

Profile and Role Description
Associate Priest in the
**LEIGHTONSTONE
CHURCHES**



West and North Leightonstone Benefices,
Huntingdonshire, Diocese of Ely



**A House for Duty post (2 days plus Sunday)
Working in two benefices in Beautiful Cambridgeshire
You will be housed in
Brington Rectory, Cambridgeshire
Or Alconbury Rectory, Cambridgeshire.**



The Church of England

Diocese of Ely

Foreword by the Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech, The Ven. Richard Harlow.

Thank you for taking an interest in this post in the Diocese of Ely. The role of associate priest in the Leightonstone churches is a supporting post, working with 2 experienced colleagues caring for the people and growing the mission of these parishes in the Deanery of Huntingdon. The Deanery is a warm place, with a mix of evangelical, central and catholic tradition parishes working well together.

You will be working with two highly able incumbents serving an area of rural parishes stretching from the A14 to the A1, including the some of the most beautiful churches in the county. Your role will be to assist, develop and support the growth of discipleship, vocations and ministry in 2 benefices that are actively trying to reach younger disciples, whilst nurturing the faith of those who have sustained these rural communities in past years. A lot of the time you will be doing good old fashioned pastoral care, whilst the incumbents focus on change leadership.

The Benefices have a depth of leadership and ministry resources that leave this post needed but not unsupported. Experienced incumbents are in post and you will find a highly collaborative team that can flex around your particular contribution. Undoubtedly there are challenges: rural communities, historic buildings, and the need to find officers. But there are already many good things happening, as this document will show you.

You may be concerned that this is a huge job. It is not intended to be such. What you see here is a menu of interesting opportunities. You will work primarily with the Assistant Rural Dean (incumbent of West & South Leightonstone) to determine where your gifts and vocation best equip you to serve with joy and creativity. You will together work out a role description. Both incumbents will be your colleagues, but you will not be pulled in different directions. We are clear about that.

In the light of our mission priorities, we need clergy who are:

- Confident in God - rooted in prayer and scripture.
- Committed to personal holiness and striving for professional excellence.
- Mission-focused leaders who want to see the church deeply engaged with schools, serving the community and connecting with community organisations of all kinds.
- Resilient people who take risks, accept failure and try again.
- Empowering and enabling collaborative ministry.
- Hospitable and generous when engaging with the local community
- Open and willing to work with and learn from others.

Enquiries about this post can be made to the Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech, Ven Richard Harlow, on 07415757527 or archdeacon.handw@elydiocese.org or by contacting the 2 incumbents listed at the end of this profile.



Dagmar, Bishop of Huntingdon



Richard, Archdeacon of Huntingdon

ROLE DESCRIPTION: Associate Priest (House for Duty)

This Role Description should be read in conjunction with the vision, aims and priorities set out in this profile. The role is for a priest who, with the incumbents, ministry team and PCCs will lead, support and nurture the congregations in these diverse parishes and build on recent achievements to develop the mission of the Church in the community and ensure pastoral needs are met.

Together with the incumbents, ministry team and PCCs, you will

Leadership

- undertake all the tasks and responsibilities assigned to you by Canon Law and adhere to the [Guidelines for the Professional Conduct of the Clergy](#)
- work with the priest in charge in both North and West Leightonstone benefices to decide appropriate areas of responsibility, depending on gifts and interests
- encourage the parishes to find new ways of working together in mission, ministry and governance to encourage stability as we go forward.
- support measurable progress in your area on the Benefice Development Plan
- help to grow the financial resilience of the PCCs.

Worship & nurture

- help us grow the numbers of regular worshippers and the depth of discipleship, supporting the vocations of others in your area.
- help us raise the standard of regular worship, whilst encouraging development of new forms of church so that we attract new members.
- work with ecumenical colleagues, the ministry team on Alconbury Weald and the other Leightonstone benefices to develop Christian impact.

Mission

- be visible in our local communities, approachable and trustworthy.
- If appropriate and according to your gifts, be a visible presence in our church primary schools.

Community Development

- nurture and build good relationships with village organisations, pioneering new forms of engagement where necessary.
- be expected to attend Chapter & Deanery Synod.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

We would like our new Associate Priest to have the following qualities/abilities:

Essential

- a “people person” with good communication skills, emotional intelligence, and warmth – someone easy to “get along with”.
- the ability to engage with the regular village congregations, also having the energy to reach out beyond those congregations.

- be confident in their own theology, but comfortable working with those who hold a differing understanding or tradition.
- be able to appreciate the joys and challenges of maintaining historic church buildings with small active congregations and help us imagine a viable future.
- be able to engage with and lead existing pastoral teams, equipping and enabling them to grow the reach of the churches in the villages.
- share a belief in an equality of ministry between lay and ordained
- be able to work as one amongst equals
- be inclusive – inclusivity is non-negotiable
- use imagination and creativity to see beyond limitations to offer possible solutions.
- be at ease with the wider role in the community which is required of a rural priest.
- be able to work within procedures so there is clarity in delegation and responsibility for delivery.
- be a car driver.

Desirable

- have previous experience of leadership in a rural, multi parish context.
- have experience to help and support sound financial practices across the benefice and encourage us to look at new governance arrangements.
- be comfortable with traditional ways of worshipping (ie BCP) as well as the more flexible variations of Common Worship and innovative worship.
- be comfortable with using IT to communicate across the benefice. The ability to support and develop our social media presence would be greatly appreciated.

What we can offer to you

- we understand that there are particular reasons why you have decided to apply for a House for Duty position. As far as is possible we will work with you to ensure that our pattern of working together supports your other commitments and needs.
- we have a Ministry team where there are varieties of time commitment and recompense, but we try to work by consensus. Our Ministry team is a mix of lay leaders and ordained.
- we will recognise your working and non-working days, and work with you and the parishes to ensure that your times are protected.
- daily office on Zoom (as appropriate); regular meetings with the incumbents; monthly Ministry team meetings (with food).
- a house in the middle of a moderate sized village, which has a good village school and lively community activities. The house is well situated for access to the A1 and A14. It is 19 minutes by car to Huntingdon Railway station with regular trains to London or Peterborough, and 33 minutes by car to central Cambridge or the closest Park and Ride in Cambridge.

The description of the parishes below illustrates the richness and diversity of our benefices. It does not suggest that you will be responsible in or for all these parishes!



North
Leightonstone
a Church of England Benefice

**Alconbury, Buckworth, Hamerton,
The Giddings, The Riptons, The
Stukeleys, Upton and Winwick**

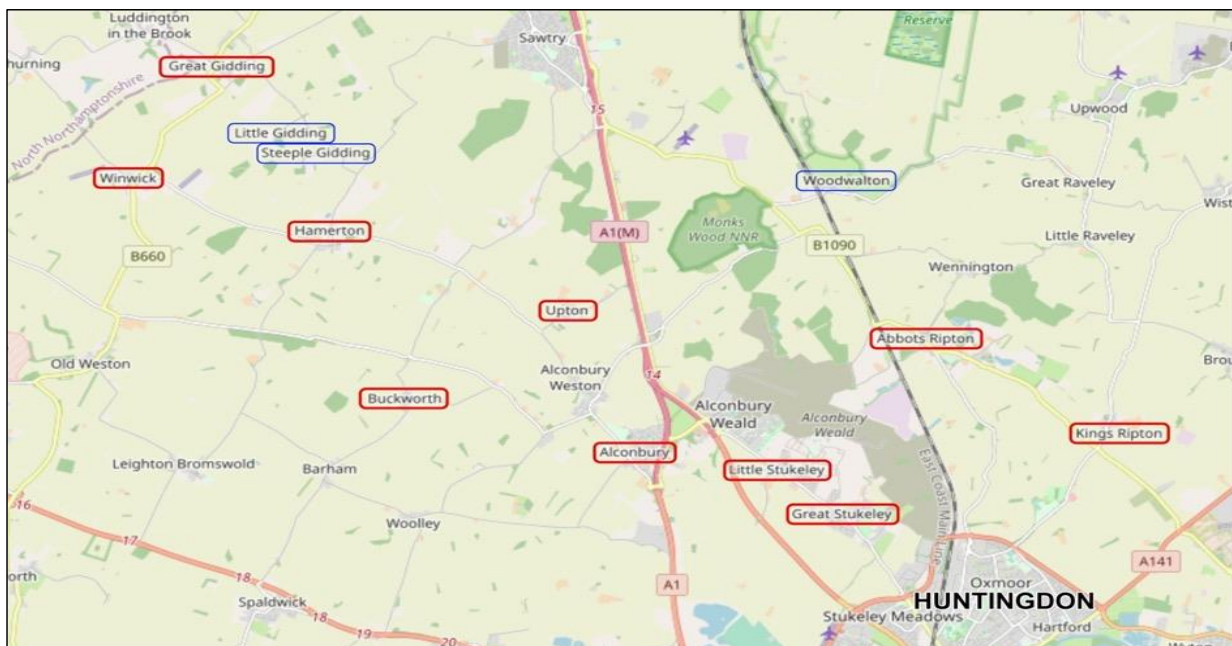
**We are one Church Family in ten different villages,
sharing God's love as we live our life's journey.**

Rural parishes are as varied as urban equivalents, each one has its own history of people and place. Some residents have lived in these villages since birth, most have chosen to live here to raise children, enjoy more space or work in peace. Generally, people who live here want to live here. They love the pace and the character of rural life.

But rural life is changing. Our area is being developed to provide large numbers of new houses on the former RAF Alconbury site. The estate will also provide a new primary and Church of England secondary school for the area. The area also attracts commuters who mix home working with a less frequent commute. The potential for new businesses is growing.

In recent decades some villages have lost the focal buildings that used to gather the community: local shops, village school, pub, village hall, free church chapel. Sometimes the church is the last community building. Some of those who rarely worship there feel attached to it, and want to contribute to its continued existence. We seek to build bridges with all who inhabit our villages, welcoming their contribution, whatever form it takes. In turn the clergy are welcomed and valued by more groups than they can possibly attend regularly.

We are a group of ten rural parishes in the western part of Ely diocese. Our locations lie within a twenty miles radius to the Northwest of Huntingdon.



North Leightonstone Benefice

The two villages of Alconbury and Alconbury Weston comprise one parish titled Alconbury cum Weston and this is the largest parish in the benefice. Great Gidding parish is smaller in population than the Alconbury's but stretches over a larger rural area.

Great Gidding parish looks after St John's, Little Gidding which is a Chapel of Ease, and St Andrew's, Steeple Gidding which is under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust.

The Riptons are comprised of the parishes of Abbots Ripton with Wood Walton and Kings Ripton; The Stukeleys, Great Stukeley and Little Stukeley. The other four parishes of Buckworth, Hamerton, Upton with Copmanford and Winwick are smaller villages each with one parish church.

We are proud of who we are, both individually and corporately; we are thankful for the journey we have taken so far and excited to present our Benefice to a new Associate Priest.

OUR PARISHES

ALCONBURY CUM WESTON

St Peter and St Paul's Church

Alconbury cum Weston is the largest parish in the group with a population of around 2500. There are services 4 Sundays in every month in St Peter and St. Paul's Church and our worship ranges from Holy Communion to All Age Worship. The church serves two villages, Alconbury and Alconbury Weston. Alconbury is the larger village and facilities include a village shop and post office, a C of E Primary School, a doctors' surgery, a hairdresser, a Memorial Hall, a pub and a Sports and Social Club. Alconbury Weston has a pub and a deli/farm shop. There are many local clubs to suit all ages ranging from toddler groups to choir to football.

Our LLM for Youth leads a Rock Cafe Group on a weekday evening and the Monthly Sunday Rocks, All Age Service provides an avenue into Church with more informal and Youth orientated worship, including breakfast!

We are very proud to have a toilet and kitchenette, these facilities have enabled us to make people comfortable in church. We run a popular thriving 'Coffee Plus' group of approximately 20 people each week where we share a chat, coffee and cake and this is regularly used by members of the whole village community.

Alconbury has a thriving youth work with different age groups meeting on a weekday evening and the monthly Sunday Rocks All Age Service provides an avenue into church with more informal and youth-oriented worship, including breakfast!

In addition, Alconbury has an Open the Book team which goes into the local Church of England Primary School fortnightly. The school and the church have strong links and a good number of the congregation volunteer regularly in the school and are/have been foundation governors.

We have evolved together over many years and with many permutations but essentially, we are a diverse group of committed Christians who, with our differences, rub along well together.



BUCKWORTH
All Saints' Church

Buckworth is a small rural village with a population of around 100 people. Population change is significant with a 75% turnover during the last 10 years. Most residents no longer work in rural industries. At present there are 8 persons under 16 years of age and about 16 persons over 70 years of age. The only other amenity is the Cricket Club. The Parish Council, Church and Cricket Club work jointly on significant occasions but old links are weakening as life styles change.

All Saints' Church, which stands at the centre of the village, is a grade II listed building and is mentioned in the Domesday Book. Like small churches in the Benefice, we have only one service a

month comprising either Communion or Morning Prayer. Common Worship is used in most of our services. Our regular congregation of 7 to 9 persons is small but committed. At our festival services such as Harvest, Christmas Carols by Candlelight, Easter and Remembrance we are joined by a much larger group of people. This reflects the wider role that the church plays in village life and surrounding area.

All Saints Church hosts a number of social and fund-raising events such as the popular Harvest Supper and Burns Night. Recently Buckworth has linked with the four other northern parishes in the Benefice in holding a joint APCM. The well established Good Friday Walk of the northern parishes is an excellent example of bringing a range of villagers together.

Two challenges we face are; a church with no water, heating or toilet which makes social gatherings and other uses difficult; the reduction of services from 3 to 1 limited funding from collections. In 5 years' time we wish to: keep the church open; actively retain a presence in the rural area; ensure more villagers want the church to survive and make the church financially secure.

THE GIDDINGS

St Michael's Church, Great Gidding

Great Gidding is a small village of around 350 people. There is a good community spirit in our village. Facilities include a pub, a village hall, a general store, a mobile post office and a recreation field. The village is well served by these amenities. Unfortunately, our small C of E Primary school closed in July 2023 due to low numbers making the school no longer viable.

Our congregations are small but we have a long, positive history of being an important part of life in the village. A recent survey completed as part of a Neighbourhood Plan Survey conducted by the Parish Council demonstrated that although church attendance for an average service is small, the building and churchyard are important places for many in the village.

There are 2 services a month at St Michael's Church Great Gidding (Family communion/morning prayer and evensong) plus a weekly service on Tuesday mornings. Our Churchmanship may be described as broad, with a mixture of BCP and Common Worship for services.

St Michael's is respected in the village for its association with music, and there are occasional choral evensongs with visiting choirs and other high quality musical events which draw numbers from the community who enjoy classical and light music. The services for Remembrance Sunday, Harvest, Christmas Carols, Christmas evening are well attended.

St John's Church, Little Gidding

"... You are not here to verify, instruct yourself, or inform curiosity, or carry report. You are here to kneel, where prayer has been valid ..."

Nicholas Ferrar

"Here, the intersection of the timeless moment, is England and nowhere. Never and always."

T.S. Eliot – Little Gidding

St. John's Church is a building of historical significance and attracts many visitors.

Sited nearby, Ferrar House serves as a retreat centre and house of hospitality. Many visitors come to this place both for individual retreats or group visits. Casual visitors, drawn largely through knowledge of T.S.Eliot's poem "Little Gidding", are welcomed and there are many throughout the year. The Church is open during daylight hours. The PCC of Great Gidding are responsible for the running of the church as a 'Chapel of Ease'.

We hold a regular Eucharist on the second Friday of every month, followed by a simple lunch in Ferrar House, which attracts an eclectic congregation. There is also a Eucharist at 11.30 am on the fifth Sunday of the month.



St Andrew's church, Steeple Gidding

This church is under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust and services are held on Good Friday and to remember St. Andrew. The PCC has responsibility for the churchyard.

HAMERTON

All Saints' Church

Hamerton is a small village (the combined civic electoral role with Steeple Gidding is about 100 people) but what it lacks in numbers of people it makes up for in warmth and enthusiasm.

The residents are the usual mix of people who work locally, mainly in agriculture/animal care of some description and of professionals who work out of Cambridge or London. There are a large number of retired people in the village, and only a few houses with small children.

The earliest known reference Hamerton Church dates back to 1103 with the porch windows dating from the 13th Century. The main body of the Church dates from the early 14th Century and the side aisles rebuilt in the 15th century along with a clerestory and the tower. In 1990 the bells were retuned and rehung above a new loft floor and two bells from Wyton Church were added. The Church is regularly used by bellringers from our own tower and further afield.

One of the many features is the rare and beautiful medieval angels which adorn the Church roof. We also have an unusual reed organ used for services. Traditional Church music is an important part of our worship at All Saints.

While we have a small congregation, they are determined to keep our Church thriving and in good shape for future generations. Our priority is creating a large fundraising project to make the building wind and water tight. We intend to improve the Church facilities at the same time, making it a valuable asset for our community, and hope to add kitchen and toilet facilities as part of the project.



THE RIPTONS

Abbots Ripton & Kings Ripton Villages

The villages of Abbots Ripton and Kings Ripton are rural, being 5 miles from Huntingdon, 14 miles from Peterborough and 25 miles from Cambridge. Lord De Ramsey who lives in Abbots Ripton Hall is our Patron and the villages are surrounded by the De Ramsey estate and other local farms. Both villages are very picturesque and have conservation areas.

Abbots Ripton (including Wennington) and Kings Ripton have, respectively, 310 and 190 villagers each. Historically, most people were agricultural workers living in 'Estate' houses; now, many are professionals, commuting to London and Cambridge. Some light industrial areas provide local employment.

Abbots Ripton has a village store, post office and a C of E Primary school with a Montessori preschool. Pupils come from various nearby villages and the churches enjoy a positive relationship with the school. Abbots Ripton has a large, well-equipped village hall with ample outdoor space which can be hired for major events and weddings. There is also a thriving village pub. Kings Ripton has a small village hall, where we hold village events and fortnightly Church community lunches.

St. Andrew's Church, Abbots Ripton

A church has been on the site for over a thousand years and is recorded in the Domesday book. The current building is Grade I listed and dates from the thirteenth Century. The last major restoration was around 1930. Recently, the bells have been electrified. There are 38 on the Electoral Roll, though regular services have an attendance between 8 and 15; these are on the 3rd Sunday of the month. Every 5th Sunday we have a communion service. The school is always welcome and uses the church for end of term services and events.

St. Peter's Church, Kings Ripton

St Peter's Church is also recorded in the Domesday book and is Grade II* listed. The present building dates from the 13th century. Recently, major renovations have been carried out, these include moveable pews and replacing the nave's floor (2012), repairing the churchyard wall (2018) and repairing the roof and leaded windows (2022). Our next project is to restore the damaged external buttresses. There are 7 on the Electoral Roll and regular congregation numbers total 8 to 10, with greater numbers for Christmas Eve Carols and Remembrance Sunday. We have one service a month, on the first Sunday, alternating between Morning Praise and Family Communion.

St. Andrew's Church, Woodwalton

The church in Wood Walton is affiliated with St. Andrew's in Abbots Ripton. There are 220 villagers in Wood Walton. The church was declared redundant in 1979 and has since been in the care of Friends of Friendless Churches. There are occasional services and renovations are ongoing.

The Future

Our two parish churches work closely together, regularly attending each other's services and alternating key events, such as Remembrance Sunday. We are currently exploring how we might continue to enjoy music in our worship, as our joint organist has recently retired. We enjoy hosting an Easter Pilgrimage walk, flower festivals, cream teas, Christmas tree festivals and Harvest Suppers.

We are determined to keep our churches open despite recent challenges, such as Covid. We are a dedicated team, looking for a priest who shares our vision, where our churches are at the heart of the local community. We look forward to growing church attendance through active ministry within our villages. We wish to foster strong relationships with our school and continue to inspire our children's spiritual development through strong pastoral leadership.



THE STUKELEYS

St Bartholomew's Church, Great Stukeley

The existence of the church on the current site is noted in the Domesday Book. In 2022 we celebrated the 802-year anniversary of worship in the current church by holding a medieval fayre, which was a great success.

We have four services a month, two Holy communion and two taken by members of the congregation. When there are five Sundays in the month, we invite village clubs and societies to choose six hymns and join us for a Songs of Praise service.

Visitors to the church tell us they find us friendly and welcoming; we provide coffee and cake after the 9.30 services and a place to sit and chat. We might be small in numbers, but we are big in heart and look out for each other. Also, we take every opportunity to celebrate great occasions.

The village is split into two by a Roman road called Ermine Street and the population is approximately 900. There is no school in the village, the children either attend Alconbury, Alconbury Weald, or Stukeley Meadows Primary schools.

There is a core following in the village that supports church social events even though they do not regularly attend church. Our church attendance numbers have remained steady in spite of losing several parishioners during Covid.

Looking to the future we wish to follow our Benefice plan to develop and nurture our congregation so that they can spread the word of God with confidence building on what is already happening and through new initiatives given out by the Diocesan Synod:

- To encourage families following a baptism to attend our family worship services:
- To reach out to people we have no contact with in the village to encourage them to see the church as more than simply a historical building;
- To give pastoral care to those who require it:

And above all else ensure the church has a future.



St Martin's Church, Little Stukeley

Little Stukeley, with the church in the centre, is a small village with 100 homes and has recently had an influx of young families. The village community is strong and are very supportive of church and village events, running several events together with the village hall. St Martin's church is reasonably small, accommodating up to 80 people; it is very well cared for and very much loved by its PCC of 8 members. We currently have 2 services per month, one Evensong and one Holy Communion morning service.

UPTON and COPMANFORD

Upton stands at the edge of the fens just west of the A1, the hamlet of Coppingford (Copmanford is an ancient spelling) that shares the Parish Council and the church lies to the North. Upton is a small and picturesque village clustered around the church and village pond with a mixture of houses and Coppingford with its open aspect is made up of farms and cottages. Collectively the population is approximately 200 and is a mixture of families and older people. Upton has modern village hall in that is located close to the church. Following church services refreshments are open held in the village hall, and this is also used for some benefice meetings. The Parish Council where possible are very supportive of the importance of the church in the community.

St Margaret's Church

The Church stands in the heart of Upton village and there are signs that there was a church here from before the 12th century. The current mainly stone Grade 2 listed building began with a nave and chancel in the 13th century. A bell tower with a spire and the north aisle were added in the 14th century. Further work was carried out in the 1870's when the north aisle was rebuilt and a south aisle was added. The pews, pulpit and screen were later additions.

Today the church retains many of its original features and is in a well - maintained condition. Six services are usually held during the year to coincide with festivals and other significant occasions. To accommodate families and avoid dark nights most services are held at 3pm.



WINWICK

All Saints' Church



Winwick is a typical rural community with four farms, a small factory and a population of 75 adults and 6 children. The villagers have a mix of occupations and includes mainly retired people and a few families with school age children. It has a village hall which is well used for social events. The relationship between the PCC and the Village Hall Committee are excellent and the proceeds from fund raising events are shared between the two organisations. For many years All Saints has paid its parish share in full. Church services are currently held once per month.

Attendance is limited although the Harvest Festival and Carol Service are well supported. Villagers support the church in a number of ways including taking part in a cleaning rota, baking cakes for 'Sue's Little Shop' (our fundraising stall) and winding the church clock.

As a PCC we would hope to continue to have regular church services in our church and to build on the links we have with other churches in the Benefice. We will continue to integrate the church into the life of the village and hope to find creative ways of using the church building for social events. Everyone, be they a regular churchgoer or not, wants All Saints Church to continue for many years to come to provide a spiritual focus for the village.

BENEFICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In response to the Huntingdon Deanery Development Plan, representatives of the North Leightonstone Benefice parishes have met together initially in groups of five to review where they are in each of the parishes and where they hope to be in the next 2-5 years.

A variety of initiatives, appropriate to the life of each parish, have begun to be undertaken in the following areas: sustainability for the future, outreach into the community, growing new ministers, use of buildings, worship, communications & rural communities.

A full text of this plan as it stands is available on request.

WEST LEIGHTONSTONE BENEFICE.

The Benefice of West Leightonstone is a cluster of seven rural parishes comprising approx. 620 homes, in the rolling countryside of west Cambridgeshire. The benefice straddles the A14 midway between Kettering and Huntingdon, giving excellent connections further afield.

The benefice has a mix of long established families, newcomers and a traveller community. The majority of residents fall into the working middle adulthood range with families. Our elderly population is mainly independent but supported by members of each village community.

Within the benefice is Brington Church of England VC School. Its catchment area matches that of the benefice and it works closely with St Leonard's Day Care, the community pre-school and out of school care provider, next door. 'Village Matters', a monthly magazine containing both church and community news, is delivered to every household in the seven villages.

Church Life

Our churches have maintained their work and worship in recent years through several periods of vacancy and during the Covid crisis, through the active involvement of lay people and visiting clergy. We have recently appointed a new priest in charge, who has sacrificed his stipend to enable us to employ a Children and Families Minister to support us as we seek to grow younger and deeper.

In our ministry team we currently have one Licensed Lay Minister (LLM), one LLM in training, and two trained as Authorised Lay Ministers, in worship leading and pastoral care. In addition, our churchwardens, PCCs and other laity in the parishes deal with day-to-day running of the churches.

Following Covid, we maintained online worship alongside 'in person' services until the end of 2022. We currently hold just one service per Sunday, rotating between Brington, Leighton Bromswold, Molesworth and Catworth, plus a monthly Evensong in Catworth. The other villages host services from time to time, especially for festivals. On fifth Sundays the parishes come together, occasionally at the school, for cafe style worship, songs of praise and other special services.

As a benefice we are generally tolerant of different styles of worship and willing to try fresh expressions of faith. The teams on the ground work co-operatively, supporting each other's worship and social events.

Our Schools

Brington Primary School teaches children from all the benefice villages and beyond. It is rated Good by Ofsted and Outstanding by the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS). Both reports particularly praise the school's supportive community and the behaviour of pupils. Children perform above the national average in SATs (Standard Attainment Tests).

The school has excellent facilities, including a swimming pool, Forest School, large field, well-stocked library, purpose-built all-weather terrace play area for the youngest children, and a dedicated intervention hub dedicated to teaching small group/1:1 booster groups.

The cohort is 100 pupils and there is a full team of teaching and support staff, many of them members of the local community. Previous incumbents have often had close links with the school, leading collective worship and taking part in daily life. Pupils often visit Brington Church for worship and for learning, including RE and local studies.

Brington School has an active community of parents and a busy social media presence. It also plays host to community groups such as Scouts/Cubs, parish council and clubs.

St Leonard's Daycare is a childcare setting, with qualified staff providing a safe and caring environment for children from two years old until school age. They also provide an Out of School Club and Holiday Club for children aged 2 - 11 years, both of which are always well attended. They are situated next door to Brington Church of England Primary School, and enjoy a good relationship with them. St. Leonard's are included in many of the Brington School's activities including church services. Visits from clergy are always welcome.

The Parishes

Brington: All Saints

The village of Brington is a small, friendly and expanding village. Until recently there were some forty houses and about 100 residents, and we now have the addition of a new housing development of approximately 54 homes that we are working hard to bring into the fold of the original village.

The church itself is a small, much-loved and well-maintained building dating back to the 12th century with later embellishments and additions. Fundraising is an integral and popular part of church life, creating social events and village gatherings.

Holy Communion is held at Brington on the first Sunday of each month. Services are well attended and occasional services such as Good Friday, Maundy Thursday, Easter and Christmas attract larger congregations.

A small core of the Brington congregation attends services on other Sundays in the month at the other churches in the benefice, and supports study groups such as Alpha, Pilgrim, Lent and Advent courses. Services held in 2023: 15 plus 1 baptism and 1 funeral.

Bythorn: St Lawrence

Bythorn is an attractive small village of about 150 people surrounding the Church and Village Hall. There is a good community spirit in the village and residents rally round to support each other. The pub closed in 2009 and is unlikely to reopen, however the Village Hall has regular social functions, and these are well attended. There are no other amenities (no shop, school etc).

St Lawrence Church is in the heart of the village. Congregations are often small but can attract a good number for festival services. Occasional special services also are well supported, such as "Hymns and Pimms" and our carol service with mince pies and mulled wine.

The church is a fine medieval Grade 2* building, in generally good repair although there are a host of jobs identified in the latest Quinquennial inspection that could be attended to as funds permit. The entire lead roof was stolen in 2018 and has been replaced with a stainless steel sheet roof. There is a good ring of four bells and these are rung by a band from the village. The majority of the maintenance is carried out by villagers on working party days. The churchyard is tidy, and kept so by volunteer mowers and gardeners.

For the future, the PCC would like to encourage more families and younger people to join in with the church activities. An encouraging development is recent cooperation between church and village hall in hosting joint events, some in the church and some in the hall. The church has no water or toilet facilities, but those in the village hall can be used for events held in the church. Recent events in the church have included a Christmas Tree Festival and a Wedding Dress Festival. A very well attended event in the church was the live streaming (on a big screen) of The Coronation.

The PCC have developed proposals for a re-ordering of the interior, to remove the rear blocks of pews to create a usable space for displays, meetings, and the serving of refreshments etc. The currently congested chancel step will also be opened up by the removal of the lectern plinth and the platform under the priest's chair, which will make it a better venue for performance events. A faculty for these works is to be submitted imminently.

Catworth: St Leonard's

Catworth is the largest village in the benefice, with a population of approximately 370 of which around ninety are youngsters. There are 53 people on the electoral role. It is hoped that the, recently closed, pub will reopen shortly. There is a garden nursery and a garage offering car repairs. The village has a good mix of long standing residents and more recent arrivals. Other amenities include a playing field used regularly for cricket and football, an all-weather pitch, children's play area and a well-used, recently fully refurbished village hall.

St Leonard's church is Grade 1 listed and dates in part from the 13th century. The church buildings are loved not just by worshippers but by many non-churchgoers, who support a range of activities in our church as well as contributing to its maintenance. The Church recently reached its goal to increase the number of bells in the tower from four to six and there is a group of bell ringers from Catworth and surrounding villages, dubbed The Clangers, who ring regularly.

The PCC's mission is to look for ways to nurture faith in the church community and beyond, by making the church a welcoming place that can be used by a wide variety of people, and by overseeing the pastoral needs of the village. As a small parish member of a numerous Benefice the PCC has developed a tradition of self-reliance. A Healthy Church Group supports the PCC in discussing policy, in its pastoral care of the village and in welcoming newcomers. The PCC has ensured that St Leonard's finances, covering both the maintenance of the fabric and the work of the parish, are stable and in a healthy state. The church is in a good state of repair and the PCC is in the process of carrying out all the repairs recommended in the recent Quinquennial inspection.

The Church and the Community

St Leonard's Church is a much-loved focal point of the Community, it supports and is supported by many Village groups. The Church has an important relationship with the Village Hall, which provides facilities for services and other events.

Events, such as Catworth Rocks in the summer and the Silent Auction after Christmas, are attended and enjoyed by all Villagers. For the past 10 years, in early November, the Church and community come together to celebrate St Leonard's Day with a festival of displays, around varying themes, in the Church, plus a craft fayre and refreshments in the Village Hall. The displays in the Church are lovingly created by businesses, Village groups and individuals and are enjoyed by over 200 people each year.

The Future

The church and worship within it have been maintained by a small committed team who are dedicated to the preservation of an ancient village asset and to share their faith within it. The challenges faced by this team have increased and there is recognition that without change both worship and the fabric will decline. They are open to engaging with the surrounding parishes to develop and implement new styles of worship to widen villagers' participation in church life and preserve the building for future generations.

Keyston: St John the Baptist

The parish of Keyston has about seventy five dwellings with a population of approximately 170 people. The age distribution is from infancy to over eighty years. The village lies south of the A14 - halfway between Huntingdon and Kettering.

Keyston is arranged around the Loop Road with the church, the church field, Manor Farmhouse Garden and the "little field", a nature conservation area, at the centre. There are several listed houses. The thatched Pheasant Inn is a well-known restaurant. The Village Hall is a refurbished barn with modern and well-equipped facilities.

The medieval St John the Baptist is Grade 1 listed. It is the largest church in the Benefice. Building commenced in about 1250. The poet, John Donne was once a Rector. The church field is the site of medieval dwellings. The site of the original Manor House lies to the east of the church. Beneath the site are ancient earthworks recorded by English Heritage and the site is now a National Monument. Keyston is listed in the Domesday Survey.

Leighton Bromswold: St Mary's

Leighton Bromswold is a small positive parish with a good percentage of the village involved in the church. Some residents commute to Cambridge and London, while others work locally. Leighton Bromswold has a fantastic community spirit with a full calendar of social events, which brings the villagers together regularly. Older folks are cared for and people genuinely look out for each other.

There is a large PCC, with each person taking responsibility for different areas. We are able to run our own services and have put on many events including cafe church, family services, special services such as the Easter morning sunrise service and breakfast, fund raising concerts, games nights and we provide tours for U3A and the George Herbert Society visits. We hope to make our services warm, friendly, engaging and spiritually enlightening thus attract new and younger congregants. There is a long-running men's prayer breakfast and a weekly home group which give expression to faith and builds community. We support the benefice initiatives, such as Lent Groups and the West Leightonstone working group.

St Mary's Leighton Bromswold was built in 1248 and most famously was rebuilt by George Herbert. Its two pulpits reflect the need to pray as well as preach and is a feature that helped the church gain entry to Simon Jenkins' book, "England's 1,000 best churches". The church benefits from a number of visitors and we try to make people welcome, organising tours of the church, providing information and food for the annual Little Gidding Pilgrimage, presided over recently by Most Rev Rowan Williams. There is a new board highlighting the role of George Herbert and we hope to provide inspiration to those visiting in recognition of his spirituality and poetic talent.

The Grade One building is well cared for and we have recently installed a sound system and a completely new roof. However, we are keen to develop the church further and are progressing with a re-ordering to make it more versatile and warmer. We plan to install running water and a toilet and are hopeful of securing a grant to help us gain some effective heating and a community area at the back of the church. Our hope is to make the building inviting enough to be useable as a community space and ideally to be able to draw more in for social and spiritual activities.

We are working hard to draw in more villagers and have launched a Friends of St Marys group to help with building maintenance. We are hoping to launch an eco-project for the churchyard. .

Around 10 people from the parish attend monthly in the worshipping community and around 40 have attended a service at least once in the last year.

Molesworth: St Peter's

The Village

Molesworth is within a conservation area. The village has 16 Grade II listed buildings, 11 being homes. Locally owned businesses operate from small sites at each end of the village boundaries. The parish comprises 60 households and we've been pleased to welcome two Ukrainian families into our community. Villagers are of all age groups and varying occupations. Some work from home or in the village, some commute, others are employed on Molesworth airbase and some are retired. Several children from the village attend Brington Church of England Primary School.

A well appointed village hall (established 1866) is next to the church and is the focal point for village celebrations and functions. The community group, Friends of Molesworth, hold monthly get togethers such as The Tea Rooms, the Pop-Up-Pub and a Breakfast Club, in addition to events such as an Autumn Fair.

The Church

St Peter's church is Grade II*, being a particularly important building of more than special interest. It dates from the 13th Century, though the current church has some Victorian 'improvements'. The large 15th Century wall paintings, which include a picture of St Christopher, are in remarkable condition given their age. The 1848 organ, made by Wm Hill & Son, one of the main organ builders in England during the 19th century, was repaired and cleaned in January 2024. The church's three bells are regularly rung by the Catworth Clangers, also visiting Bands, to mark church or special occasions.

St Peter's has an active Church Warden. We hold a monthly service plus special services such as the Carol Service, which is well attended and includes readings from the children and adults of the village. This is followed by seasonal refreshments in the village hall with a visit from Santa Claus to distribute gifts to the children, courtesy of Friends of Molesworth.

Old Weston: St Swithin's

The Parish of Old Weston is quite large, however the main populous centres on Main Street and Brington Road. There are approximately 90 dwellings across the Parish.

The pretty medieval Church of St Swithin's stands in the countryside 10 minutes' walk away from the village centre of Old Weston, surrounded by pasture and arable farmland. The church attracted visitors from all over the country and abroad, some looking for relatives buried in the churchyard.

The original church dates from the 13th century and is as old as Notre Dame in Paris. Regrettably, due to structural issues, services have not been held inside St Swithin's church since February 2020. The NATO base at RAF Molesworth continues to hold an Armistice Day service outside to commemorate four Canadian Airmen who are buried in Commonwealth War Graves in the churchyard. This service is extremely well supported by locals and military alike.

Prior to February 2020 the congregation was small but slowly growing and with new houses being built there was a possibility of future growth. The village includes a variety of housing including some social. Villagers include retirees, locally employed & commuters to London, the farming community and families who have lived in Old Weston for several generations. In recent years a number of young families have made Old Weston their home, which is encouraging for the future of the village and Benefice.

No services are held currently, with the exception of the aforementioned Canadian Armistice service and interments following a service elsewhere, both held outside. Since February 2020 the village hall has hosted the annual pet and St Swithin's day services, both of which have been very well attended. The worshippers from Old Weston now travel to the surrounding churches in the Benefice, although numbers have declined since the closure of St Swithin's.

If you have read this far:

You may be intimidated by the size and scope of the work that needs to be done across our 2 benefices. Please do not think that we expect you to tackle this alone, or even to develop the strategic plans that will help us make progress. The scale of the work is why we need you!

You will be working with Rev Philip Howson, Priest in Charge of West Leightonstone Benefice and Rector of South Leightonstone, and Rev Canon Fiona Brampton, Priest in Charge of North Leightonstone benefice. Philip has been in post since 2019, and Fiona since 2019. Between them, they have 40 years of ordained ministry experience. You will be adding capacity to this team, alongside LLMs, ALMs and a full time Children and Families Minister (in the process of being recruited).

We encourage you to pick up the phone, visit our website or come and see us to see if you might find a home and a ministry amongst and alongside us:

Assistant Rural Dean & Incumbent of West & South Leightonstone (line manager for this post) - Rev Philip Howson: 07946 206586 or revphiliphowson@gmail.com

Incumbent of North Leightonstone - Rev Canon Fiona Brampton: 07860 102729 or revfiona@norleigh.org.uk

North Leightonstone Benefice website: <https://norleigh.org.uk/>

West & South Leightonstone Benefice website: <https://www.kymchurch.org.uk/wp2/>

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