



# The Parish of Rural Ainsty, York

## Parish Profile 2024



*He tends His flock  
like a shepherd: He  
gathers the lambs  
in His arms and  
carries them close  
to His heart.*

*(Isaiah 40:11)*

## **Welcome to our Parish**

We are one parish with 5 churches in the Diocese of York within the Deanery of New Ainsty. We are led by His Grace The Archbishop of York, the Most Revd Stephen Cottrell.

We are blessed to live in a beautiful and tranquil part of the country, close to York, Harrogate and Leeds and connected through the national rail and motorway networks.

Our parish consists of farms and villages within a beautiful rural landscape changing with the seasons. In such an environment, it is easy to believe that God has a purpose for each one of us; we are excited to discover God's plans for His Kingdom amongst our communities. We look forward to welcoming you as you discern with us whether to become part of our growing Church Family.

## **New Ainsty Deanery**

Welcome from The Reverend Nick Morgan, Area Dean

Thank you for your interest in a ministry post in the New Ainsty Deanery. Later in this profile, there will be more on our recently completed Deanery Plan but for now, I commend this place and these people to you. God is at work in Rural Ainsty and across the deanery. He invites you to join us in Living Christ's Story here.



## **THE PARISH OF RURAL AINSTY - Who we are**

We are a flock whose homes are scattered across several hamlets and villages, but we are very much united in worship, ministry and mission. We seek a shepherd for this flock who will enable us to grow: someone who will nurture, enthuse and encourage us as we journey together.

We are strengthened by being one in governance: one team, one PCC, one set of parish accounts. We work with our Methodist family through our Local Ecumenical Partnership in Hessay, with our sister parishes across the New

Ainsty Deanery and the York Methodist Circuit through collaboration and mutual encouragement.

Whilst each village and church has its own unique character and traditions, we live together as one worshipping community. Collaboration is a strength, and we have an active laity including Authorised Local Ministers. Our vicar can expect a supportive, able team to work alongside, and we believe a 0.5 post is realistic in terms of hours and workload. We already share the work of ministry here and are led by our belief in the vocation of all believers to be about the Lord's work. We seek a pastor for our family, a shepherd for our flock, and ask that you prayerfully discern whether God is calling you here.



We embrace and celebrate the diversity of our parish and aim to be fully inclusive and welcoming of everyone into our church family. Come and find out how we are already living out the Gospel here and help us discern how God is calling us to love our neighbours and renew His mission here!

### **Our Team**

Our Leadership comprises four church wardens and a cohesive and united PCC. Our church wardens meet regularly and work effectively as a team, as does the PCC. Our ministry team comprises a retired vicar with PTO, an authorized Lay Minister (with a second in training), plus a dedicated lay team. We are not waiting for a vicar to come and do everything: we are ready to work together and be led by our new incumbent to God's glory.

### **Our worship**

Generally, there is a single Sunday morning service which serves the whole parish, with the venue rotating between our churches. This includes a Methodist-led service once per month. Currently, services are either led by members of our own lay team, or by visiting clergy who offer a monthly Communion service. We are open to discussing how this pattern might evolve

with the arrival of a new vicar but are by no means expecting frantic dashes between multiple churches each Sunday.



We have developed a pattern of different styles of worship which meet the needs of all our community; from family and youth to the older generations; from formal liturgy to contemporary and lively, or more contemplative and reflective services. Music in our worship varies between

modern and traditional hymns with organ accompaniment, and contemporary worship songs led by a variety of instruments.

An area of development we require support with is to engage with families and young children. We are already working with other parishes in the Deanery to develop new ways of meeting the needs of young people in rural communities.



*The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let the one who hears say 'Come!' Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life. (Revelation 22:17)*

## **Our Finances**

Despite some challenging years recently our accounts are in a relatively healthy state. We have operating reserves amounting to a little over 3 months of operating costs. We are signed up to the Parish Giving Scheme, and we aim to encourage regular online giving in order to aid our cash flow. We hold regular fundraising events in our communities and have had previous successes in securing grant funding for specific purposes.



## **Our safeguarding**

The Parish of Rural Ainsty is committed to welcoming and serving young people and vulnerable adults within our communities.

We are therefore committed to following safeguarding guidance from the Diocese and have procedures in place to enable this to happen. These include ensuring that DBS checks are undertaken.

Safeguarding training is offered to volunteers and discussion at village church and Parish level regarding safeguarding is part of our culture.



## The Vicarage



The vicarage is in Thorp Arch, a lovely village closely adjoining the Parish. The vicarage is a four-bedroom, detached house with three reception rooms, a large double garage (which has been used as a workshop by previous clergy and their spouses) and parking for several vehicles on the drive; and large gardens with an open aspect across the River Wharfe. Superfast fibre broadband connections are available from a number of suppliers.



## **Our Churches and Communities**

There is so much we could say about each of our churches and communities, and we would love to tell you more about what we are already up to, should you apply for this post. Here is a brief pen portrait of where we worship and minister.

### **Bilton-in-Ainsty with Bickerton**

The ancient parish church of St Helen stands at a crossroads with the church building dating back almost 900 years. The population of just over 400 adults largely live in the villages of Bilton and Bickerton with some farms and outlying houses. St Helen's benefits from a kitchen and toilet and space for larger services and parish and local community events. The local community comprises a number of working farms, a thriving cricket club, a vibrant local gastro pub and a diverse population including many young families and children .



### **Healaugh and Catterton**

The conservation village of Healaugh runs atop a ridge in the Vale of York. There are ten working farms within the parish boundary and only around fifty houses. It is rural in character in contrast to the adjoining hamlet of Catterton where recent barn



conversions have created a buzzing hub of some twenty dwellings. The Hayloft in Healaugh is used as a base for our youth ministry.



## Hessay



St John the Baptist Church was built in 1905 just outside the village amid fields. There is no electricity or heating in the church although it does have a hand pumped organ which is a wonderful accompaniment to worship!

The Methodist Chapel was built around 1840 and in 1988 a covenant was signed forming our Local Ecumenical Partnership with Moor Monkton. The communities have worshipped and grown in unity as Churches working together. The village blends working farms, family country living, allotments, open public spaces and a great sense of community.



## Moor Monkton

All Saints' Church, Moor Monkton is a stone-built, 12th Century medieval



Church surrounded by fields, lying centrally between our small village and its outlying farms. The Church served the community of Hessay before the Chapel and Church were built. See above for the LEP information. The population is approximately 350. In the village itself, The Old School Room is managed by The

Richard Kay Charity Trustees who include the vicar and churchwarden. This is a well-used community space.



## Wighill



There has been a church on the site of All Saints' Church since 1170. Wighill is a small village with outlying farms and has a population of around 200. The village has a varied population many of whom commute to work in nearby towns. Priory Barn and Cottages is a nearby wedding venue, so many couples that choose to have their wedding reception there choose to marry at All Saints' Church.

### **Distance to each church/village from the vicarage:**

All Saints', Wighill (3.5miles, 7 mins drive from the vicarage)

St Helen's, Bilton in Ainsty (5 miles, 9mins drive)

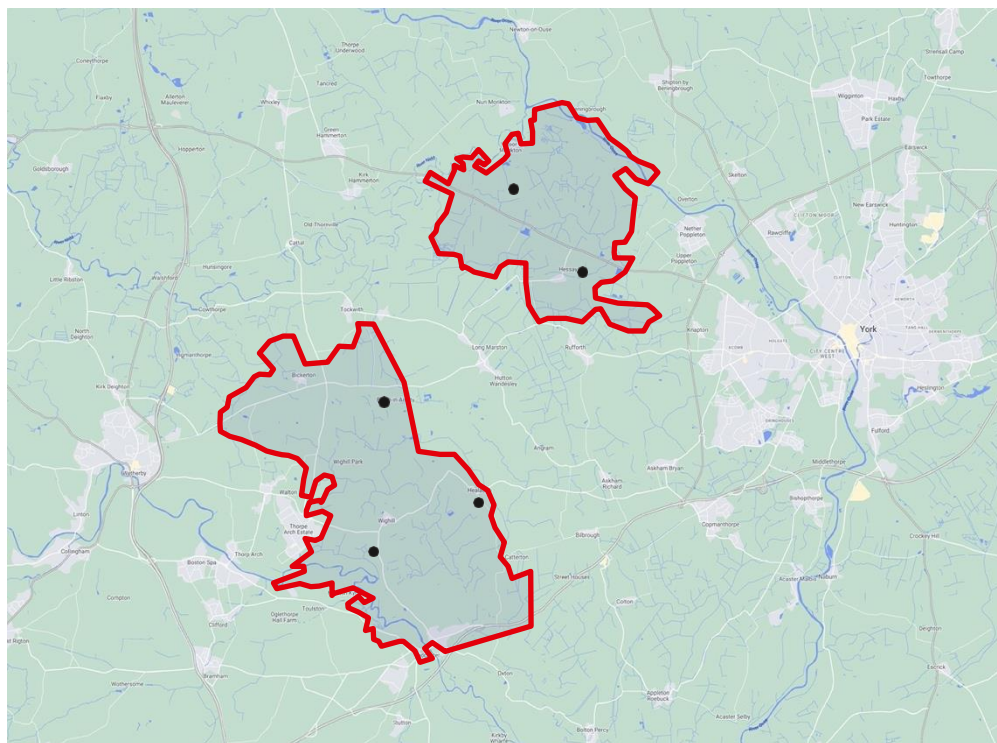
St John the Baptist, Healaugh (5.5miles, 12 mins)

St John the Baptist, Hessay (9.5miles, 16 mins)

All Saints, Moor Monkton (10.5 miles, 20mins)

## Parish Map

The layout of our parish may look unusual, but in practice, the road links are good and this is no barrier to our unity as a parish family. We work in harmony with our neighbours in the parish of Marston Moor, including through providing collective worship at the schools in Askham Richard and Long Marston.



## Working together

As one body, members bring their different strengths and skills to our ministry. Our missional and worshipping energy is expressed through:

- senior ministry (Cruse counsellor)
- foodbank collections
- holiday clubs
- social events, including coffee mornings and lunches
- youth work in collaboration with a Tadcaster-based youth charity The Bridge Project
- annual 'live nativity' productions
- the Passion in church and adjacent stable yard



- The methodology within the Big Green Heart ([biggreenheart.org](http://biggreenheart.org)), where forgiving leads to freedom, has grown out of work in the Loft with young people and families.
- Messy Church

We have been praying for the right shepherd to come and nurture us into the next phase of our ministry. We are looking forward to learning, together with our new vicar, how God is calling us to love and serve him and our neighbours.

*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. (John 16:13)*



## **NEW AINSTY DEANERY**

Thank you for taking the time to read this profile. We hope you have found it inspiring and encouraging. New Ainsty is a welcoming and hospitable deanery, full of challenge but also laughter.

The following overview of our vision is based on a recently completed Deanery Plan (July 2022) which emerged as part of the York Diocese's Living Christ's Story process.

You can read more about this [on the Diocesan website](#).

### **Overview**

New Ainsty is a largely rural deanery: a combination of small villages where most or all amenities apart from its church are long gone; commuter / dormitory villages with schools and local shops; farming communities; large, thriving villages awash with amenities and social life, and the town of Tadcaster. Some of our rural communities have a population of over-60s with no younger folk, while others have a lot of young couples and families.

While most of the deanery looks towards York, the villages on the western edge also look towards Wetherby, Harrogate, and Leeds.

Lay-led services are a strength of the deanery, supported by a mutually supportive chapter which is committed to releasing all God's people into ministry, and which values the input of readers and retired clergy at chapter meetings. There are also a number of lay-led [Multiply](#) projects across the deanery.

There are no Ministry Units identified as areas of significant deprivation (indeed, there are large pockets of wealth), but there are many who struggle financially or socially, and there are identifiable areas of relative deprivation and social challenge. While there is little in the way of ethnic diversity, there is a static, permanent traveller site within the deanery (and other sites are used seasonally), and there are small numbers of refugees.

Access to public services remains a challenge for many rural communities, and increasing fuel prices are creating challenges for those who commute as well as those not connected to the mains gas network.



## Deanery Mission Priorities (2022)

1. Making and nurturing new disciples; collaborating and communicating across the deanery, and making use of mixed modes (including online) to increase access.
2. Making our Multiply projects sustainable.
3. Engagement with new housing areas and communities we do not serve effectively at present.
4. Better communication and visibility of our mission and ministry.
5. Working across parish and other boundaries: developing a generous-hearted, non-tribal, collaborative approach to our shared ministry.
6. Nurturing and growing our existing church communities.

## Key Principles

1. A commitment to growing everyday faith for all God's people.
2. Growing the confidence of the laity in ministry, evangelism, discipleship, involvement in the leading of worship, and in living out our faith at work, home, school, social activities, and in how we engage with society, culture, and the world.
3. Develop local and online training opportunities to increase access to training.
4. A commitment to the local: in service, fellowship, worship & engagement, working ecumenically where appropriate.
5. Streamlining structures of governance and administration where possible to make better use of resources and allow more focus of clergy on their diaconal and priestly vocations, and in overseeing and mentoring lay ministry.

Revd Nick Morgan, Area Dean  
Rachel Reid, Lay Dean