

St John the Baptist Church, Snape

Report for Snape Parish Meeting 2026

Rector

Reverend Robert Leveritt

Associate Priest

Reverend William Sokolis

Electoral Roll.

During 2025, the regular Church of England periodic review of the numbers of people recorded on the electoral rolls of parishes across the country took place. The Electoral Roll of Snape now totals 22; 12 residents and 10 non-residents. This is the lowest total ever in current records. The reasons for this decline in numbers include, sadly, some deaths but principally established village residents moving away to be closer to other family members. They have not been replaced. The general administrative load on the current members of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) is significant.

General Report.

The Alde River Church Benefice is a successful group under the leadership of The Rector with the support of our Associate Priest and several retired clergy, Canon Derek Johnson, Reverend Sheila Murray and Reverend Nigella Youngs-Dunnett. The number of services held at St John's is restricted by the needs of the whole Benefice; seven churches in all. In fact, 73 services were held at Snape during 2025, ranging from Holy Communion (14), Morning Prayer, held on Friday at 9.00am (41), Special Services such as the school's Harvest Festival and Christingle services, Remembrance Sunday, the Light of the World at Christmas and the Festival of All Souls at the end of November. There were 7 funeral, thanksgiving and burial of ashes services, 4 Weddings and Blessings and 2 Baptisms. The church has remained open during the day for private prayer and as a place of peace and quiet and this is frequently remarked upon by visitors.

Finance.

The church's annual expenditure and income require comment from two aspects. Firstly, total expenditure and income. Total expenditure during 2025 was £37,505 against income of £27,375. A deficit of £10,130. The largest unbudgeted expenditure item was for essential repair and replacement of guttering and soffits. The total cost of these works was £18,252, which was offset by a gift of £8,000 and reimbursement of the VAT element via the Listed Places of Worship Grants Scheme (LPWG), resulting in a final cost of £7,210. It is unfortunate that this VAT repayment grant scheme has recently been withdrawn.

During 2025, the average weekly running costs of the church to stay open, insured, be warm and well maintained and to pay our Parish Share, a sum decided by the Diocese based on Diocesan financial figures, and other Benefice commitments, were £313. Weekly income from regular giving, donations and collections averaged £173. A shortfall of £140/week.

During 2026, forecast weekly running costs are likely to be circa £350 taking into consideration an increase in the Parish Share to £13,500, a 7% increase from the figure for 2025, increased utility bills etc. During the year, the urgent need to replace the louvres in the tower is planned, together with the consideration of a CCTV installation in the church and vestry to counter increasing security risks.

Finally, the Parochial Church Council (PCC) remains very grateful for the fund-raising activities of the Friends of Snape Church (FOSC) who remain focussed on raising more funds during 2026 and into the future.

Church Fabric.

General maintenance of the church fabric and the two churchyards has continued thanks to the most valuable contribution of the regular “Thursday Group” of volunteers who continue their splendid work throughout the year.

Safeguarding.

The PCC has complied with the safeguarding guidelines and has due regard to the House of Bishops’ guidance on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. There have been no incidents throughout the year.

Outreach.

Regular liaison has continued with the village school. For the Historic Churches’ Sponsored Ride and Stride event in September, the church was open as a recording centre and for refreshments. Church members also contribute actively to other events in the village and the Benefice. As examples, the well-attended “Messy Church” sessions during school holidays, the annual Classic Cars Show at Stratford St Andrew and the weekly “Meet Up Monday” (Meet Up Tuesday!) meetings. How the Golden Key is missed!!

Thanks to our Volunteers.

The appreciation and thanks of the PCC and all parishioners is again formally recorded for the efforts of our volunteers with the maintenance of the church and its surroundings, for flower arranging and church cleaning and to our resident organist for the music at our services and on other occasions. They all contribute so much to the continuation of the life of the church here in Snape.

VOLUNTEERS TO JOIN IN ANY OF THE ABOVE ACTIVITIES ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.