

THE KNIGHTLEY BENEFICE PROFILE 2024



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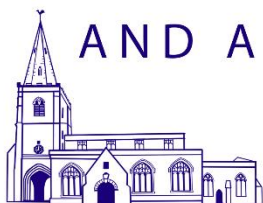
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BADBY,
ST MARY THE VIRGIN



NEWNHAM,
ST MICHAEL
AND ALL ANGELS



CHARWELTON,
HOLY TRINITY



FAWSLEY,
ST MARY THE VIRGIN



PRESTON CAPES,
ST PETER AND ST PAUL



INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME



We all look forward to welcoming our new Priest in Charge to join us in our parishes.

We seek a full-time Priest who will lead us in his or her way to develop what has been achieved so far and to take further steps to broaden our worship and increase our growth. We have a lay Ministry Team who are keen to help in this.

We are proud of our five villages, their sense of community and their willingness to work together, and we are pleased to have this chance to describe it all to you.

We have a very willing, hard-working team of people who make our Churches beautiful and welcoming and who want to make Church-going and worship equally welcoming.



GENERAL INFORMATION



Location

The five parishes covered by the Benefice are in a rural area of significant natural beauty in Northamptonshire. The landscape includes open farmland and ancient woodland (Badby Woods is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest). The rivers Nene and Cherwell have their sources nearby. There are two long-distance footpaths dating from Saxon times: the Nene Way and the Knightley Way. The Jurassic Way goes through Charwelton's Churchyard.

The Benefice lies between the M1, the A5 and the M40, with nearby railway stations at Long Buckby, Rugby and Northampton with trains to London Euston, and Banbury with trains to London Marylebone. Oxford, Coventry and Birmingham can all be reached in less than one hour, and London in little more.



Local services

The market town of Daventry has three supermarkets (Tesco, Aldi and Waitrose) together with a range of other shops. Bigger shopping centres can be found at Northampton, Towcester, Banbury, Rugby and Leamington Spa. There are many local farm shops, particularly in Staverton, Byfield, Weedon and Eydon.

There are concert halls and theatres in Northampton, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwick, Oxford and Birmingham. The nearest cinemas are in Daventry (recently refurbished), Northampton, Rugby, Banbury and Leamington Spa. Warwick Arts Centre also screens more specialist art house films.

There is good local health care provision, with GPs, dentists and opticians in Daventry as well as a recently modernised hospital. There is a large, general hospital offering an A&E service in Northampton, as well as two private ones. A&E is also available in Banbury, which also has a private hospital. We are not far from the excellent teaching hospitals in Oxford. There are health centres or surgeries in Daventry, Byfield and Weedon.

There are two good primary schools in the Benefice, in Newnham and in Badby. They are not C of E but they have always had a good relationship with the Church. The schools have been actively encouraged to use the Churches and do so especially for their Harvest and Christmas services. Secondary school provision exists in Daventry. Our recent Incumbent developed a relationship with the schools in both Newnham and Badby and regularly took assemblies in both.



CHURCHMANSHIP



The liturgy used varies across the Benefice with Common Worship preferred in some parishes and the Book of Common Prayer in others. There is a wide range of churchmanship through the Benefice, with regular services of Eucharist, both BCP and CW, of morning and evening prayer, a monthly lay-led evening service of the Word and an annual pet service.

In interregnum the current pattern is that Holy Communion is held in two Churches on the first Sunday, in two other Churches on the second Sunday and in the fifth Church on the fourth Sunday. The third Sunday is reserved for a United Benefice Service of Holy Communion in each of the Churches in turn. When there is a fifth Sunday there is always a service of Holy Communion in Fawsley.

At Christmas all five Churches manage to hold a service on Christmas Eve or Day, thanks to the generosity of local retired Priests who support our Priest. All villages hold a carol service and most usually hold a Christingle service.

Services, some of which are Compline, are held daily throughout Holy Week in the five parishes in turn, and Easter Day is a busy day, made slightly easier again thanks to local retired clergy!

The special occasions celebrated throughout the year include Mothering Sunday, Harvest Festival and Remembrance Sunday, and members of our Ministry Team stand in for the Priest when necessary for these. One parish holds an annual pet service!



QUALITIES OF THE NEW PRIEST



Role description

Guiding us in our worship

Leadership of as many services as possible with the Ministry Team staffing other services

Pastoral care in the five villages

Leadership to encourage Church growth, especially among the young

Teaching the Gospel

Celebration of the rhythm of Church life and its seasons

Awareness of the traditions of life in the countryside

A visible presence in the community, including building a Christian ethos in the schools

Person specification

Someone who will embrace a challenge

Someone keen to tackle the above

Someone with experience of parish life

Someone IT-literate

Someone willing to show flexibility

Someone with tact

Someone able to delegate and willing to work with the team.



What we are offering

Not all the work need fall to the Priest. There are people in place in the Benefice to help with some of this. We offer: -

A Ministry Team, ready and willing

Loyalty

Attentive PCC members, all people of faith, anxious to drive Mission forward

Awareness of the pressures on the Priest's time and respect for very necessary time off

Desire to reduce burden of administration work on the Priest

Acceptance of delegation

Confidential support

Funds (limited) for IT support

A photocopier

If the above seems to fit with you, please apply to our Benefice. You will be so welcome!





Priest's accommodation

The Vicarage is a modern, four-bedroomed detached house on Vicarage Hill in Badby, approximately 150 yards from St. Mary's Church. It has two reception rooms in addition to a separate study, and lots of storage. It has a garage and ample parking and has been well-maintained by the Diocese. The garden is a good size, largely laid to grass. Vicarage Hill is very quiet and safe for children. There are views of the Church and open fields from the upper floor.



BENEFICE PROFILE



History of the Benefice

The five parishes were united into a single Benefice in April 1991. A Benefice council was established in 1998, and is chaired by the Priest, or by a lay chair in interregnum. Although it has no executive powers it is a useful forum for discussion and an option currently under consideration (to be discussed with the new Priest) is that ministry and mission should be considered at this council and not duplicated by the PCCs. Meetings are held at least quarterly.

A monthly Benefice magazine, the Link, was started in 1991, by the then-Incumbent. Its purpose is to keep the five villages in touch with each other and it is distributed free of charge to every household in the Benefice, with its cost borne entirely by advertising. It has a remarkable turnaround time each month of five days from copy deadline to start of delivery. Each village has its Link correspondent, and the magazine is centrally edited by a Charwelton resident. It is also available electronically.

Our Benefice website can be found at knightleybenefice.org.uk. It is regularly updated with detailed information about the Benefice and its five parishes.



Benefice team

There is provision for two churchwardens in each parish, though Newnham, Charwelton and Fawsley currently have one each.

In addition to the lay chair the Benefice council has its own treasurer who sets contributions per parish and settles the Priest's expenses (see financial summary).

We have an SSM living in Badby, who takes many services in two deaneries, and one lay pastoral minister living in Charwelton.

The lay Ministry Team, formed in 1992, has four people, from three villages. They have been trained by Incumbents over the years and confidently lead worship and intercessions. They are a considerable asset to the Benefice, both to support the Priest and in our current interregnum, and to increase the number of services available. One of them holds the Diocesan Certificate in Children's Ministry. The Evening Service of the Word is a possible nursery for future leaders to join the Ministry Team. Their input is much appreciated in the Benefice.

We are lucky to have four people willing to act as servers for the Eucharist, approved by previous Incumbents.

We have one safeguarding officer in each parish.

Churchwardens and treasurers are dealing with a lot of the day-to-day administration during the interregnum and are willing to continue following appointment of a new Priest. We are also willing to hire up to six hours of administration assistance a week for the new Priest.





Service pattern

The following is an example of our current service pattern during interregnum, thanks to several local priests, both retired and non-stipendiary, and our own lay Ministry Team.

Clergy		Badby	Newnham	Charwelton	Fawsley	Preston Capes
Lay-led service						
1	Sun	11am HC CW		9.15 HC BCP		
2	Sun	11am MW .			11am HC BCP	9.15 HC CW
3	Sun	<i>UBS in</i>	<i>rotation</i>	10am HC UBS	<i>UBS in</i>	<i>rotation</i>
4	Sun	11am MW .	9.15 HC CW	5pm EP .		10am MP BCP/CW

In addition, an Evening Service of the Word, a 30-minute lay-led Benefice service, is held on the Tuesday after the third Sunday of the month at 6.30pm in St. Mary's, Badby. Three different volunteers staff it, one leading, one reading and one talking about a Saint or other inspirational figure.



Children

Children are very welcome in our Churches, with children's corners mostly provided but with little current attendance. This needs to be worked on and we hope our new Priest will help us to improve in this area. There are many ideas, successful elsewhere, which could be started.

Bellringing

All five Church towers in the Benefice contain bells in good working order. They are rung before services in most parishes by ringers from within the Benefice. There is good cooperation between the tower captains, who are very active. Practices within the Benefice are popular with not only local ringers but also those from further afield.



Population

The current population of the Benefice (2021 figures), living in about 700 households, is as follows: –

Badby	701
Newnham	595
Charwelton	220
Fawsley	32 (2001 census)
Preston Capes	216.



Financial summary

How we manage finances

Each parish has its own treasurer who deals with planned giving for that parish. Also, the Benefice has a treasurer and each parish makes monthly contributions to the Benefice which are used to pay clergy expenses, rentals for the Benefice website, and the Benefice copier/printer

Financial Information for 2023

	Total Benefice	Badby	Newnham	Charwelton	Fawsley	Preston Capes
Number on Electoral Roll	117	30	30	16	11	30
Parish Share Paid	61,599	17,298	11,000	9,596	10,383	13,322
Parish Share Paid % ¹	88%	100%	75%	90%	100%	100%
Planned Giving	33,713	11,368	9,202	3,460	1,288	8,395
Number of Planned Givers	67	21	22	9	2	13
Clergy Expenses	2,220	444	444	444	444	444
Income in 2023	107,824	36,448	16,226	19,867	16,297	18,986
Expenditure in 2023	133,433	44,980	16,357	22,842	28,254	21,000
Surplus/(Deficit) in 2023 ³	(7,251)	(3)	(2,769)	(975)	(1,490)	(2,014)
Unrestricted Funds	102,905	34,736	16,100	10,920	35,374	5,775
Designated and Restricted Funds ²	255,721	25,341	12,428	110,132	46,539	61,281

Notes:

- 1 Parishes paid parish share in full, or as much as they could afford while maintaining their unrestricted reserves above the minimum approved levels.
- 2 No major building projects have been approved which will be a major charge to reserves within the next few years.
- 3 The Surplus/Deficit is that arising on the general funds and so excludes expenditure charged to fabric funds.



PARISH PROFILES

BADBY, ST MARY THE VIRGIN



Badby is the largest of the Benefice parishes, with nearly 300 households. It's a lively and active village with many local clubs and societies including an active WI, horticultural society, cricket club and many others. We also benefit from a well-maintained village hall where films are shown usually twice a month, and concerts are given by local musicians.

Badby is a few miles away from the nearest railway station at Long Buckby, and there is a regular bus service from the village both to the nearby market town of Daventry and to Banbury.

Just outside the village are the well-known Badby Woods, which attract walkers in all seasons, especially to see the bluebells in spring and the snowdrops in winter.

There is one pub in the village, the Maltsters, with a recently opened coffee shop and a back room available for meetings.



WELCOME TO OUR CHURCH

Church

A Church has existed on this site since before 1343, when the first parish Priest arrived. Her varied history has called for much improvement and in recent years we have carried out a major reordering project to create level access from the main door and remove pews at the back of the Church to provide a carpeted area now regularly used for both worship and social purposes. The font was also relocated to the nearby children's corner, and the heating and electrics were upgraded. The Church benefits from a sound system with hearing loop. The entire roof was also recently replaced with terne coated stainless steel which has the appearance of lead but offers little value to potential thieves. There is a recently modernised kitchen and a WC. The next project is to rehang the six bells together with other associated repairs, to make the bells easier to raise and ring more rhythmically, and funds are currently being sought for this. There is an electronic organ, voiced to sound like a pipe organ, maintained regularly, and a clavinova piano.

The Churchyard is closed and is maintained by the Parish Council.

We can seat over 100 in St. Mary's, and many more if they budge up a bit!

The Church is open every day of the year at least from 10am till 4pm.

We always welcome concerts or theatrical performances at St. Mary's. The WI makes occasional use of the Church for social events when the village hall is in use as a polling station! With our recent upgrade of the kitchen more can be done to welcome people to other events at the Church.

The back of the Church is regularly used for coffee after services and is particularly useful for the greater numbers at Harvest Festival or after baptisms.

Food is taken from the Church to Daventry food bank several times a week.



Church Services

During the interregnum Badby is holding one Common Worship service of Holy Communion and two lay-led morning worship services each month at 11am. Attendance is usually between 12 and 20 with higher numbers occasionally. The Electoral Roll currently stands at 30. A monthly lay-led Evening Service of the Word is attended by congregants from all five villages in the Benefice, averaging 8-12.

Recently Badby's Sunday services have all been held at 11am. This timing has its supporters and its detractors.

The rota for sidesmen (10), readers (14) and coffeemakers (10) is drawn up by the churchwardens.

Ecumenical links

All are welcome in our Church. There used to be a United Reformed Church chapel in the village, but it was closed in 2021.

School

Around 100 years old, Badby School is a popular primary school and nursery, attracting pupils from the surrounding area as well as from the village. Our recent Incumbent was hard-working in developing good relations with the school, with some success, and led assembly there regularly, but there is more to do in this area. The school enjoys holding its Harvest Festival and Carol services in St. Mary's.

Outreach challenges

We aim to visit those in need and are working on a sensible system to flag up these visits. In addition, we are making efforts to include children in our services, and to make them welcome. These areas need improvement, and we hope that our new Priest can lead us in both aims. Our monthly coffee morning, held at the back of the Church, is a popular event for Churchgoers and other village residents and is a useful way for people to meet up.



PCC

The PCC (seven members currently) is a good, enthusiastic and cooperative team. Most of the energy for fundraising (see below) comes from PCC members. The most recent quinquennial report (December 2022) shows the list of work needed, which has either already been completed or is under the watchful eye of the Maintenance and Assets Working Group. The PCC treasurer manages all income and outgoings, including the planned giving.

Volunteers

St. Mary's is kept in good condition, thanks to the hard work of its cleaning team and the skill of its flower arrangers. We frequently receive compliments on the beauty of the building. There is a regular list of sidesmen, readers and providers of coffee after services, all of whom cooperate with each other to provide cover when necessary. We have two organists living in the village, both of whom play for services when they can, and we use CD accompaniment when they are not available.

Our six bells are rung every Sunday and for Wednesday night practice thanks to our very knowledgeable tower captain (since 1980), a former president of the Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers, who is happy also to give his time as ringing instructor for nearby Deanery Churches.

Fundraising

A fundraising group meets regularly to keep up the momentum of the next event. In this current year we have held a quiz supper, soup lunches throughout the weeks of Lent, a theatre visit to the Church with drinks provided by us, and an afternoon of selling tea and cakes to those visiting the village gardens in May. We are now planning our annual scarecrow festival for September, to be followed up by the Christmas Fair at the end of November. In addition, there are monthly coffee mornings held in Church, and the monthly Church draw. We always welcome choirs and other concerts. It is worth noting that organisers are never short of volunteers to help run these various events. The Church is a much-loved feature of the village.

Finance

Our finances are on a sound footing. Many of the congregation are part of the Parish Giving Scheme and we have noticed increased giving by visitors to the Church since we installed a card reader by the door. We keep up to date with our parish share payments, thanks at least partly to our successful fundraising.



PARISH PROFILES

NEWNHAM, ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS



Village

Newnham is a beautiful middle-England village with a population of approximately 600. It is positioned in a valley sheltered by a steep hill which separates it from Daventry which lies about two miles to the north. In rolling countryside alongside the river Nene, its most obvious features are its richly coloured ironstone buildings and the surrounding pastureland. In addition to the stone houses in the older parts of the village there are two modern estates, a few groups of new houses and several outlying farms. The village has a frequently used village hall where the Parish Council, WI and the Girl Guide unit meet and a playground within the playing field with swings and a roundabout for younger children. The local public house is The Romer Arms which incorporates Maria's Kitchen, a restaurant which serves Portuguese and English food. Unfortunately, there is no longer a village shop, and the village is not on a bus route.



Church

The Church is a 13th Century grade 1 listed building which is open daily. Its exterior is unique in having open arches at the west end which supports the bell tower. The six bells are rung by a small band of ringers who ring when they are able. The Churchyard which has several unusual memorials is now closed apart from an area of cremated remains which has been recently expanded. The maintenance and upkeep of the Churchyard is now the responsibility of the Parish Council.

The interior of the Church seats up to 150 people and includes original box pews, a medieval brass memorial and a pipe organ in excellent playing order. As with any old building, the Church makes constant demands on its custodians. The chancel roof has been replaced after the lead was stolen during the Summer of 2018 and a roof alarm installed. The antiquated LPG heating system has been replaced by a modern infrared system.

The interior of the Church has been decorated for the first time in 50 years and further works which need to be undertaken include relaying the porch floor and repair work to the stonework around the south window.

There are rotas for sides–persons at services, flower arranging and Church cleaning. After morning services tea or coffee is served.

Church Services

During the interregnum Newnham is holding one Common Worship service every month and there is an United Benefice Service which follows the Benefice rota. We have a small but loyal congregation with the average attendance at services ranging between 12 and 18.

The Electoral Roll stands at 28.



Ecumenical Links

St Michael & All Angels is the only Church in the village, but all denominations are welcome to attend our services.

School

The village has a primary school with approximately 100 children, many of whom travel in from the surrounding area. The recent incumbent visited the school on a regular basis and had a very good relationship with pupils and staff at the school. The school visits the Church for various activities including services for special occasions.

Outreach

Newnham's congregation is always friendly and extremely happy to make sure that visitors and newcomers are made welcome, and coffee is served after services. The Church also hosts the Mothers Union Advent carol service and special services for the school to celebrate Harvest, Christmas, Easter and at the end of term a leavers' service.

In addition, the Church hosts musical events such as concerts and choral groups and the village History Society hold events using the Church as a venue.

The Church also collects and delivers the generous donations provided by villagers to Daventry Food Bank.



PCC

There are 6 members of the PCC who meet bimonthly to discuss services, the upkeep of the Church, safeguarding, health and safety and fundraising. The main recommendations of the last quinquennial report in August 2021 have been addressed and others are ongoing.

Volunteers

Volunteers support the Church in various ways including Church cleaning, flower arranging, distributing the Benefice magazine to each household in the village and assisting in fundraising activities.

Fundraising

The PCC's fundraising committee meet to organise various fundraising activities that are essential to the finances of the Church. The activities include serving teas and lunches for the NGS Open Gardens, serving teas for Snowdrop Sunday, coffee mornings, and regular bingo sessions. In addition, concerts and musical events have been held in Church.

Finance

Twenty-five households in the village participate in the Planned Giving Scheme, three of which subscribe to the upkeep of the building only. In total the Planned Giving Scheme generates approximately £9,202 annually. Unfortunately, we have struggled to pay the parish share in full for 2023 managing only 75.11% which amounted to £11,000 out of the £14,646 required.



PARISH PROFILES

CHARWELTON, HOLY TRINITY



Village

The village of Charwelton lies on the A361 between Banbury and Daventry but it has not always been there. Its origins can be traced to medieval times, when it lay less than a mile away from the current village, surrounding the Church. But changes in agricultural practices led to the relocation of the village. With 101 houses, of which nine are outlying farms, Charwelton has a distinct rural feel whilst also benefitting from being on a bus route. The settled community has, in recent years, been supplemented by new houses on the A361 and on Church Street, the main road through the village. The mixed community retains its farming background, of which much has been made in the past, with Rogation rambles and the Harvest Festival weekend. With this in mind, we are always keen to explore innovative ways of celebrating our “rural-ness”. A few residents have lived here all their lives but most migrated to the village, capitalising on its commuter-convenient location. Due to the character and relatively high value of the housing stock, Charwelton has few young families: the demographic is weighted towards the older quartile. The only significant sources of local employment are farming, a nursery, the community-owned pub, a small iron works, and the Catesby Innovation Centre, employing skilled engineers, albeit many that don't live locally. Built on the site of the old railway station, this world-class aerodynamic testing facility makes use of the 2.7km long Victorian railway tunnel.



Church and Chapel

Charwelton has two places of worship: a **12th century Church** (its 800th birthday, which fell during COVID, is still to be celebrated), situated a mile out of the village at the end of a gated road running through fields which are often occupied by cattle and sheep; and **the chapel of the Good Shepherd**, situated at the heart of the village next to the village hall.

The Church has a monastic heritage – one can still see evidence of the ancient fish pools. It sits in a beautiful, tranquil location, very much in the heart of the countryside. Accessed not only by villagers but also by walkers of the Jurassic Way which passes through the churchyard, there are many footpaths and bridleways nearby. It's rare, when at the church, not to meet at least one passing walker.

The Church, which seats about 100, is in a good state of repair. Minor roof leaks were picked up in last year's QI and these are still to be dealt with. But the Restoration Fund should cover the full cost. Our countryside location means we share the Church with the occasional wild animal, but most see this as adding to its character. At least one Communion service is held in the Church every month. During the period between Easter and Harvest, evening services are held in the Church. Practical and economic considerations in the winter lead us to hold evening services in the Chapel. At present our services follow the BCP and use the English Hymnal. The Church has a ring of five bells, which are in good repair for ringing.

The Church has some notable monuments, one of which (the Andrewes Tomb) was loaned to Tate Britain for a six-month exhibition in 2001. Families with the Andrewes connection travel from all over the world to visit this tomb. The Church also has some fine brasses which attract enthusiasts.

The Church doesn't have a sound or loop system. It has a two-manual electronic organ but no organist and so relies on music for the hymns being downloaded onto an iPod. There is no running water or toilet. The Church is heated by a curtain heater over the main door and free-standing gas heaters. Although we run events here, they require careful planning. (Not having any on-site, hiring toilets eats into profits from fundraisers.) The Churchyard is open to burials and has a preservation order on one of the gravestones, which has a rare moss growing on it.

The Chapel is open every day and can seat c25, although a few more chairs can be imported from the village hall if needed. It also has a two-manual electronic organ. The Chapel was refurbished as a millennium project and we are mid-way through a programme of works involving repointing, updating the electrics (heating and lighting) and redecorating.

It is a good and comfortable facility for PCC and other Benefice meetings. The Chapel has an interesting mural on the east wall, painted by a known artist in the 1980s and depicting, as Nativity characters, some local residents. The Chapel is particularly suitable for child-friendly services, such as Christingle (well attended) and Mothering Sunday (although attendance has declined of late). We also open the doors during village activities (e.g. the Open Gardens), which can generate 70+ visitors. It is also used for the Remembrance service prior to the village's Armistice Breakfast.



Community links

The village has an active village hall committee with which the PCC has good relations. Each supports the other in fundraising events and, with the pub, combine to build community spirit. The well-attended Macmillan coffee morning in September has been going for over 20 years.



Outreach

We have no specific outreach activities but there are three areas that have brought people into the church: learner bell ringers, flower arrangers and ramblers.

PCC

There are currently six on the PCC, although only three live in the village and one of these is about to move away. Of the six, one is the Treasurer, co-opted from the community. Outside attendance at the APCM is virtually non-existent, with only one villager attending. Recruitment onto the PCC is difficult. The Electoral Roll stands at 16.

Volunteers

The mowing team (which includes non-Churchgoers) works hard to keep the Churchyard tidy. The Readers and Sides persons rota (some members being infrequent attenders) can usually be supplemented by villagers for Carol and Harvest services. The flower arrangers also include villagers who seldom attend Church. But we are fortunate that locals always pull together in times of crisis (such as when the lead was stolen from the Church roof).

Fundraising

We work hard to raise funds, with the 100 Club, Harvest Supper, Christmas Bingo, wreath-making, a wine tasting evening, sales of Christmas cards and calendars, and sales of the book *Charwelton Through the Ages*. The various events were well attended in the past although attendance has declined of late, with predictable consequences for our finances. Last year we decided to capitalise on two major festivals in the Church (Easter and Harvest), when the flower arrangers excel themselves. Displays which were previously appreciated only by service attendees were opened for the entire weekend to visitors, with tea and cakes provided. On both occasions 70+ people attended, collectively making generous donations. The PCC has recently been considering how best to capitalise on the steady stream of walkers who are usually keen to see inside the Church. However, for practical reasons (and insurance problems) it has not proved feasible to keep the Church open, other than for services.

Finance

Until 2022 the PCC always managed to pay its Parish Share in full. However, reduced income – from fundraising events, offerings on the plate and yield on investments – now make this all but impossible. We currently spend more than we bring in, resulting in a gradual depletion of our funds. (Our difficulties are compounded by the fact that we have two buildings to maintain.) On the plus side, we still usually manage to make charitable donations from our festival services. We also have restricted funds for both restoration work and for the upkeep of the Churchyard, to which the Parish Meeting makes an annual contribution.



PARISH PROFILES

FAWSLEY, ST MARY THE VIRGIN



Village

The parish of Fawsley is unusual as the original medieval village which formed the parish has long since disappeared. But the Church, built by the villagers in 1206, has remained in use as the parish was purchased in the Middle Ages by the once powerful Knightley family (after which the Benefice is named) and for several centuries it effectively became their personal Church. They built Fawsley Hall which is just 200 yards across the field from the Church as their main residence and this has now become a hotel owned by the Handpicked Group.

Today, the parish has a population of 22 (down from the 2001 census). Despite this small population the Church manages to attract between 10-20 to its twice monthly BCP services, with visitors from the hotel, regulars who travel from other parishes, and wedding couples who are creating a “connection” with the church through attendance.



Church

The Church itself is Grade 1 listed and is in the middle of parkland grazed by sheep and is protected by a ha-ha wall to keep them out. The park surrounding Fawsley Hall was landscaped in the 18th century with 3 lakes being created. The small churchyard is still open for burials and with two benches is a popular stopping point for walkers using the Knightley Way.

Inside the Church there are box pews seating 30–40 people and an open space for around 80 chairs. This provides a great deal of flexibility in setting up the Church for different services and for concerts etc.

The bells, which are rung for special services by a group of volunteers, are thought to be the oldest set of four by the same foundry still in regular use in this country. Electricity was installed in 2000, along with lighting and heating, but there is no mains water supply. The building and fabric are well cared for and generally in reasonable condition. The last quinquennial inspection was in 2019 and repairs classified as urgent have all been completed.

Reading, flower arranging, cleaning, and churchyard maintenance are carried out by volunteers. We currently have no regular organist but have no difficulties finding organists for special services. For our normal monthly BCP services we rely on a recently installed sound system.



Services

Until the interregnum we had one 9:15 BCP service a month, provided by the incumbent, and one 11:00am service a month, for which we paid, by a retired clergy person. Our Christmas and Easter services are also provided by a retired clergy person. Earlier morning and later evening prayer services have been given a trial but with such a small parish they were not a success as the timing made it difficult for visitors to attend. Also, as the Church is in an unlit field access can be difficult early and late in the day. In many ways, with its large number of visitors, the Church is more like a festival Church than a traditional parish Church. The regular congregation is not “BCP only” and other services are held with alternative liturgies, including Remembrance and Harvest Festivals.



Weddings

There are two wedding venues in the parish. Fawsley Hall Hotel has its own wedding suite and “The Granary”, which is half a mile to the west, has a wedding barn. The PCC receives regular enquiries for weddings, but during the winter months the Church field can become waterlogged, so it is really only practical to hold weddings between April and October, and these are of course subject to strict conditions, such as regular attendances by the engaged couple.

Outreach

With its very small population, Fawsley has limited opportunity for conventional mission but compensates by providing something special to those who have not previously been regular churchgoers. Wedding couples attend in preparation and often, in due course, bring their children to be baptised. There have also been adult baptisms and confirmations. Our Christmas Day Service can attract congregations of 60 or more. We also use the Church for concerts and recitals from time to time which have drawn good audiences. We also have our own website www.FawsleyChurch.org.uk

Finance

In 2023 the PCC managed to pay the full requested parish share of £10,383. However, it is a struggle to raise an amount of this size from such a small village with only one incumbent-provided service a month and we only achieved this target because we had an unusually high number (7) of weddings arising from post-Covid catch ups, but even so we had to draw down on reserves. We hope our new Priest will be blessed with the pastoral skills to enable him/her to convert new visitors into regular worshippers.



PARISH PROFILES

PRESTON CAPES, ST PETER AND ST PAUL



Village

Preston Capes is a small rural village comprising some 85 dwellings, a mixture of some attractive Northamptonshire stone or more modern cottages and houses, with a combined population with Little Preston of 210. Little Preston is one mile from the main village and consists of 18 houses. The villages are situated in an attractive rural area, with fine views and walks.

Whilst there is no school, shop or pub, there is an active Village Hall, which runs many events during the year, as well as a bar on the first Sunday of each month. These are always well supported. There is a strong WI in the village, which holds a monthly coffee morning on the last Friday of each month.



Church

The Church is listed Grade 2* and dates from the early 13th century with 14th and 15th century additions. It is built in an elevated position looking over the surrounding countryside. There are five bells which are maintained, regularly rung, and enjoyed by visiting bell ringers from time to time. There is a Nicholson of Worcester organ, and a modern sound system with a loop. Music for services is provided through this from John Keys Hymn CDs. We have no organist but try to find one for Festival Services.

The last Quinquennial Survey was in 2022. We are working on the recommendations and various tasks have already been dealt with. We are looking into a scheme to provide toilet and refreshment facilities, but the required utility connections are a large initial cost.

On the wish list is a desire to open up an area near the door and font by re-positioning a few pews. The north aisle lead roof has passed its most effective life, but due to careful maintenance all our roof areas are currently sound.

The Church is open 7 days a week from 9.00 to 16.00, (or at other times by request). The Visitors' book regularly shows pleasant comments on the beauty and serenity of the Church. The Church is kept beautifully clean and tidy by a rota of loyal cleaners.



Services

Current services are the second Sunday Common Worship Holy Communion at 9.15, and fourth Sunday said Morning Prayer (alternate CW or BCP), at 10.00 and lay-led. Mean service attendance is 12. It would be appreciated if it were possible to have another Priest-led service each month. We have supported United Benefice services and enjoy hosting one or two each year.

Amongst other annual services, we hold ones for Pets [in the churchyard!], Mothers' Day, Harvest Festival, Christingle and Carol Services, many of which are particularly aimed to attract families and children.

The PCC would like new ideas to enlarge and widen the congregation and to attract young people. We wish that the Church could claim a higher profile, and for a Priest who is a visible presence of Christian leadership in the village, and available for care and counselling of the flock.

Ecumenical Links

St Peter and St Paul is the only Church here. We make our Catholic friends and other denominations welcome to our services. Our rectors have always invited those confirmed of all faiths to take communion.

School

There are primary schools at Woodford Halse, Badby and Newnham, with secondary schools at Daventry. School buses serve the village.

There is no longer a school here, the original Church school was closed in 1960, but there is still benefit from the building.

When the School Rooms and School House were sold, the proceeds were put into Trust as a registered Educational Charity, which makes annual awards to young people under 25 who may apply. The Priest and churchwardens are ex-officio trustees, as it is very much a Church charity.



Outreach

Members of the PCC take pride in their welcome to churchgoers. They and the congregation keep close to the life of the village and the needs of its inhabitants, new and old. There are frequent examples of 'love thy neighbour' and our prayer list is used in intercessions.

We have a visiting coordinator here (and in each parish of the Benefice).

The Link, our monthly Benefice magazine containing village news, service times and useful parish information, is delivered to each house by hard copy or an electronic version.

We have several regular members of the congregation from further away who attend services because of loyal connection by weddings, baptisms, funerals and, not least, by our welcome.



PCC

There are 8 members of the PCC who meet bi-monthly in someone's home. In meetings, safeguarding and health and safety always figure, as do ideas for growth, feedback on services, parish share, and planning future fundraising events.

Volunteers

That our Church is widely loved is shown by the breadth of ready support from parishioners, not all churchgoers, for a wide range of tasks.

For example, key holders for daily locking and unlocking the Church x 4, readers x 6+, sides-persons x 8, flower arrangers x 10, cleaners x 13, churchyard mowers x 20, biannual churchyard working party x 9, monthly parish magazine deliverers x 5, and most importantly one Church clock winder.

We are blessed to have help from such a strong team of helpers, and they are proud of their very active contribution to the visible, faithful and continuous life of their Church, with which they undoubtedly feel united.

Fundraising

We continue looking for new ideas for fundraising events. This year to date, we have had a successful annual plant sale and coffee morning, a Mexican evening and a quiz and have plans for a garage sale, a garden party evening and the usual Harvest Supper with auction.

Finance

Payment of our annual Parish Share is a difficult challenge, but one we have met in full for many years. This year we have £13722 to find, and to date we have paid in full. We are very fortunate to hold reserves as are shown, along with our 2023 accounts, on the Benefice Financial Summary on page 8 above.





Welcome to The Knightley
Benefice