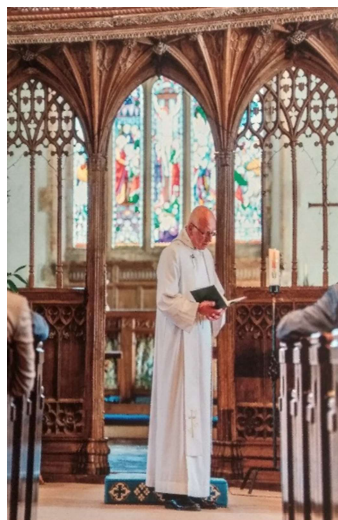




**The Benefice of St Mary's Chard and The Cloverleaf  
Parishes of Combe St Nicholas, Wambrook and  
Whitestaunton**





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# Welcome and Introduction

**Chard**, the home of powered flight since 1848. We would love you to join us and help us to fly our benefice to new and exciting heights.

The benefice comprises St. Mary's Chard with the diverse rural Cloverleaf Parishes of St Nicholas' at Combe St Nicholas with St Barnabas' Ham, St Mary's Wambrook, and St Andrew's Whitestaunton, and is part of the Somerset South Deanery.

Chard is an industrial town having a population c14,000, with a strong manufacturing base including the 'Henry' vacuum cleaner factory and a multi-national workforce. It is surrounded by working farms. We are situated in the Somerset countryside close to the borders with Devon and Dorset, and within easy reach of the A303 and M5. The Cloverleaf villages are situated within 4 miles of Chard with a combined population of 1600.



We are delighted that you are viewing our profile and invite you to pray with us and we with you for God's guidance in the role you are called to and the role we offer in His name.

## Church For Everyone



Chard Town Centre with Guildhall in Fore Street, looking East

Chard from Snowdon Hill looking towards Windwhistle



## Where we are

### Map 1

#### Chard and the surrounding area



### Map 2

#### Chard and the villages of Combe St Nicholas, Wambrook and Whitestaunton



# Diocesan Statement – Our Vision for Growth and Transformation

## Introduction

We are delighted that you are considering whether this post of Rector of Chard St Mary 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 of 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 of Bath and Wells**



**Archdeacon of Taunton**

## **The Somerset South Deanery**

Somerset South is a relatively new deanery, which was formed in November 2021 when Ilminster and Crewkerne deaneries merged. We are geographically large – stretching from Haselbury Plucknett in the east to Churchinford in the west, Tatworth in the south to Stoke St Mary in the north. We have great transport links with the M5 and the A303, and mainline train-stations nearby in Taunton and at Crewkerne. South Somerset is a beautiful part of the world, with fantastic countryside walks and close enough to the south coast to nip out for an evening swim. People still tend to have lived in one place for generations, but whilst our communities are tight knit, they are also welcoming of newcomers. The church remains an important part of the lives of many of our towns and villages.

We're a diverse deanery made of 55 churches, with many small rural communities but also sizeable and growing towns like Ilminster, Crewkerne and Chard itself. As churches and as a Chapter we represent a breadth of church traditions, but we work together with generosity and warmth. As a deanery we hope to be a learning community, where ideas are shared

and where we encourage experimentation and imagination, as together we seek to make Christ known to this generation.

Shared local ministry is something we are wholeheartedly committed to. We're the first deanery in the diocese to have in place a formally recognised local ministry team, and equipping and enabling all God's people to grow in their discipleship is at the heart of what we're about. We aim to model this at all levels in the deanery.

If you've got any questions about this exciting role, please do get in touch. It has huge potential, and we know that you will be working with people on the ground who are equally excited about this new adventure. You'll also be working with deanery colleagues who will support you and pray for you. We look forward to exploring this post with you further and pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you in your discernment.

**Rev'd Jo Stobart and Jim Webb**  
**Area and Lay Dean**

## Ministerial provision in the Benefice

### A note from Simon Hill, Archdeacon of Taunton

The diocese has been undergoing a process of pastoral reorganisation and the Deanery has had to plan for a reduction of 2.5 stipendiary posts. The current Associate Vicar post in the benefice will not be replaced. Somerset South Deanery is wholeheartedly committed to shared local ministry, an important part of Bath and Wells Diocesan strategic thinking and the Deanery is at the forefront of work in this area in the Diocese. Rev Deborah Perreau, an experienced local OSSM, has been appointed as local priest serving the Cloverleaf Parishes and is the 'go-to' person for the Cloverleaf villages. In the current vacancy the local priest is accountable to the Area Dean. Future consideration will need to be given to the future of the parishes. It is envisaged that, either this arrangement will continue with the new incumbent being oversight minister of the Cloverleaf Parishes and share a mutual accountability between incumbent and the local priest or the Cloverleaf Parishes may join with another benefice. In either case the desire is for the new incumbent to be able to focus their energies and their ministry first and foremost on Chard itself.





## Typical Month of Services Across the Benefice

This typical pattern can be varied, especially for Festivals and special events.

(Services are mostly based on Common Worship unless detailed otherwise)

Week	St. Mary's Chard	St. Nicholas' Combe St Nicholas	St. Mary's Wambrook	St. Andrew's Whitestaunton
1st Sunday	8am Said Holy Communion  10am Morning Prayer	10:30am Family Service  6pm BCP Evensong Ham Church (Summer Only)	9.15 am Morning Prayer BCP	
2nd Sunday	10am Holy Communion	10.30am Holy Communion	9.15am Holy Communion	6pm June to October Evensong/Festival
3rd Sunday	8am Said Holy Communion  10am 3rd Sunday Service	10.30am Service of the Word  6pm Evensong BCP Ham Church (Summer Only)	6.00pm Evensong BCP	10.30 am Holy Communion/Morning Services/Festival
4th Sunday	10 am Holy Communion 4pm Nov to Apr Evensong	10.30am Holy Communion		
4 <sup>th</sup> or 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	10am (Chard, Wambrook) 10.30am (CSN, Whitestaunton) Benefice Holy Communion – Held in each Church in rotation.			
Wednesday	9-45am Every Week: Said Holy Communion	10.30am 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday, Holy Communion BCP		

## Our Benefice Staff and Team Members



### George

My name is Reverend Georgina Vye, I am into my tenth year as the Associate Vicar across the Benefice and have enjoyed my time here immensely. I love the diversity of working within the rural parishes with the beautiful countryside we are situated in, alongside the busy life of the growing town. I am passionate about people, and building connections whilst networking. I love

the privilege of coming alongside others in their daily lives, whilst sharing the love of God amongst us all through action and being part of their life events.

I enjoy going to the beach, archaeology, spinning and knitting in my spare time.



### Deborah



My name is Rev Deborah Perreau, I am an ordained minister and have until recently served as Deanery Mission Priest. Prior to my current leadership role as the Local Minister for the Cloverleaf Parishes I bring both business and charity experience at Senior Leadership & Governance level having been a founder of a Global Medical Charity. I live in Combe St Nicholas with my family and have a heart for rural mission with a desire to see the people using their treasure and talents to serve God and the wider community. I am Chair of The Bath & Wells Audit and Risk

Management Group. I have various interests including bee keeping and can often be spotted walking my donkeys in the lanes of the Cloverleaf.





**John** My name is John Rollings and I am the curate of the Benefice. I am in my third year of curacy and rapidly approaching the end of this part of my ministry. I am a self-supporting minister and will be staying in the Benefice as an ordained local minister. I have lived in the Benefice for many years with my wife, Dee. We have 3 daughters and 6 grandchildren, all of which live locally. I have thoroughly enjoyed my curacy and I am really looking forward to

welcoming our new Rector and continuing to develop the opportunities that present themselves.



**Anne**

Hi, my name is Anne Perez and I have been Benefice Administrator for almost 6 years now. I love working here helping the clergy, PCCs and others with a variety of tasks. Currently I am an ordinand, and I am training at Sarum College. I shall be graduating in the summer of 2025 when I shall serve my curacy on a self-supporting basis in nearby Two Shires Benefice. Apart from ministry work, I love being outside and gardening or spending time with my rescue Greyhounds.



**Tom**

Hello, my name is Tom. I began pioneering youth ministry in Chard in September 2020 as part of the Diocese's pioneering project to explore possibilities for new worshipping communities. We have seen some great success in building volunteer teams to deliver detached youth work in Chard Skatepark, mentoring at Holyrood Academy, as well as an annual children's holiday club in August. We're excited about exploring new opportunities in the community for young people to encounter Jesus in authentic ways. When I'm not in Chard, I am in Taunton with my wife Claisse, and our two energetic beagles!

**Readers and Lay Worship Assistants**

Our only active reader has very recently died. Ruth was much loved and appreciated and we continue the work where she took part in the community, including Tots on Tuesday and in schools. Also, in the last few months, a team has begun training for leading worship. These are regular members of the congregation, in fact two married couples, who are keen to take the lead albeit under close supervision at present, during worship services. They have successfully completed a number of services and are going ahead with further training to become Lay Worship Assistants.

# What is important to us as a benefice?

We are a diverse group of parishes with St Mary's in the heart of an industrial town with the Cloverleaf Parishes in surrounding rural villages. We seek to continue to work together as a thriving benefice of church communities in developing our mission, ministry and worship without losing the individual characters of our churches, services and communities.

We are committed to nurturing, growing and spreading the Good News of our God who loves, inspires, empowers and transforms lives. We recognise the need to reach out and engage with all our diverse communities, including young people and families, both to sustain our current congregations and to welcome more people into the family of the church.

We look for opportunities to grow our churches through outreach in our local communities including those who might need support. For example, the free monthly community breakfast and Warm Space initiatives at St Mary's where, during the winter months, people can relax in comfort and make new friends.

We feel it is very important that parishioners and visitors are welcome to access our Churches' beauty and quiet at any time, so they are unlocked daily. We value greatly our beautiful churchyards and buildings and all of our churches have joined the Wilder Churches initiative with Chard and Combe St Nicholas having achieved bronze status in the Eco Churches Scheme.

## Church For Everyone



A Joint church choir Songs of Praise

# Who is our benefice looking for?



Thoughts from the Children at  
Combe St Nicholas VA Primary  
School

- ❖ Someone who can appreciate and value the way of life and diverse needs of a larger urban town and smaller rural communities. They will be able to lead and build on the unity of the benefice whilst encouraging the individuality of each parish.
- ❖ A flexible person who is open to the different styles of worship across the benefice and is able to support and enable the development of traditional and contemporary worship, teaching and preaching with sensitivity and empathy.
- ❖ They need to be open to working with other denominations and Chard Churches Together.
- ❖ A rector who loves the Lord Jesus Christ, is a person of prayer and an enthusiastic teacher of the bible; giving interesting, concise sermons and enjoyable services for all-ages.
- ❖ An inspirational person who will support and maintain current congregations but be eager to grow these by involving younger people and families.

- ❖ Someone who is pastorally minded with a heart for community, outreach and engagement with people of all ages and social and ethnic backgrounds. They will value and build on existing initiatives, whilst bringing their own ideas to help develop Church, ministry, mission and chaplaincy in the wider community. Including developing links with schools and young people.
- ❖ A person who values the role of music within the church.
- ❖ A person who has excellent leadership management skills either demonstrated in previous ministry or in other roles before or outside their ministry. They will be a team player who is able to nurture and inspires others to use their gifts to serve God in the church and wider community. They must value the role of the PCCs and have a good understanding of policy and practice including safeguarding.
- ❖ A rector who is an effective communicator, is friendly and welcoming. They must have the ability to listen to people with ease and understanding both in meetings and especially at a personal level.
- ❖ A person who will collaborate with and support the local priest to support the ministry, mission and diverse needs of the Cloverleaf Parishes.

## St Mary's Chard

Chard is a small town which is growing apace at present with several hundred new homes recently being built and more on the way. One area we are keen to explore is the possibility of some open-air services near or within the new developments. For instance, carol services in communal open spaces and possibly other services which may increase awareness of the church and what it has to offer.

There are several large industrial businesses in Chard, including Numatic which employs around a thousand people. The company is famous for its Henry vacuum cleaners among other products. It is a growing business and is having a new factory extension built on its existing site. We feel there may be opportunities for chaplaincy here which is something which is very popular at the moment. This is something that lay members of the church could become involved in once given the required training and mentoring. Our curate has experience in a chaplaincy role and would be able to advise and mentor on developing this area.

We look forward to hearing your views on how to grow the church and in particular any projects you would like to develop or instigate.

### The People

The Rector at St Mary's will join a rich benefice team comprising a full-time stipendiary Associate Vicar, a half time non stipendiary Curate, and a Diocesan Youth Pioneer, assisted by several clergy living nearby on an ad hoc basis. There is also a part time administrator. In addition, we have many church members who take an active part in worship, with our 3rd Sunday Morning Worship often led by lay members, when our music group accompanies our hymns.



Our PCC is large, active and hardworking, varying in age and experience, and supporting our Churchwarden with their diverse gifts and skills. Fund raising activities are prominent which also offer opportunities for outreach and encourage participation by the wider community. One such activity is a weekend flower festival around harvest time. This a new initiative which has proved very popular and has enabled the church to raise significant funds.

The Churchwarden prepares to abseil down the tower as part of a fund-raising event.

Our electoral roll currently numbers 98, with 85 considered to be regular worshippers, and an average attendance of 50 at the main Sunday morning service.

The life of the church extends into the week when a dedicated team share in taking Home Communion and Worship services to local sheltered housing communities and nursing homes on a monthly basis. Every Tuesday a regular group meets on zoom for Morning Prayer, which is especially appreciated by those who may be housebound, and a small group meets in church on Thursday evenings for a short time of Meditation. Social gatherings are varied; the Mothers' Union meets monthly, and Tots on Tuesdays every week during term time. We have a regular monthly Breakfast, serving on average 80 'Full English', offered free to the community, and supported by a hard-working team and generous donations from many diners. We host a weekly 'Warm Space' to all comers during the winter months, offering lunch, afternoon tea and companionship. Once a week during Lent, on the same day as our Lent course takes place, our Pastoral team serve our popular weekly Lent Lunches, raising funds to support Christian Aid. The Pastoral team also hosts the annual 'Light up a Life' Service in December, appreciated by many members of the wider community who have lost loved ones. Many of our members are part of town projects reaching out to the community, including the Lord's Larder (food bank), Community Hub, Stroke Club and more.

We have a strong link with nearby Manor Court Primary School, supported by the Head Teacher who wants to see this involvement flourish. We take morning assembly and an after-school pupil and parent session, both once a week, when we are able to share our Christian message. The pupils from all the schools in our parish come to our church at several times a year, especially for Christmas, Harvest and Easter, and it is a joy to hear our church filled with the singing of young voices. We have been able to develop increased links with Redstart Community Primary school and Holyrood Academy about 1400 students. Tom Tame, our Youth Pioneer has been allocated to work in Chard for 5 years and during his first 2 years he has established a good relationship with young people who gather at the local skate park, and he attends Holyrood Secondary School two days a week getting to know the students and mentoring some who are having difficulties at school. Chard School is a small independent school in the parish and we, with most of the churches in Chard, take assemblies there.



Church members belong to the Nightingale Charity supporting Ukrainian refugees, helping them to improve their English skills, find employment and housing, and integrate into the community.

Church members and Ukrainians after a concert in aid of the Nightingale Charity

St Mary's is the Civic Church of Chard, and we hold a number of large civic events each year. The Town Council is supportive of our work in the community and our Associate Vicar is currently the Mayor's Chaplain.



At the War Memorial on the Annual Service of Remembrance (2023)

## At St Mary's We Offer

- Strong links with our local schools and a desire to increase these.
- Pastoral care through pastoral teams and individuals.
- A parish administrator.
- A vibrant church community comprising:
  - Music group.
  - Mothers' Union.
  - Bell ringers.
  - Flower arrangers.
  - Tots group.
  - Chard Chimes (monthly magazine)
- A community centre hosting church meetings and events and hired by various local community groups.
- A vicarage close to the church, schools and town centre.
- A church family which welcomes all, without exception.
- A willingness to support our new incumbent in their ministry among us as it develops.



## The Buildings



**The Church:** St Mary's Church is Grade 1 listed, built in the 15th century on the site of at least 2 former churches.

The building is in good condition with an efficient heating system providing a warm welcome for all occasions.

Comfortable chairs provide seating for 250 and can be moved easily to suit a

variety of activities from the occasional informal service to harvest barn dances, Burns Night celebrations, events, and concerts.



Burns Night at St Mary's

**St Mary's Centre:** This is a building within the church grounds which is owned by the Southend Church of England Educational Foundation, chaired by the incumbent of St Mary's and the Churchwardens along with other trustees who bring their various gifts and skills. The Centre provides a valuable asset for outreach in the community. It is used by the church for various meetings and community events such as Warm Space and Community Breakfast and by other churches including Alpha. The kitchen and two large rooms are hired by many organisations and groups, providing accommodation at favourable cost to a wide range of community services and activities, including Brownies, health/social workers, dance and exercise groups and private events. The hall is valuable in providing a large space where we serve coffee after our main Sunday service and connect with each other and especially have the opportunity to show a welcome to visitors whilst we await our planned servery in the church, dependent on funds.



## The Future

We are looking for someone who:

Will have the energy and initiative to continue to connect with the wide socio-economic environment, including young people, the new housing estates and those with particular financial and social needs; will entice them into the church family through (perhaps) new or outdoor worship services in the community; will get to know and integrate with our different communities.

Will support and build on our existing relationships with the schools in the town, with our Curate and our Youth Pioneer, strengthening the work of our Youth Pioneer who is halfway through a five-year posting.

Will maintain and encourage our pastoral work and support our ministry to care homes and the giving of Home Communion.

Will take an active and collaborative role with the Chard Churches Together movement and forging positive links with other churches in the town, encouraging the congregation in supporting their activities.

Will support and grow our existing Outreach Programmes. For instance:

- Tots and Young Mums group
- Men's Shed
- Community Holiday Club
- Nightingale Group [Ukrainian Refugee Assistance]
- Eco Church
- Flower Festivals

Will continue leading a variety of different worship services that will appeal to a wide audience. Encouraging and supporting our embryonic music group whilst always being faithful to and having the Bible as centre of our church and worship pattern, whether ancient or modern in style.



Brown Owl



Tots on Tuesday

## St. Mary's Church and Chard Churches Together (CCT)



Good Friday Walk of Witness

St Mary's takes an active part in the activities of Chard Churches Together, where representatives from each of the seven churches in Chard meet every two months to pray together and coordinate joint worship and outreach events, as well as serving the local community and schools through various initiatives. These include:

- The Lord's Larder food bank - serving local families and individuals in need
- Supporting children and young people in our local schools – help with reading skills, mentoring young people who experience difficulties in mainstream education
- Youth outreach work at the local skate park
- Weekly prayer group for the work with our children and young people
- United services for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (in January)
- Good Friday Walk of Witness through Chard's town centre – approx.100 people taking part
- The Sovereign mission bus (one day during the school Easter holidays)
- Pentecost Praise celebration at Forde Abbey
- Children's holiday club at Holyrood Academy School Site (one week in August)
- 'Follow the Star' nativity event at the Town Beacon in December
- Warm spaces in the winter months (offering refreshments or light lunches and community fellowship)

CCT meetings take place six times a year, in the evening in the church hall of the English Martyrs Roman Catholic church. The role of chairperson alternates between clergy and lay members. The purpose of the group is to unite with our Christian brothers and sisters in ecumenical service and outreach to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ in Chard.

## St Nicholas' Combe St Nicholas



The Parish of Combe St Nicholas ([www.combestnicholas.org.uk](http://www.combestnicholas.org.uk)) lies about two miles from Chard and ten miles from Taunton. It is set in lovely countryside on the edge of the Blackdown Hills. The approach from the north via Stoopers Hill provides a stunning panorama of the area. The village of Wadeford lies within the Parish, and also the Mission Church of St Barnabas, Ham.

We consider Combe a very friendly village, and with its popular Church of England VA school, the community has a wide range of age groups. Within the village is a shop incorporating Post Office services, a Methodist Chapel, a popular pub, and a well-used village hall, which holds monthly roast lunches as well as a wide range of social activities. The abundance of produce at the village's Annual Show in the church is evidence of Combe being a hive of horticultural activity.

In early days the village was known as Combe Episcopi and took its present name when the Church was dedicated to St Nicholas in 1239. The church sits within a large, well-tended, open churchyard with a lovely extension known as Sunday School Wood: this is used regularly by the school for 'Forest School', and on fine summer days other services take place there.



Children looking at a hedgehog living in Sunday School Wood.

The school is adjacent to the church and uses the church for assemblies, end-of-term services, prize giving and concerts. The church and the school have a very close relationship and carry out many functions jointly. Regrettably, families do not often attend regular services, although the Christmas Eve Christingle service draws in about 100 excited children with their parents, which - we hope - reminds them that Christmas is not all about Father Christmas and presents.



Christmas in Combe includes a nativity trail and carol singing around the villages. There is a weekly 30 Minutes with God meeting every Tuesday throughout the year.



A small adult choir led by Samantha Stevenson and a dedicated team of bellringers with Lynne Smith as Tower Captain support Church services.

The church is in covenant with the Methodist Church in the village and the congregations worship together regularly. The Women's Fellowship Group is run in conjunction with the Methodists, a relationship much valued by both churches.

The Combe Pastoral Care Group visits homebound parishioners and takes Holy Communion to them as needed.

The parish/village magazine, Cloverleaf, is produced bi-monthly and delivered, free, to all households in Combe, Whitestaunton and Wambrook. It carries useful advertising, which pays production costs.

We would like to retain the traditional low churchmanship of Combe St Nicholas.

An average of 26 people regularly attend worship. At the end of December 2022 there were 52 names on the Electoral Roll. In 2022 there were 3 baptisms, 5 marriages and 11 funerals in St Nicholas's church.

The current churchwardens are Penny Croucher, appointed in 2017 and Keda Horn, appointed in 2020.



## Ham Church



St. Barnabas or rather Ham Church, as it is known throughout the Benefice, is a tiny building which sits in farmland just off the A303 and is approximately 2 miles from its Parish Church at Combe St. Nicholas. From Combe St. Nicholas it can be approached entirely through lanes and is an enjoyable walk on a summer's eve.

Ham Church was consecrated in approximately 1903 when it was considered a need to have a place of worship for the local community of the hamlet, rather than their having to walk to Combe St. Nicholas. Therefore, a small stone-built barn was 'ear marked' in Ham. The East End was added, and Services have been held almost continuously since.

Ham is chiefly a summer Church mainly due to its location but has been used out of season too. Regular Evensongs are held April to September inclusive on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays of each month.

Over the years many baptisms have taken place and in more recent years, weddings.

In 2021 funds were raised to re-roof the Church and at the same time one solar panel was added to provide limited lighting.

## St Mary's Wambrook



Nestling within the Blackdown Hills area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in South Somerset, Wambrook is a rural village of c180 inhabitants. Within the village there is a mix of traditional buildings several of which are Grade II listed and limited modern buildings. The community consists of people with widely differing backgrounds, experiences, occupations and interests. A successful balance has been achieved between families of long standing and newcomers. Surrounded by farmland and stunning countryside the quietness and privacy of country life is much valued and the village is cherished by its inhabitants. People also value aspects of village life that bring people together such as the thriving village Inn which is used for meetings and celebrations and the successful church and community activities including a Horse Ride, Motorcycle event and Flower Show



The wider community of Wambrook is of a traditional and diverse nature. Made up of a broad range of agriculture, people from all walks of life



who have chosen to retire in Wambrook and a small number of people who work in the nearby town of Chard and the surrounding area.

The 13<sup>th</sup> Century Grade II\* listed church is a gem of simplicity, energetically supported by members of the Church community. It is the topographical centre of the village and serves as a focus both sacred and secular. It is open every day for worshippers and visitors alike. In continuous use since the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, it has been described as 'God's own Country' by many after spending time in the Church. Only some two miles from the town of Chard, the peace and tranquillity offered by the Church has to be experienced.



A new roof was installed in 2017 and in mid-2021 repairs were made to the Tower. Work is on-going to provide toilet facilities at the Church for worshippers and visitors alike. A community wide survey on the future and greater use of the building was carried out in 2014 and it is available as a download from the Church website.

Visitors and new worshippers are very welcome at Wambrook Church, and this is actively encouraged. The Church community is very proud of its traditional values and likes to be known as a Church that upholds these values and is a place where worshippers from the surrounding areas can attend in this traditional manner. It holds traditional service formats e.g., Remembrance Service and Christmas Day, in high regard. Any changes to services would therefore need to be taken by fully engaging with the church and maybe the wider Wambrook community. The successful applicant will need to be a good listener and able to understand and adapt to the naturally changing needs of the community.

Church services are currently held on three Sundays in the month:- 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday, Morning Prayer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday, C.W. ~ Communion and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday B.C.P. ~ Evensong, with additional festivals, i.e. Harvest Festival, Remembrance and Nativity, being celebrated during the year. Attendance at these special services is always well supported, whilst the average number of worshippers at regular services is eight. The current pattern of Church services is settled into a good routine and is reviewed around six-month intervals to see if change is needed. Although Wambrook has its own style, there is some crossover of the worshipping community when we join in with benefice services, i.e. the fourth Sunday which is held on a rotational basis at one of the benefice churches. The Church Electoral Roll currently stands at 24.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) meets in accordance with the Church Representation rules and is committed to fostering a pragmatic and meaningful working relationship between both clergy and laity. There is some 'doubling up' of tasks on the PCC but this is not seen as an issue and the members have an excellent working relationship.

A team of volunteers regularly clean the Church and decorate with flowers throughout the year. A further volunteer team regularly mow the Churchyard during the growing season and carry out general tidying up around the Church estate. These teams are made up from a cross section of the community, both worshippers and those who rarely if ever, attend.



A comprehensive listing, produced by three volunteers within the community, of the known burial records up to and including 2016 is available on the dedicated Church website. These records are available as a download and an interactive map of the Churchyard can be viewed online. This mirrors the records already on display in the Church for visitors to peruse at their leisure. The online version is routinely updated as required. A family who emigrated to Australia in the 1950s, have been re-united with family members in Wambrook by contact through the Church website.

In summary, Wambrook remains a vibrant village with wide inter-generational loyalty to the Church as evidenced by support for regular Services, village events and Church festivals. Wambrook is a listening Church, which has been in continuous use since the early 13<sup>th</sup> century and will continue for the foreseeable future.

Further information can be seen on [www.wambrookparishchurch.com](http://www.wambrookparishchurch.com) which is regularly updated, privately funded and administered from within the community. There are more images on the website, of the Church estate and a bird's eye video, complete with music recorded in the Church.



## St Andrew's Whitestaunton



The beautiful village of Whitestaunton lies in the Blackdown Hills, an AONB, on the Somerset Devon Border. Our little gem of a Church serves the wider Parish of Whitestaunton which consists of the hamlets of Northay, Howley and Crickleaze and includes a residential caravan park. It stretches into parts of Marsh and as of 2011 had a population of 256. There are many lovely countryside walks in the area and interesting historical features including an Iron Age Hill-fort, a mediaeval Manor House, and Roman remains.

Our community is a mix of ages with a large farming community, people who work in local towns and larger villages, professionals, semi-retired and retired people. We do not have a school, so our children attend schools in local towns and villages. There is a county council bus provided for children who wish to attend nearby Buckland St Mary Primary School or the secondary school in Chard. Some families have lived in the Parish for many generations and some people are quite new to the area.

St Andrew's Church is a beautiful 13<sup>th</sup> Century Grade 1 listed Church in a lovely setting. It is the only community building left in the Parish and is well regarded and supported by many residents whether they attend services or not. Many people have family members buried there or appreciate its beautiful, peaceful setting and history. It remains unlocked so that it can be shared by the community and visitors daily. Our visitors book shows that people visit us from far and wide whether they are passing walkers or tracing family. We have fantastic teams of volunteer grass cutters, flower arrangers and cleaners. We also have a great bell captain who organises teams for special services and arranges for visiting teams to ring our bells. Recently members of the community have donated money and raised funds for our new church gate and another member made and donated a new church notice board.





The addition of WC facilities, a small communal area and the use of a carpark has enabled us to hold community events in the church such as coffee mornings, a big breakfast and concerts, including a concert showcasing young talented musicians in the local area. As well as being good fundraisers these events have enabled the community to get together. We also use local village halls for community functions and our recent bingo and craft fair were well supported.

We would like to continue to develop our community work so we can support and reach all aspects of our community.

We have a small but hard-working PCC. Currently, we run without a church warden, so we work as a team with clear jobs and actions. The formation of a Fabric Committee and clear fabric work plans have enabled us to monitor and carry out the ongoing maintenance works needed to be done. We are currently working on updating the church electrics and seeking funds to repair the church roof. We have two small re-wilding areas in the churchyard and have taken a survey of its flora and fauna. We would like to work with a benefice rector who is well organised, listens, values our work and wants to collaborate with us and our Local Priest so we can ensure that Whitestaunton Church continues to thrive for the community and our next generation of worshippers.



We have 2 services a month in the Summer and 1 in the Winter, differing depending on the time of year. Holy Communion and Evensong are less well attended (3 to 5 people on average) than our festival services which often have a congregation between 17 to 30 plus. In the last two years we have carried out a review of our services based on the needs of our community. As a result, we have retained our Holy Communion and popular festival services i.e.

The Carol Service, Christmas Day Crib Service, Harvest and Easter Day, but reduced the number of Evensongs and added or reintroduced some all-age services such as a Pet Service (with visiting donkeys), a Plough Service (where a farmer's plough was blessed) and a Summer Songs of Praise. Services are often followed by an opportunity for people to gather and chat over something to eat and drink e.g., mulled wine and mince pies at Christmas, and homemade soup and a roll at Plough Sunday. We have a very dedicated organist. Our relatively new church choir sings at 3 or 4 festival services a year including a joint church Come and Sing Songs of Praise, which was held in Whitestaunton this year with 60 people filling the church. We also take part in the popular benefice services. We would like a benefice rector who delivers interesting, imaginative, lively services and is willing to support us and our Local Priest as we develop new ideas to grow our community of worshippers especially our young people.

The Carol Service, Christmas Day Crib Service,



## Finance

### St Mary's Chard

In the last 2 years we have struggled to pay our Parish Share in full, this has been due to dwindling resources and reduced giving since the Pandemic and has resulted in us paying less than half the requested amount. However, as a Parochial Church Council we are fully committed to paying as much as we can afford and therefore during 2023, we have paid more than half the requested amount. We have also agreed as a PCC to join the Parish Giving Scheme and are at the point of rolling this out to our congregation. One of the benefits of this scheme is that reviews of annual giving are promoted and administered within the scheme, as well as gift aid on annual giving.

### Combe St Nicholas

Our Parish Share Band is D which we previously paid in two instalments in January and June to enable us to claim a small discount. However, this became increasingly difficult, and we now pay on a monthly basis, thus losing the discount. The Covid pandemic has meant that since 2020 we have been unable to meet our full parish share obligations.

Our running costs exceed our annual income by £8,000/£9,000. We meet this deficit by drawing on a legacy which was left to the church many years ago and is a finite sum. Our regular monthly giving has decreased year on year as older members pass away. We are constantly looking for ways to attract a younger membership and to raise funds. Regular coffee mornings, concerts and performances by the youth theatre group CLOKS (whose Christmas show reliably twice fills the church) all contribute to fund-raising activities for specific essential maintenance projects. Our ongoing commitment to the environment should also result in cost savings with the future installation of solar panels, etc.

### Wambrook

Our Parish Share Band is D and the Church is reasonably well funded and fully meets the current financial liabilities. Fundraising is a strength and derives its income from a range of activities, including a Horse Ride, Motorcycle event and Flower Show, to mention a few. A new roof was installed in 2017 under the government funding scheme, (L.P.O.W. II) and in mid-2021 repairs to the Tower were funded under the Heritage at Risk, (HAR) scheme.

### Whitestaunton

Although we have had to draw on our reserves, we are very pleased to report that we have been able to pay our full Parish Share (Band D) for 2023 and we anticipate being able to do the same for 2024. We pay by monthly direct debit. Income from our regular givers only covers around 18% of our day to day running costs (Including Parish Share) but thanks to our very able fund raisers and one-off donations we are managing to stay afloat.

We have been able to commit to significant electrical repairs in 2024 but we anticipate that we will need to undertake major repairs to our roof in the very near future for which we will be unable to pay without further significant fund raising and grants.

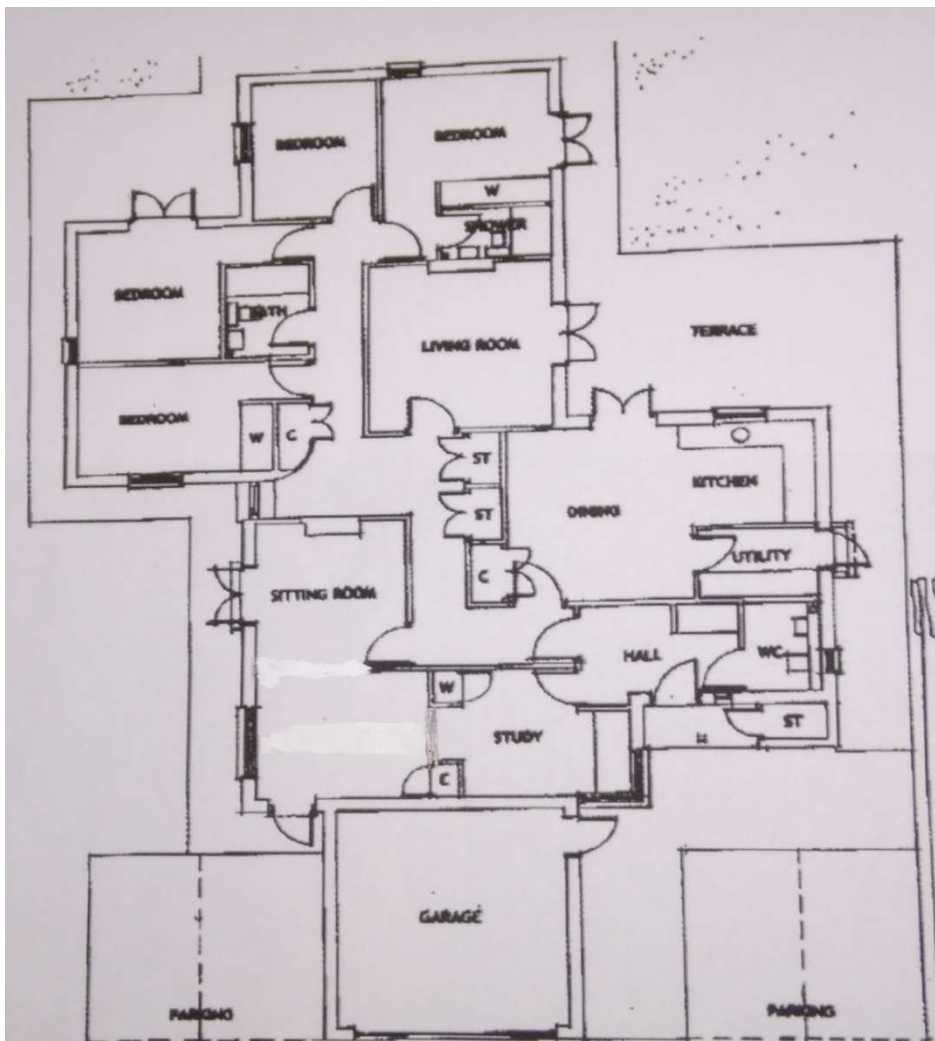
## The Vicarage

Your new home, is a modern bungalow with four bedrooms, two reception rooms, large kitchen diner and an office. It is served by a solar heating system and is backed up by underfloor heating throughout.



You will be pleased to know that the vicarage has recently been decorated throughout and all known faults have been rectified. It is surrounded by gardens which are spacious but manageable. It has a double garage with ample parking for several cars.

The vicarage is located just across the road from the church. The town centre is a 10-minute walk away, with shops, cafes, a new leisure centre and swimming pool, and good library. Two larger supermarkets are just one mile from the vicarage.



Floor Plan  
for The  
Vicarage

## Thank You



Thank you for taking the time to read our profile. We hope it will have encouraged you to give serious consideration to coming to live and work in this beautiful part of South Somerset. Chard is a working town with a diverse community with lots to offer you. The beautiful villages all have their own unique characters. You will find the people in both town and villages to be warm friendly, open and welcoming.

We look forward to the possibility of meeting you and welcoming you to our great community.



A Park in Chard