



# THE TWO SHIRES BENEFACT PARISH PROFILE

HOUSE FOR DUTY POST

# A WARM WELCOME

We are delighted that you are exploring this parish profile. The Two Shires Benefice is a group of five rural Church of England parishes set in the beautiful countryside of the Somerset–Dorset border, not far from the Jurassic Coast. Each parish has its own character and story, yet together we share a strong sense of calling, collaboration, and hope for the future.

At the heart of our benefice is a genuine love for our villages and a desire to see God's presence known through worship, service, hospitality, and relationship. We are prayerfully seeking a House for Duty priest who will enjoy rural ministry, value people, and walk alongside us in the next chapter of our life together.



# OUR VISION AND VALUES



Our shared vision can be summed up in four words:

## **Openness**

Open to God, open to our communities, open-hearted and welcoming to all.

## **Visibility**

Churches that are present, engaged, and woven into village life through worship, events, and service.

## **Compassion**

Caring for the elderly, the lonely, families, and those in need – locally and beyond.

## **Faith**

Growing discipleship, prayer, learning, and confidence in sharing the Christian faith.





# OUR BENEFICE AND SETTING



The Two Shires Benefice lies within the Somerset South Deanery of the Diocese of Bath and Wells. Four parishes are in Somerset, with one just over the border in Dorset.

The landscape is rural and scenic, with strong village identities and deep community roots.

## The benefice comprises:

- St Mary Magdalene, Cricket Malherbie (Festival Church)
- St Michael & All Angels, Chaffcombe
- St John the Evangelist, Tatworth
- The Blessed Virgin Mary, Thorncombe (including Forde Abbey)
- St Stephen's, Winsham

# WORSHIP AND COMMUNITY LIFE

Our worship is rooted in the Church of England tradition, using Common Worship and the Book of Common Prayer, and expressed in a variety of styles across the benefice. These include:

- Holy Communion
- Morning Worship
- BCP Evensong and Evening Prayer
- Café Church and informal lay-led worship
- Family services
- United Benefice services

Beyond Sundays, our churches are lively community spaces. Activities include:

- A thriving weekday toddlers group
- Coffee Mornings
- Wild Church, drawing families from across the benefice
- Café Church and shared meals
- Silent Prayer group
- Seasonal events such as Harvest suppers, flower festivals, BBQs, quizzes, Lent walks, lunches and skittles.
- Strong links with local primary schools, including Open the Book and school services

There is significant goodwill towards our churches from the wider community, including many who do not attend regularly but value the church as a welcoming, inclusive presence.



# THE ROLE: HOUSE OF DUTY PRIEST AND THE TEAM.



## THE HOUSE FOR DUTY ROLE

We are seeking a House for Duty priest who will:

- Lead and preside at Sunday worship across the benefice
- Offer pastoral care and presence within the villages
- Share in occasional offices (baptisms, weddings, funerals)
- Work collaboratively with lay leaders, churchwardens, and colleagues
- Encourage and support our existing ministries while helping us discern future opportunities

This role would particularly suit someone who enjoys relational, pastoral rural ministry, values teamwork, and is happy to work flexibly within a benefice context.

## SUPPORT AND MINISTRY TEAM

You would be well supported by:

- Dedicated churchwardens, PCC members, and many committed volunteers

We value shared ministry, mutual encouragement, and realistic expectations.

- A part-time Benefice Administrator, providing excellent organisational and communication support.
- A curate, locally deployed.
- A retired priest with PTO, active in worship and pastoral ministry.

# OUR STRENGTHS AND OUR CHALLENGES

## STRENGTHS

- Churches that are the heart of their communities
- Warm, welcoming congregations where people are known by name
- Growing connections with young families through toddlers and Wild Church
- Strong community support, including from non-churchgoers
- A variety of worship styles
- Beautiful historic church buildings, cared for with pride

## CHALLENGES

- Ageing congregations and fewer volunteers
- Maintaining historic buildings
- Limited facilities in some churches
- Reaching and engaging younger generations

*We face these challenges honestly, with faith, humour, and hope.*



# THE VICARAGE

The House for Duty property is a modern detached vicarage in Tatworth, close to St John the Evangelist Church.

The house offers:

- Four bedrooms (one en-suite)
- Study, sitting room, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, utility room
- Two garages and off-road parking
- Enclosed garden
- Central heating and solar panels
- Walking distance to a primary school and early years setting.
- Less than 3 miles to a local large town with all amenities, while set in a village setting.
- 12 miles from Lyme Regis.

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