

# Buriton

## PARISH PROFILE



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND



Diocese  
of Portsmouth



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# BISHOP'S WELCOME

The Diocese of Portsmouth is in good heart and together we have heard God's call to Live, Pray and Serve the Kingdom of Christ, in and for the world.

If you sense the good Lord is calling you to join in with this beautiful work of retrieval and love we will be ready to receive you – all that you bring – in the days ahead.

With my prayers and blessing,



THE RT REV JONATHAN FROST,  
BISHOP OF PORTSMOUTH





## WELCOME FROM THE ACTING ARCHDEACON AND RECTOR

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I'm delighted to be looking to appoint a colleague to minister as House for Duty parish priest in Buriton. In this profile you'll find ample reasons why Buriton is a deeply rewarding place to live and minister. The parish is in Petersfield Deanery, a proactive and friendly deanery with good lay and ordained leadership. All stipendiary incumbents give part of their time to champion an aspect of ministry across the deanery.

As Rector my aim is to make this post the most rewarding context for ministry. The House for Duty license means that you are expected to minister to the parish for two days a week, plus Sunday services. As Rector I want to enable you to spend every moment of that time in parish ministry- I'll work with you to find out what level of support and freedom will enable you to flourish, so you can play to your strengths. We'll meet often to support each other, and being part of a team means that on the days you're not ministering, there is still ministry cover.

I want you to have the freedom to be a proper parish priest, and I believe that this is the way House for Duty ministry should be.

*Rev Canon Will Hughes*

## DEANERY INTRODUCTION

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### **PETERSFIELD DEANERY**

Not all deaneries are the same! We may be biased, but we think that Petersfield Deanery is quite special.

The Deanery Chapter has developed into a warm and supportive community of stipendiary and self-supporting clergy. Meeting on alternate weeks over a lunchtime enables us to keep in touch, to share and pray in an enjoyable environment of mutual respect, learning and encouragement. It is important for us to keep growing together and for anyone joining us to become a full and positive part of this community.

The Deanery Synod, and its active Standing Committee has become a place of energy (surprising, I know!) which has been learning to work well together as its members have prayerfully forged a plan to build the Kingdom of God here, in the Deanery Mission Action Plan. We want to value the best of what we are while reaching and praying for the 'more' that we could be.

An essential part of our progress is the 'Deanery Lead Roles' attached to all the parish incumbent posts. These include:

- 'Growing Faith' (children and young people),
- Mission, Evangelism and Outreach,
- Anna Chaplaincy (Older adults),
- Developing Lay Ministry,
- and Area Dean.

This is an exciting time to be part of life here as we bring that innovative vision into reality. The next few years are important ones as these roles are established and developed. Crucially, each individual works across the deanery in their lead area, linking with lay people in creating a Task Group and coordinating with fellow clergy who in turn provide support in different





areas. Firmly based in parishes (0.7), deanery lead roles will constitute 0.3 of the post, and will be reviewed after 3 years to allow role holders to move focus. The lead roles provide the opportunity for their holders to think creatively and strategically and to act sensitively and energetically across the deanery.

We hope that you will be excited by the prospect of working here, being embedded in your own parish community, while making the most of the rare chance to use and develop your experience of working and relating beyond parish boundaries.

We look forward to meeting you and serving Christ alongside you.



## INTRODUCING THE PARISH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, BURITON

The parish lies 2.5 miles south of the market town of Petersfield and one mile east of the A3 in East Hampshire. It covers eight square miles of attractive rural countryside on the north side of the South Downs and has a population of 780 inhabitants. It is an area of outstanding natural beauty, which attracts many visitors. Buriton is a vibrant rural community with a strong sense of identity.

St Mary's has been at the heart of this community, physically and spiritually, for 850 years. It has flourished in recent years, drawing in worshippers from neighbouring Petersfield and further afield, attracted by the distinctive nature of a village church community and by its broad form of worship. There are regular Eucharistic services on Sunday and Thursday, a BCP service and Family Service once a month, weekly morning prayers and monthly Taize services on Sunday evenings. All the church offices are filled. There is a lay reader and an active PCC.

There has been a resident parish priest in Buriton for most of its history. Since 2000, that priest has been a self-supporting, house-for-duty priest, reporting to the Rector, who is the Vicar of St Peter's, the main town church in Petersfield. The priest is licensed to both St Mary's and St Peter's; and the assistant clergy at St Peter's, including the curate, are also licensed to both parishes.

St Mary's sits at the southern end of the Petersfield Deanery. It is in plurality with St Peter's and part of a legal group with St Peter's and St Mary's, Sheet. There is a deep attachment in the village, including from many residents who are not regular members of the congregation, to the church as the centre of the community and to having a priest, living in the village, with whom they can identify and who can provide spiritual leadership and pastoral care.

As a church community, we are proud of what we have achieved so far but we





know that with God's guidance we can do more to support our community and to draw people to Christ. Our new Mission Action Plan (see Appendix A), which was adopted in October 2022, describes our determination to maintain a strong base, on which a new parish priest can help us build, and our longer term ambitions for our mission. The Plan is closely aligned with the Deanery Action Plan (Appendix E).



## MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

The mission of St Mary's is:

*"We are here to worship God, welcome all and grow together in faith and love"*

Our Mission Action Plan is structured around the four key elements of this mission:

- **Worshipping God:** maintaining and growing the quality, depth and range of our worship.
- **Welcoming all:** ensuring that everyone in the village and beyond is welcome at St Mary's and feels the church belongs to them.
- **Growing together in faith:** working with other churches in the Deanery to deepen our faith and renew our understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Christ.
- **Growing together in love:** building on our already excellent record of pastoral care and community support, particularly to the elderly, lonely and vulnerable.





# ACHIEVING OUR MISSION

Our Plan sets out the actions necessary to achieve these four broad objectives. There lies behind it a detailed schedule of who is responsible for what. We are fortunate to have the support of the parish office in Petersfield and a strong team of lay people from the congregation.

**In the short term** we are focused on recruiting a new resident parish priest and providing her or him with a flourishing base on which to build. So far:

- we have been able to maintain our range and quality of worship (see Appendix C) and our full schedule of Christmas services, with the help of our Rector, curate (who is based at St Peter's), lay reader and visiting clergy. This includes Carols Round the Pond with the Liss Silver Band, which is a big village event, ending with mince pies and mulled wine and more carol singing in the church;
- we have sustained St Mary's tradition of pastoral care and outreach to the community. We are in discussion with the Parish Council about providing a warm space in the church room (the Seward room) with lunch and fellowship for those in the community that need it;
- our Rector is maintaining our strong links with Buriton Primary School, providing regular assemblies; he is also the chaplain at Ditcham Park School, the independent school in the parish.
- we are building better connections with the churches in our Group and playing an active role in Deanery affairs and in the wider Christian community represented in PACT (Petersfield Area Churches Together).

In the **medium term**, we want to focus on the two priorities of our new Bishop, which are also reflected in the Deanery Plan: namely our mission to **older people and the vulnerable**; and to **children, young people and their families**.

**Our mission to older people** is already a strength. It is, however, our firm intention to resume the monthly "drop-ins" which we began in the Five Bells pub just before the pandemic: this may follow-on from the initiative, described above, to provide a warm space in the church room during the winter months. We are also keen to learn from, and link with, the first two Anna chaplains from the Deanery who were licensed in October (in St Mary's) in order to develop further our spiritual and pastoral support.

On **children and young people**, our plan provides a realistic assessment of both our successes in attracting very young children and building links with the two schools in the parish and the need for fresh thinking about replacing our monthly tea-time service and working with St Peter's and St Mary's Sheet on our mission to teenagers. The new stipendiary priest, who is currently being recruited to Liss, will have a specific responsibility to provide Deanery-wide leadership on children and young people. We will want to work closely with him or her, when appointed.





## MEET THE TEAM

Rector:  
Rev Canon Will Hughes

Curate:  
Rev Allison Waterhouse

### OUR LAY TEAM

Lay Reader: Tom Cooper      Treasurer: David Normington

Churchwardens: Moya Cozens and Win Normington      PCC Secretary: Katy Schwarz

Tower Captain: Harry Cain

Director of Music: Alison Stevens

### PCC MEMBERS

*(for a full list of PCC roles and responsibilities see Appendix D)*

Vanessa Dowse

Simon Nicholls

James Dryden

Mary Owens

Ian Johnston

Carol Stein

Richard Marks

David Symmonds

We also have a much wider group of committed members of our congregation and parishioners who support a wide range of activities including: running the Sunday school on the first Sunday; study groups; music; IT support; outreach activities; flower arranging; bellringing; fundraising; maintaining the church, churchyard and burial ground; vergers; baking for our famous summer cream teas and other events; – and many more!

## THE CHURCH

St Mary's church is a beautiful, but relatively small, 12<sup>th</sup> century building with many Norman features and a striking Norman nave. The building is in good order but needs constant attention. It is Grade 2\* listed, putting it in the top 10 per cent of listed buildings in England. The church is a popular venue for weddings and wedding couples often supplement our congregation and return for the baptism of their children. It occupies a central position in the village at the bottom of the High Street, opposite the village pond and next to the Manor House complex and barn, where many village events take place, courtesy of the owners. There is good car parking. The church is surrounded by a very pretty ancient graveyard with a number of listed table-top tombs. The main burial ground is in South Lane on the other side of the pond.

The church has an attached church room, the Seward Room, which was built about 20 years ago. Its kitchen has recently been improved and modernised. It provides an excellent space for medium sized meetings and events, for summer teas, for coffee after church and for the weekly Post Office. It is available for hire at a modest charge. The church has recently had a telephone and internet connection installed, enabling it to stream its Sunday morning service live on Zoom and to provide an internet connection for our Sum Up machine and for those using the Seward Room.

The Church is currently financially secure and has continued to pay its full parish share to the Diocese (see Appendix E).





# LIVING IN BURITON

Most people in Buriton live in the village itself; there are hamlets at Weston and Nursted and small settlements around old farmsteads like Ditcham and Sunwood. There are seven working farms, which exert an important influence on the rural character and landscape of the parish. The population is currently around 780 but will grow to over 800 with the ten new houses planned for 2024. While there are many incomers to the village, there is a very stable population with a number of residents whose families have lived in the village for several generations.

There is a wide range of housing, both owner occupied and rented. There are several big houses, including the Manor House next to the church; and many of the older houses and cottages are Grade 2 listed. There is a development of social and former social housing at the west side of the village. In the last available census, 58 per cent of people were over 45 with 16 per cent between 25 and 44. 20 per cent of people live in single person households. 95 per cent are white British.

The village has two schools: Buriton Primary School with between 80 and 100 pupils and Ditcham Park School, an all through independent school in an isolated location on the Downs. There are two pubs (one with hotel accommodation), a village hall and a recreation ground with tennis courts and recently rebuilt children's playground.

There is traditionally a strong sense of community, although some activities (like the annual fireworks and the Village Show) are struggling to find sufficient volunteers since Covid. Members of the church community play a leading role in Buriton Neighbour Care, on the primary school governing

body and in the very active village-to-village link with Dominase, a village and church community in Ghana.

Petersfield, to which there is a week-day bus service, is the main centre for shopping with well known supermarkets, chain stores and independent shops. It is a historic market town with a good range of cafes and restaurants and a twice weekly market in the Square, on which sits St Peter's Church. Most secondary school pupils attend either the Petersfield School (TPS), which is the main state school, or one of the two independent schools, Churchers and Bedales. There is a small modern community hospital with an urgent treatment centre and two GP surgeries. Petersfield is one of the main stops on the railway line from London to Portsmouth. There are frequent trains, the fastest taking about 70 minutes to London and 25 minutes to Guildford and Portsmouth.





## ST MARY'S HOUSE

The vicarage is known as St Mary's House and is situated in North Lane, one of the main residential roads in the village. It is a seven minute walk to the church and a further three minute walk to the school and pubs. It is a semi detached house built in the 1970s, comprising: on the ground floor, an entrance hall, spacious living/dining area, kitchen, study and wc; and upstairs three double bedrooms, a bathroom, with bath and overhead shower and an airing cupboard. The Diocese is about to undertake some redecoration and other improvement work, including a new kitchen. The house is set slightly above the road, overlooking fields at the front, with steps from the road to the front garden and door and a garage and drive to the rear, providing even access to the back garden and back door. The small front garden is planted with shrubs and the secluded west facing rear garden has a lawn and paved terrace. There is also a garden shed and woodstore to the side of the property.



## ROLE DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

We are seeking a self supporting, House for Duty priest, who will commit to working two days a week plus Sundays and major church festivals. St Mary's House will be provided free of charge with utility bills paid by the Diocese and/or the parish. She or he will also receive reasonable expenses, including a mileage allowance (a car is essential). The priest will report to, and be supported by, the Rector, who is the Vicar of St Peter's, Petersfield. He or she will be licensed to both St Mary's and St Peter's. Both the Rector and the curate regularly take services at St Mary's.

Our new priest will help us build on the legacy of our outgoing priest, who retired in October 2022, and further extend our ministry and mission as set out in our Parish Mission Action Plan. St Mary's and its Parish Priest are valued and known by the whole community, whether or not they are churchgoers. As the only church in the parish, we are a broad church offering a range of worship, attracting people from many different traditions and drawing in a regular congregation both from the parish and beyond. It is important to us to maintain this broad form and style of worship.

### The key responsibilities of the role are:

- to provide spiritual leadership to the congregation of St Mary's and to the wider parish of Buriton; and over time to grow the congregation;
- to lead and develop our regular pattern of services and worship;
- to ensure that there is an active programme of study and prayer and opportunities for members of the congregation to grow in their knowledge and love of Christ;
- to maintain and develop our links with Buriton Primary School, providing regular assemblies and welcoming the school into our church buildings; and to extend our mission to children, young people and families;
- to ensure there is active provision of spiritual and pastoral care to the





parish, particularly to the elderly, lonely and vulnerable; and

- to maintain St Mary's as an important centre of the community open and accessible to residents and visitors alike.

**The successful candidate will, therefore, be:**

- compassionate and caring with a calling for pastoral care and a deep understanding of the varied pastoral needs of the community;
- passionate about their faith and creative and sensitive in helping others to find their way to Christ and to deepen their faith;
- an effective preacher and teacher able to present and interpret the Christian message;
- inclusive and welcoming to all, ready to take their ministry out into the local community and to play a full part in village life;
- a good listener, communicator and team player, ready to work collaboratively with the PCC and the wider lay team, with other clergy in the Group and Deanery, with the other Christian churches represented in PACT and with other relevant organisations in the village and in Petersfield.
- organised and flexible in their use of time, with an ability to prioritise and delegate work and to discern, develop and use the gifts and skills of others;
- respectful of our current pattern and forms of worship but willing to suggest to the PCC new approaches which might help us to connect better with those, including young people and their families, who currently do not come to church.;
- ready to participate fully in, and contribute to, the life of Petersfield Deanery ( including synod and chapter) and Portsmouth Diocese.

## APPENDICES

# APPENDIX A MISSION ACTION PLAN, 2022

*"We are here to worship God, welcome all and grow together in faith and love."*

## A. INTRODUCTION

The parish of St Mary the Virgin, Buriton, lies just over 2 miles south of Petersfield and one mile east of the A3 in East Hampshire. It covers eight square miles of attractive countryside at the heart of the South Downs National Park with a population of 780 inhabitants. It is an area of outstanding natural beauty, which attracts many visitors, walkers and cyclists. It is a vibrant and supportive community with a strong sense of identity.

The parish church of St Mary the Virgin has been at the heart of this community for 850 years, drawing its congregation from both the village and the surrounding area. In the last 12 years under the leadership of our parish priest, Rev Canon Judith Bee, who retired in October 2022, it has grown and flourished.

This Mission Action Plan is designed to maintain this momentum and to provide the basis for growth under a new parish priest, when she or he is appointed. The Plan is aligned with the Petersfield Deanery plan and reflects the priorities set by our new Bishop, which we warmly welcome and support. It is, however, first and foremost, a Plan for the distinctive characteristics and needs of our village and its surrounding area.

The Plan begins with a parish profile and a description of the place of St Mary's in the community. It is then structured around the four key elements of our mission:

1. Worshipping God: maintaining and growing the quality, depth and range of our worship.





2. Welcoming all: ensuring that everyone in the village and beyond is welcome at St Mary's and feels the church belongs to them.
3. Growing together in faith: working with other churches in the Deanery to deepen our faith and renew our understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Christ.
4. Growing together in love: building on our already excellent record of pastoral care and community support, particularly to the elderly, lonely and vulnerable.

It concludes with consideration of how we might build the clerical and lay resources needed to deliver our mission.

## **B. PARISH PROFILE**

First, some key facts about Buriton, drawn from the latest available data:

- for much of the 20th century its population was steady at between 700 and 750 residents, but in the last 20 years that has grown by about 6 per cent to around 780 (333 households) on the latest estimates;
- ten new houses are planned on the approach to the village, which is likely to increase the population to above 800 by 2024;
- most people live in the village of Buriton itself and there are hamlets at Weston and Nursted and small settlements around old farmsteads like Ditcham and Sunwood;
- there are seven working farms and, although only about 4 per cent of the adult population work in agriculture, the farms exert an important influence on the character and landscape of the village;
- 95 per cent of the residents are white British;
- the market town of Petersfield is close by and is growing in population with some of the newer housing developments just to the north and the east of the parish boundary.

Secondly, Buriton is outwardly quiet, prosperous and comfortable. There are a number of large houses in prominent positions in the village plus a high proportion of attractive grade 1 and 2 star listed houses and cottages. Levels of education and skills are relatively high and child poverty is relatively low.

However, in the latest 2019 Church of England's parish index of multiple deprivation Buriton sits, perhaps surprisingly, at 5,657 out of 12,307 parishes (where 1 is most deprived and 12,307 is most prosperous). That is a reminder that our better off residents are balanced out by low-income families and pensioners, who often do not own their own houses and live particularly in social and former social housing and in some of the smaller cottages, houses and flats around the village. These individuals and families are likely to be under particular pressure as a result of rising prices and soaring energy costs.

Thirdly, the detailed population breakdowns come from the 2011 census at the moment and are therefore out of date, but some trends from that census seem unlikely to have been reversed in the intervening years:

- the population of Buriton is getting older: in 2011 58% of people were over 45, compared with 50.5% in 2001 with the biggest increase in 65 to 74 year olds;
- the proportion of 25 to 44 year olds had declined from 24 per cent in 2001 to 16 per cent in 2011, perhaps reflecting the cost of housing. There were around 130 under 16 year olds, about the same as in 2001, but forming a smaller percentage of the total population; and
- about 20 per cent of people, many of them elderly, live in single person households. While car ownership at 90 per cent is high, the 10 per cent without cars are vulnerable to being cut off without extra help from Neighbour Care and the limited bus service to Petersfield, which runs four times a day on weekdays.

Fourthly, education:

- the village supports a state primary school (with between 80 and 100 pupils) and sometimes a private nursery. (Over 80 per cent of the pupils at the school are from outside the parish, many from the south side of Petersfield.);





- most secondary school pupils go to The Petersfield School (TPS), the local state secondary school, just over a mile and a half from Buriton village; or to Churchers, the independent secondary school, near the centre of Petersfield;
- there is also an all through (i.e. 3 to 16) independent day school within the parish – Ditcham Park School – in the far south west in a fairly remote spot high on the South Downs.

### **C. ST MARY THE VIRGIN, BURITON**

The Church of St Mary the Virgin sits at the very heart of the parish – geographically and spiritually. It is a beautiful, but relatively small, 12th century building with many Norman features. The building is in good order but, like all ancient buildings, needs constant attention. It is Grade 2\* listed, putting it in the top 10 per cent of listed buildings in England. It is a focal point of the village for residents and visitors alike.

There has been a worshipping community at St Marys continuously for 850 years – and possibly even before that. Originally, before the growth of Petersfield, it was the mother church of the area with its own Rector. Nowadays, it is in plurality with Petersfield and the Rector resides in Petersfield and is the Vicar of St Peter's, Petersfield.

St Mary's draws in a significant number of worshippers from outside the parish: both from neighbouring Petersfield and from further afield in, for example, Clanfield and Horndean. Such worshippers are, we believe, attracted by the warmth of the welcome; the strong sense of community and family which is possible in a village church; and by the distinctive form of worship, which avoids extremes and is designed to attract the broadest range worshippers from all traditions and none.

The parish abuts the town parishes of St Peter's, Petersfield and St Mary's, Sheet – the other two churches in the greater

Petersfield area – with whom it forms a legal group. It is also an active member of the Petersfield Area Churches Together (PACT), comprising most of the Christian churches in the area, working together to provide support and help to its residents.

For almost all its history St Mary's has had its own priest resident in the village. Originally, when St Mary's was the mother church, this was the Rector. Since 2000, the priest has been a self-supporting, house-for-duty priest, licensed not only to St Mary's, Buriton, but also as assistant curate at St Peter's, Petersfield. She/he reports to the Rector in Petersfield but has a specific responsibility for St Mary's and, crucially, lives in Buriton in St Mary's House in North Lane. She/he has had a formal time allocation of two days a week, plus Sundays. Assistant clergy at St Peter's are licensed to both parishes and there is currently a Lay Reader resident in the village.

This has been very successful model, particularly under our recently retired priest. For example

- pre-Covid, St Mary's was one of the few churches in the Deanery showing an increase in congregation, with an average weekly attendance (AWA) in the 10 years up to 2019 of 46; and 90 to 100 on the electoral roll;
- for a small church there has been a wide range of worship for adults and families, including excellent Bible study groups, regular confirmations and our own lay reader;
- there are very good links with the two schools in the parish;
- pastoral care and support is very active and strong;
- there is a wide range of lay ministry from a team of lay people, led, when there is no vacancy, by the parish priest and our lay reader. All the key lay offices are filled including a lay pastoral assistant. There is a Director of Music and several excellent musicians play for services. Members of the congregation are active in the wider community, including chairing the governors of Buriton primary school and co-ordinating the local Neighbour Care.

During and since the pandemic the church has installed simple, high quality technology, which, with the help of skilled members of the congregation,





enables the main Sunday service (and some other occasional services) to be streamed live on Zoom to people who are unable to get to church in person and to former members of the congregation who have moved away but want to stay in touch.

There is on-going work to rebuild some of these activities post pandemic and to exploit further the benefits of technology, but St Mary's remains a leading example of what can be achieved in a rural community when a church is woven into the life of its parish with a resident priest, present and visible to its community, supported by an active group of lay people.

#### **D. OUR PLAN AND PRIORITIES**

Our Plan is structured around our mission, which is living and real: "We are here to worship God, welcome all and grow together in faith and love." This was developed some years ago with the active participation of members of the congregation. It remains a powerful statement of what we are seeking to do at St Mary's.

##### WORSHIPPING GOD

Our current range of services has served us well, enabling us to grow our congregation and to draw in worshippers from well beyond the parish. Our priority is to maintain this range and quality of worship – and a vibrant worshipping and prayerful community – on which a new parish priest can then build.

With the help of our Rector, curate, visiting clergy and lay reader, we will continue with

- the present pattern of weekly and monthly services: a Family Service on the first Sunday of every month; a morning service with Eucharist on the other Sunday mornings; a Eucharist from the Book of Common Prayer on the first Sunday of the month at 8 am; and a Eucharistic service every Thursday evening;

- Taizé services once a month on a Sunday evening;
- morning prayers at least once week;
- a distinctive "village" style of worship welcoming people from all traditions and none and from other denominations and making a different offering from our sister churches in Petersfield and Sheet which serve more urban areas; and
- the live stream of our main Sunday service on Zoom, so that those who cannot get to the service in person continue to feel part of our church family; and we will look for other opportunities to reach people through online worship and learning groups.

We have recently refreshed our Family Service on the first Sunday so that there is a separate Sunday school for children for part of the service. Our aim is to learn from what works best and to increase the participation of children and families in the village and beyond. Our monthly family teatime service has run its course (the last such service was in July 2022) with several families growing up and moving out of the area.

**A priority for a new parish priest will be to consider with the PCC and the congregation the future pattern of services, including whether to replace or reinstate the tea-time service and, if so, how.**

##### WELCOMING ALL

It is central to our mission that St Mary's is a church for everyone - integral to the life of the village for residents and visitors alike. We have six proposed actions to fulfill this part of our mission.

- Keeping the Church open.** We will aim to keep the church open every day for visitors and residents for private prayer or reflection or just to enjoy the history and beauty of our lovely building. We know how important this is from the many warm expressions of thanks in our visitors' book. There will continue to be a range of material available to help people, including children, to pray and worship and also to understand the history and architecture of the building.
- Welcoming newcomers.** We will ensure that there is a warm welcome for anyone who comes to our regular services; and support for those new





arrivals who do not know anyone or are unfamiliar with our form of worship. We will seek feedback on how newcomers experience the welcome and act on the feedback. We will pilot a welcome event for new arrivals in the village, when the new houses are occupied.

- c. Encouraging greater use by the schools.** We will encourage both schools in the parish to use the church more for worship and study. With the support of our Rector and lay reader (who is also the chair of governors at the school), we will work hard to maintain our close relationship with Buriton primary school. This will be a priority for a new priest.
- d. Important life events.** We will ensure that the church is the natural place to which our village residents look for important life events, like baptisms, weddings, funerals and memorial services. We will welcome couples from further afield who want to marry in our beautiful church, asking them to worship with us as part of the preparation for their wedding. We will continue to offer our marriage preparation day working with our sister churches at Sheet and Petersfield. We will seek to maintain our links with wedding couples after they are married and encourage them to return, as many do, for the baptism of their children.
- e. Special services.** We will maintain our special services, which often attract many village residents who do not come to regular services. We will continue to invite our farmers to Rogation and Harvest. Other priorities for “special” services will be our Easter services, Remembrance Day, All Souls, Christingle, Carols Round the Pond (which ends with fellowship in the Church) and the Crib service on Christmas Eve. The last two of these have often each attracted up to 150 adults and children into the church.
- f. Encouraging people over the threshold.** We will maintain

and develop a number of other occasions when we can offer fellowship to the village and, as appropriate, raise money for our mission. This will include a series of music events, in addition to maintaining our weekly Post Office, the Christmas market and the summer teas. Our aim is that it should be absolutely natural for village residents to come into the church for support and fellowship.

#### GROWING IN FAITH

We will aim to deepen the faith and discipleship of our regular congregation. Some of our study group and other activities fell by the wayside during the pandemic; but Zoom and other online capabilities have opened new possibilities to bring together people for study and discussion. We will:

- revive our Lent study group for Lent 2023;
- offer regular short study courses online (on the model of the recent course on St Paul) or in person;
- continue to provide a weekly opportunity on line to discuss the forthcoming Sunday readings from scripture; and
- encourage members of our congregation to take up Diocesan and Deanery courses and give them opportunities to feedback what they have learned to our congregation.

We will also publicise, and encourage participation, in activities run by our sister churches, including particularly the Tuesday evening discussion groups at St Peters and Oasis at St Mary’s, Sheet.

#### GROWING IN LOVE

Our pastoral and community work is central to our Christian mission in the village. This has been one of our retiring priest’s strengths; and we are determined to maintain the range of connection with the village, which she has developed. In all our pastoral work we will listen to what works for people and try to respond to our residents’ needs and wishes. We will also work with and support, rather than duplicate, other churches and local organisations that are already providing services and support in these areas.

**An immediate priority is a joint initiative with the Parish Council to**





**provide a warm space in the Seward room every week for those who may be struggling with their energy bills and would welcome fellowship ( and some refreshments) in a friendly warm room.**

Beyond this, while we will remain sensitive to the needs of the whole community, we believe it is important to focus on the two priorities identified by the Bishop and reflected in the new Deanery plan.

#### THE ELDERLY AND LONELY

We intend, therefore, given our parish profile, to give particular priority in 2022/23 to the spiritual and emotional needs of the elderly and lonely in our community who are not part of our regular congregation or can no longer come to services in person. We propose to:

- revive our afternoon Drop In once a month for older residents and for those living by themselves. This will be on the model of the successful Drop In started, but then suspended, just before the pandemic. (If we go ahead with the provision of a warm space, we may delay this until after the winter season.);
- maintain regular visits to former members of the congregation who are unable to come to church in person, including the offer of regular home communion from our Lay Reader; and
- identify other lonely or vulnerable people who might like regular visiting from our lay pastoral assistant and others in the congregation.

The Bishop has said that he would like every parish or group of parishes to have an Anna chaplain. The first two Anna chaplains in Petersfield deanery were commissioned at a service in St Mary's in October 2022. The current plan is to appoint a further chaplain at St Peters, Petersfield but with a

remit to provide leadership and advice to St Mary's, Buriton. Our aim will be to link our work with the elderly to this Anna Chaplaincy and to explore the possibility of developing a group of "Anna friends" to support the work.

#### CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

The Bishop's first priority is to enable more children and young people to experience and grow in spiritual life through connecting churches, schools and households. In response the Deanery has made it a top priority in its plan to reach out to more children, teenagers and to their parents and carers. We set out earlier our plans for connecting with younger children and their parents:

- developing further the family service on the first Sunday of the month;
- maintaining and growing the strong links with our primary school and the independent school at Ditcham; and
- considering whether and how we might replace the family teatime service.

We have just relaunched in a new format "Stitch and Yarn" (previously Knit and Natter). This is aimed at anyone who just wants to come along for a chat and fellowship but with a particular focus on parents and their young children. We may also, if there is a demand, trial a weekly coffee morning for parents dropping off their children at the primary school.

Our mission to teenagers is much less developed and this will be the subject of an early discussion with our new priest. Projecting forward the 2011 census data, we may have in the parish about 50 to 60 11 to 17 year olds, most of whom look to Petersfield for their education and activities and very few of whom come to St Mary's. We currently do not have the capacity by ourselves to develop our work with these young people. Our plan, therefore, is

- to work with our sister churches in Petersfield and Sheet to understand what they already offer to young people and how our Buriton young people might benefit from it;
- to maintain our links with the Kings Arms in central Petersfield, which provides services to 11 to 19 year olds in the Petersfield area, so that we can signpost the range of activities and support on offer; and





- to look for future opportunities to connect St Mary's with local teenagers, maybe initially by developing a youth eco group.

## E. RESOURCES

Achieving this plan will require us to draw on all the resources available, lay and clerical, not just in the parish, but in our sister churches in Petersfield and the wider Deanery.

### A RESIDENT PARISH PRIEST

**Our top priority is to replace our resident parish priest.** The evidence of the last 12 years is clear that, if we can attract the right person, a house for duty, non- stipendiary priest, supported from Petersfield by our Rector, can be the catalyst for a growing church woven into the life of the community. That can be, and has been, done at very little annual cost to the Diocese beyond the cost of the priest's expenses and the maintenance of the house, plus expenses.

Our ambitions, as lay members of the church, are, while in vacancy, to maintain and build on the excellent work of our now retired priest. However, we know that the strength of our lay ministry in Buriton is in part the result of having a respected and resident parish priest. The previous Archdeacon described Buriton as a shining light in the Diocese. We want to keep it that way. We look forward, therefore, to welcoming a new priest as soon as possible. ( Since the first version of this plan the Bishop has, to the delight of the congregation, given permission for recruitment of a new priest to begin.)

### LAY MINISTRY

We also seek to widen the number of lay people who are able to support our mission. We have a remarkable team of lay people who give their time and talents generously to the service of our Church and community and on whom much of the work in this plan will fall. But our resources are not limitless and our ability to fulfill this plan depends on whether

we can find more lay members of our congregation to take on the leadership of a particular activity. We propose to

- identify a lead person (and a deputy) for each of the key tasks in this plan;
- ensure, with the help of St Peter's parish office, that all our services are covered by priests from the Deanery;
- ensure that we have a team of vergers to support baptisms, weddings and funerals; and
- identify and support people who want to deepen their lay ministry and learn new skills, encouraging them to take up courses run by the Deanery or Diocese.

We will continue to develop our technology to support our mission. A particular priority is to improve our website, so that we can publicise more effectively the range of our services and activities and support our fundraising and giving.

### CHURCH FINANCES

**We will ensure that our church finances remain sound.** It currently costs £50,000 a year to keep the church open and running. That includes our annual charitable giving but not significant expenditure on repairs and maintenance, which is additional. Like other churches our income was badly affected by the pandemic. We ran significant operating deficits in 2020 and 2021, despite cutting back on our charitable giving and using our reserves (which remain relatively healthy) to pay our parish share.

Our parish share has almost doubled in the last six years and at £34,000 now accounts for 70 per cent of our annual expenditure, which is pretty much at the limits of what we can afford. We are committed, if we can, to continue paying our parish share and understand its importance in supporting our clergy, not just in Petersfield and Buriton, but in the wider Diocese. However, we cannot wholly square the scale of our parish share with Buriton's position in the Church of England's index of multiple deprivation and will continue to discuss this with the Diocese.

**We already have in place a stewardship group** to raise our income from both





fundraising and regular giving back to pre-pandemic levels. This has so far been successful in raising income from fundraising events, but increasing regular giving is more difficult in the current difficult economic climate. That is a priority in the year ahead.

#### OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

**Finally, we are committed to reducing the carbon footprint of St Mary's and increasing the biodiversity of our churchyard and burial ground.** We have an active eco-group which is focused in the short term on low-cost ways of saving energy and on drawing up a plan for reaching net zero by 2030.

*St Mary's Buriton  
December 2022*

## APPENDIX B ST MARY'S FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The finances of St Mary's are relatively sound and secure. The key facts are as follows:

- The annual running costs of the church (excluding expenditure on the fabric) are about £50,000, of which over £34,000 (nearly 70 per cent) is paid in parish share to the Diocese. This is likely to increase as energy bills rise. The parish share has increased very sharply since 2016 and its scale is a source of concern for some.
- Running costs are generally covered by regular giving, fundraising and income from investments.. This Unrestricted account ran a deficit of several thousand pounds in both 2020 and 2021 – the two Covid years - but is likely to be in small surplus in 2022 due to a bounce back in giving and some very active fundraising.
- There is a “ Designated Fund” of over £80,000, which can be used for one off and abnormal expenditure, including covering the deficits in 2020 and 2021. Most work on the fabric is covered by a “Restricted Fund” (with current assets of £97,000). There is also an “Endowment Fund” (of around £27,000), the income from which supports general running costs. The vast majority of these funds are invested so that their value goes up and down according to the markets. Total assets at the end of October 2022 were valued at £218,000.
- Maintaining a Grade 2\* listed medieval building can be costly but the building is generally in a good state of repair. In 2022 we will spend around £6,000 on repairs and building related costs. The most recent Quinquennial Review (completed earlier in 2022) identified no major problems, but there is a schedule of minor works to be completed over the next year. The last major expenditure was in 2019, repairing the stonework around the Chancel windows. Historically it has been possible





to fundraise from the whole village for major building projects.

- The PCC has an Eco Group which is constantly looking at ways of cutting our carbon footprint and of increasing the bio-diversity of our churchyard and burial ground. The PCC has just agreed to commission a professional survey of the building to identify further ways of cutting our energy bills and our carbon footprint. So far we have concentrated on low-tech solutions like LED bulbs, a Hive system to control the heating and a curtain over the west door. We have looked at replacing the present gas boiler but the cost would be prohibitive and there are currently no good low carbon alternatives.

*Hon Treasurer  
December 2022  
St Mary's*

## APPENDIX C LIST OF REGULAR SERVICES

### SUNDAY SERVICES:

1st Sunday	8am	Holy Communion from the Book of Common Prayer
	10am	Family Service with Eucharist
Other Sundays	10am	Parish Eucharist
(the 10 am services are all streamed live on Zoom.)		
3rd Sunday	6pm	Taize service

### WEEKDAY SERVICES:

Monday	8.15 am	Morning Prayer
Thursday	6pm	Service of Holy Communion



# APPENDIX D ST MARY'S BURITON PCC

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### EX OFFICIO

<p><b>Tom Cooper</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lay Reader</li> <li>• Musician</li> </ul>	<p><b>Moya Cozens</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Churchwarden</li> <li>• Sacristan</li> <li>• Safeguarding Officer</li> <li>• Outward Giving Group</li> <li>• Standing Committee</li> </ul>
<p><b>Win Normington</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Churchwarden</li> <li>• Lay Pastoral Assistant</li> <li>• Health and Safety Officer</li> <li>• Standing Committee</li> <li>• Stewardship Group</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ian Johnston</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Synod representative</li> </ul>

### PCC MEMBERS

<p><b>Vanessa Dowse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pact representative</li> <li>• Stewardship Group</li> <li>• Eco church Group</li> <li>• Outward Giving Group</li> </ul>	<p><b>James Dryden</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IT and tech support</li> </ul>
<p><b>Richard Marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fabric, Building and Planning</li> <li>• Standing Committee</li> <li>• Finance Committee</li> <li>• Eco church Group</li> </ul>	<p><b>Simon Nicholls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing Committee</li> <li>• Musician</li> </ul>
<p><b>David Normington</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treasurer</li> <li>• Deanery Treasurer</li> <li>• Deanery Synod Representative</li> <li>• Stewardship group</li> <li>• Finance Committee</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mary Owens</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IDWAL/Ghana link</li> <li>• Outward Giving Group</li> <li>• Finance Committee</li> </ul>
<p><b>Carol Stein</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deanery Synod representative</li> <li>• Outward Giving Group</li> </ul>	<p><b>Alison Stevens</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director of Music</li> </ul>
<p><b>David Symmonds</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• IT and Tech support</li> </ul>	





# APPENDIX E PETERSFIELD DEANERY MISSION ACTION PLAN: JULY 2022

The heart of our life is knowing, living and sharing the love of God in Jesus Christ with people of all ages. That is what inspires and energises us.

As the Body of Christ in the Petersfield area, we are ambitious for our churches to be spiritually vibrant, outward-looking, praying communities of people embedded in the life of our villages and towns. We will be making a positive difference to children and young people, families, schools and to older people. We will be reflecting the love of God, growing in faith, welcoming all, and caring for our neighbours and communities.

## INTRODUCTION

The Petersfield Deanery is at the very north of Portsmouth Diocese. It is one of the Diocese's smallest Deaneries, comprising 15 parishes and 20 churches. The area is rural with market towns, many villages and beautiful countryside in the Hangers and South Downs. The majority of people live in the towns in the north and east of the Deanery, along the route of the A3. The area is relatively prosperous with a high proportion of professional and skilled workers and an above average percentage of retired people.

There is higher proportion of people identifying as Christians in East Hampshire than the England average. There is a deep commitment to the distinctive nature of rural ministry. Our

historic churches remain at the centre of their communities as they have been for hundreds of years. Churches are highly engaged with their local schools and communities. Our priests are known and valued - and provide ministry - well beyond their worshipping congregations. Our lay people are woven into the life of their towns and villages through many different forms of service.

Our plan (updated following discussions with the Bishop and his team and approved by Petersfield Deanery Synod) builds on these historic strengths to meet the changing needs of our society and to bring a new generation of worshippers to Christ. It is in five parts:

- Our vision for the Deanery
- Our strengths and weaknesses
- Our priorities for action
- Our proposed organisation
- Our resources

**Appendices** (page 12f) provide more detail, particularly on our plans for young people through 'Growing Faith', on our proposed pioneer ministry in Whitehill and on clergy well-being.

## 1. OUR DEANERY VISION

Our churches will be spiritually vibrant, praying communities of people who are embedded in the life of our towns and villages: reflecting the love of God, growing in faith, welcoming all, and caring for our neighbours and communities.

We are ambitious to grow more confident in our faith in Christ and expecting great things of God. We will share the light and love of God by praying together and putting our trust in God's grace:

- bearing witness to the love of Christ - individually, in our schools, our communities and our workplaces;
- offering engaging worship and growing faith in people of all ages;





- contributing to the well-being of our communities;
- making a difference through our care for the poor, marginalised and suffering; and
- caring for God's creation and using its resources wisely.

Our people are our strength. Clergy and laity will work together ever more constructively, pooling their talents, generously seeking to love and serve one another and to encourage each other's ministries. We will know more of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and to be responsive to the Holy Spirit. More of us will be aware of our calling to be an active part of the body of Christ.

With God's help and support, over a five-year period we will see:

- churches working together to grow our congregations and to make a positive difference for people of all ages;
- more children, young people, and young adults engaging with our churches;
- a Christian presence in, or partnership with, every primary and secondary school;
- more spiritual and emotional support for older people, and their relatives and carers;
- more lay people bringing their many and varied talents to the service of the church;
- all our churches reversing the decline in average weekly attendance in the Deanery and regularly paying their parish share.

In all our communities people will notice the love, understanding, care and service of our Church family and will be drawn to find out more.

## 2. STRENGTHS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Our plan for fulfilling this vision is based on an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses threats and opportunities in Petersfield Deanery. The full analysis is attached at Appendix 1.

We start from a strong base. Our parishes sit at the heart of their communities and most have strong congregations. There is a high level of lay involvement at every level and most key offices are filled. We are regularly paying well over 95 per cent of our parish share with only two parishes failing to pay 100% of their full share in 2021. Our parishes value their independence and traditions but all are now working actively on closer collaboration with neighbours, determined to learn from each other and to share resources.

Our strengths lie in the remarkable people who bring their many gifts to the service of Christ. Although our average weekly attendance has declined over ten years (but by no means everywhere), that does not fully measure the impact of our churches on their communities or the many people who provide and receive ministry without being regular attenders on a Sunday morning. There is an immediate task to restore and renew the positive elements of our worship, pastoral work and community service which were flourishing before the pandemic, and that task is well underway. We are confident enough in our strengths to believe that every parish has the potential to grow; and we sense a real enthusiasm among our people to grow their faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

We also see key new opportunities. There are new housing developments and new arrivals with whom we have not yet connected. More people are now used to worshipping and meeting on line, helping us to keep our connection with people who cannot get to church or have moved away as well as reaching out to potential new worshippers. Patterns of work and leisure are different with fewer people commuting and more people present in our communities during the day. We need to understand and adapt to these new realities. Most of our church buildings are well situated at the heart of their communities but some newer communities have grown at a distance from the historic church and are now under-served.





Children and young people are under-represented in our worshipping communities. More widely, their opportunities to experience God are often very limited. Our recent review of our links with schools (see appendix 5) shows that there is very strong engagement with our primary schools, some of which are church schools; but weaker and more variable links with state and private secondary schools in the area. Similarly, many of our congregations contain young children and their parents, but the connection with church declines as children get older and experience competition from other activities. A new mission to older children and teenagers and their families is one of our biggest priorities, aligning with the 'Growing Faith' initiative in the Church of England.

Finally, we have been blessed over recent years by the ministry of our clergy, stipendiary and non-stipendiary, working in partnership with our retired clergy and our laity. This has enabled us to provide a "Ministry of Presence" in all our communities, providing a strong identification between a place and its priest. However, seven out of our ten stipendiary and house for duty priests have already recently retired or moved on or will do so in the next few months. This includes our Area Dean (although that role is now filled on an interim basis). This is causing great anxiety in the Deanery and a fear that we will not be able to maintain our distinctive rural and town ministry. It poses a major risk to how quickly and effectively we can implement this plan.

### **3. PRIORITIES FOR ACTION: OUR SIX-POINT PLAN**

Using this analysis, we set out below our six-point plan of action. It is based on extensive discussion within the Deanery and continues to be informed by prayer and by the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It has been updated in the light of discussions with the new Bishop and his team.

#### REFRESHING OUR WORSHIP AND DISCIPLESHIP

Our starting point is to deepen our faith and renew our confidence and trust in Christ, as we re-gather our congregations, some of which have been scattered over the last two years of the pandemic. Our churches are full of people who are the foundation of our mission. We will help them to renew their understanding of what it means to be a disciple of Christ and to be bolder in their invitation to others to share in the love of God. The rest of our priorities will only be possible if our communities see the quality of the lives of those who are part of the church – their love, understanding, care for others and service to the community.

#### BUILDING ON THE STRENGTHS OF OUR PARISHES

We believe every church in our Deanery has the potential to grow both in numbers and in impact on their communities. Where we can help and encourage each other, we will.

Every parish, benefice or group will be encouraged (and helped as necessary) to draw up a mission action plan or refresh the plan already in place. Each plan will reflect the differing needs of each community, but every parish will be encouraged to address:

- its recovery from the impact of the pandemic, responding to what has changed in the last two years;
- refreshing faith and discipleship;
- growing its ministry to children and schools and to older people and those in care; and
- working with other parishes, sharing strengths and seeking support.

We will also work together to rekindle the faith of those few churches which are struggling to develop their congregations or to pay their parish share. This work has already started: for example in Greatham, where a new curate, supported by the Vicar and the wider benefice, and with valuable input from neighbouring Blackmoor, is providing a reinvigorated and strongly ecumenical focal ministry.





#### GROWING FAITH: MINISTRY TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND SCHOOLS

Our new Bishop has signalled that one of his priorities is to enable more children and young people to experience and grow in spiritual life through connecting churches, schools and households. We warmly welcome this, which reflects our own Deanery and parish discussions about priorities. We, therefore, propose to give a top priority to a new Deanery wide mission to reach more children, teenagers and their parents and carers and ultimately welcome more of them into our church families. We envisage that this will involve:

- developing a new youth strategy for the Deanery;
- identifying someone at Deanery level to lead the implementation of that strategy;
- building on the work of, and learning from, those already successfully involved in youth ministry in the Deanery;
- working with other organisations, like Petersfield's Kings Arms, and with other denominations and churches;
- being innovative and ready to try new approaches to church and worship.

We set out in Appendix 2 more detail on how we will approach this work, including identifying one of our clergy to lead this mission at deanery level.

A key element of this work will be to develop better links with our all schools. We have conducted an analysis (see Appendix 5) of our current links with schools, which demonstrates both the strong links we have with primary schools and the need to improve our work with secondary schools. As a result of this analysis we have already begun to strengthen our links with our two state secondary schools – Bohunt and TPS (the Petersfield School); we will also strengthen our existing links with Bedales, Churchers, Ditcham and other independent

schools. Our aim is to integrate this work into our overall strategy for children and young people.

#### SUPPORT FOR OLDER PEOPLE IN NEED AND THEIR CARERS

We want to make the Deanery a centre of excellence in the Diocese in the provision of spiritual and emotional support to older people in need and their carers. We already have in Liss one of the largest concentrations of care homes in Hampshire, and Sheet parish has a chaplain to older people. We are proud of the care and support we offer to those in need during the pandemic. We intend to build on these strengths to ensure that we offer the best support and care in every parish. We note that this is also a priority for the Bishop and welcome his encouragement to create an Anna Chaplain in each parish, benefice, or group of parishes. We explain later in this plan how we might create the Deanery leadership to execute this plan.

#### OUTREACH TO UNDER-SERVED AND NEW COMMUNITIES.

We do not have many communities which are under-served by their local church: but one of those is Whitehill, at the northern tip of our Diocese where there is much new housing, but no obvious community centre. Blackmoor Church, though flourishing, is very much at the geographical edge of this community.

We are at an early stage in discussions about a new mission in which the parish of Blackmoor and Whitehill will work closely with its Deanery neighbours and the adjacent parish of Bordon (in Guildford Diocese) to engage a community which presently has limited involvement with its local churches. We believe that this area may be suitable for a pioneer ministry, but need first to do some research to establish if this is the case. We set out in Appendix 3 more detail on what we have in mind. We would like to move quite quickly with a view to making a request for central church funding, should we decide that a pioneer ministry is appropriate.

We will also encourage our other parishes to consider their mission to new housing developments and new arrivals, particularly in Petersfield, Liss and Liphook. The parishes of Petersfield, Sheet and Buriton have already begun discussions on outreach to the new estates on the eastern side of Petersfield.





#### DEVELOPING LAY MINISTRY.

We are all members of the Body of Christ. We will value the many and varied ways in which people serve God and bear witness to the love of Christ. We will seek to encourage the contribution of each one and draw more people into lay ministry and service in its widest sense. Our recent audit of existing resources in the Deanery shows that we start from a strong base, but we can do more. This will include:

- increasing the number of lay worship leaders - a Deanery training course is planned for Autumn 2022;
- developing further our network of Churchwardens to enhance learning from each other and sharing challenges and resources;
- refreshing our lay pastoral assistants programme (which was a successful Deanery initiative five years ago).
- supporting any churches which are not able to fill key offices.

#### 4. ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE

We want our Deanery structure to follow and facilitate mission. As our vision and plan have developed in the past year, so has our Deanery structure also evolved. During 2021, extensive consultation with parishes led to the Deanery Synod adopting what we have termed the “mixed ecology model”. Rather than a homogenous approach of any kind, the Synod proposed building change on the natural pattern of parish relationships within the Deanery. The model has three parts.

##### A STRONGER ROLE FOR THE DEANERY IN SETTING PRIORITIES AND PROVIDING LEADERSHIP.

We are clear that we can only benefit from stronger Deanery level leadership and by working together on key priorities. There is strong support for an enhanced leadership role for the Area Dean and the Lay Chair, working in partnership. A new, revitalised Standing Committee has been established and has,

among other things, taken the lead in drafting this plan. A more engaged Synod has identified the Deanery-wide priorities on which the draft plan is based. The Deanery Chapter has met more regularly and the Greater Chapter, including PTOs and retired clergy, has met for the first time for some years. There is now a strong unity of purpose across the Deanery, which gives us confidence that our ambitions can be delivered. This was very much in evidence at our June Deanery Synod, which has become a much more engaged and united body, strongly and unanimously supportive of this plan.

The next step is to identify “lead” responsibilities in the Deanery to support parishes in meeting the priorities in this plan. We set out below in the section on “resources” how this might be achieved by each full time parish priest being linked to a Deanery role. We would propose to prioritise our mission to children and young people, as described above and in Appendix 2.

##### ENCOURAGING PARISHES TO WORK TOGETHER AND TO BUILD ON THE EXISTING PATTERN OF RELATIONSHIPS AND MINISTRY.

The Deanery Synod has in the last six months asked every parish to discuss actively with its neighbouring parishes how they might grow together. The emphasis has been on learning from each other, sharing ideas and expertise and celebrating our breadth and diversity of churchmanship. In only a few months there has been great progress:

- clerical and lay representatives of the three parishes of Petersfield, Sheet and Buriton (already a legal group) have been meeting regularly to discuss how they can grow their ministry to the Greater Petersfield area, and particularly to secondary school pupils in the town.
- in the north of the Deanery there is strong joint working between the Benefice of Empshott, Greatham and Hawkley with Priors Dean, and the parish of Blackmoor and Whitehill, which may evolve into a team structure in the future;
- these parishes are also discussing with Bramshott & Liphook and Bordon (in the Diocese of Guildford) how to focus shared mission and ministry, gifts and skills on the area of Whitehill and on Bohunt secondary school,
- the four parishes of the Upper Meon Benefice have produced a new mission action plan





- Steep and Froxfield with Privett have held initial discussions with the neighbouring Upper Meon Benefice with a view to working more closely together in the future.

The essence of our “mixed ecology” model is that these discussions can evolve at different speeds and in different ways. Alongside increased collaboration across the Deanery, some may move towards formal team structures; some may grow a mission community or covenanted partnership to focus on particular issues; others may remain in more informal partnerships. The Deanery believes strongly that this is a model of change which is already winning acceptance in the parishes and proving its worth in the progress described above.

#### MAINTAINING RELATIONAL MINISTRY

However, the central message of the Deanery on organisation and structure is that we must build on our flourishing parish structure and do everything we can to sustain a “Ministry of Presence”. For us this means everyone in the Deanery, whether an active participant in our mission or not, being able to identify a single person as her or his priest; with that priest being regularly present and visible in the community and in its schools and locally resident wherever possible. This is the essence of rural/small town ministry and the key to our vision of the church woven into the life of our towns and villages. It is what distinguishes fruitful ministry in this context from ministry in the large conurbations which make up so much of the Diocese. We cannot over emphasise how strong the feeling is in our parishes on this subject and how critical it is in delivering this plan.

## 5. RESOURCES

In this final section, therefore, we set out our proposals for resourcing the Deanery to achieve our three objectives: strong Deanery leadership to drive mission and growth; sharing of resources and expertise across parishes; and a Ministry of

Presence in as many communities as possible.

In summary our resourcing needs are as follows:

- We propose a total clergy complement of 8.3, comprising 6 full time and one half time stipendiary priests plus two house for duty priests. As shown in the table below, this will enable us to maintain the Ministry of Presence, which is central to our mission in the Deanery.
- We intend to create Deanery “leads” for our priority areas of ministry, starting with children and young people and older people. We envisage 0.3 of every full time priest being devoted to these areas of deanery leadership. That is 1.8 out of total complement of 8.3. It may be that this resource could be found from central church funds.
- We would like to put down a marker for the funding of a pioneer ministry in Whitehill, subject to further research into the suitability of the area for that kind of ministry.
- We propose to support our stipendiary clergy in their dual roles by ensuring, as set out in our plan, that there is a strong supporting team of lay worship leaders, PTOs and retired clergy and through the deployment and development of our curates.

In more detail, our resources would be deployed as follows:

We would propose to allocate our complement of 8.3 as set out in the table below:





Group/Parish/Benefice	Parishes	Residence	Parish post	Deanery 'lead' post
Bramshott and Liphook (connecting with NW Team in proposed mission group)	Liphook	Liphook	0.7	0.3
Liss	Liss	Liss	0.7	0.3
North West Team (connecting with Bramshott and Liphook in proposed mission group)	Greatham, Empshott, Hawkley & Priors Dean	Hawkley	0.7	0.3
(Joining in NW Team with G, E, H & PD)	Blackmoor & Whitehill	Blackmoor	0.5 focus on local mission in under-served area of Whitehill	
Petersfield and Buriton (in group with Sheet)	Petersfield	Petersfield	0.7	0.3
	Buriton	Buriton	0.4 HfD	
Sheet (in group with Petersfield/Buriton)	Sheet	Sheet	0.7	0.3
Steep and Froxfield with Privett (joint benefice) Potential to work with Upper Meon Benefice	Steep, Froxfield with Privett	Steep	0.7	0.3
Upper Meon Benefice (joint benefice) Potential to work with Steep and Froxfield with Privett	East Meon, Langrish,	East Meon	0.7	0.3
	West Meon, Warnford	West Meon	0.4 HfD	

Every full time stipendiary priest in the Deanery would carry a Deanery leadership responsibility alongside their parish-based ministry. The 'lead' roles would be allocated according to an individual's skills, expertise and interest. They would be reviewed, updated and potentially swapped, every three years to maintain momentum and freshness, as well as offering professional development to clergy over time.

The Deanery "leads" would have role descriptions clarifying their Deanery roles and assuming 0.3 of their time on Deanery leadership and 0.7 on parish or benefice duties. We set out in Appendix 4 how this might work and our concern to look after clergy well-being. The leadership role would involve working with parishes, connecting with existing work where possible, developing lay ministry in all areas of work and building teams of people with expertise and commitment to further the work. It would be important to respect different church traditions and encourage a diversity of approach, so that we all learn from what works. There would be a regular report on progress to each Standing Committee meeting and annually to Deanery Synod.

All clergy in the Deanery would be licensed to their "home" parishes and also cross licensed to the other parishes in the Deanery both to emphasise the importance of collaborative working and to maximise the flexibility in deploying scarce resources.

Part time and non-stipendiary/self-supporting clergy could also take on "lead roles" according to their available time, expertise and calling. But, where that was not possible, they would be expected to support Deanery wide priorities and assist those in lead roles.

Priority should be given to sustaining continuity in the role of Area Dean and to allocating lead responsibilities for the Bishop's priorities i.e. for senior adults/Anna Chaplaincy and for Growing Faith among children, young people and their families. Where these roles are not filled from existing clergy, the aim should be to ensure that the first new appointments to vacant parish/benefice roles are able and willing to take these responsibilities. However, such prioritised appointments will only be considered in parishes/benefices where there is a parish plan which is in line with the Deanery Plan





and the parish shows itself to be fully in support of working collaboratively with neighbouring parishes and within the Deanery priorities. (Note: the Diocese has also emphasised that parishes with vacancies must be able to demonstrate that they have an engaged laity with all lay officer posts filled and parish share being paid).

Further priorities for “lead” roles, set out in this plan would be filled according to the expertise and interests of existing or new clergy, and would be a factor in recruitment of vacant posts. They would include:

- Lay ministry development – building teams of lay people to lead ministry in parishes, schools and other settings;
- Working with senior schools (supporting the wider initiative on children, young people and families);
- Discipleship and spirituality – supporting and promoting spiritual and faith development among church communities;
- Vocations - promoting development of licensed vocations in the Deanery and Diocese with a particular focus on rural and multi church rural ministry;
- Mission, evangelism and outreach- supporting and equipping church members to develop their faith in action and to reach out to new and under-served communities.

We recognise that resources are scarce and that it may not be possible to achieve all our resource needs immediately. However, our plan cannot be delivered without sufficient stipendiary and house for duty priests, resident in the communities they serve. As described earlier, they provide the essential focus around which the teams of lay people and unpaid volunteers are formed. Without them there is a danger that lay engagement falls away and congregations dwindle. We face a particular risk in Petersfield Deanery at present from the

number of retirements and resignations from stipendiary and house for duty roles, which are happening in a short time. We are grateful that this is already recognised at Diocesan level.

*Petersfield Deanery*  
*July 2022*

## APPENDIX 1 STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS

### **DEANERY STRENGTHS**

- Most of our parishes are strong. Few are “failing”.
- Good relationships between clergy, developing positively.
- Strong lay involvement and engagement in most parishes (licensed lay ministers, lay officers & others) – including through local PCCs
- High level of competence and experience among parishioners, congregants and lay officers.
- Good curates, licensed and PTO clergy in post
- Excellent existing engagement with primary schools (many church schools), supported by strong commitment
- Good connections with communities in almost all places, especially villages.
- Generally excellent pastoral and community work
- Strong connection with traditional forms of church.
- Good variety of worship styles.
- Most parishes financially stable and paying parish share. Deanery regularly paying over 95 percent.
- Attractive area drawing in visitors, popular place to live (indicated by high house prices)





- Attractive for weddings (some from outside area, some wishing to move/move back in future)
- Good transport links North-South: A3 & Railway
- Good historical and developing relationships across church traditions/denominations (PACT)
- Good social response e.g. Food banks – churches involved in starting, running and supporting. Neighbour care initiatives. [Ukrainian] Refugees?

### **DEANERY WEAKNESSES**

- Reduced AWA numbers (by 16 per cent overall) in most churches since 2009.
- Some insularity and complacency. Looking inwards, not outwards.
- Limited tradition of parishes working together and sharing resources. Role of Deanery historically weak.
- One or two churches struggling to find officers
- Low number of children and, particularly, young people in many churches
- Weaker links with secondary schools, particularly in state sector.
- Aging congregations may lead to further decline in numbers over coming 10-15 years.
- Frustration with central diocese – relationship needs rebuilding
- High level of criticism of (and lack of trust in) diocese's financial management and transparency.
- Regular giving is in decline, as older generation reduces.
- Income affected by pandemic.
- Poor public transport links East-West & rural-town
- Pockets of deprivation (experienced more starkly because of relative wealth of others in area)

### **OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE DEANERY**

- Our congregations are generally strong enough to be the basis for a major effort of renewal post Covid.
- Changes since Covid: people reassessing their working patterns and their life/work priorities;
- More people working from home and present in the area more; more churches using IT to reach their congregations; more focus on eco church.
- Greater online offering and potential as result of Covid initiatives
- Housing growth in most communities, particularly our towns, bringing young families.
- Potential to build community by facilitating the integration of new residents and in areas of new housing
- People of faith moving into area from elsewhere, helping churches to grow (some previous worshippers fail to connect well with churches in their communities)
- Potential of new initiatives reaching children/young people through prioritising and collaboration
- Potential for context-sensitive mission among new and existing residents
- Mission potential with families of school children
- Good early approaches to secondary schools.
- Development of connection and mission with senior school age children, mentoring etc.
- Developing cohesion between parishes: action already underway to build parish to parish links and to take action at Deanery level. Past year has shown what is possible with an active Area Dean, a much more united Chapter, a refreshed Deanery Synod and a purposeful new Standing Committee
- Many benefices/ parishes have developed (or are actively discussing) new Mission Action Plans.
- Some under-use of PTO and other ministers (readers and clergy)
- Potential of further development of wedding, baptism and funeral ministries of churches





## THREATS TO DEANERY

- Recover from Covid slow: some congregations are still running below 2019 levels; vulnerable members of community still at home;
- Some pre Covid activities slow to resume- pastoral work, fundraising and giving all affected.  
Financial pressures: reduced regular giving, higher costs.
- Few stipendiary clergy in post. Incumbency vacancies (many more in a few months)
- Insecurity and anxiety
- Threat of low morale establishing
- Loss of leadership with AD leaving
- Danger of over-reliance on retired clergy/readers.
- As committed aging congregations are lost over time, risk of their regular committed giving not replaced
- Financial uncertainty of ongoing reduced income where churches' rely on collections at services or fundraising events rather than online regular commitment
- High house prices
  - unaffordable for retired clergy to live in many parts
  - unaffordable for many families with children
  - high mortgages restricting financial commitment for younger people
- At northern edge of diocese, so sometimes feels distant from 'centre' of diocese.
- Perception that rural ministry is not sufficiently valued.
- Lack of trust in central budgets and Diocesan financial management causing some parishioners to withhold their regular giving.

## APPENDIX 2 GROWING FAITH: MINISTRY TO CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

### THE ROLE OF PETERSFIELD DEANERY 'GROWING FAITH' LEAD ROLE

The Role of the Deanery Lead in 'Growing Faith'<sup>1</sup> would be to work with Deanery colleagues, supporting ministry and mission in the Deanery parishes by:

Building a strategy to increase the opportunity for children and young people to experience the love of God in Christ through their churches, schools and households through:

- Building on existing good practice with local schools
- Further developing relationships in schools
- Developing relationships with members of households connected with schools
- Grow prayer across school communities (parents/carers and staff)
- Building a team of volunteers to support and develop the ministry in this area
- Exploring the potential of a Deanery level post of Youth and Children's Minister by 2025
- Reaching out directly into areas of concentration of children and young people including new housing (A3 corridor) and more untouched areas (e.g Whitehill)

Research and assess:

- Research the profile of the population under 18 & their families across the Deanery  
What are their needs? (Tools e.g. Education Dept, Experian, 'Mosaic', Local Authorities, Schools)

<sup>1</sup> Growing Faith is a Church of England initiative, <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/renewal-reform/growing-faith>





- Understand the scope of existing good practice connecting churches and local schools (community and independent)
- Understand the scope of good practice in churches' work with children re baptism and confirmation
- Develop a strategy to share good practice across our churches & schools.  
Where are the gaps?
- Develop a strategy for Deanery churches to begin to develop their ministry to respond to the gaps/needs
- Propose a strategic and detailed plan for employing a Deanery-wide youth and children's minister by 2025, including how this person might positively support and grow parishes' reach to children and young people in town and country parishes with diverse traditions.
- Developing relationships and building support
- Identify present (and potential) volunteers/employed people leading youth and children's work in churches in the deanery.  
Identify areas of ongoing support and training they need.
- Work with Deanery Lead in Senior Schools to identify the heads in the area's schools.  
Work with parish clergy to build supportive one-to-one relationships with them (alert to busy schedules and professional sensitivities e.g. between schools).
- Assess how local churches can best build and sustain good relationships and connections with households of school students.
- Identify areas where there are concentrations of children and young people (e.g. new housing) and develop plans to reach out directly into them
- Engage with existing youth activities (eg King's Arms; Crossover) and propose ways of working more closely with them

- Connect Christian teachers (in all schools, possibly separately for senior and primary) for prayer and fellowship
- Facilitate Prayer groups for staff and parents/carers for schools.

Explore potential areas of ministry with and for lay and ordained colleagues to support 'Growing Faith' in issues that resonate with young people/their families, such as:

- Care for the planet, eco-church
- Parenting support:
  - Life online
  - Parenting (different ages/stages)
  - Mental health needs
  - Managing relationships
  - Food bank
  - Other?
- Drop-off drop-ins at church for parents/carers at local schools
- Children receiving communion in churches pre-confirmation

## APPENDIX 3: PIONEER MINISTRY IN WHITEHILL

Further to a recent Growing in Faith seminar Peter Sutton met with Gregg Bakker (Diocesan Dean of Pioneer Ministry) whose role in the Diocese, alongside his parish role, is to 'support stipendiary pioneers and raising up lay pioneers to serve in the churches and parishes'.

If Blackmoor and Whitehill, Greatham, Empshott and Hawkley with Priors Dean become a team ministry then the heavily populated community would be well suited to the ministry of a pioneer minister. We need however to do some research to establish if this is the case and whether or not central





church funding might be sought to add a pioneer minister to the intended team ministry and Mission Community of Bramshott and Liphook and Bordon (Guildford Diocese).

The CoE defines as follows:

*Pioneers are people called by God who are the first to see and creatively respond to the Holy Spirit's initiatives with those outside the church; gathering others around them as they seek to establish new contextual Christian community.*

Whitehill is served by Blackmoor. Some people attend Blackmoor Church and certainly do so for occasional officers. There is a wide range of housing, a village hall and a few shops but there is much that we do not know or understand about this community. Estimates of population range between 10000 – 12000. There feels to be no community centre and Blackmoor Church, even though it flourishes, is very much on the geographical edge than at the centre.

In the first instant Peter Sutton will engage further with Greg Bakker to commence the necessary research to gain a greater understanding of the Whitehill community. A possible start to this is to work with those training pioneer ministers now to see if there are students who might be able to do some feasibility work as part of their training courses. We will also look at the Experian data if this is still possible.

## APPENDIX 4: CLERGY WELL-BEING

The wellbeing of everybody has taken a hit over the last two years and with additional pressures on churches, those with responsibility whether ordained or lay has been affected.

Forthcoming changes may add to these pressures but our intention is to understand them and alleviate/address them where we can.

The Petersfield Deanery Plan introduces a ratio for stipendiary clergy of 70/30 where the greater part of their ministry is directed towards the parish(es) in which they have legal responsibility and where we believe that their 'presence' is essential for the ministry and mission of the church to flourish. The smaller, but still significant part relates to their leadership role within the deanery.

WHAT DOES 70/30 MEAN IN REALITY?

The ratio is given as a guide to help establish priorities for the mission of the Church. It doesn't mean that every week stipendiary clergy will give exactly 30% of their working time to their deanery role. It may happen sometimes but given the nature of clergy ministry this will vary enormously. This is more about focussing energy and priorities than about time management – it is about taking the lead and making headway in our shared walk with God.

The clergyperson with the deanery leadership role will understand the vision and expected outcomes for their area from the MAP and the details of these can be further worked on with the Area Dean, Deanery Synod and Deanery Chapter colleagues. Their task is to lead which means gathering others, inspiring, facilitating, thinking, praying, etc.

Parishes should be aware that just as their named and dedicated priest is giving 30/70 of their time to the wider church, so priests from the other parishes will be sharing their 30/70 so that all parishes will receive as well as give. It is particularly hoped that the parish(es) and churches of clergy who have such leadership roles will come to share and gain expertise in this area of mission and ministry as well.

We want to stress that  $70 + 30 = 100$ . We would be seriously failing in our care for each other and in our responsibilities for clergy wellbeing if we accepted that  $70 + 30 = 130$ . This is something we must commit to guard against. Part of this process should include the opportunity for clergy to consider what tasks they currently undertake that could or should be undertaken by others. The same principles apply to lay ministers and lay





officers as well as individuals in our churches who carry many responsibilities. As a deanery we can give time and energy to clergy and lay wellbeing but we will also need help and resource from the Diocese with training through Continuing Ministry Development (CMD), through more general training for parishes and specifically for clergy through their Ministry Development Review (MDR). In changing times we would value the Bishop dedicating one of his training days to wellbeing both of clergy and lay people.

## APPENDIX F INTRODUCTION TO THE DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH


The Diocese of Portsmouth stretches across south-east Hampshire and includes the whole of the Isle of Wight. It includes 139 parishes, from Botley in the west to Emsworth in the east, and from Blackmoor in the north to Ventnor on south side of the Isle of Wight. It includes diverse communities, ranging from the densely populated and relatively deprived parts of inner-city Portsmouth, to rural villages in Hampshire; and from a range of seaside towns on the Isle of Wight to suburban communities west of Fareham and Gosport. In total, it covers 420 square miles and has a population of 784,000.

The Diocese of Portsmouth has 170 churches, ranging from historic listed buildings to brand new, purpose-built churches. There are around 150 clergy serving in those churches and their parishes, around 50 of whom are self-supporting. There are also around 70 licensed lay ministers who help with leading services and pastoral work. Around 13,500 people regularly worship in our churches, on Sundays and during the week. Attendance numbers have been declining over the past 10 years, but there are particular congregations that have grown. Only a tiny number of churches have been closed in recent years.

Parishes and chaplaincies within the diocese are supported by a small diocesan team, based in Peninsular House, Portsmouth. These officers support parishes and church schools, administer clergy housing and stipends, manage its property portfolio, promote social justice, handle communications, manage safeguarding procedures, and run a variety of training courses. The Diocesan Secretary oversees these staff. Separate teams of staff are employed in the bishop's office and for the three archdeacons. There is no suffragan bishop.

The diocese includes 41 Church of England schools in south-east Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. These are still mostly schools funded by the local authority, but the diocese supports them with regard to governance and admissions, building projects, Christian ethos, RE and recruitment of






headteachers. The education team supports schools across both Portsmouth and Winchester dioceses, under the authority of a Joint Board of Education. Two schools on the Isle of Wight are joint Church of England/Roman Catholic schools.



Bishop Jonathan Frost was installed in March 2022, and has shared his vision for the diocese – a place where all are invited into a life-enhancing encounter with Jesus Christ. It should be a place where children, young people and young adults are given a particular priority; and where ministry to the elderly is supported by a network of Anna Chaplains, working in every locality.

The vision is encapsulated by a vocational call to all Christians, entitled **Live | Pray | Serve**, which has been supported by strategic funding from the national Church of England to promote the planting of new congregations and a network of pioneer ministers. You can read more about our vision and vocation at [portsmouth.anglican.org/liveprayserve](https://portsmouth.anglican.org/liveprayserve).



The Diocese of Portsmouth is one of the smallest dioceses in the Church of England, but has often “punched above its weight”, with senior staff and diocesan officers involved in the national Church, managing joint projects or implementing innovative ideas. Financially, the payment of parish share has always been good – but the recent Covid pandemic has resulted in some financial challenges.

There is a range of churchmanship across all traditions within the diocese, few parishes deliberately exclude themselves from deanery and diocesan initiatives, and our smaller, family feel means that most clergy and lay leaders know and respect each other.





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