DIOCESE of OXFORD

The Benefice of Thame

A Profile of the beautiful rural parishes of Adwell, Lewknor, South Weston, Stoke Talmage, Tetsworth and Wheatfield in the Thame Benefice

1. Powerpoint Summary.
2. Profile.

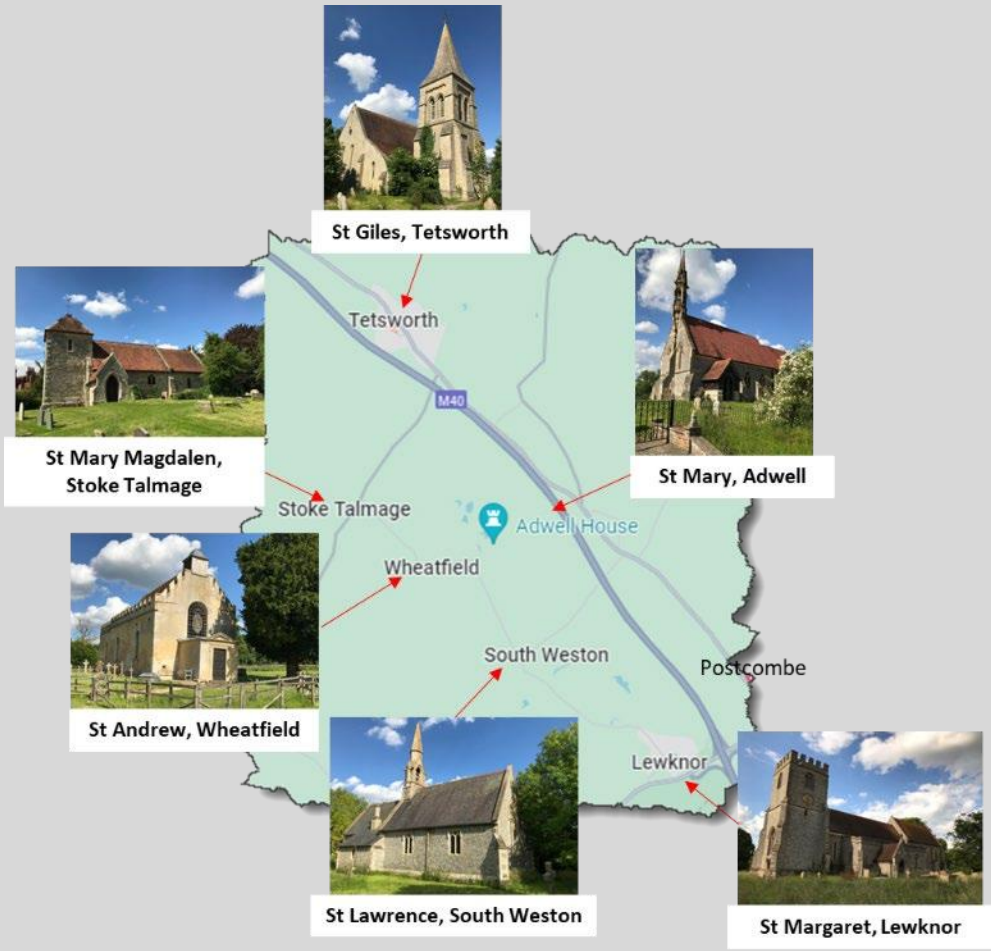
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The Vacancy:

Team Vicar (House for Duty) for the Parishes of:

- Adwell
- Lewknor
- South Weston
- Stoke Talmage
- Tetsworth
- Wheatfield

Together known as the “Tetsworth Benefice” within the Benefice of Thame



Who are we..

The Tetsworth Benefice is a thriving community of 6 independent parishes bound together through our love of the countryside and support for each other, with a vision to grow as a benefice and support our communities.

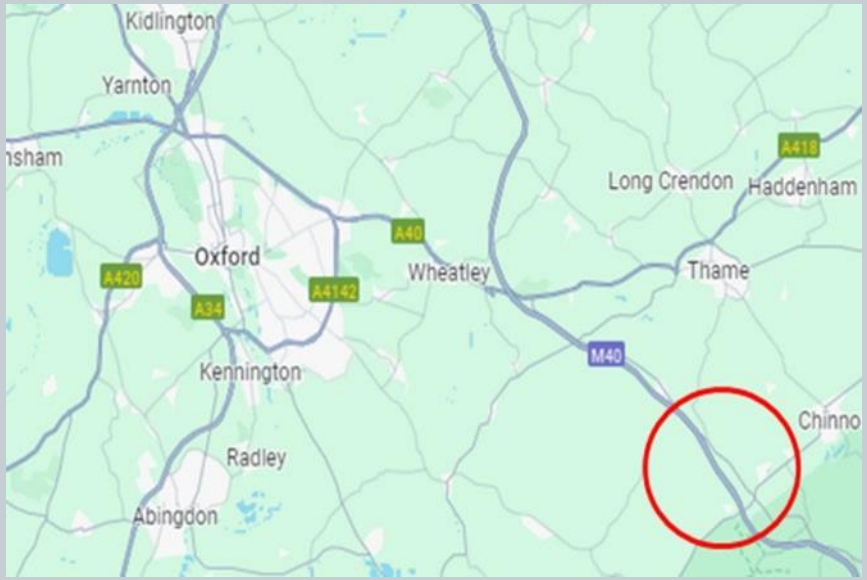
Our aim is to:

- Build on our love of God
- Spread the Word of God
- Care for God's Creation
- Love God and each other
- Strive to make the church the Rock at the centre of our communities

Where are we…

We are a collection of rural parishes in the lovely South Oxfordshire countryside, about 12 miles from Oxford and 40 miles from London

The parishes cover 7 villages situated to the south of Thame.



Come and see our beautiful parishes…

Adwell
…a small village with a church in the estate garden





Stoke Talmage
…an ancient church with the best carol service and harvest festival in Oxfordshire!




Lewknor
…an ancient Church in a village with a primary school and a pub, affiliated with Postcombe.



Tetsworth
…a growing village with a pub, a primary school, a village store, an antiques centre and the vicarage.



South Weston
…a lovely small church in a farming community.



Wheatfield
…a small village with a church amongst the cattle!




The person we are looking for should..

- Be servant-hearted and equipped to provide strong and effective spiritual leadership and pastoral care
- Be able to engage with and encourage all those who have yet to be a part of the Christian community across all the parishes
- Bring new ideas and ways of working across the benefice
- Be comfortable working across a range of worship styles
- Relish living in a beautiful rural part of South Oxfordshire

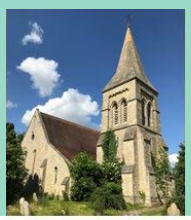
Our offer to you…



- A supportive and encouraging environment in which to minister.
- A thriving community of seven villages across six parishes
- A forward-thinking group of parishes open to embracing new ideas and ways of working
- Well established administrative and financial responsibilities managed independently by the individual PCCs
- An opportunity to live and work in a beautiful part of South Oxfordshire.
- A 4-bedroom vicarage on the High Street in Tetsworth
- The gift of friendship and laughter

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The Benefice of Thame



St Giles, Tetsworth



St Mary Magdalen, Stoke Talmage



St Mary, Adwell



St Andrew, Wheatfield



St Lawrence, South Weston



St Margaret, Lewknor

A Profile of the beautiful parishes of Adwell, Lewknor, South Weston, Stoke Talmage, Tetsworth and Wheatfield

The Post of Team Vicar (House for Duty) with special responsibility for the Parishes of Adwell, Lewknor, South Weston, Stoke Talmage, Tetsworth and Wheatfield within the Thame Benefice

1. Welcome from our Church Wardens

- Welcome to our collection of small villages in South Oxfordshire, all different, and united in a love of God, in support for each other, and in a desire to spread the Word.
- We are very fortunate in the variety of our churches, in the history which has moulded them, and in the beautiful countryside which has nurtured them.
- We look forward eagerly to the arrival of our new incumbent with the assurance of our prayerful and practical support.

2. Welcome from our Bishop

Dear potential applicants,



I am delighted that you have read this profile and would like to encourage you to pray about whether this might be the right position for you to consider. The 'Tetsworth Group' within the Thame Benefice is looking for a Team Vicar (House for duty) with a gift to clearly proclaim the gospel in these rural parishes and faithfully live out the Christian faith. The successful candidate will very much become part of the communities and the church family in the small villages which are already bound together and help each other in their daily lives and in supporting each other in their faith.

You will have the advantage of living in a very well positioned vicarage in the middle of Tetsworth, just 12 miles from Oxford and 40 miles from London, and yet tending to your flock in the centre of the beautiful countryside of South Oxfordshire.

A key aspect of this role, within the limits of part-time work, is ministering in the small communities of the 6 parishes, building on opportunities through contact with families, schools, and those who have not had much or any connection with the church, in particular in the larger (although still very

small) villages of Tetsworth and Lewknor. In all these tasks you will have the active support of the parishioners.

Over the past 14 years, when the parishes have had a House for Duty Vicar, they have made sure that many administrative matters are dealt with by the PCCs and the Church Wardens. This enables the Team Vicar to focus their energies on spreading the word and pastoral care in the villages. As a part of the Thame Benefice you will also have the full support of the wider Thame Team and of the Deanery in the work that you do.

Please pray about whether you are the right person to join us and, if you decide to apply, I would be delighted to receive your application for this fulfilling ministry position and look forward to welcoming you as a potential colleague in ministry.

With every blessing,

+Gavin Dorchester

Rt. Revd Gavin Collins Bishop of Dorchester

3. A message from Mike Reading, Team Rector of Thame



Thank you for your interest in this opportunity to serve God in a beautiful and interesting rural environment, close to the lively and market town of Thame.

This role has some unusual features:

- A House for Duty Team Vicar with the responsibilities and the independence of being an ordained minister, working collaboratively with the Team Rector, supported by lay people who want to see the church flourish
- Serving the six rural parishes recognising that the role is part-time
- Leading worship in collaboration with lay members and overseeing pastoral care

We are seeking a man or woman with a loving, listening approach; who is energised by the opportunity to serve a rural community, helping people to embrace God and focus on mission rather than buildings.

We strive to change lives by the power of God's Spirit, to know the reality of God's grace and experience the comfort of Christ's love. Our hearts' desire is for all to experience God's love as they come to know the living Lord Jesus, through the power of the Holy Spirit expressed by our words and in our lives.

Thank you for prayerfully considering whether you might join us and support us as we play our part in God's mission. We will support you with our prayers and look forward to welcoming the new House for Duty Team Vicar into this Benefice.

If you wish to chat informally before proceeding with an application, please contact either: David Tyler, Archdeacon of Dorchester (07961 726403) or me (07808 548807).

Revd. Mike Reading
Team Rector

4. Introduction

- Historically, the Benefice of Thame was created by Order in Council in April 1998 when the benefices of Adwell, Lewknor, South Weston, Stoke Talmage, Tetsworth and Wheatfield were united with the benefice of Thame and Towersey ("the Pastoral Measure"). The Pastoral Measure required that the parishes should "continue distinct" but for ease of reference within this document we shall call the 6 distinct parishes the **"Tetsworth Benefice**".
- Although the Benefice operates as six distinct parishes with individual PCC's, each parish takes on all the administrative burden at each individual church and if there are specific projects, they are managed within the parishes.
- The six parishes will work proactively with the incumbent to ensure that the role can be undertaken in the most sustainable way, commensurate with the three-day working week, and we will always welcome proposals which would lead to this being carried out more efficiently and effectively.

5. Role Description and key responsibilities

The role for the Team Vicar (House for Duty):

- The Team Vicar will be Vicar in the ministry of the Benefice of Thame with special responsibility for the Parishes within the Tetsworth Benefice.
- You will preside at Sunday services, and Occasional Offices (weddings, baptisms, and funerals, as required).
- You will ensure that a high standard of worship, preaching and pastoral care is provided, so people are more able to live and grow as Christ's disciples.
- You will work with us to maintain and develop the existing links with the schools in Tetsworth and Lewknor and other community organisations.
- You will use your gifts and experience to develop ministry across all the parishes exploring further ways to maintain the close relationship between the parishes.

The Person we are looking for should…

- Be servant-hearted and equipped to provide strong and effective spiritual leadership and pastoral care
- Be able to engage with and encourage all those who have yet to be a part of the Christian community across all the parishes
- Bring new ideas and ways of working across the benefice
- Be comfortable working across a range of worship styles
- Relish living in a beautiful rural part of South Oxfordshire

What we offer you

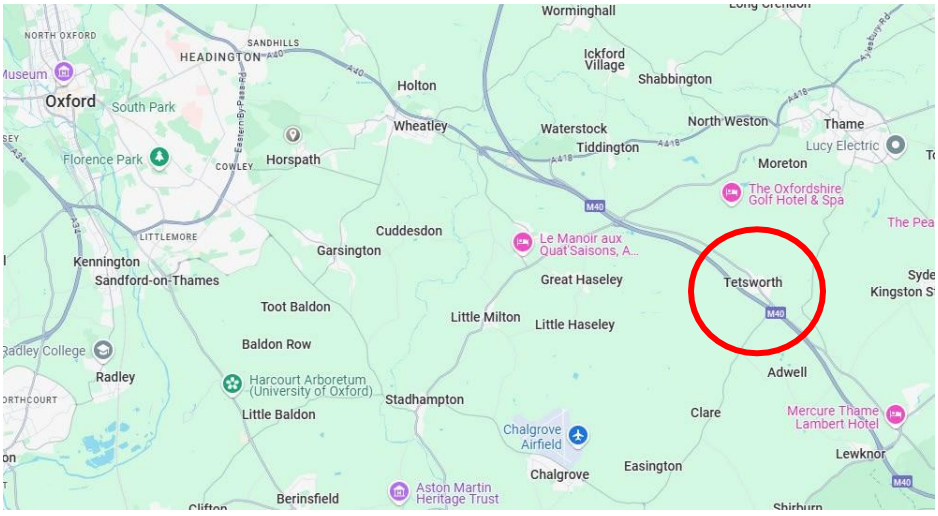
- A supportive and encouraging environment in which to minister.
- A thriving community of seven villages across six parishes
- A forward-thinking group of parishes open to embracing new ideas and ways of working
- Well established administrative and financial responsibilities managed independently by the individual PCCs
- An opportunity to live and work in a beautiful part of South Oxfordshire.
- The gift of friendship and laughter.

6. The Vicarage

- The detached vicarage is in the High Street of the village of Tetsworth, opposite the Village Green well known for its cricket pitch, and now also used for football and other sports. The vicarage is just a stone's throw from the Red Lion pub, which also has a small convenience store. The village also has a sports club and village hall, and the old Swan coaching inn which is now a well-known antiques centre.



- The vicarage, built in 1985, has 4 good sized bedrooms, a bathroom, a cloakroom and a large sitting room, kitchen, dining room and study.
- Outside, there is a garage for one car with additional parking in the driveway. The garden is a good size with a patio, a vegetable plot and borders and is well maintained. The house is alarmed and has security lights back and front.
- The house is currently being refurbished and has the benefit of solar panels, and the oil boiler has been replaced with an air sourced heat pump. Insulation of the walls and loft has been upgraded. The kitchen worktops and tiles have been upgraded, and new vinyl floors and carpets have been laid.
- The vicarage has extremely good transport links. Exits 6 and 8 of the M40 are within one mile, Haddenham and Thame Railway station is 5 miles away. Journey times driving are: Oxford 35 mins, Thame 10mins, Birmingham 90mins, London 60mins.



- The Oxford Tube bus runs every 10 minutes from the Lewknor Turn, just one mile away, and takes you to Oxford and London.
- The school bus picks up and drops just 50 yards from the house.

7. Our Aims and Objectives

- We are fortunate in our small parishes in being independent of each other and yet bound together as a community in a love of God and in supporting each other.
- Our Aim is to reinforce and develop this bond within and between our local communities and the churches that serve them, working together to:
    - Build on our love of God
    - Spread the Word of God
    - Care for God's Creation
    - Love God and each other
    - Strive to make the church the Rock at the centre of our communities
- Our vision is to grow as a benefice, supporting the communities across all our parishes, while encouraging and harnessing their involvement in worship as well as wider church activities.

8. A Brief History

- The Benefice consists of six parishes covering seven villages and hamlets. Lewknor, which includes Postcombe, moved from the Watlington Benefice to join the Tetsworth Benefice about 45 years ago. The six parishes then operated as a self-contained group with a full-time stipendiary vicar living in Tetsworth.
- In 1998 the Pastoral Measure was implemented to amalgamate the Tetsworth Benefice with Thame and Towersey, to form the Thame

Team Ministry. The Measure provided that the vicar of the Tetsworth benefice should continue in that role and reside in Tetsworth.

- In 2010 the Tetsworth benefice became vacant, and it was agreed to appoint a Team Vicar (House for Duty). The Incumbent would commit to working three days per week and it was accepted that this would mean they could serve only the six parishes and that the service these received would be limited.
- An appointment was duly made, and the Team Vicar (House for Duty) position has been a great success.

9. Estimated Populations:

The estimated populations of the parishes in the Tetsworth Benefice are as follows:

Adwell	38
Lewknor and Postcombe	690
South Weston	45
Stoke Talmage	65
Tetsworth	800
Wheatfield	29
TOTAL	1,617

10. Our Communities and Churches

The parishioners of each Church manage the services and the administration of the churches, as well as organising events and activities within the local communities.

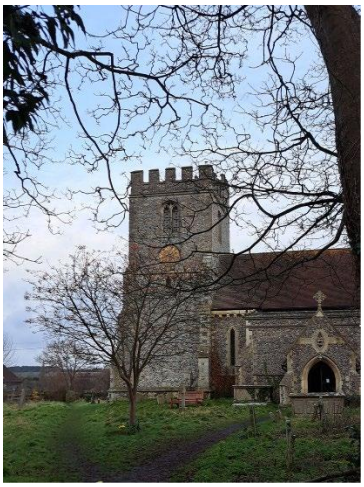


Broadly speaking there are four small parishes and two larger ones.
The larger parishes are Tetsworth and Lewknor (with Postcombe).

- **St. Giles', Tetsworth.** Tetsworth has about 340 houses with a population of about 800. The village has a small school for approximately 60 infant and junior age children. The congregation participate in various village fund-raising activities, such as the village fete and the Christmas Fair and have held other fund-raising activities from time to time including a very successful flower festival in 2022. On occasion the Church is used for music recordings or fund-raising concerts due to its excellent acoustics. Services are held four Sundays in the month There are two Common Worship communion services a month, led by the vicar, and two services of morning worship which are led by members of the congregation. The average Sunday congregation comprises a core of around 10 regulars who are very much a church family, and very forward thinking in their approach to the role of the church in the village and surrounding area.



- **St. Margaret's, Lewknor.** Lewknor (with Postcombe) has some 250 houses and approximately 690 residents, most of whom work in London or Oxford. The parish includes the hamlet of Postcombe, separated from Lewknor village by the M40 motorway. Built either side of the A40, it includes a pub and a petrol station with a shop attached.
  Currently one Holy Communion service is held each month at St. Margaret's.
  Lewknor has a thriving Church of England Primary School with 80 children and a very popular pub.



The smaller villages of Adwell, South Weston, Stoke Talmage and Wheatfield have an average population of 45.

- **St. Mary's Adwell** is in the garden of the manor house and is maintained by the Estate. Besides the regular services of which there are about 18 BCP communion services per year, other services are held occasionally to celebrate national events, and a Countryside Service is normally held once a year. The church is also used for occasional charitable events. The PCC is a member of the Prayer Book Society and Save our Parish.



- **St. Lawrence, South Weston** is in the middle of the village and is well looked after by the parishioners. Typically, there are 19 services per year, using Common Worship for the communion services and a regular informal morning worship service.



- **St. Mary Magdalen, Stoke Talmage** is thriving, with the Harvest Festival and the Carol Service being major events, when the church is beautifully decorated it is packed with people from far and wide. Currently, an additional service for Ash Wednesday is held, and other events take place in the church at the discretion of the PCC. The church is of 13th century foundation with considerable rebuilding in the 18th and 19th centuries and is currently undertaking an exciting restoration programme entirely organised by the PCC, with completion due by end 2026.



- **St. Andrew's, Wheatfield** is in the middle of a field which in itself is an uplifting feature, it is a listed Gade 1 building and is featured in Simon Jenkins book "England's Thousand Best Churches". The PCC of Wheatfield has just completed a major restoration programme on budget and on time. Thirteen services are held each year using the Book of Common Prayer and readings from the King James's Bible. Two of the services are held in the evening one of these being Harvest Festival and the other one is the standard Evensong. These services are lit by candlelight, creating a special atmosphere.



11. Parish Administration & Finances

- Historically, parish administration has been undertaken by the Church Wardens and other parishioners, and this will of course continue.
- A joint meeting of all the parishes is held once a year and a service rota for the year is agreed. This forms the basis for the annual rota but there are occasional amendments which are always agreed and notified without fuss. A monthly rota is sent out by one of the church wardens to those who come to church or have asked to be on the list.
- It is normal for the incumbent to attend this meeting and to report on the year and discuss any requirements.
- At the annual parishes meeting any other matters of common interest are also discussed, and agreed, including Clergy Expenses. The 2023/24 agreed General Expenses budget was £3000 to cover items such as fuel, printing and telephone costs. This was funded through parish contributions from across all six parishes.
- Our Group Treasurer (who also deals with Clergy Expenses), is responsible for returns to the Diocese in terms of service fees.
- PCC meetings are held by each parish once a year and on any other occasions necessary. There is no expectation that the incumbent will attend these meetings although they may of course wish to do so.
- All parish finances are dealt with by the PCCs, and all church matters such as Inspections by the Diocese, Quinquennials, maintenance issues, and churchyards are dealt with by each PCC without any involvement necessary from the incumbent.

- In the recent past 2 of our churches have required significant renovations. These projects have been managed by the PCC's responsible, with all fundraising and works organisation and supervision being undertaken by the PCC.
- Church building maintenance is generally covered by Patrons, Benefactors or Fundraising for specific projects.

Parish Share is paid in full each year. See below the 2024 allocations:

Parish	Amount
Adwell	£2,309
Lewknor	£4,923
South Weston	£2,181
Stoke Talmage	£2,634
Tetsworth	£5,351
Wheatfield	£2,192

12. Services

- Prior to the "Interregnum", the normal Sunday commitment for the incumbent would consist of 2 services, normally at 9 a.m. and either 10:30 a.m. or 6:30 p.m., with one Sunday most months having a 3rd service. A lay led service or a Prayer Group led by a lay person would normally take place in Tetsworth twice a month.
- Below is an example of the service schedule taken "Before Interregnum" showing the mix of Communion services, Evensong and lay led services at each church. May was an exceptional month with 5 Sundays (and Ascension Day), but the pattern of service is not unusual. The lay led services are marked in blue.

2 May	9.00am	Wheatfield	Holy Communion BCP
Easter 5	10.30am	Tetsworth	Holy Communion
9 May	9.00am	Wheatfield	Holy Communion BCP
Rogation Sunday	10.30am	Tetsworth	Morning Worship (lay led)
	4.30pm	Stoke Talmage	Rogation Sunday Service
Thursday 13 May Ascension Day	7.30pm	Stoke Talmage	Holy Communion BCP
16 May	9.00am	Lewknor	Holy Communion BCP
S after Ascension	10.30am	Tetsworth	Prayer Group (lay led)
	10.30am	South Weston	Morning Worship

23 May	9.00am	Adwell	Holy Communion BCP
Pentecost	10.30am	Tetsworth	Holy Communion
	6.30pm	Stoke Talmage	Holy Communion BCP
30 May	9.00am	South Weston	Holy Communion CW
Trinity Sunday			

13. The Locality and Amenities

- There are two primary schools in the area: Lewknor Church of England Primary and Tetsworth Primary School. There are also pre-school groups in both Lewknor and Tetsworth.
- Secondary school children mostly attend either Lord Williams in Thame or Icknield School in Watlington.
- Tetsworth has an active Sports and Social Club with well supported football and cricket teams.
- The villages tend to look to either Thame or Watlington for facilities such as shopping, doctors, dentists etc. Of these two, Thame is closest to the vicarage, providing good sports facilities, including a swimming pool, a large weekly market and good supermarkets. There is also a library and a small theatre.
- Both Tetsworth and Lewknor have village halls which host a variety of events throughout the year

14. The Deanery Perspective:

We are delighted that you are exploring the possibility of coming to minister here. Aston and Cuddesdon is one of the larger deaneries in the Diocese of Oxford with more than 50 churches, including the beautiful Dorchester Abbey. The Deanery is essentially rural, but wraps around the north-east, east and south of Oxford. Deanery Chapter and Synod are well attended, and the Chapter has a strong sense of fellowship with a lot of mutual support which we are trying to nurture by meeting in more localised clusters to minimise travel time and distance. As well as this, we offer a wonderful location, with easy access to London, plus Oxford itself is, of course, on the doorstep, with all the cultural, educational, social and architectural richness for which it is famous. With such good road and rail links and a major cultural city on the doorstep this is nonetheless a very beautiful part of the country in which to live. It stretches from the foot of the Chilterns to the higher land to the East of Oxford. The Thame Team is at the eastern edge of both the county and the Deanery, bordered by Buckinghamshire to the east and the M40 to the southwest, and focused on the thriving market town of Thame, which has a very lively arts scene including music festivals, a

theatre, an annual arts and literary festival, a food festival, and an annual promenade art exhibition utilising shop windows. We do hope you will take an interest in the profile for these six parishes. We really believe that this would be a rewarding post for someone who wants the delights and challenges of rural ministry, but with all the benefits of having a world class city just down the road.

Revd Prebendary Jane Haslam, Area Dean

Maureen Underdown, Lay Chair

15. The Diocesan Perspective:

The Diocese of Oxford is part of the family of the Church of England in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

- Together, we are the Church, called and sent by God as disciples of Jesus Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit. We are a living, growing network of more than a thousand congregations, chaplaincies, and schools.

- Together, we are called to be more Christ-like: to be the Church of the Beatitudes: contemplative, compassionate and courageous for the sake of God's world.

- Together, we work with God and with others for the common good in every place in one of the great crossroads of the world.

- Together, we are called to proclaim the Christian faith afresh in this generation with joy and hope and love.

- Together, we are called to dream dreams and see visions of what could be, and see those visions come to birth. [Taken from the Flourishing in Ministry Booklet.]

The Common Vision Five Mission Focus Areas currently are:

1. Environmental action
2. Setting discipleship and catechesis at the heart of our common life
3. Growing new congregations.
4. Reaching out to children, schools, and families.
5. Addressing poverty and inequality

Further information about the Diocese is available at www.oxford.anglican.org

Applications

To apply please go to: pathways.churchofengland.org