

All Saints, Farmborough St Peter, Marksbury





## Introduction

This role has two separate halves: the rector, leading the congregations, and the pioneer, connecting with people in the wider community. We want you to be able to share the story of God's love by acting on shared values and concerns of the people in our villages and beyond.

### Rector

- exploring both old and new ways.
- Develops and encourages strengths and gifts of lay worship assistants and others.
- ♦ Leads the pastoral care of the congregations.
- ties, attending significant events and being a familiar and approachable face.
- Develops existing relationships with the schools to help build foundations for the lives of our young people.
- $\Diamond$  Draws the congregations with them into  $\Diamond$  Balances the pioneer and rector roles, with the the pioneering outreach.

### Pioneer

- ♦ Leads the worship of the three parishes, ♦ Pursues new opportunities of Christian mission in the rural setting of our benefice as a community organiser.
  - ♦ With a particular heart for social justice, environmental and conservation issues, listens to the concerns of people and assesses the talents, organisations and resources here, which may extend beyond benefice boundaries.
- ♦ Is active in the life of our village communi- ♦ As a practitioner, leads activities that make a difference in our communities and bring people into trusted working connection with God's church.
  - Works within the deanery system as a model for new ministries and to help realign resources towards mission.
  - support of a pioneer advocate.

Our vision is to maintain our unified benefice, help each other grow in faith and to bring people to see and know Jesus.

We want to reach out to the people missing from our congregations and share the word of God with them through friendship, care and support for the local communities and their wider issues.

### Rector and community organiser pioneer

### focusing on the environment and social justice

We seek a rural parish priest. We look forward to our new rector leading us in worship, enriching our village communities and celebrating with us the events that shape our lives.

But the church is declining throughout the country, and our congregations here are small. Two and a half generations are missing. We want to give our incumbent a role that will invigorate the church more powerfully and effectively than we have seen before.

### An incumbency of two parts

This post is half and half, with both halves equally important and exciting. The roles are separate, but balanced, overlapping and mutually enhancing, and both are in the service of God's kingdom on earth and in heaven. Here is a rare opportunity for us as parishioners and for you as the highly qualified candidate whose calling shares in this vision.

Based on the love of God and for the glory of God, our vision is to care genuinely about people both within and outside the church, and – specifically, creating channels through which the message of Christ will spread – to act together with people outside the church in areas of shared values that already have strong momentum with them, that very many people of all ages already care passionately about.

All five of the church's Marks of Mission are a single whole, and within that whole, there are values that we and people outside church share. This common ground for 'living our faith with them' is found especially in Marks 4 and 5.

- 1. Proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- 2. Teach, baptize and nurture new believers
- 3. Respond to human need by loving service
- 4. Seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation
  5. Strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

The two roles envisioned for our incumbent weave these truths and facts together.

### For us, this is common sense

The needs, character and focus of people in the parishes are always at the heart of the incumbent's work.

Long-term relationships of mutual trust, especially facing important shared challenges together, are enjoyable and enriching in themselves. And through them the message of Christ's love spreads. This applies inside the church, and it is profoundly true outside the church as well.

People outside the church do not ask, What do you believe? They want to know, How do you live? If we can live it with them, they can see what we believe and will hear the message of God's love in Christ. This is where the role of the community-organiser pioneer comes in. You will be able to devote fully half of your time and effort to this vital, commonsense work.

There's another reason for wanting this double role for our incumbent (and for ourselves). Pioneers tell us from experience that genuine, trusted involvement with people outside the church contributes to spiritual life and growth within the church.

'We find that (through the work of pioneers) the traditional church is revitalised.' – Revd Canon David Male, an early innovator, now director of evangelism and discipleship at Church House

You will shape these two roles in your own way, as God leads.

### To begin with, the rector's role

Our three villages are keen to welcome you as you join in with the life of our communities.

We look forward to your leading us in worship in a wide range of forms, from BCP to Messy Church, in ways that help us discover commitment and peace within worship. And you'll celebrate with us such defining events in our lives as marriages, baptisms, funerals, harvest, Christmas and Easter.

We imagine two goals for the rector half of the post. First, we anticipate that the benefice will gain in breadth and depth as you develop the gifts of laypeople. We have certainly needed to dig deeper during this period between incumbents. We'll be glad when you arrive, but we must say we've done pretty well. This will further evolve (and the need for it will be understood by all) in light of your parish-priest role receiving half of your efforts.

You'll lead pastoral care within the benefice, not doing it all yourself but further preparing gifted, vetted and capable laypeople to gladly help other parishioners, spiritually and otherwise.

There is a vibrant, continuing opportunity to establish Christian faith amongst the children, as well as staff and parents, at the two CofE primary schools in Farmborough and Marksbury. How you encourage us and expand our resources here (again, laypeople are already active) is a matter for your creativity and initiative.

The three churches have long engaged in charitable and outreach activities. From the Three Towers Music Festival to harvest lunches, Monday coffee mornings and Tuesday teas, to fundraising events like August cream teas and Open Days, to financial contributions. Together we can find ways to build on these foundations.

And of course there is the delightful matter of overseeing the upkeep of our ancient buildings and fabric and the administration of the benefice. You'll quickly make yourself an expert here with a full complement of capable church wardens and other members of the three PCCs, an administrative assistant three hours a week, other parishioners, willing residents of the villages, and various professionals to help bear the weight.

We imagine that a second goal for the rector's half, which you can address as you are led, is in the words of Jesus to 'feed my sheep'. People attending church – and from those missing generations aged 18 to 69 – are capable of receiving real sustenance in intriguing sermons and other lessons. Your teaching can nourish the life and growth of the benefice perhaps as much as anything else you could do. Regular teaching could also be part of the 'overlapping' quality of your double role: it is one means of sharing with everyone what happens in the pioneering.

We anticipate that life in the benefice's three churches will still look familiar to parishioners, only better. This is part of the 'separate' quality of the incumbent's two roles. Each person can choose how to be part of the rector-half or the pioneer-half or both. Not everyone has to join in. Each parishioner chooses how to contribute to the vitality of God's work (simply being present in worship is an important contribution). Also, the pioneering will not overpower the much-loved and valued work of the rector, enriched by laity, just as the rector's role will not overpower the pioneer. This is a balance you will need, and will find it a privilege, to create and sustain.

### Now, about the pioneering role

We have had to learn a lot in our search for a new incumbent. More than merely supplemental issues, Marks of Mission 4 and 5 are an integral part of what the church is. These are essential to the work of God's love and purpose in the world. The church's activity in these areas is where people who do not yet know Christ can see that their own beliefs are part of what stands as lovely church towers in their villages, part of a greater whole.

The pioneer's community organising demonstrates tangibly that people are listened to, heard, taken seriously, cared about. This is not done as a clever tactic; there is no heavy atmosphere of ulterior purpose, which friends can detect a mile off. Acting together on shared concerns takes everyone further in their own (including us in our own) commitments, while all five parallel strings of the marks of mission resonate with the message of God's grace.

Our assumption is that everyone in our villages and surrounding areas already, in a sense, belongs to our churches. Not 'us and them'. We all belong; we are already here. You are not primarily aiming to form new worship communities.

People here are rural and transplanted townspeople. Rural but connected to nearby towns and the cities of Bath and Bristol. Most are distanced from God and the church, vaguely assuming they know about Christ, dismissing him to a corner, assuming they know what they do not want or need. But many are not merely willing to be involved in the life and needs of their communities, they (we) actually *are* involved. What are sometimes called Kingdom values are being lived out. These can be ends in themselves, but developing this overlap of shared church values and non-church values creates a rich potential for reaching people, enhancing the life of God's church and enhancing the life of the villages (as the church should do, and vice versa).

The willingness (in fact, the commitment) of people and organisations to 'be involved' brings community and church onto common ground. What we call Marks of Mission 4 and 5 or expressions of Kingdom values, are known by 'regular' people as doing what's right, social justice, respect for the environment.

We do not know, and cannot know, exactly how the message of Christ will spread – God works in wondrous ways – but we do know that within Kingdom values God is at work in the world. Through them the message certainly will spread. People in relationships of mutual belief and achievement with people of God who embody the gospel, know the gospel and can express the gospel, have clear opportunity to find or enrich their faith. All while matters in our area that need improving are improved, and things that need doing actually get done.

As a pioneer you will go where people are, listen, explore, engage. In rural settings such as ours, poverty and its causes and effects in deprivation, isolation and social injustice are a hidden blight. In a global climate crisis, a question often asked is what can ordinary people do?

You will always be identified as a member of God's church, and your task is hearing, finding out what matters to people, and what resources there are in the benefice and in the wider area. Adding to the knowledge you bring with you, you will discover talented and willing people, networks, organisations, assets, connections – and needs that have gone disregarded, opportunities ignored, enthusiasms overlooked, questions unasked.

With prayerful discretion, following God's leading and not spreading yourself too thinly, you will bring people and organisations together. You'll probably start small. You (we) and our neighbours outside the church will engage in appropriate work, try what's promising, learn, adjust, try again, bring considered effort to bear on local issues of social justice and the custodianship of creation.

You'll recognise this innovative, dynamic picture from your background as a community organiser. You will get to be a hands-on practitioner here, someone who makes things happen, not merely an 'encourager' or 'mission enabler'. Those less-active, stand-back roles have been ineffective in other parishes.

Pioneering is a well-established activity in the church, but we acknowledge that your pioneering role is unfamiliar to some of us. Some may assume you can do this in the off hours. But that is not the case. It is vitally important and fully half of what you are called here to do. We understand that it works slowly, especially at first. 'Results' may not be immediately apparent. It will not fill up the pews, certainly not anytime soon. We do, however, know where to look for the eventual impact. It will be with people in the community (including ourselves). Pioneers are sometimes called dreamers who get results. We will be able to look back in coming years and see the results in relationships, in activities that have simply been right things to do, and we will see that through them Christ's gospel spreads where it did not previously go.

### You will be well supported

The rector works in the benefice, of course. The pioneering is a deanery role that is rooted in the benefice. Its effects will spread across the deanery and hopefully wider. You will be able to engage people and organisations both within and beyond benefice boundaries as needed.

You will not be alone. There are pioneers in various types of posts already at work in the deanery and diocese. You will be able to share vision, ideas and gripes with them. And you will have a pioneer advocate to support you and help you keep a balance between your two roles – and the rest of your life.

## The Benefice

Set in rolling hills, Farmborough, Marksbury and Stanton Prior are villages located in the South West of Bath, connected by the A39. There are a small number of long-standing families within our community, although over the past few years we have seen families moving here to enjoy rural life with the opportunity to commute to both Bristol and Bath.

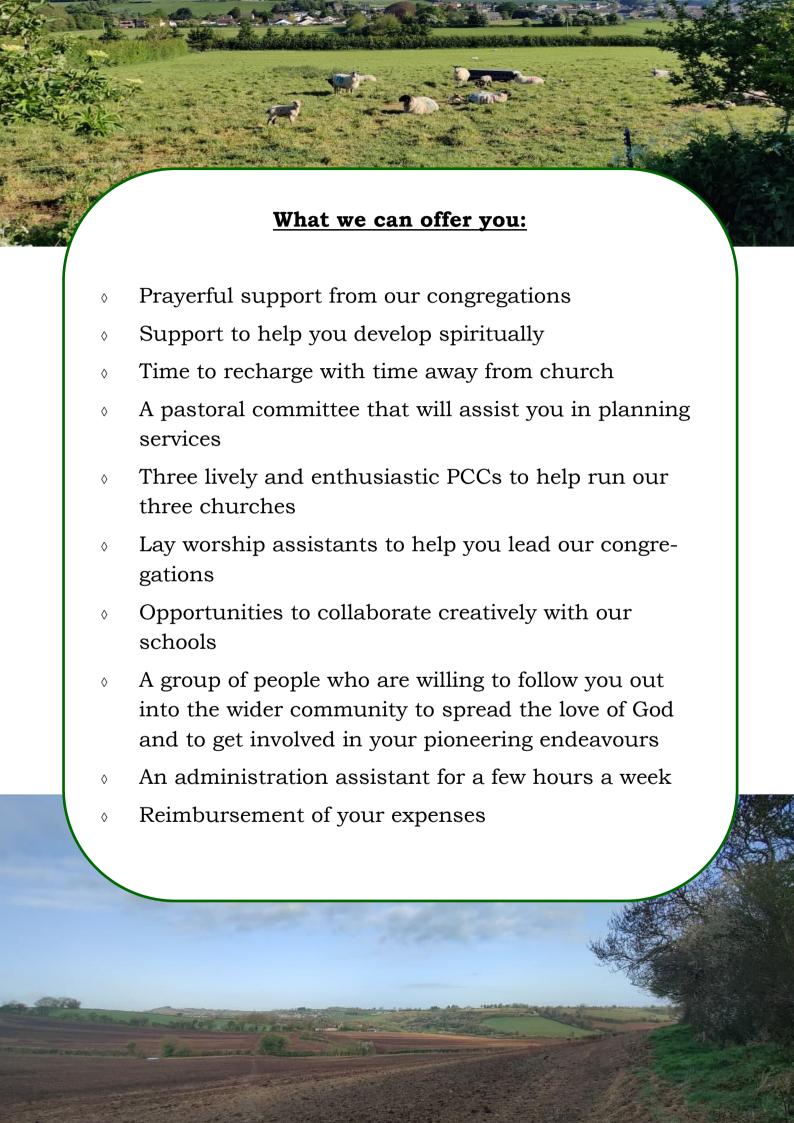
Our faithful congregations are mostly made up of middle-aged and older people (though young at heart!), some of which have been worshipping here their whole lives, and a small handful of younger families. They are supported by our lay worship assistants and church-wardens who volunteer their time and talents in the service of God and to keep places of worship alive in our villages. The connection to our younger people is predominantly through our schools and village events, though we do have a team of dedicated people who run Messy Church sessions and our afterschool clubs ARK and SPARK.



We have a varied repertoire of services to suit all worship styles including traditional BCP services, holy communion and more modern friends and family services. This is an area we would like to develop: responding to the changing needs and approaches of worship and to keep our services appealing to our growing communities. We plan on changing our service pattern in the future with your help and input.

We want the life of our church reinvigorated for all through:

- ♦ Continuing to develop our forms of worship, enabling people to meet God in a way that suits them well and meets them where they are.
- Developing the part that the churches already play in the life of the community.
- Building on the already strong relationships with our village schools, both of which have OFSTED and SIAMS 'outstanding' ratings.
- Supporting and growing the after-school church children's groups ARK and SPARK, and Messy Church.
- Developing outreach to the local communities as they continue to grow.
- The effective stewardship of our buildings, using them imaginatively and optimising the available space.



## More about us...

**Farmborough** has a thriving primary school, community shop, two pubs, a hairdresser and a Memorial hall which hosts a number of local clubs and organisations.

In 2019, our population was 1,273, though major housing developments in recent years has allowed this to increase, attracting commuters and young families.



Our church is lucky enough to have a team of 5 active bellringers, led by Patrick Bridges. They practise on Wednesday evenings for Sunday morning services - I'm sure you would be welcome to come along and have a go if you'd like! Chris Lovell has led our choir for many years, he and his dedicated team help lead us in our worship.

The children in our school enjoy spending time with the Rector and other church members, exploring festivals together and asking The Big Questions. On the other end of the spectrum, we have an aging population who seek support and fellowship through our outreach of Tuesday Teas and Circle of Friends.

The PCC have been working away at reordering the church to make it a more versatile space and more useful in our aim to diversify our worship and community activities. The Reordering Group have been resilient in their efforts to make this go ahead, despite some opposition. We hope you can bring an injection of energy to help us on to the next stage!



In **Marksbury**, there is a church with a long history. Nowadays it serves Marksbury, which has become a commuter village whilst remaining rural in character. There are still a few families with long-standing connections to the village, but the majority are more recent arrivals, including a small number of young families.

The Church congregation is largely comprised

of older people, with a wide experience in many fields. These are encouraging links with younger people, through active participation in village events. Special occasions, especially Christmas and Remembrance Services, draw the young families of our village into our church and our informal "Elevenses" service has begun to reach a wider number of people.

Our church aims to play a full part in the life of the village community (approximately 280 people) and has built up a tradition of sharing monthly coffee mornings, lunches, suppers and helping with the annual village quiz and fete.

Marksbury Church of England Primary School is linked firmly to our church, with supportive staff and children. Classed as Outstanding by both OFSTED and SIAMS reports, the school attends three services in the church each year, and invites the rector to be involved in assemblies and events such as our Harvest Festival and the Nativity play.

The local Co-op supermarket and petrol station share premises with van-hire, various local businesses including a saddlery and a barbers, all used extensively by the three benefice villages.

Some say **Stanton Prior** is the smallest village in Somerset, between 55 and 65 souls. A healthy turnover of new people enriches the larger core of longstanding residents. At the moment, there are ten children or young people. The longest-resident family has been here for over 90 years.



The village feels like another time and place. We're sheltered by hills on one side (and the A39 a mile away) and enclosed by a down on the other. We create our own ways of being a community. We have no shop, no pub, no school, no buses, no post office, no holiday lets, no second homes, little traffic and no war memorial. We're listed among the very few "Thankful villages" in the UK - we'll tell you that story when you get here. It's gloriously dark here at night.

Bath Spa university is a mile and a half down the valley by footpath (no direct road).

The two working farms are the core of the village. Both are Duchy of Cornwall. The farming year is our year. Fields and pastures in the midst of the village spread in all directions. Big dairy barns stand close by the church.

The Village Hall is central to village life. A few years ago we came together, like a "barn raising", to restore and extend the century-old hall. We have all the usual village activities, from allotments to BBQs to celebrations to projects that draw upon our various skills.

You might enjoy the "GLORY TO GOD" door to the hall or our art gallery in the redundant red telephone box. Every Sunday afternoon in August (bar Covid's 2020) we serve cream teas to raise funds for the hall and the church. Fundraising brings us together.

## Ministry Team

We are extremely fortunate to have a dedicated team of leaders and enthusiastic volunteers in our benefice, serving the three churches.

You would have the help and support of 3 lay worship assistants, all of whom are experienced in leading services:

John



Judith



Chris



Each church has an active PCC and two churchwardens:

Tom



Catherine



Richard



Tony



Francis



John



The church wardens have previously met with the rector four times a year to discuss and plan the life of the churches.

We have a pastoral committee which gathers views and ideas from across the benefice to incorporate new ideas into our services.

In each church there are willing helpers to clean, arrange flowers and polish the brass - and cater for many events involving food!

Since we have been able to meet back at church, we have been drawing on the services of local retired clergy to lead us in our worship.



### Children's and youth work

The children's and youth work in the benefice is led by volunteers and includes monthly after-school clubs and occasional Messy Church activities. These are led by Jan Jones, Liz Ladd and Judith Haywood. During lockdown periods, handouts have been prepared so that the children don't lose touch with the church. Both Farmborough and Marksbury churches have hosted 'Experiences' – labyrinth-type explorations of major festivals, attended by the village schools working together and classes from the schools have also visited their churches for informative project work. Children from Marksbury school entertain at the monthly Thursday

teas in St Peter's church.



### ARK Children's group

A monthly after school club, pre Covid, 20 children (14 girls and 6 boys) were registered; their ages ranged from 5 years to 10 years old, most of whom regularly attend each session led by Liz Ladd. The sessions follow a regular format: the children are collected from school and there is a 'walking bus' to church. Starting with a drink and a snack, there is a story, a craft activity, a game, a song and a prayer. Sessions explore what it means to be a Christian based on the parables and other stories. Ark provides an important outreach to our primary school. It is well supported by Darren Roberts (Headteacher) and the Office Staff at Farmborough Primary School, who also give lots of practical help.

We hope that Ark is becoming an important part of the children's lives. Some of the children have also started to come to Messy Church. We aim for it to be a fun and relaxing club where they can meet with friends and learn something of God's love for them.

### SP\*ARK Children's group

SP\*ARK has been led by John and Judith Haywood, taking place in a classroom at Marksbury School once a month.





**Messy Church** activities are led by Jan Jones and Liz Ladd. The activities are for all generations and take place at different venues within the Benefice. Messy Church themes are seasonal and the format includes story telling, crafts, drama, prayer, a short act of worship and eating together.

## Serving our community

Within our benefice, the churches work throughout the year to bring God's love into the heart of our community:

- ↑ Tuesday teas (weekly), held in Farmborough, and Thursday teas (monthly), held in Marks-bury Where people come together in friendship to share stories and talk about life over a nice cup of tea and delicious homemade cake!
- ♦ Coffee mornings brings the people of Marksbury together.
- ♦ Cream teas—throughout August in Stanton Prior.
- School governors representing Farmborough, Marksbury and Stanton Prior churches.
- ♦ Carol singing and handbell ringing around Farmborough and the local pubs.
- ♦ Carols on the green in Marksbury.



### Three Towers Festival

The largest benefice event is the annual Three Towers Music Festival - www.threetowersfestival.org

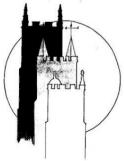
Every year, since 2013, we have held a Benefice music festival in our three churches at the end of April, with other concerts under the festival umbrella throughout the year. Sadly, because of the pandemic, we had to cancel the events in 2020 and 2021, however plans are afoot to continue as soon as it is safe to do so. We aim to cover a wide range of musical genres,



ranging from early music to jazz, dance music, pop, folk, organ recitals and classical music. We have featured solo instrumentalists and larger groups including choirs and big bands. Our per-



formers include children from our schools, amateurs and professionals. We are keen to support professionals who are embarking on a career in music; for example we are proud to have supported the young baroque group, Ensemble Hesperi, who have subsequently won accolades at international festivals.



### Collections and gifting

Easter and Harvest collections go to designated charities, chosen for special need. A Christmas gift service collects and distributes gifts via the Sisters of the Church in St Paul's, Bristol. At the November PCC meeting, annual charity donations are decided, chosen to be given to the widest possible range of recipients.



### TUTELLA Africa:

Jonny and Becky who were residents of Farmborough, established their charity in Mozambique and places abandoned children in family-like foster homes, cared for by a Mozambican mum and dad with the support of a social worker. We support them in prayer and designated collections from services are donated to them and, pre-Covid, donations from the sale of Traidcraft goods.

Marksbury have given long standing support to **CHRISTIAN AID** 



THE CHILDREN'S SOCIETY receive collections made at Christmas during Farmborough and Markbury's yearly carolling around the village. We also have box holders around the villages for The Children's Society which bring in good amounts of donations each year.





### JULIAN HOUSE - DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES

Farmborough Church collects long life food items and donates these to the Julian House Hostels at their Harvest service and then toiletries at the Christmas Gift Service. They also receive collections made at Christmas services.

### UNITED SOCIETY PARTNERS IN THE GOSPEL

Marksbury has been giving long standing support to USPG.

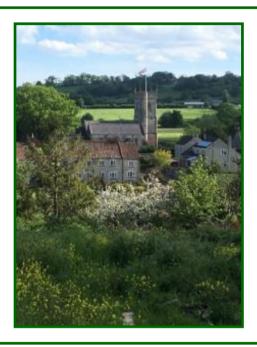


### Opportunities for our pioneer

Creating long-term connections for the message of Christ

**Potential pioneer opportunities** for bringing together organisations, networks and people centre on custodianship of creation and social justice. You will hear about ways to make our communities better: These are always rooted in local needs and attitudes. Current charitable projects in the churches and village halls could be enlarged upon.





More potential pioneering opportunities for engaging with organisations, networks and people surround us. There are new initiatives that address inequities exposed by the coronavirus. You arrive in a moment of need and awakening.

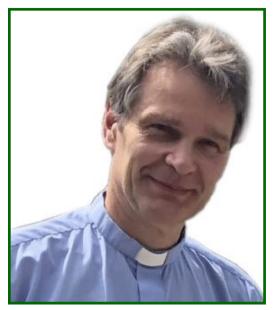
### More pioneering opportunities:

Longstanding networks, activities and organisations could become part of your pioneering work. For example, CitizensUK, the Duchy of Cornwall, Common Ground, the farms and the farmers' union, food networks, nearby and proposed solar PV farms with their commitments to support local people, Transition Towns in the area, walkers, sports clubs, local pubs, the community-founded Farmborough Village Shop, two civil parish councils and the Bath and North East Somerset council based in nearby Bath with offices in Keynsham, active members of the recently dissolved chapter of the WI, the village halls and numerous other groups.

Potential pioneer projects concerning social justice or custodianship of creation might have to do with, for example, food, poverty, access, skills, education, work, safety, housing, the arts, nature, energy, celebration, health - any relevant, constructive project that people here experience, think about, care about. Not spreading yourself too thinly but engaging with our communities in living and telling our faith.



### Chew Magna Deanery



Chew Magna Deanery is one of nineteen deaneries in the Diocese of Bath & Wells, and one of five in the northern Archdeaconry of Bath. The Deanery is made up of nine benefices and staffed by thirteen clergy licensed to a variety of posts – stipendiary and non-stipendiary. Whilst a significant proportion of the population of the Deanery live in and around the town of Keynsham, the Deanery is predominantly rural.

The Archdeacon of Bath is the member of the Bishops' staff with whom the clergy and benefices have most immediate contact having a quasi-episcopal role.

The Deanery Synod meets three times a year and along with all the other deaneries in the Diocese produced a Deanery Plan for Mission in the autumn of 2017; this

being under the umbrella of the diocesan vision of 'Being God's people who live and tell the story of Jesus, in response to God's immense love for us.' The initial phase of the Chew Magna Deanery Plan included a) seminars across the Deanery to equip and encourage all to tell their faith story and b) a process of matching strengths within one benefice with needs within another. The plan has been updated each year since then, removing aspects of the plan as they are achieved e.g. the beginnings of a Deanery website <a href="www.chewmagnadeanery.org">www.chewmagnadeanery.org</a> and adding new aspects as they are required. During 2020, some of the plan has had to be put on hold, but we have continued meeting as Synod by Zoom.

In pre-Covid19 times, the Deanery Chapter met every other month for Holy Communion followed by a discussion or Bible Study. In the months between chapter meetings the clergy met for a pub lunch at a central location, and in the summer there was a barbecue for clergy and spouses. There is also usually an annual quiet day led by an outside speaker.

During 2020 the chapter has been meeting by Zoom as frequently as fortnightly. We have all found the chapter to be a really helpful arena for mutual problem solving, and to have been even more friendly and supportive than ever.

Should you take up this post please be assured of a very warm welcome from the people and clergy of the Deanery.

Stephen M'Caw (Area Dean) (email: <a href="mailto:samcaw@talk21.com">samcaw@talk21.com</a> tel: 0117-9864437)



### Our vision

In response to God's immense love for us we seek to be God's people living and telling the story of Jesus.

Our vision speaks of the story of Jesus; his life, teaching and work, his death and resurrection; the story which is the context of our faith and the content of our message.

We seek **to live** this story as disciples of Jesus Christ in the world and **to tell** it, both in sharing the good news and by the way in which our lives speak about Him.

The diocesan strategy is built around three priorities:

- To place mission and evangelism at the heart of all we do.
- To re-align our resources towards mission.
- To identify, develop and release the gifts of all our people.

The priorities provide a framework for decision-making and planning at parish, benefice, deanery, archdeaconry and diocesan levels.

# Finances

Here is a table which shows the unrestricted funds for our three churches in the years 2019 and 2020:

	Farmborough	Marksbury	Stanton Prior
2019	£31,957	£2,694	£18,712
2020	£18, 123	£4,970	£13, 773

- ♦ Even during the pandemic, with minimal money coming in and not many reserves, all three churches have been able to continue to pay our parish shares in full.
- Marksbury have invested in repairs to their tower, and are in the process of considering whether they will finance the reinstating of their bells.
- ♦ Farmborough are planning on reordering their church to make the space more useable for the future.









## We look forward to meeting you











The Benefice of Jarmborough, Marksbury and Stanton Prior