



BENEFICE PROFILE

The united benefice of Ampthill, Millbrook and Steppingley

AIM

We expect to appoint an energetic person with the desire and skills to draw younger people into the church; somebody who visits local schools regularly and plays an active and visible role across the benefice. They will be pastoral and share our enthusiasm for the music of the church. Our new priest will be ready to take up a leading role in the wider community of Ampthill whilst supporting two smaller parishes and lead us in our vision to share God's love.

[St.Andrew's Church, Ampthill
\(standrewsamphill.org\)](http://standrewsamphill.org)

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Who are we looking for

We hope our new priest will

- be an energetic and visible leader with the ability to inspire, challenge and encourage
- share in our commitment to nurture unity and communication across the benefice
- lead worship in an enthusiastic and engaging style
- embrace the challenges of two small rural churches, alongside a larger church with civic involvement and a leading role in a burgeoning market town
- be resilient, pastoral and have a good sense of humour
- will lead people in the growing life of prayer
- be able to relate to all ages and build on links with local schools and the wider community

What we can offer

- a modern, family friendly, detached rectory in Ampthill
- three active & supportive PCCs, along with experienced parish officers and ministry team.
- a shared vision for the future, in two rural villages and a growing, thriving market town
- excellent transport links via road, rail or air, with London under an hour away by train
- an organist and choir based at Ampthill, who also support the smaller parishes
- a Chapter House which has lettings on most weekdays to various clubs and organisations, along with two well equipped village halls available for social functions

The Rectory



The rectory is a modern, detached house, located in a prestigious area Ampthill.

- 5 bedrooms (two en-suite)
- a spacious kitchen and dining area
- lounge and study
- large, mature, private garden to the rear

Our Patron

Ampthill with Millbrook and Steppingley has HM King as its sole Patron. His representative will be nominated by the Crown Appointments Team at the Cabinet Office and they will play an important role in the appointment process. More information can be found [here](#).

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in our Benefice!

The benefice is located in the Central Bedfordshire market town of Ampthill and the villages of Steppingley and Millbrook. <https://goo.gl/maps/HfY9pZdYZYvX32CL6>

The area is well known for its community spirit, its family friendly nature, its love of music and sport and its beautiful countryside.

Our Priorities

- Going deeper into God – To increase opportunities for spiritual development within the core church and wider community.
- Making new disciples – To enable people in the surrounding community to feel part of the Church by making ourselves, our buildings and our services accessible to all.
- Transforming communities - To strengthen the link between our churches and the communities they serve.

Our key goals

In light of these priorities, our five key goals are:

- For the three parishes to work more cohesively as a United Benefice, in both church and social contexts.
- To build on existing links with our two lower schools and in turn, reach out to the middle and upper schools in the area.
- To increase opportunities for the ageing community to participate in events, services and activities.
- To connect and communicate more effectively, both with each other and the wider community, utilising social media to raise our profile.
- To encourage training and development of skills in discussion, prayer and Bible study in order to increase opportunities for spiritual development and in turn, discover more about God's love for all.

Worship

- Our attendance numbers continue to recover following the ravages of Covid 19. St Andrew's and St Lawrence's are open every day for private prayer and offer some form of organised worship every day.
- We usually conduct Baptisms on the first Sunday of every month either as part of or following our family service. Our current pattern of worship is

		Ampthill
Monday - Friday	9.00 a.m.	Morning prayer
Tuesday	9.15 a.m.	Little Stars (term time only)
Thursday	10.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
Sunday	8.00 a.m.	Holy Communion
	9.30 a.m.	Sung Eucharist
	6.30 p.m.	Evensong (1 st Sunday most summer months) Taizé Worship (3 rd Sunday

	Millbrook	Steppingley
1 st Sunday	11.15 Holy Communion	11.15 Morning Praise
2 nd Sunday	11.15 Holy Communion	11.15 Holy Communion
3 rd Sunday	11.15 Holy Communion	11.15 Morning Praise
4 th Sunday	11.15 Morning service	11.15 Holy Communion
5 th Sunday	11.15 Holy Communion	11.15 Morning Praise

Our people

We are very fortunate to have two Readers who take an active part in services and church life across the Benefice, teams for reading the lessons, leading intercessions, providing servers and chalice administrators, refreshments, flowers and bell ringing and a choir and choir master who produce excellent music at the services.

We also have active social committees and fundraisers who put on events throughout the year.

About the Benefice headlines



St Andrew the Apostle, Ampthill

- Attractive market town, steeped in history with excellent road, rail and air links
- A great place for walking, with many sports facilities and clubs
- Ampthill has many independent shops and restaurants, Waitrose, Tesco and Aldi in nearby neighbouring Flitwick

St Michael & All Angels , Millbrook

- Small, attractive rural Bedfordshire village that formed part of the Woburn Estates, with many of the houses exhibiting a 'Woburn' style of architecture
- As with all parts of the benefice, Millbrook sits partly within a conservation area
- An active, privately owned Golf Club



St Lawrence's Church Steppingley

- Small, picturesque village on the Greensand ridge, with a hall, cricket green, pavilion and playground
- A sought-after village to live in, with a strong and active sense of community

Our buildings

	St Andrew's Rectory Lane Ampthill MK45 2EL	St Michael's (No effective postal address)	St. Lawrence's Church End Steppingley MK45 5AU
What3words	Feast.prevents.blink	Necklaces.february.protest	Watched.validated.humble
Electoral Roll	73	17	17
Population	8,100+	c120	c200

St Andrew the Apostle, Ampthill

- Situated at the east end of the town
- dates from the 12th century
- aisles, tower, organ loft, vestry and upper room were all added later
- Replaced pews with chairs in 1975
- house was added in 1976, along with an office, new vestry, toilets, a kitchen and new heating in 2014.
- A sound system was installed in 2019.
- A digital card reader has been installed to reflect modern ways of giving.

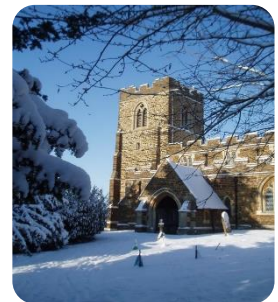


St Andrew's Chapter house:

- Hired out to Tai Chi, NCT, and others
- sound absorbent panels
- upgraded double glazing and installed patio doors
- decking to follow

St Michael and all angels, Millbrook

- dates from late 11th or early 12th centuries, then 15th century.
- on a hill above the village of Millbrook and is approached either by a rather vertical pathway or, from above, by a somewhat bumpy, unadopted road.
- open churchyard for burials
- access and lack of utilities other than water provides challenges



St Lawrence, Steppingley



- rebuilt in 1860 on the site of an earlier church
- register of the church dates from 1562.
- QI report of 2022 shows need for work
- peal of 6 tuned bells attracts visiting ringers
- embarking on an ambitious project to add a toilet, tea station and fully accessible entrance to our
- contactless donation machine raises additional funding

The bells!

- bell ringers serve both Ampthill and Steppingley
- tower captain is responsible for both towers
- practices are carried out every Thursday
- ringing is also conducted for baptisms, weddings and funerals.



Local schools and amenities



Whereas most of the UK operates on a two-tier school system with primary and secondary schools, Central Bedfordshire has historically been three-tier but this is under review across the county. Ampthill still operates within the three-tier system and as such, has two lower schools, along with one middle and one upper school, that are all well regarded and attended by children from the parishes of both Ampthill & Millbrook.

Although none are Church schools, our vision is to build on existing links with both lower schools, with the intention of extending this to the upper age range. In doing so, we hope that the Church can play a small part in supporting local children throughout their educational journeys.

All of the schools that serve the benefice are rated as “Good Providers” by Ofsted.



The Firs Lower School www.firslower.co.uk

Two form entry plus Saplings Pre School

Age range: Two – Nine



Russell Lower School www.russell-lower.co.uk

Three form entry plus Ladybird Forest on-site non-affiliated Pre School

Age range: Two - Nine



Eversholt Lower School www.eversholtschool.co.uk

Age range: Four - Nine

Steppingley children attend either Ridgmont or Eversholt Lower Schools; Woodland Middle School in Flitwick or Toddington Middle School serve children aged 9-13; . Secondary education is Redborne School in Ampthill (see above) or Harlington Upper School.



Alameda Middle School www.alamedamiddleschool.org.uk

Six form entry.

Age range: Nine – Thirteen



Redborne Upper School www.redbornecommunitycollege.com

Ten form entry plus sixth form

Age range: Thirteen – Eighteen.

Care Homes

There are a number of care homes in the area, particularly Ampthill and Flitwick which benefit from pastoral visits from our priest and readers. There are plans to build more care homes and retirement complexes in the pipeline.

Leisure and recreation

There are many clubs in the benefice, offering opportunities for players and spectators alike in sports such as rugby (Ampthill play in the Green King IPA Championship), football, golf at Millbrook, cricket, netball and five-a-side football. The Greensand Ridge Walk is a long-distance walk of 40 miles (64 km) that crosses Bedfordshire, with brief sections in Cambridgeshire and Buckinghamshire and there are many beautiful walks in the area including Ampthill Great Park! There are tennis courts in Ampthill park and a thriving tennis club in nearby Flitwick. There are also Air cadet, Sea cadet and Royal Marine Cadet corps as well as Scouts, cubs, guides and brownies so chaplaincy services are much in demand.

The benefice has a number of excellent restaurants and coffee houses including Michelin guide listed Eileen's, Fratelli and Donatello's Italian restaurants, The Verandah, Ampthill Tandoori and Ameera's Kitchen Indian restaurants, Meedou Chinese Takeaway, The White Hart Hotel with function rooms, Wooden Hill Coffee roasters in Millbrook, Costa Coffee and Cakestand & Crumb.

There are also a number of pubs, including The Albion, an award winning Real Ale pub, which cater to a range of clientele and are family-friendly. Many of our pubs and restaurants are dog friendly too!

We are fortunate to still have a Post office, chemist, bakery, butchers, supermarket, book shop in Ampthill and the recently opened banking hub is serviced by NatWest, Barclays, Lloyds, HSBC and Santander. Ampthill also has a weekly Charter market.

Financial headlines

Each of the parishes work hard to minimise costs and even harder to increase income through planned and ad-hoc giving, fundraising, events and online giving. As well as supporting our churches we also make donations, when possible, to local and national charities. St. Andrew's has donated to several charities this year, primarily through monthly soup lunches, coffee mornings and the Christmas Tree Festival.

In 2023 the Ampthill income included grants totalling £20,000 and expenditure of £140,000 relating to the stonework repairs. Removing these amounts leaves a small oncome surplus of £15,000.

The Mission Statistics for the benefice can be found here

<https://app.klipfolio.com/published/c3f0f854036f3b9f9b5e4da57e7f8a54/diocese-of-st-albans--benefice-mission-statistics>

	Ampthill	Millbrook	Steppingley
Income from giving	47114	662	7294
Fundraising income	5831	2922	5000
Other income	115385	6125	6552
Total Income	168330	9709	18846
Parish share	47795	5314	4320
Other expenditure	224741	3417	9807
Total expenditure	272536	8731	14127

Communications

A detailed pew leaflet is produced for each parish every week which details services and events throughout the benefice, a list of people in need of prayer and those recently deceased as well as the "Year's Mind" for the week.

Our monthly magazine, Church and Town, which contains details of services, notices of events, articles written by members of the benefice and advertisements for local businesses. The magazine sells for 80p and is available from the Church and distributed locally by subscription. Over 100 copies are also distributed electronically.

Both Ampthill and Steppingley have Facebook pages (St Andrew's has 618 followers and St Lawrence's has 74). There is ample capacity and content for us to venture into Instagram and Tik-Tok when we find someone to take it on.

Events and services are advertised on noticeboards around the towns and villages, through our Churches Together network, the Town Council website and "A church near you".

Pastoral and Ecumenical activity

As you would expect our priest and readers provide home, hospital and hospice visits and undertake funeral and baptism preparations supported by members of the PCC's. Our monthly Soup Lunch is extremely popular and always busy. Attendees come from Ampthill and the surrounding villages, many of them use it as an opportunity to get away from their desk, support our fundraising and enjoy the food and fellowship on offer.

Reflecting the national increase in "food poverty" our foodbank service has seen a big rise in demand in recent years and offers discreet, non-judgemental support to families and individuals in need. Some just need support for a few days whilst others need longer term care. We are members of Churches Together and enjoy services together with Ampthill Baptist Church, Ampthill Methodist Church and the Catholic Church in Flitwick. The "Walk of Witness" is always well supported as are events such as Pentecost in the park.

The Future

The government has set ambitious house building targets and this has already had an impact on parts of the benefice and will continue to do so. Central Bedfordshire Council is in talks with Universal Studios who are considering building a theme park in nearby Stewartby. This will inevitably have an impact on housing, employment and infrastructure of the area both in a positive and a negative way.

It is also possible that the Council will move away from the three tier education system and it is likely that pastoral support would be welcome during any transition process.

We are an ambitious benefice and we believe that our future is bright. Are you the person who could lead us to success?

Links and Socials

An excellent "Welcome to Ampthill pack" is available from [AmpthillWelcomePack2022.pdf \(marksmith.org.uk\)](https://www.marksmith.org.uk/AmpthillWelcomePack2022.pdf)

Ampthill Town Council [Ampthill Town Council \(ampthill-tc.gov.uk\)](https://www.ampthill-tc.gov.uk/)

Central Bedfordshire Council [Central Bedfordshire Council](https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/)

Facebook www.facebook.com/standrewsamphill

Facebook www.facebook.com/stlawrencechurchsteppingley

Christmas Tree Festival www.ampthilltrees.org and Instagram [@ampthill_trees](https://www.instagram.com/ampthill_trees)

Friends of St Andrew's Ampthill (FOSA) www.facebook.com/fosa.ampthill

Ampthill 2021 census data [2021 CENSUS FOR AMPTHILL PARISH](#)

Millbrook 2021 census data [2021 CENSUS FOR MILLBROOK PARISH](#)

Steppingley 2021 census data [2021 CENSUS FOR STEPPINGLEY PARISH](#)

Appendix 1

The Parishes

Ampthill:

We are very fortunate in Ampthill to have two Readers who take an active part in services and church life across the benefice, teams for reading the lessons, leading intercessions, providing servers and chalice administrators, refreshments, flowers, bell ringing and a choir and choir master who produce excellent music at the services. There is a very popular group for pre-school children (called “St. Andrew’s Little Stars”) in the week. The Church Book Stall is open every Sunday after the service and sells books, cards, and wrapping paper. This, however, is only a small part of our church. We also have a Christmas Tree Festival and Christingle at the beginning of Advent, a Nativity and Midnight Communion on Christmas Eve. There is a 'Follow that Star' at Epiphany, Ash Wednesday services and many extra services during Lent and Holy Week. We also run a Bible Study Group over zoom. Each year we do an All Souls service, with personal invitations for the recently bereaved in our community. This is followed by tea and cakes and is very popular. We have run Celebration of Baptisms services and these are usually well attended.

We have introduced a fledgling house group “Fourth Friday” which takes the basis of Christian discussion on topical issues over a cup of tea (and sometimes cake!).

Steppingley

There is a service every Sunday at 11.15am. Consistency is vital, so if a special service needs to be in the afternoon or evening, any change is well-advertised, with posters at the church and around the village; the Steppingley Village and benefice websites; benefice publications and flyers posted to every house and business along with social media updates on Facebook, WhatsApp and A Church Near You. All our services aim to be welcoming, inclusive, comfortable and accessible to all, including well behaved dogs with their adults. As such, our door is open to everyone...occasional worshippers, visitors, seekers, all denominations, traditionalists & otherwise, any age and a relevant children’s activity is always provided. We have no resident organist; however, we are very grateful for the support of St Andrew’s organist, who plays for special services such as Christingle and Christmas Carols. In all other instances, hymns and songs are accompanied by CD’s (organist and choir) and played by our very able karaoke operator! Special services include:

- Compline with meditation (Wednesday in Holy Week)
- ‘Hymns & Pimms’ (Sunday evening to coincide with Wimbledon!)
- Christingle and Carol services

A new crematorium has been built on the outskirts of Steppingley by Central Bedfordshire Council. Known as Oakfield Gardens, the crematorium was open in 2024 and will serve the surrounding area.

From the Oakfield Gardens Website

“Oakfield Gardens Crematorium is designed to provide a tranquil and open space with a range of memorial options that make the most of the open landscaping and setting within the Bedfordshire countryside. We want to place the experience of bereaved families at the heart of everything that we do and provide options that reflect the choices that local communities are seeking. We understand that services are deeply personal and we aim to help families achieve the service that they want for their loved ones.



The site sits to the north of Flitwick in the Parish of Steppingley, situated between the A6 and the M1. A short walk from Flitwick and a walk, cycle or taxi ride from Flitwick Train Station. The site is designed with the landscape in mind, with views out to neighbouring fields and countryside. The views from the Chapel use tree-lined avenues over a water feature that extends into the distance to represent the journey through grief."

Millbrook

The parish once formed part of the Woburn Estate and many properties display the Woburn architectural style. Being part of a conservation area, opportunities for development within the village itself are very limited although there is room for considerable development within parish boundaries. Sadly, the pub has ceased trading but social activities are supported and hosted by the village hall committee and a parish representative is on the committee. The hall itself is modern and very well used. Both the church fete and Harvest supper are held at the hall and both enjoy considerable community support.

Further support comes from the "Millbrook Proving Ground" (often featured on Top Gear) particularly on fete days when they provide minibuses which take paying guests for a lap around the famous banked circuit.



Historically, the incumbent has conducted two services a month at the village and these have been augmented by visiting priests. On the first Sunday of the month we are supported by St Andrews. Here, the choir attend and enhance our worship, making this our most popular service and one which village residents are most likely to attend. Special services include Songs of Praise and an annual carol service with the local brass band.

Friends of St Andrew's

The idea of a Friends' organisation to help the PCC with fund-raising was conceived in 2019 and received its first donation in January 2020. After a quiet start, it was kick-started as a project in 2022 and The Friends of St Andrew's Ampthill (FOSA) was set up as a charitable trust, with three trustees, in January 2023.



The trust deed declares that the sole object is to "help Ampthill PCC with the repair and conservation" of the church. In the first instance, the fund-raising implied by this object was simply via the recruitment of "Friends" who agreed to commit a regular standing order. There are now nearly 70 such Friends, a mixture of Individual and Corporate.

However, the trustees are also keen to see the church being used and enjoyed by the community and, to this end, have extended their fund-raising ambitions to include the organisation of live music events (four so far with another planned for Christmas 2024) and the re-launch of

Ampthill Open Gardens (which had ceased to be a regular event before the pandemic). These events have proved successful as community occasions and have raised awareness of the church in the town as well as bringing in finance.

After turnover rapidly exceeded the £5000 limit for an unregistered trust, FOSA was formally registered as a charity in May of this year and, at the time of writing this profile, has assets of over £35,000.



Our SWOT analysis

