

APPLICATION PACK

TEAM VICAR IN THE
BRIDGNORTH & MORVILLE TEAM OF
PARISHES



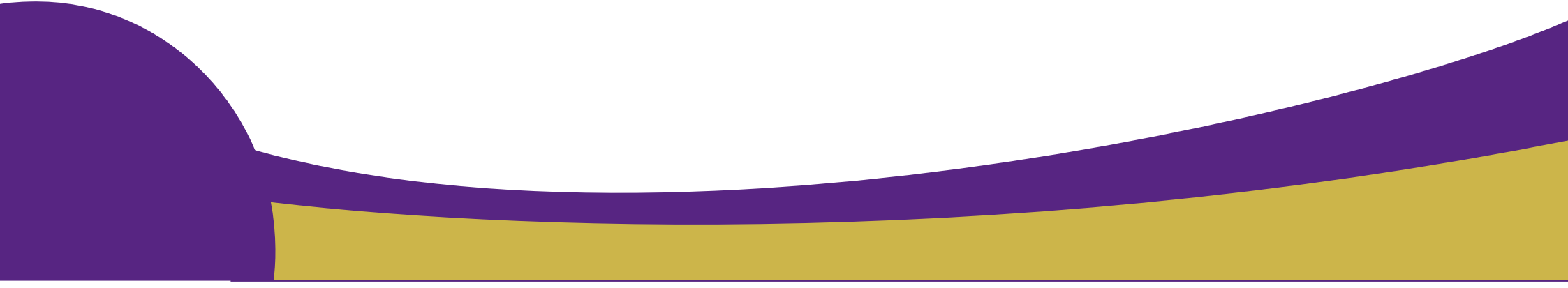
— Diocese of —
Hereford

Proclaiming Christ + Growing Disciples



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A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP RICHARD

Thank you for your interest in this post and in the Diocese of Hereford. This is an exciting opportunity to join a growing team of clergy and lay ministers in a benefice that serves a significant market town and its surrounding villages. The Diocese of Hereford is the smallest in the Church of England in terms of population, and we believe that our parishes are at the heart of diocesan life. We are committed to supporting local ministry and enabling ministers to thrive. Being a small diocese means we place a high value on relationships. While we offer proper structures—such as Ministerial Development Review (MDR), and access to confidential wellbeing support including accompaniment and counselling—we also know that informal support is just as important. The accessibility of senior staff and a rich diocesan social life contribute significantly to the sense of community here. I also have access to a discretionary fund to provide emergency financial support when needed.

Our benefices are diverse—socially, economically, and theologically. We are fortunate not to experience the kind of aggressive partisanship found in some other places. On Living in Love and Faith (LLF), I have always affirmed that clergy will be supported to act according to their conscience, within the proper order of the Church.

We have a diocesan strategy, but it is intentionally light-touch. Our purpose is clear: to proclaim Christ and grow disciples. We shape our churches around three

core values—Christlikeness, prayerfulness, and engagement. These values have been explored in diocesan-wide 'Years of Prayer, Discipleship, and Engagement,' but their local expression is left to the discernment of each parish. In areas where there is limited relational connection—particularly with young people—we are working alongside the national church on creative outreach initiatives. Thanks to our total return accounting policy, we are also able to fund innovative local projects. I hope you will find the Diocese of Hereford to be a happy, supportive, and enriching place in which to live and minister. I look forward to receiving your application.

Yours in faith,



The Rt Revd Richard Jackson

Bishop of Hereford



LIFE AS A MEMBER OF THE CLERGY IN THE DIOCESE OF HEREFORD

As you will read, the Diocese of Hereford is a place of contrasts. We're geographically large, but our population is small. We straddle six local authorities (Herefordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, Monmouthshire, Telford & Wrekin, and Powys) and two countries (England and Wales), but we are one Diocese with one Bishop. We are predominantly rural, with scattered communities, but we have a vibrant cathedral city, several historic market towns and post-industrial towns, and serve estate communities as well.

We are all committed, whatever our context, to our calling to make Christ known, to love God, one another and our neighbours, and to work for the common good. We do this not only through our churches but also through our church schools and academies which are an integral part of our Diocese. We are small enough (in terms of numbers) that clergy can get to know one another and the diocesan staff quite easily.

In the Diocese of Hereford, we want to appoint and work with clergy who are excited by the demanding and exciting common task of "Proclaiming Christ and Growing Disciples". Our Diocesan Values encourage all of our church members become more Prayerful, more Christ-like and more Engaged with God's mission in the wider community.

This means that we seek church leaders committed to equipping and releasing the whole people of God, empowering them according to their unique gifts, inspired by the vision in Ephesians 4. These leaders will inspire and enable others to actively participate in God's mission locally, focusing on growing leaders and developing teams rather than doing everything themselves - a collaborative approach often called Oversight Ministry.

Recognising that this model can be challenging, we provide comprehensive training and support through Ministry Development opportunities and the Accompanying programme - a mentoring scheme for all clergy new in post, whether this is their first role post-curacy or a new appointment.

The Accompanying programme pairs each new incumbent with an experienced priest who serves not only as a mentor but also collaborates closely with the incumbent and their Parochial Church Councils (PCCs). Together, they discern how God is guiding them to fulfil the plans and hopes outlined in the parish profile.

Incumbents who have participated in the Accompanying programme have praised it as "one of the strengths of the welcome offered by Hereford Diocese." They highlight how it creates a safe space where clergy can nurture one another, share knowledge, and build supportive relationships marked by good humour and growing trust. Participants also value the programme's focus on relevant topics that address the challenges of adapting to new responsibilities. Crucially, it offers space for reflection on God's vision for the benefice, helping incumbents deepen their understanding and commitment as they settle into their roles.

OUR DIOCESE – THE FACTS AND FIGURES

Our worshipping community is made up of people of all ages and backgrounds. We are responsible for 406 churches, 12 Deaneries, 86 Benefices, and 344 parishes, serving approximately 326,000 people - we are the Church of England in Herefordshire, south Shropshire, and parts of Monmouthshire, Powys, and Worcestershire. We were founded in 676 AD and cover roughly 1,650 square miles, with many of our church buildings of historical importance.

Nearly 12,000 children attend one of our 78 schools and academies, although 40% of these schools have fewer than 100 pupils; there are more pupils in our C of E schools than regular attendees at Sunday services. In 2022, we maintained over 110 properties across the diocese which are occupied mainly by our stipendiary clergy and curates. We have the fewest stipendiary ministers but the highest clergy level per person simply because we're a rural diocese.



SUMMARY FROM THE RURAL DEAN

The Deanery of Severn Borders in the Archdeaconry of Ludlow is situated in the northeast of the Diocese of Hereford. The deanery consists of eleven benefices, all of mainly small rural parishes near the market town of Bridgnorth and the urban area centred on Telford 'new town'. The deanery is geographically divided by the River Severn.

Severn Borders Deanery came into being at the beginning of 2025. A merger of the two former Deaneries of Telford Severn Gorge and Bridgnorth, bringing together two smallish clergy Chapters and Deanery Synods. The majority of clergy in the deanery have taken up post in recent years. The clergy chapter looks forward to welcoming a new colleague.

Our vision is that together we may develop and encourage the work of the whole people of God in new ways. Equipping and enabling congregations for mission and ministry in their parishes, with buildings that will meet the needs of the communities in this generation and beyond.

The clergy, greater chapter and synod of the deanery are praying for a person who is called to work with the Team in Bridgnorth and Morville and share in the mission and ministry of all God's People in this corner of Hereford Diocese.

The Revd Preb Jeannetta Stokes

OUR BENEFICE

The Benefice of Bridgnorth and Morville is in south-east Shropshire between the West Midlands conurbation and the Welsh borders. Its eleven parishes span both town and country, lying within the beautiful countryside of the Severn Valley and along the banks of the River Severn. Tourism and heritage are important to the area with the market town of Bridgnorth, in particular, attracting many tourists to its market and independent shops, the Severn Valley Railway and visitors to the Thomas Telford-designed St Mary's Church.

There are five primary schools, three of which are Church of England schools with whom we have very positive relationships. We are working towards strengthening our links with the two secondary schools.

We have contact with the other denominations in the town and are proactively building a number of community events into the year with ecumenical colleagues. We also work in conjunction with the town council to organise the annual Remembrance Sunday service as well as other events too.

The benefice of Bridgnorth and Morville Parishes Team Ministry is a large one with nine parishes. St Mary Magdalene with St Leonard's, which is the largest, is a town parish. The remaining eight are village parishes each with a clear local identity. A Joint Council brings together representatives of all the PCCs to discuss issues common to the parishes and the Benefice as a whole. St Mary's has a civic role in the town, and the village churches have strong links to the life of their communities.

The parish of St Mary Magdalene with St Leonard's is based in the market town of Bridgnorth, St Peter and St Paul, Tasley and St Calixtus Astley Abbots are to the North, St Nicholas Oldbury is to the South with St Mary Magdalene Quatford (which is the only Parish to the East of the River Severn) and the rural parishes of St Gregory the Great Morville, St Mary Acton Round, Aston Eyre, and St Peter Monkhopton.

Bridgnorth is a market town providing an attractive centre for the surrounding rural areas and farming communities as well as being a dormitory town for the Wolverhampton and Telford conurbations. Lying on the River Severn to the East of the Shropshire Hills Natural Landscape (an area of outstanding natural beauty) the town has been an important centre for many centuries reflected in the numerous historic streets and buildings. It offers an appealing place to live and work.

In Bridgnorth, two hall churches form part of the parish of St Mary Magdalene with St Leonard's. The St Leonard's Church building along with that of St Michael's Upton Cressett, are both closed and in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust.

OPPORTUNITIES IN OUR BENEFICE

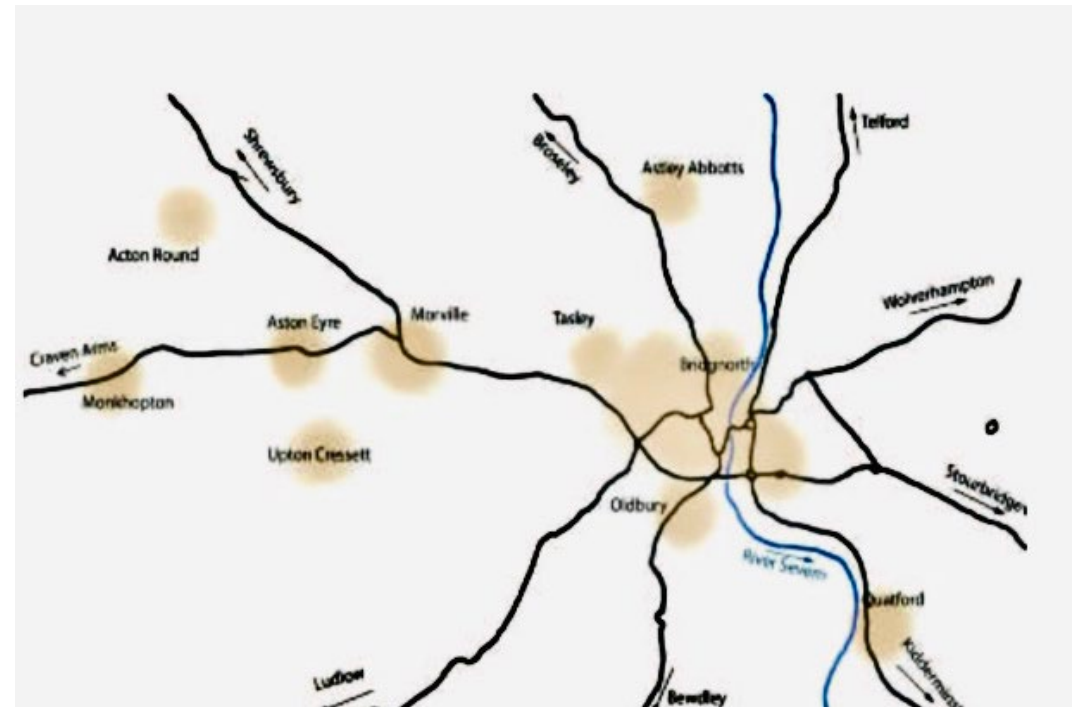
We're a newly formed ministry team who are well supported by Churchwardens in each parish and our growing team of forward thinking

and proactive volunteers. We will continue to discern together where God is calling us to focus our energy and giftings.

Part of this process will be discerning your specific areas of responsibility and focus. Including the following:-

- Delegated pastoral responsibilities for a number of the parishes
- Oversight of a pioneer project i.e., Messy Church
- Being part of a team setting up a new ecumenical project across our schools in area

This means you will be joining our team at a very exciting time where your ideas and experience will be especially valued and welcomed.



BENEFICE VISION AND VALUES

Since the recent appointment of our Team Rector and the even more recent appointment of our new Curate, we have as a Benefice, enjoyed two benefice days working together as a team to look forward to where God is leading us next.

So far, we have identified the following goals:

- A growing congregation filling all our buildings – including the two hall churches.
- Congregations alive with families, young people and adults of all ages
- Church Schools that bring The Kingdom alive to our children and young people
- An appropriate and thriving provision for children and young people.
- An established culture that encourages every member to live out their individual calling as a disciple of Christ.
- A growing preaching team ready to help support and increase the ministry for the villages.
- Our people of God, equipped to take on the challenges and opportunities of our continually changing world.



DEVELOPING THE BENEFICE MISSION AND STRATEGY

We seek to be a Christ-centred community founded on prayer, developing relationships with those in the community and drawing them to Christ and a life of discipleship.

As we work together to recognise, encourage, and develop the gifts God has given, we want to enable every member of the Bridgnorth and Morville Team to be involved in mission and ministry.

We are intentionally seeking to make this a reality through a program of benefice days across the year. Each day being focused on a different facet of what it means to be a follower of Jesus and how to confidently share our faith with those around us.



SERVICES AND STYLES OF WORSHIP

St Mary's Bridgnorth has one service on a Sunday, which is Holy Communion at 10.30 (Common Worship) with Morning prayer on the third Sunday. There is a weekly Wednesday service of BCP Holy Communion with a congregation of around 14. We are also trialing a more informal service once a month on the 4th Sunday at 4pm. St Mary's also participates with other churches in various interdenominational events such as the Easter sunrise service and a popular outdoor Christmas carol event which will be accompanied by Alveley Brass band.

More informal services are held twice monthly at St Leonard's Hall Church, one of which is a lay led Family Service and the other Holy Communion.

Services in the village churches vary, both in frequency and style.

There is one regular Bible study group meeting in the home of members of Astley Abbots church and seasonal courses take place that members of all churches across the benefice take part in e.g., for Lent and Advent or for series such as The Happiness Lab, Alive in Christ and The Bible Course.



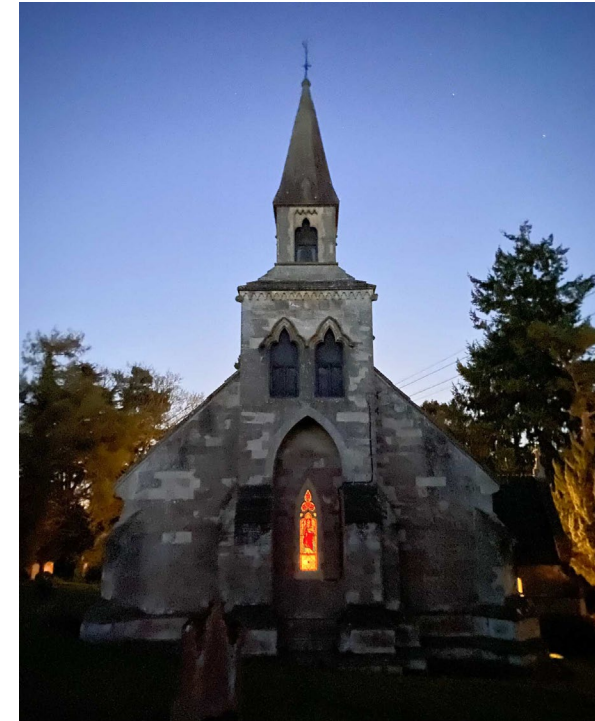
ATTENDANCE AND FINANCE

Benefice Total:			
Year	Baptism	Wedding	Funeral
2025	9	6	24
2024	5	12	30
2023	8	16	33
2022	33	18	46

The benefice is governed through a Joint Council which is formed from the clergy team and representatives from the PCCs of each of the churches. The Joint Council was established by a pastoral scheme that put in place the Team Ministry and provides support to the clergy.

Each of the nine parishes in the benefice are responsible for its financial conduct and each one is supported by its own treasurer.

(2025 to end of July)



COMMUNITY

We are developing a strategy to reconnect and strengthen relationships and contacts within the wider context of our Benefice through Film Club, Brick Church and other events.

We seek to be a church that grows organically from within our thriving community. With a willingness to live in faith and to take risks for the increase of God's Kingdom. We believe this can be achieved by our parishes working even closer together, with God at the centre.

Our churches are building strength from mutual support while continuing to serve their village communities, with whom many have close links.

We recognise that care of the creation is part of our Christian calling. This is encouraged through the A Rocha 'Eco Church' scheme. Five churches in the benefice (St Mary's Bridgnorth, Astley Abbots, Oldbury, Quatford & Tasley) have registered as Eco Churches. Led by Eco Groups and involving others, both within the church and the local community, St Mary's has a bronze award while Astley Abbots and Quatford have already gained a silver award.

We continue to have a very prominent funeral ministry across our team and value the support not just of Jane Peeler our lay reader and Anna chaplain but also retired clergy who support us in this really important ministry. We are looking to develop a strategy to provide preparation for



Weddings and Baptisms, as this is also a very valuable focus of what we intend to provide.

HISTORY

Bridgnorth Benefice has been created over the last 15 to 20 years, by bringing together a town parish, eight rural parishes and two hall churches.

Rev'd Suzan Williams was appointed in December 2024 and our most recent addition to our Team is Rev'd Vickie Dunlop; our newly ordained Curate. In the last six months, we have also appointed Keely Spencer-Lea to our team and she is a highly valued resource, providing administrative support not only to our team but also the individual churches. We are blessed to have a retired non-stipendiary vicar and two retired clergy and a Reader who is commissioned as an Anna Chaplain. We have also had the joy of eight new Local Worship Leaders being commissioned recently. With God's help we see this as an exciting opportunity for development and change and we look for the new Team Vicar to be a valuable addition to our leadership team.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

We would like the Team Vicar to be a prayerful person of integrity and emotional intelligence. Who has a strong commitment to God and who seeks to live out their faith as a disciple of Jesus with joy in the community.

They will be:

- an inspiring and joyful leader in faith and worship
- warm and welcoming, approachable and empathetic
- a team player as well as having the confidence, skill and experience to set up new teams
- good pastoral skills and the ability to engage with all ages
- willing to reflect on and explore differences of opinion as we move forward together
- enthusiastic and able to inspire and engage
- able to embrace and build on existing ecumenical links within the area

EXPECTATIONS OF THE ROLE

- Build on and explore patterns of worship to help our congregations move closer to God and build a deeper understanding of our mission.
- Continue to train members of our congregations so that we can expand and develop delivery of our lay-led ministry.
- Move our churches further into their local communities spreading the gospel of Jesus as we go.
- Support existing projects and teams within the town including Open the Book, as well as with the Anchored Project involving Bridgnorth Youth and Schools Project.
- Develop our mission and outreach, specifically focusing on the two largest housing estates within the benefice.
- Guided by the Holy Spirit, develop the work of our Joint Council as a Team Hub so that parishes can better communicate and work with each other.
- Prioritise and adhere to safeguarding processes and procedures.

HOUSING INFORMATION

The accommodation provided with the post is a very desirable four bedroom detached property with good sized bedrooms and a lovely garden with a drive to the front of the property and an attached garage. There is a reasonably sized study with separate access from the side of the property and a separate wc accessed separately to the main house.



41 Innage Lane, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 4HS



CONTACT DETAILS

All applications should be made via Pathways, following the link on the Diocesan website vacancies page or Pathways itself.

For an informal conversation about anything you've read in this profile, please do not hesitate to contact the Team Rector, Suzan Williams, rectorbridgnorthandmorville@gmail.com

Alternatively, you can contact the Archdeacon of Ludlow sam.hustwayte@hereford.anglican.org or 01588 673571

We look forward to meeting you soon!