



The Hundred Parishes

An introductory article about CENSUSES

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has published a good deal of analysis based on the 2021 Census. Nationally, this has shown that the population of England grew by 6.6% in the last 10 years and 14% over the last 20 years. Locally, the rise in population numbers has been much faster.

The population of The Hundred Parishes stood at 125,000 in 2001. In 2021 it was around 157,000 having increased by 13% in the 10 years between 2001 and 2011 and 25% over the 20 years since 2001. If we think the roads have become busier, these extra 30,000 people are a major factor.

Half of that numerical increase is accounted for by 6 parishes close to Stansted Airport. Elsenham, Flitch Green, Great Dunmow, Little Canfield, Stansted Mountfitchet and Takeley have each expanded by more than 50% in the last 20 years.

The only other major population growth within the Hundred Parishes has been in Buntingford: up from 4,300 in 2001 to 7,900.

The Census is the modern equivalent of the Domesday Book produced in 1086 AD. The two sets of data provide insights into some of the differences between life under the Normans and in the 21st century. In 1086, the population of England was about 2 million, compared to 56 million today. That's equivalent to spreading today's population of Thaxted across the whole of the Hundred Parishes.

Back then, wealth tended to be measured by the number of pigs or plough teams in a community, while the social strata ranged from lords of the manor down to slaves.

In 2021, 8% of the Hundred Parishes population was born outside the UK (compared to 17% in the whole of England and Wales); 95% are white (v 82%); 10% of homes are flats (v 22%); 36% of houses have 4 or more bedrooms (v 21%); 27% of homes are rented (v 37%); 40% of adults work at home (v 31%); 55% are in professional or managerial jobs (v 46%); 56% of households have 2 or more vehicles (v 35%); the Hundred Parishes has a different age mix to the UK average, with a shortfall of around 5,000 people in their 20s and 30s offset by around 5,000 extra people aged over 40.

Whilst the previous paragraph highlighted contrasts, there are some statistics which are closely aligned with the national picture: 99% of households have central heating; 5% of households have a second home; 51% of the population is female and 49% male.

Each census is intended to help policy-makers who, no doubt, will draw their own conclusions as they plan ahead. We have not sought to draw any conclusions, although it seems that many of the stats point in a similar direction - that this is an

area of high-cost housing. Younger homeowners cannot afford to buy their way in; nor can airport workers for whom so many of the houses were supposedly provided. Given that there has been much opportunity to 'level-up' within the sustained housebuilding bonanza, the continuing imbalance reflects the failure of planners to ensure that developments include sufficient affordable or smaller properties.

If you would like to see more information, please go to <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census> or for more in-depth figures go to <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/customprofiles/draw/>

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Any comments or suggestions for improvement may be submitted by using the Feedback form on the website. The website has many short articles on various aspects of The Hundred Parishes, as well as introductions to individual parishes and to a number of local celebrities, and an extensive What's On section. More than a hundred walk route descriptions can be freely downloaded, with each of the hundred parishes featuring in at least one walk.