

The Parishes
Of Pilton
Croscombe
North Wootton
and the
Benefice of
Fosse Trinity
A profile

Contents



PAGE

- 3 Welcome
- 3 Summary
- 4 Our vision
- 5 Our Worship: service patterns, Roll and Attendance
- 7 Spiritual life and Discipleship
- 8 Children, young people and families
- 9 Ministry, our Ministers and Church Wardens
- 11 Governance
- 11 Accessibility
- 12 Our Villages and Communities
- 15 Our Landscape
- 16 Our Buildings: In pictures
- 17 Our churches
- 21 The Rectory
- 21 Sustainability and Wildlife
- 22 Financial Matters
- 23 Charitable links
- 24 Our Deanery
- 24 Benefice prayer for Vacancy



Pilton church window

Welcome

We very much welcome your interest in learning more about our existing benefice and our vision and hopes for the future.

We are on the cusp of important change in which our incoming Priest-in-Charge will play a pivotal role. By the time the successful applicant takes up their new role we will either be or will be well on the way to becoming a new benefice which is being created out of two benefices that exist at the time of writing.

The benefice of Pilton, Croscombe and North Wootton will be joined with the benefice of Fosse Trinity which comprises of Ditcheat with Alhampton, East Pennard and Pylle. Depending on timing, the successful candidate may join our existing benefices but will have a crucial role in leading us during a time of change which is both exciting and challenging for us, to will become the first Priest-in-Charge of our newly formed larger benefice.

Each of the parishes (see on the map in red) that will comprise the new benefice has its own identity but what has become clear through our very early work together is 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.



Summary

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 larger and more spread-out 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.

- **The Church supporting village life.** In the busy and pressured life that exists today we want to support people's well-being that can be hidden in what seem to be idyllic villages. We pray that our priest will understand and be a source of support and they would look to identifying parishioners to share this pastoral role.
- **The Church as a growing Worship Team** Our priest needs to be a Team Player and a 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.

- **The Church Team sharing areas of ministry** Whilst having oversight of all areas of ministry, the priest will consider the existing gifts and strengths of ministers and key people and enable them to take responsibility for certain areas that they themselves as one person cannot cover.
- **The Church for everyone** Our priest will bring care and nurture to church members through worship and by developing deeper faith through teaching; exploring other worship material would bring a fresh dimension to worship and spirituality. Our priest will value the initiatives that are beginning to bring our parishes together. They will be a bridge alongside the links with local schools. Their presence at key community events will be appreciated.
- **The Church for our priest** We hope you will bring a variety of gifts to our 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. We will encourage you to take time to nourish your spiritual life and seek the refreshment you need for your own well-being.

Looking forward can be daunting but it is also 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 group of parishes with fresh eyes will mean that you have a key role in uniting us and enabling us to move forward in exciting ways. We are praying with hopeful hearts as we approach a new, fresh way forward together.

Our Vision

- To work together to become a thriving new benefice that is united but also celebrates 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.
- 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.

Our Worship

Worship patterns across the Benefice

- Current service provision for the two Benefices as illustrated below, is at present uneven. It is our hope and vision that the appointed priest will be willing to lead two Eucharistic services on Sundays enabling them to visit each place of worship during the month, and that our Reader and two PTOs will support as requested so that each church is able to have at least two services a month, although this will be a reduction for some.
- The Fosse Trinity (FT) worshipping community is accustomed to travelling to services around all its churches. For the last 12 years the FT Benefice has been in an Interregnum, for 10 years of that under the guidance of an Interim Minister who conducts 4 services a month (one in each church) plus Occasional Offices. We have recently benefited from the support of two retired Ministers who have moved into the area.

Styles of worship

Our congregations consist of those who like a traditional, familiar service but also those who are looking forward to a more relaxed and informal approach. Currently the style of services throughout the churches can best be described as traditional but we share a desire to explore other patterns of worship, and we are hopefully open to accommodating and welcoming fresh ideas.

The Current two Benefice monthly worship schedule

	Pilton	Croscombe	North Wootton		Alhampton	Ditcheat	East Pennard	Pylle
1st Sunday	Alternating United Service 10.30 Holy Communion					10.00 FT Benefice Communion		
2nd Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion	11.00 Holy Communion	11.00 Holy Communion					10.00 FT Ben Communion or Zoom service
3rd Sunday	11.00 Pilton Churches Working together		9.30 Holy Communion (BCP)				10.00 FT Benefice Communion	
4th Sunday	9.30 Holy Communion	11.00 Holy Communion	11.00 Morning Service/Matins Local Leader		10.00 FT Benefice Communion			
5th Sunday		Rotating United Service 10.30				10.00 Rotating FT Benefice Communion		

Notes on the above

- 1st Sunday Services in Pilton, Crocombe and North Wootton are United Services which alternate between the Parishes, and the 5th Sunday United Service can take a different form e.g., Songs of Praise, Outdoor Service and again alternate between the three Parishes.
- At North Wootton there are two LWAs enabling one Sunday a month for a Morning service to be covered and for other services such as Compline to be held twice a month.
- A team from *Pilton Churches Working Together* co-ordinates monthly services alternately in the Parish and Methodist churches.
- All these churches celebrate the main festivals of Christmas, Easter, Harvest and Remembrance with significantly greater attendance and with some cover from retired priests with PTO and Lay Leaders.
- Ditcheat and East Pennard churches rotate the 5th Sunday, Harvest and Remembrance services, and both churches have Easter, Christmas and Carol services.
- Pylle has four services a year and alternates bi-monthly with a Zoom service.

Pilton 54
Crocombe 43
North Wootton 62
Ditcheat and Alhampton 43
East Pennard 21
Pylle 8

Electoral Roll Statistics

Crocombe 15
Pilton 20
North Wootton 15
Ditcheat 29
Alhampton 18
East Pennard 25
Pylle 17
Fosse Trinity zoom services 21

Worshipping Numbers

“The notion of travelling to another church is relatively new to Crocombe churchgoers but people seem to be warming to the idea.”

Spiritual life and discipleship

- Currently both Benefices hold Lent study groups.
- *Pilton* has a monthly Christian-based discussion group with the Methodist church in Pilton.
- Lay and Ordained church leaders of Pilton Parish and Methodist churches meet regularly to discuss the monthly *Pilton Churches Working Together* joint services alternating between the two venues.
- The Pilton churches have a bi-weekly Bible study group and a weekly prayer group.
- *Fosse Trinity* run a Prayer Pyramid which is advertised in the Benefice magazine. Bring and Share meals alternate round the churches, i.e. the Last Supper meal and Harvest lunch.
- *East Pennard* has just held a popular Remembrance Sunday lunch to raise funds for the Benefice.
- *Ditcheat* During our extended interregnum, our Men's Breakfast Club was launched, as were several discussion groups during the year. Our Christmas Crib service has been developed into one of the largest attended events in our church.



Children, young people and families

- All parishes have agreed that 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 of all ages.

West Pennard Church of England Primary School is an Area Primary School and is attended by children from *Pilton and North Wootton*. Our Rector has led Collective Worship with Key Stage 2 children here several times a term. Since the school opened there has been an agreement that Pilton and North Wootton PCCs each nominate a Governor to serve on the Governing Body. Reports are made at PCC meetings and in the Village magazines. West Pennard children's choir comes to both churches to sing carols which is really

enjoyed by our communities. There are two excellent local Secondary Schools, Whitstone at Shepton Mallet and The Blue School at Wells. There are several well-regarded independent schools within easy reach and Strode college at Street.



Croscombe C of E VA Primary School federated with Stoke St Michael Pre and Primary School in 2014. The incumbent is an ex-officio member of the Governing Body and Croscombe PCC is responsible for nominating and approving Foundation Governors. As well as leading regular acts of Collective Worship Ministers lead end of term and seasonal services in the church. The children also visit the church as part of their Religious Education studies. Displays, both visual and interactive, in the school reflect and enrich the Christian ethos of the school.

Croscombe PCC members are currently recruiting a local minister who is interested in becoming a Governor, leading worship and providing relevant practical help and support.

Ditcheat Primary School is Part of the East Somerset Federation which includes Bruton and Upton Noble C of VC Primary Schools.

Although not a church school, Ditcheat has Collective Worship services on a weekly basis and a monthly Messy Church (led by Revd Jayne (PTO)). The school also uses the church for most of their main festival services, including Remembrance, at which Jayne officiates.



E



The Year 6 children said they would like to see a new incumbent who is:

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

The Year 2 children’s thoughts were slightly different:

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

Benefice Ministers



Ted



Susan



Christine



We have two retired ministers with Permission to Officiate living in the parish of Ditcheat; Reverend **Jayne Buckles** and Reverend Canon **Rosalind Paul**.

Our Churchwardens



Jean and Bob at East Pennard



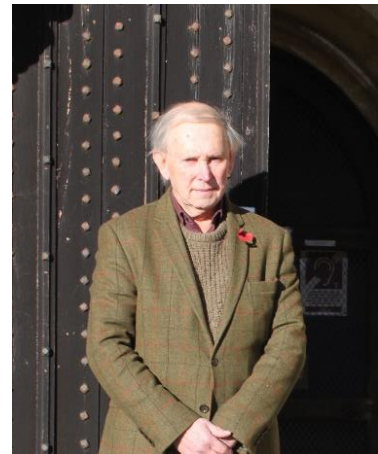
Derek and Charles at Ditcheat



Christine at North Wootton
Carolyn at Pylle



Charlotte at Pylle



Terry at Croscombe

Sheila and Paul at Pilton



Governance

Fosse Trinity

- Each church has its full quota of PCC members and Church Wardens and all governance is conducted by a Lay Chair. The Wardens form the Fosse Trinity Advisory Committee (FTAC) which meets quarterly and advises on matters then taken to a quarterly joint meeting of all 3 PCCs for discussion and ratification.
- Each church is autonomous with individual PCC meetings, Lay Chairs, accounts and Treasurers. Benefice administrative tasks such as weddings and funerals are undertaken by lay persons being accountable to our Treasurer who looks after the Benefice account.

Pilton, Croscombe and North Wootton

- These churches have Churchwardens, deputy church wardens and a full complement of Church Officers. Lay Chairs lead PCC meetings.
- The Churchwardens and the Reader meet regularly to discuss and plan for the benefice before taking these to the individual PCCs.
- There is a Benefice Treasurer who administers central funds.

Accessibility

- All the churches except Pylle and Alhampton have level access. They all have sound systems, induction loops and large print service materials.
- North Wootton has wheelchair access to the church and to the adjoining Church Hall. East Pennard and Pilton have a wheelchair available for use in the church.
- East Pennard and Pilton have accessible WCs
- Both East Pennard and Ditchheat churches are open during daylight hours. Pilton, Croscombe and North Wootton usually keep their churches open unless there is a temporary security problem.

Our Villages and Communities

Ditcheat, population 750, has a primary school, village hall, pub, farm shop and a well-used children's playground near the school. It is home to the stables of Paul Nicholls Racing, where over 50 people are involved in the well-being and training of approximately 150 racehorses, some of which are champions. It is also home to the farmers and cheesemakers Barber's Dairy, employing 250 staff, all of whom are local. They farm around 3,000 acres, grazed by more than 2,500 cows, working with over 100 local farmers. Farming and cheese making have long been vital parts of the local economy and long may this continue. Wraxall Vineyard, situated in the hamlet of Wraxall, is a small thriving family owned business producing Award-Winning English Wines. The View@Wraxall provides a venue for activities ranging from informal gatherings to larger celebrations. All three businesses above actively support our church both financially and practically. Our Bell Ringers' Annual Christmas Supper is held at the vineyard – the owner of which is a bell ringer himself.



Many weekly activities take place in Ditcheat village hall such as Pilates, badminton, short mat bowls, tai chi, yoga, and art. On a monthly basis there is a village coffee morning, a village lunch, barn dancing, a cinema and occasional concerts. A Music Hall evening is being planned as a church fundraiser for 2024.

Alhampton has a well-supported community run pub which provides a focal point for this small village and is used during the summer months for village events such as the fete, BBQs etc. During the winter it has become a tradition to hold an informal carol singing evening together with mulled wine and mince pies. There is also an open green space called Haddon Wood which runs alongside and behind the chapel and is a favourite with dog walkers and fruit pickers in the autumn.



The village of **East Pennard** is a designated conservation area and the parish consists of a number of hamlets; Huxham, Stone, Hembridge, East Pennard, Parbrook and Wraxall, none of which have any amenities such as street lighting, mains drainage or buses. Workable internet is in process of being rolled out. All the Parish has is Pennard House events venue which generously hosts occasional village functions, several large orchards, an organic vineyard, a cheesemaker, some small enterprises, and one church!

The population of **Pylle** is 160 and there is a super village hall together with Thorner's farm-shop, a petrol station, scrap yard and convenience store. Adjacent to the Parish is the West of England's premier events centre for exhibitions and indoor and outdoor events: the Bath and West Showground.

The small village of *North Wootton* is on the first foothill of the Mendip Hills surrounded by working farms. It has a population of 300, a pub, but no shop and no bus service. People are, therefore, reliant on cars to commute for work and to shop in Wells or Shepton Mallet. The church is alongside the Village Hall and opposite the Village Green making it truly the heart of the village. The church makes full use of the Village Hall for refreshments after services and a weekly café is held in the Village Hall. During Covid this met on Zoom and we even had an open-air café in the Wildlife Garden. Church members also initiated 'St Peter's Cares' with a team of people willing to offer practical help with shopping, lifts and small jobs. Supporting one another is an important part of life in our village because there is no shop or bus service.



Crocombe is a busy community of almost 600. The village is built in a steep sided valley through which runs the busy A371 road and the River Sheppey. It has a Primary School, a well-used Village Hall, and an excellent pub which houses a small convenience shop. There is also a community allotment and orchard, and a recently re-vamped children's play area. We have an active Parish Council and several groups and clubs, all of which make a positive contribution to the life of the village: The OAPs and Children's Fund holds an annual Harvest Auction in the pub, the proceeds of which finance family summer coach trips to the seaside and a magnificent Christmas Dinner for all village pensioners.



The Crocombe Frolics (established 50 years ago) present regular entertainments plus a popular Pantomime each February half-term. And the Crocombe orchestra rehearses weekly giving two concerts a year.

The Village Hall hosts monthly Film Nights, monthly coffee mornings and a quarterly Charter Market, selling locally produced food, plants and crafts.

Next year sees the return of Fun Day when all the Clubs and organisations combine for a country day-out of stalls and music, bouncy castles, cider and Pimms, skittles and raffles and children's

aces and games. Our new priest will be made most welcome at any of the above (perhaps not the bouncy castle).

We are lucky to be on the route of a regular bus service with easy access to Wells, Shepton Mallet and Bath.

Pilton is a beautiful and thriving village close to the centre of the proposed new benefice, 6 miles east of Glastonbury and 20 miles south of the City of Bath. It sits on the edge of the Mendip Hills and includes the hamlets of East and West Compton, Upper and Lower Westholme, East Town, Steanbow and Cockmill, all surrounded by rolling countryside. The parish's population is approximately 1,150 in around 450 households.

The village has many attractive historic buildings and cottages and the church of St John the Baptist, a particularly beautiful, Grade 1 listed building, sits at its heart.

Village amenities include a Methodist Church with a Community Coffee Shop, Village Hall and Social Club, a recreation ground with a tennis court, skateboard park, children's play area and pavilion, a village pub, a community orchard, a Post Office and Co-op, a nursery and a pre-school. Concerts and events are also held in the 14th century 'Tithe Barn' and church.



There are numerous clubs and organisations including a Village History Group, various sports and exercise groups, arts and social groups, a bell ringers group, an amateur dramatic society, an allotment society, a youth club, football team and community choir. The Pilton Show includes the annual Flower Show and a full weekend of entertainment with an evening Barn dance.



A bus service runs every two hours on weekdays and links the village with the adjacent towns of Shepton Mallet, Glastonbury and Street. Castle Cary rail station is 7 miles away with services to London, Bristol, Bath, Frome, Taunton and beyond.

The Glastonbury Festival

The Glastonbury Festival is famous throughout the world and attracts about 200,000 visitors plus staff, performers and traders each year. The site is adjacent to the parish of Pilton, and the parishes of Pilton, North Wootton, East Pennard and Pylle are inevitably impacted by traffic and noise during the month of June. Our villages are transformed, and not everybody welcomes its presence, but the festival does however benefit the local economy and encourages tourism in the area. The villages of East Pennard, North Wootton and Pylle benefit from funding opportunities through festival stewarding, but the influx of a large number of people at festival time in Pilton creates tensions and divisions amongst those who live there, where it has widely affected village life all year round. We hope that the incoming priest will continue to develop positive relationships between villagers and festival organisers.



Our Landscape



The six Somerset parishes forming this new Benefice lie to the North-Eastern edge of the Somerset levels, south of the Mendip hills, where two outlying clay ridges protrude southwards. The Romans established a port at Pilton, and dug ditches or 'Fosse' to drain their cross-country road until it reached the higher levels which straddle our parishes. Glastonbury Abbey thrived on a rural economy and provided stability for the area. Local industry developed from proximity to mining for lead and coal on the Mendips. The good upland grazing areas were surrounded by marshlands until drained in the 18th century and this part of Somerset continues to be regarded as the birthplace of Cheddar cheese and cider.

Although rural in nature the area lies in-between Glastonbury, Wells, Shepton Mallet and Castle Cary, with Bristol and Bath to the North, Yeovil to the south and Frome to the East. Convenient access is provided from Castle Cary with a high-speed London rail link, the M5 lies to the West, and Bristol airport to the North.

There are a number of private schools around the area, primary schools in Croscombe and Ditchat, and secondary schools in neighbouring towns. Glastonbury and Shepton Mallet have minor injury units, and Yeovil Hospital has an A and E unit.



Local tourist attractions and

events include Wells Cathedral, Wookey Hole caves, Glastonbury Abbey, Glastonbury Tor, Shepton Mallet prison, the Newt, and Stourhead. You may find the Bath and Wells website helpful:



www.bathandwells.org.uk/supportingparishes/finances/parish-spotlights/

OurBuildings

All of our churches have regular Quinquennial inspections and are well maintained with no significant issues.

Ditcheat

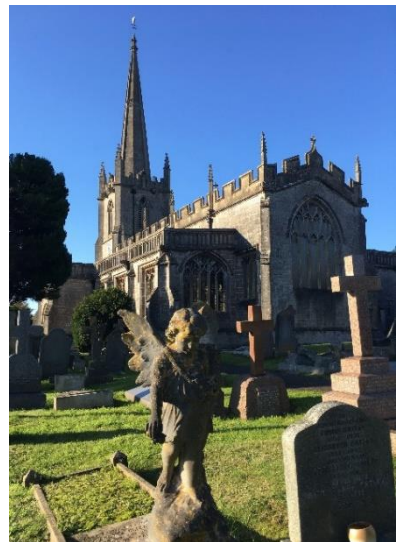


Pilton



East Pennard

Crocombe



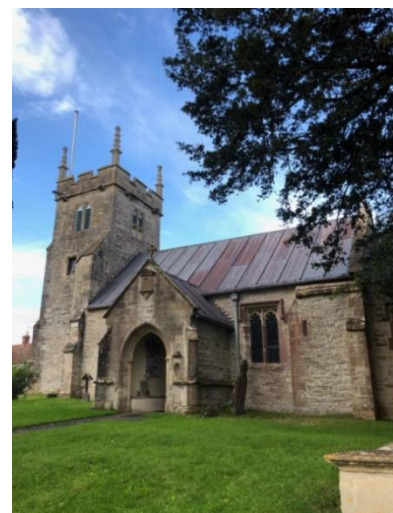
Alhampton



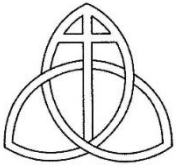
Pylle



North wootton



Our Churches



The **Fosse Trinity Benefice** was created in 2000 and consists of two Grade 1 listed churches St Mary Magdalene in Ditcheat and All Saints at East Pennard. St Thomas A Becket is in Pylle, and Alhampton has a Chapel of Ease Tin Tabernacle, all within the parishes of East Pennard, Pylle and Ditcheat.

There is a Fosse Trinity monthly magazine delivered to all households in the Benefice, owned by the FTAC but produced by a local team of volunteers.

The FT congregation and the team of bell ringers are willing to travel around all the churches in the Benefice, intercessions are normally prepared and read by a member of the congregation, and there is a small group who have formed a choir to assist with singing at services. Our friendly atmosphere and welcoming after-service coffee adds a social element and creates connections within the community extending beyond going to church. We would like to think of ourselves as being non-discriminatory and having an open-door policy for all.

Having been in a long-term vacancy we are ready to be re-energised by a full time incumbent and simply need a person who, encouraged and supported by our vision of spiritual growth, can light the blue touch paper!



Ditcheat and Alhampton

Ditcheat is the largest of the three parishes that make up the Fosse Trinity Benefice. Within the village there is the centrally sited St Mary Magdalene and its church room, with a sister chapel of ease dating from 1892 at nearby Alhampton. The Church of St Mary Magdalene has 12th-century origins and was built by the Abbots of Glastonbury Abbey. The chancel dates from the 14th century and the clerestory from the 15th. It has a website www.ditcheatchurch.org

The church has a fine organ and claviola. At Christmas time the church services are candlelit, attracting a large congregation from the wider community.

Attendance at regular services is modest, however non-churchgoers consider the church and its much-valued green space which incorporates a wildlife area, to be an important part of the village and support it financially when funds are needed.

We have a peal of eight bells at Ditcheat which are considered to be very fine, together with our own bellringers. The church room, with kitchen and toilet, is within the churchyard and was refurbished in 2017. It is used for church and non-church meetings as well as hosting our monthly Men's Breakfast and monthly craft session. It is also used for social occasions such as children's birthday parties.

All Saints' church, East Pennard



All Saints is a gorgeous, enthusiastic, well-maintained church in the village of East Pennard. It was originally a Minster church serving Glastonbury Abbey and has a tower containing the heaviest known set of 5 bells!

The PCC

It is intended by its PCC that it should be a welcoming functional community facility serving a local community which is poorly served by amenities. Developments over the last 10 years have included installation of a toilet and servery, restoration of the reredos, rebuilding of the 1788 turret clock, and a recent fund-raising campaign to launch a programme of capital works starting this year with the re-leading of the aisle roof – a major project for a tiny village. Ongoing matters include restoration of our medieval Doom painting, organ pipe work and tower guttering problems!



Our churches website www.eastpennardchurch.org is regularly updated with Benefice service information and events, and the church has just installed Wi-Fi and a Payaz giving station.

There is an underused church room run by a village committee, and a churchyard with circular walk which is the only open public space in the village. An annual acoustic concert is held in the church in June, and a talk about the church building took place in September. Our local congregation is small but boosted by visiting wedding couples, and we would welcome support to develop this.

East Pennard Wedding Ministry



The church is adjacent to Pennard House events venue which opened 11 years ago, and some couples from outside of the Benefice request to be married here. There have been 24 weddings in 2023 which has challenged the lay administration, but which enriches the church both financially and spiritually. Our small local congregation enjoys meeting lovely younger people at services before their wedding, and whom we hope in return gain a fulfilling experience of Christian worship.

All the FT Benefice wedding administration is conducted by a lay person at present. There are 16 weddings booked for next year but it will be for the newly appointed priest to discuss their personal involvement as our PTO'S are willing to assist.

St Thomas A Becket, Pylle

Pylle is the smallest of the three parishes in Fosse Trinity Benefice and the church is situated in a hamlet about a mile away from the linear village which straddles the Fosse Way. The tower is 15th Century, but the church was rebuilt in 1868 by the Portman family. The church is the patron church of the Somerset Guild of Craftsmen and is beautifully adorned with decorations from the early 20th century including wood carvings, some stained glass and wrought iron. It is well maintained with a Victorian organ, a small electric organ and a fine set of bells.

Non-churchgoers do like to support the church and have offered to help in practical ways.

There is a cleaning rota and a paid gardener who maintains the churchyard and grounds. The two churchwardens feel that although the church is regarded fondly by those in the village, acting as a central point, it could offer more to the local community. For example, it has been used as a starting off point for a snowdrop walk in the spring, with soup and coffee served after the walk in the church porch and interior.

At the moment the two churchwardens feel that things are 'hanging on by a thread' and that some new ideas and support would be welcomed.



The Churches of Pilton, Croscombe and North Wootton

St. Peter's North Wootton St. Peter's is a small medieval church in the centre of the village, which we keep open every day when possible. There is a Prayer Group that meets once a week and a Bible Study Group that meets every two weeks.

Members of the congregation and villagers help with Church and Churchyard maintenance, cleaning the church, and organising the Prayer Group, Bible Study Group and various charitable events.

The Church has an open churchyard, which we were able to extend recently by consecrating an adjoining piece of land.



Crocombe

St Mary the Virgin is noted for its fine spire and Jacobean woodwork of national renown. It is much visited as a tourist attraction and rates three stars in Simon Jenkins' book England's Thousand Best Churches. A legacy and a Heritage Lottery Fund Grant meant the lead on the south slopes of the roof could be replaced in 2018 and we are now rain-proof after several years of drips and buckets!

Our closed churchyard is maintained by the Council but there is a Village Burial Ground in, and a relatively new crematorium just outside, the parish. The tower has a peal of six bells (re-hung in 2016) with an enthusiastic band of ringers. Next to the church is a well-used Church Room with lavatory and kitchen.

Pilton St. John the Baptist church is a lovely Norman and medieval church in the centre of the village which is normally open every day. The church community really values the opportunity to meet and have regular services in the village church; and wider experiences indicate the village and beyond appreciates the church as a place to come for occasional concerts and other events.

Our congregation is committed and welcoming and this is our PCC.



The church has many lovely and historic artefacts an organ, piano and tower with a ring of 8 bells which are routinely rung for some of our Sunday services; for other services the Ellacombe chimes are used.

The churchyard is now closed and is well cared for by our local authority. We have a cemetery not far away in the village which is cared for by the Parish Council.

We have raised funds in recent years to pay for renewal of the heating system and for roof repairs and these appeals have been very well supported by the village generally.

The Rectory

'The Rectory' is in Pilton and was built as a private house in 1953, extended in 1977. It was bought as the Rectory in 1993 and extended in 1994. It has reconstructed stone elevations and concrete interlocking roof tiles with some felted flat roofs.



The house is in the 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 and shared driveway. The house is well within the central area of the village and 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. An adjoining study is separate from the main house. There is a garage and additional parking space for two cars.

The Diocese is currently searching for a more modern and sustainable property to replace the existing house. This is unlikely to happen before the new priest arrives and therefore you would be asked to move to the new property once it is ready. Please be assured that the diocese would pay for this second move in the usual way, and that the new house will still be located in the village of Pilton.

Sustainability and Wildlife

Pilton PCC has taken advice from a number of sources concerning the recent installation of a new oil fuelled boiler which can be adapted as and when green fuel is more readily and reasonable available.

Wildlife Our FT benefice wildlife group has designated areas within the

Ditcheat and East Pennard churchyards to encourage insect and plant life, East Pennard is extending its Wild Life Group which was started after a 'Greening the church' service in 2012. There have been several very successful events with a young group and their carers and there is a will to expand on this by



developing a family WLG, pictured here during a Woodland Adventure morning. At North Wootton the church has a wildlife garden on land adjacent to the river which provides a place of peace and solitude for the whole village. It was very important during Covid when open-air services were held and a particularly memorable open-air Carol Service which over 50 people attended. As part of our environmental vision, we took part in Wilder Churches this year.

Finances

Parish Share

- All the churches have charitable status, planned giving, adequate reserves, and have paid their parish share in full apart from Ditchheat church which is partly paid at present.

Benefice Funds.

- *Pilton Croscombe and North Wootton:* We had a remunerated administrator for our Benefice until the departure of our outgoing priest, and our PCCs readily agreed to this funding.
- There is a Benefice Treasurer who manages the account which funds Ministers' expenses and resources for the parishes.
- *Fosse Trinity:* All the churches are exempt charities. The Benefice churches each have their individual accounts with Treasurers, and there are three Benefice accounts – A general benefice one maintained at £5,000, a wedding, and a funeral account.
- All three accounts are managed by lay members who produce and pay invoices and fees, including those of the priest. Accounts are presented annually.

Individual Church Finances

- *More details of Parish Finances are available on application.*

Croscombe

Financially we are staying afloat. Regular payments by Direct Debit make up the majority of our income (several payers are not churchgoers). There is currently £43,500 in Restricted Funds and £16,000 in the General Fund.

Pilton

We meet all our financial obligations. As a small village, with a small congregation, collection income is low and we depend on regular giving to pay our way. We have raised funds in recent years to pay for renewal of the heating system and for roof repairs. These appeals have been very well supported by the village generally. We have been able to address the issues identified by our last Quinquennial inspection.

Although we have incurred a deficit on our operational income & expenditure in the last few years this has partly been an effect of recovering from the pandemic – prior to 2020 surpluses were achieved. The latest (2022) accounts show unrestricted funds: income £21,702 & Expenditure £23,967 with funds carried forward of £18,949.

We ask the congregation to review planned giving annually and Gift aid schemes are in operation. Appeals for fabric repairs have been very well supported by the village generally in the past.

The parish faces the same financial challenge as most rural parishes – small congregation, annual increases in routine costs, especially Parish Share, and the on-going upkeep of an historic listed building. Overall, we are financially better placed than many parishes, but we face constant pressure to contain ever-increasing expenditure while maintaining and trying to increase income.

North Wootton St Peter's Church has cash assets of £25,931. Current year cash assets are allocated between an Operating Fund of £14,690 and a Building Fund of £11,241. Income is made up of regular Direct Debit contributions and church collections. Some direct debits are made by non-church members directly to the Building Fund. The last two years have seen an excess of income over expenses as we recover from the Covid years.

Ditcheat and Alhampton have seen a slow increase in solvency levels during the post-pandemic period with income in excess of expenditure just during the past year. "We are not able to pay our Parish Share in full at present but do make a monthly contribution which we hope to add to if and when funds allow".

Pylle Pylle church is very grateful to the Glastonbury Festival for the practical financial support it has given over recent years without which it would not be in such good order.

East Pennard receives a peppercorn rent from the Trustees of its Village Hall.

Its PCC maintains a number of Reserves which are set at a level to provide security in that they are able to plan with some degree of certainty for significant projects, finance any unplanned expenditure such as urgent maintenance and repairs, and to develop the community use of the Church, for example by installing Wi-Fi and multimedia equipment etc.

There is a Restricted Restoration fund for the Enhancement, major repairs and maintenance and longer-term restoration of the Church, and a Tower and Bell fund for the maintenance, restoration and improvement of the tower, bells, and clock.

There are designated funds for the provision of community facilities within the Church, and for the long-term financial stability of the Church.

There are General undesignated funds to cover the day-to-day operational costs, the largest of which being the parish share and cost of insurance.

Charitable links

- Pilton church donates at least 10% of its income to charitable causes through regular donations to The Children's Society, The Ordinands' Fund and the Church Mission Society.
- Our churches make special donations to alleviate particular world crisis and we have been able to donate regularly to charity, supporting both local and foreign causes. Church collections are periodically donated to specific charities during the year.
- Fosse Trinity carol service collections are donated to The Children's Society and Crisis at Christmas.
- At North Wootton a Christian Aid Cream Tea and Harvest Lunch and Carol Singing raise money for charitable causes
- Ditcheat church regularly collects material items to be taken to Ukraine



Our Deanery

- The Benefice is part of the Shepton Mallet Deanery, one of 18 in the diocese, and 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.
- 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.

Benefice Vacancy Prayer and Reading



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

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.”

Finally, a message from the Ditchheat school children.....

