



The Parish of St Thomas Bradwell-on-Sea
Parish Profile Local Information



Appendix 1 Bradwell-juxta-Mare



[St Thomas Church Profile](#)



[St Thomas Church, Bradwell-juxta-Mare](#)

<http://www.essexinfo.net/bradwellchurch/>

[Location and local geography](#)

Bradwell-on-Sea falls into three settlements:

- The Village centred round St Thomas and the school and stretching east towards St Peter's Chapel.
- Bradwell Waterside, a mile north-east of the main village, has a large marina.
- Mill End, a mile to the south-west.

Being bounded on two sides by the North Sea and the River Blackwater it has areas of designated Special Scientific Interest. The ancient chapel of St. Peter-on-the-Wall, the sailing, walks and wildlife on the coastal areas attract many visitors to the area. The parish church located in the centre of the village provides a focal point of attraction.

The housing is mixed and includes a conservation area with listed buildings, a housing estate and a range of housing association properties. There is a residential nursing home and council-run sheltered housing scheme. The village has a thriving Community Shop and Post Office. There are also three pubs and a petrol and service station.

The village hall is a community hub and has a large playing field and excellent stage which has been used by an amateur dramatic group. A large Flower Show and Companion Dog Show is held here on the first Saturday in August each year.



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There are doctors' surgeries and pharmacies in the neighbouring villages of Tillingham (the closest), Mayland and Southminster.

Across the benefice there are a number of thriving organizations covering all the age groups including Brownies, Guides, and Cubs (non-church attached), Women's Institutes, a youth club, a Thursday Senior group, Art classes, Craft club and Coffee mornings

The close proximity to water means a great deal of sailing activity with the marina, a thriving yacht club and an outdoor education and activities centre. There are also three caravan sites in the parishes.

The decommissioned power station, small industrial units and agriculture provide some local employment but many people commute as far as London to work. With a satisfactory broadband connection there are a large number of self-employed people working from home.

There is a wind farm in the parish that offer annual community grants of £30000 to the parishes of Bradwell and Tillingham.

Bradwell History

The area that surrounds Bradwell-on-Sea is rich in diversity and steeped in history

In Bradwell a Roman fort, known as Othona, was built in 290 AD to protect the coast against Saxon raids.

In 653AD Cedd was sent from Lindisfarne by Aidan and landed at Ithanchester (Bradwell) as it was connected to the centre of the East Saxon kingdom by a good Roman Road. In 654AD he built the chapel, which still stands today, from the ruins of a Roman fort. The chapel was used as a monastery for several centuries and then later as a Chapel of Ease until the 17th century. It later fell out of use as a place of worship and contemplation and was used as a barn for several centuries. It was re-consecrated by the Bishop of Chelmsford in 1920 and is now known as St Peter's Chapel.

In the 1920s and 1930s Bradwell was an up-and-coming holiday area but this was brought to a halt during World War II when an airfield was built to provide air cover for the east coast and pathfinder support. RAF Bradwell Bay was closed in December 1945.

In the late 1950s a nuclear power station was built and started generating electricity in 1962, ceasing in 2002. The station is now in an accelerated de-commissioning stage, an operation expected to come to fruition in 2020, where it will be left for around 85 years prior to full demolition of the reactor buildings. The power station has helped to keep Bradwell a rural area as the Nuclear Installation Emergency plan has limited the amount of building in the area. In May 2015 Bradwell was named as a preferred site for possibly a new nuclear power station sometime in the future.

In 2013 a wind farm was built in Bradwell, with ten turbines to the south of the parish. A community grant offers funds for the communities of Bradwell and Tillingham.



The Church

The earliest record of St Thomas' history is that of the first recorded rector. This was Imbertus de Monte Martino, who was instituted on July the 8th 1321. St Thomas' Church was probably built around this time. It is a Grade II* listed building in a closed churchyard at the heart of a conservation area and is symmetrical in plan except for the addition of a small vestry on the north side of the chancel and the porch on the south side. The chancel is built of a random mixture of Roman tiles, flints, septaria and rubble. The nave, declared dilapidated in 1699, was rebuilt in 1706 of alternating layers of flint, rubble and brick up to the window level and upwards from limestone used in the previous church building. The present tower was built of red brick in 1743, replacing a previous tower with a steeple. At one time there were eight bells in the belfry but now there are only six. The clock, first referred to in records in 1767, is believed to have been installed soon after the tower was built.



The timber porch was rescued from Shopland church near Southend in 1961 and is believed to be 15th century.

The church interior has had several changes with the removal of a ceiling at the beginning of the last century. The walls were also painted white and new lighting installed at the end of the 20th century. And finally the rear of the church was reordered to provide additional rooms and facilities

There are restoration projects underway with roof and paintwork being started in Summer 2014 and nave wall stonework repairs being started in 2015.

The churchyard is closed but there is an open cemetery in East End Road next to the rectory.

Chapman Room/Upper Room

In 1984 a transformation of the church was started. From the area below the gallery the pews were removed and the font moved to the present location at the front of the church. The space was used to form a parish room called the Chapman Room after Deaconess Ethel Chapman who once lived in the parish. In 2000 the area was completely remodelled, a toilet, an upper room for meetings and an area for refreshments after services were added.

The new upper room has a safe wide staircase for easy access is used for meetings such as PCC meetings. During the redevelopment the gallery was brought forward, providing extra accommodation when the church is full and keeping the aspect similar to the original from the nave.



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The concluding part of this plan is the enclosing of the porch with oak doors, a tiled floor and glazed windows. This part of the project is presently being planned.

The Church Community

As well as worshipping in our St Thomas Church the parish has the use of St Peter's Chapel.

Church Organisation

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) and committees

The parish has its own PCC decision-making body which meets every two months. On the other month one of the sub committee meets. One third of the membership, by rotation, is elected annually to ensure continuity. The churchwardens are elected yearly with a 6-year maximum term. Apart from the standing committee there are three main sub-committees of the council, which are chaired by laity. Each committee reports back to the PCC and makes recommendations.

Finance Committee

This committee consists of Standing committee members who are to meet to discuss finance and budgets.

The Fabric Committee

The Fabric Committee oversees the maintenance of our beautiful building. Its members carry out an annual inspection of the church, churchyard and cemetery and oversee small projects. The church Quinquennial Inspection has just been carried out. The report on St Thomas was excellent in 2010 and is expected to be the same this time, identifying only a few minor issues which will be addressed.

Social Committee

The Social Committee meets during the year and aims to plan a mixed programme of fellowship, outreach and fund-raising. Our activities include:

- Parish harvest supper
- Christian Aid shared family lunch
- Christmas or summer fairs - with refreshments and stalls
- Pilgrimage refreshments
- Fundraising meals
- Other ad hoc fundraising events

The group is hard working, leads by example and has a wide band of volunteers to call upon. We are also in contact with many people who are not members of the congregation, whom we try to encourage and include in social events.



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Worship and Mission Committee

The mission committee look at special services and mission opportunities within the parish.

Financial Position

The parish normally pays the Parish Share in full. The parish operates an envelope and standing order giving scheme and all money given is encouraged to be by Gift Aid.

The PCC believes that the expenses of the church should be paid for by the church membership and we go out to the village for help with supporting the upkeep of the church building.

2015 Statistics

Electoral Roll members	27
Average weekly communicants	15
Average attendance at special services	50
Christmas Eve Attendance	80
St Thomas' Nine lessons & Carols at the Chapel	140+
Easter Day Attendance	37
Funerals	5
Baptisms	2
Weddings	5
<i>(Currently 3 Weddings have been booked for 2016)</i>	
Confirmations	0
<i>(Currently 2 confirmations are planned for 2016)</i>	
Average Service Attendees at Church	17

Baptism anniversaries are remembered by sending a card for the first three years and an invitation to the Baptism Roll Service for subsequent 10 years.

Our enthusiastic congregation is involved in many activities.

Thursday Club

An enthusiastic group meets in the Church's main communal area, the Chapman Room, on the 1st Thursday afternoon of each month. This group was started when the re-modelling of the west end of the church was completed and enjoys activities including games, talks, visiting local attractions and meals together.



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Church Flowers

We have a talented team of 16 volunteers who arrange flowers in all parts of the church. All the team members help to decorate the church for Pentecost, Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Occasionally we hold a flower festival, which attracts many visitors. We also offer a personal service for flower arrangements for weddings and funerals.

Bell ringing

There is a band of 12 dedicated bell ringers who ring for every Sunday morning service, weddings and special services. Bell practice night is Friday, sometimes alternating with Tillingham. The bell ringers and PCC have presently undergone a study to restore the 1743 bells and replace the missing two bells to the 8 bell frame.

St Thomas' Bells - Brian Clayden – Tower Captain,

“It is an exciting time for bell ringing at St Thomas’. Our six bells have a long history. Five were cast in 1744 and are listed by Church Care. One bell, the tenor, was installed in 1948. But the 18th century frame originally held eight bells, and remains in excellent condition. The present ring is in need of refurbishment, and our enthusiastic band of some eleven ringers looks forward to this challenging but exciting project, which will hopefully include augmentation back to eight”.

Other Christian establishments, organizations and activities in the parishes

St Peter's Chapel on the Wall (Ad Murum)

This chapel, built by St Cedd in 654 AD, is probably one of the most significant church buildings still in use in England. The building is held in trust by Chelmsford Cathedral and is Grade 1 listed.

The chapel has a Chaplain who acts as the local representative of the cathedral, correspondent and organiser for visiting groups. Throughout the year various groups such as primary schools, ecumenical church groups, social workers, teachers etc. request a talk and/or worship. The Rector as well as the Chaplain serves on the chapel committee which meets twice a year. The Chaplain is the correspondent for those contacting the chapel website (www.bradwellchapel.org). St Thomas church members are responsible for the grounds, housekeeping, and flowers in the chapel.

Chaplain to the Chapel of St Peter-on-the-Wall - Brigid Main - Chaplain

The Chapel of St Peter-on-the-Wall is governed by Chelmsford Cathedral and the running and upkeep lies with the Chapel Committee, a sub-committee of the Cathedral Chapter. The day to day upkeep of the chapel is undertaken by members of St Thomas', Bradwell-on-Sea.

As the chapel is within the parish of St Thomas' there is close co-operation between the Chaplain and the Rector.



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As Chaplain I have responsibility for all the worship at the chapel and work closely with the Rector and the Othona community. A number of St Thomas' services are held at the chapel during the year and the Othona community use the chapel regularly and daily during the summer months.

I also hold Quiet Days at the Chapel and a weekly communion on a Thursday at 9am. In July and August there is evening worship at the chapel, with a variety of speakers which can attract up to 100 visitors. There is a wedding, baptism and funeral policy which is set in conjunction with St Thomas' PCC.

The chapel is a place of national and international interest and attracts a large number of visitors as well as visiting history and architectural groups. It is being developed as a centre of spirituality and as part of this, in conjunction with Maldon Tourism Office, we are exploring a project to develop a resource centre in the village. It is being developed as a centre of spirituality and I hope that the Rector will be an integral part of this mission.

Visit by the Archbishop of Canterbury to the Chapel in May 2014.



In celebration of the Centenary of the Diocese of Chelmsford the Archbishop of Canterbury visited the diocese for a few days

The Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Reverend Justin Welby, visited Bradwell on a Saturday 17th May to celebrate Eucharist at St Peter's Chapel, before attending a meeting at Othona to discuss monastic communities. St Peter's Chapel was founded by St Cedd in the 7th century along with a Celtic-style community.

The Archbishop's 7.30am visit was part of the Diocese of Chelmsford's centenary celebrations.



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The Othona Community – Tim Fox - warden of the community

Othona is an open and inclusive Community rooted in the Christian tradition and drawing on a wealth of other inspirations. We welcome people of all ages, abilities, backgrounds and beliefs to our two centres on the quiet coasts of Essex and Dorset. Through sharing in a daily rhythm of work, worship, study and play, we seek personal renewal and glimpses of the sacred. In community we explore the relationship between faith and life and encourage one another in caring for the world and its people.

From its beginning in 1946 as a summer camp in tents on the Essex marshes, Othona has been a meeting place for people from different countries and backgrounds. Now with its purpose built buildings Othona is now open all year round, providing a place of renewal, to take stock, make friends over the shared chores, perhaps to learn something new.

The community attracts anything between 15 and 90 people, depending on the theme and the season. At any given time there will be some who have been coming for years and others here for the first time. Especially in the summer the dining room echoes to the sound of many languages and children's voices.



Othona has a special concern for living in harmony with nature – with wind-turbine, solar panels, and eco building and much else. The beauty of the natural world is all around – from a green woodpecker to an unpolluted starlit night sky.

The Community enjoys an extremely good working relationship with the Parish of St Thomas and The Diocese of Chelmsford, working closely with the Chaplain of St Peter's Chapel to plan joint events. Our core team and visitors attend the Thursday morning Eucharist services. Members of the community also gather twice a day in the Chapel for morning and evening worship. <http://www.othona-bradwell.org.uk>

The Bradwell Pilgrimage (2016 Bradwell Festival)

The Bradwell Pilgrimage is an annual ecumenical event organised by a Committee under the banner of Churches Together in Essex and East London (CTEEL).

It is held on the first Saturday in July, over the years the event has attracted a host of excellent speakers from all walks of the Christian faith. An opening service is held in St Thomas churchyard precedes a walk to St Peter's Chapel. Once arrived at the Chapel, Pilgrims are encouraged to have their lunch and to take part in the opening worship service before visiting the variety of stalls, speakers, workshops and activities available. The afternoon concludes with community singing and a final act of worship, finishing around 3.30pm.

There is to be a new committee in 2016 but usually the chaplain, the Rector, and some parishioners are on the organising Committee. A group of dedicated parish helpers take on the responsibility for organising the site and local volunteers for the day of the pilgrimage.

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