**A shared Profile of the West Wight Mission Community dated 5th July 2020**

***“…the potential for leading the way in enabling rural parishes to flourish.”***



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**An Introduction from the Bishop of Portsmouth**

As we begin to recover from a global pandemic the Church faces challenging times and exciting opportunities and this post in West Wight requires a gifted priest to tackle both. The West Wight Mission Community is in one of the most beautiful parts of the South Coast and is made up of rural communities, small towns and villages. There are many different aspects of life which are enriched in the summer months by many holiday visitors.

Our mission strategy in the Diocese of Portsmouth is to **Live: Pray: Serve**. Believing in Jesus Christ as the source of our hope and salvation, we are called to:

**Live** our lives in ways that are formed by his life, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming again.

**Pray**, on our own and together in community.

**Serve** the people among whom we live and work, caring for young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor.

We want others to join us and to grow in **depth**, **impact**, and **number**, so that more people love the Lord their God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength; more people love their neighbours as themselves; and more people join us in going out to make new disciples and to make disciples of all nations. The Isle of Wight deanery has a plan called ‘IsleLead’ which places this vision in the context of the Island, and we are looking for a priest who can lead the West Wight Mission Community in working this out in their particular rural and seaside location.

This Team Ministry has been established by the previous Team Rector and colleagues. It is well placed to flourish with the right leadership. The person appointed to this post will lead the shaping of mission and ministry alongside the lay leadership of the parishes, a full-time stipendiary Team Vicar, a part time house for duty priest and a paid administrator.

Lay Pastoral Assistants and Local Worship Leaders are trained, commissioned and used extensively on the Island and churches are working more closely together than ever before. The foundations are good and it is my hope that the priest appointed to this post will also play a key part in ensuring the engagement of West Wight Churches in diocesan life. I also believe that this post has the potential for leading the way in enabling rural parishes to flourish.

This is not only an area of outstanding natural beauty but of historical importance as well. St Mary’s Brighstone is the former parish of Bishops Wilberforce, Moberley and Ken, and Freshwater the home of Tennyson and photographer Julia Margaret Cameron. With a rich past and with parishes adapting to new ways of working and the needs of a changing environment, this demanding post is one that will develop new patterns of ministry and mission in a rural environment that is eager to grow.

If you have any questions about this post please contact Archdeacon Peter Leonard who will be pleased to discuss it further.

The Rt Rev Christopher Foster

Bishop of Portsmouth

**Team Rector-designate of the West Wight Mission Community**

**Growing Together** ………

…………to lead and further develop the model of shared Ministry within the West Wight Mission Community, as set out in the Archdeaconry and West Wight Rural Parishes plans.

**General Introduction**

**The West Wight Mission Community** group of parishes is at present formed of two groups: the Brighstone and Shalfleet Group (the Rural Parishes - eight churches); and the Freshwater, Yarmouth and Totland Bay group of Parishes (popularly known locally as ‘the FYT group of Parishes’ - four churches, because Freshwater has two). A sketch map showing the locations of these twelve churches can be found in the Appendix at the back of this document - page 18. These present historical groupings are based on logical geographical factors relating to the lie of the land, population concentrations and road communications.

The Brighstone and Shalfleet Rural Parishes are led by the Team Rector who is supported by a number of voluntary lay leaders.

The FYT group of Parishes (Freshwater, Yarmouth and Totland Bay) is led by a Team Vicar, supported by retired priests and a number of voluntary lay leaders.

**This Profile** outlines the present characteristics of both groups of churches which the Team Rector will lead and develop together with the current Team Vicar, but **has a particular focus on the Group of eight Rural Parishes -** **the Brighstone and Shalfleet Group** - **as this will be the primary area of day to day working for the new Rector,** continuingto develop the excellent progress already made during the last two years by the previous Rector towards their mission objective.

**The Archdeacon’s vision** for the Isle of Wight Deanery was published in November 2019 under the title “i*slelead*”. In it he says, of the West Wight Mission Community: “We are exploring a bold and innovative way of doing rural ministry. This is at an early stage but the ministry team there are exploring ways of doing mission in this context which will hopefully feed into the rest of the diocese”. A copy of the “i*slelead*” Deanery Plan is appended to this document - pages 20-26.

A copy of the “*Mission Action Plan*” for the eight West Wight Rural Parishes is appended to this document - pages 27-30. It was developed by the previous Rector and approved by the Joint PCC of the eight Rural Parishes in September 2019.

A self-contained Profile for the Team Vicar’s group of four Freshwater, Yarmouth and Totland Bay churches is appended to this document - pages 31-34.

**The present Ministry Team within the Rural Parishes, and its resources**

For the purpose of this shared Profile it is appropriate to consider the “human” resources as a central pool. As will become clear in the following sections the provision of ministry and the development of mission in these rural communities can only be achieved through the centralisation of limited assets. In taking this pragmatic approach, which reflects the reality of the situation and avoids confusion, detailed references to ministry teams have not been included in the individual church profiles of the eight Rural Parishes, although clearly some individuals may be associated more with one church than with others.

**The Rector of the Brighstone/Shalfleet Rural Parishes and Team Rector of the West Wight Mission Community**

This has an incumbent vacancy (since the end of February 2020), hence the reason for this Profile.

**A House for Duty Priest**

This appointment is in the Bishop’s overall staffing scheme but has yet to be advertised and recruited. The new Team Rector will be fully involved in this appointment process on arrival.

**West Wight Mission Community Team Administrator**

There is one funded part-time administrator (Monday to Wednesday) who supports the mission team and co-ordinates communications within, and between, each of the two Groups within the Rural Parishes. Another funded part-time administrator supports the four churches further to the west, the FYT group of Parishes (Freshwater, Yarmouth and Totland Bay), and these two posts are able to cover for each other.

**Other Team Members**

Vital additional support within the eight Rural Parishes is provided voluntarily by: **two non-stipendiary Readers** (one of whom has responsibility for young people (some of whom are disadvantaged) and increasingly their families too (see the notes on SWAY later in this profile, pages 7 and 17), while the other is an organist and plays regularly in support of our services); **four Lay Worship Leaders**; and **six Lay Pastoral Assistants**.

**Parochial Church Councils**

Individual parishes within the Groups retain their own Church Wardens, Treasurers and PCCs and are represented on a Joint PCC (the G8JPCC as it is known for the Rural Group of 8 parishes) which meets three times per year to steer Group Team Strategy, making better use of the Rector’s time.

**The present Ministry Team within the FYT Group of Parishes, and its resources**

(See the Profile of the FYT group of Parishes in the Appendix below, pages 31-34.)

**General description of the pattern of services across the group of eight Rural Parishes within the Brighstone and Shalfleet Groups.**

With the limited resources available a considerable degree of compromise has had to be accepted of late in the provision of services in our eight Rural Parishes, and no set pattern has yet emerged - indeed no such regular provision or guarantee is possible at present. However, by staggering the times of services, Holy Communion is celebrated within reach of all our congregations every Sunday although not in every church. As a guide, every Sunday there is a service in three out of the four churches in each of our two Groups, which if not Holy Communion will be Mattins, Morning Prayer or Evensong, as often as not led by one of our Licensed Lay Worship Leaders. Provision is also made for one mid-week service in each Group of four churches.

Liturgy varies between the Book of Common Prayer and Common Worship, so all preferences can be met during a four-week cycle.

The new Team Rector will need to work with the Team Vicar and all 12 churches on developing a longer term sustainable model of services across the Mission Community.

In order to avoid contradiction and confusion, individual Parish Sketches of the eight Rural Parishes will refer back to the principles set out in this section and its generalisation of service provision, and will not attempt to convey any specific structure or pattern within their own churches.

**General description of the pattern of services in the FYT Group of Parishes**

(See the Profile of the FYT group of Parishes in the Appendix below, pages 31-34.)

**The new Team Rector**

Resident in Brighstone, the Team Rector will be the inspirational leader and teacher of the whole West Wight Mission Community **with a specific focus on the Rural Ministry Team in this Group**, directing the Administrator, developing the ministry to children and young people while providing ministry and oversight, with the Team Vicar, to the foundation governors of the four Church of England Primary Schools in the West Wight. (See also page 15.)

**Sketches of the individual eight Rural Parishes and their hopes for the new Rector**

**The Brighstone Group of Four Churches**

The Brighstone Group of Churches comprises: St Mary the Virgin, Brighstone; St Mary the Virgin, Brook and St Peter and St Paul, Mottistone; and St Peter, Shorwell. (A fifth church, Kingston Church, dedicated to St James and standing on a knoll overlooking Kingston manor house, is located within Shorwell parish but no regular services have been held there since the 1980s.)

All of the four working churches in this Joint Benefice lie within a three-mile radius of Brighstone village centre at the heart of the South West Wight AONB.

There is real potential for lay ministries to be developed further in support of the existing mission resources.

For the last eight years a Group Joint PCC has provided a vital forum for developing local Ministry (with the three individual PCCs (Brook and Mottistone have one PCC) retaining control of their own fabric and finance). These quarterly JPCC meetings have enabled a growing fellowship, shared purpose and more effective use of PCC and ministry team resources. There is a growing readiness to try out new ideas.

The new Brighstone/Shalfleet G8JPCC aspires to build on this tested JPCC model to become *one Church growing together in Christ,* following the new Island Deanery Plan 2019. The Brighstone group website ( [www.fivechurches.org.uk](http://www.fivechurches.org.uk/) ) features the seasons of village life and how our Church is engaging with the wider community. Our Administrator has achieved steady progress in creating and managing the website, coordinating appointments and information, and supporting new lay volunteers in the parishes. Work is in hand with the Diocesan IT experts to expand this website to embrace all eight West Wight Rural Parishes.



‘The Exchange’ (the old Brighstone village library - see photograph right) is leased from the Isle of Wight Council at a peppercorn rent for 99 years. This small building is available free of charge for use by the community and Church across the Benefice and offers regular drop-ins for a range of services including the Police. A Diocesan Mission Opportunities Fund grant has recently paid for improved washroom facilities. The building is mainly used as a base of operations for SWAY (South Wight Area Youthworker project) (see APPENDIX for more details on The Exchange and SWAY - page 17).

**St Mary the Virgin, Brighstone; Brighstone Church of England (Aided) Primary School; and The Rectory, Brighstone**

**St Mary the Virgin, Brighstone**

Population: c1200

St Mary the Virgin: capacity: 250. Church Roll: 47. Average Sunday attendance: 35.

St Mary’s has been a place of worship in the village since the 12th century. The village is an increasingly popular holiday destination. Close to the village centre is a pub (‘The Three Bishops’, celebrating three former Brighstone Rectors who all became bishops: Bishop Thomas Ken (1637-1711), Bishop George Moberly (1803-1885) and Bishop Samuel Wilberforce (1805-1873)); a village store which also incorporates the Post Office; a Hairdresser; a GP surgery; a volunteer-led library; and the CE primary school. There is talk of a café opening soon. There is a hall in the centre of the village, owned by the church and administered by a committee of community and trustee representatives, where a wide range of activities takes place. In addition there is a Scout and Guide centre and a Social club. There is a recreation ground with cricket and football pitch, tennis courts, pavilion and an enclosed children’s area with play equipment.

Brighstone boasts many organisations and activities including uniformed organisations for children and young people. The church also supports SWAY (South Wight Area Youth) which is a Christian organisation working with children, young people and their families. One of the Group’s Lay Readers is their chair. We have a community hub which is called The Exchange where we also provide office space for SWAY. There is an active branch of the Royal British Legion in the village. There are a wide range of special interest groups, including art, history, horticulture, walking and keep fit, several singing groups and a WI. The Parish Council ( [www.brighstoneparish.org](http://www.brighstoneparish.org) ) is very active.

Brighstone lies at the geographical centre of the Benefice and St Mary’s is a welcoming family church that regularly attracts members from beyond the village.

Within the constraints of the need to spread mission resources across the two Rural Groups, on the first Sunday of each month we try to offer, in alternate venues, two different Café-style services: one in the Scout centre and the other in the church. On the first Saturday of the month we have a Forest Church which is held outdoors in various locations within the Benefice. This service is informal with prayers and sharing, aimed at people who would not normally attend a traditional service. Its continuation may be in doubt as the leader is retiring.

St. Mary’s seeks to provide a quiet contemplative space for visitors as well as opportunities for all kinds of regular worship, but also feels a strong sense of its role in, and mission to, the whole community. The recent quinquennial inspection indicated that the fabric of the church is generally in good order but recommended some work which is being put in hand. Currently the church has raised a significant sum to cover the cost of roof repairs which commenced in June 2020. A major re-ordering in 2005 added a single-level stone tiled floor (giving disabled access to all parts of the Church), under-floor heating, a vestry and toilet, an enlarged bookstall/library and a small kitchen. Old fixed pews were replaced by more comfortable chairs allowing higher seating density and greater flexibility for special events. There is a hearing loop and sound system offering audio facilities, and we have a screen which can be lowered to be used both in services and during other events through a laptop or Wi-Fi (when connected) and a fixed projector.

Besides the ministry of the priests and lay leaders outlined earlier above in the paragraph headed “The present Ministry Team….”,(page 5), there are several gifted individuals with a ministry in music. There are two Bible Study groups and Brighstone has hosted a number of Alpha Courses and Lent Courses. Lay Pastoral Assistants help meet the pastoral needs of the Church and community, including administering home communion; and Lay Worship Leaders regularly take services in our church and across the Benefice.

Main services at Brighstone include contemporary and traditional music led by the Director of Music from the organ or keyboard, plus a music group that leads services twice a month. The St Mary's “occasional” choir sings on the 3rd/ 4th Sundays and at special services. There is an enthusiastic team of bell ringers who frequently welcome ringers from across the UK. Brighstone is the only tower on the Island which is able to silence the bells and use a computer simulator for practices. The bell-ringers upgraded our 6 bells to 8 bells in 2017 thus giving more scope to our ringers and also to visiting ringers. There is also an enthusiastic team of hand-bell ringers.

The Church has close links with the village Methodist chapel which include occasional united services, and the sharing of meeting rooms.

Brighstone PCC, in recent years, has met its annual Parish Share. However, with giving-income falling due to various reasons, we are at present not meeting our Parish Share but have plans in place to rectify this. Adoption of the Parish Giving Scheme has produced an increase in regular giving.

Increasingly, St. Mary’s recognises its place within the wider provision of the Group of Rural Parishes. Special events include the annual Christmas Tree Festival now in its 23rd year with venues in and around Brighstone and nearby Mottistone and arranged through a committee of volunteers. This attracts many visitors from across the Island and even from the Mainland and in 2019 raised £14,000 for local and national charities. Featured in Wightlink (ferries) on-board video advertising, the Festival has also included a Nativity Pageant with actors, singers and musicians taking place at various locations across the villages. In 2019 a Passion Play was staged in and around the village.

Among the charities supported by the Parish are: Christian Aid, Mission to Seafarers, and the Children’s Society. Community events include Lent Lunches, Carol singing, coffee mornings, and concerts.

**Brighstone Church of England (Aided) Primary School** <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>provider/21/118192

Brighstone Primary is a popular and ambitious school with a thriving pre-school playgroup. The school has a supportive PTA and excellent links with the Church and Community, offering a community lunch every Tuesday in school. Members of the PCC and congregation serve on the Board of Governors. Church members take weekly Collective Worship at the School, and pupils attend Eucharist each half term in the church. The school takes part in church festival services, including Harvest, Remembrance, and Ash Wednesday, and holds an annual Leavers’ Service. Working with the Pre-school, wrap around care - breakfast club and after school provision - is provided for children. There is a variety of 'After School Clubs', an adult Fit Club and a new baby and mother’s group - Tottime.

The Chair of Governors’ hopes for the new priest are: “Someone who supports the school’s values of ‘Love, Courage and Respect’ and is leadership-focused on pupils’ learning and progress. They will serve as an *ex officio* governor and ensure a reflective start to the Governors’ meetings. They will bring generous and common-sense contributions to discussion, and an appreciative, encouraging but unsentimental approach to issues and people. They will befriend staff, parents, and particularly the children at the School, whilst building lasting relationships between church, school and the wider community.”

A stone building

Description automatically generated**The Rectory, Brighstone**

The modern Brighstone Rectory has green field views and is located in a quiet lane 150m from St Mary’s Church, the Primary School, GP Surgery and the village centre. The ground floor includes an entrance hall, large kitchen/diner, washroom, utility room, study a large sitting room and a dining room. The first floor has a bathroom, shower room and four bedrooms. There is a garage attached to the side of the house, as well as parking space for four cars. The rear garden has a lawn, patio, and a heavy-cropping damson tree and shrubs.

**St Mary the Virgin, Brook; and St Peter and St Paul, Mottistone**

Our two churches lie roughly two miles apart, in wonderful protected landscape. Along with the Village Hall and the Sun Inn, St Mary’s and St Peter’s are among the centres of local life and are valued reminders of village history. Outside each church are roadside banners featuring permanent exhibitions: ‘Wrecks & Rescues’ showing the heroic achievements of the Brook Lifeboat; and ‘The Seely Chapel’ showing General Jack Seely (Lord Mottistone), and *Warrior*, his well-known World War l horse.

With their unique views and characters, both churches are popular for baptisms, weddings and memorial services - often with numbers overflowing into the churchyards.

Mottistone church attracts a large number of National Trust Mottistone Manor visitors and passers-by. Its chapel is a perfect space for part of the annual Christmas Tree Festival and for performances of sacred music from local and mainland choirs.

Brook and Mottistone share one PCC, two churchwardens and a congregation of up to 25 regular worshippers. Services use traditional Common Worship Holy Communion and Sung Evensong liturgy, regularly attracting worshippers and enthusiastic singers from other churches. The two churches share five licensed Eucharistic assistants and a rota of fifteen lesson-readers from the congregation (who also cover verger/churchwarden duties at each service). Within the constraints of the size of the ministry team of priests and lay leaders outlined on page 4 above, we try to provide four services each month, Sunday Holy Communion alternating with Evensong at each church. Each has a friendly and welcoming atmosphere; highlights of the year are the Advent Carol and Christingle Services which are attended by people from across the Group.

The PCC regularly fulfils its Parish Share obligations. Notices can be found in each church which explain the work and conservation needs of the church; this helps to generate useful income, especially from visitors to Mottistone Manor across the road.

Of the two churches, Mottistone churchis the more easily accessible with a new, level wheelchair-route from a quiet road. Both are fitted with induction loop systems. Exterior stonework at both churches shows the erosion from south westerly winds, but their general condition is good. Detailed repair and conservation works are steadily being progressed, often with some general repairs by volunteers.

The PCC operates each church with valued support from The Friends - a monthly rota of villagers who help care for and prepare the churches between Sunday services. Other informal ways of sharing local ministry work (e.g., Safeguarding Compliance) help foster goodwill in the wider community.

Like others in the West Wight Mission Community, we provide an important ministry to many holiday-makers and their children. These include self-catering visitors and second-home owners throughout the year, many of whom find spiritual refreshment in our churches. We hope to expand our ministry to visitors outside as well as inside the churches. Both these ancient churchyards are spectacular havens for wild flowers and wildlife, (woodland at Brook, grassland meadow at Mottistone). Grass is left uncut during flowering and seeding, and new paths have recently been created to encourage people, of all faiths and none, to spend time there.

The Seely Hall, Brook is an important part of village life, with more than 100 events and bookings taking place each year inside, or outside on the village green across the road. Each year the PCC and the Hall committee help run monthly coffee mornings, a Lent lunch and the summer fête and duck race.

**St Peter, Shorwell**

Shorwell is a compact and popular village five miles south west of the county town of Newport.

St Peter’s Church is Grade 1 listed and stands in the centre of the village. It is popular with visitors because of its well-preserved fifteenth century wall painting of the life of St Christopher.

There are 41 names on its Electoral Roll.

A year ago, a kitchen and disabled toilet were built in the church, greatly enhancing opportunities to involve the community in activities such as the Flower Festival, which the church hosts every August Bank Holiday weekend, and ‘Tea, Toast and Time Together’ (TTT) on the third Sunday of each month.

The church regularly supports a Latin Link missionary family in Chile, who have a local connection with Niton (a village on the Island). The church also has links with the local South Wight Area Youthworker project (SWAY) (see APPENDIX Page 17). There is a keen small choir and a peal of six bells which are rung for services and attract visiting ringers.

Although the congregation is small, the church is up-to-date with its Parish Share payments and continues to be hugely important to the village for weddings and funerals and for Christmas and Easter celebrations.

Within the constraints of the size of the ministry team outlined on Page 5 above, we try to achieve a monthly pattern of services as follows: Holy Communion on the first Sunday of each month, Morning Worship alternating with the Methodist Church on the second, a Fresh Expression café-style church called ‘Tea, Toast and Time Together’ (TTT) on the third, and a traditional Evensong on the fourth Sunday. The congregation joins the other parishes in the benefice for Holy Communion on fifth Sundays.

The village has a broad mix of local housing including three historic manor houses. There is a busy pub - ‘The Crown’ - , a shop, a parish hall with a social club, and a recreation ground with a play area. Activities include a popular weekly coffee morning called “Pitch up at the Pub”, table tennis in the parish hall and a monthly ‘Blokes, Bacon Butties and Banter’ attended by about 25 mostly retired local men for socialising.

The village supports a number of special events throughout the year. These include the very popular Midsummer Fair, the annual Wolverton Manor Garden Fair, and Shorwell Drama Club’s sell-out pantomime each December.

The last quinquennial confirmed the need for considerable work on the spire and tower so that this beautiful church and its congregation can continue to serve the community for future generations.

Kingston Church, dedicated to St. James, is located within Shorwell parish but no regular services have been held there since the 1980s. However, the burial ground remains open and is in the remit of responsibility of St Peter’s.

**The Shalfleet Group of Four Churches**

The Shalfleet Group of Four Churches comprises: St Michael the Archangel, Shalfleet; All Saints, Calbourne; Holy Spirit, Newtown; and St Swithin, Thorley.

The pastoral ministry of clergy, not only for the children but the sick, elderly, needy and bereaved is valued highly within the whole Benefice.

Our four PCCs work closely together but have no formal Joint meetings. As the West Wight Mission Community has begun to develop, at least one member attends the G8JPCC meetings for the enlarged benefice of eight churches that make up the Rural Parishes.

**St Michael the Archangel, Shalfleet**

Shalfleetparish lies within the local AONB. The National Trust owns much of the land adjoining the Newtown river estuary and some of the surrounding woodlands. There is a small harbour with mooring facilities at Shalfleet Quay, a quarter of a mile from the church. The coastal walk between the village and Yarmouth has wonderful views and is described as a ‘walkers' and nature lovers' paradise’.

The village C of E primary school has 169 pupils and receives excellent Ofsted reports. The school is closely involved with the church. We arrange an annual Christingle carol service where pupils, siblings, parents and grandparents fill the church to capacity; and a school service is also held at Easter. At the end of the summer term the younger children come on an “explore the church” outing where they play the organ and dress in clergy robes and the children take part in a few other services during the year on an informal basis. Shalfleet School is federated with Yarmouth C of E (VA) Primary school and the chair of governors attends Shalfleet Church.

Shalfleetis a scattered parish with a population of around 1,500 embracing all age groups and social classes. Shalfleet village is made up of some social housing, a modern private estate and a wide variety of individual houses, including a manor house. There are two public houses, one in the centre of the village that has a quality restaurant and another in the hamlet of Ningwood, a mile to the west towards Yarmouth. The central meeting place for essential shopping and chatter is the village shop in a converted farm building.

There is a thriving village hall, owned by the PCC, in the field adjacent to the church, which is used for recreational activities, a fortnightly community lunch, occasional parties and social events and, most importantly, the village fête on August bank holiday Monday. The Hall is run on behalf of the PCC by a Hall Committee and provides much needed funds for the maintenance of the church and its grounds, as well as for maintaining a high quality recreational asset in the village.

The church of St. Michael the Archangel is a grade 1 listed building of Norman origins and is very much a focal point of the village. Archaeological digs have unearthed the earliest known Christian burials on the Island, late c7th and early c8th.

The building needs a lot of committed care and attention and a Fabric Trust undertakes this on behalf of the PCC. The church fabric is in good repair following major works in 2003 and 2006. A large legacy left to the church by Jim and Claire Rice in 2007 has enabled this maintenance to continue but careful stewardship of this, and other fund raising, is needed.

Most of the congregation are of the older generation. We have a small but dedicated choir which for the benefice service and weddings, etc., join together as one with the other three churches in the Shalfleet group. The congregation of the church has fallen over the last few years and averages around 20 on a normal Sunday but the services at Easter, Christmas, Remembrance Sunday, etc., are far better attended. The recently bereaved are invited to the All Souls’ service.

Communication with not only the benefice but the whole Shalfleet parish and further afield is done via the church website and email list ( [*www.shalfleetchurch.org*](http://www.shalfleetchurch.org)) together with the church and community magazine “*Village News*”. This is run by volunteers, printed monthly with all the area news, church service times, important local contact numbers, local events and news of local people. It is financed by local advertisers and delivered by hand to nearly every house in the area.

**All Saints, Calbourne**

Calbourne is situated in an AONB and Conservation Area. Close to the church is Winkle Street - with its thatched cottages it is one of the Island’s best-known beauty spots. Just outside the village lies one of the oldest working water mills in the country and this is another popular local tourist attraction.

There is a good village support network, with people helping each other whether ill, lonely or just needing a helping hand on occasions. Many members of the community volunteer, participate, donate items or make copious numbers of cakes for the various village events. We are proud of the way we rally together, whatever the situation.

The church fabric is in fairly good condition after a massive overhaul of the roof in 2018, done with the help of a grant of £141,421 and Calbourne church contribution of £12,712. The Quinquennial identified a number of minor repairs, most of which have been dealt with; the major ones are the boundary wall to the west that has a section that has collapsed and seven windows that need attention. The PCC has obtained satisfactory quotations for these two items and faculties have been applied for. We have sufficient reserves to finance the boundary wall but we hope to obtain a grant that will enable us to also complete, although not urgent, the work on the windows during 2020.

Regular income is short of expenditure, but we work hard to try to make up the deficit from fund-raising events. At the end of 2019 our accounts show a balance of £32,700 but as previously mentioned we do have two major works to complete. We also keep a reserve to be able to fund 6 months running costs.

Calbourne parishis fairly large geographically, consisting mainly of farmland, with the Downs and forest to the south of the village. The village itself is small, with approximately 130 residents. At the last census, the population of Calbourne Parish was around 200. There is a pub (The Sun), a few small business outlets, the village hall (Recreation Centre, not owned by the church) and All Saints’ church.

Our church doors are open every day of the year for quiet reflection, prayer or just to have a look around. In 2019 forty services were held. Our service style is fairly traditional. We use the traditional language Common Worship service for Holy Communion; the Book of Common Prayer for Mattins and Evensong; and a slightly more modern language for our all-age services.

Attendance at these services is around 8, the average age is about 70. There are 18 on the electoral roll, most of whom come to at least one service per year. We have very few children and young families in the village and children rarely attend our normal services. This contrasts greatly with our Christmas and Easter Day services when the children and grandchildren of our congregation visit - last year there were 49 at Easter and 70 on Christmas Day. We also have good attendance at Harvest Festival, Remembrance Sunday, and the Carol Service. Although our regular attendance is low, there is a strong feeling in the village that the church has an important role to play in the community. The PCC has 8 members and meets around six times per year. It is a friendly group, committed to serve God and the community.

There has been a church in Calbourne for over a thousand years. Calbourne is one of only a handful of churches mentioned in the Domesday Book. The grade ll listed church we see today was built in around 1240 AD with 17c and 19c additions. The churchyard is “open” but with very limited space left for full burials. There is a Garden of Remembrance within the churchyard for cremated remains. There is an identified need for our church to remain in Calbourne and we hope to maintain a strong presence in the village.

**Holy Spirit, Newtown**

Newtown village and Newtown Creek are very popular with ramblers, bird-watchers and sailors. The early Victorian parish church is small, compact, light and airy with a charm of its own. It is supported by a very loyal and welcoming congregation with 25 members on the Electoral Roll and an average attendance of 12.

Numbers at the church have been steady over the years with a mix of people who live in and outside the parish. A much larger congregation comes on special days, such as the Pet Service which we held for the first time last year. Within the constraints of the need to spread ministry resources across the two Groups of Rural Parishes as explained on Pages 5 and 6 above, the pattern of services we try to achieve includes the monthly Benefice service at one of the Shalfleet Group of Churches, and on alternate Sundays a Holy Communion service at 9.30 am and an evening service at 3.00 pm. Our aim is to maintain regular and special services, encourage lay pastoral care and lay leadership, to engage with families and the younger generation in Newtown and its outskirts. We support the Church Schools in Shalfleet and Yarmouth in all our prayers. If through staff shortage it is not possible to have Communion on a particular Sunday a Communion service is held on the Tuesday following at 10.00 am.

Newtown parish church is located in the very heart of the quiet hamlet of Newtown. A very small community with mainly retired people and holiday and week-end homes, it is a popular yachting locality for the yachting fraternity. Copies of the history of the church and a booklet on the history of Newtown itself are available. The Church is in a good state of repair and we manage to pay our parish share. The churchyard is “open”, but with limited space left for full burials. We have a Garden of Remembrance within the churchyard for cremated remains. There are very limited facilities in the church and village and therefore no meeting room. There is a chemical toilet housed in the churchyard.

We try to keep in touch with people with a connection to the church, and with children who have been baptised here, and we invite them to special services. Our social events and fundraising consist mainly of coffee mornings. Second-hand books and other saleable items in church are a good source of income. We support various charities throughout the year.

**St Swithin, Thorley**

St. Swithin’s Church is situated on the main road which runs through Thorley Village which has a population of about 300, largely within the village with the remainder scattered in farms and other isolated dwellings. The village is just far enough from the beaten track to be tranquil and untroubled by the visitors who swarm around the major tourist attractions. The Grade ll Listed Victorian church was built in 1871. It is small enough that it actually gets warm during services which may be part of the reason that we are attracting a gently increasing congregation. We had a hearing loop installed and added a radio microphone system which our ageing members are finding helpful. We have two bells that hang in the open Bell Tower which were cast in the 13th Century and transferred here from the old church, as was our Font.

In 2014 we were able to rebuild the Vestry, converting it into a small kitchen, a toilet which is suitable for the disabled, and a mingling space at the back of the church. We have introduced a monthly coffee morning for the isolated and lonely people in our village since our church is the only meeting place in the parish of Thorley. We offer ourselves as a venue for occasional concerts and other events and some of our fundraising has been around light meals served at the back of the church.

As part of the Shalfleet Group of four churches within the West Wight Rural Parishes (eight churches) in the West Wight Mission Community of twelve churches, we share the same constraints of the need to spread ministry resources across the two Groups as evenly as possible, as explained earlier in this Profile. We have a monthly Group service of Holy Communion, and try to have our own services on two of the remaining three Sundays of the month. Our numbers at our services during the year are around 18 but are considerably swelled at the major services of Harvest Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter when the church can be full.

There are not enough young people in the parish to justify a Sunday School or Youth Group but we support the West Wight Churches Youth Project by contributing to the funding for their Youth Worker. The church primary school in the Parish of Shalfleet means that there are young children in the community who can be reached by going into the school but we would welcome greater links between our church and the school.

For practical reasons we have found it difficult to establish links with the Brighstone Group of churches on the south side of the Island, however, we enjoy the United Services which rotate between the four churches in the Shalfleet Group in the north, and this helps us to feel part of a wider community. We occasionally take part in events run by the ecumenical Churches Together in West Wight under the auspices of the Freshwater/Yarmouth/Totland Group which again brings us into contact with the wider church world.

(St Swithin Thorley, continued)

There are 50 people on our Electoral Roll and we have the occasional Marriage, Wedding Blessing or Baptism, and, sadly, the occasional funeral too. The ten members of the PCC, plus a small army of willing helpers, arrange half a dozen fundraising events throughout an average year which are intended not only to help maintain the fabric of the church but to bring together the village people who enthusiastically support our efforts. Some members of our congregation are extremely diligent in caring for the aged and sick in the parish and liaise closely with the clergy when the need arises. Every household in the parish receives the “*Village News*” which keeps them informed of both church events and other activities throughout the Benefice and the surrounding area. We have found this to be an invaluable resource and one which gives our mission team the opportunity to spread the good news of the church’s work.

We see our church as providing an essential reminder of the presence of God in our village; we are looking for leadership in making changes which could stimulate our growth and help us to be relevant and a force for good in our village. When the pages of history are turned we do not want them to reveal that the people of the twenty-first century valued their church so little that it was forced to close.

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**Desirable attributes of the Team Rector**

Someone who will:

* be a visible sign of Christ’s presence in the wider community, preaching the faith to build up the body of Christ;
* lead by example, befriend, teach and encourage the Team and their churches to grow together;
* develop, support and release the gifts of all in sharing ministry and pastoral care;
* work in the power and grace of the Holy Spirit with colleagues in the Team, Deanery and Diocese;
* identify with the Diocesan Strategy of *Live, Pray, Serve*, working with Island colleagues in developing the local mission plans and encouraging generosity in giving;
* share in developing an effective Ministry in the schools of the Group, ensuring the highest protection of children and vulnerable adults in accordance with Diocese protocols and guidelines;
* maintain a discipline of prayer and study rooted in Christ.

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**APPENDIX**

**Additional detail about the Isle of Wight and the parishes**

The Island has a sunny climate, award-winning beaches, walks, cycle routes, enviable water sports and activities, a beautiful landscape and internationally important areas of SSSI, and of Coastline and Marine Conservation Zone Status. More than half of the Island is AONB-designated with over 500 miles of public footpaths and bridleways including 70 miles of coastline. Osborne House and Carisbrooke Castle are major English Heritage sites and The National Trust is a major landowner, particularly in the West Wight.

A long-term PFI contractor is steadily transforming Island roads to an impressive standard.

The information revolution has changed employment prospects on the Island. Once a region of limited employment and facilities, many more people of all ages now work and socialise, full-time or flexibly, nationally and globally, from their homes.

Now that the Island’s unique advantages are available without many of the previous limitations of separation by sea, employment on the Island has risen steadily closer to the average for the South-East of England.

Frequent car ferry and fast passenger ferry services connect with rail services at Portsmouth, Southampton and Lymington. London can be a little over an hour’s journey by road or rail from mainland ferry ports, on a good day.

Portsmouth is just 10 minutes by hovercraft, 25 minutes by Fast Cat catamaran and 40 minutes by car ferry. The Cathedral is about 10 minutes’ walk from each of the three Portsmouth terminals.

Each summer the Island hosts an outdoor Music Festival attracting some 50-60,000 visitors of all ages. As well as being a world class sailing venue it is now a major centre for active outdoor holidays and events. Second home and self-catering visitors are important contributors to the Island economy.

The largest employers are the tourism, retailing, marine-leisure and aerospace industries, the NHS, and local government, education and prison services. For more information see the IW Council site [www.iwight.com](http://www.iwight.com/)

Island schooling has for some time been based on a two-tier education system. This, with the positive recent effects of strengthened leadership and Academy status, is beginning to produce notably better performance in the schools.

Christ the King College in Newport is an ecumenical secondary school which brings together young people from across the Island and is developing good relationships with parishes. Local clergy are encouraged to be present for termly communion services which, with a thousand young people worshipping together, represent the largest community Eucharist participation in the whole Diocese.

The Isle of Wight College provides an excellent range of vocational and further education courses.

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**The Exchange, Brighstone**

The Exchange is currently leased by the Isle of Wight Council to St Mary’s, Brighstone for community use. This is understood to be for a period of 99 years. The West Wight Mission Community Team Administrator uses it for one day as a base for her work, and bookings are made through her. It is booked out by a number of groups during the week, for house groups and study groups. However, it is mainly used as a base of operations for SWAY (South Wight Area Youthworker Project). SWAY’s Administrator uses it on Tuesday and Thursday mornings for her work. All SWAY confidential files, resources and its computer are housed there. Thursday morning is the SWAY team and prayer meeting from 9.30 am - 10.30 am, followed by various meetings. On Wednesday mornings the SWAY Project Leader meets the Gap Year workers to plan the week ahead.

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**South Wight Area Youthworker project (SWAY)**

SWAY began as a Charity in 2014, supported and founded by the partnership between Niton Methodist Church (on the southern tip of the Island - see Sketch Map) and the Parishes around Brighstone. It was initially funded by the Isle of Wight Council, with support from the partner Churches. This council funding ended in March 2018, since when the two founding Churches have continued to support the work, along with a number of successful funding bids and fundraising events. SWAY enjoys wide support from many quarters and shows no sign of reducing its work or effectiveness.

SWAY has a Board of Trustees taken from both Churches. It has a Project Leader, a Family Worker, and two Gap Year workers. SWAY has recently appointed an Administrator. One of our Gap Year workers is based in the Brighstone area.

SWAY runs youth groups across the area of South Wight, including two groups in the Brighstone area on a Friday. It runs a number of events through the year, including: visits to the Isle of Wight Scout centre at Corf Camp; a New Forest Junior Leaders’ weekend: summer holiday activities; and a Summer Residential in the Lake District. Leaders have also taken groups of young people from the area across to Harbour Church in Portsmouth to experience a youth-friendly worship environment. An Open House is held in Niton on most Sunday evenings for young people and some from the Brighstone area attend.

SWAY’s Family Worker works with a number of families across the area and some of these include Brighstone families.

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**Sketch Map**

A close up of a map

Description automatically generated

A sketch map showing the eight West Wight Rural Churches: the Shalfleet Group (4) in the north and the Brighstone Group (4) in the south.

It also shows the 4 churches to the west in Freshwater (2), Yarmouth (1) and Totland Bay (1) - the FYT Parishes - which, with their own Team Vicar and lay leaders, complete the composition of the West Wight Mission Community (12).

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**Mission Data 2019**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Church** | **Electoral Roll** | **Regular worshippers** | **Baptisms** | **Weddings/ Blessings** | **Funerals overseen** | **Christmas Services** |
| **Brighstone** | 50 | 50 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 236 |
| **Shorwell** | 41 | 25 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 120 |
| **Brook** | ] 44 | ] 18 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| **Mottistone** | ] | ] | 1 | 2 | 3 | 213 |
| **Shalfleet** | 60 | 20 | 0 | 6 | 3 | 64 |
| **Calbourne** | 18 | 11 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 70 |
| **Newtown** | 25 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 10 |
| **Thorley** | 50 | 18 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 30 |
| **Freshwater St Agnes** | ] 62 | 30 | 7 | 6 | ] 20 | 257 |
| **Freshwater All Saints** | ] | 70 | 3 | 5 | ] | 136 |
| **Yarmouth** | 70 | 48 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 204 |
| **Totland Bay** | 92 | 96 | 1 | 1 | 15 | 128 |
| **TOTALS** | 512 | 395 | 23 | 37 | 70 | 1468 |

**Parish Patronages**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Parish** | **Patronage** |
| **Brighstone** | Bishop, Dean and Chapter St Paul’s (2/1) |
| **Shorwell** | Bishop |
| **Brook** | Bishop, Dean and Chapter St Paul’s (2/1) |
| **Mottistone** |
| **Shalfleet** | Lord Chancellor |
| **Calbourne** | Bishop |
| **Newtown** | Bishop |
| **Thorley** | Bishop |
| **Freshwater** | St John’s College, Cambridge |
| **Yarmouth** | Keble College, Oxford |
| **Totland Bay** | Church Patronage Trust |

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**A Vision for the Island**

**The Headlines:**

**Live** clearly as disciples of Jesus Christ.

**Pray** for the world and for each other and to draw closer to God.

**Serve** all people and seek truth and justice.

Grow in **depth**, **impact** and **number**.

Be **courageous**, **pioneering**, **resourceful**, **collaborative** and **generous.**

Know what our values and beliefs are

and live them out confidently and competently.

**The Isle of Wight Deanery Vision**

The Archdeaconry and Deanery of the Isle of Wight is part of the Diocesan strategy formed around three key commitments: to live, to pray and to serve.

**Commitments:**

Believing in Jesus Christ as the source of our hope and salvation, we are:

* called to **live** our lives in ways that are formed by his life, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming again. Emboldened by the gift of the Holy Spirit at our baptism, we are sent out into the world to live and to tell the Good News of God in Jesus Christ, and to be and to make new disciples of Jesus Christ;
* called to **pray**, on our own and together in community, following the practices of daily life and worship that have shaped Christians through the ages. We are to seek God’s will in prayer and to hold each other’s needs and the needs of our world on our hearts before God;
* called to love and **serve** the people among whom we live and work, caring for young and old, strong and weak, rich and poor. Speaking prophetically, we are also to seek the kingdom of God among us, and to act as its servants in upholding truth and justice.

We want others to join us and to grow in **depth**, **impact**, and **number**, so that more people love the Lord their God with all their heart, mind, soul, and strength; more people love their neighbours as themselves; and more people join us in going out to make new disciples and to make disciples of all nations.

**Culture:**

We will need to be a community of disciples which is:

* **courageous** – bold and obedient in our actions, willing to make costly decisions that we and others have shied away from in the past, and not just for the sake of those left within our churches, but for those who might never consider entering them;
* **pioneering** – following the first disciples after Pentecost, considering with fresh and transformed eyes what God is asking us to do to reach others with the good news of Christ, taking risks and sometimes failing, being willing to let go of the habits which hinder us, and all this in the spirit of trust in the resurrection;
* **resourceful** – being good stewards who see that God gives us what is sufficient to do his work, who make the most of what we have, and who respond wholeheartedly to opportunities for mission when they arise;
* **collaborative** – reforming our structures so that people are better able to work together across parishes and ecumenically, because we believe that we are one body with many parts all working in the service of God;
* **generous** – sharing our time, money, and other resources with those who have less, being patient and supportive as communities discover and offer their own gifts, consciously and prayerfully allowing our resources to follow what we believe God is asking us to do in mission.

Rejoicing in our cultural and theological diversity, we are committed to acting with unity for the sake of the gospel and for all people within our churches, within our parishes, ecumenically and across the diocese as a whole.

We shape our work through the four streams that we have identified as priorities, namely

* making disciples;
* growing churches;
* learning for life; and
* transforming society.

We pray for the Spirit to guide our decision making and our work and for the church to grow in depth, impact, and number.

**Confidence:**

*“I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”*

Joshua 1:9

There are three things which both successful business and successful churches (however you measure this!) have in common:

1. **They know who they are and what their values are** – whilst as Christians we may disagree on many things, there is much more we agree on, not least of which is the commandment to love God, love others and love ourselves which is the basis of all we do. We know our beliefs and values and discussing them amongst ourselves will make it easier to articulate them to others.
2. **They translate those into actions** – These values and beliefs are not static things or empty slogans. They inform the way that we live our lives. *“And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands.  As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.”  2 John 1:6*
3. **They carry out those actions competently and confidently** – The values are lived out both confidently and well. This means that we don’t try to do everything, but concentrate on what we can do and do it well, really well, and because of this it is done confidently.

**Context:**

*“For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. 20To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. 21To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (though I am not free from God’s law but am under Christ’s law) so that I might win those outside the law. 22To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some. 23I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.”*

1 Corinthians 9:19-23

* What is the Island Context? There is something particular about being on an island and it is good to be aware of that but within that there are also many different contexts. What brings about growth in depth, impact and number in Ventnor is going to be very different to what would work in Seaview, Newport or Ryde!
* What is your context?
  + Listen to your existing congregations but more importantly your local community who don’t come to church.
  + Don’t compete! It is all about context. Not every place needs a lively church plant and café church won’t work in every situation.
  + What is God doing?
    - *‘It is not the church of God that has a mission in the world but the God of mission who has a church in the world’*

(Tim Dearborn)

* + - *‘Mission is finding out what God is doing and joining in’*

(John V Taylor)

* + What is Good News here? What would be good news for the people in Wetherspoons in Union Street, Ryde? What would be good news for the members of the Royal Yacht Squadron in Cowes? What would be good news for the people in the nursing home in Wroxall? I t really is all about context!
* Examples:
  + Haven Benefice Eco-Church.
  + Niton Sunday afternoon Service for the elderly, lonely, those with dementia and their carers.
  + Café Church at Wootton and Binstead.
  + Peace Garden in Lake.
  + Schools work St. John’s, Ryde.
  + Church Mice at Bembridge.
  + Film Club in Christ Church, Sandown.

**Frugal Innovation:**

*“Be hospitable to one another without complaining. 10Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. 11Whoever speaks must do so as one speaking the very words of God; whoever serves must do so with the strength that God supplies, so that God may be glorified in all things through Jesus Christ. To him belong the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen. “*

1 Peter 4:9-11

Professor Navi Radjou is a fellow at Judge Business School, University of Cambridge and serves on the World Economic Forum’s Global Future Council and is co-author of the book ‘Frugal Innovation’. He has been working with churches in Norfolk on what they can do and achieve with very few resources. He highlights the fact that human creativity is a natural, infinitely renewable resource and it is coming up with smart, cheap solutions to people’s biggest problems. He cites examples such as a fridge in India made entirely of clay with no electricity required which can keep fruit and vegetables fresh for days and phone recharge stations in Africa powered by bicycles. These and many other examples are created by individuals who can transform adversity into opportunity. Professor Radjou states that when commodities are scarce people are forced to go within themselves to tap into that most abundant all-natural resource – human ingenuity – and use it to solve problems.

So how can this model help us within the churches of the Isle of Wight? Well we all know that resources are scarce but also that there are many creative and ingenious people in our churches. What can we creatively do to transform the church and this island with these resources?

Professor Radjou believes there are three key principles:

1. **Keep it simple!** Don’t create things which are complicated or designed to impress. Make them easy and widely accessible. Observe the local situation (context again!) to identify the real challenges and issues. Radjou describes how one software company spends more than 10,000 hours a year with their customers studying how they actually use their software so that they can improve it. He advises launching a good enough product which addresses fundamental needs and then continually improve that product over time.
2. **Do not reinvent the wheel**. Make key partnerships and use existing resources wherever available. Don’t automatically open a coffee shop inside a church if you have good ones locally you can partner with? Might an event or service aimed at families work better if you partnered with a school rather than trying to work separately? Might a film club work with the local cinema or film club?
3. **Think and act horizontally**. Radjou believes that companies would be better not to scale up vertically by centralising operations in big factories and offices but scale out horizontally by having smaller, local units thus remaining agile. As the Church of England, we are already there with this one! Of course, we are back to context and this even applies on a smaller scale. The monthly Sunday afternoon service in Niton Village Hall is meeting a real need for those who find getting into the church difficult, either physically because of the steep path, of emotionally because of memories or bereavement. How do we remain local and agile?

Business models are of course never a perfect fit but there does seem to be something significant in this one for us as a church and certainly worth considering. The cry of course is always “but we have so few volunteers and can’t do anything more!” Absolutely not and we shouldn’t be doing more and more but we owe it to ourselves, to our volunteers and to God to ensure that what we do has maximum effect which takes us back to the age old question we never seem to address properly – “What are we going to stop doing?”

**Actions:**

*“Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.”*

1 John 3:18

1. **Pray**: The single most important thing we can do. Pray as individuals, as churches, as groups, as a synod and as an island. Pray that we might know God’s will and how best to carry it out.
2. **Pastoral Reorganisation in Newport**: this will obviously be important for the whole island. A new and innovative way of being a parish and of delivering ministry to the County town via the new parish and to the island via Newport Minster. Further details of this project will be available at the next synod dependent on the scheme being made before then.
3. **Administration**: This is a real concern for many clergy and parishes, and we need to look at how we can provide administrative support for groups of parishes in a cost effective and efficient way thus freeing people up to do the work of mission. Can we use the principles of frugal innovation here?
4. **Lay Training and Ministry**: The Island has had real success in training and equipping lay people for ministry. Lay Readers, L ay Pastoral Assistant, Lay Worship Leaders and Occasional Preachers are all having a significant impact in their locations. So what next? Do we look at training people for specific ministry with older people or young people, working with those struggling with their mental health or the bereaved, pioneer work or ways of sharing their faith in the workplace?
5. **Clusters**: These have not had the impact which was envisaged but remain a useful tool for administrative purposes. Some act as useful support between people and where that is the case we should encourage it but we should not force people into these as if they were strait jackets but allow organic partnerships to emerge. These might be around group administrative support, study courses, mission opportunities which cross parish boundaries or marriage / baptism preparation.
6. **West Wight Emerging Mission Community**: We are exploring a bold and innovative way of doing rural ministry. This is at an early stage but the ministry team there are exploring ways of doing mission in this context which will hopefully feed into the rest of the diocese.
7. **Ryde**: It is important that we understand how those outside of the churches perceive their community. Ryde is not seen as two parishes but as one town and so we need to do the same. As Sam Martell joins us as Priest in Charge of All Saints, as Heath Monaghan starts as a pioneer ordinand, as Aspire moves into a new phase of its life and as St. Johns considers how it can use its building to best serve the community it is important that we work together to serve the community of this significant town on the island. We will look to meet and talk regularly and listen to one another and the context in order to decide how best to do this.
8. **The Bay**: This is an important area of the island served by six Anglican churches. In what ways can we continue to work together here? Can we use six church buildings in more creative ways?
9. **Fresh Expressions**: Not simply for the sake of it, not as an additional burden to both clergy and volunteers but where we believe God is calling us into helping people meet Jesus in a new and creative ways, which work in our context and which are engaging and will enable people to become disciples.
10. **Church Viability**: Being courageous means facing the difficulties and dealing with them. We are an over churched island. In some places that is justified and viable for example rural communities where the presence of a church building is vital and serves a clear purpose. In other places when congregations are struggling to maintain even the basic levels of activity within the church then we will need to face those hard situations together. In some places that may result in stopping some activities which we might have thought would never end and replacing them with something innovative and transformational. In others it will mean closure and exploring being the church in that community in new ways.
11. **Island Wide Responsibilities**: Many of the clergy on the island have specific island wide roles and responsibilities. Now is a good time to review these and ensure they match the context and need. We need also to consider what island wide roles could be carried out by lay people and how we match specific needs to specific skills.
12. **Education**: The church has a significant role in schools on the island. How do we offer our services to these schools in the most effective way? Do we need to consider paid chaplaincy roles in some?
13. **Pilgrimage**: The previous island plan looked at how we might encourage pilgrimage on the island. This needs to be revisited with experts and partners to discover the best way of delivering and promoting these. Can we produce good quality maps and how about an app?

**Questions to consider:**

1. **What are our values and beliefs?**
2. **What is our context?**
3. **What is the good news for our community?**
4. **What can we do well?**
5. **What is the first thing we will do now?**

*The Venerable Peter Leonard, Archdeacon of the Isle of Wight, November 2019*

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**Mission Action Plan for the Benefice of the West Wight Rural Parishes**

[This Action Plan was produced and circulated in mid-2019 and was discussed at length at a meeting of the G8JPCC which was held at The Three Bishops pub in Brighstone on Thursday 12th September. The Plan was approved subject to a number of instances of rewording and tweaks (“all were in favour”). The Mission Action Plan has since been very slightly updated for this Shared Parish Profile where events have been overtaken, in order for it to retain relevance.]

A Mission Action Plan for the Benefice of the West Wight Rural Parishes, incorporating the eight churches of **Brighstone, Brook, Mottistone, Shorwell, Shalfleet, Newtown, Thorley**, and **Calbourne**.

The G8JPCC (Group of 8 Joint PCC) which meets three times a year has now become the focus for Mission and Vision Strategy within the West Wight Rural Parishes. All the PCCs of the churches above are invited to attend or be represented at these Joint PCC meetings.

The meetings’ agendas focus on delivering the *Live, Serve, Pray* strategy of the Diocese.

Key areas for mission are as follows (using the main headings from the Standard Agenda which the G8JPCC has adopted):

**Under the heading: “Growing the Church spiritually & numerically”:**

**Brighstone:**

The creation of a Cycle Hub in the back of Brighstone Church. This now needs a lay leader to take the project forward.

The creation of a prayer station to add to the current votive stand and prayer request which will have its focus changed bi-monthly, so as to create a prayer space which is both personal, intimate and informative.

We will continue to support SWAY with provision of the Exchange and resources to maintain their invaluable work with young people and families in need.

Café church will be continued operating from the village halls on a bi-monthly basis with drop-in refreshments and a space for relaxed fellowship before a short and yet imaginative time of worship.

All Ages Worship (AAW) will in future be billed as the Three Ts - Tea, Toast and Time together, and will alternate with Café Church on a once-a-month basis. The creative flexibility of the seating and the screen and music provisions will help to open-up this service to a broader audience.

Forest Church will continue to operate throughout the next year; numbers attending this initiative have increased lately and begun to attract non-church members. This could also possibly serve as a feed-in to Café Church. However, the future of Forest Church is uncertain as its leader (a non-stipendiary priest) retires in July 2020.

**Brook and Mottistone:**

These churches are left open for the public and are a continuous focus for prayer across the wider benefice. **Mottistone** benefits considerably from its close proximity to Mottistone Manor across the road, and **Brook** continues to hold special services to uphold its historic connection with the RNLI. Spiritually the two churches have become key providers of BCP Evensong, attracting good numbers, encouraging greater participation in worship and singing in a traditional format.

**Shorwell:**

Following the creation of new facilities within the church, refreshments will now be served and a light lunch will be provided once a month to which anyone will be welcome. Special events, concerts and the like will now be enabled to be offered more regularly for the benefit of the local community.

Joint services with the Methodist Church will continue alongside commitment to a renewed approach to the provision of the community worship known locally as “Tea, Toast and Time Together”.

**Shalfleet:**

A renewed management structure for the Hall has been created and this will serve to ensure that this valuable and idyllic asset will continue to benefit the Church and the local community.

The Fabric Trust continues to host a considerable number of excellent concerts which enable the church building to be enjoyed by the wider community.

**Thorley:**

A newly created regular monthly series of coffee mornings has proved to be incredibly successful and these have acted as a mission opportunity to countless cyclists who stop off and participate in the events.

It is hoped that occasional events around ruins of the old church in the village will also give wider opportunity for spiritual growth and development.

**Newtown:**

The church continues to be an open space for prayer which is frequented on a regular basis both by locals and the walking community. An annual Art Exhibition enables a wider group of people to enjoy the simple prayerful ambiance of the building and its geographical location. The long-term future of this church is of concern as there is no Church Warden. The PCC has begun to consider this matter and how to get more people involved with the Church.

**Calbourne:**

The church continues to be well supported by the local community in relation to events and major church services. Regular worship has been maintained but the viability of this for the long-term is unlikely. Major services at **Calbourne** are, however, very well supported and the church engages strongly with the local community, and this is a strong missional opportunity.

Discussions with the PCC about the possibility of becoming a Festival Church will be encouraged over this next year.

**Under the heading: “Using and building our resources to make disciples”:**

All the churches in the Group of Rural Parishes are seeking ways to improve provision for those who are hard of hearing and have other disabilities. The introduction of loop and amplification systems is being investigated and **Brighstone** church already has these in place, **Thorley** is in the process of implementation, **Shalfleet** has good amplification already established and **Newtown** are exploring possibilities. **Brook** has a loop system in place together with amplification which has just been updated.

Nature conservancy is a major focus. **Mottistone** has created a beautiful eco-friendly environment which is in keeping with its historic setting, and this will continue to be nurtured. **Brook** is doing the same with its churchyard and is focussing attention on the creation of a new area for cremated remains which will be designed to provide a walk through place of peace and tranquillity in a beautiful location, emphasising its identity as a sacred space in the West Wight. **Shalfleet** are continuing to promote the area around the Hall as an eco-friendly environment with an emphasis on natural fauna and flora.

Visitor Publicity is constantly on the agenda, signage generally for events is exceptionally good, and discreet funding boards in **Brook** and **Mottistone** have proved to be very successful. It is hoped that these or similar opportunities may be considered across the wider benefice.

We seek also to make disciples through our provision of Bible Studies and informative community talks. It is hoped that a regular monthly prayer meeting will eventually be put in place, and we also seek to encourage others to support the church through the provision of friends groups which encourage volunteers to both prepare and maintain the churches for worship.

**Under the heading: “Promoting learning for life”:**

This is where our connection with the schools in our benefice takes precedence. We are, as a benefice, active in the schools in **Shalfleet** and **Brighstone,** with the Rector being on both Governing Bodies, actively engaging in aspect of SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools). Other church members take their responsibilities on the Governing Bodies very seriously and offer considerable time and support to the Schools, staff and families.

**Under the heading:“Work to transform society”:**

We offer a platform for selected Lay People to speak at church or community events and this has helped to promote greater awareness of injustice on the Island. We have signed-up to the Time Bank initiative and take an interest in the voluntary work in which they engage. We are good supporters of a number of different charities, holding special events to raise funds for them, and we actively support the Ride and Stride event raising considerable resources to assist the Historic churches trust in its work.

Our work with SWAY helps not only to assist those in need but also to keep us informed as to the social injustice often hidden in our midst. We hope to find opportunities in which we can further both awareness and support for SWAY and other agencies active in our benefice and across the Island.

**Future direction of the wider West Wight Mission Community, incorporating: the Brighstone, Shalfleet and FYT Groupings**

Under the previous Team Rector, the Rural Group of eight churches and the FYT Group of four churches had begun the process of working closer together although still as two separate groups. Given the resources available and the need for an innovative and creative growth model of rural ministry in this area of the Island we are looking for someone who will work closely with the Team Vicar to further develop ways of operating as a single Mission Community.

**Where we want to be in five years**

**Brighstone and Shalfleet Group of Rural Parishes**

We want to have developed a greater understanding of what it means to be the Christian community in this part of the Island, encouraging and supporting one another as parishes with the PCCs focussing on growing together as a group of eight parishes seeking to bring about God’s kingdom, and encouraging active engagement with our schools in terms of collective worship, faith education and community involvement. We will collaborate with the FYT group of Parishes as and when appropriate.

**The FYT group of Parishes**

To explore how best to use the buildings we have in order to help people encounter God and for the benefit of the community, enabling sustainable Anglican worship for the future including regular services and festivals, actively engaging with schools in terms of collective worship, faith education and community involvement.

**Actions required**

* Advertise and recruit a House for Duty Priest.
* Archdeacon to attend Staff meetings on a monthly basis where possible and appropriate.
* This Action Plan to act as the focus of our Mission Strategy and the G8JPCC to take responsibility to ensure that it is always kept fresh and is acted upon in a strategic way.

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**A PROFILE OF THE FYT PARISHES OF WEST WIGHT**

**F**reshwater - The Churches of All Saints and St Agnes

**Y**armouth - The Church of St James

**T**otland Bay - The Church of Christ Church

*www.allsaintsandstagnes.org.uk www.stjamesyarmouth.org.uk www.christchurchtotland.org.uk*

*Facebook: The FYT Parishes*

**Team Vicar: Rev’d Leisa Potter** **Team Administrator: Ms Julia Bridgeman**

**A close up of a street in front of a house

Description automatically generated**

**A Summary**

The West Wight churches of All Saints, St Agnes, St James, and Christ Church have come together to form the FYT Parishes Church Community, as part of the wider West Wight Mission Community. Each church retains its own independence and character and each church serves very different, but sometimes overlapping, communities. The 3 Parishes and 4 Churches have a Team Vicar who is supported by a part time Administrator, 7 Lay Leaders and 3 Readers and some assistance from 2 retired clergy. The tentative steps towards bringing the parishes together, in terms of missional intent, began following the appointment of the new Team Vicar – Rev’d Leisa Potter - in April 2018.

**All Saints and St Agnes Churches (with Rectory Chapel and Parish Hall**) are linked and serve the communities of Freshwater and Freshwater Bay. The established congregations are welcoming of the changes needed to further embrace others in the community whilst still retaining traditions of worship that stand in good stead today. They have been delighted, recently to see new faces at regular services. The local community feel strong connections to both churches which are popular for baptisms, weddings and funerals. The churches have maintained regular Sunday services – All Saints at 9.30am and St Agnes mostly at 6pm (but with an 8am service once a month) and a midweek service at the Rectory Chapel. Whilst linked and with one PCC, the two churches (both of historic importance) are very different and lend themselves to developing and flourishing in different ways both in terms of worship and the reimagining of church space.

**St James’ Church** sits in the centre of the harbour town of Yarmouth and has a deep love of and connection to the local community. There is a small but dedicated PCC, supported by a passionate civic community. There are services every Sunday and a midweek service. The church is a historical haven for visitors and is the focal point for a range of community celebrations, concerts, and seasonal events. Services offer opportunities for traditional worship but there is a growing awareness and acceptance of the need to reflect on the way forward, and to ensure that the Church continues to sit at the heart of the Community and that partnerships continue to be strengthened with local stakeholders and organisations.

**Christ Church** describe themselves as “a welcoming Anglican, evangelical church whose mission is to shine God's light into the lives of those in our local community and overseas through prayer, stewardship and practical support”. They have strong links with the ecumenical projects around West Wight and have a flourishing Lay Worship team, who help to ensure that there are a variety of Sunday services, each week along with one midweek service. The church has improved accessibility at the front and side for those with mobility issues and the PCC have a vision for the re-ordering of the inside of the church and for making their space more versatile, for exhibitions, community and hospitality events, and concerts.

The three Parishes and four churches are making good progress towards establishing a ‘community of churches’. There is now a bi-monthly magazine; a FYT Parishes service in one church on any 5th Sunday of the month; a new FYT Parishes Facebook page; quarterly planning meetings; and during Covid 19, a joint Zoom service and collaborative home worship materials for the FYT Parishes community.

**The FYT Parishes Demographic**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Town/Village | Population at 2011 (Census returns) |
| Freshwater | 5369 |
| Yarmouth | 865 |
| Totland Bay | 2927 |

There are currently two Church of England Primary Schools within the FYT Parishes - one in Freshwater, one in Yarmouth (federated with Shalfleet). Yarmouth primary school will be moving to a new site in Freshwater over the coming year. Despite the sadness and upset of one school closing and one school moving from Yarmouth to Freshwater, Leisa, as a Governor for both schools, will be supporting children, families and teachers as the schools project develops.

The area is popular with visitors and a number of properties are second homes (this is a particular issue in Yarmouth) but there is a robust year-round residential population throughout West Wight. Freshwater is the largest of the three Parishes There is a mixture of affluence and social deprivation, often common in tourist areas. Local incomes and educational achievement tend to be below the National average.

**Basic Parish Returns data for 2019**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Church | Electoral Roll | Reg worshipers | Baptisms | Weddings  /Blessings | Funerals  overseen | Christmas Eve and Day services |
| St Agnes } | 62 | 30 | 7 | 6 |  | 257 |
| All Saints } |  | 70 | 3 | 5 | 20 | 136 |
| St James | 70 | 48 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 204 |
| Christ Church | 92 | 96 | 1 | 1 | 15 | 128 |

**Parish Finances**

Prior to the Covid 19 Pandemic the Parishes were all paying their Parish Share and living within their means.

**Mission Story – The FYT parishes**

Since arriving as Team Vicar, Leisa has been exploring future mission by building upon the positive, mutual connections already in existence between church members and their local communities. All parishes have engaged, through their PCC’s and preaching, with the questions of mission and maintenance and have begun to consider the future flourishing of their worship, buildings, community presence, church traditions and future expressions. The Parishes are looking forward to developing further, both a traditional and online presence for their churches, becoming an invitation to all – virtually and physically, in buildings, in the community and in rural spaces.

There have been small, but significant, changes to worship patterns and liturgy, in this last year, in each church. Exploration of more contemplative worship and sacred spaces, both in buildings and in our beautiful rural places, is underway. This year the mission teams are looking to encourage all of the churches to implement at least one significant change, either to their church services or purpose for their building. A change which will invite people of faith and of no faith, to seek out opportunities of worship which might work for them; to experience God’s presence for themselves and to explore questions of faith. Of course, the need to retain significant times of more traditional worship and liturgy is also acknowledged, to help all who are fed to flourish, with worship that maintains liturgical rhythms and spiritual depth.

Where applicable, the Parishes have continued building relationships through the occasional offices and schools work - maintaining a visible presence, in everyday life across the communities. All of the churches are actively involved in ecumenical partnerships, with ‘Churches Together in West Wight’ (CTWW) for youth, family, celebration services and in support groups for community outreach, across the generations. Contact with the small numbers of families who attend monthly/festival church services is maintained through youth leaders or school representatives in each of the churches. Festival celebrations for families and multi -generational worship are being re-imagined. Where possible, our small number of church youth have been gathering, via Zoom, during Covid 19. With support being given to the Youth Worker (both in prayer and in practical ways through CTWW) their work for youth groups, which are normally held at the West Wight Sports and Community centre, in Freshwater, has been able to continue.

Leisa is looking forward to continuing her work in enabling ministry in others - recognising God’s call in others (both ordained and lay). The church communities are also passionate about seeking out the gifts of all, to be shared across the FYT Parishes and the wider West Wight Mission Community, as they live as disciples of Christ - praying individually and together and as worshipping communities, serving within the local towns and villages of West Wight.

**The future of the FYT Parishes – what is needed for the Parishes to thrive?**

Two years in, working within the collaborative and enabling leadership style of the Reverend Leisa Potter (supported by a part time Administrator), the FYT Parishes are looking to build on the positive start that has been made, in terms of developing a sense of ordained and lay, shared and focal ministry, across the 4 churches. However, there is a concern that the opportunity to look positively to the future is restricted by having only one full time Vicar for a combined population of around 9000 residents plus visitors. Ongoing, wonderful support has been offered by our highly dedicated and experienced retired clergy, but it is acknowledged that much of their support will soon be drawing to a natural close. A ‘house for duty’ priest would be most welcome to share the vision and mission adventure of the FYT parishes.

The churches are popular for weddings and inevitably, with an older population, the demand for funerals is not insignificant. The seasons of Easter and Christmas are very busy with many visitors and locals turning to the churches for celebration. All 4 churches have the potential to thrive, but for that to happen there also needs to be ongoing support, both practically and spiritually, in the form of ordained and licensed Lay ministry.

As to how the FYT Parishes move forward within the wider partnership of the West Wight Mission Community and developing closer missional ties with our friends in the mid and south West Wight areas, it is hoped that, whoever is appointed to the role of Team Rector will be flexible and responsive to building up a wider team ministry of prayerful and practical support with the Team Vicar. An *encourager* who is passionate about developing existing (and recognising new) ministry gifts and calling across the whole of mission community. A *delegator* who will encourage local, focal, and fruitful ministry for lay and ordained people across the communities, schools, and churches. A *visionary* with a passion for rural and island community life. Someone who recognises and is ready for, the challenges of redressing the balance of mission to the West Wight communities, along with the maintenance of the beautiful buildings and existing patterns of worship. Someone who can take the time needed to understand the unique communities of West Wight.

To be able to welcome a Team Rector, who is pastorally sensitive to the subtleties and nuances of those who live and work in the unique area that is ‘West Wight’ will be a delight. On a map, the West Wight might appear as one - somewhat remote - rural area, but it is made up of complex, long standing and very individual towns, villages, and hamlets with distinct individual communities.

The FYT Parishes are looking forward to supporting and working in partnership with a new Team Rector for the West Wight Mission Community.

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