

**THE  
BENEFICE OF  
SHRIVENHAM  
AND ASHBURY  
DIOCESE OF OXFORD**

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‘Mirroring the Hospitality of God’

**ASHBURY**

St Mary the Virgin

**BOURTON**

St James

**COMPTON BEAUCHAMP**

St Swithun

**FERNHAM**

St John the Evangelist

**LONGCOT**

St Mary the Virgin

**SHRIVENHAM**

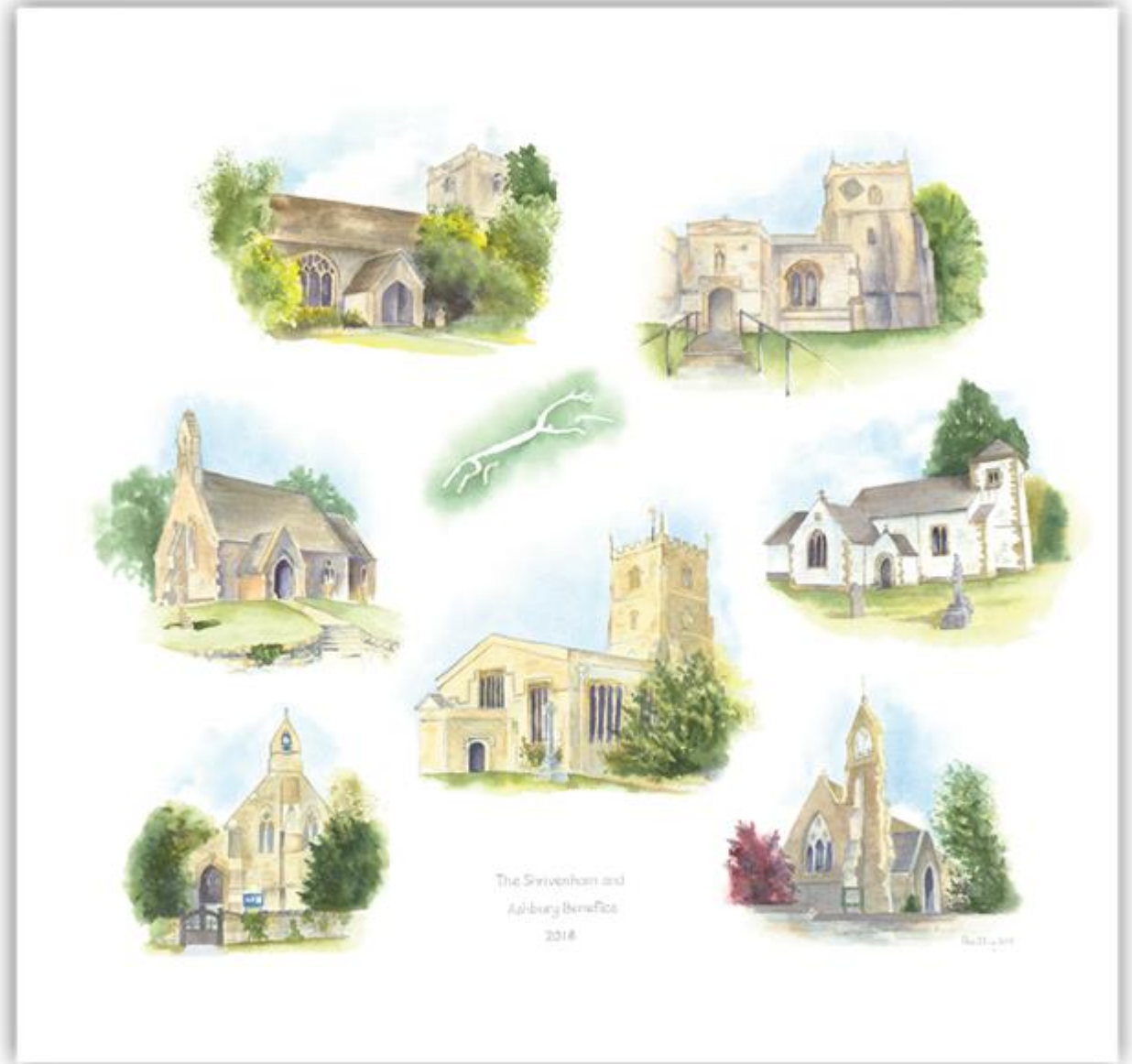
St Andrew

**WATCHFIELD**

St Thomas

# CONTENTS

Welcome	<a href="#">3</a>
Foreword by the Bishop of Dorchester	<a href="#">4</a>
Our Benefice	<a href="#">5</a>
Our Parishes	<a href="#">6</a>
Mission and outreach in our communities	<a href="#">7</a>
Your role	<a href="#">9</a>
The support we offer you	<a href="#">10</a>
Our worship	<a href="#">11</a>
Our schools	<a href="#">14</a>
Our villages and churches	<a href="#">16</a>
A view from our Vicar	<a href="#">23</a>
St Mary's House	<a href="#">24</a>
Our Deanery	<a href="#">25</a>
Job Description	<a href="#">26</a>



Original artwork by Pam Tilling

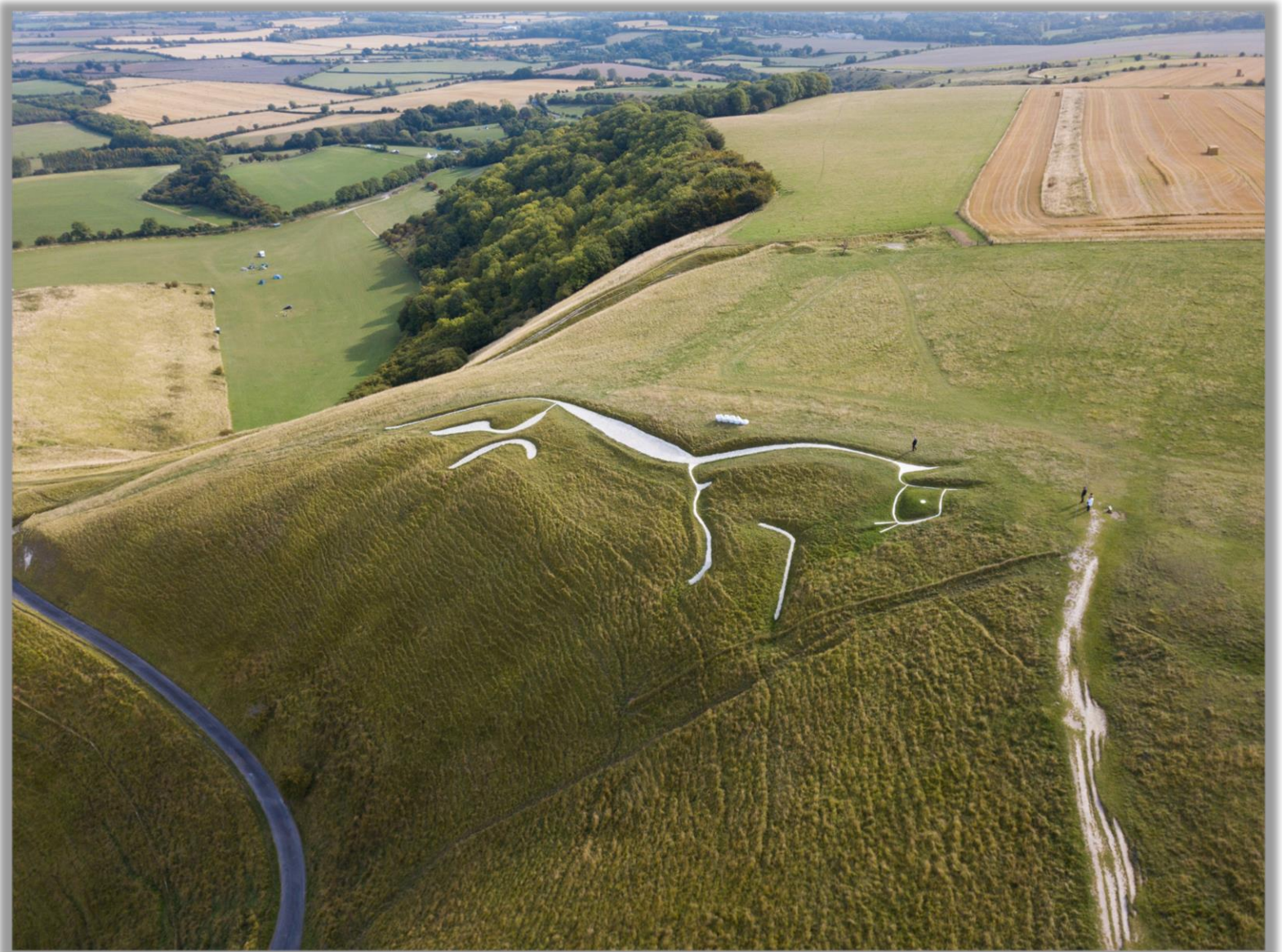
# WELCOME

Thank you for taking the time to read about life in our Benefice. We think it is a lovely place to live and work and hope you will too!

On the Ridgeway, yet within easy reach of both Swindon and Oxford, the Vale of White Horse consists of small towns, villages and hamlets and of course the Benefice reflects that. The scenery is quite stunning in places. It almost goes without saying that people are friendly and hard working; the children benefit from good schools and there are many leisure opportunities within easy reach.

As is true everywhere, we live in an age of change, including in employment, education, housing and transport, but the Vale is well placed to respond to this. Our churches are doing the same so that they can continue to play a vital part in the lives of the communities they serve, providing opportunities for worship both in person and online.

We hope this profile will bring our mission and congregations to life for you and will encourage you to want to find out more. Do visit our [website](#), or contact the [Vicar](#) or the [Area Dean](#) for an informal chat about the post.



# FOREWORD

## THE RT. REV'D GAVIN COLLINS, BISHOP OF DORCHESTER

Dear potential applicants,

I am delighted that you are reading this profile. It was with great joy that we recently appointed Rev'd Patrick Mabunu to the post of Vicar. We encourage you to pray about whether this House for Duty position might be the role to which God is now calling you, to work alongside him and the people of the Benefice.

Hospitality is the watchword of the Benefice of Shrivenham and Ashbury. These parishes, set in stunning surroundings, continue to seek to mirror the hospitality of God into all areas of their communities: through their pastoral care, their involvement in village life and organisations and their invitation to people to explore the Christian faith.

I particularly appreciate how they articulate this vision through the three strands of welcoming, reaching out and caring. This guides them in all they do and demonstrates their thoughtful and prayerful approach to ministry and mission.

The Benefice is clear about the challenges they face and are praying for someone who will be able to support the Vicar and this vision, but also bring the skills to aid its development: helping bring about change, demonstrating the relevance of God's Word today, and the ability to engage with and encourage all.

As they pray for the person God will be leading to this role, they are also clear about the hospitality they will offer that person: a comfortable Vicarage, time for holidays and retreats to enable a balance between work and leisure, and the support of a dedicated team that includes Churchwardens, Benefice Administrator, active retired clergy and lay worship leaders.

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.

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 key position and look forward to the possibility of welcoming you as a potential colleague and partner in the Gospel.

With every blessing

+ *Gavin Dorchester*



# OUR BENEFICE



Photo © Sally-Ann Spence

The Vale is open downland, with hills and agricultural land, and some areas of outstanding natural beauty. Its famous White Horse is believed to be the oldest in Britain. The Ridgeway Path provides a backbone for the area with uninterrupted views over the countryside. The villages grew up in the 18th Century to serve local farms, while Shrivenham was a centre of trade and shopping for the area.

Put simply, we see our role within this part of the Vale as one of mirroring the hospitality of God to the people who live here. To this end, six of our churches are open daily to visitors. The exception is St John in Fernham which also serves as the village hall and is home to a pre-school which is open from Monday to Friday during term time.

As elsewhere in the south of England, the area is currently experiencing large scale growth which requires us to be flexible in responding to change without losing sight of traditional values. We hope in this way to continue to serve the whole community for many years to come.

The seven churches in the Benefice are grouped together into four Parishes, which helps ensure a manageable workload for the clergy. The Associate Vicar lives in St Mary's House in Ashbury and shares responsibilities and duties across the Benefice.

## **The 4 Parishes**

- ❖ Ashbury
- ❖ Compton Beauchamp
- ❖ Longcot with Fernham
- ❖ Shrivenham with Watchfield and Bourton

# OUR PARISHES

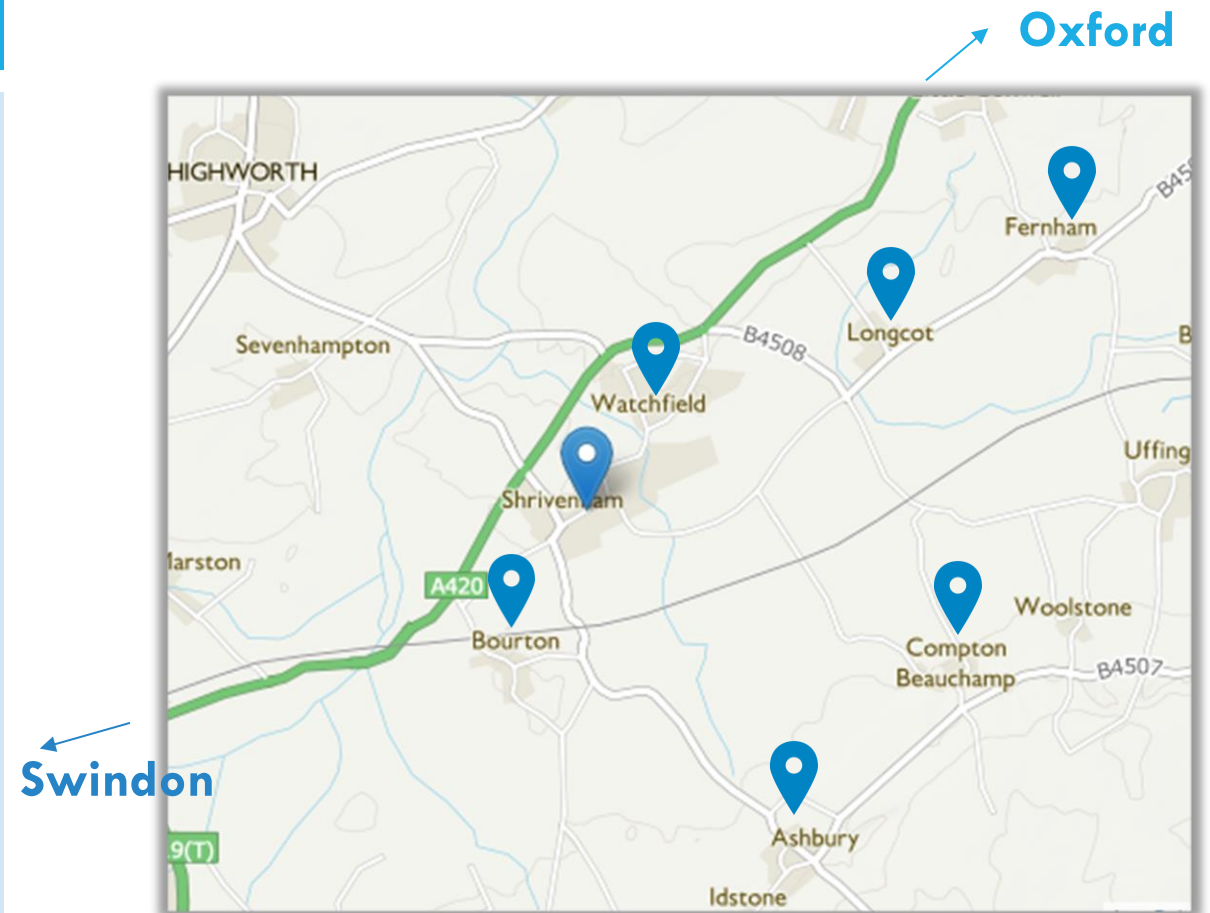
Our parish churches span the breadth of Anglican tradition, with modern, traditional, and non-traditional services found in the regular pattern of worship. The Benefice has a growing lay ministry team who are encouraged to play a full part in all aspects of the churches' life and mission.

Our churches are actively engaged in the life of the villages they serve, working alongside other community and voluntary organisations. Many parishioners are prepared to support fund-raising events and other activities associated with the church as their contribution to our ministry and mission, even if they are not regular worshippers.

The largest Parish is Shrivenham, together with the villages of Watchfield and Bourton. Shrivenham is a large village with a population of about 4000 and there are many new houses under construction with more planned. Watchfield is home to the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, which has its own Multi-Faith Centre and Chaplain. It is also home to the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Centre and the Museum of Army Chaplaincy. Bourton is a hamlet with a population of about 250 and an independent prep school (Pinewood).

The Parish of Ashbury has 600 residents including the Associate Vicar (whose home is in the heart of the village). The Parish of Longcot includes Fernham with populations of about 620 and 280 respectively. Several housing developments are planned for both Parishes over time.

The Parish of Compton Beauchamp is a small community of about 50 and the church is located within the grounds of Compton House.



# MISSION AND OUTREACH IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Mission and outreach are a key element of the Benefice which has a culture of engaging with the wider community, trying new ideas and adapting them in the light of experience. Many of the current activities grew out of creative thinking from committed members of our congregations.

We have a very good relationship with the three church primary schools, but (like other churches in the Deanery) we find that engagement with older children is more difficult. Locally, we would like to build on our existing contacts to set up a youth group, ideally as a joint project with the local Methodist Church.

The list below and on the following page gives you a feel for what we are currently doing but we'd love to be able to do more, and we're excited by the prospect of someone joining us and bringing their ideas.

- ❖ Monthly Messy Church in Shrivenham – a chance to be creative, hear bible stories, eat hot dogs and have fun
- ❖ Café Inspire – a monthly Saturday morning drop-in run jointly with the Methodists. Aimed primarily at young families, although all are welcome to enjoy coffee, cake and bacon rolls in Shrivenham Sports Pavilion
- ❖ Pet services – a different way of reaching out to the village communities in Ashbury, Watchfield and Bourton
- ❖ Weekly Wednesday study groups in person and online
- ❖ Alpha Courses – including Alpha Youth for confirmation classes
- ❖ Lent Courses – we have used the Diocesan 'Come and See' courses for the past four years



# MISSION AND OUTREACH IN OUR COMMUNITIES

- ❖ ASK (Acting in Simple Kindness) – pastoral care initiative based in Shrivenham which includes a monthly mid-week Communion service followed by refreshments. ASK also organizes our annual All Souls service.
- ❖ Benefice Pilgrimage – an occasional pilgrimage between two of our churches, including a service and afternoon tea, ending with a visit to a local pub
- ❖ Coffee mornings – often supporting local organisations and charities, and providing a chance to bring people together and, yes, if you're noticing a theme of cake in many of our activities, you're not wrong!
- ❖ Stations of the Nativity – an Ashbury tradition of more than 40 years regularly attracting over 200 residents and visitors
- ❖ Monthly Men's Breakfast in Shrivenham
- ❖ Monthly Bible Breakfast group in Ashbury
- ❖ Joint Services with the Methodist congregation in Shrivenham

## The churches also provide support to

- ❖ Baby and toddler group – meets weekly in St Andrew's in term-time
- ❖ Local foodbank as a collection point
- ❖ Monthly Tea-time Fellowship in Longcot
- ❖ Bereavement Café – a monthly drop-in for people who have lost loved ones, whether recently or in the past





# MIRRORING THE HOSPITALITY OF GOD

## Your Role

### We see you supporting this by:

#### Welcoming

- ❖ Engaging actively and pastorally with our communities
- ❖ Meeting the challenge of a growing and changing population within the Benefice
- ❖ Embracing all channels of communication with our congregations including digital and social media thus ensuring that no one is left out or forgotten

#### Reaching out

- ❖ Taking every opportunity to share the gospel message through words and actions
- ❖ Demonstrating a strong commitment to nurturing and encouraging everyone wherever they are on life's journey
- ❖ Sustaining and building on the existing church involvement within the life of our villages

#### Caring

- ❖ Supporting each other and the varied needs of our congregations on our journey in faith, creating a safe environment underpinned by effective pastoral care
- ❖ Providing a variety of opportunities for worship, prayer, bible study and fellowship for people of all ages and backgrounds
- ❖ Being flexible and embracing the different liturgical styles within our churches

### We hope you will bring:

- ❖ The skills to develop the role of the church alongside other community and voluntary organisations
- ❖ The ability to accept, encourage and facilitate change where necessary
- ❖ A good working knowledge of engaging with others via digital and social media channels
- ❖ A passion for sharing God's word and demonstrating its relevance in today's world
- ❖ The ability to reach out and engage with people of all ages and from all walks of life
- ❖ A strong presence beyond our churches into the wider communities
- ❖ The ability to encourage everyone's ministry, being comfortable with traditional and contemporary approaches to worship
- ❖ A collaborative style, supporting the Incumbent, trusting and inspiring our team of lay leaders as part of the ministry team.
- ❖ A flexible approach to time management and the ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance



# THE SUPPORT WE OFFER YOU

We very much look forward to welcoming you. There will be time for holidays and retreats, and we trust you to manage your time to meet the needs of the post, recognising that some weeks will be busier than others. We are supportive of flexible working patterns and of ensuring you maintain a balance between work and leisure. Expenses are covered by the PCCs.

Pictured clockwise from top right, the existing Benefice Ministry Team includes :

- ❖ Vicar – [Rev'd Patrick Mabhunu](#)
- ❖ Benefice Administrator & Safeguarding Officer – [Lucy Laird](#)
- ❖ Our team of lay worship leaders
- ❖ Other clergy active in the Benefice, usually taking services on a monthly basis :
  - ❖ Rev'd Geoff Price (retired with PTO)
  - ❖ Rev'd Robin Cardwell (retired with PTO)



All four parishes have strong PCCs with committed and capable members who assist with the many tasks required to ensure the smooth running of the Benefice. Parish Share is paid in full.

# OUR WORSHIP – Sunday by Sunday

We are proud to be able to offer a variety of different service styles and the typical pattern of Sunday services at the different churches is shown below. Fernham St John is a Festival Church, with the main services held at Christmas, Easter, Harvest and Remembrance, and occasional Benefice services. Leadership is shared amongst the team, so no one would normally be expected to lead more than two services on any given Sunday. Services of the Word are usually lay-led. We encourage baptisms as part of our main services but are happy to discuss holding them at other times. One of the services of Holy Communion is also live streamed each Sunday.

	<b>Ashbury St Mary</b>	<b>Bourton St James</b>	<b>Compton Beauchamp St Swithun</b>	<b>Longcot St Mary</b>	<b>Shrivenham St Andrew</b>	<b>Watchfield St Thomas</b>
<b>1st Sunday</b>	11am Holy Communion			9.30am Holy Communion	7.45am Holy Communion (BCP)  10.30am Family Service  5.30pm Compline & Benediction	9.30am Holy Communion (BCP)
<b>2nd Sunday</b>	11am Morning Prayer		9am Holy Communion (BCP)	9.30am Morning Prayer	10.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Matins
<b>3rd Sunday</b>	11am Morning Worship (includes Iona and Taizé)	11am Holy Communion		9.30am Holy Communion	10.30am Morning Worship	9.30am Matins
<b>4th Sunday if a month has 5 Sundays</b>	11am Holy Communion		9am Matins	9.30am Morning Prayer	10.30am Holy Communion	9.30am Holy Communion (BCP)
<b>Last Sunday</b>	Benefice Holy Communion Service alternates between the churches on the last Sunday of the month					

# OUR WORSHIP – Monthly and Midweek

In addition to our Sunday services, we have a number of monthly and midweek services both in person and online. We also hold services on Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Easter Eve, Ascension Day and Corpus Christi.

<b>1st Wednesday</b>	2pm ASK Holy Communion *	Shrivenham, St Andrew Also live streamed
<b>2nd Wednesday</b>	9am Morning Prayer	Shrivenham, St Andrew Also live streamed
<b>2nd Thursday</b>	10am Holy Communion (Iona)	Ashbury, St Mary Also live streamed
<b>Last Thursday</b>	11am ASK* Prayer Tree	Shrivenham, St Andrew
<b>One Thursday a month</b>	3.15pm Messy Church	Shrivenham, St Andrew
<b>3rd Friday</b>	5.30pm Worship & Praise	Shrivenham, St Andrew
<b>1st Saturday</b>	10am Family Service	Bourton, St James
<b>2nd Saturday</b>	10am Café Inspire (joint initiative with the Methodist Church)	Shrivenham Sports Pavilion

\* ASK (Acting in Simple Kindness)  
A pastoral care initiative based in Shrivenham (see page [8](#))

**Online only at 9am, mostly lay-led**  
Tuesday – Morning Prayer, Thursday – Matins



# OUR WORSHIP

## Singing and Ringing

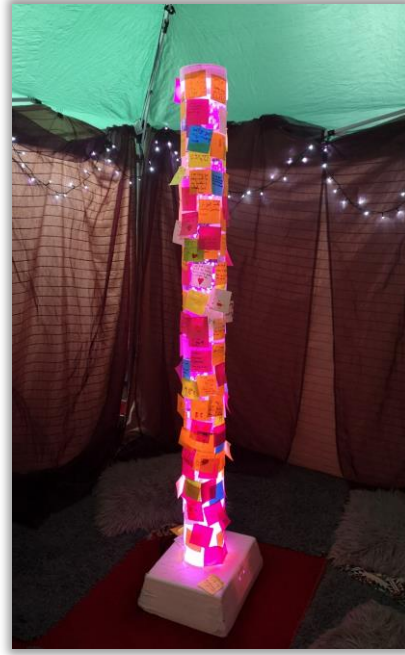
### Choir

- ❖ Drawn from across the Benefice
- ❖ Open to all – no auditions and no need to read music
- ❖ Soprano, alto, tenor and bass voices/parts
- ❖ Supports services in all our churches
- ❖ Choral Evensong
- ❖ Rehearses on Thursday evenings
- ❖ Supports fundraising concerts and events

### Bellringing

- ❖ Three active towers (6, 8 and 10 bells)
- ❖ Centre for teaching at Longcot
- ❖ Weekly practices
- ❖ Compete in regional Striking Competitions
- ❖ Handbell Group – supports Christmas services in all our churches
- ❖ Belleplate Group at Café Inspire
- ❖ Portable mini-ring of bells – supports prayer spaces (see page [14](#)) and events, and is a useful aid for recruiting new ringers





# OUR SCHOOLS

We are blessed to have five excellent schools within the Benefice, and it is a joy to be part of helping and encouraging students, staff and families on their faith journeys. The headteachers in our three church schools ([Ashbury](#), [Longcot](#), and [Shrivenham](#)) value the regular, visible church presence shown throughout the year in collective worship and Prayer Space.

In the church schools, the weekly vicar-led assemblies are linked to the Roots & Fruits programme, exploring the Christian value for the term as well as the major festivals of the Christian year.

We have run Open the Book (OTB) in the past and hope to do so again.

Of course, it's not just the the ministry team who engage with schools - members of our congregations also support them by serving on the local governing bodies, or by volunteering to help with craft activities or assisting with reading. Overall, our consistent and varied engagement with schools helps faith and Christian values to become embedded: a way of being, not a bolt-on or a box to be ticked for SIAMS.

We also work with BeSpace and iSingPop to provide additional activities :

[BeSpace](#) : creates prayer spaces in our churches and schools, providing an opportunity for students to explore Christian prayer and reflection in a safe, enjoyable and interactive way which is accessible to those of other faiths or no faith at all. The staff enjoy it, too.

[iSingPop](#) : a singing, performing, and resourcing project that helps children engage in collective worship in school, church, and at home.



# OUR SCHOOLS

## [Ashbury with Compton Beauchamp CE\(A\) Primary School](#)

A small village school of around 70 pupils.

## [Longcot and Fernham CE Primary School](#)

A slightly larger school with around 140 pupils serving two villages.

## [Shrivenham CE Primary School](#)

In 2024, the largest of our schools with around 200 pupils, moved into a brand-new purpose-built building on one of the new housing developments in order to accommodate growing pupil numbers.

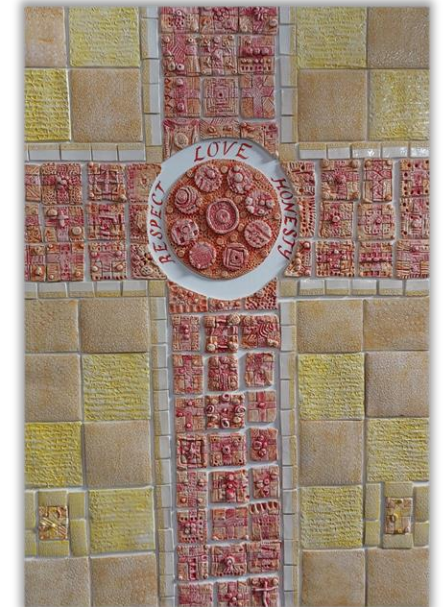
## [Watchfield Primary School](#)

Its proximity to the Defence Academy means that there are a number of service families and families from overseas. Although not a church school, Watchfield has supported prayer spaces during which students explore aspects of Christian prayer with the ministry team.

## [Pinewood School](#)

An independent day and boarding school for children aged 3-13 in Bourton. The school has strong links to St James' Church, using it regularly for services and prayer space, supported by the Vicar and ministry team as needed.

With the exception of Pinewood, all our schools are part of the [Cambrian Learning Trust](#), a successful multi-academy trust. The majority of our primary school children move on to [Faringdon Community College](#) which is also part of the Trust.



# ASHBURY

## THE VILLAGE

The village has many picturesque thatched cottages and listed buildings including Ashbury Manor, which was originally a monastic grange. The Parish also includes the hamlets of Odstone, Kingstone Winslow and Idstone, as well as the National Trust property of Ashdown House and its cottages. There are currently approximately 600 residents. Social events and courses are held in the Village Hall, another listed building. The village has a small village shop and café, and a welcoming pub, The Rose & Crown, which is home to the flourishing Community Choir (The Rose & Crooners).

Villagers see the church as having an important place in the community and many people give their time to the upkeep of the church and churchyard, and happily support fundraising efforts. The church has a close relationship with the local C of E school, hosting services for the major festivals as well as providing a venue for Prayer Space and iSingPop performances.

## THE CHURCH

The stone-built church is Grade 1 listed and dates from the middle-ages. Although the first church in Ashbury was built for the Abbot of Glastonbury sometime before AD 947 the earliest part of the present church is the 12th century west end; the chancel with its three medieval brasses is 14th century and the tower and north and south chapels are 13th century. There is a ring of six bells and a regular band of ringers.

## WORSHIP

St Mary the Virgin would describe itself as 'middle of the road' in churchmanship terms but happy to embrace other forms of worship. There are about 25 regular churchgoers with an average weekly attendance of 13, although this is higher for festivals. Members of the congregation share in leading worship, reading, and intercessions, as well as administering the chalice.





## THE VILLAGE

Bourton is a hamlet with a population of around 250. It does not have a village shop or pub, but is home to [Pinewood](#), a private prep school, and the [Bourton Social Club](#).

The village community is a real cross-section of age groups and types of housing, albeit there is little ethnic diversity.

A relatively large number of young families live in the village, and children attend a mixture of schools - some attending Pinewood, whilst others travel to schools in the nearby villages. There is no public transport serving the village, so residents are very dependent on private means of transport.

## THE CHURCH

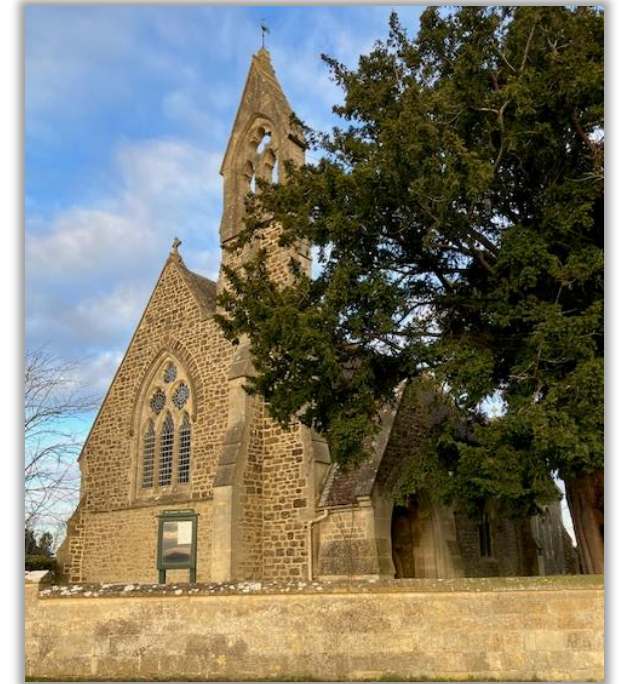
St James, a Victorian chapel of ease, was built in 1846.

It works in conjunction with St Andrew's and has two services each month, one of which is on a Saturday morning. Average attendance is 11. Young people are encouraged to take an active role in the services, and there is a play area at the back of the church. The sense of community and pride in the church is palpable, with a great commitment to the church from the wider community in terms of its upkeep.

## THE SCHOOL

Pinewood School is an important part of the community, gives great support to St James, and has been particularly supportive with fundraising. The Headmaster and several staff live on site or are village residents, so play an active role in the community. The school holds services in St James, and uses it for special occasions and concerts. The ministry team values its relationship with the school and supports the provision of prayer space.

# BOURTON



# COMPTON BEAUCHAMP

## THE CHURCH

Approached through the grounds of Compton Beauchamp House, St Swithun is a tiny church of Norman origin. It sits below the ancient Ridgeway track and is on the Diocesan Pilgrim Route. The church, by its very positioning, encourages a feeling of stillness, contemplative thinking and an engagement with nature. The visitors book tells of the many people who come to enjoy the prayerful peace of its interior and beautiful churchyard. St Swithun is considered by its worshippers and many visitors to be the jewel in the Benefice crown. Certainly it appears both in Simon Jenkins' 'Thousand Best Churches' and Richard Wheeler's 'Oxfordshire's Best Churches.' Even the 14th century bell merits four pages in the Church Bells of Berkshire!

Although the church is 13th century, the interior is the work of 20th century English artist Martin Travers, along with vine wall paintings by Lydia Lawrence with amusing additions by Anthony Baynes.

## WORSHIP

The words of the Book of Common Prayer seem particularly appropriate to the space and are used for the two monthly services of Holy Communion and Matins. Other services include the patronal festival each July, Remembrance Sunday at the War Memorial and a candle-light celebration of Nine Lessons and Carols at Christmas.



The Parish of Compton Beauchamp includes the hamlet of Knighton and the former hamlet of Hardwell, and has about 50 residents.



# FERNHAM

## THE VILLAGE

Fernham has a population of some 280 souls, in a wide cross-section of housing. Although there is no shop or school, the independent village pub attracts customers from far and wide. Social events are organised by an active village events committee and include whisky tasting nights and interest talks.

## THE CHURCH

St John the Evangelist Church is a chapel of ease built in 1860, and forms part of the combined PCC with Longcot. The building underwent some major renovation, including a new roof, in 2008-2009 and was opened in 2010 by HRH Earl of Wessex. It is now leased and managed by a local community group, the Fernham Village Trust (FVT), and is working well as both a village hall and a centre of worship. It hosts a range of community activities including a pre-school which is open from Monday to Friday during term time.

For several years, the small congregation has struggled to support a full programme of worship, so agreement was reached with the Bishop of Dorchester at the end of 2021 to make St John a festival church. This seems to meet better the needs of the wider community. The main services are Christmas, Easter, Harvest and Remembrance, with occasional Benefice services. Other village and nationally significant events are also celebrated.



# LONGCOT

## THE VILLAGE

The attractive village of Longcot has a population of about 620 and is set in the middle of the Vale of White Horse. There is a broad cross-section of housing, currently amounting to just over 220 dwellings but, like many parts of rural Oxfordshire, this number is due to increase by nearly 25% over the next five years. There is a village pub, The King & Queen, and a thriving local C of E primary school.

## THE CHURCH

St Mary the Virgin is the parish church in Longcot, but the ecclesiastical parish, with a combined PCC, includes the village of Fernham. The church dates back to the 13th century, and was re-equipped with a fine peal of eight bells for the Millennium. There is an active bell ringing team and Longcot Tower is a flourishing teaching centre for the Benefice, the Deanery and further afield. The regular Sunday congregation is around 12, but the church is well supported by the school with three services a year and by the villagers, who manage the church grounds, support fundraising, clean, and decorate the church with flowers. The wild-life garden has won environmental awards and the annual church flower festival receives visitors from all over the county.

The congregation and the Longcot Village Trust have worked incredibly hard over the past few years to raise sufficient money to build a community hub at the west end of the nave. This £200K project was completed in October 2021 and was formally opened by the Lord-Lieutenant in May 2022. The new facilities include a kitchen, disabled toilet, and a mezzanine which is an ideal space for meetings and offers visitors an interesting view of the bell ringers in action. The community hub is already becoming a focus of life in the village, hosting children's parties, community groups, concerts, bell ringing training courses and parish meetings.





# SHRIVENHAM

## THE VILLAGE

Shrivenham is one of the oldest villages in Oxfordshire and is home to the Benefice Vicar. With a population of about 4000, Shrivenham is a thriving and growing village, with much evidence remaining even today of its rich history. It has been the site of the Royal Military College of Science (RMCS) which was established on the Beckett estate in 1946 and is now part of the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom.

## THE CHURCH

St. Andrew's is the largest church within both the Parish and Benefice and is part of a joint PCC with Watchfield and Bourton. Described by Simon Jenkins as one of England's 1000 best churches, the existing Grade 1 listed building is mainly 17<sup>th</sup> century. It has the only ring of ten bells in the Deanery, cared for and rung regularly by a very committed team of ringers, and popular with visiting bands.

We are currently half-way through a major restoration project, which has included the installation of toilets, kitchen facilities and a new audio-visual system. The village is very supportive of our fundraising activities.

## WORSHIP

The congregation at the main service each Sunday is currently around 45 but is starting to increase as the village expands. Services are a mixture of Common Worship, BCP and Worship & Praise. Lay participation in services is encouraged. Compline & Benediction is celebrated on the first Sunday evening of the month. Our monthly family services and Messy Church sessions are organised and run by a dedicated group of lay workers, and are well supported. The Benefice Choir is based here and leads worship within the Benefice on at least one Sunday a month. The local C of E primary school uses the church at the major festivals and for a number of other services and celebrations, such as the year six Leavers Service and 'iSingPop'.



# WATCHFIELD

## THE VILLAGE

Watchfield is a village with ancient origins, but the 2011 census highlighted that it is blessed with a very diverse, if somewhat transient population, due to the international nature of the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom. Unlike the rest of the Benefice there is a significant presence of other faiths. Watchfield Primary School provides a very positive environment for visiting families and meets the challenges of multiple first languages with aplomb. Housing is a mix of very old (1600s) and very modern, with a nod to almost every era in between; currently there are approximately 450 military quarters and 550 civilian dwellings. Watchfield is also home to the Defence Academy Church of St Albans. The Village Hall hosts many activities and is a popular venue for children's parties.

## THE CHURCH

The present church of St Thomas was built in the 1800s, following the demolition of its predecessor in 1788. It has a faithful and committed congregation of around 10 who meet each Sunday at 9.30am for either BCP Holy Communion or Matins.

Situated on the High Street St Thomas' has a visible presence in the community and since opening daily for private prayer has attracted far more visitors.

In recent years, a significant amount of work has been done to engage with the local community including Easter Egg hunts, flower festivals, cream teas and craft fairs. Special services such as Carols, Songs of Praise, Harvest Festival and Remembrance are well attended. More recently, baptisms at St Thomas' have increased significantly as the service times for baptisms are now more flexible.

Although St Thomas does not (yet!) have a kitchen or toilet, there is a close relationship with the nearby village hall, which allows us to offer hospitality after special services.



# A VIEW FROM OUR VICAR

## REV'D PATRICK MABHUNU

When I applied for the post of Associate Vicar in the Shrivenham and Ashbury Benefice in July 2023, what spoke to me most was its mission statement 'Mirroring the hospitality of God', and this has indeed been my experience since I joined the Benefice ministry team a few months later. People from across the Benefice made me and my family feel welcome and at home, and this hospitality is extended to all who visit our churches. There is always someone who is prepared to listen, chat, share a cup of tea and cake and help wherever possible.

The Benefice is blessed with a committed and spiritual lay worship team, and hardworking and dedicated Churchwardens, PCC members and Administrator, whilst others volunteer to undertake various duties in church and help with maintenance in the churchyards.

Worship styles may differ across the Benefice, but the unity, love and respect between our churches is clear, with the congregations coming together on the last Sunday of the month for Holy Communion, followed by coffee, cake and chat.

As Associate Vicar, I knew I was in the right place with the right people on the same journey to spread the word of God, so I was delighted to be appointed as Vicar after the retirement of my predecessor. It is a joy and so fulfilling to be part of the life of this Benefice, an environment that is ripe for spiritual growth and fruitful ministry.

I now look forward to welcoming a new Associate Vicar so that together we may enjoy the presence of God and further his kingdom in this blessed Benefice. Just come as you are, and the Lord who will have directed you to us, will do the rest. Feel free to come and see the Benefice and I hope you will find it the place to stay, as it has become for me.



# ST MARY'S HOUSE

8 Chapel Lane, Ashbury SN6 8LS

St Mary's House is a modern end of terrace four-bedroom brick-built home situated in the heart of Ashbury village, close to the school and Village Hall and a short walk from both St Mary's Church and the Rose & Crown pub. It is approached from the street or via a gravelled driveway to a shared parking area and garage at the rear.

## The accommodation comprises on the ground floor :

- ❖ Entrance hall with a cloakroom and WC
- ❖ A compact study
- ❖ Recently refurbished kitchen/breakfast room
- ❖ Dining room with patio doors to the garden
- ❖ Substantial living room with an open fireplace

## On the first floor :

- ❖ Master bedroom with fitted wardrobes and new en-suite shower room
- ❖ 3 further bedrooms (1 double, 2 single)
- ❖ A modern bathroom, with a WC, hand basin and bath.

## Outside :

To the front of the property is a small, secluded garden laid to lawn with mature shrubs, trees and flower beds. There is a small garden with a patio to the rear, mostly laid to grass.





# VALE OF WHITE HORSE DEANERY

Within the Dorchester episcopal area of the Diocese of Oxford

The seven churches of the Benefice form a substantial component of the 27 churches in the Vale of White Horse Deanery. There are six Benefices in the Deanery, with five full-time stipendiary clergy, and three house-for-duty clergy (one of whom is an Incumbent). Each Wednesday, Deanery Prayers are held online, for all interested parties, to pray for each benefice and all respective office holders in turn, lay and ordained. The clergy meet regularly as a Chapter, and there is an annual meeting which includes lay ministers and clergy with PTO. The Deanery Synod meets three times a year to consider matters of concern and interest to the Deanery as a whole. The Deanery's 5-year action plan, agreed with the Diocese, focuses on the following themes :



## Contact us :

Area Dean

[Rev'd Jason St John Nicolle](#)

01235 850267

Associate Area Dean

[Rev'd Jeremy Goulston](#)

01367 821143

Lay Chair

[Dr Peter Foot](#)

01367 358046

Find out more about the Dorchester episcopal area of the Diocese of Oxford [here](#)

# JOB DESCRIPTION

As you will have seen, our vision for the Benefice is to be a place which mirrors the hospitality of God: that is to be welcoming and pastoral, reaching out to those who live, work and study here or who are just passing through. We want everyone (including our new Associate Vicar, wherever they are in their ministerial career) to have the opportunity to discover and develop their own gifts in ministry, so that the whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts. For this reason, we have tried to avoid being too prescriptive.

We are looking for someone who :

- ❖ understands and enjoys village life and has their own transport to travel around the Benefice
- ❖ welcomes variety in worship and being part of a team
- ❖ is willing to be flexible when necessary

We would expect you to share in :

- ❖ planning and leading Sunday and midweek services
- ❖ weekly collective worship and Open the Book in our schools
- ❖ pastoral care across the Benefice
- ❖ the weekly team meetings, and occasional Benefice Wardens' and PCC meetings
- ❖ supporting our engagement with environmental issues and Eco-Church
- ❖ fundraising and social activities

We have attempted to give an overview of the whole Benefice in our profile. It may seem as though there is a lot to do – and there is, so we are looking for someone who is willing to play a full part in our ministry and mission. But you won't be on your own. You will have the active and enthusiastic support of the Incumbent, Churchwardens, Benefice Administrator and lay worship leaders.

House for Duty is Sunday plus the equivalent of two days a week. Some weeks will be busier than others, and we hope that the successful candidate will recognise the need for a flexible arrangement at times. You should expect to have a minimum of two full (24 hour) days off a week, plus :

- ❖ a minimum of four full weeks' holiday a year
- ❖ four Sundays off
- ❖ an inside week after Christmas and Easter
- ❖ an annual retreat of up to three days and time to attend occasional training events

As this is a part-time post, other leave can be arranged in conjunction with the Incumbent.

## WHAT TO DO NEXT

We hope you will have been as enthused and inspired by our Benefice as we are.

Please think and pray about whether it might be the place for you.

Do get in touch by email or the old-fashioned way by phone.

Area Dean

[Rev'd Jason St John Nicolle](#)

01235 850267

Vicar

[Rev'd Patrick Mabhunu](#)

07471 434276

Benefice Administrator

[Lucy Laird](#)

01793 783519

We'd love to hear from you and show you around.