

**Whitton Times**  
**Summer 2026**



**Church in**  
**Community**

“Welcome to Whitton Times,  
a blend of Church  
and Community,  
a magazine from us to you”.  
We hope you’ll find it helpful .

Dear Friends,

I write this to you in the heat of what is looking to be a very hot summer, and as we draw close to the schools breaking up for the summer. So I’m sure some will be looking forward to holidays away on different shores or closer to home. Others will be worrying and wondering how you will manage with the extra meals to find and how to keep children occupied and thriving through the heat and the long break. Others among you may be wondering how you can simply find some company and human companionship. Whichever it is do look at the information in this edition of Whitton Times, there may be some ideas and answers here as we as a church seek to fulfil our mission to show the love of God to those in our community.

There is no doubt we are living in anxious and confusing times as we look at the world around us. As Christians we look to God and to Jesus to find ‘the peace which the world cannot give’. It isn’t a sort of magic instant thing that means we don’t worry, but over time among a family of faith, all of us at different places on the journey and some days further forward than others, we find in our shared faith encouragement, solace and find in faith something that keeps us grounded and hopeful. This is grounded in a belief that Jesus promised us eternal life and wants us to know his love and the love of God, who he calls Abba ‘father’. In this Sunday’s readings from Matthew’s gospel we hear him say ‘Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.’ in John’s gospel he says ‘peace I give to you, my peace I leave with you, not as the world gives do I give, do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid’.

If you long for such peace why not try church, where we are all seeking more of this rest and peace? We are a welcoming and very ordinary bunch of people all seeking, all on a journey and wanting others to join us because what we have is priceless. Our services are mostly very traditional but in a relaxed way, except the first Sunday which is much more informal. My advice if you have never been to a church service is just come and give it a try. Don’t worry about the words and everything going on, just sit and let it wash over you, watch, take in the bits that seem to resonate and just enjoy an hour and a bit in this holy place, where prayers have been said and been valid and which has seen all aspects of life over the 1200 or so years there has been a place of worship on this site. Just be, no one is going to mind. Oh and do stay for coffee afterwards so we can say hello!

For all those on the journey of faith, if it’s the first step or you’ve been on the journey all your life however long that is, do watch in the early autumn for news of a new opportunity of a new and very accessible and engaging way to explore or deepen faith, whether you know absolutely nothing or a great deal it will offer new perspectives and be easy to engage in. As a Church of England church we are here for the whole community—it is your church, you belong, you do not need an invitation but if you feel you do then here it is. YOU are welcome anytime, YOU belong!

Reverend Mary, Rector



**Usual services at St Mary & St Botolph & the**  
**Ascension Churches**

**Sundays—1st in month - 8am Said Eucharist &  
10 am—All Together Church—Not livestreamed**

**2nd - 4th in month—9.30am—Eucharist All at St Mary & St Botolph,  
Whitton Church Lane. These are livestreamed  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/>**

**Wednesday 10am—Eucharist at the Ascension, Larchcroft Road**



**Look out for Mary**  
**around the parish!**

**Email:**  
[marysokanovic@outlook.com](mailto:marysokanovic@outlook.com)

**Telephone:**  
07824 323073

# WHITTON PARISH CHURCH

*Celebrating the Heart of Our Community* ♥



## A CELEBRATION OF OUR VOLUNTEERS

The Whitton Parish Church was delighted to host a special Volunteer Appreciation Afternoon, organised by **Volunteering Matters** and co-ordinated by **Pauline Liberti** and **Mahila Cope**. Volunteers were nominated by their respective organisations in recognition of the invaluable contribution they make to their communities.

The event was hosted at the Whitton Parish Church with Claudette Wright, Hub Project Co-ordinator, and served as an opportunity to express our sincere gratitude for the dedication, commitment, and countless hours our volunteers generously give. For many, this service has spanned several years, making a lasting and positive impact on the lives of others.



DATE OF EVENT:  
**24th June 2026**



A heartfelt thank you goes to every volunteer. Your compassion, generosity, and unwavering commitment are truly appreciated and inspire us all.



## HONOURING OUR TOP UP SHOP VOLUNTEERS

### The Story Behind the Top Up Shop

Nearly seven years ago, the Whitton Church Top Up Shop was founded by the late Rev. Maureen Bonsall, whose vision was to provide practical support and hope to those experiencing financial hardship.

Initially operating from within the church building, it quickly became clear that the service was growing beyond the available space. Within just a few weeks, the Top Up Shop moved into the Parish Hall, where it has continued to flourish and support hundreds of local people.



### TOP UP SHOP

Supporting Our Community Together

### Volunteer in the Spotlight SALLY GROOM

After retiring from work, Sally Groom joined the Top Up Shop as a volunteer.

She began by helping set up the tables each morning before serving customers, but it wasn't long before she became involved in purchasing essential items for the shop alongside Maureen. Today, Sally's primary responsibility is managing stock control, ensuring there is always enough food, toiletries, and household essentials available for customers each week.

Reflecting on her volunteering experience, Sally shared one story that has stayed with her:

“ One conversation I had with a customer that sticks in my mind was with a lady who was living out of her car. She needed tins with ring pulls because she had no way of opening ordinary cans. Listening to people like this makes you realise how fortunate many of us are. It also reminds us why we are here—to help those who need us most. ”

Written by: Sally Groom

### Volunteer in the Spotlight STEVE BONSALE

Steve Bonsall has been a dedicated volunteer for many years and has made an enormous contribution to the success of the Whitton Church Top Up Shop.

As a volunteer driver, Steve was responsible for purchasing fresh fruit and vegetables each week, as well as collecting generous food donations from the local Lidl store.

Steve also played a key role in the development and day-to-day running of the Top Up Shop. Although he now dedicates more of his time to volunteering within the Community Café, he continues to support the Top Up Shop every week by managing the customer ticketing process, helping the service run smoothly and efficiently.

Throughout this journey, Steve worked alongside and supported his late wife, Rev. Maureen Bonsall, whose vision inspired the Community Café as a welcoming place where everyone could gather in friendship, unity, and mutual support.

Steve continues to honour Maureen's legacy through his unwavering dedication and service to our community.

*Thank You!* ♥

Behind every successful community project are volunteers who quietly give their time, energy, and compassion without expecting anything in return.

To every volunteer—past and present—**THANK YOU.** ♥

Your compassion, generosity, and commitment inspire us all and continue to make a lasting difference to the lives of those we serve.



Serving refreshments



Organising stock



Collecting donations



Offering a listening ear



And so much more...

“Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they simply have the heart.” ♥



# WE NEED YOU!

## THE WHITTON PARISH CHURCH ARE SEEKING TWO VOLUNTEERS



to assist with the donation collection for **TOP UP SHOP.**



**COLLECTION FROM:**  
Lidl's Bury Road, Ipswich



**DAY:**  
Tuesdays



**TIME:**  
To be confirmed



**IF YOU ARE ABLE TO ASSIST**  
*this would be truly appreciated.*



PLEASE CONTACT **CLAUDETTE**, HUB PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR  
ON **07897755371**

### BIBLE CAKE

This puzzling recipe uses quotations from the Bible as the key to the ingredients. Look up the references and work out what's required!

#### Ingredients:

1. 225gr (8oz) Judges 5:25 (last cause)
2. 225gm (8oz) Jeremiah 6:20
3. 13ml (1 tblsp) 1 Samuel 14:25
4. 3 of Jeremiah 17:11
5. 225gm (8oz) 1 Samuel 30:12
6. 225gm (8oz) Nahum 3:12 (chopped)
7. 50gm (2oz) Numbers 17:8 (blanched and chopped)
8. 450gm (1lb) 1 Kings 17:12
9. Season to taste with Chronicles 9:9
10. A pinch of Leviticus 2:13
11. 5ml (1tsp) Amos 4:5 \*\*
12. 45mil (3 tblsp) Judges 4:19

(\* Hint – 'leaven' means 'Baking Powder'. You may need to add some water to moisten)

#### Method:

Beat 1, 2 and 3 to a cream; add 4, one at a time, still beating; then add 5, 6 and 7 and beat again. Add 8, 9, 10 and 11 having previously mixed them, and then lastly add 12.

Bake in a low oven for 90 minutes. Good luck!



The Top Up Shop is **open to everyone**. There are **no questions asked** (apart from contact number and post code in case of product recall). There are no criteria to fulfil. If you need food or just need to top up your food supplies, please come and see us. The cost is £2 for a recyclable bag. Each week we have a good choice of goods and always fresh fruit and vegetables. **We are open from 11am to 12.15pm every Wednesday in the Church Hall, Whitton Church Lane. Coffee and cake are available in the church from 9.00 –12 noon.** You can be assured of a warm welcome.



### FAMILY FIRST

Phone:- 0300 7727715



Email:- [info@familyfirst-uk.org](mailto:info@familyfirst-uk.org)

Website:- [www.familyfirst-uk.org](http://www.familyfirst-uk.org)

Facebook:- Family First Ipswich

**A little true story from Doreen** In wartime school children were evacuated.

My brothers and I didn't want to be split up so we went to live with Auntie and Uncle in Luton. To begin with my brother took me to school, until he got a place at High School. From then brother was supposed to take me home....but forgot! I didn't know which way to go, thought it was the road on the left so tried it, and found the courage to go further. When I did I saw Jesus on the cross and knew that was the RC Church in Russell Street and I lived in Russell Road. Jesus had shown me the way home!

**Ipswich Deaf Church** now meet at the Ascension Church on the 2nd Sunday of the month at 2.30pm. The service uses **British Sign Language (BSL)** as it's source language with a voice over into English.

All the hymns are signed by members of Ipswich Deaf Signing Choir and the service is followed by refreshments.

All are welcome to come along and join us.

For more information contact Rev Penny Brinkley Diocesan Chaplain with the Deaf Community email [rev.pennybrinkley@yahoo.com](mailto:rev.pennybrinkley@yahoo.com) or text to 07901950768

(Please note occasionally the service date may change so please do check if you are planning on coming)

### Are you planning a wedding? -



#### Did you know:

- ◆ There are lots of ways you may qualify to be married in a Church.
- ◆ That you don't have to be a regular church goer to do so.
- ◆ That it usually costs less to do so than at other venues.
- ◆ You can have a range of music - not necessarily religious,
- ◆ Each wedding is unique to the couple & can have many special moments and elements.
- ◆ We have a stunningly beautiful church to be married in so why not have a chat and look round?



Contact Mrs Angela Marjoram 07950 086135 for a visit and friendly chat.

## WHITTON YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

Covering Whitton, Whitehouse and Castle Hill we currently provide Junior, Inters and Senior Youth Clubs, Single gender groups, detached youth work, one to one support, school holiday Craft and play and Youth drop in sessions. All our activities are provided free of charge and free food is available at all activities at Whitton Parish Hall where we are based.

**Junior Youth Club** – After school on a Monday

**Inters Youth Club** – After School on a Tuesday

**Senior Youth Club** – from 5.30p.m. on a Tuesday

Watch out for our summer holiday activities which will be advertised on our Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/whittonyouthpartnership/>

**Craft and Play sessions** - 28th July, 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> August 10 a.m. until 1p.m. including lunch. Free.

**Drop in sessions**- 27th July, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> August See Facebook page for times when available.

**Booking essential for holiday Craft and Play Days** as spaces go within hours of appearing on our Facebook page.

Visit our Website to see volunteering and fundraising opportunities to help us maintain our services to our young people

<https://www.whittonyouthpartnership.co.uk/>



## 10<sup>th</sup> Ipswich Scouts sleep with sharks

Yes, that's correct. **Our Scouts** will be sleeping at Gt Yarmouth Sea-life centre in July and also spending the day at Pleasure Wood Hills.

On Wednesday's at our Scout nights they have covered so much in skills training, fun and games, team-building, cooking, and so much more that this years long weekend camp is breaking tradition and leaving the woods behind.

Later in the year they will have the chance to complete the Scouts Expedition Challenge, in similar vein to DoFE but using their greater skills.

**Our Cubs** (aged 8 to 10) had a sleep over in April at Hallowtree Activity Centre, Nacton, and a long weekend at Thorrington Activity Centre, near Colchester. They used slingshots, built fires and cooked, did simulated caving and even had an afternoon in kayaks.

**Our Beavers** had a sleep over in dens in a hall at Hallowtree earlier in the year.... Sleep over is an over-statement !!!! But they did have great fun and the hike along the Orwell, and dinner of chicken egg-fried rice was a highlight.

**Adults get to join in....** Yes, our families are included too. We have a weekend "family Camp" for all the family with Scouting style activities, eating and merriment. Campfire singing and marshmallow s'mores by the fire.... Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July, 3pm to 8pm ish..... at Hallowtree Scout Activity Centre..... £5 a head – booking required for bbq by THURSDAY 9<sup>th</sup> JULY by email to [events10th@gmail.com](mailto:events10th@gmail.com)

## YOUR COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU.....

10<sup>th</sup> Ipswich Scout Group have children just waiting to join in, but our Beaver leader team, for age group 6 -7 is short staffed.



We need an 18+ up to age 100 to volunteer with us.

With our Beaver Scouts you will play, encourage, laugh with, Sometimes wipe away a tear, apply a band-aid, serve biscuits, make squash, build confidence, learn and teach skills and above all, make a difference to their young lives.

Training provided

Contact Kevin, Group Lead, [kevin.bean@welseyscouts.org.uk](mailto:kevin.bean@welseyscouts.org.uk)

## Help us keep the church grounds tidy



Fancy spending Thursday evenings in the fresh air?



Then why not join us this summer, as we prune, weed, hoe, cut back, and do anything else needed to keep our grounds tidy.

We meet in the church car park, Whitton Church Lane from 6pm til dusk. Just turn up and someone will be happy to show you what needs doing. It helps if you can bring your own tools—but not essential!

Thank you.

## Spring/Summer 2026

We have had a very busy Spring and start to Summer with our schools work at Whitton. The Open the Book team delivered assemblies in May and June in Castle Hill and The Beeches. It has been so lovely to see the children actively participating and having pupils up at the front helping us too!

In April, we held our Experience Easter event for the second year running in recent times. It was amazing to welcome three different schools into church across three days to learn about the Easter story. They had the opportunity to do multi-sensory activities on a journey around the church. This included having hands or feet washed, tasting food, drawing on stones and using playdoh. The children had some brilliant questions at the end of the sessions.

Following this, we delivered an Experience Church event on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> June. This was focused around learning about features of the church and what people do when they go to church. We welcomed two year 5 classes from The Beeches and two year 3 classes from Castle Hill with the hope of supporting their RE learning and creating a memorable trip to church!

We are very much looking forward to planning our next experience event for October.

These projects could not run without the support of our wonderful volunteers! If you enjoy working with children and are interested in volunteering for Open the Book or for our Experience events or would like some more information then please feel free to contact me at [lucy.schoolslink@whittonparish.co.uk](mailto:lucy.schoolslink@whittonparish.co.uk).

Lucy Fisk – Schools and Children’s Liaison



## **Calling Mums, Dads, Grandparents and Childminders**

### **Mums & Tots @ Whitton Parish Church**

**Come and join us with your little ones for fun, chat and play**

**Each Wednesday (during term time) from 1.15pm to 3pm**

**At Whitton Parish Church Hall, Whitton Church Lane.**



We look forward to welcoming you and your little ones up to school age. Come and meet other parents and carers while you watch your little ones play, have fun and learn to socialise.

We have a wide variety of toys for your children to enjoy, and a book library where you can borrow a book to read at home.



We ask for £1 per session per family to help cover our costs, which includes snack time and activities.

So come along any Wednesday during term time and see for yourself.

Next term begins on Wednesday 9th September

**For more details please contact Bridget on 01473 286663, or 07890311525**

**Or just come along, we look forward to meeting you**



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Are you interested  
in Baptism for yourself  
or your children?  
Give Eileen Ardern a ring  
on **01473 252251**  
for information and a friendly,  
informal chat.



### **Ladies Breakfast**

We meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month, in Whitton church at 9.00am for around an hour, to enjoy a Continental breakfast together. We make a donation towards the cost, and that has meant we have helped several local charities over the past years from the profits. We also put together “Little Bags of Love” to give to anyone we hear about who may just need a little hug. Please do pop in and join us — you will receive a warm welcome.



Any further info please contact Bev at [bev.frost@ntlworld.com](mailto:bev.frost@ntlworld.com)



**Hello! My name is Andrew Mitchell.** At the start of this month of July, I am joining the team of staff and volunteers at Whitton Parish Church. I am taking on the roles of Children and Families Minister and the other role of Parish Administrator and Operations Support. I am looking forward to exploring the new place and the new roles.



I grew up and spent a lot of my life in Halifax, West Yorkshire. For the last three years, I have been living and working for a church as a Children and Youth Worker in Market Deeping, Lincolnshire. I love living down here and now have a heart for this part of England. I have a passion for encouraging, engaging, and coming alongside children and families to see them grow in faith and in connection with each other and with the church. I have a heart for seeing children and families have fun, enjoy themselves, and live life to the full.

One of the reasons for this love of East Anglia is spending a lot of time in Ely and making happy memories there, where my close friend and I have the joy of growing fruits and vegetables on an allotment we now co-maintain. This is closely linked to my love for horticulture, which began in 2010 when I first studied it at college, where I earned four qualifications in the subject. Another hobby of mine is going out into the countryside and going on long walks. I am halfway through the long-distance footpath, Gipping River Valley Path, in Suffolk, which I hope to complete this summer.

In the last year, I have been on two holidays to the Peak District to explore and walk, and I have another holiday planned in September to explore more of it. My biggest achievement is completing the Great Ridge, which is next to Edale.

I am currently studying for a part-time Master's Degree in Children, Young People and Families Ministry at St. Padarn's in Cardiff, which is delivered by distance learning and involves travelling to Cardiff three times throughout the academic year. My bachelor's degree in Children's Mission and Ministry was undertaken from 2016 to 2022 at Cliff College, in the heart of the Peak District near Calver, and was also offered through long-distance learning.

I am very much looking forward to getting to know Ipswich, especially Whitton and even Suffolk overall, exploring the local area, getting to know the local people, and getting stuck into different opportunities that arise. So, if you see me around, do not hesitate to come over, say hello, and have a chat with me, and I look forward to meeting you in due course.

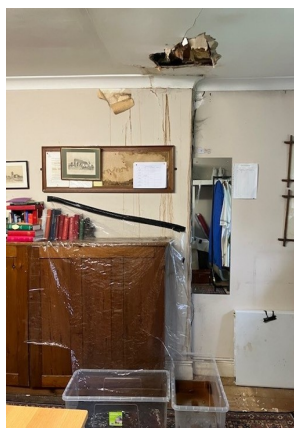
With every blessing, Andrew

## What is going on with the buildings in the Parish?

The Church of England Parish has custodianship of 3 important buildings –The ancient Parish Church of St Mary and St Botolph, The Parish Hall on the same site, and The Ascension Hall on Larchcroft Road. Over 90% of the usage of The Parish Hall and The Ascension Hall is by community groups and these provide the community with two of only 4 community spaces within our parish boundary. The church is also used for community activities and for school visits as well as for worship by the congregation each week.

We have recently raised, through grants and fundraising £125,000. This has been spent on reroofing and a complete uplift of the Ascension Hall providing improved facilities for the community.

We are currently in the process of raising a similar sum to undertake the same at the parish hall. It is much in need of repair and modernising. We have replaced the kitchen appliances thanks to generous grants for the purpose. Once we have raised the funds for the overall uplift and repairs we will need a project manager to oversee the work for us—might this be you or someone you know who would like to make a contribution of time and skill to this important community asset?



We also urgently need around £100,000 to underpin the back of the vestry as subsidence is threatening the integrity of the extension and having moved the roof with it means there is alarming ingress of water into the vestry. The roof and underground drainage also need renewing. Unless remedied we risk huge damage to both contents and the building.

Could you donate a sum of money or organise a fundraiser to help us keep this historic building here for generations to come?

If so please contact the rector or use the Go Fund Me link below.

<https://gofund.me/c5a305277>

Thank you.

**Facebook Whitton Parish Ipswich Page.** Many had found us on 'Facebook Live' for Sunday Services. Since being hacked we are not yet able to stream to the new Facebook page – 'Whitton Parish Ipswich'. Other things are posted regularly. If you would like to watch our service live stream, please go to <https://www.youtube.com/@whittonparishstmaryandstbo8772>

Or simply follow the link on our website [www.whittonparish.co.uk](http://www.whittonparish.co.uk) where you will find lots of other information.

