



St Thomas' & St Wilfrid's Kirkby-in-Ashfield

PARISH PROFILE

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OUR DIOCESE

The Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham incorporates the City of Nottingham, the whole County of Nottinghamshire and five parishes in South Yorkshire. The population is 1.15 million – 51% live in the greater Nottingham conurbation, 31% in ex-mining areas and 18% in rural. There are 305 churches (252 parishes), served by 119 stipendiary clergy and 228 licensed lay ministers.

In 2024 we launched our refreshed vision of Living Hope for the city, towns, villages of Nottinghamshire and beyond. We believe the presence of thriving, growing churches across the diocese is vital for people to discover Living Hope and make the best decision anyone could ever make for their lives – to become a disciple of Jesus Christ. To enable this vision, we are committed to our mission of growing disciples of Christ with compassion, confidence and courage. To support both parishes and the diocese in implementing our mission we have identified 7 areas of focus: inspiring worship, reaching younger, enhancing diversity, growing leaders, enabling commitment, encouraging generosity and nurturing prayer. This vision is set out in more detail on our website.

In November 2024 the diocese received confirmation from the Church of England's Strategic Mission and Ministry Investment Board of extra financial resources from 2025 to 2030. The town of Kirkby has been identified as an area of population with substantial opportunities for numerical and spiritual growth and the creation of new worshipping communities. The next Priest in Charge of St Thomas' & St Wilfrid's Kirkby will be leading the church into a new season: realising the potential of St Thomas' to become a resourcing church that 'grows to give itself away'. To facilitate this new growth the new incumbent will have the opportunity to shape a new team of paid roles alongside the existing volunteer leaders. The diocese has received 'approval in principle' for funding of an Operations Manager, a Contemporary Worship Leader and a Children's and Families' Worker. The new priest will work with the PCC and diocesan personnel to shape the missional design in order to receive full approval and draw down the funds.

As you consider the role of Priest in Charge of St Thomas and St Wilfrid's Kirkby, may I encourage you to take time to look over and reflect on our diocesan vision as part of your discernment as to whether God is calling you to be part of this diocese at this exciting time. I look forward to welcoming the new Priest in Charge to join us on this faith-filled journey.

Rt Revd Paul Williams, Bishop of Southwell & Nottingham



We find ourselves at a crucial moment for the church in relation to a changing culture. The good news of Jesus Christ is as important and life-giving as it has ever been. There are many opportunities to serve the people of Kirkby with the gospel of hope in the power of the Holy Spirit. These parishes have a vision to grow the church younger and to continue to build on its kingdom work for the future.

This is a revitalisation which seeks to create transformation in Kirkby-in-Ashfield and beyond, seeing many people come to know Jesus and grow in their discipleship journey, subsequently impacting their communities.

This post is time limited (initially for 3 years with a 3 year extension) and we trust that the progress of the revitalisation will necessitate it becoming permanent.

Ven Tors Ramsey, Archdeacon of Newark



OUR NEW PRIEST IN CHARGE

We are looking to appoint a new Priest who will lead us in this new and exciting vision to revitalise the church in Kirkby in Ashfield.

The **Primary Task** is:

To grow St Thomas' Kirkby in Ashfield and establish it as a resource church which in turn will resource the town in partnership with St Wilfrid's Kirkby. This revitalisation will be achieved by planting a new congregation with a new vision such that the church will become a centre for children's and youth work and a focus for inspirational worship and prayer.

The **mission priorities** of the new leader are:

- To lead a step-change at St Thomas' in growth in number, in younger age-profile and in revitalised faith and worship through a focus on Glorifying God, Proclaiming the Gospel and Making Disciples.
- To set the vision and growth plan for the revitalisation, accompanied with intentional prayer.
- To work with the PCCs and diocesan personnel to create the missional design and the role descriptions for the extra paid posts funded by national church investment.
- To build collaborative teams including paid staff and unpaid leaders who are confident in God, exercising their gifting and understand their roles.
- To develop a discipling strategy for reaching, involving and retaining children, young people and young families.
- To bring imagination, clarity and purpose to different and complementary worship styles that help people to encounter God.
- To create and implement a financial strategy to reach the benefice's financial responsibilities including 100% payment of parish share.

To this end **we are seeking** a man or woman:

- With a deep love of God and a desire to draw others into relationship with Him.
- Who is confident in leading contemporary worship, prayer and outreach events and is aligned to the diocesan vision and approach.

- Who has the experience of leading a growing church and developing effective, flourishing teams.
- Who has a passion and love for the post-industrial context.
- Who can engage with local schools and has a track record in growing work and ministry amongst children and young families.
- Who is able to teach, envision, inspire and communicate well.
- Who is an able staff team leader, good at supervision and line management.
- Who loves equipping and releasing lay people in ministries and teams.
- Who can appreciate all that is good from the past while creating a confident vision of 'growing to give ourselves away' as a resourcing church for Kirkby and the surrounding area.
- Who will embrace and develop a range of worship styles and traditions.

Initial focus:

- Directed, intentional prayer (prayer walks and gatherings) for breaking new ground.
- To work with the Archdeacons and Programme Management office to shape the 'Approval in Principle' missional design and secure 'Full Approval' funding.
- Assist in the development of role descriptions and recruit key leaders and paid staff roles: Children/families/youth leader, Operations Manager and Worship Leader.
- Launch a new Contemporary Sunday service at St Thomas', with launch of new children and young people's discipleship.
- Establish monthly worship and wait (worship and prayer evening).
- Develop discipleship pathways: eg evangelism, alpha, small groups, young adults.
- Recruit volunteers into leadership roles, and identify those ready for a fuller leadership pathway.
- Enhance giving and improve financial sustainability of church.
- Work with PCC/Diocese for the modernisation of the St Thomas' church interior, the upgrading of the hall – drawing down the SMMIB funds as needed.

The two churches (St Thomas and St Wilfrid) will continue to work together as a benefice and the leader of the new project will have priestly oversight of both. We will appoint a team with the new leader, as learning to date shows the importance of this to bring about rapid growth in the initial stages of revitalisation whilst also ensuring the new leader does not become isolated. The new leader will help support ministry across the two sites, while the focus for the lead minister will be to grow the new congregation at St. Thomas. The blend of two churches with two spiritualities will provide a good training opportunity to future curates, who benefit from a range of styles and churchmanship within which to train. As St Thomas' grows, a NWC will be established at St Wilfrid's to reach families and children who live in that area of the town.

ST THOMAS KIRKBY IN ASHFIELD



St Thomas is a church set in the centre of Kirkby in Ashfield, A post-industrial town in Nottinghamshire. Its industries of coal mining, textiles and significant railways have declined but there has been a growth of new industries on industrial estates. Re-generation has been a priority and this has seen many new initiatives especially around well-being. And considerable housing developments.

There are two Anglican churches in the benefice and also Baptist, Catholic, Free Church and Methodist churches.

There are 4 free churches one, Ashwood, with a sizeable congregation. In addition, there are a number of non conformist churches.

Within St Thomas' parish there are three primary schools, one secondary and one community special school and in St Wilfrid's three primaries and one secondary school with a vocational and sixth form college.

Recent improvements have seen the building of a new leisure centre with all modern facilities including a swimming pool. There are two large well-known supermarkets, small shops and there is a small precinct. We also have a well-used public library.

There is also the the headquarters of Ashfield District Council, NHS Health and Well-being Centre, a purpose built community centre (Summit Centre). Larwood Park which accommodates Ashfield Rugby Club a spacious club house, bar, restaurant and function facilities. Kirkby Heritage Centre, with internationally famous cricket statues.

The church at St Thomas has a newly installed wi-fi facility, which extends to the hall, loop system, disabled access and a recently installed small coffee bar. The church hall also has disabled access and toilets, a well fitted kitchen and a large area for events. The parish office is situated off the main hall. The hall also incorporates Men in Sheds. We are currently developing a Green Space with local community groups, within our church grounds. Over the past few years, we have held successful community events including a garden Party for the late Queen's diamond jubilee and a pop-up Christmas Market.

The people of Kirkby are, on the whole, warm and friendly and welcoming and there is a real sense of community within the town. Some comments: *'people have made us so welcome'* and *'since we moved up here the people have been so friendly'*. The historical demographic is changing with a large influx of mixed ethnicities.



**Men in Sheds,
Kirkby in Ashfield**

We have parks in our town including Kingsway, Morven and Titchfield and also the beautiful Portland Park, an SSSI, which is a short walk from town. Along with the Cowpastures in St Wilfrid's Parish offering extensive views over the Erewash Valley and Derbyshire. Sherwood Forest and the Peak District are within easy reach.

We are 12 miles from Nottingham City Centre and all a multicultural city has to offer. There is an openair plaza in the town centre used for community events which sadly is under used. We have numerous clubs including U3A, cricket, football, hockey, choirs, Rotary Club, Craft Groups and many others. In addition, we have a thriving charity sector infrastructure, including Ashfield Voluntary Action (community voluntary service), Ashfield Evergreen and Our Centre, Men in Sheds, Enlighten the Shadows (men's mental health), Military community Veterans allotments, RBL and Ashfield Spartans Boxing Club. This club is now nationally recognised following the co-founder, Stewart Nublely winning the East Midlands Unsung Sporting Hero 2024 and appearing on BBC Sports Personality of the year.

A recent addition is Coxmoor Residents Action Group (CRAG), whose founder now attends St Thomas'.

We have excellent transport links close to the M1. A railway station and frequent bus services. Primary schools close to the vicarage have good OFSTED reports.

During the vacancy we at St Thomas have pulled together with a common purpose in serving God and each other, in spite of differences and challenging situations. We have been able to do this through a core of mature committed disciples. We use an emergency prayer chain as needed. We hold GLU (God Loves Us) for young people during and within Sunday worship. Men's Breakfast takes place once a month and we have links with our local Scout Group.

Worship has been varied and as such helped us to extend our mission, which in turn has encouraged ethnic minorities and foreign nationals to seek God in this sacred space. The town's annual Remembrance Service takes place in St Thomas. We have joint services with St Wilfrid's on 5th Sundays, Easter and Christmas, also occasional offices during Holy Week. In recent times the wardens co-operate with service rotas. We have also joined with inclusive services at both churches. We share the Parish Office and equipment. We've had a number of successful joint lunches in the church hall with St Wilfrid's following services at St Thomas'. There is also a care home adjacent to the church and some of their residents regularly attend.

At St Thomas we have recently welcomed a number of new people; up to a third of the congregation. This includes both adults and children seeking to be baptised. We have seen significant answers to prayer for healing.

St Thomas Church has ownership of two semidetached houses No's 28 and 30 Crocus St and the rental income from these contributes substantially to our overall income. As well our church hall generates income from regular and occasional bookings, we have substantial spare capacity for additional bookings.

We are a small congregation in a deprived area, but we were fourth in the Deanery for giving per member (an average of £800 per person). This figure, from the Diocesan Treasurer, reflects the level of people's commitment that we have rather than their wealth.

ST WILFRID'S KIRKBY IN ASHFIELD

Kirkby in Ashfield is a market town located on the border with Derbyshire, approximately 4 miles west of Mansfield and 16 miles north of Nottingham. St Wilfrid's Church is located on the western outskirts of the town, in the oldest part of the town and is approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from town centre.

There are 3 primary schools and one very large secondary school in the benefice. We have strong relationships with 2 of the primary schools who come to St Wilfrid's to learn about the church and have performances in church at Christmas. There is also a Christian Montessori home education group who conduct their sessions in our parish hall.



There is a new leisure centre in Kirkby in Ashfield and a number of new-build housing projects currently underway. Ashfield District Council has received funding of £62.6m from the governments Town Deal which is being invested in improving town centres and attracting new businesses to the area.

St Wilfrid's church is listed in the Domesday Book and is locally renowned for its sandstone construction. We have recently invested in the installation of audio visual equipment which enables us to improve the delivery of services and we have the facility to live-stream services for funerals, weddings, etc. The church has its own car park. Another essential asset is that we have a toilet in the church.

We have a thriving parish hall which is used by a number of local community groups and is available for private hire for business and social events and achieves an annual turnover of £18,000. It is also equipped with a Community Defibrillator. St Wilfrid's also has a Charity Shop in the town centre which is run by volunteers who provide much needed support to the local community and achieve a turnover of £19,000.

We have a small lottery specifically for raising funds for office equipment and laptops, etc.

The town has good transport links. There is a railway station linking it to Nottingham and Worksop. The A38 runs by the town and the M1 Junction 28 is 5 minutes away. The town has 2 good supermarkets and a new leisure centre. It has a piazza where community events are held.



PEOPLE

We are a loving and welcoming church and take pride in endeavouring to make sure that when people enter our door they are welcomed with a warm smile and words of encouragement.

The Church Wardens from both churches meet regularly to discuss all manner of things and we have joint services if there is a 5th Sunday in the month. Having no clergy we have arranged services for all Sundays and any special services such as services throughout Easter, All Souls, Carols By Candlelight, Christingle etc. We held courses throughout Lent with approximately 12 attending each week. We are supportive of each other and have a good working relationship.

We have a talented PCC who work collaboratively to ensure that all statutory requirements are fulfilled and that major projects are given serious scrutiny and that funding sources are available.

During our recent Quinquennial Survey the architect congratulated us on the fact that we undertake continuous maintenance of the fabric which results in having no major issues.

We have welcomed new people into church. We have people from Nigeria, Russia, Malaysia and Romania. There have been a number of baptisms, one of whom is seeking confirmation. We have children attending regularly at our church.

We have strong relationships with Ashfield District Council who have been generous in supporting us with various grants and we are honoured that they choose to hold Civic Services at St Wilfrid's.

We have two churchyards which require continuing maintenance and we have recently engaged with the Community Payback Scheme who regularly come to maintain the grounds. The improvements achieved have been wonderful and members of the public give us positive feedback on this initiative. The church has eight bells and we are fortunate to have a number of proficient volunteer bell-ringers who are always requested at weddings.

Our church is also used for various concerts which are very popular with the church being full and provides a significant contribution to our fundraising activities.

Kirkby in Ashfield is recognised as an area of deprivation whose economic history was significantly based on coal mining and hosiery factories. The decimation of the coal industry and the decline of other businesses had a severe impact on its economy and workforce. As shown above, the local authority is very proactive in improving the local economy.

THE VICARAGE

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The vicarage is a modern purpose-built, detached residence and is located a quarter of a mile from the church. It has a fitted kitchen, utility room, dining room, lounge, study, downstairs toilet and south facing solar roof panels.

Upstairs there are four large bedrooms and a bathroom with additional separate toilet. There is a large drive / parking area with parking for several vehicles and an integral garage. The garden to the rear is large and mostly lawn.

