

Pioneer Associate Vicar, Yeovil



- Growing a new Christian community in a new housing estate
- Sharing in the leadership of a mission minded parish in South Somerset

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Pioneer Associate Vicar - the role

This is an exciting role for an ordained person with a vocation to mission. It has two key elements, each intended to be 50% of the job:

1. To plant a new Christian worshipping community in a new housing estate.
2. To share in the leadership of a growing urban parish.

To facilitate the first of these, a clergy house for the post has been purchased in the new Agusta Park estate (see “background” below).



The balance between the two halves of the role will be held in review: we believe in ‘finding out what God is doing and joining in’. If and when a new Christian community begins to take shape and grow, the balance of the role may shift in favour of the mission work.

Please see the attached role description for a detailed breakdown of the key tasks.

Background

Yeovil is an expanding Somerset town of 50,000 people, with a wide range of amenities and shops, a multiplex cinema and a sporadically successful football club. The main local employer is Agusta helicopters (formally Westlands) along with Yeovilton airbase and a large local hospital. There are several active and thriving churches, who work well together.



The town is well placed for enjoying the surrounding countryside, whether its walking the Dorset ‘Jurassic Coast’, cycling the Somerset levels, or exploring historic sites like Glastonbury, Wells or Montacute House. It has 2 train stations – London is 2 hours away – and sits on the A37 and close to the A303.

Many of our church locations reflect previous generations of growth and housing. Our vision is to plant a new Christian community in a growing neighbourhood on the western fringe of Yeovil, including a new build estate and school. There is the potential to plant again, in the new Brimsmore estate to the north of the parish. This is a groundbreaking and radical vision - there has not been an Anglican church planted in Yeovil since the 1930s – but we are convinced that new estates give us new opportunities to reach people with the gospel.

Agusta Park/Houndstone/Bluebell Way: This is the mission area. It has 3 distinct zones. Houndstone is well established former naval housing stock. Bluebell Way was built in 1990-2005 and includes a pub. Agusta Park is a new estate of 700+ homes including a primary



school, with a high proportion of working aged residents and households with children. The school (with community meeting space) is central to all 3 zones, which together make up a neighbourhood of around 4,000 people. Some preparatory work has happened on Agusta Park over the years – prayer walking, welcome gifts to new residents, occasional events, and more recently a regular prayer meeting and coffee morning.

Preston Plucknett: is a parish of 15,000 in NW Yeovil, including 2 of Yeovil’s 3 secondary schools, Yeovil Football Club, and a large trading estate. **St James**, the parish church, was built in 1420 and completely refitted in 2017. The regular congregation is 60-70 adults and



5-10 children with a number of social groups during the week. **St Peters Westfield** is at the heart of a deprived estate. It has grown from 12 to 35 regular worshippers in the last 10 years, and opened a brand new Community Centre in 2019. This is now in use by the community 7

days a week, including as a Warm Hub and community pantry. The Centre has 400-500 users per week, many who come for support, community and food, and is having a major impact on the neighbourhood.

The parish employs a Youth Worker and Family and Childrens worker, who between them oversee and support toddler groups, Junior Church on Sunday, a monthly Messy Church, outreach to both local secondary schools, and 5 youth groups, all with their own focus. We also have a part-time Administrator, and a Community Centre Manager at St Peters.



Around 80 of us are members of cell groups, meeting weekly, where much of our pastoring and discipleship takes place. Both churches have an enthusiastic lay leadership team, and trained Lay Worship and Lay Pastoral Assistants. We run a regular START and Confirmation courses for enquirers, and have good contacts with local schools, councils, care homes and



health services. The parish has an informal evangelical ethos, and has seen 6 men and women called to ordination in the last 10 years.

Under the **Deanery Plan proposals** Preston Plucknett will join with Lufton to form a new united benefice. Lufton parish includes much of the new build estate, though the parish



church of Lufton itself is some distance from the housing, and has the challenge of lack of running water and parking. It is well cared for by a devoted congregation, and values its BCP traditions, whilst also seeking to reach out to their new parishioners. Under the plan, the Vicar will take on pastoral charge of Lufton church.

The proposals also bring the new build **Brimsmore** estate into the parish. Currently under construction, by 2035 this estate will house around 2500 people, with a primary school, sports club, pub, shops and community centre. This will give us another opportunity for church planting.



The Vicar, Rev David Keen, will be your main clergy colleague, and you will work closely together on developing the pioneer work, as well as in parish leadership.

And there will be cake. This is a vital part of our mission strategy. Seriously.



From the Vicar

Dear (potential!) applicant,
Thankyou for your interest in this post, we're praying that God will bring us the right person for this ground breaking step in the life of our church.



As we'll be working closely together, it might help for you to know a bit about me. I'm 55, married to Becky, who is a trained Counsellor, with 2 children at university and a lazy dog. We've been in Yeovil since 2006, initially I was associate vicar in the parish and ½ time Deanery Mission Enabler, then became vicar in 2017. I've recently been made Area Dean.

I came to Christ as a teenager, and after a degree in philosophy and politics, worked here in Somerset for Clarks shoes before ordination training at St Johns Nottingham. After a curacy in Somerset, I had 5 years leading a church plant in Darlington, then took up the post at St James & St Peters.

I've been an evangelical since coming to faith – I love the Bible, I love digging into it, explaining it, and applying it to life. I'd also love to see more of the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the church, and believe prayer is the foundation of everything we do. I'm passionate about preaching, encouraging people into ministry, and seeing how the Bible speaks into our culture.

As I'm sure you're aware the church faces a number of contentious issues at the moment, and it will be important for us to find ways to agree on common practice as a clergy team, which is a discussion I would welcome.

If you would like to visit to get a better idea of who we are, or have a more detailed conversation about the post to find out if it is right for you, then I would very much welcome that - please do get in touch - 01935 422286 revdmkeen@btinternet.com.

With prayer for Gods guidance as you seek His will.

Rev. David Keen

Diocesan statement – our vision for growth and transformation



Introduction

We are delighted that you are considering whether this post of Pioneer Associate Vicar of the Parishes of Preston Plucknett and Lufton in the Diocese of Bath and Wells might be right for you. In order to help your prayerful discernment, we want to share a bit about our diocesan vision, within which we hope your own ministry might flourish.

Appointing a priest incumbent is amongst the most significant decisions that any benefice makes. When appointments work out well, they contribute significantly to parishes flourishing and growing in a host of different ways – in spiritual depth, in impact within local communities and in the numbers of people becoming part of the local church. Such flourishing is not, of course, all down to the person appointed as priest. It depends first and foremost upon God. It also depends upon everyone in a benefice being willing and able to contribute their unique gifts, skills, resources and abilities: working alongside their priest and sharing in the ministry of the benefice.

The flourishing and growth of churches always needs attention, but especially now as we come out of the shock created by the COVID pandemic. The impact of the pandemic created a sharp acceleration in the pattern of decline in church attendance that has been seen in our diocese over many years. Thankfully there are some signs that we are recovering from the COVID decline. For example, data showed that average adult weekly church attendance in our diocese rose between 2021 and 2022. Statistics only ever tell a partial story. It is even more encouraging to see churches around our diocese developing approaches that respond to the opportunities and challenges in their local context and enable growth to happen.

A vision for growth and transformation

Our diocesan context, described above, has convinced us that for our next season at least, our aim across all our parishes needs to be growing our churches, within and beyond our church buildings, in both numbers and depth of faith, so that we can better work for the transforming of our communities and the life of God's Kingdom amongst us.

Shared priorities

To help us pursue this aim, and following consultation across the diocese in 2023, we are inviting all parishes to focus on four particular areas of our ministry together. It is

important for clergy considering working in our diocese to know what these priorities are, even though what they look like in practice will vary in each place.

To value and cherish the people and resources we already have

We aim to ensure each person is well supported and equipped as a follower of Jesus Christ and for any ministries they may feel called to undertake, within the local church and wider community. We are committed to supporting the well-being of all our leaders and church officers, both lay and ordained. We have a fully funded clergy well-being service, the offer of peer support groups, and an excellent team of Diocesan support staff fully focused on supporting our parishes, chaplaincies and schools.

To develop new Christian worshipping communities

Whether it be new forms of worship in a wide variety of settings and times, church revitalisations or church plants, we long to see the good news of Jesus connect with the people in our communities that our traditional offerings struggle to reach.

To share in ministry and leadership

We are committed to the New Testament vision of the church as a vibrant body of people all using their God-given gifts. We are committed to a model of shared local ministry: raising up and equipping lay and ordained leaders able to share together in leading the church and serving God's world.

To deepen and grow faith

This is foundational to all we do. We long to see people of all ages and backgrounds, but perhaps especially children, young people and young adults, having more opportunities to discover, explore and grow in faith.

The outcome we are looking for

When he talks about his own ministry in 1 Corinthians, Paul captures the dynamic we are seeking to achieve. "I planted," he says, "Apollos watered, but God gave the growth" (1 Cor 3: 6). We know that our churches will only flourish and grow as a result of God's action among us – it is God who gives the growth.

But Paul is also clear that we have a part to play too – in watering and planting, in doing the things that enable the conditions for God's growth to be supported. So, covered by prayer, our confident hope is that if we are intentional in seeking God's guidance in planning and supporting growth, then God will honour that to see his people flourish and thrive - in spiritual depth, in impact within local communities, in the numbers of people becoming part of the local church and in transforming communities locally and beyond.

Local shaping and diocesan support

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

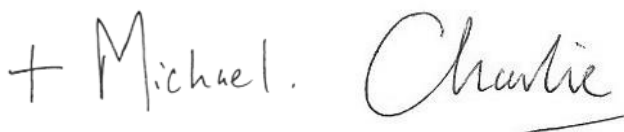
support are grounded in exploring what it means to live out our faith.

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?

The image shows two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is "+ Michael." and the second is "Charlie" with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Bishop Michael

Acting Archdeacon Charlie

Role description

Section 1 – Details of the post

Name of office holder	
Role title (as on licence)	Pioneer Associate Vicar (tbc)
Name of benefice/parish	Yeovil, Preston Plucknett AND Parishes of Lufton and Thorne Coffin
Deanery	Yeovil
Archdeaconry	Wells
Stipendiary or Non-stipendiary	Stipendiary
Proportion of time given to this role	Full time

Section 2 – Role purpose: specific

a) **Mission/Church Planting (50%):** Working in the neighbourhood of Augusta Park/Houndstone/Bluebell Way, to develop and grow a new Christian community in and for the area.

1. Engage with and listen to the local community, to understand and respond to their emerging needs and culture.
2. Develop culturally appropriate forms of outreach and Christian community, to reach local people with the good news of Jesus.
3. Grow and develop a team, working with other church partners (particularly Lufton Church and Yeovil Baptist Church).
4. Take funerals, weddings and baptisms for people in the community, as opportunities both to minister grace and love, and to share the gospel.
5. The long term goal is that people in the area become Christians, and a local worshipping community of disciples is established.

b) Benefice Leadership. (50%)

1. Share with the vicar in leadership of the churches of St James, and St Peters Westfield, including occasional offices, preaching and leading worship, oversight of ministry and lay teams.

2. Leadership of specific areas of ministry across the benefice, depending on gifts and experience (e.g. adult discipleship, worship, outreach, schools work – or maybe something we haven't even thought of!)
3. In the longer term, developing church outreach to the growing new Brimsmore estate (see Background).

Note: The balance between the two halves of the role will be held in review: we believe in 'finding out what God is doing and joining in'. If and when a new Christian community begins to take shape and grow, the balance of the role may shift in favour of the mission work.

Section 3 – Role purpose: generic

This has been written for those of Associate Minister status.

1. To share with the Bishop of Bath & Wells, the Bishop of Taunton and the Incumbent of the Benefice in the cure of souls in the parish(es).
2. To have regard to the calling and responsibilities of the clergy of the Church of England as described in the Ordinal, the Canons, national and local safeguarding policies, the Diocesan Guidelines for Clergy and all other relevant legislation, in accordance with the Archbishops' statement Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy.
3. To work with any other ministers in the parish/benefice, members of the Parochial Church Council and key lay leaders in the development of the church in the parish/benefice, having regard to the need for sustainability and effectiveness in mission.
4. To release the energy and gifts of the whole people of God.
5. To assist with providing a high standard of worship, preaching and pastoral care.
6. To be ready and willing to reimagine ministry and mission with the recognition that some initiatives may not always bear fruit.
7. To contribute, where appropriate, to the life of the wider church (possibly at a deanery, diocesan or national level) and community.

Section 4 – Person Specification

Essential:

- Desire to see non-Christians come to saving faith in Jesus, and grow as disciples.
- Able to relate to new and non-Christians.
- Understanding of church planting and contextual mission
- At least one of the following:
 - Ordained Pioneer priest in the Church of England
 - Pioneer and/or Church Planting training or experience
 - Experience of mission in new housing estates

- Love for the Bible as God's inspired Word, and an ability to teach from it with creativity and enthusiasm.
- Ability both to work as part of a team, and to lead, develop and inspire teams of people in Christian ministry and outreach.
- Able to relate well to people across age groups and cultural background.
- Creative, adaptable & pioneering in their approach to ministry and church life.
- Enthusiastic and a positive thinker, able to develop and communicate vision.
- Good and clear communicator.
- Demonstrates a love of Jesus and lives out this faith
- Prayerful and mature in faith, in close relationship with God and led by the Holy Spirit
- Hospitable, willing to use their home as a base for ministry and building relationships.
- A people person. Compassionate & pastoral.

Desirable:

- Experience of working with non-Anglican churches
- Experience of leading people to faith in Jesus.
- Skills in schools and children's work
- Able to work fruitfully with minimal structures
- Confidence with social media
- Resilience
- Desire to grow and develop as a person and as a disciple

Section 5 – Key contacts and relationships

The Community

- Residents in the new build estate of Augusta Park, along with Houndstone and Bluebell Way areas
- Kingfisher Primary School and preschool, children, parents and staff
- Church partners – including Lufton Parish Church, Yeovil Baptist Church.
- Developers on Augusta Park.
- Existing community groups and clubs, parish council.
- Equivalent contacts on the new Brimsmore estate, for potential future mission work.

Vicar of Preston Plucknett

- You will work closely with the vicar as a clergy colleague, sharing in the wider work and strategic leadership of the parish.

Benefice contacts

- Ministry team, including Readers, Lay Worship and Lay Pastoral assistants, and lay leadership team at St James & St Peters.
- The Churchwardens and Church councils

- Youth worker and Family and Childrens worker
- Parish administrator.
- Church members, especially those with a heart for prayer and outreach on new estates

Deanery and Diocesan contacts

- The Diocesan Bishop, Suffragan Bishop and Archdeacon
- The Deanery Chapter and Synod
- The Area Dean and Lay Chair
- Diocesan New Christian Communities Lead

Section 6 – Sign off

	Signature*:	Date:
Signed by Minister:		
Signed by Incumbent (if Role Description for Associate Minister):	David Keen	14.3.24
Signed by Archdeacon:		

* This can be in electronic form.

This document should be reviewed and refreshed as part of the Ministerial Development Review process to ensure that it is still current. Amendments might also be made if circumstances change, for example in the way you share work with colleagues. If major amendments are made to your role description then a signed copy should be signed off by the Archdeacons who will log it on the diocesan IT system.

Following review, please send this to be signed off and saved by your Archdeacon.