

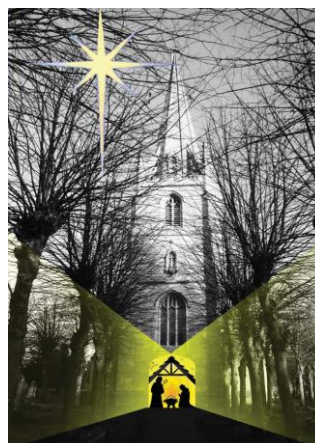
# Benefice Profile 2023



**Living God's Love**



**Growing God's Kingdom**



## North Bradford-on-Avon and Villages

Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in the post of Rector of North Bradford On Avon and Villages, part of the Ramsbury area of the Diocese of Salisbury. This post is a super opportunity for ministry within a glorious part of Wiltshire, among a warm, welcoming and collaborative group of churches.

The ancient see of Ramsbury, covering much of that county, is rich in spiritual heritage, from the cathedral city of Salisbury and the valleys of its five rivers, up to the Marlborough Downs. God is in this place – even though many know it not – and it offers an enriching context for ministry and mission today.

I am looking for devoted and visionary clergy, who can inspire and guide our communities in Making Jesus Known - our new diocesan vision statement. While this can appear a timeless landscape, our parishes are constantly changing and face all the challenges and opportunities of life in the 2020s. Because of this, the church must also change in order to grow, renewing its traditions for the contemporary situation.

These are, then, times of transition for the market town and village churches of Wiltshire, which I sometimes liken to the oak trees of the Savernake Forest near my home, which gradually join their root systems to survive individually. Churches must likewise learn how to be collaborate 'beneath the soil' in order to flourish above ground in their own particular setting.

In the Diocese of Salisbury, we place a high value on the encouragement and pastoral support of our parish clergy and, should God guide you to serve here, you will become part of a committed and collaborative team.

Please contact the Ramsbury office if you need any assistance with your enquiry and be assured of my prayers as you seek the Lord's will for your future.

*Sincerely in Christ,*

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Andrew Ramsbury". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

# **Benefice Profile 2023**

## **North Bradford-on-Avon and Villages**

### ***Living God's Love    Growing God's Kingdom***

*Almighty God, we give you thanks for the many people and places that make up this part of the body of Christ. As we work together to make Jesus known in the communities we serve, we look to you for all that we need. Keep us faithful, generous and united in our love for you and each other as we prepare for a new beginning. Give us courage to follow you with hope and joy in our hearts. May we be open to change and ready graciously to welcome our new Rector, on whom we pray your blessing.*

[Our benefice prayer.]

### **Welcome ...**

And thank you for looking at our profile. It shows you who we are, where we are coming from, and our hope to discern what God may have in store for us.

After ten years, the Rector of our benefice of four parishes has retired leaving us with a group of churches that work well with each other and who are on a journey together. This is a special opportunity to take stock, refresh our vision and help us determine our priorities and how they will be addressed.

### **Who We Are**

The benefice was established in 2010. Each of the four churches has its own PCC and distinctive characteristics. **Christ Church** in Bradford-on-Avon is one of two parishes in the town. **St Nicholas** in Winsley is in a large village, which expanded rapidly in the latter part of the last century. **St James's** in South Wraxall and **St Peter's** in Monkton Farleigh are in smaller villages which have seen much less housing development and retain more of their rural character. All the parishes are adjacent and the churches are within 20 minutes' drive of each other.

### **Where We Are**

We are in the north-west corner of Wiltshire, at the southern edge of the Cotswolds with typical local limestone landscape and attractive stone buildings. The world heritage city of Bath is about eight miles away to the north-west.

The total population of the benefice is about 6,000. The area is generally affluent with small pockets of deprivation. Unemployment is low in comparison with the national average.

Transport links in the area are reasonable with rail, road and even a restored canal. Housing costs are high, as it is a beautiful and sought-after area in which to live and to raise a family. It is also popular for retirement and for recreation. Tourism makes a significant contribution to the local economy. Both state and independent schools, along with the nearby universities, are excellent. The local communities are traditional and strong with a wealth of activities, such as clubs and other societies.

In common with many other churches, all our congregations consist mainly of older people, with most aged over 60. Numbers have declined, though recent newcomers have told us that they felt welcomed into a friendly church.

[The Churches of North Bradford on Avon \(nboachurches.co.uk\)](http://nboachurches.co.uk)

## About the Benefice

### The Team

While the Rector is the only stipendiary post in the benefice, the new incumbent will be supported by an Associate Priest and three retired priests. The retired clergy are welcomed as part of the wider ministry team as they regularly lead Sunday worship, as well as contributing pastorally. We also have four Lay Worship Leaders and six Lay Pastoral Assistants (LPAs).

There is further support from two paid part-time staff, the Benefice Administrator and a Children's and Families Worker. Additionally, there are two part-time posts on short-term contracts for the Discover Christ Church! project.

We have a full complement of churchwardens, PCC secretaries and treasurers, and parish safeguarding officers.

From life event services and meditation groups, to more traditional and informal worship, our team enjoys offering a variety of services that enrich our communities, and are held in deep affection by the congregations they serve.

Our benefice clergy work hard to encourage and maintain active and positive links with other local clergy, both Anglican and ecumenically.

- The local ecumenical Bradford-on-Avon Churches Together (BACT) is supported by Lay Representatives and Clergy. As one of the three sponsoring bodies for The Hub and its food bank, BACT has two of the trustee places; both these trustees are currently from this benefice.
- We are involved with both Deanery Synod and Deanery Clergy Chapter.
- Our Rector and Associate Priest have regular meetings with priests from the other Bradford-on-Avon Anglican benefice, and have active involvement with the local hospice Dorothy House Chaplaincy Team, the Diocesan Wellbeing Team and the Salisbury Board of Education.

### Four Churches Forum

Meeting on Thursday mornings, this recent innovation is an opportunity for clergy, churchwardens, PCC members and anyone else from the four churches who wishes to attend to keep up to date with plans, discuss current issues and raise any problems. It has been invaluable in building cross-benefice understanding, goodwill and support.

### How We Worship

Across the benefice there is a wide spectrum of worship patterns and styles, from the informal to the traditional. Maintaining and developing a mixture and variety of provision across the benefice is seen by the parishes as of paramount importance, as well as attracting new people to our congregations.

Some people would like to explore how we worship with periodic variety in styles including less liturgy and more opportunity for freeform worship and prayer. Other people are keen to retain more of the traditional worship styles.

There is an openness in all the parishes to fresh approaches and new ideas for Christian witness. Alternative forms of worship, such as café church, breakfasts, house groups and more lay-led services take place. There are united benefice-wide services at least once a month, although some with mobility and transport problems find getting to these more difficult.





Open Air Communion



Votive Candles



Christmas Prayer Tree

## Service Patterns

Sunday morning services take place at 10am in the three villages, and at 10.30am at Christ Church. A joint team of bellringers ring at Holy Trinity Church before ringing at Christ Church.

Our parish services fit within an overall benefice pattern. We worship together with a single united service on the first Sunday of the month and also on any fifth Sunday, when the churches take it in turn to host. On the other Sundays, the service patterns vary somewhat.

Under the current service pattern the two rural churches, St Peter's and St James's, have a Communion service on the second, third and fourth Sundays, with each parish taking it in turn to host. The congregations of the two churches have become much closer as a result of this practice.

At St Nicholas, the second Sunday is a mostly lay-led Café Refresh service in the hall. The third Sunday is Parish Communion, while the fourth Sunday is generally "Together in Worship" with a Bible reading, prayer and songs.

Christ Church usually has Holy Communion services on the second and third Sundays. Café-style Refresh services on fourth Sundays attract smaller numbers but are appreciated by those who attend.

A monthly mid-week service of Compline, which is much appreciated, rotates around the benefice churches.

All four churches reach out to their local community for festival services such as Mothering Sunday, Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Sunday and Christmas, and attendance at these services is significantly higher at all our churches than for regular Sunday services.

On Remembrance Sunday wreaths are laid in the villages by representatives of all village organisations as well as serving and former members of the armed forces. Some of the Christ Church congregation attend the service at the war memorial in the centre of town, and others attend the service in Christ Church that day.

Special services marking significant events in the life of the nation (such as the Platinum Jubilee, the death of HM Queen Elizabeth II and the Coronation) are well attended. One of our challenges is to translate attendance at these special services into more regular Sunday worship.

We are always looking for innovative ways to worship. Forest Church in our churchyards is well attended and raises awareness of church activity. A Pets Service at St Peter's was attended by a variety of animals and their owners from across the benefice.

There is an annual benefice-wide service of remembering for those who have experienced the loss of someone close to them.

While the current service pattern has been stable for some years and works well, we are always open to new ideas and want to see God at work in all parishes across the benefice.

Life event services take place in all four churches. The clergy team take some services at local crematoria, as well as church funerals.

### **Rota Organisation**

The incumbent and the Benefice Administrator work together to organise the service rotas, including for weddings, baptisms and funerals. This includes clergy and lay leaders, organists and other musicians, and IT assistants for St Nicholas.

[Rotas — The Churches of North Bradford on Avon \(nboachurches.co.uk\)](http://nboachurches.co.uk)

### **Music**

There is a working organ and a keyboard, well maintained and used, in each of the four churches.

A number of organists and pianists are available to play across the benefice. St Nicholas music group and Christ Church music group usually play once a month at different services. Musicians serve in one or more parishes.

While there are no regular choirs, Parish Choirs are assembled for special occasions, such as carol services.

### **How and Where we Pray**

All four churches are open in the daytime for private prayer, and are well used and appreciated. Seasonal themed displays in our churches and church porches offer another focus for prayer.

There are also small regular prayer groups in the parishes. There is a small informal weekly prayer group at Winsley, and a confidential prayer chain, as well as a weekly Christian Meditation group, open to all, which has been running for a number of years.

### **Home Groups**

Currently, there are four lay-led home groups that meet regularly for bible study, discussion, fellowship and prayer, providing mutual pastoral care and support through people who know each other well. Additional home groups are formed to meet during Advent and Lent. The four home group leaders meet regularly with the Rector who provides overall coordination and direction.



Lent Porch Prayer Tree



Forest Church

## Children's and Families Work

We recognise that our current service pattern is not convenient for families and that the church is here for all, not just our more senior people. Our Children's and Families Worker co-ordinates, organises and leads a monthly outdoor Forest Church aimed at families, rotating around the four churches in the benefice, as well as half-term and holiday workshops. She is assisted at the events by many volunteers.



Open the Book



Sunbeams

Regular Open the Book sessions and collective worship take place in all three of our primary schools, alongside occasional workshops such as It's Your Move for year 6, and Experience Church. These are a great way of initially engaging with children. Forest Church reaches a range of families in varying numbers and a trial session of Lego Church saw more than 50 children explore, engage and have fun. Good Friday workshops and Crib services at Christmas are also well attended.

Holiday activities for children are either based in individual churches or benefice wide and vary from craft activities, to stories and trails. Holiday Club mornings have proved very successful with a range of themes such as nocturnal animals, water, harvest and space, as have themed Activity Teas. We are finding children coming back and bringing friends to these. The Ark and Sunbeams groups continue to flourish and provide a welcome space for carers of young children to connect with us and each other.



## **Our Schools**

We have foundation governor representation at Winsley and Christ Church schools, and work closely with Churchfields in Monkton Farleigh. Clergy and lay people are involved in a number of ways, and are welcomed into the schools. Our dedicated Children's and Families Worker works across the three primary schools.

In addition to the regular term time Open the Book sessions, and occasional Experience Church events, the schools are welcomed into the churches regularly and frequently as well as for special events and celebrations, in which many members of the congregations are involved.

There is a nominated governor for church and school links in each school. This link is positive and creative, and involves many in each church community. We look to develop and extend our work with the schools, which is crucial to each of our churches and our relationships with our communities.

The local Church of England comprehensive secondary school, St Laurence, is located close to Christ Church but is in the adjacent parish of Holy Trinity, Bradford-on-Avon, and its catchment area covers all four parishes in our benefice. The Rector of Holy Trinity Bradford-on-Avon is a foundation governor at St Laurence School.

[Christ Church CofE \(VC\) Primary School | Bradford-on-Avon](#)

[Welcome to Winsley Primary School](#)

[Churchfields – The Village School](#)

[St Laurence School | Care • Inspire • Succeed \(st-laurence.com\)](#)

## **Finance**

In 2021 and 2022 all the parishes paid their parish share in full. In three of the four churches the financial situation, while leaving little headroom, does not give rise to any significant concern. Christ Church faces necessary building repairs, some of which will be funded under the Discover Christ Church! project, and others from the proceeds of the sale of a surplus property in 2018. It is also fundraising for further improvements to the church building.

Prudent budgeting, stewardship-giving and successful fund-raising are all strong positives in all the parishes.

Certain benefice-wide costs, such as the Benefice Office, are shared by the four parishes in proportion to their size, and we are considering how the costs of the Children's and Families Worker (currently fully funded by St Nicholas) may be more equitably shared. The four parishes are committed to working with each other in a mutually supportive way.

The challenge for the future in all the parishes is to maintain and increase the level of giving by the congregations in a period of high inflation and rising costs, as well as developing other types of income to keep pace with inflation and offset the risk of above inflation rises in the parish share, falling parish rolls and fixed overheads. This will enable us to continue to balance income and expenditure as well as further develop the reserves already held.

See also Appendix.



## Safeguarding

We make our safeguarding responsibilities a priority. Each of the four churches has a Parish Safeguarding Officer, who provides a safeguarding report to every PCC and APCM meeting. They ensure that the required training and DBS checks, for those in positions that require it, including safer recruitment, is up to date and logged with the diocese.

The Rector (during the vacancy the Associate Priest) chairs a regular meeting of the four parish safeguarding officers and liaises as needed with the diocese.

## Your New Home

The Rectory is situated in a quiet cul-de-sac on a small, mature housing development in the larger village of Winsley near St Nicholas church. A short, paved and lit public path leads to the church, or there is a short-cut through the churchyard via a gate from the garden.



The house is in a good state of repair. It has four bedrooms, a shower room adjacent to the master bedroom, a separate family bathroom, sitting room, dining room, study and good-sized modern kitchen with separate utility area. The central heating fuel is gas. There is a well-maintained garden and a double garage with a tarmac drive giving off-road parking for several cars.

## The Benefice Office

The Benefice Office is currently situated in the Mount Pleasant Centre, beside Christ Church in Bradford-on-Avon. It is well equipped with modern photocopying facilities and is staffed by a part-time Benefice Administrator. All four parishes contribute to the rent and running costs.

It is planned that the Benefice Office will move into the office space created as part of the Future for Christ Church project.



Quiz Night



Benefice visit to Lee Abbey

## **What Might Our Future Look Like?**

We have taken this opportunity to listen to our congregations, our communities and our schools, giving them the chance to let us know what they valued and their concerns and hopes for the future. We received just over 40 completed forms, with thoughtful and considered responses, from the congregations together with some feedback from classroom discussions and conversations with non-church-attending villagers.

As a benefice it was good to see that the same points were being raised by many respondents in all the churches. Some of the comments need to be discussed more widely in the benefice to help us focus on our future direction and what changes we might make.

### **❖ Things We Can Celebrate**

All the signs are of God at work in the benefice and of answered prayers. We continue to have baptisms and weddings, as well as welcoming new members of congregations.

The blessing of faithful congregations and our excellent churchwardens

Offering a variety of services and worship leaders, which welcome everybody. Music is seen as a strength.

Our wide networks of different forms of parish-based pastoral support, especially for the sick, disabled and older people as well as those in crisis.

The work in our schools (Open the Book), with pre-schoolers and young families (The Ark, Sunbeams) and our Children's and Families Worker are all valued and seen as a very positive asset.

The community events – fairs, fetes, celebrations, as well as Soup's Up, Kettle's On, Wednesday Coffee & Chat and church teas and so on, which bring people together.

### **❖ Things We Can Build On**

The growing collaborations and strengthening friendships across the benefice, such as the Thrive group, with representatives from each parish, which continues to meet regularly.

Seasonal celebrations are often attended by families who are not regular attenders.

Our churchyards are used for personal prayer, solace and reflection, and provide a space to talk to children about loss.

The strong relationships between the four churches and their local communities, including those who are not churchgoers.

The goodwill of non-attenders who have been supported by the churches.

### **❖ The Challenges We Face**

What will the future look like? Currently there is no provision for older children, teenagers and young adults.

Some service formats are not appealing to everyone, and some liturgy can make services inaccessible.

Benefice services do not work for everyone and travel can be an issue. Some prefer the familiarity of their home church.

There is a desire for more house groups and prayer groups.

Caring for historic buildings is both a practical (cleaning, repairs) and a financial challenge. Fundraising for specific projects and finances takes time and effort and

there are fewer people to undertake this.

## **We Are Praying To Find Someone Who**

Is excited by the challenges and opportunities of rural and small-town ministry.

Will be sensitive and accessible to all, and at ease with individuals and groups, including those who do not attend regularly.

Has a strong personal faith that is nurtured with private devotional practice that supports their public ministry.

Is passionate to communicate the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Is an effective leader and team player who will enjoy being part of a supportive ministry team, but also understands their own limitations and can enable others to exercise their ministry gifts.

Is a good communicator and listener to congregations, colleagues and all age groups, from the elderly to the very young.

Is comfortable with and supportive of the range of services used across the benefice and will challenge us to experiment at times, whilst continuing to offer traditional services for those that want them.

Can maintain and develop the currently excellent relationship with the schools and their heads and staff, and support our governors and Open the Book teams.

Children from our schools feel that a new Rector should be kind, helpful, thoughtful, trustworthy, and be their own self. In addition to stopping arguments, they would be forgiving and a good listener. They would also pray and know a lot about the Bible. Children would expect to see them in their schools, churches and in the parishes.

## **We Can Offer**

Four churches who are working well together

A willingness and openness to consider fresh ideas and new approaches.

Encouragement and support in your new ministry.

People with a wide range of gifts and talents who are prepared to give their time and skills to support and develop the church and its mission in a variety of ways.

Support for time with family, for spiritual growth and personal well-being.

A beautiful area in which to live, where the church is still held in high regard in the community.

## **We Need Help With**

Developing our current vision of “Living God’s Love, Growing God’s Kingdom” and help in shaping the future direction of our four Christian communities.

Facilitating further development of a united benefice of four churches.

Inspiring and attracting new people into our four congregations (especially younger people and families).

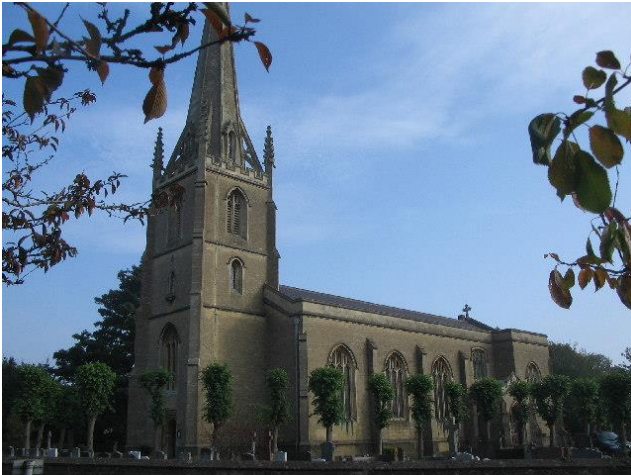
Helping us take mission beyond the church doors with the focus on living out the love of Christ in our communities and schools.

Identifying what we need to prioritise within our available resources.

## The Parishes

### ✠ Christ Church, Bradford-on-Avon

Situated on the north-eastern side of the town, the parish was created in the 19th century out of the adjacent parish of Holy Trinity. It is largely residential (population about 3,000) with workers mainly commuting to nearby towns. Accommodation is mainly private with some social housing and sheltered accommodation, a large new care home complex near to the church and two recent new build estates on the edge of the parish. Invitations to Christmas services are hand delivered to all addresses. Within the parish and next to the church is Christ Church Voluntary Controlled Primary School, which uses the church regularly through the year.



The church seats around 250 people in the nave and 20 in the Lady Chapel. Reroofing the church was completed in 2004, and the east end wall paintings conserved as a Millennium Project. The lighting system is now failing and some other areas of the church need repair. With no toilet facilities, those at the nearby Mount Pleasant Centre are available to be used during services and activities such as the Ark.

Christ Church faces essential building repairs together with a falling roll. Some repairs have been funded from existing finances, while others will be addressed through two major projects, Discover Christ Church! and the Future for Christ Church.

As a stewardship parish, Christ Church continues to meet its commitments, including payment of parish share, but expenditure is projected to exceed income in 2023. Fetes have topped up planned giving and other donations. The planned addition of toilets, a kitchen and office space will allow the building to be used more flexibly, generating income from lettings for community and cultural purposes and putting the church onto a more sustainable financial footing for the future.

The PCC sold a surplus property in 2018, with the sale proceeds invested through the diocese while further funds were raised. Grant funder restrictions led to the decision to split the work into two projects.

**Discover Christ Church!** is fully funded, with a substantial grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The outreach officer began work in May 2023, strengthening existing links with Christ Church School with sessions in the churchyard and in the building within the context of the school curriculum. Work includes safety and restoration work on the ringing and bell chambers and the bells themselves, installation of new lighting in the church and restoration of the church clock, for which there is strong community support. During the conservation of the nave west end wall paintings the church will remain open to welcome people to come in and see the work in progress, along with a parallel programme of community activities and workshops inspired by the traditional crafts seen in the church.

**Future for Christ Church.** Fundraising continues to install two toilets (one accessible) a small kitchen, an office for the Benefice Administrator, and a storage area. A number



of successful grant applications have added to the funds from the sale of the surplus property. Members of the congregation have been active in using their gifts to add to the funds. Marmalades and jams are snapped up quickly, and greetings cards and packets of seeds sell well. The Coronation Fete raised over £1,000, with a good crowd despite a damp day; the highlight was the Teddy Zip-wire for brave soft toys.

The Mount Pleasant Centre and Social Club next to the church is a well-used building. The PCC provides three trustees for the Centre; one is the Incumbent of the parish and the other two are elected by the PCC.

[Discover Christ Church! | Facebook](#) and [Discover Christ Church! - YouTube](#)

## Church Life

We aim to be a friendly, welcoming church to all who come through our doors. Our 'Welcomers' greet people, and a small group serves coffee, tea and biscuits after Sunday service. There are lunches or afternoon teas for special occasions. The Wednesday morning group knit or crochet over hot drinks and anyone is welcome to join them. Or just come to chat, no knitting or crochet skills needed.

Our decision a couple of years ago to keep the church open during the day is much appreciated by those who come in, whether local or visitors to the town. Some come to sit or pray quietly, and others just to see what is inside. Our south porch prayer tree displays are appreciated by both adults and children who walk through the churchyard.

Other groups clean the church, provide flowers for festivals and look after the Garden of Remembrance and generally tidy up. Grass in the closed churchyard is mown by a team from Bradford-on-Avon Town Council.

Four years ago, Christ Church Mothers' Union merged with that of Holy Trinity church, where their meetings are held. The Mothers' Union supports families both locally in the deanery and diocese, and across the world as a worldwide organization, all underpinned by prayer and worship.



Coronation fete



Lockdown Carols



Good Friday Workshop

## Outreach

The Scratch Nativity on Christmas Eve with a congregation of 200-250 is the most popular service of the year. All children attending are invited to take part and Away in a Manger is sung by candlelight.

Our largest area of mission is with children and families. Open the Book sessions in Key Stages 1 and 2 run throughout the school year with two small teams of volunteers. Termly session planning is led by the Children's and Families Worker. A member of the ministry team leads collective worship in both key stages each week. This has led

to a strengthening of the relationship which the PCC and the school would like to see develop further.

The Ark Baby and Toddler Café has been welcoming pre-school children and their carers since January 2012. Currently around 20 children regularly attend the sessions in church on term-time Thursday mornings. Volunteers lead activities and story-telling from Bible stories and children have a range of play activities giving carers time to chat to each other and helpers, sharing joys and concerns.

### ✠ St James's Church, South Wraxall

South Wraxall is situated about 8 miles south-east of Bath and 2 miles north of Bradford-on-Avon. The village consists of three parts: at its northern edge is South Wraxall Manor with a cluster of cottages; at the centre of the upper village are St James's Church, The Longs Arms pub and the village hall; one field separates the upper village from Lower Wraxall, where the Club is found. There are some 116 houses with a population of a little over 400. In the past fifteen years or so a significant proportion of the houses has changed hands, sometimes more than once, altering the social dynamic of the village; there are now many more families with young children.

In the church we occasionally hold concerts and, in the summer, serve our ever-popular Afternoon Teas. Other social activities take place in the village hall (converted from the school which closed in the 1970s), the Club and the pub. St James's uses the village hall for coffee after Sunday services, to serve our Sunday breakfasts and to hold other events. In June 2023 the village held a whole weekend of events to celebrate the Coronation, in which church members played a significant part. The proceeds were shared three ways between the Church, the Village Hall and the Prince's Trust.

St James's income broadly matches expenditure. Three-quarters of our income is from planned giving, collections and donations. The church holds village tea events in the summer and village breakfasts in the winter which contribute essential funds towards routine expenditure. The church fabric has been well maintained, often funded by grants and donations.

### The Church



The tower was completed around 1300 and the church was much altered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The medieval builders built well, and the tower and its turret staircase are in good condition to bear the considerable weight of the bells and the stone slab roof. Two major restorations in the 19<sup>th</sup> century bequeathed us a sound building and we are benefitting from this now.

In 2019 our derelict but listed church bells, the only surviving, unaltered ring of six by Abraham Bilbie (1769), were in urgent need of restoration, which was funded by our appeal plus four modest grants. The bells were re-hung in time for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, probably the first full circle ringing for nearly 140 years, and rung again to celebrate King Charles's Coronation. Now they ring out, to the great satisfaction of most of the villagers, for every service in the church, for weddings and for the pure pleasure of ringing by bands from all over the country. To crown all this, a band of ringers has emerged in South Wraxall and has been trained from scratch.

The Quinquennial Survey 2021 recommended repairs to stonework on several sites and most of these have been done. The churchyard boundary wall and the table tombs are low priority and are not being addressed at the moment. Electrical inspection, testing of portable appliances and boiler servicing are carried out regularly.

### Church Life

Our church is open every day with a rota of ten volunteers (not all church members) to lock and unlock it. Members of the congregation undertake duties at Sunday services and serve coffee afterwards. We are fortunate to have a wonderful group of flower arrangers (again, many are not regular churchgoers) who add to the beauty of our church and who “pull out all the stops” for festivals and special occasions such as the Platinum Jubilee and the Coronation. The messages in the Visitors’ Book record people’s appreciation of the flowers, the music and a peaceful place to rest for a few minutes in a busy day.

Church attendance is significantly higher for all the main festivals than for regular Sunday services. We do not have a school in the village, but we do try to involve children in church activities as much as possible. The crib service on Christmas Eve is always full of young families and they also make our church breakfasts a popular meeting point. Our Christmas appeal for toys for the Salvation Army is incredibly well supported by the whole community.



Watching Coronation  
in St James



Village Breakfast  
at South Wraxall



Salvation Army  
toy collection

Remembrance Sunday is very important in South Wraxall and in 2014, for the centenary of the start of World War 1, villagers began raising funds for a War Memorial to commemorate the fallen of both World Wars. This was erected opposite the church and each year our Service of Remembrance culminates there.

While only a small part of the population comes to worship regularly, the church plays an important part in the life of the village. Non-churchgoers work with PCC members to organise events to raise money for St James's: there is a real desire to maintain the church's fabric and pastoral life. The challenge is not only to maintain the current role of the church, but also to encourage the spiritual growth of those (of different ages and diverse interests and commitments) who make the parish what it is.



## ✠ St Peter's, Monkton Farleigh

### The Village

It is likely that the village takes its name from the Cluniac priory which was established around 1150. Some remains of the priory can be seen in the grounds of the present-day Monkton Farleigh Manor.

The parish consists of the old village, including the church, and the areas of Farleigh Wick, Pinckney Green, Broadstones and Farleigh Rise. There is a mixture of private and social housing with a population of about 400. In addition, there is a village hall, a pub and one of the sites of Churchfields school.

Much of the land around the village is farmed by Sir Charles Hobhouse, whose family lives in Monkton Farleigh Manor. Sir Charles and his wife take an active interest in the church and the village.

### The Church



The origins of St Peter's can be traced to the 13th century but the current church is largely the result of rebuilding in 1840s. The church building is Grade II\* listed and a number of monuments in the churchyard are Grade II listed. We are fortunate that the church building is generally in good condition and does not currently require any significant repairs.

A kitchen and toilet were installed in the vestry in 2010. Recent works to improve facilities include upgrading the heating and the creation of a flexible prayer space which is currently used for a children's corner. This welcoming area is specially furnished and equipped with toys and other activities which are used regularly during visits by children from the day nursery based in the village.

The churchyard is still open for burials and the interment of ashes. It is much visited by those tending graves and remembering loved ones. Recognising that the churchyard also provides important space for wildlife, a wildflower project and bat survey have been carried out to learn more about the habitat it provides.

The finances are stable, with income broadly matching expenditure. Planned giving, donations and collections continue to be the principal sources of income, with the funds raised from the annual church fete making an important contribution to total receipts. Normal repairs and maintenance costs have been met from income and no significant expenditure on the church fabric is anticipated, as the building has been well maintained.

### Church Life

In addition to its use for regular services the building is open every day for visitors and those wanting a period of private prayer and reflection.

Whilst the regular congregation represents a small proportion of the population many consider that the church plays an important part in the life of the village. This is borne out by the many non-churchgoers who not only work with the PCC members to organise events to raise money for the church, but who are also involved in unlocking



and locking the church each day, arranging church flowers, and cleaning and tidying the churchyard.

We have sought to increase our contact with Churchfields - The Village School and now run popular Open the Book sessions and lead collective worship. The school children also come to special services in St Peter's at Harvest and Christmas and to mark the end of the school year.

### **Village Life**

There is a strong community spirit in the village, with willing help being given to the organisation of local events which are well supported and usually held in the village hall.

The annual church fete is a traditional style event which is held in the grounds of Monkton Farleigh Manor attracting many visitors from a wide area. The proceeds from the fete form an important part of the income of St Peter's.

The church also contributes to village life with a variety of events such as concerts and coffee mornings which also raise income for St Peter's. A collection box for the local foodbank is located in the church.

Members of St Peter's helped organise and run a series of free soup lunches at the village hall to offer a warm and friendly space to those affected by recent increases in energy costs.



Church Fete at Monkton Farleigh Manor



Benefice Pet Service at St Peter's

### **The Future**

There is much to cherish and be thankful for in our small community: its inhabitants, its history, and the beautiful scenery, but there is scope for our present Christian witness to extend more widely in the parish and farther afield. We need to explore further ways to translate the desire which many have, to see the church continue to have a presence in the village, into greater participation and financial support for St Peter's. We also hope to attract an incumbent who can give assistance in strengthening links with the young people of the parish.

## ✠ St Nicholas

Winsley is a friendly, lively and welcoming village. St Nicholas church reflects the character of the village and offers lots of opportunities for the community to be involved – whether it is for Sunday worship, special services or through a number of regular outreach events.

The village has a population of just under 2,000, and there are four small outlying hamlets - Conkwell, Haugh, Murhill and Turleigh - all within the parish boundary. The 'old village' is centred around the church and pub, and there has been significant post-war housing development, with a modern housing estate which has more than doubled the size of the village. There is a small area of social housing within the parish, along with a number of private rental properties. We have a good relationship with the small Methodist church, and share a number of services a year.

Dorothy House, the regional hospice, is situated in Winsley and has regular support from both Winsley village and members of the clergy. Avon Park retirement complex is just beyond the village. A group of residents from Avon Park regularly attend church services, and we also hold monthly Communion services there.



The church is open every day. We are very mindful of the people who drop in, often when visiting very sick relatives at Dorothy House, and we have kept the building warm and heated throughout recent winters in order to provide a welcoming environment. We have a prayer corner where people can light a votive candle and say a prayer.

Most of our income is received via the Parish Giving Scheme and is augmented by Gift Aid. In recent years, periodic legacies have ensured that we have covered our direct running costs, including our parish share. As a matter of principle, we give away one tenth of our regular income to other charities and we undertake fundraising for specific projects, for example the purchase of a new keyboard for the church hall. Other organisations use the church hall regularly providing an additional, modest income stream. In 2022 our overall expenditure exceeded income meaning that we had to draw on reserves and we recognise that maintaining adequate levels of income is a challenge that we face, particularly given the current economic situation that many people are facing.

The Children's and Families Worker (18.5 hours per week) is employed by St Nicholas PCC and since the pandemic has worked across all four parishes, enabling the benefice to connect well with many children and families. Currently, all the funding comes from within St Nicholas parish, although the other three parishes are considering how they may make a contribution to this work in future.

### **The Church and Church Hall**

The church was built in the 19th century to replace an earlier building and retains an attached 15th century bell tower. The church interior is bright and naturally well lit, and can seat around 180. Average Sunday congregations are around 50 although the building can be full for certain major services, such as the village carol service. The building is used by other local groups periodically, for example for talks and for

occasional concerts. Winsley School holds a termly service in the building, normally led by the Rector or Associate Priest.

The church was last redecorated some 13 years ago and there is flexible lighting and a modern IT projection facility offering an opportunity for more creative services. The latest quinquennial inspection in 2022 revealed no major issues.

There is a church hall of prefabricated construction located just across a quiet road from the church. It has toilets, a kitchen and a small car park. Apart from being used by the church, the hall is let out for local community activities at affordable rates. This building requires some work, and a task ahead of us is to decide exactly what buildings the church community requires in future and how they should be configured.

### **Sunbeams**

This is a group which meets twice monthly for pre-school children and their carers. It is a time for play and a talk with a bible theme. Run by a dedicated team, it is popular in the local community, and a number of babies and children from this group have been baptised.

### **Social Events**

The Men's Group meets monthly throughout the year and is open to men across the benefice, whether they are involved with the church or not. The general pattern is to meet for a takeaway supper followed by a talk from either a member of the group or local speaker. Occasionally, there is a walk ending with a pub meal or a visit to a local site of interest. Several times a year, ladies are invited to attend the meetings, and these evenings are always a lot of fun.

Kettle's On started several years ago. Meeting on a Wednesday morning twice a month it is open to everyone and involves coffee, cake and chat. It is popular and well attended, particularly by people who are retired. There is a fairly even split between church members and non-church members from the village.

Soup's Up was a Warm Spaces initiative started in November 2022 to provide a twice-monthly simple hot meal, warmth and fellowship during the cold winter months. It has proved surprisingly popular and is clearly meeting a social need. We plan to repeat the initiative this winter.



Carol Service



Jubilee Flower Display

## **Village Life**

There are both Cub and Scout groups within the village, and the leaders and young people regularly take part in the Remembrance Day service at the war memorial, in addition to offering their gardening skills at our twice-yearly churchyard clear ups.

Hartley Farm, on the other side of the Winsley bypass, is a popular meeting place in the life of the village, a number of informal 'church chats' take place there over coffee and cake.

Winsley Village Project, a separate charitable project within the village, involves a number of church members and provides a fundraising focus for projects in developing countries and those nearer home. It also offers informal and fun social events throughout the year, which help foster the friendly nature of our village. Other village organisations include a drama group, cricket club, bowling green and the Social Club with a skittle alley.

## **The Bradford Deanery**

The deanery is composed of three groups, each one centred on one of the three towns in the deanery: Trowbridge, Bradford-on-Avon and Melksham.

There are two Anglican parishes in the town of Bradford-on-Avon, each with a stipendiary priest shared with neighbouring villages - Holy Trinity in the Benefice of Holy Trinity, Westwood and Wingfield, and Christ Church in the Benefice of North Bradford-on-Avon and Villages.

There is goodwill for the two town churches and benefices to work more closely together, and the appointment of a new Rector provides a good opportunity to explore how this can be achieved.

## **Want to Know More?**

More information, including the consultation returns, the children's feedback and information on the Christ Church projects, will be available when you visit.

All photos are with permission of those featured.

An appendix of key statistics follows on the next page.

Please look at our website:

[The Churches of North Bradford on Avon \(nboachurches.co.uk\)](http://nboachurches.co.uk)

Our YouTube channel during lockdown

[North Bradford-on-Avon Churches on YouTube](#)

@northbradford-on-avonchurc4300 (41 subscribers and 61 videos)

## **Finally**

Thank you for reading our profile. We hope you found it helpful and it will encourage you to consider us for your next post.

From the PCCs of St Peter's, St James's, St Nicholas and Christ Church.



Life in the Benefice



## Appendix: Key Statistics

	<b>Christ Church</b>	<b>St James's</b>	<b>St Peter's</b>	<b>St Nicholas</b>
<b>Financial statistics – Unrestricted Fund 2022 (£)</b>				
<b>Surplus/(deficit)</b>	<b>6,014</b>	<b>724</b>	<b>(3,630)</b>	<b>(7,252)</b>
Unrestricted Income, of which:	47,411	17,135	16,233	70,683
Voluntary giving	24,823	10,585	12,678	47,842
Fundraising	-	1,967	448 <sup>5</sup>	1,705
Other <sup>1</sup>	22,588 <sup>3</sup>	4,583	3,107	21,136
Unrestricted Expenditure, of which:	41,397	16,411	19,863	77,935
Share	22,905	8,714	10,208	42,724
Other	19,492	7,697	9,655	35,211
<b>Bank, deposit and investment balances</b>	<b>22,204</b>	<b>13,524</b>	<b>7,745</b>	<b>34,861</b>
<b>Financial statistics – Restricted Funds 2022 (£)<sup>2</sup></b>				
<b>Bank, deposit and investment balances</b>	<b>15,956</b>	<b>49,709<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>5,229</b>	<b>26,337<sup>6</sup></b>
<b>Electoral roll APCM 2023</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>98</b>

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Other income includes Gift Aid, legacies, grants, net fee income and investment income.

<sup>2</sup> Restricted Funds exclude assets held in trust by the Diocese and endowment funds.

<sup>3</sup> Includes legacy income of £7,335.

<sup>4</sup> Includes Bells Restoration Fund balance of £43,833.

<sup>5</sup> No village fête was held in 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Includes Youth Worker balance of £21,025. This funds the Childrens' and Families Worker post.