



DIOCESE of  
WINCHESTER

# Welcome to your next mission in rural North Hampshire!

Rector of the United Benefice of  
Burghclere with Newtown, and  
Ecchinswell with Sydmonton





# Benefice at a glance



Area of  
**Outstanding**  
Natural Beauty



Attractive  
**Detached  
Rectory**  
in village  
location  
with good  
schools

**Growing  
Congregations**  
particularly younger  
people



**Momentum,  
Energy,  
Vibrancy**  
in our Church  
community



**40**  
minutes to  
London

Strong and  
**Supportive Team**  
PCCs,  
Ministry Team,  
Wardens,  
and Worship  
Leaders



**Churches &  
2 PCCs**

Active  
**Choir &  
Music Group**  
in Burghclere,  
and



**Bell teams**  
at Burghclere  
and Ecchinswell





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# Welcome to Winchester Diocese

**Thank you for your interest in coming to minister here in this Diocese.**

We serve a whole range of diverse communities, from the historic city of Winchester with our glorious Cathedral, to the great port city of Southampton, the burgeoning boroughs of Basingstoke, Bournemouth, and Christchurch, thriving market towns such as Andover, Alton, Alresford and Romsey, and innumerable picture-perfect Hampshire villages. In all that there is much wealth – but there is also significant deprivation too, especially in our large urban conurbations where our churches are supporting some of the diocese’s poorest communities.

In every context, we are committed to making the love and life of Jesus Christ known, through our churches, schools, and chaplaincies in a way that makes a tangible difference to those communities and their people. We do that through our common commitment to ‘Walking the Wessex Way’: in Winchester’s past we find a rich heritage of serving, learning, growing and loving which inspires us for the future.

In many ways the Diocese of Winchester is in transition, as is the world around us. In parish ministry we seek people who are aware of the challenges that we face, but who are motivated above all by faith, hope and love in addressing them. We welcome those who are committed to help God’s church to be the very best it can be, in the power of the Spirit, releasing all God’s people into the mission and ministry to which they are called. And we recognise, too, our need to develop in diversity.

We are excited by the opportunities before us, and warmly invite applications from those who want to join us in addressing them.

With the assurance of my prayers as you seek God’s best next step for you,

+ Philip

 THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND



# Welcome to Whitchurch Deanery

Whitchurch Deanery is as beautiful as any other part of Hampshire, an area of rolling downland in the north together with the upper Test valley, bounded by the Berkshire border and the A303.

Our 25 churches serve a population of some 25,000 many of whom take advantage of our excellent transport links to work in London or the large towns that surround us.

As a deanery we seek to enable our seven benefices to respond to the diocesan vision, and in particular we are developing our capacity to support each other and to engage with new forms of ministry.

Our clergy chapter offers encouragement to its members and the space for reflection on our shared ministry.

A notable feature of the deanery is the dynamism and warmth of our links with the diocese of Mityana in Uganda and many visits in each direction have been undertaken over recent years.

Rev. David Roche  
Area Dean and Vicar of Whitchurch



UNITED BENEFICE OF BURGHCLERE WITH  
NEWTOWN & ECCHINSWELL WITH SYDMONTON





# Introduction

The joint benefice of Burghclere with Newtown and Ecchinswell with Sydmonton spans 15 square miles of picturesque countryside along Hampshire's, and the Winchester Diocese's northern border with Berkshire and the Oxford diocese respectively. It lies predominantly within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty but is just a short distance from the bustling market town of Newbury, complete with its racecourse, mainline train station, and thriving arts scene.

We're looking for a Rector who will build on the foundations of five years of growth of our Church family, through engaging people at different spiritual stages with diverse forms of worship and broad community engagement.


Our congregation's growth is fuelled by a consistent service pattern across our three churches, featuring a variety of styles and formats, from traditional BCP to relaxed café-style worship. An energetic team of volunteers and a dedicated ministry team support the Rector, and a number of bible study and home groups have proved popular.

We have three churches in the benefice, the largest being Church of the Ascension in Burghclere, followed by St. Lawrence in Ecchinswell, and St. Mary the Virgin and St. John the Baptist at Newtown, all located less than 15 minutes' drive from each other. Each of our Churches has its own history, identity and worshipping life, whilst interlocking and overlapping with each other.





OUR VISION

**Knowing  Jesus, and making Jesus known**



# Knowing Jesus, and making Jesus known



## Faith and Mission

We are a **vibrant active Church family** with emphasis on our **welcome** and generous **hospitality** after a wide range of both traditional and contemporary services.

We would like to build on the relationships which are forged here to nurture **friendship and faith** within the Church family, as well as with the local community.

Whilst also looking further afield to build our relationship with the churches and schools in Mityana, Uganda.



## Unity

We have **three distinct Churches** with their own character and identity, but we seek to build on the sense of unity which has been growing through joint courses, Benefice services, Rectory Ramblers and Cafés.



## Growth

Our benefice has experienced growth through a **variety of services**, a thematic sermon series, and a culture of welcome and generous hospitality.

Family services like **Café Church** and school-involved services at Ecchinswell have been particularly effective.

Additionally, our **home and study groups**, including the Alpha course, have also gained popularity.



## Community

Our weekly Community Café and **Rectory Ramblers** draw many from the villages who have little connection to the Church, giving us the opportunity to bring people closer and forge new connections. We are looking for a keen walker to lead our Ramblers.



# Knowing Jesus, and making Jesus known

## AREAS TO FOSTER



Closer ties with **Burghclere Primary School** and the **Clere Secondary school**

Build the **Benefice brand** and make the **website** a true reflection of the Church

Possibility of a Children's and **Youth Worker**

Part time or shared **administrator**

Stronger **music group** in addition to the current active choir

Continue to explore opportunities to engage the **Bishops Green** community within Ecchinswell Parish

Build a dedicated **Pastoral Care Team**





# Our Churches and Communities



Our Churches are located close to the market town of Newbury, which offers a wide range of facilities, including extensive shopping, horseracing at Newbury Racecourse, and the scenic Greenham Common.

The town is also home to the renowned Newbury Spring Festival of classical music and the Watermill Theatre.

Additionally, the town benefits from a mainline train station with easy commuter links, taking just 40 minutes to reach London Paddington.





# Burghclere

Burghclere, the largest village in the benefice, is home to approximately 1,100 residents and is located just 3 miles south of Newbury, with convenient access to the A34. The village boasts a variety of amenities, including two pubs, playing field, sports club, miniature railway, village hall, and two commons. It also features both a primary and secondary school. With its active social calendar and strong sense of community, Burghclere offers a vibrant and welcoming environment for its residents.

Two buildings of note in the Parish include the original Burghclere Parish Church, All-Saints, in Old Burghclere (a closed Church, now managed by trustees) and the Sandham Memorial Chapel. The chapel is a National Trust property, famous for its stunning murals painted by Sir Stanley Spencer, who served during World War I, depicting soldiers' domesticity and routine rather than the horrors of war, culminating in his colossal and awesome *Resurrection of the Soldiers* on the altar wall.

The Church of the Ascension offers a warm flexible space with carpets and wheeled pews, a sound system, large moveable projection screen, kitchenette and toilet facilities, foodbank collection point and is kept open during daylight hours by a team of volunteers.

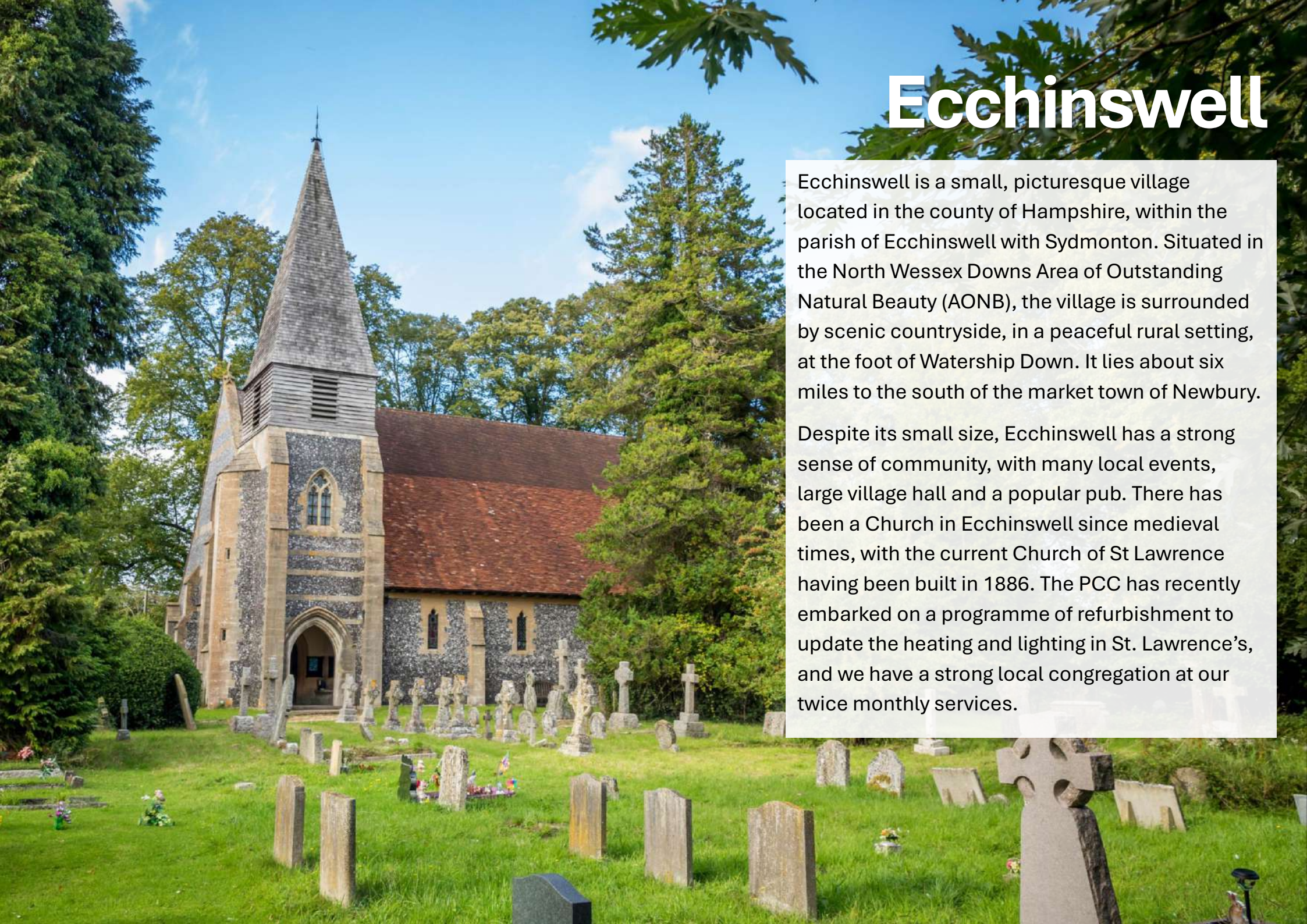




# Ecchinswell

Ecchinswell is a small, picturesque village located in the county of Hampshire, within the parish of Ecchinswell with Sydmonton. Situated in the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), the village is surrounded by scenic countryside, in a peaceful rural setting, at the foot of Watership Down. It lies about six miles to the south of the market town of Newbury.

Despite its small size, Ecchinswell has a strong sense of community, with many local events, large village hall and a popular pub. There has been a Church in Ecchinswell since medieval times, with the current Church of St Lawrence having been built in 1886. The PCC has recently embarked on a programme of refurbishment to update the heating and lighting in St. Lawrence's, and we have a strong local congregation at our twice monthly services.



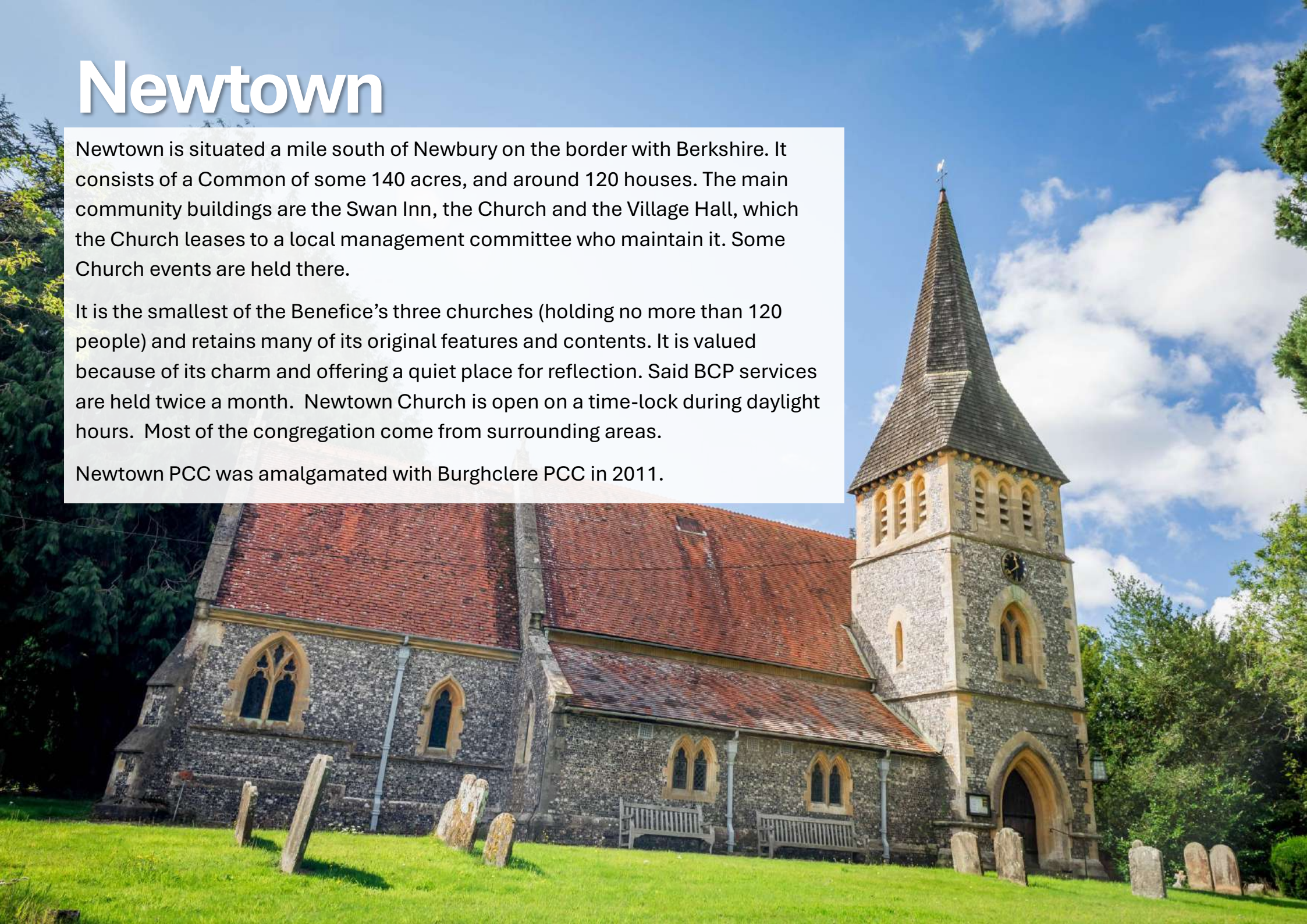


# Newtown

Newtown is situated a mile south of Newbury on the border with Berkshire. It consists of a Common of some 140 acres, and around 120 houses. The main community buildings are the Swan Inn, the Church and the Village Hall, which the Church leases to a local management committee who maintain it. Some Church events are held there.

It is the smallest of the Benefice's three churches (holding no more than 120 people) and retains many of its original features and contents. It is valued because of its charm and offering a quiet place for reflection. Said BCP services are held twice a month. Newtown Church is open on a time-lock during daylight hours. Most of the congregation come from surrounding areas.

Newtown PCC was amalgamated with Burghclere PCC in 2011.







# Our Church Life

Our worship incorporates a wide diversity of services from the traditional to the more modern informal ones, welcoming families and all ages.

Each church has a distinct character and identity with different congregation demographics. All our services, are followed by generous hospitality giving an opportunity for everyone to meet and build relationships.

Over the last five years, we have followed seasonal sermon series (rather than following the lectionary) and for the last three years have spent the spring focussing on the New Testament, and Autumn majoring on the Old Testament.



# Our Church Life

## WORSHIP

### Burghclere

The Church of the Ascension has two Holy Communion services a month with a robed choir, and two family-friendly ones: Café Church and an All-Age service. Our services are founded on clear biblical teaching.

Café Church is our most popular service welcoming many families and children. Sitting at tables, a delicious café style breakfast is followed by a short interactive talk, video, live music worship and two children's groups with biblical teaching, craft and prayer for different ages during the adult talk.

It was started by our recent Rector and built on the previous ten years of Messy Church and creates fellowship and attracts some families who may not have frequented church before.

The sound system and large mobile projection screen coupled with our moveable pews and kitchenette facilities give us a fantastic opportunity to embrace different styles of worship, as well as host local community events and concerts.

Burghclere has a growing link with the Parachute Regiment who attend our Remembrance Day services and help with churchyard clear up days (see appendix).

Burghclere's Sandham Memorial Chapel is owned by the National Trust, but it is the Rector who has delegated authority to conduct worship there. Services take place monthly either conducted by the Rector or with his/her permission.

### Ecchinswell

The Church of St. Lawrence has two Holy Communion services a month with a growing congregation and benefits from a strong bond with the local CofE primary school, where the Rector is a Foundation Governor. Local families from both Ecchinswell and Bishops Green attend the school services in the Church, and we are looking to build on the significant growth in attendance seen over the last three years.

The tower was augmented from a ring of three bells to a lighter peal of six, that project was completed in 2022 and blessed in 2023. The bells are now rung before every service.

The proposed refurbishment will further enhance opportunities for growth, including concerts and other events.

### Newtown

The Church of St. Mary the Virgin and St. John the Baptist is a small, beautiful church which lends itself to a more contemplative congregation at its twice monthly said BCP services but also draws many from the village to its atmospheric candlelit Carol Service.

**We are keen to build on the unity of all three churches at our united 5th Sunday Benefice services.**





# Our Church Life

## MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP

Christianity Explored was very well attended online during Covid and we followed this up last year with a popular Alpha course which led to two Home groups which meet fortnightly.

Our Ministry Team meets twice a month, supporting the Rector as a sounding board with the Church family, reviewing the services, highlighting pastoral needs and covering it all in prayer.

We hope to strengthen the relationship and financial support of our link to Mityana, Uganda in particular through the six lay readers whose training we are financing. Members of our congregation have visited Mityana several times, and hosted a Ugandan Headmaster in the village twice.

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Rector takes weekly Assemblies during term time in both the CofE school in Ecchinswell and Burghclere Primary. This relationship has led to well attended school involved services in Ecchinswell which we would like to replicate in Burghclere.

The family friendly services in Burghclere are growing and a monthly Tea for the Café Church families in a Burghclere home is building friendships.

The Clere School - a large secondary school is located in Burghclere and holds annual services in Church.

## MUSIC

The Burghclere choir meets for weekly practices and socialising and leads our formal services.

A live music group leads worship at Café Church and at our All Age services.

Two bands of Bellringers practise weekly at both Burghclere and Ecchinswell, and each of our three Churches has a working organ, and we have two regular organists.

The Church of the Ascension hosts a Newbury Spring Festival concert every year and the local Burghclere Baroque group hold concerts about twice a year.

Ecchinswell has hosted concerts but hopes to do more when the Church has been updated.





# Our Church Life

## COMMUNITY SOCIALS AND FUNDRAISING

Rectory Ramblers has been a standout social success. Weekly evening summer walks were initiated and led by our recent Rector's wife, drawing many villagers who do not attend church, as well as many members of our congregation. Some have since joined our church.

After many of the walks, locals kindly host the walkers with drinks and snacks.

Community Café meets weekly in the church. It is run by church family members and attracts many elderly folk who do not attend church. It is an important social hub for friendship as well as a source for highlighting pastoral needs.

Churchyard clear ups are both a practical as well as social way of giving the churchyard its due care and attention. Each church has its own working parties.

Finally, Annual Quizzes and Bi-Annual Jumble Sales are a very popular community way in which we fundraise for the Church.





# Our Team

## Supporting the Rector

BURGHCLERE PCC (8 people)

ECCHINSWELL PCC (4 people)

MINISTRY TEAM

2 X BISHOPS' COMMISSION FOR MISSION

4 X CHURCH WARDENS



Mary Cornwall  
Church Warden,  
**Burghclere**



Philip Oldham  
Church Warden,  
**Burghclere**



Jonathan Taylor  
Church Warden,  
**Newtown**



Ed Jones  
Church Warden,  
**Ecchinswell**



# Our Organisation

## GOVERNANCE

Our Benefice operates with two active PCCs, each complete with secretaries, treasurers, wardens and other lay members, and a Benefice Safeguarding Officer.

Our PCCs include two Whitchurch deanery synod representatives, one from each parish (who are also our Deanery's lay representatives on Winchester Diocesan Synod).

Burghclere with Newtown PCC met 7 times during 2024: The average attendance was 82%. Ecchinswell with Sydmonton PCC also met 7 times during 2024: The average attendance was 71%.

## FINANCES

### **Burghclere with Newtown**

The final accounts for 2024 have not yet been finalised and examined. The results for 2023 were as follows: total income was £81,708 (2022 £91,254) and expenditure was £85,505 (2022 £81,514) resulting in a small deficit before gains/losses on investments of £3,797 (2022 surplus of £9,740).

The Parish contributed £46,000 to the Diocesan CMF (Parish Share) (2022 £41,000).

At the close of the year the parish held unrestricted funds of £34,499 (2022 £37,951) representing approximately 5months expenditure (2022 5months).

Total funds at the year end including restricted funds amounted to £113,515 (2022 £112,475)

### **Ecchinswell with Sydmonton**

Our total income for the 2024 was £56,735 (vs. 2023: £58,368). The slight decrease since 2023 is mainly due to reduction in fees taken.

£69,544 was spent to provide the Christian ministry of the Church of St Lawrence. The Common Mission Fund (CMF) request by the diocese for 2023 was £13,510, but in the event we were able to pay more and contributed £20,000.





# Our Organisation

## COMMUNICATIONS

Communicating with our community is a fundamental part of our mission. We have a widely distributed weekly email newsletter, with information on services, events and other news as well as a benefice website which we are planning to update.

We have an active Social Media presence with Facebook pages for all three Churches, a combined following of over 400, a total reach of over 26,000, and frequently achieving 500-800 impressions for key events and festivals.

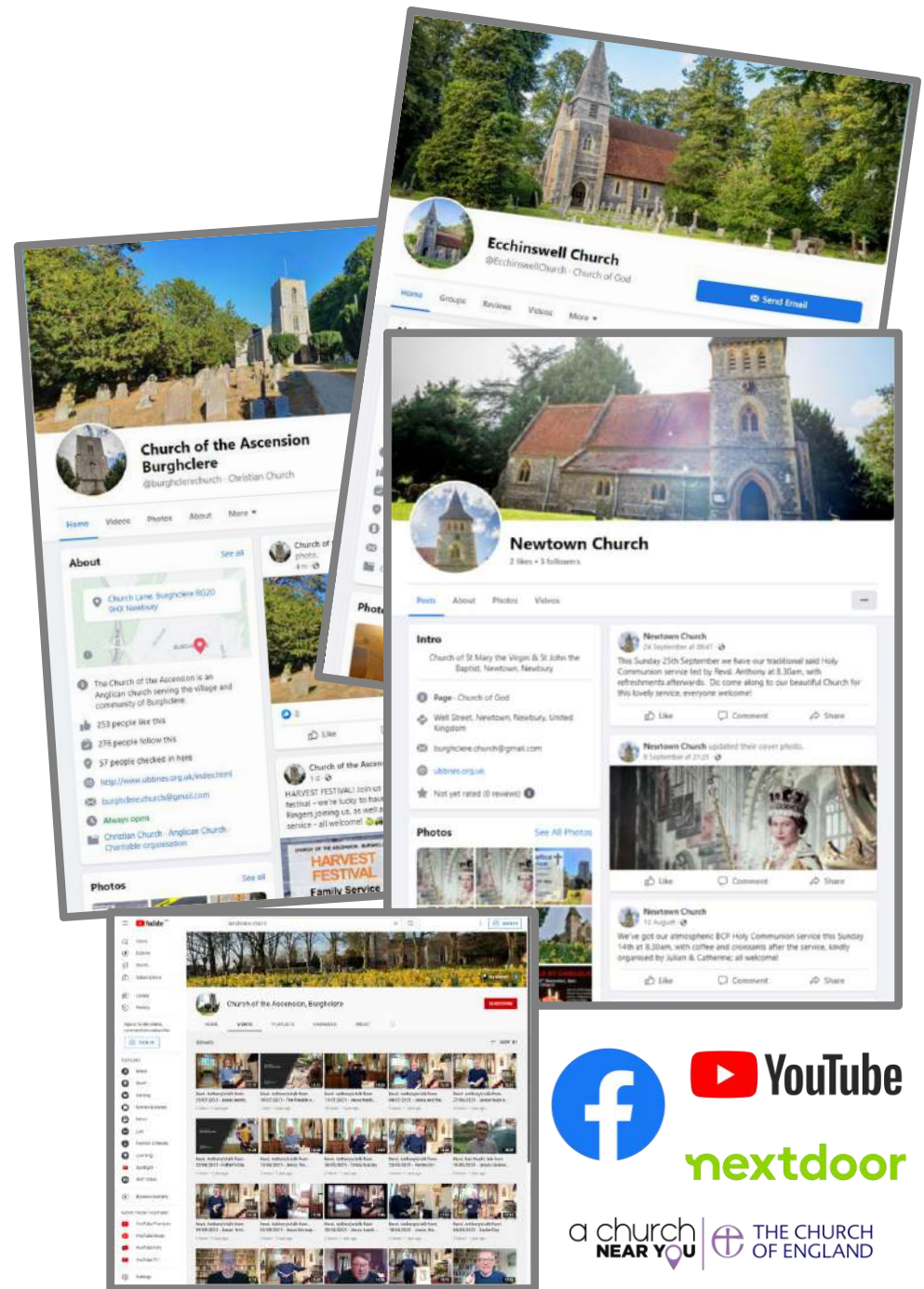
Our parishes also benefit from a popular and widely distributed local magazine called “News from the Villages” to which the Rector contributes a monthly article and service calendar.

## BURGHCLERE SCHOOL & MISSION HALL TRUST

In 1912 a Mission School existed as an Ecclesiastical charity for Church of England members in Burghclere. The land and buildings were sold in 2005 and the proceeds invested in CBF Church of England Property and Investment Funds as part of a permanent endowment fund. The income is managed and distributed by the Administrative Trustees (the Rector and Churchwardens of Burghclere and Newtown) with the intention of developing Christian education.

## SCHOOLS

The Rector is a Foundation Governor of Ecchinswell Church of England Primary School and attends around six Governor’s meetings per year.





*Your new home*  
**Burghclere  
Rectory**





# The Rectory

Well Street, Burghclere RG20 9HS

The Rectory is an attractive, comfortable and spacious detached family home, built in 1978 and completely redecorated in 2020.

It sits in a sizeable plot of almost ½ an acre with lawn to the front and extensive lawn and a vegetable patch at the rear, featuring mature trees and plants.

It benefits from three reception rooms – lounge, dining room and a study, with kitchen, utility and WC downstairs.

Upstairs there are 4 bedrooms, three doubles of generous size and a fourth single, with a redesigned and renovated bathroom.

The property benefits from good internal storage space and extensive countryside views to the front, including of the famous Watership Down.

A built-in garage and garden shed add to the practicality of the property.





# Who we're on the lookout for

## PURPOSE

Nurture a committed congregation in prayer, bible study, evangelism, and living faith.

Engage people at different spiritual stages with diverse worship expressions and traditions.

Unite congregations with a vision for growth.

## FAITH & CHARACTER

Strong personal faith with a living relationship with Jesus Christ, rooted in prayer and scripture, guided by the Holy Spirit.

Dynamic servant leader with listening skills, empathy, humour, and clear communication.

Desire to build up disciples and welcome newcomers.

Maintain a healthy work/life balance.

## SKILLS & EXPERIENCE

Leadership skills to equip and encourage the church family.

Strong organisational, communication, delegation, and administrative skills.

## COMPETENCIES

Offer a range of services for diverse people, including all ages and those new to the Christian faith.

Network with other churches, develop outreach, and build missionary links with Mityana.

Strong outreach and interaction within the local community.





# Role description



DIOCESE of  
WINCHESTER



“Walking The  
Wessex Way”

## 1. Details of Post

*Role Title:* Rector  
*Name of benefice:* Burghclere with Newtown and Ecchinswell with  
Sydmonton  
*Deanery:* Whitchurch  
*Archdeaconry:* Winchester

## 2. Role Purpose

### General

- i. To exercise the cure of souls shared with the bishop in this parish in collaboration with your colleagues.
- ii. To have regard to the calling and responsibilities of the clergy as described in the Canons, the Ordinal, the Code of Professional Conduct for the Clergy, and other relevant legislation.
- iii. To work to advance the Kingdom of God through servant leadership, collaboration and example, and with regard to the current diocesan mission vision and values;

**Serving**

**Learning**

**Growing**

**Loving**

### Specific

Working within the Benefice of Burghclere with Newtown and Ecchinswell with Sydmonton to:

1. Build a vision for the next stage of the Benefice’s life, based on the recent Rector’s work in growing congregations and nurturing people’s faith through worship, prayer, bible study and service of their communities.
2. Model collaborative leadership and build up others in ministry, vocational development and leadership responsibilities.
3. Model healthy ministry through wise self-care and attention to your own wellbeing, and good pastoral care of others.
4. Commit to developing our work with the schools within the Benefice and all that builds our engagement with children, families and young people, both within the life and worship of our churches and in the community.
5. Work with the existing congregations in a way that is appreciative of our traditions but also enables development and revitalisation for future generations.
6. Seek opportunities and ways to build unity between the parishes and churches of the Benefice.
7. Build informal relationships with the neighbouring Benefice of North West Hampshire, establishing mutual support and a good working relationship, sharing of appropriate resources and looking for synergy wherever possible.
8. Work collaboratively with other parishes in the Deanery, Deanery Synod & Chapter and play your part in contributing to our Diocesan life and commitments.



# Role description



DIOCESE of  
WINCHESTER

**“Walking The  
Wessex Way”**



## 3. Key contacts

### Generic

The Church Wardens and PCCs  
The Deanery Chapter and Synod.  
The Diocesan Staff at Old Alresford Place

### Specific

Head teachers & Chairs of Governors of local schools; Ecchinswell C of E & Burghclere Primary Schools  
Local councillors/officials  
The Rector of the Benefice of North West Hampshire  
Clergy and parishes within Whitchurch Deanery

### Supportive

Lay Chair: Mr Jonathan Taylor (parishioner)  
Area Dean: The Revd David Roche  
The Archdeacon: The Venerable Richard Brand  
The Bishop of Basingstoke: The Rt Revd David Williams (until c. Easter)

## 4. Role context and any other relevant information

***“In many ways the Diocese of Winchester is in transition, as is the world around us. In parish ministry we seek people who are aware of the challenges that we face, but who are motivated above all by faith, hope and love in addressing them. We welcome those who are committed to help God’s church to be the very best it can be, in the power of the Spirit, releasing all God’s people into the mission and ministry to which they are called. And we recognise too our need to develop in diversity. We are excited by the opportunities before us, and warmly invite applications from those who want to join us in addressing them”.***

***Bishop Philip 2024***

Our parishes, through which so much of our mission and ministry take place, still lie at the very heart of our calling and gifting.

To achieve our vision, we need to see a growing number of healthy, sustainable multiplying churches that fulfil our missionary calling and embody our vision and values of serving, learning, growing and loving within their local communities.

In practice this will mean:

Greater collaboration across parish boundaries that enable us to use the gifts of all with a blend of tradition and ethos of worship.

Any new Priest will be appointed with the understanding that all Benefices will be part of this on-going journey of transformation.



An aerial photograph of a rural landscape. In the foreground, a large, grey stone church with a prominent square tower is surrounded by dense green trees. Beyond the church, the landscape opens up into rolling green fields, some with stone walls, and scattered trees. In the far distance, there are more hills under a clear sky. The word 'APPENDICES' is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif capital letters across the middle of the image.

# APPENDICES



# Our Service pattern

	Newtown	Burghclere	Ecchinswell
Week 1		9.30am Holy Communion (CW)	11.00am Holy Communion (CW)
Week 2	8.30am Holy Communion (said) (BCP)	9.30am All Age Service	
Week 3		9.30am Holy Communion (CW)	11.00am Holy Communion (CW)
Week 4	8.30am Holy Communion (said) (BCP)	9.15am Café Church	
Week 5	10.00am Benefice Service (rotating location)		





# Attendance at Special Services in 2024

Date	Service	Adults	Children	Total Attendance
<b>Burghclere</b>				
10/03/2024	Mothering Sunday	41	14	55
27/03/2024	Primary School	55	105	160
31/03/2024	Easter	80	20	100
02/06/2024	80th Anniversary of D-Day	83	-	83
06/10/2024	Harvest	47	10	57
09/10/2024	Primary School	87	100	187
10/11/2024	Remembrance in church	112	12	124
10/11/2024	Act of Remembrance	200	25	225
07/12/2024	Carols by Tree	45	10	55
10/12/2024	Primary School	100	65	165
18/12/2024	Clere School	52	23	75
20/12/2024	Primary School	90	122	212
22/12/2024	Children's Nativity	36	16	52
24/12/2024	Carol Service	152	21	173
25/12/2024	Christmas morning	69	23	92
<b>Newtown</b>				
15/12/2024	Carol Service	70	6	76
<b>Ecchinswell</b>				
10/03/2024	Mothering Sunday	37	11	48
27/03/2024	Primary School	13	45	58
31/03/2024	Easter	75	18	93
22/07/2024	School Leavers' Service	22	40	62
06/10/2024	Harvest	47	14	61
10/11/2024	Remembrance in Church	40	2	42
15/12/2024	Christingle	68	23	91
25/12/2024	Christmas Communion	85	25	110

UNITED BENEFICE OF BURGHCLERE WITH NEWTOWN & ECCHINSWELL WITH SYDMONTON





# Occasional Offices 2024

	Burghclere			Ecchinswell			Newtown		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
Wedding	5	1	7	1	-	1	-	-	-
Wedding Blessing	2	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	-
Vows	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Baptism	8	4	6	3	-	2	-	-	-
Burial	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Funeral & Burial	2	7	2	-	3	-	3	2	2
Graveside Burial	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
Funeral	-	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cremation	-	1	2	1	-	-	1	-	-
Interment Ashes	1	6	5	2	5	2	1	1	3
Thanksgiving	1	3	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

Weddings can also take place at All Saints, Old Burghclere conducted by, or with, the permission of the Rector. There was one in 2024.

All three churches have open churchyards for the burial of bodies or ashes.

UNITED BENEFICE OF BURGHCLERE WITH NEWTOWN &  
ECCHINSWELL WITH SYDMONTON





# Benefice Statistics & Electoral Roll

Benefice Data	Population	Households	Deprivation <i>1=most deprived 12,239= least deprived</i>	Area in Sq miles
Burghclere w Newtown	1,512	594	5,539	7.8
Ecchinswell w Sydmonton	1,233	467	4,369	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,745</b>	<b>1,061</b>		<b>15</b>

Electoral Roll	
Burghclere w Newtown	76 <i>(26 non resident)</i>
Ecchinswell w Sydmonton	55 <i>(8 non resident)</i>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>131</b>





# Burghclere Church History

Burghclere parish has a rich history dating back to the Stone Age, with archaeological findings from various eras, including the Bronze Age and Iron Age.

The Church of the Ascension in Burghclere, initially a chapel-of-ease consecrated in 1838, was enlarged and restored in 1874/75; it featured a spire added to the tower and was dedicated on Ascension Day 1875.

The Church has undergone several changes, including the removal of the spire in 1964 and alterations to its galleries and transept. It was officially recognised as a parish church in 1969.

The Church hosts six bells, various historically significant stained-glass windows, and an organ installed in 1870. Significant memorials and additions have been made over the years, including stained glass windows, altar rails, and a chancel screen. Among the most notable is the Millennium window, designed by Sir Laurence Whistler and engraved by Sally Scott, which was dedicated in 1999.





# Ecchinswell Church History

The original and ancient church of St Lawrence was by the springs and swamp near the river and today's pub. This was demolished in 1884 and the new church, designed all-of-a-piece by G.F. Bodley and T. Garner, built on a fresh drier site half a mile to the north opened in 1886.

The 10<sup>th</sup> August 2025 will be the 140<sup>th</sup> birthday of the laying of the foundation stone of the Church, with the anniversary of consecration on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2026.

This new church was largely the result of the efforts of local magnate William Howley Kingsmill (1838-1894), being the grandson of an Archbishop of Canterbury, he was born in Lambeth Palace, and William Henry Digweed of Ecchinswell House, of the Stevenson family that was friends of Jane Austen, who gave the holy acre.

This beguiling building is a typical Tractarian place of worship in the then new Gothic Revival style. The lack of pulpit and pews indicate influence of the Oxford Movement.

The chapelries of Ecchinswell and Sydmonton, 'Itchingswell and Sidmonton', ceased to be appendages of Kingsclere in 1852 and then existed on as a parish with their own incumbent until forming a united benefice with Burghclere and Newtown in 1979.

The former church of St Mary, Sydmonton was rebuilt in 1853, paid for by the Kingsmill of the day and his father-in-law, William Howley, Archbishop of Canterbury. It closed c1980, and the six bells removed, but lives on secularly as Lord Lloyd-Webber's private theatre.

The school was built and founded in 1861.

UNITED BENEFICE OF BURGHCLERE WITH NEWTOWN &  
ECCHINSWELL WITH SYDMONTON





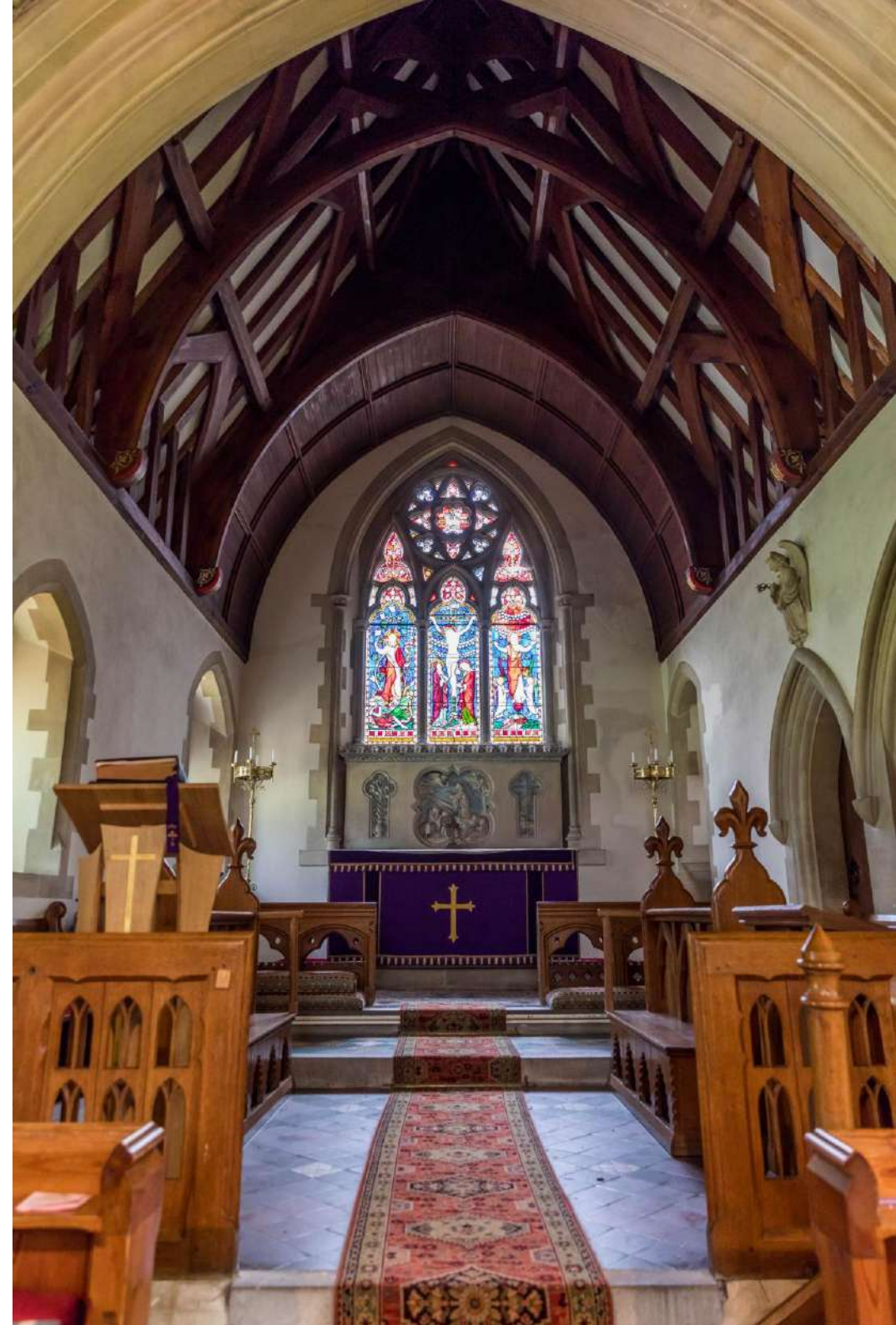
# Newtown Church History

It is believed that there has been a church on the current site since 1218. Part of the medieval village of Newtown (which is no longer visible) lies to the north between it and the Swan Inn and is a protected site.

Old maps show that there used to be a school in what is now the new churchyard, which has been levelled and its graves audited. There have been burials in the old churchyard for more than 200 years.

The present church dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin and St. John the Baptist was built in 1864. It was designed by Henry Woodyer with walls of square knapped flint and funded by the Arbuthnot family, local patrons. They also gifted in 1928 the land which is now the new churchyard.

The church and churchyard are mentioned in Richard Adams' book, 'Watership Down'.





# Burghclere & the Parachute Regiment

The West Berkshire branch of the Parachute Regimental Association has, over the years, made the Church of the Ascension at Burghclere its spiritual home. Members parade on Remembrance Sunday and on other relevant occasions. In the past two years they led the parade for the late Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the service held at the time of her death and then the celebrations at the time of the Coronation of King Charles III.

All PRA branches have their own Standard, but The West Berks branch is unique in having two as they always also carry one for the US 101st Airborne (The Screaming Eagles) in recognition of their presence in the Kennet Valley during WW2.

In 2024 their old standard was permanently laid up in the Chapel in the North Transept of Church of the Ascension, near the memorial to Lt Col Sir Richard de Baquencourt Des Voeux (Burghclere resident) who commanded the 156th battalion of the Parachute Regiment and parachuted into Arnhem in 1944.



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forward to  
meeting  
with you!**

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January 2025