



BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM
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Words of Welcome to Church of England, Birmingham

Thank you for showing an interest in the post of Associate Vicar of Hockley Heath, St Thomas.

This is an exciting time for Church of England Birmingham, as we seek to share the good news of Jesus in the West Midlands and pursue our vision of a **Transforming Church** in order to see **growing churches at the heart of each community**.



To give some context to our city and region, Birmingham is the UK's second city, is super-diverse, and has the youngest urban population in one of the most lively, diverse and creative city regions. As a diocese, Church of England Birmingham (CofEB) was founded in 1905, is geographically small but densely populated, covering an area of nearly 300 square miles and includes parishes in Birmingham and parts of Solihull, Sandwell, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, and often to people's surprise, our rural parish communities make up 15% of our family.

Birmingham is the 'poorest' CofE diocese (based on IMD rankings) but also one of the most generous (based on giving as % of income). We are recognised for being innovative, making good use of scarce resources, which resonates with the character of Birmingham being known as the 'city of a thousand trades'.

Churches in our Diocese embrace a wide spectrum of traditions from evangelical and Catholic, liberal to conservative and choral to charismatic in their outlook on mission and ministry. I am committed to ensuring that all can find a home, and flourish alongside lay and ordained colleagues within Church of England Birmingham.

Finally, thank you for showing interest in this post, and I hope the profile provides all the information you need. Be assured of my prayers as you discern whether this might be the role and region to which God is calling you. Please pray for Church of England Birmingham as we seek to witness to Christ and see lives, families and communities transformed by the power of the Spirit and to the glory of God.

Yours in Christ,

The Rt Revd Dr Michael Volland
Bishop of Birmingham



PARISH PROFILE



REVITALISATION OF
ST THOMAS' CHURCH
HOCKLEY HEATH

FROM

DORRIDGE & BENTLEY HEATH

VISION

Our vision is to see the revitalisation of the parish of St Thomas' Hockley Heath, through the appointment of an Associate Vicar and the formation of an intentional Missional Community, drawn from Dorridge and Bentley Heath and neighbouring churches. This project is supported by a five-year Church of England Strategic Development Grant, aiming to build a sustainable, contemporary, and family-focused Christian presence in Hockley Heath.

This revitalisation forms part of the Oversight Area led by Rev Dee Jones, and is under the leadership of Rev Canon Duncan Hill-Brown, Vicar of Dorridge and Bentley Heath and Priest-in-Charge of St Thomas. The intention is to replant a vibrant Christian community through relational mission, accessible worship, and a deepened connection with local people.



St Philip's Dorridge

Over the last decade St Philip's Dorridge has been focussed on the building of the new Church Centre. With a vision to **Regroup, Rebuild, and Replant.**

Since the new church was dedicated four years ago St Philip's has been replanted as a lively, worshipping, witnessing and growing parish church. Twelve months ago as part of the National Flourish project St Philip's has invested in the replanting of St James' Bentley Heath as the Church for the School in Bentley Heath School as JAM@St.James. Having experienced God's blessing we believe that God is calling us to branch out from where we are to share God's blessing with others (Zechariah 6:12). The invitation to revitalise St Thomas Hockley Heath is the next exciting step on this journey.

KEY ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

1. Vision and Strategic Alignment

Fully aligned with Church of England Birmingham's vision to:

Revitalise local churches
Grow younger and more diverse
worshipping communities
Foster new expressions of
church and local discipleship

As a new pioneering venture for the Church of England Birmingham, this initiative seeks to cultivate innovative expressions of church rooted in the life of a village community.

Rooted in the biblical vision of John 6:1–15 (Feeding of the 5,000):

- Gather a crowd
- Call out disciples
- Commission workers



2. Proposed Activities

Introduce a new pattern of worship and ministry:

Weekly family-friendly Sunday worship. Midweek service for older adults or those unavailable on Sundays. Messy Church in a local community facility such as the Pavilion or Village Hall.

Form and disciple, a Missional Community drawn from Dorridge and Bentley Heath and other local Churches to lead outreach, children's work, hospitality, prayer groups and midweek engagement.



Begin community-facing ministries such as:

- Parent & toddler groups
- Seasonal and themed outreach events
- Fellowship meals and social spaces

Collaborate with:

- Tudor Grange Primary School
- Spring Lane Baptist Church
- Civic and business community



3. INFRASTRUCTURE AND RESOURCES

St Thomas' is a Victorian church building currently in poor condition, with urgent repair needs already identified. To address this, a Buildings Sub-Committee supported by members from Dorridge and Bentley Heath has been established to oversee maintenance and long-term planning. Alternative venues for flexible mission activities are being explored, including the King George VI Memorial Hall, the Recreation Ground Pavilion and local school facilities. Administrative, safeguarding and governance support is provided by the Dorridge and Bentley Heath Parish Office.



4. PHASED TIMELINE

YEAR 1 (2025–2026):

- Appointment of Associate Vicar
- Formation and discipleship of the Missional Community
- Launch of a revitalised and renewed Sunday worship service
- Pilot community activities

YEAR 2–3:

- Consolidate attendance growth
- Launch new midweek and Messy Church expressions
- Develop lay leadership and small group discipleship

YEAR 4–5:

- Establish full weekly rhythm of worship, prayer and outreach
- Grow to a sustainable worshipping community of 140 adults and children.



5. BUDGET AND FUNDING

Initial five-year support funded through a Church of England Strategic Development Grant. Additional support for ministry and mission will come from the Dorridge and Bentley Heath PCC via Mission Beyond the Parish giving.

CURRENT ST THOMAS FINANCES:

Available unrestricted funds: £3,796.61 (as of May 2025)
Significant repair costs pending; major expenses already incurred for tree work 2025, Common Fund aspiration: £12,000 (unlikely to be met without additional income).



6. STAFFING AND LEADERSHIP

ASSOCIATE VICAR:

The role involves leading the revitalisation of St Thomas', including chairing and guiding the PCC, while developing lay leadership, discipleship and outreach ministries. Strengthening relationships with local schools and community groups is also a key focus. In addition, the role includes providing oversight and support to the JAM@St.James Leader and assisting other clergy and ministers with services and occasional offices at St Philip's, Dorridge.



Supported by:

Priest-in-Charge Rev Canon Duncan Hill-Brown, retired clergy, Readers and Lay Ministers from the Oversight Area. Parish Office admin and Safeguarding teams from Dorridge and Bentley Heath.



7. SUSTAINABILITY GOALS

Achieve a self-sustaining congregation by 2030 through:

- Intentional stewardship teaching and regular giving
- Lay empowerment and shared leadership structures
- Use of local facilities to reduce overheads
- Building relational ties within and beyond Sunday gatherings

8. PROJECTED OUTCOMES

By 2030 St Thomas' will:

- Host three expressions of worship: Sunday services, midweek services and Messy Church
- Develop and sustain home groups and discipleship pathways
- Be known in the village for family engagement, hospitality and presence
- Develop new lay leaders and volunteers
- Support local mission partnerships with other churches and schools

PARISH CONTEXT: HOCKLEY HEATH

Location: Semi-rural village in Solihull Borough, close to the M40/M42.

Population: 1,898 (2021), proposals to build 2,800 new homes in S. Warwickshire Development Plan.

Community profile: Family-based, affluent, limited church engagement.

Local facilities: Primary school, community halls, cafés, pubs, recreation grounds and a car dealership selling Rolls Royce, Maclaren and Lotus.

Religious landscape: St Thomas has a history of shared witness and community service with Spring Lane Baptist Church.



CURRENT CHURCH LIFE AT ST THOMAS'

The present congregation continues faithfully to worship each week, comprising around 10 adults. There are usually two Holy Communion and two Morning Worship services each month. We have one newly appointed Church Warden, the commitment of key individuals has sustained church life through the challenge of the illness and early retirement of the previous incumbent. A monthly Soup Lunch is held at Spring Lane Baptist Church.



	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021: Covid	2022	2023	2024
Electoral Roll	51	47	58	61	59	//	58	57	54
Baptisms	5	10	7	6	1	//	5	3	0
Marriages	3	4	3	0	1	//	0	1	0
Funerals in church	5	5	3	3	2	//	2	0	0

THE ROLE: ASSOCIATE VICAR

Role Summary:

- Lead the revitalisation of ministry and mission at St Thomas' Hockley Heath
- Establish a flourishing, multigenerational Christian community at the heart of the village
- Renew worship, grow intentional discipleship, and encourage Christian witness
- Engage in outreach and develop a strong presence within the local community

At present this role is funded from Church Commissioners for 5 years and will be designated as interim ministry under common tenure.

Key Responsibilities:

Provide leadership, vision, and growth to the worship and community life at St Thomas'. Disciple and equip the Missional Community and develop new ministries and partnerships with the local school and other organisations. Chair and lead the PCC, oversee parish governance and work with the Buildings Sub-Committee to manage building maintenance. Offer oversight and support to the JAM@St.James leader, while also engaging with ministry opportunities in Dorridge and Bentley Heath.

The PCC and Priest-in-Charge are looking for the following qualities in the new Associate Vicar:

- An experienced Priest; who's love for God gives them passion and energy to work with the people of God
- Ability to work sensitively with the present congregation
- Willing and able to work in partnership with the Priest-in-Charge of St Thomas' who also serves as the Vicar of the neighbouring Parish of Dorridge and Bentley Heath

Full support for the Associate Vicar will be available from the Clergy, Ministers, Ministry Teams and Parish Office Administration Team of Dorridge and Bentley Heath.

The person we believe God is calling will have...

- The life of a Christian disciple, rooted in prayer, listening to God and following Jesus in the power of the Spirit
- A love for local parish mission and ministry
- Have the ability to recognise, encourage and release others to use their gifts and to discover and live out their calling and vocation
- The ability to discern, shape and realise vision with others
- Gifts as a Bible teacher and preacher and able to communicate relevantly and creatively to engage people of all generations
- Proven parochial missional and pastoral leadership experience
- A creative vision for Church ministry and parish mission and outreach
- Experience of and love for working with local schools
- An understanding of the occasional and pastoral offices as opportunities for sensitive outreach and mission
- A good understanding of the need for Church structures that facilitate mission and ministry
- A desire to work in collaboration with the other clergy, the PCC and other lay leaders
- A warm and open personality, a sense of fun and good interpersonal skills

VICARAGE/HOUSING

The Associate Vicar will be housed in the St Thomas' Vicarage next to St Thomas Church in Hockley Heath.

The Vicarage is about 100 years old it has four double bedrooms, bathroom, a study and two reception rooms off a large entrance hall and a family Kitchen. There is a good sized garden and views over Warwickshire farm fields.



CONCLUSION

ST THOMAS' HOCKLEY HEATH IS A CHURCH WITH A RICH HISTORY AND A BLANK CANVAS.

The appointment of a dedicated Associate Vicar who will initiate a new season of growth, mission, hope and life in the Spirit. With the strong backing of Dorridge and Bentley Heath and strategic support from Church of England Birmingham, we are ready to reimagine what a faithful, rooted, local church can look like in the years to come.

