

Ford Group of Parishes

Pontesbury Deanery



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Welcome from the Archdeacon of Ludlow



The Diocese of Hereford is a place of contrasts. We're geographically large, but our population is small. We straddle six local authorities (Herefordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, Monmouthshire, Telford & Wrekin, and Powys) and two countries (England and Wales), but we are one Diocese with one Bishop. We are predominantly rural, with scattered village communities, but we have a vibrant cathedral city, several historic market towns and post-industrial towns, and serve estate communities as well.

We are all committed, whatever our context, to our calling to make Christ known, to love God, one another and our neighbours, and to work for the common good. We do this not only through our churches but also through our church schools and academies which are an integral part of our Diocese.

We work collaboratively wherever possible, knowing that ministry brings unique demands as well as unique privileges. We are small enough (in terms of numbers) that clergy can get to know one another and the diocesan staff quite easily.

In the Diocese of Hereford, we want to appoint and work with clergy who are excited by the demanding and exciting common task of "**Proclaiming Christ and Growing Disciples**". Our Diocesan Values encourage all of our church members to become more **Prayerful**, more **Christ-like**, and more **Engaged** with God's mission in the wider community.

This means that we are seeking church leaders who are committed to equipping and releasing the whole people of God, according to their particular giftings, inspired by the vision of the church in Ephesians 4. They will be people who inspire and enable others to be part of what God is doing in the local area. They will lead in mission and ministry by growing leaders and developing teams, providing support and oversight to other lay and ordained ministers rather than doing everything themselves.

Recognising that this way of working (sometimes called Oversight Ministry) can be challenging, we offer training and support for clergy and their teams through a range of Ministry Development opportunities and the Accompanying programme of mentoring for all clergy new in post whether this is their first post of responsibility or not. The Accompanying programme links clergy with an experienced priest who will not only act as a mentor for the new incumbent, but work with them and their PCCs to help discern how God is leading them to work out the plans and hopes you'll read in this Profile.

Turning to the Ford Group themselves, the parishes are in vacancy following the resignation of their most recent Rector. The parochial post has been reduced from full time to 0.5 and the parishes are working hard in the vacancy to prepare for the changes that will mean. As you will read, there is a capable and dedicated priest with PTO, a Local Ministry Development Group, and other lay leaders too, all of whom will be ready to offer support and work with their new Rector, understanding that he or she will be part-time. Since Pontesbury Deanery is a Group Ministry, all the clergy can work across benefice boundaries in support of one another, as you will see in the Rural Dean's introduction to the Deanery.

In response to needs within the senior clergy team of the Diocese now that Bishop Richard is a member of the House of Lords and is also Clerk of the Closet (a role in HM The King's Household) we are combining the role of Rector of the Ford Group with the new post of Assistant Archdeacon of Ludlow. This offers the opportunity for someone to experience a wider diocesan role alongside being rooted in the parish ministry which is the real heart of all that we are and do as a Diocese.

The expectation is that the new Rector would work on Sundays plus three other days per week in their parochial role, with the remaining two days per week being given to their additional responsibility as Assistant Archdeacon of Ludlow. This is a notional allocation of time; at certain times of the year, such as major festivals, it is understood that more time will need to be devoted to parochial duties. At other times, archidiaconal duties may take more time. Sundays will always be given to parochial ministry, not Assistant Archdeacon duties.

If you would like to know more about life as a member of the clergy in the Diocese of Hereford, or to discuss either aspect of this dual role, please get in touch with the Archdeacon of Ludlow, The Ven Fiona Gibson – Fiona.Gibson@hereford.anglican.org or 01588 673571.

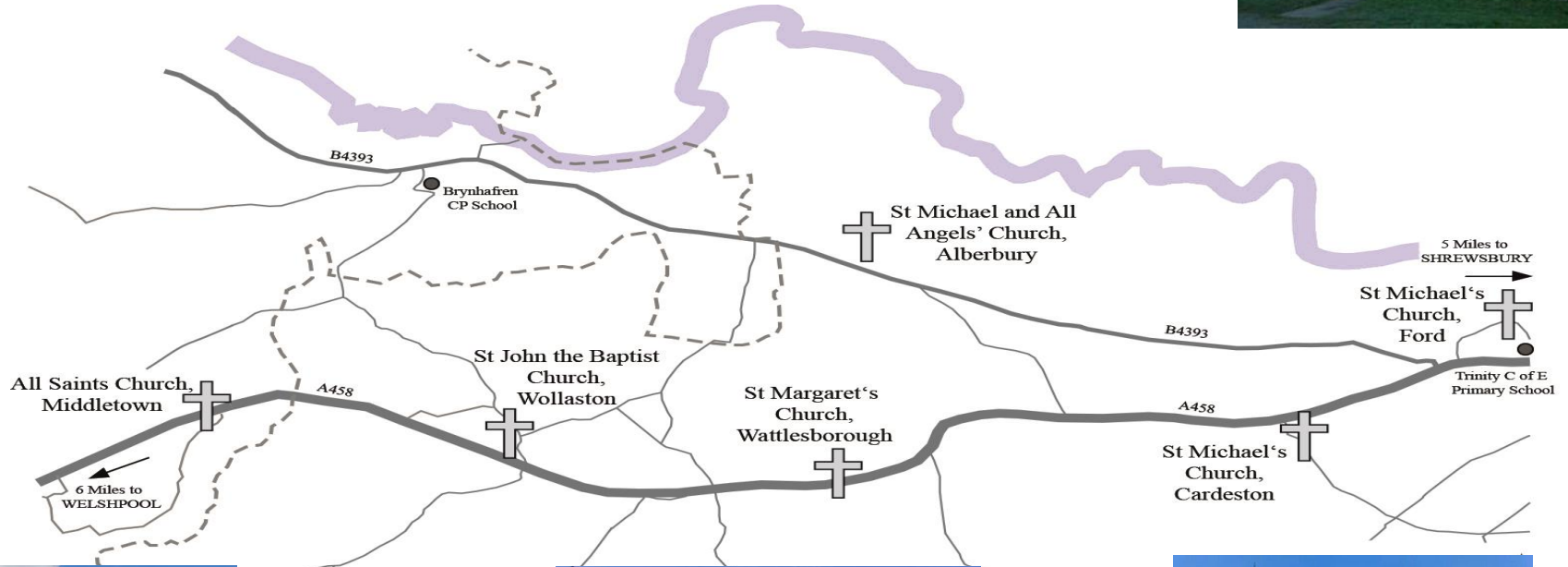
Where we are

Four rural parishes, comprising of 6 churches five miles west of Shrewsbury, make up the Ford Group of Parishes in the Hereford Diocese. The parishes span the Welsh border and are part of the Pontesbury Deanery Group Ministry.

The vicarage is located in Ford village, set in lovely countryside, which has a Primary School, Village Hall, Mini Supermarket, Petrol Station and several places to eat. The local Castle County Club has excellent facilities comprising of fitness suites, pools and provides exercise classes for all abilities. Shrewsbury is a medieval market town with a theatre, cinema, independent shops and an eclectic choice of cuisine. More widely there are good rail connections from Shrewsbury to Manchester, Hereford, Birmingham and London. It is only two hours drive via the hills to the beautiful Welsh coast.



The six churches have history, beauty, simplicity and each has something different to offer. Despite being small, committed congregations work hard for their churches. We are happy and blessed to live in this area and are looking for an individual or family to join us, to share our lives and help us grow spiritually. The ministry in our schools has been successful, but we have more work to do to reach out across the generations and to grow our congregations.



Who are we?

Working with the incumbent are the Revd Maxine Neal, a retired Self Supporting Minister with Permission To Officiate and Sue Gaulton our Lay Reader (whose role is presently curtailed due to health issues), The Local Ministry Development Group (LMDG) and members of the Parochial Church Councils (PCCs) and congregations.



Sue and Maxine



LMDG members: Alison, Sue, Jane, Maxine



Elvire (LMDG) and wardens Lisa and Jenny



Wardens Linda, Ruth, Mary and Rachel



Some of Alberbury PCC: Jean, Jane, Stephen, Ann and Mary

The Vicarage, Ford, Shropshire



Located on the edge of the village and within a short walk of the Church, the Vicarage is a four bedroomed house with garage, large parking area and private gardens.

GROUND FLOOR

- Entrance porch
- Living Room with open fire and shelving with sliding doors to garden paved area onto lawn
- Dining Room
- Kitchen with fitted units and space for cooker and dishwasher
- Boot Room
- Pantry
- Utility Room with Belfast sink, quarry tile flooring with space for washing machine and tumble dryer
- Office with shelving, door leading to garage and sliding door to rear garden



FIRST FLOOR

- Stairs to landing
- Double Bedroom with fitted cupboard and eaves storage room
- Double Bedroom with two fitted cupboards
- Double Bedroom with two fitted cupboards
- Bathroom bath, WC and basin
- Shower Room
- Small Double Bedroom with one fitted cupboard

OUTSIDE

Entrance to drive with ample parking and single garage.

SERVICES

Mains Water and Electric
Oil fired Central Heating



St Michael's Church at Ford

St Michael's Church, situated on a hill at the far end of the village, is constructed of Cardeston stone and dates to the 9th century when it was linked to St Michael's in Shrewsbury Castle. In 1927, it passed to the Bishop of Hereford.

Our church has an effective sound loop system, a regularly tuned organ, and an accessible toilet. Convenient parking is available.

"A peaceful and much-loved church" is an example of a comment found in our Visitors' Book. St Michael's is within walking distance of our local junior school. The school children celebrate Christmas, Easter, Harvest, and the Leavers Service in the church.

We pay our annual Parish Share and Clergy Expenses in full. St Michael's currently holds Morning Prayer each Wednesday at 9 am, plus three weekly services per month

- 9 am Eucharist
- 11 am Holy Communion
- 4:30 pm Evensong

(See current Service Plan – page 30)



Special services include Harvest Thanksgiving, an Act of Remembrance at the War Memorial, Service of Light to remember the departed, and a Carol Service. All services begin with a warm, friendly welcome and end with refreshments in the church.

Local Ministry Development Group (LMDG) lead a quiet Prayer evening in Ford approximately every 3 months and have started to introduce Community Worship during our "Joint" service. LMDG are hoping to increase the number of Community Worship Services in Ford.

St Michael's is on a walkers' route. We welcome all visitors and residents by keeping the church open on Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday each week, from 10 am to 4 pm.

The working communities in Ford predominantly commute to Shrewsbury, Telford, and beyond. The older part of the village has 19th century dwellings, while newer areas include family homes, sheltered housing, starter homes, and association housing.

Ford Village Hall, run by a volunteer committee, is well-supported. Activities include a judo group, keep-fit classes, a mother and toddler group, whist drive, and Three Cheers.

A small craft group meets in the Community Room at West View Sheltered Housing. There are pre-school nurseries locally and two private childcare facilities in the village. A regular bus service runs to Shrewsbury, via the hospital, Monday to Saturday. Private buses run to Mary Webb Secondary School.



God's Acre



Mark Duffell and friends

In recent years, St Michael's Church has been working with volunteers from a local Ecological Consultancy to better understand the flora and fauna in the churchyard. This has included walking tours and discussions about the habitat, which includes bats and an insect trail.

A survey of the area has revealed the quality of the habitat, including at least 15th century meadows and some rare plant and animal species. The results of the survey are being used to implement a management plan, reduce maintenance costs, and grow links with members of the village and the local school.

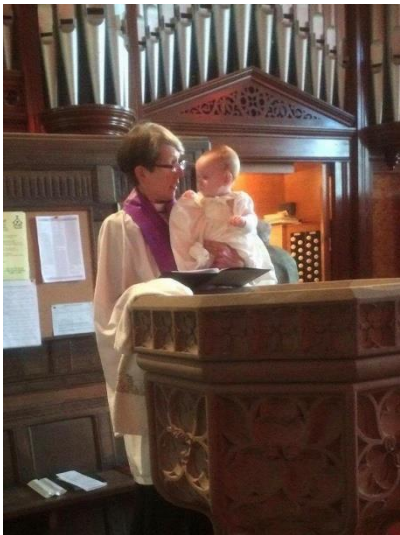


St Michael and All Angels' Church, Alberbury

.....is a welcoming church which is open daily for visitors. Presently we are fortunate to have three regular services a month; an 8.30 am BCP, a 9.00 am Holy Communion incorporating Junior Church (for young people in our group) and a 11.00 am Community Worship which is led by the Local Ministry Development Group (LMDG). The Junior Church is an exciting development to our service plan. The younger members of the congregation move to the Loton Chapel for bible stories and activities, these are then shared with the congregation at the end of the service.

There are a number of special services during the year including an Ascension Service in Loton Park and a well-attended Community Carol Service. The links with the local Brynhafren School are being developed and they now hold their Harvest and Christmas services in the church. The church can seat 150 and regularly hosts large weddings, baptisms and funerals. There is a rota for reading lessons, serving, intercessions, providing refreshments and flowers. We are fortunate to have a sound system installed in the church.

A generous bequest provided us with the opportunity to build a new porch with toilet facilities and a much needed level access which has encouraged us to have more concerts, talks and a recent art exhibition. Our local male voice choir have their weekly rehearsals in the chapel. The Hagley and District Light Car Club hold regular hill climbs in the Loton Park when a number of their members often join us at services and fund-raising events.





The church is Grade II* listed and the largest in the benefice. There are many notable features particularly the medieval nave roof, interesting windows and in the church grounds there is a late medieval cross capped by a 17th century cubic sundial. The thirteenth century south chapel was inherited by the Leighton family, of the adjacent Loton Park, and bequeathed to the church in 1970. In 1441 the parish church came under the ownership of All Souls College, Oxford, which still retains responsibility for the Chancel.

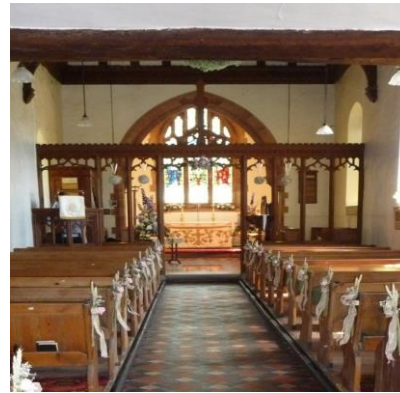
The elongated parish spans both England and Wales, covering approximately 11 sq miles with the northern boundary following the River Severn. The larger part of the population is in the Welsh half and this is where Brynhafren School is located. We are aware of the need to encourage the involvement of younger generations. Recently there have been small pockets of residential development throughout the area.

We do not have any regular external sources of income and rely on parish giving and fund-raising activities to meet our financial objectives. Despite the size of the congregation, the members are loyal and faithful. We are most fortunate to live in an area which has a very supportive, community spirit.

Church of St Michael, Cardeston

Cardeston is a scattered collection of farms and cottages with the distinguishing presence of Cardeston church tower dominating the landscape. Located near the A458, approximately 11 miles west of Shrewsbury and 12 miles east of Welshpool, the tower is visible to A458 coastal road users travelling to Barmouth (60 miles away). The exact origins of St Michael's at Cardeston are unknown, there is no mention of the church in the Domesday Book of 1086; however, a Norman 13th century window survives in the south wall of the chancel and there is historical speculation that it was a chapel to Alberbury Church, the only other Norman remains are Wattlesborough Castle. The first record of a rector is of William de Cardeston Sub Dean in 1275. The current church was mainly rebuilt in 1749 and restored in 1844 when the octagonal tower was added. There is a gallery which is supported by a beam bearing the date 1678 which suggests it was taken from the former church and used in the 1749 rebuild. Funding for the 1844 tower addition came from the sale of Mary Parker's (later Lady Leighton) water colour of 'The Ladies of Llangollen' as prints. The church has historic ties to the Leighton family and Sir Michael Leighton Bt is its current Patron.

In recent years, damage caused by Storm Doris to the tower, and time and weathering have identified structural issues. A 'Faulty Tower' fundraising appeal is ongoing due to a pause during COVID. There is a supportive core congregation bolstered by those who attend church from time to time especially for seasonal services. The PCC have a forward-thinking approach with a relaxed style. Cardeston has been restored three times in its history, and the PCC is challenged not only with the structural repairs but with membership of the PCC itself, but there is still demand for a Church within the Community.



Cardeston Church & Community

Cardeston with Wattlesborough serves a mixed congregation, with a combined electoral roll of 19. Some of the congregation worship in both churches, with a monthly service at Cardeston as well as the occasional fifth Sunday service on rotation. Cardeston is also proud to be the only church in the Deanery still holding a Plough Sunday service.

Seasonal services are held at Wattlesborough: Easter Hot Cross Bun Service and the December Carol Service. Many other fund-raising events are organised which are popular with the congregation, the local community and further afield. These events strengthen the ties with the local community and help with our Mission. Events include an annual Harvest Lunch now retitled Community Lunch, Choral concerts in the church, Breakfast fundraiser, Guided walks around the Parish, and a Breadmaking course.



Church of St Margaret , Wattlesborough

Wattlesborough is the daughter church of Cardeston and is found on the main A458 road between Shrewsbury and Welshpool. It is a small mission church built and licensed for worship only in 1932. It was designed as a chapel-of-ease for Cardeston Parish 3 miles away, and the land was donated by Sir Richard Leighton, Bart, of Loton Park, Alberbury. Its foundation stone was laid by Lady Leighton in December 1931.

Its location is an issue: there is no car park, only a wide grass verge directly outside the church. With a busy A458, the safest place to park is in the nearby access road to Wigmore Lane and the former Methodist church and walk along the footpath and then cross the main road to the church.

Wattlesborough is a commuter village on the A458 near the Welsh border. It has several types of housing; a large well used modern village hall; garage and fish and chip/takeaway café. It has a community spirit and holds a popular annual village show every September.

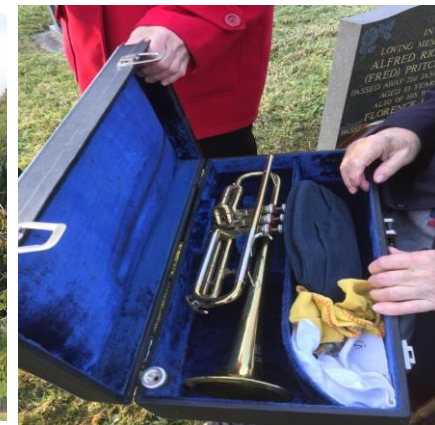
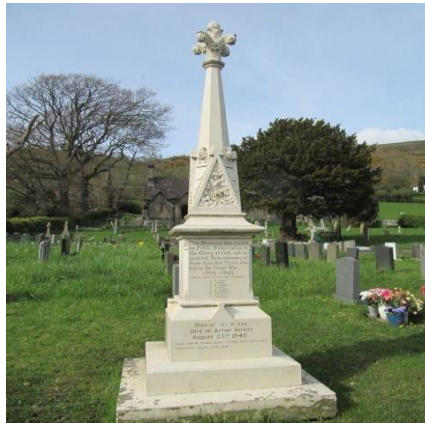


All Saints Church, Middletown, Powys

The village of Middletown on the Welsh Border sits under the shadow of the Breidden Hills and has been an important gateway to Wales for many centuries. The church sits astride the A458 road from Welshpool to Shrewsbury. Middletown, formerly known as Treberveth, is noted in historical documents dating back to the 13th century

Middletown parish church was built in 1871 and the building comprises a buttressed double rectangle, with nave, chancel, south west vestry, porch and western bell turret. The fabric is a whitish, granular stone with red sandstone dressings to a tiled roof. The Church has a simple, peaceful beauty and stands in an elevated position overlooking the village.

The extensive graveyard surrounding All Saints Church has approximately 425 graves, with space for a further 150 in an extended area. An impressive yew tree provides a central feature, surrounded by beautiful meadow flowers. The churchyard is well maintained. A war memorial stands proudly roadside towards the bottom of the churchyard. It commemorates those from the parish who fell in World War One, and their memory is observed at the Remembrance Sunday service in November.



All Saints Church cont.

As well as the joint fundraising events, All Saints' has a Tree of Light which many local people donate to.

The parish has always paid the parish offer in full every year.

Statistics

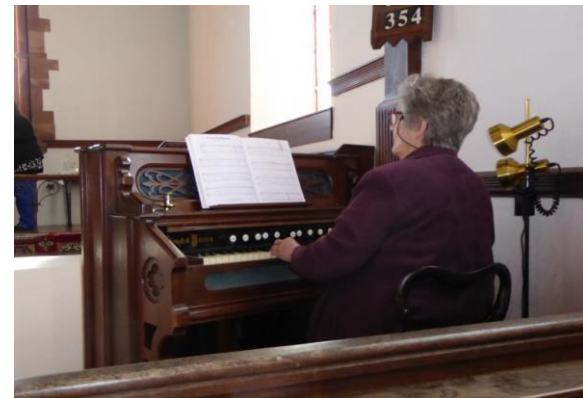
There are 31 on the Electoral Roll and an average attendance in 2023 of 12 worshippers. During the same year there were 2 weddings and 1 funeral. In each church there is at present one service a month.



St John the Baptist Church, Great Wollaston

Great Wollaston Parish is on the west side of the Benefice and in England, but is joined with the main Church, All Saints Middletown, which is in Wales and has a graveyard.

The church is set in the hamlet of Great Wollaston and is a popular and peaceful place to worship. It was once a Chapel of Ease to St. Michael and All Angels', Alberbury until in 1871 when All Saints Middletown was built and Great Wollaston Parish was formed. More recently, it has been in Westbury group of Parishes until it successfully joined Ford Group of Parishes fourteen years ago. There are regular Services, and the timing of these has changed over time to suit the workload of the Incumbent.



St John the Baptist Church cont.

The members of St. John the Baptist, Wollaston join with All Saints' Middletown, to host Three Cheers, a monthly meeting in Middletown Village Hall for Coffee, Cake and Chat. Also a bring and share Harvest, and Advent lunches.

Parish funds are raised in various ways but this is more difficult since Covid and a reduced PCC membership.

The PCC is hard working and has held joint meetings with other PCCs of the Ford Benefice. There is a feeling in the Parish that there needs to be change, and a willingness to achieve this.



Local Ministry Development Group (LMDG)

“Like branches of a vine we have many ministries. The LMDG can be seen as the root system of the vine. Their role is to encourage the growth of the mission and ministry of the whole, called to work across the boundaries of the parishes.” “called from the churches to be an expression of the ministry to which God calls all his people”.

These are words from the Bishop’s address at the commissioning service.

The group comprises of the incumbent, Revd. Maxine Neal (PTO) and currently 5 lay members from across the parishes.

This last year the LMDG has continued to plan and lead Community Worship monthly at Alberbury Church and elsewhere on the 5th Sunday. Members take turns to lead a monthly Evening Prayer service, held across the benefice. During Holy Week the team led four services.

LMDG members are responsible for coordinating the Three Cheers coffee mornings at Alberbury, Ford and Middletown village halls. These would not occur without the integration and commitment of church members and non-members to bake and be baristas.

Links with Brynhafren School (the County Primary School) at the Welsh end of Alberbury Parish) have been developed, where we’re known as the “Church Ladies”! LMDG members listen to readers once a week and lead regular assemblies. The blessing of this relationship is that the school now comes to Alberbury Church to celebrate their harvest and Christingle services.

The LMDG group has had some natural shrinkage over recent years and it would be a priority for the new incumbent to encourage the parishes to prayerfully elect more members to allow the work to develop.

Trinity Church of England Voluntary Controlled School, Ford

Trinity CE VC School is a friendly village school with 155 pupils on roll (as of July 2024) in 5 mixed-age classes. The school serves the community of Ford and several surrounding villages. Most children transfer from Trinity to Mary Webb Secondary School in Pontesbury at the end of Year 6.

The school is rated 'Good' by Ofsted (2022) and has been rated as 'Outstanding' by the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) in its last two inspections. The most recent SIAMS inspection in July 2017 noted that "A passionate commitment to a school based on Christian values is shared by all leaders, staff and governors. This sense of unity is powerful and drives the school forward towards the achievement of its objectives."

The school's motto is: Be the best you can be. 'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart' -- Colossians 3:23



Trinity School has developed strong and vibrant links with St Michael's Church. All children visit the church regularly for major festivals, the Year 6 Eucharist Service, and to support the RE scheme of work. The 'Trinity Singers' join the congregation for some special services. The church has a regular presence in school through the monthly 'Open the Book' team, which is made up of 'volunteers' from across parishes in the Deanery. One child explained, "Open the Book is an excellent thing we do each month. It involves pupils and members from the church re-enacting stories from the Bible. We rehearse the play before assembly and perform during assembly to the pupils and teachers, enjoying much applause. We often use amazing props to make it more realistic and bring the story to life for the younger children."

Rev David Moss currently leads a weekly assembly in the school. A new incumbent will have the opportunity to plan church and school activities as a foundation Governor.



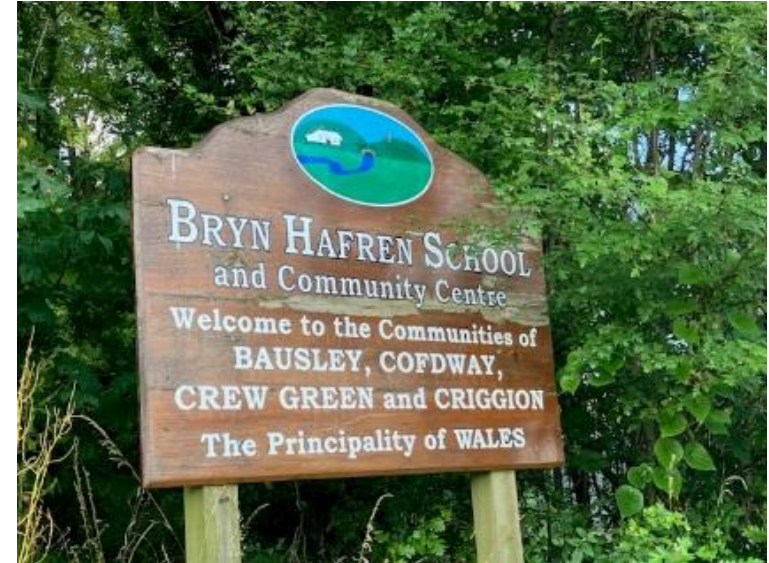
Ysgol Brynhafren

Brynhafren County Primary School is situated in the village of Crew Green and serves the communities of Criggion, Crew Green, Alberbury, Coedway and the outlying areas.

Currently we have 32 pupils on roll with two classes. Our School motto is Growing and learning together/ Tyfu a dysgu gyda'n gilydd and we are recognised as a school with a great community ethos.

We are not a Church School, but we do value our links with the community and we have good links with the church members from Alberbury, who regularly volunteer to read with our learners as well as leading an assembly each month. We also celebrate Harvest and Christmas at St. Michael and All Angels' Church.

We look forward to developing the partnership further between the school and the Church.



Three Cheers! Coffee, Cake and Company!



The idea for Three Cheers was generated in 2014 following on from a Diocese led conference focussing on Loneliness in the Community. Jane Weston and Rev Maxine discovered one of those wonderful "Godincidences" that both had a genuine interest in helping the lonely in the area and wondered what could be done to support them. They developed the idea of Three Cheers: coffee, cake and company, led by volunteers. A completely free event within the community; a sort of "pop up café" in local village halls.

The first event took place in Alberbury in 2014 and despite the obligatory break for Covid now has a regular attendance of 35 plus. A year later Three Cheers branched out to Middletown, on average 15-20 attendees, and following that in Ford, which for some reason has not been so well attended, but for the few that come it is an essential date in their diary. This gives folk three opportunities monthly to meet up, they however each have a unique local feel and a few attend more than one. Lifts are offered to those who cannot make their own way.

As well as the enjoyment and friendship of meeting up, Three Cheers allows us to engage with people who would not necessarily come to Church, and hopefully show them God's love and kindness, while building the foundations of a future Pastoral Care ministry as and when it is required in the community.

One & All Magazine

One and All is our A5 size parish magazine, distributed monthly to 300 homes, in Alberbury, Cardeston, Coedway, Ford, Halfway House, Middletown, Wattlesborough and Wollaston and Shrewsbury by volunteers. It is passed on and shared by many with family and friends so reaches further than our Parishes. It is also made available in several local facilities such as Rowton Country Club, Elsie's Tea Rooms and the local pubs.

As a popular magazine it generates an annual subscription revenue that funds our weekly service sheets. The magazine contains a programme of services for each church and a regular "from " article which is a page written by one of the Local Ministry Development Group, Rev. Maxine or Sue Gaulton (Reader) in rotation. Articles from the Diocese and Deanery on news and mission are included together with regular reports from local clubs including Young Farmers, Women's Institute, Flower Club, Weeds United, The Cricket Club, Rowton Vineyard and Three Cheers.

Activities running in the three village halls, and West View Ford are promoted. There is a monthly page for local information including farmers markets held in Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Welshpool, mobile library times, road closures, legislative policy changes, a Poetry page, community notices, charity contacts for dementia assistance and mental health.

The magazine only became a colour version in November 2020, and continued to be produced and delivered during COVID 19 as a source of information as there is no delivery of the local Shropshire Star newspaper to this area

One & All is the most widely read Christian publication in the parishes. Many people read it without ever setting foot inside a church.

"A good parish magazine is a wonderful resource that places the local church at the heart of the community it serves." JANUARY 2009, [the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams](#)



Statistics

2023	Alberbury	Ford	Gt. Wollaston & Middletown	Cardeston & Wattlesborough
Households	443	445	280	138
Weddings	3	0	2	0
Funerals/ Burial of Ashes / Memorial Services	6	7	1	1
Baptisms	1	0	0	2

Finances to 31st December 2023

	Alberbury	Ford	Gt. Wollaston & Middletown	Cardeston & Wattlesborough
Income £				
Planned Giving	8228	3106	2900	2329
Gift Aid Recovered	1253	3149	1435	1301
All Other Giving	14726	10203	2936	2001
Fund Raising (net)	4436	589	217	1426
Investments	1235			
PCC fees & activities	1510	1840	2121	118
Other	10073	798	2654	461
Total £	41461	19685	12263	7836
Expenditure £				
Parish Offer	20000	12000	8000	1000
Church Activities	814	1487	1080	1080
Church Running Costs	5862	4627	3248	2544
Capital Expenditure	3224	11685	0	2649
Other	1904	515	25	909
Total £	31804	30314	12353	8182
Surplus or Loss £	+9657	-10629	-90	-346

Notes:

1. The figures refer to restricted and unrestricted funds.

2. Each of the four parishes contribute monthly to the Ford Benefice Group account to cover Clergy and Benefice expenses and shows a positive balance.

3. The Finance records for the One and All church magazine which is produced monthly and distributed throughout the benefice at the 31st December 2023 shows a positive balance of £2206

4. Alberbury includes a grant for new building works and investment paper gain.

5 Cardeston and Wattlesborough includes fundraising money for tower damage repairs.

Service overview

First Sunday	9.15 am 11.00 am	Middletown Alberbury	Parish Communion Community Worship
First Tuesday	7.00 pm For 7.30 pm	Rotates around the churches	Meet and socialise Evening Prayer
Second Sunday	8.30 am 11.00 am 4.30 pm	Alberbury Cardeston Ford	Holy Communion (BCP) Parish Communion Evensong
Third Sunday	9.00 am 11.00 am	Alberbury Ford	Parish Communion and Junior Church Parish Communion
Fourth Sunday	9.00 am 11.00 am	Ford Gt. Wollaston	Parish Communion Parish Communion
Fifth Sunday	10.30 am	Group Service	Parish Communion
Wednesday Mornings	9.00 am	Ford	Morning Prayer

Message from the Rural Dean of Pontesbury

Thank you for your interest in the post of half-time incumbent of the Ford group of parishes. Pontesbury Deanery, which prides itself on its South Shropshire location is the most northern in the Diocese of Hereford. We have been a group ministry since 1973 and the Chapter has recently recommitted itself to working more closely and collaboratively together. The Deanery Mission Action Plan has identified clergy support for the Ford benefice as a key priority.

The clergy Chapter, which includes five incumbents, two Associate Ministers and three curates meets bi-monthly for prayer, fellowship and business. We have worked very hard, alongside our lay colleagues to produce a Deanery Plan, which has mission front and central. We hope the successful candidate at Ford will help us to develop an implementation plan to ensure that the Mission Action Plan does not remain gathering dust on a shelf.

The Deanery has six benefices, one of which is held in plurality, and includes four churches, including Middletown in the Ford Group, which are in Wales. Large towns around us, Shrewsbury, Welshpool and Bishops Castle exercise influence, providing shops, hospitals and high schools. While Pontesbury is a village of 3,000, many of our churches support scattered communities of 50-100 souls.

Our ministry with children and young people is another key priority, with Mary Webb Secondary School the focus for our youth ministry, but with twelve Primary Schools which welcome a church input, including two in the Ford benefice. Revd David Moss, Rector of Westbury, Worthen & Yockleton, has offered consistent support alongside the Rector of Ford to Trinity School. We also looking to further develop collaborative ministry with Messy Church, Open the Book and Deanery wide worship events.

The successful candidate will enjoy warm fellowship, colleagues who are keen to support whenever called upon, and the most beautiful setting.

We pray with you that you will know the Lord's guidance as you seek His will.

Greg Smith

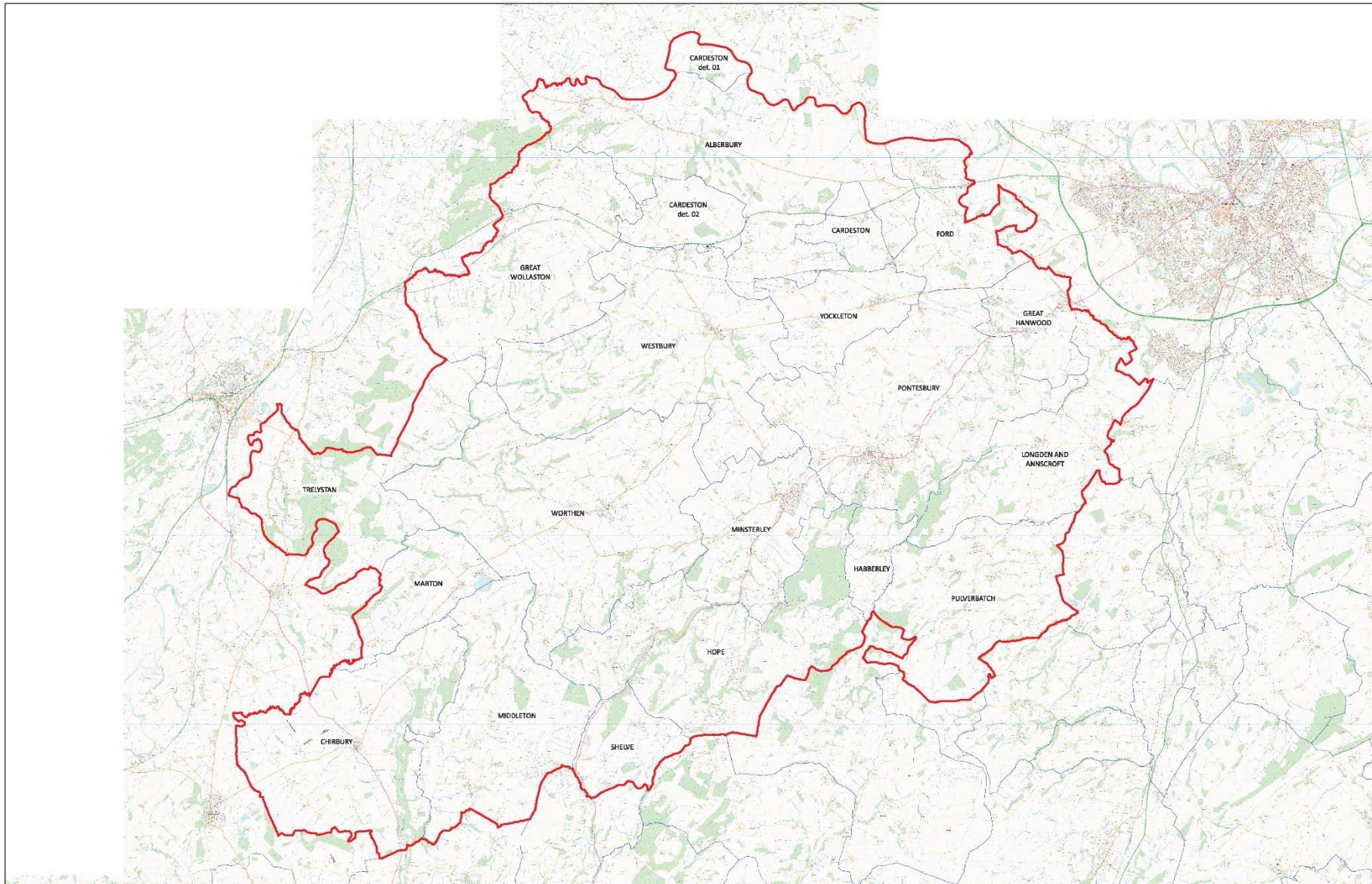
Rector: Pontesbury & Stiperstones

Rural Dean: Pontesbury

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This map was compiled for the Diocese of Hereford by Alistair Sutherland in August 2021 with digital data from Field Dynamics. It contains parish data supplied by the Commissioners of the Church of England, and Ordnance Survey data reproduced with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO. ©Crown copyright and database right 2021. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey licences nos 100040148 and 100019918. Please note that some legal parish names may be abbreviated for clarity.

We would welcome a Rector who ...

- Will be a compassionate and supportive spiritual leader who encourages and develops our Christian faith and gifts.
- Values where we are and helps us to continue to grow and evolve our worship and ministry initiatives.
- Communicates the gospel to all ages by working with a variety of forms of worship, including on-line platforms.
- Plays an active role as part of the Pontesbury Deanery Group Ministry by being team minded, a collaborative and flexible individual.
- Will be a part of our community life and able to engage with the parishioners, by sharing the gospel story in word and action.

We are ready to work with you and offer.....

- A warm welcome and support from our congregations.
- A shared commitment to growing our ministry.
- A Local Ministry Development Group (LMDG) who are productive and proactive across the parishes in worship and with other elements of mission.
- Office holders who have completed their safeguarding training.
- An effective, supportive and forward thinking Pontesbury Deanery.
- A Church Near You site for the group and some individual churches, an award winning parish magazine, links with groups such as Shropshire Churches Tourism Group and Shopshire Historic Churches Trust.

Strengths

- Our people, our fellowship and the uniqueness of our Parishes.
- Junior church structured into the service plan since September 2023
- LMDG
- Service pattern and variety of services
- Increasing willingness to actively worship together and work as a group.
- Mission Initiatives especially those within our schools.
- Parish magazine One & All
- Three Cheers
- A variety of fund raising / fellowship events that engage the wider community

Weaknesses

- PCC meetings are currently held separately for each parish.
- The geographical spread of the churches can create logistical challenges.
- A scarcity of toilet facilities and disabled access in some churches.
- Lack of a sound system in some churches and building works required
- Currently we do not have a formal pastoral visiting team.



Challenges

- ❑ To provide a variety of services that appeal to all ages.
- ❑ Finding Officers for PCCs
- ❑ Reaching out to the younger generation.
- ❑ Increasing our parish giving.
- ❑ Using other media platforms to help us keep in touch in a changing world.

Opportunities

- ❑ Build on contact with Wedding and Baptism families.
- ❑ Allow Three Cheers to facilitate development of a Pastoral team.
- ❑ Develop existing links with the schools.
- ❑ Work with the Deanery team.



Statement of needs

We would welcome a Rector who will:

Worship

- Have a sound Biblical base, with a sympathetic and realistic view of Christianity's place in the community and the world.
- Embrace the church as a place of prayer and meditation, peace and stability.
- Be able to share the faith and build on life events in ways that relate to where people are on their faith journey.
- Be an enabler who is flexible in both their approach to different groups and also in their approach to the delivery of liturgy and churchmanship.
- A good communicator, with excellent interpersonal skills, ready to inspire others across all ages. To take a leading role but be able to delegate.
- Be adaptable and open to new ideas.
- To work creatively with existing ministers in the Deanery.

Statement of Needs cont.

Mission

- Be enthusiastic to enable those within the Group's shared ministry to grow in ability and confidence and as leaders.
- Have a vision for growth and an ability to introduce new ways to encourage the further involvement of our schools, young people and families in the parishes.
- Be able to discern priorities across our parishes and work effectively with the Deanery team.
- Have an appreciation of the countryside and rural life and be able to respond to the new pastoral needs and opportunities that emerge as communities grow and develop.
- Be able to develop the use of technology as a tool in worship and in other aspects of parish life.
- Be a visible and approachable presence in our rural community, a desire to develop the church's contribution to the community and have a sense of humour.

DIOCESE OF HEREFORD

ASSISTANT ARCHDEACON (LUDLOW ARCHDEACONRY)

ROLE DESCRIPTION

DETAILS	
Role Title	Assistant Archdeacon of Ludlow
Department	Bishop's Office
Reports to	Archdeacon of Ludlow
Salary/Stipend	Cathedral Residentiary Canon Stipend
Contract Type	The Assistant Archdeacon is not a legally recognised role within Church of England structures and this is therefore an additional responsibility under Common Tenure. Stipendiary FT role with housing provision and HLC.
Conditions of Service	This role falls within the Clergy Terms of Service formally known as Common Tenure. Please refer to Statements of Particulars document issued in conjunction with this role description. The role will occupy 50% of the appointed person's time with an average of 2 days a week plus preparation time.
Normal Place of Work	Remote working from home Office of the Archdeacon of Ludlow in Craven Arms/Hereford
Responsible for	N/A
Date of Issue	July 2024

NATURE OF WORK

Role Purpose:

Archdeacons share in the mission of the church, exercising their ministry in close collaboration with the Bishop. They play a significant role in the recruiting, oversight, discipline and pastoral care of the clergy. The Archdeacon ensures that the Bishop is aware of the needs and concerns of clergy and people and fosters in them a fuller sense of their responsibilities as members of Christ's body.

Archdeacons share the ordinary jurisdiction with the Bishop and exercise the jurisdiction of the Consistory Court of the Diocese as the Chancellor directs. They present ordination candidates to the Bishop and induct and install ministers, conduct Visitations and admit Churchwardens to their office. Archdeacons work closely with Rural Deans and Lay Officers to help grow the churches in their care. By their teaching and example, they encourage good administration and due process, exercising their authority with wisdom, gentleness and vision, in all things, remembering that they are servants and pastors of Christ's flock.

The Assistant Archdeacon will be the Archdeacon's Commissary with powers delegated by Deed. They are to support the Archdeacon in their responsibilities across the Archdeaconry, and to undertake specific pieces of work for the Archdeacon or Bishop. There are some duties which cannot be delegated in this way (principally CDMs, authorising List B applications and exercising the power of the Trustee roles of the Archdeacon).

On Sundays and around the time of the major Christian festivals, such as Easter and Christmas, priority would be given to parochial duties.

Key Aspects of Role:

The Assistant Archdeacon role requires a high degree of proficiency across the domains of:

- Administrative skills
- Spiritual leadership
- Personnel skills
- Information and data management
- Written and oral communication
- Working with volunteers
- Committee member, including as Chair

The Assistant Archdeacon role requires an Enhanced disclosure certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service.

Key Relationships:

The job reports to the Archdeacon of Hereford/Ludlow. The Assistant Archdeacon will work closely with:

- The Bishop of Hereford
- Bishop's Senior Staff
- Rural Deans
- Parish clergy and clergy administrative staff within Archdeaconry areas.

ROLE AREA	MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Inspections and DAC	To deputise for the Archdeacon on the DAC and be involved in site visits and triennial inspections as delegated by the Archdeacon.
Vacancies	To work with the Bishop and Archdeacon in sharing responsibility for appointment processes. This will involve leading on some vacancies as directed.
Complaints	To assist with responding to complaints at a local, informal level as directed by the Archdeacon, investigating and recording appropriate details of complaints that are referred by the Archdeacon); to brief the Archdeacon about any actions taken or required.
Inductions	To deputise for the Archdeacon at Institution/Collation services and induct and install new clergy as required.
Safeguarding	To act as Archdeacon on Core Groups or Diocesan Safeguarding Advisory Panel as directed.
Meetings	To attend, where possible <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monthly Archdeacons Meeting• Bishop's Staff Meeting, when the Archdeacon is unable to attend• Rural Deans Meetings• Lay Chair Meetings• Contribute to the Archdeaconry Missional & Pastoral Committee

Implementation of Diocesan Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work strategically with both the Archdeacon of Ludlow and the Archdeacon of Hereford to share good practice and co-ordinate property, fabric, finance, and mission planning matters across the diocese to ensure parity and coherent policy.
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To cover other such duties as the Archdeacon may delegate from time to time. • To keep a record of correspondence and communication with clergy, churchwardens and others and to ensure the Archdeacon's Office has copies of these for the parish files. • To conduct ministerial development reviews (MDRs) as directed. • To be a surrogate for marriage licences • To maintain confidentiality at all times on sensitive matters, and observe appropriate boundaries. • To keep a note of expenses incurred in the course of this work and to seek reimbursement from the Diocesan Secretary/Bishop's Office as appropriate.

A diocesan email address will be provided, and access to the appropriate working files on the Diocesan server. A laptop will be provided and the Assistant Archdeacon will be able to request other equipment for the study in their parsonage house as needed to help them fulfil their additional responsibilities.

The Diocesan Registry will ensure a legal Instrument of Appointment as Commissary is in place. The Assistant Archdeacon will not fulfil any archidiaconal functions within the Deanery in which they live and are beneficed, in order to allow them to be a full member of the Deanery Chapter and Synod.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The following areas outline what qualifications, training, experience and technical abilities the applicant will need to demonstrate.

	Essential	Desirable
Spiritual leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayerful, with a mature and settled spirituality. • Flexible and able to engage across church traditions • Theologically articulate and able to communicate faith in the public space. • Committed to ongoing theological, professional and personal development. • Evidence of modelling healthy patterns of ministry and life. • Been in priests' orders for 6 years. • Emotionally resilient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of teamwork within a Diocesan level
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong understanding and track record in parochial leadership. • Commitment to the pastoral care and welfare of clergy and their families. • Mission minded leader and strategic thinker. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to facilitate change and growth. • Able to engage with community and civic life. • Ability to assimilate the complexities of the law of the Church of England and the details of Faculty Jurisdiction and procedure. • To understand and interpret architects' drawings and specifications

Assistant Archdeacon - Bishop of Hereford's Office – Role Description

<p>Technical</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communications skills, able to handle different expectations of the role. • An ability to listen and question, to encourage and enable, to persuade and admonish, to be firm as well as understanding and, above all, to inspire trust and confidence. • Ability to follow through on disciplinary matters. • Able to grasp complex detail, to give advice and see matters through to completion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the MS Office 365 suite of programs, including MS Teams; as well as Zoom. • Organised and administratively competent
<p>Personal Requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to deal with conflict, maintaining appropriate boundaries, including being willing and able to make difficult decisions and to stand their ground where appropriate. • Sensitive to the different cultures, traditions and activities within the Church and maintain a consistent approach to clergy and non-clergy matters. • Commitment to anti-discriminatory practices within the Church of England's legal context. • Able to use discretion when dealing with complex, sensitive/confidential issues. • Collaborative and insightful colleague • The ability to travel independently and quickly around a large geographic area on country roads is essential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full, clean, driving licence and access to own car is desirable.

And finally.....

Thank you for taking an interest in our role as Rector of the Ford Group of Parishes and Assistant Archdeacon.

We appreciate your time and hope that you will take your application forward. We look forward to meeting you.



Cheers from Three Cheers Alberbury