



DIOCESE of OXFORD

A Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world

The Parish Churches of:

**St Peter's
Wootton**



**St Mary Magdalene
Shippon**



TWO CHURCHES WORKING AT THE HEART OF THEIR COMMUNITIES

PARISH PROFILE, JANUARY 2025

Table of Contents

From the Bishop of Dorchester	3
What we are looking for in our next vicar.....	4
Overview	5
Vision and Mission.....	6
The Vicarage – Your Home.....	8
Our Church Buildings.....	9
Raising money in a fun way within the community	11
Our services.....	13
The Support We Can Offer.....	17
Continuing Ministerial Development.....	17
Ministerial Support	17
Churchwardens	17
Parochial Church Councils.....	17
Resources and Stewardship	18
Community Links	19
Developing a thriving Young People’s Ministry	21
Local Facilities in Wootton and Shippon.....	23
Wootton.....	23
Shippon	24

From the Bishop of Dorchester



Dear potential applicant,

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.

The newly formed benefice of Wootton and Shippon is seeking a vicar (0.75 stipend – 4 days plus Sunday) who will lead this benefice in a prayerful, approachable and collaborative manner. They will be community oriented and will be warm, empathetic and compassionate ... but with a sense of humour. The priest appointed will be a good listener and will be enthusiastic about the opportunities and challenges ahead and still retain the excitement of their original call to ordained ministry.

You will find a friendly Deanery with supportive and experienced colleagues and talented lay people. Our Episcopal Area and Diocese are in good heart, expectant for all that God will do and thankful for all that God is doing. Christ Church, Oxford, is a particularly active patron who you will find especially supportive.

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,

+ Gavin Dorchester

Rt. Revd Gavin Collins
Bishop of Dorchester

What we are looking for in our next vicar

We are delighted that you are interested in applying for this 0.75 (4 days plus Sunday) stipendiary position working across the two parishes of St Peter's and St Mary Magdalene, located in the beautiful villages of Wootton and Shippon respectively, only a few miles from the centre of Oxford.

We are separate parishes that have come together recently as a joint Benefice. Although each church has its own unique character, they have been working closely and effectively together for many years. We would expect the successful candidate to work two thirds of their time at St Peter's and one third at St Mary Magdalene.

Both parishes are united in what they are looking for in their new vicar. In particular, we are looking for a **contemplative**, **compassionate** and **courageous** person who is a prayerful pastor and a collaborative leader who:

- values both traditional and modern worship;
- is open to the Holy Spirit and is able to preach God's Word with joy and with relevance to 21st century life;
- is able to reach out to the wider community and to play a visible and active part in our communities;
- is adaptable, approachable and sensitive to the needs of all ages;
- will continue to develop our work with children, young people and families and our relationships with the local schools;
- is able to nurture the spiritual growth of members of the congregation and is committed to pastoral care the sick, the elderly and those in difficulty;
- adopts a collaborative leadership style that enables and empowers others to develop their vocations.

The successful candidate will be a man or woman who will be an ordained priest within the Church of England, or in a church in full communion with it, and who has successfully completed both Initial Ministerial Training and appropriate courses on Safeguarding and Data Protection and is willing to engage in further training.

If you feel that this might be the right role for you, we look forward to hearing from you. Please contact us if you require any further information or if you would like to arrange an informal visit to the churches and parishes.

PARISH PROFILE

Overview

We are two separate parishes that have recently come together as a joint Benefice. Although each church has its own unique character, they have been working closely and effectively together for many years. We can provide:

- a four-bedroom vicarage in the attractive village of Wootton which has a good primary school, many shops and amenities and is just a few miles from the centre of Oxford;
- two attractive churches in a good state of repair with strong financial reserves;
- a Licensed Lay Minister and retired vicars living in the parishes who are always willing to lead services;
- experienced and committed Church Wardens, Treasurers and PCC members providing effective ministerial support;
- churches with an excellent reputation that are working effectively at the heart of their communities.

Key data is summarised below:

Average Sunday attendance	St Peter's: 30 St Mary Magdalene: 18-20
Electoral roll	St Peter's: 54 St Mary Magdalene: 18
Population (approximate)	Wootton: 2,942 Shippon: 950
Parish Share (2023)	St Peter's: £31,440 St Mary Magdalene: £15,371
Income and Expenditure	St Peter's: Income £47,787; expenditure £47,898 St Mary Magdalene: Income £21,359; expenditure £24,314
Reserves (end 2023)	St Peter's: £61,479 St Mary Magdalene: £28,809
Expenses	Reimbursed in full

Vision and Mission

Both churches have independently established their vision and current priorities and objectives, and there is a great deal of similarity between them. This is evidenced by the two churches working extremely well together during the three years since the new Benefice was formed. Once a new incumbent is in place, however, we would welcome the opportunity of the two PCCs meeting together to establish a joint vision and agree the strategic priorities for the benefice as a whole, as well as identifying how we could work even more closely together for mutual benefit using the various and considerable skills we have across our congregations to help both churches.

St Peter's, Wootton

The PCC and the wider congregation of St Peter's developed and agreed the following vision for the church several years ago:

***A vibrant, growing church at the heart of community
spreading the joy, love and peace of Jesus to all***

We were clear that we did not want our vision to be just words on a piece of paper but that it should drive everything we do and say, the way we behave and treat each other, and the way we work within the community. Our vision statement is included on our headed notepaper and on our weekly pews sheets as a reminder of what we are trying to achieve. Having agreed our vision, we set out our aims and objectives which are summarised below.

Our Aims

Together at St. Peter's we aim to:

1. Worship God.
2. Grow in the Spirit.
3. Share Jesus.
4. Serve the community.

Objectives

During 2023 we met with Charles Chadwick, Parish Development Adviser, and agreed the following strategic priorities for the church:

1. Ensuring the church is welcoming and investigating ways in which areas of the church can be made more child friendly.
2. Aim to encourage young families and provide services which will fit in with modern lives.
3. Implement efficient wi-fi into the church.
4. Provide regular midweek evening opportunities for informal learning, sharing and encouragement.
5. Work with the wider community, including the school, Community Centre and parish Council, to develop initiatives for young people and others in need of help and support.

These are discussed regularly at PCC meetings and a number of initiatives are planned to progress these initiatives which are discussed later in this document.

St Mary Magdalene, Shippon

Our Aims

The congregation of St Mary's has a very simple aim – to keep the message of a living God alive and relevant.

Our Objectives

1. To keep the church open and attended.
2. To have a service every week.

An example of our objectives is that during Covid, as soon as the government gave permission, St Mary Magdalene opened every Sunday for private prayer. Hot drinks were available in the churchyard. As the word got around, many people from other churches which stayed closed, came into church to pray. The Christingle service was even held outdoors.

The village of Shippon has a predominately mature population. Although there is an army barracks in the area, this has a transient population and its diverse regiments have a mix of beliefs. They are supported by two ministers. There are long term plans for the redevelopment of the barracks and some of the housing for families is being sold off, which has benefitted the church with new members.

Our present diverse worshipping community is strong and faithful, and the church is ready to give whatever support the vicar may need. Much groundwork has been done with our activities in fund-raising and village social links, whilst our services have followed formal Common Worship patterns.

The Vicarage – Your Home

The Vicarage is a large four-bedroom family house with a detached garage set in mature gardens, some of which is formal garden and some of which is woodland. It is approximately 100 m from St Peter's Church in Wootton.

The Vicarage has a study for the administration of the parish. A computer, broadband and copying facilities will all be provided.

Ground Floor

- Lounge looking out onto garden
- Dining Room
- Kitchen
- Toilet
- Utility room
- Study

1st Floor

- 4 bedrooms
- Bathroom

External

- Mature gardens
- Garage



More details on Wootton and the local facilities and amenities are provided at the end of this profile.

Our Church Buildings

Both our parishes were created out of larger parishes: St Peter's Wootton began as a chapelry of Cumnor, and became a separate ecclesiastical parish in 1723, while St Mary Magdalene Shippon was created out of part of St Helen's Without in Abingdon in 1865 although the church was started a few years earlier. Both churches are Grade II listed, well maintained, in a good state of repair, and an integral part of their communities.

St Peter's, Wootton

St Peter's is stone-walled with a tiled roof on the nave and stone slates on the chancel; the oldest parts date back to the 14th century. A former 18th century family chapel now forms the vestry, and a much more recent addition is the parish room with toilet, sink, and microwave oven, which is also used for Sunday School. It stands towards the old village and looks over the village cricket field and children's play area. There is a parish car park opposite the church.



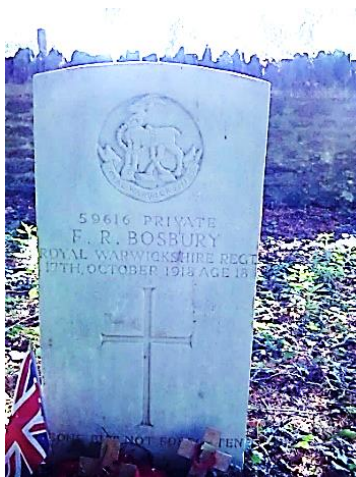
A new central heating system was installed in 2013. There is a modern sound system with loop. Music is provided by an electronic keyboard. The last Quinquennial inspection was undertaken in June 2022, with all items requiring urgent attention having been actioned. All annual checks are carried out as required. We are currently looking at options to install wi-fi into the church.

The churchyard is close to being full, although there are still a very small number of places for burials, and we also accept the burial of ashes. The churchyard is maintained by a local handyman. We continue to focus on balancing the needs of users with protecting the natural habitats.



St Mary Magdalene, Shippon

The current church building was designed by Sir George Scott in a 14th Century decorated style and although it was consecrated in December 1855, it stands on ground that in 1284 was a chapel and mentioned in the Domesday Survey. The entrance to the church faces The Prince of Wales, a small public house, and both are now positioned on the outskirts of Shippon village. The Grade II listed building is made from stone, has a gabled stone-coped old tile roof and a bell tower with crocketed spire, and benefits from having a number of stained-glass windows. Over the southern doorway is the crest of Abingdon Abbey with which Shippon was long associated until the Dissolution.



Although the churchyard is not officially closed, there is no more room for burials. However, there are several areas which have the facilities for cremated remains. At the front of the church there is stone war memorial from the first world war, funded by local subscriptions. Each year a Remembrance Service is held with representatives from the military. Behind that is a small nature reserve and at the rear, is a Commonwealth War Grave headstone for a young soldier killed in October 1918.

All relevant checks are carried out on fire precautions, electric safety, churchyard paving and graves. Within the last five years extensive work has been carried out on the roof and bell tower and the recent Quinquennial only showed very minor items. The church is in good order and looks neat, clean and well maintained. The church has followed the national environmental guidelines regarding the churchyard, which is regularly mowed, with the work being carried out by volunteers. The church does not have any employed staff.



Raising money in a fun way within the community

Both churches organize a number of fund-raising events during the year. The money raised is an important part of our total income and allows us to continue the work we do within the community. However, just as importantly, the events are designed to appeal to all members of the community and to be enjoyed by everyone attending. We may be small in number but we are big on enthusiasm. Although fund-raising events are organized by the individual churches, they are well supported and attended by the other church.

At St Peter's, major events include:

- **Summer garden party** - normally held at the end of June either in the vicarage garden (subject to the incumbent being happy for the garden to be used) or in the grounds of the Community Centre. Good weather is guaranteed (well some times!) with everyone enjoying afternoon tea whilst playing games such as darts, skittles, hook -a-duck, etc., or trying their luck on the tombola and other stalls.



- **Harvest lunch** is held on the 1st Sunday in October in the Community Centre. This is one of the highlights of the year, at which members of the congregation and local community come together to enjoy a sumptuous two course lunch in good company whilst being entertained by talented members of our community.
- **Auction of Promises** is held every 2 years and usually raises about £4,000 in one evening. This is always a fun packed event and we auction over 60 lots donated by members of our church community or by local businesses ranging from a few hours babysitting or gardening to dinner parties and stays in holiday homes.

During the year we will also hold several other fun events, including a beetle drive, quiz night, family bingo, coffee mornings and lunches, afternoon teas and concerts in church.



At St Mary Magdalene, fund-raising includes:

- **Quizzes.** Each year, two quizzes are organized to raise funds. Held during the half terms in February and November in the hall at The Manor School, a preparatory school in the village. The school incidentally also provides a Christmas tree each year to the church. The tickets include a hot supper, the menu changing frequently and supplied by a small team from the congregation. These eagerly awaited events are always sold out.



Both quizzes are well attended with over 100 attendees from the church and residents. These quizzes, along with generous raffle prizes, raise valuable funds for the church.

- **Coffee and Cake morning.** We have always held an Advent Fayre to raise funds but in 2024 tried something different. Orders for the Christmas Cakes and puddings made by a very small team from the church have always attracted high orders and sales. In 2024, a coffee morning with a stall selling the cakes, books and a raffle was held instead.
- **MacMillan Coffee Morning.** During the year, we host a MacMillan coffee morning which is well attended and raises invaluable funds for a wonderful charity.

Our services

Our regular pattern of services is designed to be welcoming and open to all, with families and young children always particularly welcome. Our services generally follow the Common Worship pattern. The lectionary is used unless the presiding clergy requests something different. Our two churches have worked together to develop a service pattern that meets the needs of our individual parishes, whilst recognising that we are a shared benefice with one incumbent working across the two parishes.

Both churches are fortunate to have retired clergy members living in their villages always willing to lead services, a Licensed Lay Minister who leads a Morning Prayer and Praise service at St Peter's monthly, and members of the PCC willing to lead non-Eucharistic services when required. Both congregations value the range and breadth of services offered and the different preaching styles. As a result, the incumbent would be expected to lead two services per month at each church.

As the churches have started working together in forming the Benefice, the two congregations now value the times when we can worship and meet together. On the 5th Sunday of the month, we have a Benefice service alternating between the two churches. On special weekdays such as Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Ascension Day, and the evenings of Holy Week (when daily services of Compline are offered) services are usually held in one of the two churches with congregations of both churches being invited.

We prefer that vestments are worn at all formal services. Music is very important in our worship with a range of traditional hymns and contemporary songs at all our services. Both churches are fortunate in having experienced and talented musicians to play the keyboard and organ, to nurture the talents of younger musicians contributing to our services, and to arrange the music for all special services. St Peter's also has an enthusiastic and committed choir of eight individuals who lead their worship.

A variety of other services are held at both churches during the year. However, we are always open to new ideas to improve or add to our pattern of services. More information on the services at the two churches is summarized below.



St Peter's, Wootton

The regular services are:

- 1st Sunday: 10.00 am Morning Prayer and Praise
(Sunday School meets in the Parish Room)
- 2nd Sunday: 10.00 am Holy Communion
- 3rd Sunday: 10.00 am All Age Service (followed by refreshments)
- 4th Sunday: 10.00 am Holy Communion
- 5th Sunday: 10.30 am Benefice Service
(alternating between St Peter's and St Mary Magdalene)

Every 1st and 3rd Wednesday: 10.00 am Holy Communion

There are 54 people on the electoral roll. The numbers attending our Sunday services have slowly been recovering post Covid, and during 2024 an average of 30 people attended our Sunday services (27 adults and 3 children) which is slightly higher than the previous year. An average of 7 people attended our Wednesday communion service. 53 and 57 people respectively attended our Easter Day and Christmas Day services in 2024 with 190 people attending our 2 Christingle services on Christmas Eve (the highest number since 2018).

To give you a flavour of aspects of a current year in the worshipping life of St Peter's:

- **Lent** - a time of reflection and there have been a variety of Lent study groups over the last few years. These are typically held at 7.30pm on a Tuesday and are often shared with our friends from our neighbouring churches, especially Cumnor.
- **Mothering Sunday** - this is celebrated during a family service at 10.00 am with posies distributed to the children to give to their mothers followed by home-made simnel cake and refreshments.
- **Good Friday** - at 2.00 pm An Hour at the Cross, a contemplative service reflecting on all that Jesus did for us on the Cross.
- **Easter Day** - there is a Family Communion service at 10.00 am followed by an Easter egg hunt in the church or vicarage garden with refreshments.
- **Harvest** is celebrated on the 1st Sunday in October with a family Communion service followed by a harvest lunch in the Community Centre.
- **Remembrance Sunday** - we gather outside by the War Memorial at 10.45 am to remember those local people who lost their lives in the two World Wars, before entering the church after observing the two-minute silence for a service of Remembrance. We are joined by members of the local Royal British Legion and current serving members from Dalton barracks.
- **Advent Sunday** - the community gathers at 7.00 pm in the centre of the village for a short service to sing Christmas carols and to switch on the Christmas tree lights, followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the Community Centre.
- **Sunday before Christmas** – at a Service of Christmas Praise (our carol service) both traditional and modern carols are sung accompanied by instrumentalists and representatives of all areas of the congregation read the lessons.

- **Christmas Eve** - there are two Christingle services at 3.00 pm and 5.00 pm. Christingles are assembled the afternoon before by members of the congregation. Around 190 people attend the services, with standing room only in the church. Christingles are distributed to all children and when lit, the lights are turned off and everyone sings Away in a Manger by candlelight, a truly magical moment.
- **Christmas Day** - there is a Family Communion service at 10.30 am.

St Mary Magdalene, Shippon

Our regular Sunday services are:

1st Sunday: 10.30 am Holy Communion

2nd Sunday: 10.30 am Holy Communion

3rd Sunday: 10.30 am Informal Service

4th Sunday: 10.30 am Holy Communion

5th Sunday: 10.30 am Benefice Service

(alternating between St Mary Magdalene and St Peter's)

External Service linked to St Mary Magdalene: Once a month the churchwarden leads a service at *Stowford House*, the local care home, which is well attended and supported by the staff. Music is supplied by a congregation member with a guitar and several members of the congregation support the service.

A year of worshipping at St Mary Magdalene for 2025:

- **Ash Wednesday** – A service is held alternating between St Peter's and St Mary Magdalene.
- **Maundy Thursday** – A Service will be held at St Mary Magdalene.
- **Lent** – A shared lunch.
- **Mothering Sunday** – 10.30am a Family Service with posies for the children to give to their mothers followed by refreshments.
- **Good Friday** – at 2.00pm '*An Hour at the Cross*' where we meditate on the sacrifice Jesus gave for us all.
- **Easter Day** – 10.30pm a Family Holy Communion followed by refreshments.
- **Patronal Festival 27 July** – 10.30am Holy Communion followed by a bring and share lunch.
- **Harvest** – celebrated early autumn. 10.30am Holy Communion with collection of tins and packets requested for the Abingdon Food Bank. – (always well supported). Followed by a bring-and-share harvest lunch in the hall.
- **Remembrance Sunday** – 10.45am - A parade from Dalton Barracks assembles by the church war memorial. In attendance to lay wreaths are representatives from the Town and Parish Councils, Military, SSAFA and congregation.
- **Advent Sunday** – 10.30am Holy Communion.

- **Sunday before Christmas** – 10.30am Holy Communion followed by refreshments.
6.00pm – Traditional Service of 7 readings and carols, followed by mulled wine, mince pies and sausage rolls. Readings are read by local villagers. In 2024, 91 adults and 18 children attended.
- **Christmas Eve** – 3.00pm – Crib Service followed by a Christingle. Safety lights have been used as a health and safety issue, but it was found that the magic is missing.
- **Christmas Day** – there is no service. The congregation is invited to attend the service at St Peter's.



The electoral role is 18 with regular attendance of between 18 – 20.

As well as our fund-raising activities mentioned elsewhere the church has staged several very successful events to commemorate national events with our catering highly recommended. The churchwarden sends out a monthly newsletter with details of the services and other events. On a regular basis, the Church runs a lunch group with members of the congregation and residents attending monthly.

The Support We Can Offer

Continuing Ministerial Development

The vicar's commitment to continued learning and professional development will be supported by the parish in terms of allocating both time and money to these activities.

Ministerial Support

St Peter's has a Licensed Lay Minister, Dr Shirley Northover, who leads services and preaches at least once a month. There are also two retired members of the clergy living locally who have permission to officiate and regularly lead services. One of the Churchwardens also regularly leads the All-Age service and has received authorisation to preach from Bishop Gavin and recently commenced the training. Similarly, St Mary Magdalene has links with two retired clergy members who regularly lead services, and the Churchwarden also leads a service at least monthly.

Churchwardens

The two churchwardens at St Peter's and the churchwarden at St Mary Magdalene are all very experienced and have been in post for many years. They met regularly with our previous incumbent to offer practical support and advice. All churchwarden duties are carried out faithfully. The service register is completed by the wardens as are the burial, baptism and marriage registers. The Last Archdeacon's inspection was undertaken at both churches in February 2023 with no significant issues arising.

Parochial Church Councils

The St Peter's Parochial Church Council currently has eight enthusiastic and supportive members, comprising the incumbent, churchwardens, Treasurer, Deanery Synod members and members elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. It normally meets six times a year and previous incumbents have been very appreciative of the support they have received. There is also a PCC Standing Committee consisting of the Vicar, LLM, Wardens, Secretary and Treasurer which meets as required and a Worship sub-committee which meets every two months.

The St Mary Magdalene PCC currently has six committed members including Secretary and Treasurer (who has also been the Churchwarden for the last 24 years). The PCC meets every two months to plan forthcoming events. A monthly rota for readers, sides-people, intercessions and chalice is prepared a month in advance by the PCC secretary.

Led by the Churchwardens, both PCC's work to provide the best for their church and congregation. They are fully supportive of the vicar by arranging rotas for the readings, intercessions, sides people, brass cleaning and flower arranging, after service refreshments, etc. They also ensure that the church is ready for services. Although we have historically not provided any paid administrative support, the work done by a number of volunteers does mean that any administrative work undertaken by the incumbent is kept to a minimum.

Resources and Stewardship

The main financial management is in the hands of the Treasurers. Both churches are very fortunate to have experienced and diligent Treasurers who have been in the role for many years. A budget is produced every year for approval by the PCC which then monitors expenditure against the budget with summary reports provided to each PCC.

St Peter's Income for 2023 was £47,787 with expenditure of £47,898, resulting in a small deficit of £111. The parish share was £31,440 in 2023 representing 66% of our total expenditure. The Parish Share is paid in full and on time each year. We continue to be blessed with a large legacy that was received in 2012. We used part of the legacy to install a new heating system in 2013, but it has also been used to cover any shortfalls between our income and expenditure and to finance any small capital projects.

It is current PCC policy to maintain reserves equal to 50% of our annual expenditure (i.e. £24,000 currently) although the Deanery suggests 33%. With total assets of £61,479 and allowing £5,000 for cash flow, this would leave around £32,000 available for new projects, although it is likely that we will continue to use some of the reserves to service any future deficits.

St Mary Magdalene income for 2023 was £21,359 with expenditure of £24,314 resulting in a small deficit of £2,955. The parish share was £15,371 representing 63% of total expenditure and is paid in full each year. Fund raising generated £4,215 in the year representing 20% of total income with the hall bringing in income of £1,700 after expenses. Charitable giving in 2023 was £620 and we have supported The Children's Society for many years as well as the Food Bank, Macmillan and WaterAid. At the end of December 2023 we had reserves of £28,809.

We are very aware as to the help given to the finances by the generosity of church members. Fund-raising (discussed separately) has been vital. The Church Hall (also discussed separately) provides an income but it can be erratic – hall expenses are also not regular. There are limitations on who we can accept as hirers, stipulated by the owner. During Covid everyone was approached to see if they would set up standing orders while no services were possible. Almost everyone agreed and these are still in place which helps tremendously with budgeting. Since January 2024, plate collections have been restarted successfully. Gift Aid and GASD are claimed.

Both PCCs reimburse the incumbent for all budgeted and reasonable expenditure on parish related activities and travel.

Community Links

Both churches are very well respected in their local communities, with many of the congregations playing an active role in those communities. More information is provided below.

St Peter's, Wootton

A number of people from St Peter's helped establish Community Coffee over 15 years ago in the Community Centre meeting every Thursday morning between 11.00 am and 1.00 pm, and this is still flourishing today. Every Christmas members of our congregation lead the singing of Christmas carols at the Thursday morning café.

We also have very close links with the Abingdon Food Bank with our congregation regularly donating food and other items.

On the 4th Saturday of each month we open our church between 10.00 and 12.00 for members from our community to drop in for a bacon roll, tea, coffee and biscuits and the opportunity for a friendly chat surrounded by the peace and beauty of our ancient church.

Every Tuesday evening the Wootton Warblers, a local singing group led by Paul Herrington and including many members of our church choir, meet in church and regularly put on concerts in the church or the community centre during the year. Members of our congregation also play an active role on the Parish Council and on many of the other groups that meet in the Community Centre.

The Parish Council and the Community Centre management committee are very keen to work with the church to enhance the services offered to the wider community. One initiative currently being discussed, for example, is to provide a simple lunch once a quarter in the Community Centre for those who live on their own.

St Mary Magdalene, Shippon



In 1985 it became apparent that apart from the church and the pub, the village of Shippon lacked a focal point to serve the needs of the community and in April 1987, a successful planning application was made to refurbish a farm building next to the church. The Shippon Parish Hall Committee was convened with members from the church and Shippon resident's association; fund-raising began - assisted by a grant from the Vale of The White Horse District Council.

By 1988, the hall was near completion; with the help of a loyal band of volunteers it had been carpeted, chairs and coffee tables were in place, along with the new kitchenette but there was concern about the lack of parking. A supporter of the church, Arnold Binning,

came to the rescue, offering the church the use of the space between the west wall of the churchyard and the vicarage garden.

The hall is now very much a part of the community and is used regularly by several organisations including:

- The Parish Council meet quarterly
- The PCC meets every two months
- Floristry Classes
- Coffee Mornings
- Local Polling Station.
- Bridge Club
- Friends of Shippon



The Friends of Shippon are a local community group of residents begun in November 2007 who meet on the second Friday in the month at 7.30 pm with the aim of getting residents and friends together for interesting talks and social events.

As a recognised group within the area, the Friends are regularly used to provide a view of the community and recently were heavily involved in the communication, consultation and production of a Neighbourhood Plan. Membership is open to all residents and friends of Shippon for a small charge.

The hall can be hired for private functions. The church regularly uses the hall for both social and fund-raising events.



Since the RAF handed the base over to the Army, the church has benefitted from the two serving Padres who help when they can. Often, they are on training, away or are posted after a short time. However, good relations have been forged with many of them and they have led services and supported in other ways.

The village of Shippon is about 200 households. There are very few young families and with no school other than a private prep school, this has made family ministry almost impossible. Recently however two families with children have become regular attendees.

Developing a thriving Young People's Ministry

Children and young people are very important to us. However, in Shippon opportunities are limited as there are few families living in the village and no school other than a private prep school. It is hoped that this may change over the next 10 years with the proposed building of the new housing development on Dalton Barracks.

However, developing our Young People's ministry is a key priority at St Peter's. Once a month we have our All Age Service where we can all worship together with our young people reading the lessons and leading the intercessions whenever possible.

We also provide a Sunday school on the 1st Sunday of each month at our service of Morning Prayer and Praise. A small group of children between the age of four and nine meet in the parish room under the guidance of our Sunday school leaders to read a bible story, talk about what story means, have a drink and biscuit and do some craft activity before re-joining the rest of the congregation for the final hymn.



Before Covid, one of the highlights of the year was the Children's Christmas Party in the Community Centre the weekend before Christmas where children of all ages (from 0 to 80) gather together for party games, singing and dancing, party food and rounded off by a visit from someone very special. It is hoped that we will be able to recommence this activity soon.

One of our key aims is to continue to develop our Young People's ministry and for young people to want to come to church and to be part of our worshipping community. We are planning on recommencing Tiddlers in 2025. This was our pre-schoolers' group, meeting twice a month on Friday afternoons at 2pm but was suspended during Covid. There is no other music and toddler group in the village, and we believe that this would be warmly welcomed by the community.



We also have the ambition of setting up something specifically for teenagers to allow them to remain as part of the church family. We propose to work with the Parish Council and the Oxford Diocesan Children's Adviser to look at options. We will continue to develop strong relationships with local schools and pre-school providers, and to review the content and timings of our services and meetings for young people to ensure they meet their needs.

We are proud of the close relationship we have enjoyed with Wootton St Peter's Primary School over many years. We would expect our vicar to engage closely with the school which could include taking an active role on the school governing body, spending time in school and, in particular, leading assembly once a week. The whole school regularly visits the church for services on special occasions during the year, including Easter, Ascension Day, St Peter's Day, Harvest and Christmas.



Further information about the school can be found at: <https://wootton-school.co.uk>.



A group of six volunteers from St Peter's Church go into St Peter's School once every half term to lead an Open the Book assembly, where we share some of the well-known stories from the Bible with children in a way that is fun, interactive and memorable. They are always well received by children and staff alike.

One of the Church Wardens is currently Chair of the Governing Body and other members of the congregation regularly assist in both assemblies and listening to reading in the school. We are continually looking for opportunities to further develop our links with the school and establish new ways of working to benefit both the school and the church.

Local Facilities in Wootton and Shippon

Wootton

Wootton is a village and civil parish in the Vale of White Horse about three miles north-west of Abingdon. It was part of Berkshire until the 1974 boundary changes transferred it to Oxfordshire. The parish of Wootton covers 3.1 square miles and includes the hamlets of Henwood and Lamborough Hill and the western part of Boars Hill. The population of the parish at the 2021 census was 2,942 in 1,228 households.

The village has a Church of England primary school, Wootton St Peter's, which has some 90 pupils on roll, an excellent reputation within the village, and achieved a Good rating in its last Ofsted inspection in March 2019.

The village has a recently refurbished business park and two new housing estates. There are a few shops including two convenience stores (one of which includes the post office), a pharmacy and a chip shop. There is also a dentist, a bathroom shop, a charity shop, and a carpet shop. There is a children's play area immediately opposite the church which is extremely popular with young families.



Wootton's social amenities include the Wootton and Dry Sandford Community Centre. Following a major redevelopment, the centre was re-opened in April 2010. This was made possible by a large grant from the Big Lottery, grants from Oxfordshire County Council, Vale of White Horse District Council and various organisations and local businesses, with numerous donations from members of the local community. The centre now has a main hall with stage, three function rooms, two kitchens, a football pitch with new changing facilities, a multi-user floodlit games area, a toddlers play area, and the WADS bar. A wide variety of regular activities take place at the centre from coffee mornings to bingo, exercise classes to quiz nights, badminton to table tennis, indoor bowls to dance classes.



Opposite the Community Centre is the Bystander Public House, a Greene King establishment, set in the centre of the village. It serves food from an extensive menu with plenty of choice for the whole family and offers a lovely, large garden with a play area for children.

Shippon

Shippon is a small agricultural village with few facilities. It has a care home and a pub, The Prince of Wales, which is open in the evenings and in the daytime in the summer with garden. The local town of Abingdon on Thames is close and can be accessed by walking or by bus. Oxford is also on a bus route via the village.

