

Associate Priest West Sheppey Benefice

Introduction

We are looking to appoint an **Associate Priest** to offer ministry in the **West Sheppey Benefice** who will bring pastoral gifts to serve the three churches of the benefice and missional skills to share across the benefice and beyond.

This is an exciting time for ministry and mission on the Isle of Sheppey. The **Isle of Sheppey Group Ministry** consists of the **Benefice of West Sheppey** and the **Benefice of Eastchurch w Leysdown & Harty** on the eastern half of the island. Currently, both benefices are vacant. The Benefice of West Sheppey became vacant October 2024 when the previous incumbent moved to Ely Diocese.

The post of Associate Priest is a new appointment and the expectation is that an Associate Priest will be appointed in due course in the Benefice of Eastchurch together with an Incumbent leading a team across both benefices. Until this point, it will be possible to minister across the Island as part of the Group Ministry. However, it is envisaged that initially the role will be focused mainly on West Sheppey.

Because the Benefice, and the role in particular, is supported by the Church Commissioners' Lower Income Communities Funding, a Reference Group will be put in place both to support your ministry, and to provide accountability to the Diocesan Mission Resources Group, which controls the allocation of such funds. You will also receive support from the Archdeacon of Maidstone and the Bishop's Chaplain particularly in the early stages of the role.

Sheppey is part of Sittingbourne Deanery. Like all diocesan clergy, you will be expected to play a full part in Deanery life, making Chapter and Synods a priority, and contributing as appropriate to wider deanery strategy.

What you will be doing - *role description*:

- **Pastoral Care:** Providing sensitive, pastoral care for parishioners and engaging in outreach to those who are not yet part of the congregation, particularly given the local context.
- **Worship:** Participating fully in the worshipping life of the benefice, including preaching and presiding at services. Having a passion to share the Gospel in our prevailing culture and be an effective preacher/ teacher.
- **Occasional Offices:** developing the missional opportunities of the occasional offices and growing teams to support this ministry which is vital to the Island.

- **Discipleship & Leadership:** Nurturing spiritual growth and developing lay people's ministries; supporting the ministry team of churchwardens and ALMs through regular meetings and bible study; identifying potential new leaders, and providing training and support. Discerning the gifts of others and build up every church member in their discipleship and vocation.
- **Mission & Community Engagement:** Working proactively to engage with the local communities and respond to their needs; working collaboratively with other agencies and organisations offering support to the communities. Inspire the benefice to reach out to all communities.
- **School links:** Engaging with local schools, including St George's CofE Primary School, Minster, and developing new connections between church, family and school.
- **Collaboration:** Working with the local ministry team, wider Group ministry, and engaging with the deanery and wider diocese. Helping to draw the parish closer together whilst maintaining the identities of each church.

Who we are looking for – *person specification:*

- **Prayerful and Pastoral Heart:** A deep sense of empathy and a prayerful approach to life and ministry are essential.
- **Openness and Warmth:** personal qualities for building relationships and engaging with the community.
- **Enabler:** someone who can discern and develop gifts in others and can build confidence and aspirations.
- **Team Player:** Ability to work collaboratively with others in a team setting and to work independently on projects. A team player and team builder, intentionally building fruitful relationships .
- **Proactive and Self-Motivated:** The role demands initiative to identify and develop missional opportunities.
- **Resilience and rest:** a priest who will guard their own spiritual life and prioritise their wellbeing.

Accommodation



The house is a semi-detached house built about 1930, situated on the main road into Sheerness. There is a later single storey extension to the side which provides a study, toilet and separate entrance. The main house has a lounge, dining room, small conservatory, kitchen and utility room. The 1st floor has 4 bedrooms, bathroom and separate toilet. Externally there is a detached garage and a pleasant rear garden.