



THE BENEFICE OF SHRIVENHAM & ASHBURY DIOCESE OF OXFORD

With Bourton, Compton Beauchamp,
Fernham, Longcot & Watchfield

**ST ANDREW
SHRIVENHAM**

**ST MARY THE VIRGIN
ASHBURY**

**ST JAMES
BOURTON**

**ST SWITHUN
COMPTON BEAUCHAMP**

**ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST
FERNHAM**

**ST MARY THE VIRGIN
LONGCOT**

**ST THOMAS
WATCHFIELD**

WELCOME

Thank you for taking the time to read about this role.

Our Benefice is a lovely place to live and work. Within easy reach of the large town of Swindon and close to Oxford, the Vale of the White Horse consists of small towns and many villages. Our people are very friendly, work hard and enjoy the exceptional scenery of the local countryside; our children enjoy good schools and many leisure and worship facilities are close by to serve the young, our families and the retired.

As is true everywhere, we live in an age of change but our Benefice is well located to develop and adapt to changes in employment styles, housing, education and transport. We want to ensure that our churches continue to be regarded as a vital part of both the community and village life.

We hope this profile will bring to life our mission and our congregations, but do visit our website to find out more [here](#)



CONTENTS

Our benefice	4
Our mission & your role	6
The support we offer you	7
A view from the clergy	8
Our worship	9
Outreach & community	10
Our schools	11
Our villages & churches	13
The vicarage	22
Our deanery	24
Afterword from the bishop of Dorchester	25



The Vale of the White Horse is open downland, with hills and agricultural land, and some areas of outstanding natural beauty. Its famous White Horse is believed to be the oldest in Britain. The Ridgeway Path provides a backbone for the area with uninterrupted views over the countryside. Local villages grew up in the 18th Century to serve local farms while Shrivenham, was a centre of trade and shopping for the area.

The Benefice consists of four parishes within the Archdeaconry of Dorchester in the Diocese of Oxford between Swindon and Oxford. As found elsewhere in the south of England, the area is currently experiencing large scale growth which may require a different approach and pattern of pastoral support for community in the future.

The seven churches in the Benefice are grouped together into four parishes to ensure a manageable workload for the clergy. Importantly, there is an experienced Associate Vicar, who largely ministers to the smaller villages, together with her husband, a Licensed Lay Minister. All are supported by the benefice administrator.

The 4 Parishes

- ❖ Shrivenham with Watchfield & Bourton
- ❖ Ashbury
- ❖ Compton Beauchamp
- ❖ Longcot with Fernham



OUR BENEFICE

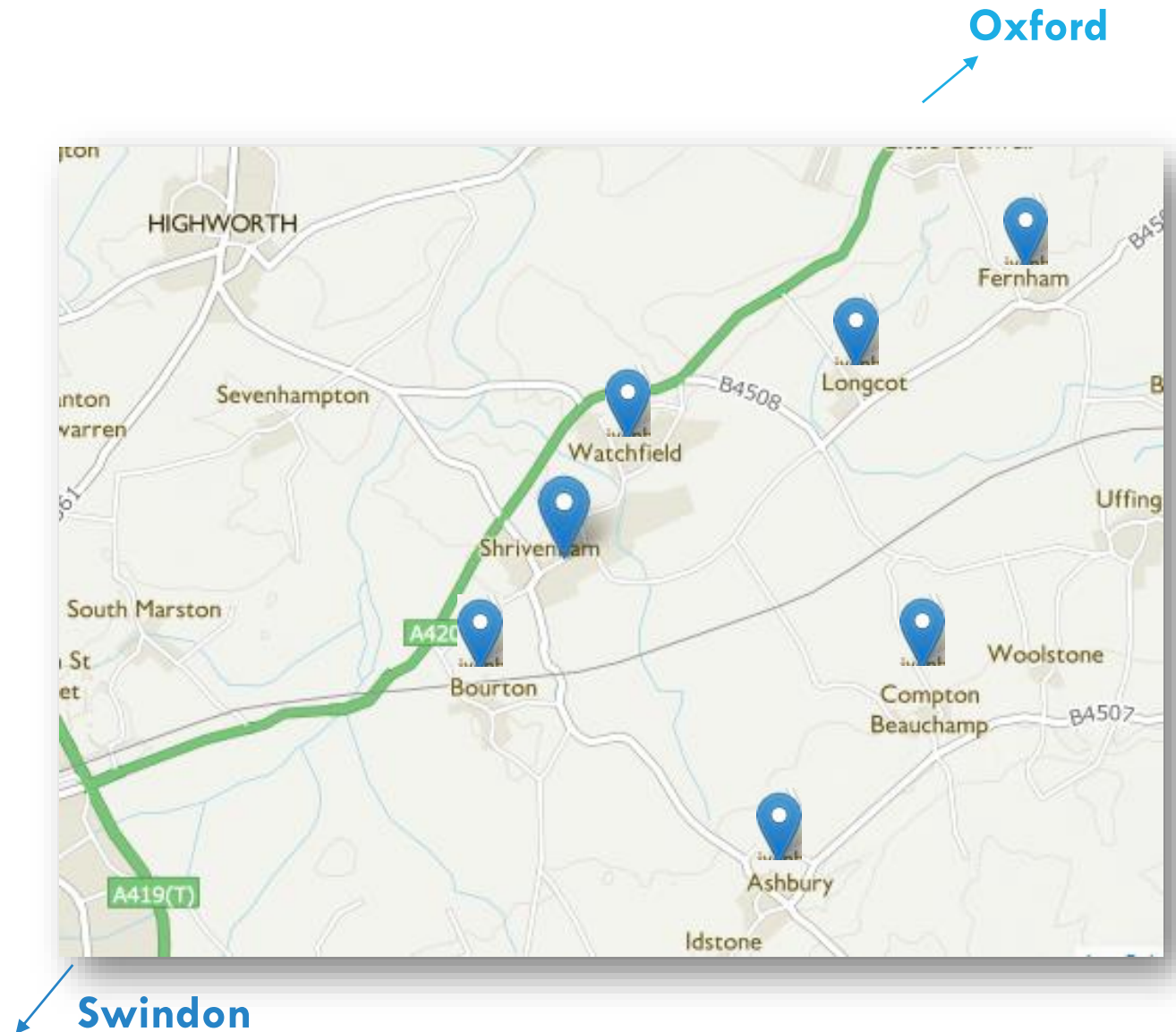
OUR PARISHES

The largest Parish is Shrivenham, together with the villages of Watchfield and Bourton. Shrivenham is a large village with a population of about 2500 and there are many new houses planned with some are under construction. Watchfield is home to the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, which has its own multi-faith centre and Chaplain. Bourton is a hamlet with a population of about 250 and an independent prep school (Pinewood).

The Parish of Ashbury has 600 residents. The Parish of Compton Beauchamp is a small community of about 50 with its church in the grounds of Compton House. The Parish of Longcot with Fernham has two churches, one in each village. Longcot's population is about 620 and Fernham's 280. There will be limited building developments in both villages over time.

Our parish churches span the breadth of church tradition, with modern, traditional, and non-traditional services found in the regular pattern of worship. The Benefice has a growing lay ministry team who are encouraged to play a full part in all aspects of the churches' life and mission.

Our congregations are all a valued part of their local community and involved in many village activities. Many parishioners are prepared to support fund-raising events and other activities associated with the church as their contribution to the work and mission of the church whether or not they are regular worshippers.



TO MIRROR THE HOSPITALITY OF GOD

OUR MISSION - YOUR ROLE

We will do this by :	You will have :
<p>Welcoming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Engaging actively and pastorally with our community❖ Meeting the challenge of the growing population of the Benefice❖ Embracing all channels of communication to our congregation including digital and social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ The skills to develop the role of the church alongside other community & voluntary organisations (e.g. Fernham Village Trust, Shrivenham Alms Houses, School House Trust, Shrivenham Parish Council)❖ The ability to manage and embrace change❖ Readiness to work with current information and communication platforms
<p>Reaching out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Taking every opportunity to proclaim the gospel message in word and deed❖ Demonstrating a strong commitment to schools' ministry - nurturing and encouraging staff and pupils❖ Sustaining and building on church involvement in village life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ A love of God aligned with a passion for sharing scripture and its relevance in today's world❖ The ability to work with primary school age children and young people❖ A strong presence across the wider community
<p>Caring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Supporting each other and the diverse needs of our congregation on our journey in faith, providing a safe environment and ensuring that no one is left out or forgotten❖ Providing a variety of opportunities for worship, prayer, bible study and fellowship, for people of all ages and backgrounds❖ Being flexible and sympathetic to the different liturgical styles within our churches	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ The ability to encourage everyone's ministry, being comfortable with traditional and contemporary approaches to worship❖ A collaborative leadership style, supporting, trusting and inspiring your team❖ A passion for learning and personal development, and enabling the development of others❖ The desire to develop the joint covenants with the Shrivenham Methodist Church and the Ashbury Evangelical Free Church



THE SUPPORT WE OFFER YOU

We very much look forward to welcoming you and your family. There will be time for holidays and retreats as well as a weekly day of rest, which we will respect.

The existing Ministry Team in place to support the Incumbent includes :

- + Associate Vicar – [Norma Fergusson](#)
- + Licensed Lay Minister – [Richard Fergusson](#)
- + Benefice Administrator & Safeguarding Officer – [Lucy Laird](#)
- + Retired but active clergy :
 - + Rev'd Robin Cardwell
 - + Rev'd Frank Parkinson
 - + Lord Elton
- + Four financially stable PCCs with a strong community of church wardens in post, as well as teams of capable volunteers who assist with many other tasks.



A VIEW FROM THE CLERGY

NORMA FERGUSSON ASSOCIATE VICAR

Our mission - to mirror the hospitality of God - is not something which has been imposed from the top down, but is what we see in all our churches. This is no "one size fits all" benefice but a place where difference is cherished. What unites us is our faith and our desire to do our best for God and God's people.

The breadth of liturgy is one of the joys of Anglicanism as it both nurtures and challenges. Sometimes we want and need to worship in silence; at others we want to sing out in praise, and over the course of a month you will find these opportunities - but you don't have to do it all yourself. Some services are clergy led, but during the vacancy our lay leadership has been growing wonderfully across all the churches. In St Andrew's in particular, the family services are run by and for families, whilst our three church schools take the lead in devising the liturgy for their services.

Another way we mirror that hospitality is in our building programme. There is a lot of work involved in fundraising for toilets, kitchens and good audio visual systems, but they are essential in meeting the needs of young and old, be they regular attenders or occasional visitors. We are blessed to have active groups who care for our buildings and churchyards, whilst our three bell towers often host visiting ringers.

There is a lot going on within our churches and much of it began with a "you want to do what?" moment quickly followed by "ok, let's try." We look to our new vicar to challenge us where we have become complacent, encourage us in what we are doing well and inspire us to do more. If you are wondering whether this is the benefice for you then please, come and see. That is our open invitation to everyone. We can guarantee you a warm welcome.



OUR WORSHIP

We are able to offer a blend of different service styles and, although some changes have been made during the vacancy, the typical pattern of services at the different churches is shown below. Leadership is shared amongst the team, so the vicar would not normally celebrate more than two communion services on any Sunday:

	St Andrew's Shrivenham	St Mary's Ashbury	St James Bourton	St Swithun's Compton Beauchamp	St John the Evangelist Fernham	St Mary's Longcot	St Thomas Watchfield
1st Saturday	10.00 Family Service						
1st Sunday	07.45 Holy Communion (BCP) 10.15 Family Service ² 18.30 Compline & Benediction	11:00 Morning Prayer		09:00 Holy Communion (BCP)	09:00 Holy Communion (BCP)	15:00 Joint service in Methodist Chapel ¹	09.00 Matins (BCP)
2nd Sunday	10.15 Holy Communion	11:00 Holy Communion			09:00 Morning Worship	09:30 Holy Communion	09.00 Holy Communion (BCP)
3rd Sunday	10.15 Holy Communion	11:00 Morning Worship ³	9am Holy Communion	09:00 Matins (BCP)	09:00 Holy Communion	18:00 Evening Worship	09:00 Matins (BCP)
4th Sunday	10.15 Holy Communion	11:00 Holy Communion			18:00 Evening Worship	09:30 Family Communion	09.00 Holy Communion (BCP)
5th Sunday	Benefice Communion Service alternates among the churches						

Notes

- Leadership alternates with the Methodists
- May include baptism
- Café church is celebrated on alternate months in the village shop

OUTREACH & COMMUNITY

Mission and outreach are a key element of the Benefice which has a culture of engaging with the wider community, of trying new things and adapting them in the light of experience and preference. Many of the current activities started out from creative thinking from committed members of our congregations. The list below gives you a feel for what takes place across the Benefice :

- ❖ Benefice Alpha Courses based in both Shrivenham
- ❖ Men's Breakfasts and Breakfast Bible Study Groups held monthly in Shrivenham and Ashbury
- ❖ Joint Services with the local Methodist congregations and Free Churches in Longcot, Ashbury & Shrivenham
- ❖ Joint services with Pinewood School in Bourton
- ❖ Café Church in Ashbury held in the local village shop and café
- ❖ Café Inspire joint with the Methodist church – a monthly messy church. This is an inclusive fellowship for young families in the Benefice, currently welcoming over 100 people to each session
- ❖ Lent Courses throughout the Benefice
- ❖ Annual Parish Retreat – recent destinations have been Lee Abbey, Walsingham, Wintershall and Santiago de Compostela
- ❖ Messy Church sessions across the Benefice
- ❖ Pet Services – an extremely successful way of reaching out to the village communities in Asbury, Watchfield and Bourton
- ❖ Stations of the Nativity in Ashbury – a tradition upheld for more than 40 years attracting over 250 village residents
- ❖ ASK (Acting in Simple Kindness) communion services for fellowship and to support people in Shrivenham who are in need
- ❖ Bellringing – Active bands of ringers across the Benefice with weekly ringing practices at Shrivenham, Longcot and Ashbury, as well as supporting services, special occasions and handbellringing for Christmas services.





OUR SCHOOLS

We view our relationship with schools as a vital part of helping and encouraging students, staff and their families on their faith journey. All the schools value the regular, visible church presence which helps staff, parents and students. This is an important part of pastoral care for the communities. We believe this contact with our schools is important in developing links with the churches. There are five schools in the Benefice and we are involved in all of them, but with a significant involvement in the three church schools in [Ashbury](#), [Longcot](#) , and [Shrivenham](#)

The weekly 'Vicar-led' assemblies, through which lay and ordained members of the Anglican and Methodist churches explore bible stories and aspects of worship, are linked to the Christian value for the term. All three church schools use the Diocese of Gloucester's 'Values for Life' programme. 'Open the Book' teams visit Ashbury and Shrivenham schools every two weeks. Longcot School engages a small team of year 6 pupils in planning and leading worship through 'Lighting the Candle'. A week's "prayer space" (supported by 'BeSpace') has been provided for Longcot, Shrivenham, Ashbury and Watchfield either in school or in church.

Members of the congregation visit schools on a regular basis, including running craft activities, assisting with reading and, of course, as governors. Shrivenham School returns the favour by hosting Café Inspire. Our consistent and varied engagement with schools helps faith and Christian values to become embedded: a way of being, not a bolt-on or a box to be ticked.



OUR SCHOOLS

[Ashbury & Compton Beauchamp CE\(A\) Primary School](#) rated good by Ofsted and outstanding by SIAMS.

[Longcot & Fernham CE Primary School](#) rated outstanding by Ofsted and satisfactory by SIAMS.

[Shrivenham CE Primary School](#) rated good by Ofsted and outstanding by SIAMS.

[Watchfield Primary School](#) rated by Ofsted as good. Its proximity to the Defence Academy means that there are a number of service families and families from overseas. Although not a church school as such, in 2017 Watchfield hosted a week long 'prayer space', during which students explored aspects of Christian prayer with the ministry team.

[Pinewood School](#) an independent day and boarding school for children aged 3-13 in Bourton rated by the ISI as excellent . The school has strong links with the local church and uses St James' on a regular basis; the Incumbent is invited to lead occasional assemblies and services.

NB : The Shrivenham and Longcot & Fernham schools are part of the [Faringdon Academy of Schools](#) a successful multi Academy trust which may expand further. The majority of our primary school children move on to the [Faringdon Community College](#) which is also part of the Academy. The previous Incumbent was a director of the Academy Trust.

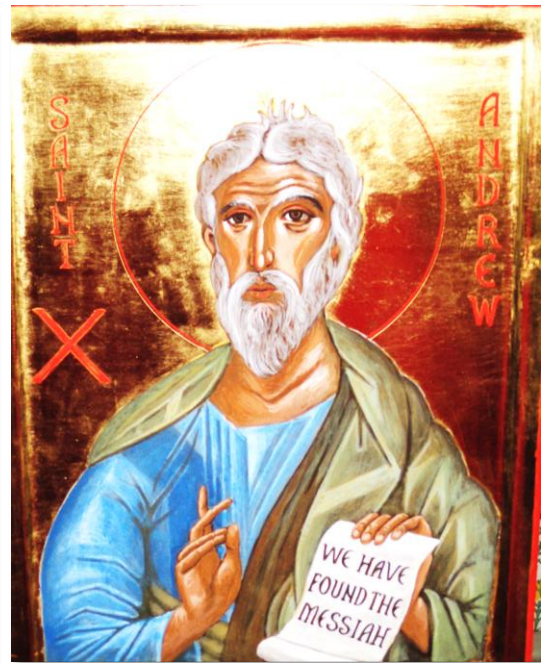
SHRIVENHAM

THE VILLAGE

Shrivenham is one of the oldest villages in Oxfordshire and is home to the Benefice vicarage. It was once part of Berkshire, and is close to the border with Wiltshire. With a population of about 2500, Shrivenham is a thriving village. It has been the site of UK military colleges since 1946 when the Royal Military College of Science (RMCS) was established on the Beckett estate. This college is part of the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom. The village has grown considerably since the 1940s in both area and population but much evidence still remains today of its rich history. More can be found at www.shrivenham.org

Shrivenham has a lively community with a full range of age groups. It has a CofE primary School and there is a small high street offering a range of amenities, with Swindon close by for a broader choice of shops and supermarkets. The village is scheduled to double in size over the next few years and we look forward to discussions with our new incumbent about new and creative ways to support the ever expanding village.





SHRIVENHAM

THE CHURCH

St. Andrew's is the largest church within both the Parish and Benefice and is part of a joint PCC with Watchfield and Bourton. There has been a church on the site of St. Andrew's for over 900 years and it is mentioned in the Domesday Book. Described by Simon Jenkins as one of England's 1000 best churches, the existing building is mainly 17th century. It has one of the best rings of ten bells in the county, cared for and rung regularly by a very committed team of ringers, and popular with visiting bands.

WORSHIP

The congregation at the main service each Sunday is around 50 with the family service often attracting in excess of 100. Services are a mixture of Common Worship, BCP, Family Worship and non-traditional. Compline & Benediction is normally celebrated on the first Sunday evening of the month. Lay participation in services is encouraged. Our Benefice choir leads worship on at least one Sunday each month, and the local C of E primary school uses the church at the major festivals and for a number of other services and celebrations.

We want St Andrew's to be seen as a resource for the wider community, serving others and not just functioning to support itself. It is envisaged that the current restoration and in particular the improvements project will be instrumental in expanding the role and use of the church, as toilet and kitchen facilities are introduced. We also want to develop the children's activity area at the back of the church and establish a Sunday School/ Children's Group.



ASHBURY

THE VILLAGE

The earliest known record of Ashbury is from AD 840 and it is one of several small villages along the spring line of the chalk escarpment of the North Wessex Downs. The centre of the village has many picturesque thatched cottages and listed buildings including Ashbury Manor, an ancient manor house, originally a monastic grange. The Parish also includes the hamlets of Odstone, Kingstone Winslow and Ildstone, as well as the National Trust property of Ashdown House and its cottages. There are currently approximately 600 residents. The village holds social events and courses in the Village Hall, another listed building. The village has a large pub, The Rose and Crown, a small village shop and café, and primary school. Further information can be found on the village website at www.ashbury.org.uk



ASHBURY

THE CHURCH

The Grade 1 listed Church of St. Mary the Virgin is stone-built dating from the middle-ages. Although the first church in Ashbury was built for the Abbot of Glastonbury sometime before AD 947 the earliest part of the present church is the 12th century west end, the chancel with its three medieval brasses is 14th century and the tower and north and south chapels are 13th century. There is an interesting Norman door with traditional Norman dogtooth and chevron decorative patterns. There is a ring of six bells and a regular band of ringers.

WORSHIP

St Mary the Virgin would describe itself as 'middle of the road' in churchmanship terms but happy to embrace other forms of worship. The priest is robed with chasuble for the major festivals and members of the congregation share in leading worship, reading, and Intercessions, as well as administering the Chalice. Communion is celebrated twice a month, with Morning Prayer on the first Sunday and the third Sunday is for all-age, Celtic, Taizé services or Café Church where the village shop café welcomes us, and we usually include a guest speaker. There are about 25 regular churchgoers with an average weekly attendance of 15. There is also a said Thursday morning service. Much higher attendances are achieved at weddings, funerals and thanksgivings, baptisms, school services and several Christmas and Easter services. The village sees the church as having an important place in the community and many people (while only attending these special services) will give their time to the churchyard and internal cleaning days and support church fundraising when needed. The church has a close relationship with Ashbury with Compton Beauchamp CE(A) Primary School ensuring that Christian values are integrated through all school activities which they feel give a sense of being part of the community.

THE VILLAGE

The village community is a real cross-section of age groups and types of housing, albeit there is little ethnic diversity. A relatively large number of young families live in the village, and children attend a mixture of schools - some attending Pinewood School, whilst others attend some of the local schools. There is no public transport serving the village, so residents are very dependent on private means of transport.

THE CHURCH

St James, a Victorian church (chapel of ease) was built in 1846. It works in conjunction with St Andrew's and has two services each month, one of which is on a Saturday morning. There is no formal Sunday School to speak of, but there is a well-used play area and young people are encouraged to take an active role in the services through Serving, Readings and Intercessions. Supported by two church wardens, the congregation is small but loyal, and the sense of community and pride in the church is palpable with ongoing fundraising to ensure essential maintenance work can be undertaken.

THE SCHOOL

Pinewood School is an important part of the community and gives great support to St James. The school has been particularly supportive with fundraising. The Headmaster as well as a number of staff live on site or are village residents, so play an active role in the Community. Every other Saturday during term time, the school holds a service of worship at St James for children in years 5-8. The Incumbent holds a strong relationship with school, joining it for some services and supporting special occasions like Harvest Festival.



BOURTON

BOURTON IS A HAMLET WITH A POPULATION OF AROUND 250. IT DOES NOT HAVE A VILLAGE SHOP OR PUB, BUT IS HOME TO A PRIVATE PREP SCHOOL 'PINEWOOD' AND A SOCIAL CLUB BOURTON CLUB

FIND OUT MORE AT WWW.BOURTON-OXON.ORG.UK

THE CHURCH & WORSHIP

Situated as it is in the grounds of Compton House, St Swithun may appear to be a private chapel, however our visitors' book tells of the many people who come to enjoy the prayerful peace of its interior.

St. Swithun is considered by its worshippers and many visitors to be the jewel in the Benefice crown. Certainly it appears both in Simon Jenkins' 'Thousand Best Churches' and Richard Wheeler's 'Oxfordshire's Best Churches.' Even the 14th century bell merits four pages in the Church Bells of Berkshire!

Although the church is 13th century, the interior is the work of 20th century English artist Martin Travers, who created a beautiful, sacred space within the tiny building. Services have an intimate, almost familial, nature. The church by its very positioning encourages a feeling of stillness, contemplative thinking and an engagement with nature. It sits below the ancient Ridgeway track and is on the Diocesan Pilgrim Route.

The words of the Book of Common Prayer seem particularly appropriate to the space and are used for the two monthly services of Holy Communion and Matins. St Swithun has a long-standing connection with St. Stephen's House in Oxford and students come to celebrate Mass according to the English Missal, which is a great treat for lovers of traditional services. Other services include our patronal festival each July, Remembrance Sunday and a candle-light celebration of Nine Lessons and Carols at Christmas.



COMPTON BEAUCHAMP

IS A HAMLET OF ABOUT 50 RESIDENTS 3 MILES FROM SHRIVENHAM IN THE VALE OF THE WHITE HORSE. THE PARISH INCLUDES THE HAMLET OF KNIGHTON AND THE FORMER HAMLET OF HARDWELL.

FERNHAM

THE VILLAGE

Fernham has a population of some 280 souls, in a wide cross-section of housing types. Although there is no shop or school, the independent village pub attracts customers from far and wide. Social events are organised by an active village events committee. 'Fernham Fireworks', the village safari supper and other similar events are occasions not to be missed.

THE CHURCH

St John the Evangelist Church is a chapel of ease that was built in 1860. It forms part of the combined PCC with Longcot. It underwent some major renovation, including a new roof, in 2008-2009 and subsidiary work was completed in 2012. It is now leased and managed by a local community group, the Fernham Village Trust (FVT), and is working very effectively as a village hall and a centre of worship. It hosts a range of activities including a daily nursery school, as well as maintaining a regular pattern of Sunday worship using a variety of liturgies from BCP and Common Worship to Taizé and Iona.



LONGCOT

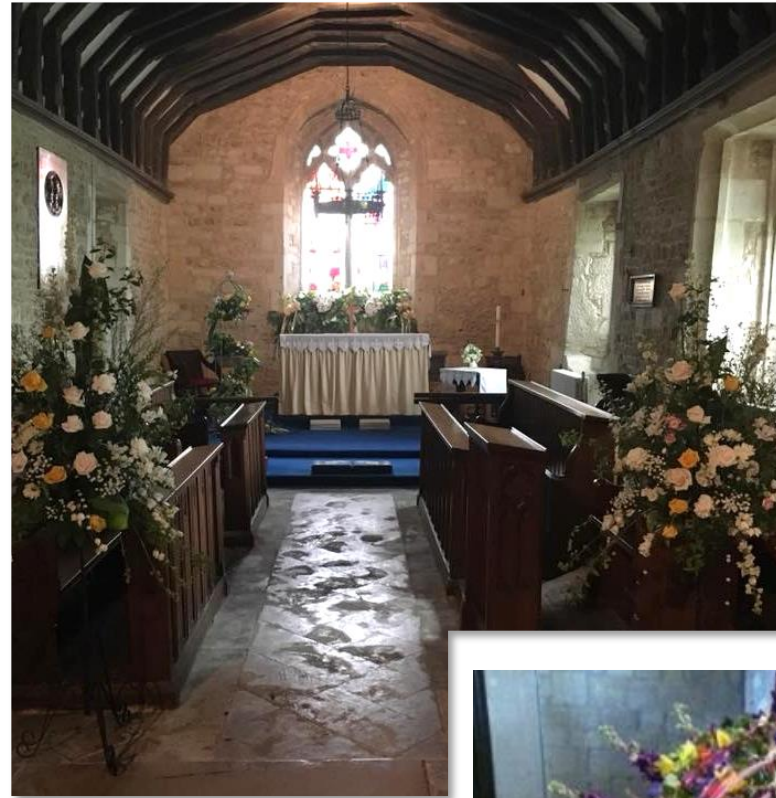
THE VILLAGE

The attractive village of Longcot is set in the middle of the Vale of White Horse. It has a population of some 620 with a broad cross-section of housing. Currently, this amounts to just over 220 dwellings but, like many parts of rural Oxfordshire, this number is due to increase by nearly 25% over the next five years. The village pub is renowned for its hospitality and there is a thriving local CofE primary school.

THE CHURCH

St Mary the Virgin is the parish church in Longcot, but the ecclesiastical parish, with a combined PCC, includes Fernham and its chapel of ease. The church dates back to the 13th century, and was re-equipped with a fine peal of eight bells for the Millennium. We have our own active bell ringing team and the Longcot Tower is a flourishing teaching centre for the Benefice, the Deanery and the surrounding area. The regular congregation is around 15 for Sunday services, but the church is well supported by the school with three services a year and by the villagers, who manage the church grounds, support fundraising, clean and decorate the church with flowers. The wild-life garden has won environmental awards and the annual church flower festival receives visitors from all over the county. The congregation holds a monthly Sunday afternoon service with the Methodist Church in the village chapel; leadership alternates between the Anglican and Methodist ministry teams. Other services are mainly Common Worship but there is often Choral Evensong during the flower festival.

Find out more at www.longcotvillage.org



WATCHFIELD

THE VILLAGE

Watchfield is a village with ancient origins, but the 2011 census highlighted that it is blessed with a very diverse, if somewhat transient population. Due to the international nature of the Defence Academy of Great Britain. Unlike the rest of the Benefice there is a significant Muslim and to a lesser extent Hindu population. Watchfield School provides a very positive environment for visiting families and meets the challenges of multiple first languages with aplomb. Housing is therefore a mix of very old (1600s) and very modern, with a nod to almost every era in between; currently there are approximately 450 military quarters and 550 civilian dwellings.

THE CHURCH

The present Church of St Thomas was built in the 1800s, following the demolition of its predecessor in 1788. It has a small but faithful congregation who meet each Sunday at 9am for either BCP Holy Communion or Matins. In 2017 St Thomas was at risk of closing, but this is no longer the case since a significant amount of work has been done to engage with the local community including Easter egg hunts, Scarecrow trails, flower festivals, cream teas and craft fairs. Special services such as the Advent Carol service, Harvest Festival and Choral Evensongs are well attended attracting up to 80 people.

Find out more at www.watchfield.org



THE VICARAGE

The vicarage is a modern detached four bedroom stone-built home situated in the heart of Shrivenham, close to the Church & Shrivenham Primary school. It is approached via a gated driveway.

The accommodation comprises on the ground floor :

- ❖ an entrance hall with a cloakroom and separate WC
- ❖ a good-sized study
- ❖ a large kitchen/breakfast room with a walk in-pantry and separate utility room
- ❖ a separate dining room which can open out into the sitting room where there are patio doors to the garden

On the first floor :

- ❖ Master bedroom with fitted wardrobes and windows on two sides
- ❖ Three other double bedrooms
- ❖ Two bathrooms, both with a WC and hand basin, one with a shower and one with a bath.

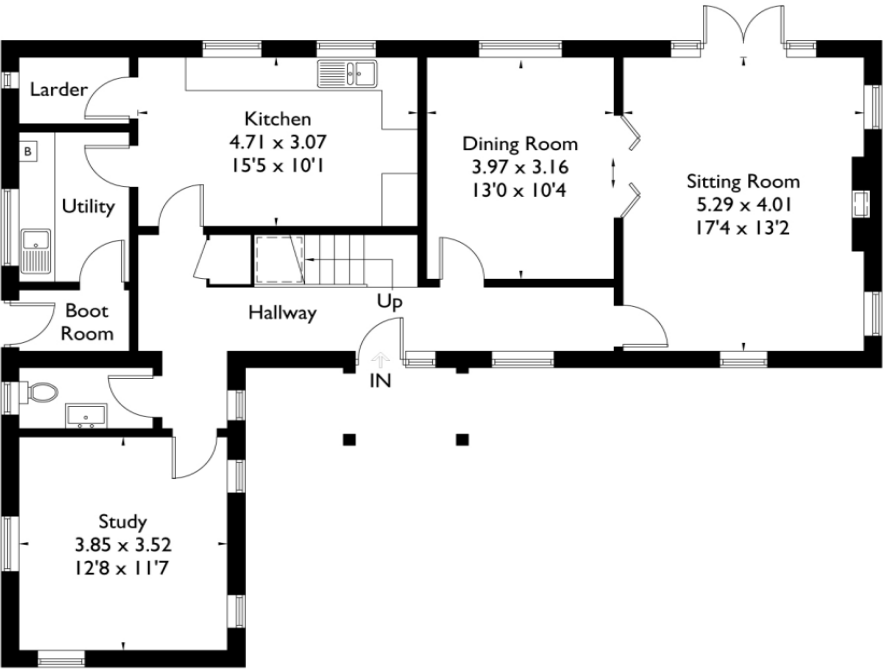
Outside :

- ❖ To the front of the property a graveled parking area for several vehicles, as well as a garage.
- ❖ To the rear is a large, secluded and fully enclosed garden laid to lawn with mature shrubs, trees and flower beds; there is also a garden shed and greenhouse.

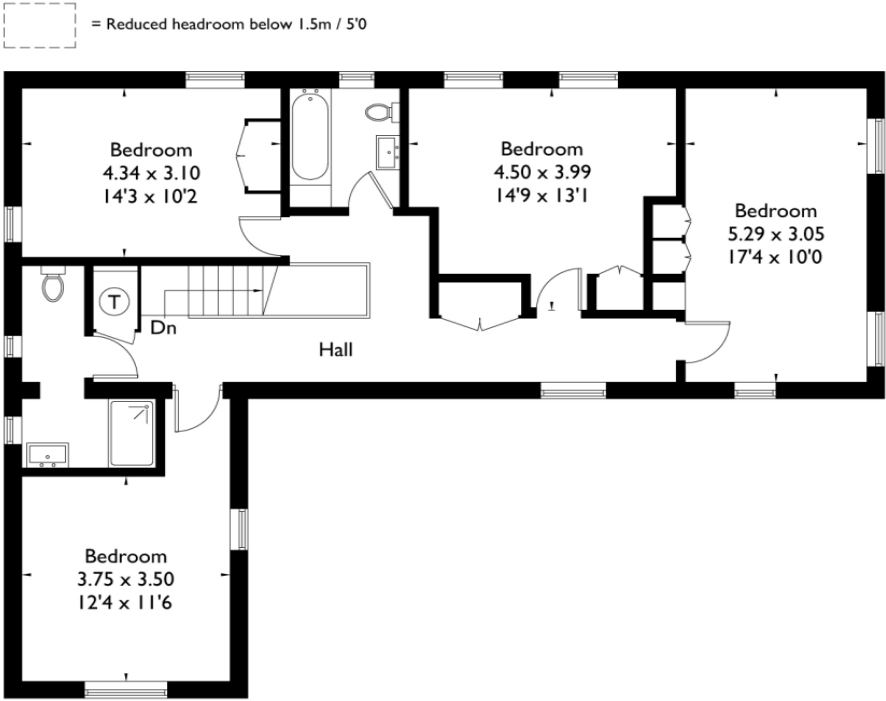


Saint Andrews Vicarage, High Street Shrivenham, Swindon, SN6 8AN

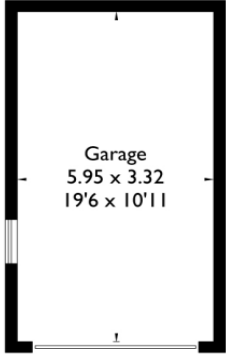
Approximate Gross Internal Area = 188.8 sq m / 2032 sq ft
 Garage = 19.6 sq m / 211 sq ft
 Total = 208.4 sq m / 2243 sq ft



Ground Floor



First Floor



(Not Shown In Actual Location / Orientation)

VALE OF WHITE HORSE DEANERY

WITHIN THE DORCHESTER EPISCOPAL AREA OF THE OXFORDSHIRE DIOCESE

The seven churches of the Benefice form a substantial component of the 27 churches in the Vale of White Horse Deanery. Most of the churches in the Deanery are open daily.

There are six Benefices in the Deanery, with five full-time stipendiary clergy, and three house-for-duty clergy (one of whom is an Incumbent). There are a significant number of active, licensed and authorised lay ministers, together with retired clergy with permission to officiate (PTO). The clergy meet regularly as a chapter, and there is an annual meeting of the chapter which includes lay ministers and clergy with PTO.

The Deanery Synod meets three times a year to consider matters of concern and interest to the Deanery as a whole. Currently under discussion are the four (non-prioritized) recommendations in the draft Mission Action Plan :

- 1) Training, especially of the laity
- 2) Developing our engagement with schools, including the possible appointment of a Deanery schools chaplain or youth worker
- 3) Addressing the age and gender balance of our congregations; and
- 4) Strengthening pastoral care of the elderly in our parishes, especially the housebound and those with dementia.

The Deanery Synod allocates parish share to the benefices, all of which pay their obligations in full and on time, earning the rebate payable as a result. Synod will be active in exploiting the opportunities offered by the new Development Fund being established by the Diocese to resource its Common Vision for a more Christ-like Church it has already begun exploring ways of bringing prayer into the centre of its work. The developing website is at <http://vale-of-white-horse.org/>



Contact us :

Area Dean: [Revd Jason St John Nicolle](#)
01235 850267

Associate Area Dean:
[Revd Jeremy Goulston](#)
01367 821143

Lay Chair: [Peter Foot](#)
01367 358046

Find out more about the
Dorchester Episcopal
area of the Oxfordshire
diocese [here](#)

AFTERWORD BY THE BISHOP OF DORCHESTER

If you have reached this section of the Profile, I hope that you will have already realised what an exciting post this is without me having to labour the point at this stage. However, it may be that you have skipped to this page, searching for any skeletons in the cupboard that we have tried to tuck away in the back of it.

So, whether you are in the former or the latter category, let me ask five simple questions – and make one request.

1. **Are there any skeletons we have deliberately hidden?** No
2. **Why has this post proved difficult to fill?** To be honest, I don't know. It is, I believe, a great post with all sorts of opportunities, as well as some challenges. For whatever reason Oxford Diocese has been attracting fewer applicants recently, and Shrivenham has had the misfortune to be caught up in that. But we also decided that we needed to make sure that we had greater coherence in this Profile and we have worked hard together to achieve that.
3. **Ah, but with all these parishes, is it do-able?** To which the clear answer of the present House for Duty Priest is 'Yes it is'.
4. **But can it only be done by an experienced incumbent?** To which my answer is, 'no', though if it's to be a first incumbency then we will look carefully at what you were doing before ordination.
5. **Is it as good as the Profile suggest?** Yes, I believe it is.

But here comes the request...

Come and have a look, test it out and see. Unless you do, you'll never know if God is calling you to this ministry.

With every blessing,



The Rt Revd Colin Fletcher
Bishop of Dorchester



WHAT TO DO NEXT

WE HOPE YOU WILL HAVE BEEN AS ENTHUSED AND INSPIRED BY OUR BENEFICE AS WE ARE.

PLEASE THINK AND PRAY ABOUT WHETHER IT MIGHT BE THE PLACE FOR YOU.

GET IN TOUCH USING THE EMAIL LINKS IN THE DOCUMENT OR THE OLD FASHIONED WAY BY PHONE – WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU AND SHOW YOU AROUND.

GOD BE WITH YOU

