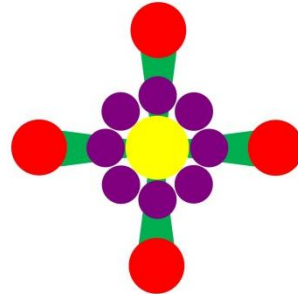


Benefice Brochure for the Benefice of Harden & Wilsden, Cullingworth & Denholme



Introduction

We are seeking a new Team Rector who will be keen to focus on the mission, ministry and growth of a benefice united in faith and service, while lay colleagues take on the tasks of parochial administration.

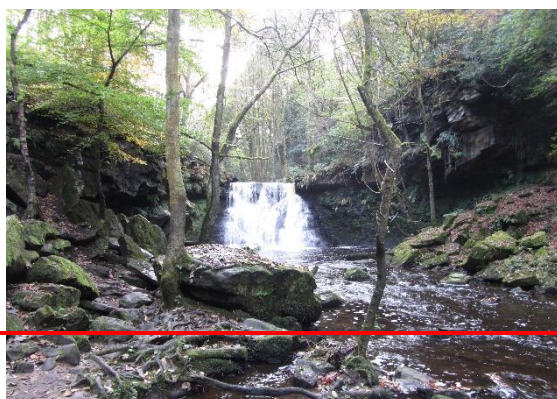
The benefice was formed in 2014 and is made up of 3 Church of England churches in the villages of Harden, Wilsden and Cullingworth and a Local Ecumenical Partnership Church in Denholme, which is a Baptist / United Reformed Church / Church of England and known as Denholme Shared Church.

The congregations and their councils work well together, and our laity is supportive and encouraging. During the first few months of the vacancy, parish officers have met together regularly, sharing ideas and good practice for the benefit of the whole benefice. We have an excellent and varied Benefice Ministry Team, a Benefice Administrator and a Benefice Council where we work creatively on ideas and strategy for mission and ministry. Administration is streamlined, and parishes share similar paperwork. Parochial Church Council meetings are set up to minimise the load for the clergy and members are open to any further efficiencies.

The benefice is situated in the beautiful “Bronte Country” of West Yorkshire countryside between Bingley, Haworth and Keighley. We are close to the City of Bradford, currently the UK City of Culture, and the World Heritage site of Saltaire. The outstanding natural beauty of the Yorkshire Dales National Park is on the doorstep.

We are well positioned for accessing larger towns and cities in the region, and beyond, both by road and public transport. Bingley railway station connects with services to Leeds (King’s Cross) also York, Halifax and Manchester. We are close to the M62 and M65.

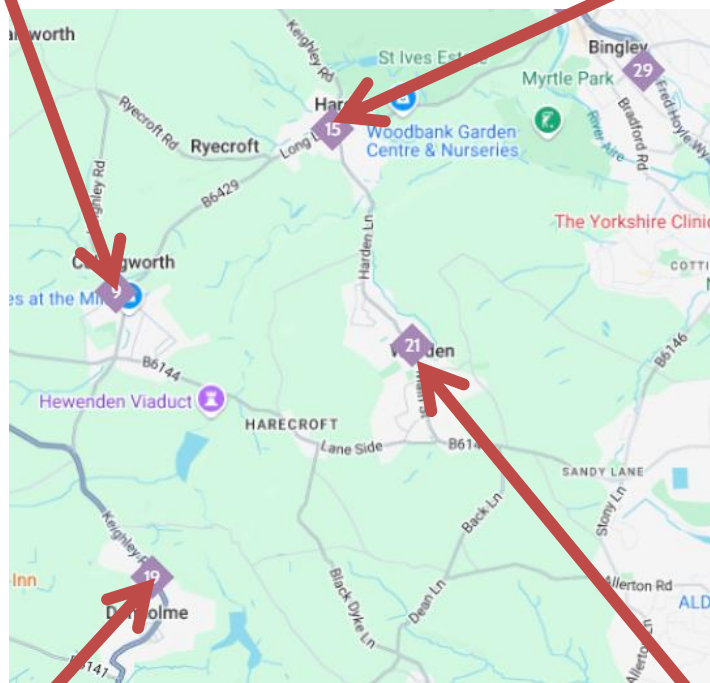
We have a number of secondary schools, one in Cullingworth and two in Bingley. We also have good primary schools in each of the four villages.



St John's, Cullingworth



St Saviour's, Harden



Denholme Shared Church



St Matthew's Wilsden

Statement from the Bishop of Bradford, The Rt Rev'd Dr Toby Howarth

These four parishes form an important joint benefice within the Bradford Episcopal Area and the Diocese of Leeds and include an encouraging local ecumenical partnership in Denholme. After the benefice came into being eleven years ago, the constituent parishes continued to run with a great deal of independence. For the past six years a fruitful period of Interim Ministry has been in place. There is now a strong, shared and cohesive identity across the four churches. The Benefice Council has been fully established and the respective Church Council meetings are set up to minimise the load for the clergy. A coherent, attractive and workable pattern of worship has been established across the four villages, including new forms of worship (particularly Messy Church and online services) to reach new people. The clergy now operate more flexibly across the whole benefice. Confident lay leadership has been developed (making good use of the Diocese's Personal Growth and Leadership Course) and the office holders in the four churches now meet regularly to share good practice. Financial viability has been enhanced. Relationships with the schools in each village, and links with the various community, uniformed organisations are all good.

The benefice is also served by a part-time Team Vicar, active retired clergy (including one who served as a Self-Supporting Minister in the benefice until recently and continues with specific responsibilities) and an LLM with Permission to Officiate. There is also a part-time paid benefice administrator. Following the Interim Ministry, we are now looking to make a permanent full-time appointment to the role of Team Rector. The new post-holder will be able to build on the foundations laid during the past six years, offer good Church of England parish ministry, and continue to:

- Work with the congregations of the four churches to grow them, particularly through outreach and ministry among families, children and young people, and working a 'mixed economy' of new forms of church and worship alongside traditional ones;
- Develop lay discipleship and lay leadership;
- Grow the financial health of the churches in the benefice to be able to meet the full costs of mission and ministry in the benefice and also make a contribution to the costs of mission and ministry in less economically advantaged parts of the Diocese;
- Reinforce the shared identity of the churches in the benefice;
- Help the congregations be even more at the heart of the community life of the villages.

Our vision as the Diocese is about confident clergy equipping confident Christians to live and tell the good news of Jesus Christ. In appointing to this post, we are therefore looking for

someone who is a visionary, enthusiastic and enabling leader for the next chapter in the life of the benefice and has a joyful and confident faith which has inspired a track record of church growth, both numerically and spiritually. (S)he will be a good communicator, comfortable with being a visible public presence in the villages, capable of building good relationships with a wide range of people and able to thrive within the diversity of the benefice.

The Deanery of Aire and Worth is comprised of parishes similar to those of this benefice, many of whom are experimenting with mixing new approaches to worship and mission alongside inherited patterns. The new incumbent will therefore find a group of creative and supportive colleagues in the Deanery chapter, all of whom will be deeply familiar with the joys and challenges that each other faces. The new post holder will therefore be expected to work with a spirit of generosity in sharing wisdom and insights about ministry within the Deanery of Aire and Worth and across the Episcopal Area.

+Toby Bradford

11 June 2025



Bishop Toby at a Confirmation in the Benefice

Our New Team Rector will:

- Be a confident, positive individual with vision and energy, who can enthuse and inspire others;
- Have appropriate and relevant experience and enthusiasm for multi parish ministry;
- Be a strategic thinker with the ability to delegate, direct and encourage;
- Be a spiritual leader, helping others to encounter and follow Jesus in their personal lives;
- Be a team player as well as a good team leader, with highly effective pastoral and interpersonal skills;
- Be open and welcoming to all.

They will:

- Deepen the faith and active commitment of the four congregations;
- Continue to develop the common sense of purpose between the four parishes;
- Be an active and visible presence around the benefice, having a positive engagement with the whole community;
- Continue to develop and take further our work among children and young people;
- Support and nurture the leadership teams, encouraging and enabling lay and clergy training and discipleship.
- Support and encourage the PCCs and congregations to fulfil their responsibility for the financial wellbeing of their respective parishes and to support the more economically disadvantaged parts of the Diocese.



What we can offer you:

Ministry Team

Alongside this full time post of Team Rector, there is a Half Stipend Team Vicar and a Self-Supporting Associate Minister with PTO. They are supported by two retired priests, a Reader with PTO and lay leaders. We have three people who are Lay Worship Leaders and an Occasional Preacher. Fifteen of our lay people have also completed the Diocesan Personal Growth and Leadership Course.

Administrative assistance is provided by a part time administrator. Alongside our administrator, lay colleagues are working together across the benefice to release the clergy from unnecessary involvement in parish administration. Working more closely across all four parishes has been one of the positive impacts of the vacancy, allowing us to consider carefully how to support and 'free up' the clergy for ministerial tasks.

The Ministry Team meeting brings the clergy and lay leaders from across the benefice together each month. The ministry team works across the four parishes and shares resources, learning new ways of working from each other. Together the Team oversees the pastoral care and ministry in the churches and communities, encouraging and supporting each other.

The Benefice Council brings together the licensed clergy team and two members from elected from each church. This group meets quarterly, determining benefice strategy and initiatives in mission and worship. Each church has a very competent and enthusiastic Church Council, wardens, treasurer, secretary and lay chair.

Worship

We offer worship in a number of different styles in order to meet the needs of all our congregations, whether long standing or those just starting their journey of faith.

The monthly pattern of worship includes Common Worship Eucharistic Services, All Age Services, Morning Worship, Café Church, Book of Common Prayer Communion and Messy Church in three of our churches.

We also have good attendance in other activities such as United Benefice Services, discussion groups and bible study, Lent groups, social events and fundraising. We have an active men's group and support Inn Churches with the provision of a shelter for the homeless one week each winter.

We produce a written worship sheet and newsletter each week which is distributed to around 500 people.

We have a Benefice Facebook Page on which we broadcast Morning, Evening and Night Prayer each weekday. These services serve a congregation of around 50 people for each service. We have also used this and our YouTube Channel to livestream services and to explore books of the bible.

We have good contact with all of our local schools and run three Messy Church groups (Wilsden, Cullingworth, Denholme) which gather each month. We deliver regular collective worship in our primary schools and we welcome them into our churches for regular visits and celebrations.



Aire & Worth Deanery

The benefice is part of the Aire and Worth Deanery. Our eight Deanery Synod Representatives attend the three annual synod meetings which are always informative and engaging. The Clergy Chapter creates a supportive network of local clergy.

Ecumenical relations:

We are active members of the local Churches Together in Bingley Rural group and hold regular joint services and Lent study groups. The Group is made up of our four churches together with Trinity Church in Wilsden, Cullingworth Methodist Church and Harden

Congregational Church. Together we produce a welcome pack which is distributed to all new residents of the villages of Harden and Wilsden and Cullingworth produces an annual Village Diary which is delivered to every household.

Our Communities

Wilsden is the largest of the communities in the benefice, Harden the smallest village with a church. Denholme officially has town status. Cullingworth is the only community in the benefice with a secondary school. There are also two hamlets, Harecroft and Ryecroft. The benefice also includes the beautiful grounds of the St Ives Estate and Goit Stock woods and waterfalls which are great place for a walk.

There are community primary schools in Harden, Wilsden, Cullingworth and Denholme. All are served by good village activity and energetic local council groups. There are excellent local shops including pharmacies and Post Offices in each village and Co-op supermarkets in Wilsden, Cullingworth and Denholme. A Doctors Surgery is based in Wilsden and Cullingworth to serve the area of the benefice. There is a residential care home in Wilsden.

Wilsden and Cullingworth each have a village hall. Wilsden's includes two squash courts. In Denholme there is "The Mechanics" where many community activities are based.

There has been a large increase in local housing across the benefice in recent years, adding to the number within our care. The population is very varied in age and wealth.

The Team Rector will live in The Rectory in Harden. The Team Vicar lives in The Vicarage which is situated in Cullingworth.

Our Churches

All the churches are well situated in their communities. Harden, Wilsden and Denholme have all been reordered with chairs providing flexible seating options. All four churches have projectors and screens which can be used in worship. At Denholme there is an open graveyard, Cullingworth are in the process of closing the churchyard which is now full.

All four churches have engaged church councils which actively take responsibility for the care of the church buildings, allowing the clergy to focus on their mission, ministry and pastoral care.

Each has a hall or large room for social and community activities. Activities include Keep Fit Classes, Art Groups, Lunch Clubs, Classes for learning to play the Ukulele, Uniformed Organisations, Toddler Groups, a Men's Shed and a "Well Being Café" for local people and

their carers. Each summer we hold a special service in each church where we invite the groups who rent the space to join us to celebrate community.

Pastoral Care

The churches have an established pastoral network. Each church has a Pastoral Co-ordinator who oversees a group of pastoral leaders. These are members of the congregation who have a small group of people allocated to them which enables good pastoral care. Regular telephone contact and visits ensure that everyone in the congregation is aware of the community of the church fellowship.

There is also a well-maintained list of people to whom church news is distributed physically or electronically each week. This has also proved an excellent means of maintaining contact with those who come to the church for baptisms, weddings and funerals.

Outreach & Mission

We have enjoyed welcoming new church members through good follow up from pastoral services, from local engagement and from the good welcome and joy in our churches.

We regularly hold a service in the residential care home and lead an afternoon once a month in a retirement living community.

For the past three winters we have hosted Warm Spaces in our churches, serving over 600 meals each year.

The churches maintain a good profile and take opportunities to reach into the communities at village events such as the annual galas and switching on the Christmas Lights.

We share leadership with the other local churches for Remembrance Sunday. At Harvest and Christmas we welcome out local schools and preschools.

At All Soulside we invite families we have met in our funeral ministries to come together for a special service of Thanksgiving for Life. And each year we invite those recently baptised to a Teddy Bear's Picnic.



The Diocese of Leeds

The Diocese of Leeds was formed at Easter 2014. It is one of the largest dioceses in the country covering an area of around 2425 square miles and a population of around 2,642,400 people. The diocese comprises five Episcopal areas, each served by a suffragan Bishop. Each Episcopal Area is coterminous with an Archdeaconry.

The Diocesan Vision is 'confident Christians, growing churches, transforming communities and so helping share the Good News of Jesus Christ across our Diocese. The vision is embedded into the Diocesan Strategy: **Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence**.

The Diocese is a mix of urban and rural. The area includes the major cities of Bradford, Leeds and Wakefield; the large industrial and post-industrial towns of Halifax, Huddersfield and Dewsbury; the market towns of Harrogate, Skipton, Ripon, Richmond and Wetherby; the deeply rural area of the Yorkshire Dales.

The Diocese is unique in having three cathedrals; Bradford, Ripon and Wakefield. The Deans of the Cathedrals work together to provide key diocesan services.

Barnabas: Encouraging Confidence

The Diocese of Leeds is committed to building **confident Christians** who are part of **growing churches** and helping to **transform communities**.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to **share the Good News**, serve others and make a positive difference in our communities. To help us do this, we need to be **confident** in our faith, in our churches and in the future.

Over the next 10 years, we are focusing on four key areas:

- **Confidence in our Mission** – Helping churches understand their purpose and make the best use of their buildings, time, and resources.
- **Confidence in our Future** – Ensuring the diocese remains sustainable, effective, and well-prepared for the years ahead.
- **Confidence in our Leadership** – Supporting and equipping everyone who serves in our churches.
- **Confidence in our Witness** – Encouraging and empowering people to share the Good News of Jesus, especially with children and young people.

These **four pillars will guide everything we do from Church House**, helping us work together and support the diocese more effectively.

BENEFICE STATISTICS

Sunday Worship

	Harden	Wilsden	Cullingworth	Denholme
Week 1	11.15am Eucharist	9.30am Eucharist 11.00am Café Church	9.30am Eucharist	10.30am Anglican Service of the Word
Week 2	11.15am All Age Service	9.30am All Age Service	9.30am Eucharist 3.45pm Messy Church	(10.30am Free Church service)
Week 3	11.15am Eucharist	9.30am Eucharist 11.00am Café Church	9.30am Eucharist	(10.30am Free Church service)
Week 4	11.15am Morning Worship	9.30am Morning Worship 6.00pm Eucharist	9.30am Eucharist 6.00pm BCP Eucharist	10.30am Anglican Eucharist
Week 5	10.30am United Benefice Service rotating around the four churches			

Weekday Worship, streamed on Benefice Facebook Page

8.00am Morning Prayer

5.00pm Evening Prayer

9.00pm Night Prayer

Wednesday Worship and Prayer

10am each week at Cullingworth

10am (First, third & fifth Wednesday) at Wilsden

2.30pm to 3.30pm Harden Church is open for prayer

3.30pm Messy Church (Wilsden second Wednesday, Denholme third Wednesday)

Each fortnight we lead a communion service in the local residential care home.

	Harden	Wilsden	Cullingworth	Denholme
Usual Sunday Attendance	29	27	22	17
Messy Church Attendance	n/a	28	33	23
Electoral Roll 2020	50	43	48	10
	Shared Church Membership 2019			20
Village Population	2,800	4,900	3,500	3,800

Occasional Offices 2024	Harden	Wilsden	Cullingworth	Denholme
Baptisms	5	7	8	1
Weddings	2	1	2	0
Funerals in Church	7	2	3	8
Funerals taken by clergy not in church	0	2	1	2

The figures above mainly focus on our Sunday activities and worship. Our activity continues throughout the week.



Warm Space



Benefice Men's Group

In a typical week in March, excluding Sunday, we will see over 200 people attending church run activities in our churches. Approximately half of these will not be people who we see in church on Sunday or at Messy Church.

In December, school and preschool celebrations, carol services and Christingles mean that we greet over 3000 people at Christmas activities.



Carol Singing



Dove's For Peace

The Rectory

The Rectory is situated in the village of Harden, on Wilsden Old Road, a five minute walk from St Saviour's Church.

The property was built in 1911 and is well appointed and maintained. There are five good sized bedrooms, a bathroom and shower room on the first floor. On the ground floor there are two reception rooms and a large kitchen with separate utility room. The large study is separated from the house by a partition door and there is access to the downstairs WC from the study.

There is a garage which accommodates one car.

The garden is well maintained, with decking, two ponds and well established borders.



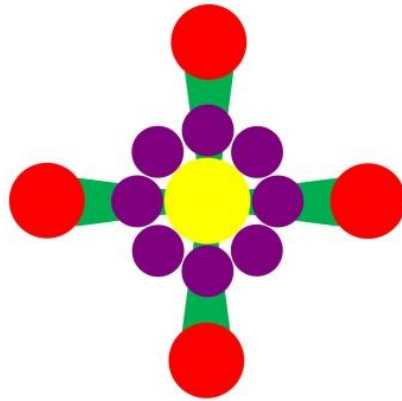
Is God calling you to this post?

To arrange a visit or conversation, please contact:

Ven Dr Andy Jolley, Archdeacon of Bradford:

andy.jolley@leeds.anglican.org or 07973 458403

Application is via Pathways. Closing date for applications is midnight on 1st Sept 2025 with interviews on Friday 19th Sept 2025.



The Benefice of Harden & Wilsden, Cullingworth & Denholme

