Onnycamlad
GROUP OF PARISHES

‘Our vision for Growth’
Introduction

‘Where there is no vision, the people perish’  Prov 29 v18

When the Group met to discuss the appointment of a new incumbent, it was clear the there was a general view that we could not carry on as we were. Ageing and declining congregations were a common theme. However there emerged, independently from each parish, a wish to ‘try something different’. New forms of worship were mentioned many times. Ways to bring in new people were discussed at length. ‘How can we best support the new incumbent?’ brought forth a welter of ideas.

Out of this came the theme of this document

‘Our vision for Growth’

By ‘growth’ we mean spiritual growth of our existing congregations, as well as growth in numbers through outreach to the members of our communities who currently have little or no involvement with our churches. We hope that as you read it you share our vision and that the challenges here excite rather than concern you. Thank you for taking the time to read this, and may God have already put in your heart a desire to live and work with us.

OnnyCamlad Group of Parishes

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Though hail flattens the forest and the city is levelled completely, how blessed you will be...’ PS 32 v19-20

OnnyCamlad Group of Parishes

The OnnyCamlad Group is located within the Clun Forest Deanery, in the north west of the Diocese of Hereford. It is made up of nine parishes spanning the border between England and Wales, from Wentnor at the most easterly extreme to Churchstoke, 12 miles to the west. It is a very rural area, made up of villages, hamlets and remote farmsteads, with livestock farming and tourism the dominant industries. The English parishes are in the South Shropshire AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

Facilities within the Group of Parishes

The community enjoys the benefits of four village halls, at Churchstoke, Hyssington, Lydham and Norbury. All are well-utilised and provide valuable facilities within the community, with The Village Hall at Norbury built anew with National Lottery funding in 2015. There are two primary schools within the Group.

Churchstoke Community Primary School is designated bi-lingual, teaching in English and providing classes in Welsh speaking. www.churchstoke.powys.sch.uk. Norbury Primary School and Nursery has been categorised Outstanding in its latest Ofsted report. www.norbury.shropshire.sch.uk

The secondary school is in Bishop’s Castle, and many students go to sixth form colleges in Shrewsbury, Ludlow, Hereford and Newtown.

Tuffins supermarket and Sunday Market in Churchstoke have a Chaplaincy and Christian presence provided by the Mission Priest and Market Chaplain. There is a convenience store and post office at Wentnor, a health food shop in Lydham, and a number of public houses throughout the area.

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Other local facilities

The market town of Bishops Castle is located about five miles south of the Group of Parishes and provides access to the following facilities:

- Doctor’s surgery
- Community College (secondary school) and primary school
- SPARC (Leisure and Arts centre)
- Veterinary surgery
- Small supermarkets and artisan shops
- Sports clubs (e.g. rugby, football, cricket, hockey, tennis, etc)

Beyond Bishops Castle and the Group of Parishes itself, the nearest large towns are Shrewsbury (15 miles north, with the nearest hospital), Ludlow (15 miles south east), Newtown and Welshpool (15 miles west). The nearer, smaller, towns of Church Stretton and Craven Arms have railway stations on the main Manchester to Cardiff line.

Accommodation and provision

The rectory is a well-appointed modern (built 1993) four bedroom bungalow located in the village of Wentnor. The property has a garage and extensive gardens and enjoys an elevated position with views eastwards across to the Long Mynd. It is a very suitable home and environment for a family.

The Group of Parishes is an inherently rural community, spread over a significant area, and is not well-served by public transport. Any incumbent and their dependents will need to have the ability and willingness to drive.

Despite the rural location, the area has a good level of broadband coverage. Digital communication is now the norm and would be the expectation with the new incumbent. Mobile phone connection is bad everywhere except Churchstoke.

The Deanery

The OnnyCamlad group is the northernmost part of the Clun Forest Deanery, which is one of the more rural areas in the Diocese of Hereford. The Deanery comprises four groups of parishes covering the south west of Shropshire, and over the border into the Welsh county of Powys. The area includes the traditional market town of Bishops Castle, with outlying villages such as Lydbury North, Bucknell, Clungunford and Clun typifying the rural tranquillity.

As with the OnnyCamlad group, the area is defined by its open pastures, moorland and mixed woodland and relies heavily on tourism, livestock farming and associated industries as a primary sources of employment.

The ancient Offa’s Dyke runs north to south through the west of the area, marking the approximate border between England and Wales.
Worship

“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for these are the kinds of worshippers the Father seeks.”  John 4 v23

With nine places of worship in the Group of Parishes the structure of Sunday services has evolved over the years. A service, when there is a fifth Sunday in the month, has been held at Churchstoke, Lydham and more recently at the new village hall at Norbury, which offers warmth, comfort and catering facilities. It is also viewed as ‘non-threatening’ for those who don’t normally attend church and ‘neutral’ for those who do; there is still an inclination to attend only the ‘local parish church’.

There is a weekly prayer and worship meeting in Churchstoke – Powerhouse – on Wednesdays and a monthly prayer meeting in Norbury on Tuesdays. Friday Morning Prayer has taken place in each parish church in rotation; numbers have dwindled and during the interregnum there has been no response from the parishes to continue.

A new-style all-age service featuring drama, prayer stations and new songs has been running in Churchstoke for 10 months in an attempt to engage with young families and it is proving popular with older people too; prayer ministry is available at every service.

Exploring Faith currently includes an Alpha course at Churchstoke (an earlier one took place some years ago at Ratlinghope). The Rector led an occasional Bible study which was supported by a small but enthusiastic group. Lent groups have been held every year in Wentnor (various courses have been followed) and Churchstoke (which has included prophetic prayer and Bible meditation).

Experiments have been made at Churchstoke with a day of prayer and fasting and a fortnight of focussed Bible reading and training has been given recently in leading intercessions.

The LMDG’s prayer with pastoral care and home communion has been available but there have been few requests. It is not clear whether this is because parishioners are not aware, parishes feel they are covering this themselves or it is not a culture with which people feel comfortable.

The churches are first class with festivals, special events and celebrations of christenings, weddings and funerals and visitors are welcomed warmly but this doesn’t often translate into attendance at Sunday worship. Leadership, preaching and example are needed in understanding our faith and the God whom we worship; encouragement is needed to want and expect an encounter with Jesus Christ as we worship Him.

There are concerns as congregations get smaller and older. Our worship needs to be attractive and accessible to all; the message of the Good News of Jesus Christ is timeless and always relevant but our church culture needs to be flexible and we need leadership in this if our churches are to survive.
Our Mission in the Church community.....

Our new Rector will find a growing awareness of the need for Mission in all our churches. We have a good foundation of lay-led services and throughout the benefice there are core people who are committed to worshipping and praying together but we need leadership and vision from a Rector who knows the urgency of mission.

We look to our new Rector to teach, co-ordinate and encourage us so that we can find the confidence to reach out in evangelism in our parishes and communities. We know that we will need more lay-led services in the years to come and need training and encouragement from our clergy. We also need to look at those groups who are not represented in our Churches and make sure we are welcoming to people from all different groups. We will need to offer a variety of services and activities. Mission is not providing a few Sunday services and waiting......

Many of our community work on a Sunday and we are aware we may need to consider other times and other ways of being church.

Mission in the wider community....

Tuffins supermarket and Sunday market in Churchstoke have a Chaplaincy and Christian presence provided by the Mission Priest and Market Chaplain. There is more potential for mission in our two primary schools and in the festivals and events held annually around the benefice and we need guidance and vision for this.

In Churchstoke a team from the congregation lead a children’s after-school Christian club and do Open-the-Book. A Youth group – IGNITE – has been running in Churchstoke vicarage for 15 months led by the Mission Priest. Open to the whole benefice it features youth worship (teenage culture) and Christian teaching as well as fun and games. There is a growing involvement in Sunday worship too. A Confirmation Service is booked for June in Churchstoke.

People from our benefice have attended diocesan ‘Follow’ events to encourage us in mission and a growing number regularly attend ‘Filling Stations’, where they receive good teaching, ministry and encouragement in evangelism.

Over the last decade or so, we have seen an influx of retired people coming to live in our parishes. They move here to live not die! Some have much to offer and we are looking for an Incumbent who enables everyone’s gifts, spiritual and practical, in our collective mission to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to those who live in this beautiful area.

Tourism is an important part of our economy and our church buildings offer quiet time and comfort. Many came here as visitors and joined us later as parishioners. Our challenge for the 21st century often seems to be about the survival of our buildings. Congregations will need support and comfort when difficult decisions have to be made - but we need an Incumbent who sees Mission and Evangelism as the priority.
Local Ministry Development Group

‘Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing’ 1 Thess 5 v11

The Group has been supportive of local ministry through the Hereford Diocese since 2005 when the first team was called. The initial team were enthusiastic in trying many outgoing initiatives, the production of a Welcome Booklet, services, prayer walks and celebrating anniversaries by sending cards to those who have been married or christened in the churches. In 2010 the team responded to the Hereford diocese consultation “The church looks ahead” with a meal held at Lydham Village Hall for churchgoers from all parishes, discussion and note taking on tablecloths (paper!) after the meal resulted in a document showing the “way forward” for 2015 as seen by the parishes.

Most of the team still live in the parish and remain active and supportive of ministry.

The current team have concentrated on pastoral care and have benefitted from training by the Lay Development Officer. Members of the group have pursued a wide range of ministries as they seek to serve all who live within the benefice and further afield. These include Chairman of Abbeyfield, an independent sheltered home for the elderly, booking secretary for Norbury hall and long time playgroup leader, DBS verifier and safeguarding representative, ecumenical link in Hyssington and beyond, Chaplain to the Churchstoke Sunday Market, Mission Priest at Churchstoke and Chaplain to Tuffin’s Supermarket and Reader and prayer group convener.

There is much potential in the team; during the vacancy they are involved in planning and leading services across The Group and are experimenting with services in the Village Hall at Norbury organised and led by the LMDG.

Over the years members of the groups have responded with their individual God given personalities and skills to support the incumbent and serve the community, and now look forward to being led in mission, outreach and pastoral care by the new incumbent.
Our Building and our Parish
The village of Churchstoke, population 1200 approx, nestles on the English/Welsh border. We have a County Primary School (50 children), a village hall, two pubs, Chinese takeaway, a care home and several small businesses. We have Bowling Club, Tennis Club, Guides, Brownies, Rainbows and playgroup. Churchstoke has a unique large supermarket complex, including a Sunday Market. Our church is a Grade 2 listed, substantial stone building situated in the centre of the old village.

Our Congregation
In October 2014 a Mission Priest of Churchstoke (stipendiary, half-time) was appointed, to have responsibility for worship, mission and ministry in Churchstoke; she and her husband live in the vicarage. There is an experienced Reader, three Wardens and a PCC committed to growth in Church and Kingdom.

Sunday Pattern of Worship:
All services at 10.30am
4. Holy Communion CW
Over the past two years we have experimented with new ways of worship. On the third Sunday we have developed ‘Sunday Central’ - relaxed and lively worship with drama, meditation and fun activities for all ages.

We worship with traditional hymns and modern ‘New Wine’ type songs, sometimes with flags; sometimes with food and drinks served from our new kitchen at the back of church; sometimes with prayer stations around the church building; sometimes praying for each other in our seats or at the altar.

Church members are often at the forefront of community events; we work with the school for the Christmas Bazaar; local businesses participate in our Christmas Tree Festival by decorating a tree; residents at the Care Home are waited on and blessed at the church Strawberry Fayre.

Much work has been done in clearing the west end of the churchyard and we are planning to open this up for school children and visitors.

Our Vision for Growth
We have a lively programme for mission including:
• An after-school Christian club, led by church members.
• A youth group, for school years 7 and 8. They use drama and games, study the Bible and worship Jesus in both loud and quiet worship songs. The young people are following the ‘Youth Alpha’ course.
• The Mission Priest and Reader lead a service of Holy Communion in the Care Home on two Fridays per month. Throughout the year church members visit residents and the Reader and Warden take Harvest and Christmas services in the Home.
• CoffeeCraft Led by our Churchwarden, this is a group providing friendship and support for all comers.
• Supermarket Complex. The Mission Priest spends Thursdays 1-2pm in the store, talking and praying with staff and customers.
• A second Alpha course is currently being held.
St Etheldreda’s Church, Hyssington

Our Building and our Parish

Our parish is small, rural, situated in an area of outstanding natural beauty and one of the Benefice’s Welsh parishes. It consists of the village of Hyssington and the scattered hamlet others who have moved into the parish in recent years, many of whom are retirement age. We cannot sustain shops, schools, pubs etc. but we have a well-used Village Hall, a Social club, Book club, Friendship club, Local History group and our community is warm hearted and welcoming. We share our witness with the local Methodist Chapel. Our building is well maintained and generally in good order. We have large numbers of visitors to the Church and it is opened daily.

Our Congregation

St Etheldreda’s has been a focus of Christian worship for nearly 900 years. Our parish electoral roll is 44 with an average 12 at our monthly Holy Communion services. In addition to this, we have monthly lay-led services with our local Methodist congregation. We celebrate major Church Festivals with a Christmas Eve Candelit Service, Easter Vigil Service and a Harvest Festival.

As well as these services, we also hold an annual Advent Party for our young people and their families, and an Open Churchyard Sunday with a short service of Thanksgiving followed by an enormous tea and entertainment in the church yard. All these events and festivals are widely supported by the whole community and they enable us to welcome new faces and visitors to our Church. We enthusiastically tackle ‘new’ hymns and include music in every service. We hold a variety of regular fundraising activities which enable us to involve the wider community in our church and to meet our financial obligations. For example, this year, with the help of a grant from the Shropshire Historic Churches Trust, we were able to replace our badly eroded west gable Cross.

Our Vision for Growth

We thank God for our Church and look back over our long history of serving Christ in this place, and forward to the future of our Church with confidence and Faith. We know that we cannot be complacent. We need to grow our membership, particularly amongst younger people in our community. This may require us to look anew at our worship and the way we use our Church building. We may have to make difficult decisions but we must put our mission before every other consideration. We will be sustained and upheld by our faith in Jesus Christ.
Our Building and our Parish
The village, a mix of private and social housing, has 85 households, a population of about 190 with Holy Trinity Church situated in the center. There is no school, post office or pub but an organic whole food shop and a village hall in which a weekly fruit, vegetable, fish and confectionary market is held. Apart from agriculture and forestry work, motor engineering and metal fabricating work is locally available along with a wood burning stove manufacturer nearby.

Aware of the need for regular maintenance and quality repair work on this over 800 year old building, listed Grade 11*, extensive repair work was carried out on the east wall and its attractive Georgian window in 2011. Costing £79,000 this was possible because of generous grants plus active community fund raising. Structurally the building is sound and a community centre point.

Our Congregation
The Christmas Day Communion Service, the Harvest Festival Thanksgiving service, followed by lunch and some Benefice services can attract congregations up to 40. Unfortunately there are small single figure congregations for monthly morning services and still less for an early morning communion service. The congregation apart from the organist is generally elderly. Strong community support will continue by way of joint parish quiz nights, autumn harvest lunches, monthly ‘100’ Club draws, competitions, super Jumble sales and soup and pud lunches. A movement has started in which capable female parishioners work with their neighbouring parish counterparts in fund raising by organising and running worthwhile social gatherings and opening up their respective Houses of Worship. We are currently financially sound and Hereford Diocesan’s intention to move in 2017 to an offered parish gift system is welcomed.

Our Vision for Growth
The PCC realize that with the best intentions run on ‘traditional church’ lines as a private chapel Lydham’s future is limited. The PCC must be more active and working with the new incumbent as a team open up Lydham church to all members of the community particularly to younger people for anybody seeking a quiet spot for reflection, meditation and prayer. We hope that the new Incumbent is active, communicative, and one whose mission work will appeal right across the spectrum especially to the younger members of our community seeking the value of Christian worship, prayer and fellowship. Parishioners would welcome new ideas, new service patterns and a different way of doing things.
St. Peter’s Church, More

Our Building and our Parish

More Parish is a scattered parish with approximately 150 residents. St Peter’s is a Grade Two Listed Building in good repair. It was replastered and decorated in 2009.

Our congregation

Our congregation is small (4 – 12 people) at our regular two services a month (One Holy Communion, Common Worship and Morning Praise- winter Months , Evensong – summer months (Both Book of Common Prayer)) . Easter and Harvest are highlights of our year when we have 20 – 40 people. The Group Carol Service is always held at More because it is the largest Church. Also the United Pack have a Carol Service. These are both well attended. 120 – 150 people.

Our finances are supplemented by a monthly draw , Coffee Mornings, Jumble Sales and other events. People around are always willing to help.

Our Vision for Growth

More is a rather small and isolated village. We feel that we could best grow by working with our close neighbours Lydham in partnership to share resources and ideas. Perhaps one day the largest building in the benefice will be full!
Our Building and our Parish

Myndtown is a rural parish set in the foothills of the Longmynd, on the edge of the Onny Valley, near to the village of Wentnor. It is made up of around two dozen homesteads – about 60 people in total - including a number of working farms, smallholdings, private houses and several holiday homes. The parish includes a full cross-section of people, ranging from retired couples, younger professional couples and families with children. The population includes long standing residents (with several generations preceding them in the parish) to relative newcomers.

Employment within the parish is exclusively agriculture-related, but a number of residents commute outwards to work in Bishops Castle, Church Stretton, Ludlow, Shrewsbury and further afield.

St John the Baptist church is located in the vicinity of Myndtown Hall Farm on the Plowden Estate. Dating back to the 12th Century, there is significant historic interest in the church and it has recently been awarded Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant for the purposes of carrying out urgent structural repairs, stimulate visitor numbers and promote community engagement. With work soon to be underway, the church is currently closed, but under normal circumstances services are held monthly. These are usually Holy Communion, apart from seasonal services such as Harvest Festival, Christmas Carols and other special services agreed on rotation with other parishes in the Group.

Our Congregation

Congregations typically range from 7 – 10 (standard service) up to 40-50 for special services. With the HLF grant ring-fenced for the specific purposes of the project, fund raising continues with the aim of raising in the region of £1,500 to £2,000 each year. This, along with the offertory from services, helps to keep the finances for Myndtown stable. Events such as quiz nights, harvest suppers and occasional banquets organised by the incumbent families have to date maintained the required annual funding.

Our Vision for Growth

As a parish we would not be adverse to new ideas, and would welcome a clear, concise and modern approach to worship, making the church relevant not just to the current generation but to the younger people coming through.

Most of all we seek a family person with a love of the countryside, an understanding of rural issues and a strong empathy with the younger generations. An interest in the local (Norbury) primary school is considered important as is an ability to communicate well with a broad spectrum of inhabitants.
All Saints, Norbury

Our Building and our Parish

The parish consists of a village and two hamlets. Norbury has a population of approx 50 whilst the associated hamlets, Whitcott and Hardwick combine for a further 20. Norbury has a pub which opens occasionally and functions mainly as a B and B. The newly built Benefice Village Hall lies in Norbury and it is used occasionally for services. The local playgroup operates from the hall as does WI, over 60's and discussion club. The local primary school too is in the parish. It has a school roll of 50 or so and is extremely active in the local community, running a monthly lunch and coffee event for local people. This is very well supported and the model has been copied for other schools in the area.

The building is a largely Victorian renovation of a Norman chapel with a small chancel addition. Only the tower is original being 12th century. It is a simple country church with a magnificent 2,800 year old yew in the churchyard. Well cared for with new heating system and restored porch it is intended to redecorate the interior and create a meeting space as our next project. The churchyard is well cared for with the help of Caring for Gods Acre volunteers, they are helping us to create a wildlife friendly space alongside the church to attract local people visitors and the schools.

Our Congregation

The worshippers reflect the community, usually between 5 and 10 people aged between 50 and 80 attend the three services a month - early communion, mid-day sung communion and evening service. The population is ageing like all villages in the immediate area and this represents a particular challenge for the future - who will care for the existing population when they are too old to care for themselves and who manages the farms and other business to provide the grease for the local economy! Congregation members act as Parish Councillor Chair, Chair of the Village Hall Committee and so on, and have enthusiastically engaged with the new offered parish gift system. But in essence this is a community in which the church physically and emotionally lies at its heart. Whilst congregations are small, the influence of congregation members is substantial and village events in the past were planned by and emerged from ideas formed by church members.

Our Vision for Growth

Church membership is ideally positioned for growth with the new Village Hall and the school’s increasing popularity. To take advantage of this, want to ensure our new rector has experience of and enthusiasm for rural life, capable of supporting lay leadership in worship and action in the community. We look for a person who understands the challenges facing local people of all ages who will facilitate action to deal with them.
Our Building and our Parish

The Church of St. Margaret serves a scattered community accessible only by narrow winding lanes. Ratlinghope boasts a pub and a Youth Hostel and a population of approx 100, of whom 56 are on the Electoral Roll. The Bridges pub is enjoyed by the many visitors to the area, mostly walkers, who also visit the Church. St. Margaret’s modest size of building, is most suitable for our small congregation. However on some occasions, Harvest or the Carol Service etc., we are bursting at the seams,

Our Congregation

The regular congregation numbers about 16. We are a cohesive, cheerful body, informal, yet respectful of tradition. When 5 of our number moved away, recently, we were joined by five new members. While we exercise kindness and concern amongst ourselves, visitors are warmly welcomed.

We have a Lay Preacher living in the area and many willing volunteers caring for the maintenance and running of our beautiful, historic Church, and support for special services at Easter, Christmas etc. is good. Adjacent to the Church is a well used camp site and campers are welcome to attend our services. There are two festivals held every year in Ratlinghope, one being ‘jazz’ orientated and the other a 3-day children friendly-festival where many families come and camp for a week. We endeavour to keep our church and churchyard in good repair as we are members of the Shropshire Church Tourism Group which attracts a number of visitors each year. Also we are part of ‘Caring for God’s Acre’. In 2015 our charitable giving amounted to £1,145.

Our Vision for Growth

We are a thriving, active Church with many events taking place through the year. Our PCC is keen, with several younger members, striving to move our church forward. Our congregation is open and receptive to new ideas, patterns of service and ways of doing things. We are able, organized, prepared to take on various roles within the church, and there are leaders of worship amongst our congregation.

We need a priest who will:

• be a spiritual guide to our dispersed, rural community and who will be a visual presence in the life of our community;
• encourage all ages in their worship, ministry and service, and who is able to undertake thoughtful and prayerful worship and preaching.
• maintain and develop the gift of our lay ministry.
• encourage us in our outreach within the community
• communicate with those in our community, by developing links with all families
• lead worship which is ‘uplifting, spiritual, exciting, informal and informative.'
Our Building and our Parish

Snead is one of the smallest parishes in Wales. The current population is 32 and historical documents indicate that 50 was the maximum. The church is situated in a raised churchyard on the banks of the River Camlad. The idyllic setting can make access difficult. Fortunately the lay-by on the A489 is a convenient car park before walking down a narrow lane, across a paddock and finally along a narrow grassed path. It is well worth the walk! Originally built as a 12C Augustinian chapel, the church has historical interest and supporters are keen to have the church floor restored to counteract the fungal and damp that has been an expensive and ongoing problem. Discussion with the Diocese and possible grant support is being pursued.

Our Congregation

There is only one resident farming family and two chicken farms. Over time some small businesses have established: B&B, Caravan Park, Antique Centre, Wood Yard and Farm Machinery maintenance. Services are held on six Sundays from April to Harvest and the usual congregation amounts to ten, four from the parish. Church members attend other churches in the benefice and beyond for the rest of the year. Two of the congregation are LMDG members, two are organists. The churchyard is cared for by a founder member of Caring for God’s Acre. Snead put itself on the map for Benefice fundraising with a Duck Race on the Camlad which metamorphosed into a Balloon Race and Dog Show until it became difficult to find younger volunteers. We are all aging and most have reached 70.

Our Vision for Growth

There have been few new comers to Snead and we have not been successful in getting either church or fundraising support. We have tried to raise the profile of the church as members of Shropshire Historic Churches Trust, Small Pilgrim Places, Caring for God’s Acre, Facebook and A Church Near You in the hope that more people will discover Snead Church and be able to share its unique peacefulness. We look forward to welcoming and working with the new rector and feel that an understanding and willingness to live a rural life in the 21st Century, although obvious, needs careful consideration. As a parish we need encouragement to look for a way forward in identifying a need for Christian worship in this small community. The incumbent needs the capacity to be at ease with people, work collaboratively, using the abilities of the LMDG, other lay groups and other denominations, in particular the Methodist congregations. We hope we will be lead by someone who can offer and support varied and purposeful worship.
Our Building and our Parish

The church, which dates back to Norman times, lies in the heart of the village of Wentnor. It was restored in 1866 and has immense charm, with individual multi-coloured kneelers that characterise every pew. Of the many visitors, virtually all, comment on the beauty and tranquillity of this unique place of worship, which is in a good state of repair and has an adequate heating system. It seats around 100.

The total parish population is estimated at 200. The median age is higher than many would like, with only a limited number of younger families in the community.

The local economy is an interesting mix of hill farming and local businesses which in many cases operate from home. Recent investment grants from Shropshire Council have assisted many households with improved broadband service. However, the principal character of this rural locality remains broadly unchanged adding to its general attractiveness, but not necessarily to its opportunity for inward investment. The village of Wentnor is served with a village store and an outreach post office and two pubs.

Our Congregation

This congregation is no different to many others, in having a small group of regular worshippers, in our case averaging ten in number; of whom most are pensioners. Historically, Worship has largely been Traditional in nature; however it is hoped that in future the Common Worship version of the Eucharist (in preference to any new Patterns of Worship i.e. Evangelical) will gain in popularity with the encouragement of a new Rector. Importantly, the congregation positively supports worship in the church, [in preference to any alternative viz. Village Hall] and has an active core of helpers with cleaning and flower arranging.

There are annual events including a Grand Fete for four local parishes, a harvest supper and a well attended and successful Flower Festival held every five years.

Our Vision for Growth

The PCC is acutely aware that, with an ageing population of worshippers, the existing congregation will diminish rapidly without a new and spirited revival to attract the next generation of younger families and their children. This represents by far the greatest challenge for the new incumbent, but the heart and soul of the community is generously minded and willing to provide active support and to assist with lay worship to preach and disseminate the Word of God.
Person Specification

“They preached the good news in that city and won a large number of disciples.” Acts 14:21

We seek an Incumbent who is:

- clear about his/her role as the apostolic minister with concern for oversight, strategy and mission in the Benefice
- a person with vision for church growth, evangelism and the making of new disciples
- a good communicator who sees preaching and teaching as a top priority
- an encourager and resource for others in ministry and mission
- a pastor able to relate to all in a friendly and open way
- a priest passionate about God
- a person of prayer who feels a calling to rural ministry