



BENEFICE PROFILE

The Benefice of Abbas &
Templecombe, Henstridge and
Horsington with the Parishes of
Holton and North Cheriton

A Vision for Growth and Transformation

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Living and telling the story of Jesus



Introduction

We are delighted that you are considering whether this post of Priest in Charge of the Benefice of Abbas & Templecombe, Henstridge and Horsington with the Parishes of Holton and North Cheriton in the Diocese of Bath and Wells might be right for you. In order to help your prayerful discernment, we want to share a bit about our diocesan vision, within which we hope your own ministry might flourish.

Appointing a priest incumbent is amongst the most significant decisions that any benefice makes. When appointments work out well, they contribute significantly to parishes flourishing and growing in a host of different ways – in spiritual depth, in impact within local communities and in the numbers of people becoming part of the local church. Such flourishing is not, of course, all down to the person appointed as priest. It depends first and foremost upon God. It also depends upon everyone in a benefice being willing and able to contribute their unique gifts, skills, resources and abilities: working alongside their priest and sharing in the ministry of the benefice.

The flourishing and growth of churches always needs attention, but especially now as we come out of the shock created by the COVID pandemic. The impact of the pandemic created a sharp acceleration in the pattern of decline in church attendance that has been seen in our diocese over many years. Thankfully there are some signs that we are recovering from the COVID decline. For example, data showed that average adult weekly church attendance in our diocese rose between 2021 and 2022. Statistics only ever tell a partial story. It is even more encouraging to see churches around our diocese developing approaches that respond to the opportunities and challenges in their local context and enable growth to happen.

A vision for growth and transformation

Our diocesan context, described above, has convinced us that for our next season at least, our aim across all our parishes needs to be growing our churches, within and beyond our church buildings, in both numbers and depth of faith, so that we can better work for the transforming of our communities and the life of God's Kingdom amongst us.

A Vision for Growth and Transformation

Shared priorities

To help us pursue this aim, and following consultation across the diocese in 2023, we are inviting all parishes to focus on four particular areas of our ministry together. It is important for clergy considering working in our diocese to know what these priorities are, even though what they look like in practice will vary in each place.

To value and cherish the people and resources we already have

We aim to ensure each person is well supported and equipped as a follower of Jesus Christ and for any ministries they may feel called to undertake, within the local church and wider community. We are committed to supporting the well-being of all our leaders and church officers, both lay and ordained. We have a fully funded clergy well-being service, the offer of peer support groups, and an excellent team of Diocesan support staff fully focused on supporting our parishes, chaplaincies and schools.

To develop new Christian worshipping communities

Whether it be new forms of worship in a wide variety of settings and times, church revitalisations or church plants, we long to see the good news of Jesus connect with the people in our communities that our traditional offerings struggle to reach.

To share in ministry and leadership

We are committed to the New Testament vision of the church as a vibrant body of people all using their God-given gifts. We are committed to a model of shared local ministry: raising up and equipping lay and ordained leaders able to share together in leading the church and serving God's world.

To deepen and grow faith

This is foundational to all we do. We long to see people of all ages and backgrounds, but perhaps especially children, young people and young adults, having more opportunities to discover, explore and grow in faith.

The outcome we are looking for

When he talks about his own ministry in 1 Corinthians, Paul captures the dynamic we are seeking to achieve. "I planted," he says, "Apollos watered, but God gave the growth"(1 Cor 3: 6). We know that our churches will only flourish and grow as a result of God's action among us – it is God who gives the growth.

But Paul is also clear that we have a part to play too – in watering and planting, in doing the things that enable the conditions for God's growth to be supported. So, covered by prayer, our confident hope is that if we are intentional in seeking God's guidance in planning and supporting growth, then God will honour that to see his people flourish and thrive - in spiritual depth, in impact within local communities, in the numbers of people becoming part of the local church and in transforming communities locally and beyond.



Local shaping and diocesan support

There can't be any 'one size fits' all approach to turning the priorities outlined above into action. They always need to be adapted to local circumstances, opportunities and needs. The task of our diocesan support services is to get behind all that local benefices are doing and apart from their general support, there is specific support for exploring how to grow new Christian communities, how to discern and equip a growing range of ministries in your context and how to work well with children and young people. All these areas of support are grounded in exploring what it means to live out our faith.

What implications does this have for the appointment of clergy?

It is important for us all to appoint clergy to benefices who are ready, willing and able to pray for and share in the vision we have for the flourishing and growth of churches and Christian life in our diocese. We want to create an environment that could be described as high challenge, high support. This means appointing clergy who will not only value all that already exists but will be eager to work with others to build on and develop it. It means appointing clergy who are committed to learning, being creative, and to starting with the gifts God has given to them, their benefice and the wider community. We are therefore looking to appoint candidates who will

- be committed to praying and intentionally seeking the growth and flourishing of the benefices in their care
- relish and expect to work in an environment that is high challenge, high support
- work joyfully and collaboratively with those who share with them locally in ministry and leadership, with their congregations and with others in their locality, to identify ways to grow and develop their churches with the grain of local priorities, resources, skills and passions
- enjoy working in partnership with deanery and diocesan colleagues.

We hope this might be you! We hope that you'd like to join us on the adventure and course we've set for our next ten years. We're praying that God will send us the right labourers for the harvest that God has set before us. Could this be you?

Bishop Michael

Archdeacon of Wells



Deanery Context

Bruton and Cary Deanery, in the Archdeaconry of Wells, is served by 6 incumbent status appointments. These posts cover 41 mainly rural parishes which are run in a variety of benefice formats. All of the recent reorganisation under the Deanery Plan drawn up in 2024 is now in place. Holton and North Cheriton having recently joined with the wider Henstridge benefice for this current grouping that is being advertised.

We are a Deanery that is looking to seek ways to enable rural ministry to flourish. We aim to do this by helping larger groupings of parishes, to develop ways of working together and pooling their resources and expertise, whilst also enabling the growth of lay ministry. We have an active Chapter group of Clergy and Chaplains which meets once a month, for prayer, food and fellowship. At this meeting we seek to prayerfully listen, share good practice and support one another in the roles that we have, seeking to be labourers together in the building of God's Kingdom in this Deanery.

Caroline Walker
Interim Minister Cam Vale
Area Dean Bruton and Cary

Priest in Charge - Role Description

Benefice Priorities

As a new community of five parish churches, we aim to work together to exercise a ministry of presence and make God known to the villages we serve.

Having met together as a benefice for a discernment day to discuss our strengths and priorities for the future, these are the top priorities we have identified to help us survive and thrive as churches:

- **Church Family:** Support one another across the benefice, maintaining and growing our current congregations through prioritising welcoming and inclusive Sunday Services and pastoral care.
- **Wider Community:** Be an active and welcoming presence in the community, exploring creative ways to engage with new and current residents.
- **Buildings:** Explore how to make all the church buildings more accessible and attractive for the church community and for wider community use.



Who we are looking for...

We are prayerfully seeking someone with the following traits:

- Confident leader and enabler
- Good communication skills
- Prayerful, biblical, discerning
- Love for people of all ages
- Adaptable, flexible
- Enjoys challenges
- Sense of humour
- Willing to be a visible, integral part of the wider community
- Passions for outreach and to communicate the good news
- Approachable and empathetic
- Pragmatic
- Experience of parish life and rural communities

Support for our new Priest in charge

We are fortunate to have eight Lay Worship Assistants, two Readers and three retired clergy resident and active within the Benefice. All these are willing to continue to provide support where appropriate.

We are open to exploring ways to simplify the governance of the five parishes e.g. creating a Benefice Council to consider spiritual leadership and worship, with separate (optional!) PCC meetings for practical fabric and finance matters.

We are keen to provide suitable administrative support, sharing the cost of a benefice administrator and other expenses across the five parishes. There is an office laptop, printer and other office items available for immediate use.



Who are we?

Following a Deanery re-organisation in 2024, we are the Benefice of Abbas and Templecombe, Henstridge, and Horsington, with the parishes of Holton and North Cheriton. As a new, not-yet-official five parish benefice, we have already started getting to know each other; working together and voting for a new benefice name, though our new Priest in charge will have the casting vote.

Where Are We?

Nestled in South Somerset on the border with Dorset and Wiltshire, our new benefice follows the A357 Southwards from the A303, encompassing 5 small and medium sized rural parishes. In general, these beautiful West Country villages house friendly, close-knit communities whose residents come together to celebrate key events and support one another. There are a range of groups and activities throughout the benefice and a sense of community spirit, often focused around a few key individuals. Our larger villages are facing rapid expansion through several new housing developments and while there are decent transport links, there is limited infrastructure in terms of social community spaces. The benefice contains three primary schools, two pre-schools and one independent special school, a main line railway station and a large number of local businesses including one major employer. Many people both live and work in the area and there is a high proportion of retired folk.



Areas of Growth

Two of our churches host community food share schemes in partnership with local supermarkets, which are open to all and regularly serve many within the community whose income is limited. The schemes also aim to reduce food waste. Another of our churches regularly collects donations of food to donate to a local charity, and we all support such schemes at harvest.



A new congregation was planted last year with the launch of our weekly 'Bubble Church'. This fresh expression of church is aimed at families with young children (0-8), but open to all. It has proved to be very popular, attracting several new families to learn the Gospel in a simple and interactive, child friendly way.



Work Still to Do

We are still learning to work with each other as a five church-benefice. Many within our current congregations enjoy the traditional service style and others enjoy a broad mix of styles. There is appetite for some variety in our villages, and while Bubble Church is going well it would be good to have somewhere for families to move on to when they outgrow it. We will need to review our service patterns with our new Priest and see what is sensible, achievable and fair to all going forward.

As a church community we generally do well at celebrating festivals, organising and joining in with occasional events and fundraisers, yet we can struggle to connect with particular groups in the larger villages. Teenagers, working people, weekend commuters, those in supported housing, new residents, those who struggle to get out of the house... there are plenty with whom we barely rub shoulders let alone meet and engage.



There is support outside of our regular congregations for keeping the church buildings in use, and alongside wanting to see them used more by the community use there seems to be a significant desire to have the buildings available for private prayer and contemplation. Many of the buildings have been closed to the public outside of services so it would be good to explore how we can make them more widely available and accessible.

The Benefice – Setting the Scene

Finance

Each parish has its own PCC, treasurer and bank accounts. Expenses and administrative costs are shared across the benefice. All the churches engage in charitable giving.

Parish	% Parish Share paid in 2024	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	2024 Parish Share	2025 Benefice Share
Henstridge	100%	£6,049	£8,451	£15,518	£16,760
Abbas & Templecombe	100%	£21,508	£14,328	£15,087	£16,542
Horsington	75%	£11,434	£41,852	£21,704	£21,705
North Cheriton	100%	£14,054	£85,399	£8,977	£9,474
Holton	66%	£0	£11,943	£4,732	£5,859



Pattern of Worship

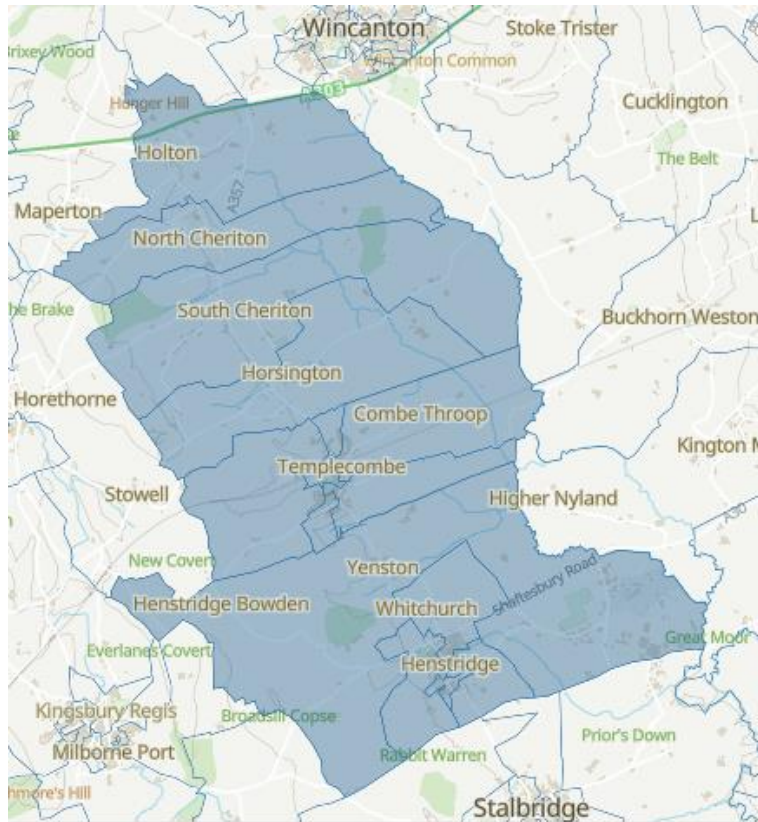
Presently, we are working together to maintain current service patterns, planning 6 months at a time. While travelling across the benefice can be challenging for some members of the congregations, attendance for our joint benefice services rises to 30-50 depending on the time of year and location. Moving forward, we are keen to ensure a sensible and sustainable pattern of services.



LL= lay led	Holton	North Cheriton	Horsington	'Templecombe	Henstridge
1 st Sunday		9:30 Matins (LL)	9:00 Holy Communion	9:30 Bubble Church (LL) 10:30 Holy Communion	10:30 Morning Worship (LL) 18:00 Compline (LL)
2 nd Sunday	11:00 Morning Worship	9:30 Holy Communion	10:30 Morning Worship (LL)	9:30 Bubble Church (LL) 10:30 Morning Worship (LL)	10:30 Holy Communion
3 rd Sunday			9:00 Holy Communion (without music)	9:30 Bubble Church (LL) 10:30 Morning Worship (LL)	10:30 Morning Worship (LL)
4 th Sunday		10:30 Joint Service in the Benefice (rotating between all 5 parishes)		9:30 Bubble Church (LL)	
5 th Sunday		10:30 Joint Service in the Benefice (rotating between all 5 parishes)		9:30 Bubble Church (LL)	18:00 Words & Music (LL)

The Local Area and Further Afield

Within Henstridge and Templecombe are small and medium sized local shops, going further afield there is more shopping at Stalbridge, and Wincanton, and further afield again, at Gillingham, Sherborne, Yeovil and Shaftesbury. Henstridge has two public houses, South Cheriton (linked to Horsington Parish), one and Holton, one. Stalbridge also has an excellent Indian Restaurant. Transport wise, we are situated between the A303 and the A30 and Templecombe has a station on the main rail line between Exeter and London.



The Vicarage

The Vicarage, built in 1955, is situated within a stone's throw of the church in Henstridge, approached via a private drive from the small church car park.

A spacious family house in large gardens, it has a good size kitchen with utility area and access to rear gardens. Downstairs there is also a dining room, large sitting room with French doors looking south to the rear of the garden, a study and a cloakroom. Upstairs are four bedrooms and a family bathroom.

The house has oil-fired central heating and solar panels. Adjacent to the house are a garage, boiler house and two further storage rooms, all brick-built and fully enclosed. Gardens surround the house and there is ample parking and a greenhouse.

Henstridge is about two miles from Templecombe station where trains run every hour to Exeter or London (Waterloo) and is served by two buses providing a two-hourly service to Blandford Forum or Wincanton. There is an hourly service to Yeovil.



The Benefice – Schools and Education

We have close links with our benefice schools, particularly the village primary schools which are part of the Diocese of Bath and Wells' Multi-Academy Trust ([BWMAT](#)).

[St Nicholas CE Primary School, Henstridge \(BWMAT\)](#)
I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.

[St Nicholas Church School](#) has 4 classes – Reception, Years 1 & 2, Years 3 & 4 and Years 5 & 6. One of their most important school expectations is: 'Be kind, gentle and honest at all times', which underpins everything in all areas of school life. Their vision is for their children to grow and mature into confident, self-motivated, independent life-long learners who have a genuine desire to be kind, showing God's love to others whilst developing their skills and talents in all areas of school life both inside and outside the classroom. The school comes into church for special services at least once a term.

Explorers Pre-School

Set within the grounds of St Nicholas Primary school, [Explorers](#) has access to the playing field, play equipment and learning garden. Staff are passionate about providing all their children with a variety of day-to-day activities, play and learning opportunities, including visitors from the community and organisations. The pre-school also organises visits to the church.



[Abbas & Templecombe CE Primary School \(BWMAT\)](#)
Learning together for life's adventures

[Abbas & Templecombe Church School](#) attracts children from several local villages and has 4 mixed age classes which vary in size and composition from year to year. 1 Corinthians 13:7 provides the basis for how the school operates each day and their core values are Love, Inspire, Persevere and Respect. The school maintains close links with the church in Templecombe, through governance, termly 'Bubble Church' assemblies and our support of their monthly 'Muddy Church'. They regularly use the church for end of term services and the school shares an Executive Headteacher with St Nicholas Church School, Henstridge.



Sticky Fingers Pre-School

[Sticky Fingers](#) has been operating in Templecombe for over 30 years, providing high quality care and pre-school education to children from 2-5 years old. They have strong links with the primary school, located within the same grounds, and sharing access to the playing field, equipment and forest school area. They use the church building each year for their Christmas performance and seasonal activities.

Secondary Schools Nearby

Most teenagers within the benefice attend [King Arthur's School](#), Wincanton, travelling there via bus. Others attend [The Gryphon School](#) in Sherborne via bus or train, [Gillingham School](#) via the train, and some others further afield.



[Horsington CE Primary School \(BWMAT\)](#)

That they may have life, life in all its fullness

With 94 children, [Horsington Church School](#) offers an intimate and inclusive educational environment where children are empowered to achieve great things. They hope that children will take the values of Love, Respect, Trust, Forgiveness, Kindness and Perseverance with them into their future lives. The school values its connection with the church, in which the children enjoy and actively participate in many whole school events, including festivals and the Moving On services. Acts of worship in school are led weekly in school by children and staff. The school would love to see the appointment of an incumbent who is able to develop opportunities even further and enhance the worship in our 'Good' school.

The Marchant-Holliday School

Established in 1950, [Marchant-Holliday](#) is an independent day and weekly boarding school for boys aged 5-12 with social, emotional and mental health needs who are unable to access mainstream education for a variety of reasons.

This highly respected independent school rated 'Outstanding' by OFSTED in 2024, is run by a not-for-profit charitable trust, and has pupils attending from all over the South West. The school continues to maintain a connection with North Cheriton Church which is a short walk away.

What is Bubble Church?

Enter Abbas & Templecombe Village Hall at 9:15 on a Sunday morning and you'll be welcomed with a warm smile, freshly baked pastries, and a cup of proper coffee, or your drink of choice. Stick around and you'll soon be shouting for puppets, bouncing to action songs and wondering what's in our Bubble Church bags today.

Bubble Church is a Sunday church service especially for babies, toddlers and young families. Embracing a spirit of radical welcome and hospitality, we're aiming to give of our best to serve our local young families and provide them with an opportunity to experience church in a whole new way.

In order to be accessible for its target age group (0-8 years old) the short, sharp format is thoroughly interactive and largely the same from week to week. It includes simple yet profound liturgy, opportunities for prayer and praise, and a Bible story told by puppets with a creative response for deeper engagement.

The first Bubble Church grew out of a desire to serve young families during the COVID-19 pandemic. The originating church secured funding from the Church of England to run a pilot study; launching Bubble Church in different places and developing, refining and resourcing the format. We are thrilled to be part of the second wave of Bubble Church congregations planted across the UK.



How it's going

Since we started in January 2024, we have reached at least 15 new families who did not regularly attend church before. Every week we have around 5-8 families joining in. We have taken Bubble Church into the village primary school as part of their collective worship and to the summer Village Fete.

As part of the national pilot study, we complete a feedback form for Bubble Church HQ after each service. This anecdotal evidence tells the story of our families' deepening engagement with faith at home and in the service:

- Children who are excited to come to Bubble Church each week and get involved – including being part of the team.
- Parents and children who have come forward for prayer or regularly write or draw their prayers on our special postcards.
- Local children from unchurched families who have badgered their parents until they brought them along.
- Families beginning to engage with their faith outside of church e.g. using the Bubble Church bedtime prayer book regularly.



What next?

For 2025 we launched a Lent Course and Lent Challenge to further bridge the gap between church and home. We are starting to think about bible studies and social events. With some of our regular attendees significantly above the target age range, we are keen to find a way to support their faith journeys too.

Church Overview	Bubble Church
Preferred Worship Style	Lively and interactive
Congregation Size	18-30
Congregation Character	Young families with children aged 0-13
Core Team from St Mary's	4

Why Bubble Church?

Before launching Bubble Church we had two regular families with very small children attending St Mary's; sitting in the far aisle with toys brought from home to keep the toddlers entertained. The focus on keeping the children quiet and not running around the building during contemplative moments was less than ideal for everyone.

Discovering Bubble Church was an answer to unarticulated prayer. Here we have a space where the youngest and most excitable members of our church family can be entirely themselves. They are free to move, shout and play as much as they want in a format specifically designed for them. From start to finish it's pure joy.

Thanks to the support provided by the Bubble Church network we are able to run each Sunday with minimal preparation – the Bible stories and creative responses for each week are pre-tested and have enough scope for us to be flexible in our approach. It's a puppet-packed, Jesus-centred, coffee-and-croissant-fuelled 30-minute kids and families adventure.



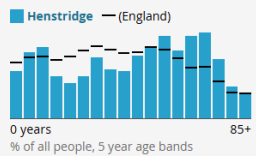
Henstridge



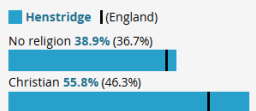
Population

1,900
people

Age profile



Religion



The Village

Henstridge is the most southerly parish of the five, bordering Dorset, and includes the hamlets of Yenston and Henstridge Bowden. While there is a large proportion of older residents, it is matched by younger people raising families and generally working locally. The population is mainly working and middle-class.

The original village contains an area of conservation, some of the houses are centuries old. More modern developments have been built on the edges of the village and there are currently two applications to build in total nearly two hundred additional homes. Nearby, a large industrial estate provides employment and the Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance is based at Henstridge airfield.

The village hall is used extensively by the U3A, exercise, sports groups, art groups and for special events. The adjacent recreation ground has a children's play area, an outdoor gym, a boules pit, a BMX track and skateboard park. The two football pitches are well used, in the summer one becomes a cricket pitch. The Summer Fete brings together groups from across the village into the Rec. There is a youth club and units of Rainbows, Brownies and Guides.

The village shop plays a major role in the village as community focus as well as being a one-stop shop. It also includes the local sub-post office.

There are two pubs, the 'Bird in Hand' is a traditional pub which is currently the focus of a community bid. It supports skittles and darts teams, provides hot lunches every day except Sunday, hosts wedding parties and wakes, board games nights and quizzes and a lot more. The Virginia Ash, at the junction of the A30 and the A357, also serves food at lunchtime and in the evenings, including a buffet breakfast on Saturdays and a carvery on Sundays.

Services and outreach

Normally, the services are projected onto a large screen which enables us to have a variety of types of service and content can be drawn from various sources. Even so, we still use prayer books and hymn books on occasions.

A Baby and Toddler group meets on Wednesday mornings in the church. Members of the church organise the Community Larder and we endeavour to open the church every day to enable people to help themselves. This also provides an opportunity for people to come in to pray or sit quietly, or even to go to the loo as there are no public toilets in the village.

Loose Ends, an informal coffee morning and lunch, and Wot's On, the parish magazine, started as church initiatives but are now managed by the village. The church takes a stall at the village fete, held in the recreation ground in June each year.

Congregation

Our Sunday congregations number around 20 to 25, with more people attending Benefice services and special festivals. The congregation falls mostly into the older categories, but younger people and children attend the special services.

Finance

Revenue comes from the weekly collections and the parish gift day each year. St Nicholas supports the Rev and Mrs Cable in Christ Church, Jaffa, Israel. Their goal was to rebuild the Anglican church in Jaffa but this work has been stopped at present in the light of the situation in Israel.

Parish Church Overview	Henstridge – St Nicholas
Preferred Worship Style	Traditional
Congregation Size	16-24
Congregation Character	Mostly over 60, some younger and sometimes with children
PCC Members	9
Church Wardens	2

The church building

The church dates from the 12th century but was rebuilt just over 150 years ago. It is Grade II* listed. The bell tower contains six bells and the church clock. Our tower captain has worked hard to encourage new people to train as bellringers. They ring for services and take part in ringing events across Somerset and Dorset. On the top of the tower is a weathervane in the form of a galleon. This was presented to the church by the Ship's Company of RNAS Henstridge.

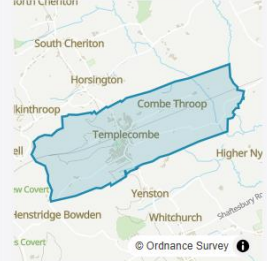
We are proud of our eco-church status. Part of the churchyard is reserved as a wildlife area and the church gained a silver award from A Rocha in 2024. We would like to reduce the carbon footprint of the church and the electricity bill by installing solar panels on suitable sections of the roof.



About the Parishes – Abbas & Templecombe

Abbas & Templecombe The Village

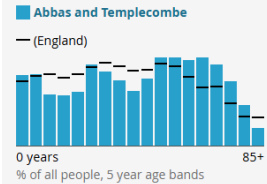
Area map



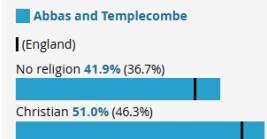
Population

1,700
people

Age profile



Religion



The village of (Abbas &) Templecombe has around 800 homes, ancient to new and an expanding mixed age population since, like Henstridge, there are several large housing developments on the way. There is a railway station, a Co-op, an independent shop with Post Office, a Café, a Fish and Chips take-away, and a Sports and Social Club situated on the Recreation Ground. Thales is a major employer based in the village and there are several farms on the outskirts.

St Mary's stands adjacent to the Village Hall, CE Primary School and Pre-school. The Village Hall is frequently used for private parties and local groups such as Templecombe Ladies, a Baby & Toddler Group, a monthly Music night and the Indoor Bowls Club. There is a dedicated Scout hut and groups such as 'Templecombe in Bloom' and 'Friends of the Station' volunteer towards the upkeep of the village.

The Church Building

St Mary's Church is a grade 2* listed building dating from the 12th century and extended in Victorian times. It houses the 'Templecombe Head' painting, said to be linked to the Knights Templars and the Turin Shroud. Financed by public subscription and grants, the bells were rehung in 2015, the roof was renovated in 2018 and a new electric heating system installation was completed in 2020.

Our sound system and hearing loop allows us to run a variety of audio from microphones and recorded music, to a live band. Two projectors and screens are used for most services and there is a basic coffee bar at the rear of the church. There is an organ which is a little past its best and a good quality electronic piano.

We would love to install a toilet and servery. Finding a route for waste water is currently the problem.



Services and Outreach.

We are delighted to be running 'Bubble Church', a puppet-packed, Jesus-centred, coffee-and-croissant-fuelled, 30 minute Sunday service especially for babies, toddlers and young families which is held in the Village Hall every Sunday.

The regular services at St Mary's mix modern and traditional, in both liturgy and music. We have links with the United Reformed Church in the village and collaborate for seasonal services such as Remembrance Sunday.

'Templecombe Together' run a Community Larder from the church building where anyone can come to pick up food that would otherwise go to waste.

There is an established lay-led bible study group which runs weekly online via Zoom. We support the local Fete, hold bi-monthly Parish Lunches in the Village Hall, a monthly fund-raising quiz in the social club, and every few years hold events in the church such as a Christmas tree or Wedding dress Festival.



Church Overview	St Mary's
Preferred Worship Style	Eclectic mix of traditional and modern
Congregation Size	11-15
Congregation Character	Mostly over 60, one or two families
PCC Members	7
Church Wardens	1

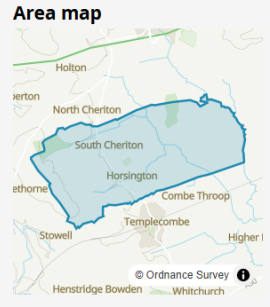


Finance

Templecombe PCC supports various charities both at home and abroad including the Bible Society, Christians Against Poverty, Combat Stress, the British Legion Poppy Appeal and Books for School. The Parish Share remains the largest pull on our finances and legacies have helped us pay the full amount in recent years. We have some reserves that can be called upon to help us in the immediate future, but more money raising initiatives will be required to enable us to fully meet our needs going forward.

In recent years, many in the community have been happy to support repairs and updates to the fabric of the church, but raising funds and financing the running of the church is down to the membership.

Horsington

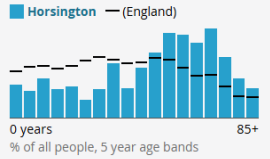


Population

580

people

Age profile



Religion

Horsington (England)

No religion 29.4% (36.7%)

Christian 62.2% (46.3%)

The Villages

The parish of Horsington also includes the villages of South Cheriton and Wilkinthroop forming an extensive rural parish with 245 homes and a population of around 580. The majority of residents are over 50 as there is a shortage of affordable homes.

St John's church is off Duck Lane, up past the village pond and behind Horsington House. Horsington has a CE Primary School, garage, riding school and cheese maker in and around the village. There is a football club, a public house and a well used village hall. The village also hosts 2 Art Classes and Yoga Classes. A village magazine which includes church services is produced ten times a year.



The Church Building

The church of St. John the Baptist is a grade II* listed building from the 14th century, which was rebuilt 1886-1887 with an original tower housing 6 bells, one dating 1390. We have a font dating back to the 14th Century and also, four stained windows by Charles Kempe, and a good organ.

Recent improvements, financed by grants and public donations, are that in 2015 the roof of the Nave and South Aisle were retiled. The Parish Room was built in 2016 to provide a kitchen, servery and toilet, and an open space for further use of the building. There is also a new rainwater harvesting system Heating is by oil and this will require replacement in due course. A new audio system was installed in 2022 allowing transmission from microphones, recorded music or live.



Parish Church Overview	Horsington – St John's
Preferred Worship Style	Mostly Traditional
Congregation Size	12-16
Congregation Character	Mostly over 60
PCC Members	7
Church Wardens	0



Services and Outreach.

We host a fortnightly Bible Study Home Group and a monthly Prayer Group.

We communicate with the School which holds end of term services at St John's, as well as a Christmas Carol Service. The Village fete is held in the School Grounds and supported by the PCC.

We hold around three events a year with concerts or talks and also an annual drinks party, which brings the local community together and helps to raise funds.



Finance

Horsington has historically paid its Parish Share in full but the current share is particularly high relative to the current membership level and therefore presents a challenge. We have reserves that can be used if necessary. We make annual contributions to several charities, local, home and overseas, including the Children's Society, the Royal British Legion and the Farming Community Network.

North Cheriton

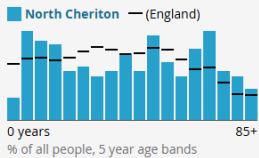
Area map



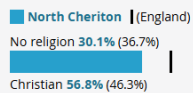
Population

240
people

Age profile



Religion



The Village

The Village is situated about a mile and a half southwest of Wincanton, set back from the A357. The parish comprises some 90 households, mostly within the village, with a population of around 208 of mixed ages and occupations.



Services and Outreach

We currently hold services on the first three Sundays of the month (Matins, Holy Communion and Morning Worship) and take our turn to host a benefice service on the fourth or fifth Sunday. A Lay Reader resident in the village currently takes Matins. We are fortunate in our long-established connection with a talented organist.

We support the Lord's Larder in Yeovil (a food bank) and the Kisumu Village Trust in Kenya.

Congregation

Our regular congregation is mostly elderly(60+) and usually numbers between 10 and 15. we have a large 'fringe' who attend services at Christmas, Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and on other special occasions. There were 76 (including visitors) at our Christmas Day service in 2024, slightly up on the number in 2023. the church also hosts the annual Christingle service of Marchant-Holliday School, a special needs school in the village. We have a newly formed team of enthusiastic bell-ringers!



The Church

The Church of St John the Baptist is a Grade 2 listed building, believed to be of Saxon origin. It was extended in 1874 and reordered in pre-Reformation style. It seats about 100. It has electric heating, an unusually fine organ and a set of five bells that were restored and rehung some 15 years ago. Plans for laying on water and building a toilet and conservatory exist but were shelved with the onset of Covid. The churchyard is closed for burials but available for the interment of ashes.

Parish Church Overview	North Cheriton – St John's
Preferred Worship Style	Traditional
Congregation Size	15
Congregation Character	Mostly over 60 with one or two families
PCC Members	6
Church Wardens	1

Upkeep and Finance

All major work called for by our last Quinquennial Survey has been carried out. In the past we have always been able to pay our parish share in full, with the church being adequately funded by planned giving.

Our Community

The other focus of village life is the village hall. Various weekly events take place e.g. Scottish Dancing/ Mini Athletics for toddlers/ Craft Club and the hall is also used for Parish Council meetings, village suppers and an annual Craft Fayre. The PCC hires it for an annual Harvest lunch or supper and sometimes for a Lent lunch.

The online North Cheriton Village blog enables those villagers who are on it to keep up to date with what is going on. In the past we have distributed copies of a monthly magazine to all households interested in receiving it. We hope that something comparable may become available in our new benefice.



Holton

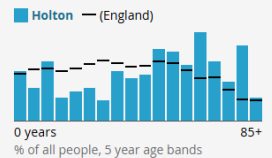
Area map



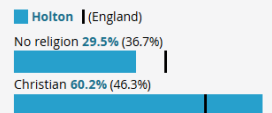
Population

260
people

Age profile



Religion



The Villages

The Parish of Holton, pop. 260 in 2021 (157 Christian), consists of the villages of Holton, Higher Holton and Lattiford. Houses in centre of Holton were mainly built in 18th/19th century and are in a Conservation Area. There are 13 listed properties including the church. At the heart of Holton village are the Church, Village Hall and a pub. Surrounding houses were mainly built in the 20th century. Other listed features include a milestone, public spring and telephone box. With roughly 80 houses in Holton/Higher Holton, it is surrounded by farmland and the A303 cuts through Higher Holton. Lattiford is a mile away. There are no footpaths or street lighting in or between the villages.



Congregation and Services

Holton PCC has 4 members and in addition, rotas of volunteer sidespersons, cleaners and florists for the regular monthly second Sunday Worship service. From January 2025, our service rota was linked to our new 5 church benefice, and a Joint Benefice Holy Communion service is held on Sundays 4 and 5 (as applicable) in rotation around the benefice.

The Church Building

The Grade 2 listed Medieval Church has records dating back to 1315. Original Norman Font and 3 bells cast at the Whitechapel Bell Co., Exeter around 1420 still remain. The church has electric heating, a hearing loop and Bluetooth speakers but no mains water. North Vale Parish Council (Holton, North Cheriton & Maperton) contributes to the cost of cutting grass in the graveyard. The Village Fete is currently organised by the Church Warden with proceeds split equally between Hall and Church. There are currently no fundraising events at the church, but we are keen to reinstate them in the near future.

Village Hall and Pub

The Village Hall was built from monies in a bequest to the Church in 1872 on land adjacent to the Old Rectory. The kitchen and toilet were recently refurbished. There are currently 8 active residents on the management committee who run and maintain it on behalf of the church – the Church Warden and Incumbent are the 2 Trustees. It's financially stable due to a generous bequest in 2018 and grants during the Covid-19 pandemic. Regular social events are organised to raise funds for the hall.



Parish Church Overview	Holton – St Nicholas
Preferred Worship Style	Mostly Traditional
Congregation Size	15
Congregation Character	Mostly over 60
PCC Members	4
Church Wardens	1



Our local pub, The Old Inn, is open 6 days a week serving food. It currently hosts a monthly Quiz Night and the village book club.

The Parish of Holton is a small, friendly, neighbourly village. Every new resident gets a welcome knock on the door. We know who lives in each property, who are happy to engage with the church, for worship and/or to give practical support, who enjoys joining in village social events/ pub life and we respect those who want to remain private.





[St Nicholas, Henstridge | A Church Near You](#)

[St Nicholas Church Henstridge | Facebook](#)



[St Mary's \(The Blessed Virgin Mary\), Abbas & Templecombe | A Church Near You](#)

[St Mary's Church, Abbas & Templecombe | Facebook](#)

[@stmarysabbastemplecombe | Instagram](#)



[St John the Baptist, Horsington | A Church Near You](#)

[St John the Baptist, Horsington | Facebook](#)



[St John the Baptist, North Cheriton | A Church Near You](#)

[North Cheriton Village Blog | What's happening in North Cheriton](#)



[St Nicholas, Holton | A Church Near You](#)

[Holton Village Hall | Facebook](#)

