



**Wallingford  
Team Ministry**

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell,  
Crowmarsh Gifford  
and Wallingford

Profile 2026: Prepared  
for the appointment of a

# Team Vicar

with both pastoral  
responsibility for the parishes  
of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and  
Crowmarsh Gifford and shared  
team responsibility



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## A close-up photograph of a bouquet of flowers. The bouquet features several purple bell-shaped flowers, white daisy-like flowers with yellow centers, and a single red rose. The flowers are interspersed with green foliage and small, dried, golden-brown seed heads. The bouquet is resting on a light-colored, textured surface, possibly a wall or a piece of fabric, which shows some signs of wear and discoloration.

A wide-angle photograph of the interior of St. Andrew's Church, looking down the nave towards the altar. The church features a high, dark wooden ceiling with exposed beams. The walls are light-colored stone or plaster. On either side of the central aisle, there are rows of dark wooden pews. The central aisle is covered with a red carpet. At the far end of the church, there is an altar area with a large, colorful stained glass window. A chandelier hangs from the ceiling in the center of the nave. The overall atmosphere is bright and open.

Together may we discern your way for the future  
and be further equipped to grow your kingdom in  
this place. Amen





# 1: Foreword from the Archdeacon of Dorchester

Dear potential applicants,

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.

The Wallingford Team is looking for a Team Vicar who will minister alongside the Team Rector with confidence and an approachable, collaborative style. The new minister will inspire those around them with a warm, friendly hopeful approach. The congregations would like the next minister to smile being joyful in their new role. A prayerful minister will be appreciated and one who will care for those around them, reaching out to all to seek to include them in the life of the church.

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 Wallingford Team 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



## 2: Introduction

Could you play a central role in developing Christian life and worship in Oxfordshire? Do you share our vision of being an inclusive church that is open to God and open to all?

The Wallingford Team Ministry is looking for a dynamic and forward thinking Team Vicar, to work as part of a collaborative team of clergy and lay leaders. The parishes offer plenty of scope for innovative working in a traditional setting and the area can provide excellent quality of life and leisure.

We have put together some information to help you decide if you could use your skills in our team. This profile offers you a brief introduction to our team ministry; to its people, its communities and its churches. We hope that it describes us as we are now but also shows you our future hopes and aspirations.

### **a) The Wallingford Team Ministry**

Welcome to the Wallingford Team Benefice of five churches, comprising the historic market town of Wallingford and the villages of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and Crowmarsh Gifford. We are nestled in a beautiful stretch of the River Thames, in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in South Oxfordshire.

Our churches welcome newcomers from all walks of life to all our services and activities. We welcome Christians of all traditions and those with no church background at all.

Wallingford Benefice is in the Wallingford Deanery, part of the Dorchester Archdeaconry in the Diocese of Oxford. The Bishop of Oxford is the Patron.

### **b) Team Rector**

Rev Sarah Nesbitt was licensed as Team Rector in the Wallingford Team Ministry in March 2024. She previously served as Assistant Rector in a benefice in the neighbouring Henley Deanery, where she also served her curacy. Ordained Deacon in 2018 and Priest in 2019, Sarah previously worked in the pharmaceutical industry as a self-employed training consultant for over-the-counter medicines. Sarah is married with two grown up sons, a daughter-in-law and granddaughter; she enjoys walking, paddleboarding, ballet and dressmaking.

### 3: Our aspirations

There are opportunities for our new Team Vicar to help shape our ministry and our relationships with the wider community.

The Team Ministry aspires to be one congregation made up of three distinct parishes, worshipping in different ways in the five churches of the parishes. We work together in a number of ways and areas and are keen to develop this.

In months where there is a fifth Sunday, the Team come together for a Team Communion service, which rotates around the benefice.

There are some examples of where the Benefice works well as a team, for example St Mary's in Wallingford recently hosted a fundraising concert for the St Mary Magdalene (Crowmarsh) renovations.

There has been a sense, however, that the voice of the smaller parishes has been under-represented in the Team. There is an opportunity for the Team to work more closely together and we look for a Team Vicar who will embrace and engage with the villages as well as the town.

There has been significant housebuilding and associated development in all three parishes over the last ten years. There are challenges and God-given opportunities in this ministry. We can do more to reach out, both to those in new communities and to those with established roots, and bring them into the life of the Church.

There is an emphasis on encouraging lay people to identify their gifts and to offer them in the ongoing life of the church. This helps to ensure that the many gifts and resources which God has given us are used appropriately, and to provide as rich a ministry as possible. Our ongoing commitment to this is demonstrated by the participation of some of our lay people in the Diocese's Leading Worship workshops in autumn 2025.

We aspire to be an intergenerational church, where all ages are valued and nurtured in faith. As part of this intergenerational vision, we would like to do more to involve, include and inspire children and families while still ministering effectively to older members of our congregation.

Our mission is underpinned by the diocesan vision which calls us to be a more Christ-like church; to be the Church of the Beatitudes: to be contemplative, compassionate and courageous for the sake of God's world.

We believe that becoming more Christ-like is about who we are called to be, not what we're called to do.

# 4: What we are looking for in our new Team Vicar

## a) Role description

The Team Vicar will minister as part of the Wallingford Team, which aspires to be one congregation across three parishes and five churches, diverse in worship but inclusive and united in mission. This role offers the opportunity to help shape ministry and deepen relationships with the wider community, working collaboratively with clergy, lay leaders, and congregations.

The Team Vicar will play a vital and visible role in strengthening the life of the whole benefice, ensuring the voices of both town and village churches are heard, and supporting lay people to use their God-given gifts. They will embrace opportunities for mission in growing communities, nurture the faith of children and families, and help the churches to become more Christ-like for the sake of God's world.

## b) Key responsibilities

- Lead services across the parishes, celebrating the richness of different worship styles.
- Preach and teach in ways that deepen discipleship and encourage growth in faith.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues to reach out to those in our communities not yet connected to the church, fostering welcome and inclusion and building relationships.
- Encourage creative initiatives that strengthen links with the wider community.
- Help develop and grow existing ministries such as Open the Book and Jesus and Me (JAM), in order to involve and inspire children, families and schools.
- Work collaboratively with clergy colleagues and lay leaders, contributing to shared ministry across the benefice.
- Encourage the gifts of lay people, helping them to discern and offer their ministries in church and community life.
- Strengthen the sense of belonging and representation for the smaller parishes within the Team.
- Work alongside others to ensure pastoral support across the parishes with compassion and integrity.
- Encourage discipleship rooted in prayer, which can help the church community to grow as Christians.

### c) Qualities we are seeking

We are praying for a Team Vicar who is:

- Someone approachable and pastorally sensitive, with integrity, humility, and warmth.
- A skilled listener, eager to inspire, encourage and collaborate with colleagues and lay leaders and to ensure that all voices are heard and valued.
- An imaginative leader, able to support and nurture intergenerational worship and to build relationships across our communities with those who are new to church.
- A clear, confident, and compassionate communicator, in preaching, teaching, and everyday relationships.
- An outwardly focused and mission orientated person, able to engage with the broader community (especially with those who do not yet know of God's love for them).

Alongside these five essential criteria, it would be desirable to have a Team Vicar who is:

- Confident in developing lay-led worship and training initiatives.
- Creative in using music, the arts, or community events as ways of building mission and fellowship.
- Sensitive to rural, semi-rural, and town contexts.

We asked the children at the primary schools in Brightwell and Crowmarsh what qualities they would like to see in a Team Vicar. Their answers included:

'Know how to speak to God and be happy to speak in front of lots of people.'

'Be funny, kind and inclusive.'

'Have a connection with other people, know what they are feeling and how to help them.'

'Be creative in assemblies.'

'Be nice, tolerant and joyful.'



## 5: Support we will offer if you become our Team Vicar

If appointed, you would be part of a team of clergy, led by our Team Rector. This arrangement allows you to seek support with difficult issues, to ask questions and to collaborate.

We are excited to hear your ideas and vision. There will be opportunities for you to be imaginative and innovative, as we move towards our shared goals.

Alongside the Team Rector and retired clergy in the benefice, there is a skilled and conscientious lay community. You would be supported by a full complement of churchwardens alongside specialist Treasurers and Parish Safeguarding Officers.

As outlined in section 3 above, we are committed to encouraging lay people to identify their gifts and to offer them in the ongoing life of the church. This enriches our ministry and also offers valuable support for the clergy.

We expect our clergy to take a day off each week, and a 48 hour break every two months, and we support and encourage regular prayerful retreats.

# 6: Living in our community

## a) Overview

The whole area is an extremely pleasant place in which to live. Not only are the villages and town themselves attractive, but they are also surrounded by beautiful countryside. There are many leisure opportunities and a number of active community organisations and activities.

Wallingford and Didcot (just over six miles away) provide local shopping, while Oxford and Reading are within easy reach (approximately 14 miles away) by bus or car. Wallingford is about equidistant from the M4 and M40 and about 45 miles from London which can be reached by car, bus or by train from Didcot Parkway, Cholsey or Reading.

Many inhabitants commute daily to these locations and also to the various key scientific establishments nearby e.g. at Crowmarsh, Harwell and Culham. Wallingford has a medical practice and a number of dental practices and also a community hospital with a maternity wing; the nearest major hospitals are at Oxford and Reading.

A wide range of schools is to be found across the area, both local authority and independent. Wallingford School is a well-established comprehensive school. Children from the team area also attend secondary schools in Didcot and Woodcote and there are sixth form colleges in Henley and Abingdon.

There are five infant/primary schools in the team area (three of which are Church of England aided or controlled schools). All the schools have received good OFSTED inspection reports. There is also a range of pre-school and nursery provision in the benefice.

## b) Vicarage

The vicarage is situated in a quiet cul-de-sac in Crowmarsh. It is a short walk from St Mary Magdalene church and close to a path into nearby fields. The vicarage has four bedrooms, a spacious kitchen, a newly fitted bathroom and three reception rooms. There is a study close to the front door with access to a downstairs cloakroom. It has a small back garden with a beautiful view. There is a garage and off road parking.

# 7: Team Statistics and information

## a) Ministers and paid employees

- Team Rector: The Reverend Sarah Nesbitt
- Team Vicar
- Self-supporting Associate Priest with Permission to Officiate: The Reverend Janice Chilton
- Permission to Officiate. We have a number of retired clergy who give their time willingly and frequently to officiate at services and other activities, primarily in the Wallingford Parish:
  - The Reverend Sue Booy
  - The Reverend Christopher Evans
  - The Reverend John Hutchinson
  - The Reverend David Rice
  - The Reverend Prof. Christopher Tuckett
  - The Reverend Canon Jonathan Wilmot
- Licensed Lay Ministers, based in the Wallingford parish:
  - Gavin Wood
  - Susie Wilmot
- Authorised Lay Preacher: Prof. Helen King

In addition, Wallingford Parish employs:

- Director of Music - Judith Ward

Finally, Wallingford Parish has a Verger, Fiona Huntingford-Ledger, who assists at weddings and funerals. Beyond this team is a strong network of lay people from all three parishes who are highly active in the church life and who support the churchwardens and clergy in a wide variety of roles.

The Team Council is formed of representatives from each PCC. Its role is to act as an advisory body to help formulate and coordinate the strategy and administration of the parishes in the team and to agree apportionment of the Parish Share each year.

## b) Annual reports 2024

The reports from the three parishes can be found on our [website](#).

## c) Electoral roll 2025

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell	61
Crowmarsh Gifford	34
Wallingford	135

## d) Life events

Over 2024-25:

<b>Baptisms</b>	
Brightwell	4
Crowmarsh	3
Wallingford	8
<b>Weddings</b>	
Brightwell	1
Crowmarsh	0
Wallingford	2
<b>Funerals (church or crematorium)</b>	
Brightwell	6
Crowmarsh	1
Wallingford	20



## e) Current pattern of services

### Sundays

St Leonard's	Wallingford	08:00	Weekly	Holy Communion (BCP)
St Agatha's	Brightwell-cum-Sotwell	09:30	1st Sunday 2nd & 3rd Sundays 4th Sunday	Family Service Parish Communion (CW) Family Communion (CW)
St Mary's	Wallingford	10:15  11:30 10:00  10:00	2nd Sunday   1st & 3rd Sundays  4th Sunday	Family Service, preceded by crafts and followed by Holy Communion (CW) Parish Communion (CW) and Children's Church All-Age Communion (CW)
St Mary Magdalene's	Crowmarsh Gifford	11:00	1st Sunday 2nd & 3rd Sundays 4th Sunday	Family Worship Parish Communion (CW) Family Communion (CW)
St Mary Magdalene's	Crowmarsh Gifford	16:00 or 18:00	Weekly	Evening Prayer (BCP)
St Leonard's	Wallingford	18:30	Weekly	Evensong or Choral Evensong (BCP)

Usually, should a month have a fifth Sunday, this will be a Team Communion service, which rotates around the parishes in turn.

### Mid-week

St Mary's	Wallingford	08:30	Monday-Thursday	Morning Prayer
St Agatha's	Brightwell-cum-Sotwell	09:00	Wednesday	Morning Prayer
St Mary Magdalene's	Crowmarsh Gifford	09:00	Friday	Morning Prayer
St Mary's	Wallingford	11:00	Thursdays	Holy Communion (CW)

### Irregular services

St Peter's, Wallingford	Once a year
St Mary's, Newnham Murren	Churches Conservation Trust, 2-3 services a year)
St James', Brightwell-cum-Sotwell	Irregular

# 8: Brightwell-cum-Sotwell

## a) The twin villages

Brightwell-cum-Sotwell, to the west of Wallingford, is an attractive, rural parish surrounded by fields, orchards, woods and meadows. The villages of Brightwell and Sotwell were joined in 1948 and each had its own church – St Agatha's and St James' – both of which are still in use today. The village has a primary and pre-school, 14th century pub, post office and community shop, village hall and a donkey sanctuary! There are operating farms within the parish. Although there is no industry as such, a number of those living in the parish run businesses from their homes, and there are small businesses based in the village, such as Brightwell Bees and the Bach Herbal Remedy Centre.

People have lived here for over 5000 years and there are buildings in the village dating from the Tudor period onwards. The village is a popular place to live because of its pretty setting, facilities and amenities, and its convenience for Wallingford, Didcot (and hence by train to London), Oxford and the large science facilities at Harwell, Milton Park in Didcot, and Oxford.

The village is a thriving community and we aim to create and strengthen links wherever we can. The ministry of the churches is valued by the community and this is apparent in financial support and attendance at special services, if less so in regular weekly services.

## b) The Churches

Both churches in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell are Grade II\* listed buildings in a conservation area. The burial grounds at both churches are still in use and well maintained by committed teams of volunteers.

**St Agatha's** late 12th century nave and 14th century chancel and aisles, can accommodate a congregation of about 150. There are a few 16th century brasses, some stained glass windows and the 'Millennium Window' which was based on a design by a young member and became a village project. A sound system and loop have been installed. There was major development at St Agatha's in 2012, following local and other fundraising providing a Church Room, toilets and small kitchen facilities. It is used for church meetings, coffee on Sundays and Wednesdays, and is hired out for various meetings at other times. The church is open every day.

**St James'** can accommodate 60-70 people and is in the form of a chapel with a long nave-cum-chancel. The present church of St James' was entirely rebuilt in 1884 on old foundations but incorporating stonework from the 12th to 15th centuries. It has a lovely atmosphere, particularly in the summer – the heating system is unable to heat the building very effectively in the winter and there is no running water.



## c) Service figures

Average service attendance at Sunday services at St Agatha's are approximately 15-20. This varies somewhat when there are Joint or Team Services, and considerably increases for major church festivals. For instance, in 2024, there were 270 at the Christmas Eve Crib Service and 130 on Remembrance Sunday.

Although St James' is not officially designated as a Festival Church by the Diocese, it has been effectively treated as such of late. Reasons for this include the availability of and demands upon clergy; the very limited number of attendees as well as the climatic factors described above.

Occasional and special services continue to be held there, including:

- St James' Patronal Festival
- Christmas Eve Midnight Communion
- Christingle

There are occasional Eucharist services at St James', for instance when families wish to have children baptised there.

Members of the laity participate in services, providing assistance as sidespeople, intercessors, readers and communion assistants. Other volunteers offer their services for flower arranging, cleaning, and serving refreshments on Sundays after the service in a social atmosphere, which is very popular.

## d) Quinquennial inspections

**St Agatha's:** The Quinquennial Inspection of 2023 (received 2024) revealed a need to replace the roof in the church tower which is letting in water and where the underlying wooden beams supporting the (previously failed and repaired) lead roof are damp. There is also a need to attend to water leakage on the North Wall near the church entrance where the roof may need replacing.

Quotations for the work are being obtained for the work through the offices of the inspecting architect. When this is done, consideration will need to be given to what is affordable and how to pay for the necessary work.

Heating issues and redecoration will require consideration in the future. Presently there is an oil-fired boiler, which a 2024 survey confirmed was suitable and still the most economic way to provide heating. The church is cool in summer but can get so cold in the winter that it is sometimes necessary to hold services in the Church Room.

Aside from these issues St Agatha's is generally in a sound state, but does require decoration and internal plaster works.

**St James':** There are ongoing structural issues which are being carefully monitored. The 2024 QI identified a number of issues which have to be managed. Complete refurbishment is not presently possible, given the funds required and the economics of maintaining two churches in a single village.



## e) PCC

The current PCC, covering both churches, has ten lay members (including two Deanery Synod representatives) in addition to the Team Rector.

The parish has two churchwardens and an assistant churchwarden, who manage much of the administrative work of the parish.

The parish is fortunate to have Rev Janice Chilton, an associate priest who lives nearby, conducts many services and is a co-opted member of the PCC.

The PCC faces significant challenges in managing the required building works identified in the last Quinquennial Inspection.

## f) Finances

The annual parish income of approximately £48,000 a year is broadly in line with, or just below, expenditure each year. Brightwell paid our parish share of approximately £32,000 in full last year (note that this was subject to a discount, due to a vacancy in the benefice). Regular giving falls just below this parish share sum.

The PCC holds funds of over £100,000 (derived mainly from generous legacies). However, the cost of the necessary works identified in the latest QI reports is likely to far exceed this amount. Although the community has been very supportive in the past, helping raise funds for the St Agatha's church room extension (over £80,000) and bell restoration (£45,000), this doesn't guarantee future support.

The parish benefits from small annual grants from the Community Association and the Parish Council.

The Fairthorne Trust is a modest local trust supporting the needs of villagers and church members. The Team Vicar and one churchwarden are ex-officio trustees.

## g) Music and bellringing

St Agatha's no longer has a robed choir but an augmented choir comes together for certain events, e.g. the carol service and a summer concert. Music at services is a mixture of traditional hymns and more modern composition. Anthems are sometimes sung at the 9:30 Communion Service. St Agatha's has a tracker action organ and a baby grand piano. St James' also has a baby grand piano.

*Hymns Old and New* is used at St Agatha's, supplemented with a book of more modern Christian songs. *Ancient and Modern* is available at St James'. In the absence of an organist and choir, music is provided via pre-recorded tracks on either the sound system operating in St Agatha's or by portable speaker.

St Agatha's has a ring of eight bells. The small but enthusiastic band of bellringers includes regular worshippers and youngsters. St Agatha's is much in demand by visiting bellringers and the Tower Captain seeks to

ensure that they can visit and that the church bells are heard, in order to reinforce the church's presence in the village.

## **h) The church in the community**

The church Spring Fair in May is a fixture in village life and is well attended and supported by volunteers from within and outside the church community. The takings have increased year on year. Likewise, the Summer Concert, devised and performed by community members, fills St Agatha's. Church members run the tea tent at the Village Fete. Other events and concerts continue to be held periodically in both churches and there is scope to develop this aspect of the churches.

The Wednesday coffee morning in St Agatha's is well attended and valued, particularly by visitors and older members of the community. Traditionally this has been preceded by a Morning Prayer Service, although the two have different constituents.

## **i) Pastoral care**

There is very strong support within the village for the church's activities and fellowship, and for its compassion for those in need.

Communion is offered monthly at Sotwell Hill House, a private residential home for the elderly. A small fellowship group meets regularly to study the Bible and Christian thought.

## **j) Children and Schools**

[Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Primary School](#) is Church of England Voluntary Aided, and has approximately 180 children on the roll. There are two foundation governors from the church and the church plays an active role in the school, with clergy taking regular assemblies and lessons. This provides the main contact point with children and young families.

Strengthening and developing the children's and young people's work in the parish from this base is a key part of our vision for the future. Six school services are held in St Agatha's each year. The whole school attends St Agatha's at the end of term, accompanied by teachers, parents, relations and carers.

There has been a small and intermittent Sunday school in recent years, but this is not currently running.

## 9: Crowmarsh Gifford

### a) The village

Crowmarsh Gifford is set in an agricultural area, near to both the Thames and the Chilterns. Crowmarsh Gifford is joined with the market town of Wallingford by an ancient bridge. The settlement gradually expanded away from the river, but there was no major growth until the twentieth century. Since 1970, the number of homes has increased substantially; two large housing estates have been built in the parish in the last five years.

We have a number of small to medium businesses located in and on the boundaries of the village including suppliers of agricultural machinery and building supplies. Also within the parish are a number of world-renowned organisations specialising in water, the environment and climate change. These organisations help shape environmental regulation, research and innovation.

The village has good road and bus connections with Didcot, Oxford and Reading, where mainline railway stations are located.

Amenities in the village include two pubs and a number of popular and well-used allotments. We are very fortunate in that we have two public venues for village recreation. Firstly, there is a village hall which is used during the day and most evenings by a wide range of groups and organisations. Secondly there is a pavilion and recreation ground, which offers a dedicated space for a range of outdoor sports, a nature reserve and children's play facilities. Beside the river there is an open-air swimming pool and children's splash park.

### b) The church

**St Mary Magdalene:** This is a Grade I listed Norman building, which has been in existence since 1140. As it now stands it is practically in its original form. It consists of a Norman chancel and nave, built of massive rubble walls with stone facings with a rafter roof and tie beams. An early English transept was added about 1240 on the north side, and a vestry now used as a kitchen was added in the 1840s.

Above the west door, two circular lights and a plain round headed Norman window are unusual, and have been called the eyes, nose and mouth of the church. Also at the west end is a wooden bell tower, containing eight tubular bells, which were refurbished in 2008. The lych gate was erected in honour of the dead of WW1, and the names of those who fell in WW2 have been added.

In September 2025 we began major renovation works at the church, reordering the west end and providing a long-awaited toilet, kitchen and servery. We are holding services in the village pavilion, while the work is in progress.





### **c) Other Anglican Church**

St Mary's, Newnham Murren lies within the parish boundary. This is a lovely flint church near the river, and is in the care of the Oxfordshire Churches Conservation Trust. We hold two or three candlelit services here a year, which are always well attended. It has no power or running water. It is open during the day and well-cared for by volunteers.

### **d) Service Figures**

Average regular Sunday morning service attendance is 19, and eight at Evening Prayer.

There are no mid-week services, except on Feast Days and other special occasions (e.g. an Ash Wednesday service, which alternates between Crowmarsh and Brightwell). We say the office of Compline each evening during Holy Week, and use the service of Easter Vigil and Renewal of Baptismal Vows on Easter eve.

Members of the laity participate in services, providing assistance as sidespeople, intercessors, readers and communion assistants. Other volunteers offer their services for flower arranging, cleaning, and serving refreshments on Sundays after the service in a social atmosphere, which is very popular.

### **e) Quinquennial inspection**

The exterior of St Mary Magdalene is in good order. The Quinquennial Inspection from 2024 had no items of great report to offer, other than damp, which has been an item for many years. This may be connected with the church being built on marshland.

### **f) PCC**

The PCC consists of five members plus two Deanery Synod representatives, a Treasurer and two Churchwardens. We meet on a regular basis. Members stand for as long as they wish to, and are elected at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.

### **g) Finance**

Crowmarsh PCC has run on a modest and stable cash balance. This has been maintained by regular contributions and collections from the congregation with additional regular fund-raising activities supported by the local community. Crowmarsh PCC meets its obligations to the parish share of approximately £34,000 per year.

In recent years a great deal of effort has gone into raising funds for a toilet and servery at St Mary Magdalene. The church has raised over £50,000, which has been supplemented with grants, trust and donations to meet the target figure of £136,000.

## **h) Music**

We do not currently have a choir, although Crowmarsh choristers have recently sung with the choir at St Mary's in Wallingford during Team services. Since we do not have an organist, we play accompaniment to hymns digitally.

## **i) The church in the community**

We hold a monthly community cafe in the village hall, which attracts villagers of all ages. The Patronal Festival service is usually followed by a Parish Lunch; church members support the School Fayre on their various fund-raising efforts.

A member of the congregation organises two local history walks each summer, which are followed by cream teas in the church. We also support the annual Ride and Stride, which raises funds for the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust.

At Christmas, a lively Village Carols Service takes place in church. There are contributions from individuals and groups, which adds to the evening's celebrations. A service of "Readings and Carols for the Business Community", followed by a simple lunch of soup and a roll is well supported by those who work nearby.

## **j) Children and schools**

[Crowmarsh Gifford Church of England Primary School](#), which has just over 200 pupils, has a good relationship with the church. Children attend church for Christmas, Easter and Harvest Services.

Members of the congregation have created an Open The Book team, which visits the school regularly. The Team Vicar (or a churchwarden during the interregnum) leads collective worship in the school on a regular basis. Two members of the congregation are school governors. The school has an active PTA, which helps keep the school at the centre of village life.

# 10: Wallingford

## a) Wallingford – the town

Wallingford developed around an important crossing point of the River Thames and has a rich history, including a prominent role for Wallingford castle (now destroyed) in the civil war. Today, it remains a vital centre within South Oxfordshire, serving not just residents directly, but also those in the surrounding parishes.

Wallingford benefits from three weekly markets: charter market, local producers' market, and country market, plus other themed markets throughout the year. It has a variety of shops and there are several small industrial sites. Many local people commute to Oxford, Reading or London and there are a number who work in science centres at Culham, Harwell and Crowmarsh Gifford.

Wallingford has several homes for the elderly as well as sheltered accommodation. The Community Hospital provides inpatient rehabilitation and palliative care, a maternity ward and a range of outpatient clinics. The site also houses Wallingford Medical Practice. Wallingford also has a small theatre and cinema, run by volunteers, and many recreational organisations. There are a number of pubs, wine bars and restaurants.

## b) Wallingford – the Churches

Both of our open churches are Grade II\* listed buildings and are in a conservation area. The churchyards are closed and under the management of South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC).

**St Mary's** (full name: St Mary le More): The date of the original foundation is unknown, but it is generally acknowledged that the first Christian building was Norman in character. It was rebuilt at the end of the 13th century before being largely reconstructed in 1854.

Renewal work in 2009 delivered underfloor heating and stacking chairs to replace the former pews, providing a very adaptable large open space. This reordering has allowed St Mary's to become a versatile community space. It is kept open during the day, and also let out to local organisations and groups. Uses include: concerts, choir rehearsals, history society meetings, markets and exhibitions.

St Mary's has a sound system with a hearing loop. Sunday Communion services are livestreamed on YouTube, which allows those unable to attend in person to still participate in shared worship. Services are based on Common Worship, with the exception of the Family Service which is a shorter, more informal service devised by the leader of the service.

**St Leonard's:** St Leonard's is the oldest church in Wallingford and stands close to the Thames Path. There has been a church here since

at least the Saxon period, though it is possible that the first church on the riverside site dates back as early as the 6th century. From 1849, the church was rebuilt in Gothic Revival style, preserving sections of the original Saxon building.

St Leonard's has a sound system with a hearing loop; services are based on the Book of Common Prayer.

### **c) Other Anglican Church**

St Peter's Church, also Grade II\* listed, is now under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust. It is still used for an annual Evensong service to celebrate St Peter's Day and is hired out for events by Churches Conservation Trust.

### **d) Service Figures**

St Mary's Sunday morning services are typically attended by about 70, with around 5 children. Our monthly family services attract around 15 to 20 children, with 50-60 adults. We offer regular activities for children during Sunday services which are run by volunteers (see more below), and we share tea and coffee after each Sunday morning service. We also have members of the congregation involved in various ways in the services, including as sidespeople, readers, intercessors and communion assistants. St Mary's also holds a service of morning prayer on Monday to Thursday mornings, which around 5 people typically attend. A variety of special services are held throughout the year with around 150 attending our Easter Sunday service and 100 at each of two Christmas eve crib services.

St Leonard's has an average attendance of around 10 people for morning holy communion and 30-40 (including choir) for evensong.

### **e) Quinquennial Inspections**

Quinquennial inspections for both of our churches were carried out in early autumn 2021.

St Leonard's: The building was reported to be in a reasonable condition in 2021 and all urgent actions highlighted in the report have now been carried out.

St Mary's: The 2021 inspection flagged concerns that required careful and thorough investigation and guidance from professional experts. We have, where reasonably and practically possible, completed the urgent actions and are working through lower priority tasks. A significant lead replacement project has recently been completed (encompassing work on both churches). Although not included in the QI report, it is worth highlighting here another significant buildings project, which is the plan to replace the boiler with heat pumps (this now has DAC approval).

In early 2023, a Fabric Committee was created to address QI actions for the two churches. The group arranged an interim meeting with the quinquennial architect in June 2024 to gain direction on potential future repairs to aid development of a long term strategy for both churches. The meeting has also assisted with prioritising more immediate actions.

## **f) PCC**

The current PCC has 13 lay members, one Deanery Synod representative, one General Synod representative and a Licensed Lay Minister, in addition to the two churchwardens and incumbent. We normally meet five or six times per year with the standing committee meeting regularly in-between.

We have subgroups within the PCC responsible for various focus areas: Worship & Spirituality, Social Responsibility and Outreach & Nurture. We also have a Choir Committee; a Fabric Committee; a communications team; and representatives to the team council which connects the churches in the parish. We are also introducing a group to further develop our commitment to cherish God's earth and care for our environment.

## **g) Finance**

The financial situation of the parish of Wallingford is very stable, with the total funds held at the end of 2024 standing at just under £500k. Most years we live within our means, with income of £217k in 2024 running slightly ahead of expenditure. The small budget surplus was used to fund charitable donations and to replenish reserves.

Wallingford always meets its Parish Share obligations, and in recent years has made grants to Crowmarsh parish to enable it to pay its Share in full as well. The Share, as well as all other regular running costs of the church, is funded from regular income (mostly standing orders). The Treasurer gives an annual presentation to the congregations at both St Mary's and St Leonard's to explain the state of the parish finances. When a boost to giving has been needed, the presentation has been linked to a stewardship campaign to which the congregation has responded very positively.

Data on 2024 income/expenditure can be found in the Annual Report under 'Policies and PCC minutes' [here](#). We recently secured funding in grants and donations (from individuals and organisations including The Friends of St Mary's & St Leonard's) which provided a significant part of the cost required for the recent the lead replacement project. Looking forward, we are beginning a programme to raise funds for the boiler replacement project. Other recent projects have included work on the tower, installation of LED lighting and the purchase of a new piano.



## **h) Music and bellringers**

Wallingford Parish Church has a robed choir of about 30 adult and 10 junior members. On all but one Sunday a month the choir sings at the 10:00 Parish Communion in St Mary's Church, leading the congregation in four hymns and a sung communion setting. They also sing an anthem. On usually the second Sunday of the month the junior choir sings at the Family Service. They are not robed for this as it is a less formal service; they lead the congregation in four songs and sing their own piece. The choir sings Evensong every Sunday at St Leonard's Church. Once a month this is Choral Evensong, which features a composed setting of the canticles, as well as an anthem, accompanied psalm and a composed setting of the responses (ferial in Advent and Lent). A visiting organist may be invited to play for this service. Most evensongs are Sung Evensong in which the canticles are chanted, and the psalm is unaccompanied.

The choir sing at a variety of extra services such as weddings, funerals and carol services. They usually perform large-scale work on Good Friday (such as Somervell's *The Passion of Christ*, and sections of Handel's *Messiah*) and on Remembrance Sunday (settings of the *Requiem* by composers such as Fauré, Mozart and Rutter). They also enjoy regular cathedral visits. These have, in recent years, included visits to Salisbury, St Albans, and Christ Church, Oxford.

The church band plays once a month at the Family Service, including several string and wind instruments, with support from the piano.

St Mary's has a ring of 10 bells, and a team of 14 ringers, including some newcomers who are learning the ropes. The ringers hold a weekly practice and Sunday ringing for two services, as well as arranging outings to other towers. The bells are also rung for weddings, Midnight Mass, New Year's Eve and other occasions such as Remembrance Day.

## **i) The church in the community**

Refreshments are offered after the Sunday morning service at St Mary's, and coffee and cakes are sold on Friday and Saturday mornings, alongside the local markets which take place either in the town or the church on those days. These provide a source of income, as well as an opportunity to welcome all visitors to the church. A number of regular and ad hoc activities take place through the year: in 2025 we held an autumn season of 'Fascinating Talks', given by local speakers and addressing topics of general interest such as social justice. We have also enjoyed a summer picnic in a parishioner's garden, a parish cathedral visit to hear the choir sing, Harvest Brunch, a Newcomers' Afternoon Tea, and making posies with the local brownies for Mothering Sunday. We also take part in events which link into the community such as opening St Leonard's church and churchyard in the recent Wallingford open gardens days, and offering refreshments and a quiet space for BunkFest (a huge, free access, family-friendly community festival).

We have held various Christmas events in recent years. These have included Christmas Tree Festivals, in which local or church-based

groups each decorate their own tree along a theme (recently using paper, recyclable trees!); and Celebrations of Light, which included decorating the church with hundreds of lights and stars. Both events have included a variety of activities during Advent which were open to the community, e.g. inviting those from local care homes, children's events etc. These events rely heavily on volunteers providing time and in some years, we have opted for smaller events that have fewer demands on volunteer time.

## **j) Life events**

We believe it is important to engage with people at key events in their lives, regardless of whether they are involved with the Church or not. We have therefore introduced a number of initiatives to stay linked such as sending Baptism anniversary cards and inviting the family back for Family Services or to receive the candle and be welcomed by the congregation if the candidate was baptised outside a service, and keeping the parents informed about our toddler group and baby singing activities etc. We keep in touch with wedding couples by inviting them to special services such as Easter and Christmas and letting them know when their banns will be read, sending a wedding day card and first anniversary card. We endeavour to support the bereaved, sending a bereavement card and inviting them to follow-on services such as All Souls and Longest Night at Christmas; we also invite them to hang a star on our Tree of Remembering during Advent to remember their loved ones.

## **k) Children and Schools**

Our children, young people and families are an important part of our church community. We previously had a children's worker who ran a number of activities. Since her departure, activities for young people have continued through a group of volunteers. These include JAM (Jesus and Me), where children spend time engaging with bible stories two Sundays a month; and a Family Service once a month which is preceded by craft activities which are enthusiastically received!. Outside of the regular Sunday activities, there is also a baby singing group and Tiny Toes toddler group. We recently supported a confirmation of a group of young people, who are continuing to meet regularly. Other ad hoc activities are run on occasion, including a Nature Trail, organised in conjunction with the community's Wild About Wallingford group and held in St Leonard's churchyard alongside the town's wider open gardens event.

There is a comprehensive school and three infant/junior schools. We offer collective worship at St Nicholas School every two weeks. In the other infant/junior schools, we have also been invited to lead collective worship at Fir Tree Junior School for seasonal occasions. St John's enjoyed a whole school carol service in St Mary's last Christmas. We are working to improve engagement with the comprehensive school, Wallingford School.

# 11: The Deanery Perspective

The churches of St Mary-le-More and St Leonard's in Wallingford, with St Agatha's & St James' in Brightwell-cum-Sotwell and St Mary Magdalene in Crowmarsh Gifford, form the Wallingford Team and are part of the Wallingford Deanery in the Diocese of Oxford. We believe the Wallingford Team and the deanery is an exciting and growing place to be with a mix of market town and rural life coupled with a rapidly increasing population across the deanery.



In our two towns, our rural communities and in new housing across the Deanery there are great opportunities to develop teams, reach out to others and evolve new worshipping communities. We currently have 19 churches and 10 stipendiary clergy serving alongside a house-for-duty priest and lay, self-supporting and retired ministers. The Deanery is one of 11 deaneries in the Archdeaconry of Dorchester which covers most of the county of Oxfordshire, apart from the city of Oxford itself.

Member churches in Wallingford Deanery have collectively developed a Mission Action Plan which identifies some of our shared priorities:

- Ministry to children, young people and families
- Outreach to new and settled communities
- Appropriate patterns of worship
- Ministry in the Greater Didcot area which is set to again double in numbers through new housing over the next 10-15 years.



The Deanery aims to support mission and ministry across the area, facilitating thought-provoking Synods and Chapters, inviting experienced practitioners to speak on topics that stimulate our practice and sense of God's call. Recent Synods have explored the nature of being church and our ministry together. Mutual support through sharing, prayer and Bible reflection is important to us.

In common with deaneries across the Diocese, Wallingford Deanery has a designated role of allocating parish share to the Benefices, bringing local knowledge to the Diocese. The Diocese makes available grants to deaneries, benefices and churches from a Common Development Fund to assist community mission projects in the deanery. We encourage such collaborative visions of mission and the lived presence of Jesus in each local area.

We look forward to welcoming the new Team Vicar as they work alongside the Team Rector and other ministers, encouraging the churches in the Wallingford Team to grow deeper in their faith and share the love of Jesus. The churches are each different but have many gifts to offer and a shared passion to connect with local communities.

**Area Dean: Revd Dr Andy Lord**

**Lay Chair: Vaughn Lawful**

[Link to Deanery Annual Report](#)