



# Sevenside Parishes Profile

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Cover Photos:

St Mary's All Age Worship Congregation, February 2024.

New housing – Severnside Parishes, March 2024.

View to Malvern Hills from churchyard, March 2024.

# Introduction

Sevenside Parishes is a vibrant and varied benefice comprising three parishes approximately three miles south of the City of Worcester.

The parishes have three active churches plus a church under the care of the Churches Conservation Trust on the Croome National Trust Estate. A varied group of people, we have a common aim in seeking to be an authentic community who love God, encourage one another in our faith and who share the gospel of Jesus with those around us, both inside and outside our churches.

We aim to reflect the love of Jesus, showing hospitality, actively engaging with our communities, and witnessing to the love of God.

In all that we do we want to ensure that our churches are places which are our spiritual homes; places of belonging, which are open and welcoming to all, where we can come as we are and where we can flourish together as God's people.

We are conscious that we have good news to share and that our community is growing, rapidly. We seek to look beyond our church buildings, to find new and creative ways to engage with the people around us and to carry the love of God into the lives of those we live and work alongside.



# Our vision and values

Our current mission statement is to see God transforming lives as we follow Jesus, build community and make disciples.

## Following Jesus

We want to grow in our relationship with God together, showing love and concern for His world. We want prayer and scripture to be central as we seek His will and strengthen our discipleship. As we discern what God wants, we pray that each person will be encouraged and equipped to live out their life following Jesus, as part of belonging to our churches.

## Making Disciples

Whilst each of our churches reflects a broad range of traditions, it is important to all of us that everyone can flourish in their faith. Our previous incumbent has helped us to widen our view of what ‘church’ is and can be, and so our services, whether liturgical or more contemporary in style, seek to fuel faith in Jesus, which is deep, real and honest. We have welcomed the development of a new creative worshipping community and some small groups, which have added a richness to our church life together. We would love to see God prompting curious hearts and minds among us, and fuelling a hunger to know more of who God is in Jesus. We recognise too that our worship of God is not just about our services on a Sunday but about the whole of our lives; learning how we can worship and thrive in our faith in the everyday is important to us too.

We desire to grow both ‘younger’ and ‘deeper’ and to encourage every member of our church family to get involved so that our ministry is shared, and everyone is able to play their part.

## Building community

In each of our churches, we have strong connections with our communities and are committed to serving them well. We have begun our journey of becoming an intergenerational church which shares friendship and faith with those around us, through our active involvement with a cross-section of local people – young and old alike, and yet we long for more - and are always thinking of new ways in which to engage and connect with those around us. Looking outwards, beyond the safety and comfort of our church family, and thinking missionally is important to us, especially as the population of our parishes grows rapidly.



Stepping Stones Norton

# Our challenges and opportunities

## Housing Development and Schools

The most obvious opportunity for Severnside Parishes is to engage with new people among our rapidly increasing population. Kempsey has already grown 40% in the past five years and further development is well underway with more awaiting permission. These sites are mainly north of Kempsey village and west of Norton but within the parishes. In total another 2,500 homes (estimated additional population 6,000) are planned across the parishes and these developments should be occupied by 2030. This represents an 80% increase in the number of households in the parishes in six years. This large-scale development could be regarded as an expansion of Worcester, however it is south of Worcester city southern link road and west of the M5 motorway so residents may look to Norton and Kempsey for community rather than to the city.

A new primary school is proposed, presenting further opportunity for mission as we build our relationships with Kempsey and Norton primary schools.

Looking further ahead, plans are in progress to build a new town near the neighbouring Worcestershire Parkway Railway Station with links to London, Birmingham, Bristol and Oxford, although when this might take place is uncertain. This will obviously have a vast impact on the local population. The station itself lies within the parish boundaries, although much of the development may come in neighbouring parishes.

<https://www.swdevelopmentplan.org/>

[http://www.kempseyhub.co.uk/HOME\\_33085.aspx](http://www.kempseyhub.co.uk/HOME_33085.aspx)

## Parish Challenges

The villages to the south of Worcester have experienced flooding issues for many years. Kempsey now has effective flood defences, but the water then travels south to Severn Stoke, regularly affecting the church.

Fundraising for flood defences in Severn Stoke is in progress. This is important not only for the church's maintenance, but following the recent demolition of the Village Hall, there is an opportunity for St Denys' to become a welcoming community space for the village and to support the isolated in the community, especially through cooperation with the Rose and Crown next door.

## Re-organisation of St Mary's Kempsey

St Mary's Church is an unusually large village church and the largest indoor community space within the village. We see the potential for a significant re-ordering of the building by replacing the pews with comfortable, flexible seating, creating smaller meeting rooms, office space, a better kitchen, more toilets, more storage and better disabled access and facilities. We have taken first steps by gauging community opinion and having plans drawn up to hone our ideas. Ultimately our vision is to enable the church to thrive, grow in size and quality of worship, and to serve our community ever more effectively.

## Croome D'Abitot

The Croome National Trust estate provides a magnet for some 250,000 visitors per year. The church of St Mary Magdalene sits in a prominent position on the estate and offers huge potential.

## Buildings

Managing the upkeep of old buildings is no small task. Our churches are exquisite, historical masterpieces, but also require careful management and can be costly to maintain. We seek to spend our money wisely to enable our buildings to be useful practical spaces while retaining their character, history and elegance.

## People

We have growing needs for administration, buildings management and technical support. We are looking for creative ways to meet these needs to free up time for mission whilst also being mindful of managing within our financial resources.

## Mission Accompanier

Since 2022 Severnside Parishes have worked with Alan Cutting, a Mission Accompanier. This is how Alan describes his work: *“My time (about one day per month) is usually split between Zoom conversations with the Missions Team and leadership, and also in prayer and a little research towards all things pertaining to the 'Health and Sustainability' of the Severnside Parishes. Although I live on the other side of the country, I also aim to visit in person about three times per year.*

*Believing that God's heart is always reaching out to a broken world, this role seeks to bring focus, direction and encouragement to ensure the church keeps looking upwards, outwards and onwards, seeking to equip church members to commit to intelligent and compassionate ways of engaging with their neighbourhood with the love of Jesus. I'm there to coach - to disciple, to mentor - but, in practice, I do a lot of listening and very lightly steer an already moving object!”*

## Resourcing Church Partnership

All Saints Worcester have provided resources to support initiatives and specific services in recent years. Although the formal partnership has come to an end, the relationship with All Saints is strong. Occasional support is being provided during the vacancy and there is potential to explore new opportunities and develop the relationship further.

# What we are looking for

We are looking for the right person for our churches and parishes. We appreciate nobody will have all the skills and attributes, but four key areas are reflected in the headings below. We are keen to find somebody who can help us discern God's vision for our future. They will be someone who:

## Has a mature faith

- Has a mature, sincere, spirit-filled faith rooted in the Bible, a love for Jesus and an ability to share this with others.
- Is prayerful and has a heart for worship.
- Acts with Godly wisdom, humility and kindness and can share their vulnerabilities when appropriate.
- Has theological depth and understanding and can support and deepen the faith of others – both those who are relatively new and those who have been Christians for many years.

## Is a people person

- Has a pastoral heart, loves people and can build community.
- Has the ability to draw the best out of others and enable them to flourish and develop a deeper relationship with God.
- Is a capable leader who is confident leading a team of staff and volunteers and can also be an effective team player.
- Is comfortable working with people of every age, from children through to the more elderly.
- Is confident and capable in overseeing ministry across multiple locations.
- Is a skilled communicator able to engage people from all generations and lead all age gatherings.
- Seeks to collaborate with other churches to enable growth in faith across Worcestershire and further afield.

## Is a sensitive innovator

- Is open to new ideas, dynamic and forward thinking.
- Recognises the importance of traditional worship styles.
- Is comfortable with informal and contemporary styles of worship.
- Can bring together the traditional and contemporary aspects of our church community.
- Is able to modernise and innovate sensitively.
- Can develop and implement a forward-looking strategy for our worship, our church life and our buildings.

## Is a community pioneer

- Has a heart to welcome those moving into our parishes and share the good news with them.
- Is excited to pioneer mission and ministry in our new housing.
- Understands the importance of community to our villages and recognises the role that the church can play.
- Can develop warm and effective school relationships.
- Embraces opportunities to bring the community into our churches.
- Is creative in finding ways to demonstrate the love of God to our community and can inspire people to explore and develop faith.
- Understands the range of issues presented by a rural / semi-rural / suburban group of parishes.

## Rectory

The Parsonages Board is seeking a new property to serve as the rectory for this post. We are actively looking for a four-bed detached property with a ground floor study and manageable garden, and one that helps us towards our commitment to reaching net carbon zero. The Archdeacon will be able to update potential candidates on progress with this search.

We recognise how important your home will be for you and will be supporting the process in any way we can to ensure the most suitable property is provided.

## How we will support you

We know there's a lot involved in being the Priest-in Charge of Severnside Parishes and we don't expect anyone to be able to do it all, so we're keen to support you as best we can. Here's how....

### **A good team spirit and some willing volunteers**

We have worked to establish an effective and supportive team ethos through meeting regularly as a core team to pray and plan. The invitation to join us is extended once a month to some retired priests who help us out from time to time, and our church wardens. This has proved fruitful, empowering and energising, and has ensured that we are both working and growing together spiritually, as well as ensuring we are communicating with each other well and effectively. We currently have three PCCs, with members of varying ages who are supportive of the work of their individual church, but who also meet as a joint PCC approximately twice a year to consider and engage collaboratively in benefice-wide mission and ministry. Each PCC is keen that their working relationship with our new vicar will be supportive.

### **Personal, Ministerial and Spiritual Development**

We will encourage our new incumbent to take time out for retreats, clergy conferences and ministerial development, and we have a training budget which can be drawn on for these purposes.

### **Work Life Balance**

We fully appreciate the need for a sustainable work life balance, with time for family, friends and personal refreshment, so as to avoid the risks of stress and burn-out. We will encourage our Vicar to protect their day off and to take other time off in lieu to compensate for evening work. As a congregation we will aim to respect your free time, family, and personal commitments.

### **Home Life**

In addition to being our Priest, you may come with significant, possibly dependent others. They will be welcome as an ordinary member of our churches, and part of the life of Severnside Parishes in as much or as little as they want, and to find genuine and supportive friendships.

# People



**Rachel Colthurst**  
*Curate*



**Owain Bell**  
*Retired Priest*



**Don Sloggett**  
*Retired Priest*



**Kay Mason**  
*Licensed Lay Minister*



**Ron Rust**  
*Licensed Lay Minister*



**Libby James**  
*Licensed Lay Minister*



**Libbirty Webber**  
*Children's and Families Worker*



**Ellis Webber**  
*Volunteer Youth Worker*



**Jane Cadman**  
*Stepping Stones Leader*



**Joy Clee**  
*Churchwarden - St Mary's Kempsey*



**Christine Grant**  
*Churchwarden - St James Norton*



**Tony Mason**  
*Treasurer for St James and St Mary's*



**Sally Linsey**  
*Treasurer at St Denys'*



**Sue Fitzjohn**  
*Safeguarding Officer*



**Fiona Harrison**  
*Wedding and Funeral Co-ordinator*

### **PCC for St James Church, Norton**

*Christine Grant (Churchwarden), Carol Smith (Secretary), Tony Mason (Treasurer), Clare Morgan, Ian Perry and Rita Twining.*

### **PCC for St Mary's Church, Kempsey**

*Joy Clee BEM, Marian Walters MBE (Secretary), Sue Fitzjohn (Chair), Tony Mason (Treasurer), Julia Grant, Fiona Harrison, Kay Mason, Becky Garratt and Nigel Taylor*

### **PCC for St Denys' Church, Severn Stoke**

*Sally Linsey (Treasurer), Pat Comley (Secretary), Libby James, Jane Hall, John Henderson, Vivienne Portman*

# Children and young people

At Severnside Parishes we are privileged to be able to work with children and young people in a variety of different ways, co-ordinated by our Youth and Children's Worker, Libbirty.

## Schools Work:

We have built strong connections with some of our local primary schools.

At Norton-Juxta-Kempsey Primary School, we run fortnightly assemblies, help with RE lessons, and have an Open the Book team who, each month, bring a Bible story to life in Collective Worship. The school come to St James' Church for lessons, services, and special events. We support CREW (Collective Religious Education Worship, run by Year 6) in planning and executing some Collective Worship sessions. We have run three 'Messy School' after school clubs and are running a year-long Expressive Art Project within the school, culminating in an exhibition in the church.

We support Whittington C of E Primary School (outside our Parishes but close links have been warmly welcomed) with fortnightly assemblies, supporting CREW and leading RE Lessons. We have also run Christian creative art sessions and interactive prayer afternoons. We are excited to be launching a six-session 'Messy School' in the summer term.

Recently, we supported (financially and logistically) a series of I-SingPOP\* concerts for four of our local primary schools at St Mary's Church Kempsey. This was an exciting opportunity to gather families from the wider area in an engaging, community-focused Christian-based event.

We are excited about all the things that are happening within our schools, that they are keen to develop this work and that we have been able to welcome some new families into our churches.

Kempsey Primary School is close to St Mary's Church and, although the children often fill the church for Christmas, Easter and End-Of-Year school services, input has lessened in recent years. This is an area we would like to develop.

\*<https://www.isingpop.org/>

St Mary's runs family events from time to time offering activities, shared food and sometimes a Christian element. These have been very popular and have ranged from St Patrick's Day crafts, cinema afternoons to a bonfire and fish & chips evening.



## Stepping Stones: Parent and Toddler Groups

'Stepping Stones' is a Baby and Toddler Group based in both St James' Norton and St Mary's Kempsey. We have recently expanded our provision from two to three groups per week. Our aim is to create a comfortable, fun and safe space that communicates to all families that church is a place where they are welcome and can come to for community, friendship and support. Across the week we have contact with 50-60 families, with some attending more than one session. We have been encouraged by an increase in attendance at our All-Age services, with families coming to church regularly after initially engaging with Stepping Stones. We have also looked for ways to support the parents who come to these groups through pastoral visits, cards, and social events. These groups are a key part of our ministry and the value they have within the church-going and non-church-going community cannot be over-emphasised.



## Sevenside Youth

In September 2022 we launched a weekly drop-in style Youth Group at St Mary's, Kempsey. It is fun and laid-back and after games we come together briefly for a relaxed, relevant discussion with a Christian message. Our group has swiftly grown from an initial 8-10 to between 20-25 young people every week. Our aim is to further develop the faith of these young people and so, in January 2024, we launched a Sunday afternoon small group. We are starting by going through Youth Alpha together and we aim for this to carry on as a small group after the course has ended.

Last summer we attended Limitless\* for the day and as it was such a success, plan to take the Youth Group this summer for the week.



# Services and worship

## First Sunday:

St Mary's Kempsey:	10:30 All Age Service	30-80
St Denys' Severn Stoke:	10:30 Traditional Communion	15-25

## Typical Attendance

## Second Sunday:

St Mary's Kempsey:	10:30 Holy Communion	35-45
St James' Norton:	10:30 Holy Communion	6-12

## Third Sunday:

St Mary's Kempsey:	10:30 Informal Worship	30-110
St Denys' Severn Stoke:	10:30 Holy Communion	15-25

## Fourth Sunday:

St Mary's Kempsey:	10:30 Holy Communion	35-45
St James' Norton:	10:30 Morning Worship	6-12

## Fifth Sunday:

Benefice Service

## Thursday:

St Mary's Kempsey:	10:00 Holy Communion (followed by coffee morning)	10-20
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Stemming from Norton's connection to the Worcestershire Regiment, the annual Remembrance Sunday service at St James' is packed to overflowing with uniformed groups, their families and those with a military connection. The uniformed groups have expressed interest in expanding their links with the church.



Remembrance St James'

St Mary's is also very busy at Remembrance with around 150 attending. At Christmas the Crib and Christingle services are also very popular.

Celebratory services at St Denys' (Easter, Harvest, Carols etc) are typically attended by 30-40.

## Croome D'Abitot

An annual Patronal Service and picnic is held in July, a joint celebration for the Severnside Parishes. Popular lay Carol Services are held in the Church before Christmas, arranged by the National Trust. Baptisms, Weddings and Funeral Services are occasionally held in the church.

## Baptisms

We regularly hold baptisms in our three active churches for members of the local community as well as our Stepping Stones families. Our baptism preparation aims to inform parents as well as to engage them with faith and church. We are gradually seeing more families interact with us through coming to all age services or becoming regular members at Stepping Stones.

## Weddings

We average six weddings a year between St Mary's, St Denys' and St James'. In the last ten years there have been three weddings at St Mary Magdalene, Croome d'Abitot.

## Funerals

All three parishes have active graveyards.



Remembrance St Mary's

# Community

Kempsey has a thriving community spirit, with a variety of clubs and societies for all ages. In addition to the Children's and Youth work described earlier, St Mary's offers a variety of well-attended weekly groups for our community. They are not overtly mission-based events but valued for building relationships through genuine, lasting friendships.

## Come on in

About ten years ago a need was recognised for support for people who were alone or needing emotional support and so 'Come On In' began meeting in one of the village pubs. As numbers increased it moved to the lounge area of The Firs, a Retirement Home in the village. Held twice a week and with over sixty regulars, it is a place for people to find friendship, support, fun, laughter and companionship over refreshments. It has become an important means of support and Christian outreach within the community.

Other opportunities for people to gather informally include a Coffee Morning after Thursday's Holy Communion service, fortnightly Cornflower Club where visiting speakers and trips out are enjoyed and 'Knit and Natter' at the Firs.



## Create Sanctuary Arts

'Create Sanctuary Arts', a New Worshipping Community, began recently with a desire to help all people (not just those who call themselves artists) connect to God through creative activities such as painting, basket weaving, photography, dance, drama, writing, cake decorating or landscape design. Create is a weekly event and brings people together around the table to share creativity, conversation and fellowship. A first exhibition of work produced by Create is taking place in April.



## Wider Community Activities

We organise a variety of events throughout the year, including our very popular Summer Fete and Christmas Fair. These are generously supported by the community and local businesses. These events are highly valued building blocks of our community and provide financial support for the church.



Across the parishes, there is also a strong community spirit. During the lockdowns, a large group of volunteers came together to provide a wide range of support. Weekly phone calls were made to vulnerable people, food parcels, shopping and ready meals (cooked by The Talbot and Walter de Cantelupe pubs' staff) were delivered, prescriptions were collected and delivered. The pulling-together was tangible.

For the Diamond Jubilee, a team of villagers worked incredibly hard and provided the Parish with a fun-packed 4-day celebration. This team continues to organise events, such as Carol Singing at The Lawns (Nursing Home) complete with Brass Band and refreshments.

## Morogoro

Since 2015 St Mary's Church, Kempsey has been linked with St Paul's Church, Chamwino in the Diocese of Morogoro, Tanzania, through the Worcester Diocesan Parish Link.

Following a visit in 2016 by Jan and Peter Venables from Kempsey, it was decided that we would support the church in the vision to build a nursery school. Thanks to the fantastic support of Kempsey parishioners, friends, the PCC and through a variety of fundraising events we have been able to send in excess of £10,000 to Chamwino. This has enabled them to build 2 classrooms, aptly named Kempsey 1 and Kempsey 2, which were officially opened by Bishop John during his visit in 2023.

We have had the pleasure of hosting clergy from the diocese over the years and Jan and Peter also made a return visit in 2019 with a Diocesan party.

The latest project, Chamwino Nursery Water Appeal, is to provide 2 toilet blocks and an improved water and sanitation system for the rapidly increasing intake of pupils. This appeal is well underway but will need more funding to complete. We look forward to maintaining our Parish Link with Chamwino into the future.



# Parishes, buildings and churchyards

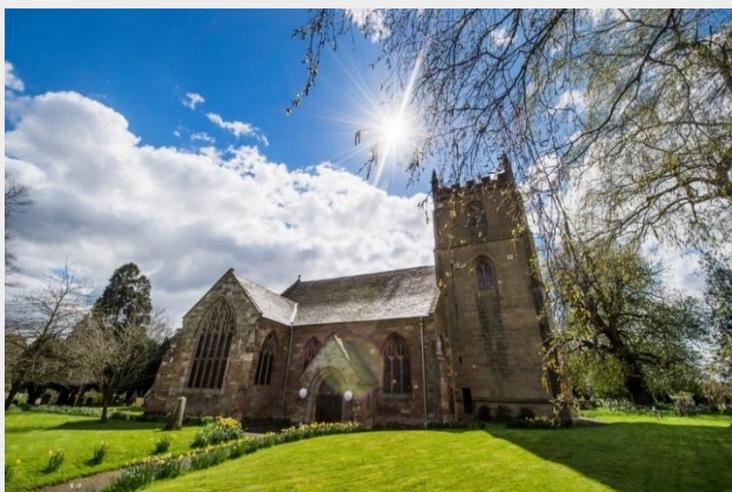
## St Mary's Church and Kempsey

The Parish of Kempsey covers about five square miles bordered on the west by the River Severn, on the east by the M5 motorway and dissected by the A38. The main village is clustered around the A38 and with outlying hamlets. On its western boundary is the River Severn and its Hams, which are rare Lammas land. On its other boundaries are Ashmoor Common, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Normoor Common, Kerswell Common, Kempsey Common and Stonehall Common.

Kempsey is noted for its mix of housing styles, from chocolate-box cottages and Georgian manor houses to modern estates and everything in-between. The building of several new estates has increased the number of domestic dwellings by 40% in the last six years and the population now exceeds 4,500.

We have a 2-form-entry primary school which feeds into a secondary school near Upton-upon-Severn. There are two registered nurseries in the village, a small doctor's surgery, a general store, four public houses and two other licensed premises. The large nursing home (The Lawns) is an important part of our community and provides an excellent service for many.

There is a playing field with a Sports Pavilion, a Youth Centre and also a small Community Centre which houses the Parish Council Office and Hair Salon. There are proposals at an early stage of planning for a new larger playing field with a new community building, skate park and pump track. There is a large area of common land within the Parish including river meadows which provide easy access to picturesque countryside and views towards the Malvern Hills.



There is a wide range of smaller industries and businesses in and around the village on small estates and in private homes. There are enough enterprises to provide many services needed by residents.

The local bus service is intermittent but new initiatives for public transport are in the pipeline. The new Worcestershire Parkway rail station is two miles away with good parking and fast services to Birmingham, Oxford, London, Cheltenham, Bristol and further afield.

The present spacious Grade I listed church building dates mainly from the 14th century. A Bishop of Worcester built a palace at Kempsey, and it is possible that this is the reason for the generous proportions of the parish church. It appears that Christian worship has taken place on this site for over 1,000 years.

The development of the present building took place in the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries. Many internal alterations took place in the 19th century with the present Victorian interior remaining. In the 20th century the choir vestry was sound-proofed, and toilet, water supply and small kitchen facilities were added.

The constant low heat in the winter months keeps the building comfortable, protecting the fabric and allowing the church to remain open in daylight hours every day of the year. There are of course ongoing maintenance costs, and we are considering starting a 'Friends of St Mary's' to involve many residents who do not worship regularly but value the building. The church-yard and proximity to the River Sever are much valued by the whole village. There is a large repair project in the future with some weakness in mullions of the east window but otherwise nothing major outstanding. There is a good Nicholson organ played regularly (used for organ practice by Sir Edward Elgar, a Kempsey resident some 100 odd years ago) and an electric piano augmented by an audio system with television monitors around the church.

St Mary's is the largest of the churches in the benefice and the most well-attended.

## St James' and Norton

The church of St James the Great is situated in the semi-rural village of Norton-Juxta-Kempsey (the full name of the parish.) The church is part Norman with 14<sup>th</sup> century and Victorian additions. A legacy over 10 years ago provided a modern extension called the Beechill Room, which has excellent kitchen and toilet facilities, provides a source of income and is well used by local groups and for occasional parties. The Norton parent and toddler group Stepping Stones is based here. In the vicinity there is a pub, a parish hall, a cricket ground and sports club, a former barracks for the Worcestershire Regiment (now apartments), and the award-winning St Peter's Garden Centre.

Regular fundraising takes place to maintain the church. The Christmas Tree Festival was a successful example of this. Services can be well-attended on an occasion such as Remembrance Day.



Christmas Tree Festival at St James'

## St Denys' and Severn Stoke

The village lies to the south of Kempsey and has a population of about 700 people. Severn Stoke straddles the A38 trunk road, seven miles from Worcester and three from Upton on Severn. Like many rural areas, in recent decades the parish has lost its Post Office, village shop and Primary School. The timber-built Parish Hall in the centre of Severn Stoke was demolished in November 2023 following continuous flooding. St Denys' Church and the picture-postcard 'Rose and Crown' Pub next door are at the heart of maintaining the local sense of community and they benefit from and enjoy working closely together. There is a spirit of hopefulness encouraged by the enthusiasm and drive of those for whom the area is dear to their hearts and the church accepts its role in fostering a strong community spirit and supporting those who feel isolated and alone in this rural area. The church is currently without a Churchwarden - the tasks are shared between the PCC.



## St Denys' Church

The Grade II listed church is built of grey rubble masonry throughout and dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century with later additions.

St Denys' is a much-loved Church. The regular congregation is a small group of mostly older people who are loyal, dedicated and devoted to this beautiful Church.

The church is supported by the Friends of St Denys' (founded over 50 years ago) which raises funds towards repairs, maintenance and improvements. The services regularly attract people from across the Severnside parishes who find God's spirit of love and peace in the traditional and relaxed style of worship. Local retired priests frequently lead Services at St Denys'; it is a church where one can sense the centuries of prayer and praise.



## St Mary Magdalene Church



The Church of St Mary's lies in the grounds of Croome Court, formerly the seat of the Earls of Coventry. The church is not used for regular services and is managed by the Churches Conservation Trust. The Church's opening hours match those of the estate. The bells are often rung out across the beautiful estate on Sunday afternoons.

## Bells

There is a bell tower at St Mary's, Kempsey with eight bells that are rung most weekends by a team of ringers. They also have visiting teams as the bells are unusual - going anti-clockwise. There is a tower at St Denys with five bells which are rung for weddings. St James' has three bells on a pulley system - if you are not careful these play "Three Blind Mice!"

## Church Office

St Mary's PCC has recently rented office space at the Seaborne Leisure Complex close to the church to provide a base in the benefice for the staff team.



# Governance and finance

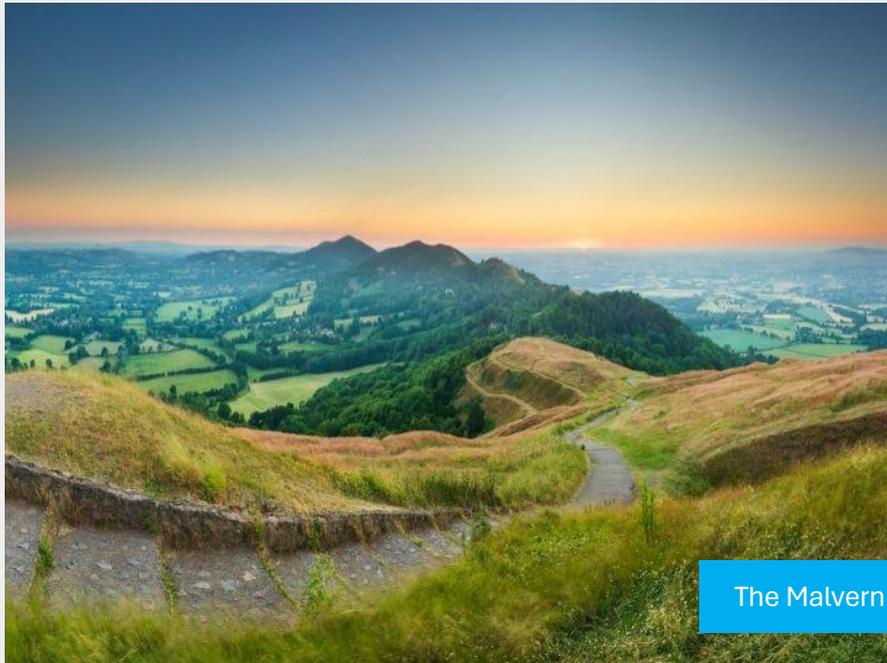
Each of the three active churches has its own PCC which meet on a regular basis and manage the affairs of each church. Joint PCC meetings are held approximately twice per year.

St Denys' PCC currently holds reserves of approximately £40,000. The Parish Share for St Denys' has always been paid in full. The figure for 2024 is £10,649.

St James' PCC currently holds reserves of approximately £32,000. In 2023 income was £10,500 with outgoings of £11,000 plus Parish Share of £7,600.

St Mary's PCC 2023 financial summary:

Giving & Fundraising	71,400
Other Income	48,200
Parish Share	(44,600)
Salaries	(32,000)
Other Expenditure	<u>(39,000)</u>
Total	4,000



The Malvern Hills

# Demographics

## Sevenside Parishes

### Area map



### Population

**7,500**  
people

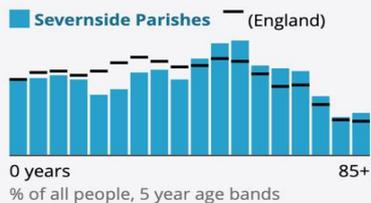
**56,490,000** people in England  
Rounded to the nearest 100 people

### Number of households

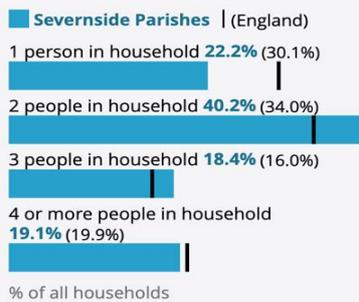
**3,100**  
households

**23,436,100** households in England  
Rounded to the nearest 100 households

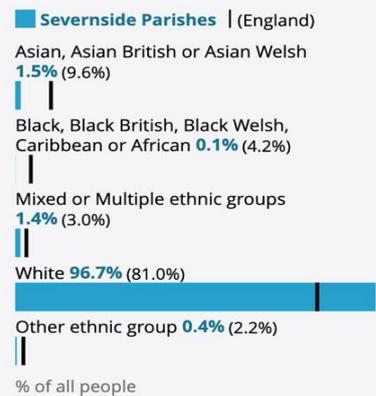
### Age profile



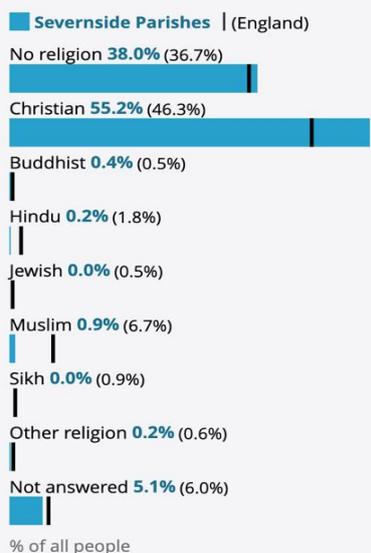
### Household size



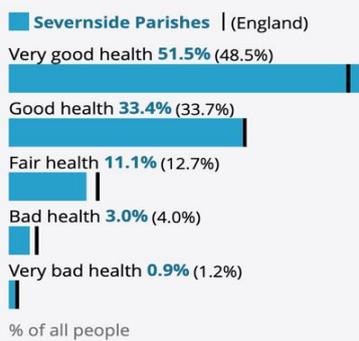
### Ethnic group



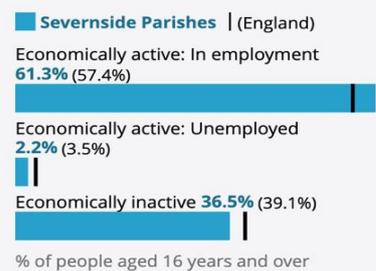
### Religion



### General health



### Economic activity status



# Diocese of Worcester

The Diocese of Worcester covers an area of 671 square miles and includes parishes in Worcestershire, the Metropolitan Borough of Dudley, and a few parishes in northern Gloucestershire, south-east Wolverhampton and Sandwell. It has around 170 parishes and 280 church buildings, together with 100 church schools. The diocese is divided into two archdeaconries, with six deaneries.

**Our diocesan vision is to grow as kingdom people, sharing the good news of Jesus' love in Worcestershire and Dudley. As the body of Christ, we join together to worship God creatively, make disciples, share hope, and transform communities as we live out values of love, compassion, justice and freedom to bring about the kingdom of God on earth.**



## Priorities 2023 – 2030

Over the next few years, we aim to:

- Double the number of children and young people worshipping in our churches.
- Create 100 new worshipping communities offering a range of ways for people to come to faith and worship God. (eg Forest Church / Café Church / Walking Church).
- Invest in the renewal of around a dozen churches to ensure that each major area of population has at least one church with 150 people attending weekly, enabling them to support other local churches.
- Underpin these by investing in our clergy and lay leaders, providing training and development opportunities to enable them to grow and feel supported and equipped for mission.

[Download a pdf summary](#) of our priorities along with the different ways your parish can get involved.

[Download a pdf](#) of our full diocesan transformation strategy.

One size does not fit all - we want to strengthen local churches and encourage and resource them to explore what it might mean to grow in health and sustainability in their context as they worship God, make disciples, share hope, and transform communities.

We share a vision for a church which enables its people to be:

- Deeply rooted in prayer and study of the scriptures
- Renewed and transformed by regular worship.
- Equipped to witness to the gospel of love, compassion, justice and freedom.
- Dedicated to helping children, young people and young adults to belong and be nurtured in faith.
- Devoted to growing deeply in discipleship, offering our time and talents and money to God.
- Resourced and released to minister to others.
- Ready to engage with and serve our community.
- Committed to making our buildings fit for purpose as a spiritual and community resource.

# Deanery



*Time for some  
blue sky  
thinking?*

The Malvern & Upton Deanery is one of the six deaneries of the Diocese of Worcester. We have a mandate to transform the life of our churches in line with diocesan priorities as we relate to the missional and ministry needs of our geographical and missional areas.

## **The Deanery area and its churches**

The deanery is contained by two great rivers, the M5/M50/A38 and the majestic Malvern Hills. As well as two tourist towns, Great Malvern and Upton upon Severn, the deanery is an eclectic mix of expanding new housing, existing dormitory settlements, quaint rural villages, farmland and agri-economy, tourist trails, traveller sites and a few stately homes. We have churches straddling the hills and we have churches that endure river floods. The deanery includes some of the poorest areas in the county and some of the most exclusive. There is a myriad of schools (state and independent), and many care homes to watch over. There are strong people and vulnerable people in our midst. We have a vibrant ecumenical *Churches Together in Malvern*, and there is great potential for better ecumenical links in Upton. It feels like we have churches everywhere: some at capacity on Sundays and busy during the week, others locked after Sunday worship. Our churches are a beacon of our faith and hope to all. Some, though, are fragile and need support to thrive but all are eager to transform.

## **How do we function as a Deanery?**

Working relationally with our archdeacon and diocesan support staff, the deanery is the space in which we work together to develop healthy and sustainable churches collaboratively with our constituent parishes. Under the leadership of our Area Dean, the Revd Gary Crellin and Lay Chair, Maria Toman, and supported by the Deanery Leadership Team, we aim to discern God's strategic direction for mission and ministry in this beautiful part of the world and strive to implement the response. The Deanery Leadership Team acts as the lynch-pin for drawing in all of our churches - urban, rural, large or small – together so we can navigate the future challenges as one body. We are a *Team of Teams* which must work together. We provide a safe place for this level of engagement to happen, and for appropriate responses to the challenges ahead to be developed, through research and conversations with individual parishes and benefices. We cannot do this alone - we need to work together and we are beginning that journey utilising a progressive and insightful Deanery Synod and Chapter.

## **Our strategic direction – where have we got to so far?**

With the presence of a couple of large, gathered churches, alongside churches that are struggling or fragile, the emerging expertise of some churches in delivering particular types of ministries (for example: tourism, rural mission, ministry to new housing developments, dementia care and older person's/care home support, art churches and of course greater involvement with children, youth and families) is being galvanised. We need to work together to develop new ways of working between clergy, lay ministers and laity to meet the demands of running our churches affordably and competently. Although the direction of travel is formative and emergent, we sense that the best way forward is to draw our churches into a developing partnership with each other, informally at first but moving at pace and scale as we explore a variety of group and oversight and collaborative ministry models. We must free up as much resource (financial and human) as possible to focus on mission and ministry where it is most needed. New ways of working can be explored with flexible deployment of blended lay and ordained ministry, contextual ministry, appropriate training and support that delivers effective mission, and objectively looking to standardise or even centralise supporting services (e.g. administration, safeguarding, treasury & buildings/churchyard maintenance). Such transformation would release all of us, not a select few, to focus more intentionally on our collective priorities as *Kingdom People*. In summary, we aim to operate more smartly, more sustainably and with greater impact than our churches can individually achieve. We need to be brave and work together.

## **And finally..**

We welcome those who are up for change rather than resisting it. Relationally, we want to be collaborative rather than parochial in attitude. We want to work with colleagues that are prepared to offer and share responsibility for the future, whilst being in love with Christ, and the people He has called us to serve together, as a Team of Teams. Future success is not just about the parish, it's about the wider church.

Join us in our mission and ministry.

