

1

Church name: ALL SAINTS ASFORBY

Date: 30/3/23

Who are you?

All Saints' Asforby. Rural Village Church.
 Congregation varies between 20-30, mostly mature
 in age but perhaps not in attitude, very welcoming
 and friendly, we are an inclusive church.

Where have you come from?

We see ourselves as a very adaptable
 church, being open to change i.e. we welcomed
 a lady vicar and we welcomed the Methodist
 congregation when their Chapel closed. We
 adapted to the pandemic and had a considerable
 following via Zoom and Facebook, it was shared
 among the parishes and sometimes led by the
 other parishes.

Where are you going?

We are very supportive for ongoing learning and
 development of faith and empowerment of
 laity. We hold Lenten Advent courses.

What are you doing now?

We hold monthly coffee mornings with no charge.
 We support the Foodbank, we host a toddler
 group supplying heat for them free of charge.
 We hold services in the local schools and welcome
 them into the church. We have an ongoing
 Safeguarding priority.

?

Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God emerging?

We live our faith and try to show it by our actions. It is good to see people come into our church finding it a welcoming environment. We the people of the church are the church ~ not the building. Although we are very lucky to caretake such a beautiful building.

What are you hopeful for?

To continue as we are but also building hoping and praying for help in spite of considerable challenges.

What are you fearful about?

A dwindling congregation. Also increasing costs. The fabric, age and maintenance of the church.

How you can pray for us.

We pray for wisdom, discernment, kindness and clarity.

1

Church name: St Mary's Ashby Folville

Date: 27th March 2023

Who are you?

St Mary's is a rural church with an aging worshipping population. A beautiful building with a lot of history relating back to medieval times. We are part of the benefice of the South Croxton group and part of the South West Framland group

B16
A16

Where have you come from?

See 'Who are you'

Where are you going?

We are hoping to be able to continue to work within the benefice as we have done so successfully in the past



What are you doing now?

We are keeping St Mary's going. The Priest in Charge has been on long term sick for nearly 18 months and we have been carrying on with the few services we are able to with the clergy who are available



Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God emerging?

We are keeping St Mary's going. The Priest in Charge has been on long term sick for nearly 18 months and we have been carrying on with the few services we are able to with the clergy who are available

What are you fearful about?

Lack of worshippers and harder to attract younger members of the community

✓✓ AGREE

What are you hopeful for?

A positive outcome of this process which will engage with the community and attract and revitalise rural churches.



⇓
MAY BE POSSIBLE TO
REVITALISE THE CHURCH
BUT MAYBE NOT THE
RURAL CHURCHES

How you can pray for us.

See above

- CULTURAL HERITAGE - WHO FINES?
(NON SPIRITUAL ~~OVER~~ POPULATION, WILLING TO
CONTRIBUTE?)

HOW BECOME RELEVANT TO THOSE UNDER 18?

1**Church name:** St Peter and St Paul's Barkestone le Vale**Date:** 20/4/2023

Who are you?

- Very small rural village of approx. 125 houses in Vale of Belvoir
- Currently v small congregation – 5-10 people
- PCC of 5 Members
- approx. 10/12 % of houses have practicing Christians (varying denominations)
- Interregnum for 2 lengthy periods of time. (2 years 2015-2017 then recently 3 years 2020–2023)
- Also major reorganization of Vale churches over last 13 years .
- Vale churches split into 2 groups – without consultation of churches : some were v disappointed by this major change. Congregations across the small churches dwindled.

Where have you come from?

- Church v traditional built approx. 1155. Tower and spire – approx. 15C. Major refurbishment in 1840s. Recent refurbishments – roof repairs 2012
- Water and toilet added - 2015
- Lights added to spire – donated by resident family.
- Vibrant worship with good attendance and family activities for over 10/15 years. V good fundraising community events and good savings. Very good links with community and families.
- Local evening fellowship group with 3 local churches.
- Most recent Vicar left during Covid.
- Since COVID closure – church has v little congregation, church open at weekends. Just festival and special services.
- Church opened each weekend.
- Still v good links with community and local village Hub
- Open the book in local school
- Join in zoom service – through covid weekly, and still now fortnightly.

Where are you going?

- Period of transition for the village and benefice.
- Been a few years of prayer for vicar/leader
- Involvement and appointment of Growing Faith Minister to work in local communities in our area.
- Village/community initiative to renovate the bells, secure the structure
- Further vision to open the church inside (take away pews/create a refreshments/play gathering space - to become a larger community space that will be multifunctional.

What are you doing now?

- Village event with church at least once a year, plus coffee mornings, drinks in local Hub
- See previous where are you going for current planning and active work
- Small PCC that has to do all the church admin/renovations/service /worship prep, budget/safeguarding etc
- Small group has to attend as many meetings - time is precious. Lots Energy is being spent on fabric and admin . This is true for each v small church in our area. Previous plans to share budgets, admin have vanished! So less time for fellowship

Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God emerging?

- Seeing God moving through the village – wider aspect than the church base.
- Very encouraging relationship with local Hub – village pub bought by our village.
- Still good attendance at major festivals in the church.
- Village families like to join in creative and active events in the village .
- Christians in this and other villages joining for zoom services/prayer and fellowship.
- God's wider work than within one church denomination.
- Through community support of charity – e.g. FOODBANK

What are you fearful about?

- Burnout! Very small group trying to complete all tasks for one church within a large Minster group.
- Communications across all the churches and diocese.
- Being forgotten and left alone as a small rural church– that the larger churches will demand/expect the time of the clergy
- That our small church(es) may end up having to close.
- Wider context – seeing the church diminish in village and rural life.

What are you hopeful for?

- Praying for a revival of mission/energy to spread the Good News through the communities.
- To bring churches together more – especially those smaller churches that need group face to face fellowship.
- See growth in the worshipping community - all ages / diversity
- More encouragement, ideas, physical assistance , to reach out to the community. 2 of the 5 PCC are 80+ feel weary. ' Spirit is willing but flesh is weak'
- Valued praying together with other 5 churches for Growing Faith appointee. Discovered that God had already started to move that person even as we were praying, Excited about this appointment
- Help to think outside the box to encourage new ways of worship in community. Traditional Sunday morning not working.
- Sense community is open but we need more help to get started, then hopefully it will support from within.

How you can pray for us.

- Using the prayer Jesus taught us as a base for the whole process
- Enabling every individual to feel valued in this process
- The Holy Spirit to guide each church/group/clergy/parishioners/individuals to work for the glory of God and serve Him.

Who are you?

Beeby is a small village whose residents have always had a strong sense of community, originally based around the many long-standing families in the parish. The community is now much more diverse with residents representing many walks of life.

Nevertheless, a strong sense of community prevails.

All Saints' church has always been the main focal point for villagers to come together, given that there is no other communal building or public space. Traditionally this would have been mainly for worship.

Where have you come from?

The South Croxton Group Benefice was formed, as others at that time at in the Framland Deanery, at the beginning of the 1990's.

It is made of the communities of Ashby Folville, Barsby, Beeby, Gaddesby, John O'Gaunt, South Croxton, Thorpe Satchville and Twyford.

For half of the groups existence, it has been a member of the South West Framland Group.

Each village sending a member to be part of the Group Council of 16 churches working closely with each other and sharing a central administration based in the benefice at Twyford Parish Church vestry.

The benefice has experience of working collaboratively with others and the Minster Community documents produced identify in an honest and open way a desire to continue doing that.

Where are you going?

We will continue to utilise our lovely church to help bring the Beeby community together, through a range of activities and especially our Carol Service.

All Saints will be open daily for Beeby residents and visitors to allow contemplation, private prayer and historical study.

The famous Beeby Tub is a draw to the village and brings visitors from near and far to see it. The old rhyme goes: Beeby Tub without a pub, A church without a spire. Two brothers fought and broke their backs, and so 'twas built no higher'

What are you doing now?

This church is not in regular use for worship and vested with the Churches Conservation Trust. The Churchyard remains open. The Parish is now joined with South Croxton.

since All Saints' church became vested with the Churches Conservation Trust, we have been able to continue to hold our annual Carol Service, a joyous bringing together of the community at Christmas, but also offer a facility for a wider range of communal activities such as music recitals, wreath making workshops and village meetings. Residents of Beeby may, and do, also use the church for funerals christenings and with special permission, weddings.

The open churchyard is very much a shared village space, maintained by members of the community and frequently visited by friends and relatives of those buried there.

**Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God emerging?**

We have been able to continue to hold our annual Carol service, a joyous bringing together of the community at Christmas, but also offer a facility for a wider range of communal activities such as music recitals, wreath making workshops and village meetings. Residents of Beeby may, and do, also use the church for funerals christenings and with special permission, weddings.

The open churchyard is very much a shared village space, maintained by members of the community and frequently visited by friends and relatives of those buried there.

What are you fearful about?

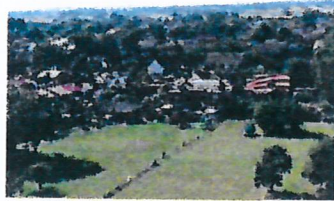
Funding is a major concern with respect to the maintenance of the churchyard. In recent years we have had to fund the rebuilding of a section of the church wall and gateway following a traffic collision, and the pruning and shaping of several yew trees, which had become overgrown.

What are you hopeful for?**How you can pray for us.**

1 St Mary the Virgin, Bottesford

22 April 2023

Who are you?



Bottesford is a large village (about 4,000) in the very attractive rural area of the Vale of Belvoir. It is in the north eastern tip of Leicestershire and the northern edge of the Leicester diocese with the city of Nottingham to the west and town of Grantham to the east.

The Belvoir benefice used to consist of 9 churches but more recently we have been in a group of 5 East Vale churches along with Muston, Redmile, Barkestone and Plungar. Since October 2020 the group has been in vacancy and activities have

been largely led by a lay ministry team with visiting clergy for sacraments. Nevertheless, services have been maintained in person and on Zoom, using YouTube during covid, and activities expanded.

St Mary's has a service each Sunday morning at 10.30am with a congregation of around 50 mainly mature people with a warm love of the Lord Jesus and a keenness to serve Him. Recently, we have seen green shoots of engagement by younger people, both in the services and in other activities. This is most welcome as we are conscious that the congregation is not representative of the wider village community.

St Mary's Church is open every day and we have visitors from all over the world (evidenced by our Visitors Book.) We maintain this open-ness on the basis that God's welcome is for everyone, and God's house is a sanctuary.

Where have you come from?



St Mary's is a beautiful Grade 1 listed 13th century church containing elaborate tombs of the Earls of Rutland from the 16th and 17th centuries. Through history there has been a close connection with nearby Belvoir Castle and the Duke is a Patron. Links today are looser. The building is well-maintained though there are always projects needing attention.

The church community embraces all-member ministry with a can-do attitude. Individuals are involved with services: forming a choir, leading and preaching, leading intercessions, reading the Bible, welcoming and stewarding, and providing refreshments afterwards. Others help maintain the building and churchyard: mowing grass, changing lightbulbs, regular cleaning, etc.



The church building is a prominent local landmark and the wider village has a keen sense of ownership. A Friends network fund-raise to help support maintenance work. Turnout for major festivals is circa 200 and services by the local schools attract even more. A video monitor of peregrines nesting on the tower attracts considerable interest from all ages.

Where are you going?



Our mission is to serve God, grow in faith and serve the community. God is at the centre of all we do both in the church family and in the wider parish. The PCC's aim is for the church to be a prominent presence in village life.

To develop links with the wider community in all 5 churches, a Growing Faith Minister has recently been appointed (Rev Monica Judson) whose licensing is 25 June 2023. She will build on existing work and green shoots by working in local schools and building other networks to encourage spiritual awareness and nurture faith in younger elements of the community. Our desire is for greater inter-generational faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and worship of His Name.

We are seeking the Spirit's leadership to balance valued and long followed traditions with daring to do things differently.

There is room for expanding the use of our church website and Facebook page to be more visible on-line, as a means to offer a welcome and share the gospel of love more widely.

What are you doing now?



St Mary's undertakes or is involved with a wide variety of activities and pastoral work which bring contact with the community. We are seeking to develop these to make best use of them and exploit any overlaps:

- a successful charity shop and support for the local foodbank,
- termly school services and links with uniformed groups,
- monthly tea and cakes and a Warm Space over winter,
- Wild Worship activities and eco-church in the churchyard,
- Little Angels toddler group;
- Open the Book in primary schools,
- Churches Together in Bottesford with Methodists and Windmill BMO,
- a well-attended group for a Lent Course and the Bible Course,
- pastoral care of vulnerable and frail community members,
- Lay ministers taking communion to the sick or housebound,
- a well-used 'in-church' prayer tree for the community and visitors,
- a large ministry of occasional offices (Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals),
- using the church building to host concerts and exhibitions,
- family friendly services and events at key festivals,
- sponsoring of 2 children in Africa through To Kenya With Love.



Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God emerging?

By going out into the community using the activities listed already, we are making contacts, building relationships and trying to show God's love.

Kingdom examples include:

- Little Angels families exploring faith by engaging with Wild Worship and Sunday Worship,
- Community members exploring faith by attending the Bible course / Lent Group,
- Church family members deepening faith by attending the Bible Course / Lent Group,
- Open the Book members generating conversations with parents
- Growth of monthly the 'tea and cakes' community, offering friendship and a sense of belonging,
- Thriving church charity shop, addressing local rural poverty, blessing local homeless charities and offering fellowship with a brew,
- Adult community members exploring God's welcome at Wild Worship events e.g. Wreath-Making Workshop.



Green shoots are emerging from all this with contact and attendance by younger people. Led by our new Growing Faith Minister, we hope to develop those and build a more inter-generational church community.

Additionally, there are concerts in church, and a steady stream of baptisms, weddings and funerals, offering 'en masse' opportunities to offer God's welcome.

Our ancient church building with its unusual monuments attracts lots of visitors - many leave favourable comments in the visitors' book. We encourage further engagement through other offerings inside: sale of preserves and candles, bookshop, prayer tree and votive candle stand, camera monitoring the nesting peregrines.

We have a generous and missional approach to our monetary giving to charities and, following PCC discussions, increased our parish contribution.

What are you hopeful for?

- All-age worship and interaction across generations.
- Growing God's Kingdom and seeing lives changed.
- The Holy Spirit continuing to use this fine old building and its worshipping community for God's glory.
- A growing and younger church community with the vitality that brings.
- Nurturing vocation – those seeking or capable of greater involvement, even leadership.
- Growing the faith and understanding of all those coming to Jesus.

What are you fearful about?

- An ageing congregation – without younger people, the church faces an uncertain future.
- Being irrelevant to the local community and side-lined by them.
- Letting the community down by not meeting their needs.
- Letting God down by not spreading His Gospel.
- Some are fearful about 'all the change' that is currently being made (Minster Communities).
- How the Growing Faith Minister and the Minster communities will affect the current situation and dynamic.

How you can pray for us.



Prayer is at the heart of who we are. These are some of the different ways we pray, and how we will pray for you:

- Through the weekly intercessions in church services.
- Through the weekly church news sheet "In Church Today".
- Through the ministry team and other small groups.
- Through Crystal McAllister's prayer initiative linked to 'Thy Kingdom Come'.
- Through the in-church prayer tree and votive candle stand.
- Through different styles of music in worship.

1

Church name: St Guthlac's Branston

Date: 23 April 2023

Who are you?

We are St Guthlac's Church in Branston, situated on the borders of Leics and Lincs, a small rural village very close to other small rural Churches.

Where have you come from?

Not sure, not a lot of knowledge about the Church before we managed to create a good working PCC in the last 4 years.

Where are you going?

We are working hard to make our church a place that the community can get together, we do not have a village hall or anywhere to hold a coffee morning etc. so the villagers felt isolated in their own village, so we have opened the Church into a Community meeting place.

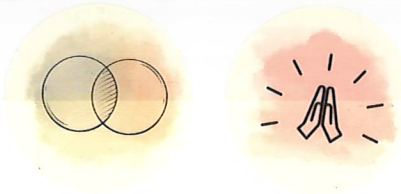


What are you doing now?

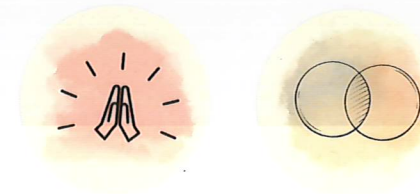
We are having Community events to fundraise towards getting an Eco toilet and Served in the Church, the PCC and Community are keen for this to happen.

Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God emerging?

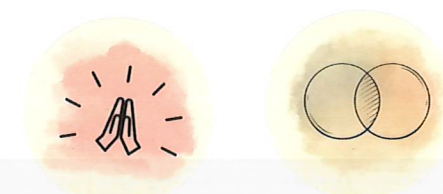
We see the Kingdom emerging in this village as communication amongst the villagers has improved, they greet each other, having met and spoke at the coffee mornings, we see some of them attend Church now and then but it is a seed that has been planted, be it a slow growing plant.

**What are you fearful about?**

We are fearful that interest in the Church will wane as it becomes more difficult to get financial help from the diocese to maintain the buildings and look after the trees in the churchyard, especially with small churches trying to raise money.

**What are you hopeful for?**

Hopeful that all will improve and that God has his eye on all of us and will not let us flounder

**How you can pray for us.**

Who are you?

- One of 6 parish churches in The Parish of The Upper Wreake since 1993
- After 500 year as a “deserted village”, a new development of 70 houses is under construction in Brooksby and the first houses occupied
- Most of the land in Brooksby is owned by the SMB College Group and farmed or is in the process of gravel and sand extraction
- Many new college buildings and sports facilities have been constructed in recent years and this expansion continues

Where have you come from?

- Traditionally Brooksby and Thrussington shared the same rector
- From 1960, Hoby with Rotherby, Brooksby & Ragdale were in the same benefice
- From 1977 Thrussington was added although it was in a different borough and looked towards Syston rather than Melton Mowbray
- Meanwhile Frisby and Kirby Bellars had been subsumed into Melton Great Framland. And it was a logical step for Frisby and Kirby to join Hoby, Rotherby, Brooksby and Ragdale without Thrussington

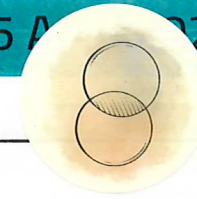
Where are you going?

- Maintaining the advantage of being on the same site of the county’s rural college and continuing to welcome the diocese for rural events
- Welcoming all the new residents into the village
- Developing wedding and baptism ministries
- Continuing to play a full part in the life of the parish
- Offering unique surroundings for the future minster community

What are you doing now?

- Sharing cards/gifts at Christmas and Easter with local residents and holding get-togethers.
- Popular wedding venue in association with Brooksby Hall
- Acting as college chapel for Brooksby Campus of SMB College Group
- Hosting services at Christmas and at other times for local organisations
- Annual lambing service on the college farm
- Heritage tours and talks





Where are you seeing the Kingdom of God emerging?

- Wedding couples returning to the church for baptisms
- Opportunities to engage with students on campus
- Testimony to the value of meeting outside a church building e.g. lambing service on the farm

What are you fearful about?

- We have no churchwardens or DCC since this year's ADCM
- No-one to organise fund-raising

What are you hopeful for?

- Individuals will come forward to ensure that the niche roles of St Michael & All Angels Church can continue: chapel for the Leicestershire rural community, college chapel, venue for special services for other organisations, wedding venue, heritage visits and talks.
- The above features won't be lost in a large minster community.

How you can pray for us.

- Prayers for conserving what is good in the past whilst stepping out boldly into the future