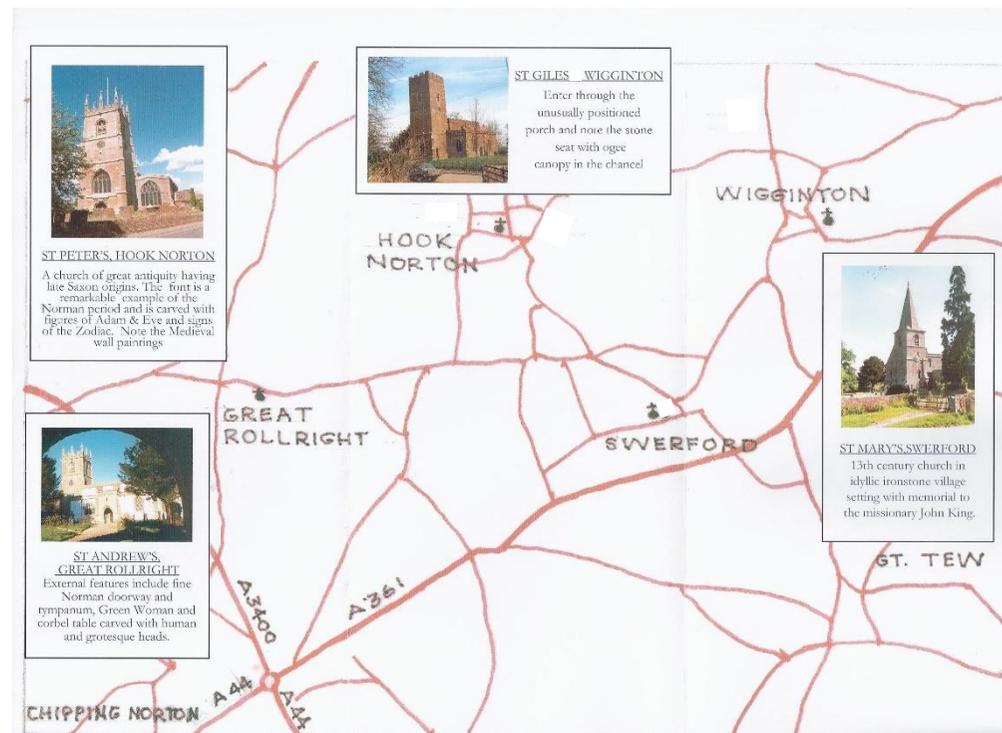


Welcome

to the Benefice of

Hook Norton with Great Rollright,
Swerford and Wigginton



Welcome

Welcome to this beautiful part of North Oxfordshire and thank you for taking the time to read about our Benefice.

Our four rural churches are strongly rooted in our villages, centres of the communities we serve. As with many villages we are seeing developments being built, particularly in Hook Norton, offering opportunities as well as challenges for the churches.

The parishes of Hook Norton, Great Rollright and Swerford were combined in 1981 to form the unified parish of Hook Norton with Great Rollright and Swerford. Wigginton remains a separate parish. Despite being part of two separate parishes – Wigginton and Hook Norton with Great Rollright and Swerford – we work well together with a shared ministry. Our Ministry Team currently includes two LLMs and one trained lay person; we are seeking someone who would help to rebuild that team with more lay people involved.

The joint patrons of the Benefice are The Bishop of Oxford, The Oxford Diocesan Board of Patronage, Jesus College Oxford and Brasenose College Oxford.



Clockwise from top left: the Keys of St Peter, the Lily of St Mary, the Cross of St Andrew, the Deer of St Giles

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Letter from Oxford Diocese

Dear potential applicants,

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

The Benefice of Hook Norton with Great Rollright, Swerford and Wigginton covers an area of unspoilt rural beauty whilst also offering very good transport links to major centres. It is a lovely place to live and minister and there can't be many places that also boast their own brewery!

As you will see from the churches' mission statements here are people seeking to be led by the Spirit and to share God's love with their local communities by having churches that are at the heart of community life. They are praying for a dynamic priest who will join them and lead in developing mission and discipleship across the communities by being visible and by engaging with local activities.

If you are someone who appreciates rural life and is open minded, while also being grounded, nurturing and prayerful, you will find here people who are ready to work with you with the gifts that they have to reach out and enrich lives. There is also a clear commitment to ensuring your wellbeing through protecting your day off, as well as supporting time for you for training and occasional retreats.

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.

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 key position and look forward to the possibility of welcoming you as a potential colleague and partner in the Gospel.

With every blessing



Reverend Prebendary Jane Haslam, Associate Archdeacon of Dorchester



Statement from Chipping Norton Deanery

Chipping Norton is a rural Deanery on the north-western edge of the Dorchester Area of the Diocese of Oxford, consisting of a number of flourishing small market towns and vibrant rural villages of varying size. There are seven multi-parish benefices with eight stipendiary clergy and a wealth of retired clergy and lay support. The incumbents and parishes reflect a variety of churchmanship and liturgical styles.

The Villages of Hook Norton-with-Great-Rollright-and-Swerford, and Wigginton.

The churches enjoy a mix of liturgical styles across the villages. Synod Representatives from the Hook Norton Benefice attend regularly and take an active part in Synods. Church social events continue to thrive, and it is hoped that inspiration from the Rector will also include attending other local events, getting to know parishioners and building up congregations. The parishes are looking forward to working with their new incumbent.

Chapter

There are currently bi-monthly meetings of Chapter which include all ordained people within the deanery who wish to attend. The licensed clergy are also invited to meet bi-monthly for lunch. This is an informal and confidential space which is valued by deanery colleagues who choose to engage.

In addition, there are two social events for all clergy during the year to which spouses are warmly invited. The licensed clergy of the deanery have all served many years in ministry and can relate to the stresses and strains the job may bring for both single and married clergy.

Deanery Synod

The Deanery Synod meets three times a year. There has been a conscious effort to highlight and celebrate the diversity of our deanery with meetings held in different benefices most recently in the brewery! There is often a keynote speaker such as a local farmer to consider items of mutual interest to which synod reps are invited to bring guests, and everyone is invited to share good news from their parishes and to leave with a sense that God is working in our area.

The deanery has several church primary schools so there is a great deal of wisdom to share on governance and parish engagement. There are many opportunities ahead for mutual support and growth for a new colleague who will be welcomed most warmly.

Chipping Norton is a friendly deanery which will work hard to provide the successful candidate with a warm welcome and supportive colleagues. Join us as we seek to work towards becoming a more Christ-like church for the sake of God's kingdom, contemplative, compassionate and courageous.

Sarah Sharp, Area Dean

Catherine Hitchens, Lay Chair

Our Parishes

Each parish has its own Parochial Church Council [PCC] and Treasurer and typically meets four times each year.

We have a full complement of experienced churchwardens who are all supported by our Benefice Administrator.

Finances

Both parishes pay the Parish Share in full via monthly direct debit. St Peter's has joined the Parish Giving Scheme, St Peter's and St Andrew's have electronic donation points in church, St Giles' uses a QR code to direct online giving. Each church holds some reserves to cover day-to-day costs and both PCCs hold reserves to cover larger costs. Each church relies on fundraising events to supplement income from the congregation.

Charitable giving across the benefice includes regularly supporting Polly who feeds the needy and homeless in Banbury every night of the year as well as support for Katharine House Hospice, Lawrence Nurses, Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, Tearfund and other Christian charities.

Hook Norton with Great Rollright and Swerford PCC

Along with the Incumbent, the PCC includes the churchwardens from each of the three churches within the Parish as well as the PCC treasurer and members of the clergy team.

The PCC delegates financial responsibilities and day to day matters concerning each of its three churches to a local District Church Council [DCC]. The Churchwardens and other elected representatives of each DCC then report back to the PCC as the legally responsible body.

Wigginton PCC

The PCC has eight members including the Incumbent. The PCC meets 4 times each year in addition to the APCM.



Current St Giles Parochial Church Council

The Area

The Benefice comprises four villages and is set in a rural part of North Oxfordshire close to the borders with Warwickshire, Gloucestershire and Northamptonshire. Two of the villages are within Cherwell District Council and two are in West Oxfordshire.

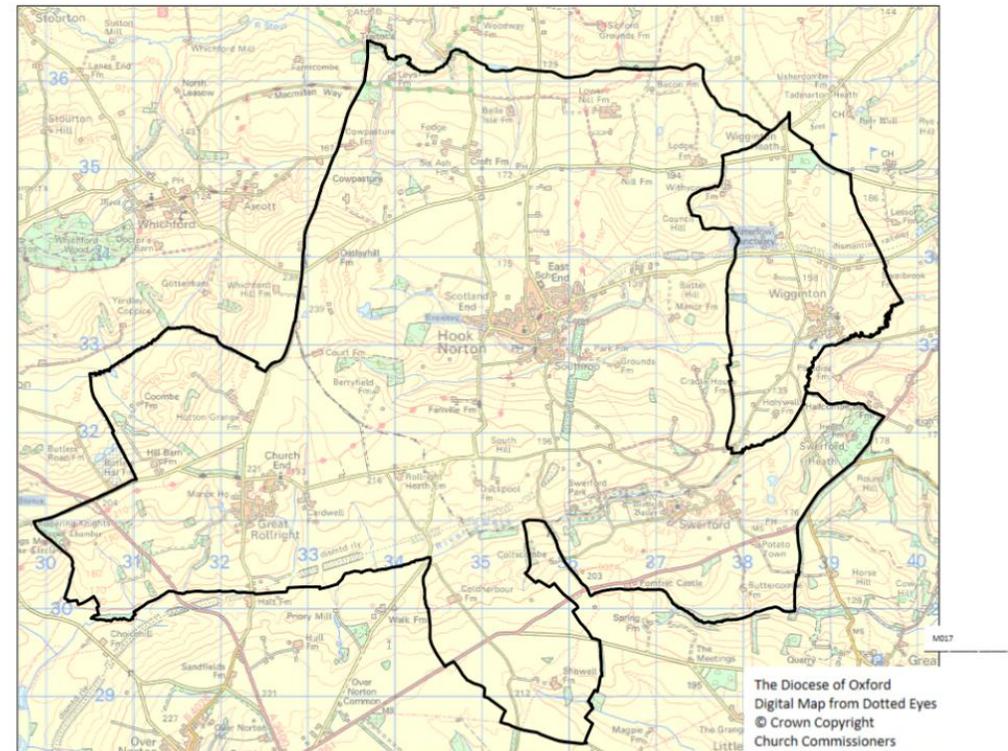
Nearby towns include Chipping Norton, Moreton-in-Marsh, Shipston-on-Stour, Banbury and further afield Stratford-upon-Avon. There are main hospitals in Banbury and Oxford.

The area is an attractive location with its unspoilt countryside, whilst also being well placed for those wishing to travel to major centres such as Birmingham, Bristol, Oxford and London.

Unemployment in the area is low with many companies choosing Banbury and Chipping Norton as alternatives to Oxford or Bicester.

There is good road and rail access via the nearby M40 motorway and mainline stations at Banbury (for London Marylebone, Birmingham and beyond) and Charlbury (for London Paddington). There is a regular bus service between Banbury and Chipping Norton which runs through Hook Norton and Great Rollright. Oxford now has many Park & Rides which provide an easy way to access the city for work or pleasure. With two stations, the newer Oxford Parkway station offering easy access to Chiltern trains into London Marylebone, working in London is also an option.

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Benefice of Hook Norton with Great Rollright, Swerford and Wigginton

Schools

There are two Church of England primary schools in the Benefice, in Hook Norton (<http://www.hook-norton.oxon.sch.uk>) and Great Rollright (<http://www.great-rollright.oxon.sch.uk>). The Church has good links with both schools although the governance of each differs slightly. The Rector sits on both boards of governors along with other Foundation Governors, and weekly assemblies were led by the previous Rector. There is also an 'Open the Book' group in both villages run by members of the church community which regularly visit their respective schools.

Hook Norton Church of England Primary School (Voluntarily Controlled) is a key part of the village community and currently has 273 children on roll. It is a friendly and welcoming place and has been consistently rated 'Good' by Ofsted. The school holds a Christmas service in St Peter's each year, as well as taking part in the service on Remembrance Sunday.

Great Rollright Church of England Primary School (Voluntary Aided) is next to the church. The school currently has 112 children on roll. It has also been consistently rated as 'Good' by Ofsted. It has become a popular school in the area and while approximately 20% of the children attending are from the village, the rest are bussed in from Chipping Norton and other surrounding villages. The school has a close relationship with St Andrew's Church and holds its own festival and year-end leavers services in the church building, as well as other events through the year for different year groups.

Pre-school provision in the Benefice is provided by two private companies –Willow on the Farm nursery school is open school terms and hours. The Rector has previously led Harvest, Easter and Christmas for them and a good working relationship exists. Whole day childcare is provided by Bamboo which runs all year round in the centre of Hook Norton.

At secondary level, most students move on to Chipping Norton School, an academy part of the River Learning Trust, a mixed school with 1100 pupils, which was rated "Outstanding" in most areas during their 2024 inspection. Free transport is provided at present for U16's, subsidised for ages 16-18. Transport can also be provided to the Cotswold School at Bourton-on-the-Water.



Great Rollright School

Ecumenical Links

There are ecumenical links with the Hook Norton Baptist Church (<https://www.hookybaptist.org.uk/>) and the Wigginton Methodist Chapel (<https://en-gb.facebook.com/WiggintonMethodist>). These have included occasional combined services, a shared Lent course, shared Prayer fellowship, including a monthly prayer meeting, and a children's summer holiday club. Hook Norton Baptist Church has recently appointed a new trainee Minister and our LLMs have already started discussions about future joint plans.

Bellringing in the Benefice

The benefice has an enthusiastic and committed team of bellringers who support services in Hook Norton, Wigginton, and Swerford. The bells at Great Rollright are currently unringable due to structural issues with the tower.

The band rings for all Sunday services at St Peter's, Hook Norton, and for as many Sunday services as possible in Wigginton and Swerford. They also ring for special services, weddings, local and national commemorations, and church festivals. The Hook Norton bells were installed as a memorial to those from the village who died in both World Wars, and the ringers hold a particular sense of responsibility for ringing at acts of remembrance. At Wigginton the previous peal of 3 bells was taken down in 1998 and replaced with a peal of 6 bells, of which one was cast using one of the old bells.

Regular practices take place in Hook Norton and Wigginton, offering opportunities suited to ringers of different abilities and interests. The band strives to be friendly, inclusive, and welcoming to all. Practices at Hook Norton benefit from a large number of visiting ringers from across Oxfordshire, and evenings always conclude with a lively discussion in the Pear Tree pub.

Ringling is led by an experienced and dedicated Tower Captain, who greatly values a strong working relationship with the Rector and churchwardens. While the ringers are largely self-sufficient, the Rector is invited annually to chair the ringers' AGM, supporting transparency and good communication across the whole band.



Hook Norton Ringing Chamber

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The New Rector

The Role

With four very different villages and churches we are looking for someone who:

- Will work with us to develop our mission and discipleship across all our communities
- Will be visibly present in the villages throughout the week, joining in events in all four villages
- Welcomes variety in worship
- Will help us to reach out to those moving into our villages with young families
- Will serve as Trustee on the three village charities in Great Rollright, Swerford and Wigginton
- Will serve as governor of our primary schools in Hook Norton and Great Rollright
- Will foster our ecumenical links with the Hook Norton Baptist Church and the Wigginton Methodist Chapel

The Person

You will be:

- Flexible and open to a diverse range of worship
- Empowering of others to build on the current ministry team to share leadership
- A good communicator and a good listener
- Have a keen interest in the challenges of the changing rural landscape

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What we offer you

Ministry Team

Our current Ministry Team, in addition to the Rector includes two LLMs, Janet Collins and Keith Disney, and a trained lay person. In the past the number of trained lay people has been more, and the wish would be to rebuild that team.



Janet Collins

Janet was licensed in October 1997 and has been part of St Peter's church family for many years. She still takes an assembly in Hook Norton School regularly and was involved in previous youth work in the parish, something that we hope to start again.

Keith Disney

Despite living in Hook Norton since 1999 it was only after a major change in his circumstances in 2008 and the encouragement of a friend that led him to St Peter's. Since then he and now-wife Helga have put their faith central to their lives and having retired in 2015 Keith was licensed at the end of 2018.



To read Janet and Keith's full profiles please click [here](#).

We would encourage you to take a regular day off each week and we would work to ensure that this day was protected. We would also support you in training, occasional retreats and other times for you to take care of yourself and your own wellbeing and faith.

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The Rectory

The Benefice Rectory is situated in Hook Norton about a quarter of a mile from the church. It is a detached brick-built house occupying a double corner plot on the edge of an estate. It was built in the late 1970s.

There are 4 bedrooms, one ensuite, and a bathroom. There is a fitted kitchen, small utility room, dining room, lounge with open fire, study and downstairs cloakroom. Principal heating has been converted to heat pump (during the vacancy) with solar panels already installed on the roof.

There is a single garage with additional on-site parking.

Some funding will be available for redecorating in the new Incumbent's taste.



Benefice Office

The Benefice Office is located in the Norman Matthews Hall which is the former primary school building next door to St Peter's Church in Hook Norton. Until the end of 2024 half the building was used by Hook Norton Library whilst Hook Norton PCC leased the other half from the owners Oxford County Council (OCC). This provided us with a small hall and a kitchen/meeting room as well as our office. The initial lease was at a peppercorn rent however when the lease was last renewed in 2022 OCC put in steep annual increases in rent to reach their community rental rates. In 2024 the PCC took the decision to give notice but retained the office. We now have a Licence to Occupy that runs until 2027 at a monthly rental of £41.50 including all utilities. The whole building is about to undergo a major refurbishment as OCC converts all the ground floor to be the village library. The village recently raised over £60,000 to help fund this refurbishment using matched funding from OCC. When the work begins our office will move upstairs to what was originally a mezzanine but will now be a self-contained office.

Benefice Administrator

Our self-employed administrator works an average 10 hours per week, usually in the office on Wednesday and Friday mornings. Our current administrator has been in post for 6 years and during the vacancy has taken over most of the benefice administration. Her tasks include dealing with telephone calls, messages and emails, being the GDPR Officer of the benefice and maintaining a parish contact list within the boundaries of GDPR, completing church registers and certificates, keeping the Google bookings diary for all four churches, doing diocesan returns where appropriate, and quarterly wedding returns, updating church websites on A Church Near You, production of weekly orders of service inserts and all posters advertising events and services, helping the Rector with any booking arrangements for baptisms, weddings and funerals, ordering supplies eg. candles, wafers, paper, stamps etc, photocopying, printing and laminating, filing.

Safeguarding Officer

Safeguarding is intrinsic within our church communities. Our Benefice Safeguarding Officer liaises with the Diocesan Safeguarding team when concerns are shared. The Safeguarding Officer has previously held meetings quarterly with the Rector.

Many of our volunteers have undertaken training as well as elected church officers, and this has promoted clearer understanding around Safeguarding awareness. Policies and processes for checking training are in place and are kept up to date.

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Our Churches

Current Pattern of Services

	8am	10am	10am	6pm
1 st Sunday	Hook Norton Holy Communion [BCP] (Rector)	Hook Norton Morning Worship (LLM)	Great Rollright Holy Communion [CW] (Rector)	Swerford Evening Prayer [BCP] (Rector)
2 nd Sunday	Wigginton Holy Communion [BCP] (Rector)	Hook Norton Holy Communion [CW] (Rector)	Great Rollright Morning Worship (LLM)	
3 rd Sunday	Swerford Holy Communion [BCP] (Rector)	Hook Norton Morning Worship (LLM)	Great Rollright Holy Communion [CW] (Rector)	Wigginton Evensong [BCP] (Rector)
4 th Sunday	Great Rollright Holy Communion [BCP] (Rector)	Hook Norton Holy Communion [CW] (Rector)	Wigginton Morning Worship (LLM)	
5 th Sunday		Benefice Holy Communion (CW) (Rector + LLM)		
Wednesday (Currently 1 st & 3 rd)		Hook Norton Holy Communion (BCP) (Rector)		

St Peter's Hook Norton

Mission statement of St Peter's: In the power of the Holy Spirit, to bring people of all ages into a living relationship with Jesus. By the Word of God through prayer, worship and fellowship to nurture faith and encourage all to use their God-given gifts to enrich the life of God's family in this place.

Hook Norton is a large, well-serviced, rural village. The central older part of the village consists of traditional ironstone cottages, which has been expanded by significant and ongoing new developments.

We are fortunate to have lots of amenities in the village including a Post Office and Shop, three pubs, a library, a butcher, a hairdresser, a veterinary surgery, a GP surgery and a dentist. There is also a Church of England primary school and a Baptist Church.

Hook Norton Brewery is a traditional Victorian tower brewery and a popular tourist destination. Beer is still delivered in the village by horse-drawn dray.

The village is popular with people of retirement age and young families, although housing affordability is a growing challenge for young families on lower incomes and first-time buyers.

The Community

Hook Norton is the largest community in the Benefice with a growing population of over 2,300 people. It is an active and engaged community where people know their neighbours and there is lots to get involved with.

The Sports and Social Club hosts a variety of sports teams and clubs for both adults and children, including football, cricket and tennis. There is a very popular Community Choir, as well as a Brass Band and the amateur dramatics group, the Hooky Players, do 2-3 performances a year.



The library hosts several groups throughout the week and is currently in the process of expanding. There are plenty of clubs for children to join, as well as multiple well-equipped play areas.

Village events taking place each year include the Beer Festival, a music festival, Apple Day, a Safari Supper and the Church Craft Fair.

Lots more information about the village and what goes on here can be found on the village website <https://hook-norton.org.uk> which includes digital copies of the village newsletter.

The Church

The earliest record of St Peter's church can be found in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of 922 AD, with the current building including a 12th century chancel and an 11th century font. The church has had several additions over time and is notably large for a village church. St Peter's stands in the centre of the village and is a striking focal point. The church is open throughout the day, and people frequently step inside for a moment of quiet. Tourists also regularly visit the church to admire the medieval wall paintings and the unusual pagan carvings on the font.

The church has kitchen and toilet facilities, and a separate upstairs space which was previously used for Sunday School provision. Heating is via a warm air heating system, as well as wall-mounted infrared heaters. We would like to explore updating the heating system to a more efficient, low-carbon option. There is a modern sound system installed and there is provision for overhead projection, although this is rarely used. The church pews have been removed and replaced with moveable chairs, which allows for flexible use of the space and a variety of events to take place outside of services.



Font Café

'Font Cafe', a community cafe, is held in the Font area every Saturday morning, with a monthly bake sale. This is very popular and a key way that St Peter's currently engages with the wider village community. An annual Craft Fair is held in the church, which is now in its 30th year, and a key fundraising event for St Peter's. In 2025, an Autumn Ball was held in the church as a further large fundraising event, and this was very successful. Other events regularly held in the church include pop-up markets and concerts. The church is regularly hired for external events which is a further source of income for St Peter's and helps to highlight the church as a community asset. We are keen to build on our engagement with the wider village and to have a bigger focus on church outreach.

St Peter's has a two manual 19th century pipe organ, which has recently been refurbished, as well as an electric piano. We are fortunate to have several talented musicians in the congregation and generally have a musician at every Sunday 10am service.

The churchyard has been closed for some time, but burials of ashes continue to take place.

The church building is in reasonable condition but is due some maintenance and improvements. We have recently appointed a new church architect and are keen to work with him to do some maintenance work on the building and improve the way the space is utilised.

The Services

10am Common Worship services are held on Sundays, alternating between Holy Communion services led by the Rector and Morning Worship services led by one of the lay ministers. BCP Holy Communion services are held weekly at 10am on Wednesdays and at 8am on the first Sunday of every month. The variety of service styles offered is important in meeting the needs of our rural community. Attendance at 10am Sunday Holy Communion Services is usually 35-40 and at 10am Morning Worship it is typically 25-35. The BCP services generally have a congregation of 5-8 people.



We do not currently offer regular services aimed at young families or have any specific provision for children. This is reflected in the make-up of our regular churchgoers; we have 71 people on the electoral roll of whom 93% are over 60, 68% are over 70 and 38% are over 80. We are seeking a Rector who will be creative and enthusiastic in exploring what services St Peter's can offer to meet the needs of children and young people in our community. We have had encouragingly high attendance numbers at recent special services aimed at children, our Christmas Eve Crib service had a congregation of 365, and the village has seen significant population growth in recent years. There is a real opportunity in Hook Norton to grow the church and serve sections of the community who are not currently having their needs met by St Peters. This is a pivotal moment for shaping and safeguarding the future of St Peters and the wider Benefice.

St Peter's holds a number of special services throughout the year which are popular and well attended. These include a Passover Supper with Holy Communion on Maundy Thursday; a Good Friday 'At the Foot of the Cross'

service with choir; an All Souls service which is highly valued by bereaved residents of the Benefice; a Benefice Remembrance Service which follows a parade through the village and includes the Hook Norton Brass Band; a Harvest Service followed by a 'bring and share' meal; and a Service of Carols and Readings with a choir.

During 2025 St Peter's held 4 Baptisms, 3 Weddings, 12 Funerals and 2 memorial services. Funerals are often very well attended and in this respect the church still plays an important role for the wider village community.

The District Church Council

The Churchwardens are members of the Parochial Church Council which includes Hook Norton, Great Rollright and Swerford. The District Church Council includes the Incumbent, the two Churchwardens, the two licensed lay ministers, the Treasurer, the Fabric Lead, the Safeguarding Officer/Deanery Synod Rep and three further members of the church community.

Hook Norton is responsible for paying 68.6% of the Parish Share and is financially stable, although we are heavily reliant on fundraising to cover our day-to-day running costs.



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St Andrew's Great Rollright

Mission statement of St Andrew's: Led by the Holy Spirit we seek to know Christ and to make Him known, and to live according to the Word of God. A Church at the very heart of this village, we reach out to our community.

Great Rollright is a small village within West Oxfordshire District Council. The Village Hall provides a social hub for community activities; a Post Office van visits the Village Hall four times a week and there is a farm shop with garden centre and café just outside the village. The village also lies on the hourly 488 Bus route, connecting it to Chipping Norton and Banbury.

Great Rollright benefits from an active Parish Council and there is also a thriving Women's Institute, as well as weekly Yoga and Pilates classes, a Baby and Toddler Group and monthly Sound Meditation - mostly organised by village residents but attracting people from outside the village, too. There are also social events in the Village Hall including a Summer Fete, quiz nights, Bingo, pop-up café as well occasional dances and concerts, and other events raising money for the various village groups.



Great Rollright WI

Benefice of Hook Norton with Great Rollright, Swerford and Wigginton

Several artists live in Great Rollright, and the village gives particular focus to Oxfordshire Artweeks, with exhibitions in various locations around the village and in the Village Hall two or three times a year. These events attract a good number of visitors from outside the village.

The village produces a free newsletter which is delivered to all households three times a year; in addition, a village email circulation list gives almost instant updates and news, so everyone is kept well informed of what is going on, in and around the community. A well-maintained village website also provides up to date information about the village and group activities.



Jubilee celebrations at the Village Hall

The Community

With around 230 homes, including some social housing and a few second homes with owners coming for weekends or longer during the summer, the village has a population of around 500. It is a friendly, welcoming community. However, while there is a strong community spirit centred on the Village Hall and the church, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find volunteers amongst the younger residents to serve on committees or to help organise community events.

The Church

The church building dates from late 12th Century with 13th, 14th and 15th Century additions. The building is in a generally good state of repair, and the most recent Quinquennial Inspection raised only one Priority 1 item, that has been addressed. The church is open every day during daylight hours.



There is a long-term project to provide running water into the church so that a small kitchen and toilet can be installed. A feasibility study has been drawn up by Acanthus Clewes, church architects, but as yet we have not determined when the work can take place. The improved facilities will, eventually, provide the village with a further amenity to supplement the much-used Village Hall. Fundraising events include our ever-popular Quiz Nights, and we hope to raise more funding in the near future.

Church cleaning, brass cleaning and flower arranging are carried out by a rota of people drawn from across the village, not just the congregation, with regular churchyard clearing and church cleaning mornings well supported.

The church building has been used for occasional concerts and is the designated evacuation point for the village school in the event of an emergency.

The churchyard surrounding the church is closed to further burials, so both full body burials and interment of ashes are accommodated in the burial ground adjacent to the churchyard and next to the lychgate.





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The Services

Services at St Andrew's are led by the Ministry Team, with members of the congregation reading the lessons and leading the intercessions. There is a modest regular congregation of between 15 and 20 worshippers most of whom are above the age of 60; whilst some people living in the village worship elsewhere, we feel that there is a Christian Family in Great Rollright that encompasses more than just those who worship in St Andrew's. Under the previous incumbent a trend of falling attendance has been reversed: we hope that this slight increase in the numbers of regular worshippers can be consolidated and built upon, and that some form of outreach may attract younger residents to the church.

Two services of Holy Communion (CW) are held at 10am on the first and third Sunday of each month, the second Sunday of the month is a less formal Morning Worship service held at 10am. On the fourth Sunday of the month

there is an 8am Holy Communion (BCP) and no 10am service.

The celebrant and preacher for Holy Communion wear cassock, surplice and stole.

Music in church is a mixture of styles using the Porritt organ, an electric piano, or recorded music. The orders of service are printed each week, including the words of the hymns. The church has a set of pew bibles that are used by many to follow the readings.

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St Mary's, Swerford

Mission statement of St Mary's: To be the focal point of village life, thereby promoting the Christian faith



Swerford has the smallest population of the four communities making up the Benefice.

St Mary's Church was founded in the late 12th century by the monks of Osney Abbey. It remains the spiritual focus of the Swerford community.

The Community

Swerford has two distinct parts to the village, "Chapel End" and "Church End" which each has its own village green. There are around 80 houses with 200 residents although many of the houses are second homes or holiday lets.

There is a thriving Village Hall that has had extensive refurbishment work over the last 30 years. Events held there include the annual quiz, summer barbecue, Christmas drinks before the Carol Service, Line Dancing and the Harvest Supper.

The village has a dedicated Playing Field and mixed fruit orchard.

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The Church

St Mary's is valued for its ancient heritage, its beauty and its calm atmosphere of dedication and contemplation. Its stunning silhouette contributes to the image and beauty of the village, and it has its own intrinsic value both aesthetically and materially. It is a fine setting for worship, a lovely place to listen to music and particularly beautiful when dressed with flowers and candles on special days.

The church is open every day during daylight hours. The churchyard remains open for burials.

After successful fundraising, major refurbishment works were completed in 2020/21, with re-roofing of the Nave, substantial stonework repairs, new gutters and underground drainage, and redecoration throughout.

The Services

Regular services tend to follow the Book of Common Prayer whilst the festival services are Common Worship. Traditional hymns are preferred. Whilst regular congregations are small, the Church has many visitors; and is of great spiritual importance to a large number of villagers.



The Carol Service regularly attracts over 80 people and is greatly enhanced by the support of a Parish Choir that comes together to sing on special occasions, one of them the Swerford carol service. The Harvest Festival and the Patronal Services typically attract 30 or more.

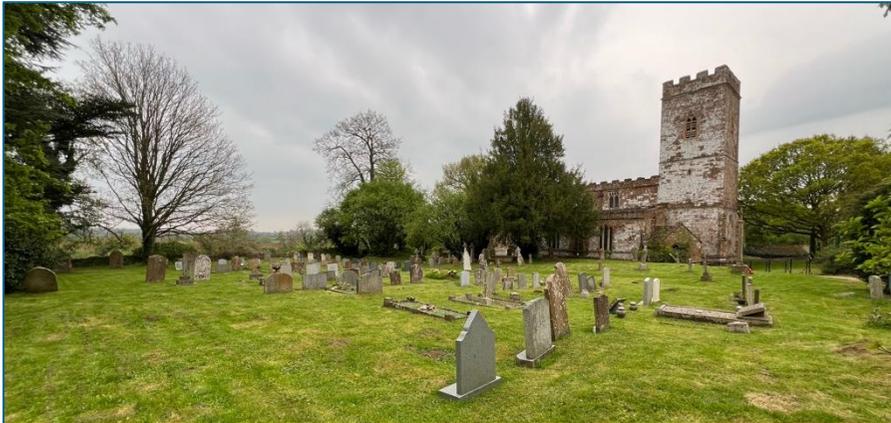
The churchwardens are members of the Hook Norton with Great Rollright and Swerford PCC.

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St Giles', Wigginton

Mission statement of St Giles: To provide a Christian haven at the centre of the community, working with our sister churches, to be responsive to the spiritual needs and preferences of all those seeking spirituality, reassurance and companionship.



Wigginton, Oxfordshire, is a small village in an attractive rural setting, halfway between Banbury and Chipping Norton, on the River Swere. It covers 1,187 acres and is roughly triangular in shape with the river forming one side of the triangle.

The parish is connected to the main road from Hook Norton to Milcombe; it is further connected with South Newington and Swerford by minor roads.

As a compact village with surviving older built fabric (ironstone cottages, historic lanes) it gives a picture of continuity in rural English

settlement, while being accessible to Banbury and the north Cotswolds.

There is a post office van that calls twice a week, and there are regular rounds for milk and newspapers.

A former bus shelter at the middle of the village has been converted into a Swap Stop - a place where villagers can exchange books, DVDs, jigsaws, games, seeds and produce.

The Methodist Chapel hosts the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) for the village.



Chapel Street, Wigginton

The Community

The village comprises some 80 houses with a population of around 200. Whilst a number of the residents are retired, in recent years there has been an increase in families with young children. We have a good mix of long-established families, as well as those who have moved into the area. There is a strong sense of community within the village, in part because there are few second homeowners or short-term rentals, and also due to its compact size.



Wigginton Parish Lunch August 2025

Every other year the church holds a Church Garden Party, which raises money for St Giles. The location rotates amongst the gardens of parishioners. In the intervening years, the church arranges a Parish Lunch, which is always a well-attended event, both by current and former residents of the village. Originally conceived as a fund-raising event, it has become as much as anything an opportunity to gather together, as well as being a celebration of the community.

St Giles also hosts a very popular Coffee morning, led by a member of the PCC, on the last Friday of each month which provides a wonderful setting for tea, coffee and cakes. It culminates at Christmas time, when there is the Carols by Candlelight Event - where all villagers are welcomed into the decorated church and join in celebrating Christmas, by singing carols and enjoying festive treats.

In addition to the Church of St Giles, Wigginton has a Methodist Chapel and a Village Hall that was previously the Village Parochial School.

The Methodist Chapel serves a wide community taking in Banbury, Chipping Norton and surrounding villages. They also hold an annual plant sale, as well as the Great Wigginton Model Railway exhibition each summer.

The Village Hall is run by trustees and is used on a regular basis for community events, children's parties, evening talks, village book club, Parish Council meetings and the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. It also acts as Wigginton's Polling Station for local and national elections.



Carols by Candlelight

Every September the Village Hall Trustees organise the Village Fête which raises money for the Village Hall.

An annual Spring Clean occurs each April arranged by the Parish Council, where villagers come together to wash road signs, litter pick and generally tidy up the village.

Wigginton also benefits from a Fuel Allotment Charity, for which the rector serves as a trustee. The charity can trace its roots to 1795 when fields at the Wigginton Heath crossroads were set aside to compensate landless parishioners for the loss of their right to gather fuel wood pursuant to the Wigginton (Oxfordshire) Inclosure Act.

The Church



St Giles Church

The church of St Giles is Grade I listed and a fine example of medieval architecture in rural Oxfordshire, with multiple periods of work and restoration, whose origins date back to the 13th century. Built of the local ironstone it comprises, chancel, nave, aisles, western tower, and porch set at an angle at the west end of the north aisle. There are two medieval monuments in the chancel, in arch recesses, which have been obscured by the raising of the chancel floor and the insertion of benches. The recumbent knight now on the north side was originally lying on a black marble gravestone on the south side and the effigy of a recumbent man with two small female figures, one on either side, now in the southern recess, was fixed to the outside of the south aisle in the early 18th century. The distinguished Victorian architect John Loughborough Pearson sensitively restored the interior. The Norman & Beard organ was originally installed in 1913 and has been cleaned and repaired over the years.

The most recent quinquennial inspection in 2024 shows the church to be in a generally good state of repair. There are some leadworks to the roof which are currently ongoing and stone walling repairs still to address.

A parishioner with an engineering background has very kindly, and at his own expense, carefully restored the church clock. Although the original date is unknown, its characteristics suggest it was made in the mid-17th century. Rebuilt in 1743 by clockmaker Tobias Gilks of Chipping Norton, it has no clock face; instead, its sound alone marked the passage of time, striking the chancel bell for farm labourers working the surrounding fields, as such it is an excellent example of the social history of the village.

The church is open every day during daylight hours.

The churchyard remains open for burials and is kindly maintained by one of the Parishioners.

The Services

The current pattern of services in St Giles is an 8 o'clock BCP Holy Communion on the second Sunday, a BCP Evensong on the third Sunday and a 10 o'clock Morning Worship on the fourth Sunday of each month. The celebrant and preacher wear cassock, surplice and stole for these services.

Beyond these regular services, the most popular service is a 10 o'clock service of Christmas Day Carols held on Christmas Day. This is typically attended by around 60 or more from Wigginton and the surrounding villages. The service on Easter Sunday is also well attended, with some 40 communicants in 2025.



Snowdrops at St Giles

Other regular services include Mothering Sunday, the St Giles Patronal Festival at the beginning of September and the Harvest Festival service which is usually celebrated at the end of September.

There are currently 17 people on the Electoral Roll of St Giles.

Village funerals generally attract a large local attendance and the Church's role in conducting these is both important and highly valued. Collaboration with the Village Hall enables the provision of extra amenities for this type of gathering.

We are currently seeking a replacement organist since the previous organist decided to step down, after many years of faithful service.

An ecumenical service, in conjunction with Wigginton Methodist church, usually takes place in July each year. The service takes the form of an open-air Songs of Praise service accompanied by the Hook Norton Brass Band.

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Nave inside St Giles

Links

[Hook Norton Village Website](#)

[Wigginton Parish Council](#)

[Great Rollright Village Website](#)

[Swerford Parish Council](#)

[St Peter's Hook Norton Font Cafe](#) (video clip)

[Barb Crowther talks about moving to Hook Norton](#) (video clip)

[LLM Profiles](#)

Drone footage of Hooky

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Benefice of Hook Norton with Great Rollright, Swerford and Wigginton

