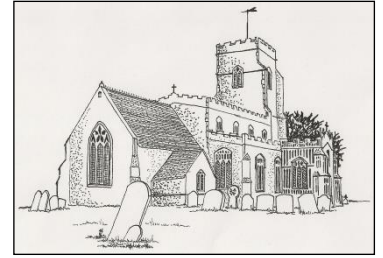


St Peter and St Paul,
Lavenham

The Parishes of Lavenham with Preston St Mary *in the Lavenham Deanery*



St Mary the Virgin,
Preston St Mary

Population, Demography and Amenities

The population in round terms – Lavenham 1,722 (2011 census) and Preston St Mary approximately 200.

Roughly one in six of the inhabitants was born and grew up in the benefice.

Many affluent people have moved into the villages, often having previously visited for holidays and/or having second homes here.

Although many houses in both parishes are mediaeval and listed Grades I and II, both parishes have private houses of all sizes and periods and some council or social housing, outlying farms and separately owned farm houses.

The benefice includes several small local industries and businesses.

Those who work outside the villages mostly travel to Sudbury and Bury St Edmunds and Ipswich for employment, and a small number commute to Cambridge, Norwich or London.

The benefice has a higher than average proportion of retired middle-class and relatively well-off residents, and lower than average number of young families.

Surprisingly there are no nursing homes currently in the benefice. The nearest is in the neighbouring village of Brent Eleigh, and there are others in the locality.

Many of the facilities and activities in Lavenham, including the school, library, surgery, shops, cafés and restaurants and a wide range of clubs for example also benefit those from neighbouring villages.

A strong community spirit is a hallmark of both our parishes.

Lavenham

Tourists supports about 50% of local trade, and a great many of these visit the church.

Many come to see the plethora of historic half-timbered buildings often used in film sets including the National Trust Guildhall and the Little Hall.

Lavenham County Primary School has approximately 120 pupils from Lavenham, Preston and the surrounding villages. There is currently a pre-school on the same premises which will shortly be moving to an annex to the Village Hall and close to the Parish Church, which will free up space at the school for modest expansion.

Beyond the benefice, older children attend Upper Schools in Great Cornard, Thurston and Bury St Edmunds. There are a number of private schools in the vicinity.

More than 60% of the population is older than 45, and those under 40 less than 25%. There are about 10 times as many over 60s as children under 10. More than one third of residents are retired and women outnumber men by a ratio considerably higher than the national average, particularly among the over-65s. (Statistics are 15 years old now, but unlikely to have changed very much.)

Lavenham has a few almshouses and there is a council-run group of sheltered houses and flats.

There are more than 20 clubs and organisations which meet in one of the following: the Village Hall, the Guildhall, the Recreation Ground and Sports Pavilion, the Parish Church, the Salvation Army Hall, and at the Royal British Legion centre.

There is an hourly weekday bus service to Bury St Edmunds, Sudbury and Colchester.

Preston St Mary

Preston St Mary has no shop or Post Office but a thriving pub and some visitors.

The Village Hall was formerly the village school. Organisations which meet there include the Friends of Preston St Mary Church, Ladies Group, Preston and District Art Group, Bowls Club, Village Hall Committee as well as the Parish Council.

Preston St Mary no longer has a bus service.