



Welcome to the new benefice of Soberton, Newtown and Hambledon



We promise you the warmest of welcomes and our full support.

We worship together in our local community, seeking to bring people of all ages to Christ through our work and witness.

Strengthened by our faith, using our care, skills and time, we proclaim the good news of God's love.

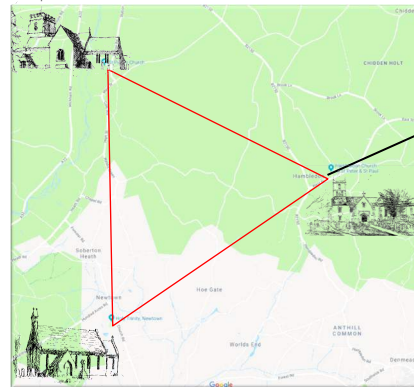
The joint benefice of Soberton and Newtown has been merged with the Parish of Hambledon and this is an exciting challenge for a new priest to explore mission partnerships and opportunities to bring together our committed and enthusiastic teams.



Parish Profile

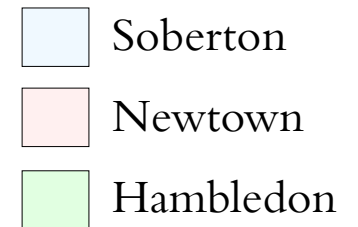
The Meon Valley

St Peter's, Soberton



St Peter & St Paul's,
Hambledon

Holy Trinity, Newtown



The three parishes lie approximately 10 miles north of Portsmouth in the Meon Valley. The newly expanded benefice of Soberton, Newtown and Hambledon is in the South Downs National Park and is an area of great natural beauty. Bordered to the west by the River Meon and the A32 from Fareham to Alton, our active rural villages lie

- 25/30 minutes from Portsmouth and the Diocesan Office
- 20 minutes from the market town of Petersfield.
- 30 minutes from each of the Cathedral Cities of Portsmouth and Winchester
- With direct trains from Petersfield to London Waterloo (70mins)

There is a lot to do, to share and to be involved in for a new priest and their family in all three of the villages.

Soberton, Newtown and Hambledon

Our parishes are very similar. They comprise small clusters of houses with fields or woodland in between and are connected principally by narrow country lanes. The villages are surrounded by several small hamlets which are included in the benefice. Properties date from the fifteenth century to the present day and include many listed buildings.

The total population of Soberton and Newtown parishes is about 1,640 with Hambledon hovering around 950 souls. Historically they were dominated by agriculture, but with substantial connections with the Royal Navy arising from the proximity of the Portsmouth naval base. These connections continue in the parishes but increasingly those in business, medical and other professions are making their homes here and working in the Solent area or commuting to London, or working from home several days a week.

There is little public transport provision in the area but there are community buses with volunteer drivers providing shopping excursions, so maintaining a vital connection between the Meon Valley villages along the A32, with larger towns and cities such as Fareham, Winchester, Petersfield and Chichester.

This is a desirable location and house prices tend to reflect this. The population, therefore, is a mix of long standing residents, many of whom are retired, together with younger working people. There are several small estates peppered throughout which successfully combine private, social, council and affordable contemporary housing. Recently, there has been a welcome influx of young, professional families and while many of them may not be regular worshippers in our church they form the pivotal hub of our villages going forward and they do like to know that church is there.



St Peter's, Soberton



This historic church is Grade 1 listed and dates from the early 13th Century, when the chancel and part of the nave were built. The south transept, known as the Curl Chapel, was built in 1270 and houses some of the earliest and most important wall paintings that remain in the Meon Valley. It also contains a remarkable plinth supported by three carved human heads on which a statue of the Virgin Mary probably rested in pre-reformation days and dates from about 1300. The chancel and chancel arch were rebuilt in the 14th century along with further additions to the church, notably the present tower which was built in the 16th century.

Since the 2011/12 quinquennial, death watch beetle found in some timbers has been treated and repairs completed; the heating system has been replaced with under-pew heaters and new LED lights installed. In the south transept, there is movement in the walls with a crack currently under review for repair. The church, however is loved and cared for by many in the village and has both character and charm.

After many years of fundraising a new suite of rooms sympathetically designed to fit with the ancient church was completed in 2010. It includes a main room with seating for 45, an office with communication facilities, a kitchen and WC facilities accessible by all. The extension has proved an invaluable asset to the church life at St Peter's providing space after church services for coffee and conversation. It is used by the ROCS children's group and by other groups for church-linked and wider community events such as the History Society, Film Club, Deanery meetings and on occasions the Parish Council.



The church has a peal of eight bells (also dating back to pre-Reformation days) and a dedicated team of bell ringers who ring for each service; visiting bell ringers also practise at the church and the bells can be heard across the valley.



The church yard at St Peter's surrounds the church and is approximately 1.5 acres with tombstones dating back to the late 17th Century. It contains many fine trees and is well maintained by a team of dedicated and hard-working volunteers. There are family tombs and a mausoleum although space for burials is now limited.





Holy Trinity church was built in 1849 and is constructed of stone and flint work. The church has a single bell in an external tower on the west roof with a Celtic cross on the east roof. The Celtic cross had been missing in living memory, however, a very old photograph of the church (circa 1900) shows the cross so it was replaced some years ago.



The church is entered via a porch with external oak doors. The interior of the church is simple, with white-washed walls, a timber roof and wooden pews. Seating capacity for the congregation is 150, but this can be expanded for larger services. Choir stalls have been removed to allow more flexibility in our worship and a larger area for coffee at the back of the church.

Holy Trinity, Newtown

There is a stone font at the rear of the church. The pipe organ was acquired, refurbished and installed in 1997. Pipes are housed at the west end of the church on an elevated platform and the instrument is played at the south wall, before the chancel step. Beneath the organ platform is the choir robing area with a small kitchenette as well as the plant room for the warm air heating system.



The vicar's vestry is on the north wall near the east end of the church, with the door entering the chancel. A new lighting system with various settings enhances worship for different services. A bio loo, separately housed, is sited in the churchyard near to the church.



The churchyard is a beautiful and tranquil area and includes the development of a consecrated Peace Garden for the interment of cremated remains which has been made available to all those with a connection with the parish as well as those living in the area. Maintenance is undertaken by private contractors living in the parish.



St Peter and St Paul is a beautiful Grade 1 listed church of Saxon origin. It stands prominently above the heart of historic Hambledon village. An array of table top tombs and headstones surround this most peaceful church and churchyard setting. Inside you can observe **two** chancel arches and a **double** nave rather than the usual one. The [church guide](#) talks of the “arcading in the old walls of the Saxon church” and the Norman arches as having “massive presence”. Slightly more recent (1960s) is the elaborate organ loft and chancel roof, painted in the medieval style and overseen by Dykes Bower.

The spiritual life of the church was strengthened in 2000 by the creation of the Millennium Chapel of The Good Shepherd in the north west corner of the outer nave. Smaller services are often taken here or in the chancel.

In 2013/14 the outer nave was reorganized to provide a welcome area and an information centre, together with a soft play area for our younger members. Children love playing here and really enjoy taking ownership of this space during the services.



This improvement is part of a much wider and more ambitious opportunity to re-order the west end of the church to provide modern administrative facilities, a meeting room, toilet and kitchen facilities. To assist with this project we have asked the advice of the notable architect Ptolemy Dean. This is an exciting project which is being undertaken with great care and sensitivity. The new vicar's leadership in promoting this development will be a key objective.



The fabric of the church is in good order. Major roof repairs were completed in 2004, with the energetic and generous financial support of the whole community. A recent quinquennial survey has not revealed any significant problems. The fabric of the church is kept under constant review by a team of experienced members from the congregation who report directly to the PCC. Indeed, much of the routine maintenance is expertly carried out by them. The churchyard is also reviewed regularly and well maintained.



St Peter & St Paul, Hambledon



Services

Soberton & Newtown

Monthly Sunday services prior to the vacancy and interim priest included:
8.00am Holy Communion (BCP) at St Peter's with 10.00am Joint Benefice Communion service at St Peter's or Holy Trinity or
9.30am Holy Trinity Parish Communion with activities for children and
11.00am St Peter's Parish Communion
Once a month 11.00am Matins at St Peter's
ROCS (children's group) meet on the first Sunday Joint Benefice Communion at St Peter's.

Currently during the vacancy, there is no 8.00am BCP service at St Peter's. Matins continues monthly. The expectation is for a communion service to be held at St Peter's or Holy Trinity every Sunday with additional and special services as often as possible.

Hambledon

Sundays 8.00am Communion and 10.30am service plus Evensong at 6.30pm
Each has a carefully considered balance between BCP and Common Worship Services.

Most months in term time there is a short family service at 10am designed to attract families and other adults who enjoy stories, drama, songs and prayer delivered in an informal way at the back of church, followed by Matins at 11am.

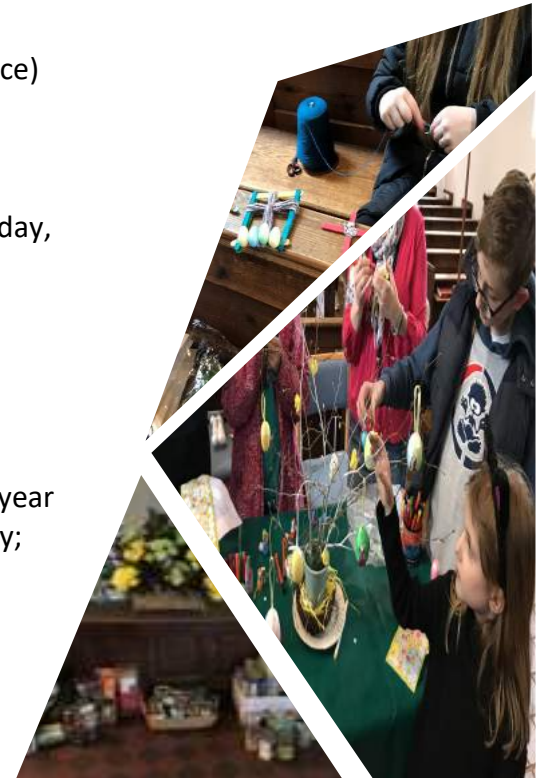
We have felt that our pattern of worship has been central to the success of our parish life. See copy of *The Hambledonian* (parish magazine) for details.

Annual and Festival Services: (held in each church or as a joint service)

Advent Carol Service, Nine Lessons and Carols Service, Nativity Service, Christmas Eve Midnight Communion, Christmas Day, Candlemas, Christingle, Ash Wednesday, Mothering Sunday, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Pentecost, Harvest Thanksgiving, Trinity Sunday and Feast of St Peter (Patronal Festivals), All Saints' Day, Commemoration of All Souls, Remembrance Sunday

Special Events for Children and their families

There are special events organized for children and their families during the year eg. Christmas workshops at St Peter's; Good Friday workshops at Holy Trinity; Christingle at Hambledon and Newtown; Messy Church



Ministry Teams

Readers support the worshipping community in many ways.

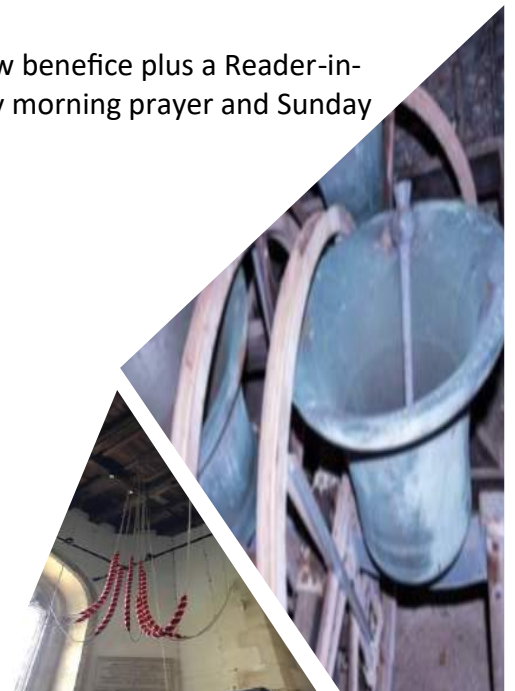
All churches are well cared for by a dedicated team of parishioners from both the church membership and wider village who provide cleaning, flower arranging, bell ringing, churchyard maintenance and coffee after the services. Our churches place a high priority on welcoming newcomers and nurturing and supporting existing worshippers.

Newtown and Hambledon have two Church Wardens whilst Soberton has one. Hambledon has a verger. There is a team of servers, lay chalice assistants and lesson readers in all churches. Members of the congregation lead intercessions. Each of the three parishes has its own Parochial Church Council (PCC) and all comply with current Data Protection and Safeguarding procedures. The PCCs meet regularly: Hambledon monthly (except in August), Soberton PCC and Newtown PCC each meet four times a year, plus APCMs in April.

The Church Wardens head a large number of dedicated volunteers. We have a team of pastoral volunteers who keep in touch with anyone who is sick or unwell in the village. We also have an effective “Good-Neighbour” support network, particularly for newcomers to the village and our involvement and joint social events with villagers are enjoyed by many, whether church-goers or not.

The Vicar's spiritual ministry will be supported significantly by four Readers across the new benefice plus a Reader-in-training. Some have their own home groups. The Readers also lead much of the week-day morning prayer and Sunday non-eucharistic services. They also play a central role in home and hospital visits.

Bell Tower: At Hambledon, the church bells are rung at all mid-morning and festival services, and weddings (if requested). There is a full band of loyal and regular ringers, headed up by our Captain who has been with us for 28 years. She has taught a great many people how to ring the bells well; some of them were young children, who have now gone on to pursue their own careers but - they enjoy coming back to ring for their Captain! At Soberton, the bells are also rung by a dedicated team for Sunday services and for weddings and special events as requested.



Our Churches in the Community

Engaging with our villages is central to the activities of all three of our churches: it is essential for us to be at the centre of village life. To achieve this, we have adapted to preserve some of the traditional forms of worship, whilst introducing more modern approaches and reach out into the community in supportive ways.

Welcome – One of our natural strengths is that there is always a warm welcome given to all coming to the services or events, whether regular attendees or newcomers. There is coffee and biscuits after each service to encourage personal contact and friendship.

Study groups – Benefice Lent and Advent courses are held annually providing the opportunity for study and prayer during the year. There are also small bible-based study groups held in a member's home.

Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals – This is an active ministry with 1-4 weddings annually in each church and funerals are held as needed. Baptisms are often held within the main service, although some are arranged privately.

Visiting the sick. The Reader in Soberton currently visits those in need. In Hambledon, the Pastoral Care Team supports the community and all comply with the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy. Readers regularly give communion by extension to house-bound parishioners as part of their pastoral care.

Music – There are two well established choirs which increase in number on an ad hoc basis by calling on the musical talent in the area for special services or events. Organists play regularly at all three churches accompanying hymns, psalms and liturgical responses. Hymns are mostly traditional although we enjoy worship songs and different styles to suit different occasions!

Our love of music as a medium for bringing people together is shown in the range of concerts held and visitors hosted at the churches: Her Majesty's Band of the Royal Marines at Hambledon, Portsmouth Cathedral Choir at Soberton, Winchester School Quiristers at Hambledon. St Peter and St Paul's Hambledon would also like to become established as a setting for excellent artistic displays and classical and religious music in a way that meshes the spirit of what church means with the aspirations and enjoyment of the village community.



Outreach – Soberton & Newtown

Soberton Lunch club A lunch is available prepared by a team from the churches for anyone living in Soberton and Newtown parishes . This is held at the Church Rooms in Soberton. Up to 30 people attend; it is popular and encourages links between church and the villagers.



Fêtes – A remarkable feature of the life of the villages is the two church fêtes. On the last Saturday in May, the Newtown fête has been held for many years, in the lovely grounds and garden of Meonwood. The Soberton fête is held on the last Saturday in June on the grounds of St Peter's and on the Church Green. Both are superbly organized and involve a large number of church members and villagers in the preparation and on the day, with many entertaining features to appeal to visitors. They attract many people (up to 1000) from the local area and further afield resulting in substantial sums being raised for both churches (each raising over £13,000). We are very proud of our fêtes, not just for the sums raised but because they bring our whole village communities together. The buoyant, cheerful atmospheres are evidence of enjoyment for all.

Friends of St Peter's (FoSP). Although the main objective of the Friends is to raise money to support the fabric of the old church, and they succeed in doing this, an important aspect is that villagers are drawn into the church or its rooms as a part of the Friends' activities.

Stitch and Chatter. This is held monthly and welcomes people from the community and surrounding villages to knit or sew and take part in creative projects such as making an Aran throw (raffled at St Peter's fête), items for the FoSP annual Bring and Buy Sale and clothing made and sent to charities. New projects are always on the go.

Icon painting. Led by a parishioner icon painter, courses and meetings are held in the church and church room attracting people from within Hampshire, and beyond. The courses bring in considerable and much needed funds and increasingly are defining St Peter's as a Centre for Sacred Art.

Soberton & Newtown Children's week.

In August each year, 70-80 children of all ages meet daily for a week on the Recreation Ground - and around - for fun and games. Teenagers support each group in a supervisory role, with parent volunteers, members of the church congregation and villagers also helping out. Each year there is a theme and a 'big-build' of junk modelling, with each group's creation displayed around the village streets for several weeks after the event. Every day, we sing, share a picnic outdoors, make all sorts of crafty things and mid-week we go on an outing linked to our theme. The local Scout Troop support the Children's Week trail held at Meonwood on the Thursday. Children give a presentation to their families in church on the Friday evening, to celebrate all they've done and experienced. The week has been run by the churches for the children of the parishes for over forty years and is always oversubscribed!

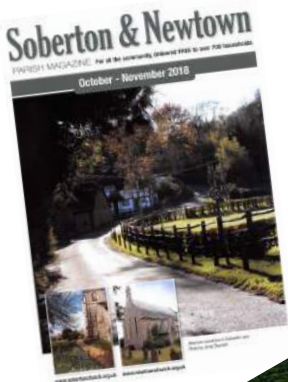


Outreach – Soberton & Newtown (cont.)

ROCS - On the first Sunday of the month at the Benefice service at St Peter's, a children's group is held in the church room run by parents of the children and other adults. Children have teaching linked to the lectionary and join the service at the end to share their work.

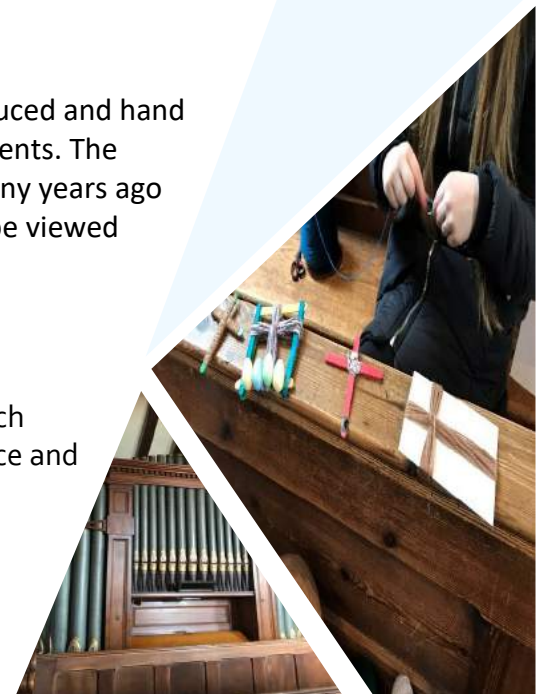
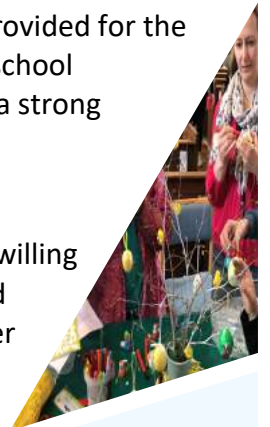
Sobertots – This group for mothers/carers and toddlers meets every Tuesday at the Guide Hut on Soberton Heath. It is open to all and attracts on average between 6-11 adults and 8-15 children each week. The theme of each session alternates between play and music with snacks provided for the children (while adults appreciate the croissants and coffee!). It is run nearly every week of the year and is open to older siblings during school holidays. There are guest sessions and special social events arranged too. It is a thriving group and great outreach as most do not have a strong connection to the Church. A challenge is to ensure contacts are maintained once children leave to go to pre-school.

Christmas and Easter Workshops – A real strength of the benefice is the number of skilled people, often church members, who are willing to undertake workshops for children, teaching them, and sharing new skills in making or doing things – and having a lot of fun! The Good Friday children's workshop includes making the Easter Garden and learning about the Easter Story, finishing with a short service of prayer and reflection. At Christmas, the children make church decorations as well as Christmas inspired creations to take home. The workshop ends with a short service in the church and lunch for adults and children and often includes preparation for the hugely popular Nativity Service on Christmas Eve which involves many of the local children and families.



Outreach – Parish Magazine – Every other month a very professional magazine is produced and hand delivered free to every household in both villages, with reports and news of forthcoming events. The incumbent writes a forward for each edition. The magazine was started by the churches many years ago and allows the churches to promote activities and services very prominently. This can also be viewed online (click the link [here](#).)

Outreach – Website The website <http://www.sobertonchurch.org.uk> or <http://www.newtownchurch.org.uk> has been established and maintained by a church member. We would like to develop this for good communication within the benefice and further afield.



Outreach – Hambledon



We believe we are the first registered **Dementia Friendly** church in Hampshire. We welcome and offer support to carers and those with dementia.

Our **coffee and Cake drop-in** on Thursday mornings is a welcome stop for parents and toddlers after dropping off the children at school.

We maintain a friendly link and give financial support to our inner city **local link parish** of St Michael and All Angels, Paulsgrove and we try to attend each other's services when we can.

Lent and Charity soup lunches raise awareness for our outreach programme and we aim to donate the equivalent of 10% of our annual planned giving to the registered charities we support. (The full list is on the church notice-board.)

We have run very successful **Saturday clubs** and **holiday clubs** in the past. These could easily be re-invented if suitably qualified young parents could be found to run them. There is certainly a band of eager children in the village with time in the summer holidays!

The Hambledonian is an award winning church-owned community magazine. It is delivered free to every household in the village. In the magazine you will see that there are many proactive clubs and groups with lots of opportunities to join in. Horticultural spring and summer shows, French twinning, Scouts and Cubs, Tennis, Art, WI, Walking, History, Bird Watching, Drama, The Winter Film Club, Scottish Dancing and a Folk Group are just a few which come to mind.

The village actively raises money for **The Rowans Hospice**. There have been some very convivial **summer BBQs** in the vicarage gardens! "Bring and share food" was the order of the day, with everyone helping to prepare, wash-up and clear up afterwards.

The well-used **tennis court** on the glebe land, neighbouring the vicarage, gives a good opportunity for engagement with parents and children, as does the annual fireworks event which is held close by.



Our Villages – Soberton & Newtown

Soberton and Newtown are two distinct villages, but the parish community share their history, traditions, lifestyles, facilities and talents. There are many shared facilities: the two churches plus an infant school, a pre-school, three public houses, two village halls, a recreation ground with Guide Hut, cricket pavilion, children's play area and a skateboard park. A satellite Post Office operates in Newtown, but most main services (Post Office, medical facilities, shops) are in Droxford and Wickham.



The Village Halls

We are very fortunate to have two very well-maintained village halls: Rookesbury Hall Newtown (capacity 120), Soberton Village Hall (capacity 160 with a stage), both of which are great assets to the community and the churches.

Village Organisations

There are activities for all age groups in the villages including the Ladies' Group and Men's Dining Club, the Local History Society, the Conservation Group, the Soberton Players (Drama and Music Group) and Table Tennis Club. Brownies and Guides meet in Soberton Heath Guide Hut weekly, whilst Cubs and Scouts meet in our neighbouring village of Droxford in the Meon Bridge Benefice; both support special church events during the year.

The 3Ps

St Peter's Parish Planners- the 3Ps - was formed in 1975 by the Revd Roger Moseley to engage the wider population in the parish by organising social events linked to the church. It soon evolved into a group representative of both parishes to encourage the villages to enjoy a more cohesive link together. Although now primarily a secular organisation, the 3Ps is a valuable part of parish life. The organisers are drawn from both villages and arrange an annual quiz, tennis tournament and at Christmas time a Carols and Christmas Spirit evening of carol singing and contributions from our talented villagers. All these events are well supported and enjoyed by people of all ages. They are indicative of the active community life in our villages and provide an opportunity for newcomers to feel welcome and included in the area.



Church members are active in many village organisations and in particular 'The Good Neighbours Scheme' which assists the elderly and infirm with transport to medical and other appointments.

Public Houses

Both The White Lion and The Bold Forester pubs are central to the social life of the villages and are community focal points for many events. The Travellers' Rest has also recently re-opened after a change of ownership.



Our Village - Hambledon



St Peter & St Paul's church stands prominently above the heart of this historic village. The village has a strong identity with a happy mix of people, ages, occupations and incomes. The population hovers around 950 souls who live in approximately 450 homes. We think it is fair to say that people who come to Hambledon rarely leave. Indeed, we have over 60 people here who have lived in the village for over 50 years!

Recently there has been a welcome influx of young, professional families and while many of them may not be regular worshippers in our church they form the pivotal hub of our village going forward and they do like to know the church is there. There has always been a visible and very warm melding between the young and the actively retired population.

There are four small estates which combine private, social, council and affordable contemporary housing. There is also a crescent of bungalows situated in the centre of the village for the elderly. The winters of 2000 and 2014 saw many houses in the village devastated by flooding and the roads in the village were impassable. Nonetheless the wellington boots were lined up in the church porch for all the Christmas services and everyone rallied round in support. The village has only just emerged from the eventual major works which had to be done to provide a flood alleviation scheme.

At its northern boundary stands Broadhalfpenny Down (**The Cradle of Cricket**) and the famous Bat & Ball pub. The Vine is in the centre of the village. The country roads around here all feel as though they are linked by footpaths, bridleways cycle routes.

Further points of note are:

- Hambledon Village Hall + walk-in GP's surgery, 3 mornings a week
- 2 children's play areas and a tennis court – free for parishioners and tuition for children.
- Youth Hut: venue for Hambledon Pre-school & Folk Club
- GP Surgery & Health Centre, Post Office & Local Shops in Denmead Village centre (10mins)
- Main chain supermarkets all within 20 minutes.
- We also have an excellent village shop which sells most of what you might need and it remains open from 8am until 8pm
- The cricket club boasts three senior teams and colts, from age 5 upwards which is attracting a lot of village children.
- Hambledon Hilly fun run over the most beautiful countryside.
- Working farms and a large vineyard surround the village.
- Hambledon pre-school meets Monday to Friday from 9am until 3pm
- Excellent secondary schools within easy reach
- Church Affiliated Primary School (Ofsted rated Outstanding) is situated opposite the vicarage and is usually accessed through the churchyard. It enables really close ties between the 118 children there and our church.
- There is a new tea-room (The Old Forge) in the village too.





Our School – Newtown Soberton Infant School

Hold Hands and Work Together

AFFILIATED SCHOOL



NEWTOWN SOBORTON INFANT SCHOOL



[Newtown Soberton Infant School](#) has 66 pupils aged 4 to 7 years and is situated next to Holy Trinity Church Newtown. Our school was judged as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in 2010 and has an excellent reputation within the community. Our catchment area includes the neighbouring villages and a number of our pupils choose to travel from outside the catchment area to attend the school. Earlybirds, judged 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in 2015, is an integral Pre-School on the same site as the school and offers places for children aged from 2 years up to school-age.

The school entered into an Affiliated Schools Partnership Agreement between Holy Trinity Church and the Portsmouth Diocese in February 2008 in recognition of the close links that the school has with the church

The school and parents regularly visit Holy Trinity Church for Harvest Festival, Christmas carols and an Easter service. The children use the church and its grounds to support their learning as part of the curriculum. We also support the annual church fêtes with a country dancing performance.

The school values the relationship with the Priest-in-Charge and warmly welcomes them into school to help with reading, to lead school assemblies and enrich the RE curriculum.

The school has a strong ethos of actively encouraging parents and the community to work in partnership with the church and the staff and governors are keen to develop further the links with the church. We look forward to this exciting opportunity of welcoming the new Priest-in-Charge into our happy school community.

Mrs Emma Howell, Headteacher

Other School Links

Many families in the Meon Valley send their children to either Newtown Soberton Infant School or to Meonstoke CofE Infant school and both feed into Droxford Junior School in the neighbouring Bridge Benefice.





Our School – Hambledon Primary School

A village school nurturing individual talent and success.

AFFILIATED SCHOOL



[Hambledon Primary School](#) is situated almost opposite the Vicarage. It was judged 'Outstanding' by Ofsted in 2014. Since it became a Primary School the numbers have steadily increased to 118.

The children walk through the churchyard every day in term time to get to school, so they feel very comfortable with those connections. Indeed they regularly use part of the Glebeland behind the Vicarage for their PE and Sports Events.

The school and parents enjoy coming to church for Harvest, Easter and Christmas and often they attend our festival services too.

The school values the community links. For example the wife of one of our Readers (who is part of the Short Family Service team) regularly leads school assemblies either in church or in school each month. Several members of the village also enjoy going into school to help the children with their reading. There is even a time and talents list held in school for people who are prepared to share their talents with the children. This has included "wellie walk" visits to farms and gardens, talks about explorers, Scottish and Morris dancing as well as watching villagers playing their accordions and bag pipes – and that is just some of them!!

The school regularly participate in village events including The Hambledon Hilly, singing carols at Christmas to the over 60s lunch club and also to enter their own exhibits into the two annual Horticultural Shows.



The Bishop's Waltham Deanery

All three churches are part of the Bishop's Waltham Deanery, one of eight Deaneries in the Diocese of Portsmouth. Our patron is the Bishop of Portsmouth. The Deanery is comprised of 16 parishes and the Deanery synod meets 4 times annually with regular chapter meetings and shared events such as the Deanery Ascension Service (last held at Meonstoke). This is a lively and concerned Deanery with secretaries of the various PCCs meeting up over a soup lunch to share best practice.

During recent years the Area Dean and Lay Chair launched the Deanery Mission Framework and ran a 'Leading your Church into Growth' (LyCiG) local course which was attended by PCC members and other parishioners across the Deanery. This encouraged growth not only numerically but spiritually and through service. Many ideas for furthering this were generated but we await a new incumbent to bring them together. This links well with the Diocesan initiative 'Live-Pray-Serve' and promoting discipleship is a key element for the benefice.

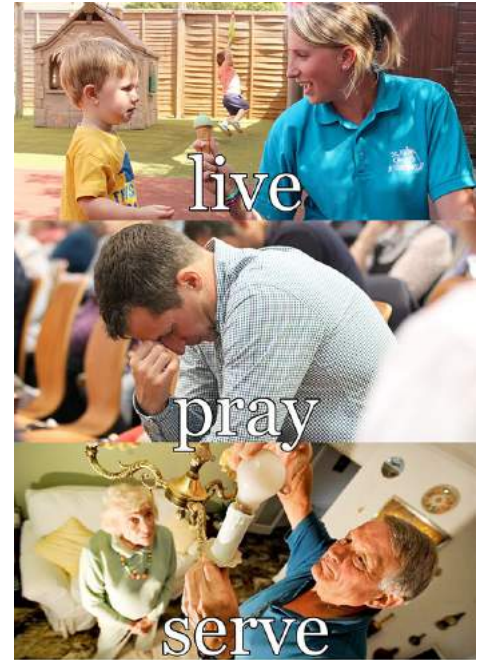
We look forward to ministerial collaboration across the parish boundaries, particularly with the cross-licensing of our new priest with the neighbouring Meon Bridge Benefice. With the added benefit of an additional clergy house in this newly formed benefice, further opportunities for curate training may arise to enhance the ministry team.

The Wider Church

Parish links through the Deanery include the Hackney Link in the Diocese of London, and our churches contribute to providing for the homeless and deprived people in their communities. We also link with Wiawso in Ghana through IDWAL (Inter-diocesan West Africa Link) although this is currently under review as new groups are being formed.

Support to Charities

We support many charities and donate regularly as agreed annually by each PCC. All our churches contribute to The Meon Valley Food Bank in line with their weekly wish list. The Royal British Legion holds a Remembrance Service at Hambledon every year and at Soberton every two years, alternating with a service at Droxford.



Our Vision



In preparing this profile, we have discovered that the parishes of Soberton, Newtown and Hambledon have much in common and we look forward to working together and harnessing the wealth of experience that we share. We hope that the opportunities offered up as a result of this new union, bring new ways of working which blend, encourage and benefit our thinking.

There are countless opportunities for us to grow and develop while recognising and respecting the certain rootedness which we are familiar with. The members of our congregations at the moment are mostly middle-aged and elderly except at major festivals when the churches are busy. We long to see our church grow ... across all ages. We are looking for a Priest who will move us forward with energy, keeping our churches central in the life of the villages and rising to the challenges that this presents. We hope and pray that the priest will strengthen our congregations in worship and will especially deepen our spiritual lives. We see great potential for God's work in our parishes and we look for leadership and encouragement to use the enthusiasm already present in our congregations and communities. There are great social changes in the way that people spend their weekends which of course affects their pattern of living. We are only too aware that this may be the single biggest challenge for our new vicar. We need to work with these changes and

review our work going forward - both in terms of our mission, timings, pattern of services and content. That is not to say we should abandon existing preferences for familiar or traditional worship, but we do need to communicate with, understand, respect and provide for the needs of a younger generation as well. Technology, social media, music and art may all have a big part to play.

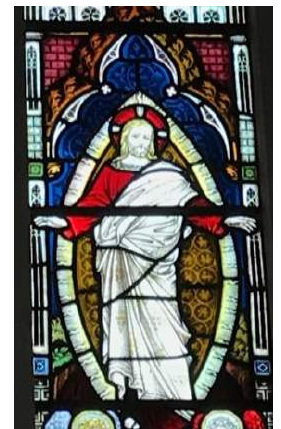
OUR PRIEST

We pray our new priest will ...

- bring spiritual depth, inspiration and leadership to the parishes
- grow and encourage our existing ministry teams to develop new and pro-active pathways that will be effective across all ages
- nurture and develop the full range of worship, music and liturgy expressed in all three churches, being sensitive to our balance of tradition and innovation and bringing others alongside
- able to recognise and harness the gifts of others
- be someone with proven missional leadership skills
- engage with the financial issues we all face and be prepared to consider initiatives to address these with the wider community as well as with the congregations
- work with our village schools to inspire children and support young families in their new faith journeys

We offer ...

- our support and encouragement, through prayer and action together
- a willingness to be receptive to fresh ideas
- social opportunities and engagement with a proactive community
- a comfortable home in a peaceful rural setting



The Vicarage

The vicarage is beautifully situated behind Hambledon church. It is a good, spacious adaptable family home with four bedrooms and two bathrooms. On the ground floor there is a large, double-aspect sitting room, study, dining/play room and kitchen. It is currently undergoing a redecoration programme inside and out, which will include certain fresh floor coverings and new bathroom suites.

The garden of the vicarage is lovely with far reaching views; the established garden extends to approximately 1/2 acre. It is just two minutes' walk to the village centre.



There is an excellent parish office, sited in the church rooms at St Peter's, Soberton. It is fully equipped with telephone, internet connection and a printer. There are parishioners with administrative and IT skills who will be pleased to support the new priest as needed.

There is a Vicarage in Webbs Green, Soberton that is currently housing the curate for the Meon Bridge Benefice. The house is mid-way between Newtown and Soberton churches. The vicarage at Webbs Green will transfer to the Portsmouth Diocesan Board of Finance and will continue to be held within the Diocese. Its primary use will always be for clergy housing and would be used to house a curate for this benefice if one was appointed in the future.



Statistics

St Peter's Church, Soberton:

Parish Share -	2016: £19,078;	2017: £19,643;	2018: £19,455
Income -	2016: £37,903;	2017: £36,894	
Annual expenditure -	2016: £30,668;	2017: £31,773	
Electoral Roll	2016: 41;	2017: 44	

Estimated costs of building work and maintenance 2017: £4,719; 2018/19: £25,000+

There is a modest reserve fund which will be reduced by the current restoration and maintenance project; there is no outstanding debt.

The church receives a small income from the use of the church rooms and the annual fête is a major fund-raising event (2016: £10,000 2017: over £13,000). As a historic Grade 1 listed building, the cost of building and churchyard maintenance is a demanding responsibility for a small community.

Holy Trinity Church Newtown:

Parish Share -	2016: £16,103;	2017: £16,826;	2018: £16,018
Income -	2016: £34,684;	2017: £34,169	
Annual Expenditure	2016: £25,970;	2017: £32,068	
Electoral Roll -	2016: 33;	2017: 33	

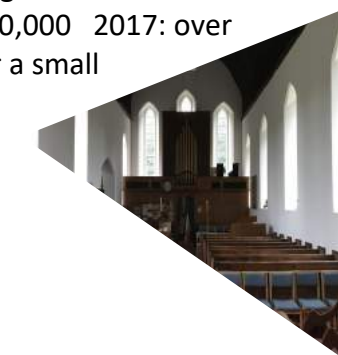
There are no outstanding debts, and a small reserve fund.

The annual fête is a very important fund-raising event, currently raising over 40% of the annual income (2017: £14,000). It will be a challenge to continue raising funds to maintain the church fabric and meet expenses and continue with the church's charitable giving.

St Peter & St Paul's Hambledon:

Parish Share -	2016: £58,246;	2017: £60,412;	2018: £61,579
Income -	2016: £101,758;	2017: £114,843	
Annual Expenditure	2016: £97,870;	2017: £102,345	
Electoral Roll –	2016: 200;	2017: 201	

The PCC has agreed to promote the Parish Giving Scheme in 2019. At the moment we need to raise over £100K annually to meet our anticipated commitments, including our parish share of just over £62K. This is a significant amount to raise. Last year we achieved a modest surplus but often it is a very close-run thing. Our reserves policy seeks to maintain a balance of unrestricted funds which equates to approximately six months running costs. We currently maintain reserves in excess of this policy.



LINKS

Find out more!

Please click on the photos or double-click on the tags for links to documents or webpages that will give more information on our parishes and our work.

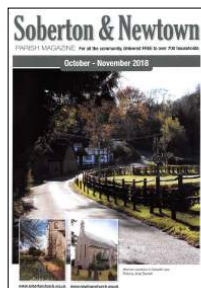
Soberton
End of Year
Financial Statement

Soberton
End of Year Report
Financial Statement



St Peter's Soberton

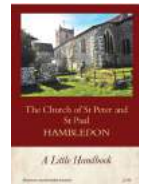
Soberton
Annual Report



Holy Trinity Newtown

Newtown
Annual Report &
Financial Statements

Church
Handbook



Hambleton
Annual Report

Hambleton
Receipts &
Payments analysis



St Peter & St Paul
Hambleton

