



# *Benson & Ewelme Churches*



House for Duty Associate Priest  
Benefice Profile

# Welcome



Thank you for considering applying to become the next House for Duty Associate Priest in Benson with Ewelme.

This is a beautiful place to serve our Lord, a benefice that was freshly formed in 2017 from one large and four smaller villages. In the years since then I have grown to deeply love the people and places of these villages, and to recognize the gentle, steady, and tender signs of God's work in people's lives here.

There is much work to be done, though, and I would be delighted to welcome a prayerful, committed, and joyful colleague to the ministry here. The principal work for the next House for Duty Associate Priest will be to help lead the revitalization of Christian ministry in Ewelme: perhaps the foundation of a new afternoon family service, and the restoration of sung Evensong. This will be a 'team project', but one the next Associate Priest will be decisive in shaping and leading.

The 'style' of worship here matches the 'style' of the parishes: gently traditional, moderately central-to-catholic in flavour, formal but relaxed, drawing on the riches of our spiritual inheritance but entrepreneurial, and always deeply interwoven with the rural character of the villages. For someone who rejoices in the witness to God's care that a slow pace of life offers, whilst also knowing how to leap on any and every opportunity given by God's Spirit, this could prove the perfect post. Do come and join us!

The Revd Dr Patrick Gilday, Rector



I am delighted that you are reading this profile and encourage you to pray about whether this position might be the role to which God is now calling you.

The churches of the Benson with Ewelme Benefice are praying for a warm, engaging, joyful and spiritually mature priest to join them in witnessing to God's care in these rural villages. This role will suit someone with a quiet confidence, someone who can inspire confidence in others and whose ministry has a firm grounding in prayer.

They have much to offer. There is a strong team of colleagues with whom to work and a beautiful rural setting that also benefits from excellent access to urban centres by road and rail. The parsonage is a purpose-built and welcoming property with work space separated from the living space.

You will find a friendly deanery with supportive colleagues. Our episcopal area and diocese are in good heart, expectant for all that God will do and thankful for all that God is doing.

Please pray about whether you might be the right minister to join us. If you decide to apply, I would be delighted to receive your application for this key position and look forward to the possibility of welcoming you as a potential colleague and partner in the Gospel.

With every blessing

*+ Gavin Dorchester*

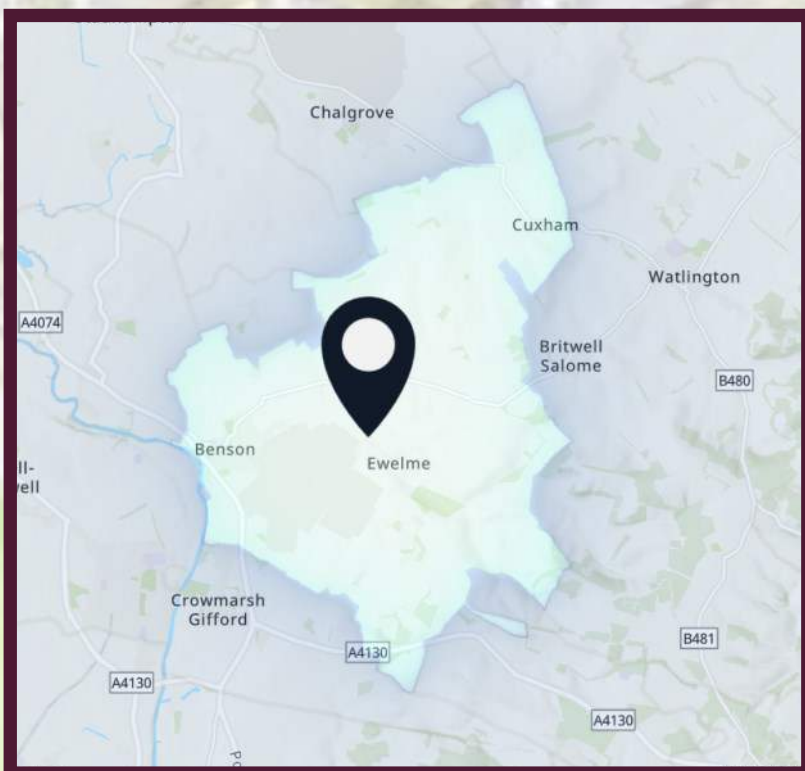
The Rt Revd Gavin Collins, Bishop of Dorchester

# The setting

Bounded by the River Thames on one side and the Chiltern Hills on the other, the Benefice of Benson with Ewelme is made up of four parishes in South Oxfordshire: Benson, Ewelme, Brightwell Baldwin, and Cuxham with Easington. Roughly mid-way between Henley and Oxford, the Benefice straddles the most rural and sparsely-populated of farmland at one end and a large village undergoing significant development and growth at the other. Excluding RAF Benson—which has its own spiritual oversight—the total population is about 6,000.

With excellent access to Oxford, Henley, and Reading, as well as straightforward commuter access to London via Cholsey station or Lewknor Turn bus stop, the Benefice does not feel at all disconnected from metropolitan life. There are two CofE primary schools within the Benefice (in Benson and Ewelme; both rated Good by OFSTED), and secondary school pupils travel outside the Benefice to the neighbouring towns of Wallingford and Watlington, as well as to Henley, Abingdon, Didcot, and Oxford.

*Source: Church of England Research & Statistics Unit*



# Ewelme



Fellowship after a recent Rose Festival service



Newly-confirmed parishioners gather in front of the bell-tower with the Bishop

The church of St Mary the Virgin was rebuilt in 1430-50 by William and Alice de la Pole, Duke and Duchess of Suffolk, who as part of their devotion to Christ also founded the adjacent almshouses and school. Their practical devotion to Jesus continues to inspire the present-day congregation, whilst the history of Ewelme's buildings and their stories attract visitors from far and wide.



Ewelme School Christingle in St Mary's Church

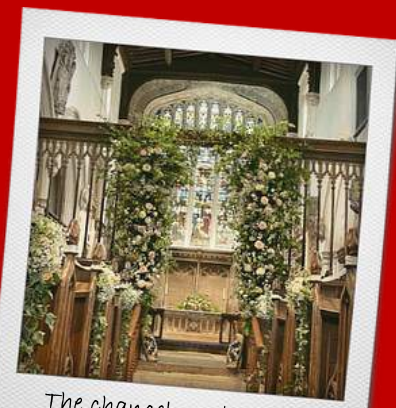
Ewelme is a relatively small village (population ca. 600) with great community spirit. In addition to the primary school and pre-school, it has a village hall, a cricket team (jointly with Benson), a pub, and a range of volunteer-run associations, including a community shop. Volunteers are not, however, as readily available as they used to be, and certain groups have struggled to keep going.

Sunday services are currently held weekly at 11 o'clock, and draw a loyal congregation of about 15. Worship is traditional, and eucharistic vestments are worn. The entire school comes to church once a week on Tuesday mornings. On special occasions—such as the Ewelme *Messiah*, Remembrance Sunday, Christmas and Easter—the church is full.

A major part of the next Associate Priest's role will be to lead us in growing fresh service patterns, with the aim of developing new congregations. The PCC is looking at introducing two different monthly services—an evensong and an afternoon children's service—and has set aside substantial funds for such work.



Eleanor Fortescue-Brickdale's painting of Alice's tomb



The chancel ready for a summer wedding

# Cuxham & Easington



Cuxham church readies for Harvest Festival with gifts from the farm

Cuxham is a rural farming village, with a population of about 140. The Church of the Holy Rood stands by Manor Farm, and the monthly congregation for the Family Communion service averages about 15-20, including a few children who help to lead. The village is deeply connected to the church, with special services for Harvest, Remembrance Sunday, and Christmas sometimes exceeding the church's capacity. The community in Cuxham is exceptional—there is a deliberate network of care and friendship that is cultivated by villagers of all ages, and which serves as a pastoral care 'net'.



St Peter's, Easington



Easington Live Nativity on the farm



A camel

Easington is a single farm, approached by a single track road. Surrounded by the four houses on the farm, St Peter's Church is a fourteenth-century building with no electricity or water supply—but it is heated and warm! The

congregation at the monthly BCP Communion service numbers 10-15, but special services can attract congregations of up to 40, thanks to the commitment of the farm family, who look after and vigorously promote the church's activities.



Cuxham Church full for Christmas Carols



Sunset over Cuxham churchyard



Follow the star!

# Brightwell Baldwin

Serving a population of 205 across the two hamlets of Brightwell Baldwin and Brightwell Upperton, St Bartholomew's Church is in good physical and spiritual health. There are three services in each month, each attended by an average of 12-15 people. Most attendees are elderly.

Brightwell Baldwin is a Prayer Book parish, and services are drawn from the Book of Common Prayer exclusively. Though a variety of other types of service have been experimented with over a number of years, Prayer Book worship seems to work quite comfortably at St Bartholomew's and the parish has always returned to it. One question for the future is how to bring alive BCP worship in each successive generation (especially with children); another is how to celebrate this unique charism of St Bartholomew's to maintain historic forms of worship within the broader Benefice.

The village itself is equipped with an excellent pub, the Lord Nelson, which also serves as a produce shop for locals. With such a small community, the life of the church is well embedded within that of the village, and there is significant goodwill towards the church among residents which shows itself each year at the annual Lent Lunch, Remembrance Sunday, and Advent and Christmas carol services.



*The chancel set for a flower festival*



*A happy wedding*



*Signing the register in the  
Lowndes-Stone Chapel  
@indiahicksstyle*



*Some congregation members  
visit Christ Church Cathedral*

# Benson



The Palm Sunday procession gets underway

St Helen's Church serves a population of around 4,600. Congregation numbers (roughly 50 adults and children on a Sunday morning) and income are stable, thanks to recent mission work. Growth has occurred through 4 O'Clock Church, a family service held monthly at 4pm; as well as the weekly service in the new nursing home; and recruitment to the parish choir, which sings an anthem every Sunday and helps lead the congregational mass setting. Worship is loosely modern Catholic in style: vestments are worn and the sacrament is reserved, but the atmosphere remains relaxed.

The biggest community in the Benefice, Benson hosts the local doctors' and dental surgeries, a pharmacy, small supermarket, café, a library, and a 45-entry church primary school, as well as several other shops and amenities. RAF Benson is nearby and, although it has its own chaplains, joins the parish for Remembrance Sunday.

The congregation in Benson is in good health, devoted to Christ and growing in his love. The past two years have seen the adoption of a new plan for congregational development, as well as the award of an EcoChurch Bronze award, the full establishment of a small pastoral care team, two Alpha Courses run ecumenically, and several Christian education courses. There is an online Contemplative Prayer Group that meets fortnightly, and congregation members staff the local Helpline, the Patients Panel, run a local community garden, and serve as Street Pastors in nearby Wallingford.



St Helen's Church ready for a carol service



Remembrance Sunday flypast at the War Memorial



St Helen's EcoChurch Group at a local Big Green event



Prayer corner at Benson CofE Primary School



Christmas tree festival



# The Parsonage

The Parsonage in Ewelme was built to Green Guide standards in 2020. It is a beautiful four-bedroom home situated opposite the church at the end of Ewelme village. Downstairs, the public area of the house includes a lobby, a disabled loo, and a large study. The remainder of the house is separated by a secure door, and includes an airy, modern kitchen and utility room, a dining room, and large living room with log-burner—with patio doors to each room. Upstairs there are four double bedrooms with built in wardrobes, one en-suite and one family bathroom, as well as a spacious landing. The whole house is heated by electric under-floor heating. There is a detached double garage as well as parking for three cars on the gravel drive, as well as a bin store. A small front and back garden makes this a welcoming family home that is easily maintained.







Remembrance Sunday in Benson  
Image by Rachel Malthouse

# Worship in the Benefice

	08.15	09.30	09.30	11.00	PM
1st Sunday		BRIGHTWELL BALDWIN: Said Holy Communion (BCP)	BENSON: Sung Eucharist (CW)	EWELME: Eucharist with hymns (CW)	4.00pm BENSON: 4 O'Clock Church
2nd Sunday		CUXHAM: Family Communion (CW)	BENSON: Sung Eucharist (CW)	EWELME: Eucharist with hymns (CW)	BRIGHTWELL BALDWIN: Sung Evensong (BCP)
3rd Sunday	BENSON: Said Holy Communion (BCP)	BRIGHTWELL BALDWIN: Family Service	BENSON: All-age Mass	EWELME: All-age Eucharist	
4th Sunday		EASINGTON: Said Holy Communion (BCP)	BENSON: Sung Eucharist with baptisms (CW)	EWELME: Eucharist with hymns (CW)	
5th Sunday	BENEFICE EUCHARIST held in one of the churches				

Baptisms are accommodated within ordinary Sunday services.

There are an average 16-20 funerals or memorial services, and 8-10 interments of ashes, across the Benefice in any given year.

The number of weddings each year varies widely—from as low as 4-5 to as high as 14.

Prayers of Love & Faith are not offered, though other local churches have opted to offer them.

A weekday eucharist is said in Ewelme on Tuesday mornings, and in Benson on Thursday mornings. In addition, there is a said communion service in Benson House Care Home each Wednesday morning.

# Appendix 1—About the role

We are seeking a House for Duty Associate Priest, to serve on Sundays and two days a week (or the equivalent thereof), who:

## ***Spirituality***

- Evidences an orthodox but generous faith, rooted in regular personal prayer which shapes public worship and lifestyle
- Feels comfortable ministering to God in rural villages where congregation members enjoy diverse churchmanship, and liturgy “done well” matters
- Can maintain balance in his/her personal life between work, recreation, family, and friends

## ***Worship & Preaching***

- Is at home leading worship from the Book of Common Prayer, Common Worship, and in informal contexts
- Enjoys preaching the fullness of the good news of Christ, both in sermons and in other media, and is unafraid to offer the gracious challenge of Jesus to the world
- Is confident to propose, develop, and deliver new forms of service alongside teams of lay people

## ***Team working***

- Collaborates joyfully with the Rector and with churchwardens in developing the growth of congregations
- Is a good communicator, eager to minister to the needs of the people of the villages

## ***Pastoral care***

- Is an approachable, active listener with strong interpersonal skills; exercising pastoral care not just amongst the congregations but across the wider parishes
- Is competent and confident in officiating at weddings, funerals, and baptisms

## **Key Responsibilities**

- To pray for the people and parishes of the Benefice, and to make the presence of God known and felt in daily life in Ewelme
- To help lead in the development of, and the delivery of, new forms of service in the parish of Ewelme to reach young families
- To preside at two or three services on a Sunday (generally including one at Ewelme), and to preach on two or three Sundays a month
- To serve as foundation governor at Ewelme Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School
- To offer weekly acts of collective worship for Ewelme Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School
- To lead pastoral care in the parish of Ewelme
- To officiate at a share of the occasional offices across the Benefice
- To participate in the governance of the parishes as suits the appointed candidate’s gifts

# Appendix 2— Person Specification

## Qualifications/Training:

### **Essential**

- Ordained priest within the Church of England, or a Church in communion with it, or a Church whose orders it recognizes
- Have satisfactorily completed Initial Ministerial Education

## Experience

### **Essential**

- Engagement with and pastoral support for people of all ages
- Priestly ministry demonstrating wisdom and gentleness, as well as clarity and vision

### **Desirable**

- Multi-parish ministry, especially in a rural context
- Development of new liturgies and forms of service for children and young families
- Active engagement with local schools
- Oversight of pastoral visiting teams
- Historic buildings management, and use of them for evangelism and outreach
- Ministry to tourists and visitors

## Knowledge/Skills

### **Essential**

- Ability to preach well in a variety of styles and formats, to include a broad range of listeners with varying backgrounds, ages, and levels of understanding
- Ability to preside and officiate at divine service in ways that honour Christ and build people up in faith
- Ability to identify and respond to opportunities for evangelism and outreach
- Ability to motivate and inspire volunteers
- Ability to work within a broader team of churches with multiple competing concerns
- Ability to organize one's own diary

## General attributes

### **Essential**

- Able to work independently within the liturgical traditions of the Benefice
- Evidence of a deep personal prayer life, centred around the Eucharist
- Eagerness to develop new forms of service and worship in order to lead many to Christ, whilst maintaining traditional theology
- Ability to travel to minister across a range of rural parishes

## Other

### **Essential**

- Ability to work within, and to develop, Safeguarding policies.

St Mary's, Ewelme—overlooking the Cloister at God's House  
in Ewelme, and Ewelme School—on a January morning



***Benson & Ewelme Churches***