

The Benefice of Cogenhoe and Great Houghton and Little Houghton with Brafield on the Green



St. Peter's aims to reflect the teachings and glory of God and to make His presence felt in every home in Cogenhoe. We also aim to welcome everyone as God's children and valued members of the body of Christ.



Our mission at St Mary's Great Houghton is to make known the love of God in each home through our faith. We aim to develop a vibrant community through prayer, education, worship and fellowship.



St Mary's Little Houghton.

To proclaim Christ's love in the community and to keep the Church at the heart of village life.



St Laurence, Brafield on the Green.

Spreading God's word in the wider community.

2014

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the Benefice of Cogenhoe, Great Houghton and Little Houghton with Brafield on the Green – four very different villages united in the single purpose of spreading the Word of God, and supporting and encouraging our parishioners to be more thoughtful and caring neighbours.

Our hope is that this profile will give you an overall view of the Benefice – of what we are like, what we have to offer and our hopes for the future. We look forward to welcoming a new priest who will have the enthusiasm, energy and commitment to support us as we face challenges and opportunities in the days ahead.

The full Parish Profile for each of our villages can be found on the respective church websites listed below.

Joy Hodge
John Grubb
Churchwardens of Cogenhoe

Tony Newton
Alan Walker
Churchwardens of Great Houghton

John Ford
Ralph Westmoreland
Churchwardens of Little Houghton

Raymond Henman
Madeleine Donald
Churchwardens of Brafield on the Green

May 2014

Benefice: www.theunitedbenefice.org.uk

Cogenhoe: www.stpeterscogenhoe.org.uk

Great Houghton: www.stmarysgreathoughton.org.uk

Little Houghton: www.stmaryslittlehoughton.org.uk

Brafield: www.stlaurencebrafield.org.uk

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Benefice and Surrounding Area

The Benefice

The Benefice of Cogenhoe and Great Houghton and Little Houghton with Brafield on the Green was formed in 1997. The original Benefice of Little Houghton with Brafield on the Green began in 1686, thus making it one of the oldest in the country. Great Houghton was added in 1988. This is a well-established Benefice, the four churches having worked together for 17 years.



We are four rural parishes, each with its own individual characteristics, lying to the SE of Northampton. Great Houghton is within the borough of Northampton whereas the other three parishes are in South Northamptonshire District.

The map shows the four parishes, L-R: Great Houghton, Little Houghton, Brafield on the Green and Cogenhoe. Although Cogenhoe has the smallest area it is the highest population at 1400.

Brafield has 650, Great Houghton 600 and Little Houghton 375. At the moment, the ethnic grouping is mainly white.

Northampton is the county town of Northamptonshire, with a population of over 210,000 people and still expanding. It lies between London and Birmingham at the 'cross-roads of England'. There is easy access by train and road to London, Birmingham, Birmingham International Airport and Milton Keynes. The town offers a wide range of cultural, retail, leisure and employment opportunities. It is home to Northampton Saints rugby team, Northampton Town Football Club (the Cobblers), the Northants County Cricket team, the Royal & Derngate Theatres, the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery (including national shoe museum), the iconic 78 Derngate designed by Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the University of Northampton. There are several places of historic interest reasonably close by - e.g. Althorp House, Castle Ashby House and Lamport Hall. Other nearby places of local interest include Silverstone Circuit and Towcester Racecourse.

There are daytime bus services, and the Council provides a Free Bus Travel Scheme for the over 60s and people with a disability.

Cogenhoe

The population of Cogenhoe is about 1400 which covers all age groups. The church is on the edge of the older part of the village and there has been much ribbon development from the 1960's to present day. Infilling is still continuing.

The local county primary school has a good reputation and attracts families from within and outside the village. Although not a church school, the church has good links with it and our Curate and Reader regularly lead assembly. Our Reader also works with individual classes on Religious Education related topics. Pupils attend an end of term service in church and sing at our Fete. They also open their doors to us to host our monthly Messy Church.

There is a pre-school playgroup held in the village hall and our Reader regularly attends during term time to do music and tell bible stories. The ladies of the playgroup also assist with our parish lunch and the annual Church Fete.

Within the village we have a shop with post office, village hall, social, bowls, football and cricket clubs. The Royal Oak pub is under new management and has a restaurant.

The village hall stands within a large playing field with children's playground. There are some limited opportunities for employment in Cogenhoe.

Great Houghton

Great Houghton is a large village on the eastern side of Northampton situated just south of the A428 Bedford Road. This forms one of only two approaches to the village – the other coming from the B526 Newport Pagnell Road. In modern times the village has become incorporated within the expanded Northampton Borough boundaries.

Like Little Houghton, the village was developed on high ground overlooking the River Nene valley. Its dwellings were documented in the Domesday Book and research suggests settlements have been present on its site since Roman times.

The village presently has 270 houses, the majority of which are owner-occupied. Its population in 2011 census was 636 (116 aged <16 years old; 405 aged 16-65 years old; and 115 aged >65 years old). The predominant ethnic grouping is white.

The older part of the village is situated in the area adjacent to the church with a number of listed buildings within the designated Conservation area.

There are no major industries or offices based within the village in 2014 although the village is close to the Brackmills Industrial estate, which houses a number of multi-national companies including Barclaycard. The A428 road has been the site of development of a number of offices, restaurants and hotels in the last twenty years. In 2014, the old Cattle Market site adjacent to the village has been redeveloped for major warehousing. However, there is still an important local agricultural economy surrounding the village and its importance is reflected particularly at the time of Harvest Festival.

Like many villages, Great Houghton lost its Post Office and local store which closed about ten years ago. A Beauty Salon occupies its site.

Great Houghton has two public houses both situated within the older part of the village close to the Church. Both pubs have gardens and provide food for visitors. The village has an excellent Parish Hall that was built in 2003 as a result of a magnificent bequest from a villager and is appropriately named the Parsons Memorial Hall. It sits on extensive grounds which boasts a children's play area, cricket and soccer pitches and tennis courts. It is run by a committee of local people. The full list of current activities

at the Hall and advertised in the Great Houghton Parish News and can be found on www.greathoughton.org

Little Houghton

The village is the smallest in the Benefice, with a population of 375. The numbers of children and older people are probably average for the size of the village. There are about 180 houses.

Whilst Little Houghton is within easy reach of Northampton, the village itself is bypassed by the busy Northampton to Bedford A428 trunk road. It is set on high ground above the valley of the river Nene, and has a good collection of dated stone houses and cottages, mainly of local dark ironstone and buff-colour sandstone. The earliest house is believed to date from 1601. The older part of the village is a designated Conservation Area. There are no plans for any significant housing development.

In the early twentieth century the population tended to fluctuate, the earlier years being greater than today. Apart from the present tendency for smaller families, many of the cottages have been altered to create larger properties. A large proportion of the houses are owner-occupied, although there is some Housing Association property, and a number of the bigger houses (mostly in the ownership of the Little Houghton Estate) are rented.

There is a shop and Post Office, open five and a half days a week, and a recently-refurbished public house 'The Four Pears.' The village hall (not church property) is managed by a committee and is hired by organizations, including the church, as required.

A small industrial estate at Clifford Hill (1m distant with an historic mound believed to have been a Motte and Bailey guarding the river crossing) provides a centre for a removals firm, a wrought-iron works and a guest-house. There is no local employment.

The land surrounding the village is mostly owned by the Little Houghton Estate, and has largely been farmed by one family for the past eighty years.

There is a small play area, with swings and slides; the land is owned and managed by the Parish Council, and has the support of an enthusiastic fund-raising committee.



The [Little Houghton Church of England Aided Primary School](#)

has about a hundred pupils, with six class teachers, several teaching assistants, and administrative staff.

The first school was founded in the early seventeenth century, and has since provided continuous education for children of the



village. The present building dates from 1967; an additional classroom was added twelve years ago and a further classroom has recently been built.

The Vicar is a Foundation Governor, and visits to lead Assembly or to give religious instruction. The PCC is entitled to appoint three Foundation Governors to the Board.

There is an active Association of Friends which supports the school in various ways, particularly in raising funds for specialist equipment and other needs.

The Ward and Smyth Educational Foundation (one of several village charities) also makes grants for specific purposes.

The School has catered for Great Houghton children since the school there closed in 1924.

Brafield on the Green

We are a rural village with a population of approximately 650, and surrounded by mixed arable and pasture farming. Two thirds of the 301 dwellings are owner occupied whilst the remainder is housing association accommodation with some private rental. It would seem that there is a well-balanced mix of all ages and professionals, tradesmen and retirees. The village has two shops, providing groceries, alcohol, tobacco and newspapers. One has a Post Office counter and provides Road Tax discs. The other provides petrol and car-washing. There is a unisex hairdresser next to the Post Office shop. There is also a Funeral Director with three Chapels of Rest.

The Red Lion is the local pub and restaurant, and the Working Men's Club is popular, and hosts a 'Good Neighbours' club for the elderly, every Monday afternoon.

The village is fortunate to have The Sargeant Memorial Hall which is used by the Church, local organisations and classes in upholstery, Pilates, yoga and dance. It is also hired out for private functions. The trustees are required to be communicating Christians.

The Alley Garden Play Area is run by the Parish Council supported by a "100 Club". Next to the play area are allotments which are fully in use, and owned by a village Charity.

Sadly, we have no involvement in a local school since our own village school closed almost twenty years ago. Our village children attend the primary school in Denton, which is not in our Benefice. The secondary school is in Wollaston.

However, we do welcome children to our Eucharist and Family Services, and provide instruments, toys, a play mat, books, colouring books and crayons for their amusement. Our Reader, in leading the Family Service, always involves the children in activities relevant to the chosen topic.

Other Churches in the Benefice

There is a Baptist Chapel in Brafield which has been in the village since 1829. It has a small congregation and visiting preachers who travel from far and wide.

The Rectory



The stone Rectory is in Cogenhoe, adjacent to St Peter's Church. It was built in the late 1980s to a very high standard. It is an excellent family home with four bedrooms, a refurbished modern kitchen and large lounge and dining room. There is a double garage and ample parking at the front.

The front door opens into a small lobby with separate doors to the home and study, so that visitors do not need to go into the home.

There is a large mature garden with a doorway into a spinney.



The Rectory is in the catchment area of [Cogenhoe Primary School](#). Little Houghton has a [Church of England primary school](#).

Most of the village children attend [Wollaston School](#) for their secondary education, although a number of local children attend [Bishop Stopford Church of England School](#) in Kettering, [Northampton School for Boys](#) or [Northampton School for Girls](#).

The area is served by GP practices based in [Denton](#) and [Earls Barton](#) (both of which have in-house dispensaries) and several practices in Northampton. The nearest hospital is [Northampton General](#) (which also provides A&E services).

Vision and Mission

None of the churches within the Benefice has passed any resolutions under the Priests (Ordination of Women) Measure 1993.

Cogenhoe

St. Peter's aims to reflect the teachings and glory of God and to make His presence felt in every home in Cogenhoe. We also aim to welcome everyone as God's children and valued members of the body of Christ.

Our vision is

- We are a modern catholic parish, enjoying a variety of liturgy and music. Our family worship is lively and informal. Vestments are worn for the parish Eucharist where common worship is used, led by the organ and choir or the worship band. Once a month we have an early morning BCP said Eucharist. On weekdays, evening prayer is said at 5 pm and a 7 am said Eucharist is held every Thursday; here we are seeing new growth.
- Our vision is to continue to build on and develop a greater presence within the wider community and to make people of all ages feel included and able to worship in a way they feel comfortable.
- We hope to achieve this through active outreach to all.
- The right candidate would be set within the modern catholic tradition: a good preacher and teacher with energy and enthusiasm, able to respond to the needs of our community. We have an aging congregation and are keen to encourage more young people and families to attend regularly.

Great Houghton

Mission Statement of St Mary BV, Great Houghton:

To make known the love of God in each home through our faith. We aim to develop a vibrant community through prayer, education, worship and fellowship.

Our Vision and Mission

- To develop and deepen the faith within our present congregants and encourage greater participation from others within the village to join us in worship, evangelical discussion, and social interaction.
- To foster a sense of welcome, pride and responsibility towards the Church within our community.

- To understand and respond to better the spiritual needs of our fellow villagers.
- To expand the cadre of core members participating in the activities of the church including duty rotas, participation in church services, membership of church committees and positions and aid in local social events.
- To enhance the pastoral reputation of the Church within the village as a result of the work of our clergy and lay members, particularly with respect to the elderly and infirm.
- To continue our support of those involved with providing religious education to our local youngsters particularly with respect to Messy Church and encouragement for people of all ages to put themselves forward for Confirmation.
- To maintain and increase our involvement and links with schools in both Great and Little Houghton.
- To promote the planned-giving campaign.

Little Houghton

Our pattern of Sunday services reflects our desire to connect with people of all ages, whilst acknowledging the need to provide for those who are more conservative in their preferred type of worship.

The parish might perhaps best be described as being of *moderate tradition*, with the use of vestments, Prayer Book early Holy Communion service and Evensong, and generally a rather more formal kind of worship. An exception is the monthly Family Service, which usually takes on an informal style, with an increasing contribution by young people.

Our vision is

- to seek to deepen our faith, and the faith of all who work to achieve this vision
- to develop our contact with the younger families, and our ministry among children and young adults
- to continue to give support to young people who are currently attending a Young Leaders' Course, to enable them to lead services and encourage their peers to become involved
- to increase the church involvement with the village School
- to set a pattern for encouraging Confirmation, to be more aware of likely or eligible candidates, and review the working of the scheme to admit to Holy Communion before Confirmation
- to be more active in our support for the elderly and the housebound, particularly in visiting
- to continue to develop our planned-giving campaign
- to strengthen our small 'team' of lay people who work for the church

Brafield on the Green

Our Mission Statement for the Church of St. Laurence is:

“Spreading God’s Word in the wider community”

- St Laurence’s is of the Modern Catholic tradition of the Anglican Church with the wearing of vestments for the celebration of the Eucharist.
- We currently have 22 parishioners on our Electoral Roll and our average Sunday attendance is 15, with an average of 14 communicants.
- Each year we pay our Parish Share in full, as funds become available.
- A ‘Welcome Visit’ is made to each new family who moves into the village by making a call and presenting them with a booklet about the life of our Church. We also give them a copy of our Parish Magazine, which is in partnership with the parish of Little Houghton. The monthly magazine content is mainly of Church news.
- With the support of our willing organist and choir leader, we are hoping to resurrect the Junior Choir, as the current youngsters have now joined the adults. We also hope to encourage more singers into our Adult Choir. We shall continue to promote our Parish Lunches, Junior Film nights and Festivals, to try to attract new members of the Parish into the family of the Church.
- We would hope to strengthen the pastoral care from Baptism to Burial within the community.
- We would welcome guidance in reaching the wider community, and look forward to supporting and working with our new incumbent to fulfil our mission.

Future Direction

Cogenhoe

We are continually working on increasing the congregation and bringing new people into the church while still meeting the needs of our existing congregation. Following the introduction of weekly 11am services our numbers are growing.

We have several youth groups ranging from pre-school to 11-14 year olds. Our Reader and a core group of helpers work tirelessly with them in building ties within the community. Under our previous Incumbent we have recently re-launched our Carer and Toddler group (Church Mice) which is rising and we are looking at ways of integrating this into the wider church. We have a growing Sunday School.

Last December we held an outdoor carol service in the centre of the village followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the village hall, which attracted over 70 people, most of whom are not regular churchgoers. We hope to build on this in future years.

As a way of encouraging Scouts, Beavers and Cubs to attend more often we invited them to attend a Thinking Day Service in February and hope this will become a regular event.

Great Houghton

Like many parishes, the average age of our congregation gradually increases and the numbers attending services has not significantly increased. There remains an urgent need to engage young people and families with our church and re-invigorate our local Anglican community. The monthly Family Service remains the most popular service within the village and active encouragement is given for younger congregants to play an active part.

The frequent presence of live music from our Benefice Band has proven popular particularly with the younger members.

Messy Church is well-organised and thrives but suffers from a disconnect with the Church building due to the lack of kitchen and toilet facilities. The PCC are trying to raise funds to finance a small extension for this use.

The combination of the nationwide move of the Church to develop larger Benefices and the geographical positioning of Great Houghton as the furthest outpost from our Rectory has significantly reduced the presence of the church within the village. This cannot be fully compensated for by lay activity particularly when many are out of the village during the working day. The result has been a reduction of the perceived central position of the church within the local community

Little Houghton

- to seek out people who are able, and willing to train for the different aspects of Lay Ministry. eg. in leading worship, as pastoral and Eucharistic assistants and, hopefully, as Lay Readers.
- to set up a network of people who not only visit as needed, but also 'hear' what is happening, particularly among the sick

- to bring more people, of all ages, into committed and regular worship
- to press forward with the planned-giving scheme, in order to free members of the Church Council of the burden of having to devote so much energy to fund-raising, thus enabling them to give time to worship, pastoral and evangelistic matters. The social and often pastoral value of fund-raising activities is, however, recognized, particularly in a small village community.

We believe that this short list of ‘opportunities’ is widely embracing, and that with the support and experience of an enthusiastic and energetic priest, we shall be able to plan a strategy, and then gradually work to achieve it.

Brafield on the Green

Our aim is to encourage more young families to join in our Christian worship, as many members of the congregation are of a senior age. Our annual Flower Festival, Horticultural Show and Christmas Tree Festival are all held in Church and are supported by many of those on the periphery of the Church family.

We hold a Harvest Supper and the occasional St George’s Day supper as a way of pulling together the wider community. These functions, whilst fund-raising, encourage fellowship.

Having recently removed the pews from the west end of the Church, we are able to make good use of the increased space for outreach projects. We hold monthly Parish Lunches from the Spring to late Autumn, and recently we have held Film Nights for youngsters, followed by drinks and snacks.

We look forward to leadership and guidance in the promoting of our Church family.

Church Buildings

Please see the individual Parish Profiles for a fuller description of the buildings.

Cogenhoe

The oldest part of St Peter's Church dates from the 13th Century and is Grade II* listed.



The tomb of Sir Nicholas de Cogenhoe, Crusader Knight and builder of the original church, is in the nave.

The interior was reordered in 2009 to provide an open nave with movable seating. We can accommodate about 120 seated. We have an altar in the nave and a smaller one in the chancel which is used for some services.

The pipe organ was found to be beyond economic repair and we now have a modern electronic instrument. The tower has six bells which are rung regularly for services and weekly practices.

The Churchyard is well maintained by volunteers and is still open for burials.

St Peter's owns the Parish Centre, providing two halls with kitchen and toilet facilities. The building is used for Sunday School, Ladies Fellowship and youth activities, also for parish lunches.



Great Houghton

The first known village Church was established by the Anglo Saxons in the early 13th century and stood on the site occupied by the present Church until the mid-1700s. The first recorded priest is Roger de Houghton in 1230. It saw many changes in the county during this time and was witness to all the political trends of the times, including those of King Henry VIII, all of which would have affected life in the village.

The present Church was built in the mid-18th century.



The rebuilt church is almost certainly on the same site as the original - the spiral staircase and lower portion of the bell tower retain the old stone and are much older than the rest of the building.

The rebuilding was carried out in the Italianate style fashionable at that time. By 1780 repairs were needed to the roof, walls, bells and windows. In 1842 a gallery was installed at a cost of £48, and four years later a new font was installed.



In 1878 further restoration work took place, and the windows were divided into two lights. The gallery was removed, the lower arch opened, the south porch added and the interior re-seated. The stained glass window in the north wall is likely to have been added at this time. The window in the south wall is a much more recent addition; being commissioned by the Preparatory School in 1977 to celebrate the Queen's Silver Jubilee and the school's first Quarter-century.

In 1967 major structural faults were discovered in the spire. Repairs to this and other work totalling around £5,000 were funded mainly from within the village, which, at that time, still only had around 350 occupants. Further extensive remedial work to the roof to remedy beetle infestation and other problems of building decay has recently been completed.

Restoration of the Northwest and Southwest windows of the Nave and the vestry window were completed in 1997 and the clock was converted to an automatic electric winding mechanism.

Some of the pews have been removed and others repositioned to create a meeting area where the congregation can enjoy refreshments after the service.

Little Houghton

The church occupies a prominent position in the centre of the village. The original



tower, of three storeys dating from c1225, is of fine proportion with an upper arcade, originally with openings, on each face. It is likely that the openings were filled in, creating a 'blind' arcade, when the fourth, belfry, storey with parapet and intricately decorated limestone frieze, was added in about 1425. The whole tower was restored in 2010 at a cost of some £200,000.

Apart from the font, the south doorway (circa 1200) and the tower and chancel arches, the church was rebuilt in the neo-Gothic style in 1873-74, when the nave was heightened, with clerestory, and a north bay added. There is some fine late nineteenth century stained glass and the tower contains five bells. The church has a Grade II* listing.

There is an historic William Hill organ of 1846.

In 1999 an extension was built to provide kitchen and toilet facilities. There are some 250 sittings, with space for a large number of chairs.

The churchyard is still open for burials, although normally restricted to parishioners.

Brafield on the Green

The Parish Church of St. Laurence is situated on the north side of Brafield on the Green and dominates the skyline as one approaches the village. Parts of the Church, which is



Grade II* listed, date back approximately 800 years, however, major changes were made in Victorian times. Today, we have a pleasing building, exceptionally well maintained, with gas central heating.

In 2011, a glass etched screen was fitted, opening up a view across the Church upon entering the building. It was paid for mainly by a donation. The screen depicts the Church and the village pond.

The wrought iron Vestry gates have been designed to represent St. Laurence's gridiron.

There are several stained glass windows. Above the High Altar and in the Chancel they are decorated in the grisaille style. The east end wall carries an embossed design, in deep red and antique white.



The Lady Chapel is carved oak panelled, depicting scenes from the life of Our Lady. The window above the Altar depicts the Annunciation. On the north wall there is an Aumbry, and the window above shows the Adoration of the Magi.

An extension was added in 1997, to accommodate a small kitchen and toilet, in the west corner of the Church.

The lighting system was completely renewed in 2010, with spotlights and uplighters to enhance the beauty of the building.



We have an open Churchyard for villagers, and a yearly parish collection helps with its upkeep. An honorarium is made towards its maintenance.

Sunday and Weekday Services

Our four churches hold a range of services from a monthly 8am said Eucharist (BCP) through a sung Eucharist to family-friendly service in which the young members play a larger role. You will find a fuller description in the four Parish Profiles (see the Welcome page). Family services are sometimes led by a Reader.

Little Houghton has a 6pm weekly Evensong which has regular support from the other parishes.

Music

We use mainly “Complete Anglican hymns old and new” supplemented by the Iona Abbey music book and newer hymns as sheet music. The Choir occasionally perform items from past Peterborough Diocesan Choral Festivals.

Monthly Service Structure

All services are listed on the Benefice website www.theunitedbenefice.org.uk

Sunday Services

Sunday services are held in a monthly pattern.

Week	Time	Brafield	Cogenhoe	Great Houghton	Little Houghton
First Sunday	8:00 am		Said Eucharist BCP		
	9:30 am				All age worship
	11:00 am	Sung Eucharist CW	All age worship		
	6:00 pm				Evensong BCP
Second Sunday	8:00 am				Said Eucharist BCP
	9:30 am			All age worship	
	11:00 am		Sung Eucharist CW		
	6:00 pm				Evensong BCP
Third Sunday	8:00 am			Said Eucharist BCP	
	9:30 am				Family Eucharist CW
	11:00 am	All age worship	Sung Eucharist CW		
	6:00 pm				Evensong BCP
Fourth Sunday	8:00 am	Said Eucharist BCP			
	9:30 am			Sung Eucharist CW	
	11:00 am		Sung Eucharist CW		
	6:00 pm				Evensong BCP
Fifth Sunday	10:00 am	There will be a single Benefice Eucharist (CW), please see the calendar for details.			
	6:00 pm				Evensong BCP

Coffee is provided after the main Sunday services to encourage people to stay and chat.

Weekday Services

Day	Time	Service	Church
Tuesday	9.30 am	Said Eucharist	Brafield
Thursday	7 am	Said Eucharist	Cogenhoe

Average Attendance at Sunday Services

Service	Children & Youth (0 – 16 yrs)	Adults	Totals
Cogenhoe 8am said Eucharist	0	9	9
Cogenhoe 11am All-age	10	24	34
Cogenhoe 11am Eucharist	6	34	40
Great Houghton 8am said Eucharist	0	7	7
Great Houghton 9.30 Eucharist			26
Little Houghton 9.30 family service	10	19	29
Little Houghton 9.30 Eucharist	0	16	16
Little Houghton 6pm Evensong	0	9	9
Brafield 8am said Eucharist	0	10	10
Brafield 11am Family Communion	3	15	18
Brafield 11am Family Service	8	22	30

Other Services

Major festivals are organised on a benefice basis so every church will hold a service at some point during the celebrations. Each church holds its own Harvest Festival and Supper. Schools attend regularly for end of term services and the local Scouts, Cubs and Beavers attend on Remembrance Sunday and St George's Day.

Last December Cogenhoe held an outdoor carol service in the centre of the village followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the village hall, which attracted over 70 people.

Christingle services are held in December (Cogenhoe and the Houghtons) with a Christmas Tree Carol Service in Brafield.



Baptisms are usually held during Family Worship and the families are visited beforehand by the priest or reader.

Weddings and funerals are usually the responsibility of the Priest and the couples to be married are seen on a number of occasions beforehand. Support is given after funerals as needed.

Support Available

- We have one Priest (this vacancy) and have hosted a Curate for the last two years, who is due to move on. We have no other paid staff.
- The benefice has two licensed Readers and eight Eucharistic assistants. Readers sometimes lead Family Services.
- The benefice has three organists, one of whom is the benefice organist and choirmaster.
- Each church (except LH) has its own choir which unites for benefice services, weddings and other events. They have attended the Peterborough Diocesan Choral Festival annually since 2009.
- We have a benefice band which regularly leads worship and on occasions the band, organist and choir join forces.
- There are a number of youth workers.
- Lay people read the lessons and lead the intercessions.
- We have a band of bell ringers who ring for services at Cogenhoe and Brafield.
- Each church has two churchwardens and each PCC has its own secretary and treasurer.
- The Benefice has paid for Clergy and Lay training.



Youth and Children's Work

There are children's corners in the churches with books and colouring materials.

Cogenhoe have a Sunday school which runs in St Peter's Centre alongside our 11 a.m. service in the church and the children then join us during Communion for a blessing and the final hymn. On the first Sunday of the month they attend the all age worship in church.

On Maundy Thursday and the Saturday before Mothering Sunday a benefice activity is held for the children. This usually attracts between 15 and 25.

During the summer holidays there is an activity day which usually involves an educational pilgrimage to a neighbouring cathedral.

We have several groups for young people in the benefice that are held in St Peter's Centre:

- Church Mice for 0-5 years and their carers once a month.
- Messy Church held monthly in the primary school hall (Cogenhoe) and in the Parsons Memorial Hall (Great Houghton)
- JCYC once a month for 8 -11 year old and SCYC twice a month for 11-16 years.

Each of our groups has its own team organising its programme. All youth leaders have current DBS (CRB) clearance.



Church Groups and Activities

Details of the various groups and activities can be seen in the Parish Profiles, which can be found on the individual Church websites.

We all encourage outreach to the wider community such as the monthly lunches provided in Little Houghton and Cogenhoe, which attract 20-30 people, and the Prayers and Lunch at Brafield with an average of 12.



Finance

Each Church has its own treasurer and there is also a Benefice account to which each church contributes. This is managed by a Benefice Treasurer.

Clergy Expenses are paid in full from the Benefice account; this has also paid for training, sheet music and website hosting.

The Benefice has only a small reserve as the level of contributions is reviewed annually. Each church is responsible for its own budgeting.

Organisation

The Churchwardens from the four parishes meet regularly.

Each church has its own PCC, with formal meetings held quarterly and other meetings as required.

Person Specification

As a Benefice, we seek an enthusiastic, motivated Priest to lead us in a variety of worship, celebrating our distinctions while inspiring us all to reach out into our villages.

The successful candidate should be a confident spiritual leader with a sincere faith, promoting the teachings of Our Lord through inspirational preaching and prayer, leading by example.

We seek a leader who is friendly and approachable and able to connect with people of all ages and backgrounds. He or she should have the skills energy and experience to further existing, and develop new, outreach links with local groups including schools, youth groups and the elderly.

We would like someone who supports and encourages lay members to train for church roles in ministry and leadership: innovative while not losing sight of traditional values in worship and music.

Our Priest would be expected to provide pastoral care: visit the sick and housebound, celebrate home communions and have good counselling skills and empathy.

Are you a listener and a leader who will further God's work in our Benefice?

A position for you?



We stand together at the beginning of a new chapter in our own journey. Like the disciples, we must listen to the voice of the risen Christ to tell us the way forward.

If you feel that God is calling you to apply for this vacancy, please contact:

Cheryl Goddard, the Archdeacon of Northampton's secretary

E-mail: secretary.northampton@peterborough-diocese.org.uk

You will find further information about us on the Benefice and Parish websites, see the Welcome page. We would welcome informal visits from interested candidates.