



St Mary's Eaton Socon

THE CHURCH ON THE GREEN

Parish Profile 2026



CONTENTS

Contents.....	2
Overview	3
We Are Looking for.....	4
In return we will offer	5
The Vicarage.....	6
Our Vision Is	7
Our Priorities.....	8
Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.....	9
Community.....	10
Education	11
Worship.....	12
Ministry Team	15
Church Life	17
Church Buildings	19
Finance.....	20
Communications	22
The Benefice.....	23

OVERVIEW

Welcome to the Parish of St Mary's, Eaton Socon. We are excited that you are interested in exploring the post of Vicar here. Thank you for taking the time to find out more about how God is at work here in the Eatons.

Rev'd Timothy Robb served in the Parish for 18 years. Following his death in January 2026, the church is now in Vacancy.

Over the past 18+ months, through Tim's illness, the running of the church has been and is managed by the very capable local team.

We are a single parish numbering 100+ adults worshipping across two services on a Sunday. We have had the joy of celebrating four full immersion baptisms in 2025 and four to date in 2026.

Biblical teaching and prayer are the foundation of church life at St Mary's, we enjoy spending time together through a variety of activities including learning together, eating together and getting to know each other.

The principle focus of the church during 2026 is to maintain a full programme of church activities, whilst we prayerfully seek a new incumbent.

We are seeking an incumbent who will be able to help us discern and shape a vision for the future, enable people to make full use of their abilities within the church and support the development and continued growth of work with young people. Someone who will have a sense of the privilege and joy it is to lead a church that seeks to pray together, learn from the Bible and have fun. Someone who will come and join with what God and His people are doing in this place. Someone willing to bring their gifts to help us grow in our faith. We hope as you read this, you will have a sense that this is you!



WE ARE LOOKING FOR

We are strong in faith but want to grow in understanding and in leadership. Hence, we seek someone who is:

- committed to lead an evangelical church with Bible based teaching, worship and mission, who lives under the word of God
- a person committed to prayer and to encouraging and promoting prayer as central to the life of the church
- passionate about living out the message and life of Jesus, inspiring everyone to know and experience more of that life
- a gifted Bible teacher and preacher
- a 'people person' who relates to and cares for everyone
- an effective leader and enabler who has experience in management and motivation, who is able to identify gifting, nurture abilities and empower people to use their gifts.
- a discerning minister who will enable each member of the body of Christ to identify and use the gifts the Holy Spirit gives them in order to encourage, strengthen and build up the church.
- a minister who will encourage us to 'keep in step with the Spirit', so that our lives and our fellowship will be characterised by the fruit of the Spirit
- a supporter/leader of a variety of patterns of worship



We are a church that wants to move forward, changing in response to the realities of how to reach out to people in our modern world. We seek someone who under God's guidance:

- can help us develop a vision for the church, including growth and a strategy for achieving, making full use of the abilities of the congregation.
- can discern the opportunities and challenges that St Mary's can meet and offer.
- can give particular attention to attracting and engaging younger age groups and able to interact with them and develop future leaders.

IN RETURN WE WILL OFFER

The support of a dedicated and gifted team of people who collectively make life at St Mary's happen.

An enthusiastic congregation, willing to learn, grow, and deepen their faith.

A beautiful church building which, as well as being a place of worship, is a fine community venue with good acoustics new carpets.



THE VICARAGE

The Vicarage accommodation comprises four bedrooms, a fitted kitchen, downstairs cloakroom, lounge and separate dining room, bathroom, utility room, and study which is accessed directly from the entrance hall. There is a linked single garage and ample parking space on the drive.

The Vicarage is well situated overlooking the Church and the village green and is in close proximity to Tesco Express. There is also a village store that accommodates the Post Office and excellent eating places nearby.

Primary schools and doctors' surgery are within walking distance.

London, Cambridge, Peterborough and Bedford are in easy reach via road and rail links.



OUR VISION IS

Our Vision

"A people who live, love and grow in God"

As part of God's family in Eaton Socon, we seek to live in God's love, to love everyone, and to grow God's kingdom.

Our Mission

Our Mission is that we might all grow a 'Jesus' mindset in our lives.

'Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.'

Philippians 2: 1-5

Our Values

To live in God's Love:

- to know God as our loving Heavenly Father in a deep, life-changing way.
- to know Jesus and His unconditional love for each of us.
- to know and release the power of the Holy Spirit to work in our lives.
- to live a life of faith, prayer and obedience as Scripture teaches us.

To love everyone:

- to value the unity of the Church family through fostering a shared mindset.
- to value each other through building a community of deep relationships.
- to encourage one another to follow Jesus.
- to share with each other what Jesus is doing in our lives.

To grow God's kingdom:

- to believe that the good news of Jesus is for everyone.
- to help each person learn to share the good news of Jesus.
- to care for and seek justice for the oppressed and marginalised.
- to give generously of our time, talents and treasure to the life of the church.

OUR PRIORITIES

Following Jesus

- We seek to know Jesus in a deeper way through engaging with God's holy Word and being persistent in prayer

Worship that leads us to God

- We seek to encounter God's transformative love through Spirit-led worship.

Authentic Community

- We value each other and the unity of the Church family. We seek ways in which we can build community, foster deep relationships and encourage one another to follow Jesus.

Ministry in the Power of the Holy Spirit

- We believe that Jesus works radically in people's lives today. We create opportunities where people may come and ask to be prayed for by a dedicated team.

Urgent Outreach

- We believe that the Good News of Jesus is for everyone and God calls His church to share this Gospel of Love to all.
- To develop work with young adults and continue to develop our work with youth and children.
- To preach and teach the word of God and reach out to our community.



STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

Strengths

Leadership alongside the Vicar: CW, PCC, Eldership, LLW, retired clergy, lay reader

We are a one centre parish

We have a top-class team of paid staff providing a strong multi-disciplinary team

The church has sound finances

Weaknesses

An aging congregation

A lack of children and young families

A lack of young adults

A stretched leadership, two years without a Vicar



Opportunities

Outreach

Development of youth work in particular Sunday morning Reactors and Friday evening Fusion

Development of children's work including Sunday School and the desire to re-introduce Friday Club following the Pandemic

Threats

Failure to engage young people and adults into church life

Failure to introduce more families into church life



COMMUNITY

Eaton Socon is also home to a few residential care homes, where we take services regularly.

The church and it's building are used by many community groups including:

- weekly after-school Youth Café on Mondays in term-time (run by Youth for Christ)
- two weekly AA groups on Monday and Wednesday evenings (Alcoholics Anonymous)
- Rainbows on Wednesdays, and Brownies on Thursdays
- Foodbank on Fridays (St Neots Food Bank)
- St Neots Sinfonia, St Neots Choral Society and Riverside Theatre use the church for public performances several times a year



EDUCATION

There are three schools located within the parish, Bushmead Primary School, Crosshall Infant School, and Crosshall Junior School as well as several pre-schools. The church enjoys good relationships with the three state primary schools and the local pre-schools.

Our Children's Worker regularly takes assemblies and occasional services in the schools and holds good relationships with them. School groups regularly visit the church.

There are two secondary schools in St Neots. There are additional schools in nearby towns/cities including in Bedford, Cambridge and Kimbolton.



WORSHIP

Pattern of Sunday Worship

Sunday

- 9.00am Traditional BCP or CW Holy Communion Service.
- Morning Prayer is held once a month.
 - Attendance ranges from low 30's to high 50's.
- 10.30am Family contemporary style Worship (Communion once a month)
- Young People's programme (0-18 yrs) consisting of
 - Creche
 - Sunday school
 - Reactors (Y7+)
 - Average attendance: 80 adults, 10 U18s
 - This service is also live streamed via YouTube



Wednesday:

- 9.00am CW Holy Communion – average attendance about 10-16

Occasional Offices (2025 statistics):

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Baptisms | Six baptisms both infant and adult full immersion |
| Weddings | Seven |
| Funerals | 17 |

All our preaching and teaching is Bible based, Holy Spirit led, contemporary, relevant and with application to real life.

Prayer

Prayer is the most important activity of the Church. In addition to the opportunities to pray in the Life Groups and Daily Offices, there is an active prayer network that responds to prayer requests as they are received either by phone, text or email. Prayer meetings are held at 9am on Tuesdays and Thursdays

As a church we have engaged with the Archbishop's yearly 'Thy Kingdom Come' Week of Prayer initiative, when the Church is open for people to come and pray. A range of people take responsibility for the different prayer stations around the church.



Other Services:

At Christmas a significant number of services are held in the church for local schools, nurseries and other local organisations.



General Features of Services

Laity take an active part with leading, intercessions and Bible readings at all our services.

9.00am services utilise Common Worship and the BCP and use traditional hymns with music provided by Jason, our digital hymnal.

The 10.30 service makes use of the visual screens around the church. Music is contemporary but usually with some traditional hymns included. There is a small music group that supports this and other occasional services.

Several times through the year, our congregation comes together for combined services and for special occasions.

Occasional visiting preachers including mission partners are also invited to preach.

Young people occasionally take part in all-age worship.

Copies of the New International Bible (2011) are provided.



MINISTRY TEAM

Leadership

- St Mary's Team consists of:
 - Vicar,
 - Two Churchwardens who meet regularly with the Vicar
 - PCC
 - Eldership Team supporting the Vicar in overseeing the life of the church
 - Three Retired Ministers with PTO, who help regularly by leading services and preaching, and taking baptisms, weddings and funerals when required, whilst also ministering more widely
 - One Licensed Lay Reader
 - There are five Lay Leaders of Worship who help by regularly leading services

Staff Team

Funded by the PCC

- Office Administrator (11 hours)
 - Manage the church office and act as the first point of contact for enquiries from members, visitors, and external enquiries
 - Maintain church records, databases, and filing systems
 - Co-ordinate communication between clergy, PCC members, and the congregation
 - Maintain the parish calendar, booking and lettings
 - Support communication of church events and community activities
 - Provide support to the treasurer
- Vicar's PA (8 hours)
 - Administrative support to the vicar
 - Administration and recording of life events
 - Weekly notices
 - Production of monthly newsletter
 - Annually compile the APCM reports booklet, complete the Diocesan Statistics for Mission
 - Support communication of church events and community activities
- Community Families and Children's Worker (24 hours)
 - Responsible for all groups, activities and community outreach which is aimed at 0 - 11yr olds
 - Community outreach which is aimed at 0 - 11yr olds.
 - Assemblies in schools and welcoming schools into church at various points in the year
 - Family events and various all age services over the year and a yearly summer holiday club.
 - Oversight of and updating our churches social media and updating / editing the church website
- Caretaker/Cleaner (8-10 hours)
 - Cleaning the church and church hall
 - Re-ordering of church furniture for children's and youth activities.

From time to time, we have had curates and within the parish there is a diocesan owned house for them.

Lay involvement

There is a growing lay involvement across the various services and ministries of the church.

Lay members are regularly involved in services as Churchwardens, Assistant Churchwardens, Lay Leaders of Worship, Welcomers, Sides persons, Musicians, the reading of Scripture, the leading of intercessions, prayer ministry, pastoral care, testimony/sharing, preaching, working with young people, serving refreshments and helping to administer Communion.

Both the Prayer Ministry and Pastoral Care Teams are run effectively by laypeople with most Home Communion and Pastoral visits being organised by the Pastoral Care Team. One of our Retired Clergy is actively involved as a Pastoral Care Team member.

Our children and young people's ministries are all lay led. We have a very active 'Creation Care Team' that is encouraging and teaching us how as Christians we can care better for creation as well as working with the Town Council to manage the Churchyard.



CHURCH LIFE

The Church

We are an evangelical, single-centre parish, that desires people to discover the truth of God's love and how this can be lived out in daily life through the power of the Holy Spirit and the living word.

Situated in the heart of Eaton Socon by the village green, we offer a range of services from traditional to the more informal/contemporary. We desire to be a welcoming church that seeks to help people to learn, love and live the Gospel and be salt and light in the community.

St Mary's hold to the traditional, orthodox view of marriage as enshrined in Canon B30. We pay the parish share via the Ephesian Fund. St Mary's is supportive of the ministry of women.



We are a welcoming church for all people. Within our congregation we have members from a variety of denominational backgrounds. There are several adults with additional needs who regularly attend the 10.30am service with their carers.

St Mary's operates an Eldership structure which was initiated by the vicar following discussion with the Bishop of St Albans. The model when finalised was approved and adopted by the PCC and a courtesy copy sent to the Bishop of St Albans, receiving a favourable response. It consists of the

vicar and four lay members and is 'A group that, working with the Incumbent, jointly oversees the spiritual life of the church'.

The 2026 Electoral roll stands at 116. Sunday attendance since the pandemic has been stable but has not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels.

Children and Youth

- Little Stars (baby and toddler group)
- links to local schools through taking assemblies and school visits, to the church annual Holiday Club for 3-5 mornings in the first week of summer holidays, including singing, games, crafts and teaching. (70-80 children from reception to year 6)
- Hive – monthly Sunday afternoon session for children with additional needs or disabilities with their families
- there are plans to relaunch our Friday Club for Primary aged children in September 2026.
- Fusion (Weekly Friday night programme for Secondary School Aged-Youth)



- Youth Café meeting after school on Mondays during term time
- annual Light Party takes place around All Saints Day (alternative to Halloween).
- annual Christingle takes place each December.
- annual Easter Egg-stravaganza.

Adults

- LIFE groups – small groups meeting regularly in church members homes for fellowship, Bible study and prayer.
- monthly Life Together - 'Learning Together' – average attendance 20 people
- Craft Group (weekly)
- Café on the Green (weekly) – a free café for the church and community
- Music Group – live band
- Bell Ringing – there is an active band of ringers
- monthly Sunday afternoon there is a wildlife walk normally starting from the church to view the locality through the seasons.
- monthly working parties to maintain the churchyard and building.



Community:

Residential Homes & Sheltered Housing monthly services
Thursday Lunch Club (A monthly opportunity for adults to enjoy food and fellowship and a short talk)

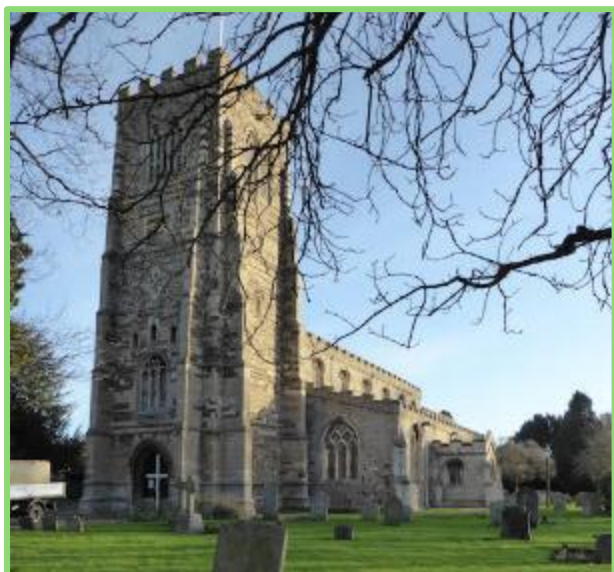
Events

A range of different events throughout the year to engage the community in conversation and friendship including May Day, Christmas Fayre and Christmas Lunch.

We have run the following courses:

- Alpha (HTB) including Youth Alpha
- Baptism Preparation Course
- Marriage Preparation Course (HTB)
- Confirmation Preparation Course
- Freedom in Christ Course
- The Grace Course
- Test of Faith Course
- Prayer Courses (HTB)
- Christianity Explored

CHURCH BUILDINGS



In 1930 the Church was destroyed by fire leaving only the tower and parts of the outside walls standing. It was rebuilt in its original medieval style but adapted for the 20th Century. The Church has chairs instead of pews and is light and airy (no stained-glass windows). It was rededicated on June 25th, 1932. The building is Grade II* listed.

The present Church building is in good order. We have replaced the heating system with a modern gas system. The interior is in reasonable decorative order.

The Churchyard is closed for burials but there are areas for the interment of ashes. Maintenance is now the responsibility of the Town Council.

There is a Church hall which is attached to the main Church building and is used by community groups as well as for Church meetings. It is also available for private hire.

As the Church building is acoustically good and we have chairs rather than pews, which are removable, the Church is used by outside music societies for concerts and displays.



The Church stands on the Village Green and is the centre of many village activities such as the May Day Celebrations and other such events run by Eaton Socon Community Association. The Church usually runs a cake, craft and other stalls as well as supplying lunches and teas in the Church.

The church's annual Christmas Craft Fayre,

which in 2025 raised over £2,600 for church funds, also attracts many from the community into the church building.



FINANCE

Background

Over the years St Mary's has generally broken even, paying its Parish Share in full.

The main source of income to the General fund is regular planned giving by church members; the number giving this way reduced from 93 in 2020 to 69 at the end of 2025, while the annual amount reduced from £117k to £111k over the same period. Other regular income comes mostly from offerings and other donations, an annual Gift Day, income from room rentals, and fees and charges for weddings and funerals.

In addition, the Church holds two significant fund-raising events each year, raising a few thousand pounds between them; providing lunch and refreshments in the church at the community-organised May Day celebration on the Green, and running our own Christmas Fayre each November/December.

These funds and legacies, alongside appeals to the congregation and the community, have enabled St Mary's to spend significant amounts on refurbishment projects. Recent examples include:

Urgent replacement of the Church boilers in 2018, costing over £30k,

New kitchen build and fit-out and Hall refurbishment in 2021-2, costing ~£34k

Vestry refurbishment in 2023, costing £9.6k,

Church clock repair and overhaul in 2025, costing £2.5k.

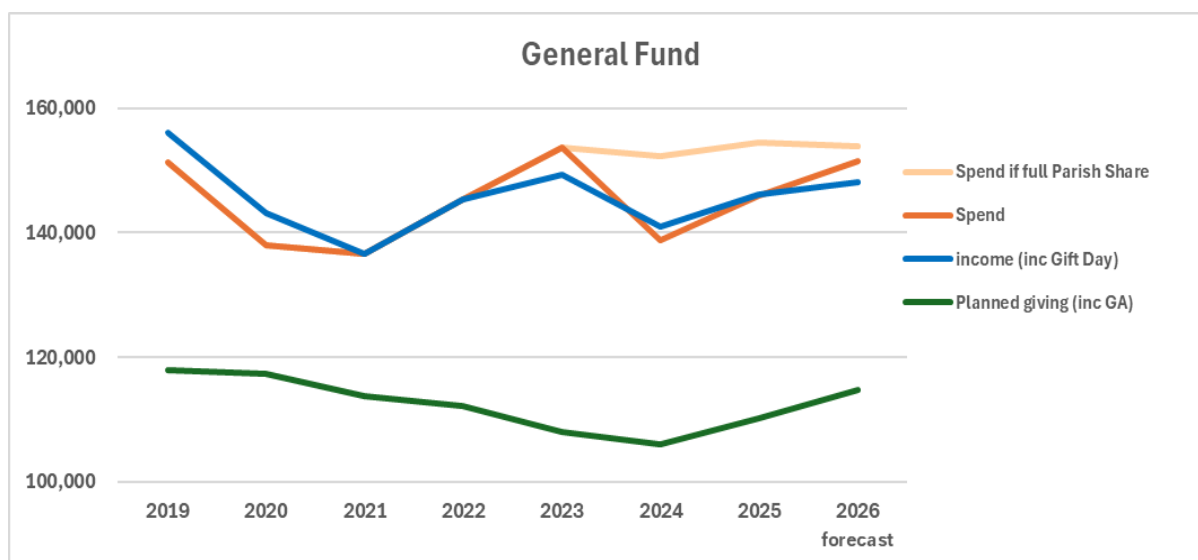
St Mary's has usually held sufficient unrestricted reserves, but these were allowed to drop following Covid, although we reduced staff hours (saving ~£3k pa from 2021-2025, partly restored in 2026), and reduced our contribution to global mission (saving ~£4k pa in 2022-4, partly restored in 2025). A dip in income in 2024 forced the PCC, reluctantly, to underpay the Parish Share (saving ~£13.5k in 2024 and ~£8.5k in 2025).

Last year (2025) the PCC agreed a reserves policy, aiming to keep at least £35,000 in our General and Designated funds. At about the same time as we agreed this policy we received an unexpected anonymous donation of £15,000, which enabled the PCC to immediately achieve the minimum reserves required.

Looking Ahead

The graph shows recent General fund figures, plus the current forecast for 2026. (The forecast spend with full Parish Share allows for the reduction due to the current Vacancy.)

The picture is clearly uncertain with the loss of Rev Tim Robb, our Vicar, and a period of Vacancy. We are encouraged by a recent increase in planned giving, and by the fact that both service attendance and giving do not appear to have decreased since the start of the Vacancy. We are currently forecasting a shortfall of about £5k after including a Gift Day. We believe this gap could be closed, but we are also ensuring that there are sufficient Designated funds earmarked to keep our reserves above the agreed minimum figure throughout the year.



There is a full review of the 2025 accounts, alongside the figures and analyses required by the Charity Commission, in St Mary's 'Report & Accounts for 2025' which may be found at eatonsocon.org/apcm-documents.

COMMUNICATIONS

The church has a website (eatonsocon.org). We also have Facebook and Instagram Profiles.

[St Mary's Eaton Socon • Home](#)

[St Mary's Eaton Socon | St Neots | Facebook](#)

[St Mary's Eaton Socon • Instagram](#)

While these are kept up to date, we recognise that there is more that could be done to improve the digital outreach and image of the church.

The Church database is hosted on ChurchSuite. We use this platform in many ways including the church calendar and bookings, for messaging and email as well as forms and data collection.

A newsletter, Life News, is produced monthly. The Creation Care Team also produce a regular newsletter

A list of Sunday Services is produced quarterly with the theme for the day and readings.

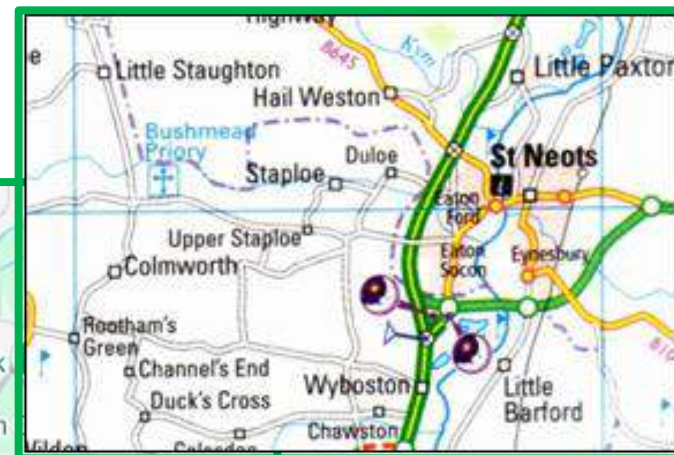
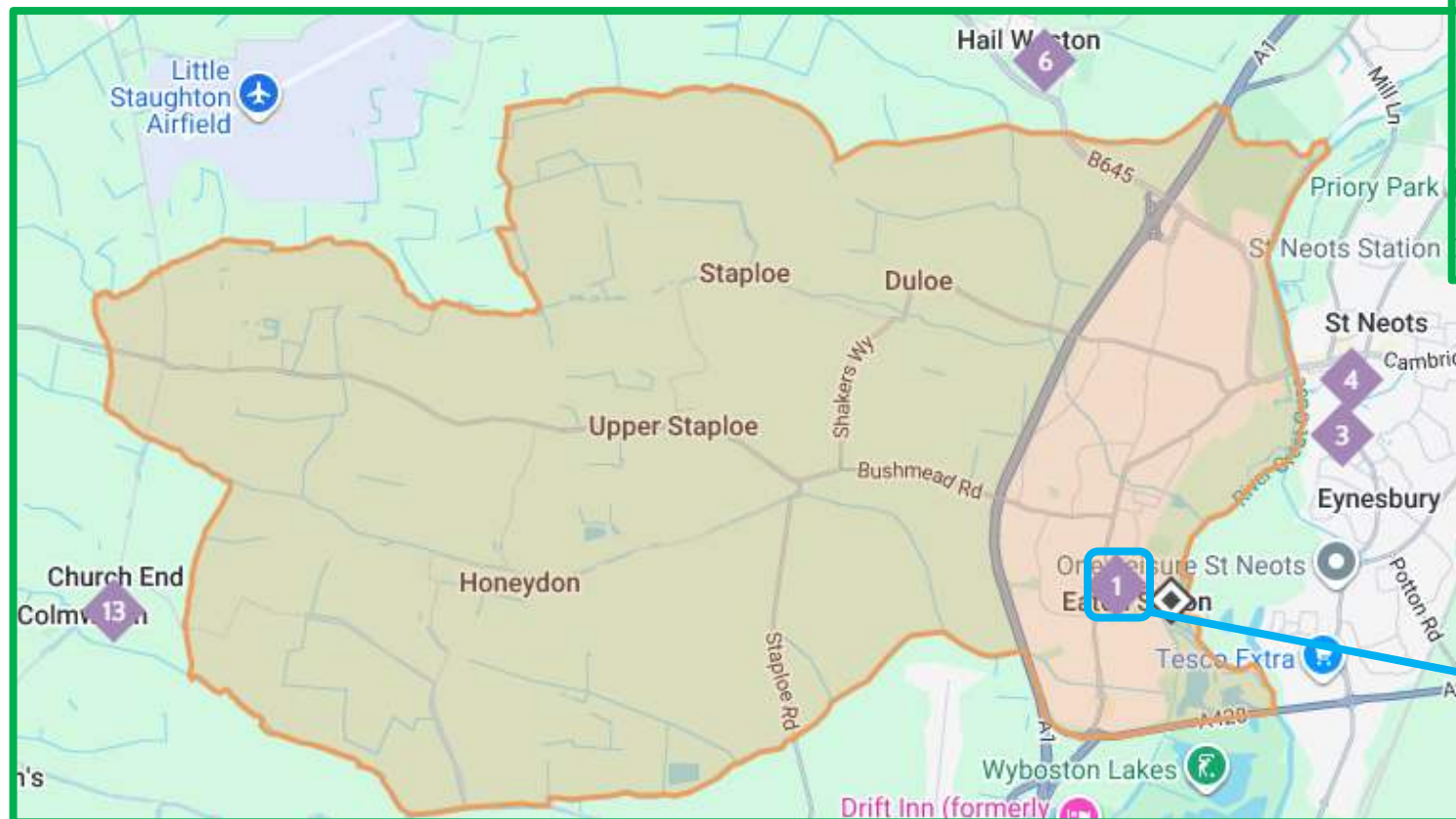
A map of the parish boundary can be found at the link below, at the bottom right of the page search Eaton Socon

[Church of England parish map](#)

Census demographics:

Deprivation rank (1=most deprived, 12,154=least deprived)	10,564
Parish population (2021 census)	12,745
Parish number of occupied households	5,575
Area (square miles)	9.1
Population density (people per square mile)	1,400
% aged 0-4	4.4
% aged 5-19	15.2
% aged 20-29	10.4
% aged 30-44	18
% aged 45-69	33.4
% aged 70 and over	18.5
% Asian ethnicity	1.8
% Black ethnicity	0.6
% Mixed ethnicity	1.6
% White ethnicity	95.3
% Other ethnicity	0.7
% Buddhist	0.4
% Christian	46.7
% Hindu	0.5
% Jewish	0.1
% Muslim	0.6
% Sikh	0.2
% Other religion	0.4
% No religion	45.4
% Religion not stated	5.7
Rural/Urban classification	Rural
% Area urban	19.8

THE BENEFICE



Vicarage

The Parish of Eaton Socon is a mixture of urban and rural, covering 9 square miles comprising the areas of Eaton Socon and Eaton Ford (the Eatons) in the town of St Neots, Cambridgeshire and the villages and hamlets to the west: Bushmead, Duloe, Honeydon, Staploe, Upper Staploe and Begwary in Bedfordshire.

Home to around 13,000 people, the Eatons comprises a good mix of most ages and social-economic backgrounds from the genuinely deprived to the affluent.

The church is located close to the centre of the population of Eaton Socon and provides a home to several community groups in the area.

The River Great Ouse is a major feature of the area which separates the Eatons from the centre of St Neots. It is also the Diocesan boundary, with



Eaton Socon in St Albans Diocese and St Neots in Ely Diocese.

In our youth work, we work closely YFC St Neots.



We were instrumental in the launch of St Neots Foodbank, with a weekly collection point operating from the Church. Alongside this, we also facilitate an Energy Bank to help with Utility costs, and a money advice service.

The Parish includes a few small industrial areas, a couple of business parks and a retail park.

St Neots is well served by doctor's and dentist surgeries. The nearest NHS hospital is Hinchingbrooke Hospital, 10 miles away.



The locality offers excellent transport links not only to Cambridge and Bedford, but is also within easy reach of Peterborough, Milton Keynes, Hitchin and Stevenage. In addition, central London is accessible in around 50 minutes by train. All these make Eaton Socon a very accessible place to live. There is also a huge new housing development on the far side of St Neots, comprising a mix of owner-occupier and social housing. To date, the majority of St Neots are white British. However, this could change with the various housing developments.



A significant development is planned to the south in the adjacent parish of Tempsford, announced in 2026 as one of the government new towns, along with a new road between the Black Cat roundabout and Caxton providing dual carriageway from the M1 all the way through to Felixstowe on the east coast. In addition, the new East Coast Railway link

from Oxford to Cambridge will have a station located in Tempsford cementing the excellent transport service both road and rail north-south and east-west.

