

# **Priest-in-Charge Benefice of West Sheppey AND Benefice of Eastchurch w Leysdown & Harty Benefice**

## **Introduction**

We are looking to appoint a **Priest-in-Charge** to offer oversight and ministry in the two **Benefices of West Sheppey and Eastchurch w Leysdown & Harty** who will bring pastoral gifts to serve the churches, leadership gifts to inspire and oversee a new ministry team of three full-time priests and other lay ministers and the missional skills to develop new missional opportunities across the benefice and beyond.

This is an exciting time for ministry and mission on the Isle of Sheppey. The **Isle of Sheppey Group Ministry** consists of the **Benefice of West Sheppey** and the **Benefice of Eastchurch w Leysdown & Harty** on the eastern half of the island. Currently, both benefices are vacant. The Benefice of Eastchurch w Leysdown & Harty became vacant January 2020 and West Sheppey in October 2024.

The post of Priest-in-Charge of both benefices and this demonstrates the commitment and hope for more collaborative oversight and working across the Island. Two other new Associate Priest full-time appointments are being recruited with the expectation that in time this team will serve together across the whole Island. The new Priest-in-Charge will be working with the two PCCs to discern appropriate organisational structure of ministry.

Because these new roles are supported by the Church Commissioners' Lower Income Communities Funding, a Reference Group will be put in place both to support your ministry, and to provide accountability to the Diocesan Mission Resources Group, which controls the allocation of such funds. You will also receive support from the Archdeacon of Maidstone and the Bishop's Chaplain particularly in the early stages of the role. There is a real impetus from the bishop, archdeacon and diocesan officers for ministry to be re-ignited on Sheppey and so there is the expectation that the new team will have the support they need.

Sheppey is part of the Sittingbourne Deanery. Like all diocesan clergy, you will be expected to play a full part in Deanery life, making Chapter and Synods a priority, and contributing as appropriate to wider deanery strategy.

### **What you will be doing - *role description***

This role involves providing spiritual and pastoral leadership, guiding the mission and ministry of the community, and overseeing the organizational and strategic direction of the benefices. The individual will serve as a shepherd to the people, lead ministry teams, and model healthy practices.

#### **Key Responsibilities:**

- **Pastoral and Spiritual Leadership:** Provide pastoral oversight and care for all members of the community. Discern the spiritual health of the communities and embody that in the life of the church.
- **Ministry and Team Leadership:** Lead and guide ministry teams, with particular oversight of two Associate Priests, fostering their development and ministry.
- **Organizational and Strategic Oversight:** Have strategic oversight of both benefices, chairing the two PCCs, and developing sustainable practices.
- **Mission & Ministry Development:** Think creatively and inspire new mission and ministry initiatives, understanding the unique context of the Island and partnering with existing organizations.
- **Worship and Community Engagement:** Oversee a diverse range of worship across the churches, fostering a mixed ecology and developing new patterns collaboratively. Having a passion to share the Gospel in our prevailing culture and be an effective preacher/teacher. Build community networks through engagement with local schools and colleges.
- **Vision Building:** Develop a holistic vision for the future of the entire Island, listening to the needs of the congregations and communities while respecting heritage and being open to change.

### **Who we are looking for – *person specification***

#### **Essential Experience and Skills**

- **Pastoral and Spiritual Leadership:** Proven experience providing compassionate pastoral oversight and spiritual guidance to a diverse community. This includes the ability to discern the spiritual needs of individuals and communities.
- **Team Leadership and Development:** Experience in leading and nurturing ministry teams, with a track record of developing the skills and leadership of others.

- **Strategic Oversight and Management:** Demonstrated ability to manage and provide strategic direction for multiple groups and to develop sustainable practices.
- **Creative Mission and Ministry:** Experience in inspiring, developing, and executing new mission and ministry initiatives, and working collaboratively to share leadership.
- **Worship Oversight:** Proven ability to oversee and develop a diverse range of worship styles in different church contexts.
- **Collaborative Partnership:** Strong track record of building and maintaining relationships with external organisations, including schools and colleges, to foster community engagement.
- **Vision-Building:** Proven capability to listen to a range of stakeholders and lead the development of a holistic vision for the future, balancing heritage with openness to change.
- **Excellent Communication:** High-level verbal and written communication skills, including effective public engagement and digital communication.

### Essential Qualities

- **A "Shepherd's Heart":** A deep sense of care for people and a selfless, servant-hearted approach to leadership.
- **Adaptable and Creative:** Openness to new ideas and a willingness to try new approaches.
- **Relational:** Empathetic, trustworthy, and able to build strong relationships with a variety of people.
- **Resilient:** The emotional and moral strength to provide leadership in challenging situations.
- **Collaborative and Empowering:** Enjoys working in a team and is committed to enabling others to use their gifts and skills.

### Desirable Experience and Skills

- **Multi-parish/Benefice Experience:** Previous experience managing the complexities of multiple church communities.

- **Specific Contextual Knowledge:** Familiarity with the unique context and community dynamics of deprived communities.
- **Facilitation Skills:** Experience in chairing committees or councils (PCCs) and guiding collaborative decision-making.

## Accommodation

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A large, detached house located in the coastal village of Minster-on-Sea, this classic red brick house was built in 1926, a character property set within a generous plot and brimming with period details, the home features multiple pitched rooflines, and traditional sash-style windows. There is ample parking, complemented by a detached garage and outbuilding and a mature garden that offers privacy and a sense of seclusion. The property has a substantial footprint of 195 sqm which reflects the large accommodation inside, 5-bedroom, 3 reception and 2.5 bathrooms. Located in an excellent position next to Minster Abbey with sea views.