



The Benefice of
Cherbury with Gainfield
a community working to express Christ's love for all

Benefice Profile

Diocese of Oxford | Deanery of the Vale of White Horse

cherbury-gainfield.org.uk

A few words from the Bishop of Dorchester, Rt Revd Gavin Collins

Would you like to be known and to know people in a rural setting where tea is enjoyed and where encounters with mud are an accepted way of life?

Here may be just what you have been praying for – a House for Duty role (2 days + Sunday) where deepening and growing relationships with God and each other is key.

On offer is a team to work with in matters of faith, spiritual life and practicalities – all with a sense of humour.

If you are someone with energy, a big smile and able to connect with others and muck in I'd strongly advise contacting Jane Haslam (Associate Archdeacon of Dorchester) jane.haslam@oxford.anglican.org who'd love to tell you a little more.



Welcome

Seven villages. Seven churches. One very lovely corner of Oxfordshire that feels like everyone really does know each other (both out and about, and on WhatsApp/Facebook).

This is the Benefice of Cherbury with Gainfield—a place where faith is deep though often unspoken, community ties are genuine, and the best conversations happen over tea, muddy boots, and a sense of humour about rural life.



The Place

We're nestled in the Vale of White Horse, roughly 25 minutes from Oxford, and half an hour from the M4 or Didcot Parkway or Oxford Parkway stations. Close enough to the city. Far enough away to remember why you love the countryside.

The busy A420 connects us all; muddy country lanes remind us that we're not on a motorway. You will not be able to rely on public transport to get between the villages.

Our villages—Buckland, Charney Bassett, Hinton Waldrist, Littleworth, Longworth, Lyford, and Pusey—share one thing: we know our churches aren't just buildings. Our churches are integral parts of our communities.

The Rectory

A spacious, detached four-bedroom (3 doubles and one single) home in Longworth with a large garden and stunning views north across the Thames Valley. Your home. Your base.

More details: Sitting room, study, dining room, kitchen, utility room (relatively spacious!). Family bathroom with shower, plus another shower room upstairs. Downstairs toilet. The garage does fit a car. Plenty of parking. Oil central heating. Double glazing. Recently repainted and in very good condition. Garden is mostly lawn, and the Benefice offers to pay for the mowing. Open fires in sitting room and study.

Our Vision:

1. Deepening our Relationship with God

Quiet prayer at the heart. Sunday worship, “Being With” courses, bible study. Encouraging people to live out the faith that's already there in our day-to-day lives.

2. Growing Our Relationships (Each Other & Our Communities)

Seeing Christ in each other. Welcoming the stranger. Partnering with schools and charities, at home and abroad. Taking care for creation seriously. Caring for our neighbours in practical ways.

3. Making Our Churches Welcoming & Alive

Traditional and family-oriented services. Café@Church in Longworth. Pastoral follow-up. Creative use of our beautiful buildings. Making space for everyone—children, young families, older folks, people who only come at Christmas. All are welcome.

What We Offer

Strong support across the Benefice:

- An Incumbent Rector
- Monthly clergy and ministry prayer and business team meetings
- Weekly public morning prayer
- LLM, Lay Worship Leaders, and retired clergy in the benefice
- Monthly clergy & churchwarden meetings on Zoom
- Active churchwardens and engaged PCCs
- Plenty of help with all the practical stuff in church
- A dedicated Benefice Administrator (12 hours/week)
- Good administrative infrastructure (Life Events Diary, iKnowChurch database)

What makes us tick:

- Real relationships matter more than procedures
 - People genuinely care for each other
 - Practical expressions of faith (helping with repairs, fundraising, pastoral visiting)
 - Deep attachment to place and heritage
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The Associate Priest: What We're Looking For

Someone who:

- **Understands rural ministry** – This isn't suburban church. You can't force urban models here. You'll need to appreciate what makes rural churches different: deeper roots, slower rhythms, community first, attendance second.
- **Values people over process** – You'll spot the Kingdom of God in a chat over the garden fence as much as in a formal committee. You'll listen. You'll visit. You'll know when to show up and when to let things unfold naturally.
- **Is warm, approachable, genuinely present** – You like being with people. You remember what folks have told you. You're encouraging. You laugh.
- **Works collaboratively** – You're part of a team: clergy, lay ministers, churchwardens, volunteers. You celebrate their gifts. You don't have all the answers.
- **Pastorally gifted** – You can sit with grief. You can encourage faith without forcing theology. You listen more than you speak. You notice who's struggling.
- **Is flexible and willing to muck in** – Literally and metaphorically. You don't mind getting your hands dirty. You adapt. You help where needed.

- **Gets the rural bit** – Mud happens. The internet might go down. Everyone knows everyone. Sheep escape. Villages feel like villages. You're okay with all of that.
 - **Has a sense of humour** – Because if you can't laugh at rural life, rural life could get you down.
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What You'll Do

Across the Benefice:

- Contribute to a varied pattern of Sunday worship
- Pastoral visiting and care
- Share in occasional offices (baptisms, weddings, funerals)
- Develop areas of ministry suited to your gifts

Areas where we'd particularly welcome your focus (take your pick):

- Pastoral visiting and bereavement follow-up
- Work with families and children (we're seeing more young people move in)
- Ministry with older parishioners
- Developing lay vocations (both lay ministry and ordination pathways)
- Restarting house groups and prayer networks
- Building on our schools' connections (Buckland CE School, Longworth Primary, St Hugh's Prep)
- Community outreach and tackling isolation

You're invited to shape this role. Your particular gifts and experience will matter. We're not looking for someone to fit a rigid box. We're looking for the right person, and we'll figure out the rest together.

The Churches: A Quick Tour

Buckland: St Mary the Virgin

The heart of Buckland parish (population ~588). A 12th-century church with fine organ, active bell-ringers, and a loyal community. Strong fundraising! Currently nearing completion of major restoration works which have included, nave, transept and chancel roofs, a complete refurbishment of the bells and the clock tower. Upgrades to path access, heating and facilities remain to be done.

Charney Bassett: St Peter

Small but active (population ~256). Monthly 1662 Communion and family service. Lovely 12th-century church in good repair. Unusual neighbour: Charney Manor (medieval, now a Quaker conference centre). Early-stage reordering project and newly installed broadband.

Hinton Waldrist: St Margaret of Antioch

Good community awareness and strong pastoral care (population ~331). Beautiful village fête. 13th-century church with six bells. Major internal reordering underway to add kitchen, toilets, and proper heating.

Littleworth: Church of the Holy Ascension

Small village (62 houses), at the centre of a rural parish of scattered hamlets and farms. Big(ish) Victorian church, good condition, built by Edward Bouverie Pusey and Fellows of Oriel. Active village events/church fundraising led by Churchwardens. Some pews gone, replaced by table tennis, pool table etc. Open access enjoyed by all ages. Chancel services preserve the sacred space.

Longworth: St Mary's

Longworth is the largest village in the Benefice (population ~600), though not the largest church. We're an active community with commuters and young families as well as retirees. We have coffee mornings, a film club, the Village Hall with an active social programme. Oh, and a very popular village pub, the Blue Boar.

Our 13C church has a modern extension with kitchen, meeting room and loo. We host the village Library.

Café@Church is held monthly and average attendance is 30-40 - but fewer at traditional services. Bells and tower restoration project is underway (aiming for a ring of 8 bells). There's a strong Friends group (£100k raised since 2007). The church fete and village fireworks are both great community events - as well as fantastic fundraisers.

Lyford: St Mary's

Tiny parish (40 people, 18 houses). Historic Edmund Campion connection (special annual service). Monthly 1662 Communion and Sung Evensong. Beautiful, intimate congregation. Home to occasional concerts.

Pusey: All Saints'

Very small village. Georgian gem of a church, historically linked to the Pusey Estate. Services on fifth Sundays as Benefice services; famous Christmas Eve Carol Service.

We take Safeguarding very seriously. Each Church has a Safeguarding Officer.

The Numbers

Village	Population	Electoral Roll	Schools	Avg. Oct. # per Sunday
Buckland	588	81	Yes	20
Charney Bassett	256	18	No	9
Hinton Waldrist	331	18	No	9
Littleworth	239	8	No	14.5
Longworth	610	34	Yes	25
Lyford	40	8	No	14
Pusey	~50	5	No	
Total	~3,000			

Table 1: Benefice Villages and Key Statistics

Over half the population comes through our doors at Christmas. Sunday attendance is steady. Occasional offices (baptisms, weddings, funerals) average 8–13 baptisms, 3–8 weddings, and 5–19 funerals per year.

In 2025 our Parish Share was £62,854. This was paid in full.

Community Life

Schools: Excellent relationships with Buckland CE (Foundation Governors, regular Open The Book assemblies), Longworth Primary, and St Hugh's. Strong SIAMS and OFSTED ratings.

Social strengths: Village halls, pubs, coffee mornings, toddler groups, fêtes, quiz nights, fireworks, concerts. Church members often help organise village events.

Charity & Environment: We support the Oxford Christmas Lunch, African Children's Fund, Joshua Orphan Project (Malawi), and others. Bronze Eco-Church achieved in some churches.

The Exciting Bits (and The Challenges)

Growing families moving in. Working from home has changed the demographic. More children in villages than for years. More commuters. This is an opportunity.

Major building projects. Roofs, heating, kitchens, toilets, accessibility improvements, bells and towers. These are real undertakings. They're happening. Slowly.

Vocations to nurture. We're keen to develop lay ministry and vocations of all kinds.

Pastoral follow-up to strengthen. Baptism and bereavement follow-up could be more systematic (while staying "light touch").

Where is God leading us next? We set a vision in 2022. It's working. But we need fresh eyes and God's next invitation for this place. You'll help shape that. The clergy take a key role in leading, sustaining and resourcing this.

The rural church needs to be loved. Sunday attendance doesn't tell the whole story. Community care, maintenance, practical service, heritage — these are where the rural church shines. We need to celebrate that and build on it.

The Deanery & Diocese

We're part of the **Vale of White Horse Deanery** (27 churches, predominantly rural). The deanery is focused on families and youth work, rural strategy, Christian stewardship, community engagement, and eco-church initiatives. There's a supportive chapter of clergy, and a Deanery Synod that meets three times yearly.

We're within the **Diocese of Oxford**, in the **Dorchester Area**, with diocesan initiatives around mission and work with families and intergenerational church. We are called to be contemplative, compassionate, and courageous for God's world. Bishop Gavin, Archdeacon David, and Associate Archdeacon Jane are all very supportive, as is the team at Church House Oxford.

A Word About Us

What we are: a group of communities that genuinely love their churches, care about their villages, and believe that God is doing something here. We're collaborative. We value heritage and change in equal measure. We're learning how to bring faith into our everyday lives.

We know that God can show up in a casual chat over a gate as much as in formal worship.

We understand that belonging matters more than attendance.

We're looking for someone who gets that. Someone who genuinely enjoys rural life, loves people, values trust, and doesn't take themselves too seriously.

How to Get Started

Interested? Get in touch informally with:

The Revd. Preb. Jane Haslam (Associate Archdeacon of Dorchester): Jane.Haslam@oxford.anglican.org

The Revd. Talisker MacLeod (Rector): talisker@alatheia.org.uk 07887 773579

We'd love to chat. No pressure. Just conversation.

“Because sometimes the best ministry happens with muddy boots and a kettle on the boil”

*Our Ministry Team
and Churchwardens*

