

Shedfield & Wickham

PROFILE



WALTHAM CHASE 1 ³/₄

SOBERTON 2

WICKHAM 1 ¹/₂
SHEDFIELD 1



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



Diocese
of Portsmouth

Jesus-centred, Kingdom-seeking

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BISHOP'S WELCOME

I am delighted you are seeking to discern whether Jesus is calling you to serve with His beautiful people at Shedfield and Wickham. 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



THE RT REV JONATHAN FROST,
BISHOP OF PORTSMOUTH

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for showing an interest in our Benefice of St John the Baptist, Shedfield and St Nicholas, Wickham.

We are looking to appoint someone who can lead us, enabling us to develop existing initiatives and explore new opportunities. We see this as a partnership, embracing each other's skills and experiences and enabling us to continue in our mission of:

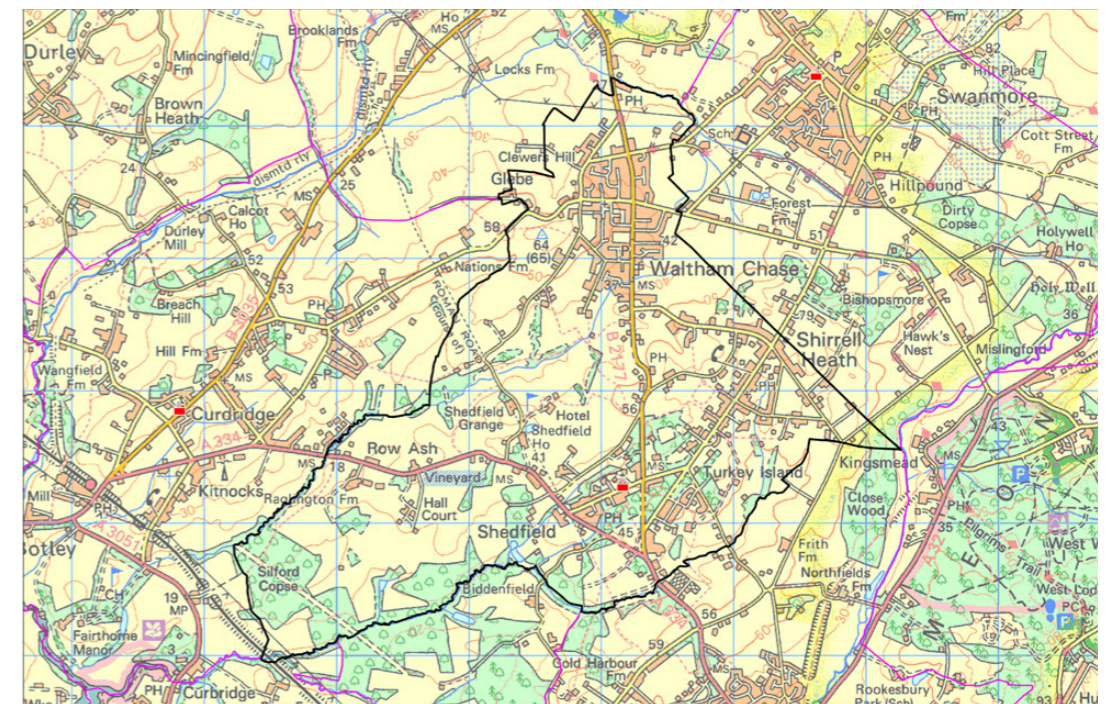
'Drawing people closer to God and each other'

Allowing us to grow spiritually both as individuals and as a worshipping community and answering the Bishop's call to be a rejuvenating community of Jesus-centred, Kingdom-seeking disciples. We support the vision of the diocese to be a Church with Jesus Christ at the heart of everything we do, a Church in which we seek God's Kingdom, and where all are enabled to experience a life-transforming encounter with Jesus Christ.

Our two semi-rural parishes are in the beautiful county of Hampshire, in the Meon Valley on the edge of the South Downs National Park and equidistant between the cities of Portsmouth, Southampton and Winchester. The Benefice was created in 2007 consisting of two neighbouring churches that lie approximately 1.5 miles apart. Each church has an independent PCC, but they meet on a couple of occasions each year. Background information about each parish can be found in Appendix 1 and other data associated with the life of the churches in Appendix 2.



ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, SHEDFIELD



SHEDFIELD PARISH BOUNDARY



BENEFICE LIFE AND MISSION – DIRECTION OF TRAVEL

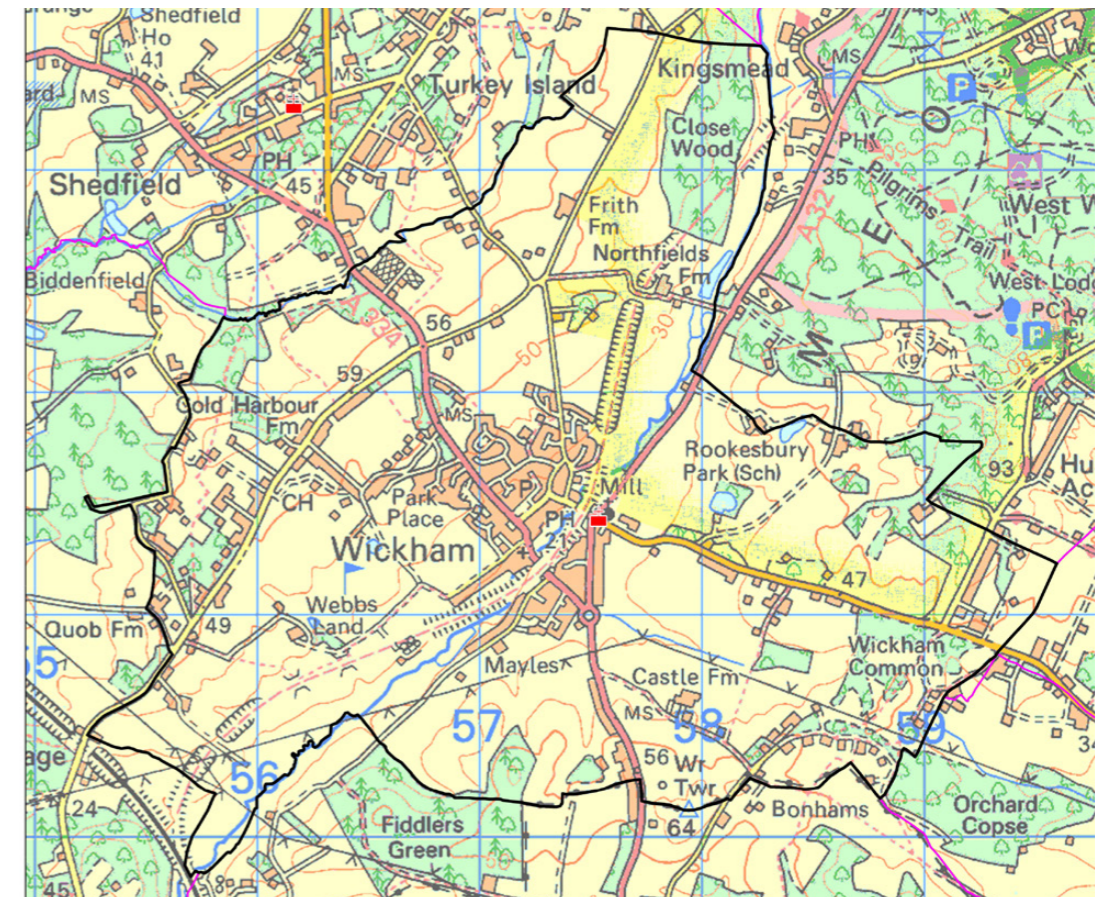
We are a welcoming community looking for someone who can lead us on our continuing journey in faith and love for one another and the world in which we live. We seek someone who can build on the commonalities of our two church communities, but also recognise our individual differences and embrace teamworking opportunities across the Benefice.

We are in the developmental stages of our action planning, but through consultation have a clear idea of the direction our mission is taking us within our Benefice, having identified four key areas of focus:

- Developing our ministry and worship to continue to meet the needs of our communities today and for tomorrow.
- Growing our church communities by engaging more with children, young people, and their families.
- Supporting and nurturing the older people in our communities.
- Developing further outreach opportunities, recognising the differing needs of the communities around us.



ST NICHOLAS, WICKHAM



WICKHAM PARISH BOUNDARY

WORSHIP AND MINISTRY



NATIVITY, ST JOHN THE BAPTIST



REMEMBRANCE, ST NICHOLAS

In April 2024 the first cohort of lay worship leaders for the deanery were commissioned by the Archdeacon in St Nicholas, Wickham. Currently there are five within the benefice; four from Wickham and one from Shedfield. Having completed eight modules of training over four Saturday mornings from November to January, they are now authorised to lead worship within the Bishops Waltham Deanery at the specific invitation of the parish incumbent or Area Dean. To date they have led worship at many non-eucharistic Sunday morning services, as well as evensong and Holy Week compline. Their enthusiasm for the role is evident from the photograph and they have been accepted warmly by the ministry team and congregations.



COMMISSIONING OF LAY WORSHIP TEAM MEMBERS

A variety of service types are offered across the Benefice consisting of a blend of traditional and more modern, as we seek to meet the differing preferences of our congregations, but also provide new opportunities for various types of worship and encouragement of fellowship. Weekly services are split between the two churches and consist largely of regular Communion, a more informal Sunday Service and occasional Evensong, allowing people to migrate between churches as they choose (Appendix 3). A cafe style service has been running for several years at St John the Baptist and is held within the Study Centre on the fifth Sunday of a month. This is well attended by people across the Benefice and offers a more informal form of worship incorporating discussion, music and of course breakfast!

Annual services of Remembrance and Harvest are offered at both churches as well as Patronal Festivals. These events attract the wider community and are frequently attended by our younger uniformed organisations. Within our church buildings dedicated teams of volunteers use their talents to produce floral arrangements as a means of enriching our places of worship throughout the year and for parish life events.



CHRIST THE KING SING



ST NICHOLAS, PATRONAL FESTIVAL

We are not afraid to try something new; the 'Christ the King Sing', an opportunity for praise and fellowship as an evening event was adopted in recent years and has been very well received. The new Pop-Up Nativity in 2023 was a great success and enjoyed by adults and children alike.

Members of our congregations have indicated that they would welcome additional opportunities for personal growth and learning. We run Lent



courses and for several years ran a very successful Lent lecture programme involving outside speakers, more recently on Zoom. A recent consultation revealed a desire for the creation of further clergy led work involving Bible study and house groups.



Our recently developed Benefice choir is very much appreciated by our community and members of the music group regularly contribute their talents to the more informal cafe church and other family services. We have the benefit of two church organists and a Choir Director who liaises closely with the Ministry team regarding content for weekly services. Consequently, music forms an integral and valued part of our worshipping activities (Appendix 5).

Our Ministry team makes use of our church websites and our weekly 'Being Church Together – at home' email newsletters to update those that subscribe to events in the church diary as well as key notices and prayers. This resource is also valuable for those who are unable to attend services in person.

WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

We recognise that young people are the present and future of our church communities and wish to develop further opportunities in this area. Whilst the number of children attending services at both churches is currently small, we seek to involve young people in different ways outside of our usual Sunday services.

Messy Church has been running at St Nicholas for several years and there are good links with the local C of E primary schools associated with collective worship in both parishes which we are keen to develop further. The Mothers' Union in both churches have strong links with the local primary schools and visit regularly, participating in a range of different activities (Appendix 5). The physical location of both churches is challenging; however, they are used by our school communities to a limited extent. St John the Baptist is used by the local nursery and primary school for Christmas services and the children are invited to help decorate the church for Harvest and Advent each year. St Nicholas hosts several school services throughout the year.

We have already identified and are working on areas linked to young people in the coming year. Their first Teddy Praise group linked to baptism families took place earlier this year, and a Godparents' Sunday is planned. We have seen a successful launch of the Lego Lunch Club that runs in school holiday time.



SUPPORTING OUR OLDER COMMUNITIES

Our church community is generally older, but in many respects young at heart and recognises the need to move forwards whilst still retaining some of the familiarity of traditional worship. Support outside of services has been provided through a long established 'Parish Lunch' held in the Study Centre for the over 60s. This is regularly attended by around fifty people including helpers. A 'Tuesday at Ten' group has been established to predominantly support our older communities. This was set up to meet the needs of people in need of company along the principles of "love thy neighbour" (Appendix 5).



TUESDAY AT TEN

We recognise the wider role of the Anna Chaplaincy initiative and our Assistant Curate, Jill, is trained in this area and working at Deanery level. As a Benefice we are keen to draw upon this experience as we continue to work with our older communities. We recognise that more could be done to meet the needs of this area of our church work in the years ahead which may involve working in different ways.

OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY

The wider communities surrounding our churches have been expanding in recent years as new housing has been and continues to develop. We recognise that additional outreach is needed beyond that which we already do, to make our presence more visible. Our two parish magazines are currently distributed across the parishes, in the case of St John the Baptist, free to all homes within the parish and in the case of St Nicholas for a small annual fee. Both parish magazines are freely available on the respective church websites.

The main outreach beyond that previously highlighted is in the form of annual events. The St Nicholas church fête takes place each summer and in the case of St John the Baptist, the annual Shindig takes place in September offering an afternoon of music and activities. Both events are designed for church members and the wider communities in which we reside. St Nicholas also hold an annual Carol Service in the centre of Wickham.





ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCHYARD TEAM

The Study Centre at St John the Baptist provides an ideal meeting place for groups and organisations. In addition to existing groups, a recently formed Mindful Stitch group meets once a month bringing together members of the church and the wider community. There is scope for greater use of this resource as well as the Church Room at St Nicholas and for the development of events that might appeal across the generations, enabling our outreach activities to be expanded.

Our church grounds surrounding our buildings are providing excellent ways of reaching out to people beyond our usual congregations. They are used and worked in by a wide range of people both within and beyond our local communities. Our volunteers work regularly within them and are proud of what



SHEDFIELD STUDY CENTRE

has been achieved in terms of their management. They offer peaceful reflective spaces for all who visit. They are also used by some of the local younger uniformed services as part of their programme of activities.

Both churches support a range of organisations as part of their mission, from food donations through to financial giving. Our current outreach activities would not be possible without a team of dedicated volunteers who contribute to so many aspects of church life (Appendix 5). Each will benefit from the experience of a committed leader able to work with them in their contribution of gifts and talents to the overall mission of the Benefice moving forwards.

We recognise, given our respective locations, that we need to make ourselves more visible to our wider communities and find new ways of communicating, to fulfil our outreach ambitions in the coming years.

NEXT STEPS

We are at an exciting point in our journey which as in all parts of life is not without challenges. We are, however, keen to welcome new people into our church communities and embrace new opportunities as they arise. We are looking to work in partnership with you as we increase support to our four areas of mission:

- Worship and ministry
- Young people and families
- Supporting older communities
- Outreach opportunities

Do please consider joining and leading us in this next stage of our journey as we seek to grow and spread the word of God.



BRINGING OUR COMMUNITIES TOGETHER IN WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP AT CAFÉ CHURCH

MEET THE TEAM



LEFT TO RIGHT: FRED, CAROL, JILL, ADRIAN, JULIA J, JULIA B, ROSEMARY AND STEPHEN

JILL PHIPPS – ASSISTANT CURATE

I am the Assistant Curate for the Benefice, having been ordained at the end of June 2024. I live in the neighbouring village of Swanmore with my husband and dog and enjoy going into our Church schools and Pre-Schools to lead worship and get involved with other activities. I am also an Anna Chaplain for the Deanery, coming alongside older people in our communities and care homes, and working with others to offer spiritual care and support for those in later life and their families.

STEPHEN CAMPION – LAY MINISTER/READER

I was licensed as Lay Minister/Reader in 2001 and granted Permission to Officiate on reaching the age of 70 in 2020. I have served as Deanery sub-warden of Readers, member of the Portsmouth Diocese Readers Board, member of the Deanery Synod and Mission and Pastoral Committees, Benefice Ministry Team, PCC and am a longstanding member of the combined church choir. I play a major role in developing Lay worship leaders locally and within the Deanery. I am an experienced preacher, supporting ordained ministers by



leading a range of non-eucharistic services from Choral Evensong to Cafe Church and funeral ministry. I was appointed Chaplain to the mayor of Winchester in the year 2023/4, the first non-ordained minister to hold that position. I had a professional career background in NHS management, with outside interests including Chairmanship of the Botley Choral Society, music, playing golf (badly!) and discovering new walks in the Hampshire countryside.

CAROL HOTCHKISS – CHURCH WARDEN, ST JOHN THE BAPTIST
The role of the Church Warden is purely voluntary, and I was asked to support the position following retirement from a full career in the Civil Service. I already played an active role in the Church, being a member of many of the groups and affiliations such as the Mothers' Union and supporting many of the congregational activities including the Flower team. I know many of the congregation as friends and although I knew nothing about the financial and business responsibilities for the parish, it was clear that I would be a great asset to the team offering a congregational opinion to any decisions based on the running of the parish and maintenance of the Church. I also support everyday activities including weddings, christenings and funerals as well as ensuring the calibration and restoration of the church contents for prosperity. I live close to the church and the location is often considered a "bonus" to the position where I nurture the relationship the church has with its congregation and its associated school – looking for or supporting activities to open the church doors to all members of the local community.

ADRIAN JORDAN – CHURCHWARDEN, ST JOHN THE BAPTIST
I have been a regular worshipper at St John the Baptist Church since 2001. Soon after joining the church, I became secretary to the PCC and in 2006 was invited to be Churchwarden; a post I have held for a total of 13 years having served for 5 years from 2006 until 2011 and then from 2016 to the present day. For the last six years I have been a member of Bishop's Council and recently elected to the Deanery Synod Standing Committee. I

was made a Lay Canon in 2021. My activities in the church include singing in the church choir, playing in the music group and playing the organ on occasions. Away from church I am a recently retired dental practitioner having spent the majority of my career as a Royal Navy Dental Officer. My hobbies include sailing dinghies and yachts, woodturning, and all sorts of DIY.

ROSEMARY CRANE – CHURCHWARDEN AND VERGER ST NICHOLAS
I am the verger and one of the two church wardens of St Nicholas church. I am pretty much a novice for both! I see my role as helping take care of the practical aspects of church life allowing the clergy to concentrate on the theological. I feel privileged to have this role and I enjoy it. I am also the churchwarden, a role that I never expected or felt capable of. A vacancy occurred, and I was asked if I would step up. It's a steep learning curve which, with so much help from the other church wardens in the benefice, I am hopefully ascending. I feel very blessed to be able to take an active part in the life of our benefice. I have lived in Wickham for 40 years and feel this helps towards making a contribution.

FRED CROSSKEY – CHURCHWARDEN, ST NICHOLAS
I became a Christian in my teens while living in Croydon. I worshipped at Anglican and Baptist churches until approximately 1995 when I joined Emmanuel Church, South Croydon, becoming a Deputy Churchwarden in 2010. I was also a voluntary Trustee/Director of a local Day Centre for the retired and on the committee of my local Residents' Association for nearly half a century. I have recently become a member of the Lay Worship Leaders team. I was a solicitor specialising in property law from 1965 to 2010, then worked part-time for a property development and management company until moving to Fareham in 2016 to be near my two daughters and their families. I have three surviving grandchildren and have recently become a great-grandfather. When not engaged in church or family life, I have long been a student of aviation history, including making model aircraft, cooking (and eating), enjoying classical music, and am well known for my insane sense of humour, founded upon Tony Hancock, Kenneth Horne and the Goons.

JULIA JORDAN – VERGER, ST JOHN THE BAPTIST AND BENEFICE SAFEGUARDING OFFICER
I have been the Verger and Sacristan at St John the Baptist Church for 5 years this Christmas Day having helped the previous Verger for a couple of years.



My role as Verger is to make sure the church is ready for the services so that they hopefully run smoothly for the Ministry team. I have a small group of enthusiastic volunteers who help keep the church open every day for private prayer and who help me maintain the vestments and altar linen. Our biggest project to date is an Ordinary time altar frontal to commemorate the King's coronation. I am also the Benefice Safeguarding Officer and occasional choir member. I have lived in Waltham Chase one of the 3 villages that make up the parish of Shedfield for 23 years and have worshipped and served in some capacity at St John's for most of that time.

JULIA BURGESS – DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

I have lived in Hampshire all my life and began attending St John the Baptist Church aged 11 as a chorister. At the age of 14, I took on the role of Organist in partnership with my father and then became overall Director of Music two years later. Following the merger of the two parish choirs to create the Benefice Choir in 2023, I became Choir Director of the newly formed choir while retaining the post of Organist at St John's. I am a teacher of the Year 5 and 6 class at West Meon Primary School where I have worked for over twenty years. In my spare time, I enjoy reading historical fiction, visiting historic sites in the UK, and walking in the beautiful Hampshire countryside.

In recent years we have found new ways of working. The Benefice currently benefits from a joint Safeguarding Officer and a volunteer Parish Life Events Officer.

LIVING HERE – THE COMMUNITY



All four villages within the Benefice have active communities offering many different clubs and societies, some of which are linked to the churches directly and others run within the wider community. Both parishes are well served by transport links being near to the M27/M3 and Southampton Airport as well as having good rail links to surrounding areas. There are also good bus services to Fareham and Winchester. Being a semi-rural area, the Meon Valley offers excellent opportunities for outdoor pursuits such as walking, cycling, horse riding and golf and the Solent is almost on the doorstep providing access to a wide range of water sports.

The villages have the benefit of easy access to healthcare, primary and secondary schools, retail facilities and entertainment. Within the area there are also two Methodist churches, a Catholic church in neighbouring Bishops Waltham and the Wessex Jamaat Al Mahdi Centre at Funtley.

- [Meon valley – South Downs leaflet](#)
- [Visit Hampshire](#)

THE HOUSE

The Rectory is situated behind St. Nicholas' Church in Wickham. It was built on the edge of the churchyard and adjacent to the carpark about thirty-five years ago with a fenced garden, an integral single garage and two storage outhouses. The entrance lobby gives access to a large study, and a further door leads into the family rooms consisting of a lounge, dining room, kitchen, and utility room on the ground floor and four bedrooms on the first floor. There is gas central heating and an open fireplace in the lounge.



WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR

CAN YOU SEE ANYTHING OF YOURSELF IN THIS IMAGE?



PERSON SPECIFICATION

For the next stage of our journey, we are looking for someone who is:

- An enthusiastic and gifted leader with a strong personal faith, able to build relationships and engage with the whole community.
- An effective communicator, preacher and teacher able to lead us all on our continuing journey in faith and love.
- Able to maintain a good balance between ministerial work and opportunities for personal devotion, enabling a good work life balance and encouraging others to do the same.
- Able to support and empower the continuing development of lay ministry within the Benefice.
- Willing and has ability to continue working with our local schools, engaging with young people in a way that brings faith alive.
- Compassionate and caring with a calling towards pastoral care and a deep understanding of the needs of elderly communities.



- Able to connect with local communities and organisations and enhance the visible presence of our churches.
- Able to embrace different styles of service provision and willing to try new things and respond to feedback.
- Friendly and approachable and able to engage with all ages to help support and develop their faith.
- Organised and flexible in their use of time, with the ability to prioritise and recognise and utilise the gifts and talents of others.
- Willing to support and take an active part in Deanery matters.
- Able to look at current activities within the Benefice and identify alternative approaches which will benefit our overall mission.

In summary we are looking for a leader who has enthusiasm, sensitivity, respect, and a sense of humour enabling them to connect and engage with all members of our community.

APPENDIX 1 THE CHURCHES



ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, SHEDFIELD

Shedfield parish, with a population of approximately 4000 consists of three villages: Shedfield, Shirrell Heath and Waltham Chase.

OUR HISTORY AND BUILDINGS

The church of St John the Baptist in the village of Shedfield was consecrated in 1880 and is Grade II* listed. Prior to this there was an 1820 Chapel of Ease, the remains of which in the form of The Old Tower lie within the church



boundaries. The existing Victorian church has an active bell tower that is used by visiting ringers in addition to regular use at our own services. The churchyard and its buildings lie within the Shedfield Conservation Area.

There have been very few changes to the church building over the years, except for the addition of a wooden chancel screen and the creation of the priest and choir vestries. The inside of the building has distinctive red brickwork, and the exterior is stone clad. It seats up to 450 people using a combination of wooden pews and upholstered chairs. The font located towards the rear of the church allows for 'baptism in the round'. The church is opened daily by volunteers for private prayer and reflection.

*'I can enter the church at any time and on any day and I feel a warm embrace, a feeling of being at home'.
(Member of church congregation)*

The Study Centre, built in 2003 and the inspiration of Rev Geoffrey Morrell, is regarded as an important asset. Managed by a small committee, it supports our outreach work as well as meeting the needs of the church community. It consists of a large hall, a smaller meetings room, kitchen, toilets and a parish office. The Study Centre is used for a range of functions such as celebrations, private hire, away days and some services, but there is scope for greater use in the years ahead.



Waltham Chase Village Hall was built on church land and is overseen by the church wardens, administration trustees and the incumbent.

Following the 2021 Quinquennial Inspection all matters that were raised have been attended to. Day to day maintenance not requiring external professional involvement is carried out by volunteers supported by our Health and Safety Officer who reports to the PCC. The church is well maintained, in part due to the excellent work of the Faculties Officer and two very active Churchwardens. In addition, the Verger is supported by several small teams who help with internal activities such as cleaning and maintenance of linen and altar frontals. The flower team develop and maintain floral arrangements throughout the year and offer their support for weddings and funerals as requested. We are very fortunate in that the church is currently being documented by the Church Recorders providing us with a permanent record of our relatively short, but rich, history.

CHURCH GROUNDS

The last few years have seen extensive work conducted within the church grounds by a team of volunteers. We are a bronze award Eco Church and are keen for the churchyard to be managed alongside sound ecological principles. The grounds contain a memorial garden for the interment of ashes. Recent work has been designed to not only encourage wildlife and diversify habitats, but also to provide a welcoming and reflective space for visitors (Appendix 5).

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

Whilst the position of the church within one of three villages is not without its challenges in terms of mission, it does support a range of parish life events. In 2023 there were 10 baptisms, 6 weddings, 15 funerals and 9 interments of ashes. A prayer chain is managed by a lay member of the church, ensuring that prayers are offered for all that request them. This is advertised via a weekly email called 'Being Church Together – At Home'.

The Boucher Trust supports the educational and spiritual needs of the parishioners as well as the Study Centre. The Franklyn Harvey Charitable Trust is administered by the incumbent and Church Wardens and supports educational needs within the Parish. It has recently donated £750 to assist pupils from poorer families in participating in all school activities.



Our church would not be the community it is without our dedicated volunteers who embrace opportunities for new outreach projects.

FINANCES

The church finances are currently sustainable, and we have been able to contribute our full parish share in recent years as well as maintaining the needs of our building (appendix 6).

LINKS

stjohnthebaptistshedfield.org.uk

ST NICHOLAS, WICKHAM

Wickham, with a current population of around 4500, is a historic market village, previously a Saxon settlement and a Roman outpost. The second largest medieval market square in England forms its heart. There are small businesses and a few independent shops, together with a sub-Post Office and banking facilities in the Co-op. Its facilities make it a popular centre for surrounding communities. The Square is also the venue for events such as A Taste of Wickham, at which the Church has a presence. Our large Community Centre near the Square offers a wide range of activities and there is a variety of sports facilities within easy



reach. Each year local uniformed organisations, especially the Royal British Legion, Scouts, Cubs, Beavers and Squirrels, take a leading role in the Remembrance Sunday service, and there is a Garden of Remembrance on the village green opposite the Church. Since 2006 the village has been the venue for the popular annual family friendly Wickham Festival.

Despite initial appearances, there are issues of deprivation, and some social divisions exist. There is an imbalance to the housing stock following large scale building of Council homes prior to 1970. That has been partially redressed by the construction of over 250 new houses since 2000. More significantly planning consent has been given by Fareham Borough Council for the development of “Welborne Garden Village”, comprising some 6000 homes. This will extend almost to the Wickham boundary and will inevitably impact on the whole area.

We are proud that St. Nicholas met the challenge of an initiative set by the Bishop of Portsmouth and created one of the first Community Land Trusts in the country. In 2012 the Trust acquired eight homes in Houghton Gardens, followed by a further ten properties in Wykeham Vale in 2023. These all now provide affordable housing to local people.



OUR HISTORY AND BUILDINGS

The church has a prominent position beside the A32, but unfortunately on the opposite side from the village centre. Many attempts to persuade the authorities to install a roundabout or other traffic control measures have been without result. It is believed this may be a contributory factor to the limiting of attendance, particularly of children and more elderly local residents.

The church dates to the 12th Century and is a Grade II* Listed Building. Much is in Early English style, with some significant 13th Century features. Various additions have been made, such as the south transept in the 17th Century, and the outer flint cladding was added in the Victorian era, at which time the tower was moved forward by several feet to enable the installation of the current peal of six bells. In 2004, a glass screen, strikingly etched by a local artist was installed to make the Lady Chapel suitable for small meetings or private prayer.

The nave has pew seating for 100 and the two transepts will accommodate a further 75 on portable chairs. In the south transept is a notable monument to a 17th Century Lord of the Manor. The organ is sited on a mezzanine floor at the west end of the church with access from the bell-ringing chamber.

The Church Room, built in the 1970s with a kitchen and toilets, is immediately adjacent to the door into the north transept and is accessible to the disabled. It is used on Friday evenings for

choir practice, once a month on Saturday mornings for the Men's Breakfast, and at other times by church and other groups.

The churchyard is nearly at full capacity, but a survey carried out in 2023 to confirm and realign the eastern boundary has yielded some more precious spaces, and a recent discovery of burial records in the Winchester Records Office may enable the identification of further spaces within the churchyard itself. Grass mowing is undertaken by two local contractors, and other gardening is undertaken by a team of dedicated helpers. The Garden of Remembrance in which ashes are interred is tended by a local resident. There is a small carpark opposite the Rectory.

The last Quinquennial Inspection took place in 2021, and satisfyingly commenced with comments by the Architect congratulating the Churchwardens and PCC on the high standard of maintenance of the Church buildings. Most of the repairs recommended have been carried out; but with an ancient building we need to be aware that defects will inevitably arise from time to time. A new servery will be installed in the north transept following completion of decoration works later this year, enabling refreshments to be offered after services.

The Friends of St Nicholas (Appendix 5), founded in 2008 by members of the Men's Breakfast group, have provided a total of £35,000 over the years towards the major repairs and we are fortunately able to call on local craftsmen to undertake minor repairs at reasonable cost, in addition to generous help given by skilled members of the congregation. Our draft 2023 accounts (Appendix 6) show healthy reserves, more than sufficient to enable us to carry out our planned maintenance and improvement plans.



APPENDIX 2 KEY DATA

Key data 2023	St John the Baptist, Shedfield	St Nicholas, Wickham
Parish population	Approx 4000	Approx 4500
Number on electoral roll	78	108
Number on electoral roll outside of parish	19	23
Baptisms	10	6
Weddings	6	0
Funerals	15	17
Interment of ashes	9	6
Average congregation attending Sunday 10am service (bi-monthly)	67	60
Number serving on PCC	14	10

APPENDIX 3 PATTERN OF WORSHIP

	8 am	10 am	Afternoon/evening
1st Sunday		Wickham: Communion (Benefice Choir)	
2nd Sunday	Shedfield: Holy Communion	Shedfield: The Sunday Service (Benefice Choir/Music Group)	6 pm Evensong (alternating between Shedfield and Wickham)
3rd Sunday	Wickham: Holy Communion	Wickham: The Sunday Service (Benefice Choir/Music Group)	
4th Sunday		Shedfield: Communion (Benefice Choir)	
5th Sunday	Wickham: Holy Communion	Shedfield: Café Church (Music Group)	Evensong (choir led)

- 8 o'clock Holy Communion: a short service of Communion alternating between churches and using traditional language.
- The Sunday Service: less formal service with music group, hymns, reflection and prayerful space.
- 10 o'clock Communion
- Café Church: Coffee and croissants followed by informal talk or discussion and all age worship led by the Music Group.
- Evensong: sung Evensong with sermon

APPENDIX 4 LOCAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

St John the Baptist C of E Primary School serves the three villages within the parish and is in Waltham Chase having moved from the site opposite the church which is now occupied by Fairlands Nursery. Both the school and the nursery make use of the church building particularly around Advent and help with the creation of decorations each year at Harvest. The school was rated 'good' following an Ofsted inspection in 2023 and there is strong church representation on the Board of Governors in the form of Lay Foundation Governors. The school has approximately 270 pupils on roll and its community is built on Christian values of trust, respect and friendship. The Mothers' Union has strong active links with the school. At Christmas time we provide the teachers with Christingle supplies for the children to construct their own Christingles during school to take home. We also help with their Easter projects, often supplying greenery for Easter gardens.

- stjohnthebaptistprimary.co.uk

WICKHAM C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

There are strong links with the school, both in representation on the Board of Governors, members of the church volunteering in giving diverse help as assistants and members of the clergy team taking part in assemblies. The Christian core values of the school are Love, Courage and Respect and it was rated as "good" in the Ofsted inspection at the end of 2023. It currently has 311 pupils, (including the pre-school which it took over from private ownership in 2022). Many of the pupils are seen in the Church on various occasions, such as Christmas, Easter,

and Leavers' services. Members of the congregation are happy to spend time with groups of pupils in the church as part of their RE curriculum. As Covid made it impossible to hold most of the events planned to mark the 900th Anniversary the Church donated the funds held, namely £5000, to the school for its new library project.

- wickham-primary.co.uk



DECORATING FOR CHRISTMAS BY LOCAL PRIMARY SCHOOL



APPENDIX 5 CHURCH GROUPS

MUSIC ACROSS THE BENEFICE

Following the merger of the choirs of Wickham and Shedfield churches, the Benefice Choir was formed in January 2023. Over twenty loyal and enthusiastic members meet each Friday to rehearse for weekly services, singing Communion and non-Eucharistic services in both churches. The choir also leads the singing at weddings and funerals if requested. Traditional Christmas Carol services and a devotional Good Friday service are held as well as social occasions such as a popular 'Hymns and Pimms' event, a Wickham tradition restarted after the pandemic.

Services at both churches are accompanied by the organ or piano and at Shedfield, a small but talented group of musicians lead the music for the non-Eucharistic 'Sunday service' and Café Church on a 5th Sunday.

MOTHERS' UNION

The branch at St John the Baptist is very active regarding church activities. With a current membership of 22, we hold monthly meetings that come in different forms, with speakers, crafts, film discussions, trips or time for a coffee and a chat. We also regularly hold fundraising bake sales. Many of our members are also active in other areas of church life with the choir, church yard upkeep, church flowers and two members also oversee the lunch club and Tuesdays at Ten. Another important part of the life of the branch is the connection with the local school joining in with many of their projects and providing support to parents and teachers.

The St Nicholas branch with a membership of 12 holds monthly meetings, one or two fundraising events during the year and provides support to their local school with reading, crafts and cookery.

Both branches of the Mothers' Union put together 'Bags of Love' in September of each year for the local Primary schools. Each bag contains a tea bag, tissues, and biscuits as well as a prayer and a small information sheet. These are given, along with a small posy of flowers, to parents or carers whose children are entering Year R.

TUESDAYS AT TEN

Tuesdays at Ten meets monthly at St John the Baptist Study Centre providing a comfortable place for lonely people to engage in conversation and take part in a varied programme such as crafts, games, quizzes or reading of newspapers.

A hot cup of tea or coffee with a toasted tea cake is always welcomed.

The principle of "love thy neighbour" is the motivation and there are various skilled church members who listen and converse with members of the group.

Many of the members who have no transport are picked up by the Lions' minibus.

PARISH LUNCH

Shedfield Lunch Club is held on the first Tuesday of each month in the Study Centre and started in 2004. We have a team of seven people whose skills range between peeling vegetables, laying tables, cooking, serving and washing-up. We have several drivers who bring those who do not have transport. We are a cheerful group who enjoy working together. There are 48 names on our register, and we average 40 each month, plus the helpers, so we cater for 50. We charge £5 and serve a roast dinner and pudding, followed by tea or coffee. We are known for our excellent roast potatoes! As we do not pay for the use of the Study Centre, we are able to cover our costs more easily. We feel we are an excellent example of outreach, especially as many of the people who come are not regular church goers but so enjoy coming for their lunch and a chat. It is always a happy occasion.

'Lunch club is very much appreciated and enjoyed'

WICKHAM MEN'S BREAKFAST

Towards the end of 2007 an article in the parish magazine tentatively suggested that the men of the parish might take a leaf out of the ladies' book and start a men's group to discuss matters of State and put the world to rights. The



proposal struck a chord, and in January 2024 we celebrated our seventeenth birthday. The pattern, set by one of the founding members, provides a mildly alcoholic aperitif and a wholesome breakfast followed by a talk from either one of us or a guest speaker, and the range of subjects is quite astounding.

With no idea of the cost of a meeting we plucked a figure out of the air and set a fee of £5 per monthly meeting. We were surprised to find that we were gradually building a fairly substantial reserve, and on our first anniversary we were able to divide £350 in donations to the Friends of St Nicholas and Help for Heroes. Times have changed and we have increased the fee, but we can now make a grant where a talk is given on behalf of a charity and our Christmas donations to the Friends and other charities have risen.

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST'S CHURCH MEN'S GROUP

St John the Baptist's Church Men's Group was created over 30 years ago by the then vicar, the Rev Geoff Morrell. It was set up, and continues, as a group for men to meet and take part in social activities, with annual events, such as Maurice's quiz, fun wine tasting, Safari Supper, social rambles to name a few...plus the highlight of the year when the group come together to create an amazing Mothering Sunday Breakfast complete with table service and smartly dressed waiters. The group are also commonly called upon as the church work force, when everything from erecting the Church Christmas Trees to putting up Gazebos and Marquees for the annual Shedfield Shindig are required. In more recent years the group's activities have become more and more open to all who form part of the St John the Baptist's Church family regardless of age or gender.

CHURCHYARD TEAMS

The St John the Baptist team which currently numbers eight regular members, gathers on Monday mornings each week, reasonable weather permitting. Others join in occasionally when they visit or when work permits, and all are most welcome to

join us. We also hold one late summer session of mass strimming at which cake and coffee feature strongly! A way of working together seems to have evolved rather than being dictated, and we all learn from each other. We have built compost heaps and repaired wooden and stone structures. Our team also care for the graves ensuring they are visible and safe to access. All the grave memorials have been checked and recorded and this has enabled us to provide information for family historians looking into their ancestry. An annual maintenance plan is followed so that the normal business of a churchyard can take place easily and safely. We work with nature, and time our activities to fit in with the seasons and the needs of the flora and fauna. Paths and benches provide places for visitors to wander or to sit and enjoy the peace and beauty of the churchyard which is part of a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation area (SINC).

At St Nicholas the churchyard is greatly valued and appreciated by the congregation. Despite being bounded by 2 very busy roads, it is for many a place of tranquillity and for quiet contemplation. 14 volunteers, who work in pairs, form a team who undertake regular tidying and maintenance of the churchyard. Twice a year the whole congregation are encouraged to enjoy a morning of churchyard care – clearing leaves in the autumn and preparing for the summer in the spring. These sessions have become a social event with much enjoyed refreshments and community involvement.

BELLRINGERS

Although our band has a reduced number of regular ringers, we still continue to ring for all the church services held at St John the Baptist. We ring both call changes as well as methods usually on either 6 or 8 of the bells. We have visitors who ring for us on events such as weddings (so we can ring all 8 of our bells), to celebrate the King's Coronation and Christmastide as well as at our regular Tuesday evening practices.

Some of our ringers join Wickham for their practice nights and events such as ringing in the New Year. We have also been supporting the new Droxford band, who formed for the "Ring for the King". In December, handbell ringing was arranged for some of the Tuesdays at Ten participants, who enjoyed themselves in ringing 3 simple carols. We have had visits to the ringing chamber by groups of Shedfield Cubs who had fun chiming the bells safely



using the Ellacombe apparatus. Each year our tower hosts 2 or 3 visiting bands as well as our bells being used by those participating in District and Guild Education. The bells have been inspected by Whites of Appleton and it has been recommended that the bells are rehung.

St Nicholas has a bell tower housing a peal of 6 bells dating from 1767. We have a well-established and enthusiastic team of bellringers who ring before the main Sunday service and also for weddings and funerals by arrangement and for special occasions by request. A regular weekly practice is held on Thursday evenings. The ringers actively participate in training and other events organised by the Portsmouth District of the Winchester and Portsmouth Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers.

FRIENDS OF ST NICHOLAS

The Friends are an organisation dedicated to preserving this 900-year-old church as a historic part of our village. If St Nicholas is to remain in good repair we need the local community and visitors to help. To become a Friend all you need do is make an annual subscription of a minimum of £10 per person, more if you are able. That's it, no big fundraising efforts or coffee mornings. You, as a member, have a say in how our money is spent, usually at our AGM, which takes place in April. We are independent of the PCC and consider their requests for help.

What we have achieved so far. The total given by the Friends to the PCC to date is £30,374.21.

APPENDIX 6 FINANCES

Click the links below to view the financial reports for both churches:

- [Annual Report for St John the Baptist, Shedfield](#)
- [Annual Accounts for St Nicholas, Wickham](#)



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, 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.

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.





Diocese of Portsmouth

Jesus-centred, Kingdom-seeking



WALTHAM CHASE 1 $\frac{3}{4}$

SOBERTON 2

WICKHAM 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
SHEDFIELD 1

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THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND