



# Benefice of Backwell & Chelvey with Brockley

<sup>1</sup> March 2024

## Diocesan statement – our vision for growth and transformation



### Introduction

We are delighted that you are considering whether this post of Rector of the benefice of Backwell with Chelvey and Brockley 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.

### 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?

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael." with a small cross symbol to the left of the name.

The Rt Revd Michael Beasley  
Bishop of Bath and Wells

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adrian" in a cursive style.

The Venerable Dr Adrian Youngs  
Archdeacon of Bath

# The Benefice of Backwell & Chelvey with Brockley

## Introduction

Welcome and thank you for taking the time to read our Parish Profile. We are seeking a new full-time Rector to work within the two parishes in our Benefice. We are ambitious to grow God's Kingdom in this place and perhaps, with God's grace, it is with your help that we can. We have a lot to offer with the rich opportunities in our communities and the goodwill and unity with local churches, we look forward to our new Rector helping us to renewed impact and presence. Alongside these blessings there are of course some challenges, and we seek someone who will relish tackling them with us.

## Vision

Our vision is to love God, love our neighbours and encourage discipleship as we seek to extend the Kingdom of God.



## Where we believe God is calling us - responding to His love

We share the priorities of the Diocese, to grow as churches and be a transforming presence in our communities.

We want to deepen and grow faith and through the love of God, make welcome all who come to us in the name of Jesus.

In the recent past, we have experimented with developing new forms of worship, seeking unity in the church without uniformity; recognising we all worship the one God.

Many of the local community value our beautiful historic churches, but we also want to make these buildings work practically.

We long for people to recognise and value their God-given gifts.

A particular task we feel God has given us is to continue to work alongside families and to support our Children's Worker. This includes developing the Pupil Chaplain's Hub at the local C of E Junior School and extend it to the Senior School.

We also want to be open to national and global issues, understanding churches in other countries, especially through our Zambia link, and caring for creation through working to become a more sustainable church.

In summary, we believe God is calling us to the Mission tasks set out below.

## Mission Tasks

- To encourage one another and deepen individual faith and discipleship.
- To embrace the variety of worship we offer and enjoy which, we pray, will enrich our faith and deepen our unity as members of the Body of Christ.
- To continue supporting our children's work; as well as exploring and increasing ways of engaging with young people – a concern that is shared with local churches.
- To engage visibly in village life and develop effective forms of outreach and love in action.
- To engage actively with local churches in our common aims and mission in the area, hopefully increasing shared events and activities.
- To nurture and develop our church music in all its forms, possibly by appointing a Director of Music/Choir leader.



Light Party in Church House  
Good Friday,  
Singing Carols outside SPAR,  
Ringing room



We seek a Rector who will guide and lead us as, together, we engage with these mission tasks. We believe that this requires someone with the following skills and qualities:

### Skills and qualities needed for the tasks.

- 1. Leadership:** someone who is open to the Holy Spirit, has a love for God's word and will encourage us to deepen our knowledge and how to apply it practically and prayerfully.
- 2. Communication:** a skilled communicator and listener who engages with individuals, groups and community in order to grow faith.
- 3. Visibility:** a 'visible vicar' – someone who loves all and connects with the wider community to help us be a transforming presence.
- 4. Passion for children's work:** someone who will get involved with our schools' work and children's ministry and in particular to develop ways to engage with youth and teenagers.
- 5. Collaboration:**
  - 5(a) - a team builder who will empower others and is able to delegate; and
  - 5(b) - someone who will encourage more people to be involved and develop cross-church activity.



## What we can offer

**The Ministry Team:** currently two retired Priests, two Readers and our Children and Families' Worker who all regularly support the ministry and mission of the Benefice. During the vacancy they have maintained our worship, pastoral care and support for the wider community. They are all looking forward to working with and supporting the new Rector.

**Two active PCCs:** People with a rich variety of experience and insights.

**People who are concerned about outreach, evangelism and love in action to impact our community.** This theme was one of the top issues arising out of our recent church consultation and we will be looking at how to take this forward.

**A welcoming environment** – where people of all ages feel accepted and appreciated.

**Children's work** – Our Children's Worker was appointed in 2021 and has made a significant impact. Along with a small team, she has supported new initiatives that bring parents and young children into Church House.

The widespread concern remains around how to extend our engagement from young children, where we have made an encouraging start, to the challenges of engaging with older children and teenagers. This is frequently a shared concern and subject for prayer with other local churches.

**Ecumenical relationships:** There are active and supportive relationships and links across local churches. Backwell Prayer Watch is a dynamic monthly meeting supported by St Andrew's, the Baptists, Methodists, a modern Free Church and Catholics, where we pray about local, national and international issues. Christians Together in Backwell also organises regular events during the year.

**Well maintained church buildings:** There are three historic church buildings within the Benefice. St Andrew's and St Bridget's house active worshipping congregations and both have had some modern facilities added. St Nicholas' is a

closed church under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT)

**Volunteers:** A faithful team of people who care for the church and its ministry to the wider community. In recent times our volunteer numbers have declined and those currently involved take on many different roles in maintaining the day to day running of the church.

**The Benefice Office:** Our paid, part-time Administrator based at St Andrew's is a member of the congregation. She is a very efficient organiser and willing to learn new skills when necessary.

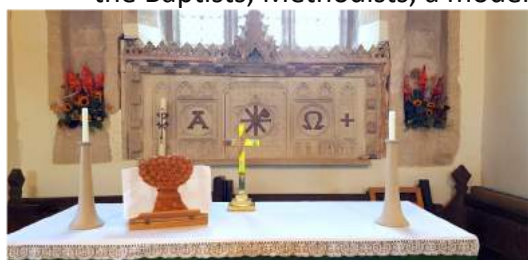
**Fairtrade, overseas and charitable connections:**

St Andrew's is a Fairtrade Church and holds a Bronze Eco Church award. There is an established link with St Andrew's Church, Ndola North, Zambia. We also support a young overseas CMS worker and four Christian charities over the course of a year. Occasional speakers visit to share about current Christian initiatives in some of the challenging parts of the world.

**A modern Rectory and excellent local schools.**



Making Christingles



St Bridget's



the Parish Office



Choir after the Carol Service

## Worship

Our current service pattern offers a mix of traditional services which is the preferred style for a good number of our members and informal worship, which has attracted new people. A significant percentage of St Andrew's and St Bridget's congregations love to worship in a traditional style and services continue to enable people to enjoy this aspect of church life including Sung Eucharist and Communion, Morning Prayer and Evensong, a liturgical approach and a robed choir. Between St Andrew's and St Bridget's, there are currently six traditional Sunday services monthly, as well as monthly mid-week communion and home communions as requested.

In recent years St Andrew's had experimented with new worship forms which led to the current informal worship; the continuing journey has some challenges for us all, as we find a new balance alongside the continuing more traditional models.

Three times a month we hold informal services at St Andrew's. These may appeal to those who are new to church and would like the choice of a more informal approach. This includes café style and conversational formats, contemporary music, a worship band, more informal prayer and opportunities for all to contribute. We see this as providing another opportunity for people to explore and develop their God-given gifts for the benefit of all.

A small number of people participate in both styles of worship but a question for the new incumbent will be how to ensure that everyone feels valued and enabled to worship in their preferred manner without expecting uniformity. Our common denominator remains our faith and our relationship in Christ.

The current pattern of services can be found at <https://www.backwellchelveybenefice.org.uk/worship/sundays/> and we live-stream two to three services a month.

The Worship Band





## Church Life

We firmly believe that church life is not restricted to the buildings or to Sunday services.

**St Andrews** - Church House, our warm, comfortable and beautifully positioned room attached to the church, is well-used during the week by both church and secular community groups. These include an art club, bridge club and the Ladies' Group. Whether it is a curry night in support of USPG, singing carols out in the village or one of the musical evenings or concerts that we host in the church itself, there is ample opportunity for bringing people together, building community and sharing His love.

Other groups meet in Backwell Parish Hall, in people's homes or online. To enhance our spiritual life, a book club, Bible studies and home groups run throughout the year.

As part of our desire to help vulnerable people in our community, the Knitting for Others group makes items to be used by those in need. The Mothers' Union meets monthly to share fellowship and friendship, often fundraising for Mothers' Union projects worldwide through coffee mornings and lunches.

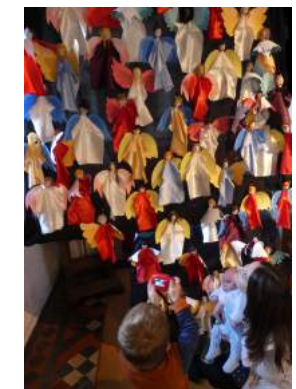
Music has a special place in our community as well as our worship, and it's not just churchgoers who enjoy hearing our accomplished bellringers display their talent, as is evident by the good number of people who attend the tower open days. Our robed, 4-part choir meets weekly to rehearse and includes 4 youngsters who enjoy the challenge of a varied repertoire and are keen to learn more. We have held 'Come and Sing' events to encourage others to share in the joy of singing and always look forward to an invitation to sing at St Mary Redcliffe's Evensong each summer as a visiting choir.

Prayer is woven into the life of the church in various formal and informal ways – these include monthly prayer breakfasts, the offer of prayer for individuals after some services and Morning Prayer on zoom.

A small pastoral team, working with the Ministry Team, aims to support members of the church family prayerfully, through visits, telephone calls and home communion. Support is focussed on people and families with long term health issues, bereavement, and end of life care.

The Meeting Point - Serving the community: this ecumenical initiative provides a wide range of opportunities to serve people and develop relationships with those who do not necessarily have church affiliations. These include meals, signposting and children's activities in school holidays.

Looking further afield, our Mission and Outreach committee seek to strengthen and develop our link to St Andrew's Church in Ndola North, Zambia. We have both hosted visitors from Zambia as well as sent representatives from our congregation to visit their parish. This group also chooses the charities we support each quarter and looks for opportunities to inform the congregation about each specific charity as well as more over-arching themes such as global justice and our Christian responsibility to care for our environment.



Curry night for USPG, Elizabeth Webb (Chair of the Ladies Group), Cooking at The Meeting Point (Summer Activity), Visiting Zambia, Junior School angels, Bellringers, the Light Party.

**St Bridget's** – consists of a small, enthusiastic and mature congregation where weekly attendance has increased as we welcome people who come to join our traditional services. We currently enjoy three services a month consisting of Holy Communion, Morning Worship and Morning Prayer on successive Sundays. We also open for Morning Prayer on Tuesdays.

The lawn outside allows us to host occasional services and social events. These have included quiet days of prayer and contemplation, harvest lunches, cream teas, and other events, all of which bring in visitors.

The open space in our Tynte Chapel is used for coffee after Communion and for local meetings such as the PCC and Parish Council. It is also ideal for events such as flower and arts festivals



## Church and Children

(see more detail at <https://www.backwellchelveybenefice.org.uk/worship/young-people>)

The Benefice warmly welcomes and supports children coming to church and caters for them in a variety of ways through our children's worker and a fully DBS-checked group of volunteers:

**Sunday Club** - Meeting twice a month, our qualified children's worker leads Sunday Club for all ages alongside the Sung Eucharist service.

**Children's Choir** meets after school every Wednesday in Church House. They take part in services 3-4 times a year.

**Little Lambs** - is a messy play session that runs every first Sunday with quality activities and refreshments for parents and children that also includes story time, singing and dancing. The themes are always drawn from scripture, but are made fun and accessible to non-church families.

**Begin Well** is a Christian ante-natal class (<http://www.beginwell.org.uk/>). In

2022 we became a Begin Well Facilitator church and trained eight volunteers to run these



courses. During 2022-23 we ran five Courses attended by 35 mums-to-be and their partners. We are now working in collaboration with Nailsea and Backwell Methodists to host alternately between our churches. We are the only free ante-natal course provider in our area.

## School Links

Backwell C of E Junior School (BJS) is situated opposite the Rectory and close to St Andrew's Church. The Rector is expected to be an ex-officio Governor of the school and there are two Foundation Governors selected by St Andrew's PCC. The Head Teacher has spoken passionately of the important connection between St Andrew's and the Junior School and has been very supportive of our link. There are many events and opportunities to connect throughout the year.

Each child entering the school receives a gift such as a copy of Luke's Gospel or a graphic Bible.

Services and assemblies include weekly collective worship in school, Church Days (every year, each year group from BJS visits St Andrew's for a day of seasonal or themed activities), Church Services (we host all students from BJS for a service each term) and Christmas and Easter "in a Box" from Bristol School Connections.

**Pupil Chaplains** - We started the Pupil Chaplaincy program in 2022 with 10 chaplains, who meet weekly for lunchtime Bible study. We are now on our third team. The pupil chaplaincy program has been selected as a Learning Hub by the Growing Faith Foundation, so our work will intensify next year as we plan to write a handbook curriculum based on our work to provide an easy resource for other parishes wanting to start their own chaplaincy programs.



Pupil Chaplains 2024

## Practical Information

### Local Schools

There are excellent schools in Backwell, consisting of a Primary Federation of West Leigh Infants and Backwell C of E Junior School and a successful Secondary School which includes a sixth form; these state schools are all part of a Multi Academy Trust; Lighthouse Partnership Trust (<https://www.lsp.org.uk/>, <https://www.backwellfederation.co.uk/>, <https://www.backwellschool.net/>).

There is also a private school and nursery for 2 to 11-year-olds in the village. <https://fairfield.school/>

**Rectory** - The Rectory is modern and was purpose built in 1985. It has 5 bedrooms and an attractive lounge, dining room study and kitchen. It is an easily managed house. It stands on the edge of the Church Town Conservation area in Backwell some 400 yards from the church and opposite the C of E Junior School. The garden is fairly large, mainly laid to lawn with part a cultivated area. The garage is attached to the house with a sizeable parking area.



## Church Buildings

**St Andrew's** is a Grade 1 listed building on the hill overlooking Backwell which is the main village in the Benefice. Despite being away from the village centre, passers-by comment on the value of being able to call in to enjoy some quiet time to themselves. Recently an upgraded sound system was installed along with improved IT to enable services to be streamed. There is continuing debate to explore how the building could be more flexible for the needs of today's congregations.



**St Bridget's**, the 12th century parish church of Chelvey, is situated in open countryside in a conservation area. Fundraising (£250,000) over the last eighteen years has allowed us to provide many enhancements to our building and churchyard. The most significant change has been the building of "An Tigh Beag" (the little house) in our churchyard. This provides kitchen facilities and a toilet. Fundraising also enabled the church tower to be restored, the churchyard paths to be improved and solar panels to be added. Inside we have enhanced our lighting, heating and sound systems, but the greatest improvement has been to make and provide an ideal space should outside events be forced inside due to inclement weather.



**St Nicholas'** is a small ancient church building in the hamlet of Brockley and has been passed to the CCT. It still has a keen Friends group who fund raise and arrange cultural and community events. The churchyard is still the responsibility of St Bridget's. There are only three services a year at St Nicholas marking major festivals.



Sue Bougourd and Roger Watson; St Bridget's Church Wardens



Andy Pitcher and Cherry Leake; St Andrew's Church Wardens

## **Financial Statements**

### **St Andrew's Backwell**

St Andrew's has a Finance Committee who guide the PCC regarding church finances. The treasurer, in addition to dealing with the day to day bookkeeping and accounts preparation, is also the stewardship recorder. Over 75% of our normal income comes from planned giving and related gift aid tax.

At the end of 2023, our substantial capital base stood at £812,511, this figure being split between unrestricted funds £302,559 and restricted funds £509,952. The majority of the restricted capital is for the fabric of the church, the bells, the churchyard and outreach. These reserves result from several large legacies and donations received over the last decade.

Unfortunately, our annual income does not cover normal running costs, so we are using unrestricted capital to make up the shortfall. For 2023 this was £7,525 but offset by a £3,000 legacy and a large donation of £20,000 creating an unrestricted credit balance of £15,475. Recently, we have been fortunate to be able to carry out some major repairs to the church, including roof renovations, new sound system and updating our church room. We will be drawing on reserves in 2024 to fund repairs to the church tower roof.

The restricted Missions and Charity Fund is being actively used to pay for outreach activities, charity giving and the cost of our children's worker.

### **St Bridget's Chelvey**

St. Bridget's finances are managed by the treasurer at the direction of the PCC. The key elements of our income are collections, planned giving, gift aid, events and the sale of solar power.

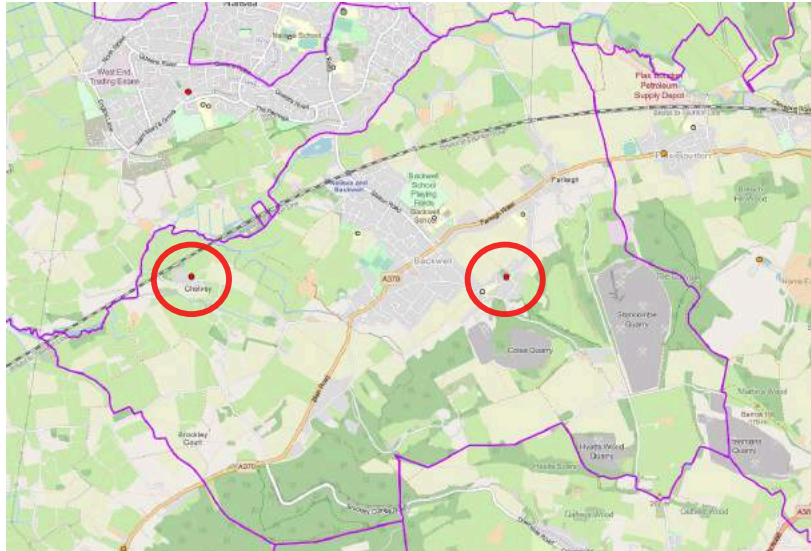
We have two funds. The designated fund is for future improvements of St. Bridget's, maintenance of the organ, and a float for events. At the end of 2023 it stood at £1,975. The general fund is unrestricted and supports day-to-day expenses. At the end of 2023 this stood at £26,193. Our most significant expense is the parish share which was £14,528 in 2023 and has risen to £15,981 for 2024. In addition to this there are church running expenses, extraneous costs (for example replacement of church lighting), administrative costs, churchyard maintenance and donations to other charities.

Thanks to ongoing fundraising efforts St. Bridget's has most years managed to cover normal running costs. However, with the prospect of increasing costs, our relatively modest reserves and uncertainty about levels of future receipts, our finances need to be managed carefully in order to safeguard the church.

Find out more on our webpage (<https://www.backwellchelveybenefice.org.uk/>), a Church Near You (<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/11176/> and <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/11178/>), Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/standrewskidsministry/>, <https://www.facebook.com/standrewbackwell/>) and Instagram (standrewskidsministry)

## Village Life

The benefice of Backwell and Chelvey with Brockley sits in the countryside nine miles to the south west of Bristol. It is bordered to the south by Bristol International Airport and to the north by the town of Nailsea. There are frequent bus links to Bristol, Weston-super-Mare and Nailsea and 'Nailsea and Backwell' railway station is on the main line with direct links to Paddington, London, Wales, Birmingham, the North and to the West Country.



In the centre of Backwell there are thriving local shops which include a Post Office, a Chemist and a mini-supermarket. It also has Doctor's, Dentist's and Vet's Surgeries as well as the Parish and W.I. halls. In nearby Nailsea there are larger supermarkets.

The many sports clubs in Backwell include Football, Tennis and Bowling, which are situated at the well-used Backwell Recreation Ground in Backwell West Town. There is also a Cricket club which has its' grounds between Backwell and Flax Bourton. There is a Leisure Centre with a swimming pool, a gym and squash courts. There are other local clubs such as the Backwell Camera club and the Backwell Playhouse Theatre. There is a pub at either end of the village.

Many organisations promote their activities in The Village Magazine which is available to read online at <https://backwellvillagemag.co.uk/index.html>. This is edited by a member of the congregation of St. Andrew's.

Backwell is expanding and North Somerset Council is consulting about a further 500 homes between Backwell and Chelvey.



By contrast, Chelvey and Brockley are set within excellent pastureland with many architecturally interesting properties. Brockley has a successful farm shop on the A370 that has been in business for many years.

View from St. Bridget's Tower towards St. Andrew's in the distance.

## Portishead Deanery

**The Benefice of Backwell and Chelvey with Brockley** is in the Deanery of Portishead. We are a friendly deanery. People get on well together and the clergy chapter is a place of mutual support.

We are committed to working together and ask all new clergy in the deanery to consider themselves a resource to the wider deanery. Most parish clergy have particular interests and specialisms. We encourage co-operation and working across parish boundaries.

We have undertaken a difficult process of agreeing a new deployment plan which loses two Stipendiary Clergy over the next 5 years however this will not directly affect the benefice of Backwell with Chelvey and Brockley, and we have a plan for how to go forward across the Deanery and are now able to support those parishes that are affected and shift our focus to other matters. With a newly-elected Deanery Mission and Pastoral Group and a newly-adopted Deanery Plan (both in September 2023) we are now engaged in moving forward across the whole Deanery.

The 23 parishes (plus a conventional district) of the Deanery of Portishead have set ourselves a challenging deanery plan to:

- **inspire** us to respond to God's call where we are
- **equip** people to share in ministry and leadership
- **communicate** better by sharing and publicising events or initiatives that are taking place in our own local context

We the Area co- Deans look forward to meeting and working with the newly appointed Rector of the Benefice.

Astrid Tiesema-Samsom Co-Area Dean  
Rob Eastwood Dewing Co Area Dean  
Rob Norman Lay Dean