St Mark's Newnham (*See REACH Ely case study: Newnham*) and St Andrew and St Mary Grantchester – rotating around all three parish churches.

The church music group plays for the third Sunday service and occasionally at other services. The Trumpington church choir performs at festivals and special occasions.

Parish Share

In 2019, parish share expenditures was £72,310.



Top: 'Forest of pillars' in the nave. Middle: Box pews and the north door.
Bottom (Photos of Trumpington church): Organ playing at the service; 'Third Sunday' service activities.

Fundraising

Events. St Mary and St Michael church hosts several fundraising efforts: the annual Harvest Lunch; Lent Lunches; occasional talks and concerts; and a Christmas Tree Festival. Profits are either shared between the church and another charity or donated to another a charity.

Donations. Proceeds from the Christingle Service are donated to the Children's Society. Mothers' Union of Trumpington church holds an annual coffee morning in the summer. The 2019 event raised £263.50 including donations in aid of Mothers' Union Summer of Hope appeal. The local branch of the Mothers' Union meets monthly in the Bakehouse.

Income Generation

Rental Income. The Church Hall is let out to the Rainbow Day Nursery which generates income for the church and provides a service for the local community.

Magazine Advertisements. The church charges fees to publish commercial advertisements in its bi-monthly magazine *The Trumpet*. Each year the

fees are budgeted to meet production costs. The PCC considers the magazine as a service to the community by the church.

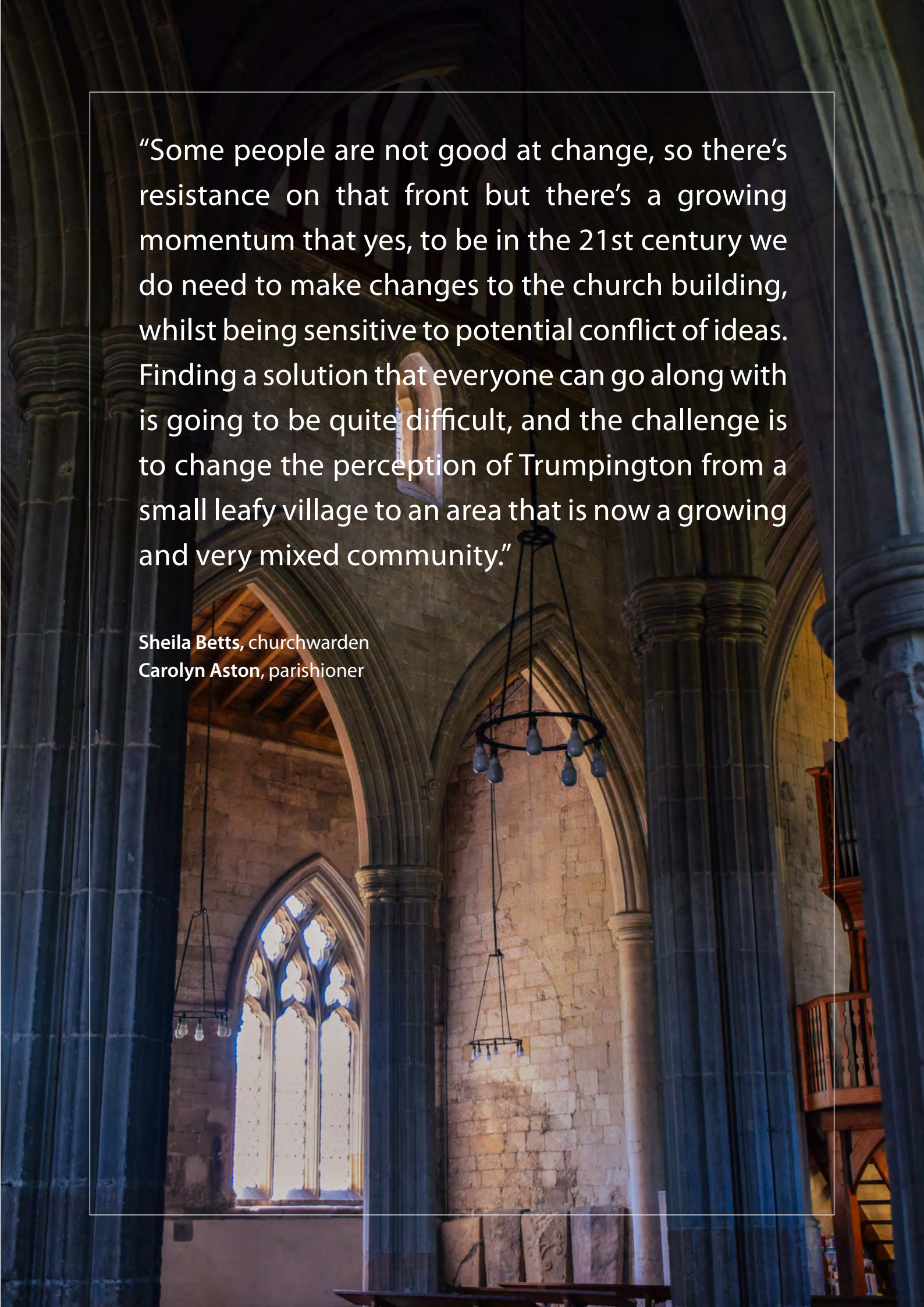
Communications

Trumpington church's **website** publishes updates on church and community events, services and worship, special occasions, activities for children and families, volunteers, and other parish information. St Mary and St Michael church is registered at www.achurchnearyou.com. Events are also posted on the Diocesan website.

Facebook page of the church posts updates on upcoming events and popular Messy Church activities. Information boards are arranged in the north aisle.

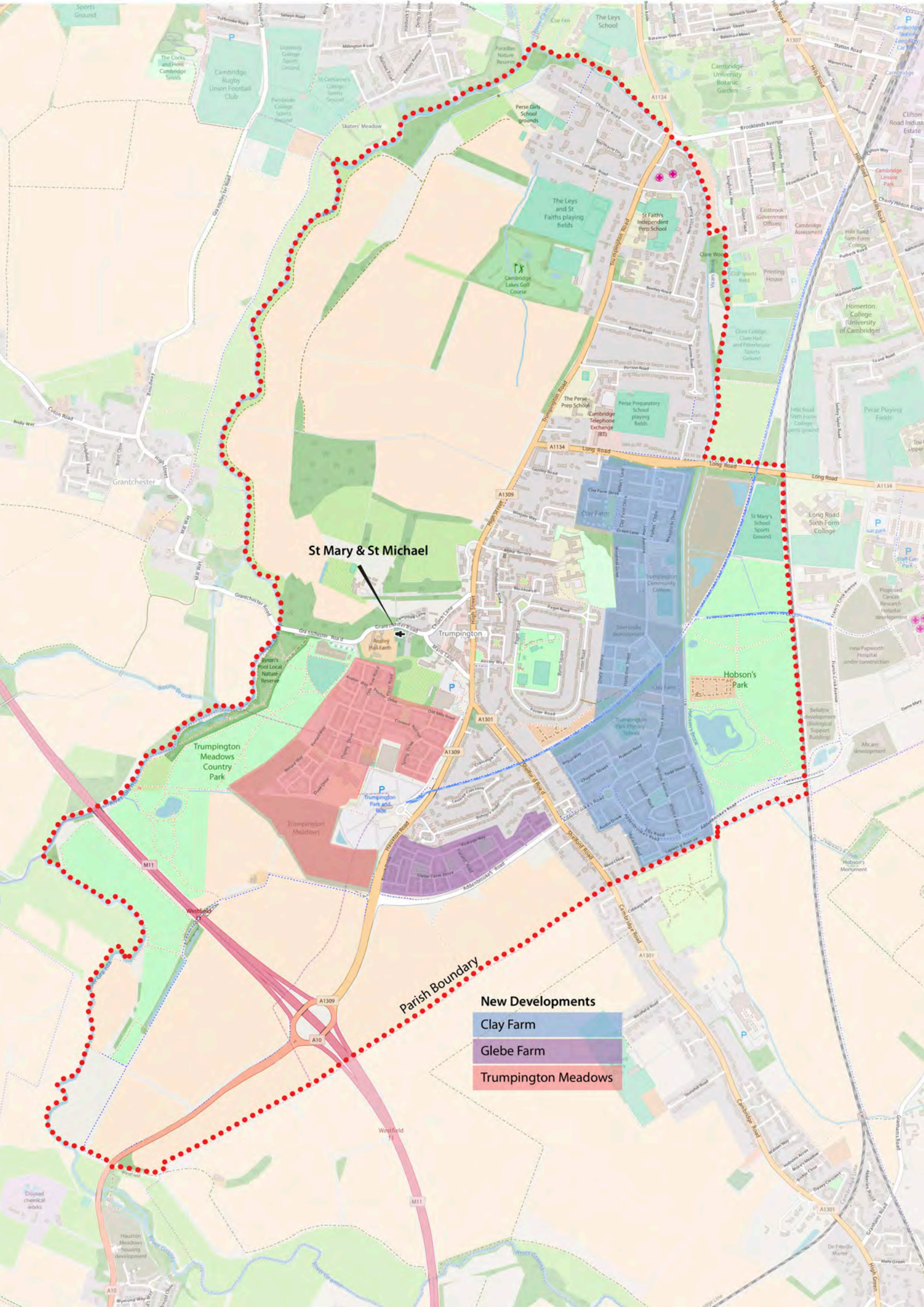
The **church magazine** *The Trumpet* is published bi-monthly with news and events in the church and its community. It is distributed by volunteers to every household in the parish.

Visitors' Book is set by the entrance and records travellers' notes complimenting the building and its artefacts.

The background image shows the interior of a Gothic church. It features tall, dark stone pillars supporting a high, vaulted ceiling. A large, ornate Gothic window with multiple panes is visible on the left, allowing light to filter through. A modern, circular chandelier with several small lights hangs from the ceiling. The overall atmosphere is one of historical grandeur and architectural detail.

“Some people are not good at change, so there’s resistance on that front but there’s a growing momentum that yes, to be in the 21st century we do need to make changes to the church building, whilst being sensitive to potential conflict of ideas. Finding a solution that everyone can go along with is going to be quite difficult, and the challenge is to change the perception of Trumpington from a small leafy village to an area that is now a growing and very mixed community.”

Sheila Betts, churchwarden
Carolyn Aston, parishioner



St Mary & St Michael

Parish Boundary

- New Developments**
- Clay Farm
- Glebe Farm
- Trumpington Meadows

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REACH

Community

The Bakehouse. The Bakehouse building is used as the church office and for church-related events such as Junior Church, PCC, staff and other small church group meetings, and a Music Together group. The church is exploring an alternative venue for Junior Church.

Support for pre-school families. St Mary and St Michael church members are involved in a range of initiatives to support young families: **Mothers of Pre-schoolers** (MOPS) meet on second and fourth Wednesdays at Trumpington Meadows School, with a supervised crèche (**Moppets**) run by members of the congregation. These events enable mothers to meet in a relaxed environment.

In 2018, the CCFOW (*See Engagement*) partnered with council family workers facilitating **Circle of Security Parenting** (COS-P) at one of the schools, the Clay

Farm Centre, and in the Bakehouse. The COS-P group is designed to help parents/caregivers see things from their child's perspective (build empathy) and to encourage children to grow to be secure and confident. COS-P encourages all relationships to thrive - couple, family and beyond. A successful spin-off is **Hands on the Circle!** (HonC!) a supportive stay and play group for pre-school families. This is held weekly at the Clay Farm Community Centre.

Community Survey. In early 2018, St Mary and St Michael Trumpington distributed a survey to gather community feedback on renovation options, for example, to build an extension on the outside or alter the interior of the church. The results found that 27 preferred an extension to 10 preferring reordering internally. Given the wide distribution of the survey in the magazine and within the immediate church community there was a disappointingly low response.

“What I find in terms of community outreach stuff is the most effective way is word of mouth and by building relationships with families within the community and asking them what they want. So I try as much as possible to be driven by what they see as important and what they would like and that I think is when it's most effective.”

Helen Bell

Church and Community Families Outreach Worker



1st row: Moppets volunteers; MOPS (Mothers of pre-schoolers) meeting. 2nd row: M&Ms youth group karting event; Messy Church in the nave.
 3rd row: Mossy Church outdoor picnic; HonC! (Hands on the Circle!) session.
 4th row: Christingles choir (Photos of Trumpington church) and Christmas Tree Festival.

Events

Activities for families and children.

On second and fourth Sundays, **Junior Church** meets during the 10 am service and offers activities for mostly pre-school and primary-aged children. Overseen by the CCFOW, the sessions are run by a small group of parents.

St Mary and St Michael church also runs **Messy Church** every second Monday in term time and attracts around 70 people, mostly not from the regular Sunday congregation.

Mossy Church. As part of Messy Church, St Mary and St Michael church organises outdoor events at the Trumpington Meadows Wildlife Trust Reserve on Palm Sunday and to celebrate harvest, to support those in need, and unite the local community. Participants bring food contributions to share for the harvest picnic, and activities include making scarecrows, leaf artwork, playdough food plates and other seasonal crafts.

The Trumpington and Newnham youth group, **M&Ms** (St Mary, St Michael and St Mark's) for approximately 10-13 year olds, meet monthly on a Sunday afternoon for social events.

Activity Groups. A group of parents who have attended COS-P and with a desire to support one another in parenting and to reach out to other families, have established **Hands on the Circle (HonC!)** at the Clay Farm Community Centre. This group is overseen by the CCFOW who supports a team of volunteers, all of whom bring their own skills and gifts. HonC! is based on principles of COS-P in which

the CCFOW is trained. Community Reach Funding (Cambridge City Council) has enabled a parent to be trained in COS-P thus ensuring further COS-P groups can run moving forward.

HonC! consists of free play and a time of gathering together for songs. The families attending HonC! are from a diverse range of backgrounds, culturally, linguistically, socially and economically. The CCFOW seeks to respond to the needs of the group. For example, a 'conversation table' has now started to support families in speaking and writing English in a supportive environment and to share opinions, as a way of encouraging integration and community building. 50+ families now attend on a weekly basis. Trumpington church is currently trialling a shared lunch once a month in response to families wishing to stay and connect after the end of HonC! This has been very well attended and is an example of table fellowship.

Community Carols. Together with Christ Church Trumpington, St Mary and St Michael Church holds a community carols event for the primary schools. Since 2014, the successful event, where the Cambridge Brass Band performs, has been organised annually at the nearby Anstey Hall, which kindly offers free use of the venue, is attended by approximately 350-400 people.

Christmas Tree Festival. Since 2018, St Mary and St Michael church organises a community Christmas Tree Festival. Local residents, businesses, charities, schools, and clubs are invited to donate decorated Christmas trees for display in St Mary and St Michael church. This event is well attended and much appreciated by the local community.

“A lot of the people who come to get married [in the church] aren’t regular church goers. They don’t necessarily carry on coming to church after they’ve got married. They’re coming because they feel the need to connect and they love the building.”

Sheila Betts
Churchwarden

Engagement

Church and Community Families Outreach Worker (CCFOW). The position of the CCFOW was co-funded by the diocese, parish funds, and the County Council with joint funding for three years. The PCC seeks to continue the post but is struggling to attract the necessary funding. The CCFOW seeks to foster belonging, all-round wellbeing and faith in an increasingly disparate community. She also co-ordinates a growing number of volunteers, both old and young, who run or support various events. The CCFOW is a Chartered Clinical Psychologist and she brings her specialist skills into this role seeking to get alongside a diverse range of families. For example, parents with mental and physical health difficulties, those with a history of childhood abuse, and adults and children whom are marginalised and isolated for whatever reason.

Church Cornerstone. Trumpington church is experimenting with a congregation for Seekers and Christians on the fringes of church and the name given to this safe space is Cornerstone. The church is continuing to develop a model for this congregation which is more inclusive of the wider church community.

Collaboration with primary schools. St Mary and St Michael Trumpington has established links with all three primary schools in the parish (Fawcett school, Trumpington Meadows school, and the newest Trumpington Park school. None of these is a church school). The vicar is a governor of Trumpington Federation (which comprises primary schools of Fawcett and Trumpington Meadows) while other clergy and several members of the congregation have served, or are serving, on the various school boards. Open the Book teams, with members drawn both from St Mary and St Michael and Christ Church Trumpington, present an assembly in each of the three primary schools on a weekly basis.



1st row: Harvest lunch and Toy service. 2nd row: Church choir and post-service get-together with refreshments.
 3rd row: Community garden and Clay Farm centre. 4th row: Trumpington Park School and new developments in the parish (Photos by Trumpington church).



Top: Cambridge half-marathon breakfast bar organised in the churchyard; Act of Remembrance in Trumpington. Middle: Community lunch in the church; Messy Church welcome event; Christingles and nativity event. Bottom: Wedding celebration at St Mary and St Michael Trumpington; Meeting in the Bakehouse (Photos by Trumpington church).

REFLECTIONS

Challenges

Church location

The church and the Bakehouse are currently situated in the middle of the geographical parish, yet post-war developments in Trumpington and latterly the Cambridge southern Fringe developments have moved the village centre to the Clay Farm and Trumpington Meadows development areas – so that the church now sits on the edge of the built-up residential area. Being in a peripheral location, the lack of natural traffic of people means that the church building is scarcely visible outside the direct location.

“We are quite close to, and visible from, the Trumpington Meadows development which has only limited community gathering spaces. I think we have an asset with our large church building which we could bring people into, if it’s done in the right way.”

Carolyn Aston
Parishioner

Church building condition

The large building of Trumpington church lacks WC facilities, a reception area, storage space and adequate catering facilities. During the week the church “is not inviting to visitors even though it is open. Without the lights on it is rather gloomy and not very welcoming”, adds Mrs Betts.

Space limits

Because of the church building condition, activities for families and children are held in the Bakehouse. The limited capacity of about 35 people in the Bakehouse impedes wider congregation use. On a weekly basis, about 20-25 families with pre-school children visit the Bakehouse, however, lack of toy storage facilities and inadequate catering facilities impact negatively on expanding church activities there.

Reconnection with the community

Residential developments in the village have created an increasingly disparate community. To address this challenge, Trumpington church has appointed a CCFOW to connect with families in the Clay Farm growing community and establish links with the new Trumpington Meadows residential area.

“We are on about how we connect with people, and I do think welcoming hospitality is a massive thing that everyone can relate to. For example, I’m working with some Muslim families that have actually been to Messy Church and they liked it because of its broader themes around hospitality that they can connect with. It is about people coming because they want to meet and connect with each other.”

Helen Bell

Church and Community Families Outreach Worker

Asset sale

The church hall, which is currently let to the Rainbow Day Nursery, is a source of regular income. If sold in the future it could realise the funds to reimagine the church or it could be rebuilt as a space for church use once again. However, this strategy has not been discussed or agreed upon.

Lessons Learned

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

The PCC may need to consider some internal reordering of the building to increase flexibility in the way the space can be used, other than just for traditional church services and for private prayer. However, no strategy has yet been agreed upon.

To allow sufficient time for new initiatives to be introduced

The 2018 quinquennial inspection assessed the church building as being in good condition yet for the next decade the church needs to allocate funds for renovation of stonework and the tower roof. St Mary and St Michael church have commissioned architectural plans for structural repairs.

To maintain and strengthen the connection with the growing community

St Mary and St Michael church has started to establish links with the Grosvenor Group property development in Trumpington Meadows. The Community Enhancement Manager of Trumpington Meadows is keen to collaborate with the church's CCFOW on developing initiatives to reach people living in the new community – such as a pop-up cafe.

To be flexible and creative

In order to provide more space than the Bakehouse can offer, the church uses gazebos in the summer for family and children events as a temporary solution. This is not practical in cold weather and the church needs alternative(s) to the Bakehouse for its growing numbers.

To work in partnership

The CCFOW has developed close partnerships with Council-employed Child and Family Centre workers and other organisations. This has enabled the running of a range of successful seasonal events: Shrove Tuesday Pancake Party, Messy Christmas, Easter Garden Session and a Mossy Church at Trumpington Meadows Nature Reserve. Some of these have become annual events. In addition, the CCFOW collaborates with the Community Development Worker at St Paul's, for example there is cross over of families local to St Paul's moving into Trumpington. Trumpington is now ripe for partnership working and for collaborations with others, so to bring ideas to fruition. St Mary and St Michael has joined with Christ Church Trumpington to organise joint community carol services.

To increase opportunities for further church and community integration

Trumpington church places itself in the heart of the community by joining the Circle of Security groups, run in different locations across the UK and around the world (www.circleofsecurityinternational.com), and providing a course designed for parents and carers of children of four months old and older. The Circle of Security Parenting Group is run by Trumpington PCC (a registered charity, no. 1139132) with support from Cambridgeshire County Council. Every group is run by trained facilitators. The suggested donation for the course is £100 per person. In January-March 2020, the CCFOW plans to run a further group, run over 8 weeks at Clay Farm Community Centre, supported by a creche. To make COS-P sustainable in the longer term, partnership working with other organisations and the training of more facilitators is necessary.



“There isn’t that sense of village life that there once was, people don’t gather around church in the same way, which is why we need to be reimagined.”

Sheila Betts
Churchwarden

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