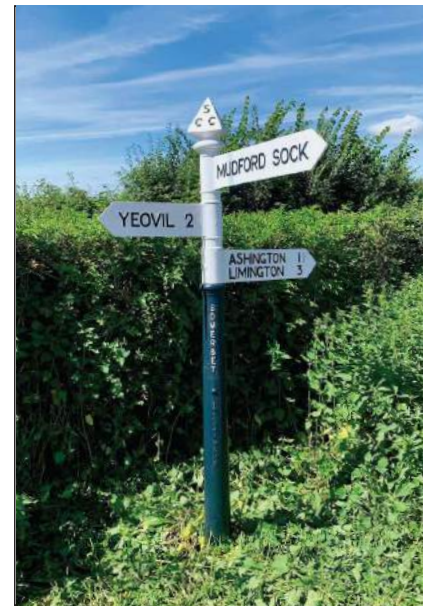


WELCOME TO THE
BENEFICE OF ASHINGTON, CHILTON CANTELO,
MARSTON MAGNA, MUDFORD AND RIMPTON
PROFILE MAY 2024



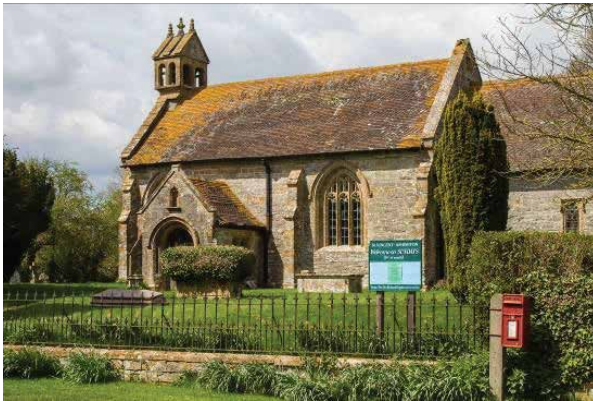
Is God pointing you in our direction?

We invite you to look at our profile and hope it inspires you.

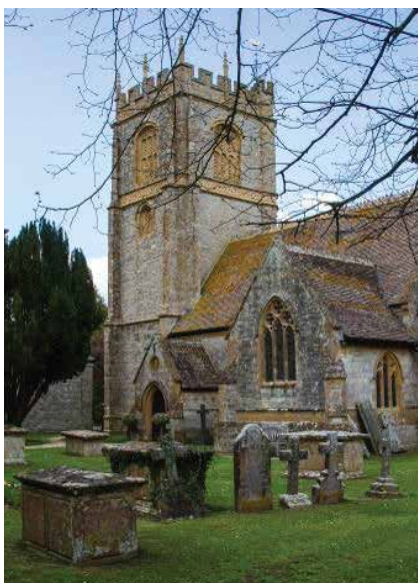
We are earnestly praying that God will send us a part-time Rector to work alongside us as we seek to serve God and the people of our close-knit group of five rural parishes situated in a beautiful part of South Somerset, on the border with Dorset and close to the market towns of Yeovil and Sherborne.



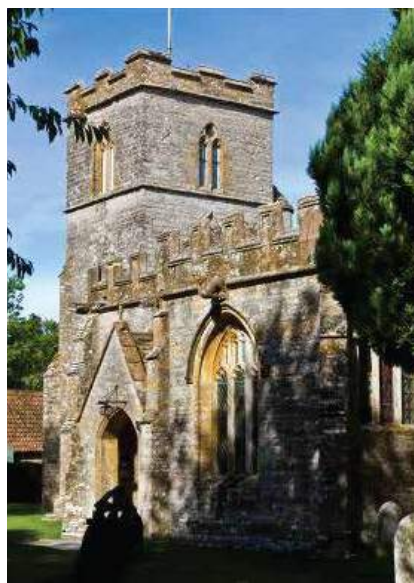
OUR CHURCHES



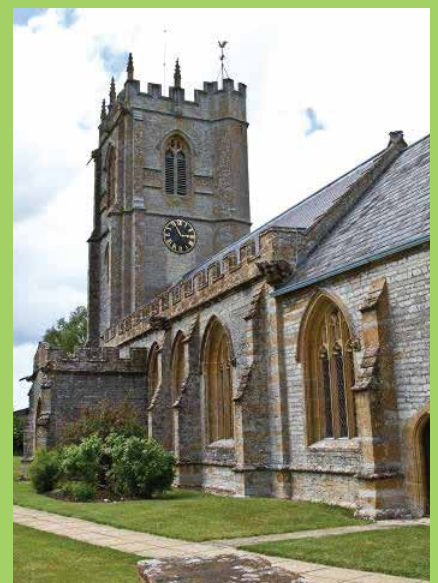
St Vincent, Ashington



St James, Chilton Cantelo



St Mary's, Rampton



St Mary's, Mudford



St Mary's, Marston Magna

*These are our buildings,
time-honoured and
peaceful places of
worship. However for us
and for our communities,
and just as Jesus
intended ...*

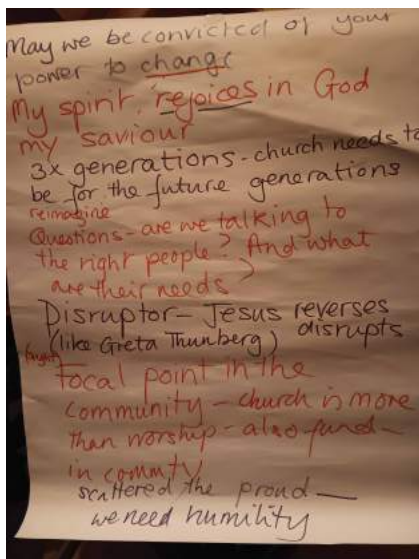


The CHURCH is GOD'S PEOPLE!



The benefice is made up of 5 small, rural villages, ranging from the largest, Mudford with 320 households to Ashington with just 12.

Whilst both Mudford and Marston have a good number of families of working age with younger children, there is a higher than national average retired contingent. Alongside this is a significantly higher number self declaring as Christian - over 60% across the benefice.



The results of our consultation process reflect views from across our entire community, church and non-church goes alike; cumulating in a Benefice wide public meeting, we began by reflecting on MARY'S SONG OF PRAISE, Luke 1:46-55, very appropriate since three of our churches are dedicated to the Virgin Mary. It helped us to focus on where we are and where God might be leading us.

The discussions were so lively and productive that some people were still vigorously engaged long after the tables, chairs, flip charts, post-it notes and coffee cups had been cleared away.



We seek to be the Body of Christ in our communities.

Our prayer

Beloved God,

You have welcomed each one of us in Jesus and called us to be his body in this place.

We give you thanks for all that has been and all that will be.

We ask your guidance as we work together to hasten the end of this time of vacancy:

guidance to be light in our community,

guidance to love and encourage one another,

and guidance to draw to us the person that is right for us and our community.

In Jesus' name we pray

Amen



We gathered the views of a wide variety of people from across the parishes, including school children, workers and the retired, occasional and regular churchgoers, and people who say they are not at all religious.

We found that people respect and value the church, even if they feel it is not for them, and they recognise that there are church people active in all manner of community organisations and endeavours: from

Gardening Clubs to Short Mat Bowls, from Parish Councils to Village Hall Committees, from choral groups to village cafes, from children's parties to quiz nights, from charity fund-raisers to foodbank collections, from concerts to illustrated talks, and all the large scale SHOWS, FAIRS, FESTIVALS, HARVEST SUPPERS, CHRISTMAS DINNERS, ENTERTAINMENTS and CELEBRATIONS!



UNITED IN WORSHIP AND PRAYER

- We join together in worship across the Benefice, meeting every Sunday in one of four churches, with occasional services in the tiny village of Ashington. We rejoice in the variety this affords.
- Although much of our practice is traditional, we welcome alternative styles of worship. We sometimes worship outside of the church buildings: Mothering Sunday Café Church in the village hall, the Palm Sunday Procession, and occasional outdoor services.
- Some of our special services really seem to answer a need in the wider community; Remembrance Sunday, we are very close to RNAS Yeovilton, Music and Poetry for Good Friday, All Souls, and the Christingle and Crib Services.
- There is a fine tradition of music in the Benefice, with three organists, who play for some regular and almost all special services, which often benefit from the excellent Ad Hoc Singers; there are also occasional concerts of sacred and secular music.
- Congregation members always prepare and lead our prayers of intercession, which



are varied, relevant and often very beautiful.

- Most of the churches are open for visitors on weekdays, offering opportunities for private prayer and prayer requests.
- A small group meets mid-week for prayer and worship.
- Two thriving Bible Study Groups welcome new members, one meeting in the community lounge of a sheltered housing complex.
- The groups combine for a Lent Study Course, which attracts additional people.



Where are we now?
Our strengths and our challenges...



A Benefice Café Church
for

Mothering Sunday
10th March

JOIN US FOR BREAKFAST
(bacon rolls, croissants & toast) from 10
am
to be followed by a
SERVICE of THANKSGIVING at 11 am
in MUDFORD VILLAGE HALL

Come with family, come with friends, or
come on your own.

ALL ARE WELCOME!



- We work well together, as a benefice, with experienced, hard-working and committed lay leadership. The parishes currently have separate PCCs and officers, but we also meet regularly in cross-benefice groups. We do not expect our rector to chair, or even attend, every meeting.
- We manage our legal, financial, and administrative responsibilities responsibly and efficiently.
- We enjoy good links with the Deanery, having representation on both the Synod and the Mission and Pastoral Group.
- We are blessed to have three licensed lay readers, and a retired priest, living in the Benefice; they are fully involved in all aspects of church and community life, providing invaluable spiritual nourishment, pastoral leadership, and practical support.
- There are Lay Ministry Team members in two of the churches, with experience in leading worship and organising special services and activities, including Family Fun Days; safeguarding training has been completed and DBS checks are up to date.
- Everyone receives a warm welcome in our churches and events; we have a reputation for friendliness.
- There is a small but willing band of helpers, who open the churches, arrange flowers, polish brass, serve refreshments, look after the churchyards, etc, etc.



- There is a vast pool of experience and talent in our communities, with retired people from a wide variety of professional backgrounds, who are willing to share wisdom and advice and offer practical help when needed.
- There is a monthly magazine delivered to every house in two of the parishes and a newsletter,

that reaches most people in the others. One church has a dedicated website, which acts as a point of communication for the other parishes. We also have weekly emails that provide news and worship materials to all who subscribe to them.



We work well together as a benefice.



Penny Holt, Lay Reader

'I was first licensed in 2017 and moved to Rimpton in 2020. I see my Lay Ministry as a bridge between church and community, showing something of the love of Christ through building relationships with people locally.'



Richard Gardner, Lay Reader

'I feel called to proclaim the gospel and was licensed as a lay reader in 1981. As a retired teacher, I have been particularly involved in worship with children. I enjoy pastoral work, assisting in the village cafe and leading Home Group Bible Studies.'

- We share a strong desire to help God's children when they are in need; we collect for our local foodbank, raise awareness and funds for local, national and international charities and appeals.



- We care for our neighbours, responding quickly and imaginatively when a situation arises; the people of Chilton Cantelo opened the doors and their hearts to the young Ukrainians working locally at the time of the invasion and have maintained the contact ever since.

- We look after each other and the wider community; we care for each other giving friendship and practical help to all who are in need; our lay readers and resident retired priest offer a deeper pastoral care, visiting and bringing comfort and prayer to the sick, suffering, the dying and the bereaved.



Easter 2022 - a very difficult time for our Ukrainian friends



Tony Green, Lay Reader

'I was moved to become a Lay Reader having listened to a sermon by our parish priest urging us to look at ways to 'give something back'. I was licensed in Peterborough Cathedral in 2007. I have become increasingly more involved in officiating at funeral services, a part of my ministry I find particularly fulfilling.'



Rev. Jeremy Swayne, Retired Priest

'I was ordained in 2000, towards the end of my varied medical career. House-for-duty Priest-in-charge of a rural Somerset Parish for a few years, I was a member of the Diocesan Healing Advisory Group and its Chairman for two years. I have been very happy to serve as an Assistant Priest in this Benefice since 2006, but age and personal circumstances now limit my availability.'





- Our congregations are small, elderly, and mostly retired.
- We have a small, in some cases declining, number of able-bodied people doing much of the work.
- Our lovely buildings are inflexible spaces, with limited potential for development, and there isn't a loo in any of them.
- They are also very expensive to run; we face a constant challenge to keep them warm and in good order.
- Too often the demands of management, coping with admin, take our focus away from the much more important tasks of ministry and mission.
- Our methods of communication are not properly integrated, nor do we make use of social media.
- We are kind and helpful people, but many of us lack confidence and skill in opening

up those deeper conversations with people that would allow them to express their feelings and their needs, and maybe to allow us to bear witness to God's love and share our faith more effectively.

- During the pandemic and the vacancy, we have lost some of our existing connections with children and families; we used to run themed Fun Days at least twice a year, but we have only managed one half day in the last four years.



Story time in church

- There is uncertainty about how our population might grow in future years; there are plans at various stages in the process for about a thousand new houses and other buildings on the edge of Yeovil but within the parish of Mudford.

But there are obstacles in our way...



Fun afternoon - church detectives hunting for clues





What is on our horizon? Where are we going next?

OUR VISION and OUR PRIORITIES

'the Mighty One has done great things'

- We want to be convinced of God's power to change us
- To grow his church in this place

'He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts'

- We seek humility and a willingness to embrace change
- To follow the leading of the Holy Spirit wherever he takes us

'from generation to generation'

- We wish to be a church for everyone now and into the future
- To develop our contacts and work with children and families

'He has helped'

- We want tell the story of God's love and saving grace
- To hold the Christ-light for those struggling in this dark world

'in remembrance of His mercy'

- We wish to meet the people God brings to us at their point of need
- To offer comfort and care and a healing ministry

'my spirit rejoices'

- We seek to draw nearer to God through study, teaching and prayer
- To share our joy with others through church and community action

'He has shown strength with His arm'

- We want to work ever more closely together, relying on God's strength
- To achieve his purposes for us



- A warm welcome from our communities.
 - Prayerful and practical support from the Benefice.
 - Flexibility and open minds.
 - Positive attitudes towards teamwork and developing talents and abilities.
 - Enthusiasm to contribute to the growth of God's Kingdom.
 - Willingness to work together to unify and simplify our administrative, communication and governance systems to give space for greater emphasis on ministry and mission.
- Understanding that this is a part-time post and respect for time off-duty.
 - A great place to live with excellent schools, health services, entertainment, leisure and sporting facilities nearby.
 - Good road and rail links, with easy access to beauty spots, the coast and places of historic interest.
 - A beautiful, modern four-bedroom house, with large garden in Marston Magna.
 - Excellent support from the Deanery.



THE DEANERY

Yeovil Deanery comprises four urban churches, surrounded by 18 small rural parishes mainly in three multi-parish Benefices. The recent deployment plan means that in future there will be 7.5 stipendiary priests across the Deanery .

The Deanery leadership are looking at ways for the Deanery to work together, sharing resources and training, and providing more mutual support. There is a small but supportive Deanery chapter, which puts a high priority on the pastoral care of local clergy.

What can we offer.





WE ARE CALLING FOR...

A person of depth and prayer who delights in helping others to connect with their community and whose presence at key events would be a powerful and comforting spiritual beacon.

Someone who ...

- Will oversee and inspire our ministry
- Provide strong spiritual direction and teaching
- Is rooted in scripture and prayer
- Works well in a team, valuing and developing other peoples' skills and talents
- Makes connections across the generations and with all types of people
- Demonstrates the relevance of Christ to modern life
- Offers compassionate and sensitive pastoral care
- Is a visible presence across a range of community settings
- Represents the Benefice in engagement with secular and church bodies

Are you the person for us?



Prayerful

Spiritual

Scripture based

Compassionate

Inspire

Direct

Teach

Christ's relevance

Modern life

Value

Develop

Engage



RIMPTON

Community is at the heart of Rimpton with its two hubs of the church and the village hall with large adjacent playing field and children's play area; both are active, much loved and well attended.

Sunday services are invariably followed by coffee and a catch-up, average 20-25 people, and Remembrance Service (there is a significant retired military presence here) and the Carol service are always full. Mid week morning prayer is celebrated and a growing home group meets fortnightly. The church aims to look upward and outward, incorporating speakers and fund raising for local and national charities, as well as hosting recitals and flower festivals. Pastoral care is very

much in the DNA of the village too, with many people 'looking out for each other' and stepping up as the need arises.



Rimpton church path

Meet the Teams



Rimpton PCC

Pictured L-R: John Spencer, Hilary Stephens (warden), Pamela Hopkins (treasurer), Marlene Green (secretary/deanery rep), Chairman McCreight, Lucy Caruth (safeguarding), Penny Holt (lay reader/staffing committee chair), Tony Green (lay reader)

Other members: John Tricker (warden), Morag Le Hardy



MUDFORD

Mudford lies on a busy A-road close to Yeovil, but retains a largely rural character. There are currently plans for two large housing developments on the outskirts. Most residents work locally and the village has several working farms and other businesses, including a wonderful farm shop.

There is a popular pub offering food and accommodation, a large well-kept recreation ground and a small but attractive village hall offering a varied and busy schedule of events. There is a strong church presence within the community, which includes running a weekly bookstall at the village café.

St Mary's Church is a beautiful building and a deeply spiritual space. The regular congrega-

tion is tiny and elderly, but uses its skills and talents in the service of God and neighbour. The All Souls Service and Christmas Eve Christingle/Crib Service are exceptionally well-attended. Above all, St Mary's has a great reputation for friendliness - the Home Study Group meets in public in the lounge of the sheltered housing scheme and there is a long standing tradition of music.



Our beautiful altar cloth made by a member of the church

Meet the Teams



Mudford PCC

L-R: Carol Gordon, Jo Dalton-Leggett (warden), Bill Watkins (warden), Judith Brown, Chris Adams (secretary/treasurer), Jean Jones



MARSTON MAGNA

Marston Magna is situated on the busy A359 near the Royal Naval Air Station at Yeovilton and the market towns of Yeovil and Sherborne, where many of the residents are employed. There are a number of working farms, a paper recycling plant, a pub, agricultural engineers and a residential home for the elderly. A shop/post office, primary school and an excellent medical centre can be found just one mile away in Queen Camel.

There is a strong community

spirit, much of which is centred around a modern Village Hall which holds a very wide variety of activities including a church-initiated weekly cafe.

The large, historic church hosts a monthly service, and Holy Communion for residents and staff is celebrated each month in Fir Villa Residential Home. At present no churchwardens are in post, but the PCC continues to function. The churchyard is well maintained and the church is open daily for visits and private prayer.



Meet the Teams



Marston Magna PCC

*L-R: Hugh Privett (treasurer/organist),
Richard Venning*



Trevor Henry



Edd Jackson

*Other members: Jon Pengelly
(secretary), Tim Smith, Richard
Gardner (lay reader/safeguarding)*



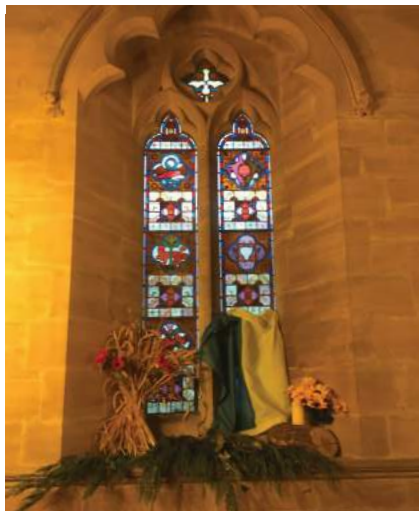
CHILTON CANTELO

Chilton Cantelo was originally a small farming village and still has two working farms, and a small organic market garden. There is also a large soft fruit 'Glasshouse Growing Concern', staffed seasonally by Ukrainian people, who have been welcomed into the church and village life. After the Russian invasion, the church held special services, which were much appreciated, and a window display remains dedicated to Ukraine.

The majority of villagers support the church and its aims as

it is the only public space in the village and there is a very good community spirit. Near to the church, Chilton Bridge School for children with special needs is currently being established.

The very beautiful church is dedicated to St James. Rebuilt in 1864. The Provost of Eton, the Rev. Charles Goodford, undertook this as a tribute to his brother, the late rector. The architect was Sir Arthur Bloomfield and his assistant was Thomas Hardy- better known as an author.



Meet the Teams



Chilton Cantelo PCC

L-R: Pam Stinson, Sue Kerton (secretary/treasurer), Nobby Kerton (warden), Dave Stinson (warden)



ASHINGTON

Ashington is tiny, has changed little over many years and has a very rural feel. It is known for its Elizabethan manor house, which is listed (Grade 1), as is the beautiful church.

Dougie Allen, who is resident in the village, is warden and maintains the church and

churchyard. Interest in the church is for its historical significance rather than as a place of worship - it hosts only one or two services a year. A long-term restoration project of the bellcote and the medieval bells is nearing completion, funding permitting.



The church and Ashington Manor entrance



Meet the Teams



Ashington PCC

Dougie Allen (warden)

*Other member: Nicola Stafford
(secretary/treasurer)*

Profile statements containing much more detail have been prepared by each of our five parishes and may be found on the website.

mudfordchurch.org.uk



THE PART-TIME ROLE

This Benefice has had three incumbents since 1998. Two were Priests-in Charge and the most recent became our Rector. All were a part-time (.5). We have a good history of working with and supporting our clergy to ensure that the part-time role is sustainable.

Rota of services for March 2024:

Date	Time	Parish	Service	Information
3 rd March	10:45	Rimpton	Holy Communion	
10 th March	11:00	Mudford	Café Church in Village Hall	Mothering Sunday Breakfast from 10:00
17 th March	09:30	Marston	Holy Communion	
24 th March	10:45	Rimpton	Morning Worship Palm Sunday	Procession from Main St/ Back Lane at 10.30
29 th March	12:00 19:00	Marston Mudford	Hour at the Cross Music & Poetry	Good Friday
31 st March	09:30 10:45	Chilton Rimpton	Holy Communion Holy Communion	Easter Sunday

Previously, we had services in at least two of our churches most Sundays, but declining numbers attending and difficulties in finding people able to take services have led to a reduction.

Baptisms, marriages & funerals in 2023

Parish	Baptisms	Marriages	Funerals	Burial of ashes
Marston Magna	2	0	2 (burials)	5
Mudford	3	2	3	1
Rimpton*	0	0	4	0

Population, electoral roll, average attendance & PCC membership

Parish	Population in 2021	Electoral Roll	Average attendance	Wardens	Sec/ treasurer	Other PCC
Ashington	19	n/a	n/a	1	1	0
Chilton Cantelo	75-80**	4	12	2	1	1
Marston Magna	520	35	15	0	2	4
Mudford	720	15	12	2	1	3
Rimpton*	236	47	34	2	2	6

*Rimpton's figures are for March 2023-March 2024; others are for 2023.

Attendance in all churches has increased since we went down to one service per week.

** Estimate

Some facts and figures.



Diocesan statement – our vision for growth and transformation



Introduction

We are delighted that you are considering whether this post of Rector (0.5) of the Benefice of Chilton Cantelo with Ashington, Mudford, Rimpton and Marston Magna 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?

+ Michael. Charles Steer

Bishop Michael

Acting Archdeacon Charlie

