



St Francis Church, Banbury



Parish Profile

Archdeacon of Dorchester's Foreword

Dear potential applicants,

I am delighted that you are reading this profile and encourage you to pray about whether this position might be the role to which God is now calling you.

St Francis LEP is seeking a new Minister who will be kind, friendly and welcoming. As a leader centred on Jesus you will bring enthusiasm and even excitement and passion as you inspire the church to creatively engage in mission and wait with anticipation as to what God might do. This established LEP works well with ecumenical partners and a minister who can engage with all ages and particularly children and young people would be appreciated.



You will find a friendly Deanery with supportive and experienced colleagues. Our Episcopal Area and Diocese are in good heart, expectant for all that God will do and thankful for all that God is doing.

The Diocese is committed to a high level of support and training for our clergy. Successful candidates who are taking up posts of first responsibility will be expected to participate in Pastoral Supervision Groups, further details can be found at <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/ministry/continuing-ministerial-development/pastoral-supervision-groups>

Please pray about whether you might be the right minister to join us. If you decide to apply, I would be delighted to receive your application for this important position and look forward to the possibility of welcoming you as a potential colleague to partner in the gospel.

With every blessing,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "David Tyler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and a long tail.

Venerable David Tyler, Archdeacon of Dorchester

Welcome to Deddington Deanery

Deddington Deanery is one of the larger and more diverse deaneries in the Diocese of Oxford. In all, there are twenty-nine parishes, with thirty-four churches (in twelve Benefices). The resident population exceeds 76,000, with c.50,500 in the largest town, Banbury which is increasing rapidly with new housing around the edges.

The clergy Chapter includes eleven incumbents and others, many of whom are retired and enjoy offering help where needed. Incumbents get together frequently, often over an informal lunch, and you will find a lot of support amongst colleagues. The whole chapter (retired and associate clergy, Licensed Lay Ministers) meets 3-4 times a year and partners are also invited to social gatherings.

One of our main aims is to provide networks of mutual support for each other. We have also recently been re-engaging with our Deanery MAP to find ways to work together in our worship, ministry and outreach.

Deanery Synod

The Deanery Synod meets up to four times a year at different venues throughout the deanery and in recent years these have had a more relaxed feel so while still purposeful they give an opportunity to learn from and support the different parishes. There is often a keynote speaker or a workshop to consider topics of mutual interest to which synod reps are invited to bring guests.

We have a new Area Dean and Lay Chair who hope to follow in the example of their predecessors. The excellent Deanery Treasurer is a long-standing servant of the Deanery. The Standing Committee is increasingly taking a strategic approach to the work of the deanery and trying to free up synod's agenda to provide space for keynote speakers which support areas of our Mission Action Plan. Recently, we have chosen to focus on Communication, New Housing, Inter-generational Belonging and The Environment.

Once a year we aim to have a Deanery Morning on a Saturday to which all the deanery are invited. In the previous two years we have had keynote speakers on various topics. In 2025 we had a Quiet Day.

We will be praying as you consider your application to join us at St Francis Church which holds a warm place in all our hearts.

Alicia Baker
Area Dean



Some of the people who attend St Francis Church

Seeking a Vicar to Lead with Compassion, Vision, and Community Spirit

We are a local church for Ruscote, Hardwick and Hanwell Fields in Banbury – we are officially an ecumenical partnership formed from the Church of England, Methodist and United Reformed churches but in practice we have a wide variety of denominations represented. We also have a long-standing partnership with the Roman Catholic parish of St Joseph s. This is reflected in the various gatherings within the life of the church and the people who attend St Francis Church, who enjoy the ecumenical flavour of the church activities and worship.

We are blessed with a building less than 35 years old which includes a hall annex and a flexible worship area, all with easy access. The worship area includes a baptistry. We have internet access and use a screen for services. There is generous parking, and the grounds - which feature a developing Community Garden - have earned us a bronze Eco award.

Our Vision

We are an inclusive Ecumenical community – encouraging difference, welcoming diversity and seeking unity where we can. We aim to **Make Jesus Known** in all we do and say. Together we seek to share the values of Hospitality, Commitment, Learning, Worship and Prayer, Community and Diversity.

At St Francis, our heartfelt desire is to be a church that is known and not hidden—a visible presence in Banbury. Although some still remark, “I never knew that was a church,” our prayer is that our shared life will shine ever more clearly, as a beacon of welcome and

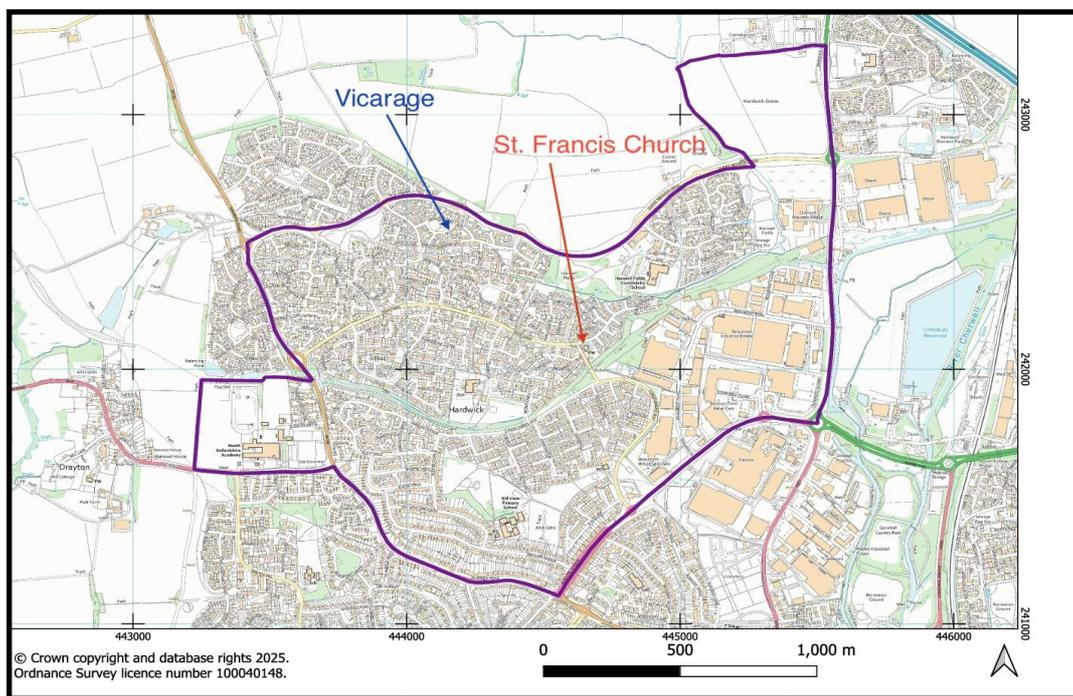
Christian faith and hope within the community. We are a place of welcome, through our worship, Drop-In sessions, Tots group, Wellbeing Campfire and every aspect of our ministry; we strive to be recognised as a church where everyone is welcome. We want to be a Place of Transformation; we endeavour to meet people wherever they are in life, supporting and encouraging them as they grow into the individuals and community that God calls them to be in Jesus.

Our Parish

St Francis is one of 28 parishes in the Deddington Deanery and is the second largest in terms of adult population.

2021 Census Snapshot of the Parish (Adults 18+):

- Total population: 11,536
- Christian: 5,220 (45%)
- No religion: 4,708 (41%)
- Muslim: 629 (5%)
- Other faiths combined: 979 (9%)



Banbury has experienced significant growth, with new housing estates welcoming many families and individuals from diverse backgrounds. Our congregation reflects this richness, displaying a wide range of ethnic diversity.

There are twenty-seven names on the Electoral Roll. There are 30 Anglicans, six Methodist and six other members. This means that there are 42 names on the Common Roll of Members in total.

The average attendance on a Sunday morning is 35 and the attendance at Tuesday's Communion is about 16. There are people from almost all age groups, from toddlers to well-retired!

Our Context

Banbury is a rapidly-growing market town known for its high-tech businesses, with excellent transport connections—London is just an hour away by train, Birmingham lies to the north, and the M40 is conveniently close by. The town boasts:

- A town centre featuring independent shops, restaurants, and cultural events
- Two modern and lively shopping areas which feature nationally known chain stores
- Festivals, street food fairs, and music nights, all supported by the Town Council. <https://banbury.gov.uk/>
- Robust community initiatives, such as Street Pastors and Town Chaplains <https://streetpastors.org/locations/banbury/> <https://chaplaincy4banbury.org/>
- Ample green spaces, community gardens, and a canal-side nature reserve
- An extensive range of schools, sports clubs, and leisure facilities

Banbury is a town of contrasts—both historic and modern, prosperous yet with areas of deprivation. Whichever direction you travel, you are soon surrounded by beautiful countryside.

Our Worship & Spiritual Life

Sunday Worship: Our congregation is welcoming and diverse, united by a strong sense of community. We usually have an all-age/café church service on the first week of the month, communion on the second and fourth Sundays, and the third Sunday is usually a non-communion morning worship service. If there are five weeks in the month the fifth Sunday takes this form, while the third Sunday becomes another all-age service. Preachers can be from any of the partner denominations.

Tuesday Morning: Our weekly communion service reflects our various ecumenical partnerships, with each week highlighting a different collaboration. The congregation appreciates the variety of the different worship styles.

Home Groups: The Apprentice Group meets on Tuesday evenings, focusing on discipleship and mission. The Thursday Afternoon Group gathers during the day, currently following the 24/7 Prayer Course to deepen both prayer and mutual support.

Forest Church: In 2025, Saint Francis Church launched Forest Church for primary-aged children. We gather monthly in our Community Garden to explore, encounter, and worship. Each session centres on a Bible story, feast day, or season. Our prayer is that children encounter God as we explore and have fun in His creation, with their sense of wonder turning to adoration.

Wellbeing Campfire: We welcome a variety of people who have little or no church contact to engage with a monthly reflection and discussion and we have attracted a number of teenagers and young adults living within the parish to attend.

Prayer Group: Twice a month there is a prayer meeting for the purpose of praying about the activities and people of the church, the town and concerns on the wider, world stage.

As a church, we are eager to grow in prayer, discipleship, and confidence as we share our faith.

The SCC reached a consensus in favour of adopting the Prayers of Love and Faith if requested, following a whole-church consultation and discussion process. We recognise that our congregation contains a range of sincerely held views, including some that differ from this outcome. We are committed to continue approaching these differences with honesty, grace, and respect. Although our perspectives vary, we remain united; throughout the vacancy our church family has shown remarkable unity, supporting one another and continuing to serve faithfully. This shared commitment is a strength we value deeply.

Our parish profile reflects St Francis' longstanding identity as a community shaped by mission. This naturally brings us into thoughtful conversations and encourages us to engage with complex issues in a spirit of openness and faithfulness. Anyone joining us will find a congregation committed to discerning together what it means to live out the gospel in our context. The recent ecumenical review reflected this positively, showing a congregation that works well together and continues to grow in its ministry. Over the past months our activities—Drop-In, Experience Christmas, Distraction, Forest Church, house groups, and regular prayer—have demonstrated our desire to make a meaningful impact locally. We continue to walk together as a community seeking to honour one another and to build up the life and mission of St Francis.

Our Community Engagement

Community Drop-In: St Francis Church Community Drop-In was founded on a vision. It is not a club, but a place for any adults of any faith or none to drop in for hot drinks,

biscuits and snacks and a warm welcome. It is timed to dovetail with the Tuesday communion, being open from 11am until 3.30pm, and is run by a team of dedicated Christians. We have various activities; board games, quizzes and seated exercise can feature. People come and go at different times, as they need. It is a warm, safe place to be befriended and accepted, with a listening ear, a shoulder to cry on and a loving prayer if wanted. It is also a council-recognised Warm Space.

Tots: This has been running, in one form or another, for many years. It offers a safe space for parents and carers as well as their youngsters, with an awareness of the added extras a church community can offer. It would be wonderful to develop an involvement of Tots attenders in church activities and festivals.

Musical Memories started in 2021 as a church sponsored group. It is a group for people with dementia where music is used to enhance their wellbeing. We meet on the first and third Mondays of the month from 10.30 to 11.45am.

After tea, coffee and chat, we sing popular and familiar songs of different genres. The most rewarding songs are those with a well-known chorus. Attendance often reaches 30, and we have also recently been joined by residents and carers from Green Pastures nursing home. We have our own keyboard musician which makes such a difference.

St. Francis' Church is an ideal venue for this group; warm, comfortable and with all the facilities we could require. Long may we continue!

Schools: Over the years, St Francis Church has developed strong connections with local Junior and Infant Community schools – Hanwell Fields and Hillview. These relationships include school visits during festival times, supporting RE lessons and assemblies, leading Open the Book and Prayer Spaces, and offering pastoral support for school staff. Notable events are "Experience Christmas" and "Experience Easter" for Year Six pupils, where volunteers guide children through interactive stations to bring the Christmas or Easter story to life. We welcomed two primary schools in December and were invited to join Community Carols at one of the schools.

<https://hanwellfieldscommunityschool.org.uk/>

<https://hillview-school.co.uk/>

'Distraction' Community & Youth Project (CIC): Launched in 2025 and hosted at St Francis, this project empowers young people through creativity, wellbeing, and leadership. It provides open-access youth clubs, mentoring, creative programmes such as a film club, a book club and gardening opportunities, holiday activities, accredited training, and partnerships with schools and local services. 'Distraction' is not merely a user of the premises but is viewed as a vital part of our mission.

(Check out our FB or Instagram page)

Foodbank: For over twelve years, St Francis has hosted a Trussell Trust Foodbank centre, staffed by a dedicated team of volunteers from St Francis and other local churches. What

began with a single cupboard has grown into a major operation, offering two weekly sessions, a large storage space, and dedicated volunteer teams. It remains a lifeline for many in our community.



Thursday Foodbank at St Francis Church

Our facilities are regularly used by other community and well-being groups, such as Guides and Brownies, OXPIP (Oxford Parent Infant Project – a charitable counselling service for parents of babies and toddlers) and Gamblers Anonymous

Our People

St Francis is blessed with:

- A faithful congregation, enriched by cultural diversity
- Dedicated lay leaders and volunteers supporting worship, pastoral concern, and outreach
- Strong partnerships with charities, schools, and community groups

The Vicar We Seek

We are praying for a vicar who embodies the following qualities:

- **Prayerful and Spirit-led:** Someone who inspires us in both worship and discipleship
- **Compassionate and inclusive:** Welcoming people of all ages, backgrounds, and cultures
- **Collaborative and empowering:** Encouraging lay leadership and working ecumenically

- **Visionary and outward-looking:** Supporting us to grow in faith, service, and sustainability

We seek a vicar who will journey with us in this vision—one who will inspire, empower, and join with our other partner ministers in leading us into the next chapter of our shared life.

Partner Clergy:



The Superintendent Minister of the Banbury Methodist Circuit is part of the Ministry team. Currently this is Rev David Alderman, although this will change when he retires over the summer. A new Superintendent will take up post from 1st September 2026.



Rev Wayne Hawkins has oversight on behalf of the URC for all LEPs across the Wessex Synod, including St Francis Church.



The silly picture of the congregation!

Opportunities Ahead

With God's guidance and under new leadership, we see many opportunities to:

- Deepen our discipleship, prayer life and pastoral care
- Strengthen our ministry through the Drop-In and outreach to the local community
- Develop our ministry among children, young people, and families
- Build upon our work with local schools and the Distraction Project

We acknowledge that the future will bring new opportunities, and what we are able to achieve will depend on the gifts, calling, and availability of those who step forward, both lay and ordained. We do not expect our next vicar to do everything, but rather to encourage, empower and support the people of St Francis in living out their faith, and to help us make the best connections and find practical solutions to make things work.

Some initiatives, such as Alpha and Leading Your Church into Growth (L.Y.C.I.G.), have borne fruit in the past. The 'Shape' course has been run successfully several times, leading to people discerning gifts they had not previously recognised. We would hope to be open to further initiatives which might help us 'grow' as individuals. As Scripture reminds us, "For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). We also hold fast to God's promise: "Behold, I am doing a new thing" (Isaiah 43:19).

We are keen to discern what God is doing in this time and in this place—perhaps connected with the emerging “Distraction Community & Youth Project”—and to join in with His work here and now.



Wellbeing Campfire

Practical Details

- A modern vicarage is provided. This has three floors, five bedrooms, a double garage and a garden and faces an attractive green space. See further photos at the end of the profile.



- Strong lay support and mutual care; we have a dedicated Parish Safeguarding Officer, SCC (Shared Congregational Council instead of just a PCC) and a Churchwarden. There is also the support of local ministers within the area as part of our ecumenical basis.
- Commitment to clergy wellbeing, including time and space for rest and retreat, with the potential for informal personal support if this would be appreciated. We are also conscious of the need to support the appointee in maintaining work/life boundaries as their role is on a house for duty basis

Closing Invitation

St Francis is a church with a big heart, a strong sense of community, and a deep desire to grow in faith and service. We are ready for a vicar who will share our journey, nurture our gifts, and offer compassion and vision within our shared ministry.

If you feel called to join us in this mission, we would be delighted to hear from you.



Peg characters created to reflect our community

Further pictures of the vicarage and its setting:



The kitchen



The sitting room



One of the bedrooms



The ensuite bathroom



The back of the house



Part of the green facing the front door