

2026

APPOINTMENT OF AN
ASSOCIATE
PRIEST



Aerial Photograph of Turville - © Savills

The Hambleden Valley Group of Churches



FOREWORD

from the Associate Archdeacon of Buckingham

A good story told by a good shepherd, builds a faithful flock. This describes neatly the plot to the new Hugh Jackman and Emma Thompson movie, 'The Sheep Detectives', but also speaks to something of the hope for ministry in the Hambleden valley, where the movie was filmed.

Set within the rolling landscape of the Chiltern Hills, the Hambleden Valley Churches provide places of prayer, beauty and deep-rooted community life. Across six distinctive villages and churches, each seek to live out a shared vision: "to see our lives and communities transformed by the love of God."

This Parish Profile offers a glimpse into a benefice where a timeless faith is expressed through generous hospitality, faithful worship, and attentive presence in everyday village life. These churches sit not at the margins but at the heart of their communities, serving people of all ages, backgrounds and stages of faith – including many visitors and pilgrims who retain a spiritual belonging here long after they have travelled on.

The prayer is for an Associate Priest who will delight in rural ministry, value collaboration, and gladly share in a sustainable life of worship. This is a context shaped by strong lay leadership, committed congregations and a wide ministry that can be traced along iconic footpaths and byways.

As you read on, my prayer is that you hear God's call – whether that call is to explore this post further, to pray for us as we seek the right person, or to imagine how your own gifts and vocation might find a home in the Hambleden Valley for this next chapter of our shared story.

As ever, the new Priest will be committed to the diocesan vision of becoming a more Christ-like Church for the sake of God's World – contemplative, compassionate and courageous – and to model and enable a flourishing ministry, for all, in line with the diocesan work in this area.

I commend this profile to you and I would welcome conversations about the role with interested candidates.

With every blessing,

Reverend Canon Chris Bull

FOREWORD

from the Rector



I very much look forward to working alongside a second priest as a co-pilot, to share this life-affirming ministry in the Hambleden valley. Having first tasted ministry here myself in September 2022, I have enjoyed all my time in this happy valley. We benefit from remarkably healthy church communities (350 people elected to receive our weekly e-mail), given how sparsely populated this area is (3,500 people in the Benefice).

Each of our six churches sits in its open churchyard at the heart of its village, not only geographically but relationally, serving as a place of gathering, memory, and belonging for the whole community, whether or not they are regular church attenders. I will work collaboratively and prayerfully to play to our strengths and passions with the priest who accepts this treasured post, and we will devise a pattern of worship that is comfortably achievable.

Do seek God's direction. Is this the place for you? If so, I look forward to meeting you!

Rev Andy Storch



MESSAGE FROM

the Church Communities of the Hambleden Valley

We are a valley of welcoming, prayerful, committed and enthusiastic communities – each distinct yet united in faith and friendship. We long to share life and ministry with a priest who will join us in worship and witness, walk with us through change, and help us deepen our faith and service to others, supported by the wider village communities who love their churches. We hope you will hear God's call to join us in this next chapter of the Hambleden Valley's story.

With our prayers,

The PCCs of the Hambleden Valley



WHO WE ARE SEEKING

We pray for a priest who is:

- ❖ Faithful and prayerful, rooted in Scripture
- ❖ Someone who values rural ministry, embracing both its opportunities and its challenges, and delighting in the life of our unique but interrelated villages.
- ❖ Someone who is organised, steadfast, and collaborative, ready to work closely with clergy, lay leaders, and the wider deanery.
- ❖ Flexible and creative, open to traditional and informal worship.
- ❖ A communicator and encourager, nurturing gifts in others, and a visible presence in the community.
- ❖ Someone who is at ease walking alongside people of all faiths and none, including those who are unsure and questioning, and able to engage generously, respectfully, and confidently with all those who are part of the life of our communities.



Shared responsibilities of the ministry team:

- ❖ Lead and share in worship, prayer, occasional offices and sacramental ministry across the benefice.
- ❖ Support mission and pastoral care in all five parishes.
- ❖ Foster collaboration within the ministry team and among PCCs.
- ❖ Build links with the two schools, community organisations, and new residents.
- ❖ Encourage discipleship, prayer, and lay leadership in ways that are inviting and accessible.
- ❖ Participate in the wider life of the Deanery and Diocese.

OUR VISION & MISSION

Our vision is simple: “To see our lives and communities transformed by the love of God.”

We seek to nurture Christian life and faith throughout the Hambleden Valley – in worship, in service, and in care for one another.



About the Hambleden Valley

The Hambleden Valley lies in the heart of the Chiltern Hills, between Marlow and Henley-on-Thames: an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty just 30 miles west of London and 45 minutes South East of Church House, Oxford. The five parishes of Hambleden with Frieth, Fawley, Fingest, Medmenham, and Turville form a single Benefice, stretching from the Thames riverside to the wooded hilltops at the head of the valley.

This is a community where long-established families, newcomers, and visitors all find connection through the churches. Traditional rural life flourishes alongside commuters and young families. The valley is also well known for its film and television links.

Somehow it has escaped much of the rush of modern life (although all churches have wifi!), and many seek the tranquility here to walk, ride and cycle, taking in the views and visiting (6) local pubs at their leisure.

WORSHIP & COMMUNITY LIFE

Across the six churches, we offer a rich variety of worship, from traditional BCP and choral services to informal, family-friendly gatherings and innovative interpretations of our ancient traditions.

We also host popular seasonal services such as Harvest, Remembrance, Christmas, Easter, alongside pastoral ministries including a Tea Club for older residents and Lent lunches that strengthen village friendships. A weekly Bible study group meets in Turville, and three very different Lent courses are being hosted across the benefice this year.

Our Church of England school, Frieth CEC Primary, is integral to our ministry with children and families. The Associate Priest will have opportunities to support collective worship and community life in the school and beyond. The Benefice has a newly formed group developing ways in which we can expand our work with children and young people.

We value continuity and encourage creativity in our worship, and music plays a significant role in our shared life, with choirs in Hambleden and Frieth and bellringers in several parishes. Our Director of Music is based in Hambleden.

We are fortunate to be able to publish a monthly magazine for the Benefice, and one which not only colourfully informs and entertains, but also brings in surplus funds from subscriptions and advertisements. [See Group Magazine.](#)



VISITORS

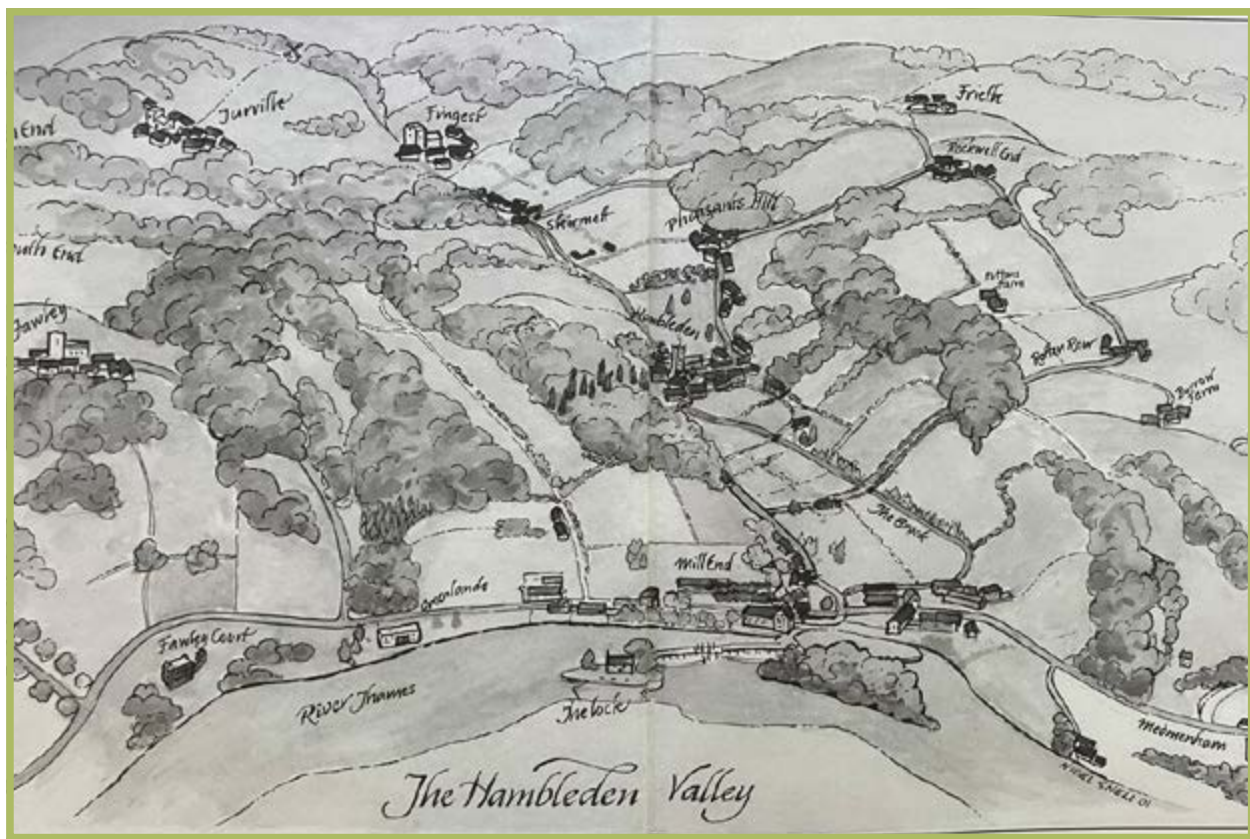
The Hambleden Valley attracts a steady flow of visitors drawn by its natural beauty and timeless village life, meaning our churches regularly welcome far more people than those who live locally. Festivals and special services see congregations significantly enlarged by those from beyond the parish, many returning year after year, alongside others who remain part of our regular church communities despite moving to nearby towns.

There is a deep and enduring attachment to these churches: many people from outside the valley ask to hold their weddings here (and subsequently, occasionally, the baptisms that follow!) and some form close relationships with the regular congregations. Families ask to hold funerals here long after they have moved away, reflecting a lasting spiritual connection.

This 'hidden congregation' is also evident in quieter ways- in the steady use of candle stations and prayer books in many of our churches, the popularity of summer church teas, and the dedication of those who travel long distances - for example a family who come annually from Southampton for the Animal Blessing Service to celebrate their mother's birthday. Two John Piper windows and some famous graves are further attractions, as well as many filming locations around the Valley. All our churches welcome many international visitors, while Fawley's Friday prayers include requests from across the world sent in by email, continuing a valued practice begun during lockdown.

Together, these patterns reveal a ministry extending well beyond parish boundaries to a dispersed but significant community - one we deeply value, including the many people we will never meet.





OUR CHURCHES

St Mary the Virgin, Hambleden

Hambleden church is both in and at the heart of the village and local people and visitors visit, pray, wonder and reflect. It has an interesting history ([see History](#)) and our volunteers keep the fabric in great condition.

Four services a month are attended by a regular, committed and friendly congregation and services are enhanced with a choir, flowers and bellringing. The major festivals draw particularly large congregations which is heartening. We are also busy with weddings and funerals.

We support a local food bank and, during summer months, well-attended weekly Sunday church teas provide extra funds for the church.

The village is packed with activity with continuous streams of visitors on feet, bikes, horses and of course cars, the friendly shop opposite the church does a roaring trade and its outside tables often occupied.



St John the Evangelist, Frieth

Frieth has it all: a Primary school, the Church, its own Village Hall & a Gastro Pub!

There exists great potential to innovate and attract growth & interest in our church community.

Already with loyal supporters, a redecorated church building....an eagerness to see our congregation flourish.

Our church has 2 sung eucharist pcm + 2 Group Services pa alongside those that are school life specific.

To new arrivals we have events that would inspire & amaze 'Frieth hilly' endurance run, 'Lent lunches' soup for the locals, 'Villager socials', 'Numerous clubs & societies' (EG Natural History, Keep Fit, card playing, Dahlias...) and 'Food collections' for those in need.



St Mary's, Fawley

Where is Fawley? If it were not for the church and the tiny village green, the scattered village of Fawley would have no centre of gravity. The locals and their houses are all real characters, some of whom do an incredible job to unite community spirit.

There is a small but devoted congregation at the fortnightly Sunday services and a large congregation at Christmas, with an additional unique Railway Nativity Service. It also benefits from The Friends of Fawley Church, a charity founded in 2021 to protect and maintain the church building for the whole community. The FFC raised £450K for the re-ordering of the church in 2023, making a space that is more suited to all kinds of events from Christmas Fairs, concerts and dinners to meditation groups and village drinks. Since March 2020 there has been a very active group meeting at noon every Friday in the churchyard for a short Friday prayers service.

St Bartholomew's, Fingest

Fingest is the smallest of the six villages with Grade 1 listed St Bartholomew's Church at its centre. Originally Norman, the unique twin gable tower adds to the building's charm and challenges. Fingest's rich history means deep community roots with congregation and residents preserving the church and surrounds. A good relationship with the pub opposite, hosting church celebrations, makes up for no village hall. An annual walkers cafe and church teas on Bank Holiday weekends supplement regular hospitality at our monthly morning and evening (Compline or Evensong) services; together with a biannual Group service, the August one outside. A beautiful candlelit Candlemas completes the yearly pattern.

From the twin-gabled tower to the bride-carrying tradition, from outdoor services to the evening services, Fingest is unique.



St Mary the Virgin, Turville

St Mary the Virgin has an iconic setting in the beautiful village of Turville. It focuses on engaging with families through creative outreach to the close-knit parish communities of Turville Heath, Northend and Southend. The church was beautifully restored in 2024, with the architect winning a national prize for her work on the project. It has featured in many TV shows, including The Vicar of Dibley, and is popular with walkers and visitors throughout the year. There is a weekly midweek service and a Sunday service (rung in by an active bellringing band) once a month. Festivals and community events, including an animal blessing service, are especially well supported.

The village of Turville itself is picture-perfect and has a strong community spirit. Three surrounding communities-Turville Heath, Northend and Southend-are also within our Parish. Without the benefit of close physical proximity, fostering connections with people living in these settlements is more of a challenge, but we take every opportunity to extend our welcome as widely as possible

St Peter & St Paul, Medmenham

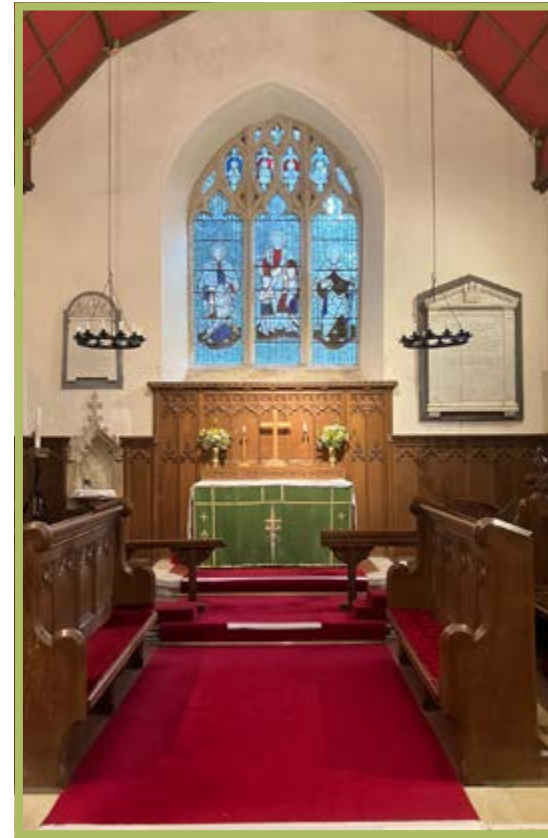
Standing just off the A4155, alongside 5 church cottages, and opposite a pub and village hall, the church is loved by a friendly community of owner-occupiers. An RAF estate and primary school (who visit and are visited) border the parish. We collect for a local foodbank.

A monthly informal Village service, with refreshments, was suggested by parishioners. Additionally, Group Communion services are twice a year plus fifth Sundays. The popular Carol Service hosts an excellent visiting choir.

The Grade 2* Norman building has recently added kitchenette and toilet, 3 bells operated electronically, and a historically important bell frame. Charity concerts relish the acoustics.

The churchyard is still open and boasts wild orchids and native flowers.

Newcomers to the village are welcomed at an annual meet and greet, a free meal offered, which is provided by the current residents, where friends for life are made. The locals put on concerts at the fondly-regarded church and pack it out at the carol service, and some baptisms, and all are kept in touch with an excellent email newsletter.



OUR OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

We are a Benefice with great blessings: vibrant communities, faithful congregations, and well-cared for churches, but we also recognise our challenges and meet them by sustaining and deepening faith in a changing population; engaging with younger families; supporting clergy and lay people across a wide area; and maintaining unity across five distinct parishes. The missional opportunity of many visitors is linked to the challenge of additional requests for weddings and funerals from outside the benefice. Rural ministry comes with other challenges, too, with the wide distribution of people and lack of public transport, and the perennial pressure of maintaining our parish shares, but we have substantial support from the Deanery and the Rural Forum of local churches.

There are huge opportunities for mission here, and the growth we see is very much organic and natural. It stems from the many visitors and pilgrims who seek us out, the new families and old at the festivals, the vital relationships formed during occasional offices, and our presence in the rhythms of village life; at community events, in pubs and schools, on footpaths and at kitchen tables, not just in church buildings. This is a ministry of accompaniment, hospitality, and gentle invitation, rooted in the love of Christ and expressed through everyday encounters.



FINANCE SUMMARY

Overall the parishes in the valley have sufficient unrestricted income to cover the parish share request and their running costs. In 2025 total unrestricted income was around £200,000 whilst for 2026 parish share is £88,466 with budgeted benefice expenses of £19,480. Previous Associate Priest expenses were in the region of £3,000 pa fluctuating according to mileage expenses. The overall financial strength of the individual parishes varies, with Hambleden and Turville having the additional benefits of the most weddings and filming, as well as of endowment funds; and Medmenham having a rental income from five cottages. Fingest and Fawley in contrast are less well resourced. Furthermore, Hambleden, Fawley and Turville have recently raised external funds for church building work and consequently their churches are in good repair.

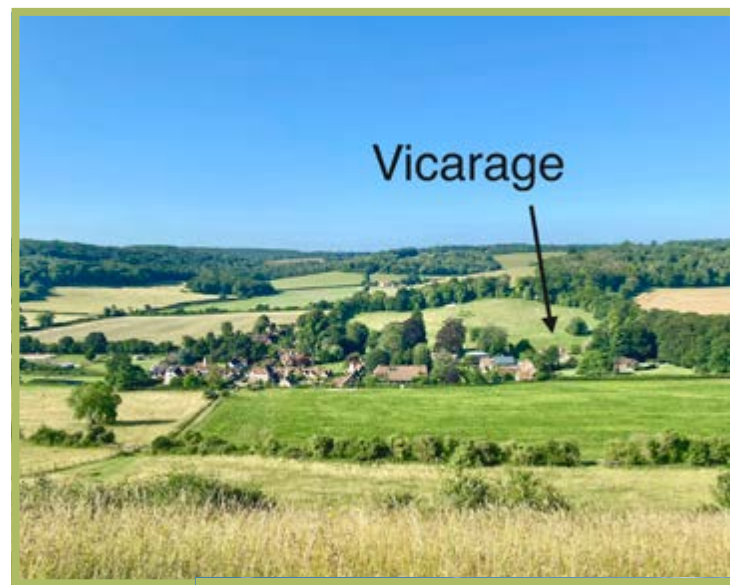
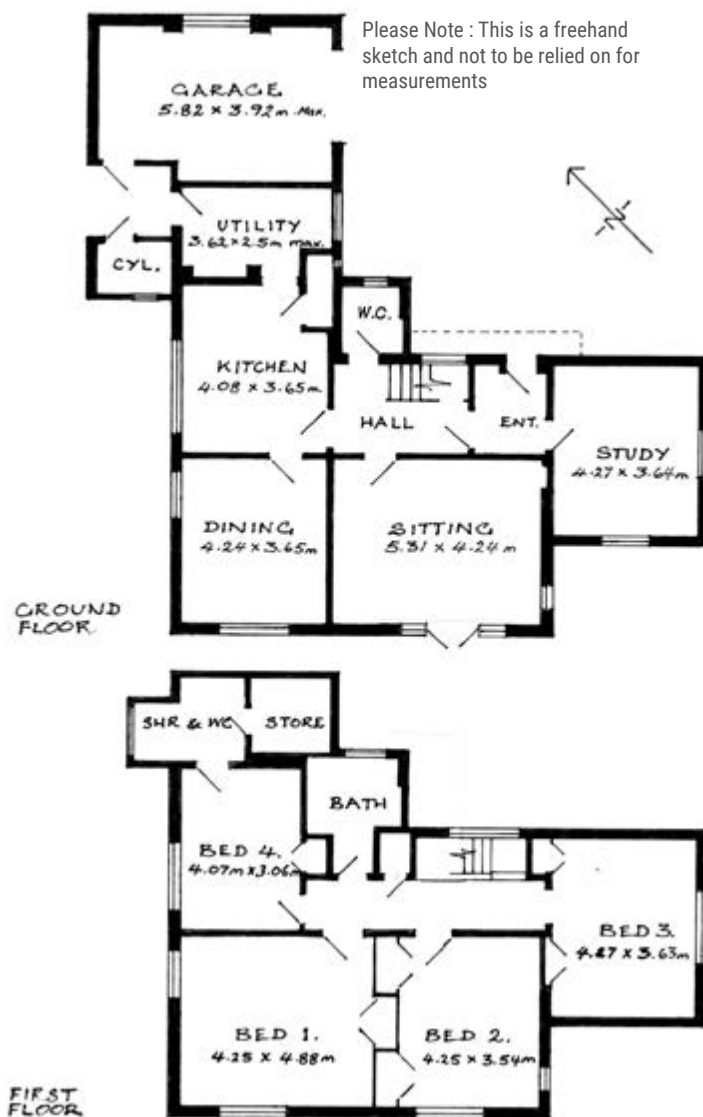
The group treasurer also helps publication and distribution of the Hambleden Valley Church magazine. It unites the benefice with its good news stories and pictures, and is run very efficiently, generating some surplus income to defray group expenses.



OUR MINISTRY TEAM AND SUPPORT

The new Associate Priest will serve alongside our Rector, Andy Storch, clergy with PTO, and a committed team of lay leaders. We are blessed with a Director of Music, a part-time Group Administrator, a Group Treasurer, and active PCCs, who excel at drawing additional assistance from many other villagers. There are Parish Safeguarding Officers in each parish save Medmenham, where the Rector stands in. All PCC members are trained according to the latest guidance and there is a safe and aware culture in the churches.





THE VICARAGE

The Vicarage is a spacious four-bedroom house situated on the edge of the village of Turville, enjoying beautiful views up and down the valley. It has a generous garden, mainly laid to lawn, together with a large parking area and garage.

Inside, the house provides comfortable and practical accommodation for ministry and family life, with approximately 1,830 sq ft (170 m²) of accommodation, excluding the garage, of which around 1,500 sq ft is principal living and bedroom space.

On the ground floor there is a large study, a living room and dining room, as well as a good-sized kitchen and utility room. Upstairs there are four very generous bedrooms, one with an en suite shower room, together with a family bathroom.

The house is currently being upgraded with improved insulation and a new heating system using an air source heat pump, which, with recently replaced modern windows, will help to ensure it is comfortable and energy efficient for the future. Further, the kitchen will be fully refurbished, there will be new bathrooms, and it will be freshly decorated with new carpets throughout.

LIVING IN TURVILLE

Turville was the setting for the television series *The Vicar of Dibley*, and village life still reflects much of the warmth portrayed there. There is a strong sense of community: people look out for one another, enjoy coming together for village events, yet at the same time respect each other's privacy. The church is physically and emotionally at the heart of village life and is well supported by the community. There is a private nursery in the village which takes children from 3 months to 4 years old, full or part time. There is an active village WhatsApp group which helps keep everyone connected and informed.

The Vicarage is ideally located on the edge of the village, with the substantial Old Vicarage standing between it and the church, giving a sense of space with no immediate neighbours, while remaining close to the heart of village life.

Turville is a popular starting point for walking, cycling and riding, and the surrounding network of footpaths and bridleways across the Chiltern Hills is exceptional. The village pub, The Bull & Butcher, is a lively gathering place, particularly during the summer months, and villagers traditionally meet there on the last Friday of each month for an informal catch-up.





THE WIDER CHURCH FAMILY

The Diocese of Oxford serves the mission of the Church in Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire. The Diocese comprises more than 600 parishes with over 800 churches, serving a diverse population of more than 2 million people located in all types of settings.

Due to the size and complexity of the Diocese, we have three Area Bishops who exercise considerable strategic and pastoral oversight for their Areas. In the Buckingham Area, the Bishop of Buckingham, the Rt Revd Dave Bull, is supported by the Archdeacon of Buckingham, Revd Cassa Messervy, Revd Canon Chris Bull, Associate Archdeacon of Buckingham, and the wider Area Team.

Through prayer, listening and discernment a common vision has emerged for the Diocese of Oxford. The vision is based on the qualities described in The Beatitudes and addresses what kind of church we are called to be: a more Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world: contemplative, compassionate, courageous.

Our Common Vision continues to emerge as we identify together areas of our common life where we believe God is calling to focus. The Diocesan focal areas are not a description of everything we do, but these priorities are being supported centrally by resources, training, conferences, workshops and much more. The Diocese is inviting benefices and their clergy to share a vision rather than demanding a response, motivated by hope not driven by anxiety, and thereby to flourish in their ministry. It is hoped that clergy appointed into the Archdeaconry of Buckingham will want to commit to this vision and encourage their benefice to share in becoming a more Christ-like church for the sake of God's world."



Wycombe Deanery is a family of Anglican churches and congregations in and around High Wycombe.

Like all families, our Deanery is diverse, stretching from the Thames Valley to the Chilterns Escarpment, encompassing urban areas in High Wycombe, some smaller towns, and dozens of rural villages. What unites us as a Deanery is a vision to see all of our churches flourishing in serving their parishes and working together to seek God's Kingdom.

A new Deanery Plan was approved by our Deanery Synod in October 2025. The plan, which was drawn together with contributions from across the Deanery, offers a shared direction of travel for the Deanery over the next five years. While not being a rigid blueprint, it is a framework built upon our values, and priorities and underpinned by our vision statement:

“To help our churches serve their parishes and work together to see God's Kingdom come”

Further information about our Deanery, including our Deanery Plan, who's who, and upcoming meeting dates, can be found on our website: www.wycombedeanery.com

We hope that this has given you a flavour of what we are about as a Deanery. If you have further questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Wycombe Deanery organises the Rural Forum, a group that meets three times a year to bring the lay and clergy leaders of our 17 rural parishes together, to support each other & share ideas and challenges.

ROLE SUMMARY

Role Title: Associate Priest (House for Duty- 2 days plus Sunday)

Benefice: Hambleden Valley Group of Parishes

Deanery: Wycombe

Archdeaconry: Buckingham

Episcopal Area: Buckingham

Accountable to: The Archdeacon of Buckingham

CONTACT & FURTHER INFORMATION

Would you like to find out more?

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**More about our churches and community life
can be found at: www.hambleden-valley-churches.org.uk**

CURRENT PATTERN OF SUNDAY WORSHIP

	Fawley	Fingest	Frieth	Hambleden	Medmenham	Turville
1st Sunday		10am Holy Communion (or another church)		(or elsewhere) 3pm Family Service		
2nd Sunday	11am tbc	9am Holy Communion		11am Holy Communion		
3rd Sunday			9am Holy Communion	8am BCP Holy Communion 10am Lay-led Morning Prayer	11am Village Service	
4th Sunday	11am Holy Communion	6pm Evensong	9am Holy Communion	11am Holy Communion		9.30am Holy Communion
5th Sunday			8am BCP Holy Communion		10am Group Service	

HAMBLEMEN VALLEY PARISH

Data from 2021 Census

Parish	Hambleden with Frieth	Medmenham	Turville	Fawley	Fingest
Occupied Households	583	315	108	91	15
Population	1375	928	269	227	38
Age 0-19 (%)	19	33	21	20	18
Age 20-44 (%)	18	30	18	28	14
Age 45-69 (%)	42	31	47	39	41
Age 70+ (%)	21	6	14	13	27
Christian	60	57	63	58	58
Deprivation Ranking*	6980	9650	6573	6628	6628

**1 = most deprived; 12239 = least deprived*