

# Haven benefice

PROFILE



THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND



Diocese  
of Portsmouth



# CONTENTS

Bishop's Welcome	3
Archdeacon's Introduction	4
Introduction	6
The Parishes: An Overview	7
Vision and Mission	9
Worship in the Benefice	11
The Vicarage	12
The Parish of St Mary the Virgin, Brading	13
The Parish of St Helens	17
The Parish of St Peter's, Seaview	23
The Parish of St John the Baptist, Yaverland	29
Role Description	31
Introduction to the Diocese of Portsmouth	32

# BISHOP'S WELCOME

I am delighted you are seeking to discern whether Jesus is calling you to serve with His beautiful people at the Haven benefice on the Isle of Wight. Be assured of our prayers in the diocese for you and those you love as you step into a time of discerning.

The Diocese of Portsmouth is a community of communities focused and centred in Jesus, and seeking the Father's heart of love for the world. We shall be praying fervently for you as you discern your next step of faith in response to God's faithfulness.

With love, in Christ,

*'As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.'*

*Colossians 3: 12-13*

*Jonathan Portsmouth*



**THE RT REV JONATHAN FROST,  
BISHOP OF PORTSMOUTH**



# ARCHDEACON'S INTRODUCTION

The Isle of Wight is a county that is committed to investing in infrastructure, amenities and commercial development. It covers the busy towns of Newport and Ryde, through to pretty villages, and Victorian seaside resorts. Having moved here three years ago, I can say that it is a great place to live and enjoy life.



THE VEN STEPHEN DAUGHTERY,  
ARCHDEACON OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT

The developing vision of our diocese is to be a humble and joyful church 'in and for the world'; a courageous church which abides in Christ and seeks God's Kingdom; a church in which younger and older people grow in faith, find their voice and, by God's grace, offer their lives in service of God's Kingdom.

The churches on the Island are at the leading edge of developing an "every member in ministry" model with licensed lay ministry being a crucial element. We have a way to go, but Anna Chaplaincy is being developed across the Deanery and many parishes benefit from people who have been commissioned to specific ministries, including Lay Pastoral Assistants, Lay Preachers, and Lay Worship leaders.



We are committed to helping all our churches to

- deepen their discipleship of Jesus;
- demonstrate the way God's love impacts our communities; and
- grow to be larger, multi-generational communities who are able to engage with children and young people whilst continuing to treasure the older generations.

*Ven Stephen Daughtery*  
*Archdeacon of the Isle of Wight*



## INTRODUCTION

Do you feel called to serve God in one of the most beautiful parts of the country? The Isle of Wight is blessed with stunning countryside, beaches, harbours and uplands, and even has its own unique micro-climate.

The island is shaped like a diamond, and at its eastern edge are the rural parishes of Brading, Yaverland, St Helens, and Seaview and Nettlestone. Together these comprise the Haven Benefice, which embraces the churches of St Mary's, Brading; St Peter's, Seaview; St John's, Yaverland; and St Helen's (situated between St Helens and Nettlestone). The villages of St Helens, Seaview and Yaverland are all by the sea, while the town of Brading was an important seaport until its harbour was reclaimed in the 1880s. Part of the parish of Brading falls within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. St Helen's and St Mary's churches both have extensive and very 'bio-diverse' churchyards.

Each of our churches is different, and each has its own distinct location, heritage, worship tradition and congregation. As a benefice, though, we are united by a desire to bring the knowledge and experience of God's love to the communities we serve, in ways that are appropriate to our church traditions. We are also passionate about promoting our places of worship as sacred spaces, within which the presence of God is tangible, and the love of God is known.

So, we are looking for a leader who, respecting the different character of each church, will inject new life into each. Ideally s/he will catch the imagination of the younger generation, while being able to relate to the needs of the more senior members of our congregations. We would welcome a priest who, while able to promote the gospel in exciting ways, and open to new ideas, will also keep in touch with more traditional values.

## THE PARISHES: AN OVERVIEW

Although our benefice was only formed in 2018, when St Peter's and St Helen's merged with St Mary's and St John the Baptist, its churches are linked by geography and by a long and intertwined history.

Our churches are grouped around the ancient harbour where Bishop Wilfrid first stepped ashore on the Isle of Wight in the year 704 AD. Brading is thought to be the site of the first church and baptism on the Island, and it was St Wilfrid's chaplain, Hildila, who oversaw the building of the first church in St Helens on the Duver. The churches at Yaverland and Brading both date from the 12th century, the present St Helen's church from 1719. The newest of the four, St Peter's, was built in the mid-19th century.

Though different in their traditions and histories, our churches have much in common, which helps our vision to work collaboratively:

- They are all historic churches, which require similar upkeep and maintenance;
- The villages are adjacent, so the incumbent and congregations need travel no more than a few miles between them;
- They host similar styles of worship, but are all open to the addition of new forms;
- The average attendance at three of the churches is between 30-50, at the fourth (St John's) around 15-20. These numbers increase greatly when second-home owners arrive for the summer, and for services to celebrate the major Christian festivals;







- There is real unity of purpose concerning expanding our congregations to include younger people and children. Our churches are committed to the Diocese's priority to 'enable a new generation to grow in faith and find their voice'. Three of our churches have good relationships with local schools, and at the heart of our vision for a former camping field near to St Helen's church, which is being gifted to us, is a plan to provide a wide range of activities for children and young people.
- Our churches are committed to extending our mission – under a committed leader – to be of greater service to our communities. Three of our churches play a big part in the life of their local communities: the fourth, St John's, has the challenge of being geographically isolated;
- A monthly benefice magazine, 'What's On', carries news of our churches and enables local societies and businesses to promote their activities. It has a monthly circulation of 500+ and is also available online;
- One of our churches, St Helen's, was the first church in the diocese, and only the tenth in the country, to receive an A Rocha Eco Church Gold Award.



## VISION AND MISSION

In 2023 we formed a cross-benefice planning group to draw up a 'Mission Action Plan'. Working on this together strengthened greatly the bonds between our churches, as did our coming together for an Advent Course the previous year. (This course, which focused on the new book from Church House Publishing, *How Village Churches Thrive*, proved so worthwhile we carried it on after Christmas, naming it an 'AdLent' course! It also inspired us to embark on a new Benefice Lent Course in February 2024.)



In drawing up our Mission Action Plan the working group agreed a benefice vision and our shared mission objectives.

Our Common Vision is: *'To love, nurture and engage to grow God's Kingdom.'*

The mission objectives to enable us to fulfil this Vision are:

- To engage with children and young people, providing opportunities for them to learn about Jesus and join in the life of the community;





- To nurture and enhance a strong community spirit across the Benefice, centred on our churches;
- To offer support for the social and spiritual needs of everyone within our communities, with particular care for older people and the socially isolated;
- To challenge those structures of society that promote injustice and violence and to reach out to those whose lives they affect;
- To encourage a love of our group heritage, an understanding of its usefulness today, and a commitment to preserving it for the future;
- To care for God's creation, through our worship, buildings, land, community engagement, and individual lifestyles.

These objectives continue to form the basis for our benefice mission planning over the coming year and beyond. Included in this planning, which is set out fully in our Mission Action Plan, is securing funding for a range of projects aimed at increasing the impact of the benefice.

These include:

- employing a youth worker;
- structural improvements to increase footfall and access into our churches;
- and the acquisition of a redundant camping field to develop as a hub for pilgrims, retreats, youth camps, and community facilities.

St Mary's are already seeking grants to restore their belltower and improve understanding of their heritage by the addition of an InfoPoint church guide, along with plans for a heritage centre. *(We would be happy to send a copy of the Plan to anyone interested in seeing it.)*

## WORSHIP IN THE BENEFICE

Worship in our churches would be described as 'traditional', although the possibility of offering Taizé-style worship and café church is being actively explored.

Thanks to the kindness of retired priests living in or near the benefice, we have been able to offer Eucharistic worship at most of our Sunday services. When this has not been possible, non-Eucharistic services have been provided by our hard-working and dedicated licensed lay minister, Sylvia; our curate, Bevaly (whom our new incumbent would be responsible for training); and by three lay members of our churches who were commissioned as worship leaders in 2023. Two of these have also now completed the 'occasional preaching' training course offered by the diocese and are putting what they have learned into practice. When there is a fifth Sunday in the month, our practice is to hold a united benefice Eucharist in each church in turn.

A recent experiment which is proving successful is the introduction of informal worship at St Catherine's, the chapel in the Community Centre in St Helens village. Services are now held there on two Tuesday mornings and one Sunday evening every month, with those attending being mostly people from the village unable to get to the church itself, which is a little way outside the village. These services are mostly lay-led, with the occasional Communion service led by a retired priest. An Advent carol service, and service for New Year's Eve, proved particularly popular.

We have an active benefice pastoral group, whose members look after, pray for, and visit those known to us.





## THE VICARAGE



The Vicarage is a detached 1990s, 4-bedroom house near to St Helen's church. There is a modest garden, a garage, and room for parking which is shared with the nearby cottage. Although the house is surrounded on three sides by fields, it is very close to the village of Nettlestone, which has a large village store, and is only 15 minutes from the ferries by bus or car. The two nearest villages, Nettlestone and St Helens, both have good primary schools.



## THE PARISH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN, BRADING



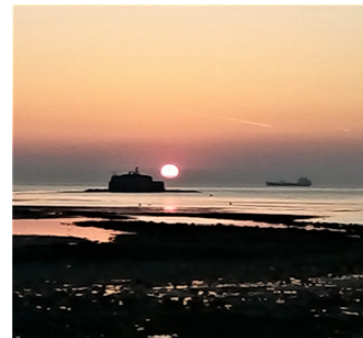
### WHERE WE LIVE

Brading is one of the Island's most historic towns. It is here that St Wilfrid landed in the early 8th century to begin converting the natives, and where the first baptism on the Island took place – probably on the site of the current St Mary's Church. Brading's first charter in 1280 was granted, unusually for the time, directly from King Edward I, which led to it being known as the 'King's Town' (or Kynge's Town). The Roman Villa south of the town, and Roman relics discovered locally, indicate that this was an important seaport 2,000 years ago.

Brading retains many reminders of its past, while offering the facilities expected of a small town today. There are four pubs, a small supermarket, a Post Office, a newsagent, several other specialist shops, and a C of E primary school. Brading railway station, on the Island Line Railway, has a direct connection to the Wightlink ferry at Ryde Pier Head. The town is well-connected to the surrounding countryside by footpaths and bridleways.

The south-western part of the parish falls within an Area of Outstanding





Natural Beauty, and Brading Down, a local beauty spot, has views over Culver Down and Sandown Bay. The Brading Marshes Nature Reserve, situated on the reclaimed land of the old harbour, is the first RSPB reserve on the Isle of Wight. The reserve is not open, but there is a path around it.

## OUR CHURCH

St Mary's occupies a prominent site at the end of Brading High Street. There have been four churches on the site since the one that St Wilfrid would have known, and the present church has been endowed in the past by notable families who lived in the neighbourhood, including the Oglanders and the Rollos. Its central location means that it continues to play an important role in the life of the town.

The 13th-century tower is one of only four of its kind in England. It is open on three sides to arches, and the wooden stairs going into the bell platform are external. This platform has a fine ring of eight bells, the oldest dated 1594. There is an

early Jacobean altar table now placed at the East end of the Oglander chapel, and in the South aisle there are two chests, one dating from the time of Elizabeth I. There is an 18th-century 'birdcage' clock in the belltower. In the chancel there are several Romanesque features, notably the nave arcades and the piscina attached to the south wall. At this church the Rev Legh Richmond is thought to have originated the now globally popular idea of using boards with movable numbers to indicate hymn numbers during church services.

Next to the church is a church hall, which is available for hire. It has a fully equipped kitchen and toilet facilities and has disability access. It is well used by the community and church groups, and benefits from having a large public car park adjacent. In the church itself, plans are underway for a kitchen and cafe in the North Aisle, kindly funded by a legacy.

## OUR CHURCH LIFE

Services of Holy Communion take place on the first and third Sundays at 9:30 am, and there is another service of reflection and prayer on a Wednesday morning at 10 am. The average attendance at a morning service is 45. The local primary school uses our church for services at certain times of the year, and members of our congregation take services in the school as invited. Since being appointed in October 2023, our curate, Bevaly, has been leading collective worship in the school, as well as working with Brading Methodist church, helping at their Messy Church, and being a focal minister in the village. Our church liaises regularly with the Methodist Church to provide innovative outdoor services, for example the Nativity Procession through the village.

We are fortunate to be able to draw on a range of talents and skills in the community, as well as enormous goodwill. There is an active social group, who can be called on to provide refreshments for different events, and a flower arranging group. The 'Friends of St Mary's Church' helps to ensure that the building is well maintained, running various events throughout the year, including guided tours. We often host musical concerts, which are very well-supported. We collect for the food bank and for other charities every week and have strong links with many community groups in the town.

The church has a strong bell-ringing tradition, and the current team of ringers enjoys success at both local and national level: in 2023 they won two



of the three IoW bellringing contests, and one of their 12-year-olds is a national champion in his age group. Members of the local youth club practise with us once a week – which is hopefully sowing seeds for the future – and once our bells are restored, we plan to establish Brading as a bell-ringing education centre for the Island.

### **OUR CHURCHYARD**

We have a large graveyard, with space remaining for only a few more burials. It contains a number of interesting graves, including the Commonwealth War Graves of four British Army soldiers of World War I. It was the subject of a book published in 2022. Next to the graveyard is a field, St Mary's Meadow, which is owned by the church. This is currently rented to the Brading Community Partnership, which owns the Old School building and runs youth and community activities. The field is used for grazing animals and for allotment gardens, both of which involve local children.



## THE PARISH OF ST HELENS



### **WHERE WE LIVE**

St Helens is a village and civil parish on the eastern side of the Isle of Wight. A short walk from the coast, it is a popular holiday destination, with a beach well suited to swimming, sailing and other water sports. The village green, the second largest in England, is used for cricket and football, and has a sports pavilion and children's playground. In 2023 St Helens won the Best Kept Large Village Award on the Island.

The land adjacent to the sea, known as the 'Duver' (an Isle of Wight dialect term for a low-lying piece of land along the coast) is protected by the National Trust. It is here that the original St Helen's Church was built in the early 8th century. The tower from a later church on the site, built about 1220, remains today. Its seaward side is painted white and has been used as a seamark since 1719.





St Helens has a population of around 1,200, comprising members of old village families – some of which have lived here more than 300 years; commuters working in Newport and Ryde; and many retired people. There is a good mix of ages and social backgrounds.

The local pub, The Vine, is popular with residents and tourists, and the village also has a restaurant, Ganders, on the upper side of the green. There are two cafés on the seafront which open during the holiday season. There is a village primary school which, with 105 pupils currently on the roll, is one of the smallest on the Island. The village also has a Post Office and grocery store, a large second-hand bookshop, a medical centre, and a community centre. At the heart of the community centre is St Catherine’s Chapel, which hosts regular midweek and Sunday evening services. The centre itself is well used by local societies, and its foyer is home to the very popular Community

Fridge. This project was established in November 2023, and its success is due largely to the efforts of one of our members.

St Helens has three holiday camps, considerably increasing the population during the summer months, as well as Brading Haven Yacht Club and Bembridge Angling Club. The village boasts thriving horticultural and historical societies, a cup-winning cricket club, and other groups and societies. Besides all the on-going activities, the village organises various events in the summer, including a carnival and travelling fair, a horticultural show, open gardens, and sports day. These events are well supported by residents and visitors from outside the village.



## OUR CHURCH

The church ‘on the hill’ has been here since 1717. It is not located in the village but between St Helens and the neighbouring village of Nettlestone. It replaced the ‘old church’ on the Duver (mentioned above), which was washed away by storms after the river changed course and land was claimed by the sea. Mostly rebuilt in the 1800s, the present building still retains some interesting old gravestones set into the floor, some fascinating memorials and hatchments, several stained-glass windows, and the George I coat of arms. In 2021 major works took place: a kitchen, toilet and new staircase were installed, the pew plinths were removed in the Nave (so that our pews are now fully movable), and most of the interior was redecorated. A full restoration of the vestry was completed in early 2024.

The church will seat approximately 150 in the Nave and Transepts. There is a small gallery which houses the organ. Entries in the Visitors’ Book frequently





comment on the tranquillity to be found in the church. We find that our building is popular with couples for weddings.

## OUR CHURCH LIFE

Alongside our regular Sunday worship, we hold several special services during the year. Some of these take advantage of our proximity to the sea: for example, one is at sunrise on Easter Day, one is on Sea Sunday, and another is on Ascension Day. All of these are held near the site of the old church on the Duver, giving us a strong sense of our connection with the past.

For our Sunday morning Eucharists, which attract between 30 and 40 people, we use service leaflets, created from the liturgy in Common Worship, which are particular to each church season.

We are proud of our status as an Eco Church. We were the first in the diocese, and only the tenth in the country, to receive a Gold Award from A Rocha. Eco Church is predicated on a belief in God in all things, a God who is at work in creation and through community. Eco Church is about connecting this faith to our concern for the environment.

Our Eco Church meetings include a reflection and prayers, an activity with an eco-focus, and a bring-and-share meal. Our activities centre largely around the churchyard, where we are creating a wildlife haven and contemplative space.



We also support village environmental projects. In 2022 we organised a village consultation on tree-planting, which has



produced several outcomes, and we were represented on a group set up by the Parish Council to develop a plan for managing the greens. We were also involved in setting up the St Helens Community Fridge Project. We have worked with children at the school in different ways, involving them in building boxes for bats, birds and red squirrels, and sowing acorns which were later planted in a copse in the village.

Additionally, we engage in national environmental lobbying campaigns, and have guest speakers on environmental themes which attract good audiences. Our plans include developing ways to encourage schools, children's groups and families to use our churchyard as a place to connect with nature and with God.

Our PCC comprises the two churchwardens, a treasurer, a chair and six others. We meet monthly, and there is a warm and positive spirit among us. There is a 'Friends of St Helen's Church' which was set up to help keep the church well-maintained.

## OUR CHURCHYARD

We are privileged to have a beautiful, peaceful churchyard at St. Helens, an amenity which serves St Helens, Seaview and Nettlestone. The original part, around the Church, has been there since the present church was built in 1719, and over the years it has been necessary to extend it southwards so that it now occupies a very large area indeed.

An honorary manager oversees all the work, including any burials. There is also a section set aside for the interment of cremated remains. Fees are charged for burials and interment of cremated remains, and headstones, when they are



fitted. Many people make a regular donation to the funds, and all this helps us to meet the cost of regular maintenance.

A contracted groundsman undertakes the year-round tasks necessary to keep the churchyard properly maintained, whilst keeping within our Eco Church credentials.

At the far end of the extensive churchyard there is a grass path Labyrinth watched over by a solitary oak tree – a wonderful aid to prayer, reflection, or just ‘slowing down’.

There are seven War Graves in the churchyard, and the Lychgate is the Village War Memorial commemorating all who lost their lives in the first and second world wars.



## THE PARISH OF ST PETER'S, SEAVIEW



### WHERE WE LIVE

Seaview is a small seaside resort on the north-eastern corner of the Island. It is popular with tourists, and is 3.8 km from Ryde, where most visitors reach the island by ferry or hovercraft. Together with Nettlestone, it forms the civil parish of Nettlestone and Seaview. Originally known as Sea View (two words), its name was altered to Seaview (one word) to save the cost of having two words in a telegram!

Out of season the parish is quiet, an ideal place for retreat and contemplation. During holiday periods, however, the pace changes, and the village fills up as it welcomes its part-time residents and visitors, especially those who enjoy sailing and on-water activities.

The well-known Priory Bay is a short walk from the village. This stretch of beach, which can only be reached at low tide, is filled with white sand and is excellent for swimming. Seagrove Bay, between the village and Priory Bay, is also popular with families and dog walkers.





Seaview has many holiday homes, and it is estimated that about 38% of its population are permanent residents, with 62% only visiting in the summer months or holiday periods. However, since lockdown a growing number of young retirees and semi-retirees are choosing to spend more time in their second homes, with a significant number settling permanently in the parish.

Seaview has two hotels, a pub, a café, a pharmacy within the Post Office, a volunteer-run community shop, other specialist shops, and an art gallery. The village is home to the Sea View Yacht Club, founded in 1893, and during the summer hosts the Seaview Regatta. There is a regular bus service linking the town with Ryde, Bembridge, Sandown and Newport.

Nettlestone is a smaller community just inland from Seaview. It has a large village shop, and a thriving primary school which has taught local children since 1905. Nettlestone is listed in the Domesday Book. Like Seaview, it is served by a good regular bus service. Until recent times, Nettlestone had its own church, known affectionately as 'the tin tabernacle'.



## OUR CHURCH

Originally part of the parish of St Helens, work began on constructing St Peter's in 1859, and it became the parish church for Seaview in 1907. Much extended over the years, the church now comfortably seats 275, with a side aisle and lady chapel built as a memorial to the local men who lost their lives



in the First World War. The wide chancel arch is fitted with an attractive wrought iron screen. The church's pipe organ was created by two of the 19th century's leading organ builders.

Adjacent to the church, as a separate building, is the church hall, which is on two levels, the lower level serving as an undercroft. Both have a social area, kitchen and toilet. As a PCC we have discussed using our buildings to generate more income and cut running costs. One idea involves making the church a more multi-functional space, incorporating both sacred and social areas.

## CHURCH GARDEN

This small, well-kept space hosts beautiful trees, a variety of flowers and herbs, and a remembrance rose garden. It is always open, and everyone is welcome to use it. It is a beautiful social and spiritual space, and we are keen to make more use of it as a public facility.



## OUR CHURCH LIFE

Situated in the heart of the village, the church is well connected to, and well supported by, the local community and 'part-time' communities.

Services are held at St Peter's every Sunday. Whenever possible these will be Eucharistic – great importance is attached to regular communion services – but Matins and lay-led services of the Word are also held. Agape services and morning prayer are held regularly on certain weekdays.

Alongside the regular worship we have special services and events which involve members of the community who may not be regular worshippers. These include the Regatta Service – with the Regatta Choir, comprising members of the regular church choir and our 'Events Choir'; the Burns service and lunch (with a local doctor piping in the haggis!); the Lent lunches, when we serve home-made soup and bread every Wednesday throughout Lent; and our Pet Service. The church hosts an annual Flower Festival, to link with the May Fayre.

There is a thriving Women's Institute, which recently celebrated its centenary, and a very active Mothers' Union. Both use our church buildings as their base. Our hall also hosts regular exercise classes and indoor sports, a toddler group, and other activities and meetings. The church has good links with the primary school in Nettlestone, and with the Royal British Legion, Sea View Yacht Club, and Men in Sheds.

The church door is always open. This is very important to us, and we are grateful to live in a community where it is safe to do so.

Our congregation reflects the village's largely ageing demographic. There are few children resident in the village, but the younger community grows every summer when the second homeowners arrive – indeed, the local community comes alive during high days and holidays when we gather together! Our family services, especially at Christmas and Easter, attract a hundred or more worshippers. Young grandparents are increasingly bringing their grandchildren into church, particularly to special services. Many second homeowners are loyal and generous to our church and have been over many generations. Some in our community descend from those involved in the conception and construction of the church building.

We are developing strong links with a village in Liberia, the country of origin of one of our members. We actively fundraise to help provide hand pumps, and a place of worship, in her village.





St Peter's has a strong music tradition. John, our organist and choirmaster, has been part of the church family for most of his ninety years. We have a regular choir, and an 'events choir', which is drawn from the wider community, contributes to services on special occasions. Over the years John has mentored several organists and young singers. We also use drama, and our annual Passion service, directed by a professional actor in the village, is always popular and involves people from beyond our parish boundary.

Many of our local community cherish the traditional values of the Church of England, and were brought up on, and still hold dear, forms of worship and services which reflect those. However, we are also an open-minded community, with a willingness to engage in new and different forms of worship which are relevant and appropriate to the community to which we belong.



## THE PARISH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, YAVERLAND

### WHERE WE LIVE

Yaverland is a village of about 200 houses just north of Sandown on Sandown Bay. St John's Church, and the manor with which it is historically linked, are about a third of a mile from the village.

The older part of the village is spread along the road to Bembridge by the church. The newer part is along the seafront, consisting entirely of a bungalow estate. The name 'Yaverland' appears to come from a local rendition of 'over land', being the land over the once-tidal causeway. In the fields below Yaverland, the archaeological television programme Time Team discovered a Roman smithy.

The Wildheart Animal Sanctuary in Yaverland is noted for its collection of rescued tigers. The sanctuary inhabits much of the converted Granite Fort built by Lord Palmerston as a defence against the French in 1860. By the sea is the Yaverland Sailing and Boat Club, and along the seashore are fossil-bearing beds, which may be explored by guided walks from Dinosaur Isle. A holiday camp further north in the village was once the site of Yaverland Battery.

### OUR CHURCH

The Church of St John the Baptist dates from around 1150 and is Grade 1 listed. It was originally built as a chapel for the manor and is one of only three similar manor chapels in the country. It is well worth a visit, not only for its stunning interior, but for its still, peaceful atmosphere. The garden is also ideal for quiet reflection and prayer.

Within the south entrance porch is the original Norman doorway, and the chancel arch has an intricate chevron moulding. There is an octagonal stone font dating from the 12th century. The church was remodelled in the 15th century, and square mullioned windows were installed in the chancel. Yaverland was assigned as a 'garrison church' during the reign of Henry VIII, initially for the troops at Sandown Castle built by Henry in the 1540s, and so continued until





1945. The east Wight, until recent times, was home to a series of military installations on account of its strategic position beside the English Channel and Portsmouth Harbour.

### **OUR CHURCH LIFE**

The church is open at weekends, and Eucharistic services are held every second and fourth Sunday of the month. These attract a small group of very loyal worshippers, although the congregation can grow to beyond 20 on Christmas morning. We would describe ourselves as being within the Anglo-Catholic tradition.

There is a tea station at the rear of the church, and the PCC has plans to install a disabled access path to the church, and to build an extension to house some much-needed toilets (currently there are temporary toilets outside the church). These additions will help promote the church to ramblers, cyclists, car clubs and other community groups, and to historians wishing to visit a Grade I listed church of note. The church is beginning to engage more with the residents of Yaverland and are hoping to forge links with local schools and youth groups.

## ROLE DESCRIPTION

We need a full-time priest who, in addition to developing their own spiritual life:

- will provide team leadership as we build on the vision we have begun to articulate in our Mission Action Plan and take it forward with us;
- will inspire and be able to inject new life into our churches, catching the imagination of young people, while at the same time being able to relate to the senior citizens who make up the bulk of our congregations;
- will be visible in all four communities, and able to build on existing relationships with local schools, organisations and youth groups;
- will be an excellent communicator, both with congregations and those not involved with the church, who can be heard but is also willing to listen;
- is a good preacher and teacher, able to challenge our congregations;
- is able to discern the gifts and skills of others and has an aptitude to nurture the spiritual growth of church members of all ages;
- will commit to caring for God's creation through worship, the use of our buildings and land, community engagement, and promoting awareness of individual lifestyle choices;
- will be willing to work with other churches wherever possible, whilst fully participating in and contributing to the life of the deanery (including synod and chapter) and diocese;
- will value the role that our church buildings and churchyards play in the community;
- will have respect for the past and a vision for the future.



# 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 133 parishes, from Botley in the west to Emsworth in the east, and from Blackmoor in the north to Ventnor on the 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 44 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/our-strategy](https://portsmouth.anglican.org/our-strategy).

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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