

# THE PARISH OF ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

Appointment of  
Team Vicar,  
Abingdon-on-Thames.

"We aim to worship God, to grow in faith and to share Jesus Christ, by honouring the past, while living in the present and growing into the future."







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# Foreword

Dear potential applicants,

I am delighted that you are reading this profile and encourage you to pray about whether this position might be the role to which God is now calling you.

The benefice of Abingdon-on-Thames is seeking a new Team Vicar who will support the Team Rector and wider team in leading this benefice in a prayerful, confident and engaging manner. The priest appointed will be welcoming to all, exuding a fun and friendly demeanour. A team player who possesses strong pastoral skills, along with an appreciation of the breadth of liturgical expression within the Church of England, including strongly sacramental ministry, will be appreciated.


This is a post supporting the Team Rector and gifted laity and to some extent the role can be adjusted to reflect the gifts and skills of the successful candidate.

You will find a friendly Deanery with supportive and experienced colleagues and talented lay people. The benefice recognises that they are under-represented in a number of key characteristics and would particularly welcome applications from those who would increase their diversity. Our Episcopal Area and Diocese are in good heart, expectant for all that God will do and thankful for all that God is doing.

The Diocese is committed to a high level of support and training for our clergy. Successful candidates who are taking up posts of first responsibility will be expected to participate in Pastoral Supervision Groups. Further details can be found at <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/ministry/continuing-ministerial-development/pastoral-supervision-groups>

Please pray about whether you might be the right minister to join us. If you decide to apply, we would be delighted to receive your application for this important position and look forward to the possibility of welcoming you as a potential colleague to partner in the gospel.

With every blessing,



Venerable David Tyler, Archdeacon of Dorchester





## Welcome

On behalf of the PCC and congregations of the parish of Abingdon-on-Thames, thank you for taking an interest in our parish and our current Team Vicar vacancy. We are a Team Ministry made up of three churches, all within the historic market town of Abingdon-on-Thames.

Our parish lies on the Thames in south Oxfordshire, with Oxford eight miles to the north and the Berkshire Downs to the south. It is a lovely part of the country with a rural feel and with excellent bus links to local towns and rail access to London from nearby Didcot, Radley, or Oxford stations.

Following my recent appointment as Team Rector, the parish is working to implement our vision for ministry and outreach in Abingdon. We are currently looking for a Team Vicar to work with me, as Team Rector, our current House-for-Duty Associate Priest, PTO-clergy, and licensed lay ministers to share in the pastoral care of the congregations of the parish, and to help achieve our vision for the parish. There are a great many opportunities within the parish and the role will be shaped so far as possible to suit the gifts and skills of the person appointed.

Please do read on to find out more about our parish, our hopes, and our challenges as we move forward.

The Revd Dr Jennifer Brown, Team Rector

## Who and where we are

We offer a breadth and richness of Anglican worship. St Helen's is the big 'town' church with a central and fairly liberal tradition, St Nicolas' offers a broad church in a smaller, more intimate building, and worship at St Michael & All Angels' is in the Anglo-Catholic tradition.

Until 2013 the town of Abingdon had a single parish, since then the town has been served by the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames (the three central churches) and the Parish of North Abingdon. In Abingdon-on-Thames we have been on a journey of developing more collaborative and supportive church life across our congregations.

We very much wish to take this further, honouring our traditions and our differences, while embracing opportunities and the excitement of seeing how we can develop and grow in the future.

Abingdon is rapidly increasing in size with several housing estates under construction; although many of these are outside the parish there is great mobility among congregation members,

who travel to centres of worship they prefer. There is tremendous potential to forge closer links with our existing community and with those moving into new housing.

Like many congregations, our members are ageing, yet we are attracting younger people, children and less experienced Christians to our faith and family. The Team Vicar will work with the Rector and congregations to continue growth in this area.

We can offer a strong team of clergy and lay support. The Team Vicar will work with our Rector, Revd Dr Jennifer Brown and our current House for Duty (Associate Priest) Revd Dr A.K.M. Adam. Three Licensed Lay Ministers (with permission to officiate) and a Licensed Preacher help out in the parish.

We are also blessed with the support of many retired clergy with Permission To Officiate who are generous of their time in taking Sunday and weekday services and occasional offices, and offering support with other parish and pastoral work.

# Could you be our new Team Vicar?

We are seeking a Team Vicar who is an approachable, caring and welcoming team player, with:

## Spirituality

- A deep, reflective personal faith and the ability to engage with complex theological issues.
- A life grounded in prayer.
- Vision and passion for their faith and ministry.

## Ministry

- A commitment to pastoral care for all.
- Enthusiasm for the distinctive liturgical traditions of each of our churches.
- A collaborative style of ministry working with clergy, laity, ecumenical partners and the wider community.
- A visible and approachable presence in the parish and wider community.
- The ability to discern and encourage the gifts of others.
- The ability to preach with depth and relevance, and to contribute to the teaching ministry of the parish.
- Awareness of the importance of different musical traditions in worship.
- An interest in parish carbon footprint reduction, and in addressing issues surrounding poverty and inequality in the parish.

## Personality and character

- Emotional intelligence and a high degree of self-awareness.
- Imagination and creativity.
- Resilience and the ability to face challenges.
- Ability to recognise and respond to opportunities.

## Practical skills

- An open and effective communication style, including familiarity with IT and social media.
- Good time-management and prioritisation.

# What we can offer you

We take seriously the need for a good work-life balance and fully support the Diocese's guidelines for clergy hours of work and time off. Over the last five years both our clergy have taken sabbaticals, with financial support from the parish. We also encourage anyone ministering to the churches to take a retreat each year. The laity is committed and in most areas we have good volunteer support.

There is a paid Parish Administrator who works 24 hours a week on parish business.

Fellowship is important to us and we believe in supporting our brothers and sisters in their time of need and of rejoicing. Across the parish, our clergy will never be short of a sociable cup of coffee or a piece of cake.



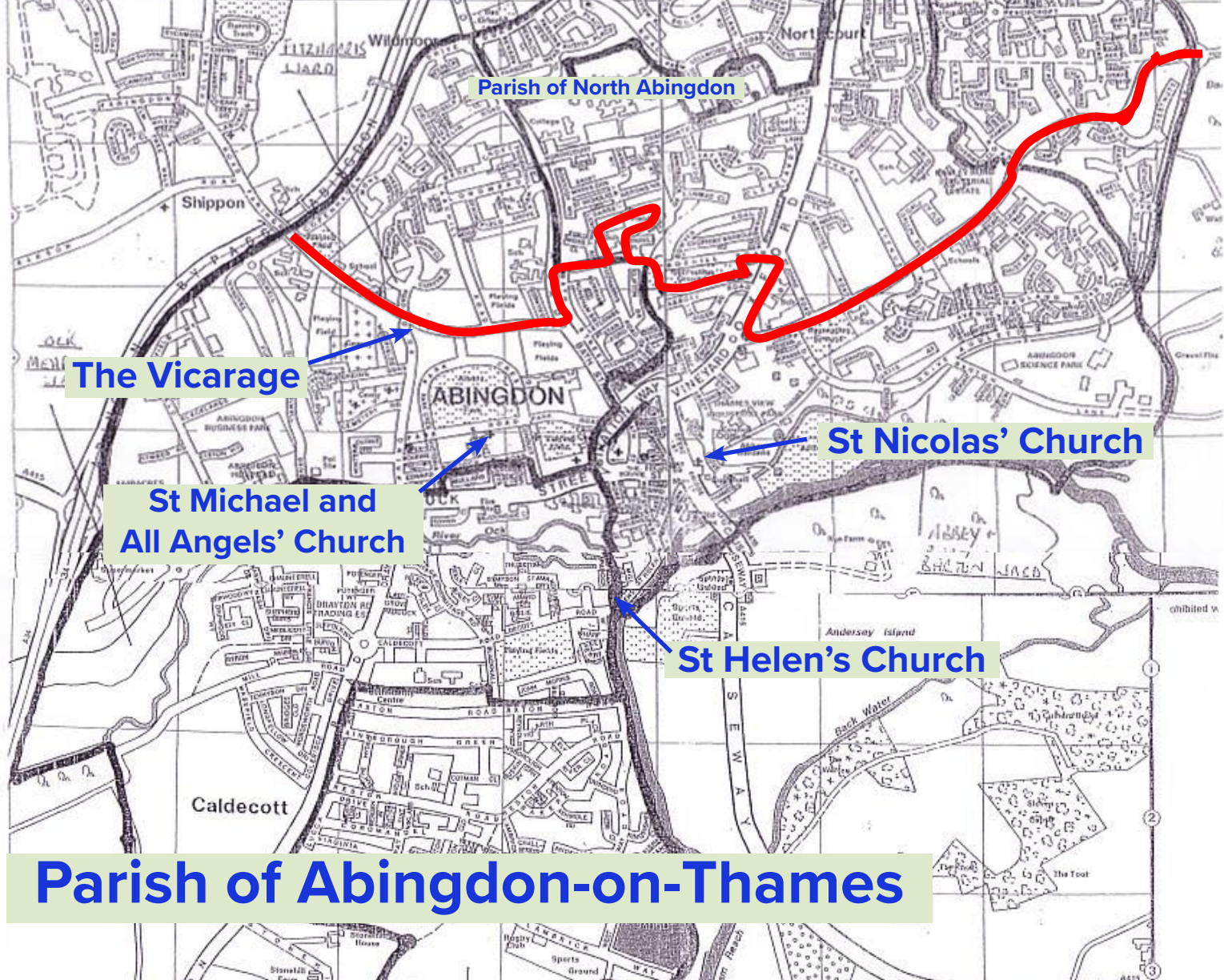
# The town and parish of Abingdon-on-Thames



Abingdon is an historic town of over 35,000 people. For centuries it has been the focal point of a rich farming area with its weekly market on a Monday, its famous hiring street fair held in October, and was once known for its brewing industry of Morlands. Nowadays it is probably better known as the hub of internationally acclaimed centres for scientific research. The Culham Campus lies about four miles away, home of the UK Atomic Energy Authority and recently chosen as the UK's first national Artificial Intelligence Growth Zone. To the south is the Harwell Campus housing the Diamond Light Source and the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory employing some 1,200 scientists and engineers. With further Science parks in Abingdon, Oxford, and Milton Park it is no surprise that our congregations include many scientists.

The proximity of Oxford offers many other career prospects and we have a sprinkling of academics amongst our numbers. However, many people do not share a comfortable lifestyle, and our parish includes one of the most deprived local government wards (Caldecott), falling within the 20% most deprived areas nationally. There are two foodbanks in the town, both of which are supported regularly by our parish with gifts and with volunteers.

Within Abingdon there are nine state Primary Schools (including St Nicolas VA Church of England), three state secondaries, two independent schools and two offering specialist provision (one state and one independent).



The parish has links with some of these and would like to widen and deepen these relationships further. There is more information about them on the Abingdon Town website: <https://www.abingdon.gov.uk/services/services-and-facilities/schools-adult-centres-and-colleges>



Abingdon is also on the cusp of change. About 900 new houses are currently under construction around the outskirts of the town and a Garden Village development is proposed for the Dalton Barracks land which is adjacent to the town and soon to be vacated by the army.

The town council has produced an Abingdon Town Neighbourhood Plan 2041, laying out its plans for the redevelopment of the town over the next 15 to 20 years. This can be accessed at <https://www.abingdon.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Draft-Neighbourhood-Plan-July-2024.pdf>



# Safeguarding

Safeguarding has been given high priority recently across the parish, as we have worked to ensure that all records are up to date, that everyone relevant is DBS checked and trained to the level required, and as protocols, policies and role descriptions have been reviewed, resulting in the parish dashboard currently standing at 78% compliant, so always more to do. A team of DBS verifiers plus one person at each church site works with the Parish Safeguarding Officer, who also works closely with Health and Safety and the pastoral team. Emergent concerns have been addressed promptly with support from the diocese.

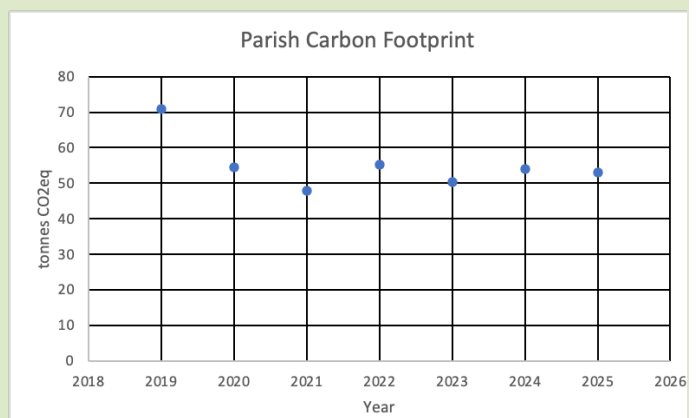
Our aim is a healthy, open, transparent parish culture where every individual is valued and every voice heard.

## Carbon footprint and eco-church

The parish is committed to reducing its carbon footprint, and we are registered with **A Rocha's Eco Church** programme. Each church's carbon footprint has been published in the Parish Magazine for the past six years.

St Nicolas' church achieved an **Eco Church Silver Award** in 2024, and in 2025 received a Diocesan Quick Wins Grant towards installing more energy efficient lighting.

Making our church buildings more eco-friendly is a priority, as far as resources allow. A major consideration of the new lighting scheme in St Helen's is that it should be eco-friendly, and the congregation is looking into the feasibility of a water-source heat pump, drawing from the River Thames.



# The worshipping community

The parish of Abingdon-on-Thames is the result of the formation of a Team Ministry in 1989 when the ancient parishes of St Helen's (including St Michael and All Angels' church and Christ Church, N. Abingdon) and St Nicolas' were united. In 2013 the very large parish encompassing the whole of Abingdon was divided into two. The southern/central section became the parish of Abingdon-on-Thames and the northern section became the parish of North Abingdon, centred on Christ Church and its daughter church at Long Furlong.

Our churches are also founding members of the Church in Abingdon (CiA <https://www.church-in-abingdon.org.uk/>), which was set up over 30 years ago as an ecumenical organisation to bring all the Christian churches together. The CiA now includes 15 members.



The CiA provides umbrella support for a number of ecumenical activities, such as Christian Aid, Church Twinning, the Abingdon Passion Play, and Street Pastors.

The town has become more multi-cultural over the last decade and other faiths are now practised in our community.

## Numbers on the Electoral Roll

There was a complete Roll Revision in 2025

	2023	2024	2025
St Helen's	214	229	146
St Michael's	63	67	54
St Nicolas'	67	62	53
Total	344	358	253

# Worship



## Sunday

- 8am: Book of Common Prayer Holy Communion, alternating monthly between St Helen's and St Nicolas'.
- 9.30am: Sung Mass at St Michael and All Angels'.
- 10.30am: Sung Eucharist at St Helen's.
- 11.15am: Morning Prayer, or Holy Communion or Service of the Word at St Nicolas'.
- 5.30pm: An evening service (Taizé, Wholeness and Healing, Choral Evensong, or Sacred Concert) at St Helen's.

## Weekdays

- 9.10am: Morning Prayer (Common Worship) at St Helen's every day.
- 10.30am: Holy Communion at St Helen's, Wednesdays.
- 12.30pm: Said Mass at St Michael and All Angels', Thursdays.

The principal services at St Helen's and St Nicolas' are broadcast via Zoom weekly, the sermons recorded and made available online. Where possible this approach is adopted for all major services. We are also introducing the option of Zoom broadcasting occasional offices if requested.

Major festivals are marked through a range of services offered in our three churches – each contributing in their own tradition. The congregations are used to coming together to worship for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Ascension Day, Trinity Sunday, Christmas Midnight Communion, and other festivals as appropriate.

Most services in church are led by the clergy or one of the supporting Licensed Lay Ministers or honorary assistants.

In addition monthly services of Holy Communion are offered in three town centre care homes and Home Communion is administered to the housebound where possible, by both clergy and trained laity.



## Music

Music features strongly across all three churches.

St Helen's has a Director of Music/Organist and Assistant Organist; the robed choir is about 30 strong and growing in number, including children and teenagers.

At St Nicolas' the hymnody is mainly traditional, but more modern music has also been introduced, particularly on Third Sundays.

St Michael and All Angels' has a regular organist and choir.

All three church buildings frequently host concerts, in a range of musical styles, including performers from within and beyond their congregations.





There is a large and dedicated band of tower- and hand-bell ringers who ring regularly at St Nicolas' and St Helen's. A couple of their members train an enthusiastic band of young ringers.



## Attendance across our Parish

Average attendance	2023	2024	2025
Christmas:	1098	975	958
Easter:	353	364	306
October average:	250	216	242
Usual Sunday:	192	190	169
Worshipping community:	353	342	293
Age of attenders	2023	2024	2025
0-17:	17	15	27
18-69:	69	96	66
Over 70:	196	231	191
Age unspecified:	71	0	0

## Occasional Offices

### Baptisms

Families wishing to have their children baptised are encouraged to attend joint baptism preparation sessions over two evenings, led by members of the ministry team assisted by lay people. There is also a possibility of a thanksgiving for the birth of a child if the parents do not want a baptism. There has been a recent growing interest in adult baptism.

### Confirmation

Candidates who wish to be confirmed are prepared by the clergy and admitted into the church at liturgically significant points in the year.

Children are prepared for communion before confirmation.

### Weddings

Couples wishing to marry are encouraged to attend shared preparation classes over three evenings, led by a member of the clergy team supported where possible by the laity. In some years a wedding workshop has been held where the couples (from all churches) can meet the organists, flower arrangers, bellringers etc. to discuss what they would like for their weddings.

### Funerals

Pastoral support for the dying and bereaved is important to us and funerals are celebrated in a dignified manner. Our clergy will preside at services at the local crematoria and attend burials.

	2023	2024	2025
Baptisms:	18	23	33
Weddings:	5	10	6
Funerals:	19	17	18

### Living in Love and Faith

This is an area which as a parish we would like to explore further.

## Life of the Church



All three churches have many ways of enriching faith and fellowship, some at a parish level, some by church.

St Helen's **Babies' and Toddlers' Group** has been running for many years with an average attendance of about 15 to 20 parents or carers and babies. The majority of these families do not attend regularly and we would like to develop closer links.

A troop of **Beavers** and of **Cubs** meets each week in the Parish Centre and is affiliated to the church.

There are currently three **House Groups** meeting in the afternoon or evening across the parish. This is an area in which newcomers often express interest, and we are actively developing this further.

**Faith Forum** is part of our adult education programme across the parish and meets monthly on Sundays at 12:30 for a light lunch followed by a talk (often from an outside speaker) followed by discussion. Recent themes have included **Personal Spirituality, Liturgy** and **The Church and Disability**.

**Agnostics Anonymous** is a regular open meeting looking at popular religious dilemmas or conundrums. It was set up in order to show that it is alright to have questions, and even doubts, about various matters of faith, with an audience of both practising Christians (Anglicans and other denominations) and enquirers. Recent subjects have included **Does being religious make you a better person?** and **Evil and the God of Love**. With an average attendance of about 40-50 we seem to be filling a need.

The **Desiring Life** book group is an open, book-based discussion group which meets fortnightly in the Parish Centre.

With its beautiful labyrinth, St Michael and All Angels' offers the opportunity for **Silent Reflections**, a time for people to reflect for a while, to examine their lives in the stillness of a sacred space, to be open to an encounter with God. The labyrinth is a focus for other activities including circle dancing held regularly with an enthusiastic following.

There is a town wide **Mothers' Union** branch which meets regularly to hear a speaker or run an activity. The members are instrumental in raising money (and cakes) for holidays held locally for the families of prisoners.





## Events

Each of the three churches runs regular events. St Helen's and St Michael and All Angels' both hold Christmas markets and host many concerts, cream teas, and St Helen's recently ran a barn dance. With its central position on the market square, St Nicolas' hosts concerts, art exhibitions and Cards for Good Causes in the run-up to Christmas. Although many of the events are held to raise money, we also believe them to be important in bringing our congregations together and encouraging the community into our buildings.

## Communications

A small dedicated team produces '**The Candle in the Window**', a parish wide e-magazine. A local incumbent said that "he didn't know any parish that had such a good magazine". Most read it online, but some hard copies are made available, too. It offers a wonderful mix of theological discourse, news from the churches, book reviews, quizzes and more. Each church has its own **weekly newsletter** or **pew sheet**.

About seven years ago, the parish took the decision to produce a **parish website**: <https://abingdonparish.org.uk> for all three churches. It has served its purpose but there is now the feeling that the website is due for further development.



# Community engagement

In recent years the congregations of our three churches have been exploring ways to engage with the community outside our congregations. These include:



For a few days in Advent and Easter, St Helen's creates a display in the West Porch, where members can offer a warm greeting, a seasonal treat, and a leaflet giving details of the Services in the Parish.

On one Saturday in December members of the PCC stand outside St Nicolas' Church offering Christmas greetings (and leaflets giving the



Christmas Services in the parish - examples below) as well as chocolates and mince pies to passersby.



St Helen's Church, West St Helen's St  
St Michael and All Angels' Church, Park Road  
St Nicolas' Church, Market Place

## SERVICES IN ADVENT AND CHRISTMASTIDE 2025



"We wish you a happy and peaceful  
Christmas and New Year."

### Carol Services

in the Parish of Abingdon-on-Thames

Sunday 30 November - 5.30 pm  
**Advent Carols at St Helen's Church**

*A service of music and readings, with blessing of the Jesse Tree, to mark the beginning of Advent and the wait for Christmas.*



Sunday 21 December - 11.00 am  
**Christmas Carol Service at St Nicolas' Church**

*Music and readings for Christmas with seasonal refreshments. All welcome.*



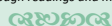
Sunday 21 December - 5.30 pm  
**Carols by Candlelight at St Helen's Church**

*Music and readings for Christmas by the light of many candles.*



Wednesday 24 December  
- Christmas Eve - 6.00 pm  
**Christmas Lessons and Carols at St Michael and All Angels' Church**

*This traditional service tells the Christmas Story through readings and music.*



Sunday 11 January 2026 - 4.30 pm  
**Epiphany Carols at St Helen's Church**  
*A short service of music and readings to mark the baptism of Jesus. Followed by tea and cakes. All families welcome.*

### Events for Families this Easter



Friday 18th April GOOD FRIDAY 10am  
**Children's Service and Craft Activities**  
*followed by refreshments.*  
St Michael & All Angels' Church

### Easter Garden

Come and visit the Easter Garden in the West Porch of St. Helen's Church.

It will be open every day from Mon 14th to Sat 19th April from 11am to 3pm.



St Helen's Church, West St Helen Street  
St Michael & All Angels' Church, Park Road  
St Nicolas' Church, Market Place

## HOLY WEEK AND EASTER 2025





Taking advantage of their position by Albert Park, a favourite place for dog walkers, St Michael & All Angels' offered a **Dog Café** after Sunday Service, with home made dog treats offered along with the home made cakes.

### Cream Teas with Music

at St Michael and All Angels', from April to September, have enticed many people into the church building on Saturdays, and made some money for the church as well.

At St Nicolas the glazed south porch offers the opportunity to have Advent, Nativity and Lent displays – where tableau and text (illuminated at night) offer insights into our faith, In 2025 displays for both Pentecost and Trinity Sundays were added and we hope to repeat and develop these initiatives.



### Cream Tea

St Michael & All Angels' Church,  
Park Road



**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May**  
**2.30 – 4.30 pm**

Tea/coffee with scone/cake £5



## Links and work with schools

We are working to develop and improve links with our local schools – this is an area in which we would like the Team Vicar to be involved – perhaps interacting with both the religious education and history curricula.

Our Team Vicar could be an Associate Governor of St Nicolas' VA Primary School, and a current member of the congregation at St Nicolas' Church is a Governor. We hope our next Team Vicar will take Assemblies at the school, assist with end-of-term services (held in St Helen's, St Michael and All Angels', and Trinity Methodist / URC) and be available to provide pastoral support to the staff. The school welcomes the clergy's involvement.

The parish supports the school by providing Scripture Union Books to Year 6 and, through the St Nicolas' Education Trust, Bibles to all new pupils. St Nicolas' School also maintains strong links with Christ Church in the neighbouring parish of North Abingdon.

Our churches are frequently used for end of term services and other events by our local schools.



## Organisation

The Governing Body (Trustees) for the parish is the PCC – composed of clergy, wardens, and elected representatives from the three congregations (See annual report at [https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P\\_communications.html](https://abingdonparish.org.uk/P_communications.html).) Financial and Governance (eg Safeguarding) responsibility rests with this body.



In addition each church has its own District Church Council, comprising ex-officio and elected members, which look after the day-to-day organisation of their church and congregation.

## Finance

The three churches' day-to-day financial matters are managed separately, with the DCCs being responsible for income, expenditure and monitoring, budget preparation etc. The PCC provides strategic oversight and monitoring – receiving regular updates on the finances of each church and discussing, in advance, all major items of expenditure in the parish. The PCC is the body responsible for approving budgets, and the consolidated end-of-year accounts. Each church is currently financially sound and the Parish Share is paid in full.



# The St Nicolas School and Education Trust, Abingdon

The Team Vicar is an ex-Officio Trustee of the St Nicolas School and Education Trust Abingdon (<https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/charity-search/-/charity-details/5189383>), a CIO established in 2022 to take over the assets and activities of an existing charity, whose assets were held and managed by the Oxford Diocese as Custodian Trustees.

*The objects of the new CIO are for the public benefit within the parish of Abingdon-on-Thames in the County and Diocese of Oxford:*

- To advance education in such ways as the trustees shall from time to time think fit.*
- To advance the Christian faith in accordance with the beliefs and practices of the Church of England.*
- To further the objects and work of the Church of England in the said Parish in such ways as the trustees shall from time to time think fit.*

Work to date has concentrated on setting up the CIO, and negotiations with the Charity Commission and Diocese over the transfer of funds.

The next steps – in which the Team Vicar will play a vital role – are to determine how best to meet our charitable objectives, and to start to put them into practice for the benefit of the Abingdon community.

## Church in Abingdon

All Abingdon clergy are invited to participate in the governance and activities of the Church in Abingdon. There are regular meetings, which offer suitable opportunities to meet ecumenical partners in the town, and provide appropriate occasions to get involved in Abingdon-wide activities, as far as each member is able.

The Church in Abingdon organises several joint events each year, frequently hosted by the individual churches and places of worship, and led by Church in Abingdon clergy.

## The Vicarage



The Vicarage is situated on Faringdon Road, within walking distance of all three churches, the Parish Centre, and the town centre.

Downstairs it has a spacious lounge, a kitchen/dining room with separate utility room, a study, a library, and a cloakroom.

Upstairs it has four bedrooms, and a bathroom.

There is a medium-sized back garden and ample space for parking.

The diocese is intending to carry out some repair and improvement works before the next Team Vicar moves in.

## Buildings

Please see the appendices for details of the buildings of each church.

## Church Rooms



*The Parish Centre building and front garden*

There is a purpose-built Parish Centre, adjacent to the Rectory and close to St Helen's church. It contains the Parish Office, a Hall with attached kitchen, suitable for up to 70 people, additional meeting space upstairs and has a small enclosed garden attached. The building is used for children's activities during the main St Helen's Sunday services, and for many church meetings. It is let at other times to produce an income.

At St Michael and All Angels' the small church room with attached kitchen can be accessed from the Church, but also has independent external access so can be used by the congregation, or hired, as a separate small space.

St Nicolas' has no separate church room, but the west end of the church has been re-ordered as a multi-use space for post-service refreshments, small meetings and coffee mornings, exhibition area etc., with plenty of auxiliary seating for larger services and concerts.



A separate annexe with fully accessible kitchen and toilet facilities has been created in St Nicolas' churchyard.

# The Deanery Perspective

Welcome to Abingdon Deanery. The deanery is located south of Oxford and is part of the Diocese of Oxford. It is one of 11 deaneries within the Archdeaconry of Dorchester. We have a total of 10 benefices and 26 churches, a mixture of both large and small parishes in town, village, and rural contexts. The Clergy Chapter and Deanery Synod meet four times a year to support one another with prayer, and to share ideas and best practice.



 **DIOCESE OF OXFORD**  
Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire

**Abingdon Deanery  
Overview by Benefice 2018**



We are fortunate in that we as a Deanery can pay our Parish Share in full and so all Parishes benefit from a rebate from the Diocese. We have good communication across the Deanery and a good understanding of the missional priorities we share – not least being the intention of growing all-age congregations and continuing to develop effective outreach in all our communities. We aim to network both clergy and lay people in meeting these opportunities.

Sue Scott, Lay Chair of Abingdon Deanery and worshipper at St Michael & All Angels' Church



For more information, please see [www.abingdondeanery.org.uk](http://www.abingdondeanery.org.uk)

# The Diocesan Perspective



The Diocese of Oxford is the Church of England in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.

The parish currently has two Lay Diocesan representatives out of a total Archdeaconry of Dorchester allocation of three laity.

The Common Vision Five Mission Focus Areas currently are:

1. Environmental action.
2. Setting discipleship and catechesis at the heart of our common life.
3. Growing new congregations.
4. Reaching out to children, schools, and families.
5. Addressing poverty and inequality.

- **Together, we are the Church, called and sent by God as disciples of Jesus Christ and filled with the Holy Spirit. We are a living, growing network of more than a thousand congregations, chaplaincies, and schools.**
- **Together, we are called to be more Christ-like: to be the Church of the Beatitudes: contemplative, compassionate, and courageous for the sake of God's world.**
- **Together, we work with God and with others for the common good in every place in one of the great crossroads of the world.**
- **Together, we are called to proclaim the Christian faith afresh in this generation with joy and hope and love.**
- **Together, we are called to dream dreams and see visions of what could be, and see those visions come to birth.**

Further information about the Diocese is available at [www.oxford.anglican.org](http://www.oxford.anglican.org)



# Appendix 1



## St Helen's Church <https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StH/StH.html>

A church has stood on this site by the Thames, witnessing to the Christian faith, for over a thousand years. The current church is unusual, being almost as wide as it is long. Its five aisles offer a beautiful and flexible space for all forms of worship and other community activities. The building accommodates a wide range of uses: from very large services attended by over 600 to intimate Taizé worship or a Wholeness and Healing Service.

Much of St Helen's Church today reflects the impact of the Oxford Movement in the late 19th century, with a Bodley altar in the Lady Chapel and reredos in the Chancel, but its greatest treasure must be the painted ceiling in the Lady Chapel completed in 1391, illustrating the lineage of Christ and culminating in Christ himself hanging on a cross of lilies.

About 25 years ago, a major re-ordering scheme began, installing under-floor heating, a nave altar platform and repositioning seating 'in the round'. This has transformed the life of the church, with increased visibility and a sense of inclusion and involvement in the services.

The re-ordering is still to be completed and we are launching a fundraising campaign to pay for a new, eco-friendly lighting scheme across the church. We are awaiting final permission from the DAC and have already been pledged a considerable sum of money. We have been assured that when the lighting is installed the church will remain open; we may only have to move from aisle to aisle for our Sunday services.

As one of the biggest spaces in Abingdon, the church is often used for concerts, art exhibitions, and other community activities, as well as for civic events, such as the Remembrance Sunday service.

Several local schools hold services in St Helen's throughout the year, and especially at Christmas.

St Helen's Church is open every day. It is rewarding to see how many people visit us during the day, be they locals, visitors, those who come to pray, to eat their lunch, or to play with the toys in the children's corner.

## Worship at St Helen's: additional comments

**The Eucharist** is central to the life of our church community, and with the ministry of the word, it represents the focus of our Sunday morning worship. There is a history of great strength in preaching at St Helen's, where the congregation appreciates being challenged.

**Music** is strong at St Helen's with a robed choir of over 30 (joined by others for special events) and led by a Director of Music/Organist and an Assistant Organist. The choir is affiliated to the Royal Society of Church Music (RSCM) and young choristers are encouraged to take its singing awards. The church has a fine three manual Harrison & Harrison organ which has been completely restored.

**The Sunday evening Services** are different each week, including Taizé, a Service for Wholeness and Healing, Choral Evensong and occasionally a Sacred Concert. These services are often attended by those a little more on the sidelines of parish life.

## The Friends of St Helen

The **Friends of St Helen** (FoSH) was set up to raise a capital sum of money to help care for the fabric of the church. It gives grants to support the maintenance of our church building. The Friends meet three or four times a year for a social evening and a cream tea each summer. Recent events have included a talk about life in the Caribbean and the archaeology of Abingdon. The Friends manage a small gift shop in the church, and recently produced a St Helen's calendar for sale.

## Education and nurture

**Children and families** are welcome at the Sunday service, with a small play area in the church for the under threes, while older children can attend Junior Church, Quest or Senior Quest. The First Sunday 10:30 Eucharist each month is tailored more to families and younger members of the congregation, with lessons and prayers frequently undertaken by young people. It is an occasion to welcome the newly baptised or to give thanks for the birth of a child.

**Junior Church.** At present we offer a Christian education and worship for those aged 3 to 8. They meet on three Sundays a month and follow the Roots suggestions of activities and readings.

For those aged c.8 to 14 there is a group called **Quest**. They, too, mostly follow the Roots material but will often have more discussion.

**Senior Quest** (aged c.14 upwards) meets once a month to discuss topics of ethical interest such as the recent debate about assisted dying or thoughts about where is God in the war between Israel and Palestine.

Children are able to take communion before confirmation, with their parents' agreement and after suitable preparation. Children not receiving or not yet old enough to receive can be brought forward for a blessing.

***In our young people's words: "We need someone who makes young people a priority and tries to include them more in the life of the church, while staying true to the type of church we are and keeping older congregants engaged."***

***"We'd like a Vicar who is inclusive, welcoming, flexible, open to different opinions, organised and prayerful."***

## Charitable giving

Charitable giving is an integral part of the fabric and mission of St Helen's. We currently support three charities with regular donations four times a year: **Abingdon Carousel** which provides services for children, parents and carers; the **Dorothy Springer Trust** which provides training in skills for the disabled in Sierra Leone and the **Open Doors Special Education Centre** in Nigeria, which caters for students with disabilities. A member of the congregation is (or was) closely linked to all of these charities.

In addition we support the local **Food Bank** both with donations and with volunteer help, **Macmillan Nurses** and, through our provision of the church building and services, the **British Legion** and the **Children's Society**.

## Welcome and outreach

We have recently decided to keep the church open seven days a week. From Easter to September it is stewarded for two hours every weekday as well. Everyone feels this has been a wonderful step to take and it is not often that the church is empty, especially in summer, in the tourist season. There is a brief guide to the church and a welcome leaflet, both in hard copy in church and on the website, detailing what provision and activities are on offer to newcomers and explorers.

Those who wish to become involved in church life are invited to fill in a **welcome card** and they will then be contacted. At least annually a **Newcomers' Lunch** is held, offering an opportunity for those new to the church to meet and get to know those who have been around a while and to hear a little more about church life.

When the building was closed due to Covid-19, we initiated a church presence in the West Porch at Christmas and Easter. A **Nativity Scene** or **Easter Garden** is set up and leaflets of service times, children's activities and treats like mini Easter eggs are offered to passersby, as well as a warm "Hello". The footfall past the church is large and many now expect to come and see our seasonal greeting. Numbers at all the Christmas services have certainly increased in recent years so we believe we are making an impact.





# St Michael and All Angels' Church

The church is situated on Park Road, opposite Albert Park. It brings a distinctive Anglo-Catholic tradition to the parish. St Michael and All Angels' has a warm, friendly, and welcoming congregation, with an average attendance of approximately 30 to 40 people. The multi-sensory nature of our Anglo-Catholic liturgy makes our worship attractive to those who are neuro-divergent and with a range of cognitive abilities.

## The Building

The building was designed by the architect Sir George Gilbert Scott, and built in 1864-1867. It was dedicated by Bishop Samuel Wilberforce on 25th January 1867 and the church keeps this festival each year.

In 2009 the building underwent a significant re-ordering, including the installation of underfloor heating, a large labyrinth, and replacing its pews with chairs, thereby giving us a flexible and versatile space used by both the church and community. There was a further enhancement in 2014 with the consecration of a nave altar, sensitively designed to be in keeping with the architecture of the building. In 2017 the church celebrated its 150th anniversary, by refurbishing its three bells, which are now in full use.

There is a distinctive set of Stations of the Cross on the walls, which are used for devotion, especially during Lent.

The church has a church room within the building, with modern kitchen and toilet facilities (including equal access). This offers a valuable space for meetings and other activities, especially hospitality. It is regularly hired by community groups.

## Worship

### Labyrinth

Since its installation, there has been a great deal of interest in the Labyrinth from those outside the parish. Every month we host a group meeting for people who wish to walk the labyrinth after a period of guided meditation. The Labyrinth is also the focus for a bi-monthly Circle Dancing group.

### Sunday

**Sung Mass** is held at 9:30 am. The worship is centred on the celebration of the Mass (Common Worship, contemporary language). Both incense and bells are used every Sunday. There is a small and talented choir which plays a valuable and much appreciated role in our worship week by week. Refreshments are served after the service each Sunday when members of the congregation have an opportunity to catch up and share fellowship. In addition to our Sunday Services, we celebrate festivals on their appropriate days with a Sung Mass and traditional liturgy.

### Thursday

**Said Mass** is held at 12:30 pm. The midweek celebration of the Mass is followed by a bring-your-own lunch. The average attendance is between eight and twelve people.

### Pastoral Care

As a small congregation we are well aware of members of our church. We therefore look out for each other and raise any concerns with the clergy and pastoral care team.

## Education and nurture: Children's Mission

A very recent initiative has been the establishment of a once-monthly Children's Church which we hope to develop through the coming years. Mission to children and young families is an area we are keen to foster. We hold a much-enjoyed crib service on Christmas Eve and a Good Friday service for children, which is followed by craft activities and hot cross buns. Both of these services are lay-led.

## Charitable Giving

Charitable giving is integral to our mission at St Michael and All Angels'. We support two charities during our Lent Appeal, when we ask the congregation to vote for their nominated charities to support over the next two years. This year's vote was for **The Abingdon Bridge**, a local charity providing guidance and emotional support for young people aged 13 – 25, and for **Tariro**, a charity supporting young people in Zimbabwe. Additionally we support the Abingdon **Foodbank** and local charities at Harvest Festival and at our Christmas Fair.

## Stewardship

Each year we run a Stewardship Campaign, in which we encourage our congregation to take part and pledge their giving over the following year.

## Other activities

The building has the advantage of excellent acoustics and houses a beautiful Yamaha grand piano, which is used regularly for concert performances of a variety of genres, by visiting choirs and musical groups, all of which attract large and enthusiastic audiences. A local choir uses the church for practice and for performance.

Abingdon School and Cothill House School use the church during the year for services and occasional concerts.

We hold monthly cream teas with music in the spring and summer which have proved popular with the congregation and the local community.

We have an annual Christmas Fair, which is always a popular event.



## Appendix III

### St Nicolas' Church <https://abingdonparish.org.uk/StN/StN.html>

The Church of St Nicolas is one of the oldest buildings in Abingdon and one of the few remaining from the great Benedictine Abbey of Saint Mary. Started in about 1170, St Nicolas' served as a church for lay servants and tenants of the Abbey, and was situated on one side of the main gateway.

The exterior of the church has changed little in recent centuries, but there were many internal changes as the result of a major restoration in 1880 and repairs to the chancel after a serious fire in 1953.

Small re-orderings have continued, resulting in a church with a moveable nave Altar, fixed pew seating in about two-thirds of the nave, and an open area at the west end.

We have installed automatic doors with glass panels so the Altar can be seen from the street when the church is closed, and ramps in the Nave and Crossing, making the main body of the church fully accessible.

Inside the church is the memorial to John Blacknall and his wife Jane, who died of the plague on the same day: 21st August 1625. His bequest still provides for much of the structural upkeep of the building, still in good repair. The monument was restored in 2025 to mark their 400th anniversary, but further work on the small side aisle in which it stands awaits the results of further investigation. It is hoped that this can be completed in 2026.

The Tower houses a peal of six bells cast by Abel Rudhall of Gloucester in 1741. Bells are rung each Sunday and for special civic events. The ringers can be seen from the Nave of the church, and visitors are encouraged to come in and watch.

A memorial tablet outside the church commemorates St Edmund of Abingdon (born 1174), Archbishop of Canterbury from 1234-1240, who we believe may have worshipped in St Nicolas'. His mother's tomb was originally housed here.

The small garden to the North of the Church is well managed and is much used by visitors, providing a green refuge in the very centre of the town.

## Worship

The 8am BCP Communion Service is celebrated in St Helen's and St Nicolas' in alternate months. The small but faithful congregation enjoys the more formal spoken service, with no hymns but including a short reflection.

St Nicolas' is central in church tradition, and has a friendly congregation, drawn from a variety of backgrounds, with typically 30 adults and occasionally some children at the 11:15am service. Services follow a fixed but varied pattern of **Prayer Book Morning Prayer**, with sung canticles (first Sunday); **Common Worship Communion** (second, fourth and fifth) and an informal **Service of the Word** (third Sunday). This service is often lay-led, and normally theme-based, ranging from biblical themes to church teaching or spirituality. It enables the congregation to engage with teaching, with the 'sermon-slot' being interactive and given over to small group discussion and feedback on the theme of the day.

Most congregation members attend all styles of service, but some choose to come to only one or another. Toys and activities are always available for younger members.

The church has a good two-manual Nicholson organ, and a baby grand piano Hymnody, accompanied by organ, piano and occasionally guitar, led by a small group of singers enthusiastically supported by the congregation, is mainly traditional, but more modern music has also been introduced, particularly on Third Sundays.

St Nicolas' hosts the Church in Abingdon series of **Weekday Prayers** in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity most years, and is pleased to be able to host Mothers' Union and other occasional services.

We offer monthly services of **Communion by Extension** to two local care homes, one held in church (after which we offer refreshments in the open space at the west end) and the other in the care home. Care home residents occasionally join us for Sunday services.

## Pastoral care

As a smaller congregation most members are well-known to everyone. We all look out for each other, and a Pastoral Assistant is available to help with particular concerns. A cross-church House Group, led by a member of St Nicolas' congregation, meets every fortnight in church or members' homes throughout the year.

## Charitable Giving

Every year we designate all collections on specific Sundays to external charities. In 2025 we supported charities working with homeless people (spring), dementia sufferers (summer), famine or hunger relief (harvest) children's work (Christmas) and The Bishop of Oxford's Advent Appeal.



## Hopes and plans

St Nicolas' position on the Market Place makes it the most conspicuous church in Abingdon's historic town centre and confers a very particular responsibility for outreach. The DCC and congregation are ready to capitalise on the ministry possibilities opened up by the (relatively) new, fully accessible multi-use space and facilities.

We would also like to build on our heritage links with Abingdon Abbey and St Edmund of Abingdon and are in touch with others in the town who are similarly interested.

Our small size is both a restriction and an asset; we have fewer people able to share the work, but we can be responsive, quickly canvassing congregation opinions and taking up opportunities. We look forward to the future and the possibilities which a new Vicar might explore with us.