

The Astwell Benefice Profile



THE ASTWELL BENEFICE
www.astwellparishes.org.uk



St. Mary Magdalene, Helmdon, and St. Lawrence, Chapel at Ease, Radstone



St. Mary & St. Peter, Lois Weedon & Weston with Plumpton



St. James the Great, Syresham



St. John the Evangelist, Whitfield



St. Mary the Virgin, Wappemham

Vision Statement:

Whilst always respecting the individual histories and identities of our six ancient buildings and their communities, we work as one, together as a united Benefice, in governance, in mission and in ministry. Our aims are:

- to grow disciples, to reach out into our communities and beyond and to serve Christ in all we do
- to increase church attendance, involve children of all ages, share our knowledge, experience and enthusiasm and do all this as one Church in the body of Christ

We are working together to face each new challenge through Christ, with Christ and in Christ.

The Astwell Benefice - 6 churches, one Church

2023

Welcome to the Astwell Benefice - 6 churches, 1 Church

Welcome to **The Astwell United Benefice Profile** which we hope you will enjoy reading.



If you are interested in working with a dynamic group of churches, and would like to know more, please contact:

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We look forward to meeting you.

The Profile:

This document provides a full and comprehensive view of our United Benefice and of each parish church, its services, congregation, ministry and outreach, all working together to form the Astwell Benefice.

As a United Benefice we have a governing BPCC with 4 meetings a year. Meetings are structured as follows:

- 1 X BPCC (Benefice Parish Church Council)
- 4 x Benefice sub-committees: Finance, Worship, Social & Fundraising, and Pastoral Care, (all lay led except for Worship, led by the incumbent). Regular meetings are decided by each committee.
- Church Councils one for each parish, chaired by a Church Warden. Meetings are held on a regular basis throughout the church year as necessary.

While welcome to attend any of these meetings as an active participant, the Incumbent is an official member of the BPCC and the Benefice Worship Committee only, allowing greater focus on Mission.

Benefice PCC (BPCC) council members

- *Officers:* Ex-Officio Elected Members: Lay Chair, Benefice Treasurer, Safeguarding Officer, and Benefice Secretary (APCM Elected).
- *Benefice Council Members:* 1 Churchwarden and 1 representative from each parish church, together with the incumbent and lay reader. (APCM Elected)

Each Parish focuses on its individual church building(s) through its elected Church Council as detailed above.

An example of the structure of the BPCC showing the interaction between, Members, Committees and Church Councils can be viewed on (page 11 & 12 of this document).

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SECTION 1.

1.1 Astwell Benefice - Surrounding Area and Characteristics

The Astwell Benefice

The Astwell Benefice, part of the Brackley Deanery, is located in a beautiful part of South Northamptonshire. Many of the villages in the local vicinity are mentioned in the Domesday Book, with many dwellings built of fine local stone.

Close by are the market towns of Towcester and Brackley. Bicester, Oxford, Banbury, Northampton, Stony Stratford and Milton Keynes are also within easy reach. We have excellent transport routes with fast trains to London and Birmingham. By road the M1 and M40 being 12 miles away.



Helmdon, Radstone, Lois Weedon, Syresham, Wappenham and Whitfield

A new development of over 1000 homes, (Radstone Fields) is nearing completion. The development incorporates a new Primary School, 'The Radstone' and 'Radstone Fields Community Hall'. The new Brackley Medical Centre and Community Hospital, in the same vicinity, opened in 2020.

Brackley, Towcester and Buckingham have excellent secondary schools providing education to A-Level, healthcare provision, nursing home(s), dental practices, supermarkets, town shopping, and Bicester Village Shopping outlet nearby.

Brackley hosts a new all-inclusive fitness centre and sports hall together with a 25m swimming pool opened in 2019. Towcester also has a combined swimming centre, fitness centre and sports hall.

Both Brackley & Towcester have seen a vast increase in the number of new-build homes over the past 12 months. As rural parishes, (The Astwell Benefice), population growth in the surrounding area is normally by in-fill, with the exception of a 26 house development and Community Centre in Syresham.

Characteristics

Each Parish in the Benefice - Helmdon with Stutchbury & Radstone; Lois Weedon & Weston with Plumpton; Syresham; Wappenham and Whitfield, are all rural locations within South Northamptonshire.

In terms of population and housing, Helmdon and Syresham are the largest villages with a population of 899 and 826, and housing of 359 and 316 respectively. It is estimated that the majority are privately owned with approx. 3-5% social housing.

Lois Weedon, Wappenham and Whitfield have a population of 360, 329 and 238 and housing of 150, 137 and 86 respectively – it is estimated again that the majority are privately owned with a possible 3% social housing.

Detailed statistics in respect of

- Housing (social or private);
- Spread of ages, social-economic and ethnic groupings;
- Religion;
- Specific social problems and opportunities;

may be found on the following website: –

[www.https://parishreturns.churchofengland.org/reporting/reports.org.uk](https://parishreturns.churchofengland.org/reporting/reports.org.uk)

The Astwell Benefice community is extremely active, participating in many local activities as well as those of the Church...

SECTION 2

2.1 Personal Specification, Vision, Mission and Direction.

Whilst always respecting the individual histories and identities of our six ancient buildings and their communities, we work as one, together as a United Benefice, in governance, in mission and in ministry.”

As noted previously the churches of Helmdon, Lois Weedon, Radstone, Syresham, Wappenham and Whitfield sited in beautiful South Northamptonshire are working together as United Benefice with a single BPCC, resulting in one BAPCM, and a maximum of four BPCC meetings annually. This structural simplification removes the need for constant duplication and enables the churches to focus on shared priorities. These are exciting times!

Personal Specification

We are looking for a Rector who will:

- work with us as we continue to develop a permanent united structure in this rural benefice
- see work with children, young people and families as a priority
- maintain good links with our local schools
- provide warm hearted pastoral care for our communities
- be a team player, encouraging lay participation and leadership
- inspire and uplift our congregations
- understand the challenges and opportunities of rural ministry
- Take the church into the community

We look forward to hearing from you.

Enhanced DBS Disclosure required.

View the Benefice Profile via
www.peterborough-diocese.org.uk/jobs

There is no doubt that running the Astwell Parish church, (five parishes, and six churches) requires energy and enthusiasm, however when dealing with only one BPCC and with the continued support of the Benefice team and Committees, (Finance, Worship, Social & Fundraising, Pastoral Care), more time is available for ministry and mission.

If you have these characteristics or God is developing them in you and you would like to help the Astwell Benefice church to continue to move forward then we would like to meet you and explore whether you are being called to lead us.

Vision and Mission

- To welcome the new incumbent into the Astwell Benefice, providing assistance and involvement in all aspects of church life, through the BPCC & Committees, namely Finance, Worship, Social & Fundraising and Pastoral Care.
- To continue to maintain and grow our stewardship programme within the benefice churches enabling us to continue our ministry providing training for lay leaders and lay readers. To grow our income enabling new ideas to come to fruition.
- To work together as one church, within the revised structure of governance; lay reader(s) and officers of the BPCC will ensure that the new incumbent has a full understanding of the organisation and development as one church going forward.
- *To progress the requirement for Safeguarding training up to C1 level on-line by all BPCC & Church Council members, including group leaders responsible for all vulnerable adults and children.*
- *To ensure all safeguarding policies are adhered to and displayed in each Parish church throughout the benefice, extending these policies to all activities undertaken in relation to the church.*
- To continue to foster and grow relationships with children and young people through schools and youth groups and to continue to build on faith, teaching and confirmation classes for all ages.
- To continue to develop our Pastoral Care, a sub-committee of the BPCC, with representatives in each parish advising the incumbent about house visits as and when required.
- To continue to take an interest in and support charities both locally and further afield.
- To promote house groups across the Astwell Parish, exploring our faith and increasing our understanding of the Bible.
- To integrate within the community, building a core knowledge and involvement in village life across the benefice.

We see the incumbent contributing to the achievement of our vision and mission by working closely with the BPCC to achieve our aims and expectations, thus increasing Mission and Outreach amongst the many.

Future Direction

During the last five years the Benefice has changed radically and we are open to fine-tune changes to grow our congregations, being sensitive to and aware of, the future needs of our rural community.

A major direction for training is that of Safeguarding to C1 level for all BPCC members, and volunteers within the Church, most importantly all members of the Pastoral Care Team at Committee and Group level.

We encourage within the Church community active involvement in all village / fund raising events, including those external to the church, to raise funds for a wide variety of external charities and organisations, i.e. Medical Dog, Blood Bikers, Cancer Research, Dogs for Good, SASRA, and more.

We have, with much encouragement, increased the number of church members willing to share transport to services throughout the benefice. Growing our church with local support is a priority.

The Choir and organist(s) continue to support weekly services across the benefice including some choral evensongs. Major festivals, Christmas & Holy Week together with benefice services are prioritised throughout the year.

We are committed to supporting and grow our links with each of the 3 village schools, encouraging them to attend services and special events held throughout the year continues.

Although a non-church school, Helmdon Primary School holds major festivals and musical events in the church. The two church schools also hold services and nativities in church.

Messy Church and *Secret Keepers*, a group for 8-11year olds, continue in *Syresham*, run by the Chair of Finance Committee, with links to the local school and support from the chapel for the youth group.

A recent Family service introduced in Helmdon has resulted in more family and children participation.

Breakfast Church at Wappenham, held in the Village Hall, continues after the long covid break.

2.2 Support Available

Help for the Incumbent:

Parish support will help the incumbent integrate into the Astwell Benefice church life, taking away the practical arrangements required for all services.

All persons, paid or volunteers, involved in the services and running of the Astwell Benefice, including the Incumbent, enjoy feeling valued and acknowledgement of their effort makes working together both rewarding and a blessing.

Meetings:

The *Benefice Worship Committee*. Chair: the Incumbent.

Meet on a regular bi-monthly basis to discuss and make decisions regarding benefice planning of Mission, services, and new ideas.

Helmdon Group Worship Committee Chair: Lay Reader:

The aim of this group is to review, and organise future lay-led services, i.e. Praise & Prayer theme(s) and content linking in with fund raising events, etc. i.e. Harvest Festival followed by meal and auction. The Group also review forthcoming services and arrangements for marriage, funerals, confirmation, and baptism.

Other BPCC Committees: Finance, Social & Fundraising and Pastoral Care meet regularly as determined by the Committee Chair.

Parish Church Council Meetings are determined by the Church Warden as Chair.

Minutes of all meetings as detailed above, are sent to the Incumbent and the Astwell Secretary, to keep abreast of current progress. The Incumbent is not required to attend the Committee meetings unless he/she wishes to attend.

People

Two retired Priests live in the benefice and are prepared to take services if required. A full breakdown of paid and voluntary help is detailed below:

People – paid

- *Two Retired clergy:* prepared to do occasional services;
- *One Benefice Secretary:* responsible for: BPCC minutes, meetings, service schedules, organisation and sourcing PTO and organist cover where necessary.

Voluntary (unpaid)

- One Lay Reader living in Helmdon, permission to take Communion by extension during the interregnum at relevant services across the benefice
- One Benefice Treasurer
- Five parish treasurers
- Five Church Wardens and six Representatives
- Three main committee chairs (Finance, Social & Fundraising and Pastoral Care). The Worship Committee is chaired by the Incumbent
- Safeguarding Officer (benefice)
- Lay Leaders for Evensong and Matins (Lois Weedon) also for morning worship and Praise and Prayer.
- Sidesmen duties and monthly service Roster including readers and intercessional prayers are provided, and circulated by each church
- Organiser(s) of sound/vision systems, within the benefice church
- Preparation of the altar, communion wine, and the setting of prayer candles
- Organist prepared to travel to parish churches across the benefice for communion services, festivals; concerts etc., has a deputy for ad-hoc services and holidays
- Volunteers offering the use of their homes for church meetings, representing economy in use of costly church resources, especially heating.

Groups (Voluntary)

- Pastoral Care team, across the benefice
- Benefice choir (benefice events, services, concerts and festivals)
- Lay volunteers for Prayer & Praise services, intercessions, poems, and readings (the Gospel is read by the lay reader or lay chair)
- Members of the Parish Church Councils
- Key holders: daily opening and closure of the churches, where required
- Bell ringers across the Astwell Benefice.

There are many additional tasks undertaken on a voluntary basis in support of the church and Incumbent:

Church cleaners; brass cleaning; flower arrangers; Friends of the Churchyard; cleaning of purifiers/altar cloths; hymn numbers and lighting of altar candles; breakfast church, after service tea/coffee, and more.

SECTION 3

3.1 The Astwell Benefice Rectory

Your new Home, The Astwell Benefice Rectory is situated in the Parish of St. Mary & St. Peter, Lois Weedon:

Address:

The Rectory, The Green, Lois Weedon, Towcester NN12 8PN.

Built in the 1980s of stone, comprising:

Ground Floor

- Office/study
- Large kitchen/diner (seating for 14 persons) – sufficiently large for a Meeting Room
- Lounge
- Downstairs Toilet & Utility

1st Floor:

- 4 Bedrooms
- Bathroom
- Single garage



The property is well maintained with a large front and rear garden ideal for church related events.

3.2 The Astwell Benefice, Organisation

BPCC Committee

Rector

|

Secretary-Safeguarding Officer-Lay Reader-Treasurer-Lay Chair- Pastoral Care Chair
Choir Master all ex officio

|

Benefice PCC

1 Church warden from each parish-1 Representative from each church-11 people

|

|

Benefice Committees Chair

|

Worship Rector	Finance Alice Palmer	Social and Fundraising Sheena Warren	Pastural Care Karin Smith
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Church Councils

|

Chair Church warden

Treasurer

Up to 10 elected members

Church Councils elect representatives to the BPCC

3.3 The Astwell Benefice Who's Who

BPCC Representatives



Alice Palmer
Benefice Treasurer
Syresham Rep
Finance Committee Chair.



Bill Elkington
Benefice Lay
Chair, Churchwarden
Helmdon



Paul Stothard
Lay Reader



Karin (Wiggy) Smith
Chair Pastoral Care



Judith Elkington
Safeguarding



Sara Rudkin
Secretary



Ann Netten
Helmdon Rep
Helmdon Treasurer



Claire Bonner
Whitfield Rep



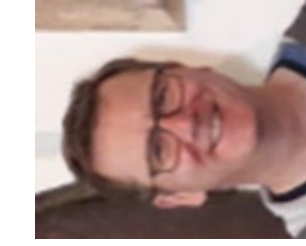
Susan Timmis
Whitfield Rep



Penny Bonner
Radstone Rep



Sheena Warren
Wappenham
Church Warden



Peter Oliver
Wappenham Rep



Mike Stretten
Lois Weedon Rep

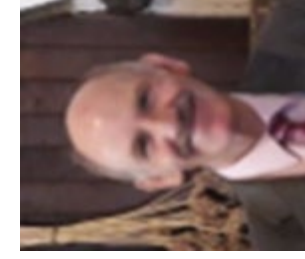
Other Benefice Positions



Cliff Netten
Church Warden Helmdon



Edwin King
Church Warden Wappenham



David Wright
Organist and Choir Master

3.4 The Astwell Benefice, 6 Parishes, 1 Church

St. Mary Magdalene Parish Church, Helmdon - Grade II Listed.



Introduction

Helmdon has a beautiful, well-used and much-appreciated church in St. Mary Magdalene. The building, which is Grade II listed, boasts several notable historic features as well as modern facilities, and attracts a regular congregation.



Services and Congregation

There were 61 members on the 2020/21 Electoral Roll for Helmdon and Radstone combined.

The Benefice Worship Committee has general oversight of patterns of worship; in addition the Helmdon Worship Committee meets regularly to consider content of services such as Prayer & Praise.

For regular services we have the largest congregation in the benefice, average 21, but we welcome much larger congregations to festival services: Harvest, Remembrance, Christingle and over Christmas, when Carols by Candlelight is particularly popular. Easter Services are also well supported and in Holy Week we hold a Stations of the Cross tableau over two days.

Usual Monthly Services

1 st Sunday 10:00 am	Morning Worship
2 nd Sunday 10:00 am	Holy Communion & Children's Church
3 rd Sunday 10:00 am	Prayer & Praise
4 th Sunday 10:00 am	Holy Communion
5 th Sunday 10:30 am	Benefice Holy Communion, Radstone
Wednesday 10:00am	Midweek Holy Communion

Helmdon has a good management team with two churchwardens and a rota of sides people, lesson readers and intercessors, as well as many supporters who provide refreshments after the services, arrange flowers, clean the church and maintain the grounds.

Family and Children's Ministry

Helmdon is keen to encourage and grow a younger congregation as well as maintaining and providing for the current core church goers.

There is some appetite for services catering specifically for children so we have recently introduced a monthly Children's Church, which is held in the back room during the main service, with the children returning towards the end to take part in the Eucharist and share what they have done and learned with the rest of the congregation, which seems to be enjoyed and appreciated by all! Three Children's Church leaders plan and deliver these sessions on a rota basis and they are predominantly aimed at children of primary school age, although anyone is welcome.

We are also exploring new ways to encourage families to attend church, with different formats and timings of services. Just recently we held a short and informal Harvest Celebration on a Saturday evening, with family-friendly songs and readings, and a drinks-and-nibbles social afterwards. This was very well received. We are planning similar events for other occasions, like Christmas when we already hold the popular Christingle service.

Income and Fundraising

Helmdon benefits from a dedicated charity, The Friends of St. Mary Magdalene, whose committee members organise fundraising events to raise money for the church building, outside of regular maintenance costs. This is in addition to the fundraising undertaken by the Helmdon Church Council and helps enormously with the cost of repairs, one-off projects and the beautification of the church.



Although the pandemic has impacted fundraising over the last two years, we are very pleased to be getting back to holding events in and for the church. One notable example is the sell-out concerts performed by Fiori Musicali, a world-renowned group of classical musicians who enjoy playing in Helmdon church thanks to the beautiful surroundings and excellent acoustics.

We have also held theme nights with a meal and a film on the projector screen (the last one being a Greek Night with Mamma Mia), Summer Fetes, Race Nights, Car Treasure Hunts, Safari Suppers and Christmas Fayres, among many other activities.

Community Venue

The church can accommodate 120 persons comfortably and with the pews, additional chairs and all furniture removed this capacity increases to over 200. We are keen to make the most of the space in our wonderful church, both for services and as a venue for community and fundraising events.

The DAC has recently visited the church to view our initial ideas for re-ordering prior to applying for a Faculty. The aim of the reordering is to replace the current pipe organ with a smaller electric instrument and thus make space in the old Vestry and Choir Robing area for a new larger room to be used for Children's Church activities close to the chancel.





There is also scope to remove some pews, and instead use stackable chairs for services, which would allow a greater space for concerts, plays and meals as part of our aspirations for Mission and Growth.

We have a good relationship with Helmdon Primary School, which is Ofsted rated Good and has around 135 pupils from the village, Brackley (the nearest town) and surrounding area. The school uses the church for Harvest, Christmas and Easter services.

Facilities

Our facilities within the church continue to be well maintained and developed. The latest Quinquennial inspection was conducted in August 2017 and there were no major works to be undertaken. The building is wheelchair accessible and has a continually monitored roof alarm.

The church has a well-presented and fully kitted kitchen to accommodate anything from refreshments after services to fund-raising events with full meals. We have an accessible toilet with a baby-changing unit, which also houses the oil boiler that powers the central heating.

In terms of technology, we have free WiFi to enable electronic card payments, a sound and vision system with projector and retractable screen, a camera for putting services on social media and a portable sound system for use at outdoor services such as Remembrance Sunday at the war memorial.

There is a carpeted children's corner with colouring and toys set out, and display boards which can be used for the children's work as well as church notices.

Special mention has to be made for the church kneelers, as for many years an enormous amount of hard work went into creating a remarkable set of kneelers, depicting both church events and village life. The work was carried out by many residents in the village, both members and non-members of the church community.

Historic Features

The William Campiun medieval stained glass window, sited at the east end of the north aisle, commemorates William Campiun, most likely a local Helmdon stone mason working at his trade. The window has been accepted as dating from 1313 artisans being portrayed, especially in stained glass, was a very rare occurrence at that time. There are 3 in the country one at York Minster.

There is a huge and very impressive yew tree just next to the church, which careful studies suggest was planted around 1310.

We have an oak mantle that is being investigated as its dated around 1300 but some experts say it's around 1500.

Electoral Roll 62 average attendance 21

Helmdon Village

Helmdon's population at the 2011 Census was 899 with the age profile being similar to the average for England, albeit with fewer young adults as is typical in a rural village.

As well as the primary school, we have Acorns Pre-School for children from two years, which was rated Outstanding at its latest Ofsted inspection.

Helmdon has an active social life, often centred around The Fat Landlord pub and a village hall called the Reading Room. The reading Room is a warm place with soup and a roll Thursday Lunchtime and a Food larder on Friday, The Reading Room is used by several societies and organisations such as the Film Society, Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, Parents & Tots group, Sewing Group, Helmdon Together Club, and occasional evenings of live music and some church functions. A pop-up Post Office comes twice a week and this coincides each Tuesday with a well-supported Coffee Morning.

St. Lawrence, Radstone, Chapel of Ease to St. Mary Magdalene, Helmdon



The church is of considerable architectural and ecological significance, according to Dr. Joseph Elders FSA, Major Projects Officer of the Church Buildings Council, February 2013.

The church is Grade I Listed, of Saxon style, part of which dates to the 11th century and is possibly one of the oldest churches in Northamptonshire. It has a nave, south aisle, porch and chancel, and the low Saxon tower contains two bells and a small stained glass window depicting the Patron Saint of St. Lawrence.

The church was closed in June 2015 on Health & Safety grounds by Archdeacon Richard Ormston due to bat infestation. The church has a colony of Natterers bats and three other species use the church year round. Fortunately Natural England (NE) was awarded Heritage Lottery Funding to address this problem at St. Lawrence and the church re-opened in December 2021. BBC Songs of Praise filmed our Walk With Bats, which will be shown on the 20th November edition.

Due to the temporary closure of St. Lawrence Church, with no services being held since June 2015, the accounts were at zero balance. The accounts are now a page within the Helmdon accounts and the church insurance is covered in the Helmdon policy. We have a church representative who checks the security of the church on a regular basis.

Now re-opened, this beautiful church makes a wonderful wedding venue, a large wedding is booked for 2023. Fifth Sunday services are held for the benefice at Radstone church.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Warm and friendly social activity after the services
- Active family services with children's church
- Support from Friends of the Church
- Looking for change (Church re-ordering)
- Sound and vision system with screen and camera for showing services via the web
- Free wi-fi in the church with card payment facilities
- Full calendar of fund raising
- Interaction with the village school
- Toilet and kitchen facilities

- Well maintained church buildings and churchyard
- Financially sound with high planned giving
- Will meet our full parish share
- Fully support Benefice events

Weaknesses

- Taking the church to the village
- Large percentage of retired in the congregation (80%)

Opportunities

- Building changes for school and children's church. A fund is already started for this
- Using the church in the round
- Congregation open to and acceptable to change and new ideas

St Mary & St Peter, Lois Weedon, Grade II Listed

www.westonandweedonloispc.org.uk



This year saw the completion of our Quinquennial work, with the installation of a roof alarm, approved by our Insurers, with full cover for repair/damage caused by theft.

Our 2019 Quinquennial identified potentially harmful roof leaks which have been fixed but with no other major problems.

The Church is supported by a Charitable Trust 'Friends of Lois Weedon Church' which regularly helps financially with repairs and improvement to the fabric of the Church.

The Church tower provides an access point for superfast broadband supplied by Tove Valley, a community project supplying over 650 households in the benefice and beyond. The Church provides access to approximately 80 users. The service is due to be replaced in 2023 with Optical Fibre connections to all our premises including the church.

We have a surround sound system which provides a lapel mic, lectern and pulpit microphones, boosts the organ sound and plays music from Laptop's or external CD players.

We have been monitoring a significant crack between the tower and the Chancel which appeared in 2011 and has stabilised, continuing monitoring is required. Other cracks have appeared around the East window which is under investigation.

We have recently submitted a faculty to provide drainage for a servery and toilet.

Church capacity: 80 in pews, with additional chairs 150.

Norman Font.

Layout: Cruciform with a central tower.

Electoral Roll (Renewal year 2019) Lois Weedon 34; average attendance 13

SWOT Analysis

St Mary & St Peter, Lois Weedon, Grade II Listed

Strengths

- Good organisation through the Benefice Council structure with a local Parish Church Council Committee
- Enthusiasm for 'getting things done'
- Loyal congregation
- Beautiful 'cared for' church buildings and churchyard
- Friendly and welcoming
- Strong and supportive 'Friends of the Church'
- Superfast broadband and Wi-Fi soon to be upgraded to Fibre
- Peel of 6 Bells with thriving ringing team
- CofE school with links to the church.

Weaknesses

- Aging congregation
- Reluctance to travel.

Opportunities

- Plans for servery and toilet
- Electronic payments within the church
- Mission and growing congregation
- Stewardship and increased giving
- Improved heating system.

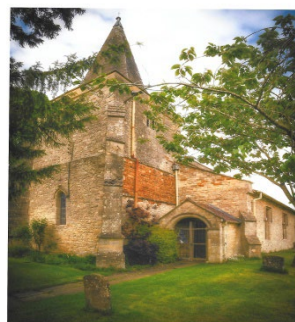
Threats

- Reluctance to change although accepted the united benefice
- Lack of succession in the case of church warden and CC members
- Further cracks in the East Wall and window

St James the Great Syresham

This beautiful church has been serving the community in Syresham since it was built around 1200.

It is our vision to continue to serve the village sharing God's love and hope with all, welcoming all comers particularly to festival services, and showing care to those in need.



Services

1 st & 3 rd Sundays 11am	Holy Communion
2 nd Sunday 11am	Morning Worship
4 th Sunday 11am	Praise & Prayer
Quarterly Saturdays	Messy Church

Church capacity is 100 in pews, with additional chairs 150. Regular services have a small congregation, but we welcome much larger congregations to festival services: Harvest, Queen's Jubilee, Remembrance, Christingle and Carols by Candlelight being our largest congregations. Counters once recorded over 300 people, at a Christmas Eve Christingle service, this included standing room only.



The Church in Syresham has close involvement with St, James CEVA Primary School. Monday school assemblies are organised and run by a member of the benefice church (Benefice Treasurer). The previous Rector was a Foundation Governor, and a member SCC is standing in as a Governor during the interregnum. The church runs 'Experience Easter' and "Experience Christmas', with the help of the chapel, for the whole school every other year.

The church council ensure that the school is prayed for on a regular basis in church and supply cakes or other treats for the staff once a term.

Secret Keepers Youth Group: A group for 8 – 11-year-olds, meet every Wednesday in term time in school as a lunchtime club. Also run in conjunction with the chapel.

Messy Church is held once a quarter with five families showing interest but only two or three attending at a time so far.

A great team came together to organise our recent Blackberry Fayre helping funds for our parish share but also providing a wonderful social gathering for village folk.

Some years ago the building was enhanced by an internal redecoration and the installation of a kitchen area and toilet with refurbishment of the vestry. The Friends of St James supports us financially to maintain the church; they have agreed to contribute to our planned audio upgrade, currently awaiting DAC permission.



Our bells were rehung as part of a millennium project. We are excited to welcome some new bell ringers who practice regularly in the church.

We had a Quinquennial in 2021 and are now working on items raised the largest of which is replacing shingles on the tower. We are fortunate in having Payne trust funds to support us in this work.



Historical Fact

John Kurde, Syresham Martyr, 1557 Burnt at the stake in Northampton, because he would not recant during Queen Mary's reign.

Electoral Roll 35, Average attendance 10.4

Strengths

- Welcoming atmosphere at services.
- Incredible support and help by a very small team.
- Reasonable heating system. Toilet facilities. Kitchen for events. Movable pews for exhibitions/plays & our Benefice Maundy Thursday supper etc.
- Good connection with St James C of E Primary School. Including a team of church & chapel members who lead weekly assemblies and a Christian lunchtime club (Secret Keepers). Services in church including the school harvest. Support & advice for RE teaching including visits to church and Experience Easter & Christmas.
- Good relationship with Wesleyan Chapel with shared services at Christmas, Remembrance, Mothering Sunday and other occasions.

- 3 young families keen to join us at Messy Church. 3 young ladies (12/13 year olds) who will sing for us on special occasions.
- Popular Christingle Service.
- Well-kept building; Relatively speedy repairs of faults/stolen lead etc.; often facilitated by the Payne trust funds.
- Supportive Friends Committee fundraising for the enhancing the church and organizing social events.
- Regular financial support from non-church going villagers as well as church members.
- Regular support to maintain the churchyard also from non-church going villagers & church members.
- Well-organized rotas for cleaning/mowing/flowers etc.

2. Weaknesses

- Small and ageing, mostly 70+, regular congregation in a village of 800 souls. Occasional attendance from 40-50 yr. old parents but none from younger generations, except for Christmas, Easter & Harvest and a few who come to Messy Church;
- Relatively small band of helpers/event organizers.
- We are gradually building our finances post-Covid but need more regular givers to replace some who are moving on. We struggle to meet our parish share target.
- A recent Benefice mission day highlighted that we were good at presence but lacking in proclamation & persuasion.

3. Opportunities

- To appoint a new incumbent who could support us in building on the relationships we have across the village.
- To continue to build on our youth activities.
- To offer opportunities for those who are interested in deepening their faith.
- To continue to encourage folk to join us for festivals throughout the year.

4. Threats

- Congregations tailing off and loss of finances for supporting the ministry of the church.
- The small team becoming overwhelmed by the amount of work to be done.

Syresham Church Council September 2022



St Mary the Virgin, Wappenham, Grade 2 Listed

Dating from the thirteenth Century, the Grade 2 listed Church building is in a reasonable condition however, there is constant attention needed.

Our latest Quinquennial was 2022.

Since 2006 'projects' are now mainly under the auspices of the 'Friends of St Mary the Virgin, Wappenham', operating as an independent charity No. 1116889.

Major church projects over the last decade include: -

2008 Restoration of unique early clock with an associated auto-wind mechanism

2010 Purchase and consecration of an extension to the graveyard

2016 Installation of the 'Wappenham hub' of the Tove Valley Communities Superfast Broadband project

2016 Installation of roof alarm following metal theft

2017/18 Resurfacing and repair of Tower stone steps

2020 Two porch roofs and the vestry roof replaced. End of Astwell aisle re-pointed.

Major projects planned:

Repair of damaged crenellation and subsequent damage to Boiler Room roof;
Pointing of many outside areas
Checking of lead on roof.

Church Capacity: 90 in pews, with additional chairs 150

Electoral Roll (Renewal year 2024) Wappenham (??)

Average attendance: 7.19 (submitted to Diocese)

SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

Paying the agreed proportion of Parish Share
13 regular givers

Enthusiastic team working with positive attitude. Fundraising events include Fete, Dog Show, Silent Auction. We have a good team of flower arrangers to ensure flowers are in the Church throughout the year with special effort going in to 'Festival' flowers. The bellringing team at Lois Weedon is encouraging Wappenham to re-form and recruitment is going positively.
Wifi in the church and contactless payment is available

We offer a church opportunity within the community by running Coffee Mornings and Breakfast Church in the Village Hall on a regular basis. The village has a happy friendly atmosphere with approximately 290 residents.

The church is open every day.

Weaknesses:

Village lacks community facilities (no pub, shop, school etc).
Congregation has declined in numbers since Covid 19.
Marketing/Sales not our forte.

Opportunities:

Continue to grow on success of coffee mornings etc.
Follow up new fundraising opportunities
Use social/digital media
Use Wappenham website and Facebook
We would welcome ideas to encourage younger people to attend church.

Threats:

Not finding a new Rector
Stigma on attending church
Lack of liturgical understanding in the country

St. John the Evangelist, Whitfield, (Victorian)



The small Parish of Whitfield (80 houses) is located SE of the county and lies on the south side of the A43. Brackley town is 1.5miles away.

As part of the benefice service pattern Whitfield has a Parish Communion service on the first Sunday in the month and a Morning Worship service on the third Sunday. We are a small and welcoming community, as such our Festival and special services attract many people; regular worshippers and those who don't normally come to Church; we are finding this is a great way to increase our outreach.

The small Victorian Church is open during the daytime, and we know from the many comments in the Visitors' Book that this is greatly appreciated. A main attraction is the glorious stained glass windows from the William Morris foundry.

The churchyard has been managed for conservation for over 25 years by a band of loyal volunteers. The bell ringing team from the village is complemented by ringers from across the Benefice, with regular Friday night practices. There is a pub and a village hall where social events are held including a monthly coffee morning and a weekly craft evening.

A stewardship campaign has increased the regular giving and small fund-raising events are held regularly. It is hoped that the annual fete (not held since 2019) will be back in our calendar in 2023. The issues highlighted by the 2019 Quinquennial inspection have been addressed and necessary repairs following a lightning strike in 2020 have also been completed,



'Jumping the Cockerel' before it was reinstated on top of the spire

3.5 Other Churches in the Astwell Benefice

There are three non-conformist (*) and two other churches in the Astwell Benefice area.

1. * *Wesleyan Reform Chapel, Syresham* has a good working relationship and combined services with St. James the Great, Syresham several times a year;
2. * *Evangelical Church, Wappenham* – no contact at all;
3. *Baptist Church, Weston* – shared services with St. Mary & St. Peter, Louis Weeden and Weston with Plumpton - Over the past 12 months, these services have begun to impinge on the regular church services held at St. Mary & St. Peter, which ultimately reduce the number of services held, impacting on church attendees and a subsequent reduction in collection monies;
4. There is also an 'Exclusive Brethren' meeting house based in Helmdon, Services are held on an infrequent basis. There is not contact with the Church of St. Mary Magdalene.
5. *St. John the Baptist Plumpton*, an independent church of Anglican tradition.

SECTION 4 Committees

4.1 Worship

ASTWELL BENEFICE WORSHIP SCHEDULE – JUNE 2022

DATE & DAY	TIME	SERVICE/EVENT	PLACE	LED BY
Sunday 5th	9.30am	Holy Communion	WHIT	Revd John Roberts [Retired Minister]
A Celebration of	9.30am	Joint Service with Weston Chapel	LWW	Revd Diane
Queen's	10am	Morning Worship	HELM	Paul Stothard [Reader]
Platinum Jubilee	11am	United Service with the Chapel	SYR	Revd Diane
	11.15am	Morning Worship	WAPP	Paul Stothard
Wednesday 8th	10am	Midweek Holy Communion	HELM	Revd Diane
Sunday 12th	9am	Breakfast Church	WAPP	Lay Led
Trinity Sunday	9.30am	Matins	LWW	Lay Led
	10am	Holy Communion & Children's Church	HELM	Revd Diane
<i>Gold or White</i>	11am	Morning Worship	SYR	Lay Led
Wednesday 15th	10am	Midweek Holy Communion	HELM	Revd Diane
Sunday 19th	9.30am	Holy Communion	LWW	Revd Diane
First Sunday	9.30am	Morning Worship	WHIT	PS
after Trinity	10am	Prayer & Praise	HELM	BE(Lay Led)
<i>Green</i>	11am	Holy Communion	SYR	Revd Will Adams (Retired Minister)
	11am	Patronal Holy Communion	PLUMP	Revd Diane
Wednesday 22nd	10am	Midweek Holy Communion	HELM	Revd John Roberts
Sunday 26th	10am	Holy Communion	HELM	Revd Diane
Second Sunday	11am	Prayer & Praise	SYR	Lay Led
after Trinity	11.15am	Holy Communion	WAPP	Revd Diane
<i>Green</i>	6pm	Benefice Evensong	LWW	Lay Led
Wednesday 29th	10am	Midweek Holy Communion	HELM	Revd Diane

Other Services include:

Holy Week:

- Monday: Walking the way to the cross, prayer stations
- Tuesday: Holy week film
- Wednesday: Taize
- Thursday: Seder Passover meal followed by stripping the Altars across the Astwell benefice
- Friday: The Passion - readings and prayers, Stations of the Cross enacted, and progressed across the Astwell Benefice;
- Easter Day: Dawn Fire Service at Radstone, followed by hot cross buns and coffee.
- Lanterns are lit and taken to each Church across the Benefice, to bring in the Light of Christ, followed by an Easter Communion Service in each parish church.

Occasional Services

- The annual *Rogation Day Service* rotating around Farms within the Astwell Benefice
- *Mary Sumner's Day Service* led by the Deanery Mothers Union
- *Guild of Bell Ringers Service*
- *Healing Service*
- *Mothering Sunday*, with the giving of spring flowers (gifted by individuals)
- *Lammas Service*
- *Harvest Festival Services*, for each church in the Astwell Parish, including school services
- *Patronal Festival* for each Parish church.
- *All Souls Service(s)* across the Astwell Parish
- *Remembrance Services* are held across the Astwell Benefice. Some take place inside the church others at their village War Memorials. A representative from the British Legion attends services on a rotational basis across the benefice;
- Following an American Airforce plane crash at Astwell during WWII a representative from the American Air Base at Croughton attends both the church service and the village Memorial Service at Helmdon, accompanied by Scouts (alternate years), Guides and Brownies;
- *Messy Christingle* services throughout the Astwell parish churches, make the orange Christingles before the service takes place
- *Women's World Day of Prayer* - Mothers Union
- *Schools Nativity Services*. Led by the schools
- *Carols by Candlelight*, individual church services throughout the Astwell Parish
- *Christmas Eve communion services*, either a 9.30pm service or midnight mass, alternating
- *Christmas Eve Nativity*, St. John the Evangelist, Whitfield
- *Christmas Day Service*, the incumbent or lay led.

4.2 Finances

Processes

We have a Finance Committee consisting of representatives from each parish, usually the treasurer, and chaired by the Benefice Treasurer. The committee meets at least three times a year and communicates by email when finalizing our APCM report document. When meeting together we discuss any encouragements and concerns about finances, share ideas, agree budgets and report on our current positions, with particular regard to contributions to the parish share.

Parishes manage their own finances and pay their parish share contributions via the benefice.

The Benefice Treasurer keeps accounts of benefice expenses, pays the parish share each quarter to the diocese and manages Quarterly Fees returns. Clergy expenses are paid in response to monthly claims. We also have a secretary who is paid monthly.

Benefice expenses are met by income from fees and benefice fundraising and events. Any excess benefice fundraising is added to the Parish Share.

Parish Share

Recently our Church Wardens agreed how the Parish Share, currently £69,495, should be split between parishes. We aim to pay the full share recognizing that some parishes will struggle. We hope, at least, to improve our contributions each year. Prior to this each parish set their own targets (See below) and this meant we were never aiming to meet the full payment.

We managed to maintain a good level of contributions during COVID.

	Helmdon	Lois	Syresham	Wappenham	Whitfield	Benefice Fundraising
Paid 2021	£20,100	£7,250	£13,000	£11,000	£3,510	£4095
Target 2021	£20,000	£7,500	£14,200	£11,000	£4,500	£0
	101%	97%	92%	100%	78%	
	BENEFICE TOTAL			£58,955	85%	

£58,955 was 85% of our total share. Most churches had restarted a little fundraising but Whitfield finances depend largely on their annual Fete this has not been held since 2019.

	Helmdon	Lois	Syresham	Wappenham	Whitfield	Benefice Fundraising
Dec 2022 Paid	£22,150	£6,101	£13,100	£9,729	£4,260	£7373
Target 2022 £69,495	£23,628	£9,729	£17,374	£9,729	£5,560	£3475
	94%	63%	75%	100%	77%	212%
	BENEFICE TOTAL		£62,714.00		90%	

Charity Giving

Each year we hold a Benefice Rogation Service, this raises money for farming charities. We raise money at Remembrance Sunday for the Poppy Appeal, at Harvest for charities such as DEC appeals, and at Christmas for The Children's Society. It is our aim to ensure that the Benefice donations to charity at least match 10% of the Benefice Fundraising.

Spending Projects

Lois Weedon plans to build a new server/kitchen area and a single toilet in the church. Helmdon are reordering their church to make space for growing children's work. Syresham have some expensive quinquennial works to cover and are upgrading their sound system.

Each church holds different reserves in their general accounts.

Helmdon	Lois	Syresham	Wappenham	Whitfield
£1,500	Anything positive	£1,000	Anything positive	£800

Most churches have support from Friends for buildings work and maintenance and Syresham has a trust fund, this supports them with buildings maintenance. The challenge is to raise enough unrestricted income to cover the parish share.

	Helmdon	Lois	Syresham	Wappenham	Whitfield
Total Unrestricted Income 2021	£27,763	£9,099	£14,350	£17,618	£4,451

4.3 Safeguarding

Benefice Safeguarding

There are 3 people (out of 15) on the BPCCC to be DBS checked. The aim is get all BPCCC members and church council members to C1 level of Safeguarding training.

4.4 Pastoral Care

Benefice Pastoral Care Team

We have a team of 8 people representing 4 of our 5 villages. Helmdon with Radstone, Lois Weedon with Weston, Syresham and Whitfield, Wappenham have a group who, now, consult directly with our Rector. We meet bi-monthly to discuss all those whom we know or have heard of that might like a visit, prayers, Home Communion, a telephone call, or a card.

Pastoral care is very much about taking The Church into our communities. We try to visit as many people as possible. This year we have introduced small tea and cake parties, usually about 6 including the host, which have proved very successful. Pastoral care is included on the agenda of all our Church Councils. If a member knows of someone in need we are informed, which means we are able to respond in an appropriate way.

4.4 Social and Fundraising

Social and Fundraising Committee

This committee was set up in 2017 with the premise of raising money for the Benefice to help pay towards expenses and the 'share' paid to the Diocese. 10% of monies raised over the year are sent to a chosen charity decided by the BPCCC.

The committee has at least one representative from each Parish, often a churchwarden or a representative on the BPCCC.

In 2022 we organised several fundraising events.

The first fundraiser was The Astwell Quiz Challenge, this was the third time this has been run and is well attended and very enjoyable. Every village hosts an evening (generally one evening a month) at which there is a team from each of the five parishes. Guests are invited and can form their own informal teams. We try and find sponsors for each round if possible. The five teams battle it out over five evenings with the winning team awarded with a cup and a bottle of champagne. This event raised over £2k this year and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the sociable evenings.

We then held a Jubilee Garden Party. A very generous homeowner lent us her beautiful gardens which were open to anyone attending the Party. We had live music, homemade cakes and teas and a few stallholders. We also run a Grand Draw every year which raises about £2.5k and this was drawn at the Garden Party. (In Covid we just ran the raffle and still managed to raise over £2.5k). Gate numbers were a little low but with the Raffle that event raised over £3k.

Finally, we hold a Barn Dance each year. Attendance was a little low this year, but it was a fun evening with a live band, caller and a delicious BBQ. The profit was only £600 this year but we only need a few more tickets to be sold to turn that around quite quickly.



Our total for the year 2022 was over £7k towards benefice expenses and parish share.

For 2023 we are planning another Quiz Challenge, Barn Dance, Raffle and we have some good ideas forming. We meet about every two months but obviously more frequently as an event nears

SECTION 5

5 Youth & Children's Work

St. Mary Magdalene, Helmdon

Family Services for children and adults is successful so we are looking to re-order the church to accommodate the numbers.

Members of the church attend the local school as volunteers, e.g. to assist with reading, one of whom is on the school Governing Body.

The school in Helmdon is not a CofE school. However, the Rector is welcome to attend or lead assemblies. Major festivals such as Easter, Harvest, Christmas, and end of school term are held in St. Mary Magdalene Church, with the incumbent or lay-leader usually present.

St. James the Great, Syresham

The Church in Syresham has close involvement with their village school and all RE and school assemblies are organised and run by a member of the benefice church (Benefice Treasurer). One member of the BRICC team is a Foundation Governor of St, James CEVA Primary School. The school holds 'Experience Easter' in the Church and this year will also hold Experience Christmas and Experience Pentecost. Their Harvest Festival and Nativity plays are also held in the Church.

Joint services are held with the Chapel in Syresham three or four times a year.

Secret Keepers Youth Group: A group for 8 – 11 year olds, meet on the first and third Wednesdays each month, with a current membership of 12. The church shares the running of the group with the Chapel.

Messy Church is held every month with varying levels of attendance.

St. Mary & St. Peter, Lois Weedon & Weston with Plumpton

The church continues to have close relationships with the school.

School concerts, Harvest Festival services, Nativity plays, and Remembrance Day assembly services are held in the church, together with the school's End of Year and Prize Giving ceremony.

Members of the church have been involved in the development of buildings, as governors, part time coaching, IT support and more recently in a new position as Guardian Governor. Church members also participate in the local Drama Group which stages plays and pantomimes attracting many young children as performers in the group, giving them confidence and participation with their peers and elders.

5.1 Church Groups and Activities

Bible Study :

- *Lent Study Group* - held weekly during Lent. Members of the Astwell Benefice church are welcomed together with those wishing to get to know and understand the bible.



- *Wappenham Breakfast Church* - held in Wappenham Village Hall with a monthly short quiz based on the Bible. The quiz is organised and run by school students. This is a 'stand-alone' event, i.e. not followed by a church service. The breakfast is very popular and is attended by villagers and church people alike.

- *School Assemblies* - Lois Weedon, Syresham and Helmdon.
- *School festival services* are often held in the Church at Helmdon, Syresham and Lois Weedon.

Ecumenical Links

Mothers Union, open to all denominations, across the Astwell benefice – linked with:

- Rumbek, (South Sudan)
- Soroti (Uganda)
- Aba-Nqwa north and Oyo (Nigeria);
- North East and Caribbean and Aruba.

Faith & Fellowship – Benefice & Parish

- *Praise & Prayer Services* - where individuals not associated with the church join in support of a 'themed' service either as readers, intercessors, or hymns choosers.
- *Car share* - for hospital and doctor visits, school services, church services and social events across the Astwell parishes are available and encouraged.

- *Hope Run* - Volunteer drivers (22 in total) collect food, donated by large food stores, from Faith Dimensions, Wolverton, Milton Keynes and deliver to the Hope Centre, Northampton, providing meals for those in need. The Hope Centre run takes place weekly with volunteers from each parish in the benefice, including some volunteers from Brackley.
- *Village / Parish Fund raising events* - fetes/bazaars, quiz events both church and school; inter parish quiz (new) bringing villages and quiz teams together; Film nights with supper; support of charitable events; musical groups, Gospel Choir, Fiori-Musicali.
- *HYHO - Helmdon Young Husbands Organisation Bi-annual Summer Ball* - Young Husbands have donated many thousands of pounds to the church, the school, Acorns, the Reading Room, and local community facilities over the past years. A percentage of monies raised are gifted as grants, village groups or organisations are invited to apply for grants for specific items.
- *The Friends of the Church* - raise funds for the fabric of the church, bringing together non-church and church members with the aim of fun, laughter and a great deal of fellowship.
- *May Day Fayre, Lois Weedon* - held in conjunction with Weston Village fundraising committee.
- *Craft Day* - held biannually at Helmdon to celebrate the talents of the benefice and raise funds for the Church and charity.



5.2 Schools, Education, Health Care, Activities and Commerce

Schools & Education

Pre-School and Primary schools in the Astwell Benefice include:

- Helmdon Pre-School - Acorns, Hintons Close, Helmdon NN13 5QP
During Session Times: Tel: 01295 768327; Mobile: 07743 470602
- Helmdon Primary School (Community School) www.helmdonprimaryschool.com
- Lois Weedon – St. Loys CEVA Primary Academy (Voluntary Aided)
www.St.LoysCofEPrimaryacademy
- Syresham – St. James CEVA Primary School (Voluntary Aided)
www.syreshamprimaryschool.co.uk

Children from Wappenham & Radstone are dispersed to various neighbouring village schools. Most schools take children out of the normal catchment area, depending on available space. Ofsted reports may be reviewed on-line for each school.

The incumbent normally attends assemblies at the two church schools and major festivals as requested by the Schools, and usually takes a keen interest in the non-church school.

Secondary schools to A-level are as follows:

- Magdalen College School, Brackley, comprehensive
generalenquiries@magdalen.northants.sch.uk;
- The Royal Latin, Buckingham (maintained grammar school) www.royallatin.org

- Northampton School for Girls (independent schools) www.nsg.northants.sch.uk
- Northampton School for Boys (independent schools) www.nsb.northants.sch.uk
- Sponne School, Towcester (comprehensive) www.sponne.org.uk
- Chenderit, Middleton Cheney (comprehensive)
www.enquiries@chenderit.northants.sch.uk

Health Care

Doctors, Surgeries, Dentists and Opticians are sited in Brackley, Towcester and Greens Norton.

- a) The Brackley Medical Centre www.brackleymedicalcentre.co.uk
NOTE: New Brackley Medical Centre and Community Hospital opened 2020. Services to include GP Surgery, Minor Injuries Unit, Occupational Health, X-Ray, Intermediate bed care. Full Details available on www.brackleymedicalcentre.co.uk NN13 6QZ (01280 702436)
- b) Springfield Surgery, Springfield Way, Brackley, NN13 6JJ · (01280) 703431
www.springfieldsurgery.co.uk
- c) Towcester Medical Centre: Link Way, Towcester, NN12 6HH · (01327) 359953
www.towcestermedicalcentre.co.uk
- d) Brook Medical Centre, Swinneyford Road, Towcester NN3 5EN · (01604) 401185
- e) Greens Norton Medical Centre, Towcester NN12 8BL 01327 358287
www.gnwmp.co.uk

Dental practices both NHS /Private, and opticians are available in Brackley, Towcester and Greens Norton.

Care Homes in Brackley and Towcester, namely:

- Brackley: Brackley Fields; Juniper House; Bridgewater House and Candleford Court;
- Towcester: Leeson Court, (providing sheltered accommodation); Duncote Hall and The Lakes; Clare House and Ridgeway House.

Hospitals in the local vicinity are:

- The Horton General Hospital, Banbury (Maternity/A&E);
- Foscote Private Hospital, Banbury;
- John Radcliffe, Oxford University Hospital (Maternity services/A&E);
- Churchill Hospital, Centre of Excellence, specialising in Cancer care, Oxford;
- Northampton General Hospital, including Orthopaedic/Maternity/A&E.

Commerce and Industry

Within the Astwell Benefice there are three public houses, serving drinks and meals, a travelling *Post Office* visiting Helmdon twice weekly, all day Tuesday, and Thursday afternoon. Syresham also has a Post Office in their village shop, open every day.

- *Agriculture* within the Astwell Benefice includes various types of farming including beef, sheep, arable, equestrian, and stabling facilities.
- *Silverstone International Circuit*, Silverstone.

- *A.W. Duncome, fruit and veg wholesalers*, Helmdon, who continue to be a great support to the Church throughout the year, including the Village Fete, Harvest, and Christmas.
- *SMS Bus Servicing*, Helmdon.
- *Helmdon Sawmills* – ideal for those winter loads of wood, also a generous supporter of the church Fete.
- *Tanks a Lot* – a tank driving range, Helmdon.
- *Black Pits* – a recycling centre, Welsh Lane, Helmdon, providing gas for over 7000 homes in Brackley.
- *Silverstone Shooting Centre*, Staplegate Farm, Crowfield.
- *Enterprise Control Systems*, hi-tec firm based in Wappenham.
- *Bed & Breakfast Guest House*, Hill House, Helmdon.
- *Astwell Mill B&B, Helmdon*

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Thank you for your interest.

If you would like to know more, please contact:

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