

BENEFICE PROFILE 2025



Benefice of Iminster & Whitelackington

Beacons of Christ's light – sharing our love
for God and our neighbours



St Mary's, The Minster, Iminster & St Mary's, Whitelackington



Iminster &
Whitelackington



DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living and telling the story of Jesus



St Mary's Church, Whitelackington

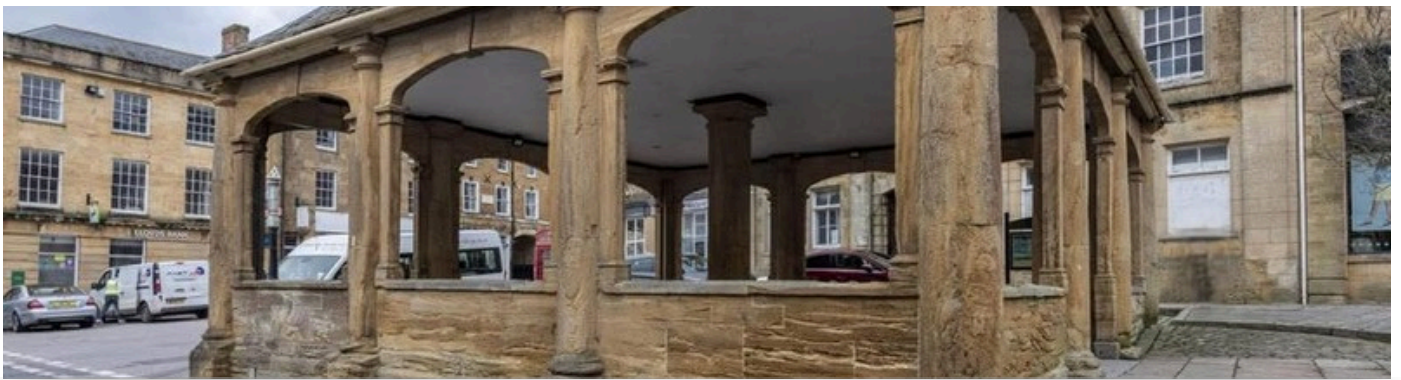
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WELCOME

Welcome to St Mary's, The Minster, Iminster & St Mary's, Whitelackington

At the core of our Christian discipleship lies the recognition of God's generosity to us and our commitment to reflect that spirit to the world. The Minster proudly stands at the heart of Iminster and St Mary's, Whitelackington at the top of the village, both serving as places of worship and significant historical landmarks in each community, connecting us to generations past. Each church building is a special venue for celebration and support for individuals and families during life's joys and challenges. At the same time none of our activities would be feasible without generous contributions of time, talent and financial support. We promote 'Ways To Give' via our 'A Church Near You' website and other platforms, giving opportunity to support our mission and care of our historic church buildings.



OVERVIEW

Our Benefice

We are the Benefice of Iminster and Whitelackington, based in South Somerset, with our two lovely churches, located just 3 miles apart, showing the best of town and country. The Minster serves the thriving market town of Iminster and St Mary's the small rural community of Whitelackington, renowned for its exceptional welcome and hospitality. Newcomers to both communities often express how quickly they feel at home. When shopping or popping out, our vicar must be sure to allow extra time for friendly chats!

Our buildings are open to visitors throughout the week, hosting Sunday and some midweek services, private prayer and a range of other events. For those unable to attend services in person we provide an option to watch some livestreamed services from The Minster via our Facebook page.

Notably, our churches are dedicated to being Fairtrade places of worship and proudly participate in the Inclusive Church Network.



The Best of Town & Country

Our Future

With solid foundations established, we are seeking a Vicar who will help us channel our plans through effective leadership, foster team development and engage more broadly with the wider community, including other local churches and groups. We look forward to new inspiration to guide us in fulfilling God's purposes.

Safeguarding

The Benefice of Ilminster & Whitelackington is dedicated to protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults. We have appointed two Benefice Safeguarding Officers, follow safer recruitment guidance for our numerous volunteers who have contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults and make full use of the Safeguarding Dashboard and Safeguarding Hub. We work closely with the Diocesan Safeguarding Team who provide invaluable support.

Our Vision and Mission

Our churches work closely together, united in our vision to be Beacons of Christ's light - Sharing our love for God and our neighbours. We seek to achieve this in the ways in which we Worship God, Serve Others and Strive for Fairness and these areas of focus are explored further in the next section of this profile.



➤➤ WORSHIPPING GOD ➤➤ SERVING OTHERS ➤➤ STRIVING FOR FAIRNESS ➤➤



St Mary's, Whitelackington

»»» WORSHIPPING GOD «««

We want everyone in our community to feel welcome at our churches and to discover ways to connect with God. Worship enables us to shape our lives around the love we have come to know in Christ Jesus and to give thanks and praise to our loving God.

The worship we provide in the Benefice ranges from beautifully spoken and sung Holy Communion services to informal, interactive worship suitable for all ages. We gather weekly in both churches and livestream some of these along with a dedicated monthly First Sunday online service filmed out and about in Ilminster and Whitelackington. We currently have three Sunday services; two at the Minster and one at Whitelackington. We offer refreshments and fellowship after the 9am Whitelackington service and 10.30am service at the Minster each week.

Regardless of service style, ensuring everyone receives a warm welcome and feels comfortable matters to us. Whether someone has been a Christian all their life or is just beginning to explore faith, we welcome all.

	Pattern of Services			
	The Minster Ilminster		St Mary's Whitelackington	
DAY	8am	10.30am	9am	6pm
1st Sunday	BCP Holy Communion	All Age Worship	Morning Prayer Winter Months	Evening Prayer Summer Months
2nd Sunday	BCP Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	
3rd Sunday	BCP Holy Communion	Morning Praise	Morning Prayer	
4th Sunday	BCP Holy Communion	Holy Communion	Holy Communion	
5th Sunday	BCP Holy Communion	Benefice Holy Communion		
Every Wednesday		Holy Communion		



The Minster

Ilminster Meditation Community

We are proud to have a long established Ilminster Community of Meditation at The Minster that meet regularly throughout the week for both morning and evening Meditation.

Teamwork

Our current service plan would not be possible without our dedicated volunteers, who generously offer their time and talents. Our highly efficient and friendly Benefice Administrator, along with the Churchwardens, will work with our Vicar to produce a quarterly service plan and monthly planner, ensuring the smooth operation of our church life, with only the occasional hiccup. We eagerly anticipate exploring and developing new ideas. Each service at our churches receives substantial support from the congregation. A rota is in place to cover key roles such as leading intercessions, reading scripture, serving and stewarding.

Spiritual Growth and Discipleship

To nurture our spiritual well-being, we host Home Groups and periodically run Bible study courses, as well as Lent courses and Easter activities for those of deep faith and those new to faith. There is scope to expand the number of home groups meeting across the benefice. We gather in Holy Week for a poignant Maundy Supper, where we share a candlelit meal in The Minster, concluding with the symbolic stripping of the altar.

Music

Music is integral to the worship in The Minster and St Mary's, Whitlelackington. Two communion services are sung at the Minster, led by the choir, who perform anthems from across the centuries. Morning worship and First Sunday services are more relaxed musically, with hymns and worship songs. The hymns are chosen from a variety of hymnbooks and online sources and we try to cover a wide range of styles from traditional to modern, in particular using new word settings to well-known tunes. The choir also leads some special services, including those on Advent Sunday and Good Friday.



The Iminster Junior Choir

The Iminster Junior Choir was established in May 2024 as a Community Choir for school aged children. Affiliated with The Minster, the choir is directed by a skilled choir leader and accompanist. Rehearsals take place weekly during term time at The Minster Rooms. The Junior Choir proudly showcases their talents at various church services and other events.

[*Illustrated on page 15](#)

Bell Ringing

We have a Bell Tower Captain and Deputy who lead a skilled and active team of Ringers, many of whom serve across other churches in the Deanery. The tower contains a peal of 8 bells dating from the early 17th century. Visiting bellringers come to our tower periodically.

Ecumenical Links in Iminster

Local churches comprise St Joseph's Catholic Church and the Society of Friends, both based in the town and are complimented by the Methodist Church at Broadway and Monks Yard Evangelical Church at Horton. Representatives from each church meet several times a year, with The Minster playing a key role in convening these. We are working to strengthen our ecumenical links by sharing compline on a rota basis during Advent and Lent.



»»» SERVING OTHERS «««

God calls everyone as disciples of Christ to contribute to the life of the church and community. All of us have been given gifts with which to serve our friends and neighbours. So don't hide your light - come and join us!

Community Engagement

Ilminster has a strong commitment to community events throughout the year, such as Ilminster Midsummer Experience (IMEX), Party on the Park, Carnival, and the Ilminster Christmas Festival, during which the town's Christmas lights are switched on. The Minster engages directly with many of these events and opens its doors whenever possible, hosting significant civic services for occasions such as Remembrance Day. Whitelackington also has a strong, close-knit community and a thriving village hall hosting many events such as the Annual Produce Show and Harvest Supper. Although we no longer run a weekly Sunday School, we operate popular school holiday activities for families. Family Fun at The Minster in August 2025 saw over 113 children and adults enjoying activities such as treasure hunts, games, stories, circus skills, bouncy castle, Lego and Duplo in a nurturing, Christian environment whilst providing lunch and learning more about Jesus' love for them.

Ilminster Food Bank - Local Churches Together

Working with local churches and supported by local community donations, including the Town Council, Ilminster Food Bank and Food Share support local families and individuals with essential supplies and a warm welcome twice a week and at other times as necessary. A group of committed volunteers collect from local supermarkets and distribute to meet local need.

Ilminster Christmas Tree Festival

The Minster hosts the long-established Christmas Tree Festival each year in the first week of December. This collaborative church and community event welcomes around 2000 visitors into the church over six days and raises approximately £2.5k per year for local, national and international charities and good causes. The festival is well supported by local businesses with over 50 decorated trees lighting up the building. It remains a firm favourite in the town in the run up to Christmas when many make their annual visits to church.

Refreshment Kiosk Project

Our exciting new community project is 'The Well', a church-run Refreshment Kiosk at Ilminster Recreation Ground. We offer drinks and snacks with a friendly Christian welcome, a listening ear and prayer if appropriate, with those who choose to engage with us. This is a bold and exciting step supported by congregational prayer. We are excited to see where this ministry takes us.

Pastoral and Peer Support

Our Pastoral Visiting Team visit those from our congregation and wider community who are housebound, providing friendship and spiritual support. These volunteers also lead regular acts of worship in local nursing and residential homes. In addition, we offer supportive bereavement visits as part of our funeral ministry.



The Minster, Ilminster

Our Pastoral Support Group members also lead a range of Peer Support Groups, which meet once or twice a month. This includes:

Memories Café - Meeting fortnightly, Memories Café offers a safe space and a warm welcome to those in our community and is also dementia-friendly. Whether it is a chat, a cup of coffee or friendly activities, many return each session for support and fellowship.

Cancer Support Group - Ilminster's Cancer Support Group works in association with the local GP practices. It offers a monthly safe and confidential space in which people can meet other people who are or have been affected by cancer. Those living with or beyond cancer can meet others who have similar experiences. Carers are warmly welcomed too.

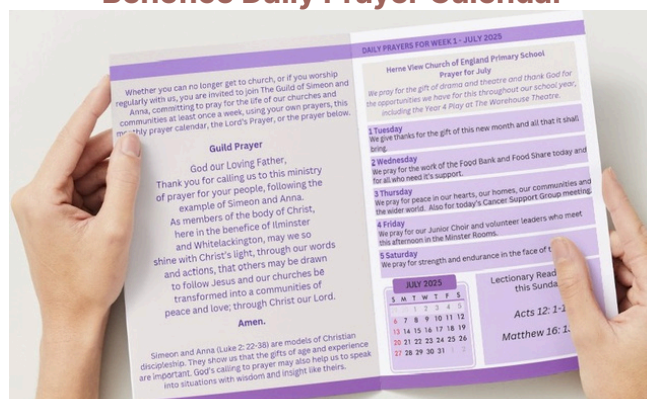
Feel Good Fridays - Over the past two years we have hosted Feel Good Fridays twice a month, a peer support group for those experiencing poor mental health. Whilst there was limited engagement with this group, the Benefice remains committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of the community and will be exploring organising occasional well-being days in the coming year.

Benefice Daily Prayer Calendar - In June 2025 we created a Benefice Daily Prayer Calendar, which has been very well received. The booklet contains short, day-to-day prayers and encourages everyone to join in praying for the ministry and mission of The Minster and St Mary's, Whitelackington, our wider community and our brothers and sisters around the world. The booklet also includes the Lectionary Readings for each Sunday in the month.

Peer Support Groups



Benefice Daily Prayer Calendar



➡➡➡ STRIVING FOR FAIRNESS <<<<

As Christians, both individually and as a church, we should long to see God's justice throughout the world, speaking up and responding to the needs of those who may be marginalised in society, or go unheard. Within our benefice we have particular concern for:

Welcoming all to our Inclusive Churches

We are Inclusive Churches that celebrate and affirm every individual without discrimination. We are proud to be part of the Inclusive Church Network and want everyone to feel welcome and have the opportunity to discover and connect with God through our worship and missional activities. We eagerly await welcoming a new incumbent who shares this same passion for inclusivity.



Caring for the Vulnerable

We strive to create a safe and supportive environment at all times to safeguard the vulnerable through implementing robust policies: safer recruitment for staff and volunteers, comprehensive training and working in partnership with other organisations. We always aim to respond sensitively and promptly to concerns and allegations of abuse whilst providing pastoral care for those affected. Our culture is one of accountability with clear lines of responsibility to uphold the rights and dignity of all individuals, especially children and vulnerable adults.

Our Mission Partners

Every three years our churches select three beneficiaries for our prayers and external giving. This generally includes a local charity partner, a national Christian charity and an overseas mission partner.

Fairtrade Places of Worship

Both churches are committed to sourcing products locally where possible and where it is not, choosing Fairtrade items. This extends to the use of Fairtrade wine for Communion services.

EcoChurch Aspirations

We are committed to minimising the impact of our activities on the environment and have already taken steps to reduce waste, increase biodiversity and source responsibly. A number of our church family are heavily involved in the activities of the local environmental group, Green Ilminster, and the successful Ilminster Share and Repair Project. We would like to be recognised for our efforts and challenged to do more by applying for an EcoChurch award within the next 12 months.







Herne View School, Ilminster

Pupils, parents, staff, governors and senior leaders from Herne View and Wadham Schools also told us they would like our new Vicar to:

- Respect everyone regardless of faith and be an active listener.
- Be fun, engaging, warm and welcoming.
- Allow us to take part in collective worship in school and in church.
- Encourage diversity and create a space where everyone feels they belong.
- Be a key member of our school communities, who champions social justice, supports the vulnerable and reaches out to the marginalised.



WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

WHO WE ARE



LOOKING FOR



Wadham School
A Church of England Community School



WHERE WE ARE

South Somerset

Somerset has a wealth of vibrant market towns and settlements, including the cathedral city of Wells approximately 30 miles away, as well as Bath, Bristol and Exeter nearby. Iminster nestles in south Somerset between the county town of Taunton and Yeovil. Known for its rolling hills and green pastures, cider and cricket, Somerset also offers coastal towns to the north and is near to the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site to the south. Somerset has lots to discover!

Attractions in and around Iminster

Iminster and Whitelackington are neighbouring locations. Iminster is a small market town situated along a ridge that descends towards the Isle Valley, while Whitelackington is a village located just northeast of Iminster. The two are connected by the B3168 as well as a circular trail for walking or cycling that offers views of the surrounding countryside. Hamstone buildings and traditional Edwardian style shops contribute to Iminster town centre's charm as well as being home to other attractions, such as a theatre and Arts Centre. Located in beautiful countryside with great transport links such as the A303 to London and Exeter, the nearest train stations are Crewkerne and Taunton, with London Paddington only 1 hour 40 mins from Taunton. Berry's Coaches provide transport services, including a Superfast Route, from Iminster to London twice a day outbound & return.

Surrounded by farmland and countryside, there are plenty of opportunities and places to explore nearby. The Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Dorset and Devon coast are within easy reach. A number of beautiful National Trust properties including Barrington Court and Montacute House are close by. There are many places in Iminster, Whitelackington and the surrounding area waiting to be explored!



Iminster Town

With just under 6000 residents, the town has a thriving centre of independent retailers offering a diverse range of products and services, including a butcher, delicatessen, bakery, hardware store, antique and gift shops and a pharmacy. It also has the familiar high street names, such as Tesco, Co-op and Boots. With its individual coffee shops, pubs and takeaways, Iminster offers a little bit of everything to suit all tastes.

Whitelackington Parish

With a population of 180, the village has a close-knit and supportive community who attend the annual Remembrance and Christmas Services. Many properties in the parish are owned by the Dillington Estate, including a number of short-term holiday lets. A well-used and well-maintained village hall with an active social club sits in the centre of the village. Many fundraising events are held here, including monthly Table Top Sales where the popular church cake stalls contribute to church funds.



Looking towards The Minster from East Street

WHERE WE ARE





The view from the Vicarage

The Vicarage - Your New Home

The sizeable, comfortable, modern vicarage, with an attractive garden, is in a residential area of Iminster overlooking the top of town. The ground floor comprises: a fitted kitchen, dining room, two reception rooms and a good sized study/home office. Upstairs there are five bedrooms, one en suite, and a family bathroom. The property is approached by a private driveway leading to off-road parking and the detached garage.



WHERE WE ARE





Iminster Midsummer Experience



Iminster Midsummer Experience



The Iminster Junior Choir



Iminster Thursday Market



August - Family Activities Event



Blessing & Celebration Herne View School



Iminster Midsummer Experience



IMEX Classic Car Show



The Kitchen on Silver Street

WHO WE ARE

Our Worshipping Community



Facts & Figures July 2024 to June 2025	The Minster Ilminster	St Mary's, Whitelackington
Electoral Roll	99	11
Sunday Attendance	60/70	9
Baptisms	11	1
Weddings	4	3
Funerals	15	1

Our worshipping community extends beyond our church buildings, encompassing those who receive communion in local care homes and those who gather for outdoor worship.

We have very few children and families currently attending church services regularly but have good attendance from families at Christmas, Christingle and Harvest as well as at our various Holiday Activities. At our services each week we welcome a number of adults with learning disabilities, who are connected with a day care service which the church actively supports, and regularly review how accessible our services are to those with additional needs.

Staying Connected

Our Benefice Pewsheets are sent out by our Benefice Administrator via email on a weekly basis. We also have an active Communications Team who produce professional publications, ensure our 'A Church Near You' website is kept up to date and maintain the profile of the Benefice on social media. We contribute church news each month to the Ilminster Press, a free community newspaper with a circulation of 2,500 copies per month.



Our Ministry, Leadership and Staff Teams

Our enthusiastic, collaborative teams are looking forward to working with you. We offer a supportive environment where our Vicar can truly flourish.



- ✓ Support for the continuous growth of your ministry, while allowing time with your family and friends, away from parish responsibilities.
- ✓ Well-established connections with our two schools, care facilities, residential homes and other churches.
- ✓ 18 hours of paid Benefice administrative support based in The Minster Rooms Benefice Office, as well as a part-time paid Verger and a part-time paid Musical Director



WHO WE ARE

Our Leadership Teams

Our Benefice consists of two distinct yet closely linked parishes that are welcoming places, cherishing our traditions while remaining open to innovation and change. Each parish has its own PCC and Church Wardens, although there are increasing opportunities for collaboration on our Communications, Finance, Children's Ministry and Pastoral sub-committees. Our church members bring experience from diverse traditions and worship practices, allowing for a flexible approach to service styles. We are ably assisted by retired clergy where needed.

Our Church Schools

We maintain strong ties with our two local Church of England Schools, Herne View Primary School in Ilminster and Wadham Secondary School in Crewkerne. The Vicar is expected to take on an active and engaging role in activities at both Herne View and Wadham, sharing gifts and talents, while also using the skills of other volunteers to strengthen the bond between our schools and Churches.



The Minster, Ilminster

The Minster, Ilminster

Our 15th-century church is the most distinctive and visible feature of the town. We continue to maintain and update the building as necessary to keep its heritage while improving it for current usage. To mark the Millennium, new engraved glass doors were installed at the entrance to the Nave, designed and crafted by Tracey Sheppard, providing a striking feature as you come into the church.

We have recently replaced our old gas boiler with a modern electric boiler that heats the existing radiators. A new AV desk, camera and projection system has been installed in the past 5 years, supporting the worship, livestreaming of some services and other events. It is run by an experienced team of operators.

The church organ was overhauled by Michael Farley in 2020, and the opportunity was taken to add some additional 8ft ranks. The instrument supports congregational singing and choral concerts with a good range of tonal sounds available. The opening recital was given by Philip Scriven, an ex-organist of Lichfield Cathedral. In addition, we have a high-quality digital piano. We host a variety of concerts and performances from local choirs and music groups in a range of styles.

Looking to the history of the church, its floor plan is a Cruciform, made largely of Ham and Moolham stone, with embattled walls and a fine 'Somerset' Crossing Tower with four traceried arches rising to a beautiful vault. Among the principal features are the Wadham Chapel, housing the tombs of Sir William Wadham. The chapel is now used primarily as a quiet space for prayer and meditation. In the opposite transept is the Lady Chapel, which we use for small services, for children's work and for monthly Prayer Ministry during Holy Communion. The tower, which was built in the first quarter of the 16th century, rises two stories above the nave. Both the clock and a set of bells are contained within the tower, topped by a flagpole and weathervane.



Vault in The Minster

Other items of interest in the church include: the Jacobean screen, the brass chandeliers, and a reredos, with its hidden slugs and snails. The West end of the Nave was screened off as the present 'narthex' in 1934 beneath the Edwardian Gallery which holds the organ and accommodates the choir.

WHO WE ARE



The Minster Rooms, Ilminster

The Minster Rooms are located opposite the west door of The Minster Church and comprise: a Vicar's Office, the Benefice Office, the Letham Room, a large, modern kitchen and the Spurdle Room. The Letham Room and the downstairs Spurdle Room are available for hire by community members, managed by our dedicated Minster Bookings Secretary.

Additionally, a large, wall-mounted monitor is available for presentations. The rooms host a wide range of activities for church members and the wider community to enjoy, from Quiz Nights and Beetle Drives to Coffee and Fellowship following our 10.30am Sunday services.



Coffee & Fellowship in The Minster Rooms after our 10.30am Sunday service

WHO WE ARE



The Minster Rooms



Activities in The Minster Rooms

St Mary's, Whitelackington

The church of St Mary the Virgin, Whitelackington stands just to the south of the village, separated from it by the main road and with the Manor buildings surrounding it to the south, east and west. The Speke family were the lords of the manor and controlled church and village life. Probably the best known is John Hanning Speke. For such a small community, it is an imposing church, built of Hamstone, listed Grade II, 12th century and of medieval Cruciform structure which has a slate roof. The lead on the roof contains images of hands, feet, shoes and names carved into it, the oldest dating back to 1689. The main body



within its unusually high nave can seat 90 plus, with an extra 30 plus easily accommodated on chairs in the south transept if required. The church consists of a four-bay chancel which has corner buttresses. The four-stage west tower is also supported by buttresses.

There is an organ situated in the north transept which is available for weddings, funerals and special services and many Sunday services. We use *Hymns Old & New* and if an organist is not available CDs are used and played through the organ amplifier. In 2015 we installed a highly efficient heating system, ensuring a comfortable worship experience during the winter months.



We occasionally host joint services here, such as on Pentecost, when we gather as a benefice to celebrate. Everyone is invited to bring their own picnic and enjoy fellowship together after the service. The Minster Choir also join us for benefice festival services.

The Cider Barn wedding venue sits a short distance from the church and hosts both wedding breakfasts following marriage services in the church, and ceremonies, as a licensed venue.



A wedding at St Mary's, Whitelackington

WHO WE ARE





Whitelackington & Ilminster Circular Trail



Welcome to St Mary's, Whitelackington



St Mary's, Whitelackington



Whitelackington Village Hall



Harvest at St Mary's, Whitelackington



Coffee after Sunday service at St Mary's, Whitelackington



Wedding at St Mary's, Whitelackington



St Marys table at the Table Top Sale in the Village Hall



Whitelackington Village Hall Table Top Sale

ABOUT THE DEANERY



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 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. We serve faithful congregations and whilst some of our parishioners have lived in one place for generations, a significant proportion of them have moved into towns like Ilminster either on retirement or earlier in life. 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. 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 Philip Albrow and Alison Cruickshank

Area and Lay Dean

DIOCESAN STATEMENT

Our Vision for Growth and Transformation



Introduction

We are delighted that you are considering whether this post of Vicar of the Benefice of Ilminster and Whitelackington 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.

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?

+ Michael Barr & Wells.

Bishop of Bath and Wells

Steve Hill

Archdeacon of Taunton

DIOCESAN STATEMENT

OUR FINANCES

The Minster, Iminster	INCOME*	EXPENDITURE*	INVESTMENTS*	CASH & DEPOSIT BALANCES*
December 2023	£258k	£208k	£136k	£202k
December 2024	£158k	£193k	£141k	£166k
St Mary's, Whitelackington	INCOME*	EXPENDITURE*	INVESTMENTS*	CASH & DEPOSIT BALANCES*
December 2023	£14k	£14k	£21k	£48k
December 2024	£10k	£24k	£20k	£36k

**Data has been extracted from the Parish Finance Returns and represents the combined total of all restricted and unrestricted funds.*

Benefice income is primarily made up of generous gifts from members of the congregation, occasional legacies and historical bequests and endowments. Both churches now have contactless card readers installed, enabling visitors to also make one-off or regular donations. Treasurers or Gift Aid Secretaries ensure that Gift Aid is claimed on eligible donations.

The Minster has signed up to the Parish Giving Scheme as its primary method for regular giving and both churches have adopted the Diocese's 'Ways to Give' tool, to help communicate the various ways in which people can financially support the ministry and mission of the two churches.

There are opportunities to broaden engagement with the wider community and ensure that giving is an integral part of any welcome material and discipleship resources produced for new joiners.

The Minster benefits from substantial and invaluable support for the maintenance of the building from the Gooch Fund, whilst St Mary's, Whitelackington benefits from a very well-kept churchyard and burial ground, thanks to an historical bequest.

In addition to our commitment to pay our Benefice Share contribution in full, our churches also benefit from three part-time employees - a Benefice Administrator, a Verger and a Director of Music.

Both parishes face the common contemporary challenges associated with preserving a historic building, coupled with rising costs, yet work hard to identify efficiencies and savings as well as adopting new approaches to fundraising. The Minster Finance Committee convenes regularly to keep an eye on the accounts, with the Treasurer providing reports to the PCC. Whitelackington also benefits from a dedicated Treasurer.

FINALLY...

Thank you for reading our Benefice Profile. We hope we have shared a picture of who we are, what we do and where we are now, along with our facilities and resources. We are an enthusiastic team with a passion for reaching out to and engaging with our local communities. We are a friendly, welcoming, caring group of people with a wide mix of age groups, educational and social backgrounds and Christian experience, all wanting to grow more like Jesus and to make a difference to people's lives by sharing His love.

You are assured of a warm welcome and we hope this Profile inspires you to apply to serve us as our new Vicar.

The right person will help us to:

- Make church worship and activities more relevant to a broad range of people, with families and young people in mind and working with our loyal congregations
- Enable our mission to reach out to our local communities
- Strengthen and broaden pastoral care
- Support us in addressing our financial challenges

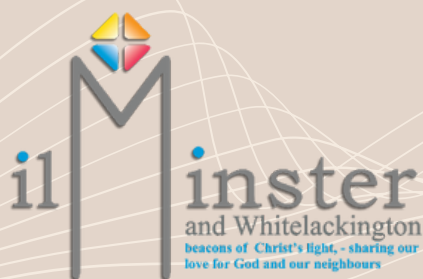
We are a willing, able and enthusiastic team and church family ready to work with you



Video



We are an ambitious benefice and we believe that our future is bright. Are you the person who could lead us?



St Mary's, The Minster, Iminster & St Mary's, Whitelackington



CONTACTS & LINKS



The Benefice Office, Minster Rooms,
Court Barton, TA19 0DU



Tel: 01460 57811



Email: office@ilminsterpc.org.uk



<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/benefice/01-209CJ/>



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Benefice Profile October 2025 ©



DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living and telling the story of Jesus