



PARISH PROFILE

ST MARY'S GREAT MILTON ST JAMES' LITTLE MILTON ST PETER'S GREAT HASELEY



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2: Welcome Statement

We are delighted that you are considering coming to be our new Rector. This document tells you who we are, what we have been doing, and our vision for the future. It also sets out the opportunities ahead, the kind of person we are looking for, and how we will support you.

We hope that you have a real heart for rural ministry, to encourage our small but committed congregations in our different styles of worship and within our village communities.

If you sense that God might be calling you to a new ministry here with us in this Benefice, we encourage you to look at our websites (links to them on the back page of this document) and to have an informal conversation with the Archdeacon, or with one of us to find out more.

3: Archdeacon David Tyler's Foreword

I am delighted that you are reading this profile and encourage you to pray about whether this position might be the role to which God is now calling you.

Great Milton, Little Milton and Great Haseley is seeking a new Rector who will be upbeat, warm, friendly and approachable. You will bring enthusiasm as you encourage the benefice to work together in reaching out to these communities. These parish churches are looking for a new priest who will engage with the villages, listening to all and share a warm welcome to join these communities of faith as well as a leader who will help to steer these churches to address the opportunities (and challenges) before them.

You will find a friendly Deanery with supportive and experienced colleagues. Our Episcopal Area and Diocese are in good heart, expectant for all that God will do and thankful for all that God is doing.

The Diocese is committed to a high level of support and training for our clergy. Successful candidates who are taking up posts of first responsibility will be expected to participate in Pastoral Supervision Groups, further details can be found at <https://www.oxford.anglican.org/ministry/continuing-ministerial-development/pastoral-supervision-groups>

The Benefice recognises that they are under-represented in a number of key characteristics and would particularly welcome applications from those who would increase their diversity.

Please pray about whether you might be the right minister to join us. If you decide to apply, I would be delighted to receive your application for this important position and look forward to the possibility of welcoming you as a potential colleague to partner in the gospel.

With every blessing,



Venerable David Tyler, Archdeacon of Dorchester



4: Your Role

We are looking forward to meeting you and hope that you will bring:

- Dedication to leadership and to sharing our collective Mission.
- An understanding of village life and the advantages and pressures of rural living.
- Skills with people of all ages, in particular with children and young people.
- A collaborative style, being prepared to enjoy working alongside our Lay Minister, and our enthusiastic and experienced church teams.
- A flexible approach which will help us maintain our established service patterns and styles of worship, as well as a willingness to make suggestions and introduce new ideas.
- A readiness to meet people in their homes, and in the wider community, as well as in our churches, and a willingness to engage with events and initiatives to increase the visibility of the church outside the immediate congregation.

5: What we can offer you

- The support of a dedicated Lay Minister and three sets of committed, forward-looking and hardworking church teams, including active PCC's, cleaning, flower, churchyard maintenance, and reading teams
- Support for you in the administration of the Benefice, including issues concerning the churchyards and buildings, upkeep, maintenance and necessary restoration.
- Efficient financial administration including the consistent payment of the Parish Share in full.
- Increasingly creative and supportive musical backup, including talented choirs for special services and concerts, a group of regular organ and keyboard players, and a highly experienced bellringing team.
- Catering and refreshment teams who provide refreshment support at almost all services.
- Effective communications and publicity support for services and external initiatives.
- A genuine appreciation of your work/life balance and any personal or family commitments you may have.

6: Job Description

You will be looking forward to taking the leading role in our ministry and our Mission, building on existing foundations, meeting current and future challenges, and leading us in growth, bringing your own gifts and experience.

Community engagement and pastoral care

Although we tend towards an older congregation, our work with children, families and young people is developing and is a priority across the Benefice. This includes:

- Leading weekly worship in our two C of E schools
- Taking an enthusiastic and committed approach to pastoral care
- Encouraging specific initiatives relevant to one or more of our three churches, including support for fundraising and social activities

Visionary leadership

We're looking for:

- Leadership and participation in a variety of formal and informal worship styles
- Creativity, collaboration and seizing opportunities in the planning of worship, and wider initiatives
- Participation in PCC and project-based team meetings.

Spiritual leadership

- Nurturing the spiritual life, journey and growth of the congregations and those exploring faith.

Communication and administrative skills

- We hope you will be a clear and effective communicator, who is happy to lead and work collaboratively, and has a good level of computer literacy.

7: Our Benefice

Geography:

Our three churches are within a short distance of each other. (Some of our more intrepid members have been known to tramp across the lovely countryside to reach each other's churches). Each is set in its own distinctive village, and each village has a range of local amenities. We enjoy excellent road, bus and rail connections to the rest of the country, including close proximity to the M40.



Social Amenities:

Great Milton's pub, The Bull, is a hive of activity, serving great food and drink, and hosting a range of events throughout the year.



The Neighbours' Hall, which was given to the three parishes by a former Rector, and is managed by a board of trustees, is available for parties and community events all year round, and the Pavilion on the recreation ground also supports individual sports and social events.



The world-famous hotel and restaurant *Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons* is next door to St Mary's in Great Milton, and our Rectors have always enjoyed a very supportive relationship with the hotel and its patron, Raymond Blanc, through the weddings of guests in St Mary's, and *Le Manoir*'s autumn and Christmas Carol concerts.



Little Milton has a well-stocked village shop, staffed largely by volunteers and housing a Post Office and our local pub, The Lamb, has won many awards.



The Pine Lodge village hall has a packed calendar of community events.



Great Haseley's pub, The Plough, has been a prizewinning restaurant and is in the process of changing its management, so watch this space!



The Great Haseley village hall, besides appearing in a number of popular TV shows, boasts a pop-up pub, as one of its many events throughout the year.

All the villages are supported by excellent local GP practices, and all have well maintained, safe, and well-used recreation grounds.

Schools:

Two of our villages, Great Milton and Little Milton, have thriving Church of England primary schools which enjoy a close connection with the Rector and the churches.

The motto of Great Milton School (roll: about 160) is “With love we flourish”, and their vision is based on 1 Corinthians 16.14.

The motto of Little Milton School (roll: about 50) is “Small school, big heart, great start”, and their vision is: “Like mustard seeds, we aim to nurture and enable our children to grow and flourish in the safety of our school community, underpinned by our Christian values”, based on Matthew 13.32.

Both schools have had good recent inspection reports.

Our relationships with other churches:

We have an excellent relationship with our Methodist brethren and share an annual service together. We join for worship twice a year and share monthly coffee mornings that warmly welcome the whole community.

The nearby Rycote chapel, on a private estate, hosts an annual summer service as well as carols for us, by the kind invitation of the estate’s owners. We have always had a good relationship with Ripon College in nearby Cuddesdon, and on occasion have welcomed ordinands and newly qualified clergy to share and lead our services, something we would all welcome in the future.



Our services:

Our Benefice service schedule is very comprehensive, and is set out over a year in advance, with all three churches taking their share of special services, as well as a rotating pattern of Holy Communion, BCP services, Family Worship and monthly Benefice services.

In addition to our services, our Lent lunches are a much enjoyed feature of our parishes, held in different homes. All churches take an active part in supporting Christian Aid week, and the Rector traditionally serves on the boards of several local charitable Trusts.

Safeguarding:

We are united in making safeguarding a priority across all three parishes, each of which has a dedicated PSO. All parish officers complete mandatory and voluntary training where appropriate.

Upkeep and maintenance of buildings and churchyards:

The overall responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of churches and churchyards rests in the first instance with our PCCs, and we are all committed to keeping our buildings and churchyards safe and in good order.

Parish communications:

Traditionally, the Rector has contributed a regular column to the three-monthly Parish newsletters which are delivered to all the households in each village. In addition, all three churches actively contribute to the A Church Near You website. Where appropriate, we produce posters, flyers for letterbox drops, and special or generic orders of service, and each year we send out specially designed Christmas and Easter cards detailing services and supporting events.

8: Our Three Parishes: 8.1: St Mary's, Great Milton

The Village

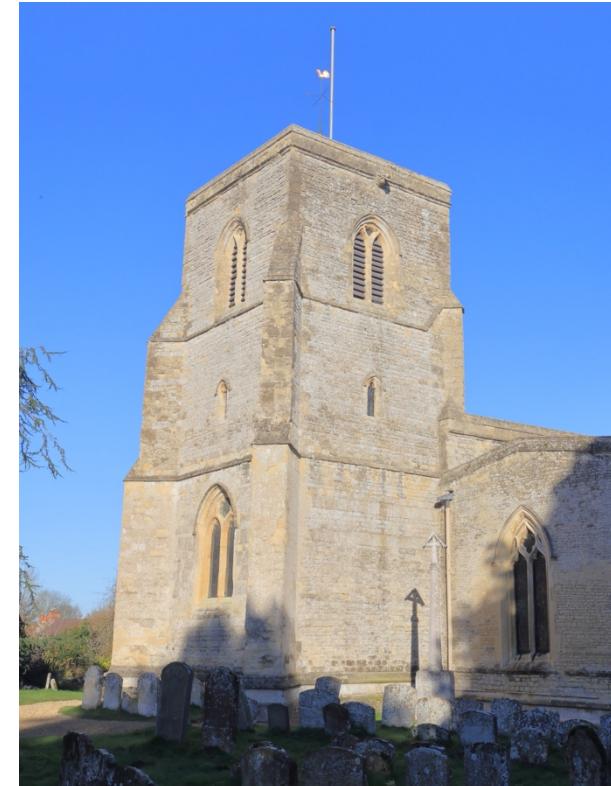
As well as the main village, the parish includes Milton Common, west of the A40, and a travellers 'community, offering further opportunities for connection. In total, Great Milton comprises around 300 households and 800 residents, forming a warm, active, and welcoming community.

The church

St Mary's is a fine large Grade-1-listed church dating back to the eleventh century. The knave and chancel belong to the thirteenth century, and the side aisles to the fourteenth. The church was extensively restored by Gilbert Scott in the mid-nineteenth century. The church clock (1699) is the oldest surviving turret clock in Oxfordshire. The tower also houses a fine peal of nine bells, all of which were retuned and rehung by Whites of Appleton in 2001.

The monumental tomb of the Dormer family has recently been splendidly restored.

A new guide to the church and the village has been produced, and an InfoPoint digital visitor guide has been installed. Plans for the installation of a kitchen and WC, and for upgrading our heating system are at an advanced stage.



The congregation

We have 40 parishioners on the electoral roll, and our PCC works in an atmosphere of warmth, trust, and shared purpose. Our core congregation is small but deeply committed, with numbers growing significantly at festivals and special services.

While few children currently attend services, there are many children in the village, offering many opportunities to develop children's and youth ministry.

Dedicated volunteers also care for the church through cleaning and flower decoration. Our churchyard is kept in good shape by some committed individuals, and a team which joins in twice a year to give it a bit of a blitz.

Worship

We follow the Benefice pattern of services (BCP and CW Communion, Family Worship), and are open to new ways of doing things. Our worship is supported by local musicians on the organ or keyboard, and refreshments after services provide valuable time for fellowship.

A group of villagers comes together to sing for our Christmas carol service, as well as for weddings and funerals. There is good scope to develop music in worship further.



Finances

We have consistently met our parish share, thanks to the generosity of regular givers through standing orders and Gift Aid. While the Parish Giving Scheme has not been recently promoted, we would welcome the encouragement of a new incumbent to reinvigorate it.

Card readers are available in church. A small trust fund and several designated funds are in place, and there is a growing fund for our ongoing development plans.

The annual fête is an important source of funds. Special events such as concerts in the church bring in extra income.

Outside initiatives

The annual village fete is organised by a team which extends well beyond the regular congregation. It is held in June and is an important village event, providing a significant contribution to church funds. The inter-village tug-of-war and our Christmas Fair are also popular features of church and community life.

A recent programme of 'In conversations' in St Mary's, with prominent figures such as the lyricist Tim Rice and the broadcaster Charlie Lee Potter has been generating connection with the community as well as funds towards the planned kitchen and WC, and restoration of the tower.



8.2: St James', Little Milton

The church

St James' was built in 1843, and has been at the heart of the village for over 180 years. In the past couple of years, we have installed an under-pew heating system, introduced a new keyboard for more informal worship, and replaced the organ with a superior instrument made available by the installation of the new pipe organ at St Peter's.



The congregation

Although we rarely see large numbers, we are seeing a steady increase in regular attendance. Our congregation is a committed and enthusiastic one, with most regular worshippers taking supporting roles, such as flower arranging, cleaning, bellringing, providing refreshments, reading, and setting up. We prioritise a welcoming, friendly approach, and services range from the formal to the less so.

We are building on our musical support, and can make up a choir for special services. With the arrival of the replacement organ we hope this will encourage more members to get involved with our music.

In addition to our services within the Benefice schedule, we also have our own Remembrance Sunday service, our own Harvest Festival, and the school hosts several special services throughout the school year.

Parish officers

For the last four years, we have run St James successfully without a churchwarden. Originally a matter of necessity, we have found that the dedicated and experienced PCC are more than able to carry out the necessary duties between them, and indeed, this has served to make us more agile, flexible, and future-proof when it comes to getting things done.

The PCC has a dedicated Secretary, Treasurer, Safeguarding officer and Deanery Synod representative.

Fundraising

We have recently added electronic payment systems to our collection process, and we host at least one fundraising event each year. The village's Annual Christmas Fair donates 1/3 of its profits to St James'.

The PCC currently has plans to look at our finances with a view to communicating more effectively with the congregation and the wider parish, and making financial matters, including the Parish Giving scheme, more transparent and encouraging for donors.

The Tower Project

Further to the Quinquennial Report, and in line with the changing nature of the use of church buildings, we need to carry out restoration work which will ensure our church can continue to serve our community for the future. In order to develop this space at the centre of the village for everyone to use, and to create new and exciting possibilities, we launched a £400k project in the summer of 2025, to achieve the following:

- Connect the church to mains water and drainage
- Install a WC and a basic kitchen
- Carry out all identified repairs, maintenance, and restoration work of the Tower
- Re-configure the bell loft for safety and future proofing, including creating a mezzanine floor.

We are fortunate enough to have a flagship donor who has pledged approximately 25% of this amount, and we have engaged the services of an experienced architect who will also help us with sourcing the remaining funds through heritage and Lottery funding, so at this point we are optimistic about this exciting project.

Outside initiatives

As well as our active part in Christian Aid Week, we support Christian Aid throughout the year. We also open the church for the annual Ride and Stride, and have plans to extend our support for this initiative.

8.3: St Peter's, Great Haseley

The church

St Peter's is a fine Grade-I-listed church dating from 1200. Recent years have seen the restoration of tower stonework including battlements, the renewal of the lead roof, and restoration of the clock, as well as restoration of the churchyard gates and pillars and an extension of the churchyard.



Worship

We enjoy a variety of forms of worship, including creative monthly Family Services (two of which, at Rogationtide and Harvest, take place at local farms rather than in church), occasional services of Evensong and Compline (with a small choir), and the Great Vigil of Easter.

The church is always packed for our Christmas carol service, which features a large choir drawn from across the Benefice and beyond. We have a strong musical tradition, which will be enhanced by the new organ. Our two voluntary organists, one of whom has extensive professional experience, both live in the village.



Our congregation includes a number of families with young children, and they have been taking increasing responsibility for elements of our worship. Last year we were awarded a diocesan prize for our imaginative Advent Family Service.

Recent and current developments

Over the past ten years, the dynamic PCC has had the vision and determination to see several major projects through to completion:

- A new kitchen and accessible WC
- A carpeted children's area
- A sound system with hearing loop
- An InfoPoint digital visitor guide, together with a new printed guidebook
- The installation of a splendid pipe organ
- The improvement of the path from the churchyard gates to the south porch to facilitate disabled access.



Current plans include the installation of a background heating system using an air-source heat pump to blow warm air through the existing under-floor ducts.

Fundraising

We are fortunate to have several trust funds, and to be able to raise money from local supporters. There is an annual fund-raising event such as a fête, a garden party, or (most recently) a concert.

Outside initiatives

Our monthly collection of food for the Thame Food Bank, which has been running for the past three years, is a joint initiative with the Parish Council, and is a mark of our commitment to mission in the community.



9: Our Lay Minister : Toby Garfitt LLM

My wife and I moved to Great Haseley in 2008, from the city of Oxford, and we love living here. My LLM licence, which I have held since 1975, was officially transferred to the village in 2013. Simon Cronk, who retired in 2025 after ten years as Rector of this Benefice, believed strongly in sharing ministry, and it has been a great privilege to work alongside him over that time, praying with him, taking regular non-Eucharistic services in all three churches (especially Family Services) and some funerals, preaching, occasionally leading or participating in small groups.

For the past four years, I have been taking worship assemblies in the two local C of E primary schools (alternating with the Rector), which is something I find refreshing after a career as a university teacher!

During the vacancy, some of our younger families are taking increasing responsibility for Family Services, which is an encouraging development. I'm very much looking forward to working with our new Rector, whoever he or she may be, and in whatever ways may be appropriate.



10: The Rectory

The Rectory was purpose-built in 1954 and is situated in a quiet lane at the edge of Great Milton, near the church of St Mary's. The house is situated in a large garden of about a third of an acre mainly set to lawn with some trees also.

The house has four good sized bedrooms, all of which can take double beds. There is one bathroom upstairs with an electric shower.

Downstairs consists of a dining room; sitting room with an open fire; a study; a lavatory with basin; a good sized kitchen and a utility room off the kitchen.

There is gas central heating installed and double glazing throughout. There is a single garage, with two lock up sheds behind, and space for parking 4 – 5 cars in the drive.



11: The Deanery

Our Benefice sits within the Aston and Cuddesdon Deanery, which stretches from Chinnor in the north, down to Benson and Berinsfield, and takes in a considerable number of small, rural churches. The deanery's three biggest centres are Wheatley, Thame and Chinnor. St Mary's Great Milton and St James' Little Milton have dedicated representatives who attend and participate in Deanery Synod meetings.

12: Contact Details

St Peter's Churchwardens:

- Toby Garfitt: toby.garfitt@magd.ox.ac.uk
- Jean Nixey: jeannixey@hotmail.com

St Mary's Churchwardens

- Trudy Timbs: trudytimbs@yahoo.co.uk
- Margaret Rogers: margaretrogers851@gmail.com

St James' PCC Representatives

- Victoria Barry: victoriajbarry@gmail.com
- Lucinda Arnold: l.arnold1963@btinternet.com

13: QR Codes and Web Addresses



St Peter's Great Haseley

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/128/>



St James' Little Milton

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/178/service-and-events/events-all/>



St Mary's Great Milton

<https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/129/service-and-events/events-all/>