

The Parish Church of St John the Baptist: Lound Incumbent Report for the Annual Parish Meeting 2026

I first saw the Church of St John the Baptist Lound at the beginning of last year when I came to be interviewed for the post of House for Duty Priest in Charge. I had read of the Golden Church but what I had read scarcely prepared me for the beauty and magnificence of the Church. I was filled with a sense of what the great Lutheran theologian and philosopher Rudolph Otto called the numinous - a sense of awe and wonder before the Holy. We who worship at St John's are indeed privileged in having such a glorious church building in which to gather for worship.

I often enjoy reading the visitors book and always note that this sense of awe and wonder is felt by all who enter and look around the Church. We need to reflect on how this might be used as a tool for mission and evangelism.

The beginning of my ministry here as Parish Priest has been somewhat chequered. I was licensed on 31 July but due to various circumstances was not able to move in until September and so August was rather frustrating both for myself and the parish, as well as the Parish of Hemsby.

I am most grateful to all those who attended my licensing, to the Bishop of Norwich who officiated, to Fr David Wells, Rural Dean of Great Yarmouth who organised the Liturgy and to Fr Richard Stanton, rector of St John's Timber Hill who represented the Bishop of Richborough.

I am very grateful to the Churchwardens for their help, advice and support and their attendance to matters of administration and maintenance, ensuring that the fabric of this lovely church is kept in good repair.

Worship

St John's now has three regular celebrations of Mass a month, on the second, third and fourth Sundays, with Fr Anthony Long presiding on the second Sunday and myself on the other two. As is mentioned in the Churchwarden's report the number of retired clergy available to assist has been reduced due to health-issues and I am grateful to Revd David Spicer for offering his services and will no doubt call on him in the future. We had our first joint celebration with St Mary's Hemsby on Palm Sunday which was a good start to Holy Week and we look forward to the second joint celebration here at Lound on Trinity Sunday.

I am grateful to Miles for serving so faithfully and efficiently each Sunday and on other occasions as well.

I am grateful to Kevin Turner our organist for playing each Sunday and for his excellent choice of hymns and to Judith for presenting the psalm. We are glad that Kevin's first cataract operation has been successful and pray that the second procedure will go well. It has been good to have Kevin with us at Mass today.

Thanks are also due to those who read and lead intercessions.

At my interview early last year I mentioned that I hoped to establish a daily Mass across the two parishes; sadly I have not been able to do this for which I apologise. A number of practical difficulties have been pointed out to me and I hope to address this with the new PCC. As an initial step I am going to suggest that I say Morning Prayer twice a week in the Church, after which I can undertake some visiting in the village.

In addition to the Sunday liturgy we have had Mass on All Souls Day, Ash Wednesday and the Solemnity of St Joseph which have been reasonably well attended.

Lound Trust

I was very pleased to learn that as Parish Priest I was also a trustee of the Lound Trust and I am very grateful to Paul Strowlger for initiating me into this role, which has enabled me to make contact with many in Lound outside our worshipping congregation.

As you know Judith is stepping down as Churchwarden and I would like to express my personal thanks to her for her support and kindness and also to thank her on behalf of the Parish.

Fundraising has been dealt with in the Churchwarden's report and I would like to add my thanks to all those who have undertaken this.

I have greatly enjoyed my first six months in the parish and look forward to working with you all in the cause of the Kingdom of God in the future.

Fr David Bailey SSC

Parish Priest

12 April 2026

Worship

St John's has been a joy to be a part of since I arrived on the 1st of July. I have enjoyed the support and advice from the churchwardens and the members of the parish. I have also enjoyed the opportunity to be involved in the life of the church. I have been particularly pleased to be able to participate in the Holy Week and the Easter Vigil. I have also enjoyed the opportunity to be involved in the life of the church. I have been particularly pleased to be able to participate in the Holy Week and the Easter Vigil.

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In addition to the Sunday liturgy we have had Mass on All Souls Day, Ash Wednesday and the Solemnity of St Joseph which have been responsibly well attended. I have also enjoyed the opportunity to be involved in the life of the church. I have been particularly pleased to be able to participate in the Holy Week and the Easter Vigil. I have also enjoyed the opportunity to be involved in the life of the church. I have been particularly pleased to be able to participate in the Holy Week and the Easter Vigil.

I was very pleased to learn that as Parish Priest I was also a trustee of the church trust and I am very grateful to Paul Stowling for assisting me into this role, which has enabled me to make contact with many in the parish outside our worshipping congregation.

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST, LOUND CHURCHWARDEN'S ANNUAL REPORT - APCM 12.04.2026

Maintenance:-

2025 has been free of major projects. The routine maintenance of the two flat roofs on the north side of the church, which was contracted in the Autumn, only got under way at the end of February 2026. By the date of this meeting it should be finished.

Jeff Attoe has pointed mortar into the Fisher memorial in the chancel, free of charge, so that we can monitor for possible movement, as per the QIR.

Minor routine clearance of gutters and drains are looked after by your churchwardens. In the absence of any other offers of help, they also continue to look after the War Memorial garden.

Services:-

We have established a regular pattern of 3 services a month, with Fr. David regularly officiating on the 2nd and 4th Sunday and Fr. Anthony on the 3rd Sunday, which he greatly enjoys. Fr. David plans to use a 5th Sunday, when it occurs, to hold a joint service with Hemsby, alternating between the two parishes. We may also do something similar for our respective Patronal days. The pool of retired clergy is now greatly reduced by illness and incapacity and LRH has not renewed his PTO; he is now officially retired! However, Rev David Spicer has expressed continued willingness to assist if required – indeed I think he enjoys doing so. However, he is often otherwise occupied and *would need to be booked well in advance*.

We were of course delighted to attend Fr. David's Licensing at the end of July, and to welcome him to his new home in Hemsby; he finally got here in September.

We were also delighted to meet Bishop Luke, who, having been unable to attend the Licensing, soon after made a special trip to meet us all for coffee and chat. We were all very impressed by his manner, his leadership and by him as a person. I think we are very fortunate to have him as our Bishop, and he is clearly relishing the job.

Our Harvest Festival was a great occasion, and the church looked fabulous; the decorations from the Phillips' wedding the previous week were left for us to use so the church was full of pumpkins. As always, the produce donated by our farmers was distributed afterwards – 19 bags to village homes, and the remainder to local nursing and care homes. They are always very grateful.

The Candlelit Advent Service, with the singing of the Advent Prose, has now become an annual event, and it was lovely to once again hold our own Midnight Mass, after previous years of sharing it with Somerleyton.

Occasional Offices:-

We have had 1 wedding, 2 funerals followed by burial, and 4 interments of ashes. The funerals included that of Alfie Baker; he and his wife Val have been great supporters and helpers for many years.

Events:-

We did not hold a Lent Lunch this year. The Somerleyton group held only one for the whole group so Blundeston was not in a position to join us or help. We discussed a joint effort with Hemsby, but the response was muted – we should really try and set this up for 2027 – perhaps on the understanding that it would alternate between us and we *should all* make the effort to support each other.

Fundraising events included the Patronal Festival weekend and a concert by Early Music Group *Hexachordia*, the Annual Sponsored Cycle Ride and Tea & Tinsel in the Autumn. In addition Paul and Susan worked tremendously hard to run a burger stall at the Annual Music Day on the Green, which was exhausting but very successful. Altogether these events raised £1386, so enormous thanks to everyone who helped or contributed in any way.

The Festival theme of 'Remembering' is so successful that we are making it an annual event. We have set this in motion with the first invitation in the April *Hexagon*. It is such a good way of getting people together from the church and the village, and has become very personal for those taking part.

A concert by the St. Mary's Singers is planned for September; I hear that there is the possibility of another Music Day when we might again be able to fund raise, and perhaps another pre-Christmas effort.

As ever, I am immensely grateful to my fellow churchwarden, the 'events committee' for their fundraising efforts, cyclists, and everyone who undertakes all the tasks involved in running a church - readers, intercessions, flower-arranging, gardening, catering, cleaning etc. As you know, I am stepping down as Churchwarden (though I will no doubt still be 'on call'), so this is my last official Report in that capacity. **Thank you all for your support; we could not manage without you! Please continue to support Lesley and your other, new, churchwarden, whoever that may be.**

JH 12.04 2026