

Parish Profile and Role Specification

Where we are



The Parish of Stony Stratford with Calverton serves the bustling Buckinghamshire town of Stony Stratford, the rural village of Calverton (comprising Calverton, Upper, Middle and Lower Weald), the Milton Keynes suburbs of Galley Hill and Fullers Slade, plus as the Western expansion of Milton Keynes continues, the emerging and growing communities of Fairfield and Whitehouse.

Who we seek

We are seeking a full-time Parish priest to spiritually support and lead us through the next chapter of growth and change in our Parish.

We are praying for a priest who has the vision, energy, enthusiasm and ability to inspire, equip and work with us as our community expands.

Where and who we are, spiritually

As a family in Christ, we enjoy worshipping with Anglo-Catholic ceremony in our services. This has enriched our worship by bringing together Christians of many different denominations and cultures from around the world. In 2024 the parish rescinded its Resolution under the *House of Bishops Declaration* after a long period of prayerful discernment and consultation following the retirement of the most recent incumbent. Please see Appendix 1 'our recent history' for more information about this chapter in our spiritual journey as a parish. We have just stepped over a crossroads, we need a priest to love and live with us and help us heal.

Contents

Where we are.....	1
Who we seek.....	1
Where and who we are, spiritually	1
The Bishop's Foreword.....	3
Welcome from the PCC.....	4
The role, our expectations and the support we provide	6
Challenges and Opportunities.....	7
Changes in the Parish.....	7
New Development Areas	7
Children, families and young people's ministry	7
At SMSG.....	7
At All Saints.....	8
What do we have already.....	8
Our Vision for the Future	9
Our town and local area – what it offers	10
The Deanery	11
The Diocese	12
Appendices.....	13
Appendix 1 - Our recent history.....	13
Appendix 2 - Our Churches	14
St Mary and St Giles, Stony Stratford.....	14
All Saints, Calverton.....	19
Appendix 3 - The New Areas	21
Location and population	21
What we have done so far	21
Appendix 4 - Our Church School	22
From the Headteacher:	22
Appendix 5 - Our Team	23
PCC.....	23
Young people.....	23
Music	23
Parish Admin Team.....	23
Appendix 6 - The Rectory	24
Appendix 7 - Our Finances	25

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Gwen Yates, Anna Page, Anne de Broise, David Riding, Fiona Collins, Bob Scarff, Marilyn Bazeley, Ruth Harvey, Jill Barby, Richard Hearne, Adam Palmer (SMSG school headteacher)

The Bishop's Foreword

Four things impressed me on a recent visit to Stony Stratford and Calverton for the Sunday services. The first was the quality of the lay leadership who have effectively steered the parish through a two year vacancy and considerable change. The second was the number and diversity of the congregation in terms of age, gender and ethnicity. This did not feel at all to be a parish which was struggling but one which is full of life. The third is the sense of potential moving forward. The fourth is the needs of the wider parish with a significant and growing congregation on the northern edge of our largest, newest and fastest growing city, Milton Keynes.

Stony Stratford and Calverton is already a vibrant parish with the potential to be a centre of mission and renewal with much to bring to the mission of God in the wider city. We need a priest of maturity, energy and vision to offer love and care and imagination to ministry in this place for the sake of present and future generations. You will find a deeply collaborative deanery and parish and will be supported in your ministry by an excellent Area, Deanery and Parish teams.



+Steven Oxford



Welcome from the PCC

Welcome to our parish!

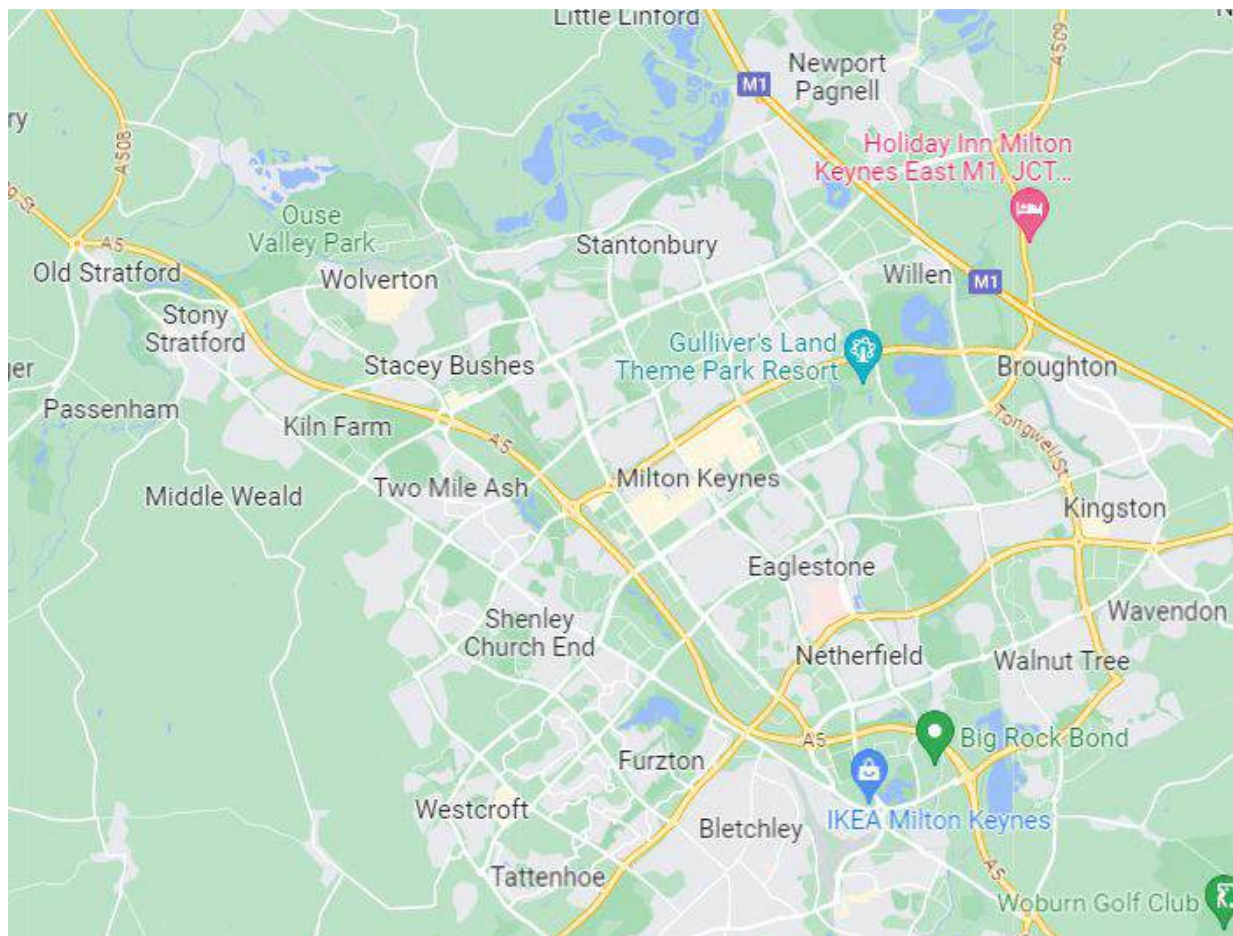
This document is an introduction to who we are as a parish family, the role description of the priest we are seeking to be our new Rector, the context and location of our parish and information about our churches.

Our parish is situated on the north western edge of the expanding new city of Milton Keynes, yet is also an ancient and modern meeting place for travellers and residents with many different lived journeys and experiences. Our congregation reflects some of that diversity, with people who have lived in the area all their lives, others who have moved and lived here for some time and others who have arrived more recently.

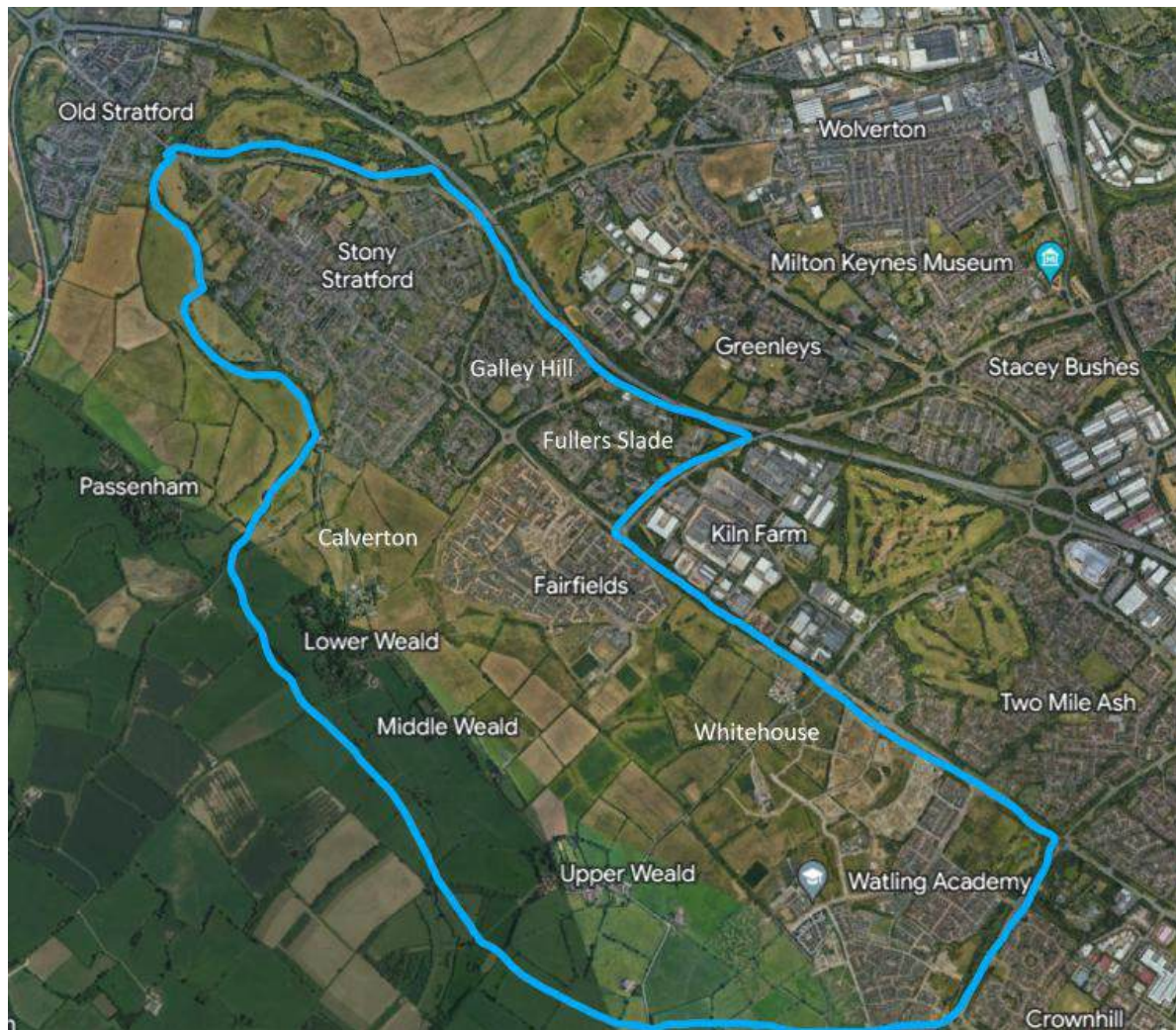
Our renewed parish roll in April 2025 lists the names of 122 people. Some of those who come to worship regularly in our churches are not yet on the parish roll. Some of our parish family lives beyond the parish area, in other parts of Milton Keynes and beyond.

Music plays an important part of our worship in the parish. Our part time Organist / Director of Music is paid an honorarium.

Our parish family includes people with a diverse range of skills, abilities and needs. We look forward to working with our new Rector to help us keep the heart of our parish vibrantly alive and responsive to the spiritual and practical needs of those who live in the parish.



Area map of Milton Keynes (Google maps)



Aerial map of the area, with the parish boundaries roughly outlined in blue (Google maps)



Fairfields



Whitehouse



Lower Weald terrace



Stony Stratford

The role, our expectations and the support we provide

We are seeking in our new Rector a person who can:

Lead prayerful, uplifting worship

- understands Anglo-Catholic and mainstream Anglican traditions of the Church of England and can build connections with other local churches of different denominations

Offer gentle, compassionate pastoral care to people of all ages

- an outward-looking, approachable person who is able to engage with those who have little or no meaningful experience of Jesus or spiritual life
- has leadership and pastoral gifts and is seeking God's heart and guidance for the future

Connect confidently with the new estates and wider community

- a visionary person who can discern new possibilities in future opportunities while pragmatically recognising and working with realities and uncertainties in changing times

Develop a program of Christian learning and discipleship and bring humour, patience and wisdom as we continue to grow as disciples

- a prayerful soul to lead us through the changing landscape of the twenty-first century by encouraging the Christ-like in others and seeing God's presence in what they encounter
- a Missional priest who will enjoy joining in with activities in the area and enhance their spiritual dimensions, building more integration of church and community

Work collaboratively with our committed PCC and congregation

- a servant-hearted priest with a sense of humour who is able to provide kind, effective and collaborative leadership
- a visible supporter of many local church events who welcomes newcomers at church services and events

Help us grow our ministry among children, young people and families and develop our partnership with St Mary and St Giles CE Primary School

- a teacher who encourages and inspires the congregation through the word and spirit of God and involves people of all ages in the services, actively reaching out to children and families, to bring the Gospel into everyday life
- brings the love of God to the wider community by encouraging the 'priesthood of all believers', giving the congregation confidence in their gifts while encouraging frugality in the use of the earth's resources

There is much to do in the parish. While we need our Rector to have enthusiastic energy for the role and the ability to delegate, our aim is to support our Rector by helping to draw clear boundaries for availability and individual responsibilities for different tasks. Therefore, we need our Rector to value and enjoy working with others collaboratively, including working closely with the Parish Safeguarding Officer to help create a safer church.

We have several parishioners with administrative and practical talents to complement the spiritual, pastoral, leadership and teaching ministry of our Rector. For example, our admin team prepares and prints the weekly service/newsletter sheets and occasional service booklets which need input from the Rector but do not need to be compiled by the Rector. The SMSG and All Saints churchwardens compile rotas for readings, prayers, servers (at SMSG), those welcoming others to church and serving refreshments after the services. The parish website is looked after by two members of the parish (one of whom is on the admin team).

Challenges and Opportunities

Changes in the Parish

The parish holds several identities in tension. Whilst Stony Stratford and Calverton have shared a parish priest for a number of years their congregations maintained distinct identities, one urban, the other rural/farming, and dispersed.

Calverton comprises a number of settlements without an identifiable community focus except the church and the pub.

In the 1960's St Mary and St Giles was created by combining two congregations of distinctly different traditions. Both were Anglo-Catholic in their beliefs, but St Giles was 'nearer to the centre', and St Mary the Virgin (the building now belongs to the Greek Orthodox Church) was more elaborate in its catholic practices. Some tensions arising from this combination still exist within the town congregation.

The combined Parish of Stony Stratford with Calverton was created on 1st January 2012.



St Mary & St Giles church, Stony Stratford



All Saints church, Calverton

New Development Areas

Recently the fields between Calverton and Watling Street have been developed for housing – the new areas of Fairfields and Whitehouse. Some work has been done to take the word of God there and encourage residents to feel welcome in the churches but this remains an opportunity for a mission-hearted priest to lead. Some cooperation with the adjacent parish of Watling Valley has been discussed but we are still at early stages with this endeavour.

Children, families and young people's ministry

We know we have to become a more outward looking parish but we need help doing it. We are hoping our new Rector might have some experience of working in a parish with a large, diverse demographic and will help us explore many different ideas so that we can meet the needs of our children, young families and young people in our parish.

At SMSG

We have a blossoming Young Christians group run by a group of young Mums and one Grandma! The children range from tiny tots to older children. We haven't had a Rector for a very long time and we have been using our present resources for ages (and ages)! We need help to explore other options aside from the main book so that we have some more variety. We have looked at some options ourselves but experience of them would really help us choose which options are

right. We would like the opportunity to deliver to more age groups at once either in resources available or “people” and experience of what works in other places.

Years ago we were able to have separate age groups which we wouldn’t be able to achieve at the moment with just the 4 of us. We would like the opportunity and support to do more to engage with the wider local community such as Christingle services etc like we have had in the past or separate “extra” events like this for the children of the parish.

At All Saints

We would love to have a Sunday school at All Saints, we have the space allocated, we are bursting with ideas and we can ask the PCC for funds but we have no families. We have a lovely peaceful Thursday morning service which would be ideal for stressed Mums, or Dads, or Grandparents with their little ones, but location is a problem. They either have to walk from Stony which means crossing a dangerous road and following a precarious path to the church, or driving there, or walking across a muddy field dodging the odd cow!

We are not expecting the new Rector to build a road, but help with putting pressure on ‘someone’ to have a proper path across the field would be wonderful. Not sure what we will do about the cows though! There has been talk about trying to get a minibus.

What do we have already

We have two wonderful churches in very different locations and each with its own clear identity. One is in the centre of town and is open all day. Our Music for All events bring in a large number of people who may not visit the church otherwise, but we need other ways for families and young people to know that they can ‘drop in’ to the church without necessarily having to ‘go’ to a service. This is where a Rector who has experience of similar locations can help us. All Saints church, out in the country, is where we have our lovely events – such as the September fete, the Heritage Day, the Christmas tree festival etc. The church is very popular with weddings – and burials!

Across both churches, we have wrestled with the theological position of who is called to the ordained life. While difficult, this has improved our biblical thinking and its application to everyday life. But it has also highlighted gaps in our understanding of current theological matters. Across the congregations, there are lifelong and recent Christians. As we journey along our Christian lives together, seeking to disciple those beyond the church, we will need a Rector who will support our discipleship, theological and sacramental journeys so that we “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of [our] mind.” Ro12:2

Alongside our own Christian development we want to explore different ways of reaching children through the local schools. We have a natural connection with the church school but there are three other schools at primary level and two secondary schools with which we need to connect.

We know that children and young people today are experiencing poor mental health and we also know that having a faith is a protective factor; therefore, finding a way of meeting the spiritual needs of children and young people is vital.

We used to join together with the other denominations in town for special events like Christian Aid Week. We can join hands again for the benefit of our young people.

We have an exciting future ahead and we hope the new Rector will enable us to meet this challenge.

Our Vision for the Future

We envisage our new Rector will help us prioritize what to work on first of the following aspirations for our vision for what our parish life might be like in 5 years' time.

We would like our churches to have bigger congregations on Sundays than currently, both churches to include a full range of ages. To do this will mean connecting even more actively than we already do with the people living in our parish:

- For our churches to be integral to the new housing developments as part and parcel of what they do. This means listening to gain understanding and engaging with local area cultures.
- For our churches to be a central part of local events in the Parish, working with the local business association in Stony Stratford (and in the new areas) and other community groups to help make things happen.
- To regularly hold church services in local community centres (Fullers Slade, Fairfields, Whitehouse and Galley Hill).
- We may need to create a Parish 'bus service' to help people get to events, doing this in ways which are practical and supportive.
- We want to build much closer links with the local schools making a virtuous circle with church and schools. It is essential to build trust between the churches, schools, parents and children. We wish to build pastoral outreach with all the local schools, which is 'done with' not 'done to' those who live in those areas. This is especially important for the South site of St Mary & St Giles CE Primary School which has high levels of social deprivation. The local schools are:
 - **Primary:**
St Mary & St Giles CE Primary school (Stony Stratford, Galley Hill, Fullers Slade), Russell Street School (Stony Stratford), Fairfields Primary School (Fairfields), Whitehouse Primary School (Whitehouse), (Calverton Primary School is planned for Whitehouse according to <https://www.explorefw.org.uk/whitehouse/>)
 - **Secondary:**
The Watling Academy (Whitehouse) is the only secondary school in our parish, however children living in the parish attend other local secondary schools (such as The Radcliffe School in Wolverton) so we need to work with other parishes if we want to do any project involving those schools)
- We are exploring options for developing an inclusive and welcoming Youth Ministry for the whole parish.
- We would like to add a Sunday school at All Saints Church.
- As music is integral to our way of worship, we wish to harness this in our outreach. This would include supporting, encouraging and extending our existing musical mission with schools. This would include more actively using RE and Music resources (hosted on the Music for All @ SMSG website) developed during the Heritage Lottery Funded organ restoration project and providing regular opportunities for schools to use our church buildings as performance spaces and for worship.
- We aim to develop a group for men to mutually support each other's growth in faith.
- We would like to build closer Ecumenical partnerships with other local churches to share perspectives, lectures and develop meditation practice to gain insights of other traditions.
- We wish to be a training parish again as we have a Curate's house and a growing population.
- We want to complete the Greater Access Project for SMSG church to provide equitable and better accessibility to the building for those using mobility aids.
- We aim to pay our Parish Share in full by 2027.

We need our new Rector to join in wholeheartedly with helping us achieve this vision.

Our town and local area – what it offers

Stony Stratford and Calverton is picturesque and varied. The town has an active town council <https://www.stonystratford.gov.uk>, many active community social groups who run a variety of events throughout the year for the community. The Town Council owns the public Library located beside St Mary & St Giles church, where some community events are hosted. York House at the other end of the town also hosts many town events. Calverton has a public house called The Shoulder of Mutton and some beautiful local walks.

There are riverside walks and conservation areas with bird hides in the town and surrounding countryside.

Fairfields and Whitehouse have local walks and play parks. It is possible to walk across the fields from Fairfield to All Saints church.

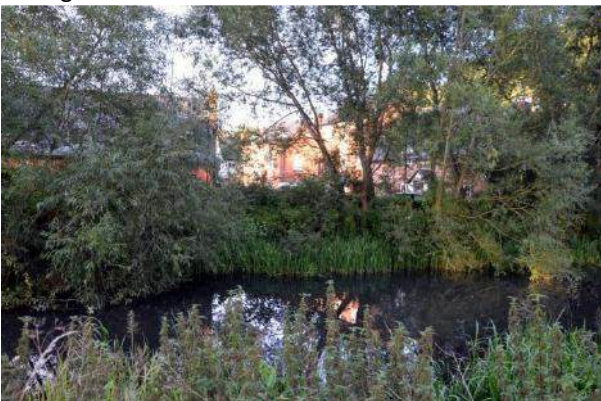
Within the unitary authority of Milton Keynes there are excellent employment, leisure and retail facilities, good rail links to London and Birmingham, bus services plus plenty of green spaces managed by The Parks Trust.



Cottages in Calverton



Park in Whitehouse



River Great Ouse near the Rectory, Stony Stratford



Playpark in Fairfield



Millfield, Stony Stratford

The Deanery

Milton Keynes is a wonderful city, a fantastic place to live and this is an exciting time for ministry in the city. We are praying for you as you consider the Parish of Stony Stratford with Calverton.

As is mentioned with clarity and kindness in this profile, the parish has been on a profound journey over the past couple of years. These discussions and decisions are of course often difficult and painful. Any priest arriving to work with the churches will of course need to be a shepherd of sheep who need and deserve some care. But as you will have seen in this profile, the sheep are not laying in a corner licking wounds or feeling sorry for themselves. There is a remarkable and exciting level of Missional energy and hopefulness bursting from both congregations as they consider their role in the mission of God in Stony and Calverton. This is encouraging and fills me with great optimism for the future of the Church and the churches.

MK Deanery has also had a year or two of transition, with more to come. As you will read in all your research about Milton Keynes, there is much that is 'unique' about the city - ministry here is no different. From the inception of the new town in the 1960's, Local Ecumenical Partnerships were established across MK which saw ministry shared collaboratively between the mainline denominations. The legacy of this is genuine collegiality and friendship between partner ministers and congregations as they share in Kingdom work. This creates a unique context for ministry, and although Stony Stratford and Calverton is not in an LEP, a minister here has the benefit of friendships across denominational lines.

As well as the benefits of ecumenical ministry however we must acknowledge the pitfalls and troubles which have been experienced as our churches go through similar struggles to others across the country in recent years. As Anglicans we are under-resourced significantly in number of clergy working in the city, and the obvious repercussions of this are widely felt. Following a change in Deanery leadership this year, our Synod recently unanimously adopted a new Mission Action Plan for the next 10 years, with the deanery seeking to Encourage, Equip and Resource ministry which bears the characteristics of the 5 Marks of Mission. We believe that creative, context-based, courageous mission and ministry is best done in local parishes, by local people who love their neighbours. Ministry which is true to this calling will bear fruit, which explains my excitement in hearing the hopes and plans which already exist in the Parish of Stony Stratford with Calverton to love, serve and bless the people of the parish.

Across the deanery we are aware that there is much to do. Alarm bells are ringing as we consider the number of young people beyond the reach of our churches and as we face the reality of hardship experienced by many congregations. This has though, in what I suspect is prompted by the Spirit, stirred us to greater collaboration, prayer and faith-filled hope. New ideas are bubbling to the surface, new resources are being attracted to the city and a new culture of helping one another to thrive in ministry is already being of benefit to all of us clergy. I am convinced that you would enjoy serving in MK and being a part of this Deanery.

As you consider this post, know that we are all praying for the parish and for you in your joint discernment. Our prayer is that God's abundant blessing is felt throughout this process and for many years to come.

Rev Paul Oxley
Area Dean



The Diocese

The Diocese of Oxford serves the mission of the Church in Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire. The Diocese comprises more than 600 parishes, with over 800 churches, serving a diverse population of more than 2 million people located in all types of settings.

Due to the size and complexity of the Diocese, we have three Area Bishops who exercise considerable strategic and pastoral oversight for their Areas. The new Bishop of Buckingham, the Rt Rev'd Dave Bull was welcomed by Milton Keynes Deanery in March 2025. The Archdeacon of Buckingham is Ven Guy Elsmore who has been in post since 2016. In September 2020, Revd Canon Chris Bull was appointed Associate Archdeacon of Buckingham.

Through prayer, listening and discernment a [common vision has emerged for the Diocese of Oxford](#). The vision is based on the qualities described in The Beatitudes and addresses what kind of church we are called to be:

**a more Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world:
contemplative, compassionate, courageous.**

Our Common Vision continues to emerge as we identify together areas of our common life where we believe God is calling to focus. The [diocesan focal areas](#) are not a description of everything we do, but these priorities are being supported centrally by resources, training, conferences, workshops, and much more. The diocese is inviting benefices and their clergy to share a vision rather than demanding a response, motivated by hope not driven by anxiety, and thereby to flourish in their ministry. It is hoped that clergy appointed into the Archdeaconry of Buckingham will want to commit to this vision and encourage their benefice to share in becoming a more Christ-like church for the sake of God's world.



DIOCESE of OXFORD

A Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Our recent history

Historically, during the 1990s both the **Parish of All Saints Calverton** and the **Parish of St Mary & St Giles** passed resolutions A & B under the *Ordination of Priests (Women) Measure* and then petitioned the Bishop of Oxford for extended episcopal care under the terms of the *Act of Synod*. The formation of the new **Parish of Stony Stratford with Calverton** in 2012 from the **Parish of All Saints Calverton** and the **Parish of St Mary & St Giles Stony Stratford** also inherited differing theological views from the earlier merger in 1968 of the two Stony Stratford Parishes of **St Giles** and **St Mary the Virgin**. In 2015 the Church of England Synod decision to consecrate women to the episcopate superseded the earlier resolutions. The PCC passed a new Resolution under the provisions of the *House of Bishops Declaration*.

When the most recent incumbent retired in 2022, the PCC commissioned a questionnaire to discover the views of both congregations, which revealed a large majority in both churches wishing to rescind the existing resolution and accept women priests, and a small number of parishioners wishing to retain the existing resolution, while the then PCC views were 50:50. During 2023 there was some change in PCC membership. The PCC sought advice and guidance from the Diocese which found two priests not previously known to the parish (one from a Resolution parish in the Peterborough Diocese the other a woman from the Oxford Diocese) to offer support and insight.

The PCC voted by majority to rescind the resolution in November 2024. This means applications for the new incumbent are open to all Anglican priests. The parish continues to explore ways to make provision for those members of the parish who could not accept the sacraments from a woman priest, if one is appointed.

Until recently we were using Roman Catholic liturgy in our services and have now adopted Common Worship liturgy.



Above: Stony Stratford High street, early evening
Right: Stony Stratford name stone, Calverton road



Appendix 2 - Our Churches

St Mary and St Giles, Stony Stratford

Location and population

The ecclesiastical parish of Stony Stratford lies at the north-western corner of Milton Keynes. It consists of the town of Stony Stratford and the housing estates of Galley Hill and Fullers Slade, which were built in the late 1960s and early 1970s as parts of the development of Milton Keynes. Areas of urban deprivation that have been identified as Urban Priority Areas exist on both estates and within the town itself. The population of the ecclesiastical parish is approximately 7,800.

The present ecclesiastical parish was formed in 1968 by the merger of the parishes of Stony Stratford, St Mary-the Virgin and Stony Stratford, St Giles, both of which were in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. At the time of the merger, the Church of St Mary-the Virgin was demised and the Church of St Giles, originally founded as a chapel of ease from the parish of Calverton, and damaged by fire in 1964, was extensively reordered by Rolls & Foster and rededicated under the patronage of St Mary-the-Virgin & St Giles, now known as St Mary & St Giles. The parish boundaries extend from Fullers Slade in the south to the River Ouse in the north, and from the A5 trunk road in the east to the city boundary on Calverton Road in the west.



Our Worship

Our worship is in the Anglo-Catholic tradition of the Church of England. Sometimes we use incense during worship. Our regular Sunday worship is a family Holy Communion service at 9:30am, usually accompanied by the pipe organ, with the choir singing twice a month. A said weekday mass was until recently held at 6:00pm on Wednesdays which we hope to revive soon. Our Sunday worship is usually attended by around 80 regular worshippers.

Our Palm Sunday worship sometimes includes a procession along Stony Stratford High Street as an act of witness. During Holy week we have daily Stations of the Cross and services on Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. In Advent and Christmastide we hold an Advent Carol service at 6:00pm on Advent Sunday, Nine Lessons and Carols the Sunday before Christmas and have held a Christingle service on Christmas Eve for several years, though are open to holding a couple of carol services that day instead, due to the large number of people who usually attend. Christmas Midnight service alternates between the two churches.



Our activities

SMSG Young Christians' group

Young Christians meet on Sunday mornings in the Parish Hall from the end of the first hymn until the Offertory and is open to all children and young people. Some parents choose to stay with very young children until they are confident enough to stay without parental support. The

children share thoughts, observations, questions and prayers on the bible readings, and do art, acting and singing. They usually do a short nativity play as part of a Sunday service before Christmas and also host one of the weekly Lent lunches which are held on the Saturdays throughout Lent in the parish hall.

Bellringing (handbells and tower bells)

The tower bellringers are always pleased to welcome people who would like to learn bell ringing, some of the ringers are regular worshippers, some are not. The Bells are rung every Sunday, on Solemnities and for the celebration of Christian Marriage. There are eight bells in the SMSG tower and six bells plus a small Sanctus bell in the All Saints tower. Practice evening is Monday at 8pm alternating between towers (SMSG, All Saints, Cosgrove).



SMSG handbell ringers ring from a set of 37 Handbells (3 octaves) which belong to St. Mary and St. Giles Church, they practice in the Parish Hall on Thursday evenings from 6.15 – 7.10pm.

SMSG Church Choir

An Informal four-part Choir of parish singers called St Mary & St Giles Choir who enjoy bringing a range of music to enhance worship, under the direction of our Organist and Musical Director. Occasionally the choir sings high mass settings (for example Haydn or Schubert) and gives an annual concert of sacred and secular music during StonyLive week in June. The choir rehearses on Wednesday evenings from 7:00 – 8:30pm in the Parish Hall. We would like to develop a children's choir.



SMSG Church band

The church band welcomes players of any instrument of Grade 3 level or above. It gives concerts throughout the year in our Parish Church and plays for other events such as Calverton Fete, Stony Stratford Christmas Lights Day, Retirement Complexes and Care Homes, Tea dances and occasionally accompanies Sunday worship in both churches. The band practices on Thursday evenings from 7.15 to 8.30pm in All Saints Church, Calverton or the Parish Hall.

Music for All @ SMSG

The Music for All @ SMSG group organizes many musical events at SMSG, some making use of the Willis Pipe Organ. We have Heritage Lottery Fund obligations following the magnificent organ restoration in 2014-17. Our musical events include the annual Pipe Organ festival, monthly Third Thursday @ Twelve Thirty concerts throughout the year, Monthly Monday organ recitals in the warmer months plus hosting concerts by visiting groups keen to use the wonderful acoustics of SMSG church – see www.musicforallsmg.org for more information. St Mary & St Giles School holds school services which include singing once a term in the church.

Fundraising activities at SMSG

We hold regular fundraising cake, craft and plant stalls with coffee mornings (called Coffee breaks) on the first Saturdays of each month in the morning, the annual Christmas Fayre on Stony Stratford Lights Switch on day (usually the day before Advent Sunday). These activities support the Greater Access Project fund, church Fabric fund and organ fund.

In the past we have done some Carol singing around the town, more recently we've held informal Come & Sing Carols afternoons in the church instead.

Friday lunch club

A friendly community gathering in which a two course lunch is served for a small fee on the second Friday of the month in the Parish hall. People sign up in advance so those doing the catering know how many people they are serving. They are a lovely opportunity for building and nurturing friendships.

Something for nothing ... just because

In 2022 we started a monthly gift giving activity in the High Street on a Saturday morning, which involved making items beforehand to hand out as free gifts to anyone in the street who wanted the gift. Gifts have ranged from bunting, chocolate Easter nests, hot chocolate kits, handmade Christmas tree decorations and homemade cookies/biscuits. We did this for a year, and then decided to make it quarterly.



Craft stall and street organ fundraising outside SMSG



Bellringing practice in SMSG church tower

Church

St Mary & St Giles, Stony Stratford (Grade II*)

The church has a large nave surrounded by south, west and north galleries. The Stony Stratford Christ above the high altar was added in the late 1960s when the church was re-ordered following a fire in 1964 which destroyed the previous pipe organ, choir screen and scorched the pulpit.

The Pipe organ is situated in the West end galleries while beside the pulpit is a baby grand piano.

There is a kitchen under the north-west gallery, equipped with an electric cooker and oven, a hot water boiler, an industrial dishwasher and a double sink.

The parish hall adjoins the church on the north side and has a kitchen area with sink, fridge, hot water boiler and microwave. There is a storage rack holding 100 foldable chairs in the corner of the parish hall. Currently wheelchair access to the church is via the Parish Hall as the West door has 3 steps at the entrance. The Greater Access Project aims to make the West end of the church more accessible for all.

The church has two toilets (one is wheelchair accessible) leading off the corridor between the hall and the church, beyond them is the parish office and the sacristy.

The churchyard is closed for burials.

Community

This town arose as a place of hospitality; where the river was sometimes impassable. There have been a great many hostelries here to cater for those in the coaching era where this was a place to change horses, have a meal and a good natter. Tall stories were told. The Cock and the Bull inns vied for trade and it was here that the phrase 'cock and bull story' originated.

There is a continuing tradition of entertainment and community enterprise. Many events in the town are community run, including the extensive floral displays organised by the Stony in Bloom Group. In June every year there is the Stony Live Festival and Folk on the Green when dance and song abound. In January every year there is the Stony Words festival including the annual Bardic trials. There is a Classic car rally in June and a Vintage car rally on 1 January every year.

The late autumn is spent preparing for the annual switch on of the Christmas lights with hundreds of lanterns made ready to parade through the streets the day before Advent Sunday and the local lights team setting up the lights on Sundays during November.

The Town Council is based in the Library next door to SMSG church; both the Town Council and the Stony Stratford Business Association are active in community events.

<https://www.stonystratford.gov.uk/whats-on> provides a list of community activity. The Church community is an active facilitator and participant in many of these events and there is probably scope for more!



Charities

The St Mary and St Giles Charity (the Rector, Churchwardens and two other trustees) owns a house in Galley Hill for the provision of housing a curate in the parish. When there is no curate the house is rented to a needy local inhabitant. Any profit from the rental is used to maintain the house and then to support the Parish of Stony Stratford with Calverton.

The Rector and Churchwardens of St Mary & St Giles are also trustees of the Church School and of the Steer Bequest. In addition to these charities which specifically benefit the church and church school, the Rector has also served on the Edmund Arnold's Charity as the local representative and a variety of smaller charities, namely: Whalleys charity, the Street charity, Aid & Sickness, Elmers, Witnells & Colins, Parrots, Olivers, Simon Bennett charity. On most of these the Rector serves as an ex-officio member.

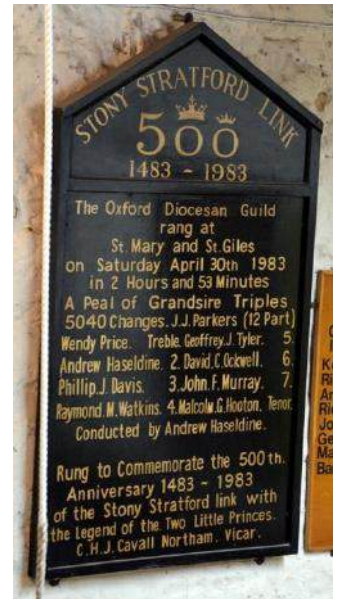
Brief history

The church building of St Mary & St Giles was originally the chapel of ease in Stony Stratford for the parish of All Saints, Calverton (until the 18th century). It has a 15th century tower and the building enlargement was completed by 1777 when the fluted columns and vaulted ceiling were added in the Strawberry Hill gothic style. The north and south galleries were added in Victorian times. The west gallery was added in the late 1960s.

It was dedicated to St Giles until the 1960s when the two Stony Stratford parishes of St Mary the Virgin and St Giles were combined. The church building was re-dedicated in 1968 to St Mary & St Giles.

Further information about the history of St Mary & St Giles, Stony Stratford can be found on the parish website at

<https://parishstonystratfordcalverton.com/st-mary-st-giles/history/>



St Mary & St Giles School Year 6 leavers service, July 2024
Top right photo of plaque in bell ringing chamber

All Saints, Calverton

Location and population

The ecclesiastical parish of Calverton lies in North Buckinghamshire at the north-western corner of Milton Keynes, bounded by the parishes of Wolverton, Stony Stratford, Shenley (Watling Valley), Whaddon, Beachampton, and Passenham (Diocese of Peterborough). It consists of three groupings of houses, the Upper, Middle and Lower Wealds, and the total present population is approximately 150, although the new developments of Fairfield and Whitehouse will increase the population of the Calverton parish to over 24,000.

Our Worship

Regular services at All Saints are the 11:15 Sunday family communion service, after the SMSG 9:30 service and 10:30 said mass on Thursdays followed by coffee and chat. There is no choir or regular organist at Calverton so the services seem less formal than those at SMSG, occasionally the SMSG church band accompany the services and the SMSG church choir sometimes visits to sing for a Christmas service.

Sunday services have a congregation of around twenty, and the Thursday service has a regular but smaller attendance. All Saints is a popular church for weddings and christenings and is often the choice for funerals.

Our activities

Calverton Fete

Calverton Fete is a favourite local event, it is held in early September in the church grounds. Various stalls, music by the church band, teas and visits to the top of the Tower for the great view make the fete an important annual fund raiser for the church.

Flower and Christmas tree festivals

The All Saints congregation has held successful Flower festivals and Christmas tree festivals in recent years.

Music group rehearsals

Sometimes the Church Band rehearses in All Saints if not using the Parish Hall. In the past the church handbell ringers have rehearsed in All Saints. The SMSG Church Choir rehearses in All Saints ahead of singing for a Christmas service at the church.



Calverton Fete and All Saints Flower festival

Church

All Saints, Calverton (Grade II*)

All Saints Calverton is a Neo Gothic church built between 1818 and 1824 on the foundations of a previous ruined church. Behind the altar there is a striking mosaic depicting the Adoration of the Magi dated from the 1870's (right).



All Saints has a Bell Tower with an eight bell configuration. Bell ringing practice is held on alternate weeks. The bell tower is also equipped with an electrical mechanical system to ring bells for the weekly services. Bellringers are available to ring for weddings and funerals. The churchyard is still open for burials.

The church has seating for approximately 200 people in traditional pews and there is a recently created learning or recreational space by the main door with folding tables and chairs. In 2005 a legacy provided a small kitchen and toilet facilities at the back of the church. Wi-fi and an AV system have been added recently. This includes a projector, retractable screen, lapel, lectern and handheld microphones, audio recording, a DVD player and laptop inputs near the pulpit and rear of the church. Bluetooth is also available. The church has electric programmable central heating. The small pipe organ, though somewhat playable would need restoration, so an electronic keyboard is used instead. There is a large car park a short walk from the church.

Community

This is a supportive community where people know each other whether church-goers or not, and respond to each others' needs.

The church is within walking distance of Fairfields (2,200 homes), a new Estate, and a short drive from another, Whitehouse (4,400 homes). Arrangements will be made to meet the Heads of the new Primary Schools so children's visits to the church can be arranged.

Charities

The Parish of Calverton has several Charities of which the Rector is an ex-officio member. They are: the Unknown Donor and Apprenticing Charity, Elmers, the Almshouse Charity and Simon Bennett's Charity.

Brief history

All Saints, Calverton, comprises a Norman Tower, a Nave of 3 Bays, a Chancel and South Aisle to which is attached a Gabled Porch. The present All Saints was built between 1818 and 1824 by William Pilkington (architect) on the foundations of a previous church. In the 1850s the Rector, Revd Charles Gore Percival, at his own expense, had the beautiful stained glass windows installed depicting The Saints, in addition the openwork parapets and the carved Angels, Birds and Foliage to the ceiling. Additional decoration was added in 1871/1872 by Edward Swinfen Harris (local architect). After a period of some 1,300 years following a kind donation, a water supply was installed into the church in 2005, providing kitchen and toilet facilities.

This ancient Parish was established in the 7th century by the Missionary St Birinus. He later became Bishop of Dorchester. Calverton was one of the first Tractarian Parishes in this part of Buckinghamshire. Many Tracts for the times were planned at the old Vicarage where Rev. Henry Edward later Cardinal Manning was a visitor. It is also known that Newman and Pusey preached at All Saints and Pusey celebrated at the Altar. Further information about the history of All Saints Calverton can be found on the parish website at

<https://parishstonystatfordcalverton.com/all-saints/history/>

Appendix 3 - The New Areas

Location and population

Fairfields and Whitehouse are in the process of being built, some areas are already occupied (since March 2015). Some schools have been built and there are no church or community buildings or any shopping areas yet.

The projected population for Fairfield and Whitehouse is 24,000 by 2031. A small number of our existing regular congregation lives in Fairfield. The websites for both areas are <https://www.explorefw.org.uk/fairfields/> and <https://www.explorefw.org.uk/whitehouse/>.

What we have done so far

We produced some welcome folders and leaflets; these were distributed for the first few months of occupation in 2015 and 2016.

A PCC member has joined the Fairfield Community Facebook group to share events and information with residents of Fairfield. The Whitehouse Facebook group is more restrictive in who is allowed to join so we have been unable to reach out to Whitehouse residents via social media methods so far.



Fairfields



Fairfields



Whitehouse



Whitehouse



Whitehouse Health Centre



Whitehouse

Appendix 4 - Our Church School

The original St Mary and St Giles Church of England Junior School was based in Stony Stratford. However, in 2017 the school merged with Queen Eleanor Primary School at Galley Hill (a local authority school) and became St Mary and St Giles Church of England Primary School. The school is now on two sites (North and South) each with its own demographic. The school on South site is in an area with high levels of social deprivation.

The school was voluntary aided (VA) until 2021 when it became part of the local academy chain 'Inspiring Futures Through Learning'. The school no longer has VA status. The school went through a period of great turmoil and it received extensive support from the Oxford Diocese Board of Education. However, the school has made huge progress of late and has recently been graded 'good' by Ofsted.

For various reasons the school has been without a parish priest for several years. Both the staff and the children will embrace the support, advice, and enthusiasm that a parish priest will bring. The whole school is supported by a band of enthusiastic volunteers from the local community. It also benefits financially from the church/school trust. As Rector you will also become a governor at the school. The last SIAMS inspection (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) graded the school 'good', and highlighted things for governors to do. The challenge will be to establish a forum for pupils and clergy to discuss together key Christian concepts such as beliefs and non beliefs and to work with the school to make sure a rigorous system is in place to monitor the impact of the school vision upon collective worship and spirituality. The school has engaged with Spacemakers (a meditative activity) which is a Diocesan initiative and has worked alongside Stony in Bloom to develop a spirituality garden at each site based on the ideas and plans of pupils.

It will take time for the Rector to get to know the school and the very different communities it serves. The Rector will need to understand the impact of the school's recent history and the need to build up trust, particularly between the school and church. Anyone who really enjoys engaging with children and young people will find their time at the school rewarding and a great joy.

From the Headteacher:

As headteacher of a Church of England school, I feel that it is imperative for a good relationship to exist between the Parish Priest, the school and the wider community.

It is important for St Mary and St Giles Church of England School to have a Parish Priest that is an active part of the school's local governing body. A Parish Priest that is an active governor at the school would undertake regular school visits (at least three times per year), attend local governing body meetings, and work closely with myself and the Christian Life leader in planning and delivering an enhanced programme of worship events. Due to the fact that we are part of an academy Trust, there will be governor training and enhanced safeguarding checks as part of the expectations involved in becoming a school governor, but there will be lots of professional development opportunities from IFTL as well as a robust school support offer. Finally, we feel that it is important that our children visit the church regularly and we would expect these visits to be planned around the worship calendar for the year, in conjunction with our Christian Life leader and the Parish Priest.



The school website is at <https://www.smsg.uk.com/>

Appendix 5 - Our Team

The following people are regularly involved in running the parish activities.

PCC

Vice Chair and Hon Treasurer	Bob Scarff
PCC Secretary	Fiona Collins
Churchwarden (SMSG)	Deb Kidd
Churchwarden (SMSG)	Marilyn Bazeley
Churchwarden (All Saints)	Jill Barby
Churchwarden (All Saints)	Richard Hearne
PCC member	vacancy
PCC member	Steve Thompson
PCC member	Louise Brown
PCC member	Sue Starr
PCC member	Kath Hindley
PCC member	Anna Page (Parish representative for new priest)
PCC member	David Riding (Parish representative for new priest)
Electoral Roll Officer	Gaynor Young
Deanery Synod representatives	Bob Scarff, Kath Hindley, Matthew Lucas
Parish Safeguarding Officer	Gwen Yates

Young people

Young Christians Leaders	Sue Womack, Georgina Holmes, Ruth Harvey, Maria Riding
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Music

Director of Music and organist	Jacob Collins
Music for All @ SMSG Events team	Anna Page, Sandra Kay, Kath Hindley, Dave King, Gwen Yates (plus regular volunteers who help at events)
SMSG Church band	Dave King, Fiona Collins
SMSG Church handbell ringers	Kath Hindley
Parish Church Tower bell ringers	Malcolm Hooton, Wendy Price

Parish Admin Team

Weekly service sheet & newsletter	Marilyn Bazeley, Anna Page
Parish Hall Bookings	Kieran Salter

Appendix 6 - The Rectory

The rectory is a modern 3 storey town house with a garden located in Willow Lane, Stony Stratford, MK11 1FG. It has 5 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms and a double garage.

The house has a downstairs study beside the front door lobby, a hallway, dining room, large sitting room, kitchen, utility room and cloakroom (bathroom) on the ground floor. The kitchen and living room both have access to a patio overlooking the garden. The downstairs space and the garden have been used to host some parish events. On the first floor there are 4 bedrooms (one with en suite bathroom) and the main bathroom. On the second floor there is one large bedroom and landing area.



Appendix 7 - Our Finances

You will see from the attached Statement of Financial Affairs that the total Funds that we held on 31st December 2024 stood at circa £170,000.

Of this total, some £53,000 was Unrestricted and represents the equivalent of over seven months Unrestricted Expenditure, so our current account is in good order.

The fabric of both of our Church buildings needs attention. A Quinquennial Inspection Report on both Churches was made available to us in September 2025. We anticipate some significant Repairs and Maintenance expenditure.

The 2025 Budget approved by the PCC assumes that our General Income will remain broadly the same as 2024 at circa £92,000; but that our General Expenditure will increase by circa £40,000 on Repairs and Maintenance. Accordingly, our General Fund at the end of 2025 will hold circa £23,000 less than it did at the start.

The largest restricted sum that we hold is in The SMSG Greater Access Project. The project to alter the main West entrance to St Mary's and St Giles' Church is progressing but as yet we do not know how much more we may have to raise than the circa £53,000 that the Fund holds.

The second largest Restricted Fund that we hold is that relating to our Music For All activity and the maintenance of our Willis Organ at SMSG. This holds circa £37,000.

We have paid our full Parish Share allocation in each of the past three years; we will do so again in 2025 and will be able to meet the anticipated allocation in 2026.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
For the year ended 31st December 2024

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	TOTAL FUNDS 2024 £
RECEIPTS					
Voluntary Receipts:					
Planned Giving		£47,213			£47,213
Collections at Services		£5,734			£5,734
All other giving/voluntary receipts		£9,104			£9,104
Gift Aid recovered		£13,322			£13,322
Church activities:		£4,333	£0	£1,354	£5,687
Activities for generating funds:		£0	£14,995	£12,731	£27,726
Investment income		£1,232	£527		£1,759
Other income		£11,347	£3,230		£14,577
TOTAL RECEIPTS		£92,285	£18,752	£14,085	£125,122
PAYMENTS					
Church Activities:					
Parish Share		£45,000			£45,000
Clergy and staffing costs		£8,257			£8,257
Mission			£918		£918
Utilities		£10,722			£10,722
Education			£174		£174
Flowers					£0
Collected for other Charities					£0
Maintenance and repair		£6,911	£9,603	£14,537	£31,051
Items of a lasting nature					£0
Church management, administration, stat fees		£4,450	£2,060		£6,510
TOTAL PAYMENTS		£75,340	£12,755	£14,537	£102,632
Excess of Receipts over Payments		£16,945	£5,997	(£452)	£22,490
Transfer between Funds		(£955)	£955	£0	£0
Fund balances at 1 January 2024		£37,332	£90,662	£19,697	£147,691
Fund balances at 31 December 2024		£53,322	£97,614	£19,245	£170,181
Current assets					
Current accounts					
Lloyds Current account					£1,583
Lloyds Savings account					£112,646
Lloyds Deposit account					£55,955
Balance in current accounts					£170,184
Sundry debtors					£0
Total current assets					£170,184
Sundry creditors					£0
Total current liabilities					£0
Net current assets					£170,184