

1 Corinthians 12: 4-7

*"There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. There are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served. There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to all for their particular service. The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all."*

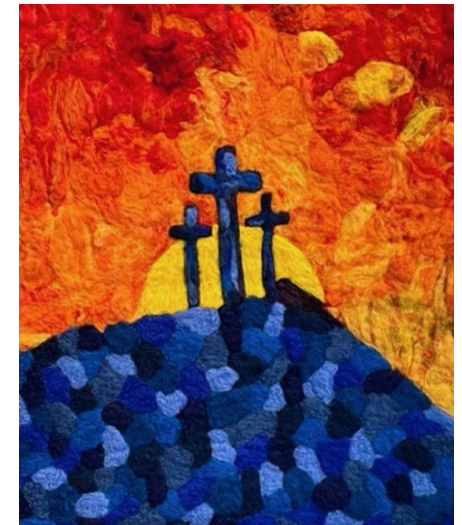
# Our Story



We are a group of seven churches within six rural parishes (coloured red) in the Diocese of Bath and Wells. We have recently come together to form a new benefice from the Benefice of Pilton with Croscombe and North Wootton, and The Fosse Trinity Benefice consisting of Ditcheat with Alhampton, East Pennard and Pylle.

The Pilton group has been in vacancy for the past year, and has relied on retired clergy from across the Diocese to take Holy Communion services, supported by the Reader and Churchwardens. The Reader takes other services and Lay Worship Assistants lead a monthly Service of the Word in North Wootton Church. The occasional offices, pastoral care and support for all in our villages are coordinated by this experienced lay team.

The Fosse Trinity Benefice had a retired Interim Minister for eleven years and he took most of the services during that time. Since he fully retired in May 2024, services have been conducted by two retired Priests with Permission to Officiate who live in the benefice. There will be one PTO from January 2025. During the last years without an incumbent the parishes have developed expertise in lay management, and all our churches, villages and events are well supported by lay volunteers. Pastoral care relies heavily on good neighbours looking after each other.



# Our Journey

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Our new Priest will play a crucial role in leading us during an exciting time of merging our worship and our ways of doing things separately and together, as they become the first Priest-in-Charge of our newly formed larger benefice.



*Churchwardens and Treasurers*

Our churches have a faithful core membership, but – as in most churches in this country - our members are growing older, and we recognise that, in order to sustain a meaningful presence in our communities, we need and want to engage more with families and young people.

Our churches are spread over a wide geographical area, so our differing benefice service patterns require rationalisation, but we have already started work on this, by having a joint service on the first Sunday of every month, rotating around all 7 churches. Churchwardens are getting to know each other better at regular six-weekly gatherings to plan events to bring the wider communities and our cumulative strengths together. These joint services and meetings have underlined the fact that we have common and positive hopes for our new benefice, that we are united by our work to spread the presence of God in our wider community, and that we are very much looking forward to welcoming and working with our new Priest.





# Our Aspirations

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- To work together to thrive as a new, united benefice, while celebrating our individual strengths.
- To 'be' the Church by encouraging and empowering more people to take up lay leadership roles in worship and pastoral work.
- To use existing as well as new opportunities in exciting, fresh ways to reveal our faith across the age ranges, especially in our school links and our annual links with the Glastonbury Festival (see below).
- To deepen our faith and reach those seeking a wider variety of worship and spiritual experiences, through word, music and greater informality.
- To be a loving Christian presence reaching out to all members of our wider communities in ways that are relevant to our situations and times.

# What we Offer

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- We offer an environment where traditional worship comes naturally, with buildings soaked in centuries of prayer and praise. This comes along with opportunities to grow church involvement in local communities in a friendly and energetic environment with a common purpose.
- Our seven beautiful churches are all in good state of repair, open during daylight hours, most with disabled access and some with toilet facilities. We have willing helpers in the form of organists, bell ringers, vergers and cleaners.
- Each parish has an enthusiastic team of PCC members and Churchwardens, and is autonomous, with separate PCC meetings, Lay Chairs, accounts and Treasurers. The Fosse Trinity Benefice also has a system of regular joint PCC meetings, and this is a model that might be expanded. Administration and finance in both benefices are undertaken by lay persons.
- You will be supported by a retired priest with PTO living in Alhampton, and a licensed Reader living in Pilton. North Wootton has three Lay Worship Assistants and two more are completing their training.
- There are regular Bible and study groups in Pilton and North Wootton, annual Lent groups across the parishes, and the opportunity to develop other church related activities.
- Several of the villages have active village or church halls which are well supported by the local communities.



# What we Offer

## Local school involvement



Ditcheat Messy Church club

We would like, along with our new Priest, to focus our future efforts on making the church and church community more interesting, accessible and attractive to families and children. Our three local primary schools welcome acts of Collective Worship in school, and special events in our churches. The Ditcheat year 6 children said they would like to see a new incumbent who is:

*“open-minded and empathetic”*  
*“listens to children’s thoughts and views, someone who knows how to work with children”*  
*“caring for animals and people”*

The year 2 childrens’ thoughts were

*“someone who must believe in God”*  
*“someone who talks about the magic of God”*  
*“someone who smiles and is happy”*

## The Glastonbury Festival

We are fortunate to be able to enjoy the world-renowned Festival on our doorstep – Pilton is adjacent to the Festival site, and for one month every year our villages are filled with visitors, benefiting the local economy by providing employment and encouraging tourism in the area. Neighbouring villages benefit from funding opportunities through festival stewarding, and there is an ever-growing number of local campsites around the villages. Bishop Michael explored mission possibilities from the Pyramid stage in 2024, and there is a variety of opportunities for the local Priest to be involved in during this event if so wished – you could experience your largest ever congregation, as well as having the opportunity to obtain complimentary villagers’ tickets!



# What we Offer

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## Wedding Ministry

We have a thriving wedding ministry in both benefices. There is a particular ministry at East Pennard as the church is adjacent to the events venue at Pennard House. Couples from outside the Benefice often ask to be married at East Pennard so that they can have their receptions close by. There were 16 weddings there in 2024 enriching the church both financially and spiritually, and the local congregation enjoys meeting younger people at services during the nine months before their wedding. In return they gain a fulfilling experience of Christian worship.

There are a maximum of 6 weddings a year in the Pilton benefice, and this year 18 weddings have been booked at East Pennard. It will be for the newly appointed Priest to decide on their personal involvement with our PTO's assistance.



## The Rectory

The current Rectory is within the Pilton Conservation Area and has a pleasant, elevated position at the top of a south-facing slope. It is situated alongside other houses but on its own plot just to the South of the A361 via a short, shared driveway. The house is 300m from the Church and Village Hall. Bus stops are 100m away along a pavement walk.

The house has 4 bedrooms, a bathroom and a shower room upstairs, with a sitting room, dining room, kitchen and utility room downstairs. A study to the front, with a WC next to it, can be separated from the main house by an inner door. It has oil fired central heating. There is a garage and additional parking space for two cars, as well as small gardens front and rear.

There are several good pre-schools, nurseries and primary schools in and near Pilton. Local secondary schools are situated in Shepton Mallet and Wells. The Mendip school, on the site of the Bath and West Showground, specialises in education for children with a diagnosis of autism and/or speech, language and communication needs. Further education is available in Wells and Street.

Pilton is close to Shepton Mallet, Wells and Glastonbury, and there are direct rail links to London from Castle Cary and Bruton.





# Our Villages

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Our villages are close to the towns of Shepton Mallet, Castle Cary, Wells and Glastonbury; however, each parish serves its communities with a wide variety of village and community groups. The larger villages have pubs and very busy village halls hosting a variety of activities, clubs, film nights and events.

- Pilton village amenities are extensive and include a Methodist Church with a community coffee shop, a pub, a Co-op with Post Office, social club, Tithe Barn and a children's recreation ground with a pavilion and skateboard park. There is a Village Show including a full weekend of entertainment and an evening barn dance.
- Croscombe holds an annual Fun-Day and a quarterly Charter Market selling local produce, as well as supporting a local drama group and village orchestra. It also has a much-loved pub-cum-community shop, with regular curry nights!
- North Wootton church holds a weekly café and runs a St Peter's Cares team offering practical help with shopping, lifts and small jobs. Supporting one another is an important part of life in this village because there is no shop or bus service. An upmarket inn and restaurant can cater for weddings and other events.
- Ditcheat village hall offers sports and fitness activities, a monthly village lunch and coffee morning, as well as monthly film nights. It is the home of a large racing stable, two cheesemakers, and a vineyard. Its village pub is being refurbished and should re-open soon.
- Alhampton has a very popular community pub which hosts weekend meals, twice weekly pop-up restaurants and a variety of village events. A Woodland Trust community woodland with footpaths just beyond the Mission Chapel are carefully tended by a local team.
- East Pennard has a cheesemaker, vineyard, farm and garden shops, and the church hosts an acoustic concert every year.
- Pylle is situated adjacent to the West of England's premier outdoor events centre - the Bath and West Showground, and has a garage and excellent farm shop.



# Is this You?

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We hope you enjoy reading about our villages and life here in the rural heart of Somerset. We are keen to begin the next stage of our story as we begin to work together in a large rural benefice. We are optimistic and full of hope for our future but aware that we need to have realistic expectations of our incoming Priest, to work with them and be open to change.

We have reached the following hopes through prayer and discussion – that together we should:

- **Support village life.** In the busy and pressured life that exists today we want to support people's well-being, recognising that issues and problems can be hidden within what seem to be idyllic villages. We pray that you will understand, and be a source of support, and look to identifying parishioners to share this pastoral role.
- **Be a growing Worship Team.** You will need to be a team player and an experienced, enthusiastic team leader who will identify, empower and enable a wider group of people to share in leading worship to ensure regular services in our churches.
- **Share areas of ministry.** Whilst having oversight of all areas of ministry, you will consider the existing gifts and strengths of both ministers and key lay people and enable them to take responsibility for certain areas that you as one person cannot cover.
- **Be the Church for everyone.** You will bring care and nurture to church members through worship and by developing deeper faith through teaching and exploring other worship material that will bring a fresh dimension to worship and spirituality. You will value the initiatives that are bringing our parishes together, and you will be a bridge to links with local schools. Your presence at key community events will be appreciated.
- **Be the Church for our priest.** We hope you will bring a variety of gifts to our new benefice, but we want to assure you that we will respect and support your needs too. A considerable amount of administration is carried out locally and additional funding will be available for this, should it be required. We will encourage you to take your regular days off, to make time to nourish your own spiritual life, and seek the refreshment you need for your own well-being.

Looking forward is an opportunity for a new beginning. We hope that, having read about our Church life and communities, you will want to come and work with us. There are lots of plans and ideas to develop church life, to build up the Christian presence in the communities and to work together with our new Priest. Coming to a newly joined-up group of parishes with fresh eyes will mean that you have a key role in helping us to move forward in exciting ways. We are ready to be re-energised by a full time incumbent and need a person who, encouraged and supported by our vision of spiritual growth, can light the blue touch paper!



# Facts and Figures

## The Current two Benefice worship grid

				Fosse Trinity Benefice			
	Pilton	Croscombe	N. Wootton	Alhampton	Ditcheat	E. Pennard	Pylle
1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday	Rotating joint service 10.30 H/C						
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday	9.30 HC	11am HC	11am HC	Rotating 10am benefice HC			
3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday	Pilton Churches working together 11am		9.30 HC (BCP)			10am benefice HC	
4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	9.30 HC	11am HC	Lay led Morning service or Matins 11am	10am benefice HC			
5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	Rotating United Service 10.30			10am Rotating benefice HC			

For the year 2023	Pilton	Croscombe	N.Wootton	Alhampton	Ditcheat	E.Pennard	Pylle	F.T. Zoom
Electoral Roll	54	43	42	Combined with Ditcheat	43	15	8	-
Worshipping numbers	20	15	15	18	29	33	17	21
Weddings baptisms and funerals	9	13	4	0	12	21	2	-

# Facts and Figures

Finances 2023	C'combe	Pilton	N.Wootton	Ditcheat and Alhampton	E.Pennard	Pylle
Total Income	26,500	26,000	27,200	24,000	28,500	5,224
Total Expenditure	23,000	24,500	21,500	14,265	16,500 120,000 roof	3,524
Parish Share	9,500	14,650	14,000	13,000	6,395	4,000
Parish Share paid	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	50%



## Local Primary Schools

**Ditcheat** <https://ditcheatprimary.org.uk>

**West Pennard** <https://westpennardschool.co.uk>

**Croscombe V.A** <https://croscombestokefederation.co.uk>

## Village Websites

**Ditcheat** <https://fossetrinitynews.co.uk>

**Pilton** <https://piltonvillage.com>

**Croscombe** <https://croscombeparishcouncil.co.uk>  
<https://croscombevillagehall.org.uk>

**Church websites** <https://ditcheatchurch.org> <https://eastpennardchurch.org> <https://alhamptonchapel.org>

[https://www.achurchnearyou/PiltonSt John the Baptist](https://www.achurchnearyou/PiltonStJohntheBaptist)

[www.bathandwells.org.uk/supportingparishes/finances/parish-spotlights/](http://www.bathandwells.org.uk/supportingparishes/finances/parish-spotlights/)

# Deanery Statement

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## The Shepton Mallet Deanery

The six Somerset parishes forming this new Benefice lie to the North-Eastern edge of the Somerset levels, south of the Mendip hills, around two outlying ridges. The Benefice is part of the Shepton Mallet Deanery, which includes the larger settlements of Wells and Shepton Mallet and the surrounding rural areas. A small but supportive and friendly Deanery Chapter meets monthly, usually for lunch. This includes the six stipendiary clergy, any curates, and other licensed clergy.

The 18 Deaneries across the diocese are in the process of being reshaped following a clergy deployment review influenced to a large extent by the financial effect of the pandemic. However, Shepton Mallet Deanery has been significantly less affected than some and the plan for the Deanery is now largely settled. This appointment is to

one of three rural benefices in the Deanery, and it is anticipated that, in addition to co-operation at Deanery level, the three rural incumbents and their ministerial colleagues will work together to share resources and ideas where useful and convenient.

The Deanery has worked hard to make sure that the new arrangement of ministry is suitable to the various local contexts, and that parishes understand the rationale and way forward. To support the process of change the diocese has developed a strategy of Shared Local Ministry, inspired by the focal ministry model, and further work is now required to develop and embed this model in the local church culture.

Reverend Samuel Denyer



## Diocesan statement – our vision for growth and transformation



We are delighted that you are considering whether this post of Priest in Charge of the Parishes of Pilton, Croscombe, North Wootton, Ditchat, East Pennard and Pylle 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.

# Diocesan Statement

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## The outcome we are looking for

When he talks about his own ministry in 1 Corinthians, Paul captures the dynamic we are seeking to achieve. “I planted,” he says, “Apollos watered, but God gave the growth” (1 Cor 3: 6). We know that our churches will only flourish and grow as a result of God’s action among us – it is God who gives the growth. But Paul is also clear that we have a part to play too – in watering and planting, in doing the things that enable the conditions for God’s growth to be supported. So, covered by prayer, our confident hope is that if we are intentional in seeking God’s guidance in planning and supporting growth, then God will honour that to see his people flourish and thrive - in spiritual depth, in impact within local communities, in the numbers of people becoming part of the local church and in transforming communities locally and beyond.

## Local shaping and diocesan support

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

## What implications does this have for the appointment of clergy?

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

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

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



Bishop Michael



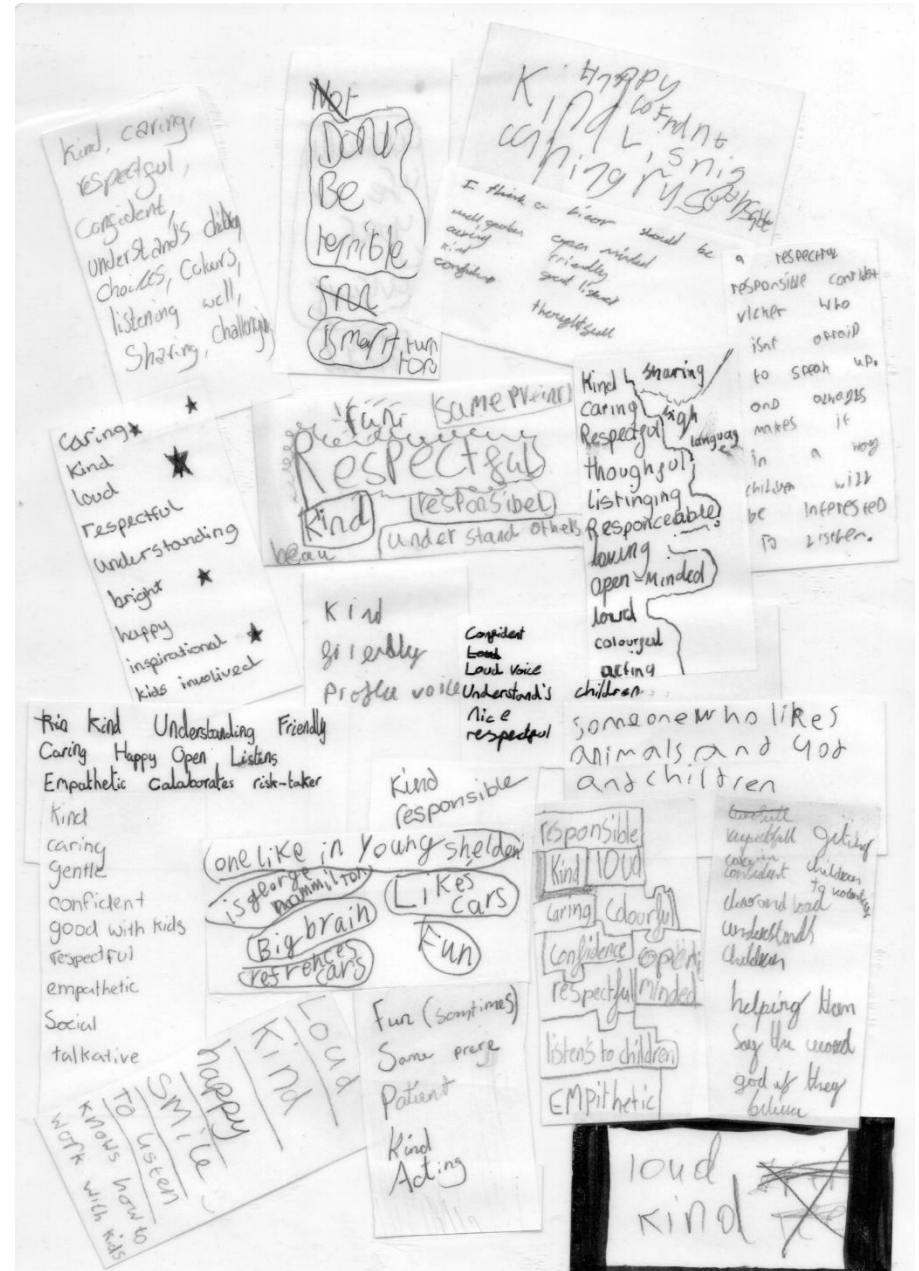
Archdeacon of Wells

# Benefice Vacancy Prayer



Heavenly Father, send your Holy Spirit, at this time of uncertainty and change, to fill us with vision and energy, and faithful prayer that we may be true to our calling to bring life to our new community. We know that you have plans for us and that these plans are good. We ask now that you will help us to share responsibility, grow in faith, love one another and care for those in need, reach out to others and welcome newcomers. Guide with your wisdom those who are to choose an incumbent for this new benefice, that the one whom we receive may be a wise and gentle shepherd of your people, ready to serve with joy, to build us up in faith and to lead us by example in loving obedience to your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

And a message from the Ditchheat school children.....





# Seven villages, six parishes, one Benefice

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## THE FOSSE TRINITY BENEFICE



St Thomas A Becket, Pylle



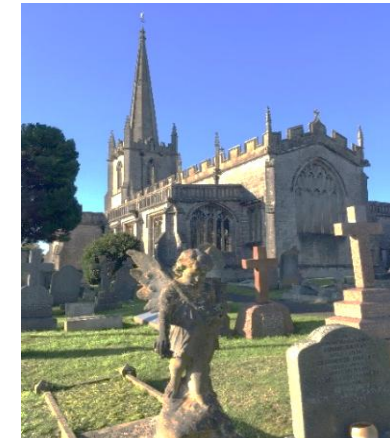
St Mary Magdalene, Ditcheat



All Saints' East Pennard



Alhampton Chapel



**THE BENEFICE OF** St John the Baptist, Pilton **with** St Peter's, North Wootton **and** St Mary the Virgin, Croscombe