

Team Vicar
(House for Duty)

in the

Dorchester
Team



Welcome! Could this be you?

Thank you for reading this profile as we seek to appoint a House-for-Duty Team Vicar for the Dorchester Team. All our clergy are licensed to the Team as a whole, whilst each have a particular pastoral responsibility. The expectation is that the person appointed will have pastoral responsibility for the parishes of The Bridge Group – Clifton Hampden and Burcot, Culham and Long with Little Wittenham – and as a House-for-Duty appointment will work two days per week plus Sundays.

The Dorchester Team

We are seeking a Team Vicar to join our Dorchester Team of churches. This consists of 10 parishes with 13 churches in 14 rural villages in beautiful South Oxfordshire.

Led by the Team Rector the clergy team includes three Team Vicars (two full time and one house-for-duty) – each with incumbent status and caring for a cluster of rural parishes.

We seek to work together, whilst enabling individual churches to flourish.

We believe that we are ‘better together’.



Dorchester Abbey



Clifton Hampden



Culham



Little Wittenham



Long Wittenham



Warborough



Stadhampton



Chiselhampton



Newington



Berinsfield



Drayton St Leonard



Marsh Baldon



Toot Baldon

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Foreword from the Bishop

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 Dorchester team is the largest in the Archdeaconry and the next House for Duty team vicar in the Bridge Group (working 2 days and Sunday) will be well supported by fellow clergy and lay officers. Led by the team rector, you will find colleagues with whom to share ministry as well as those who would like to relieve you of administrative tasks so you can focus on leadership, mission and pastoral ministry.

The Bridge Group itself, like the rest of the team are, is rural in nature. A love of and understanding of rural life is important, including the need to be visible in the communities and an ability to be at ease with all people, whatever their age or situation.

The churches of the Bridge Group currently have small congregations who value love and care from their priest but are also praying for someone with energy who can work with these small beginnings and help them flourish. The years since Covid have also been challenging for them and yet also mean there are opportunities ahead for someone who has a love for Jesus, a love for the place and a love for the people

You will find a friendly deanery with supportive colleagues. Our episcopal area and diocese are in good heart, expectant for all that God will do and thankful for all that God is doing.

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

With every blessing

+ Gavin Dorchester



Welcome from the Area Dean and Lay Chair



Welcome to Aston and Cuddesdon Deanery!

The deanery is very large geographically, stretching from Beckley in the north to Swyncombe in the south. It includes a large number of small, rural churches that are loved by their communities. Our deanery includes the historic Dorchester Abbey, the military base at Benson and the theological college at Cuddesdon.

Given its size there is a clear emphasis on working to bring clergy and laity together across the deanery.

The Clergy Chapter meets six times a year for prayer, mutual support and the sharing of ideas and resources. Here you will find clergy colleagues in whom you can trust and be open and honest with.

Deanery Synod currently meets three times a year. In addition to sharing worship and fellowship we try to ensure that we take our place in the structure of the overall church in the Diocese and beyond. We bring in speakers to broaden our understanding of key issues within our church life, we seek to share our own expertise across the Deanery, and we offer one another mutual support.

Revd Angie Paterson and Maureen Underdown
Area Dean and Lay Chair



Welcome from the Team Rector



Thank you for reading this profile for a new Team Vicar to join the Dorchester Team. I was appointed as Team Rector in 2023, arriving to a time of significant change with the Dorchester Team. I am delighted to be developing a mutually supportive clergy team, each with different responsibilities, as we minister across this large group of rural churches.

As the Dorchester Team looks to its future the exact model of ministry and where this is focused is in formation. However, what we can say is that the newly appointed Team Vicar will be an integral part of the core team, will be licensed to the whole team working with the wider team. This new Team Vicar will live in Long Wittenham and will focus on the Bridge Group, comprising the villages of Clifton Hampden and Burcot, Culham and Long and Little Wittenham but we are keeping the brief intentionally open, to allow flexibility.

As a team, we are able to offer cover for one another, and we are also well supported by clergy with Permission to Officiate and Licensed Lay Ministers. We pray for a colleague who will find being part of a team life-giving and who will enjoy ministering in these South Oxfordshire villages.

Our vision as the Dorchester Team is summed up by the principle 'Better Together, with Christ and for Christ', with the aim of 'growing Christian life in every parish'. The principle of doing together the things that individual parishes would find more difficult to do alone has been important in keeping the bigger picture before us and providing and resourcing forms of ministry across the team that individual parishes might not sustain alone. The Dorchester Team was created in 1977 and is one of the longest established teams in the Oxford Diocese. Over time it has developed and now comprises 14 villages, 10 parishes, working in clusters with a Team Vicar or the Team Rector.

The Bridge Group churches have faced some significant challenges in recent years, but there are very real opportunities here for a new Team Vicar who is able to exercise gracious leadership, to build on all that is already good and to enable these churches to flourish. Our churches are eager to welcome someone who will love them and lead them into new life and growth. There are also opportunities for the pastoring, encouraging and revitalisation of existing congregations together with engaging with schools and young families.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming a new clergy colleague to the Dorchester Team. If your reading encourages you, it would be good to speak with you – please do contact me by phone or email (01865 294276, rector@dorchester-abbey.org.uk) or Associate Archdeacon Jane Haslam (01865 208767, Jane.Haslam@oxford.anglican.org).

We pray for you as you seek God's leading for your next steps in ministry.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane'.

The Reverend Jane Willis, Team Rector
01865 294276, rector@dorchester-abbey.org.uk

The Vision of the Dorchester Team

The Dorchester Team has developed the following vision:

<p>Worship and discipleship: providing a space to encounter God's love</p>	<p>Fellowship: walking alongside others</p>	<p>Outreach: growing links</p>
<p>We desire to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● deepen our worship of God, love of Jesus and service in the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the Word, personal prayer and reflection; ● increase the appeal of our worship by meeting a wide range of worshipping needs; ● be known as open and inclusive to all. 	<p>We desire to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● provide regular and reliable pastoral care and support to all; ● expand opportunities for individual and group learning and fellowship; ● develop opportunities for all parish churches, and especially the Abbey, to be resources for the wider community. 	<p>We desire to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● reach those parts of our villages and communities that have little or no contact with Church; ● be an inclusive Church, open and welcoming to parishioners and visitors of all ages; ● develop a mission and outreach programme that is relevant and engaging to our church communities, especially to our young families and children, and those not yet senior citizens.

So we seek a colleague who...

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● has a love for Jesus and a passion to share that love with all; ● is a preacher who shows God's relevance today by bringing his Word faithfully to life; ● creatively inspires a variety of worship and discipleship, inclusive to all; ● supports and encourages lay people to contribute to leading our worship and the life of our churches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● is able to inspire, challenge and support us to deepen our faith and fellowship together; ● is able to nurture our gifts, faith and vocation; ● has excellent pastoral and communication skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● is able to work across all age groups; ● is able to understand the different needs of our communities and to enable us in seizing opportunities for outreach; ● is approachable and visible, known and appreciated; ● able to work with modern technology and social media.
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Our Ministry Team

Currently the 'core' team who hold responsibility for particular parishes are:

Team Rector: The Reverend Jane Willis
Dorchester Abbey and oversight of the Team.

Team Vicar BBD Cluster: The Reverend Vicky Burton
Berinsfield, Drayton St Leonard, Marsh and Toot Baldon with Nuneham Courtenay.

Team Vicar Eastern Cluster: The Reverend Lisa Morgan (from June 2026)
Newington, Stadhampton with Chiselhampton, Warborough and Shillingford

Team Vicar Bridge Group: Vacant
Clifton Hampden, Culham, Long and Little Wittenham

This core team is augmented by self-supporting clergy with Licence or Permission to Officiate and Licensed Lay Ministers.

Living in Long Wittenham and serving mainly within the Bridge Group we have:

The Reverend David Haylett (PTO)
The Reverend Jane Manser (PTO)

Across the wider team, with varying patterns of ministry and availability, we also have:

The Reverend Canon Rachel Carnegie (licensed)
The Reverend Mark Bodeker (PTO)
The Reverend Andrew Bond (PTO)
The Reverend Myles Godfrey (PTO)
The Reverend Professor Mark Harris (PTO)
The Reverend Jennifer Morton (PTO)
Edna Strange (LLM) (PTO)
Gerry Willis (LLM) (PTO)

We are privileged to have trained a number of curates for full-time and self-supporting ministry – our curates are currently:

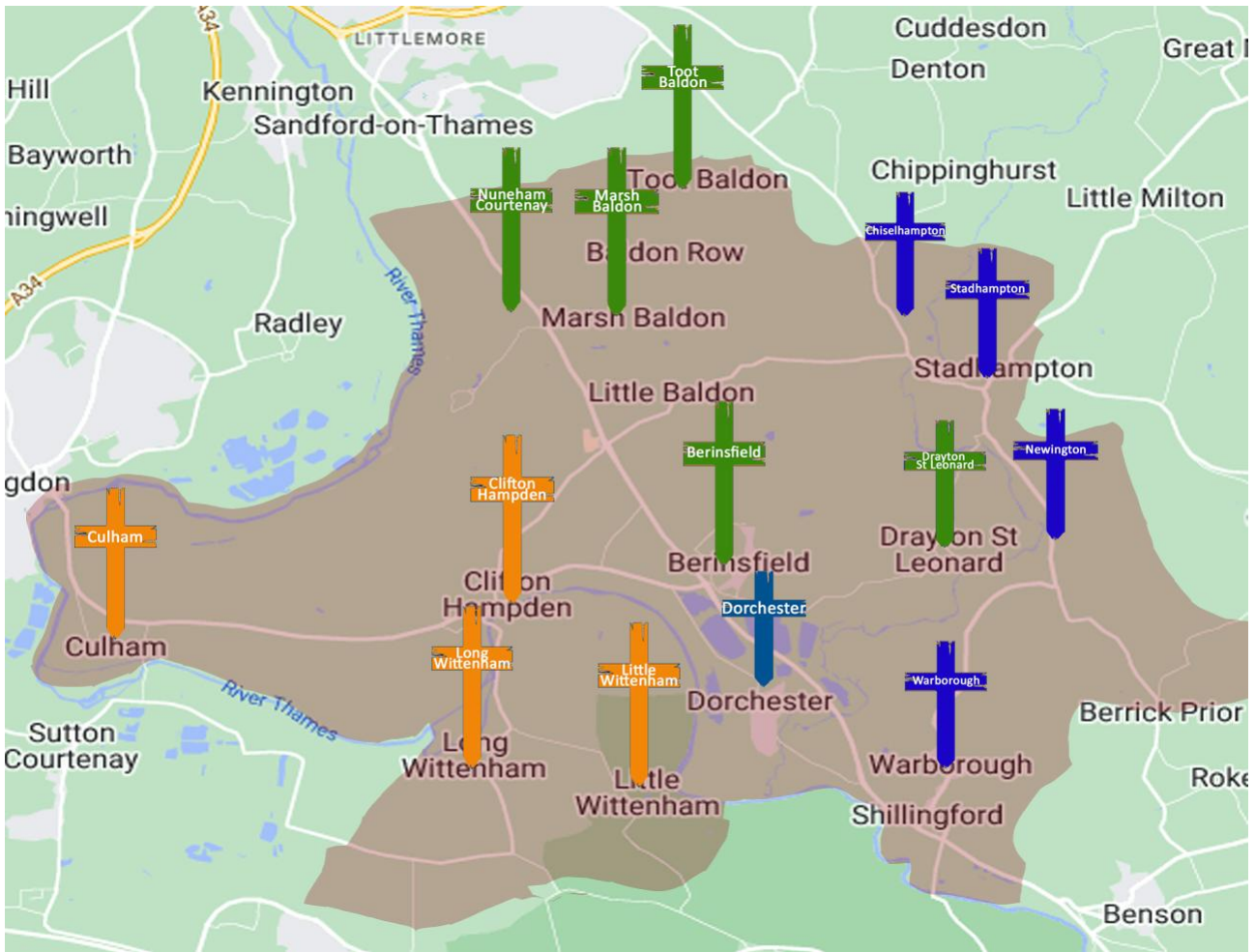
The Reverend Emma Firth (second year – half time)
The Reverend Claire Wren (first year – full time, pioneer)

Our administrative hub is based in Dorchester and is able to offer assistance across the Team including administration for occasional offices, printing service sheets and more.

The parishes pay travel and office expenses in full, and the Team is committed to ministerial development having a training budget for individual and whole-team training and events.

We hope and pray for a colleague to join us who enjoys working, praying and playing together, sharing in ministry to enable our churches to flourish.

The Team Area



Dorchester Team Parishes.

- BBD Cluster parishes are shown in green.
- Bridge Group parishes are shown in orange.
- Eastern Cluster parishes are shown in light blue
- Dorchester is shown in dark blue.

The Bridge Group comprises three parishes, four Churches and five villages:

Parish	Villages	Churches
Clifton Hampden	Clifton Hampden	St Michael & All Angels
	Burcot	Chapel no longer in use
Culham	Culham	St Paul's
Long with Little Wittenham	Long Wittenham	St Mary's
	Little Wittenham	St Peter's

Our regular pattern of services across the Team

We're not sure a 'normal month' ever happens – but if it did, it would look like this...

	1 st Sunday	2 nd Sunday	3 rd Sunday	4 th Sunday
Abbey				
Abbey	8:00 HC (BCP)	8:00 HC (BCP)	8:00 HC (BCP)	8:00 HC (BCP)
	10:30 SE	10.30 FS	10:30 SE	10:30 MW
	15.00 Forest Church	17:00 Evensong	18.30 The Well*	
BBD Cluster				
Berinsfield	14:30 MC	11:00 HC (healing)	11:00 HC	15:00 Living Room
			18.30 The Well*	
Drayton St Leonard	17:00 HC	9:30 HC	9:30 MS	09:30 HC
Nuneham Courtenay				
Marsh Baldon	10:30 HC			11:00 HC
Toot Baldon		16:00 Evensong	9:30 HC	
Bridge Group				
Clifton Hampden	8:00 HC (BCP)	10:30 MW	10:30 HC	
Culham	11:00 HC			
Little Wittenham				8:30 HC
Long Wittenham	9:30 HC	9:30 HC	9:30 HC	18:30 Worship
Eastern Cluster				
Chiselhampton				
Newington				
Stadhampton	9:30 FS	9:30 HC	9:30 FE	9:30 HC (BCP)
Warborough	11:00 PE	11:00 MW	11:00 PE	8:00 HC (BCP)
		16:30/18:00* HC (BCP)		
Rotating around the cluster				16:30/18:00 Evensong**

MS = Morning Service

MW = Morning Worship

HC = Holy Communion

FS = Family Service

PE = Parish Eucharist

FE = Family Eucharist

* The Well location varies between the Abbey and Berinsfield.

**Timing varies from GMT to BST

Monthly services and communions are offered at The Close and John Masefield House care homes in Burcot – these are currently coordinated by curate Emma, and we have a wonderful team of lay people who contribute to the JMHS services.

Our average numbers for Occasional Offices across the Team are:

	Weddings	Funerals	Baptisms
Dorchester	10	10	7
BBD Cluster	4	4	2
Eastern Cluster	5	13	6
Bridge Group	5	5	5

Person Profile

At this critical moment in the lives of our churches we are looking for a Vicar who will rise to the challenge of growing the numbers, both of our regular Sunday congregations and the wider church community, through inspirational leadership and active pastoral work in our villages. We are seeking someone who with the following skills and qualities:

- ✓ Appetite for a challenge and willingness to embrace an ambitious objective for spiritual and numerical growth.
- ✓ Leadership skills – working collaboratively both with colleagues (church and lay) and the wider community.
- ✓ Pastoral skills – offering pastoral care to all in our communities and with the willingness to spend time building relationships with people of all ages and backgrounds.
- ✓ Ability to use the pastoral offices to draw people into the worshipping life of the churches.
- ✓ Good time management and general efficiency, with the ability to make the most of limited time – able to discern priorities and with the capacity to say “No” to requests to spend time on things not within our identified objectives.
- ✓ Good communication skills.
- ✓ Good with schools, both teachers and children – and with the ability to encourage families.

We look forward to welcoming to our villages a Vicar with the passion, the energy and the drive to go out into the community (in schools, coffee mornings, pubs, on the tennis courts and cricket pitches – and above all by calling on people) and thereby, through inspiration and leadership, give encouragement to all to come to church and be involved in our church community. To that end, our PCCs and church officers are more than willing to relive the post-holder of unnecessary bureaucratic duties.



Introducing the Bridge Group Area and Villages

The population for the Bridge Group villages comprises some 2,300 people and 865 households.

It is a relatively affluent area, although not without local instances of relative deprivation. The area is idyllic, combining rural and commuter communities.

There are Church of England primary schools in Clifton Hampden and Long Wittenham and secondary schools, both state and independent, in Abingdon, Didcot, Moulsoford and Wallingford as well as the Culham Nursery/Pre School and Europa School in Culham.

There is a Brownie Pack which meets in Long Wittenham and a Scout Group (Beavers, Cubs and Sea Scouts) in Clifton Hampden. There are active branches of the Women's Institute across the Group, and the Long Wittenham Athletics Club at Bodkins Field Long Wittenham is home to a successful football team. There are active Cricket Teams (men's and women's) and a Tennis Club in Clifton Hampden.

The Bridge magazine is issued ten times a year and serves the churches and communities of Long Wittenham, Little Wittenham and Clifton Hampden edited by a lay editor. This includes details of services in the Bridge Group and articles from local groups. In Culham there is a village newsletter 'The Mouthpiece', also issued ten times a year and detailing services and events.

The Vicarage is located in Long Wittenham – just 20 mins from Junction 7 of the M40, and 30 minutes from Junction 13 of the M4, allowing easy access both north, south, east and west. The house is a few minutes' drive from Didcot Parkway Station, which has regular fast services to London Paddington (about 45 minutes) and the south-west and Wales, as well as services to Oxford and beyond. Oxford is about 10 miles to the north and Reading about 20 miles to the south.

The towns of Abingdon, Wallingford and Didcot are all only a few minutes' drive away and provide many amenities, including cinemas, supermarkets, gyms, swimming pools, theatres etc. A traffic free cycle path from Long Wittenham to Didcot is a great addition and mostly runs through open farmland; in fine weather it is a wonderful way to access Didcot. There is a local shop/Post Office and GP Surgery at Clifton Hampden, local hospitals in Didcot, Wallingford and Abingdon, with large teaching hospitals in Oxford.



Welcome from our Bridge Group church officers

Applications are invited for the post of House for Duty Priest serving the parishes of Clifton Hampden and Burcot, Culham and Long with Little Wittenham. These parishes form a cluster, known as the Bridge Group, within the Dorchester Team in the Diocese of Oxford. There is a well-appointed modern house in Long Wittenham.

The parishes lie to the east of Abingdon reached via the A415 and are within an easy distance of Didcot, Oxford and Reading. This Profile describes the Bridge Group and each parish in some detail. It provides a picture of where we are, and where we hope to go as a Christian community.

We are looking forward to welcoming a new Team Vicar who will lead us in our mission to grow as Christians and serve our local communities. We have an aspiration for each of our churches to be at the heart of village life.

The objectives for the church in our parishes are fourfold:

- a) to preach the word of God in our parish, to hold the regular services of communion and morning prayer and to baptize, marry and bury our parishioners;
- b) to provide pastoral care for our fellow parishioners;
- c) to boost the size of our congregation; and
- d) to care for the upkeep of our churches.

We believe the first three of these objectives must be clergy-led.

All of our four churches currently face the same challenge: a focus on our village communities and on pastoral care is necessary to grow our congregations. The core of committed lay people in the villages and the supportive Dorchester Team of ministers led by our Team Rector Jane Willis are looking forward to work with our new Team Vicar to meet this challenge.

Christopher Purvis, Churchwarden, Clifton Hampden and Burcot

Andy Duff, Churchwarden, Long with Little Wittenham

Andrew Churchill-Stone, Treasurer, Culham

Support from Volunteers

The three parishes all try to ensure that the Vicar does not need to be involved with administration, fabric of the churches or fundraising. We want our Vicar to spend his or her time on the critical work of pastoral care and taking services – the parts of church life that we believe can only be done by the Vicar.

Two of the PCCs are chaired by lay members, who are responsible for the preparation and smooth running of meetings. All the parishes make relationships with their primary schools a priority. This includes filling vacancies for Foundation Governors and working with the Vicar to ensure that assemblies are provided in each school by interested members of the community and other members of the Clergy team. The Friends organizations take the primary responsibility for the major fundraising for capital projects; the priest does not have to be concerned about the fabric. The Friends in each village has a committee of trustees; while the priest is an ex officio member he or she is not expected to attend the regular meetings. Churchwardens and PCCs discuss with the priest the main priorities and make suggestions regarding those who are ill or in distress and in need of pastoral care.

The Clusters and Parishes of the Dorchester Team

The Bridge Group

Clifton Hampden & Burcot

The villages of Clifton Hampden and Burcot lie on the north bank of the Thames, eight miles south of Oxford, looking south across open water meadows to the Sinodun Hills (Wittenham Clumps) and beyond to the Chilterns and Berkshire Downs.

Clifton Hampden is a pretty village, much of it thatched. The lively Church of England School, for which the successful candidate would be encouraged to stand as Foundation Governor, has some 75 children on the roll with 6 teaching and 4 support staff. A focal point of day-to-day life is the Village Stores and Post Office.

Whilst, technically, the Barley Mow public house is in the parish of Long Wittenham, it is currently the only pub serving Clifton Hampden. But on the first Friday of the month there are drinks in the cricket pavilion; and there is also a regular coffee morning – at all of which the Vicar is most welcome. There is also a thriving doctors' practice and a Village Hall, the venue for many fundraising events and other activities.

Burcot has a stock of good quality modern housing (much of it developed when larger riverside properties have been broken up) as well as older dwellings. It boasts The Chequers – a good gastropub – and The Close Care Home.

The Church of St Michael and All Angels

The church of St Michael and All Angels, which is Grade 2* listed, serves both Burcot and Clifton Hampden. It is an ancient foundation



on a spur of rock above the river crossing, restored with full mid-pointed Gothic richness under George Gilbert Scott in the mid-19th century. Our Church of England Primary School use the church for assemblies and school services – with Harvest and Christmas being highlights. Our Remembrance Day, Carol and Midnight Mass services are particularly well attended.

The PCC, which is chaired by the churchwarden, administers the parish. The Friends of St Michael is a separate charitable trust to which gifts may be made specifically for capital expenditure. The church and churchyard are well maintained. A most ambitious capital project was carried out five years ago. Approximately £500,000 was raised and the work included: new roof, repair of stained glass, new accessible churchyard path, repair of steps, new outside lighting, repair of gravestones and the creation of a new bench and area in the churchyard for the strewing of ashes.

Clifton Hampden CE Primary School

'We definitely embrace being a Church school and would love to see that connectedness develop.'



Our school is a caring learning community – we have close links with St Michael & All Angels Church and our Christian ethos underpins the warm atmosphere that it is clearly evident to all who visit.

Our school is a wonderfully nurturing environment, where children flourish and grow to become curious, compassionate and courageous young people, excited about life and learning. As a village school we pride ourselves on our ability to know each pupil as an individual and deliver a well-planned, varied curriculum which inspires and challenges.

Through a balance of challenge and support our children learn to be resilient in all that they do. They are encouraged to ask questions, think creatively to solve problems, collaborate with peers and develop skills that will lay the foundations for their future success.

As soon as you arrive at the school you will be aware of its warm family atmosphere and purposeful learning environment. Please don't take my word for it, do come and see us

for yourselves - we would be delighted to show you our School.

Headteacher Hannah Brown has spoke with the children during a recent Collective Worship and asked them what they would like to see in their new school vicar. Their comments included:

'A good sense of humour.'

'A great storyteller.'

'Someone who likes children.'

'Someone that lives out our school values of curiosity, compassion and courage.'

Hannah continues:

'As members of staff, we would like someone who is willing to participate in the life of the school, particularly as we only have one Foundation governor and we definitely embrace being a Church school and would love to see that connectedness develop.'



Culham



St Paul's Church, Culham

Culham village is a small village on a bend of the river Thames situated 1.5 miles from the market town of Abingdon. The parish is bound by the Thames on the North, West and South.

Important features of the village include the church of St Paul, Culham Nursery/ Pre-School, Europa school, Culham Manor, Culham House, the farms of Zouch, Warren and High Lodge, Culham Lock, Village green and playing field.

The village also supports a village wildlife conservation area, village pond, nature reserve and the Thames path from Abingdon to Clifton Hampden. Culham Parish covers a wide area including Culham Science Centre, Culham No 1 site (an industrial complex), Culham Railway Station, The Railway Inn, Equine facilities, Rye Farm and Kingfisher Barn.

St Paul's Church is situated on the Green and has a long history which was closely linked in medieval times to Abingdon Abbey. The oldest part of the present building is the tower built in 1710 and substantial rebuilding of the nave and chancel was completed in 1852. The main churchyard was closed, and a new cemetery was consecrated by the Bishop of Dorchester in March 2004.

A faculty has also been granted to adapt a small area east of the porch into a reflection and remembrance garden which has been designed by Culham villagers. Work has also



begun on a potential reordering project, enabling our building to be increasingly used by our wider community. A new reordering committee is now needed to progress this.

Services in addition to our regular services include the Carol Service, Christmas Day communion, Easter Service, Armistice Day and Harvest Festival which are generally well attended.



The annual Plant Sale is a great community occasion - and other fund-raising events that have taken place in St Paul's include Concerts, art shows, Harvest Supper, Children's Club and Village food festivals.

There is an ongoing maintenance programme for the church building. The Friends of St Paul's, established 24 years ago, is an organisation that funds the fabric of the building and headed by the Chairman, treasurer, and four elected members. The Team Vicar and Churchwarden are Ex-officio



members. St Paul's has a very good working relationship with the Friends, sharing fund raising projects.



A good number of active groups in the village use the Church for meeting and events, including Ladies of Culham, Lego Club and other children's activities, film clubs, meditation classes, Art of Culham, the Parish Council and reordering committee. Ladies of Culham are involved in a wide range of activities such as pumpkin carving, book club, wreath making, art classes and many other interesting adventures. They have a good relationship with the church, assisting at the Church Fête, decorating the church for Christmas etc.

The Future of Culham

The South Oxfordshire Local Plan adopted in 2020 includes new business units at Culham No1 and the building of approximately 3,500 new homes. At the time of writing work has begun on infrastructure, planning permission has been granted for the business units and the outline layout for the housing site. Detailed planning permission for the housing development is yet to come.

Long with Little Wittenham

Long Wittenham with Little Wittenham is a rural parish in South Oxfordshire with a combined population of about 1,000, spread across 375 households, mostly in Long Wittenham. At the heart of Long Wittenham stands a cross marking the spot where St Brinus preached the message of Christianity to the villagers in the seventh century. Little Wittenham is one of only about 220 habitats across Europe designated as a Special Area of Conservation. Both villages are in Conservation Areas and have many listed properties.

Long Wittenham has two pubs and a successful Indian Restaurant, and is home to the Pendon Museum. The Wood Centre, run by the Sylva Foundation, opened in 2015 in Long Wittenham and houses several small companies, with several other small companies also based in the villages. The Earth Trust has its headquarters in Little Wittenham.

Our local Neighbourhood Plan, prepared by Long Wittenham Parish Council, includes plans to move both the village hall and school to a new site and include the building of about

40 houses and possibly a small shop and cafe. Recent questionnaires in the village showed that people like living here because of the good community spirit, but they do not like the through traffic.

For one year recently a Toddlers Group met in the Church every Friday morning. There is a monthly Film Club, at Easter, Harvest and Advent there are Sunday afternoon Friends and Family events.

The Friends of St Mary regularly use the Church as a venue for concerts, an Opera Company, talks and other fund raising events.

Long Wittenham Church of England Primary School has a team of dedicated and hard-working staff, who are looking forward to moving to their new site although this has been delayed. The new Vicar will be welcomed to play a significant role in the life of the school. They hold school end of term services in St Mary's, which parents and families attend.

Long Wittenham Pre-School, located in the Village Hall, is keen to welcome the Vicar to



get involved in the children's celebrations of religious festivals such as Easter, Harvest and Christmas, providing an opportunity for the children to find out more about the Church and its role in the village and people's lives. The pre-school works closely with the Primary School to ensure a smooth transition.

There is a range of activities in the villages, including Flower Arrangers (who provide flowers for St Mary's) bell-ringers and Harvest Suppers. Long Wittenham hosts an annual village Fireworks/Bonfire Party on Ward's Field (owned by the Diocese but managed by the PCC). The Plough organises a local music festival in its gardens, WittFest, which brings visitors from far and wide. The Church is strongly supported by the Friends of St Mary's and St Peter's respectively.

Parish Churches

There are two Anglican Churches in the Parish: St Mary the Virgin in Long Wittenham, a Grade 1 Listed building and St Peter's in Little Wittenham, a Grade 2* Listed Building. Both churches are open during the day and have open graveyards. There are no other denominational places of worship in the parish.



St Mary's Church, Long Wittenham

St Mary's Church stands in its own churchyard and was begun in around 1120 on the site of a previous Saxon church. The chancel arch survives from the Norman building; the aisles and tower are later additions. The font is a rare Norman lead one; during the Civil War it was encased in a wooden covering to preserve it from iconoclastic Parliamentary soldiers. There are six bells at St Mary's which have recently been re-tuned and re-hung; the bell-ringers rehearse every Monday evening.

In 2010 the church was given a field by the Ward family, now known locally as 'Ward's Field', to be used to provide the church with



some additional income and to benefit the villagers. In early 2019, St. Mary's built an extension to the Church, providing a disabled access toilet, running water to the main building and a servery in the north aisle.

St Peter's Church stands in its own churchyard and has a 14th-century west bell tower, of which the lower stages are Decorated Gothic and the upper stages are Perpendicular Gothic. In 1863 the nave and chancel were rebuilt in the Early English Gothic style to designs by the Gothic Revival architect Charles Buckridge. There are five bells at St Peter's; the tenor bell has been rehung and the others refurbished in 2016, funded by a grants including one from the Friends of St Peter's.

In addition to the regular services, there is a well-supported Remembrance Service at the War Memorial in Long Wittenham and Christmas Eve Carol services are held at each church, again, well supported by the community; in 2025 these were attended by about 250 at St Mary's and about 100 at St Peter's.

In the past the PCC has managed to pay the Parish Share but has not managed to do so

recently. This is becoming an increasing concern as our congregation is getting smaller and older each year; there are currently 21 on the Electoral Roll. Our regular annual income is generally less than our expenditure, not helped by having two listed churches and therefore two sets of general expenses such as insurance, heating etc. The recent Quinquennial (early 2026) has not identified any major issues with either St. Mary's or St. Peter's, but does come with its usual share of issues to be addressed.

Both churches have very active Friends groups who provide financial support. We are also fortunate in having a number of parishioners who provide volunteer time to help with cleaning, flower arranging, opening/closing the churches etc., many of whom are not regular church goers. Additionally there is a local choir, the Wittenham Singers, who lead the Carol Services and sing at other village events.

The Revds Jane Manser and David Haylett regularly officiate on Sundays and also at Weddings and Funerals in all the Bridge Group Churches and also the wider Team as needed.



Long Wittenham CE Primary School



The first reference we find to a school in Long Wittenham is in the 1826 records when Robert Terry is noted as the 'school master.' In 1828 the President and scholars of St John's College, Oxford "agreed to grant the sum of £20 towards the erection of a National School. Such schools were for 'the education of the Poor according to the Church of England.' (1)

The school comprised of one room and was opened on February 18th 1833. There was a total of 57 children on the school roll across the ages 5 to 13. By 1853 there was a need to a larger school for approximately 100 children. The cost of the new build was estimated to be about £370. It was suggested pupils pay 2 pence per week. The new school was opened on its present site by the Lord Bishop of Oxford on 27th April 1857.

Long Wittenham is now embarking on our next chapter. The current school building no longer meets the requirements and standards of a 21st Century school plans are underway for a new school building which meets the needs of a modern vibrant school.

In addition to our new school building we have recently joined the Ridgeway Education Trust (RET). RET is a Trust with community at its

heart. It is based on the strong values of inclusivity, high standards and respectful relationships. They are dedicated to high standards in education for 4 – 18 year olds. RET currently comprises the Didcot Girls' School (*Ofsted outstanding*), St Birinus School and Sutton Courtenay CofE (VC) Primary School. As a school we strongly believe in the ethos of the trust and together we will strengthen our offer for all the members of our community.

We are very proud to be a Church of England School and to be part of this community and we know that. The Trust is eager to embrace our Christian ethos. From past to present this ethos has shaped our school and we now look forward to working together to build our future.

Gillian Fraser
Head Teacher
Long Wittenham Primary School

We asked our years 5 and 6 class what they would like to see in our new Vicar and they replied that they would like them to do assemblies – telling Bible stories, celebrating the seasons and talking about life experiences.

They would like them to be approachable and able to talk about any subject, and would like them to be involved in village gatherings, getting to know people.

The children would also like to ask the new Vicar where they have come from, what interests they have, and how can we make our community a better place.

Dorchester

Dorchester is a village of about 1,000 people with an unusual parish church rich in history. Dorchester Abbey began in 635AD when Bishop Birinus brought the gospel to the West Saxons. King Cynegils was baptised nearby and gave Dorchester-on-Thames as an episcopal see, where a cathedral was founded. In 1085 the see moved to Lincoln. Fifty-five years later, Bishop Alexander of Lincoln founded the Abbey for the Augustinian Order. At the Dissolution, it was saved by Richard Beauforest to serve as the parish church.

Today, the Abbey supports a strong worshipping community, with services ranging from Sung Eucharist and BCP Communion to Choral Evensong, Family Services and Forest Church who gather in our Clister Garden. We have a strong SATB Choir and a small band who play for our family service. We have two house groups meeting in the village and have recently run our first Alpha Course.

The Abbey attracts thousands of visitors annually, with a Museum, Tea Room, concerts, and arts events, especially during the Dorchester Festival.

We also serve as a 'pro-cathedral' for special services including the annual ordination of priests for the Dorchester episcopal area. and host community activities including a toddler group, coffee mornings, and home Bible studies. We have recently been exploring a new vision, drawing on our heritage to shape our future.



The BBD Cluster

The BBD Cluster consists of the parishes of Berinsfield, Drayton St Leonard, and the Baldons: Toot Baldon and Marsh Baldon with Nuneham Courtenay.



Berinsfield is a modern village, built on the site of a former airfield used by the Americans in WW2 and was the first new village in Oxfordshire for 500 years. It has grown into a well-served community with shops, health services, a primary school, and active community facilities. St Mary and St Berin church, completed in 1962, plays a central role, hosting worship, outreach activities, and community events. The congregation is small but active, offering varied services, community engagement, and links with Roman Catholics and an international prayer partnership. Worship balances tradition and informality, with strong participation at major festivals. The Living Room Café is an ecumenical missional venture, which we are beginning to anticipate becoming a New Worshipping Community.



Drayton St Leonard is a smaller village with a historic Norman church, dedicated to St Leonard and St Catherine. The congregation are small but highly able. Worship is flexible, with lay-led services and ongoing training for lay preachers. The church remains a key community hub, especially since the loss of other local amenities. The church hosts seasonal events and community gatherings. Strong local support is evident through volunteering, fundraising, and well-attended activities such as bell ringing and the annual fete.



The Baldons and Nuneham Courtenay consists of several small villages and hamlets, actively gathering for worship in Toot and Marsh Baldon. The church in Nuneham Courtenay is used very occasionally, and cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust. The congregation here values thoughtful engagement with scripture and enjoys a mix of traditional and informal worship. Church life is supported by an active PCC and strong lay involvement. A Filling Station gathers monthly at Marsh Baldon Village Hall. These are lively village communities, with close ties between church and village activities, including Marsh Baldon CE Primary School. There is a shared desire to grow in faith, deepen outreach, and strengthen connections across the wider community.

The Eastern Cluster

Newington has had a church since 997. St Giles Church, a grade 1 listed Norman building, remains the village's only public space. The parish has 85 residents in 42 homes, spanning varied ages and backgrounds, with farming as the main activity. With Newington House next door, St Giles has been a popular venue for weddings – though Newington House is presently on the market, so the future uncertain. In addition to a carol or nativity service, St Giles Church hosts occasional cluster evensongs.



Stadhampton with Chiselhampton has a combined population of around 900. While rural, many residents commute to Oxford or nearby towns. The area has a primary school, preschool facilities, and active community support services. The Church of St John the Baptist, Stadhampton, is a historic Grade II listed building which has been sensitively reordered to serve as both church and community hub, offering flexible space for events. Weekly worship



at St John's varies in style – including regular family services. The church community is active, cohesive, and engaged in village life.

St Katherine's Church in Chiselhampton, cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust, hosts occasional festival services, including a wonderful candle-lit Nine Lessons and Carols.



Warborough is a thriving parish of about 1,000 people, with a strong sense of community and numerous clubs and organisations. St Laurence Church, a Grade II* listed building, is supported by a dedicated PCC and volunteers. The parish maintains strong charitable giving and community outreach. Close ties exist with St Laurence CE Primary School, with regular Collective Worships and end of term services.



The Friends of St Laurence raise funds for conservation projects, strengthening community involvement and preserving the church's heritage.



The Vicarage



The light and modern Vicarage is in the High Street, Long Wittenham.

Built in 2006, EPC C rated, it has five bedrooms, a generously sized modern kitchen/dining room, utility room, a large lounge and a study. There is a garage and a moderately sized garden.

It is located down a quiet lane within the village, away from the main through-road. It is a 10 minute walk to St Mary's.

The Dorchester Team by Numbers...

Topic	Dorchester	Clifton Hampden	Culham	Long Wittenham	Little Wittenham	Berinsfield	Drayton St Leonard	Marsh Baldon	Toot Baldon	Nuneham Courtenay	Stadhampton	Newington	Warborough
Population	1000	650	487	958	135	4500	278	282	142	205	838	117	1000
Electoral Roll	113	34	16	28		28	24	50	with Marsh Baldon	with Marsh Baldon			71
School	CofE	50 pupils CofE	Europa School with preschool	100 pupils CofE		300 pupils plus nursery		CofE			70 Pupils County Primary		94 pupils CofE
Shop	Yes	Yes				6				Yes	Yes		Yes
Post Office	Mobile	Yes				Yes					Mobile		Yes
Pub	1 pub, 2 hotels	2	1	2		1	1	1			3		1 pub, 1 hotel, several guest houses
Village Hall	Yes	Yes		Yes		Church Hall	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes		Yes & Church Hall
Bus Service	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		Frequent				Yes	Hourly		Yes
Other Churches	RC					Share with RC					St Katherine's, Chiselhampton (in care of Church Conservation Trust)		
Library						Yes							
Sports	Sports clubs + Pavilion	Rec field, tennis courts	Glebe Field	Football field		Sports Centre, Open Water Swimming	Football field	Sports field; Cricket			Football field; cricket		Football, cricket, Tennis
Scouting Organisations													
Health Centres		Yes				Yes							
Church Youth Activities													
Other	Museum, Team Room, Hurst Water Meadow			Pendon Museum	Earth Trust	various							
Pre School	Yes	Montessori	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes				Montessori	Yes
Bell Ringing	Yes							Yes					Yes

