

Abbey Parishes Benefice Profile

The Benefice of Glastonbury
St John and St Benedict
with Meare



Our Parishes:



**St John the
Baptist**



St Benedict's



**St Mary's,
Meare**



DIOCESE OF
Bath & Wells

Living the story. Telling the story.



**Inclusive
Church**

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The Abbey Parishes

The Benefice of Glastonbury St John & St Benedict with Meare

Benefice Vacancy Prayer

Beloved God,
You have welcomed each one of us in Jesus
and called us to be His body in this place.
We give you thanks for all that has been and
all that will be.
We ask for your guidance
as we work together in this time of vacancy;
guidance to be light in our community;
guidance to love and encourage one another;
and guidance to draw to us the person
that is right for our community.
In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

Welcome

Thank you for taking an interest in our Benefice Profile which we hope will help you to discern whether God is calling you to work with us, in the task of living out the love of God following the path shown to us by Christ.

Our profile has been generated by the three churches, seeking the views and aspirations of our congregations and the wider community, including our schools.

Our Mission Statements

There are three churches in our Benefice, each of which have a PCC, accordingly there are three mission statements/visions/aims, as follows:

St John's Church – Mission Statement and Aims

St John's is an Anglican Parish Church and is part of the Diocese of Bath & Wells. It is linked with the parishes of St Benedict's Church in Glastonbury and St Mary & All Saints Church in the village of Meare as a joint benefice.

At St John's we seek to do God's work through being:

A Christian Spiritual Centre at the Heart of the Town for everyone

And aim to:

- Provide opportunities for Christian worship, prayer, meditation and education;
- Provide a spiritual and prayerful space for everyone;
- Provide a warm welcome for both local people and visitors;
- Meet the needs of both local people and visitors, within the Christian ethos;
- Maintain dialogue with other Christians, people and groups with other spiritualities.

*"A Christian
spiritual centre at
the heart of the
town for everyone"*





"Proclaim and live out the Gospel and open our doors in hospitality"

St Benedict's Church – Our Vision

We are a fellowship of followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, seeking to share the love of God among ourselves and with those around us. We are stewards of this sacred place, hallowed by centuries of prayer.

Our vision is of a living church, sustainable for future generations. We see our building being used not only by ourselves but by many others in the community. We hope that those entering our church will be touched by its holiness, and be led to a deeper awareness of God.

Our mission is to proclaim and live out the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to serve God in prayer and worship, and to open our doors in hospitality that ministers to the spiritual and physical needs of our community. We trust in God to provide the grace, love and growth that we need.

Alongside the other parishes of the benefice, we are an **Inclusive Church** – a church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate. We will challenge the church where it continues to discriminate against people on grounds of disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality. We believe in a Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ, which is scripturally faithful, which seeks to proclaim the gospel afresh for each generation, and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ.

St Mary's & All Saints Church Meare – Our Aims

Meare and its neighbouring village, Westhay, has a strong sense of community and friendliness. The villagers have expressed how they value the Christian traditions of St Mary's.

With community at the centre of our mission, at St Mary's we aim:

- to be a church for our local community, to nurture and support everyone in our villages;
- to be willing to follow God's leading and direction for outreach and visibility in the community;
- to maintain and build on the relationship with the Community Church in Meare as both churches are committed to God's Word;
- to develop and grow the relationship with Meare Primary School; to regularly open St Mary's doors to the staff, pupils and parents and reach out to those who don't yet know Jesus;
- to continue to build our relationship with the other two churches in our Benefice to worship and praise God together;



*"to nurture and
support everyone
in our villages"*

Our Life Together

Following the process of seeking the views and comments of our communities we have a vision of our ongoing spiritual journey, how people see us now and what their aspirations are from the church community.

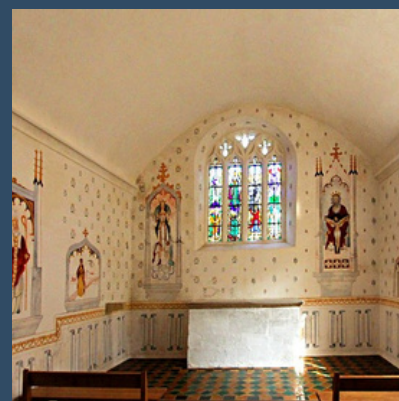
This has given us a guide as to how we may further develop the opportunities identified and can look towards our PCCs to plan while maintaining our strengths, address our weaknesses and pray for guidance to turn the perceived threats into opportunities. We would like to draw your attention to the SWOT analysis (Your Views Matter) which can be found on St John's website and appended to the end of this document.



St Margaret's Chapel



Glastonbury Abbey



St Patrick's Chapel

Our Benefice enjoys:

- Good links with local schools, including an active collective worship program in both our primary schools, involvement as foundation governors, and a recent chaplaincy plant at the local Secondary School (founded by our previous curate, with potential for continuation)
- Active open book ministry
- Links with the Margaret Chapel and Glastonbury Abbey, as the Vicar is a trustee of both
- A diversity of faiths (and none) within the area and an active Churches Together network.
- Loyal, independent and resourceful congregations
- Supportive PCCs with committed churchwardens and other officers
- A salaried, part-time professional administrator in a light, modern, well equipped church office
- An effective Safeguarding officer, and a commitment to Safeguarding procedures and training across the benefice
- Regular worship, in glorious variety
- Our three parishes are part of the *Inclusive Church Network* and have all agreed to offer the *Prayers of Love and Faith*

As a benefice we are exploring the promotion of the generous giving scheme and would hope, that in communication with the fundraising advisor, and by engaging with the diocesan funding team, would enable us to address any parish share shortfall.

In addition, we hope that by extending our mission and promoting the public events held within our spaces, we will be increasing the income for events.

We have built up the clients who have been utilising the hub since it opened in 2023, and the bookings for 2025 are already well advanced.

These combined aspects will assist in the benefice finances

We have also just begun participating in a deanery led programme, *Thrive*, which will enable us collectively to view our position regarding:

- Our praying
- Our stories
- Our leaders
- Our disciples
- Our faith sharing
- Our Future



The Abbey Parishes

The three parishes of the Benefice were all founded and maintained at one time by the abbots of Glastonbury. Thus the parishes of our benefice are known as the 'Abbey Parishes'.

St John the Baptist, Glastonbury

The church is well positioned and highly visible in the heart of our community, standing at the centre of the High Street, and surrounded by an ample churchyard. The churchyard is the home of the Glastonbury Tercentennial Labyrinth and the Glastonbury Thorn. St John's is the "civic" church and has a good relationship with the Town Council.

Currently, worship is offered in a more traditional catholic style, with a large robed choir, and a fine organ. St John's was reordered in 2019/20 and now enjoys a spacious, light interior with flexible seating. St John's is proud of its worship with the main Sunday service being 'live streamed' on Facebook, this has proved very popular. We have an established tradition of church music, the choir singing regularly in Wells Cathedral. The regular Sunday Service pattern is currently; Holy Communion(said) at 08.00, Choral Eucharist at 10.00, and monthly Choral Evensong. Our services are supported by a Sacristan and a well experienced team of servers.

St John's school, which is adjacent to the church, feel very comfortable in attending the church for collective worship and assemblies on a fortnightly basis, together with celebrating the major church festivals.

The church supports part-time hours for an events co-ordinator and a vergers. Together with a team of enthusiastic volunteers, including bell ringers (who ring throughout the benefice and beyond), flower arrangers, and welcomers, the flexible space enables us to facilitate a wide range of activities within the church building including lunchtime concerts and other events.



Additional services are held at the major times of the liturgical church year together with the Pet Blessing Service, Christmas Tree Festival, and Crib Service on Christmas Eve.

To encourage and support fellowship within our church community there are refreshments after the main service on a Sunday, a monthly fellowship lunch, and various refreshments provided as appropriate. The space is well suited and supported to hold monthly Craft Fairs and the annual Frost Fayre.

On a weekly basis the 'Talking Cafe Group', which focuses on hospitality, but is also a signposting event run by the Health Connections Service, which provides support in the areas of Health & Wellbeing, citizens advice topics, the ability to talk through and find appropriate exterior resources, IT support, and art therapy to name a few. During these sessions, there is also an opportunity for visitors to access clothing and personal hygiene items. On a regular basis NHS professionals visit the group and run medical screening sessions.

The church is keen on sustainability and currently holds the Bronze Eco Church award and is working towards gaining the Silver award.

Our Benefice Office is situated within a few yards of the church and offers a small conference centre, kitchen, and all modern facilities. Many activities take place within the 'Hub' conference centre including; music therapy, several holistic wellbeing groups, bereavement counselling, occasional craft stalls, church meetings, and family parties.



St Benedict, Glastonbury

St Ben's is the smaller and less formal of the two Glastonbury churches. Although there is a small core congregation, we regularly welcome visitors to our worship from the local community. The services at St Ben's are relaxed and happy and we are open to new ideas and experimental forms of worship.

There is a regular pattern of healing services, café services, and Celtic style communion. For many years, worship has been shared monthly with Glastonbury URC at alternating venues, and the PCC wishes to move towards more formal unity with this local church.

Our worship includes both traditional hymns and more modern worship songs led by our pianists and organist, and a small singing group contributes occasional musical items. Whilst the priestly and sacramental ministry is deeply valued at St Ben's, the congregation appreciates the strength of its lay leadership, and many of the services are lay-led.



St Ben's has a strong ministry of hospitality and our mission is to open our doors and offer a warm welcome to visitors and our local community. We are open every day offering a space for local groups, a warm space in winter, and a rich history for visitors to discover. We have a particular rapport with those in our community who are drawn to Eastern spirituality, and the pagan community who appreciate the welcome we give them.

For the past ten years, our volunteers have served a free weekly community soup lunch to 70+ people. We are part of the Warm Space scheme and on Christmas Day we offer food and a social space to those in need. We also host activities such as Sacred Cinema, a weekly Tots & Toddler group, local choir, NCT classes, and Circle Dancing. Most who volunteer or attend these groups may not be church members but they are an extended St Ben's Community and it is touching to see how protective they are of our church.

We have a strong relationship with St Ben's School, just across the road, and the children meet here weekly for fun worship and for key events such as Harvest Festival and the very popular Carol Concert.

We are doing well at completing the work from our latest Quinquennial report. We have returned our lovely organ into use and have plans to refurbish our peal of 6 bells. There is a small, well maintained closed churchyard where people come to sit and enjoy the garden or simply chat to us over the wall as they pass by.



The Blessed Virgin Mary & All Saints Church Meare

We are thankful for all the centuries of prayer and worship that have been on this historic site and which continue today. We are linked to Glastonbury four miles away by the river Brue which continues from Meare to Westhay village, through farmland and national nature reserves. In 2023 the local community celebrated 700 years since the founding of the current building. One outcome of this was a renewed interest in ringing our 18th century bells which were all refurbished in 2006. The visitor's book records many former village residents and people from overseas tracing their family connections.

Although the regular Sunday congregation is small, the beautiful and peaceful church is open daily, and much valued and used for the traditional baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Easter and Christmas bring in the whole of Meare Primary School, staff, children, and parents for their own special weekday services, and class groups are welcomed to come in and draw and explore as part of the school RE teaching.

” We only had to walk across the road, ” said one child happily.

Also beyond the closed churchyard with several Commonwealth war graves, and just across the road is the newer Meare churchyard, which is still used for burials and interments and is the responsibility of the Diocese and Vicar. Further along is the village War Memorial, where on Remembrance Sunday, we organize a joint service in collaboration with the Parish Council and the Meare Community Church. Nearby are the 1906 Church Rooms, which are now managed by the joint committee of Meare PCC and the Parish Council and are hired out for local events.

For eight years we have been hosting a Friday morning Post Office alongside a coffee morning and book exchange and this project has been an enjoyable and practical form of outreach to the community and is a good place to come and meet people. We join in Benefice services and events and we share some of the administration and finance. More fundraising and another Quinquennial Inspection are due but the church is in good repair and regularly maintained. Wheelchair access is via the north door and a ramp.



Benefice Finances

Each parish keeps its own separate finances with each parish contributing to a joint Benefice account that covers the cost of the benefice office, clergy expenses, and other shared costs.

2024	St Ben's	St John's	St Mary's Meare
Income from grants	14,947	Nil	Nil
Total income	58,155	153,224	11,978
Total expenditure	101,593	147,909	11,700
Parish Share due	21,450	49,531	8,544
Parish Share % paid	14%	60.5%	86%
Restricted reserves	14,907	229,492 (including 223,065 of endowment funds where the income only can be spent)	35,958 (Includes 21,909 CCLA Investment Fund but only dividends/interest in deposit fund available for spending)
Unrestricted reserves	279,814	146,186 (a figure which includes the Church Lane hub)	705
Electoral roll	32	124	18
Average regular Sunday worshippers	21	72	15
Population of parish	C2,300	c 6,800	c 1,400

Under the new diocesan common fund model our benefice share is decreased for 2025

*please note, our 2024 figures have not yet been signed off and audited.

Life Events and Parish Stats

St John the Baptist

Life Events (2023): 5 baptisms, 1 wedding, 29 funerals

Buildings owned (other than the church): Church Lane Hub and Office, value £125K (2021 valuation). School House – was given by a benefactor and is now in trust, with the incumbent and churchwardens of St Johns being trustees with any surplus income to be used for the benefit of education for the pupils of St Johns school.

Quinquennial highlights: This is now due and will take place in 2025. The church is generally in good repair.

St Benedict, Glastonbury

Life Events (2023): 0 baptisms, 1 wedding, 3 funerals

Buildings owned (other than the church): there were two rental properties, estimated value £305K which have recently been sold to yield capital funds.

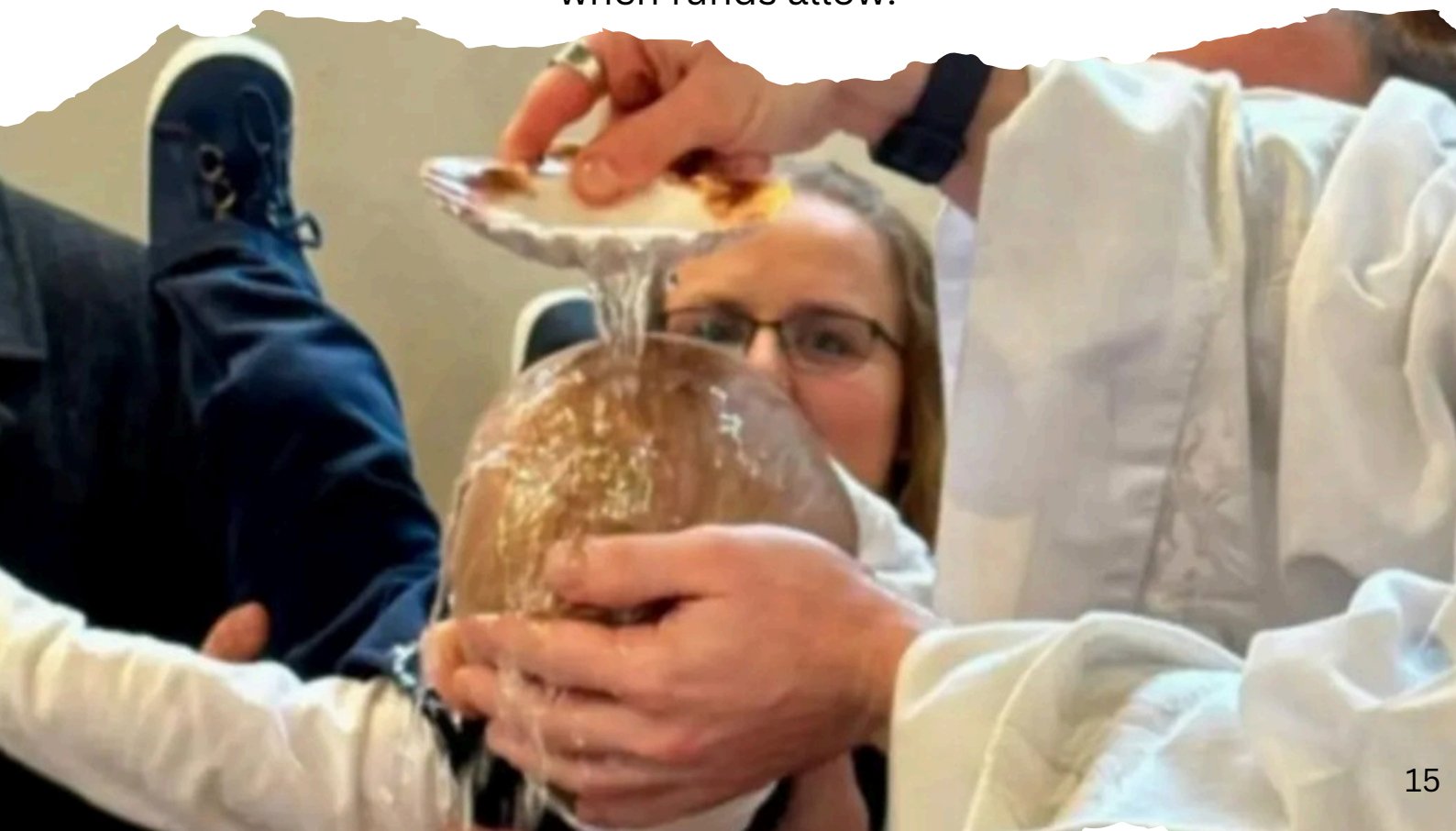
Quinquennial highlights (2021 to 2024) Roof repairs were completed and all rainwater goods were repaired or replaced. Work is planned in 2025-26 to address a problem with the underfloor heating. We have some maintenance requirements in the bell chamber and a section of the tower roof that are being assessed by our architect currently.

The Blessed Virgin Mary & All Saints, Meare

Life Events (2023): 1 baptism, 1 wedding, 4 funerals

Buildings owned (other than the church): the Church Rooms were built in 1906; the new churchyard, nearby in the village, was opened in 1933 and is still in use today.

Quinquennial highlights (2017 to 2022): Work completed by the end of 2023, including roof repairs and installation of alarm system. Future plans for repair of internal plasterwork and updating of the audio system when funds allow.





Our Future Vision

Our Vision for the Future together with our New Incumbent

- SWOT analysis – to use the information we have gathered from our questionnaire and subsequent discussions, to challenge ourselves, to continue our process of forming and developing active working groups covering areas such as: finance, prayer ministry, outreach (i.e., to schools, the sick, the diverse community), buildings, non-liturgical events, fundraising, visitor ministry, and worship.
- Guidance and Wisdom – Challenging our existing activities to encourage a wider engagement within the community. With the outreach team, identify aspects from the SWOT analysis and use them to plan activities. For example, developing healing ministry within the benefice, bible study.
- Compassion and Love – to nurture and encourage each other in the use of our varied talents to the benefit of our Churches' mission. Effective Leadership – supporting our mixed ecology of worship throughout the benefice. Be able to celebrate within a wide variety of styles of service.
- Unity and Healing – to respect the individuality within our diverse environment and our benefice.
- Faithfulness and Resilience in pronouncing God's Word – to further develop prayerful spirituality within our work. Engage with the diverse spiritualities which exist in Glastonbury and continue the dialogue with them.
- Commitment – to inclusiveness and supporting the *Living in Love and Faith* process.

Our New Vicar

Photo credit - Jason Bryant



We are looking for a vicar who:

- An obvious resilience and confidence in the Christian faith, and the Gospel, and an ability to preach with clarity and conviction.
- A prayerful, compassionate and relational leader.
- An ability to identify and develop lay ministries.
- Prepared to work with us to take risks.
- Develop an outreach strategy throughout the benefice with an emphasis on children and young families.
- Nurture our congregations and encourage new members, further developing our churches as inclusive, welcoming places.

Is this You?'





The colourful town of Glastonbury is situated in Somerset and has a diverse community with a vibrant high street full of unique shops, cafes, restaurants, and pubs. On the outskirts, there is a selection of supermarkets, and in the adjacent town of Street, a five-minute car ride, there is a retail outlet. The City of Wells is 7 miles/ 15 minutes away. Several larger towns are accessible within 1 hour – Bridgwater, Taunton, Weston-Super-Mare, Yeovil, Bristol, and Bath. Within 30 - 45 minutes of both the M5, Bristol Airport, and trains to London from Castle Cary.

It is home to many legends and has a backdrop of the Mendip Hills, an area of outstanding beauty, as well as the wonderful Glastonbury Tor.

There is a large traveling community, and there are a number of homeless people within the area.

Glastonbury has some wonderful and exciting events throughout the year, including:

- Glastonbury Festival – held in nearby Pilton (approx. 6 miles away)
- Somerset Carnival
- Beltane
- Processions and Parades such as the Goddess Conference
- Remembrance Sunday, Pride
- Frost Fayre and Medieval Fayre



Our Commitment to You

- With God's good grace, we will endeavour to offer you our support through our prayers, practical help, and collaborative ministry.
- We will respect your need for privacy in your new home.
- There are currently two experienced Readers within the benefice.
- The provision of a parish office with a part time administrator.
- Good local schools and nurseries.
- Large four bedroom vicarage, recently redecorated, with a generous private garden, within walking distance of Glastonbury centre with its shops and churches. (pictured below)
- Life in a colourful lively town in the beautiful county of Somerset.

Prayer for Our New Incumbent

(when they have been appointed until
licensing)

Heavenly Father,
As we look forward to welcoming
our new incumbent, into this
community,
we pray that you fill them with your
wisdom and grace
to shepherd your flock with love and
compassion.

Guide their steps, strengthen their voice,
and grant them discernment to lead us
closer to you.

May their ministry be a beacon of hope,
bringing healing and unity to our hearts.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.



Diocesan Statement - our vision for growth and transformation



Introduction

We are delighted that you are considering whether this post of Vicar of the Benefice of Glastonbury Saint John and Saint Benedict with Meare, in the Diocese of Bath and Wells might be right for you. In order to help your prayerful discernment, we want to share a bit about our diocesan vision, within which we hope your own ministry might flourish.

Appointing a priest incumbent is amongst the most significant decisions that any benefice makes. When appointments work out well, they contribute significantly to parishes flourishing and growing in a host of different ways – in spiritual depth, in impact within local communities and in the numbers of people becoming part of the local church. Such flourishing is not, of course, all down to the person appointed as priest. It depends first and foremost upon God. It also depends upon everyone in a benefice being willing and able to contribute their unique gifts, skills, resources and abilities: working alongside their priest and sharing in the ministry of the benefice.

The flourishing and growth of churches always needs attention, but especially now as we come out of the shock created by the COVID pandemic. The impact of the pandemic created a sharp acceleration in the pattern of decline in church attendance that has been seen in our diocese over many years. Thankfully there are some signs that we are recovering from the COVID decline. For example, data showed that average adult weekly church attendance in our diocese rose between 2021 and 2022. Statistics only ever tell a partial story. It is even more encouraging to see churches around our diocese developing approaches that respond to the opportunities and challenges in their local context and enable growth to happen.

A vision for growth and transformation

Our diocesan context, described above, has convinced us that for our next season at least, our aim across all our parishes needs to be growing our churches, within and beyond our church buildings, in both numbers and depth of faith, so that we can better work for the transforming of our communities and the life of God's Kingdom amongst us.

Shared priorities

To help us pursue this aim, and following consultation across the diocese in 2023, we are inviting all parishes to focus on four particular areas of our ministry together. It is important for clergy considering working in our diocese to know what these priorities are, even though what they look like in practice will vary in each place.

- | | |
|--|---|
| To value and cherish the people and resources we already have | We aim to ensure each person is well supported and equipped as a follower of Jesus Christ and for any ministries they may feel called to undertake, within the local church and wider community. We are committed to supporting the well-being of all our leaders and church officers, both lay and ordained. We have a fully funded clergy well-being service, the offer of peer support groups, and an excellent team of Diocesan support staff fully focused on supporting our parishes, chaplaincies and schools. |
| To develop new Christian worshipping communities | Whether it be new forms of worship in a wide variety of settings and times, church revitalisations or church plants, we long to see the good news of Jesus connect with the people in our communities that our traditional offerings struggle to reach. |
| To share in ministry and leadership | We are committed to the New Testament vision of the church as a vibrant body of people all using their God-given gifts. We are committed to a model of shared local ministry: raising up and equipping lay and ordained leaders able to share together in leading the church and serving God's world. |
| To deepen and grow faith | This is foundational to all we do. We long to see people of all ages and backgrounds, but perhaps especially children, young people and young adults, having more opportunities to discover, explore and grow in faith. |

The outcome we are looking for

When he talks about his own ministry in 1 Corinthians, Paul captures the dynamic we are seeking to achieve. "I planted," he says, "Apollos watered, but God gave the growth" (1 Cor 3: 6). We know that our churches will only flourish and grow as a result of God's action among us – it is God who gives the growth.

But Paul is also clear that we have a part to play too – in watering and planting, in doing the things that enable the conditions for God's growth to be supported. So, covered by prayer, our confident hope is that if we are intentional in seeking God's guidance in planning and supporting growth, then God will honour that to see his people flourish and thrive - in spiritual depth, in impact within local communities, in the numbers of people becoming part of the local church and in transforming communities locally and beyond.

Local shaping and diocesan support

There can't be any 'one size fits' all approach to turning the priorities outlined above into action. They always need to be adapted to local circumstances, opportunities and needs. The task of our diocesan support services is to get behind all that local benefices are doing and apart from their general support, there is specific support for exploring how to grow new Christian communities, how to discern and equip a growing range of ministries in your context and how to work well with children and young people. All these areas of support are grounded in exploring what it means to live out our faith.

What implications does this have for the appointment of clergy?

It is important for us all to appoint clergy to benefices who are ready, willing and able to pray for and share in the vision we have for the flourishing and growth of churches and Christian life in our diocese. We want to create an environment that could be described as high challenge, high support. This means appointing clergy who will not only value all that already exists but will be eager to work with others to build on and develop it. It means appointing clergy who are committed to learning, being creative, and to starting with the gifts God has given to them, their benefice and the wider community.

We are therefore looking to appoint candidates who will

- be committed to praying and intentionally seeking the growth and flourishing of the benefices in their care
- relish and expect to work in an environment that is high challenge, high support
- work joyfully and collaboratively with those who share with them locally in ministry and leadership, with their congregations and with others in their locality, to identify ways to grow and develop their churches with the grain of local priorities, resources, skills and passions
- enjoy working in partnership with deanery and diocesan colleagues.

We hope this might be you! We hope that you'd like to join us on the adventure and course we've set for our next ten years. We're praying that God will send us the right labourers for the harvest that God has set before us. Could this be you?



Bishop Michael



Archdeacon of Wells

A message from the Area Dean

The Glastonbury Deanery (also known as the Glastonbury 'jurisdiction') covers six Benefices in central Somerset and is mainly rural with two main population centres. The town of Glastonbury is diverse with an important Christian and pre-Christian heritage. It centres around the ruined Glastonbury Abbey and the town draws numbers of pilgrims and tourists of various spiritual heritage and none. Glastonbury Tor is also a draw for Christians and those with a pre-Christian heritage.

Street, only a mile away from Glastonbury, is the other main centre in the Deanery. Despite still being a village, it has a population of over 12,000. Famous for Clarks shoes, the former factory is now a retail outlet centre, which is a popular destination for tourists and for those looking for retail therapy. The Somerset levels stretch around these two centres, with major interest for wildlife and bird lovers. There are RSPB managed areas which attract many tourists.

The Clergy Chapter is a small but strong, friendly and supportive group, meeting in each other's homes once a month for breakfast, prayer and discussion. As well as colleagues with parish responsibilities we are fortunate to have a part time deanery mission enabler who has been supporting individual parishes and leading us through a deanery mission plan. The Chapter looks forward to welcoming a new colleague.

Ana Lawrence, Area Dean

www.bathandwells.org.uk

If you would like to speak to someone about this job application, please contact:

the Archdeacon or the Area dean.

The Venerable Anne Gell: 01749 685147

adwells@bathwells.anglican.org

The Reverend Ana Lawrence: 01458 841373

revanalawrence@gmail.com

Our websites:

www.stjohns-glastonbury.uk
(see also for St Mary's Meare)

www.stbens-glastonbury.uk

Our socials:

Facebook - @ St John the Baptist, Glastonbury
@ St Benedict's Church, Glastonbury

Instagram - @glastonbury_churches

Other References:

<https://meare-pc.gov.uk>

stjohnsinfantsglastonbury.co.uk

stbenedictscofevajuniorschoolglastonbury.co.uk

www.stdunstansschool.com

www.glastonburyabbey.com

stmargaretschapel.org.uk

www.glastonbury.gov.uk – Glastonbury Town Council

www.wellscathedral.org.uk

www.nationaltrust.org.uk – Glastonbury Tor

Appendix - SWOT Report

OPEN COMMUNITY MEETING
FOR ALL THREE PARISHES OF GLASTONBURY & MEARE

“YOUR VIEWS MATTER”

SUNDAY 12th JANUARY 2025

2pm to 4.30pm

AT StJOHN'S CHURCH, GLASTONBURY

TO REVIEW FEEDBACK ALREADY RECEIVED
AND INVITE YOUR COMMENTS



There will be tea and cake

ST MARY'S, MEARE: YOUR VIEWS MATTER FEEDBACK



STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Situated in beautiful countryside with the Ham Wall nature reserve close by.</p> <p>Our church is a beautiful ancient building with 700 years of history.</p> <p>Meare and Westhay still <u>has</u> a strong sense of community and friendliness.</p> <p>The villagers still value the tradition of having a church for Christenings, Weddings and Funerals.</p> <p>Whilst Meare Primary School is not a C of E school there are currently <u>good links</u> with the Headteacher.</p> <p>The provision of the coffee morning and the Post Office being run from the Church Room on a Friday <u>morning</u>.</p>	<p>There are different fundraising groups working for the same aims with a lack of cohesion. The groups <u>seem to be</u> unable to work <u>together</u> which makes members of the community having to 'take sides'. This can stop people from getting involved.</p> <p>The plans for the building of a new Village Hall <u>has</u> taken the focus away from other areas.</p> <p>Difficult to engage villagers to be interested in regular worship as there are competing lifestyles.</p> <p>Not working together with the Community Church.</p> <p>Old building means St Mary's is sometimes not a practical place to hold events</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Like St Ben's - to nurture the local desire for community and mutual support and help for others within the villages.</p> <p>To build a closer relationship with the Community Church in Meare as both churches worship the same God.</p> <p>To establish more visibility and outreach from St Mary's within the community.</p> <p>To create better cohesion with the Benefice to worship more together and to have Bible Study together.</p> <p>To develop and grow the relationship with Meare School by continuing with the children going into the church for the festivals or <u>run</u> 'church <u>familiarisation</u>' events for the children</p>	<p>Diminishing congregation numbers in St Mary's.</p> <p>Watering down of the Christian faith.</p> <p>Lack of numbers results in lack of financial resources and lack of people to give time to do Christian 'good works' for the community.</p> <p>The custodianship of an ancient building like St Mary's is, like the other two churches in the Benefice, a huge financial <u>responsibility</u> - limits funds for community projects.</p>



STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Ceremony, Choir/Music/Bellringing</p> <p>Pageant</p> <p>Architecture</p> <p>Community space</p> <p>Safe space/ Safety net</p> <p>Quietness/Peace/Kindness</p> <p>Spiritual awareness</p> <p>Mixed School assembly</p> <p>Variability/Flexibility/Variety</p> <p>Civic Church</p> <p>Fellowship</p> <p>Relationship with Glastonbury Abbey</p> <p>Inclusivity/Diversity</p> <p>Potential for <u>new</u> <u>ideas</u>/activity/worship</p> <p>Traditional church</p> <p>Feeding the Poor</p> <p>Welcoming visitors to the town</p> <p>Co Operative attitude</p> <p>Youthful Trainee Curate</p> <p>The joy/value of a Trinitarian faith</p>	<p>Antisocial <u>behaviour</u></p> <p>Lack of car-parking space</p> <p>Lack of young people/families</p> <p>Volunteer numbers/recruitment</p> <p>Poor hygiene facilities</p> <p>Loss of Pioneer Ministry</p> <p>Perception of 'Tradition' in church</p> <p>Loss of Healing Ministry</p> <p>Fail to Embrace 'Whole Community'</p> <p>Poor understanding of Need</p> <p>Egotistical Church <u>attitudes</u></p> <p>Sound system <u>variability</u></p> <p>Poor/limited communication of & around group activities.</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>More fundraising</p> <p>Inter-faith tolerance</p> <p>Interaction with schools</p> <p>Work with the 'Homeless'</p> <p>'Blue Sky' planning</p> <p>Relations with Police/Council <u>etc.</u></p> <p>Fresh Expressions</p> <p><u>Follow</u> a Spiritual Path</p> <p>Greater Outreach</p> <p>Developing Tradition</p> <p>Challenging Convention</p> <p>Embrace New ways of Thinking</p> <p>Develop a Healing Ministry</p> <p>Unconditional Love as a church</p> <p><u>Early-Years provision</u></p> <p>Collective Witness.</p>	<p>Antisocial <u>behaviour</u></p> <p>Homelessness</p> <p>Labelled as 'Magnificat Parish'</p> <p>Impact of Ageing congregation</p> <p>Fear of 'Traditional <u>Church</u>'</p> <p>Tension between 'our/others needs'</p> <p>Disrespect for Church Conventions</p> <p><u>Alcohol/Drug</u> dealing in <u>churchyard</u></p> <p>Exploitation of Homeless people</p> <p><u>Lack of</u> hygiene facilities in church</p> <p>Overwhelming effect of tourism</p>

ST BEN'S: YOUR VIEWS MATTER FEEDBACK

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Our beautiful environment.</p> <p>Glastonbury as a strong, friendly community, with an interest in spirituality.</p> <p>Wonderful, <u>colourful</u> diversity in our community.</p> <p>The thoughtful, questioning spirituality of <u>many</u> in our church.</p> <p>The willingness of <u>many</u> Christians to work together to help and serve others in practical ways.</p> <p>The churches' support for the rainbow of varied sexualities and gender identities</p> <p>A valuing of the importance of shared worship to give us a sense of connection.</p> <p>Our church <u>as</u> a well-loved place of asylum, safety, <u>sanctuary</u> and literal warmth.</p> <p>Belief in a God who embraces all faiths.</p> <p><u>Openmindedness</u>.</p> <p>Our wonderful St Ben's primary school.</p>	<p>Christians who don't "walk the talk" in the eyes of our community.</p> <p>Lack of communication and listening between different faiths.</p> <p>Lack of a will to work together among the different Christian denominations.</p> <p>Self-obsession and spiritual competitiveness in our community.</p> <p>The community's tendency to follow individualistic spiritual paths, which makes it <u>very difficult</u> to share in worship.</p> <p>Social prejudice - <u>eg</u> against the <u>non-bricks-and-mortar</u> community.</p> <p>That our ancient abbey no longer much reflects our Christian heritage.</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>To nurture the local desire for community and mutual support, and to help others.</p> <p>The thoughtful, broadminded interest in spirituality in <u>our</u> wider Glastonbury community.</p> <p>The opportunity to work together to help others, such as those in hidden poverty or loneliness, struggling young families and the <u>elderly</u>, and the mentally ill - as well as those in more obvious need, <u>travellers</u> and van dwellers.</p> <p>To support the human rights of those most in need.</p> <p>To open the gates and the doors at St Johns.</p> <p>The opportunity for growth if we can work through difficult relationships in our church community.</p>	<p>Diminishing congregations with the resulting lack of resources to <u>carry out</u> the mission of the church.</p> <p>A lack of awareness among <u>some</u> Christians of the need to give time and money to the Christian community.</p> <p>The way in which the social problems around us (<u>eg</u> drug taking) fosters fear and withdrawal from the outside world among <u>some</u> in the church.</p> <p>The fear generated by conspiracy <u>theories</u>, <u>which</u> is strong here and deliberately fed by <u>some</u>.</p> <p>Diversity <u>carried to</u> destructive extremes.</p> <p>So many premature deaths and illnesses.</p> <p>The huge responsibility of ancient buildings to take care of, which depletes our human and financial resources and deflects them from the mission of the church.</p>