

# All Saints Church, Ringsfield, Suffolk

*Archaeological monitoring*



for  
Ringsfield PCC

CA Project: SU0107  
CA Report: SU0107\_1  
HER Ref: RGD 033

March 2020



# All Saints Church, Ringsfield, Suffolk

## Archaeological Monitoring

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## CONTENTS

SUMMARY .....	2
1. INTRODUCTION .....	3
2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND .....	3
3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES .....	3
4. METHODOLOGY .....	4
5. RESULTS .....	4
6. DISCUSSION.....	6
7. CA PROJECT TEAM .....	6
8. REFERENCES .....	7

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Fig. 1 Site location plan
- Fig. 2 Location of monitored groundworks
- Fig. 3 Plan of excavated trench arch

## LIST OF APPENDICIES

- Appendix A: Context descriptions
- Appendix B: OASIS summary



## SUMMARY

<b>Project Name:</b>	All Saints Church,
<b>Location:</b>	Ringsfield, Suffolk
<b>NGR:</b>	640315 288429
<b>Type:</b>	Monitoring
<b>Date:</b>	February/March 2020
<b>Planning Reference:</b>	n/a
<b>Location of Archive:</b>	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
<b>OASIS ID:</b>	cotswold2-388428
<b>Site Code:</b>	RGD 033

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Cotswold Archaeology during groundworks associated with the construction of a small toilet facility on the south-eastern corner of All Saints churchyard.

Excavation for the toilet building footprint and drainage trench extended to a maximum depth of 0.65m and did not encounter any burials or disarticulated bone. The site of the trench arch drainage was excavated to a depth of 0.8m, revealing several grave cuts in the base of the trench. Whilst evidence of coffin nails and staining were visible in the stripped surface, no *in situ* burials were encountered at the excavated formation level. A small quantity of disarticulated bone, mostly comprising skull fragments, was collected during the trench arch excavation and reburied at the base of the trench. A trench excavated from the trench arch to an existing water supply established the presence of graves throughout its course but did not appear to reach the depth of burial. The top of a skull was exposed in this trench, close to the church tower, which was likely to represent an *in situ* burial but no grave cut was defined.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In February and March 2020, Cotswold Archaeology (CA) carried out archaeological monitoring of All Saints Church, Ringsfield, Suffolk (centred at NGR: 640315 288429; Fig. 1). The work was undertaken to comply with Faculty consent for a new toilet facility.
- 1.2 The monitoring was carried out in accordance with archaeological advice provided by Diocesan Archaeological Advisor, Bob Carr. The fieldwork followed *Standard and guidance: Archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014) the county standards and 'Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England, Second Edition' (APABE 2017).

### *The site*

- 1.3 The site is located on the north side of the parish of Ringsfield, on the south side of the Waveney valley. It lies at a height of approximately 12m above Ordnance Datum.
- 1.4 The proposed small, detached building footprint covered an area of 7.25 square metres and is situated at the top of a N-S slope in the south east corner of the churchyard, close to the crinkle-crankle boundary wall.
- 1.5 The site geology is recorded by the British Geological Survey as Crag Group- Sand. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 0 to 5 million years ago in the Quaternary and Neogene Periods, overlain by superficial deposits of Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel formed up to 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. Local environment previously dominated by subaerial slopes (BGS 2020).

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Domesday survey records a church in Ringsfield but the Grade II\* standing building is largely a Victorian rebuild. The earliest surviving elements of the medieval church are the square west tower and part of the nave, both dating to the 15th century.

## 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:



- to monitor groundworks, and to identify, investigate and record all significant buried archaeological deposits revealed on the site during the course of the development groundworks.
- to identify the depth of any burials which maybe present within the development area and exhume and record these if they are too shallow to preserve *in-situ*.
- at the conclusion of the project, to produce an integrated archive for the project work and a report setting out the results of the project and the archaeological conclusions that can be drawn from the recorded data.

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 An archaeologist was present during the excavation of various groundworks for the proposed building and associated services, the locations of which are shown on Figure 2.
- 4.2 Where archaeological deposits were encountered written, drawn and photographic records were compiled in accordance with CA Technical Manual 1: *Fieldwork Recording Manual*. A Leica GPS was also used to record and locate the monitored groundworks.
- 4.3 The archive from the works are currently held by CA at their offices in Needham Market, Suffolk. Subject to the agreement of the legal landowner the site archive will be deposited with Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service under the HER reference RGD 033. A summary of information from this project, presented in Appendix B, will be entered onto the OASIS online database of archaeological projects in Britain. The OASIS reference for this site is 388428.

#### 5. RESULTS

- 5.1 Three monitoring visits were conducted between 25th February and 4th March 2020, in order to observe the excavated groundworks associated with the proposed facility.

##### **Building footprint and service trench**

- 5.2 The footprint of the proposed building was machine stripped to a depth of between 0.4m and 0.65m (Plates 1 and 2). A thin layer of dark brown loamy sand topsoil c.0.1m

thick (0001), sealed a mid orangey brown friable clay silty sand subsoil (0002) to the full depth of the excavation. A service trench measuring 8m long, 0.3m wide and 0.5m deep was cut from the north east corner of the building footprint through the same soil profile (Plate 3). The excavated area was heavily root disturbed. No archaeological interventions were observed within the monitored groundworks, nor were any artefacts or disarticulated bones recovered from the upcast spoil.

### **Trench arch drain**

- 5.3 An area measuring 5m x 1m was excavated for a trench arch drain, to a depth of 0.8m (Plate 4). This cut through the same topsoil and subsoil layers observed in the building footprint and service trench. At a depth of c.0.65m, the natural subsoil was seen below subsoil layer 0002, within which grave cuts were visible. Subsequent excavation to the required formation level defined nine possible grave cuts, summarised in Appendix 1. Of these, 0003 and 0010 showed signs of coffin staining but the depth of burial was not reached in any of the exposed cuts. No dating evidence was observed or collected from any of the visible graves, however the coffin stains in 0003 and 0010 suggested the presence of the six-sided style of coffin, wider at the shoulder area and tapering towards both the head and foot ends. This suggests a post-medieval date for these burials.

A small assemblage of disarticulated bone, mostly skull fragments, was collected from the spoil approaching the base of the drain excavation. It is possible that this was derived from backfill of the grave cuts rather than from subsoil layer 0002 which was markedly sterile elsewhere.

### **Water pipe trench**

- 5.4 A 0.3m wide 0.7m deep trench was cut from the trench arch drain to an existing water supply on the west side of the church tower (Plates 5 and 6). On the south side of the path, this cut through the same heavily rooted soil profile as had been observed in the trench arch and it was clear that graves were present throughout the area, albeit impossible to define within such a restricted cut. An assemblage of bone collected from the spoil heap was reinterred in an area of natural subsoil exposed in the base of the trench. The majority of this was certainly disarticulated as the level of burials did not appear to have been reached, but minimal disturbance of shallower burials cannot be discounted.



On the north side of the path, the trench was cut through a dark brown sandy loam (0020) to a depth of 0.65m, below which paler yellowish brown silty sand could be seen in the base of the trench in places. It was not clear whether this was natural undisturbed subsoil or a reworked subsoil layer similar to 0002.

The top of a what was believed to be an *in situ* skull, 0021, was encountered at the base of the trench, indicating the likely presence of graves in this area, however, it was not possible to define an associated grave cut within the limited confines of the trench. The skull was undisturbed by the groundworks.

## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 Although none of the proposed groundworks impinged on known, marked burials, it is not surprising to have encountered grave cuts and disarticulated bone within an established churchyard.
- 6.2 The number of graves observed during the monitoring suggests more intensive burials within the churchyard than the existing marked burials indicate and demonstrates cutting of earlier burials by later graves, as would be expected in a graveyard presumably used continuously since the medieval period. As the excavated formation level of the toilet building and service trench did not extend below the re-worked cemetery soil, it is still possible that graves could exist below the limit of excavation, sealed by the re-worked deposits.
- 6.3 Staining in graves 0003 and 0010 indicated the presence of six-sided, tapering coffins, of likely post-medieval date, most probably 18th-19th century.

## 7. CA PROJECT TEAM

Fieldwork and reporting was undertaken by Linzi Everett. The illustrations were prepared by Ryan Wilson. The archive has been compiled by Linzi Everett and prepared for deposition by Ruth Beveridge. The project was managed for CA by Stuart Boulter who also edited the report.



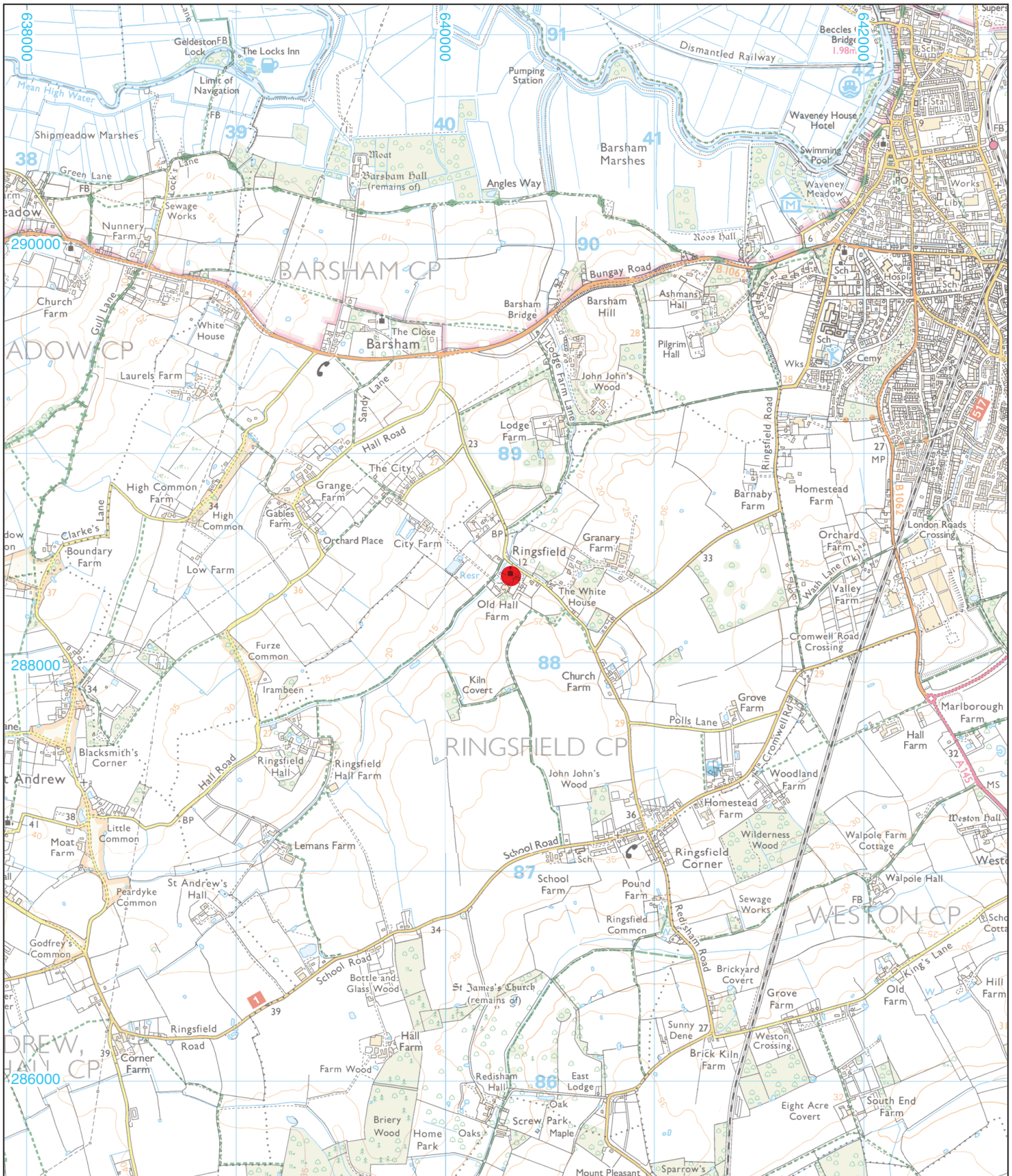


## 8. REFERENCES

BGS (British Geological Survey), 2015, *Geology of Britain Viewer* <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed 26 February 2020

Brickley, M. and McKinley, J., 2004, Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains, Reading, IFA / BABAO





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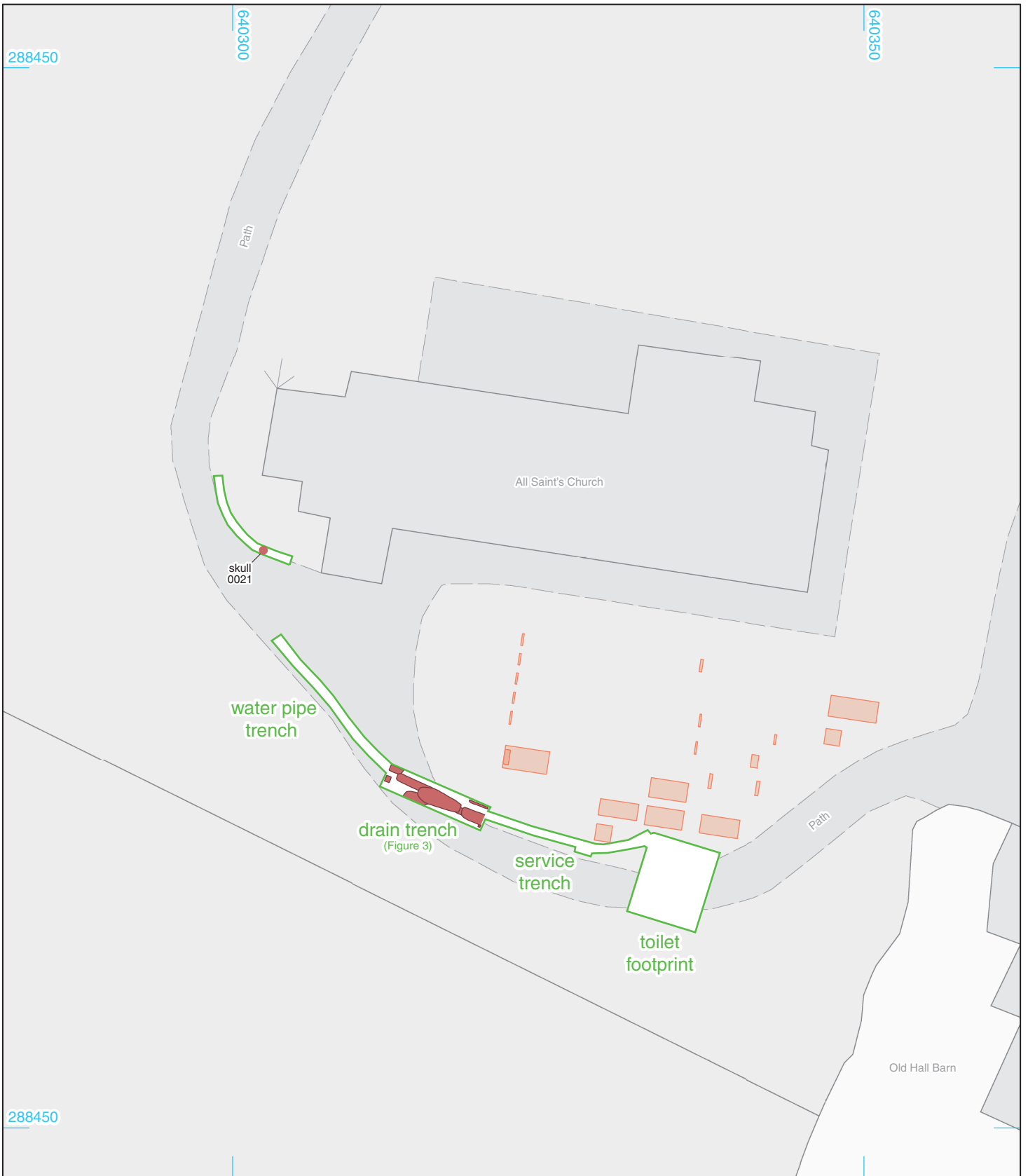
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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 All Saints Church, Ringsfield, Suffolk

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Site location plan

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 Ordnance Survey 0100031673

DRAWN BY	RW	PROJECT NO.	SU0107	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	DJB	DATE	06/03/2020	
APPROVED BY	LE	SCALE@A4	1:25,000	<b>1</b>



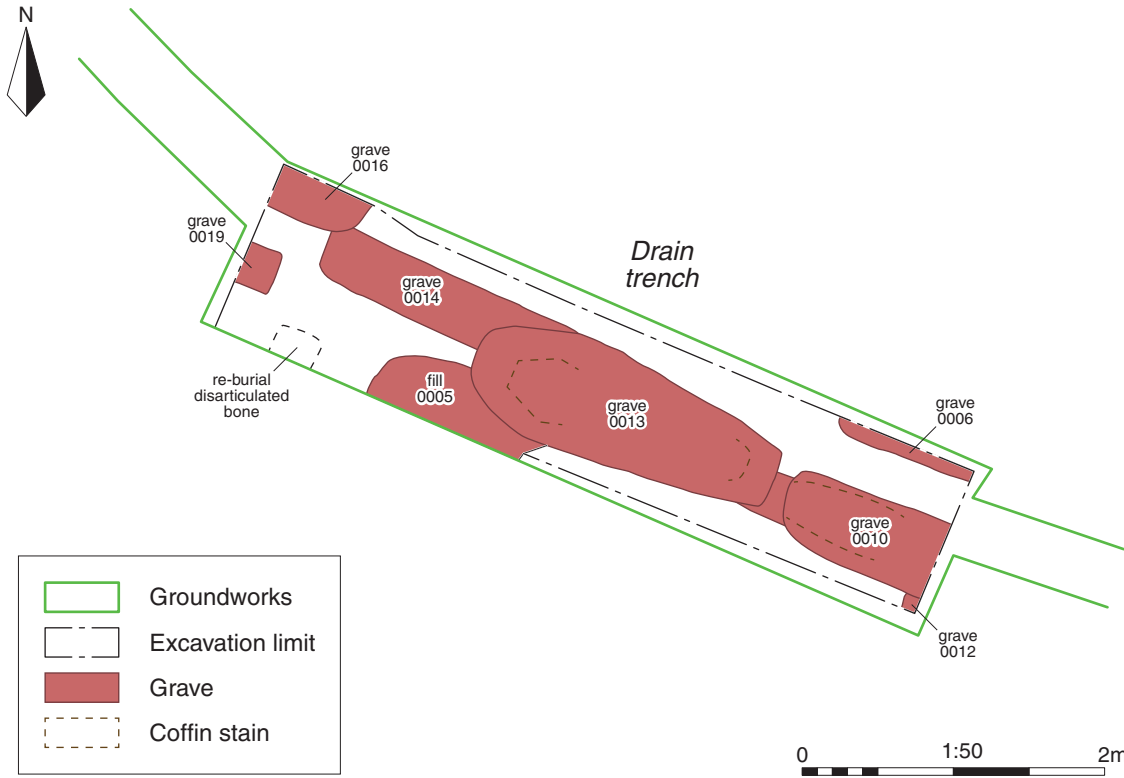
- Groundworks
- Grave / skeletal remains
- Selected gravestones  
(as defined on architect's plan)



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**PROJECT TITLE**  
 All Saints Church, Ringsfield, Suffolk

**FIGURE TITLE**  
 Location of monitored groundworks



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PROJECT TITLE  
**All Saints Church, Ringsfield, Suffolk**

FIGURE TITLE  
**Trench arch plan**

DRAWN BY	<b>RW</b>	PROJECT NO.	<b>SU0107</b>	FIGURE NO.
CHECKED BY	<b>DJB</b>	DATE	<b>06/03/2020</b>	<b>3</b>
APPROVED BY	<b>LE</b>	SCALE@A4	<b>1:50</b>	





Plate 1. Excavated building footprint. Looking east, 1m scale



Plate 2. Representative section of the building footprint. Looking north, 0.4m scale



Plate 3. Service trench. Looking west, 1m scale







Plate 4. Excavated trench arch drain, showing grave cuts in the base of the trench. Looking west, 1m scale



Plate 5. Water pipe trench, north side of the path. Looking east towards the trench arch drain



Plate 6. Water pipe trench, north side of the path. Looking north, 1m scale

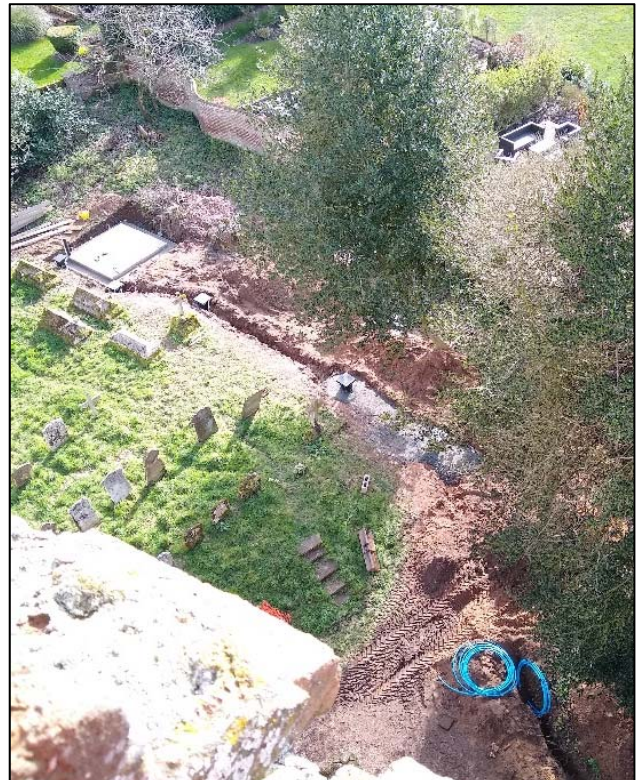


Plate 7. View of the groundworks from the church tower. Looking south



## APPENDIX A: CONTEXT LIST

Context Number	Feature Type	Category	Feature Number	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Interpretation
0001	Bioturbation	Deposit	0001	Friable mid orangey brown silty sand			0.15	Topsoil
0002	Bioturbation	Deposit	0002	Mid yellowish brown friable silty clay sand, homogenous and sterile			0.5	Subsoil/re-worked cemetery soil
0003	Grave	Cut	0003	Complete E-W grave	2.32	0.68		Post med grave
0004	Grave	Fill	0003	Mid grey brown friable silty sand with signs of coffin staining suggesting a six-sided, tapering coffin approx 1.67m long and up to 0.42m wide				
0005	Grave	Deposit	0005	Mid-pale grey brown silty sand- probable grave cut partially exposed in S side of trench. Rounded W end but E end not defined.				
0006	Grave	Cut	0006	E-W grave partially exposed in NE corner of the trench cut				
0007	Grave	Fill	0006	Mid brown friable silty sand				
0008	Grave	Cut	0008	Partially exposed narrow E-W feature assumed to be a grave but cut by later graves. Straight, almost parallel sides				
0009	Grave	Fill	0008	Pale, friable mixed yellow and brown silty sand				
0010	Grave	Cut	0010	E-W grave, W end exposed in the trench cut. Straight almost parallel sides, rounded W end		0.52		Post med grave
0011	Grave	Fill	0010	Mid grey brown friable silty sand with signs of coffin staining suggesting a six-sided, tapering coffin				
0012	Grave	Cut	0012	Assumed E-W grave partially exposed in SE corner of the trench cut				
0013	Grave	Fill	0012	Mid brown friable silty sand				



Context Number	Feature Type	Category	Feature Number	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Interpretation
0014	Grave	Cut	0014	Narrow E-W grave with straight parallel sides, rounded SW corner and straight W end. E end and NW corner cut but later graves	0.76	0.4		
0015	Grave	Fill	0014	Mid-pale yellowish brown friable silty sand				
0016	Grave	Cut	0016	E-W grave partially exposed in NW corner of the trench cut. Suggests a rounded E end				
0017	Grave	Fill	0016	Mid brown friable silty sand				
0018	Grave	Cut	0018	E-W grave partially exposed in W end of the trench cut. Narrow, with straight apparently parallel sides and a square E end		0.3		
0019	Grave	Fill	0018	Mid brown friable silty sand				
0020	Bioturbation	Deposit	0020	Dark brown sandy loam, very much like a topsoil to full depth of the excavated trench adjacent to the church tower on the north side of the path				Topsoil/re-worked cemetery soil
0021	Skeleton			Partially exposed skull in the base of a trench cut for a water pipe. No associated grave cut visible but the trench was too narrow and deep to define a great deal				



**APPENDIX B: OASIS SUMMARY****OASIS ID: cotswold2-388428****Project details**

Project name	RGD 033 All Saints Cjhurch, Ringsfield
Short description of the project	Monitoring of groundworks associated with a new toilet facility
Project dates	Start: 25-02-2020 End: 11-03-2020
Previous/future work	Not known / No
Any associated project reference codes	RGD 033 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Monument type	BURIAL Uncertain
Monument type	BURIAL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	N/A None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Faculty jurisdiction

**Project location**

Country	England
Site location	SUFFOLK WAVENEY RINGSFIELD RGD 033 All Saints Church
Study area	300 Square metres
Site coordinates	TM 4031 8843 52.440337671148 1.53620891647 52 26 25 N 001 32 10 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 9m Max: 12m

**Project creators**

Name of Organisation	Cotswold Archaeology
Project brief originator	Diocesan Archaeologist
Project design originator	Bob Carr
Project director/manager	Stuart Boulter
Project supervisor	Linzi Everett
Type of sponsor/funding body	Parochial Church Council
Name of sponsor/funding body	Ringsfield PCC



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### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	ADS
Digital Archive ID	RGD 033
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Archive
Paper Archive ID	RGD 033
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Correspondence","Photograph","Unpublished Text"

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### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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