

Welcome

to the Benefice of

Bradfield
Bucklebury
and
Stanford Dingley

Three Parishes
in Rural
West Berkshire



Appointment of a Team Vicar (House for Duty)

Archdeacon's Address

Having recently appointed the first Team Rector for this newly created benefice, we are now seeking to add to our Team with the appointment of a Team Vicar.

Located in the heart of West Berkshire, the team has three well resourced, historic parishes, each with its own individual style.

Our new Team Vicar will support the parishes priority to energise and encourage work with children and young people, as well as offering support for a wide range of worship services. The Team is mission focussed and wonderfully positioned to begin this new stage of ministry – reaching outwards, into the communities around the churches. There are lots of opportunities to do this with great links with local schools.

The Team Vicar is appointed on a House for Duty basis, being housed in a newly refurbished parsonage in Bradfield Southend

Reverend Paul Cowan
Associate Archdeacon Berkshire

Area Dean's Address

Welcome to wonderful West Berkshire! Bradfield is a warm and welcoming deanery, where mutual support and collaboration are at the heart of everything we do. Bradfield Deanery is largely rural, with stunning landscapes and peaceful villages, but it also offers easy access to the nearby towns of Newbury, Thatcham and Reading, giving you the best of both worlds. The parishes of the 2BSD benefice are well-known for their close-knit, friendly communities, each with its own unique charm. The churches are central to community life and offer faithful witness to the Gospel through each season of life. The team in place within the benefice will be a strong support network for you as you step into this role, and you can be assured that the deanery will continue to stand behind these parishes with encouragement and practical help however we can.

Bradfield has an active clergy chapter that meets monthly, and we are currently working through discerning our vision for how we can work together across shared mission priorities, particularly in areas such as children and young people's mission. We are genuinely looking forward to welcoming you to join in the life of the deanery and to share in this journey of ministry.

West Berkshire is a beautiful part of the world, with rolling hills, historic villages, and a community spirit that's second to none and we are passionate about bringing the good news of Jesus Christ to each person in our care. If you're passionate about sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in rural ministry, building relationships, and making a meaningful impact, we think you'll fit right in!

Reverend Grant Fensome
Bradfield Area Dean

The Benefice of Bradfield, Bucklebury and Stanford Dingley

A beautiful place to journey in ministry

We are a group of three rural parishes, situated in an area of outstanding natural beauty in West Berkshire, midway between Reading and Newbury. We have strong links with our two local Church of England Primary Schools as well as informal links with local Independent Schools and community organisations. As part of God's family in this area, we seek to honour God and his creation and share his love with the people around us.

For the last 20 years, our three parishes have worked together as an informal team. The three parishes have now become a single Benefice and formed a Team Ministry.

This is an exciting time in our life together – after a long vacancy, a new Team Rector was appointed and started work in April 2024. There are two other ordained clergy (SSM) and a Licensed Lay Minister, and the House for Duty Vicar will share with colleagues in the leadership of our benefice.

This beautiful rural benefice is unusual in that three of our churches are more traditional and two more contemporary. Communion is celebrated monthly in each Church and on other Sundays, different services take place ranging from liturgical Morning Prayer to informal worship with band led sung worship. We regard these differences as a strength and are accepting and encouraging of one another – indeed there is a good deal of cross over between the different churches and styles.

In the past many people have been to festivals such as New Wine and Keswick. A smaller group still go to New Wine, and we are encouraging more to do so.

Whilst we enjoy different styles of worship our theology is broadly open evangelical with Bible based teaching in each church. The existing clergy team are orthodox evangelicals, and we are looking for someone to share that perspective bringing further experience, creativity and wisdom into our strategic thinking and practice.

Welcome to the Benefice

Our Churches:

Take a drone tour across the parishes

St Mary the Virgin, Bucklebury

- Traditional including weekly 8am BCP Eucharist
- Newly introduced Family Services
- Grade 1 Listed dating back to the 11th century
- Village hall nearby
- [Video Tour](#)

St Denys', Stanford Dingley

- Small village population: 200
- Traditional services with monthly BCP
- Grade 1 Listed pre-Norman building
- [Video Tour](#)

St Mary, Marlston

- 13th century grade 2 Listed building
- Traditional services
- Used mainly by the local school

St Peter's, Bradfield Southend

- Contemporary worship services
- 1965 Colt building, with portacabin extensions
- Preschool run daily in church
- CofE Primary School, village hall and shop
- [Video Tour](#)

All Saints', Upper Bucklebury

- Contemporary worship services
- 1988 brick building, earlier lounge area
- Church office based here
- CofE Primary School, village hall and shop
- [Video Tour](#)

Our Vision

As a group of churches, we have identified some priorities for the near future:

1 Engage better with each other

Living out the idea that we belong to each other in Christ (Rom 12), also drawing on John 13 'By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

Recognising that we are at the beginning of a new chapter as we become a single benefice, and that there is room for this new benefice to encourage and support each other across the churches in shared mission and vision, adapted as appropriate to each church and its local community.

2 Engage better with the local community

Desiring to be more outward looking, a church without walls, to be salt and light to our neighbours. Whether modern or ancient, our buildings should not limit who we are as the family of God.

3 Value our diversity of worship and identity

Valuing the differences in the styles of worship, as three congregations enjoy traditional worship and two appreciate a contemporary style. Within all traditions we want to try new things, be imaginative and creative.

4 Be accessible to all ages

Developing the team ministry, in particular with work for young people and families, alongside ministry to older people. We want to be a church for all in the widest possible sense.

5 Make the most of contact with people who God is sending to us

Recognising that God is still sending people to our churches for baptisms, weddings and funerals. We would like to invest more in building strong relationships and implementing good communication and administrative systems.

The Job

As a rural benefice, we are looking for a Team Vicar who will help us make God's love known to our respective communities. Each of our parishes is committed to working together in a single benefice whilst maintaining our own individuality. Your house will be in Bradfield Southend and although you will be expected to work across all the Churches in the Benefice you will have a particular focus on the two local Parishes – St Peter's Bradfield and St Denys' Stanford Dingley. Below are the key areas that our leadership team will need to engage with. Your gifts in some or all these areas will be crucial in completing our team:

- lead diverse styles of worship - comfortable in leading a liturgical BCP service as well as a contemporary style celebration
- develop our work with children and young people and able to develop links with our local primary school(s)
- be confident in engaging with God's mission and promote opportunities for mission
- be a visible presence in the local community and get involved in local activities and events
- respond to pastoral needs within the congregations and through occasional offices
- work with ordained and lay colleagues in the Benefice
- have a strong discipline of prayer, study and spiritual development
- encourage and develop lay ministries including preaching, service leading and pastoral care
- empower others by generously giving authority and responsibility whilst gently retaining accountability
- be prepared to take risks in ministry
- bring fresh energy to parish teams
- communicate well with others



The Person

You need to demonstrate that you

- are an experienced priest and can play a full role within the existing Leadership Team, sharing in Sunday ministry and offer the equivalent of two other days (to be agreed)
- are a person with a strong discipline of prayer, study and spiritual development
- are experienced in leading diverse styles of worship – from a traditional liturgical service to a very informal celebration (New Wine style)
- are committed to sharing the good news of Jesus with others
- are a team player who can empower others whilst gently retaining accountability
- are willing to be vulnerable and take risks
- are a creative thinker and leader, ready to bring fresh energy to our ministry
- have good communication skills and are a good listener

We have discerned that children and young people are a priority for our mission. We will want to explore your experience and gifts in working with young people, partnering with schools and supporting families in their life of faith.



Our Commitment to You

We will provide:

- A recently modernised house located in Bradfield Southend
- The support of the wider team of clergy, a lay minister and lay leaders
- The support of dedicated people who run a variety of activities throughout the parishes
- Enthusiasm to work with you in furthering the Kingdom of God
- Loving, prayerful and practical support from willing church communities

Housing

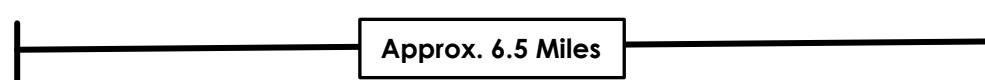
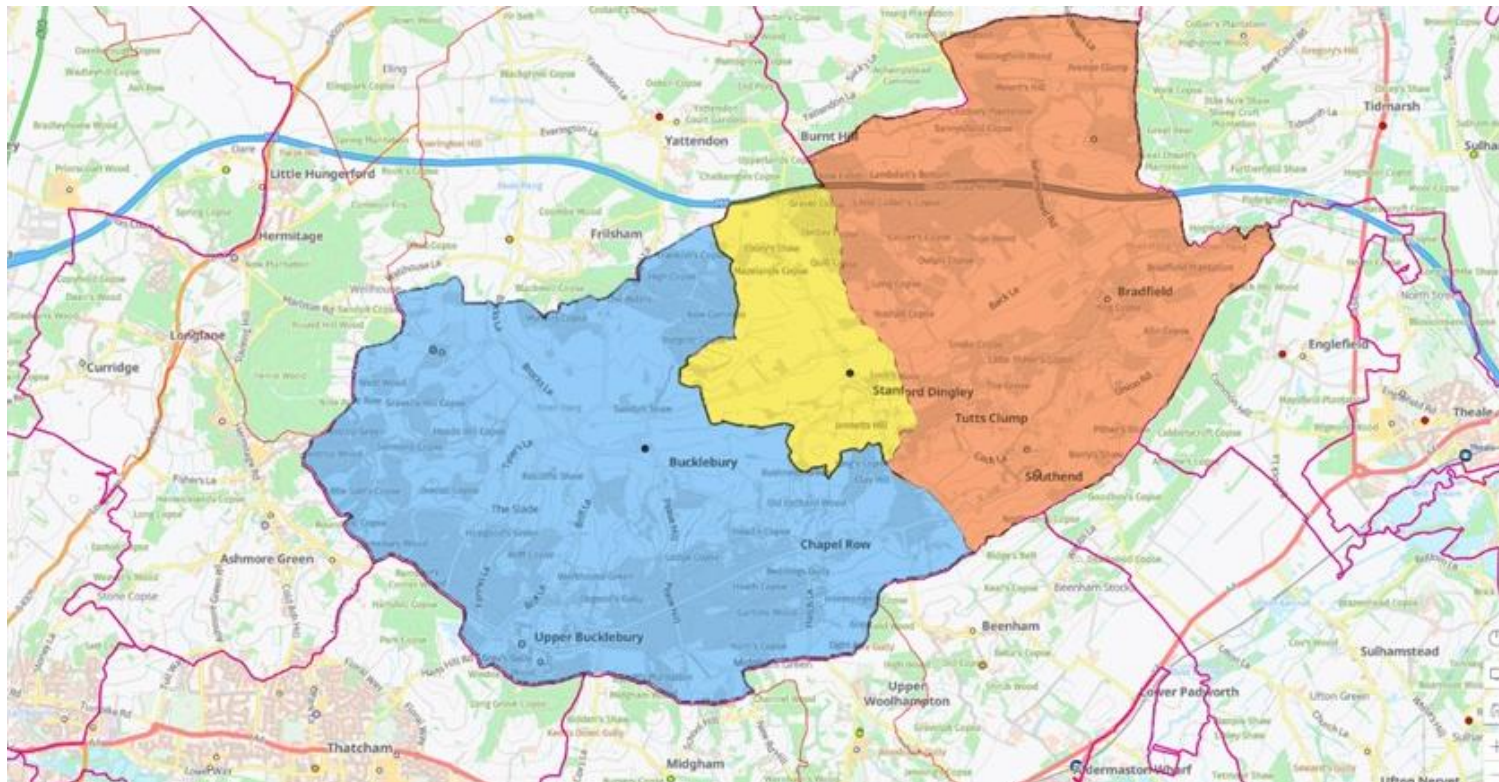
The team Vicar will live in a four bedroomed detached house situated in Bradfield Southend next to St Peter's Church. This family home has spacious accommodation. Downstairs there is a large study, lounge, dining room, kitchen and utility room. Upstairs there are 4 good sized bedrooms and two bathrooms. There is a good-sized garden to the rear of the property which backs onto open countryside. There is parking for at least four cars on the front driveway. There is also a garage with an integral door to the Utility Room. The house has been modernised to a very high standard with new windows, upgraded insulation, a new heating system, a new kitchen and bathrooms, redecorated and new flooring throughout.

Location:

The rural parishes of Bradfield, Bucklebury and Stanford Dingley are situated in an area of outstanding natural beauty in the Royal County of Berkshire, roughly midway between Reading and Newbury and largely between the M4 and the A4. The River Pang, a tributary of the Thames, flows through the three parishes linking the villages of Bucklebury, Stanford Dingley and Bradfield, whilst the ridge to the south links the villages of Upper Bucklebury, Chapel Row and Bradfield Southend. Much of the area comprises farms, woodland and common.

The population of the three parishes totals around 5,000 with a wide social mix, evenly spread across the age groups, although few from ethnic minority groups. There are extremes of wealth and status locally.

Parish boundaries for Bucklebury, Stanford Dingley and Bradfield:



Education:

Both Bradfield and Bucklebury have Church of England Primary Schools. There is a pre-school in St Peter's Church, Bradfield. Secondary schools are in Thatcham and Theale. There are also various private schools, in particular Bradfield College.

Housing:

Includes everything from Housing Association properties to large country estates, the majority of properties being owner-occupied.

Transport:

A car is essential, as are wellies! There is easy road access to the M4 at junctions 12 and 13, and to the A4 and A34. There is a local bus service but this is limited. Regular train services are easily accessible from Thatcham, Aldermaston, Midgham and Theale on the Newbury/Reading line and from Pangbourne on the Oxford/Reading line. From Reading, it is less than 30 minutes by fast train to London.

Local Services:

Shops	Community Shop and Post Office in Bradfield; Local Shop in Bucklebury; Outreach Post Office on Mondays at All Saints' Church; Large Supermarkets near M4 J12 and in Newbury; A range of small shops in Thatcham and Theale. Large Shopping Centres in both Newbury and Reading.
Cafes	Chapel Row and Pop ups in local churches and village hall.
Pubs	Bradfield Southend, Chapel Row, Stanford Dingley and Upper Bucklebury
Doctors' Surgeries	Chapel Row, Thatcham and Theale
Village Halls	Bradfield Southend, Bucklebury, Upper Bucklebury and Stanford Dingley



St Peter's Church, Bradfield Southend

- The worship centre at St Peter's was built in 1967 to serve families locally and now oversees a pre-school which runs daily, a weekly lunch club and toddler group as well as Rainbows and Brownies.
- We are hoping to redevelop the front of the building to provide a more welcoming entrance area.
- The regular congregation is about 30 resourceful people.
- Services are informal, often lay led with a contemporary worship group.
- There are a couple of weekly home groups and a popular quarterly afternoon tea hosted for the community.
- The church has good relationships with local schools.
- The parish is responsible for the graveyard surrounding the original 13th Century parish church – now in ownership of Bradfield College, as well as the graveyard in Buckhold.
- There is a community shop, a well-run village hall, a pub and many groups in the village and close to the Rectory.
- The church produces the monthly Parish Magazine covering Bradfield and Stanford Dingley going to over 900 homes. It is also distributed to local amenities.
- The church regularly supports Tearfund and a missionary in Ecuador through CMS.
- Most of the congregation have regularly attended New Wine or Keswick.
- [Click here](#) to take a tour of St Peter's.





All Saints' Church, Upper Bucklebury

- The congregation is small but Spirit-filled and committed to living for Jesus.
- Contemporary worship supported by a band, and we are experimenting with new ways of doing church having recently started to hold Café Church each Sunday.
- Our services are liturgy light and made possible by using screens. We have also recently installed a new sound desk.
- We are community minded – a Post Office and coffee morning currently but we want to restart other social activities and work with children and young people.
- We have recently launched a Toddler Group which meets weekly in term time attracting around 20 children and their parents/carers.
- The building is wheelchair accessible and has a hearing loop.
- [Click here](#) for a tour of the building.





St Mary the Virgin, Bucklebury Village

- A picturesque grade 1 listed building with a history of 1,000+ years of worship.
- We are well financed and maintained, with flexible space and modern heating.
- We have a committed congregation at the heart of the village, who undertake the readings, lead intercessions and give generously.
- We are supported by volunteers who ring the bells, arrange flowers, play the organ, operate the live-stream and provide refreshments after services.
- We have a weekly 8:00am BCP Holy Communion and 9:30am Morning Prayer or Communion; and a monthly Family Service.
- We have some fund-raising activities - coffee mornings, cake sales, garden openings – for the church and other charities.
- A popular venue for weddings, baptisms and funerals.
- [Click here](#) for a tour of the building.





St Mary Magdalene, Marlston

- Is a 12th Century Norman Church serving the hamlet of Marlston.
- We currently hold a monthly 8:00am BCP service and occasional services at festivals.
- Occasional weddings and funerals.
- Strong support and use by neighbouring Brockhurst School who use it for regular services.
- A small but loyal congregation.
- A Grade 1 listed building.
- We are financially sound.





St Denys' Church, Stanford Dingley

- St Denys' has a gathered congregation from the surrounding area.
- The village of Stanford Dingley support major services and help with the maintenance of the churchyard.
- Services vary using Common Worship, BCP Morning Prayer and occasional Evening Prayer and a monthly family service.
- We hold outdoor services on occasions, using a portable sound system.
- There is a Snowdrop Saturday in February.
- St Denys' has a close relationship with the local Methodist Church, sharing services every 5th Sunday.
- An extensive reordering has resulted in a vestry kitchen, new heating system and a more flexible space. There is a baby changing facility and an accessible loo.
- Finances are sound.
- [Click here](#) for a tour of building.



Schools and Pre-school

St Peter's Pre-school

Our pre-school is situated in the middle of the village of Bradfield Southend, at the rear of St Peter's Church and a five-minute walk to the Bradfield C of E Primary School. It was opened over forty years ago by members of the local church who wanted to offer affordable pre-school education and a suitable setting for children to socialise. It is currently run by a voluntary management committee with three representatives from the Parochial Church Council, with the remaining members being parents.

The setting, being behind the church, backs on to fields and provides Early Years education in a beautiful rural setting. When potential new families come to view the pre-school, we always point out how fortunate we are to have access to a garden and a field which is maintained on our behalf by the PCC. Although all faiths are welcome, we have a general Christian ethos. We enjoy visits to Rushall Farm to celebrate Easter, we perform a nativity production each Christmas and end all sessions with a group prayer.

The PCC is an integral part of the life of the pre-school. Its members contribute toward maintaining good standards of service to our families, support the staffing group and provide a well-maintained environment for us to provide our service.



Primary Schools

There are Church of England Schools in both Bradfield and Bucklebury that are well linked with the churches within their parish. Regular worship assemblies are supported by the ministry team across the benefices.

Bradfield CE (VA) Primary School



Bradfield CE Primary School is situated in Bradfield Southend, a short distance away from St Peter's Church with a relatively new headteacher, Miss Jessica Davies. Bradfield Primary School has had a close and fruitful relationship with the local church. Many staff members have been parishioners and the school benefits from regular assemblies led by the clergy team.

Bradfield and Stanford Dingley Churches have been kind enough to provide Bibles for our children as leavers gifts and more latterly to our children entering KS2 as an aid to study.

Bucklebury CE (VC) Primary School

Bucklebury CE Primary School is situated in Upper Bucklebury, a short walk away from All Saints' Church. The clergy team work closely with the Head, Mr Andy Higgs, in ensuring strong links with the church community including weekly assemblies and termly services.



Other Schools within the Parishes

Bradfield College

The benefice has longstanding links with Bradfield College, a leading co-educational boarding school (13-18), which is within the parish of Bradfield. The College was founded in 1850 by the then Rector of Bradfield, The Revd Thomas Stevens. Currently, Bradfield has a chaplain and assistant chaplain, who works part time at the college and part time in the parish of Theale.



There are excellent links between the College and the local community. A community prayer group meets about twice a year in the College Chapel. On Remembrance Sunday many from the local community attend the College Chapel and a ceremony in St Andrew's churchyard. There is a community remembrance service and tea held at the war memorial in Bradfield. The College takes care of St Andrew's Churchyard. Over the past few years, the College has hosted lectures, plays and concerts which have been attended by many from the local community. The College has partnerships with several of the local primary schools. The former parish church of St Andrew Bradfield has been closed and transformed by the College into a teaching and learning centre.

St Andrew's Preparatory School

St Andrew's School is part of The Bradfield Group with Bradfield College and sits on the Bradfield Parish boundary.

Brockhurst and Marlston House School

Brockhurst and Marlston House School is within Bucklebury parish in the village of Marlston next to St Mary, Marlston. The school uses the church as their chapel for their services.

Local Secondary Schools

Theale Green School in Theale Village, Kennet School in Thatcham and The Downs School in Compton.

Organisation and Finance

Note: Bucklebury – includes All Saints', St Mary's Bucklebury and St Mary Marlston

Attendance Statistics 2024	Bucklebury with Marlston	St Peter's Bradfield	St Denys' Stanford Dingley	Total
-----------------------------------	-------------------------------------	---------------------------------	---	--------------

Christmas	292	38	173	503
Easter	104	36	89	229

October average				
Church adults	48	24	25	97
Church children	4	2	1	7

Worshipping Community				
0-17	16	5	3	24
18-69	34	30	16	80
70+	24	10	28	62
Joiners	7 plus 10 Children	4	13	24
Leavers	1	0	9	10

Life Events				
Baptisms	4 (infant and under 5)	0	1	5
Marriages	4	0	0	4
Funerals	4 plus 1 service at crem. and 3 burial of ashes	0	0	4

Finance

Parish Accounts 2024	Bucklebury with Marlston	Bradfield	Stanford Dingley
Income			
Collections & Pledges	£45,433	£25,293	£19,939
Gift Aid Recovered	£11,841	£6,257	£5,438
Other	£14,500	£13,547	£8,867
Total	£71,774	£45,097	£34,244
Outgoings			
Parish Share*	£30,050	£14,598	£13,483
To Benefice Office		£2,866	£5,410
Charitable Donations	£5,322	£2,002	£1,175
Utilities and Expenses	£23,752	£8,882	£3,597
Other	£10,936	£32,006	£5,894
Total	£70,060	£60,354	£31,189
Reserves (Balance Sheet)			
Restricted	£126,407	£2,207	£174,133
Unrestricted	£16,419	£24,284	£119,164
Designated	£70,937	£174,908	

*Parish share paid in full

**The office is located in Bucklebury Parish with the other parishes contributing to expenses.