



ST CHRISTOPHER'S
FORGING COMMUNITY - SHARING GOD'S LOVE

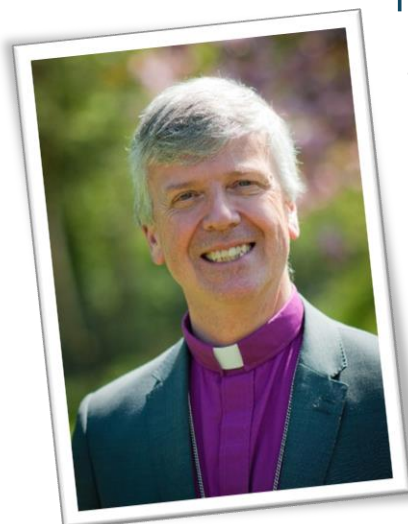


Parish Profile of
St Christopher's Church
Hinchley Wood

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Foreword from Bishop Andrew



The Diocese of Guildford is a warm and friendly place to be, with a strong cohort of gifted and passionate laity and clergy, some excellent church schools, and plenty of beautiful countryside to enjoy on a day off!

Our vision as a diocese is to see lives and communities transformed through the love of Christ; and, to that end, we have recently refreshed our Diocesan Strategy *Transforming Church,*

Transforming Lives, with a particular focus on Growing Disciples, Growing Diversity and Growing Community. Although our congregations are generally rather larger than average, we are all too conscious that we are only reaching a tiny proportion of our parish populations and are particularly keen to become more effective in passing on the baton of faith to younger generations.

Our team of Mission Enablers are committed to working with every parish in fleshing out that vision in an appropriate way, going with the grain of the church's history and tradition, whilst also suggesting new ways to 'proclaim the gospel afresh in each generation.' The pandemic, while presenting many challenges, has helped to forge new relationships between many of our churches, creating a spirit of 'us and us' more than 'them and us,' and opening up new approaches to partnership and inter-church collaboration.

If you share our vision for transformation, and have a track record in growing disciples, growing diversity, and growing community, we would love to hear from you!



A Letter from Venerable Martin Breadmore, the Archdeacon of Dorking

St Christopher's Hinchley Wood has a committed and faithful worshipping community which is eager to change in order that the community of faith might grow and reach out, especially to the many families and children who live in the area. There is huge potential in this parish with good church buildings, a committed core, a secondary and primary school right next door.

We are seeking to appoint a full-time interim priest-in-charge for an initial period of 3 years, which could be extended for another 3 years if all is going well, with the hope that the successful candidate would become the incumbent in due course. St. Christopher's is not currently sustainable in the medium/long term, due to an ageing congregation and relying on financial reserves to balance the books. This interim appointment is designed to draw upon the real potential that lies within this parish for further growth, especially with children and families, to ensure health and viability for many years to come. The interim minister appointed should be able to embrace all that currently flourishes in the parish but also bring with her or him a commitment to developing new missional activities. I sense that a focus on building relationships with children, families and the schools are key to the development of this parish. There is a firm commitment from the existing congregation to explore new and less traditional styles of worship to increase its outreach to all who live in the community. The successful candidate will benefit from the support of working with the Mission Enabler for Revitalisation from the Diocese, for about 18 months, to enable the revitalisation of this parish to begin.

This appointment is perfect timing for receiving resource and support from the wider diocese. 2024 marks the beginning of our second cycle of our Parish Needs Process, which is a brand-new way of working whereby the diocese will seek to walk alongside each parish to help them with vision and whatever needs they might have arising out of this.

I am very enthusiastic about this post. For the person that God calls, there is so much to offer here: the warmth of a great church family; the opportunity of leadership in a parish, deanery and diocese which offers considerable support and resources; the challenge of discerning with this community what God is doing and how we might join in; the privilege of living and working in a part of the country with so many opportunities for clergy and families.

If you'd value an informal conversation about this post, I would be keen to speak with you, so please do not hesitate to be in touch with me via:

archdeacon.dorking@cofeguildford.org.uk



Introduction

St Christopher's is an open, inclusive, single-friendly, and community-based Anglican Church. We believe that God loves everyone no matter who they are or at what stage of life they are. We believe that God wants everyone to know his love and to live life's journey with him so that all may have the abundance of life that God wants for us.



Statement of Needs

We are looking for a prayerful, collaborative, personable, energetic, and creative leader, who will lead us from where we are into necessary change so that we can grow, particularly in our outreach to children, families, and young people. Someone who will see the Godly possibilities and opportunities and enable us to take them. Someone who will walk alongside, encourage and work with us, take risks with us and be a visible and approachable presence in the wider community.



We are seeking a priest-in-charge who loves God and all God's people. You will be warm and friendly, engaging, approachable to people of all ages, and have the energy and enthusiasm to help us find new ways to help our community flourish. Our new priest-in-charge will be a person grounded in prayer, someone who will walk alongside us, encourage us and work with us, take risks with us and be an approachable presence in the wider community.

If this sounds like you, then we would love to hear from you. Being our priest-in-charge would be a great role for the right person.

Person Specification

Building on our statement of needs, our congregation and the wider community are looking for a person who has the vision to lead St. Christopher's into growth. Someone who will continue to nurture our current, faithful, older congregation and with energy and enthusiasm reach out to families and the schools that are on our doorstep. The right person will be a good listener who encourages others and works collaboratively to share the mission of God in this place.



The Parish of St. Christopher's Hinchley Wood is committed to the safeguarding, care, and nurture of children within our church community, and to encouraging an environment where all people, and especially those who may be vulnerable, are able to worship and pursue their faith journey with encouragement and in safety.

Support we will offer

The new priest-in-charge will be well supported by our parish team, which includes:

Associate Minister (SSM): Caroline Mullins

Caroline takes funerals, conducts Baptism preparation, and takes the Baptism Services. She is keen to run services and events that particularly include children. Caroline initiated the Together@Ten Service and Tea & Hymns. She is trained for and runs the Hearing Clinic each month. She is well known in the community.

Church Wardens: Jane Barnett and Julia Bowden

As well as dealing with church warden duties, Jane and Julia have taken on administrative duties in the form of managing hall and church bookings and overseeing regular safety checks. They also assist with updating and managing the church website. Julia is also the Parish Safeguarding Officer and Jane conducts the DBS checks.

Pastoral Assistant: Liz Hammond

Liz has particular involvement with the elderly and bereaved. She takes home communion to the housebound. She set up and co-ordinates a prayer chain.

Occasional preacher: Julia Bowden

Julia is authorised to preach at St Christopher's up to 5 times a year. This is a diocesan initiative, overseen by St Christopher's clergy.

Describing the Role

This is an exciting role for an interim priest-in-charge who feels called to lead us on a journey from where we are now to where God wants us to be.

Where we are now

At St Christopher's we are a place of worship and a centre of engagement with the whole community of Hinchley Wood. As a community hub we aim to provide a wide range of events for children and families, for those who live alone and for those who are getting on in years - both within the church itself and in the church hall.



With the help of our Associate Minister, we have introduced new forms of worship, such as Together@Ten, an informal family-friendly service on the first Sunday of the month. This has encouraged about 8 families to attend more regularly. Tea & Hymns, aimed at older members of the community and accessible to those living with dementia and their carers, usually has about 20 participants; this is held on fourth Sunday afternoons. Our regular, Sunday morning Eucharist typically has a congregation totalling between 25 and 35 people.

In 2018 we signed up with ARocha to be an Eco Church and we achieved a Silver Award. In order to gain this, we built a composting area, a bug hotel, a bird feeding station and nesting boxes. We have also encouraged our congregation to become more eco-friendly with eco tips sent out in our weekly briefing and posted on our website. The environment and climate change feature regularly in our worship and prayers.



The past few years have been challenging, with the faithful, existing congregation growing older and the legacy of Covid meaning that our outreach to children and families waned. We know that something needs to change. We know that we would love to have more families as part of our church. We know that there are young people in the nearby schools and their families living in the parish. We are looking for someone to help take us into a bright new future.

Vision for future growth

We are a community who takes seriously our responsibility to be Christ's light to all those in Hinchley Wood, forging community and proclaiming God's love. In trying to discern God's vision for the future mission and ministry of St Christopher's Church, the PCC has aimed to include the whole

congregation, plus those on the fringes and on the electoral roll. We have a vision for a church where everyone is welcome, and numbers of and ministry to, all ages grows. We are very united in our vision and in what we need now.



We believe in an inclusive church - a church which celebrates and affirms every person and does not discriminate. We believe in a Church which welcomes and serves all people as fellow travellers in life wherever they may be on their spiritual journey.

Hinchley Wood is a mainly residential area, with predominantly private houses, some flats and relatively little social housing. According to information from the latest census, the largest demographic of Hinchley Wood is families with children. In addition, there are about two hundred retirement flats in the village. The church has particularly good connections with Gibson Court.

It is a green area, having many open spaces within and nearby. There is little industry or large-scale commerce and no large employers; however, the variety of small local businesses includes a wide range of shops in the centre of the village, around the Memorial Gardens.



A GP surgery and a pharmacy are also located there.

Pre-school children are also catered for with several nurseries and there are two highly acclaimed state schools situated next door to the church: Hinchley Wood Primary and Hinchley Wood Secondary. Demand for places at both is high, encouraging families to move into and remain in the catchment area. St Christopher's has good relationships with both schools, with the schools holding year group lessons and concerts in the church. The senior and primary schools participate in the Remembrance Service, which is led by St Christopher's and held every year in the Memorial Gardens. It is anticipated that these relationships will be maintained, and hopefully strengthened, in the future.

With very low levels of reported crime, Hinchley Wood is widely considered to be a safe and agreeable place to live. There are flourishing Guiding and Scouting units, dance classes and a stage school. There is a good sense of community and St Christopher's strives to take a leading role by providing a Community Hub - our hall is the only space of its kind in the village. There is a strong Residents Association, whose candidates are regularly elected to Elmbridge Borough Council.

Local amenities include Telegraph Hill and Littleworth Common, which are just two of the many large public parks and open spaces in this attractive part of Surrey. Within three miles are Hampton Court Palace, Bushy Park, the River Thames, Kingston-upon-Thames with its extensive shopping, restaurants and entertainment, Sandown Park Racecourse, Surbiton Golf Club, Surbiton Hockey Club and Colets Health and Fitness Club.



There is provision for playing football and rugby for all ages. The A3 provides a speedy route towards RHS Wisley and Guildford, and Claremont National Trust is conveniently close by too. If you do not want to take a car, the K3 bus runs regularly between Esher and Roehampton (via Kingston hospital, and the 715 bus runs from Kingston to Guildford passing both Claremont and Wisley. Trains also stop at Hinchley Wood station on their way from Guildford to London Waterloo.

The nearest main hospital is Kingston Hospital NHS Foundation Trust which is an acute hospital with an Accident & Emergency Unit and numerous specialist departments.

The Vicarage

The Vicarage is situated at 98 Manor Road North and was purpose-built in the 1950s. It is a 4-bedroom house including study, with large garden to the front and rear, a garage and spacious driveway. It is a 2-minute walk from the church and the adjacent schools in Claygate Lane and a 5-minute walk from the shops and railway station. The Diocesan Property Department has inspected the house and undertaken any necessary repairs. The parish will pay for and undertake full redecoration.



The Church and Church Hall Buildings



The Church, built in 1953, is light and spacious with red upholstered seating and a herring-bone oak parquet floor. It is a flexible space that allows forward-facing seating or an 'in-the-round' layout, and other appropriate seating arrangements for other types of service and social events.



The flexibility of layout is also ideal for numerous events, such as NHS Blood Donor Service, quiz nights, a Polling Station and for a wide range of other regular hirings. The building has a quiet Lady Chapel to one side, a large office, a vestry /meeting room, sacristy, a bell tower, a small kitchen and two WCs (one accessible).

There is a pipe organ (made by George Osmond & Co. of Taunton) that is regularly used in services, a baby grand piano and a Premier drum kit. We also have a facility to use iTunes, and we have a Mackie sound system, incorporating an induction loop, and ramps rather than steps, as part of our inclusivity for all.



Externally, there is a Garden of Remembrance, a parking area to the front of the church and additional spaces to the side, with further free street parking on Claygate Lane.

There is also parking at the rear of the church that is used as a playground by the Nursery School and After School Club during term time.



In 2015, to kick start our drive to be an eco church, several improvements were made to the building, including thermal insulation of the entire ceiling (roof space), replacement LED lighting, a refurbished kitchen and solar panels installed on the roof.

The Church Hall dates from 1938 and was originally used as the Church before the present Church building was built. It is a large space with a stage, a commercial kitchen, various storerooms and three WCs (one accessible).

In 2015, a number of improvements and refurbishments were also made here, including a new floor and better security measures. More recently, as part of our eco-action plan, the strip lighting was upgraded to LED.



It is used for church events, lunches and meetings and is also hired out to a wide variety of local organisations, which attract residents to participate in recreation, exercise, dance, music etc.. It is very popular as a venue for parties for both adults and children.

On weekdays during the school term, an independent nursery operates from the premises and there is also an after-school club.

Other information

Church Services

There are services and activities for people of all ages and always a warm welcome for visitors. The rite used is Common Worship unless otherwise stated. All services are accompanied by our choir. The accompanying music is either the organ or a guitar.



On the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Sundays there is a 10am Eucharist Service. On the 1st Sunday of the month there is a more family friendly Together@Ten Service. This is set up café style, in the round with lots of participation from the congregation, including in the prayers and a craft activity, is encouraged.

At 4pm on the 4th Sunday there is Tea and Hymns, and this is attended by regular members of our congregation as well as people who do not usually come to our other services.

Baptism:

We operate an open baptism policy, encouraging families initially to attend services at St Christopher's, to see if it is the sort of church they would like to belong to. Baptisms currently usually take place on the 1st or 4th Sunday of the month.

Children:

After consultation with the congregation, the PCC voted to apply for Diocesan permission to allow children to be admitted to receive Holy Communion before Confirmation, after suitable instruction. This was granted, and we have had one group of children who were admitted.

Average Annual numbers:

Baptisms: 7

Weddings: 0

Funerals:

 In church: 5

 At crematorium: 8



Lay involvement in services:

Music, Bible reading, intercessions and administering the chalice. Providing a warm welcome, and refreshments after the service.



Music:

St Christopher's has traditionally had a strong choir, and in later years a lively band of musicians. We now have an enthusiastic, ageing choir and we would love to attract new members and renew the music supporting our worship. At present services are either accompanied by a guitarist or an organist, both of whom are volunteers.

Audio-Visual Technology:

We have a sound system, to assist the congregation to hear clearly what is said. This includes a loop for hearing-aid users. We also have a laptop set up to project images onto a screen. This is used to live-stream all our Sunday services on Zoom, and those joining the services from home can be seen on the screen. Both systems would ideally be upgraded in due course.

Hearing Clinic

Our Associate Minister runs an NHS hearing clinic every month and this is visited by many members of the community as well as members of our own congregation. However, we need to find new ways of sharing our faith. We are keen to explore other, new ways to present the gospel, to reach more people in Hinchley Wood.

Hirers

A variety of hirers, and participants in the events they offer, regularly visit our buildings for recreation, exercise, quiz nights, rock choir, NHS Blood Donor Service, etc.. A Nursery School and After School Club hire our hall every weekday during term-time.

Parish Organisation

The Electoral roll, which has been stable over recent years, currently numbers 67.

The PCC has 9 members including NSM, wardens and two Deanery Synod representatives.



A Standing Committee consisting of the NSM, both Church Wardens, the Secretary and one other PCC members meets or communicates by email to make decisions during the periods between PCC meetings. Our treasurer is not a member of the PCC but attends meetings where necessary and is invited to do so.

Communications

We recognise the importance of digital communication, and we use a platform for our website www.stchristopherschurch.org.uk. Its tools enable us to regularly email the congregation, and those in the wider community who are on our mailing list, with key information and forthcoming events. Through Google Calendar we manage events, hiring details and various rosters. We also have a presence on Facebook.

Church Groups

Prayer Chain

This group prays regularly for the needs of the parish and the wider community. They meet quarterly to pray together. Prayer requests are confidential to the group.

Mothers' Union

The MU meets once a month for talks or discussions and fundraising and occasional outings with lunch. Despite a small number of members, they have provided 50 bags of gifts at Christmas every year for the ladies who are in the diocesan refuges.



Men's Group

This men's discussion group has been running for many years. It meets at the Angel Pub in Thames Ditton once a month to talk over matters of current concern. It is a chance to meet and discuss in a relaxed environment. They also have outings and lunches together.

Church Links

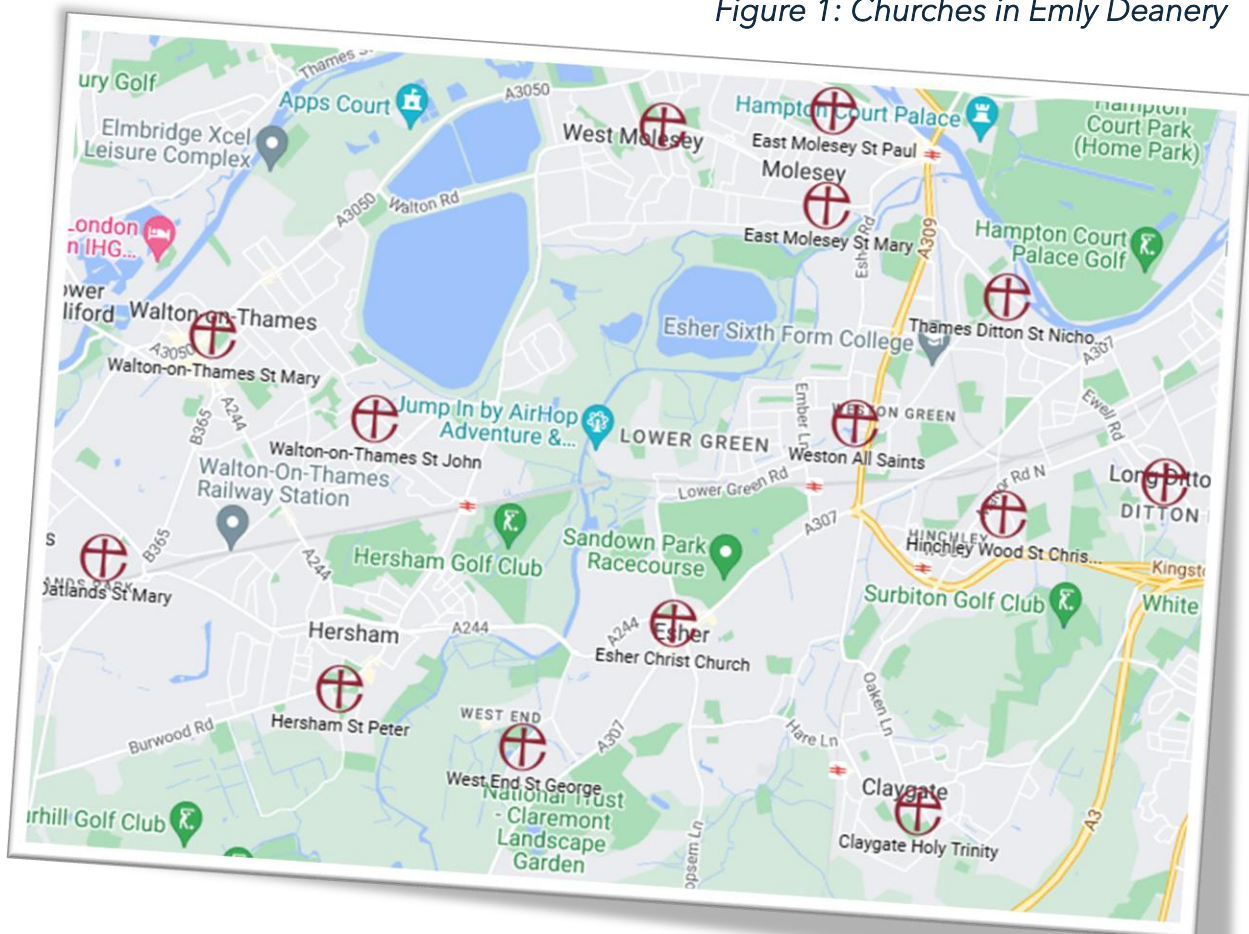
Emly Deanery

Hinchley Wood is part of Emly Deanery, which comprises 13 parishes on the north-eastern edge of the Diocese. The clergy have good relations with other clergy in the Deanery, meeting regularly, during the day, at the Deanery Chapter and at Deanery Synod a few evenings per year. Two lay representatives from St Christopher's, also attend Deanery Synod evening meetings and report back to the PCC.

The deanery chapter of just over 25 clergy meets six times a year and, on most occasions, shares a lunch provided by the host vicar, and spends time in conversation and prayer. They also participate in a twice-yearly retreat. The Lay Chair takes an active role in overseeing the life of the deanery with the Area Dean. Together it is their hope that parishes will support each other in whatever way blesses their local parish mission.

The economic profile of the deanery is relatively affluent, although there are pockets of significant social deprivation, and the church is involved in some of these areas through Food Banks and other support projects. Many people in the deanery commute to London using the good transport links. Most of the parishes have a single church and are focused around a discrete geographical area.

Figure 1: Churches in Emly Deanery



Emly Deanery Parishes

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| Claygate | Oatlands |
| East Molesey St. Mary | Thames Ditton |
| East Molesey St. Paul | Walton on Thames |
| Esher - Christ Church &
St George's, West End | West Molesey |
| Hershams | Weston Green |
| Hinchley Wood | Weybridge |
| Long Ditton | |

The Diocese of Guildford

The Vision and Mission Strategy of the diocese is entitled “Transforming Church, Transforming Lives.” The diocesan Mission Enabler Team visits each of the deaneries and parishes in turn, helping them to explore the ways in which they can: grow disciples, grow diversity, grow community. It is a framework to use in all mission planning at a diocesan, deanery, church, and even individual level. The three priorities provide support and direction, especially in the areas of making disciples, drawing in children and younger people, and building on the community partnerships which many have developed during the worst of the pandemic. You can read more about this here: <https://www.cofeguildford.org.uk/vision-and-strategy/>.

Ecumenical Links

Churches Together in the Dittons (CTD) meets about four times a year. It comprises local clergy and lay people from the Church of England and Roman Catholic churches in the Dittons (Hinchley Wood, Thames Ditton, Long Ditton, and Weston Green) and from the now closed URC church. We share in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in January, an annual Easter Supper, Good Friday service on Giggs Hill Green and a Healing Service in October. The venues and preachers change each year, as does the Chair of CTD.

Community Links

On the 1st Sunday of every month, our SSM runs a Hearing Clinic in the church. This is open to anyone in the community who wants to take advantage of this facility. In recent years we have held Music & Poetry evenings based on different seasons of the year. On the 4th Sunday of the month, we have Tea & Hymns; this is attended by members of our congregation, as well as others who do not usually attend our Sunday Services. For 25+ years we have been running a twice-yearly Quiz Night; more than 100 people come along to enjoy this event which includes supper.



Finance

An accounts summary showing income and expenditure for 2023 and the budget for 2024 is shown below. Planned giving makes up just under half of our income. St. Christopher's also receives about half of its income from lettings; the remainder comes from events. We are grateful for the generosity of the planned giving from our congregation. We are, of course, also hoping that, with our new priest-in-charge, we will be able to grow our congregation, which will further strengthen our financial position.

Despite our small congregation, we are financially viable. Our regular hirers contribute to our income and we have been able to continue paying our Parish Share. Our maintenance costs and energy bills remain a challenge to our expenditure.

SUMMARY OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR 2023 WITH BUDGET FOR 2024

<u>Income</u>	2024	2023
Planned giving	48,300	47,100
Donations (Gift Aid, loose, other)	1,650	2,850
Lettings	54,500	51,200
Events (net income)	2,000	3,400
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Totals	106,450	104,550
<u>Expenditure</u>	2024	2023
Buildings maintenance	11,500	17,000
Office	2,500	2,300
Parish share	77,299	74,200
Church and Hall running costs	20,900	19,900
Clergy and training	300	1,700
Services & caretaking	1,910	1,940
Outreach	450	620
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Totals	114,859	117,660

In addition, the parish has a savings account of unrestricted funds of around £52k.