

PROFILE OF THE PARISH OF **BANBURY SAINT LEONARD**



Our vision: To be a Christian presence in the community, embodying God's love in all we say and do.

www.saintleonardsbanbury.org

Dear potential applicants,

I am delighted that you are reading this profile and perhaps discerning whether you might be called to be the next Vicar of St Leonard's, Banbury.

This is a town-based ministry, set in Grimsbury, one of the poorer parts of Banbury. The church here has an Anglo-Catholic identity, and is committed to reaching out in love, service, and faith to its diverse surrounding community. There are good relationships and links to be built on with local schools, care homes, and a multi-faith neighbourhood. You will see in this profile that there is a strong and genuine desire to be a visible, compassionate, and generous presence in the locality.



This is a wonderful opportunity for an enthusiastic, personable, and pastoral priest, committed to the liturgical and musical life of the church. There is much good to be built upon, and potential to go deeper and further in some clearly identified areas. The PCC is both forward-thinking and realistic about what can be accomplished and have a clear sense of wanting to do a few things well, rather than many things at the expense of quality. They seek a collaborative leader who will work with them and care for them. This is a House for Duty post, enabling a ministry of 2 days plus Sundays each week, so there is a need for the new incumbent to be able to manage their time and life/work balance well – and you will find a PCC and a Diocese who are committed to your flourishing.

As a diocese, we are seeking to become more Christ-like for the sake of God's world and learning to be contemplative, compassionate and courageous in all we do. Anyone taking on this post will I hope wish to engage with our vision as it continues to develop, particularly in terms of how it might help the mission and outreach in this parish. Our priorities include addressing poverty and inequality, environmental action, Christian formation and discipleship, and engaging with schools, children and young people. You can find out more on the diocesan website and the diocese is blessed to have a great team who are keen to support parishes in their mission.

With every blessing as you seek to discern whether God might be calling you to serve here.

With every blessing,

+ Gavin Dorchester

Rt. Revd Gavin Collins, Bishop of Dorchester

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Foreword by the Bishop of Dorchester

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Our Prayer for interregnum

Heavenly Father, you have drawn us all into this church and community, and filled us with your love. In our time without a Vicar, help us all to share the responsibility of continuing to offer your welcome and love to all, so that we will care for all those in need. Lord Jesus, help us to love one another and to grow in faith as we serve you together. Guide those who are seeking to find the right Vicar, who will help us to follow your way for the future and grow your Kingdom in Grimsbury. We ask this for your love's sake. Amen.

1. Introduction

St Leonard's Church is a small, friendly church situated within the Grimsbury district on the East side of the historic market town of Banbury. The area contains a mixture of older housing (circa 1890's) and newer housing estates, accommodating people in homes ranging from Houses in Multiple Occupations [HMOs], rows of terraced housing, through to 4 and 5 bedroom properties in more recently built privately owned estates. There is a great diversity of people living in this parish including young singles, families, elderly people, ethnic minorities and people who have recently come to the UK to work.



We are looking for an energetic House for Duty incumbent willing to maintain our Anglo-Catholic identity, who is able to encourage and equip us to better serve our community and fulfil our vision of:

Seeking to be a Christian presence in the community, embodying God's love in all we say and do.

You will be working in a multicultural and multi-faith community which is diverse in terms of income, education and employment. Grimsbury has its own identity, and forms a geographically distinct parish 'over the bridge' whose boundaries are very stable.

We need someone with vision who can support us to become more of a presence in the community. We are seeking applicants keen to work in our local Church of England school, and to support our links to the local residential care home. Our church is available for community use, and we would like to explore new ways of using the building.

2. What is our Church community like?

We are a friendly group, with a dedicated congregation that enjoys worshipping in a distinctly Anglo-Catholic style.



Our congregation has remained stable for many years, with 25-30 Sunday morning regulars (there are 29 on the electoral roll). The congregation consists of people of a range of ages, and we have some younger members including a couple of children. Not all our congregation live locally: some come in from further afield, as we are one of the few Anglo-Catholic churches in the area.

The previous incumbent maintained a regular presence in St Leonard's C of E primary school and had started to form links with Dashwood Academy, the other primary school in this locality. He also visited the local care home, The Ridings.

Children of primary school age are catered for during our Sunday service, with weekly Bible-based activities taking place in the Lady Chapel, facilitated by a couple of members of the PCC.





An important part of church life is the social time we share. After Sunday services we enjoy tea, coffee and home-made cake made by members of the congregation, and we encourage visitors to the church to stay and chat, which many do.

We enjoy occasional social events either within the church or hosted in the local community centre, including quiz nights with suppers, music evenings, and coffee mornings.



We would like our new incumbent to help us prioritise community work and encourage and support us to grow in faith. We welcome new ideas and opportunities.

3. Our worship

Our Sunday morning worship is distinctly Anglo-Catholic and liturgically-based, with ritual a part of our tradition that we would like to retain. We regularly use Sanctus bells and process the Gospels, and on special occasions use incense. Music is also important to us, and we have a regular organist. We use *Hymns Old and New* and our singing is led by a robed adult choir.



Liturgically-based, congregation-led prayer services are held on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Traditionally, the choir sing anthems and lead hymn singing every Sunday. Due to other commitments choir practices have paused currently, but members still attend regularly on Sunday to lead the sung parts of the service.

Whilst we are not seeking a classically-trained musician, we would like the future incumbent to be supportive of us having a robed choir and organ-playing in church, and perhaps to take an interest in Church music.

4. Our spiritual growth

We usually offer a short Bible Study discussion group during Lent and Advent, and occasional Quiet Days each year. These are run by a member of the congregation and attract a small number of participants, mainly from other churches.

A recent consultation with the congregation indicates the importance of sermons, and highlighted their role in adding context and enhancing understanding of Bible teachings.

There was an expressed interest in more teaching of the Bible for learning the message of Jesus and the development of personal faith.

5. Activities for the wider community

A weekly Seated Exercise Class, followed by a social lunch, takes place each Monday and is run by a qualified member of the congregation. The local Methodist homes complex allows us to use their lounge for this session.

A monthly discussion group, 'It's Good to Talk', takes place in a café in the centre of the town facilitated by a church member. Numbers attending are small but constant. The group has evolved over the years. It started as a response to Covid, and it is now a general discussion group looking at topics suggested by group members.

We host quizzes with supper two or three times a year in the local community centre, and though primarily community events with affordable ticket prices, these are helpful fundraisers.

We normally hold a summer fete and a pre-Christmas Bazaar/craft-fair in Church. These events form a part of many local people's social calendar, and a space for tea and cake is included so that people may enjoy chatting together.



We have long standing connections to a local care home, The Ridings. A member of the congregation currently runs a seated exercise class, a poetry club and a Christian service based on Anglican liturgy. The church choir visits every year to sing carols, and the last incumbent took a monthly communion service. We hope that a new incumbent would continue to take communion services and encourage congregation participation in the care home outreach work.

6. Work with children and schools



There are two primary schools in our parish, St Leonard's C of E and Dashwood Academy. The previous incumbent took a few assemblies at St Leonard's School and on occasion talked to year groups. Several

previous incumbents chose to become school governors and this remains a possibility for a new incumbent but is not a requirement. Our involvement with Dashwood Academy has taken the form of participating in their annual multi-faith RE day.

Both schools visit our church building regularly and use the building for concerts, especially at Christmas.

We would like our new incumbent to work closely with the schools, especially St Leonard's, and to encourage others within the church to be trained and supported to take on this important work. Despite currently lacking a Children's Worker to lead and co-ordinate activities, we have maintained links with the schools. For example, we host visits to the church and take assemblies at school, and we have resources in church to support this work.

7. Work with those of other faiths and the secular community

Within our parish there are several organisations that provide for the needs of the people of Grimsbury. There is a Mosque, which has recently opened a community centre, a Gurdwara and two Pentecostal Churches (which meet in hired venues). There are two private nursery schools, a Dementia Active Centre, Banbury Young Homelessness Project and a Scout group.

The Grimsbury Community Association look after a community hall which is used for a variety of community activities. We occasionally hire the hall for church events and use their community notice board to publicise our activities.

There is an umbrella organisation called The Grimsbury Network, facilitated by the local council, that aims to link up different community groups so they can serve the neighbourhood better.

Banbury Christians Together has a long history in town and tries to help denominations work more closely together. We have recently re-established links with this group by the appointment of a representative who attends their monthly meetings.

8. Essential and desirable characteristics in our new Vicar

Essential

- Someone who will give strong leadership in Church guided by their own faith, helping us to learn from Bible teaching through sermons and prayer, and providing a role model of how to be kindly and Godly during our regular worship, as well as during celebrations such as Baptism, weddings and funerals.
- Someone who likes young people, and is interested in working with the local schools, encouraging families to be involved with the Church.
- Someone who is comfortable relating to a wide variety of people without judgement or prejudice, and who will enjoy being part of a multi-cultural community.
- Someone who is interested in pastoral work and will enjoy a role with older people, including visits to the local care home.

Desirable

- Someone who will enjoy participating in our community events and will be visible in the wider community.
- Someone who will be supportive of music in church, even if not a musician themselves
- Someone who is interested in interfaith work and increasing understanding between faiths.

9. Support available to the incumbent

- We have a PCC that meets approximately every two months, with two active church wardens, a named Treasurer, Secretary and Parish Safeguarding Officer.
- There is a vergers who assists with behind-the scenes preparation for Church services and helps maintain the Minister's robes and the Church's interior as well as taking bookings for weddings and baptisms.
- Other people within the Church take on the role of Sidesperson, undertake readings and prayers during the service, provide refreshments, and assist with general housekeeping.

We recognise that there is a limit to what a part-time incumbent can achieve with a small congregation – and understand that it is better to do a few things well rather than to try to do too many things.

10. Summary

We are looking forward to this new chapter in the life of our church with faith, optimism and enthusiasm. We will actively support a new incumbent whose role is part-time. We need someone who will guide us and work alongside us, growing together as the family of God, living and sharing His love in the community.

St Leonard's Church through the Year



Q2. The opportunities and challenges for St Leonard's Church

OPPORTUNITIES	
COMMUNITY WORK	<p>To develop new connections in an ever-changing community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reaching out • Working in the community, • Visiting The sick • Joining community events <p>Lead us to root the church in the community</p> <p>There are lots of new homes and a growing population in the area but only a very small population currently attend Saint Leonard's</p> <p>Opportunities for change, perhaps be less formal. be inclusive, Welcome those of all denominations.</p> <p>Open up Church for those less familiar with our Services</p> <p>Maximizing use of the Church facilities – especially during the summer months when it is warmer</p> <p>Maintaining and possibly increase the church online presence</p>
WORK WITH LOCAL SCHOOLS	<p>Increase the connection with the local schools, Saint Leonard's and Dashwood</p> <p>Spend one day in school each week</p> <p>To have more school services here x2</p>
YOUTH WORK	<p>Bring young people in to church in a world not focused in Jesus and promote the Gospel.</p> <p>Encourage young families to join us</p> <p>Young mothers and toddlers coffee morning and play</p>
OUTREACH TO LOCAL CARE HOME	<p>CARE home visiting</p>
SUPPORT FOR CHURCH CHOIR and CHURCH MUSIC	<p>Hold a choir event</p> <p>Encourage people to join the choir</p> <p>Help find more organists/pianists to play in the Services</p>
VICAR'S ROLE	<p>Consistent vicar, Need to be available</p> <p>Proclaim the faith of the Lord</p> <p>Proclaim the kingdom of God</p> <p>No need to preach (i.e. actions speak rather than words)</p> <p>Fill in the needs of the community</p> <p>Good services kind actions</p> <p>Sermons on Sunday</p> <p>Lead prayers</p> <p>Reading scriptures during the service</p> <p>Bible study on Saturdays</p> <p>Guide people who need</p> <p>Pray for each other</p> <p>Get congregation involved more in the day-to-day running of the Church</p> <p>Other Church events</p>

<p>INTERFAITH WORK</p>	<p>Encourage more interfaith understanding</p> <p>Exchange visits</p> <p>Allow time to develop connection</p> <p>To develop or re-establish inter-faith and inter-denominational gatherings to enhance spiritual well-being and connection</p> <p>Increase the numbers attending church, to help with all aspects of church life</p> <p>Grow the Church; Increase the number attending; Grow the congregation at Saint Leonard's; Increase the numbers attending church, to help with all aspects of church life</p> <p>Maintain and possibly increase the church online presence</p>
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<p>CHALLENGES</p>	
<p>TO GROW THE CONGREGATION</p>	<p>Small congregation thus difficult to do everything we would like to. Need to determine what to try to do well rather than spreading selves too thinly.</p> <p>No opportunities for paid work in this church at the present time</p> <p>To attract young people.</p>
<p>INCREASE TEACHING OF THE BIBLE AND CHRISTIANITY</p>	<p>To attract the right person to be our Vicar, someone who will want and be able to stay in post.</p> <p>To encourage more reading and study of the Bible. Maintain and develop the interest of religion within the congregation</p> <p>To maintain what is good while being open to try new things with enthusiasm</p>
<p>INCREASE INTEGRATION WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY</p>	<p>To increase our visibility in the community i.e. we need to show that Jesus's message fits the community problems. Also, by the Church being used for [appropriate] non-service events</p> <p>Develop interaction with other Churches in Diocese</p>
<p>BUILD BRIDGES AND IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING ACROSS FAITHS</p>	<p>We may need to build Bridges across faiths for the Good of God and community. Spread the word through the local community</p>
<p>TO MAINTAIN THE UPKEEP OF THE CHURCH BUILDING AND GROUNDS</p>	<p>St Leonard's Church is an old, cold building in winter (but good for summer). (Newly installed heaters help a bit).</p> <p>It has met with some maintenance challenges and there are on-going repairs to be made.</p> <p>Access into Church could be improved.</p> <p>Paint the church sign.</p> <p>The hall is derelict.</p> <p>Fundraising</p> <p>Keep this place open for the ones who need it</p> <p>Freshen up outside, repaint the sign and plant a few flowers to make it look like something is happening</p> <p>Improve the Sound system e.g.</p> <p>Bluetooth connected speakers to welcome more people</p>

INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN THE ROLES IN CHURCH	Involve the congregation more in the day-to-day running of the Church.
LOCAL DEMOGRAPHIC	Diverse non-Christian local population, plus other formal and informal churches in the area. There are small pockets of deprivation in Grimsbury. There are local areas of transient population.

Q3 Areas that the new Vicar should consider as priorities at St Leonard's:

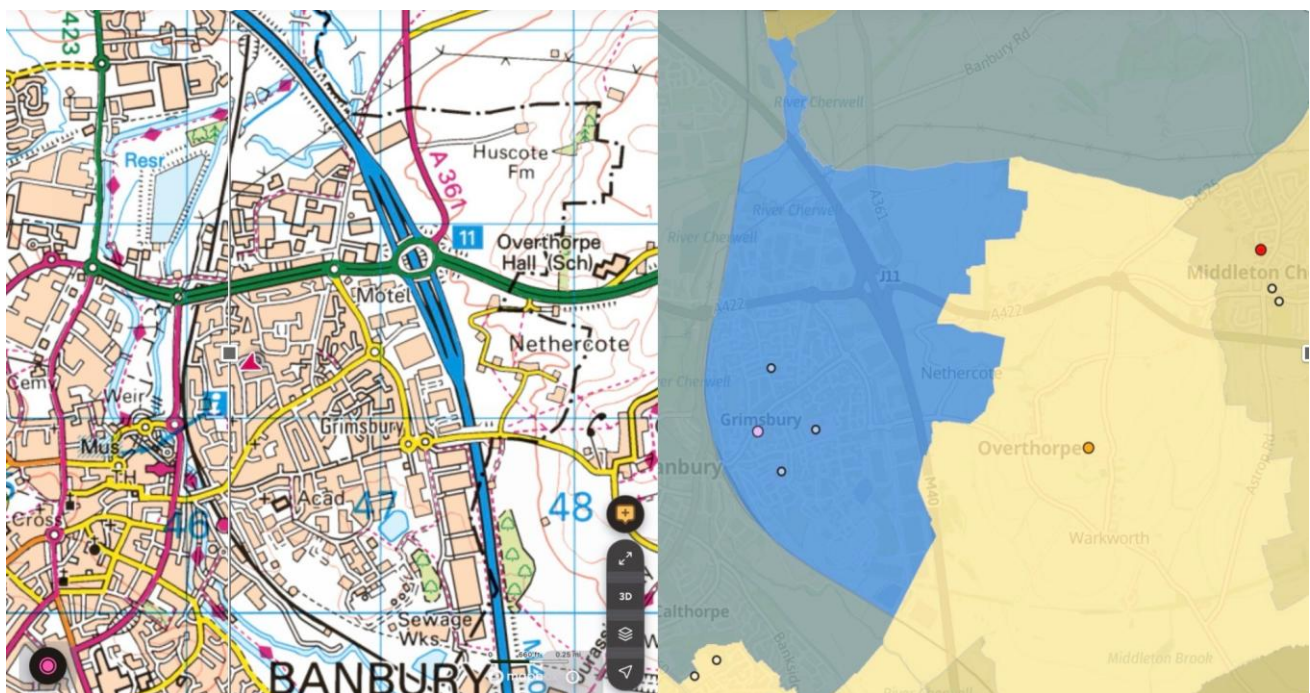
- To value what is already at St Leonard's but also to offer to share their own interests and preferences
- Be visible in the town/community
- Be active in the schools, involving parents as well as children, with encouragement to become congregants
- Grow the congregation, bring families in.
- Oversee a peaceful environment and avoid divisions,
- Promote Church and Christian principles using the Holy Bible and Word of God. Encourage people to bring their Bibles. Preach for longer and get to know members of the congregation.
- Encourage people to come to a daily service by making the sermon more interesting to listen to and share.
- Undertake outreach work in the local Care Home and home visiting e.g. for bereavement care.
- Multifaith liaison
- Home visits, bereavement care,
- Freshen up the Church outside so it looks like something is happening.

Appendix 2: Banbury and the local area

Location

The nursery rhyme ‘Ride-a-Cock Horse’ has made Banbury a well-known town in England.

Conveniently located off junction 11 of the M40 and boasting excellent railway and motorway links, its rich historic background combines excellent facilities with a comfortable standard of living. Oxford is just 23 miles away and London Marylebone around an hour by train. Although Banbury is a growing and ever-changing town, the countryside around is beautifully unspoilt and well within walking distance.



The parish of Grimsbury, where St. Leonard’s is located, is one of the poorer areas of the town, containing a large number of bed-sits and terraced homes. In recent years several new private housing estates have been built, providing everything from one-bed starter homes to 4 and 5 bedroom detached properties. It is a multicultural area, and

includes different kinds of households, from young singles and young and growing families to the elderly.

Education

Saint Leonard's Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School (<https://st-leonards.oxon.sch.uk>) is just a 5-minute walk away. This school has around 367 pupils of mixed faith and ability, with around one quarter of the pupils Punjabi and Urdu speaking and learning English as a second language. The school was most recently rated as Good overall by Ofsted, and Good by the Church of England/The National Society.

There are places for three Foundation Governors, formerly including the vicar of St. Leonard's, to play an active role in the life of the school. Both the school and PCC would like the new incumbent to serve on the Governing Body, but as a minimum, would expect enthusiastic participation in school life.

Dashwood Banbury Academy (<https://www.dashwood-aspirations.org>) was built in 2008 on the old cattle market site, and presents an additional opportunity to the parish.

Elsewhere in the town, secondary school provision comprises North Oxfordshire Academy (NOA), Wykham Park Academy, The Futures Institute, and The Warriner School, as well as Frank Wise School (Special Educational Needs). Banbury also has a number of faith schools, two of which also serve the parish, including St. Johns R.C. Primary and Blessed George Napier Secondary. There are also a number of private schools locally. At further education level, Banbury and Bicester College is located near the town centre.

There is a range of local nursery school provision within the town.

There are several universities within commuting distance including in Oxford, Warwick, Coventry and London.

Health Care

There are a number of doctors' surgeries in and around the town centre, with one located in Grimsbury itself. All dental surgeries are in the town centre (a 10 minute walk) with some of them still taking NHS patients. The Horton General Hospital, part of the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, is located on the south side of town. The hospital has a 24-hour accident and emergency department and paediatric unit. There is also a midwife-led maternity unit. The Foscoote private hospital is adjacent to the Horton. More specialist care is provided by other trust hospitals within Oxford.

Shopping and Leisure

Banbury town centre has undergone substantial redevelopment around the Castle Quay shopping centre, and this had added a multiplex cinema to the town, as well as a new hotel.

There are many pubs, restaurants and coffee shops, as well as a growing number of independent shops. The town also has a museum, a bowling alley, a sports centre, a library, a football stadium, an outdoor swimming pool (summer only), cricket and bowls clubs and golf courses located nearby. There are also several parks and green spaces in and around the town.

A street market is held on Thursdays and Saturdays, with a farmers' market held on the first Friday of the month selling locally grown produce. Tesco, Morrison, Sainsbury, Waitrose, Lidl and Aldi supermarkets are all conveniently located around the town. There are

a number of independent shops in the town centre, and two retail parks offering a wide variety of shops nearby.

The Mill Arts Centre provides theatre, arts and cultural activities for all age groups, and St Mary's, the municipal church in the town centre, hosts regular arts events also. National theatre companies can be found less than an hour's drive or a train journey away in Oxford, Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon.

The Banbury Town Council lays on a number of free events throughout the year that include a Hobby-horse festival, Canal Day, and annual Food and Folk Festivals. There is also a Michaelmas Fair in the market-place. Banbury experiences similar issues that other midsize towns do with respect to keeping town centre shops open, but retains all the activities, facilities and entertainment expected of a lively market town.

Banbury is well served by a network of canal towpaths, bridleways, footpaths and cycle paths to places of interest located nearby. Many beautiful historic houses and gardens surround Banbury, and during the summer months several festivals take place nearby, including the Fairport Cropredy Convention.

Local Economy

Major employers in the area include Douwe Egbert, Amazon, the Horton General Hospital and DHL. Motor sport is another significant employer: Prodrive, Aston Martin Racing, Haas F1 team, Arden International, and Mahindra Racing are all based in Banbury.

Increasingly Banbury is becoming a commuter town for London, and its location adjacent to the M40 has attracted large distribution centres.

Demography

The population of Banbury is approximately 60,000 according to Cherwell District Council.. The population of Grimsbury is about 10,000.

It was estimated recently that 52% of people aged 16-74 are in full time employment, compared to the national average of 39%.

Over 10% of the population identified themselves as “white non-British”. This is double the national average figure, and includes many Polish and Romanian workers. Almost 20% of the population were born outside the UK, and over 8% of households were reported to have no members with English as their main language. 55% declared themselves Christian followed by 27% no religion, and over 8% Muslim.

Grimsbury is ranked around the middle for deprivation in England, though is more deprived than most regions in Cherwell.

Crime statistics are below the national average in Banbury.

Housing

Grimsbury was originally built as an overspill area for local railway workers and mainly consisted of terraced housing, with council housing added between the wars. With the railways selling off land, new developments of mixed town houses and detached houses were built. The Banbury cattle market closed around 2000, and the site was developed to provide new homes and the relocated primary school Dashwood Banbury Academy, all within a 5-minute walk of the church.

Appendix 3: Banbury St. Leonard's Parish Church, Buildings and Land

Saint Leonard's Church was built in Grimsbury, the east side of Banbury town, in 1891. It was originally built as a Chapel of Ease to Christ Church in Broad Street.

In 1921 Grimsbury was constituted as a separate parish and Saint Leonard's became the parish church of Saint Leonard's Grimsbury. In 1931 a fire destroyed much of the South side of the church and as a result, the church was redecorated and a new vestry was built. In 1978 the newly created Parish of Banbury, made up of four districts, was inaugurated.

In 1998 the Banbury Team Ministry was dissolved. By Royal assent the new parish of Banbury Saint Leonard's was created.

In 2001 a new dais was built in the nave of the church and the High Altar was placed in the centre. The font was also moved from the South Aisle and placed in the nave at the West end of the church.

In 2003 the church underwent a makeover with the central pillars being painted to reflect the decoration of the ceiling which is believed to have been designed in the style of a canal boat. (The canal runs nearby).

The church nave seats 120 with the lady Chapel seating another 25. Individual upholstered chairs were recently purchased to replace groups of attached wooden chairs, in order to improve flexibility when the church is used for social activities.

In 2019 the rear of the church had a kitchen area built to allow the nave to double as a social area, and an accessible toilet was built in part of the foyer.

The church hall, which was built in 1976, has now come to the end of its useful life. In the long term, the PCC would like to demolish the hall and possibly develop a car park in the area, as we now have new facilities within the church itself.

Appendix 4: St. Leonard's Vicarage



St. Leonard's Vicarage was built in 2015 and is a very spacious, well-designed family property hidden away next to St. Leonard's Church on Middleton Road.

There is a long driveway, with parking for several vehicles.

The accommodation comprises an entrance hall, a light and airy kitchen, a separate utility area, a large dining room/second reception room, a large dual-aspect lounge, and an office. There is also an accessible cloakroom downstairs. Upstairs are four good-sized bedrooms, some with built-in wardrobes, and two bathrooms.

