



ST JOHN THE DIVINE
ELMSWELL, SUFFOLK



St Edmundsbury & Ipswich
erving Suffolk communities

Parish Profile

2013





Welcome to St John the Divine, Elmswell

Name of Parish	St John the Divine, Elmswell, Suffolk
Diocese	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich
Deanery	Lavenham
Address	Church Hill, Elmswell, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP30 9DZ
Patrons	Martyrs Memorial and Church of England Trust
Church Website	www.stjohnselmswell.org.uk



Our Mission Statement is:

'At St John's we are seeking to:-

- **Demonstrate God's love to the world**
- **Declare the good news of Jesus Christ**
- **Depend on God as part of His family'.**



A New Incumbent



What the PCC is looking for in a new Incumbent

- A person who is pastorally sensitive, with a heart for evangelism who enjoys meeting people and has the ability and concern to nurture a diverse congregation.
- A minister who has a clear and deeply rooted biblically based faith, secure and confident in their spiritual and personal life.
- Someone who will undertake and encourage outreach to the young through contact with the schools and youth groups.
- A person who is strong in their support for marriage and family life.
- Someone who is wholly aligned with the church's evangelical outlook, who enjoys a variety of worship - traditional and modern, formal and informal.
- We are seeking someone with a good sense of humour who has skill and passion for engagement in the local community, both by meeting those from the community and by taking our mission out into the parish. We would welcome outreach through Christianity Explored as this has been successful in the past.
- We need someone with leadership, organisational and IT skills, willing to delegate and to encourage people to become actively involved in the life of the church and its activities in the parish, thereby utilising all the various gifts which our church members have to offer.



**Churchwardens
John and Graham**



What we can offer

- A vibrant church family committed to honouring God through our worship, witness, service and fellowship.
- An appreciation that ministry belongs to the whole church community and that we do not expect our Rector 'to do everything', but rather to enable and encourage 'the body of Christ'.
- An understanding that the new Rector will come with his/her own strengths and gifts which may be different from our former Rector.
- An openness to engage in new things that will help us to expand our ministry and grow as a church for the glory of God.
- A prayerful, supportive and friendly church fellowship within a happy and thriving rural community.
- A comfortable 4-bedroom Rectory, well-sited and with ample space inside and out.
- Full re-imburement of expenses incurred in the course of carrying out his/her duties.
- A very warm welcome to whoever God sends us to be our next Parish Priest!



The Parish

Click [Here](#) for
Map of
Elmswell & Area

The village of Elmswell is situated in Mid Suffolk, close to the A14, midway between historic Bury St Edmunds (10 miles away) and the market town of Stowmarket (7 miles away). The A14 provides good access to Cambridge and Ipswich. The village is served by buses and trains, with links to London and Norwich (where there is an airport) and Stansted Airport.



Elmswell is a large, busy village (Population approx. 3,600), well served by shops, including Post Office/ Newsagents, Co-op Supermarket and Mace General Stores. There is also a Pharmacy, a Veterinary Surgery, Fish and Chip Shop, Chinese Takeaway, two Hairdressers, Travel Agents, Florists and two Public Houses.



Housing is mixed, with older traditional properties, former council houses, flats, new developments, Eco housing development and affordable housing and two sheltered accommodation complexes. In the last 10 years approximately 260 dwellings have been built, with plans for a further 400+ in the near future.



There are Neighbourhood Watch, Speedwatch and First Responders groups in the village, also a Police Station and Fire Station on a shared site, the latter being manned by retained staff. There is a Parish Council and an Amenities Association; Elmswell is in Mid Suffolk District.

Many people commute to the nearby towns for employment, with others making the daily journey to London, Ipswich and further afield. In the village there are small factories on two separate sites, haulage contractors, farms, builders, food producers, car repairers and other small businesses.



Sports facilities include excellent sports fields on two separate sites with cricket and football teams, a particularly large and enthusiastic group of youngsters enjoy coaching sessions each week. There is a newly built Bowls Pavilion and Green; Carpet Bowls can be played in the Wesley Community Hall. Exercise and dance classes are held at the Blackbourne Centre, which has just been extended by the addition of a large sports hall.



There is Scouting and Guiding in the village. Other leisure activities include an Art Club, a Photography Club, two Women's Institutes, Over 55s Club, History Group, Luncheon Club, Gardening Club and ElmsWild, who have a wildlife conservation area close by the Rectory. There is also a Library.



Education

Elmswell has its own Community Primary School which has approximately 220 children currently on roll, aged from 3 to 9 years. Clergy from St John's have been school governors in the past.

Little Elms pre-school, situated next door recently re-opened in brand new, purpose built premises and enjoys close links with the Primary School. Street Farm Day Nursery in the village centre provides private day-care for children from the age of 3 months. There is also a Toddler group for parents and carers with very young children, which meets twice a week.

Children aged 9 to 13 years living in Elmswell currently attend Beyton Middle School until they are 13 when they transfer to High School either in Stowupland or Thurston. As middle schools are phased out over the next 2 years in this part of Suffolk, children will remain at Elmswell Primary School until the age of 11, when they will transfer directly to High School for their education up to age 18.

West Suffolk College in Bury St Edmunds is a member of University Campus Suffolk and offers full-time, part-time and adult education, as well as degree courses and apprenticeships.



The Area

There are other amenities in the surrounding area, including cinemas, theatres, leisure centres with swimming pools. Tennis courts in Woolpit, under two miles away, and golf courses nearby. Also in Woolpit is the Health Centre which serves Elmswell, a pharmacy, chiropodist, physiotherapist and dentist. The nearest NHS hospital is in Bury St Edmunds.

Bury St Edmunds has an abundance of places to eat and shop, with many historic buildings including The Cathedral Church of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich, St Mary's Parish Church, the Abbey Gardens, Moyses' Hall Museum and the Angel Hotel, setting for Dickens' Pickwick Papers. There are also two theatres & two cinemas.

Stowmarket also has numerous shops; the Museum of East Anglian Life is situated in the town as well as the newly opened John Peel Arts Centre.

Elmswell is only about 30 miles from the sea at Felixstowe and further up the east coast are the famous towns of Aldeburgh (Snape Concert Hall and Benjamin Britten Centre) and Southwold.



The Church Building



The Church

St John the Divine is a medieval church situated on a prominence to the west of the main village, standing like a beacon looking out on to the busy A14. The interior of the church was greatly altered in Victorian times coinciding with a gradual change from High Anglican worship to evangelical/ low worship.

The chancel was built between 1300-1350, the nave between 1350-1500 and the tower in the 1450's. There are two side aisles. The tower is said to have the finest flint work in Suffolk, with many flush work panels.

The Church Building



In 1992-3 a major re-ordering took place at the west end of the church and there is now a boiler room, kitchen and toilet, two meeting rooms on the ground floor and a gallery with another small meeting room above. The church seats 300+ people.



Quinquennial repairs completed in the last few years have included a new south Chancel roof and a new floor to the south side of the nave. Recently a glazed timber door has been fitted to the porch, which has been redecorated. The sound system has also been upgraded recently.

There are five ancient bells in the church tower on a medieval timber frame, but these are in poor condition and have not been rung in living history. The 2 manual Henry Jones organ was installed in 1901 and has recently been cleaned and rebuilt. The Churchyard was closed for burials in 1900; there is a village cemetery and green burial ground – both administered by the Parish Council - a short distance from the Church.



The Church Family

St John's is a single benefice parish, which has a mix of ages in its congregation; the younger families are attracted because of the lively children's work. Many of the non-residents who attend are families with children. The electoral roll numbered 123 in April 2012 including 22 who live outside the parish and travel some distance to attend services and meetings.

There are 14 Members of the PCC which meets bi-monthly. We have two Churchwardens and three Deanery Synod representatives; there are five people who are certified by the Bishop to assist with the Chalice at Communion.



There are no Lay Readers or Elders at St John's but there are around 20 people who read lessons and 10 who lead intercessions and take part in the services in other ways. We have a robed Senior Choir numbering around 18 members, a Junior Choir, a music group which plays at the Family Service and a small instrumental group which plays at Sunday services. We have two organists and several pianists; we also have a group of Handbell Ringers.

We have a group of pastoral visitors who visit in the community and one of our members acts as a link person with the St Nicholas Hospice in Bury St Edmunds.

Coffee and tea is served after each main service which gives us an opportunity to welcome newcomers and to share fellowship with each other. Church and brass cleaning, flower arranging and churchyard maintenance is carried out by a team of volunteers.



Living Well and Passion for Life

You're Worth It

An evening of pampering

Thursday 18th March - 7:45pm

At The Wesley Hall

Guest speaker: Carlee Leftley

Within the Church family we have Sunday activities for the children, Home Groups and The Friends of St John's Church, whose prime aim is to raise funds for the fabric of the Church. There is also a Ladies' Lunch Group and a Men's Breakfast Group. We have held Christianity Explored Courses and would like to do this again.

In 2012 our Curate organised a series of events in the Deanery to mark the 400 years of the King James' Bible. In the last six years we have held a week of mission called 'Take Five' with students from Ridley Hall and in 2011 we were closely involved in the 'Passion for Life' mission organised by local evangelical churches.

Worship at St. John's



We have a pattern of services which includes a monthly Family Service and a monthly Book of Common Prayer service – figures exclude ‘special services’ - see chart below:-

Services	Time	BCP/CW	Average Attendance 2012
1st Sunday Family Service	9.30am	CW	25 adults 14 under 16's
1st Sunday (alternating) Holy Communion & Morning Prayer followed by short Communion	11.00am	BCP & HC MP HC	28 adults 26 adults 6 adults
2nd & 4th Sundays Holy Communion	8.00am	BCP	4 adults
2nd Sunday Parish Praise	10.30am	CW	66 adults 18 under 16's
3rd Sunday Holy Communion	10.30am	CW	55 adults 14 under 16's
4th Sunday Morning Prayer	10.30am	CW	56 adults 14 under 16's
5th Sunday Morning Prayer or Holy Communion	10.30am	CW	54 adults 13 under 16's

The attendances at ‘special services’ are usually greater than those shown above.

At present we use The Source and Mission Praise Hymn Books with Ancient and Modern being used at the 11am BCP service. The New International Version of the Bible is used at all services. Our aim is to declare the good news of Jesus Christ not just in Elmswell, but by supporting CMS (SAMS), Crosslinks, MECO and CPAS around the world, through our prayer and financial help.

Baptisms are usually held during either the Parish Praise Service, the Family Service or during Morning Prayer. Recently some of our young people have been confirmed; and one of our congregation is at present training for full time ministry at Ridley Hall.

For the last three years we have had the benefit of a Curate in training who has recently taken a position in South London. During the last year there have been 5 Baptisms, 6 Weddings and 9 Funerals.

Neither resolutions A or B have been passed by the PCC. There has not in recent years been a policy of permitting marriage in church in cases where there has been a previous marriage dissolved, but the last incumbent was happy to hold a marriage blessing at his discretion.





Youth Work at St. John's

There are approximately 40 young people aged under 18 in our church family who attend one of four age-specific regular Sunday groups: Bubbles (ages 4 and under), Explorers (ages 5 to 8), Pathfinders (ages 9 to 13) and CYFA (ages 14 to 18). These groups meet in their own areas of the church building on Sunday mornings (apart from CYFA who meet elsewhere on a Sunday evening) and enjoy age appropriate Bible teaching and activities. Over 18 adult volunteers, who are all CRB checked, help in this teaching work, sharing the duties on a rota basis.



We also have a Junior Choir, with approximately 12 members, recently re-named SLAMJAM (Serving God, Loving others **A**nd **M**aking a joyful noise with **J**esus **A**nd **M**e).

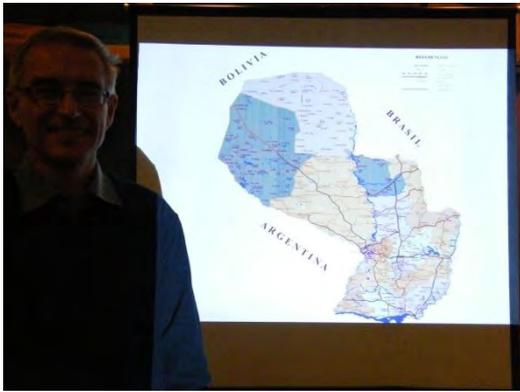


All of the children and young people join together at Christmas time to present a Nativity service and their other activities together have included camping, a Light party and a summer extravaganza in the Rectory garden.

Mission



St John's has a long tradition of supporting mission groups and other charities. We have an International and Home Mission Committee, which arranges services with speakers from some of the missions we support, for example Tim Curtis and Bishop Henry Scriven of CMS (SAMS) have both visited St John's in the past two years.



In 2011/12 the following groups were supported financially and with prayer: Bury St Edmunds Town Pastors, Children's Society, CPAS, DEC, British Red Cross – East Africa Appeal and the New Zealand and Japan Appeals. SAMS, MECO, Crosslinks, Tearfund, Shelter, Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, Kagera Diocese, Suffolk Historic Churches Trust, National Churches Trust, Church of England Pensions Board and the Church Housing Trust.





Special Occasions

Christmas

Christmas for the last two years has started with a weekend event – a Crib Festival and a Festival of Christmas. Christingle services have been for many years held in January but in 2013 we hope to fit this service in before Christmas. Little Elms Nursery hold their Nativity play in the Church each year.



Our young people give a Christmas Nativity Presentation on the Second Sunday of Advent; the third Sunday of Advent is when the Nine Lessons and Carols service is held in the evening. The Village Carol Service (organised by the Elmswell Fellowship of Churches) is held in the church the week before Christmas, when the Church is usually full, with many village organisations taking part, raising funds for Save the Children.

On Christmas Eve there is an 11.30pm Holy Communion Service, with an 8am BCP Communion service followed by an all-age Morning Service on Christmas Day.



Special Occasions



Lent and Easter

We have an evening Ash Wednesday Service and a Maundy Thursday evening service, then on Good Friday the Elmswell Fellowship of Churches organises a Morning Service in one of the Churches in the village. On Easter Sunday there is a Communion Service; an Ascension Day service is also held.

Mothering Sunday

Mothering Sunday is another of the Sundays when the Guides and Brownies attend; posies are given to Mothers and any other ladies present at the service!

Harvest Festival

The Harvest Festival service is always well attended and the Church is beautifully decorated; the Brownies always decorate the font and the flowers and produce are distributed around the village to people who are housebound or on their own. The school holds their own Harvest Festival service in the Church on the following Monday bringing their Harvest gifts. Any surplus produce is donated to the Food Bank in Bury St Edmunds.



Remembrance Sunday

On Remembrance Sunday the Church is always full – the Scouts and Guides attend and as the village war memorial is in the church there is a wreath laying ceremony during the service.



Fellowship and Social Events



We currently have four home groups, including Mum's the Word! a group especially for Mums with youngsters. We have several social events during the year raising funds for the Church – these include the Summer Fair, usually held in the Rectory garden and the Christmas Fair held in the Blackbourne Community Hall.



The Friends of St John's raises funds for the fabric of the church building, with concerts, Flower Festivals, an annual Sausage Supper and other events. The Ladies' Lunch Club also puts on events such as the Crib Festival.



The Choir and the Handbell Ringers have recently entertained the Over 55 Club.

During the last six years we have had two parish weekends away at Sizewell Hall on the Suffolk Coast. Plans are underway for another weekend away in 2013



Links with Other Churches and Our Deanery



Links with Other Churches

Over forty years ago the three churches in Elmswell joined together to form the Elmswell Fellowship of Churches. We meet about three times a year for united services and also run an annual Children's Holiday Club for about 80 children, as well as organising the Good Friday service and the Village Carol Service. There is also an ecumenical group which goes into the School with 'Open the Book'.



Unfortunately the Methodist Church has recently closed due to people moving from the village and a dwindling attendance. The Methodist Church building adjoins the Wesley Hall which is still available for use and several village organisations hold their meetings there; St John's hires the hall when our own meeting room is not large enough for the event. Our Fellowship with the Baptist Church continues.

Lavenham Deanery

Elmswell is the largest parish and is on the northern boundary of the Lavenham Deanery which comprises 30 villages stretching south and south-east, skirting Bury St Edmunds. There are currently 7 full-time and one ½ -time stipendiaries (3 male, 3½ female plus the Elmswell vacancy).

In 2011 a Deanery Plan was agreed outlining clergy deployment within the benefices, and with each stipendiary clergyperson assuming joint responsibility for promoting and sharing good practice and expertise within the deanery in one of four key areas of mission and ministry: Adult Discipleship, Children's & Youth Work, Vocations and Mission.

The deanery functions well and all stipendiary clergy under Common Tenure are required to attend its monthly clergy Chapter meetings and Deanery Synod meetings (three p.a.). From time to time Greater Chapter meetings are held involving retired clergy and Readers. There is an annual Deanery Chapter Quiet Day and a post-Christmas meal for Greater Chapter members and spouses. In 2011 Elmswell made a generous gift to support another parish in the deanery struggling financially.

Elmswell has a history of fully participating in the life of the deanery, and it is expected its new Rector will play his/her full part in the deanery.



Going Forward

We need to maintain the growth of the church family so far achieved and as well as caring for the older members of our congregation we want to build up our young people's work.

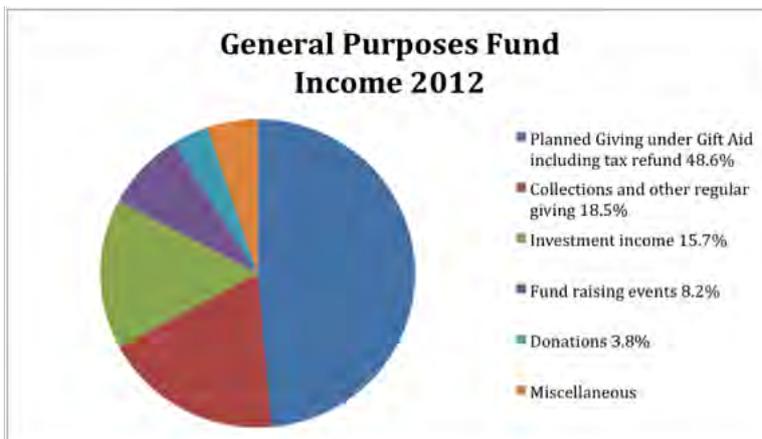
We want to build on our strengths to make St John's a vibrant centre of Christian influence in Elmswell. We believe we are a welcoming church with 'something for everybody'.

Having been a training parish for the last three years we feel we have been strengthened in our aims to fulfil our mission statement but we sometimes feel that 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few'. (Luke 10.2)

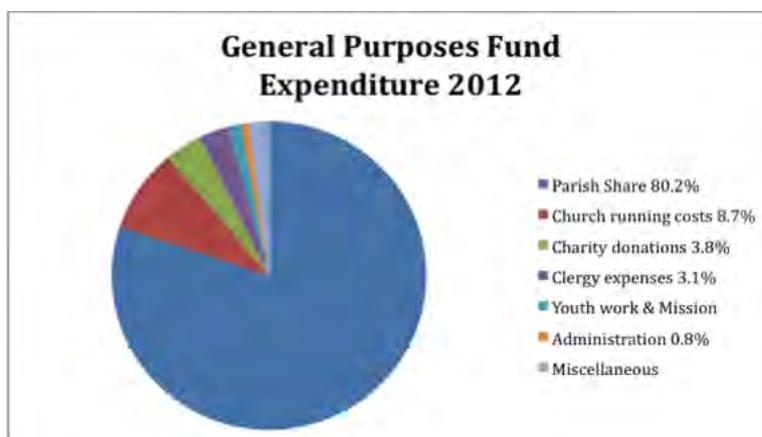
Financial

St John's has paid the Parish Share in full for the last four years (2009-2012).

The major proportion of our unrestricted income goes toward paying the Parish Share. The Parish Share is calculated using the average unrestricted income for the last three years and the amount we will have to pay in 2013 represents 87% of the average for the last 3 years. Voluntary giving on a regular basis via Gift Aid is our main source of income.



The Treasurer produces a budget each year which is discussed by the PCC at its January meeting. A full and detailed update of the accounts is presented to the PCC at every meeting and the Treasurer is fully supported by his colleagues.



Support is given to a number of charities either through donations and collections at special services or by retiring collections.

The clergy are fully reimbursed for all reasonable day to day expenses incurred. The telephone account is in the name of the PCC and the bills are paid direct to the rental company.

Any further details regarding the finances of St John's may be obtained from the Treasurer.

The Rectory



The Rectory is a pleasant and desirable family home, situated just across the road from the Church; built in about 1960, it has the benefit of central heating - solar panels have recently been fitted.



There are four bedrooms, 2 reception rooms, bathroom, cloakroom, study and kitchen. There is a garage and ample parking to the front of the house. At the back of the house there is a large child-friendly garden, with views to open countryside.

