

Welcome to the Fenn Lanes Benefice



Supporting information for candidates exploring the opportunity for
ministry as Rector within the Fenn Lanes Benefice

October 2023

Our Fenn Lanes Benefice Community

Thank you for taking the time to explore the opportunity for Ministry as Rector for the Fenn Lanes Benefice, we hope this guide gives you a sense of the community which we are and that we serve.

Our Churches have stood at the heart of the five villages that we serve for generations and it's our vision to continue to be the beacon and focal point for future congregations through embracing new opportunities to engage and make God's love known. We're a Benefice that's open to change, embracing collaboration over twenty years ago when our five parishes came together to work as a Benefice team. Whilst we're praying that a Rector will join us to help lead our mission and enable greater pastoral care, our Benefice is blessed to feature around 30 long standing volunteers, lay and retired clergy who tirelessly contribute to keep our churches active in our local communities. This team spirit has stood us in good stead, enabling us to maintain our mission over the last two years without an Incumbent.

But we know our Christian community has the latent potential to grow, so we hope that God will call a Rector to our Benefice to help harness our enthusiasm to find new ways to act as disciples of Jesus.

Our mission is to share our faith in an inclusive way, keeping our doors open to welcome our community at times of celebration, at times of need and through everyday acts of kindness and Christian discipleship. We're blessed to meet in beautiful and historic places of worship, but our churches come alive through the people that join together to worship and share their faith, fellowship and the good times, as well as being there for people when they are experiencing challenge and difficult times.

We're brimming with ideas for how we might be able to be present in our community in new ways and the opportunities we have to build on our close links with the three Church of England primary schools based in our Benefice. We support the schools as they engage with the national 'Growing Faith' focus, visiting with the Benefice Open the Book Team, leading collective worship and other initiatives. We're open to evolving the way we do things and there is a team ready to support our new Rector.

Could you be called to the Fenn Lanes Benefice to lead and inspire us to find new ways of sharing and growing our Christian faith?

A welcome from the Diocese of Leicester



Thank you for your interest in this role. Please be assured that there are many people praying for this process of discernment, and we trust that you will know God's guidance as you explore whether it is right to apply.

As part of your consideration, it is important to understand that the Diocese of Leicester, like every diocese in the Church of England, is in transition. After a long process of discernment (a process which we called Shaped by God Together and which involved much prayer and literally hundreds of small group conversations in every part of the diocese), the Diocesan Synod agreed a new framework for the diocese known as Minster Communities ([see more on our website](#)).

Anyone coming to work in the diocese therefore needs to be committed to engaging with this new framework and embedding it within the church communities they serve (understanding that it will be applied in different ways in different contexts) and be flexible and prayerful in discerning how their particular role fits and will evolve within this wider framework. This will be explored with you at interview, and, if you are appointed, will be major part of the induction process.

In addition to this, we are on an exciting journey of learning about church planting and fresh expressions of church, and about intercultural mission and ministry – two areas where we have received substantial funding from the national church. We are also committed to exploring intergenerational work, reducing our impact on the environment, and crossing the divides both in the church and in the world. We therefore want people who are open to learning, who are humble in admitting that they don't have all the answers, and yet who are bold in proclaiming the Gospel in word and action.



These changes require not only considerable flexibility and adaptability from clergy and lay ministers but also great resilience. This is why we also place a strong emphasis on wellbeing – seeing this as a partnership where you take responsibility for your own wellbeing, while knowing that there is always support available from bishops and diocesan staff. Additional support is also offered by our partner organisations such as Launde Abbey (retreat centre), St Philip's (interfaith centre), Community of the Tree of Life (residential and dispersed community for young adults) and of course the Cathedral.

I hope that I may have the opportunity of meeting you in the near future, but the meantime be assured of my prayers.

Yours in Christ,
The Rt Revd Martyn Snow, Bishop of Leicester

Shaped by God Together



Our new Shaped By God Together Minster Communities framework will help our local worshipping communities to grow the Kingdom of God and live out our everyday faith.

Shaped By God Together (SBGT) is the process through which the diocese is currently reshaping to ensure our ministry and mission is equipped and supported in the best way possible within our vision of the Kingdom of God, and our diocesan finances are used in order to resource our strategic priorities.

As part of this SBGT process, the Diocesan Synod voted strongly in favour of the Minster Communities framework in October 2021. Between 2022 and 2026, every parish, fresh expression of Church, clergyperson and lay minister, chaplain and school, will be expected to participate in conversation between local context and the diocesan leadership, in order to determine how they find their place within the framework as we form 20-25 Minster Communities across the diocese. Alongside the structural changes (which are likely to involve Joint Church Councils), we are encouraging all worshipping communities to develop how they enable discipleship and encourage vocations, grow in outwardly focused mission, engage with children, young people and schools, and work in partnership across differences. The development of a healthy culture of wellbeing is also vital.

More detailed information can be found on the Diocesan [SBGT webpages available here:](#)

Claire Bampton, Diocesan Programme Manager
Shaped by God Together

An introduction to the Diocese of Leicester

- ❖ Founded in 1926, Leicester is one of the youngest dioceses in England, with the present Bishop, the Rt Revd Martyn Snow, welcomed in May 2016.
 - ❖ Leicester is Britain's most multi-cultural, multi-faith city.
 - ❖ The County offers a great place to live and work, playing host to the Curve theatre, the National Space Centre, Premiership Rugby and Leicester City Football Club
 - ❖ Three of the country's leading universities are based in the County
 - ❖ The County contains many rural villages and medieval churches, especially around market towns, but also has a manufacturing and industrial heritage
 - ❖ In September 2020 Bishop Martyn and Bishop Guli called the diocese to pray as we began a process across the diocese seeking to be Shaped By God Together. In October 2021 the Diocesan Synod agreed the new minister communities framework for the diocese. A Minister Community will be a "group of parishes" who work together to collaborate in mission without losing their individual identity, and who work alongside their church schools, fresh expressions of Church, chaplaincies etc. The goal is to have as many Fresh Expressions as inherited Churches by 2030
 - ❖ The Diocese was involved in setting up the ecumenical and internationally-acclaimed St Philip's Centre for engagement in a multi-faith society
 - ❖ Launde Abbey, the Retreat House shared by the Dioceses of Leicester and Peterborough, is one of the finest in the country. The Community of the Tree of Life is linked to Launde, and comprises an international community of young adults
- Learn more about the Diocese of Leicester at the website:
www.leicester.anglican.org



The Rector's 'Patch'

The Rector of the Fenn Lanes Benefice has the potential to lead a 4,000 strong flock drawn from residents living within our villages of Dadlington, Fenny Drayton, Higham-on-the-Hill, Stoke Golding and Witherley.

We're part of the Sparkenhoe West Deanery, overseen by the Diocese of Leicester and within the Archdeaconry of Loughborough, so there's an established support network to tap into including our Rural Dean Mark Poskitt, together with our lay readers Jan, Michelle and Carolyn, our retired clergy, our Worship Group, members of Leicester Cursillo, our PCC volunteers, supporters and regular givers.

This support network means our Rector will benefit from lots of helping hands to support everyday ministry, meaning in this role the Rector can use the time they have available to focus on the bigger picture – leading, inspiring and supporting the Benefice to grow our Christian community.



Our Benefice community works together as a team to deliver Acts of Worship in a variety of ways – collective Benefice Services, local lay-led All Age Services, in School through Open the Book, Songs of Praise, Rogation, Online and worship groups – but we're excited to consider evolving how we deliver our Christian Mission within our community.

The Role

As a small rural Benefice we are looking for a Rector who will make God's love known to our respective communities, helping us work together as a Benefice, leading us together into a Minster Community, whilst maintaining our own individuality to reflect our local needs.

Key requirements of the role:

- ❖ A leader who can inspire our enthusiastic volunteers to help support everyday ministry, deliver services and minister to our communities
- ❖ Energetic, innovative, and encouraging others to try new things - promoting enjoyment in our faith and our churches
- ❖ A coach who will inspire and empower us to develop our spiritual gifts and ministries, giving us confidence in ourselves and our future
- ❖ An engaging communicator, particularly to share our Christian faith in an inclusive and accessible way with children and young families within our three church schools
- ❖ Supportive of our endeavours to bring our communities together for a variety of social events within, and outside, our church spaces, which is critical, particularly in Fenny Drayton where the church acts as the main community space
- ❖ Someone who will embrace the Diocesan Shaped By God process and lead us as we form a new Minster Community
- ❖ Someone who will guide us through the changing landscape of parish ministry
- ❖ The quality of refreshments served by our volunteers means an enjoyment of cakes may make this role particularly appealing to those who love the taste of Christian fellowship!

How we will support you:

- ❖ A team of around 30 volunteers featuring a variety of skills that can be called on for support to deliver ministry, fundraising, maintenance, refreshments and communications
- ❖ A ministry team featuring three Lay Readers, a pastoral assistant, retired clergy, PCC members and Headteachers who fully support our Christian ministry
- ❖ Volunteers representing the Rector serving as School Governors
- ❖ An understanding that the role is part time and our commitment to work alongside you to deliver services, studies and offer pastoral, funeral and bereavement services
- ❖ Practical and prayerful support, freeing the incumbent from the responsibility of routine tasks and fundraising
- ❖ A warm welcome and a 4 bedroomed house in our largest village, Stoke Golding which benefits from public transport, a shop, pubs, a club and highly regarded schools - both primary and secondary
- ❖ Five beautiful and historic churches (with links to the Battle of Bosworth and George Fox) who draw interest from visitors from outside our locality
- ❖ A generous community who support our fundraising activities allowing us to make financial contributions to the diocese and Christian charities

The Vicarage

The Vicarage, High Street, Stoke Golding Nuneaton CV13 6HE

The Vicarage is a detached four bedroom house built in the early 1980s and situated on High Street adjacent to St. Margaret of Antioch church which stands in the centre of Stoke Golding. The village is a lovely place to live, offering the charm of a village and rural setting, whilst being just a few miles away from the nearest town of Hinckley which has three large supermarkets, train station and shopping centre. This location offers excellent transport links served by the M69, A5, M1 and M6.

The key accommodation within the Rectory comprises; Recessed entrance porch leading to hall, study, lounge with patio door into the rear garden, dining room, fitted kitchen & utility room and downstairs WC. To the first floor are four bedrooms, family bathroom and separate WC. Windows throughout the house are double glazed uPVC and there is gas fired central heating. Outside there are front and rear gardens, parking and a single garage.

Stoke Golding is a highly desired village featuring two pubs, local shop, St Margaret's Church of England Primary School, St Martin's Catholic Academy Secondary School and two community spaces - the Baxter Hall and the Village Hall. Its proximity to both Bosworth Battlefield and the Ashby Canal means the village attracts visitors from further afield.



Dadlington

The Parish & the Village

This small hill village comprises 117 households, home to around 300 people and is a predominantly rural community. At the centre is an attractive village green, the church, the Dog & Hedgehog pub, and a church hall which is leased to the village and hosts many village events.

The Bosworth battlefield, Ashby canal and the long-distance Leicestershire Round footpath run close by bringing a flow of tourist visitors.



The Church & Congregation

The church of St James the Greater is open every day. It has an interesting history, a Grade 2* building, dating certainly before 1283 and possibly built 1145-50. St James' churchyard is the only recorded burial site for those slain at the nearby Battle of Bosworth 1485. Richard III's reinterment cortege stopped here in 2015 and we are to be part of the new battlefield sculpture trail, representing healing and reconciliation after the battle.

The congregation is a small and integral part of the Fenn Lanes family.

Church Service & Events

We see our Church as a core part of our village life. Our services are currently framed around Sunday Morning Prayer, which is lay led, and a monthly Holy Communion with periodic Benefice Holy Communion services in addition.

As a church we hold a popular annual Flower Festival at May Bank Holiday weekend, a Cream Tea in August, Harvest Songs of Praise, a Harvest Supper, a Christmas Fair, a Carol Service and a Pancake Supper. A recent call to improve and tidy the churchyard resulted in many local volunteers taking part over two days. We look to our new incumbent to encourage growth in our congregation and to assist us in making our church a greater focus of village life.

Fenny Drayton

The Parish & the Village

Fenny Drayton is a hamlet of around 200 dwellings, including outlying farms, sitting in South West Leicestershire. The 'village' is mentioned in the Domesday book and there is evidence that a religious building stood here in Roman times. In 2002, the Ordnance Survey defined Lindley Hall Farm on the village outskirts as the geographical centre of England and, as the only public building in the village, our church is the centre of all social activities and community events - the heart of village life.

The Church & Congregation

Saint Michael and All Angels is open daily for people to visit, reflect and spend quiet time. There are toys for children whose parents want to have space whilst their children play. The building, itself, is Grade II listed and is built in Gothic style with 12th-century Norman features and a 13th-century bell tower. This has five bells which were restored towards the end of the last century.

The church is surrounded by one of the oldest circles of giant yew trees in the country. Inside the church there are two monuments to the Purefoy family dating back to 1543, one of which has a rare incised slab. George Fox, founder of the Quakers, used to worship here and the font and bier from that time are still in the church - the font having been rescued from life as an animal feeder in a nearby field! There is a green plaque on the church wall to commemorate him and, next year will be the 400th anniversary of his birth, prompting visits from Quakers around the globe. In 2009 a toilet and small kitchen facility were added to the building, allowing greater comfort to congregants and flexibility for social events.

Church Service & Events

Our church hosts weekly coffee mornings and monthly social events, including 'gigs'. It's a hub for charitable giving with foodbank, 'smalls for all' collection boxes and donation point for Christmas gifts and items for refugees. We see this as an integral part of our ministry - serving our community and reaching out in love to our neighbours in need. We run regular church services in different formats but we are open to new ways to engage with our village community - making church a place they would like to spend time with God, as well as to socialise. In return, our community actively supports the church and gives generously to the fundraising events, recognising the valuable role the church plays in village life.



Higham-on-the-Hill

The Parish & the Village

Higham has a population of around 900 and there are proposals for a new development of 60 houses in the village. We believe this growth presents an opportunity to stretch our mission. Plans are advancing for a community run pub/shop/meeting place to reopen. Many community activities are centred on the Methodist church and include coffee mornings, a craft group and food bank collections. Large community events are held in St Peter's. Higham C of E Primary School is next to St Peter's and is part of the growing RISE Academies Trust. It is a thriving small school rated Good by Ofsted in 2022.

The Church & Congregation

St Peter's is Grade II listed and sits at the highest point in the village. There has been a Christian presence here for over nine centuries. The congregation is welcoming, of ages from 2 to over 90. The Anglican and Methodist communities have long-established and practical links and we join for two services each month. Although not part of a formal LEP we present ourselves as The Higham Churches. St Peter's also nurtures links with the nearby Kings Lodge (Youth with a Mission) residential Christian college. A monthly village magazine keeps parishioners updated with news and service details.



Church Service & Events

Our services follow a similar pattern to the other churches of the Benefice and we aspire to being accessible for all. Our united morning worship is a team effort led by the local Worship Group. There is a fine organ in the church and we're lucky to have a brilliant organist who lives in the village.

We welcome school children and parents for collective worship and festival services and the Open the Book team visit the school. A small Bible Study Group has emerged from both congregations. The study themes are picked by the group and usually consist of fortnightly meetings.

We would like the churches to be at the core of residents' perceptions of what makes village life special and we are pursuing this by taking a leading role in organising community events where folk come together and maybe find God at work. The Higham churches organised celebrations for the Jubilee, Coronation and have hosted an open-air theatre and concerts in St Peter's. At Christmas we invite a youth brass band to play for our popular candlelit carol service.

Stoke Golding



The Parish & the Village

Stoke Golding is a growing village of roughly 900 households undergoing further housing development that will bring new families into the parish. The village has a rural feel and welcoming community who have worked hard to help new residents integrate into village life. St. Margaret's Primary C of E school is near the church and we wish to build on the already strong links. The school, with around 220 pupils, is part of the Inspiring Primaries Academy Trust and has a strong Christian ethos. Members of the congregation are part of the 'Open the Book' team which visit this and other schools in the Benefice.

Church Service & Events

We hold a service of worship on three Sundays each month - Holy Communion, Morning Worship (lay reader led), or All Age Worship (Worship Group led), and once each month we join with the other churches in the Benefice. The Worship Group meets monthly to plan the all-age service, and there is an ecumenical prayer group. In addition to the regular pattern of services, we hold a Christingle service, a Crib service and a Harvest Festival, all of which are well attended.

The annual Flower Festival involves a lot of people from the community and attracts many from outside the village. This is a major fund-raising event, but equally importantly, it is a joint activity shared by members of the community. We also hold an annual and very popular Snowman Festival which is always generously supported by the local community. The church building is used for talks, performances and exhibitions.



The Church & Congregation

For over 800 years the church of St. Margaret of Antioch has stood at the heart of our village and is highly valued as a centre of Christian worship. The building is Grade 1 listed and is open every day. In 2021, the Church underwent large scale renovations, especially to the interior, opening up a flexible space. We receive a lot of visitors, both casual and regular who appreciate this as a place of spirituality and an important part of our community heritage.

We have a tradition of bell-ringing, with a peal of six bells which are rung each Sunday with a practice during the week. The church is popular with visiting campanologists.

A Friendship Group meets weekly and provides much valued companionship to people who often live alone and are not able to access social activities in other ways. Concern for others is often at the forefront of the thinking of congregation and we contribute to the Food Bank and local care homes. We welcome new ideas that will continue to attract members of the community to the Church.

Witherley

The Parish & the Village

Witherley Parish is home to around 1,500 people across an active village community of around 300 homes, together with the hamlet of Atterton. The village is home to Witherley C of E Primary School, the popular Blue Lion Pub, a well-used Playing Field with children's play equipment and Witherley Football Club. There is also a village community space, the Parish Room, which the PCC is responsible for, despite being sited at the other side of the village from the church.



The Church & Congregation

St Peters is a Grade one listed building with a bell tower featuring five bells which are rung by our bell ringing volunteers for special services and occasions. Our beautiful church sits at the heart of the community and adjacent to the River Anker, with a footpath running through our churchyard connecting two sides of the village. It means many in our community make strolling through our churchyard part of their daily circular walk around the village, which helps make even those who don't attend our services, have an affinity and appreciation of our church.



Church Service & Events

There is a regular pattern of worship, with a monthly Service of Communion together with Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals as required by our local community. The monthly All Age Service has long been delivered by Witherley's lay Worship group. There is a regular church community of around 100 who participate in acts of worship on at least four occasions annually.

Outside of our acts of worship, the church welcomes visitors weekly for our Wednesday Coffee & Company social event, in addition to well supported fundraising events at Christmas, Bank Holidays and our famous Annual Duck Race which attracts many in our community to visit us and enjoy the spectacle of watching hundreds of plastic ducks float down our river to reach the finish line at the churchyard! The Church space is also used to host choir and drama performances.

Our Fenn Lanes Benefice Community



Could you be called to the Fenn Lanes Benefice to lead and inspire us to find new ways of sharing and growing our Christian faith?