



The Parish Profile of
St Mary's Church Hitcham
Hitcham Lane, Burnham, Bucks SL1 7DP
In the Diocese of Oxford
Welcome to St Mary's

We are a Spirit filled, multi-generation church, with both contemporary and traditional elements who believe in inclusivity, with a heart for mission, rooted firmly in the Christian Gospel that Jesus came to bring.

We hope that you find the profile informative and interesting and that it provides an insight into the diverse community and life of our church.

Our church community is committed to pray for the person God is calling to lead us, if this is you, we pray you feel inspired, attracted, and challenged by this information.

www.stmaryshitcham.org.uk



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Foreword from the Associate Archdeacon

Our society is moving away from a place where cultural references and the rhythm of the year are impacted largely by our Christian traditions. Approaching St Mary's, in its idyllic setting, it is easy to be transported back to those times and feel wistful, even nostalgic for a world that once (if ever) was. Yet, St Mary's springs its surprise on such an unwary pilgrim because, whilst the fabric is well maintained and reminiscent of yesteryear in its freshness, once inside you can see very clearly that this parish church is very much set for mission in the 21st Century.

Its inclusive outlook starts with the accessibility of the church and continues through to the shape of the pattern of worship, the order of the church is set up for the visitor, the pilgrim – with a view to them beginning a discipleship journey therein.

These facilities, which this profile bears some testament too, is underpinned by a commitment by the congregation to sustain that offer. This single church, sparsely populated parish has a gathered community of believers and aspirants who come for the fellowship, share in the prayer and stay for their Saviour.

With good, long-term support from local colleagues in the Deanery, St Mary's have a history of sustaining ministry and mission throughout the changing seasons of life. They have very much made the most of their setting and the opportunities that it affords and look forward to inviting you to share in the joy of ministry with them.

With an easy commute by train to London, good quality local housing and an ethos of doing a few things to a very high standard, St Mary's, Hitcham is a 'treasure in a field' – just waiting for someone to see it as such and inhabit this calling anew.

As ever, the new Priest will be committed to the diocesan vision of becoming a more Christ-like Church for the sake of God's World – compassionate and courageous – and to model and enable a flourishing ministry, for all, in line with the diocesan work in this area.

I commend this profile to you and I would welcome conversations about the role with interested candidates.



Revd Canon Chris Bull
(Associate Archdeacon)



St Mary's Values

We are rooted firmly in the Christian Gospel that Jesus came to bring. God calls us to serve Him by caring for the needy and by offering people of all ages ways in which they can experience His love for them and worship Him.

Jesus At The Centre (*Acts 2:4*)

It is in Jesus that we see and meet the living God. The Father has poured His Holy Spirit upon us so that we can make Jesus the centre of everything we do and are.

Every Member Growing (*Ephesians 4:12-13*)

The Word teaches that Christ-followers should yearn for continuous inner growth as our characters are being transformed to be like that of Jesus.

Every Member Ministry (*1 Corinthians 12:12-26*)

Led by His Holy Spirit, each of us is called to exercise our God-given spiritual gifts and ministries in His service.

Inspiring Worship (*1 Corinthians 14:26*)

God is worthy of all praise and worship. We passionately desire our worship to draw us as a church community deeper into His living presence.

Loving Relationships (*John 13:34-35*)

We desire to be a community built on the foundation of genuine loving relationships that will permeate every aspect of our church life.

Servant-Hearted Leadership (*1 Corinthians 12:4-7*)

Everyone who exercises leadership responsibility at St Mary's serves for the good of those they lead, and under the authority of Christ.

Mission Minded (*John 3:16*)

The Church is called by God to be the visible agent of His love, His generosity, and His kindness to His world.

Doing Our Very Best (*Colossians 3:23*)

We believe that always doing our absolute best in every aspect of life within and outside Church life honours God and inspires people.

The Candidate Responsibilities

Vicar of St Mary's

This will be a part-time .5 stipendiary post in the benefice of Hitcham;

Episcopal Area: [Oxford](#)

Deanery: [Burnham & Slough](#)

Archdeaconry: [Buckinghamshire.](#)

The full job description and details are included in [Appendix I](#) - however this is a small selection of what our PCC and congregation view as the way forward and some of the qualities that are most important to us in our new vicar.



St Mary's Hitcham Mission

“Growing in the love of Christ and sharing his love with others” *(St Mary's mission statement)*

Our vision is born out of our passion for all the people in our Church Community, our Local Community, and in our Beyond Community. Our desire is to make a difference wherever we are and in ways that are real, responsive, and relevant in the world around us. We take seriously the call to serve in practical, spiritual, and financial ways; caring for the needy and aiming to offer every person a way in which they can experience the love of God and worship and serve Him. St Mary's is passionate about sharing God's love as highlighted in our Mission Statement, ensuring those we reach become firmly established and supported in their Christian faith whilst being a part of Inclusive Church to ensure no-one is denied the opportunity to know and grow in the love of Christ.

Creating Christian Communities & Disciples

At Our Church Today we have...

- a pattern of services that offers a variety of styles, keeps Jesus at the centre, always involves prayer and is Spirit led. For Sunday & weekday services - see Appendix 9.
- a team of Lay Leaders who have answered God's call to serve. who are encouraged to preach and lead services.
- prayer meetings and prayer ministry after services
- a dedicated welcome & hospitality team at all services to provide a warm welcome at the door and help if needed, through to real coffee tea & cake after the services
- a team of readers and intercessors at all our services
- an employed pianist/organist to play at both our 9am and 11am services as well as occasional joint 10am services and special services at Easter and Christmas
- a paid part-time administrator to assist the incumbent
- a beautiful and versatile re-ordered church offers an open space where we can eat together at Harvest lunches, our Souper Sundays, celebration afternoon teas just to mention just a few occasions - we have even hosted wedding receptions within the church
- a full AV system with recording facility and hearing loop

- become a member of Inclusive Church as we believe no-one should be denied the love of God
- a vision to encourage Every-Person Ministry for all our church community to be involved in the life of the church.
- a variety of small groups to meet the needs of new and existing Christians.
- an awareness of Eco Church, recycling, and Fairtrade
- a well-attended weekly 'Roots & Shoots' group for pre-schoolers and their carers
- a presence in our local area with our LPPW group (Litter Picking Prayer Walk) and the Well at Lent Rise
- St Mary's notices emailed to parishioners weekly and published on our website.
- specific events and services publicised on our notice boards, both outside the church and in the porch
- an on-line presence with our website: www.stmaryshitcham.org.uk, both a private St Mary's Family group and St Mary's Hitcham page on Facebook, and more recently Instagram, to promote and share events
- a regular contribution to the local Burnham bi-monthly Newsletter 'Round and About'
- a dedicated team of bellringers that ring before our 11am or 10am services as well special events
- a good attendance at events which nurture faith e.g. Christian conferences, New Wine events and local initiatives.

...and Tomorrow?

- We recognize the importance of growing children's and youth work.
- Small pastoral teams have long been a desire. During the interregnum, care has been provided by lay leaders, visiting clergy and the Area Dean.
- Strengthening and encouraging our Prayer Ministry Team
- Host an Alpha course in 2024
- Build more opportunities to draw in new church members and encourage those on the fringes to become more involved in our friendly Church, including families contacted through baptisms, youth, or children's work.
- Building on friendships made during our social events

Our Church Community



Our desire is that everyone in St Mary's - seeker to mature Christian - should grow in the depth of their relationship with Jesus and allow Him to heal and transform them. That the result of this growth, is servant hearts that continually seek to serve God and His creation in the church, the local and wider community, and the world. We have continued this vision through the challenges of three interregna and both our last vicar and previous vicar's ill health.

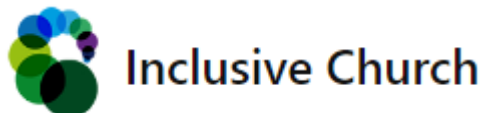
We aim to have times of fellowship and eating together as well as creative and innovative range of services.



Inclusive Church

We made the decision to become a part of Inclusive Church as we believe no one should be denied the opportunity to experience the presence of a living loving God. We spoke with the vicars of St Peters Church Burnham, and St Lukes Church Maidenhead as both churches are a part of the Inclusive Church network, and both confirmed that it was a positive and everyday part of church life.

The inclusive church statement is:



"We believe in inclusive church – a church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate.

We will continue to challenge the church where it continues to discriminate against people on grounds of disability, economic power, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, learning disability, mental health, neurodiversity, or sexuality.

We believe in a Church which welcomes and serves all people in the name of Jesus Christ; which is scripturally faithful; which seeks to proclaim the Gospel afresh for each generation; and which, in the power of the Holy Spirit, allows all people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Jesus Christ."

We believe that this is a statement that mirrors the beliefs of St Mary's and decided it would be wonderful to declare it to the world rather than be exclusive in our inclusivity! Or at least to those that live in the area around us. St Mary's is, and has always been, a gathered church that attracts people from all walks of life and a part of growing our church community is showing that we are willing and able to welcome all to our church.

Prayer Ministry

St Mary's believes in the transforming power of the Holy Spirit encouraging everyone who seeks more of the Lord to put themselves in a place of receiving directly from Him; becoming everything He created us to be. We pray for, and believe in, physical and emotional healing and see encouraging signs of what the Lord is doing. Members of the Prayer Ministry Team are trained in pastoral prayer, with further training available to current and new prayer ministers. This is an area of growth and exploration for us, and the Team are open to continued learning and growing in this ministry and constantly seek a deeper more intimate relationship with the Lord. While many in the congregation are still learning to put themselves in that vulnerable place of requesting prayer, recent needs have led to individual prayer quietly happening during a service. This development is building trust between the Team and those receiving prayer.



'Prayer takes place at St Mary's in a number of contexts. A small team of people prepare intercessory prayers for the weekly services, but much of the intercessory prayer takes place within small groups where members are supported by each other and can share their needs in confidence. There is also a WhatsApp group where prayer requests can be communicated to members when things are urgent.'

Requests for prayer can be written on tags and hung on a prayer tree at the back of the church. The names of people for whom prayer is requested are also written in a book and read out by those doing the prayers in the services. However, in my experience most of us rely on those closest to us to pray for us when we have needs and we confide in those we trust most. A short monthly prayer meeting takes place between the two Sunday services when members of both congregations come together to pray together. Prayer ministry is available at the end of most services if requested.'

Jo Cork

Alpha

The Alpha Course is at the heart of St Mary's discipleship and our intention every autumn is to reach out to people in a variety of ways including delivering leaflets to homes in our parish to invite them into a relationship with Jesus. We constantly seek to love and reach people who think "church" is irrelevant in the world today. Alpha has always been a wonderful way to connect with our local community in a safe nonjudgmental environment and many members of St Mary's have benefited from attending.



St Marys Finance and Mission Giving Group

The role of the St Mary's Mission Giving Group is to support the mission of others by distributing 10% of the church's income to charities local (close to the heart of the church), National and International.

Among those charities in the past, we have endeavoured to support local children with special needs, women's refuge, men's Christian rehabilitation centre, Parkinsons UK, British Heart Foundation and The Bible Society. We look to our congregation to suggest charities that they may themselves be involved in supporting our currently small, Mission Giving Group and new members are always welcome.

I have been attending St Mary's for the past 7 years since the death of my mother when I discovered a void in my life that I had not realised was there until I started attending. My relationship with Jesus has slowly grown along with my involvement with the church and the Mission Giving Group is a small part in that growth. **Paula Gaskin**



Children and Youth

BFG

BFG stands for Big Friendly God and has been our children's ministry for many years. It is held during the 9am service for children aged between 5 and 11. The children remain in the service for the first song and return from the Parish Room in time for the peace and communion. The aim is a brief fun-filled time involving the Bible and, invariably, Jesus. We use Scripture Union Splash and Stream material with the emphasis being on fun and learning.

Pre covid we had five families attending with sessions being run on 3 out of 4 Sundays. Sadly, the effect of the Covid break along with the children reaching the upper age of the club resulted in BFG being paused for the latter months of 2022 and early 2023.

In June 2023 we restarted BFG on the first Sunday of each month with the help of one of the original parents. The numbers are small at present - well actually just two children!

BFG is run by Chris Berry, Debbie Rainer, and parent helper Cyril Esterhuysen.

Xplorers

This is a club for non-church 5 to 11 year olds held in the Parish Room on Thursday evenings twice a month. Started in 2023, we currently have five children from 3 families taking part in fun activities. Sessions have included biscuit making, fun fitness, pizza making along with trips out to the cinema and ten pin bowling.

Xplorers is run by Angela and Chris Berry.

Roots & Shoots

A pre-school with carer group that meets on a Monday morning in the Parish Room. Roots and shoots has run at St Mary's for many years and is an invaluable outreach into our community for a safe introduction to Church life.

Roots and Shoots has been instrumental in bringing many people into the life of St Mary's.

Roots & Shoots is run by Marie Hill and Julie Richards



'As a church we believe that children are a delight to be seen and heard. We welcome children of all ages into our services with no concerns about any noise made! We value their presence and the benefits they and their parents bring.'

We currently run two clubs for primary age children - BFG and Xplorers.'

Chris Berry



'Roots & Shoots is St Marys toddler group. We have 15 parents who attend. The group has developed into a supportive group of parents who use our WhatsApp group to help support each other through the week. Our parents have enjoyed social evenings and attended all church events that we have invited them to, such as St Mary's Pancake Evening and 'Messy Easter'. We also hold an amazing Crib service which is always lots of fun.'

Julie Richards

Small Groups

Small Groups are a major part of Spiritual growth at St Mary's, and we have mixed, men's and both day and evening groups.

St Mary's continues to value the small groups as a way for members of the congregation to get to know each other at a more personal and intimate level. The small group setting allows people to share their lives with each other and discuss issues of faith with other believers.

Small Groups have aided newcomers to make close friendships and feel part of our Church Family, and much pastoral care takes place in Small Groups through leaders and group members. Issues raised can be passed on to the support team who may refer the individual for additional professional support.

'The Monday Men's Small Group meets weekly for about an hour and a half and consists of eight members of St. Mary's, past and present but all connected one way or another by their involvement in and around the Church.

Attendees range in age from mid-forties to eighties and cover a mix of backgrounds and experience walking God's path

Every term a new book or theme of the Bible is chosen to study and this forms the basis of the weekly meetings. However, the gatherings are more than just an opportunity to learn more about God, they are also an opportunity for fellowship; a chance to share burdens and or good news and benefit from the power of prayer.'

James Ulner



'I have been a member of St Mary's church since 1979 and have had various roles during this period. In 2000 there was an Alpha course which I reluctantly joined. This course changed my life and many others so a small group was formed and it is still thriving now.

At present we have 7 members and meet in a members house for 2 hours on a Thursday morning. I have made many friendships over the years and it is me who keeps people in order with who is leading each week and where we are meeting etc etc. Some people are shy when they join our group so I always encourage them to lead occasionally. When someone new starts, I remind everyone that everything that is said at the meetings is confidential, and it is a safe place to be.

We start with good news that has happened during the week and then study the Bible with one of the Lifebuilders series and finally we pray. I am a carer so it is special to have a Thursday morning when I can be me. From time to time we meet up for a meal out.

Also on the 3rd Thursday of the month we go into Burnham Lodge Nursing Care Home for a communion service which is normally led by the vicar of St Marys or I lead with pre consecrated communion.'

Sonia Hart

Serving in our Church Life and Supporting our new Incumbent

The new incumbent is invited to come on an exciting journey with us, to explore new ways in which God is calling us within a collaborative and inclusive environment, to face challenges together and should expect to be enveloped in the love of our church family and adopted by the community as a friend and neighbour.

PCC - St Mary's culture of supportive-working is facilitated by a pro-active PCC with nine voting members, each serving a term of three years, plus a non-voting Treasurer. The PCC is chaired by the Incumbent or by a churchwarden in his/her absence and meets five or six times per year. As well as these church business meetings, the PCC attend away days during the year sharing prayer, spiritual refreshment, discussion, and time together.

The members of the PCC work well together and are committed to promoting the whole mission of the church, pastoral, evangelistic, social, and ecumenical within the ecclesiastical parish.

PCC and Church members attend meetings of Churches Together in Burnham, our two Deanery Synod Representatives support the Deanery by attending four meetings per annum and reporting back to the PCC. All PCC members and Deanery Representatives are required to indicate prior to election that they are committed to live out the call of Christ on their lives and to support in every way the 'Vision and Values' of St Mary's church. PCC members count it a privilege to serve the body of the church in this way.

The PCC is committed to support the new incumbent in collaborative and embracing way, allowing them the opportunity to be 'Less Busy' and 'More Prayer time,' take time for retreats, refreshing and renewing. St Mary's will offer care, support, and commitment to the ongoing development of the new incumbent's ministry. St Mary's congregations work together as a church family, and we know a new incumbent will be embraced by all of us and fully supported in prayer.

PCC Secretary

Taking on the role of PCC Secretary in April 2019, Debbie Rainer aims to follow diocese requirements for the post in an efficient and friendly manner. This involves liaising primarily with Church Wardens and the Church Administrator, ensuring regular PCC meetings take place in a timely manner and to an agreed agenda. Draft minutes are typed during the meeting itself, following circulation of an agenda and appropriate attachments at least five working days in advance. These draft minutes are passed to the meeting Chair for initial approval within ten working days, before prompt circulation to the rest of PCC. Meeting agendas can be long, but with shared prayer, good humour, a confident Chair and focused discussion, outcomes are supportive of our shared vision for St Mary's.



Treasurer - St Mary's Treasurer is employed to expertly prepare church budgets and accounts and is assisted by our Confidential Giving Secretary who deals with HMRC Gift Aid and Planned Giving. We encourage regular giving by the Parish Giving Scheme or Standing Order and use of our 'sum-up' machine in church and the envelope Gift Aid scheme. There is also a link on our website for online giving.

Lay Leaders & Preachers

We have a lay team of three licensed preachers & one person in the process of seeking Bishop Permission to give Communion by Extension, and two service leaders and an Associate Priest



'I joined St Mary's Church during the height of Covid in 2020. That was during the day's of quite tough restrictions and Social distancing. But even then I found a very warm welcome from an even warmer congregation. Before long I felt truly part of the St Mary's family. I approached our then vicar Sue about preaching, which she willingly allowed me and soon I was able to resurrect my status as an authorised preacher.

During the time of vacancy it has been my absolute pleasure to serve the Church in preaching on a monthly basis. The family at St Mary's have been so encouraging and positive it has been an absolute joy to share God's Word with them. It is a ministry I really hope to carry on after the appointment of a new incumbent.'

Simon Price – Lay Preacher

Wednesday Morning Service



This is a precious occasion, supported by up to fifteen friends, six of whom are not to be found in St Mary's congregations on a Sunday. Except for our mini carol service, it is usually a 'said,' quietly and thoughtfully, in modern style with participation by everyone as required. The style and content of the teaching is varied, but every service is followed by a time of fellowship in the Parish Room that is an important part of the occasion.

During the ministry of our previous incumbent, leadership was alternated with myself, associate Priest Alan Bignell, when I was attached to the parish by the Area Dean in 2015; at present it is my most frequent contribution to the life of St Mary's. I was ordained NSM in 1981 and have served in several parishes around the Deanery of Burnham & Slough.

Media Team - A small team that prepare the weekly services for the computer for the 9am and 10am services and organize the notice visuals for the start of the service on the screen, the emailed notices, our Website, Facebook & Instagram and for our notice boards, plus any advertising and publicity for events.

Flower Arranging Team - A talented team that ensure the church always looks beautiful with fresh floral decorations that honour God.

As well as weekly floral arrangements within the church and often the porch, St Mary's is well known for ensuring the church always looks stunning for the major festivals of Easter, Christmas, and Harvest as well as providing floral decorations for weddings, blessings and baptisms if required.



'I have organised the provision of flowers to enhance our worship in our beautiful church for over 30 years. We have a team of ten enthusiastic flower arrangers at this time, with 3 on a regular rota. I provide tuition if requested. (I am a retired flower arranging teacher).

I have been a member of this friendly congregation for over 40 years and have had many roles in that time and been actively supported for events I have organised.' **Margaret Woodley**

Worship Team - There is a core team of singers and pianist that lead contemporary sung worship during the 9am and 10am services. They introduce new worship songs into the church repertoire and are dedicated to ensuring that the worship is relevant and authentic. The worship leader prepares the service orders each week and prays into the service, readings, and talk, when selecting sung worship. The 9am services have a less formal style, often lay led, using four different service styles over the month. 3rd Sundays are non-communion, focused on Praise and Worship and seeking to invite the Holy Spirit. There are three different styles of communion services, including singing 'Behold the Lamb' as our communion preparation.

10am joint services, named Souper Sundays, are where traditional meets contemporary. They are led by the worship team, with a good mix of hymns and contemporary worship songs and often including an Agape Feast in place of communion. The 10am



'St Mary's is a place providing many ways in which people can connect with God. Provision and support are given for those wanting to develop spiritually.

Unity between the congregations is nurtured by joint services and fellowship meals.

I wasn't welcomed as a musician but grafted into the church family.'

Paula Darrall – St Mary's pianist / organist

services are followed by fellowship in the Parish Room and a 'Hymn Sing' while the church is transformed into a dining room and freshly homemade soups and fresh baked bread are served. This is an extremely popular service and a great opportunity for all of our congregations to meet and eat together.

The worship team also support baptisms and weddings if required as well as special services for Christmas and Easter and Paula leads hymns at the 11am service.



*Souper Sunday!
In the Church*



'The warm welcome extended on arrival at church services, special events and during Alpha courses, has encouraged many to join St Mary's. I continue to coordinate a small but committed team for the 9am service; Sonia Hart leads a similar team for the 11am and mid-week services. The rota is set three months in advance, with members swapping amongst themselves when cover is required, ensuring that amendments are recorded on the chart in the church vestry. New members to the team are encouraged to this enjoyable role of service to St Mary's. A role that is far from onerous – it is a real pleasure to greet worshippers new and old with a smile.' **Debbie Rainer**

Welcome & Hospitality Team

There is a dedicated team that provides a warm welcome at the church door at all services and prepare and serve refreshments following services including homemade cakes and fresh real coffee! The hospitality team also cater on a larger scale for events e.g. Alpha and Harvest Lunch.

AV Team

A dependable team that provides AV needs for the 9am and 10am services and supports the Worship Team with special services. The services are projected onto a large screen which is fixed and can be lifted when not in use, and we currently use the Pro Presenter package to design and produce our visuals. We also have a comprehensive video recording suite so that our 9am and 10am services and any special services, like at Christmas, can be recorded. We can also offer video links for people unable to attend a special ceremony, wedding, or funeral. If the church is full for a ceremony, we also have the ability to live stream the service into the Parish Room which also has a projector and sound bar. We currently post a recording of the Reading, sermon, and response song each Sunday onto our Facebook page.

St Mary's Bells - The bells of St Mary's have been ringing out over the local countryside for well over 450 years. Prior to 1919, there were only three bells in the tower with the number 2 bell being a 'pre-reformation bell' cast by John Saunders, a Reading Company, in 1540. The other two were subsequently cast in 1755 by Thomas Swain, a London bell founder.

'This is a very rewarding service though challenging on occasions. The church is fitted with a dedicated AV system suitable for use in all types of services, with the ability to record video and audio as well as livestream both publicly and privately. The sound system has a 24-way mixer with five wireless mics, plus wired mics, and inputs from both the keyboard and computer. The Nave, Chancel & tower speakers can be independently selected, and levels adjusted.'



There is a motorised video camera at the back of the church that can cover about 80% of the nave and chancel. The lighting level in the church is fully adjustable with eight presets possible. The computer has presentation software installed which allows different content to be output to the church projector and the livestream/recording. The projector is situated above the chancel arch showing onto a motorised screen above the altar with a monitor visible from the altar. We have a purpose-built desk installed in the south-west corner of the nave where all of the AV equipment is housed.'

David Ross-Hamilton

In 1919, just after the First World War Colonel Hanbury, who lived in Hitcham House across the road and attended the Church, oversaw the complete installation of 6 new bells, with all new fittings and framework, to give thanks for the safe return of his daughter, son and himself, after serving in France during the Great War. Interestingly, the total cost was just under £600, a huge sum in those far off days. The bells range in weight from the Treble at 3cwt-0qtr-19lbs, to the Tenor at 6cwt-0qtr-11lbs. The tower is affiliated to The East Berks and South Bucks branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bellringers.

Since that time, they have been rung for services, weddings, funerals, and practice, only falling silent during the Second World War, and recently during the Covid pandemic. There were two very sad occasions during 2022 when the tenor bell was tolled. The first time was on the morning of Friday 9th September 2022, in memory of the late Queen Elizabeth, and then Monday 19th September 2022 on the day of her funeral.

Prior to 2007, the bells were a ground floor ring surrounding the font with a very long draught. However, during the reordering of the Church in 2007, the font was moved and a second floor with a small staircase was built. The ringing chamber was then moved to the second floor resulting in all the bells having a very short draught.

Currently, the bells are rung from 19:00hrs to 20:00hrs every Wednesday for practice, and 10:30hrs to 11:00hrs each Sunday prior to the 11:00 service.

Roger Webb



A few of our dedicated bell ringers!

Eco Church, recycling & caring for our environment



We are very aware of our environment and our duty of care for our world. We are working towards an award with [Eco Church – an A Rocha UK project](#), whose vision is for churches of all denominations to care for creation as an integral part of loving their neighbours and following God faithfully.



We have used their guidelines and service resources on several occasions. We are looking forward to moving forward with the project in 2024.

We have introduced better recycling facilities at St Mary's and have installed a compost bin as well as bird feeders amongst the churchyard. Each year we instruct our gardeners to leave areas of natural wildflowers and grass to encourage wildlife. We make sure the areas are well marked to let everyone know why the grass has not been cut and that it is for a good reason!



Serving Our Local Community

Today...

The Hitcham Trust

The Hitcham Trust (formerly Hitcham Poor's Land Trust), now known as the Hitcham Trust, has been in its present form since 1963 (we celebrate 60 years in September 2023) although its history goes back to 1779. The Hitcham Trust offers financial assistance to residents of Burnham and Hitcham who are in or who have fallen into hard times. As a guide, the trust can help with school clothing, shoes, winter coats, and household goods, carpets, white goods, and replacement items (for example tools).

The Trustees, if possible, like to make a home visit as in this way other requirements can often be assessed, or the individual signposted to other supporting agencies. Being on benefits is not a prerequisite to asking for help - it is to recognise that a sudden bout of impecuniousness can strike at any time!

Application is usually made through agencies such as Social Services, schools, children's support departments, Citizen's Advice, churches and of course Burnham Health Promotion Trust which Hitcham Trust played its part in setting up.

In accordance with the Trust Deed, funds have been applied to other worthy causes over the years, Alexander Devine, Care and Share, Thames Valley Hospice to name a few and the trust is investigating making an award to Padstones (a supported accommodation Charity in Burnham). The Trust has also previously supported Lighthouse Burnham that is set to return in 2024.

The trustees of Hitcham Trust (which is secular and non-political) are supportive of the campaign to have the non-selective secondary school in Burnham re-opened. Letters in support are being prepared. It is believed by the trustees that the Hitcham Trust will continue to serve the community by helping those in need who are being referred. Traditionally the vicar of St Mary's is expected to become a Trustee of Hitcham Trust.

Terry J Gamble

Chair - Hitcham Trust

The Well @ Lent Rise (charity No. 1124145)

The Well @ Lent Rise started as an outreach project of St Mary's Hitcham and was registered as a charity 15 years ago. The original idea was to bring together young and old in the Lent Rise area in a repurposed building but this was not to be and the Charity started in the Methodist Church hall, with an after school club (learning lab), memory book (for people with pre-dementia/dementia and carers), post-natal depression support, Youth Café (after school youth club) at Burnham Upper, Street Youth Outreach (Friday night) and The Meeting Place and Wake-up-Wednesday.



Because of the lack of qualified volunteers and the difficulties for charities to be given funds for salaries, only the last two activities currently continue, The Meeting Place and Wake-up-Wednesday.

Wake-up-Wednesday

Provides bacon rolls/croissants hot chocolate fruit and fruit juice predominantly for students catching school buses. Our first 'customer' arrives shortly after 7am and we usually continue to just after 8am when the non-retired volunteers go off to work. The cost has risen quite sharply of late from approximately £17 to £23 weekly during the school term. Remembering our 'St. Mary's roots,' in addition to treats, the real meaning of Christmas and Easter notes are given out to those who would like a leaflet. On quite a few mornings during the term we are joined by Wayne Dixon from Christian Connections in Schools who further brightens the mornings. The provision of breakfast on Wednesday morning is greatly appreciated by the schoolchildren and mean that students from different schools interact. When Wake-up-Wednesday started one of its aims was to make young people feel part of the community and for the short time on Wednesday morning, this is achieved.

The Meeting Place

From 9-30 – 12-30 on Wednesdays, all are welcome to meet and partake of tea/coffee and home-made cake. Volunteers organise a cake rota with 'gluten free' etc. always available. The Well Stitchers undertake all sorts of needlecraft raising money for charities and worthy causes both locally and further afield. Ukrainian refugees, Age concern, Australian bushfire victims, Burnham Library have all been recipients of the Stitchers largesse. Wall hangings for local churches have also been produced. The Well Stitchers have been on training courses, museum visits and craft exhibitions to improve their skill and motivation. Claire Rollinson, The Well @ Lent Rise's professional volunteer artist spends time with any who wishes to participate in crafts and artwork. There are also ad hoc cards and flower arranging workshops. There are various games available and a 'crossword corner.'

On the 2nd Wednesday of the month there is a 'walk-in' Citizens Advice Service, and a private room is provided.

The Meeting Place has celebrated both the late Queens Jubilee and The Coronation. Many of those who attended took advantage of a subsidised trip to the pantomime at Christmas as well as a Christmas Lunch.

The Meeting Place has for the last 15 years provided a warm and friendly welcome to all who attend and provides a vibrant place for locals and those from further afield to engage in a morning of fun.

Terry J Gamble

Trustee – The Meeting Place



An example of The Well Stitchers wall hanging in St Mary's Church

Litter Picking Prayer Walk (LPPW)

We have held two Litter Picking Prayer Walks where we pick litter - pray - and walk! Choosing two or three residential roads in our Parish we spend a couple of hours walking around and picking up litter. We regularly stop to pray as a group for the residents, businesses and those travelling past. Ending the LPPW at the Olive Tree pub on Eastfield Road is an added bonus!

We have been fortunate in that Buckinghamshire Council have very helpfully given us high end litter pick up tools on long term loan. The Council also collects the rubbish from a pre-arranged central point.

Hi-vis vests with our St Mary's Church logo on are worn to raise local awareness resulting in interactions with local residents during the walks. We intend to continue and develop the LPPW in the future. - **Chris Berry**



Lighthouse Burnham (lighthousecentral.org)

Key people in St Mary's community were responsible for setting up and launching Lighthouse Burnham in 2001, filling many of the key roles. Sadly, with the onset of Covid paired with difficulties in finding a suitable venue, Lighthouse Burnham has not been able to run for the last 3 years, although we are excited that plans are in place to run in 2024.



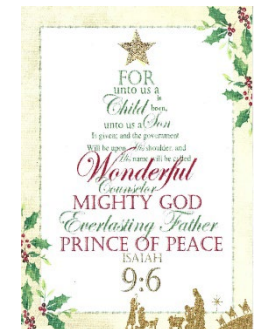
Lighthouse is a week-long Christian holiday club for children living in the area aged 4 to 11 which is traditionally held the first week of the school summer holidays. With a previous pre-Covid average attendance of 700+ children and about 350 volunteer helpers in total, with 2/3rds being teenagers, the youth in Burnham were key to its success. Lighthouse is a joint venture with all the local churches where a living faith and life with Jesus is modelled. Lighthouse Burnham is a part of [Lighthouse Central](http://lighthousecentral.org) who support all local groups to run. This had been an important part of St Mary's outreach as many children and teenagers have only encountered a living faith in Jesus during their time at Lighthouse. A considerable proportion of St Mary's congregation invested time and energy during the week and in the lead up to the event with many holding key team leader roles.

Carol Bader - Trustee of Lighthouse Burnham & former Chair and Coordinator

Regular leaflet drops

As well as the use of social media, our website, and contributing to the local publication 'Round and About,' we keep in touch with our local community in our Parish with leaflet drops. These are generally for Christmas & Easter and give all the information about the many services and events we have planned for the season to encourage our community to visit St Mary's.

We also hand deliver invitations to Alpha when we are running an Alpha Course as this is an important outreach for St Mary's and has been a great introduction to church life to many of our congregations.



Christmas and Spring Fairs

St Mary's has run several Christmas and Spring Fairs in the church, encouraging local artists and crafts people to come and display their wares as well as St Mary's congregation contributions. These are becoming more popular and a fantastic opportunity for our local community to come and see what we have to offer at St Mary's and are often heard to say how welcome they were made and how light, airy and clean our church is. Visitors staying for tea and coffee gives an opportunity for conversations about St Mary's.



Social Media

We are aware of the importance of social media and have an online presence on both Facebook and more recently, Instagram. We have a 'private' Facebook group, St Mary's Hitcham Family, whose members contain current and previous worshippers of St Mary's. Anyone can request to join the group if they have a connection to St Mary's, either present or past, however we do restrict membership to those that we know or have been recommended to join us. This group is open for anyone to post, so we can share information with our members and those that have moved away can still be a part of church life and updates.



We also have an open St Mary's Hitcham Church group. We use this to share events, updates, service times and to post our recorded sermon, reading and response song from our 9am service each week to enable us to reach a wider audience. Posts on this page are automatically copied to our Instagram account as well. We are able to monitor this page to see what posts are more popular, how many visits we have had etc.

St Mary's Craft Club

A new initiative, started last year, St Mary's Craft Club meets twice a month on alternate Tuesdays in the Parish Room. Attendees pay a small fee to attend and enjoy the facilities at St Mary's whilst bringing their own craft projects along to share with others. The group is gradually growing and attracting crafters from outside of the church to join.



Burnham Care & Share

[Burnham Care and Share](https://bhpt.org.uk/care-and-share/) is an Alliance set up by Burnham Health Promotion Trust and St Peter's Church in collaboration with Foodshare Maidenhead. They collect and re-distribute excess food to those who need help. By doing so, it reduces food wastage and helps families, children, and individuals in and around Burnham who are, for whatever reason, unable to feed themselves and who are struggling to manage.

They aim to provide a minimum of at least 3 days food which also consists of fresh fruit and vegetables. They try their best to accommodate particular dietary requirements (e.g. vegetarian, gluten-free, Halal etc) but it will be appreciated they are dependent upon the kindness and generosity of the Burnham Community as to what is available at any one time.

St Mary's support and encourage donations to Burnham Care and Share. Our Harvest offerings that are collected also go to them. Members of our congregation are volunteers with the charity and keep us updated on the current and relevant requirements and needs.



Celebration Afternoon Teas

St Mary's congregation has never needed much encouragement where having a social gathering that includes food – especially high tea with sandwiches, cakes and scones with jam and clotted cream is concerned!

Having the lovely light, fresh and clean area of our wonderful church to use as a tearoom is a real bonus when welcoming our local community to celebrate with us at our church.

Having recently had two opportunities to have a Royal tea party - for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the King's Coronation, St Mary's wasted no time in arranging both tea parties with a wonderful spread to share with everyone.

We also had a raffle to raise funds for the church and a 'Guess the weight of the cake' and encouraged dressing up for the events. For the Queen's Jubilee, one member of the congregation organised a small 'drama' performed by church members, reminiscing about what life would have been like when Queen Elizabeth was crowned.



Our Beyond Community

Today...

We use Fairly Traded products wherever possible within the church.



Compassion

We promote individual sponsorship of children through organisations such as Compassion. Several members of St Mary's sponsor children through Compassion which was introduced to us several years ago we were visited by Moses and Delmark from Kutunga in Uganda. We have a yearly visit from Compassion to talk to us about how sponsorship makes a difference in the life of the children involved in the project.



St Mary Magdalene, Ritchie, South Africa.



'We are twinned with St Mary Magdalene in Ritchie, South Africa we have very close links to families in the village spanning over 25 years. Last year we hosted the Adonis family for 14 days which was a huge blessing. Over the years we have helped run Lighthouse a Christian summer camp in Ritchie, we have fundraised for much needed wheelchairs and medicines. Our committee have enjoyed meals via zoom so we can share a meal with our Christian family in SA and we have been sent lots of photos and keep each other up to date on the amazing work happen there and here.'

Julie Richards – St Mary Magdalene link



St Mary's has very strong ties with St Mary Magdalene in the township of Ritchie, near Kimberley in South Africa. A Churchwarden, Catherine, contacted St Mary's as a church with the same name over 25 years ago seeking a church to link to. The vicar of St Mary's at that time, Rev Tom Hewson, responded to them and our linking was forged!

We have supported soup kitchens, helping with technology and wheelchairs. Several visits have been made to Ritchie by members of our congregation over the years, including putting on a Lighthouse there, and we have in turn been blessed to host them when they have visited us in the UK.

Ritchie is part of the [Kimberley & Kuruman and Oxford link](#)

Appendix I - Role of St Mary's Vicar

Role Title:	Vicar
Type of Role:	0.5 stipendiary Hitcham Oxford
Name of benefice:	Hitcham
Episcopal Area:	Oxford
Deanery:	Burnham & Slough
Archdeaconry:	Buckinghamshire
Conditions of Service:	Please refer to Statements of Particulars document issued in conjunction with this role description
Key contact for clergy:	Archdeacon of Buckingham
Terms of Service:	This role falls within the Clergy Terms of Service formally known as common tenure. The Archdeacon of Buckingham is the designated person by the Bishop of Oxford to issue the Statement of Particulars for the post holder.
Accountability:	Priests share with the Bishop in the oversight of the Church. Whilst as an office holder, the individual is expected to lead and prioritise work in line with the purpose of the role, they are encouraged to inform the Archdeacon and Church Wardens about any issues exceptional or otherwise that have the potential to affect ongoing delivery of ministry.

This role description is issued alongside and should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

The Ordinal	The Canons of the Church of England	Guidance for the Professional Conduct of Clergy
Bishop's License	Statement of Particulars issued to the officeholder on successful appointment	Diocesan Clergy Handbook

Role purpose and Key Responsibilities

General

To exercise the cure of souls, shared with the Bishop in this parish in collaboration with colleagues, including the praying of the Daily Office, the administration of the sacraments and preaching. To have regard to the calling and responsibilities of the clergy (*as described in the Canons, the Ordinal, the Code of Professional Conduct for the Clergy*) and other relevant legislation including:

- Bringing the grace and truth of Christ to this generation and making Him known to those in your care instructing the parishioners in the Christian faith
- Diligently visiting the parishioners of the benefice, particularly those who are sick and infirm providing spiritual counsel and advice.
- Consulting with the Parochial Church Council on matters of general concern and importance to the benefice.
- Bringing the needs of the world before God in intercession.
- Discerning and fostering the gifts of all God's people.
- Being faithful in prayer, expectant and watchful for the signs of God's presence, as He reveals His Kingdom among us.
- Embracing [Inclusive Church](#).

Key responsibilities specific to the local situation

Mission and outreach

- Grow our community and develop an environment for youth to worship at St Mary's
- Grow St Mary's small groups
- Embrace an annual Alpha course,
- Increase the mission work within the local area
- Nurture overseas links

Leadership and working collaboratively

- Develop lay leaders to work collaboratively within the church, the grouping, and the community
- Increase collaborative work with local churches
- Mentor and support disciples at all levels of discipleship

Worship and preaching

- Provide a variety of worship styles and spirit led teaching to inspire all congregations
- Promote daily prayer and Bible reading for the whole congregation
- Encourage our attendance at nurturing events e.g. New Wine / Mission Worship
- Develop children's and youth work

Pastoral care

- Develop a Pastoral Team
- Grow and develop the Prayer Ministry Team
- Nurture both fellowship and Bible study within Small Groups

Stewardship and benefice organisation

- Increase and develop the direction of Mission Giving
- Ensure we continue to honour our payment of the Parish share

Personal development and spirituality

- Have a commitment to personal development and God-given passions
- Take care of own wellbeing, including health & safety whilst building a good repertoire of spiritual and psychological strategies

Skills Profile

Qualifications/Training

- ✦ Ordained Priest within the Church of England, or a Church in communion with it, or a church whose orders it recognises
- ✦ Have satisfactorily completed Initial Ministerial Education
- ✦ Willingness to engage in further training that enhances the skills of community leadership

Experience

- ✦ Proven ability to lead and develop teams, identifying and encouraging gifts
- ✦ A skilled communicator
- ✦ Priestly ministry involving vision setting
- ✦ Engagement with and pastoral support for people of all ages
- ✦ Leading all styles of worship, both traditional and contemporary
- ✦ Leading forms of church in creative, engaging, and imaginative ways
- ✦ A broad experience of liturgy
- ✦ The care, maintenance and development of buildings and graveyard

Knowledge, Skills, and Competencies

- ✦ A good teacher and preacher with the ability to connect the Bible to everyday life
- ✦ The ability to motivate, inspire and effectively co-ordinate volunteers – a team builder
- ✦ Empowering and encouraging every member ministry

- ✦ The ability to seek out opportunities for mission and to develop them
- ✦ Collaborative leadership skills but with a powerful sense of direction and ability to make decisions, leading by example and using God's word
- ✦ An ability to make and grow links with individuals and community organisations
- ✦ A visionary who is prepared to be a fool for Christ
- ✦ An effective organiser of resources to meet a large number of demands
- ✦ Pastorally minded with an ability to encourage others to participate in caring for others

General Attributes

- ✦ Spirit led and a desire to develop this in the congregations
- ✦ A passion for mission
- ✦ Has a life rooted in the Bible and prayer with a commitment to developing this in the church
- ✦ Committed to growing St Mary's church community
- ✦ An ecumenical outlook and a willingness to work with local churches and faith groups
- ✦ A passion for learning and personal development
- ✦ A sense of humour
- ✦ A willingness to be part of St Mary's church family
- ✦ A servant hearted leader, with grace, generosity, and kindness, with a passion for growing God's kingdom
- ✦ A courageous leader who is not afraid of holy discontent and has the ability to voice an unpopular view and "stir it up in our hearts"

Other responsibilities

- ✦ The ability to work to a Safeguarding Policy and carry out any other duties and responsibilities in line with the parish needs



Appendix 2 - Hitcham Parish & Locality

St Mary's, Hitcham is within the civil parish of Burnham (pop.11,630). We are part of the Burnham and Slough Deanery and the Jubilee River grouping – comprising seven Anglican communities in the western part of the Deanery – Burnham, Cippenham, Eton with Eton Wick, Dorney and Boveney, Hitcham and Taplow and Dropmore. There are two other Church of England churches nearby as well as a Methodist Church, United Reformed Church. There are also two local Roman Catholic communities.

Burnham lies north of the [River Thames](#) in South [Buckinghamshire](#), on the boundary with [Berkshire](#), between the towns of [Maidenhead](#), [Slough](#) and Windsor.

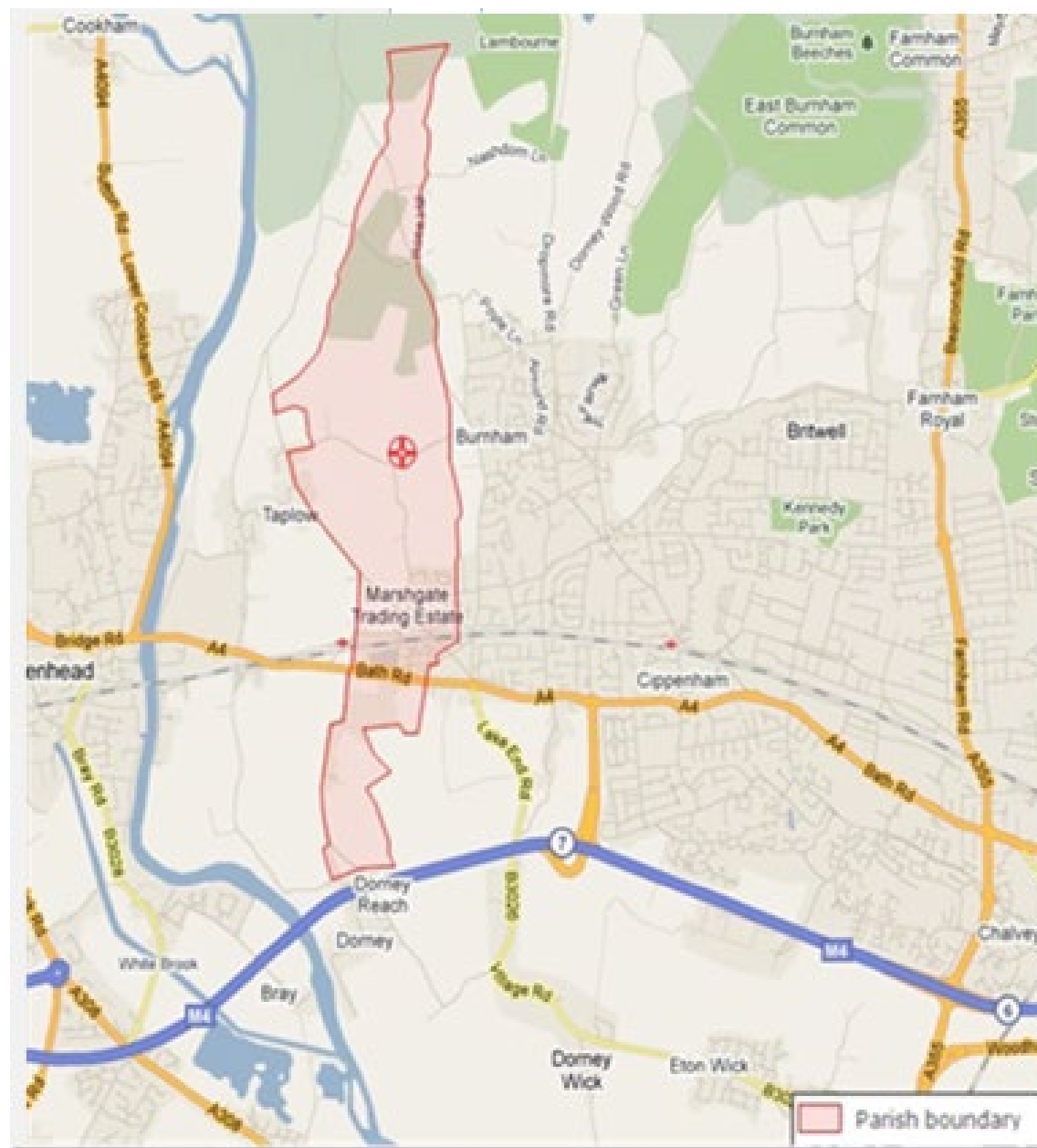
It is the traditional village [nucleus](#) for the civil parish. Its high street has a wide range of independent shops, local supermarket, restaurants, and Pubs. It hosts a weekly market.

[Taplow](#) & Burnham Railway Stations ([London Paddington](#) and [Reading main line](#)). Recently opened, *The Elizabeth Line* gives the opportunity of fast travel into London, including direct to Canary Wharf in 50 minutes

The [M4 motorway](#) passes through the south of the parish. The [M40 motorway](#) can be accessed within 5 minutes.

[Heathrow airport](#) is just over 11 miles away via the M4.

Burnham has retained its village atmosphere. It has a [local library](#), [large medical centre](#), [Youth Centre](#) and a [Day centre](#) for people with additional needs. Local clubs exist for football, cricket, hockey, rugby, tennis, gyms, and bowls. The large towns nearby have theatres, ice rink, swimming pools and much more.



[Burnham Park Hall](#) hosts community events. The community itself hosts three main annual events; the Christmas Fayre; the Donkey Derby and the Summer Carnival.

Of interest in the vicinity are: [Burnham Beeches](#) (ancient woodland), [Cliveden House](#) (National Trust), [Dorney Lake](#) and the [Jubilee River](#).

Bricks & Mortar

Our beautifully re-ordered and picturesque church is in the semi-rural area of Hitcham on the edge of Burnham. St Mary's is 850 years old but now meets our 21st century needs having a multi-functional, multimedia space to accommodate all styles of worship and events such as creative prayer activities, community events, alpha suppers, and celebrations. More information can be found on the British Historical records here.

The church building is currently in a good state of repair. The quinquennial report 2023 states that the church is: "responsibly cared for and well maintained". No major repair works to the building are outstanding i.e. no need to repair the roof or tower.

The Churchyard is closed to burials although interments of ashes are still accepted. We have a peal of six bells in our bell tower and a Sanctus bell.

The Vicarage

The vicarage, a 5-bedroom family home, with 3 reception rooms, 2 bathrooms, & new kitchen, cloakroom, linked detached garage and good-sized garden is situated in a quiet cul-de-sac, near the High Street, in the centre of Burnham. The vicarage is about a mile from St Mary's Church in Hitcham and across the road from St Peter's (Burnham), vicarage and church.



St Mary's Vicarage



St Mary's Church Hitcham



Burnham Grammar School provides secondary education to the children of Burnham and the surrounding area. Many students also commute to the nearby secondary schools in Maidenhead, Marlow, and Slough.

Lent Rise, St Peter's (Burnham), and St Nicolas' (Taplow), are the three dominant primary schools in the area and provide primary education for many of the local children.

Appendix 3 - The Diocese of Oxford

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.

Our Diocesan Bishop is Rt. Revd. Dr. Steven Croft. Due to the size and complexity of the Diocese, we also have three Area Bishops who exercise considerable strategic oversight for their Episcopal areas. Taplow and Dropmore come within the area of the Bishop of Buckingham who is the Rt Revd. Alan Wilson. Bishop Alan has been our Area Bishop since 2004.

A more Christ-like Church

Contemplative, compassionate and courageous for the sake of God's world

Our world is changing in unprecedented ways; we must think afresh about inequality, our communities and human identity. We need to be the best Church we can be in this time: a more Christ-like Church for the sake of God's world.

We are not the society for the preservation of old buildings (important though our heritage assets are); a church is the community of God's people, not the building. We believe that becoming more Christ-like is about who we are called to be, not what we are called to do.

This is our common vision for every Christian in every church and school across this diocese. We want to discern what God is doing in our communities and figure out how best we can join in.

The call to become more Christ-like is not the work we need to do before a new corporate strategy and a five-year plan. It is the response we are called to make. We are continually adapting and reshaping our common vision as, together, we discern God's will.

And we are just beginning...

Contemplative More people spending more time with God - Signs of a greater sense of humility Listening more and saying less, to ourselves, our world and one another

Compassionate More time spent with more people Signs of a greater sense of forgiveness, grace, and nurture Gracious welcome and hospitality, taking action for peace and justice

Courageous Taking steps of faith, commitment and endurance Making a difference in our local communities Signs of reconciliation; resolving conflict and working together for peace

Appendix 4 - Burnham & Slough Deanery

Burnham and Slough Deanery is a vibrant and diverse community that presents both opportunities and challenges for ministry and mission. The area encompasses a wide range of population demographics, from affluent areas to some of the most deprived in the country. Despite these differences, the deanery is committed to responding to the needs of its community and embracing the opportunities that arise.



As full time Area Dean, I am excited about the opportunities for ministry here. The urban community in Slough is growing and diverse, with the presence of one of the largest business estates in Europe. Additionally, the opening of the Elizabeth line in November 2022, offering a non-stop service to Paddington and through the city of London, presents a significant opportunity for new people to move into the area. Despite the challenges of urban and rural life, as well as varying levels of affluence and poverty, the Burnham and Slough Deanery remains a strong, prayerful, and cohesive unity. The deanery is actively seeking to grow and develop new ways of being church in the 21st century and this is reflected in our Deanery Mission Action plan. The principles and values that underpin the deanery's determination to reach the community include:

Celebrating the diversity of cultures and churchmanship present in the deanery, as well as acknowledging and celebrating both large and small successes.

Collaboration is also hugely encouraged and emphasised, so that we can provide mutual support to individuals and parishes.

Effective **communication**, both in listening well and boldly embracing necessary changes, is valued.

Finally, there is a commitment to align with the overall vision of the Diocese to become a more Christlike church for the sake of the world.

However, there are ongoing challenges, including adapting to changing resources for ministry, strengthening, and supporting ecumenical links, working in a multi-faith environment, and addressing the diverse needs of urban and rural ministry. Despite these challenges, there is a firm belief that God is present and guiding our efforts to bring His Kingdom into people's lives.

Overall, the Burnham and Slough Deanery offers a rich and intriguing context for ministry and mission in the Church of England, where the parishes are dedicated to embracing opportunities, addressing challenges, and working together to fulfil their vision in the 21st century.

Revd Canon Janet Binns

Area Dean



Appendix 5 - Burnham & Slough Deanery – Jubilee River Group

Burnham and Slough Deanery is the southernmost Deanery in the Archdeaconry of Buckingham and borders both the dioceses of London and Guildford; as well as having a long border with the Archdeaconry of Berkshire.

The Deanery is an exciting place to exercise ministry and mission. Those who work here usually stay for a number of years. The area covered by the Deanery has a diverse population, with areas of affluence as well as some of the most deprived wards in the country. Because of this, the Deanery is one that throws up many opportunities and challenges. Our local churches are consistently able to rise to these issues, responding to the opportunities and challenges that arise.

There is a varied and growing urban community centred on Slough. The plans for a Town Centre Regeneration would transform Slough's central 'Square Mile' as a space for living, shopping, leisure, and business. See the Slough Regeneration Framework at www.slough.gov.uk.

In Slough we have one of the largest business estates in Europe. This presents both a challenge and an opportunity, see more on the www.segro.com website.

The urban centre of Slough is surrounded by many beautiful and historic villages and towns, which reflect the more traditional aspects of British life (church, village green, public house): indeed, Eton College and its Olympic Rowing Lake lie within the Deanery. Many people choose to live in this idyllic setting, and the Deanery has a large commuter population. Burnham & Slough is thus one of the most diverse and intriguing places to work in England, with its challenges of urban and rural life, of affluence and relative poverty both co-existing side-by-side.



Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

2 Cor 9:6-8 (Deanery verse)

This large Deanery is made up of four geographical groups (see table below). Clergy in all the groups work well together; and the Deanery is moving forward as we encourage laity to work in and support the group ministries. Clergy and laity are encouraged to share in and develop the work of the Deanery.

Eastern (informal) Grouping of Churches	Northern Group	Jubilee River Group	Southern Group
Iver Heath (St Margaret)	Farnham Royal with Hedgerley (St John, Farn. Comm. St Mary, Farn. Royal, St Mary, Hedgerley)	Burnham (St Peter)	Horton and Wraysbury (St Michael & St Andrew)
Iver and Richings Park (St Peter & St Leonard)	Britwell (St George)	Hitcham (St Mary)	Datchet and Colnbrook (St Mary & St Thomas)
Wexham (St Mary)	Manor Park (St John and St Michael)	Taplow with Dropmore (St Nicolas & St Anne)	Upton-cum-Chalvey (St Mary, Slough St Laurence, Upton St Peter, Chalvey)
	Stoke Poges (St Giles & St Andrew's Church Centre)	Cippenham (St Andrew)	Langley Team Ministry (St Mary, Christ the Worker, St Francis)
	Slough (St Paul)	Eton, Eton Wick, Boveney & Dorney (St John, Eton, St John, Eton Wick & St James, Dorney)	

Deanery Synod meets four times a year and is served by the following committee structure:

- Standing and Finance Committee and Treasurer's meetings
- Pastoral and Mission Committee
- Mission Action Plan Sub team
- Communication Sub team (Website and social media)

Current ministerial deployment

<p>Jubilee River Group Ministry 4.5 Stipendiary Priests (including 1.5 vacancies) 1 Curate in Training 2 Licensed Lay Ministers 1 Licensed Lay Ministers (PtO) 2 Authorised Lay Preachers/Workers</p>	<p>Southern Group Ministry 4 Stipendiary Priests (including 1.5 vacancies) 1 Associate Priest (PtO) 1 Curate in Training 2 Licensed Lay Ministers (PtO) 1 Authorised Lay Preacher</p>
<p>Northern Group Ministry 4.5 Stipendiary Priests (including .5 vacancy) 1 House for Duty Priest 1 Curate in Training 1 Licensed Lay Minister 5 Authorised Lay Preachers/Workers 3 Parish Evangelists</p>	<p>Eastern (informal) Grouping of Churches 2 Stipendiary Priests 1 House for Duty Incumbent 2 Curates in Training 1 Licensed Lay Minister 1 Licensed Lay Minister (PtO) 1 Authorised Lay Worker</p>

In addition, the Deanery currently has 10 priests holding PtO in the Deanery.

Statistics

- Population: 204,811 adults (Est 2018) Area: 65.5 sq. miles (11.5 x 5.9 appr)
- Churches: 31
- Parishes: 17
- Combined Electoral Roll: 1,671

Deanery Finance 2020 - 2023

Background

Historically, the Deanery received support from the diocese through the deprivation allowance. However, in 2022, a new method of calculation replaced it with the community support allowance, which the Deanery currently benefits from.

Over the past few years, the Deanery has faced several challenges, starting as a Recovering Deanery in 2016 and transitioning to a pledge system to improve the situation. As a result of the change, some parishes immediately reduced their parish share, while others continued with the previously agreed 4% annual increase. In 2020, there was a predicted deficit of approximately £120,000, but due to the financial impact of the Covid pandemic, the deficit increased to £223,743.

To address the effects of the pandemic, Synod decided that for 2021, parishes would be allocated the same parish share as in 2020. All parishes experienced a decrease in income from collection plate/gift aid envelopes, statutory fees, and other sources like hall hire and coffee shops. Regular giving remained relatively stable, but churches relying on Sunday collections faced greater challenges.

Current Position

With the guidance of the Archdeacon of Buckingham, in 2021 the Deanery started exploring other deaneries' methods for allocating the parish share. This led to the introduction of a new parish share formula, implemented with the appointment of a new Interim Area Dean in September 2021. The goal is for each parish to pay a minimum of 80% and a maximum of 100% of the cost of ministry. Some parishes are currently paying up to 120% to compensate for those paying below 100%, a small number of parishes are below 50%. As a result of these efforts, the deficit has reduced to £130,829 in 2022. However, it remains challenging to eliminate the deficit, especially considering the current economic situation and reduced income in most parishes. The Deanery is actively exploring ways to eliminate the deficit and reduce the pressure on parishes to fundraise to cover unachievable ministry costs of a full-time priest.

The Way Ahead

For the first time in many years, the deanery has paid 48.8% of its share allocation by June 2023, just shy of the required 50% to receive a rebate. The projected deficit for the remainder of the year stands at £71,422. However, deficits are now carried forward by the Diocese for three years, and when added to the 2022 shortfall of £130,829, it places the deanery in a challenging financial position. The increasing number of vacancies across the deanery presents an opportunity to meet the annual parish share responsibility through pastoral reorganisation, which is currently being considered.



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 Bishop of Buckingham is the Rt Revd Alan Wilson who has been the Area Bishop since 2003. The Archdeacon of Buckingham is Ven Guy Elsmore who has been in the 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.

Appendix 6 - Accounts

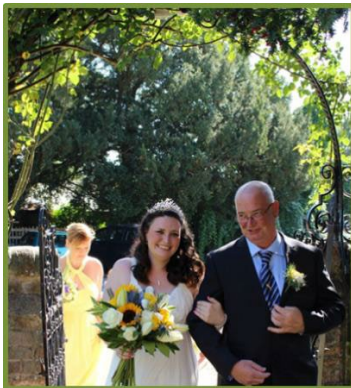
Summary Financial Statement for the year ended 31st December 2022 (Full accounts are available on request)

Summary Financial Statement for the year ended 31st December 2022 (Full accounts are available on request)						
	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Bequest Fund	Total 2022	Total 2021
Receipts						
Planned Giving	28,065				28,065	40,131
Collections and other giving	16,693				16,693	8,924
Gift Aid Tax Recovered (on all eligible donations)	5,084				5,084	6,234
Church activities	4,050				4,050	500
Investment Income	5				5	880
Total Receipts	53,897	0	0	0	53,897	56,669
Payments						
Mission Giving	5,354				5,354	5,557
Charitable Giving	354				354	1,095
Diocesan Parish Share	51,717				51,717	43,875
Clergy and staffing costs	8,915		138		9,053	8,615
Insurance	1,903				1,903	1,844
Accountancy and legal	1,051				1,051	1,163
Light, power and heating	3,282				3,282	3,059
Cleaning	983				983	960
Repairs and maintenance	2,079		1,796		3,875	5,026
IT software and consumables	271				271	533
Telephone and Internet	479				479	246
General expenses	120				120	181
Total Payments	76,508	0	1,934	0	78,442	72,154
Excess of Payments over Receipts	-22,611	0	-1,934	0	-24,545	-15,485
Balance brought forward at 1st January 2022	0	12,495	9,695	61,087	83,277	98,762
Transfers between funds	24,407	-1,200	0	-23,207		
Statement of Assets and Liabilities						
Barclays Community Account	12,205	11,295	2,748	26,214	52,461	72,160
Barclays saver Account			5,013		5,013	5,008
CBF Investment Fund (at Market Value)				11,666	11,666	11,666
Total Cash Funds	12,205	11,295	7,761	37,880	69,141	88,834
Less accruals	-10,409				-10,409	-5,557
Balance brought forward at 1st January 2022	1,796	11,295	7,761	37,880	58,732	83,277

Appendix 7 - Tables of attendance, baptisms, marriages & funerals

Services →	Sunday 8 am (5 th Sundays only)	Sunday 9 am	Sunday 11 am	Sunday 10am (5 th Sundays & Special Joint Services)	Wednesdays 10.30am (weekly)
2022	3	20	14	28	9
2023	3	18	12	25	10

	2024 booked so far	2023	2022
Baptisms	0	1	4
Marriages	2	1	1
Funeral services and internments	0	12	5



Appendix 8 - Our Services

Sunday Services 1 st – 4 th Sundays	
9am	11am
Informal contemporary worship service	Holy Communion
Live Contemporary Worship & word, often lay-led. Communion is offered 3 Sundays a month with communion by extension or Agape if no clergy available. 3 rd Sunday without communion focusses on Praise and Worship led by the Holy Spirit	Common Worship Order One with traditional hymns with piano and organ.
3 rd Sundays 10.30 – 10.50	
Lay led prayer between the two services focusing on our vacancy, topical needs for the Church, Community and World.	
Sunday Services 5th Sundays	
10am	8am
'Souper Sunday'	Holy Communion
On months with a 5th Sunday and for some special services like Harvest, we hold a joint lay led service for all our congregations, offering a mix of both contemporary and traditional service elements and sung worship. The service is followed by a 'Hymn Sing' whilst the church is prepared for sharing a time of fellowship sharing homemade soups and bread	Said service with Book of Common Prayer
Weekly Wednesday Service @ 10.30am	
A quiet and meditative service, common worship.	

Appendix 9 - Relevant Documents

Parish Summary

Parish:	Hitcham, Buckinghamshire
Patron(s):	Eton College
PCC members:	Christine Webb David Ross-Hamilton Debbie Rainer (PCC Secretary) Jo Cork (Deanery Synond representative) Josie Heffernan Marie Hill (Deanery Synond representative) Ray Woodlock Sonia Hart Susan Dickins
Churchwardens:	Chris Berry Carol Bader
Ministers:	None
Parish paid staff:	2 (Pianist/organist and part time Administrator)
Buildings:	1
Churchyard(s):	1
Resolution A,B,C:	None
Church Tradition:	Spirit-filled with contemporary and traditional elements

Appendix 10 - Key Contacts Benefice of Hitcham

Group and Committees	
PCC:	Debbie Rainer (Secretary) 117 Hag Hill Rise, Taplow, SL6 0LT debbiekayrainer@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Harsh Singh
Deanery Synod Representatives:	Jo Cork (Representative) & Marie Hill (Representative)
Parish Administrator	Carrie Hedgeworth – info@stmaryshitcham.org.uk
In the Parish	
Church Wardens:	Chris Berry & Carol Bader
Ministerial Colleagues:	None
Head Teachers of local Schools:	none
Support Structure	
Area Dean:	Revd Canon Janet Binns
Associate Archdeacon:	The Revd Canon Chris Bull
Archdeacon:	Venerable Guy Elsmore
Area Bishop:	The Right Revd Dr Alan Wilson
Patron The Provost and Fellows of Eton College	Mrs Sandra Robinson Steward of the Livings – Eton College – Windsor - SL4 6DW s.robinson@etoncollege.org.uk