

THE UNITED BENEFICE OF GREAT GRANSDEN, ABBOTSLEY, LITTLE GRANSDEN & WARESLEY CAMBRIDGESHIRE

ely2025

We are looking for a half time priest to lead our four rural churches as we seek to:

- **Engage** fully and courageously with the needs of our communities, locally and globally
- **Grow** God's church by finding disciples and nurturing leaders
- **Deepen** our commitment to God through word, worship and prayer.

Abbotsley



Waresley



Little Gransden



Great Gransden



Who we are

Our united benefice of four churches is part of the Anglican Communion within the worldwide Christian Church. It has been a single benefice since 1999 and the parishes are fully engaged with the work in the Deanery of St Neots. The four parishes are located within striking distance of Cambridge and St Neots. Bedford and Stevenage are close enough for commuters and London is 35 minutes away from St Neots station.

The parishes maintain and enjoy close and cordial links with their respective patrons. The patrons of the individual parishes are Clare College, Cambridge for Little & Great Gransden; Balliol College, Oxford for Abbotsley; and Pembroke College, Cambridge for Waresley. Presentation rights are currently suspended. Normally the right would be taken in turns, Clare College having 2 turns out of four.

We understand ourselves to be called to:

- Gather together to worship as the body of Christ in each of our four churches to celebrate our common purpose and welcome and celebrate our human diversity.
- Serve our parishes and congregations in ways that show the love and compassion of Christ.
- Relate our faith to the communities and wider world around us.
- Create a safe and welcoming space where people can question and discover the love of God in their own way.

Middle Anglican might best describe the theological position within the benefice. The bible is read seriously but critically and as followers of a faith inspired by the life and work of Jesus, we try positively to relate our theology and worship to the world we inhabit. There is a thoughtful balance between various forms of liturgy and a broad range of Christian experiences is reflected in our worship. Creativity is welcomed in appropriate services, when some members of the congregation contribute to this. We have an open communion table.

We consider social justice to be central to the gospel and this commitment supports vulnerable groups within nearby towns and national and international charities.



Dinner at Clare College after a recital & evensong

Opportunities for the Future

A recent survey in part of the benefice highlighted the strong support there is for a vicar resident in the benefice & the important place of our churches in the villages. We would look to the new incumbent for encouragement and leadership.

- Confirming the church as an integral and vital part of the community through the effective communication of church activities; close liaison with other community organisations; and helping us to meet the challenges affecting our parishes and the wider world.
- Creating a vision for all ages to grow and deepen their faith, with a particular focus on increasing the involvement of, and developing a thriving ministry for children and young people and young adults.
- Developing links with other parishes within the Deanery to strengthen our presence. Within the St Neots Deanery Plan consideration has been given to the possibility of some form of co-operation with the neighbouring Gamlingay with Hatley and Everton group of parishes. A range of options is yet to be explored.
- Raising awareness of how we can be more creative with our buildings and resources whilst continuing to meet our parish share.

Who are we looking for?

We are aware that the new incumbent will bring their own talents and gifts and identify further opportunities. But we do need a forward planner, someone who likes to work in a team with church members and with many in the community who give substantial help to the church but who do not attend. Allocating time to be visible will be important. Our new priest will enjoy a warm welcome and will not want for enthusiastic support.

We are looking for someone who will assist us in:

- Leading prayer and worship: devising and providing appropriate liturgies, new forms of church, collaborating with LLMs and ALMs, musicians and others.
- Proclaiming the word: teaching and encouraging, preaching, leading study groups; preparing children and adults for confirmation, stimulating us on our Christian journey.
- Pastoral care: including baptisms, weddings and funerals, and working with the pastoral volunteers and others in caring for the sick through visiting homes and hospitals.
- Growing the work with children and young people and providing chaplaincy to the primary school.
- Enabling confident ministry by members of our congregations.
- Widening our knowledge and experience of the worldwide church and other faiths.

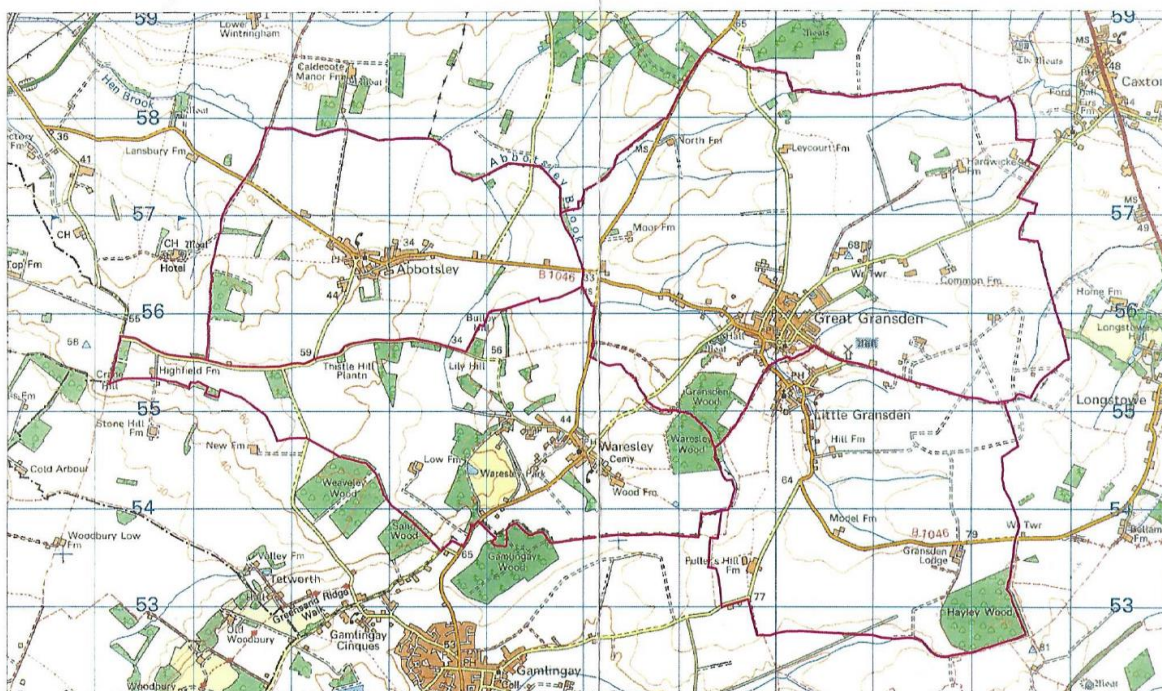
Our New Vicar

These responsibilities reflect the work of any Anglican priest, but we are aware of the different challenges presented by four churches in a rural environment. The new priest can depend on the support of the laity & the strong presence of the church in the community.

The new Priest

- Will need to have the energy to give support and spiritual leadership to four relatively small congregations, whilst serving quite a mixed population, as well as contributing to the development of a strategic vision for growth.
- Will have well-developed people skills, fostering teamwork and skills within the congregation.
- Should be willing to be visible in the parishes – at the school gate; visiting the toddler group; and the Evergreens, a retired members group, as well as pastoral visits.
- Will need to work with church members to increase numbers and develop further provision for children, young people, and young adults.
- Should be a good listener and communicator, able to engage with people of all ages, other churches in the Deanery, the primary school, & our Cambridge & Oxford College patrons.
- Will have pastoral gifts to engage with and support individuals in the congregation and the community at significant points in their lives.
- Will be open, approachable and enthusiastic, with a sense of humour.
- Should have a willingness to bring in speakers from outside and to facilitate visits to other places of interest.

Our Benefice



Diocese of Ely

Map of the Benefice of Great Gransden and Abbotsley and Little Gransden and Waresley
Produced on 04/01/2005



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Waresley: St James the Great

Waresley is a small village of some 240 people with a minimal racial mix. Our population is divided between retirees, commuters to London and Cambridge and a small number who farm locally. There are a few families with primary age children who either attend Barnabas Oley Church of England Primary School in Great Gransden or who go to private schools in Cambridge or Bedford. Secondary education is in Cambridge, Bedford or St Neots.

There is a popular garden centre with a large restaurant; a local pub; and a substantial poultry farm with a small number of local employees, all of which actively support village and church events. Waresley also has a thriving cricket club with senior and junior teams.

Our village hall has a kitchen and modern toilets. The hall is used for social and fundraising events, including those of the Friends of St James and the church, exercise classes and community coffee mornings.

The village is proud of its beautiful church, Grade II* Listed, built in 1857 and designed by William Butterfield, and a very active Friends of St James raises funds to repair and improve the building. Recent projects included installing glass doors on the porch, rehanging the bells, improving the heating system, installing a sound system, rebuilding part of the Duncombe Mausoleum, roof work and repairing and replacing leaded windows.

Abbotsley: St Margaret of Antioch

Abbotsley has a population of some 450. The church, built in the 14th century and restored in 1861, is Grade II listed. Since 1974 the church has consisted of the chancel, vestry and the churchyard. The nave and the tower are owned and maintained by the Churches Conservation Trust. Regular weekly worship is in the chancel and the nave is available for up to 6 Sunday services a year. There are few baptisms and weddings and more funerals, reflecting the largely retired population. The family service with children is especially appreciated and is lay led with songs to a guitar & sometimes dance. Morning prayer has recently adopted Common Worship and the congregation has welcomed group services.

Little Gransden: St Peter & St Paul and Great Gransden: St Bartholomew

Little & Great Gransden churches and community are best described together. Situated within sight of each other, the worshipping community is largely the same wherever the service is held. Whilst Great Gransden has a population of 1500 and Little 300 both are largely white professional and white-collar commuters. Farming, three light industrial estates and a significant pre-fab housing company also serve the local villages. New housing is a possibility but is unlikely to meet the need for affordable housing for first time buyers.

Barnabas Oley Church of England Primary School and its children and parents occupy a significant place in the benefice as a whole. It has very close links with St Bartholomew's, holds several regular school services there, including its Founder's Day service, and welcomes the contribution the priest is able to make to its spiritual life. Clare College presents every school leaver with a bible and a book grant to any of its pupils who go on to university. Following its recent OFSTED inspection, the school is working towards being outstanding. Two Foundation Governors from the benefice have a place on the Governing Body, as does the priest.

The Gransdens is a vibrant, active and hugely talented community. Within the two villages there are some 30 different societies and active groups from pre-school to post-retirement, horticultural to historical; bell ringing to bowls, tennis, golf, horse-riding, amateur dramatics & walking.

Both churches organise social events that, apart from their two Summer Fetes, will raise funds for their chosen charities. Members of both churches are very visible as active participants in community events.

The church of St Peter & St Paul is a Grade II listed building dating from the 13th century and can seat 120. It is a flexible space with moveable pews. The building is now in good condition following extensive roof repairs in 2017, planned re-decoration will commence in 2018 and provision of a kitchen & WC is also planned.

St Bartholomew's is a Grade I listed building mainly 15th century, but with a 14th century tower. Particularly noticeable are its oak pews, wooden ceiling, unique clock & chimes, six bells for ringing full circle and stained glass that includes a modern memorial window to the Royal Canadian Air Force 405 Squadron. There is also a kitchen & WC on the ground floor of the tower. There is a large performance space in front of the rood screen. The last Quinquennial inspection took place in July 2016. Overall the church is in very good condition, the Category A works mainly consisting of exterior repairs to the chancel round windows and parapets estimated at £25000 + VAT. Given the lack of capital reserves the church will look for assistance to grants together with support from Clare College who take some responsibility for the chancel.

The Vicarage



Situated in the centre of Great Gransden in a cul-de-sac of six houses built in 1983, the Vicarage is being completely refurbished & decorated. The accommodation includes a hall, study, sitting room, dining room, kitchen, utility room, downstairs cloakroom/WC, master bedroom en-suite, 3 further bedrooms, small box room and bathroom/WC. Oil fired central heating. Detached double garage and small garden at the rear.

Our Churches & Communities

Services in the Benefice

1st Sunday	*8am	<i>Holy Communion BCP</i>	<i>Little Gransden</i>
	9.30am	Said Eucharist BCP	Waresley
	10am	All Age Worship (Lay led)	Great Gransden
	6pm	Holy Communion CW	Abbotsley
2nd Sunday	10am	Family Communion CW	Group Service
3rd Sunday	9.30am	Family Communion CW	Great Gransden
	9.30am	Morning Prayer CW	Abbotsley
	11am	Morning Prayer BCP (Lay led)	Waresley
	*6pm	<i>Evening Prayer BCP</i>	<i>Little Gransden</i>
4th Sunday	9.30am	Family Communion CW	Little Gransden
	11am	All Age Worship (Lay led)	Abbotsley
	6pm	Evening Prayer BCP (4pm winter months)	Great Gransden
5th Sunday	10am	Family Communion CW	Group Service
	6pm	Evening Prayer BCP	Group Service

* *presently suspended*

NB: Group services rotate around all 4 parishes

Style of worship



Brownies helping with puppets



AAW with Rev. Chris Duffett



Confirmation 2017

Worship has become less formal during recent years and Common Worship is the predominant form in the benefice with the occasional use of BCP.

In the Gransdens a small group meets monthly to plan and lead the All Age Worship and one service each month includes Sunday School. We enjoy a close relationship with the Baptist Church in Great Gransden.

Across the benefice there is a strong desire to explore more informal worship patterns and look to how more young people might be engaged.

A Licensed Lay Minister is actively involved in leading and assisting worship within the benefice. Servers, readers, intercessors and acolytes, as well as those authorised to administer the chalice, support the Eucharist services. The servers are robed in albs; the choir in surplice & cassock and the presiding priest for communion would normally wear alb & chasuble. The sacrament is reserved in an aumbry at Great Gransden. Incense is not used.

The Sunday School meets on the third Sunday of each month during the 9.30am Family Communion Service held at Great Gransden. The children divide into two groups, Pebbles (aged 3 to 7) and Rocks (aged 8 to 11). The children learn about God, the life of Jesus, and what it means to be part of the Church. We follow the Living Stones programme, complementing the adult service using stories, discussion, prayers and an activity. The children re-join the service at the Offertory and, at the end of the service, they enjoy telling the congregation what they have been learning about.

There is an active Mothers Union that meets regularly; a Quiet Garden, part of the National ecumenical scheme; a new youth group planned for 2019; and a Lent study group is brought together by our LLM who regularly assists in benefice services.

Attendance at Services

	Average attendance	Electoral Roll
Abbotsley	10	30
Little Gransden	35	30
Great Gransden	45	110
Waresley	12	50

Church Music



Music Sunday 2017

The Gransdens Church Choir enjoys excellent leadership under our Authorised Lay Minister for Music, practises weekly and achieves a high standard. The Choir is affiliated to the Royal School of Church Music, follow the training system 'Voice for Life' and supports events held in the Diocese and further afield. Six members have obtained Dean's (Bronze), Bishop's (Silver) or Senior Bishop's (Gold) Awards. The Gransdens has a permanent contracted paid organist and the Choir also supports some Group Services. The Choir is robed in cassock & surpluses. Most of our servers are drawn from the Choir and the younger members act as acolytes.

Bell Ringing



Ringling for service

There is an active and enthusiastic group of bell ringers at Great Gransden who practise weekly. There are six bells with a tenor of 600kgs. Presently there are 11 ringers ranging in age from 17 to 70. The bells are rung for all services, and for weddings and funerals as requested. Other ringing is arranged for special local and national events. Visiting ringers from other churches are welcomed. Two of the ringers are accredited Ringing Teachers and training is carried out using materials from the Association of Ringing Teachers. Dedicated training sessions are held using CCTV and computer programmes.

<http://gransdenbells.btck.co.uk/>

Mission & Outreach

A representative group from the four parishes meets to plan mission and outreach events. One of this group organises the Christian Aid collection in Great and Little Gransden and another the monthly Traidcraft stall in Great Gransden Church.

During the past 12 years there has been a strong emphasis on encouraging confirmation groups and building close relationships with children's groups in the villages.

Support is given to the parish of Christ the King in Rio de Janeiro and their priest, Father Antonio Terto through our prayers and money via USPG (United Society Partners in the Gospel) as well as MIND in Cambridgeshire, a branch of the nationwide charity Mind, supporting people in their recovery from mental health issues and campaigning against stigma and discrimination. Stamps are collected for the Hospice at Moggerhanger & Wintercomfort in Cambridge is supported by a collection of food & clothing. Harvest gifts have also recently been given to the Salvation Army. For the last two years a team has entered a 'Swimathon' in conjunction with Biggleswade Rotary Club, raising funds for a Rotary chosen charity & the church.



The Swimathon team of swimmers 2018



Great Gransden Church Fete 2018

Administration

Each of the parishes has its own PCC. Little & Great now have joint meetings to consider finance & fabric and mission & ministry. There are five churchwardens, Waresley having assistant churchwardens, all of whom meet together regularly.

Whilst all the four parishes paid their parish share in full, their financial health needs to be stronger. Great Gransden in particular will require funds for Category A repairs in the next two years and will need to consider appropriate grant funding as well as fundraising within and outwith its membership.

The benefice supports a monthly magazine that is delivered to houses in all four villages. 'Roundabout' includes a pastoral letter from the priest, details of all the services & news from the local authorities, village societies & clubs. Little & Great Gransden churches have a well maintained and up-to-date website and Facebook page providing information about future services, meetings and information about the two churches. A printed Annual Report for Little & Great records all the events and activities of the church family during the previous year.

<http://www.thegransdens.btck.co.uk>

People Here To Help



Tony Bevens LLM



*Sheila George
ALM Music*

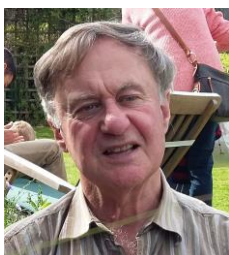


*Angela Steele
ALM Youth*



*Phillip George
Safeguarding Officer
The Gransdens*

Churchwardens



*Rob Chignell
Great Gransden*



*Iain Strath
Great Gransden*



*Nick Wareham
Little Gransden*



*Betty Bates
Little Gransden*



*Julie Wisson
Abbotsley*

Waresley Assistant Wardens



Christine Badcock



Colin Croot



Sheila Thompson



Louise Wigan