



The Church of England  
Diocese of Ely

# The Shingay Benefice Profile 2023



## **The Shingay Group of Parishes**

**Abington Pigotts - St Michael and All Angels**

**Guilden Morden - St Mary**

**Litlington - St Catherine**

**Steeple Morden - SS Peter and Paul**

**Tadlow - St Giles**

**Wendy with Shingay - All Saints**

<b>A Warm Welcome Awaits at the Shingay Group of Churches .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Are we right for you?.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Are you right for us? .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The Vicarage is located in Guilden Morden .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>So who are we?.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Meet the Ministry Team .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Our PCCs.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Our Music-Makers .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Our Safeguarding.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Communicating with our Parishioners .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>What do services look like across the Benefice? .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Sunday Services .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Weekday Services.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Occasional Services.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Festival Services .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Online Services .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>What does Mission and Outreach look like in our Benefice?.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Links with Our Schools and Pre-Schools .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Other Outreach Opportunities.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Parish Pages.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>The Parish of St Michael and All Angels, Abington Pigotts.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>The Parish of St Mary, Guilden Morden .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>The Parish of St Catherine, Litlington .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>The Parish of St Peter and St Paul, Steeple Morden .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>The Parish of St Giles, Tadlow .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>The Parish of All Saints, Wendy with Shingay.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Facts and Figures about the Shingay Benefice .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>The Location, Links and Population of our Benefice .....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Parish Finances across the Group.....</b>	<b>22</b>



*“Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.” Romans 15:7*

## A Warm Welcome Awaits at the Shingay Group of Churches

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We are praying for a new Rector who will embrace living among us and share wholeheartedly in the life of our communities. We seek a leader who has warmth, empathy, and a good pastoral heart; who can help and inspire us to reach out and bring our church into the life of our villages, and our villagers into the life of our churches.

There is great enthusiasm from the Ministry Team and from our congregations, as well as a commitment from many parishioners, to devote time and effort to making our churches, and our Lord, more central to village life. We want to grow our congregations, and we seek help and guidance in achieving this. We are open to change.



The Shingay Group lies some fifteen miles west of Cambridge, in the south-western corner of the Ely Diocese, with Bedfordshire to the north-west and Hertfordshire to the south. It is a delightful rural area, in the midst of gently rolling countryside, with walks aplenty, but it also has excellent road and rail access, two village primary schools, a number of lively pubs and a vibrant social calendar.



“When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and the elders, and they declared all that God had done with them.” Acts 15:4

## Are we right for you?

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We are a small church community, who would probably describe our churchmanship as 'broad'. We strive to be inclusive, ensuring everyone feels welcomed, valued, and respected, no matter who they are or where they come from. We are committed to prayer, worship and service, and we recognise, above all, that God has a heart for those who live in our villages, and longs for them to know Him. Whilst only about 3% of the villages' population are on the Electoral Roll, we have a real desire to develop and grow our church community. We recognise the reality of living in a rural setting: we have seen a reduction in regular church worship over the years, and are aware of the challenges involved. Nonetheless, we have benefitted from a steady, continuous ministry by our previous Rector, which provided each parish in the Benefice with a stable and consistent church life.

During our vacancy, we have sought guidance through prayer as to how, as a Benefice, we can and must move forward. With the help of our invaluable Associate Priest, and our Ministry Team, we have moved from largely individual parish services to a group-based service rota, increasing the congregation at any one service, and developing stronger links between the parishes. We have recognised that we need to develop in ways that will draw others into our church communities and enrich our worship.

We have identified some possible ways to make this happen. These opportunities include:

- Service formats and times that enable and encourage younger people to get involved and come regularly
- Wider use of small study groups, to deepen our relationship with God through his Word and through fellowship with each other
- Broader styles of music used in worship
- Increasing the visibility of the church within the community, through school and pastoral work and through ecumenical links with other churches
- Developing mission in line with *Living Ely 2025*





## Are you right for us?

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Some of the opportunities mentioned above are already in motion, but there is so much more to do. Here are a few ways that we would like our new Rector to help, and of course we will offer our enthusiastic support as they take on the challenge.

<b>Lead by example</b>	We are looking for a priest with a deep and generous faith, who demonstrates the love and good news of Jesus Christ, and who seeks strength and inspiration from the Bible and the Spirit in their preaching and leadership.
<b>Grow the congregation</b>	We welcome a Rector who can help us, lead us and challenge us to widen and deepen the church’s presence within the parishes, and provide a learning environment.
<b>Support outreach</b>	We are looking for an empathetic, proactive team player, who works collaboratively with the Ministry Team to build outreach opportunities within each parish, and who is open to new ideas.
<b>Be visible; live within the Benefice</b>	We hope that our Rector will be visible within the community, whilst recognising that they will also need a good work-life balance. As we are a rural Benefice with several community centres, we are looking for a full-time stipendiary post to enable our new Rector to become part of the life of our villages.
<b>Spiritually harness our positive factors</b>	As a group we have strengthened bonds across the parishes and identified positive initiatives. We look forward to spiritual leadership to help us further develop.
<b>Interact with children and young people</b>	We are strengthening our involvement with our schools, but we acknowledge the need to widen and improve the interactions between the church and the next generation.
<b>Broaden forms of worship and music</b>	We recognise that worship can take different forms, and we appreciate the power of music to express our faith. We hope to learn from ecumenical links with other local churches.
<b>Other skills</b>	In a rural community, mobility and the ability to drive are essential. IT skills are an advantage.

## The Vicarage is located in Guilden Morden

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The attractive, modern 5-bedroom vicarage is to be found on the High Street of Guilden Morden. At the front of the house there is a priest’s study and a small meeting room. There is also a utility room, kitchen large enough for a small table and chairs, separate dining area, a ground floor cloakroom and living room. The Vicarage has a private 180-foot mature rear garden and off-road parking and garage to the front.



The house has been refurbished with: new bathrooms (a family bathroom and two en-suites); new fitted kitchen and utility room; insulation upgrading; rewiring; replumbing; new carpets throughout - and finally, the house is being fully redecorated.

## So who are we?

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### Meet the Ministry Team

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We are very fortunate to have a dedicated and approachable Associate Priest in Rev Ann Bol. Ann was ordained and started her ministry with us in July 2016 as a curate under our previous incumbent. She has a full time senior clinical role at Addenbrooke's Hospital, yet she has somehow managed to provide our Benefice with excellent support to maintain our church life during the vacancy, and to develop as a united Benefice. We hope that Ann will stay with us for many years to come.

The Benefice also has a small team of Lay Ministers. There are three Licenced Lay Ministers (LLMs), and several locally recognised ministers who assist both in schools, and with pastoral care. One of our LLMs is experienced with working with primary age children and has had training to deliver Christian teaching into Primary Schools.

We were one of the first Benefices in the Diocese to adopt Communion by Extension, which has been regularly administered by Lay Ministers in the past thirty years.

### Our PCCs

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Each parish has its own PCC. During the vacancy, they have been chaired by a Church Warden or Lay Chair. Each PCC meets two or three times a year and holds its APCM around March. The Tadlow PCC has been retained (albeit inactive) until the parish of Tadlow is formally transferred<sup>1</sup>.

The Group is interested in investigating how we might move to a single PCC within the Benefice, whilst still retaining good care of our churches and ministry within the parishes.

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<sup>1</sup> Pastoral Scheme of 18<sup>th</sup> Nov 2021, under the provisions of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011.





Hymns and music form a crucial part of our worship, uniting our congregations to give joyful thanks to God for our blessings throughout the year.

Other than Wendy, all the churches have traditional church organs. We are very blessed to have three organists within the Group, who provide music for most of the services within the Group. Steeple Morden also have a good keyboard, which is used at Wendy when Group services are held there, and sometimes recorded music is used to lead congregational singing.

We are particularly fortunate that our most experienced organist is also our Group's Director of Music, who also directs the Group Choir. Whilst the choir is small, it is a 4-part SATB choir, who sing anthems and support the congregation singing of hymns and communion settings at Group Services.

Advent is an important Festival for the Group Choir. The Group Advent Choral Service includes several anthems, responses as well as congregational hymns and organ music to celebrate the beginning of the Christian year.

There are also several other musicians within the Benefice who have contributed to worship music within our services. These include a wind-led Worship Band who played for monthly Family Services at Steeple Morden for several years. Although Covid put a stop to this for a while, we are now planning on reviving this worship group to lead occasional Group Services. This will not only involve more people in our services, but we are confident that it will encourage many younger parishioners to attend services.

We have two well-maintained and active bell towers, and the bells are rung prior to most services in those churches. St Mary, Guilden Morden has a peal of eight bells, and St Catherine, Litlington, a peal of six bells. Our ringers and those at St Peter & Paul Bassingbourn work very closely together, sharing both regular practice and Sunday ringing.

The Litlington bell-ringers are currently training up a new group of seven youngsters and three adults, to ensure that we continue to have bell-ringing as part of our church life in the Benefice.

## Our Safeguarding

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We recognise safeguarding as a fundamental part of our faith. Each PCC works with the Parish Safeguarding Officer using the national safeguarding dashboard, with each church at Level 2 or Level 3. Safeguarding is on each PCC agenda, and we continue to work through each area of church life to address safeguarding, governance or Health & Safety concerns. There is a good understanding of the issues, with a wide coverage of members trained. We have now begun trialling Group training sessions for PCC members.

## Communicating with our Parishioners

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*Prospect* is a free A5 booklet delivered monthly by volunteers to each house within the Group (there are ten editions per year, and July and December each cover two months). *Prospect* provides a letter from the Ministry Team, information on all the services and church activities across the Group, a fun page for children and details of Church contacts within the Group. Information about services and events in the Congregational Chapels in Guilden Morden and Litlington is also included. The magazine is funded by advertising from local businesses, production and delivery are supported by a volunteer team.

We have a Group website ([Shingay Churches – Group of Parishes in South Cambridgeshire](#)) which we are looking to update and make more relevant and accessible.

Three of our churches have their own Facebook pages: St Catherine, [Litlington](#); Friends of St Mary [Guilden Morden](#), and; St Peter and St Paul [Steeple Morden](#). Members of our Church family also regularly post information on services & events to the local village Facebook pages.





## What do services look like across the Benefice?



### Sunday Services

Under our previous incumbent, we held services in all five churches on the first, second and third Sundays of the month. These services were a mix of Family Services, Holy Communion and Prayerbook Communion. Group Communion was held on the fourth and fifth Sundays, rotating around the churches. This arrangement was initially continued into the vacancy, supported by our Associate Priest, Lay Ministers and the support of a retired priest.

In February 2023 we started a new service pattern with more Group Services, and bringing pairs of churches together for other services. This new arrangement has been warmly welcomed across the Benefice, reducing the load on the Ministry Team and resulting in larger congregations for our services, and improved interaction across the group.

The following table gives an idea of what a five-week service rota currently looks like:

Week	Location	Service	Time
1	Wendy / Steeple Morden	Prayer book Communion / Holy Communion	08:30
1	Litlington (with Abington Pigotts)	Holy Communion	10:00
1	Guilden Morden	Holy Communion	10:00
<b>2</b>	<b>Rotation around Group</b>	<b>Group Holy Communion (sung)</b>	<b>10:00</b>
3	Wendy	Holy Communion	08:30
3	Abington Pigotts (with Litlington)	Family Service	10:00
3	Steeple Morden	Informal Family Service	10:00
3	Guilden Morden / GM Chapel	United Family service with GM Chapel	10:30
<b>4</b>	<b>Rotation around Group</b>	<b>Group Holy Communion (sung)</b>	<b>10:00</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Rotation around Group</b>	<b>Group Holy Communion (sung)</b>	<b>10:00</b>

## Weekday Services

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Morning Prayer is held in the chancel at Litlington every Tuesday morning at 10:00, followed by coffee and a chat. There are usually between 6 and 10 of us there. Parishioners from across the Benefice are welcome to the service or come along and have an informal coffee chat with the Ministry team. During Lent, the service is followed by a Lent course and a 'hot soup and bread' lunch, provided by a different member each week.

## Occasional Services

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We currently average between five and ten baptisms across the Group each year. Whilst the majority of those who come forward for Baptism are not regular church goers, the Holy Spirit has encouraged them to seek this, so we pray that it marks a new beginning for the whole family.

Weddings are joyful occasions in our Benefice and we regularly celebrate six each year. Our organists are often available, as are the bellringers.

The number of Funerals is a little more difficult to calculate, but of those requesting a Christian Service, about 75% prefer to remember their loved ones in one of the churches rather than at a Crematorium.

We also join together with the Shingay Deanery for the annual Confirmation Service with the Bishop. There are usually one or two candidates from our Group requesting confirmation, but we would love to see this increase.







During the year, we celebrate many festivals with services across the group of churches, and recognise it as another way for the church to reach the wider community.

During the Easter season, services are held in the Benefice on Ash Wednesday, throughout Holy Week and on Ascension Day. On Good Friday, we unite with the Congregational Chapel in Guilden Morden to walk around the village, bearing a cross and singing hymns, followed by a Devotional Good Friday Service in the early afternoon. Abington Pigotts' Easter Sunday service is also popular and fills the church.

Later in the year, our group particularly enjoys its Harvest services, which are always a delight in such a richly agricultural area. Remembrance is an important time for the Benefice and



Remembrance Services are organised jointly with the Mordens' Branch of the Royal British Legion. Services are held in two of our churches, and draw in the wider community who want to pay their respects. We have war memorials in all of our parishes, and our Ministry Team conduct a Remembrance Ceremony at each of these memorials with representatives of the Royal British Legion.

There is a large memorial to the RAF and USAAF service men who lost their lives whilst based here, at the war-time airfield sited between Steeple Morden and Litlington (see photo above). USAAF men who were stationed here, along with their relatives, have regularly returned here for memorial services.

As a special addition to the church calendar, introduced a number of years ago, Steeple Morden hold a Group Service of Remembering and Thanksgiving for the departed around All Souls Day. This is much valued by those who have recently lost loved ones, and the Ministry Team try to follow up the service by visits to those who attended, many of whom are not regular members of our congregations.

The period in the build-up to Christmas is an especially busy time, and one in which we welcome many who are not usually churchgoers. We celebrate the beginning of Advent with

a Group Choral Advent Service and Guilden Morden hold an annual Group Christingle service in early December. Steeple Morden have a Christmas Tree Festival in the church, which concludes with a lively Family Service. Nativity and Carol services are very popular and fill our churches; the Christmas Eve Carol Service at Litlington is particularly atmospheric, lit by two hundred candles over the Nave and on the windowsills.

Pre-Covid, regular 'Songs of Praise' services were held, rotating around the group. The first of these was held at Steeple Morden, and introduced by Pam Rhodes<sup>2</sup>, who has relatives living in the village. We hope to revive this service in the near future.



## Online Services

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We started on-line live weekly sung group services (with the congregation safe within their own home) early in the Covid lockdowns. The Zoom services were so important and a lifeline for many during Covid. We were constantly amazed to see so many join us for prayer and worship online. As we were permitted to open up our churches again for services, we were able to continue on-line services by recording one of our in-church services in our churches, and uploading it to the web. These continued until Easter 2021. Developing more of an online presence is an aim for the future in our group.

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<sup>2</sup> BBC Songs of Praise presenter



## What does Mission and Outreach look like in our Benefice?

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### Links with Our Schools and Pre-Schools

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There has always been a strong relationship between our churches and local schools. One member of our Ministry Team has been working closely with Christian Charities,<sup>3,4,5</sup> to support the renewal of children's and family ministry. The group is currently considering the feasibility of links with the preschool facilities in the Benefice.

Within the Benefice we have two primary schools and 4 pre-schools:

- Steeple Morden Church of England Primary School
- Guilden Morden Church of England Primary Academy
- Smarties Preschool and Out of School Club (Steeple Morden)
- Guilden Morden Church of England Pre-School
- Litlington Pre-School
- The Wendy House Day Nursery and Pre-School (Shingay)

There are two Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary Schools in the Benefice. The Rector is an ex-officio member of the Governing Body of both schools. Steeple Morden Primary School has a roll of about 175, and Guilden Morden Primary Academy has a roll of about 50. Both schools have an Ofsted rating of 'Good' and have well supported Parent-Teacher Associations.

Pre-Covid, the Rector (or member of the Ministry Team) took regular assemblies at the schools, and some church members took "Open the Book" into school monthly. Whilst the pandemic put a stop to much of this interaction, it has recently been re-introduced by a lay member of our Ministry Team.

The Ministry Team have led services in the church for Guilden Morden school at Harvest, Christmas and Easter, and these services are now also being re-established at Steeple Morden school. Prayer Spaces have been introduced by the Cambridgeshire charity GenR8<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Trained with the Scripture Union to be a Faith Guide for the villages. The SU are providing funding to start up a summer holiday club for ages 6-11. (<https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/95-campaign>).

<sup>4</sup> Open the Book, Bible Society initiative (<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/get-involved/open-the-book/otb-about-us/>) has been very active in our villages for many years.

<sup>5</sup> GenR8 (<https://genr8.org/>), a Cambridge-based Christian charity, who run lively assemblies in schools in Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, and also coordinate Prayer Spaces for the children.

<sup>6</sup> GenR8 (<https://genr8.org/>), see previous footnote.

at both schools, and these are maintained and monitored by members of the Ministry Team who live locally.

In addition, the team attends Guilden Morden school every half term to lead an assembly on the 'Value of the Term'. Encouragingly, an invitation has recently been extended by Steeple Morden school for a similar service, monthly. Workshops relating to our major festivals, Christmas and Easter, in which the focus is very much on teaching children about how to begin a relationship with Jesus, have also been offered and enthusiastically received.

Most Year 7 to Year 11 students attend Bassingbourn Village College in the neighbouring village. It has an Ofsted rating of 'Good', and a roll of about 700. Students travel to Cambridge or other local towns for further education.

## Other Outreach Opportunities

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We have a range of other outreach and community links involving our church communities across the Benefice. These activities increase the presence of the church in the community, and provide social and spiritual support to our village population.

Members of the church (along with other members of the community) are also actively involved in community groups<sup>7</sup> supporting vulnerable local residents in our villages.

The Royal British Legion Annual Remembrance Day service also includes our local Scout and Girlguiding units. St George's Day is also celebrated by scouting and is held in St Peter and Paul, Steeple Morden in rotation with other churches in the area.

Churches across the Benefice host a variety of other events such as coffee mornings, women's groups, theatre productions and the circulating of Nativity sets to schools and homes. These occasions bring people into our buildings, and raise funds for Christian charities. You can read more about each church's events and outreach opportunities on the parish pages that follow.



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<sup>7</sup> E.g. Heron Social Car Scheme & Litlington Evergreens



### The Parish of St Michael and All Angels, Abington Pigotts

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Abington Pigotts is a very pretty conservation area village of only sixty houses. We have a pub and a village hall on the main street, with the church up a short lane. With no bus service and minimal facilities, the village is not earmarked for future development. Children attend schools in nearby villages or Cambridge, and although many residents are longstanding, there has been an increased turnover in recent years.

Too small for a Parish Council, Abington Pigotts has a Village Meeting annually with a permanent chair, who acts as the communication link with SCDC, etc. With no parish rate, there is a greater emphasis on village fundraising. The village has a history of 'punching above its



weight' with a successful annual fête and separate plant sale, and an established arrangement means that these benefit the church building and the village hall equally. There is excellent community spirit, and village groups covering table tennis, reading and wine. The pub is a focus and meeting point for many.

A Village Hall committee has historically arranged the fête and a wide variety of community events but post-Covid is currently struggling to attract support and retain experience. The church community may be small, with an electoral roll of just 5, but our congregation increases for Family Services, especially now that we welcome Litlington members too, and attendance increases significantly at Easter and Christmas. The church arranges a well-supported Harvest Supper each year and the village survey showed that more such events would be welcome.

The church building is Grade II\* listed, with some parts dating from 12th century; the majority is 15th century onwards. The building is maintained by the small congregation and other villagers: volunteers mow the churchyard grass, and the Gardening Club care for the avenue of apple trees & beds. The churchyard is open for burials.

*"I enjoy meeting up with fellow churchgoers, with the opportunity to seek forgiveness for our transgressions and sing hymns!"*

The church building is beautiful but presents a challenge in terms of services that are welcoming to children, and can be very cold in winter! We have looked into the possibility of using the church more flexibly (which would be welcomed in the village), but the lack of



drainage or a water supply and the building structure would make this difficult and expensive. The church is away from the village centre, but when the village applied for a grant for a Queen's Jubilee bench this was placed outside the churchyard gates.

As a church community we have worked to build bridges within the wider village, although there is more to be done on an ongoing basis. In such a small village we can be individually very visible, but also

need to do more to make the church as visible. The fête is held on the farm's green and a field outside the church. In most years we have been able to pay our full Ministry Share through planned giving, collections, wedding fees and fund raising.

## The Parish of St Mary, Guilden Morden

St Mary's Church has a central position in the village. The Guilden Morden village community is very supportive of events in the church, such as our bustling Christmas Market, live theatre performances and other events. These are always thoroughly well-attended and are an excellent opportunity for mission and outreach to be carried out, and we are



just beginning to explore these opportunities more proactively. Numbers at services remain small, though we are currently developing good links with the local Primary School, through Open the Book and various other activities, and attendance at our Family Services is beginning to increase.

One of our strengths lies in our ecumenical links with the Congregational Chapel in the village, with whom we share a monthly



service, alternating the venue, and with whom we enjoy constant shared vision for outreach in the village.

*“It’s a welcoming and friendly place of worship and a magnificent building.”*



St. Mary’s Church goes back some 700 years, and is also known as ‘St Mary the Virgin’. The church is sited on the highest point in the village in a fine churchyard. It is planned conventionally with a splendid West Tower and lofty spire, aisled nave, and un-aisled chancel. The dates of the parts of the church are as varied as the styles. For a church with its architectural history beginning in the 12th century, and continuing into the 16th century, the effect of the whole is remarkably harmonious.

St Mary’s church boasts a full tower of eight bells and recent developments have included a toilet and kitchen. New seating at the rear of the church also allows a wide range of activities. There is an active Church Restoration Committee and Outreach Committee that organise social and fundraising events. A mobile phone mast in the bell tower assists with our fundraising. The Churchyard was closed for burials in 1895, and is maintained by the Parish Council. The local authority has a cemetery in New Road.

## The Parish of St Catherine, Litlington

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Litlington is a village of 350 households, spread over 3.4 square miles and located just four miles from Royston. Our electoral roll is 29 with fifteen active parishioners. Attendance increases significantly for special services, particularly our popular candle-lit Christmas Eve Carol service. We have two churchwardens, supported by an active congregation, who look after the church.



We aim to put Christ at the centre of our community. One way in which we do this is through our monthly Book Café at the church, which is well supported by the local community and beyond, being renowned for the scrumptious spread of homemade cakes and pastries. It allows church members the opportunity to warmly welcome newcomers and non-churchgoing members of the community and chat. The large range of second-hand books in the South Aisle is also open for browsing every day. Proceeds from the Book Café and books enable us to sponsor a Child of Hope<sup>8</sup> in Eastern Uganda.

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<sup>8</sup> Child of Hope, Charity number 1136068 ([www.childofhopeuganda.org](http://www.childofhopeuganda.org))



The annual Fete is held on the Early Bank Holiday Monday in May, in the church and surrounding churchyard. It attracts many villagers and nearby residents and is one of our key fundraising events of the year.

St Catherine's church harnessed the time and talent of our congregation to build an accessible WC and kitchen

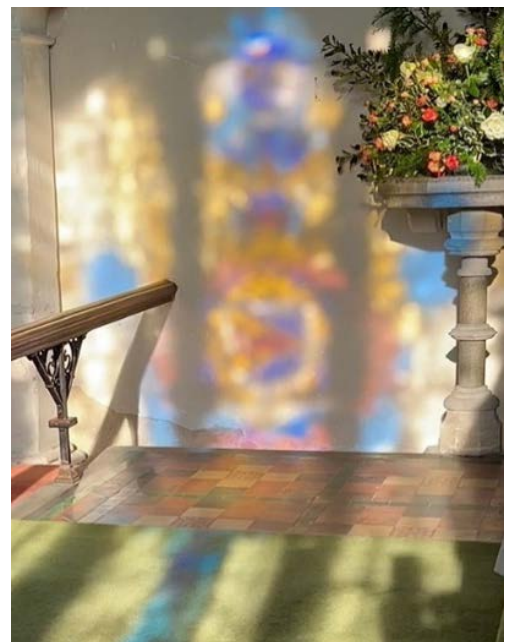
facilities in the North Aisle which was completed in 2021. Having previously had no mains water or sewerage, this has made a huge difference to Church life and enables refreshments to be offered on a regular basis. At the same time, the opportunity was taken to extend the heating system.

St Catherine's Church is a Grade II\* listed building and a fine example of early English architecture. The earliest parts of the church date from the 13th century. The tower is mostly 14th century and had a cupola its top in the 19th Century. In 1870 George Vials (architect) carried out significant repairs and improvements still seen today. The churchyard was closed for burials in 1920 and a new Churchyard Extension opened nearby in Abington Pigotts Road.



*“God has called us to serve, and our church family is active in our local villages by serving others.”*

St Catherine's tower was used as positioning focus for World War II P47s and P51s landing at the nearby airfield home of the USAAF 355th Fighter Group. In 1993 a stained-glass window was installed in the Chancel, made by John Dobberty, an enthusiastic amateur stained-glass craftsman, from Woodstock, USA. It features the emblem of 355<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group, and was donated in tribute to the men of 355<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group USAAF who lived in Litlington during World War II and were stationed at Steeple Morden airfield. Veterans paid for the installation. Many veterans and their families have visited the window and continue to do so, resulting in strong friendships between Americans and residents.



As well as the church, the village has an excellent shop with a post office, a pub, a village hall, a recreational centre, and a Congregational Church, which provide us with ecumenical links.



## The Parish of St Peter and St Paul, Steeple Morden

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St Peter and St Paul is a 14<sup>th</sup> Century church set in the heart of Steeple Morden. The village of approximately 1200 people includes the hamlet of Odsey, which is along the north side of the A505 and around the station of Ashwell & Morden. Steeple Morden is the largest village in the Benefice. The church enjoys a prominent central position in the village, a stone's throw



from the local primary school and pub. The churchyard is still open for burials.

The church is currently without any WC or kitchen facilities, the PCC and The Friends<sup>9</sup> are drawing up plans and fundraising for this project, which will help the church in its work.

Our pro-active and prayer-centred

Outreach Committee cultivate good relationships with villagers who regularly support events at the church, including: weekly Café Church; annual Christmas Tree Festival; Spring Fayre and annual Cream Teas. The Friends also arrange regular concerts in the church, which has an open chancel and good acoustics.

The village Primary School use the church for services several times a year, bringing both the children and their parents into the church. Members of our congregation work with our Ministry Team delivering 'Open the Book', supporting 'Prayer Spaces' and school collective worship.

For many years the church has supported a child through Compassion UK<sup>10</sup>, currently we support Isaya, an 11 year old boy in Tanzania.



*"Lovely, caring community. Most services are really uplifting. Mix of tradition and innovation."*

Our congregation is of a large age range. We sometimes struggle to minister to all ages in one service, so we offer a range of services each month. We ensure that once a month, a

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<sup>9</sup> The Friends of SS Peter and Paul Steeple Morden, Charity Number 292004

<sup>10</sup> Compassion UK, charity number 1077216.

Family Service is held, which allows application of our faith to be specifically aimed at our younger members, but likewise enjoyed by all ages. In December 2022 the annual nativity was replaced with a 'walking nativity' where over 25 children and families attended in their coats and woollies. Our annual Carol Services are always full, often with standing-room only.



Steeple Morden has a large village hall with regular community activities and events. The village shares Sarah's Farm Shop, a useful shop set outside the village boundaries at a tri-point with Guilden Morden and Ashwell. Within the village there is a local pub and Prothero's Garage which has a small shop associated with it for stationary, cards and snacks. The church runs a food bank, 'Parish Pantry' and there is also

a thriving allotment in the village. The village hosts the Pightle (scout and guide building) which runs thriving beaver, cubs, scouts, brownie and guide units.

Throughout the pandemic and beyond we have endeavoured to support our local community with the food bank and weekly café but financially, as with most rural churches, it was a difficult time. We have an active PCC with varying roles, skills and experiences, with great ideas and belief that together we can achieve.

## The Parish of St Giles, Tadlow

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The small parish of Tadlow mainly consists of residential houses on the High Street (a cul-de-sac to the south of the B1042). North of the B1042 the land rises to St Giles Church, and Tadlow House.

St Giles Church was closed for regular public worship in November 2021 due to health and safety concerns. The diocese is in the process of leasing the church building to The Friends of Friendless Churches<sup>11</sup> (FoFC), which is



expected to be completed later this summer (2023). The FoFC have recently undertaken extensive external and internal restoration work. The procedures<sup>12</sup> of the FoFC for the use of the church provides for occasional use for divine worship, with consent of both the

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<sup>11</sup> The Friends of Friendless Churches (FoFC) Charity No. 1113097

<sup>12</sup> "Procedure for use of our churches" 4<sup>th</sup> Dec 2007, FoFC.





Incumbent and the Bishop. However, the churchyard at St Giles is still open and part of the Benefice. The Tadlow Parish Meeting maintain the churchyard.

The Pastoral Scheme for the Union of the parishes of Guilden Morden and Tadlow was signed in November 2021, and expected to be completed later this summer (2023).



## The Parish of All Saints, Wendy with Shingay

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All Saints' Church is in Wendy, a small hamlet, comprised of about thirty homes with approximately 90 inhabitants. The parish historically consisted of two separate parishes, Shingay and Wendy. The two were united in 1957 to form the present civil parish of 'Shingay-cum-Wendy'. Shingay is about a mile from the church, with a population of 33 – about fourteen households.

The former mediaeval parish church in Wendy was probably built in the 12th century. In 1865 All Saints' Church, Wendy was rebuilt at a cost of £1,200 on the site, on what remains the church cemetery (Commonwealth graves). Records in 1868 record it as being within the



Diocese of Ely. Sadly, the church suffered from subsidence and was demolished around 1950. However, the churchyard remains open. Until 1972 services were held in the Mission Hall in Shingay. Plans were made for the rebuilding of the church on the original site & fund raising took place, but with escalating costs the church was never rebuilt.



The Victorian school, in the centre of Wendy was purchased by the PCC with some of the funds raised for the rebuilding of a church. It was subsequently consecrated as a church.

*“If we worked on strengthening our core, from that I would expect us to grow and change.”*

Over the years, the church has served Shingay with Wendy as a community hall, meeting place, local polling station, venue for parties and so on. It is fondly regarded by locals as the hub of the community. There is no pub or shop in either Shingay or Wendy, no bus service and no school. The village craves a centre point for any activities. Villagers are keen to enjoy and participate in events, including an annual summer lunch followed by sports and games.



About 10 years ago, one of the largest solar parks in the UK was developed on the site of Vine Farm. This is a large area of farmland between Wendy and Shingay. The residents formed an action committee and negotiated, so that the investment company developing the site should make substantial annual contributions towards community projects over the 25-year life of the solar farm. A non-profit making village company is in place to manage the funds.

The money has been put to remarkable use. Planning permission, with Diocese permission, was obtained for building renovation works to take place on the church, bringing it into the 21st century. Cloakroom facilities, a heat pump, kitchen, wooden flooring with underfloor heating, an acoustic system and modern lighting makes All Saints' Church, Wendy the most enviable building to hire, hold services in and become a community hub.

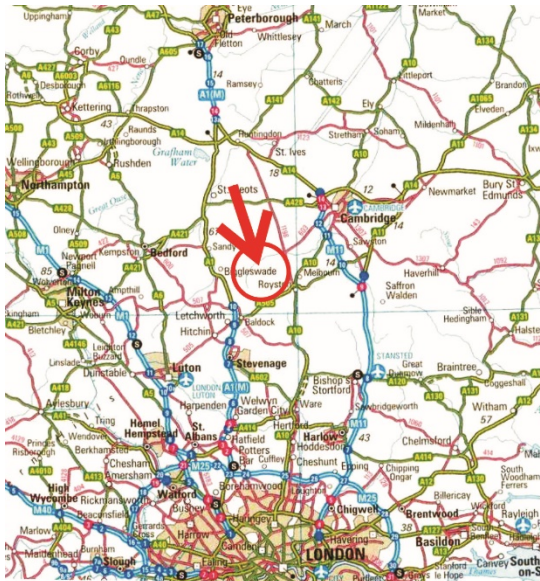
On Passion Sunday this year, with the villages' Group Service, over forty people filled the church. Families and their friends attended to hear local children read Carols at an advent service on the 18th of December 2022. Both of those services were joyous and uplifting.



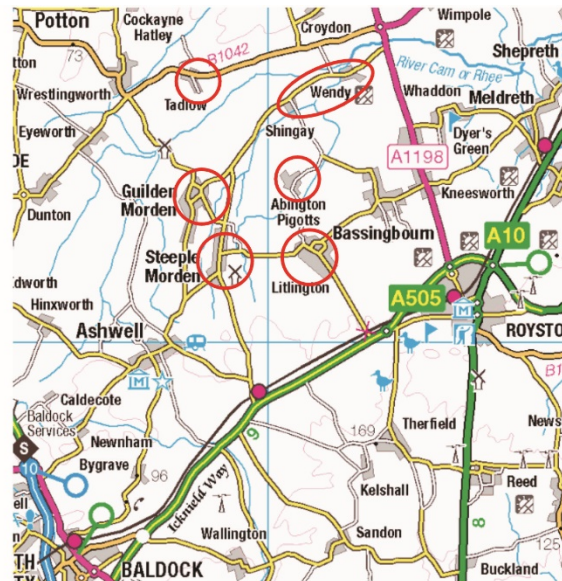


# Facts and Figures about the Shingay Benefice

## The Location, Links and Population of our Benefice



Location of the Shingay Benefice



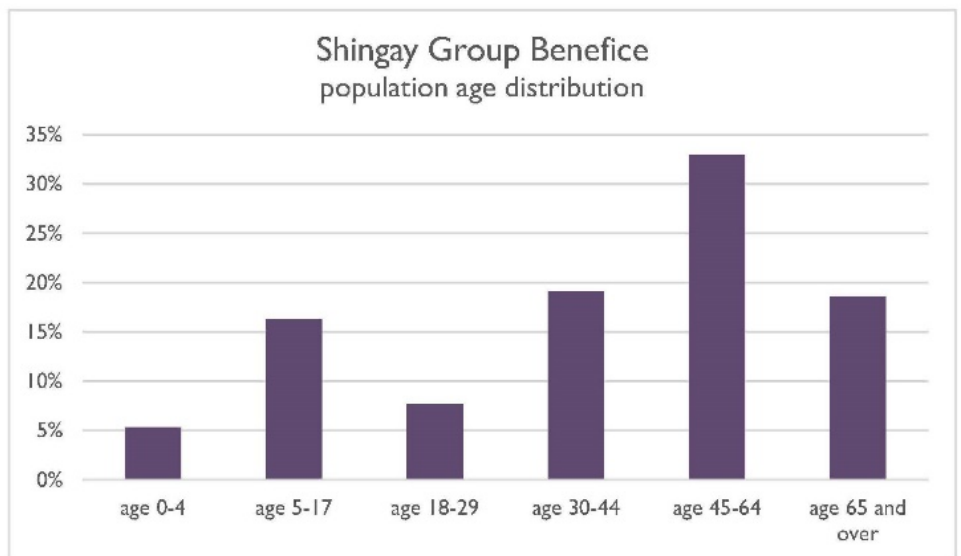
The Shingay Parishes

The Shingay Benefice is part of the Shingay Deanery and in the south-western corner of both Cambridgeshire and the Ely Diocese. It is bounded on the south and the west by the Buntingford Deanery of St Albans Diocese. The South Cambridgeshire Local Plan classifies our villages as either Infill or Group Villages, limiting any significant housing development.

There are good rail and road links. The A505 and rail links to Cambridge/London rail links are 10 mins drive, with two trains an hour to London throughout the day. Stansted and Luton Airports are only 45 minutes' drive away.

Our population is about 3,500. Steeple Morden is the largest parish, with 1,188 and our smallest is Wendy with Shingay with 103. The age distribution is similar across the Benefice, which peaks for 45-64 age range.

Over 50% of the population are over 45, and 22% are under 18 years old. In common with many rural areas, youngsters migrate away from the area once they have left school.



## Parish Finances across the Group

The parishes are all financially solvent and have generally been able to pay their ministry share. With the exception of Wendy, the church buildings are expensive to maintain and heat, but the PCCs have been able to raise funds for recent and current improvements. The church at Wendy is a Victorian building, recently fully refurbished with new facilities (see Wendy with Shingay parish page). Steeple Morden and Guilden Morden have ‘arms-length’ friends’ charities which raise funds for the churches’ building maintenance and improvement work. In other parishes, the PCCs manage their fundraising. Funds have been raised within the village communities and from external funding submissions.

Below is a summary of the latest audited accounts (2022) for the parishes, along with parish population and Electoral Roll numbers.

	<b>Guilden Morden</b>	<b>Steeple Morden</b>	<b>Litlington</b>	<b>Abington Pigotts</b>	<b>Wendy with Shingay</b>	<b>Tadlow</b>
<b>Parish population (2021)</b>	932	1,188	848	147	103	189
<b>Electoral Roll</b>	22	25	18	5	5	0
<b>Income from giving incl gift aid</b>	£ 9,516	£ 12,317	£ 30,825 <sup>13</sup>	£ 7,317	£ 2,168	£ 0
<b>Income from fund raising</b>	£ 1,167	£ 5,364	£ 4,227	£ 2,625	£ 0	£ 0
<b>Other income</b>	£ 8,032	£ 3,409	£ 1,146	£ 1,902	£ 2,711	£ 1756
<b>Total income</b>	£ 18,715	£ 21,090	£ 36,198	£ 11,844	£ 4,978	£ 1756
<b>Parish share</b>	£ 6,367	£ 14,000	£ 13,277	£ 5,506	£ 5,150	£ 0
<b>Other expenditure</b>	£ 6,448	£ 7,060	£ 9,297	£ 4,397	£ 7,961	£ 732
<b>Total expenditure</b>	£ 12,815	£ 21,060	£ 22,574	£ 9,903	£ 13,111	£ 732

**The following charities are supported across the group at various fundraising events:**

British Ukraine Aid, Cambridgeshire Historic Churches Trust, Christian Aid, Child of Hope, Children’s Society, Compassion UK, Jimmy’s night shelter, Wheels for Martin’s Friends.

The Church Commissioners have approved a Union<sup>14</sup> between the parishes of Tadlow and Guilden Morden. The trust funds of Tadlow PCC will be transferred in accordance with trust provisions, and other PCC held funds will be transferred to the new PCC<sup>15</sup> in accordance with the Pastoral Measure.


The Shingay Group has a small separate account to run the Prospect Magazine. The Group account has also funded expenses incurred by the incumbent.

<sup>13</sup> Note this includes a £10k restricted fund donation.

<sup>14</sup> Pastoral Scheme signed 18<sup>th</sup> Nov 2021 under the provisions of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011.

<sup>15</sup> The new Parish of “Guilden Morden with Tadlow”.





*“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.” 1 Peter 2:9*

