



Freshwater, Yarmouth & Totland Bay

PROFILE



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



Diocese
of Portsmouth



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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 in the cluster of Freshwater, Yarmouth and Totland Bay 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.'

Jonathan Portsmouth

Colossians 3: 12-13



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



'THE CALL OF THE ISLE'

Three growing parishes want to welcome a Team Vicar to the West Wight Benefice

A UNESCO Biosphere, the Isle of Wight is famous for its natural beauty, active living and creativity including arts and music and crafts.



Part of the West Wight Benefice, the churches of Freshwater, Yarmouth and Totland Bay form the FYT Parishes – one of three 'clusters' in a Benefice of 12 churches. These three parishes are the most populous in the Benefice and are actively engaged in their local communities, working across the generations alongside their ecumenical partners.

Building on the work already achieved we are looking for a minister:

- who understands and has an appetite for ministry in a semi-rural setting
- who will inspire, shape and lead us as we grow



- whose ministry is shaped and informed by scripture and the practice of prayer
- who has experience of growing churches (in a multi-parish context)
- can develop and support our ministry in our church school/s
- is a good communicator, competent with IT and online administrative and operational processes

In return we offer:

- A supportive and experienced team of colleagues who minister within the 12 churches that comprise the West Wight Benefice
- The support and prayers of our congregations
- Opportunities to grow and develop in your own ministry
- A modern, recently refurbished Vicarage



ROLE & PERSON SPECIFICATION

ROLE

Under the responsibility of the Team Rector, the Team Vicar will:

- be a key member of the benefice Leadership Team with primary responsibility for the parishes of Freshwater, Yarmouth and Totland Bay (the FYT Parishes);
- lead worship and occasional offices across the FYT Parishes and occasionally within the wider benefice if required;
- enable the churches to implement the FYT Parishes Mission Action Plan (MAP) as well as the MAPs of the individual parishes;
- be a visible sign of Christ's presence in the community and demonstrate a clear understanding of rural and semi-rural ministry;
- lead by example – befriending, teaching and inspiring the churches to grow together in faith;
- Develop lay ministry, supporting and releasing the gifts of all in sharing ministry and pastoral care, whilst strengthening discipleship;
- work in the power and grace of the Holy Spirit with colleagues in the benefice, deanery and diocese;
- support the diocesan strategy to “Revive, Revitalise and Renew” and the diocesan vision to be “a rejuvenating community of Jesus-centred, Kingdom-seeking disciples”;
- share in developing an effective Ministry in the schools of the Benefice and ensure the highest protection of children and vulnerable adults in accordance with diocesan protocols and guidelines;

- maintain a discipline of prayer and study and hold a belief that Scripture should be at the heart of ministry;
- join the benefice clergy team in weekly prayer and planning.

PERSON

The successful applicant will:

- have a passion for sharing the Good News of Jesus;
- have an ability to listen, understand and help to broaden and deepen people's relationship with God;
- inspire, shape and lead the parishes in accordance with the aims of the Mission Action Plans of the FYT Parishes;
- demonstrate an effective understanding of the challenges of working in rural ministry and with older communities;
- be able to engage with modern administrative processes and possess a working knowledge of the use of social media and other electronic means of spreading the Good News of Jesus;
- be able to lead the churches creatively into growth through teaching, worship, pastoral care, home groups and be able to engage with wider community;
- have the ability to engage with children and families and our Church of England schools;
- be collaborative and flexible in ministry and outlook – working closely with colleagues, offer and receive support when needed and above all to pray and worship together;
- recognise that scripture must be at the heart of all that we seek to achieve;
- be supportive of the notion of 'every member ministry', recognising the importance of lay ministry.



FRESHWATER

Freshwater Parish is a wonderful place to live and work. We have some of the best scenery in England. We are surrounded by towering cliffs and beautiful beaches, rolling farmland and forests. We also enjoy a slower pace of life than much of the country. We have a generous, community-spirited congregation who are looking for an experienced, charismatic and energetic leader who can own and enhance our mission, grow our congregations and take us forward to inspire the next generation.



We serve the parish population of Freshwater including Freshwater village, Freshwater Bay, Colwell, Compton, Afton, Middleton, Norton and Norton Green, totalling 5600 (2021 Census, arcgis.com), of which 20% are under 30, nearly 50% are aged 30-70, and 30% are over 70.

The West Wight Parishes of Freshwater, Totland Bay and Yarmouth are known informally as the FYT Parishes. The FYT Parishes are, in turn, part of the West Wight Benefice which stretches East to West from Calbourne to Totland Bay and

North to South from Newtown to Shorwell and Kingston. Oversight of the West Wight Benefice falls to The Team Rector: Reverend Jackie Maw.

The benefice is supported by Associate Priest Mark Pullinger, Curate Charlotte Hudd and a dedicated team of Lay Worship Leaders and Pastoral Assistants.

OUR CHURCHES



All Saints, our parish church, dates back in part, to Saxon times and has been a centre of its community for many years. The sprawling churchyard, covering some 5 acres, bears witness to many generations of families including some famous names (Emily, Lady Tennyson, Alfred Lord Tennyson's wife is buried here and there is a bust of the poet in the building. Other historical links include the Victorian artist G F Watts and eminent scientist Robert Hooke). Visitors are attracted to the history of the building and often comment on its beauty and peace. Like all ancient buildings it consumes money and needs some serious investment. Fundraising is regular but the income is not enough to cover the larger projects. We hope that new ideas and new leadership may help with this. Sunday services are joyful and prayerful, we host a regular congregation



of some 40 souls, more on communion Sundays and during holidays when we often have visitors.



St Agnes, our daughter church, is one of the very few thatched churches in the UK and the only one on the Isle of Wight. Nestling at the foot of Tennyson Down, St Agnes is a beautiful stone church that was built in 1908, through public subscription, on land donated by the Tennyson Family for the people of Freshwater Bay and the surrounding area. Loved by the local community and visitors alike, the small church has hosted many weddings over the years.

PARISH HALL AND RECTORY CHAPEL

We also have a Parish Hall which is used comprehensively by the local community for regular events and one-off functions. The hall is in need of some major enhancements and fundraising is key to this. A small, dedicated team look after the hall and also the attached Rectory chapel which has, in the past, been used for mid-week services. As part of the Hall building there is a small cottage currently rented out which brings additional income to the Parish.

CONGREGATIONS, WORSHIP AND TRADITIONS

Both All Saints and St Agnes are traditional worshipping communities and both periodically step out to do something different in order to attract new worshippers.

All Saints Sunday Service Pattern:

- 1st Sunday: Holy Communion, 9:30am
- 2nd Sunday: Morning Worship, 9:30am
- 3rd Sunday: Morning Worship, 9:30am
- 4th Sunday: Morning Worship, 9:30am (generally more family-oriented)

In addition to Sunday services, All Saints regular activities include:

- A monthly morning prayer with soup lunch Twice a month Craft Group
- Once a month Churchyard maintenance Bell Ringers once a week
- Mother's Union once a month (in the Rectory Chapel)
- All Saints Choir once a week All Saints Band once a month

St Agnes Service Pattern:

- 2nd Sunday: Morning Prayer, 8:30am
- 3rd Sunday: Morning Prayer, 8:30am
- 4th Sunday: Holy Communion, 6pm





St Agnes hosts a monthly Contemplative Prayer group in addition to Sunday services

Both churches host weddings, baptisms and funerals with St Agnes being particularly popular for weddings.

Both congregations share in the 5th Sunday services hosted by the wider benefice churches in rotation

CHALLENGES

In common with many rural parishes, our biggest challenges involve financing an aging church building and appealing to our wider community. Following is a SWOT analysis we completed early in 2024 which informed our Parish Mission Action Plan. However, the PCC now believe that some elements no longer apply.

STRENGTHS

- Welcome friendly atmosphere
- Two families at All Saints
- Existing volunteers/paid admin/vicars
- Occasional offices
- Weddings/Funerals/Baptisms
- Lay ministry and gifts for church roles
- Catering and hospitality/MU
- Good relationships with local schools/care homes
- Anna Chaplaincy
- Variety of worship

WEAKNESSES

- All Saints geography
- Lack of parking
- Resistance to change
- Low profile?

- Lack of faith to go forward
- New volunteers/Vicars
- New people with gifts for roles
- Small choir

OPPORTUNITIES

- Historic tours for churches
- InfoPoint (tourism)
- Bulletin/further communication to public
- Pub
- Thatched church (tourism)
- The Freshwater Way (tourism)
- Teaching and house groups
- More opportunities for music – band and choir
- Sound and vision (AV)

THREATS

- Busy families
- Other providers
- Social change
- Fear of being pressured?
- Secular society – fear of being brainwashed
- Finance and lack of money/ready cash



We have a good relationship with our C of E Primary School, we are currently recruiting a new foundation governor. Also, our Anna Chaplain visits all the Care Homes in the local area (more detail in her report to the APCM). We would like to attract a broader section of our local community and we are always looking for ways to bring folk across the threshold.



Our congregations combine fund-raising activities with serving the wider community including activities such as an eclectic mix of musical evenings, the Christmas Tree festival, raffles and coffee mornings and tea and cake events. All are well attended but financially these just keep things ticking over. We have not been able to pay our full Parish share to the Diocese since the pandemic.

At All Saints, we have a number of challenges with regard to the building and ancient masonry which really require capital funding.

St Agnes needs a toilet and the Parish Hall, whilst well used, needs some major work to make it suitable for use by the community in the longer term. We continue to pray for someone from the community to investigate major fundraising for us.

THE PERSON WE ARE LOOKING FOR AND WHAT THEY CAN EXPECT

We believe that anyone applying for this post will need to be an experienced leader with vision and the energy and the charisma to bring the congregation and the wider community with them! Our Mission Action Plan (attached) is ambitious, and a new incumbent will want to put their stamp on it to ensure we can deliver. We are blessed with two Wardens and a strong PCC who support the clergy as well as our LLM and 2 Lay worship leaders.

In addition, the main officers are in place for Electoral Roll, Safeguarding and GDPR as well as a flower team. We also have an Anna Chaplain based in our Parish, and we all benefit from a really active prayer chain of some 25 members. Their reports and others can be found in the APCM report in the appendix.

There are 79 folk on the electoral roll at present, many of whom do voluntary work both for the Churches and the community.

As a Parish we have signed up to the Diocese vision: “to be a rejuvenating community of Jesus-centred, Kingdom-seeking disciples”.

Our own mission is: “living by faith, known by love, a voice of hope to the world”. We have recently completed a wider ‘cluster’ mission plan including our sister Parishes of Yarmouth and Totland.

The FYT (Freshwater, Yarmouth and Totland) parishes have been looked after by one minister but they also contributed to the wider team ministry in the benefice.

The local Methodist and Baptist churches in Freshwater as well as other churches in the region (CTWW churches together in West Wight) do get together as a combined group supporting, for example, the highly regarded West Wight Youth project. I think our Freshwater community would be described in general as friendly and helpful in pretty much any situation regardless of faith.

Our new incumbent will be able to engage with the wider community in many ways.

Whilst we believe that this will be a challenging role, we also know that the congregation will support the new incumbent to the best of their combined ability, and we look forward to the creation of a new team.



YARMOUTH

St James is the parish church of the historic port town of Yarmouth on the north-west corner of the Isle of Wight. Yarmouth is a bustling and vibrant, and yet compact community, and a busy entry and exit point to the beautiful west part of the Island, with its stunning scenery and sunsets throughout the year. In years past Yarmouth, with its castle, stood as a western defence for The Solent.



St James serves a parish population of c475 (282 households) which expands considerably in the summer and sailing months as 2nd home-owners arrive for the season. 25% of the population is under 44 years old (10% < 19 years old), whilst 40% are 70+.

Members of St James' congregation are very integrated with the activities of the town communities and networks with whom it is intrinsically a part, and to whom love, and mission is directed. These include the Lifeboat, Yarmouth Sailing Club, the Royal Solent Yacht Club, the Harbour Commissioners, the Town Council, the Community Hub, the Yarmouth Society and the Carnival Committee which runs various events (e.g. the Shrove Tuesday

Pancake Race, and Carols in the Square (attended by the Bishop of Portsmouth)), as well as a week-long Carnival of a wide range of events for all ages in the summer. The town hosts other annual events which encourage people into the town, such as the Sea Songs weekend at which many groups of singers and shanty singers etc. perform and share their music.

In recent years there was a sadness when the town's primary school was closed. However a new one was built not far away in Freshwater to accommodate Yarmouth children. This is a church school, and actively retains its links with the town and church. The site of the old school is to be developed by a community-led Foundation as a heritage centre for maritime matters and archaeology, with a continuing educational basis.

ST JAMES' CHURCH



The current St James Church was built in 1614, and stands on the corner of the town square, across the road from the Town Hall. A reasonably compact building set in its small churchyard. As with all older building there are always challenges and maintenance work to do, and currently we have a roof project with the accompanying fund-raising activities. We have recently, with a grant from the diocese, been able to install eco-friendly light bulbs throughout the building. The Church Cemetery is separate and placed in the eastern part of the town. There is no Parish Hall, though the local Community Hall, and other institutions offer meeting space.



The church building is visited by many tourists and coach parties, and we are currently working on how we can share our 'story' and presence of history and faith more effectively to all those who visit. There are many things of interest within the building and many visitors arrive with intrigue to see the statue of Robert Holmes, a local dignitary, who acquired a classical statue of Louis XIII, and had his own head carved for the top.

Recently the church tower clock, evident to travellers arriving by land or sea, has had an automatic regulator fitted to help keep a precise reliable time – this was as a result of generous grants given by Town Council and the Harbour Commissioners.

There is a group that meet regularly to maintain the churchyard.

We are currently re-establishing 'The Friend of St James' as a fundraising group for the well-being of the maintenance and future of the building.

WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL LIFE

The worship at St James is generally 'middle-of-road' Anglican, usually accompanied by organ, or piano if more suited to the style of music, Both the Organ and Piano are fine instruments. Currently there is no permanent choir, but we are starting an evening choir helping to lead our newly developing evening services (which follow a time of fellowship with tea and cakes).

The monthly pattern of services is:

- 1st Sunday: Morning Worship (with music), 11am
- 2nd Sunday: Holy Communion (based on Common Worship) – (with music), 11am
- 3rd Sunday: Evening Worship (with music), 4:30pm
- 4th Sunday: BCP The Lord's Supper (said), 8am
- (5th Sunday – there will usually be a Joint Benefice Service in one of the churches.)

A monthly Communion Service takes place at the town's Abbeyfield retirement home.

We are exploring ways to develop more All-age worship in the holiday seasons when more families are around (e.g. in 2024 we re-introduced a Christingle service).

There is currently one home group meeting fortnightly. Weekly in Advent and Lent when it expands to welcome others through the Churches Together seasonal activities. The lively Churches Together also arrange the Good Friday Walk of Witness through Freshwater, and Sunrise Service at Freshwater Bay; as well as paying for a Youth Leader in the group.

The churches of the FYT group take turns to host the annual Remembrance Day service.

There are no other denominational congregations in Yarmouth and so there is a care to be inclusive and welcoming to brothers and sisters across a breadth of church understanding.

There are also annual Bible Study Courses held for the Benefice.

PASTORAL CARE

There is a predominantly elderly population in St James parish, and there is a strong concern that our current pastoral care is developed further for those around. This is seen as an important part of St James' life and mission.

PCC

The life of St James is overseen by an attentive PCC and 2 Church Wardens, currently meeting monthly. It's activities and aspirations can be seen in the Mission Action Plan, and Annual Reports and Accounts that append this profile.

The Electoral Roll stands at 52.

TOTLAND BAY

Totland Bay is the westernmost parish in the diocese and includes the tourist attractions of Colwell Bay, The Needles, Alum Bay and Tennyson Down. Although the church is located at the geographical centre of the parish, the heart of the village is nearly half a mile down the hill. The parish is situated in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and has many SSSIs within its borders.



The population of Totland Bay is 2,854 (2020, ilivehere.co.uk) and is of an older demographic.

There is little employment within the parish, apart from work in care homes, pubs and small convenience stores, and seasonal work in the tourist industry. Nearby Freshwater provides all the basic services with a Health Centre, dentist, library and school. There is a large Tesco supermarket along with local shops including a butchers and fishmongers. Primary aged children who live in Totland generally attend Freshwater and Yarmouth C of E Primary School or possibly St Saviour's RC school. Secondary schools in are found in the larger towns such as Newport/Cowes/Ventnor.

Southern Vectis buses serve the whole island, with one route passing the Christ Church and the Vicarage. The open topped bus to the Needles passes several times a day in summer. There is a local community minibus, the FYTBUS, which operates between Freshwater, Yarmouth and Totland. The county town of Newport, 25 minutes by car, has all the major facilities, including St Mary's Hospital.



WHO WE ARE

Worship at Christ Church fits within the evangelical tradition. We have a talented and dedicated Lay Worship team, who are pleased to lead services at other churches in the Benefice. Our PCC meets 10 times a year and is chaired either by the Minister or by one of the churchwardens. Our main service of Morning Worship takes place on Sundays at 11am and is often lay led 'Worship for All'. Holy Communion is currently on the 3rd Sunday of each month.

WHAT WE DO

A recent newcomer to our church described her first service with us as 'joyous', something, she said, she hadn't known for a long time. We do find real joy in our faith, in the fellowship at Christ Church and in the loving care of our minister,



the Pastoral Care Team and all the members of our church family. Prayer and financial support for mission at home and overseas is a priority of our church life. We enjoy our times together, both during worship and at our other gatherings, often centred around food. As part of our mission, we strive to engage the local community in various ways; 'Our Place Community Café' – tea, coffee, cakes, chat, signposting to support agencies and IT support; serving community meals; Breakfast Church; providing winter warmers – take a coat, scarf, hat or gloves, leave a coat you don't need. Church members are fully supportive of the Freshwater 'Our Place' drop-in-service at the West Wight Sports and Community Centre. We are active partners in the many activities of 'Churches Together in West Wight'.

Music plays a pivotal part in the life and worship of Christ Church; we are blessed to have a gifted organist and a talented and inspirational music director. Our regular choir numbers some 10/15 adults and is augmented for special occasions. The church, with its first-class organ and enviable acoustics is the venue for many organ recitals and concerts, both sacred and secular.

THE BUILDING AND ANNEXE

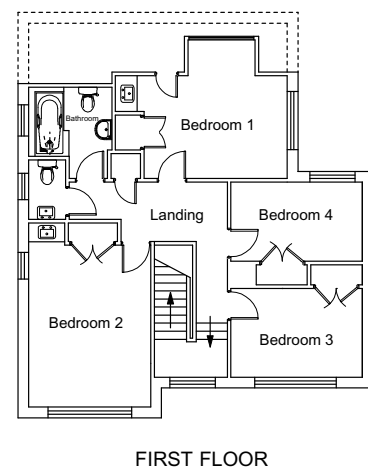
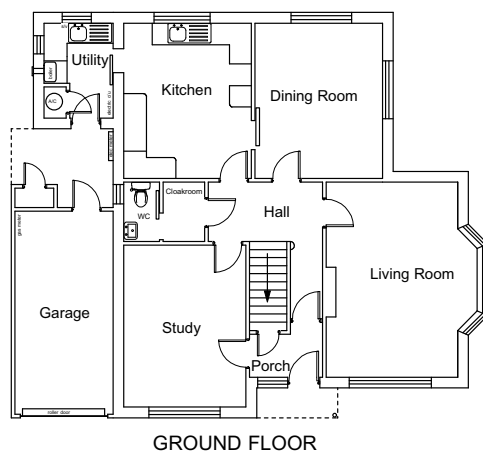
Christ Church was consecrated on August 14th, 1875. Built of Portland stone, the church is in good condition. Major work was undertaken recently to remove the old pews, resulting in the church now being a large welcoming flexible space for services, concerts, events etc. In addition to the church there is an annexe which is used as a meeting place, training and junior church venue. It has a useful kitchen area and is sometimes used for Benefice meetings.



THE VICARAGE

Next door to Christ Church church, is the Vicarage – a fairly modern (1970s), centrally-heated, four-bedroomed house which has undergone a recent renovation. The large garden is mostly laid to lawn with mature hedging and several mature trees. Red squirrels are frequent visitors, along with badgers and foxes.

The gated driveway offers parking for a number of vehicles. Roadside parking is also available. There is access from the Vicarage through a private garden gate to the covered church walkway, affording quick access to the annexe and church office.





APPENDIX: MISSION ACTION PLAN



INTRODUCTION

The Cluster of Freshwater, Yarmouth and Totland (FYT) comprises the whole of the western geographical area of the West Wight Benefice, from Compton and Yarmouth in the east to Alum Bay at the western point.

FRESHWATER

- Freshwater Parish includes Freshwater Village, Freshwater Bay, Compton, Afton, Middleton, Norton and Norton Green. The parish church is All Saints; a daughter church (St Agnes) is at Freshwater Bay; midway there is also a Rectory Chapel and Parish Hall.

YARMOUTH

- Yarmouth Parish is the ancient harbour town, a popular transit point with a substantial number (over half) of second homes. The Parish church is St James.

TOTLAND

- Totland Parish includes Totland Village, Totland Bay and Alum Bay, with Christ Church Totland Bay as the parish church.

All three parishes are active partners of Churches Together in West Wight (CTWW), a flourishing inter-denominational ecumenical partnership of churches in West Wight.

There are two local primary schools: Freshwater and Yarmouth C of E and St Saviours RC.

The area contains ten care homes/supported/sheltered housing centres.

The Sports and Community Centre, Health Centre and the C of E Primary School are all centrally located in Freshwater Village.



The Cluster population is just over 9000, amounting to nearly two-thirds of the resident population of the West Wight Benefice and a relatively dense population.

Across the Cluster, around 13 percent are aged up to 19, with thirty-two percent – or nearly a third – being over 70.

Whilst there are pockets of affluence, the Cluster parishes as a whole would count in the more deprived half of England parishes. (Source: C of E Spotlight data, ArcGIS.com, data from 2021 Census).

CONTEXT

All three parishes in the FYT Cluster subscribe to the Portsmouth Diocese Vision:

“... to be a rejuvenating community of Jesus-centred, Kingdom-seeking disciples.”

In compiling this Mission Action Plan (MAP) we have referred to the National Marks of Mission (Tell, Teach, Tend, Transform, Treasure), the Portsmouth Diocese Vision Strategy of Revive, Revitalise and Renew, and the emerging Isle of Wight Deanery response of Capitalising, Developing, Creating and Planning. These points of reference can inform our work going forward.

THE FYT PARTNERSHIP AND PLAN

A Working Group from the Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) held three meetings early in 2025 to brainstorm and prioritise joint vision themes and actions. See Appendix for Working Group membership.

Parishes of the Cluster have been working together for some years, notably as active partners in the ecumenical Churches Together in West Wight, as well as, more recently, in the Benefice. We see our FYT Cluster partnership as closer working, fluid, offering

mutual support and as an evolving relationship. It will help us focus on what we need to do together and be more keenly aware of what is happening outside our churches.

We see this Mission Action Plan as a working document which will evolve and be regularly reviewed. The focus for now is to do what we do better rather than embarking on a range of new initiatives. The time horizon is three years, allowing for the appointment of a new member of the Benefice clergy and other significant events during that period, and the potential to participate in wider Diocese initiatives e.g. Cairns, Flourish.

KEY THEMES

ENHANCING WORSHIP

This encompasses activities at both Parish and Cluster levels to:

- increase lay worship leadership, complementing the work of the Benefice Team clergy;
- introduce a greater variety of worship styles to attract new worshippers;
- support other functions through the sharing of good practice and training;
- develop the musical side of services as an important strand of our worship.

Specific actions include:

- Fostering, developing and encouraging Lay Worship Leaders, through the sharing of good practice, mutual encouragement and support. This will be backed up by initial and continuous development training from the IoW Deanery and Portsmouth Diocese.
- Introducing and developing themed joint sessions to grow and disseminate good practice e.g. for Intercessors.
- Enhancing and complementing traditional services by:
 - » Including different worship styles e.g. contemplative services such as Taizé; more informal worship sessions; music-based services such as Songs of Praise; Come & Sing services and events.
 - » Developing the musical side of traditional and new style services e.g. broadening the repertoire; extending and developing Parish and Cluster choirs; using different musical styles such as a joint Cluster band.



- » Developing children's choirs, Choir Church where feasible;
- » Trialling other types of service at Parish and Cluster levels e.g. outdoor, weekday.
- » Encouraging and supporting joint working, e.g. occasional Cluster services and worship; Churches Together in West Wight (CTWW) activities such as Lent Groups and lunches.

GROWING DISCIPLES

This encompasses:

- increasing our congregation numbers;
- assisting and supporting the spiritual growth of church members;
- reaching out to our communities through communication, publicity, events.

Some specific activities identified in the development of this plan include:

- Holding lectures, talks and themed sessions for the Cluster.
- Periodically running joint discipleship/Christian faith courses, (e.g. Alpha, Christianity Explored).
- Developing joint home groups such as: Bible Study groups; discussion groups; prayer groups; other support groups (e.g. Coffee & Chat; Bereavement; Carers).
- Introducing, promoting and encouraging joint community/church-based activities.
- Developing and promoting activities that bring members of the local community and younger people into the church and churchyards e.g.: sanctuary/contemplative spaces; prayer labyrinths; wildlife nature trails (within churchyards); use by youth groups such as Scouts, Guides, Brownies etc.

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

This reflects the requirement to increase the churches' presence within their communities and to identify ways in which to support the needs of local groups and individuals of all ages within that community. Activities include:

- Identifying community needs on a continuous basis by:
 - » Developing ways of 'tapping into' local communications via village newsletters; community groups on social media (e.g. Totland & Freshwater Community Group on Facebook).
 - » Strengthening links to key community groups e.g. the Community Connector, Our Place and others.
- Co-ordinating, encouraging and supporting joint links with the local school(s), including church and churchyard tours; Open the Book.
- Co-ordinating, encouraging and developing intergenerational pastoral care activities within the Cluster, including: a shared forum for Lay Pastoral Assistants/teams; supporting outreach within the local care homes; supporting and assisting the development of the Anna Chaplaincy; serving and supporting families through encouraging family-based activities that can take place within the churches, church halls, churchyards.
- Supporting the West Wight Youth Project and team in their activities and future developments (e.g. increased support for younger age groups).

SHARED ACTIONS TO UNDERPIN OUR VISION

The Cluster has agreed a wide range of joint actions, which are important to underpin our vision. The areas are:

- Prayer
- Strengthening communication and co-ordination within the Cluster
- Publicity
- Maintaining and improving buildings and infrastructure (largely a Parish responsibility)
- Sharing of resources.



The associated actions are, in priority order:

- We look for more co-ordination of events in the Cluster via for example, an online diary.
- We seek a greater online presence via social media and websites, including Parish Websites (which can each have a Cluster section).
- We expect to engage in more publicity together, such as exploring an advert on the ferry, or an insert/page in the Community Magazine.
- We look to share expertise and knowledge in the Cluster e.g. IT, social media, building contractors, grant sources etc for which a major early step may be a 'skills and interests' audit.
- We aim for more connection with and involvement in the West Wight Youth Project.

Whilst we do not see the need for a Cluster newsletter in the short term, we will keep this under review, in terms of achieving the aim of outward communication from the Cluster.

As parishes review their administration needs, we will explore the sharing of resources, including shared equipment.

REVIEW

This Mission Action Plan has been approved by the three PCCs during April/May 2025 and will be reviewed at least annually.

DATE: 1st May 2025

FYT CLUSTER MAP WORKING GROUP

Facilitators: Lizzie Hutchinson (Totland), Angela McCullagh (Freshwater)

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

Freshwater:

- Cheril Mayer
- Matthew Akers

Yarmouth:

- Rev Mark Pullinger
- Hazel Hall
- Janet Harding
- April Mansbridge/Mike Hammond

Totland:

- Peter Byatt
- Geoff Kirk
- Hazel Britton



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.

a Rejuvenating community of Jesus-centred, Kingdom-seeking disciples



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