

# Benefice Profile

The Benefice of The Lee

The Benefice of Hawridge

with Cholesbury and Saint Leonards



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# Introduction

This profile gives an overview of the benefices of The Lee and of Hawridge with Cholesbury and St Leonards, locally known as the Hilltops. The benefices are set in an area of outstanding natural beauty in the Chiltern hills within the Diocese of Oxford and the Wendover deanery.

Following the long-term illness of the previous incumbent, the churches are now ready for effective clerical leadership to help them rebuild the congregations and a wider Church community. This, we believe, is both an opportunity and a challenge for the future.



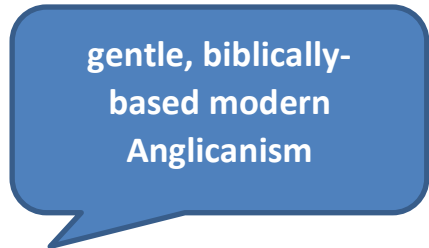
The successful applicant will find supportive, engaged and confident church communities keen to embrace and encourage new initiatives and direction underpinned by dedication to follow God's purpose for the Church in the community.

Interested candidates are invited to contact the Bishop, Rt Revd Alan Wilson, for a further conversation about the post: email [bishopbucks@oxford.anglican.org](mailto:bishopbucks@oxford.anglican.org) mobile: 07525-655756.

## Working together

The four parishes share a similar churchmanship which is a gentle, biblically-based modern Anglicanism.

Since the 1990s there has been a coming together of the four churches in the two benefices with a common service rota and strong collaboration with joint Church Wardens' meetings. Many services are now joint, particularly between the Hilltop churches.



The lay leadership of the four Parochial Parish Councils (one for each church) has shown tremendous strength and faith over recent years. This has been very important in making us resilient to changing circumstances. The strength of our love for our churches is clear, as dedicated congregation members have secured visiting ministers, led local engagement events and introduced new initiatives to grow the parishes and maintain momentum over recent years and during the vacancy. This has been assisted by interim ministry from two oversight priests in 2019 and early 2020.

## Working together during Covid-19

During the Covid-19 lockdown, the Hilltops churches have worked in partnership with local community groups to offer an email address and freephone number and a named helper for those who have been self-isolating or unable to leave their homes. Support offered has included:

- Shopping
- Prescription collection
- Dog walking
- A friendly 'phone call
- Posting letters/parcels
- Other concerns

## Who we are

The Parishes have yet to develop a combined vision statement or Mission Action Plan. During the vacancy process, however, the PCCs have worked together to consider what we value in our churches, what are some of our challenges and how we would like to see our parishes develop in the future. We look forward to discussing new ways of integration with our new incumbent.

## What we value about our churches

- **Presence** - the continued presence of worshipping churches in the local community
- **Focal points** - the churches are major focal points in each of their communities
- **Welcome** - the welcoming, friendly and peaceful approach of the churches and congregation
- **Openness** to new ways of working
- **Worship** - variety of church services and worship from lay-led breakfast services to BCP communion services
- **Financial stability** - all the churches are financially stable and meet their parish share under normal circumstances and always plan to do so, both through fundraising and committed giving
- **Faith** - the deep underlying faith of the lay leaders and congregations that has been essential to the life of the churches during the vacancy



## The next three years

In the next three years there is agreement across all the PCCs that we wish to see:

- **Thriving churches**
  - Churches for all ages, especially developing our youth and family offerings and finding ways to engage with the younger generation together with flexible thinking about service patterns and Christian gathering
  - A diverse pattern of services across all churches in the benefice, respecting both the existing provision and the needs of the wider community
  - Fuller churches both across joint services and at festivals
  - Continued exploration of the Christian faith through increased biblical exposition in sermons and through prayer groups and small groups
  - More collaboration between the churches and PCCs
- **Pastoral care**
  - Developing support for the elderly in our congregations and communities, both in worship and pastoral care
  - Pastoral care for all ages including youth, young families and retired members with a focus on alleviating loneliness
- **Mission and outreach**
  - Increased school liaison with the C of E primary schools within the parishes. We believe this is the biggest challenge we have, and this is a high priority for the next few years
  - Increased outreach to the local community

The prolonged absence of the previous incumbent tested the resilience of the churches in the benefice and the congregation and community look forward to a period of recovery and refreshing leadership.

## Challenges

In working towards this future, the PCCs have identified some challenges that we would seek to overcome with our new incumbent.


- **Governance** - working together as PCCs towards more co-ordination between the churches and exploring with our new vicar the best way forward
- **Culture change** - moving from an inward facing culture to an outward mission-oriented culture which focuses on engagement with the local community
- **Worship** – the tension between those who seek change to worship patterns and music, and those who seek to retain current worship patterns
- **Balancing** the distinct church congregations as part of a community which is quite geographically divided between The Lee and the three smaller churches
- **Community engagement** - outreach to the wider community especially in the Lee Common area and with recent arrivals in the area
- **COVID-19 restrictions** - the recent COVID19 restrictions have lengthened and intensified the difficulties we faced with no clerical leadership, and this means that a restart to the Christian life of the communities is vital

## The role

There is much work to be done to return the parishes to their previous congregation levels. The joint benefices would like to work with a new incumbent to follow God's will for the parishes and increase the Christian life of this beautiful area.

Our discussions have led us to identify that the key areas of focus for our new incumbent over the next three years will be:

- To rejuvenate the Christian life of the churches by
  - providing a sustained and consistent church service pattern
  - increasing the biblical teaching in the churches and in small groups across the benefices
  - guide the four parishes to effective and efficient forms of collaborative/co-ordinated governance
- To provide much needed pastoral support to the community, especially the elderly
- To engage with the local community through varied approaches, focusing on the schools and community groups



Church to be an integral part of the community for all ages and backgrounds

We are very aware that we are blessed to live in wonderful, engaged communities, and we want the church to be an integral part of those communities for all ages and backgrounds.

# Our new minister

We seek a vicar who will:



## Teach and lead

Someone who walks with us and shares our spiritual journey, teaching and developing us through Biblical exposition through sermons, small groups and bible studies.



## Engage with our communities

Someone who will bring a sense of mission to our communities and village schools, and who is as comfortable engaging with people in the local pubs and at local events as they are in church.



## Bring intellectual curiosity

Someone with intellectual curiosity who will help us to grow as Christians, explore the theological underpinning of our faith and meet our challenges.



## Develop pastoral care

Someone who will develop lay people to offer pastoral care both to 'churched' and 'non-churched' parishioners, especially for the retired community.



## Engage with young people and families

Someone who has a real love of engaging with families and a proven record of developing youth and family outreach.



## Develop and grow our churches

Someone with the enthusiasm to develop the churches, supported by a dedicated core group of volunteers in each parish who are eager to see our churches grow.



## Enrich our church life

Someone with interests outside the parishes, bringing this to enrich their leadership and pastoral care within our community.

# Our churches

## The Benefice of The Lee

The Lee is a thriving community with excellent links to the surrounding areas and commuter towns.

A major challenge and issue for the parish is sharply declining attendance at Sunday Services, with no new regular attenders replacing those who have died.



The church now has a regular congregation of less than 20 with the exception of special services. As recently as 2010 the average attendance was 30-40, with a thriving Sunday school of as many as 18 children with teaching taking place in the Old Church and the Vicarage.

The Lee Village originally had only a small 12<sup>th</sup> Century church. This church still exists today and even now has services on the first Sunday of the month at 8am. The Old Church is managed and run by its own Trust (currently run by John Swain, a local village resident).

Between 1867 and 1869 the Lee villagers got together and built themselves the much larger church (the New Church) following the growth in the village. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Liberty family (of the Liberty store in London), who had moved to The Lee, paid for the expansion of the New Church in 1910 including the Baptistry at the west end of the church and an extension to the east end including an organ and choir stalls between the nave and the altar.

The church has high quality wood carvings, organ and other features provided by the Liberty family who are still generous supporters of the church. Recent work on the New Church removed a number of the pews (which still remain as congregation seating and for silent prayer) to make space at the rear of the church for a kitchen area and a play area for children. The church has a newly updated audio system for those who are hard of hearing.

There is an annual church fete held on the green in June, a flower show in July, a thriving cricket club, two traditional pubs, a scout hall, community run shop, village hall, allotments, playing field and infants school. There are no organised church groups at The Lee.



## The Benefice of Hawridge with Cholesbury and St Leonards

The three parishes have shared one minister since the early 1970s and have been on a course of coming together more closely for services and events in the last 20 years.

These three parishes that include a fourth village, Buckland Common, are in many respects one community. Hilltop News, a bi-monthly magazine that includes news from the civil parish as well as church news, and Grapevine (Google Group/ community email) cover all four villages, as do various clubs, societies and activities.

## Hawridge

The community of Hawridge and Heath End is spread over a wide area. The church itself is in a quiet corner of the village and this is much appreciated by worshippers. The Parish hopes it is welcoming to all and believes it has support from many parishioners who are occasional churchgoers.

While there is not currently a regular pattern of services, we hope that a new pattern of regular services can soon be established.

St Mary's Church was rebuilt in the 1850s but it is believed the original Church was built in 1227. Hawridge Lane, now an unmetalled track, was in former times an important route.

The church is fitted with fixed pews which, with the choir stalls, can seat 82 people. The Church has an electric organ but does not have a choir. There are two bells. The bowl of the Font is believed to date from Norman times. All the fittings were recorded by a visiting NADFAS group some years ago (the record is kept in the church).

A small number of parishioners arrange for cleaning and flowers as necessary but otherwise, the PCC arranges for third parties to deal with small items of maintenance as and when the need arises. Work to improve or replace the rainwater goods (paid for from available Parish funds) was completed in Spring 2019 and we hope this will cure the damp in the east wall of the Nave. The heating is not effective and ideally should be replaced.

A quinquennial inspection of the building was carried out in May 2019 and the report identifies a number of areas where work or maintenance is required. The report estimates this work will cost in the region of £45,000. The church does not at present have such resources and raising them may be a challenge.

## Cholesbury

Cholesbury is the smallest of the four parishes and the church of St Lawrence is also the smallest church. Special services during the year are held to attract less regular churchgoers. The Church is the main organisation in the village for holding fund raising events and receives great support from villagers.

The Parish supports Send-a-Cow and PACT financially and collect shoeboxes for the Rotary Appeal. Most years we invite a charity to talk to us and give them a donation.

St Lawrence Church is situated within the Iron Age Fort: the earliest record is 13<sup>th</sup> Century. It was rebuilt in 1870. It is small and the pews provide 51 seats but, with the area at the back and the choir stalls, we can welcome 75 comfortably. It is well suited for smaller weddings. Previous generations left us a good heating system, a lovely Bates organ and one bell. The Church has recently hosted a fully-subscribed folk music concert, and the PCC is considering further ways in which its use could be expanded.



The Church has generous support from the village with 19 volunteers to mow the churchyard which is a smaller plot than the usual God's Acre. The 14 Flower arrangers/cleaners greatly enhance the church's interior.





## St Leonards

St. Leonards is a welcoming and open Church which focuses on community outreach and developing contacts throughout the parish. Little Bears Pre-School (see below), attend for a service at Easter, Harvest and Christmas. At the recent Nativity there were 50 children and parents in attendance.



St. Leonards Church traces its origins back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century and is believed to have been a cell attached to Missenden Abbey. It was completely restored in the 17<sup>th</sup> century giving it a seating capacity of about 120. It operated as a Free Chapel until 1911 and came under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Oxford in 1911. It benefits from a self-contained Church Room (constructed in 2005) and a sizeable carpark. The church itself is a Grade 2 listed building.



“Little Bears kicked off the festive season with a youngster-friendly service (at St Leonards) which saw children dressing in tinsel as angels and shepherds with their fluffy sheep. Little Bears, together with staff, friends and family, then walked ... to the church hall for their well-earned drinks and biscuits ... Some new families were so delighted with the friendly and welcoming church they were planning to come back for the Christmas services.” (Hilltops News)

## Church Groups

Village	Groups
Cholesbury	The church at Cholesbury has evolved under financial pressures into an organisation providing social events such as the Quiz, Cream Teas, Fete and Harvest. These are fund-raising events but also make a valuable contribution to village life which introduce people to the Christian community. Naturally these need organisation, and a group exists which is headed by a church member - but others in the village provide essential help.
St Leonards	<p><b>Little Bears</b> visit St Leonards church three times a year, just prior to Easter, Christmas and Harvest Festival. The Service is normally lay-led and the children enjoy participating. Following the service the children, their teachers and parent(s) and grandparent(s) move to the Church Room for refreshment – attendance is often around 40 – 50.</p> <p><b>Parents and Toddlers Group</b> - this Group uses the Church Room weekly. Their morning of companionship, games and snacks is run by the parents accompanying each child. Although not organised by St Leonards there is a close relationship and many of those who join the mornings are also part of our congregation.</p> <p><b>Monthly Teas</b> are held in the Church Room and generally attended by the older generation. The Christmas meeting begins in church when our Organist gives a short interesting talk based around Christmas and its music. After carols are sung, all retire to the Room for a special Christmas Tea!</p>
Hawridge	The Friends of Hawridge Church provides support for Church fabric and churchyard maintenance with money raised by subscription and from community events. During Covid-19, a limited number of village events run by the Church or the Friends have continued. As in Cholesbury, with whom fundraising events are frequently shared in normal times, events (the joint fete, the harvest supper, etc) organised in the name of Hawridge Church help promote the role of the Church in village life.
The Lee	The Lee church is active in the village, organising social events such as the annual Fete, cream teas and other fund-raising events (eg bridge drives).

## Worship in the Benefices

The three churches of the Hilltop Benefice share services on all but one Sunday in the month. On the four '5th Sundays', all four churches worship together, going to each church in rotation.

The attached table shows the range of worship (BCP, CW and informal worship) across the churches pre-Covid-19. There are two special monthly services: the monthly shared service at Lee Common Methodist church and the monthly Breakfast service hosted by St Leonards in St Leonards' church room.

There have, of course, been few services during the virus emergency – the front cover includes an August Breakfast service in the churchyard – but the parishes have been kept well-informed of online worship.

Sundays	The Lee	St Leonards	Cholesbury	Hawridge
1 <sup>st</sup>	8am BCP Communion 10am All Age Worship (ecumenical service)	11am CW Communion	9.30am BCP Communion	9.30am Family Service
2 <sup>nd</sup>	10am CW Communion	10am Morning Worship at Cholesbury		
3 <sup>rd</sup>	10am BCP Matins	10am CW Communion (in each church in rotation)		
4 <sup>th</sup>	10am CW Communion	9am Breakfast Service at St Leonards		11am CW Communion
5 <sup>th</sup>	10am CW Communion (in each church by rotation)			

Attendances at church services have declined over the last few years and we are eager to reverse this trend.

Parish	Usual Sunday attendance			Electoral roll		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
St Leonards	17	20	20	46	46	43
Hawridge	11	16	9	19	19	15
Cholesbury	8	13	10	19	18	14
The Lee	17	20	13	48	40	25

### Breakfast services

For ten years St Leonards has offered a lay-led Breakfast Service on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in the month. This attracts a congregation of all ages, including many children and the occasional dog. Average congregations are about 30-35: with a high in 2019 of 55. After breakfast in the Church Room with coffee, bacon rolls and croissants, the congregation moves across to the church and continues in the church with a service built on the family service booklet; but often involving musical contributions from the congregation. It has become the best attended regular service at the church with a reputation across the archdeaconry, and is now held jointly with Cholesbury.

The PCC is currently looking at extending the format and providing evening services with barbecue and drinks after the service.

The congregation of all ages, including children, averages about 30-35: with a high in 2019 of 55



## Ecumenical services

On the first Sunday of each month, a joint service is held with The Lee Methodist church, led by Gerald Tomkins, Minister at the Methodist church. The service is held on alternate months at The Lee and The Lee Methodist church. The format of the service is informal but follows a set structure.

## Fifth Sundays

The four 5<sup>th</sup> Sundays each year have become the time for shared services involving all four churches. We celebrate Parish Communion and invite a guest speaker. Some of these have come from national charities such as Church Army, Embrace the Middle East and the Church Urban Fund. Others spoke on local charities including Aylesbury Street Pastors, a Food Bank and Lindengate, a Wendover based Mental Health charity.

### St. Leonards 2019

The 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday service was a combined Mothering Sunday/Breakfast service when the attendance was 76.

### Cholesbury

Speakers are invited from national organisations. We have welcomed our new archdeacon, and one December we had no speaker but shared Stollen cake with our tea/coffee after the service.

### Hawridge

Normal attendance is 15.

### The Lee 2019

Attendance for the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday was 18.

## Leadership in the vacancy

A number of ministers, mainly retired, have led services throughout the parishes during the vacancy, and each church is grateful to have benefited from their time and leadership over the past two years. More recently, two interim Ministers were appointed for short periods.



## Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals

The Churches all play a central role in the community and have a number of baptisms, marriages and funerals each year. The churches are popular locations for weddings with many family members returning home to be married. There have been a very small number of marriages and funerals during 2020 due to Covid-19.



In St. Leonards, those who come or are brought to baptism generally have a connection with the church through attending services or being married.

In Cholesbury, recent Baptisms have been for babies with village connections but not resident. Parents are allowed a separate service and do not join regular worship. We consider this to be decision for the Vicar.

There is no specific Baptism policy adopted in Hawridge: on 5 September 2020, Ellie (brought up in the village) married Pete in Hawridge Church, albeit before a very restricted congregation.

The Lee welcomes all families for baptisms - although there would generally be some connection to either the church or The Lee village.

Parish	Baptisms			Marriages			Funerals		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
St Leonards	0	5	2	3	4	3	6	2	1
Hawridge	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Cholesbury	1	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	0
The Lee	4			5			13		

## Celebration Services

Christian festivals and other events are celebrated by different churches throughout the year.

### Easter

**The Lee** holds services across the Easter period culminating in an Easter Sunday Service in the church.

On **the Hilltops**, the three churches run an integrated program of services across all the parishes. Palm Sunday services are held in every Hilltop church on the regular rota, and Palm Crosses are distributed. In Holy Week the four churches combine and hold lay-led Compline on three evening and a Parish Communion at St Leonards on Maundy Thursday.



On Good Friday the churches gather in the morning at St Leonards to build an Easter garden and to set off on a Walk of Witness to Cholesbury. At 11.45 am Cholesbury church holds a Devotional service attracting about 15 people.

Easter is celebrated at Hawridge or Cholesbury alternately with 9.30 communion or an 11 o'clock Family service at St Leonards (2019 attendance: 84). Hawridge also hold a Praise service at 5pm.

## Harvest

Until recently, with a significantly larger congregation, the annual harvest festival at The Lee was followed by a harvest lunch, either in the church or at the parish hall. With falling attendances, other than the decorating of the church and a harvest theme to the service, there are currently no other specific arrangements. The Lee Common school arranges and attends a separate Harvest service on a weekday.

St Leonards holds an evening service in the church (2019 attendance: 56), followed by a community led Harvest Supper in the nearby Parish Hall. The supper is usually attended by upwards of 70 people of all ages and culminates in an auction of produce raising funds for charity.

Hawridge and Cholesbury host Harvest on alternate years with a service in the morning and supper, raffle and auction in the evening usually attracting about 55 people. Funds are sent to the Leprosy Mission or Send-a-Cow.

## Remembrance

The Remembrance Sunday service is by far the best attended service held at The Lee, with a congregation frequently exceeding 100, reflecting wartime loss of local men. The service follows the standard Remembrance Sunday order of service, followed by a procession to the War Memorial for the 11am two minute silence.

The Hilltop parishes assemble at St Leonards for a service which includes the Act of Remembrance at the church memorial. The names of all Fallen from across the Parishes are read out. Involvement is usual from local civic leaders and the local village choir. Attendance has varied over the last few years, with 78 people attending in 2019.



## Christmas

Each church holds a Candlelit Carol service or Crib service, often with a Christmas tree, on a Sunday evening leading up to Christmas Day. In all the villages, these services have the biggest attendance of the year. The services are based on nine Lessons and Carols, and bring in many who probably only worship once a year. Collections are either for charities or for general funds.

Hawridge carol-singing in the local pub is well received and raises money for third party charities, and may contribute to church-going over Christmas.

## Other services

**Cholesbury** holds a 'Blessing of Pets' service in June which is usually held outdoors and with guitar or electric organ accompaniment. It takes place on the second Sunday of the month when the Hilltops have a shared service. In October, Cholesbury collect Shoeboxes filled with Christmas gifts for delivery to East Europe as part of the Rotary International. Last year was our highest ever with 42 boxes. This also takes place on the second Sunday.

**Hawridge** celebrate All Souls Day on the first Sunday. Names from all four parishes are read out. Hawridge also hold a ten minute service twice a year as a Taster for those who attend church infrequently. It is a short service of 10-15 minutes comprising a 'Thought for the Day' type reading, with hymns and prayers, followed by refreshments. It attracts some local people to Hawridge from outside the parish.



Parish	Christmas - Carol			Harvest			Easter		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
St Leonards	93	116	80	44	47	56	69	56	84
Hawridge	150	140	120	40	-	18	23	32	27
Cholesbury	34	85	64	-	20	-	7	10	9
The Lee	55	80	67	28	18	28	50	32	45

Please note that all the above relate to pre-Covid-19 attendance.

## Further information

For further information please see the Parish websites

- St Leonards - <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/6002/>
- Hawridge - <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/5889/>
- Cholesbury - <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/5817/about-us/>
- Hilltop Churches - <https://cholesbury.com/church-services/>
- The Lee - <https://www.thelee.org.uk/st-john-the-baptist-c-of-e/>

## Our communities

### Location

We are two benefices with four churches in six villages (Hawridge, Cholesbury, Buckland Common, St Leonards, The Lee, Lee Common) and several hamlets, all situated in the picturesque Buckinghamshire Chilterns.

The largest of the two benefices is The Lee, situated to the west of the other villages, with a population of 700 and large Victorian church. The benefice covers the settlements of The Lee, Lee Gate and Swan Bottom. It is a prosperous area which has both an indigenous community and a number of people who commute to London and other centres of work.

The benefice of Hawridge and Cholesbury with St Leonards broadly coincides with the civic parish of Cholesbury cum St Leonards, with a population of 952 across approximately 380 households (see <http://www.cholesburyparishcouncil.org.uk/>). The four villages (Hawridge, Cholesbury, Buckland Common, St Leonards) are all along one road, and are commonly known as the Hilltop Villages. It a peaceful, rural area with a strong sense of local identity and community.

Leaving the hills, the benefices have the convenience of several small towns nearby, including Wendover, Tring, Chesham, Amersham, Great Missenden, and Berkhamsted, all of which offer excellent commuting links into London. In addition to the city commuters, many other residents work in local towns, in agriculture, or are self-employed. Superfast broadband also means that many people choose to work from home on a regular basis, all of which combine to create a busy local community who have time during the week and weekend to participate in a range of local groups, societies and events.

The local communities and congregations are diverse in terms of occupation, range of educational levels and ages. There is a large retired community but also a growing young family segment as new people move into the area.

busy local community who have **time during the week and weekend** to participate in a range of local groups, societies and events

## The Lee

The Lee is a pretty village set around a traditional village green. Traditional brick and flint cottages mix with “Arts & Crafts” houses built by the Liberty family who bought the estate in 1900. The family still own many properties in the village, which often features in “Midsomer Murders” and other TV programmes.

There is an annual church fete held on the green in June, a flower show in July, a thriving cricket club, two traditional pubs, a scout hall, community run shop, village hall, allotments, playing field and infants school.

The parish consists of two main villages close to the church in a rural area. – The Lee and Lee Common. Surrounding smaller communities include Swan Bottom (including the Old Swan pub, Potter Row, and along Kings Lane to Kings Ash).

The village community has changed from a largely agricultural one to one of commuters and retired people over the past 100 years. Estate houses are mostly let on a short-term basis as are several properties acquired by HS2 (the HS2 line will pass by to the south of the parish not far from the A413); however, there is a strong community spirit. More information can be found at <https://www.thelee.org.uk/>

### Community clubs

The Lee has a number of vibrant local organisations including a scout hall, community-run shop, village hall, tennis club, allotments and playing field, village infants’ school and an annual church fete held on the green in June.

### Community shop

Based in the heart of the village at the Parish Hall, Shop at The Lee has now been trading successfully for over a decade. The shop goes from strength to strength, serving the community with everything from daily bread and newspaper orders to fine wines, household basics to plants and flowers for home and garden, fresh meat, fruit and vegetables to greetings cards and much more.

<https://www.thelee.org.uk/shop/>



### Lee Cricket club

The first game of cricket was played on The Lee Manor Park Ground in 1875, and only a new pavilion and the maturing of several oak trees dotted around the boundaries have changed the outlook since then.

The club continues to combine Saturday league cricket with traditional friendly games played on Sundays. In 2014 we joined the Marrant Chiltern League and the First XI now play in Division 1 and the Second XI in Division 2.



In addition to senior cricket, the club also runs a hugely successful colts section, with over 120 members attending either Friday night softball training or Saturday morning hardball sessions. This season we have colts teams at Under 9, Under 10, Under 11, Under 12, Under 13 and Under 15 age groups, as well as an Under 18 T20 team. Several of our colts are also representing the county. <https://www.theleec.org.uk/default.aspx>

### **Village Halls**

Local groups meet at the Village Hall which is on the same site as the Scout Hall, <https://www.thelee.org.uk/parish-hall/>.

### **The Hilltop villages**

The Hilltop villages are located on the top of the Chilterns between Wendover, Tring, Berkhamsted and Chesham. They are in a single unified benefice. Most community organisations operate across the four villages. There is no shop but there are two trading pubs, the Full Moon (<https://www.fullmoonpub.info/>) and the Black Horse. A third, the White Lion, now being refurbished.



### **St Leonards (including Buckland Common)**

The village of St. Leonards is at the western end of the Hilltop villages and about 2.5 miles from The Lee. It is a predominantly rural community with well-established detached and semi-detached housing, some council-owned. There is also a Park Home Estate of some 50 homes, known as Coppice Farm Park; the working population commutes to nearby towns and London if not employed in the farming sector or the surviving brick makers.

With the pub in the village undergoing extensive repairs, the social hub has been the Village Hall which hosts the annual fete as well as pub nights, film nights and a number of clubs throughout the year. Ladies' football is played regularly on the Village Hall field, the WI and History Club meet regularly and it is becoming increasingly popular for wedding receptions, often following a wedding service in the church.

### **Cholesbury**



The original parish is one of the smallest in the area and today's population is about 130. Traditionally the village was poor due to the heavy flint and clay soil – the latter enabled a brick-making industry to be established. It is joined by housing to the neighbouring villages of Hawridge and Buckland Common. Cholesbury is in an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and includes a well-preserved Iron Age Fort.



## Hawridge

Hawridge is the eastern most part of the benefice and covers a fairly large area with the parish running for approximately 2.5 miles from the Black Horse down in the Vale to the Full Moon pubs, with most properties along the one road. The parish also includes the hamlet of Heath End and the properties between Heath End and the bulk of the parish. Hawridge has no village centre and dwellings cover a wide area. There are approximately 230 people in the parish.

The rural aspect of the parish is enhanced by the Common, running to the North of the road from the top to Hawridge Hill to the Full Moon (and beyond into Cholesbury).

The majority of properties within the parish are residential, and the housing stock is very mixed ranging from large houses with grounds to small cottages. The community within the parish is similarly mixed in background and occupation. The whole parish is within the Green Belt and much of it within a Conservation Area which restricts the likelihood of much new building.



## Community clubs

### Cholesbury and Hawridge Cricket club

The Cricket club was formed in 1885 and has been playing village cricket in idyllic surroundings on Cholesbury Common ever since. The club has excellent facilities and a pitch which regularly hosts county age-group matches. The clubhouse is the centre of social activities. The Saturday team plays competitive cricket in the Kookaburra Mid Bucks League Division 1 and our Sunday team plays friendly, social matches, usually at home, for all standards of player. The youth wing has age group teams from under 9's upwards.

<https://hawridgecholesbury.play-cricket.com/>



### Horticultural Society

The Society is affiliated to the Royal Horticultural Society and has approximately a hundred members spread through the villages.

The main event of the year is the Annual Show – with classes including flower arranging, vegetables, photography, craft, cookery and wine making plus a whole section for children of varying ages

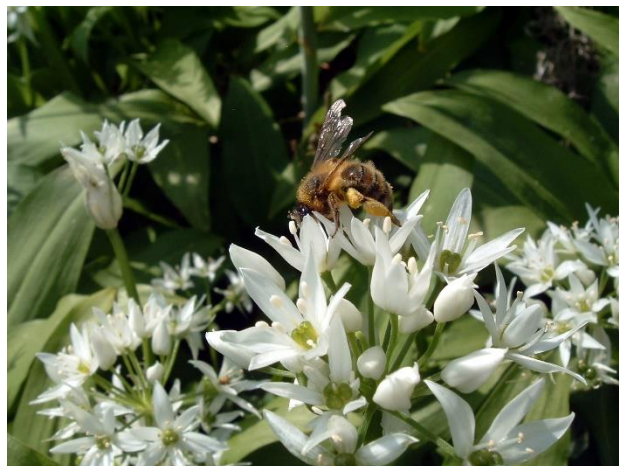
<https://cholesbury.com/hort-soc/>

## Commons Preservation Society

Hawridge and Cholesbury Commons provide 105 acres of woodland and grassland, with sunny rides and open areas full of birds, butterflies and other wildlife. There is open access for walkers and dog walkers, with many attractive footpaths, as well as permissive horse-rides around the perimeter and a further ride, across the Commons, starting near the Full Moon pub.

The Society organises summer and winter events and conservation work on the Commons.

[www.hawridgeandcholesburycommons.org](http://www.hawridgeandcholesburycommons.org)



## Other organisations

Women's Institute (<https://cholesbury.com/womens-institute/>)

History Group (<https://cholesbury.com/local-history-group/programme-of-events/>)

Good Neighbours Group that organises a monthly lunch and promotes social activities from Bucks County Council.

## Village Halls

Many groups meet in either St Leonards or Cholesbury Village Hall which both offer excellent local facilities

St Leonards Village Hall (<https://www.stleonardsparishhall.uk/>)

Cholesbury Village Hall (<http://www.cholesburyvillagehall.uk/>)

## Local Schools

The local schools are of a high standard with all of the schools having Good or Outstanding Ofsted reports.

The Lee Common C of E infants school serves the local villages of The Lee, Lee Common, Ballinger and South Heath, supplemented by some children from nearby Chesham. In the past, the incumbent has chaired the school governors and other members of the church have been members of the school governors; currently there is no church representation on the school governors committee. Engagement between the church and school is limited, partly due to the absence of any Sunday School at the church.

The Hawridge & Cholesbury Church of England Primary School (see <http://www.hawridge-cholesbury.bucks.sch.uk/website>) has approximately 200 pupils, many of whom come in from outside the benefice. The school was rated Good by OFSTED in 2019.

We hope the new minister will take the opportunity to re-establish a close bond between the school, the benefice and its church. The previous incumbent was a School Governor *ex officio* and, in addition to the incumbent, there are four places on the Governing Board for Foundation Governors. As an *ex-officio* Governor of both schools, all the PCCs see it as a key priority that our new incumbent builds up the work with our schools.

School	Distance	Type	Ofsted rating
Lee Common CoE	<1 mile	Primary	2 – Good (Mar '18)
Gateway school	1.7 miles	Primary - Independent	No Ofsted published
Great Missenden CofE Combined School	1.9 miles	Primary	1 – Outstanding (Nov '06)
Hawridge and Cholesbury Church of England School	5 miles	Primary	2 – Good (Apr '19)
Dr Challoner's Grammar School	7 miles	Secondary – selective - boys	1 – Outstanding (Nov 19)
Chesham Grammar	5 miles	Secondary – selective - mixed	1 – Outstanding (Mar 14)
Dr Challoner's High School	7 miles	Secondary – selective - girls	1 . Outstanding (Nov 12)
The Misbourne School	3 miles	Secondary - mixed	2 – Good (May '17)
John Colet School	3 miles	Secondary - mixed	2 – Good (May'16)

Data from .gov.uk – retrieved 14/1/2020 - <https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/?searchtype=search-by-location&keywords=The%20Lee%2C%20Great%20Missenden%2C%20Buckinghamshire&page=1&LocationCoordinates=51.7298%2C-0.6977&radius=10>

## Transport links

The benefices enjoy excellent transport links both by rail and road.

Local station	Distance	Line	Destination
Great Missenden	3 miles / 10 mins	Chiltern	London Marylebone Oxford Birmingham
Amersham	7 miles / 15 mins	Metropolitan – London Underground Chiltern Line	All stations to Aldgate London Marylebone Oxford Birmingham
Tring	7 miles / 20 mins	Southern London North Eastern	Clapham Junction London Euston Birmingham

# Organisation, Finance and Safeguarding

## Parochial Church Councils

While there has been a growing level of collaboration between the Hilltop parishes in recent years, more consolidation in governance between the parishes would be welcome: there are currently four separate PCCs. The parishes are in favour of exploring how we could work together more effectively, and details of how this could work will need to be discussed and agreed. We would like to work with the new incumbent to explore the options for closer relationships between the Hilltop parishes, including:

- a greater coordination of services
- the feasibility of introducing combined oversight for the PCCs
- the feasibility of seeing mission, ministry and service schedules overseen by a joint committee while fabric and finance could remain with PCCs

**St. Leonards** has an active and dynamic PCC of eight people (excluding the vicar) chaired during the vacancy by the Deanery Synod lay chair and member of General Synod, Gavin Oldham. It meets four times a year and is supported by a part-time employee, Jo Evans, as parish administrator. It is in a sound financial position, meets its financial obligations to the diocese and maintains a regular programme of repair to the church fabric.

**Cholesbury** has a dedicated few members of the PCC who undertake all roles. They are positively engaged in the local community. Cholesbury traditionally hold events during the year to raise funds as congregations are too small to meet the Parish Share. Every year we hold a Quiz, Cream Teas and Fete and there is often a fourth event. There is a core of organisers from the congregation but volunteers from the wider community are essential. We believe that arranging these fun events is a form of outreach to our neighbours and we are grateful that the presence of the parish church continues to be valued by many who do not attend our services.

**St Mary's Hawridge** PCC is made up of the Churchwarden, Elizabeth Tomlin, and Tim Watts who acts as Lay Chairman and who is also the Treasurer. Hawridge Church relies on fundraising events to meet its expenses, the principal event being the joint fete with Cholesbury. We also hold a cream tea and have held quizzes and a regular annual concert in the past. As well as the shoeboxes, the charities outside the Parish that receive support include the Hospice of St Francis, Leprosy Mission and the International Children's Fund.

**The Lee's** PCC currently has five members: the two churchwardens, treasurer, vergers and one other member. It meets approximately six times each year to manage the affairs of the church, generally meeting in the church on a Saturday morning (other than the PCC meeting following the APCM which is held after a Sunday service in late April).

Despite the rapidly falling attendance at **The Lee** church, to date the church has broadly met its costs over the past 10-15 years, largely due to the Fete and generous support of the Stewart-Liberty family, other fund-raising activities and financial support from irregular or non-churchgoers. Furthermore, given the relatively good condition of the New Church building, repair costs have not been significant, with recent one-off work (installation of a new boiler, deep clean of the organ and the building of the kitchen) being funded through fund raising campaigns.

## Finance

In normal circumstances, each parish funds its parish share in full.

The combined 2019 parish share for the joint benefice was £61,380, and the share has been paid in full in both 2018 and 2019.

Parish share	2018	% paid	2019	% paid
St Leonards	£18,553	100%	£18,553	100%
Hawridge	£7,126	100%	£7,126	100%
Cholesbury	£6,635	100%	£6,635	100%
The Lee	£28,770	100%	£29,066	100%

Combined 2019 income was £108k compared to £109k expenditure (but see note re. Hawridge exceptional fabric funding in 2019). Major fundraising in the past has included St. Leonards Church Room in 2005. The recent Hawridge quinquennial envisages £45k further expenditure on fabric over the next 5 years.

Parish	Income			Expenditure		
	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
St Leonards	£41,819	£31,689	£37,176	£33,916	£34,396	£34,817
Hawridge	£13,664	£12,303	£19,576*	£13,191	£11,966	£25,068*
Cholesbury	£12,390	£11,920	£10,260	£11,270	£10,240	£9,540
The Lee	£46,044	£43,569	£40,688	£38,366	£43,176	£39,413

\* Hawridge 2019: expenditure includes £14k on fabric funded by £8k from Friends of St. Mary's and £6k from reserves

Combined reserves at year end 2019 were £136,000, plus £67k restricted/trusts.

	Reserves	Restricted reserves	Trusts
St Leonards	£41k	£5k	£36k
Hawridge	£9k	£14k	None
Cholesbury	£19k	£0.6k	None
The Lee	£67k	£11k	None

The joint benefices are financially secure and, with dedication, the funds are available for future growth.

## Safeguarding

Each of the parishes manage safeguarding individually, doing their best to comply with the Diocesan guidance. St. Leonards and Hawridge each have an appointed safeguarding officer and, where possible, full training has been delivered to relevant people.

Parish	Safeguarding Officer	Safeguarding administrator	# of people trained	Safeguarding policy
St Leonards	Joanne Evans	Joanne Evans	7	Standard
Hawridge	Elizabeth Tomlin	Elizabeth Tomlin	2	Standard
Cholesbury	Liz Green	Liz Green	1	Standard
The Lee	Work in Progress	Work in Progress	...	Standard

# The Vicarage

The Vicarage is located in The Lee, a quintessential Chiltern village, at the south of the two benefices within 5 miles and 15 mins of all the churches.

The Lee Vicarage is a four-bedroom semi-detached property close to the church, with a family bathroom, a study, living room, kitchen, utility room and toilet, and a garage. The front door is north facing with a small garden and a shingle driveway, with the main garden to the south.

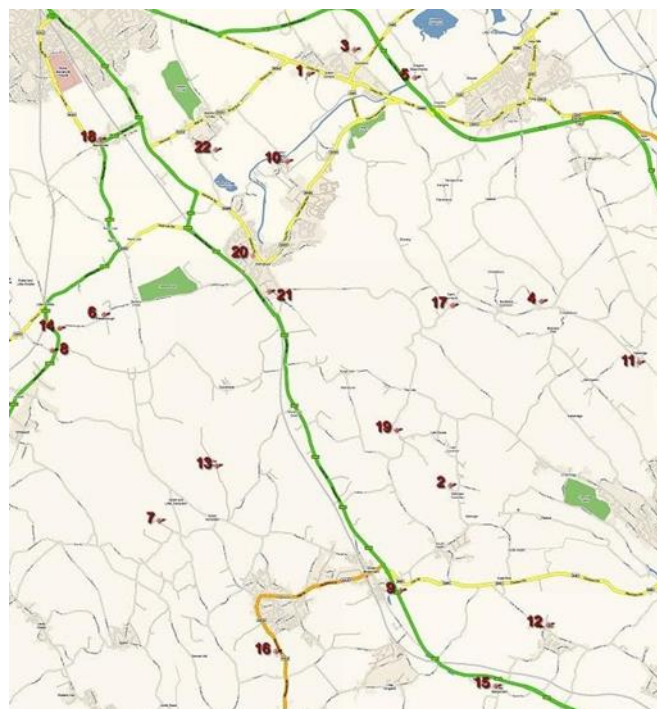


# Wendover Deanery

Wendover Deanery comprises 22 churches to the south-east of Aylesbury, housing a population of c. 36,000 people, the sixth largest out of the eleven deaneries in the Archdeaconry of Buckingham. The Area Dean is Revd. Deiniol Kearley-Heywood, and the Lay Chair is Gavin Oldham OBE. There is an active Deanery Chapter, and the Deanery Synod normally meets four times each year covering a wide range of topical subjects.

The Deanery Treasurer is Paul Moring, and the Deanery Secretary is Gareth Beynon.

Key	Location	Name of Church
1	<u>Aston Clinton</u>	St Michael & All Angels
2	<u>Ballinger</u>	
3	<u>Buckland</u>	All Saints
4	<u>Cholesbury</u>	St Lawrence
5	<u>Drayton Beauchamp</u>	St Mary the Virgin
6	<u>Ellesborough</u>	St Peter & St Paul
7	<u>Great Hampden</u>	St Mary Magdalene
8	<u>Great Kimble</u>	St Nicholas
9	<u>Great Missenden</u>	St Peter & St Paul
10	<u>Halton</u>	St Michael & All Angels
11	<u>Hawridge</u>	St Mary
12	<u>Hyde Heath</u>	St Andrew
13	<u>Little Hampden</u>	
14	<u>Little Kimble</u>	All Saints
15	<u>Little Missenden</u>	St John the Baptist
16	<u>Prestwood</u>	Holy Trinity
17	<u>St. Leonards</u>	St Leonard
18	<u>Stoke Mandeville</u>	St Mary the Virgin
19	<u>The Lee</u>	St John the Baptist
20	<u>Wendover (St Mary)</u>	St Mary
21	<u>Wendover (St Anne)</u>	St Anne
22	<u>Weston Turville</u>	St Mary the Virgin





# Oxford Diocese

The Diocese of Oxford serves the mission of the Church in Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire. The Diocese comprises more than 600 parishes, with over 800 churches, serving a diverse population of well over 2 million people (5% of the English population) 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 post since 2016.

Since the appointment in 2017 of the Rt Revd. Dr Steven Croft as Bishop of Oxford, a new common vision has emerged for the Diocese of Oxford. The vision is based on the qualities described in The Beatitudes and addresses the kind of church we are called to be:

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

Together we have identified five themes for our common life. These are not a description of everything the Church does, but they do represent the areas God is currently calling us to:

- Making a bigger difference in the world
- Catechesis and discipleship
- Growing new congregations
- Serving schools, children and young people
- Celebrate and bless Milton Keynes

These priorities are being supported centrally by resources, training, conferences, workshops, and much more. The diocese is inviting benefices and their priests to share a vision rather than demanding a response. It wants all its clergy to flourish in ministry and to deepen their enjoyment of God.

It is hoped that all clergy appointed into the Archdeaconry of Buckingham will want to commit to the Diocesan vision and to encouraging their benefices to share in becoming a more Christ-like church for the sake of God's world.

# Appendix A: Provisional Role Description

The following provisional role description will apply from the date of licensing. It will be reviewed by the postholder and the Archdeacon of Buckingham approximately six months after the date of licensing. Amendments will be made where necessary, by agreement.

## SECTION ONE: DETAILS OF POST

Role title:	Vicar
Type of Role:	Full time stipendiary
Name of benefices:	The Lee; and Hawridge with Cholesbury & St Leonards
Episcopal area:	Buckingham
Deanery:	Wendover
Archdeaconry:	Buckingham
Conditions: of Service	Please refer to Statements of Particulars document issued in conjunction with this role description
Key contact	Archdeacon of Buckingham This role falls within the Clergy Terms of Service formally known as Service: 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 Churchwardens about any issues exceptional or otherwise that have the potential to affect ongoing delivery of ministry
Additional Responsibility:	None

## SECTION TWO: CONTEXT

### Wider Context

With the appointment of the Bishop of Oxford, the Rt Revd Dr Steven Croft, a new common vision is emerging for the Diocese of Oxford. The vision addresses what kind of church we are called to be – A Christ-like Church for the sake of the world.

What are the marks of a Christ-like Church? To be the Church of the Beatitudes:

- Contemplative
- Compassionate
- Courageous

It also asks what we are therefore called to do together. This is currently a work in progress, but is likely to cover some of the following strategic priorities:

- Make a difference in the world
- Support and grow the local church
- Establish new churches and congregations
- Serve our schools
- Renew discipleship and ministry

These priorities will be supported centrally by resources, training, conferences, workshops, and much more. The diocese is inviting benefices and their priests to share a vision rather than demanding a response. It wants all its priests to flourish in ministry and to deepen their enjoyment of God.

## Local Context

The benefices of The Lee, and of Hawridge with Cholesbury and St Leonards, locally known as the Hilltop parishes are set in the Chiltern hills within the Diocese of Oxford and the Wendover deanery. They comprise three villages and several hamlets which are served by four rural churches.

For more information, see the benefice profile.

## SECTION THREE: ROLE PURPOSE AND KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

### General:

- A. To exercise the cure of souls shared with the bishop in these benefices in collaboration with colleagues, including the praying of the Daily Office, the administration of the sacraments and preaching
- B. 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
  - preparing candidates for baptism and confirmation
  - 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
  - calling your hearers to repentance and declaring in Christ's name the absolution and forgiveness of their sins
  - blessing people in God's name
  - preparing people for their death
  - 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
- C. To share in the wider work of the deanery and diocese as appropriate, for the building up of the whole Body of Christ

### Key responsibilities specific to the local situation

- To rejuvenate the Christian life of the churches by
  - providing a sustained and consistent church service pattern
  - increasing the biblical teaching in the churches and in small groups across the benefices
  - guide the four parishes to effective and efficient forms of governance with the possibility of more joint working
- To provide much needed Pastoral support to the community especially the elderly

To engage with the local community through differing and varied methods focusing on the schools and community groups

### Other responsibilities

- Participate in the Bishop's Ministerial Development Review scheme and engage in Continuing Ministerial Development
- Carry out any other duties and responsibilities as required in line with the benefice needs.
- Take care for their wellbeing including health and safety and building a good repertoire of spiritual and psychological strategies

#### **SECTION FOUR: BENEFICE SUMMARY**

Benefices: The Lee; and Hawridge with Cholesbury & St Leonards

Patron(s): Bishop of Oxford, Trustees of St Leonards Church Trust, Neale's Charity

PCCs: 4

Churchwardens: 6

Ministers: 1

Benefice paid staff: 0

Buildings: 4

Churchyard(s): 4

Church Tradition: Biblically-based modern Anglican

Pastoral Reorganisation proposals: None planned

For more detailed information, please refer to the Benefice Profile.

#### **SECTION FIVE: KEY CONTACTS FOR THE ROLE**

Generic and specific to the role

Groups & committees

- The PCC(s)
- Deanery Chapter
- Deanery Synod
- Deanery Pastoral Committee

In the benefices

- Churchwardens
- Ministerial Colleagues
- Head teacher(s) of local school(s)

Support structures

- Area Dean
- Area Bishop
- Area Archdeacon
- Spiritual director, work consultant, etc
- Staff at The Diocesan Office with key responsibilities for various aspects of supporting

#### **SECTION SIX: OTHER**

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 Licence

Statement of Particulars issued to the office-holder on successful appointment

Diocesan Clergy Handbook

Benefice Profile

Ministry Action Plans (MAPs)

Any objectives discussed and agreed between the post holder and the supervising minister

Role description signed off by: The Venerable Guy Elsmore, Archdeacon of Buckingham

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

To be reviewed next on: \_\_\_\_\_