



St Matthias'



Church of the Ascension



St Peter's

Parish Profile

Priest-in-charge for the parish of
Malvern Link with Cowleigh



www.mlwc.church



**malvern link
with cowleigh**

Application forms and details from:
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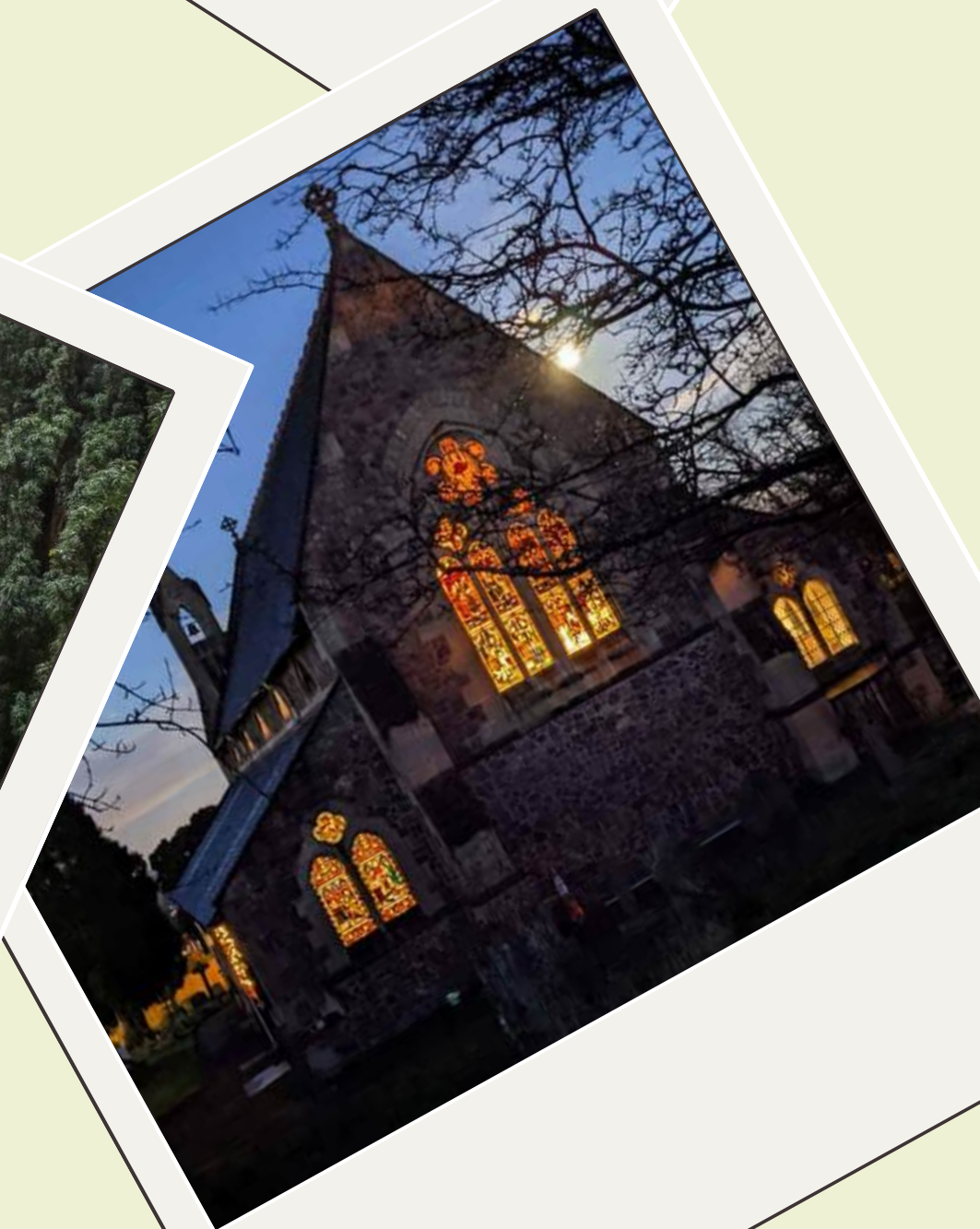
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Welcome

We're excited about what the future holds for our parish. We hope that by the end of reading this document, you will be excited about what your contribution to shaping the future might be.

If we summarise the type of priest we are looking for, one image is to think of you as an experienced 'spiritual gardener'. This image encapsulates the heart of the adventure we are inviting you to embark upon, and allows us to be 'flowery'.

Our parish is located in a beautiful part of the country, and one with a vibrant spiritual sense. Malvern is a growing town on the western edge of Worcestershire, next to the glorious Malvern Hills. Our sense is that the Holy Spirit is at work in interesting ways in our town. We believe that a commitment to working in collaboration and cross-fertilization with others – both from local churches and the wider community – is essential to growing in alignment with the Spirit's activity locally.

We have some firm foundations:

- varied approaches to prayer,
- a firm commitment to being inclusive,
- passion about nurturing the growth of children and young people,
- a large host of volunteers who are 'keen gardeners'.

We are blessed. We have three churches where we take different approaches to worship from liberal catholic through to contemporary with ease.

Through our various ministries we seek to touch the lives of hundreds of people, young and old, families and children, in our parish and beyond. We are diverse in our backgrounds and outlooks, but we are united in our belief that we are all loved by God regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, ability, sexuality or creed.

The secret ingredient to our growth is the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit – summarised in the principles of 'weeding, pruning and watering'. We are grateful.

Get to know us: a few of us saying "Why I am here"

A Spiritual Home at Last

For nearly six decades, I have wandered from church to church, never quite feeling at home. The sermons fell flat, the worship felt stale, and I left each Sunday feeling more empty than full. But all that changed when I stepped through the doors of St. Peter's.

From the moment I arrived the warm welcome was real, and I knew I had found my spiritual home. The contemporary worship enveloped me with its rich melodies and poignant lyrics that speak straight to my soul. As the band played and we sang I felt the Holy Spirit's presence stirring within me..

But it's not just the vibrant worship that draws me back week after week. It's the people - the loving, authentic community of believers. I've found a church family that doesn't just preach acceptance but lives it out fully. I feel embraced with open arms, feeling loved as I am, while encouraging me to grow.

In the smiling faces and warm hugs, I witness Christ's love made manifest. In the interactive and thought-provoking sermons, I encounter the living Word that challenges, convicts and inspires me. In the heartfelt prayers, I sense the Holy Spirit moving mightily, knitting our hearts together as one..

At 58 years old, I've finally found the church home I've longed for my entire life. St. Peter's isn't just a place to dutifully attend service once a week. It's a vibrant community where I'm being transformed, where I can live authentically, and a place where I experience the profound joy, peace and purpose that only comes from being in God's presence.

Esther

I came to faith nearly two years ago, coinciding with one of the hardest times of my life. The inclusive, warm and welcoming community here helped me through it and helped me to foster and grow my faith too, for which I am incredibly grateful. I have recently started serving at the altar as an acolyte and learning how to set up for the Eucharist to help our sacristans. Our liberal Anglo-Catholic worship is an important part of my growing faith.

Craig

I worship in this parish for a number of reasons, mainly because I feel a real Presence of the Holy Spirit working here especially for myself where many good things have happened to me. Having been a choir member at a very early age which is when my journey began. Bottom line is. This is where I have always been and so the tap root is very long.

Richard

We first came to St Matthias' 18 or more years when our local parish church lurched suddenly into dogmatic evangelicalism which left me feeling angry at the end of service. We received a warm welcome and were quickly at home in the liturgical and theological patterns and musical content of worship which resonated those we had experienced in other churches and cathedrals for much our married life. A lot has changed since then. A period of grippingly exciting radical and alternative theological exegesis has been replaced by a rather less stimulating but not uncomfortable presentation of guidance for a Christian Life. Music has remained a constant and I am committed to sharing in offering it. And underlying it all is a continuum of companionship with likeminded people with whom ideas and thoughts can be exchanged and with whom practical support can be freely exchanged in time of need.

Martin

Get to know us: a few of us saying "Why I am here" pt2

Gradually, I started to go to the 9.45 and then the other services. I found that within the midst of these different places of worship and diversity of experience, there is a commonality of purpose. To respond to God's love, offered to all of us, in worship. We then reach out to other local people through lots of different things that are going on. Many of us find ways in which we can use our different skills and talents. We are all so brilliant and it is a joy to work together, to make a difference.

Kit

"Having moved into the area more than 40 years ago, we were so thankful to find a parish where liberal Anglo-Catholic worship was the norm - indeed we were really fortunate to actually be living in the very parish which was renowned in the Deanery and even the Diocese for this style of worship. Over the years we have enjoyed such a positive and friendly atmosphere here, very much feel real members of an active Christian family, with an inclusive ethos which is especially important for us. It is wonderful that the parish now embraces other forms of worship too whilst continuing to maintain the form of worship that is so essential for us".

Anne

It was quite a surprise to find that having spent years worshipping elsewhere in Malvern, that we had on our doorstep, a wonderful parish and people to meet our needs, including opportunities to serve the wider community. Tempted as I am to join my wife at the lively, less formal service at St Peter's and possibly even contribute to the music band, I really appreciate the dignity and spirituality of the 9.45 service at St Matthias and the Ascension. We have all-parish services too, the last one being outside which was special. We hear from a varied group of thought-provoking and wise preachers too.

Ian

My wife's funeral took place seven years ago in St Matthias' Church. Eileen and my wife's parish priest were a great comfort to me and my family at this sad time. In the 1950s I sang in the Ascension Church choir and was confirmed before I left Malvern in 1959. When I finally returned to Malvern 2018 I started to attend the Sunday sung Eucharist. This was an obvious choice for me because the service was "High Church" that was my preferred worship style. The congregation, and the clergy made me welcome and progress my return to a practising Christian at my own pace. I gradually realised the diversity of worship available in the parish and the enthusiasm of the Parish to reach out people. There is a real belief in all are welcome by the Parish

Graham

It was exciting to be part of a new congregation at St Peter's. The service was short (half an hour), informal (mug in hand) and friendly. The sermons are punchy and thought provoking.

Jane

I started to worship in the Ascension as a 14yr old and always felt "at home". In later years I felt called to take on the role of sacristan and I often feel I am in the presence of God when in the quiet of the church preparing for a service. Worship together is always fulfilling.

Sue

Who will our new priest be?

We would love our new priest to be a person who is passionate, energetic and empathetic, enjoys being a Christian and is inspired by Jesus' radical inclusivity.

We are asking for a priest who will:

- **nurture** the faith of us all, capturing our imaginations, both within and outside our worshiping communities;
- promote **outreach**, reaching children, young people, and their families;
- broaden the **pastoral** care provided;
- build on what we have started with our local **communities**;
- enable **growth** as a sensitive innovator;
- develop our **worship**, with a commitment to the flourishing of diverse forms of expression;
- promote good **stewardship**, actively engaging with the practical aspects of church life.

Introducing Malvern Link with Cowleigh

The parish of Malvern Link with Cowleigh comprises one of the “Malverns”, Malvern Link, and the old village of Cowleigh nestled on the foothills of the Malvern hills. St Matthias’ was built on the Link Meadow and hence was called “The Church of St Matthias-at-the-Link”. “Link” was adopted to describe the area surrounding the church.

We are the largest parish in terms of population in the Malvern and Upton Deanery. With a more diverse demographic than you might expect (see page 20), we are a place of prosperity but also great deprivation and complex need that drives our mission and community focussed activities.

The parish has 5 primary schools, two of which are Church of England schools (Northleigh and St. Matthias’), and Dyson Perrins CofE Academy, which is one of two state-funded secondary schools within Malvern (11 to 16 years’ old provision.)

We have a number of residential care homes as well as specialist retirement accommodation that offer an important place for our ministry.

The parish has pockets of light industrial units, several large supermarkets, and shops on its own High Street and in the various neighbourhoods that make up the parish. We are well endowed with chippies and takeaways, and good pubs can be found in and out of the parish.

We have our own railway station that has a commuter service into Birmingham, with several parishioners travelling there for work. The Cotswold Line extends from London Paddington to Hereford, enabling direct comfortable travel into the capital. Malvern is well connected to the M5 leading to the M42 (North) and M50 motorways (South.)

There is a growing variety of churches and Christian groups, including Roman Catholic, Methodist, URC, Pentecostal and independent churches, in the parish. Other faiths are present with provision in the area.

The wider area around Malvern offers a good welcome to newcomers with lots of culture, heritage and common interest groups to join in with.

Our mission: To be a community of light and love

We have so much to be thankful for in our church community and the way that God draws us together. As our logo shows, we are about the light and love of Christ being shown in ways that our neighbours might recognise: a candle and a heart.

We seek to:

- be authentic and ourselves,
- participate in whatever way we can,
- be accepting of each other,
- share varied experiences of our Christian faith, and acknowledge that all are valid,
- be informal with each other,
- play our part in the outreach that is going on across the 3 churches,
- feel comfortable in our preferred settings of worship and fellowship,
- explore and enjoy the variety that all 3 churches offer and see the strength in our difference.

We can worship God with all our senses, share life experiences, be with our neighbours and care for each other through prayer and in practical ways.

There are many good examples of how we live out our way of being community, showing care and concern for each other.

One story that reflects us is the Thursday Family Club which we hold at The Church of the Ascension, see: [Thursday family club in Malvern – Diocese of Worcester \(cofe-worcester.org.uk\)](http://cofe-worcester.org.uk). There is so much more in terms of activity as described in this document. Malvern is a welcoming place for so many who have settled here.



Meet the team

We have one PCC and one team that oversees the activities within our churches.

We are blessed to have a team that includes:

- our curate, James;
- our 4 licensed lay ministers and readers (Allen, Eileen, Jacqui and Mike);
- our 4 retired clergy with PTO (Sue, Ted, Mary and Ian);
- our associate priest Alastair;
- our schools' chaplain Ness;
- our community builder Sarah;
- our Dementia Meeting Centre (DMC) manager Es;
- our Director of Music, Peter;

plus tens of volunteers who assist with a range of worship, community outreach, pastoral and arts activities.

Our wider parish team is listed in Appendix 1 to this profile.

Our PCC and warden team has been refreshed following our Annual Parochial Church Meeting on 27th April 2024.



James -
Curate



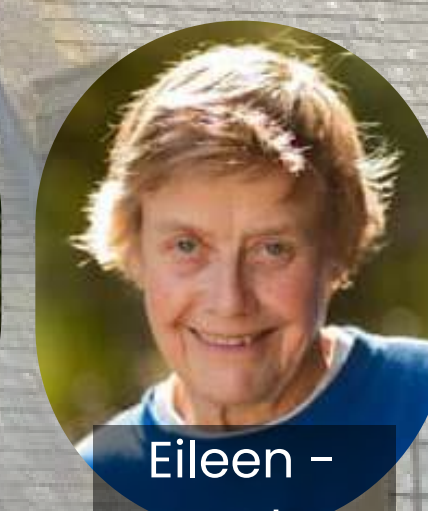
Alastair -
Associate priest



Allen - Reader



Mike - Reader
Emeritus



Eileen -
Reader



Mark -
Churchwarden



Richard -
Churchwarden



Ness - Schools
Chaplain



Jane -
Churchwarden



Es - DMC
manager



Sarah -
Community
builder



Debs - Monday
tots lead



Peter - Director
of music

Our priorities

Love: Central to our way of life as followers of Jesus is love. This means we are at peace within, act with compassion and kindness towards all and are inclusive.

What we do:

- **We pray** – knowing that this matters, creates change and has the potential to impact on the lives of others in a good and positive way.
- **We learn** – through reading the Bible, other books, being in house groups, joining courses, listening and reflecting with others, and this is an ongoing process.
- **We serve** – through the range of things going on in our churches, we find 'our slot', so that we can contribute and 'make a difference'.

What we know:

- as a church, we are a living, breathing and dynamic body of Christ,
- we learn about Christ's life to inform our own behaviour,
- as individuals within our MLWC 'Body of Christ', we will see things differently and that is okay,
- through worship and the life of our church we will reflect and grow in our own understanding of what Christ asks of us, and that the outcome of our life with Christ is outreach to others in our community.

How we worship together

Sunday Worship

Sun 9:45am	Sung Eucharist	1st and 3rd Sundays	St Matthias'
		2nd, 4th & 5th Sundays	Church of the Ascension
Sun 11:15am	Contemporary worship		St Peter's
Sun 5pm	Taize worship	4th Sunday	Church of the Ascension

Thursday 10:30am Said Eucharist: A shorter spoken service always at St Matthias' church with coffee.

There are 110 members of the electoral roll, the great majority of whom are current active members of the congregation. Over the past year, usual Sunday attendance is about 50 for the Sung Eucharists and around 30 for the modern worship service. Christmas Eve/Day and Easter Eve/Day service attendances were 113 and 144 respectively. During Advent, special services for schools brought close to 1000, largely young, people into our churches.

Sung Eucharist: At this liturgical service in our liberal catholic style with vestments, a choir, bells and sometimes smells, we share the bread and wine of life together, sing hymns and listen to a thought provoking sermon using common worship liturgy and of course coffee, biscuits and conversations afterwards!

Contemporary Worship: A relaxed more informal service with a band, modern worship songs (including the occasional golden oldie) and conversational Q&A sermon, coffee, cake and the occasional dog worshipping alongside us! We celebrate the Eucharist together here on the 4th Sunday of the month.

Taizé: a contemplative service with music from the Taizé community. Every 4th Sunday.

Occasional evensong: we have also held regular evensong services where our choir is supplemented with an additional 15 or so members, which we are looking to regularise on a quarterly basis.

Growing our worship: We are growing in confidence with our All Age and Family Worship, with services held at Mothering Sunday, Pentecost, Harvest and Christmas Eve. Each of these services have demonstrated higher than average attendance figures, leaving a positive impact on those who attended, with our wider community of parents and teachers feeling comfortable in our church setting.

Pastoral work and occasional offices

Pastoral

During the vacancy we have made good progress in organising our pastoral team – and this is something that we would wish to see given new impetus and wider input in the coming years, including care home ministry and home communion.

There is also a lot of care that is given within and beyond the congregations, on a more “organic” basis, including the use of apps as forums for providing prayer and support. In spring 2023 we established the Alongside Café to support those experiencing loss and bereavement. This has enabled us to build relationship with people in our community who have valued sharing their journey of loss.

Occasional offices

We continue to see an increase in those approaching us for baptism, wedding, and funeral ministry. It has been a particular highlight to have baptised people in each of our churches which demonstrates a growing association of place in the Parish.

Supporting our neighbours

In addition to our own parish we have supported Christ Church Malvern with celebrants for Sunday Eucharists and occasional offices. We value our links with Christ Church recognising what they add, and we share a common commitment with them to being an inclusive church.

Our Next Gen mission: Schools, Children and Families

This is a very important priority of our parish life and we will be looking to our new Priest-in-Charge to take further and build on the progress that we have made.

An explanation of our strategic approach can be found in our Annual Report 2023. We have one of the healthiest ministries to Tots, Children, Young People and Families in the Diocese of Worcester with the following key ministries (all of which are described in considerable detail in our Annual Report 2023).

Monday Tots

Thanks to a small but dedicated team of volunteers led by Deb Cook, Monday Tots continues to welcome very young children and their parents/carers throughout the year. Average attendance in 2024 is 30 children and 26 carers at each session.

Youth Choir

We run our Youth Choir sessions and are delighted to be able to award RSCM medals to young people who have put in a tremendous effort to learn the art of choral singing and sing in our church choir.

Family Fun Days

For the last two years we have held our Family Fun Day, first at St Matthias' and then at the Church of the Ascension, welcoming children, families, and local groups from across our community offering a variety of activities (including the essential bouncy castle). Each year the day has been well attended and enable us to offering a moment of excitement for our hard-pressed communities.

Youth Club

In October we opened St Peter's Church to young people on a Monday evening. Most of the attendees come from Dyson Perrins and are connected in some way to the work Ness undertakes there. Numbers of attendees has been steady, which has provided excellent conditions for the development of relationship and opportunities to support young people through the challenges of adolescence.

Our Next Gen mission: Schools, Children and Families pt2

Family Club

In October 2023 at the Church of the Ascension Hall we launched our Thursday Family Club, a group designed to provide children and their parents with an opportunity to connect with each other after the school day. The club usually involves a game and a craft activity and is always accompanied by a hot meal. We were able to set up the club after receiving funding from the National Lottery which has enabled us to purchase resources and promote the club to the wider community.

One of our aims in establishing the Family Club was to elevate some of the hidden issues of poverty in our community. Although it is not operated on a needs basis we are acutely aware that by providing a hot meal, we are responding to some of the coalface issues of the cost of living crisis.

We have seen a brilliant take up from parents from a variety of local schools in the community and have a sizeable group of regular attenders. We are delighted that the Ukrainian community have found the sessions useful and have been blessed to learn more about their traditions and culture.

Pentecost poem

written by a pupil from Northleigh school

Jesus' disciples waited in a room for the gift Jesus
promised them.

Fire and wind.

While a storm was raging on.

His friends panicking in fear.

The Holy Spirit came and went

Leaving them with nothing to dread.

They could speak every language.

They had to be brave..

Pentecost is about being hopeful and brave.

To stand up in what we believe in.

To do many things.

Be you.

Don't let anyone stop you.

Schools ministry

We have a Schools Chaplain Vanessa Everitt who is part funded by Dyson Perrins CofE Academy (secondary) and part funded by the Diocese of Worcester. Ness has been in post since November 2022. This has enabled us to work with all our local church schools, with a presence in each of them, working with heads and teachers in each school.

Governance

We have provided governors over decades for each of Dyson Perrins, St Matthias' CofE Primary School and Northleigh School (primary) as well as links with Somers Park and Malvern Vale schools (both primary). There are a number of governor positions that are open, which need to be filled.

Collective worship

We play an active role in collective worship, having a presence in all our church schools every week, with Ness a weekly presence at each of them, in a leading, coordinating or supporting role.

"Experience" events

Experience Easter, Pentecost, Harvest and Advent weeks are held with our schools. A huge amount of preparation goes into these events and volunteers from across our parish and beyond have supported them faithfully with resources and time.

Chapel Club at Dyson Perrins

Every day at Dyson Perrins there is Chapel Club which is an informal drop-in for students at break and lunchtimes that provides a safe, inclusive space for them to get away from the noise of the rest of the school. It is a space in which they can talk, hang out, play games and have the opportunity to ask questions about faith and prayer.

Worship Wednesday: time set aside during lunch specifically for those students who would like to engage more fully in collective worship. There are also opportunities for the whole school community to come together. On Friday mornings the chapel is open for prayer and every half term we have a Eucharist service.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Both James and Ness have been into school and delivered 10:10, a course that explores well-being. In September 2023 we were part of the pilot for the Archbishop of Canterbury's Difference programme for schools and youth clubs.

Godly Play

We support our primary schools with Godly Play, but not with the frequency we would like owing to limited capacity. Both Ness and Deb Cook are trained in Godly Play.

Community activities

Community Fridge

The Community Fridge runs on Monday morning and Wednesday afternoon from the Ascension Hall. The purpose is to save supermarket food waste from landfill by redistributing food to anyone attending and there is no cost. The food is either at its 'sell by' or 'best before' date and hence the supermarkets have to dispose of it. We have an average redistribution of one tonne each month that is saved from landfill. The sessions have a really strong community feel with volunteers from both the church congregation and the wider community assisting with supermarket collections and the sorting of food at the Community Fridge itself. We have an average of around 28 households attending each session, with around 35% attending both sessions. Although its purpose is to save food from landfill, open to anyone to attend, we do have a high proportion of people attending who are on low income and who really value the service to save on their household expenditure. We are supported by the local business community in a variety of ways including the donation of proper weigh scales earlier in 2024.

Friends space

The friends space offers free tea, coffee and conversation run from The Ascension Hall. From the summer of 2023 the sessions altered slightly to run prior to and alongside the Community Fridge sessions – many people attend both sessions, so it has made sense to combine the two. During the start of the Winter of 2023, it was run on Monday and Wednesday afternoons with support from 'Warm Space' funding via MHDC. Initially run by staff and volunteers from the church congregation towards the latter part of 2023 there saw additional members of the wider community volunteering their time. People attending the sessions have expressed how valuable they find them in building friendships and that for many people, it's one of the few places they go to mix with others. It is also a space where we can share church activities and wider community information in an informal friendly way.

Community activities pt2

Malvern Dementia Centre

Malvern Link Dementia Meeting Centre is a parish resource offering ongoing warm, friendly and expert support to people and families affected by dementia. At the heart of the Meeting Centre is a social club where people meet to have fun, talk to others and get help that focuses on individual needs, all based on sound research evidence of what helps people to cope well in adjusting to living with the symptoms and changes that dementia brings. The focus of the Meeting Centre is on both the person living with dementia and their family.

A lot of work has been done in recent months to put the Dementia Meeting Centre on a sustainable footing, under the leadership of the Centre Manager, Es Hoyle, who works within an operational framework, supported by Anne Hancox (deputy warden) and Jane James (church warden).

SPARC (St Peter's Arts Church)

For almost twenty years there has been an arts programme at St Peter's Cowleigh, which has operated in a number of guises and which is in a time of transition to being re-established as a community led programme. In recent times we have had film festivals, Live and Local events, concerts, plays and presentations. We are looking to constitute this group and go forward with a programme that is linked into the network of local artists.

The church continues to be used by several arts organisations in particular the St Peter's Printmakers who for many years have held printing workshops twice a week and attract a range of talented local artists. We are looking forward to them holding their annual exhibition weekend in the Summer that has become an annual event showcasing the talents of their members, with an act of worship outside the church, in celebration of local talents. St Peter's also hosts a range of pastimes, including drumming workshops and lessons.



Community builder programme

The 'Community Builder Programme' has the purpose to support communities to be strong, resilient and sustainable. When people are given the opportunity to shape the outcomes of their community and make changes to things that matter to them, they lead more fulfilling lives. Funding for Community Builders comes from the Government's Containment Outbreak Management Fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund, following the COVID-19 pandemic. Across the Malvern Hills District there are around nine Community Builders working in different settings, all working with residents and partners across the Malvern Hills District to strengthen community connections, reduce isolation and improve health and wellbeing.

Sarah Clark is our Community Builder. So far Sarah has spent time working with the many activities we have within MLWC, particularly the Community Fridge, the new Family Club and the Youth Club, as well as one-off community events. Sarah meets regularly with other Community Builders and has to regularly report to MHDC and local councillors on her role. We are agreeing the next year programme with her (which as it stands finishes in July 2025).



Term Time | The Ascension Church Hall
Somers Park Ave WR14 1XA | 3:30 to 5pm

THURSDAY FAMILY CLUB

NEW AFTER SCHOOL CLUB FOR FAMILIES STARTING OCTOBER 2023

CRAFT ACTIVITIES + GAMES
COOKED MEAL + SNACKS

OPEN TO PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN
ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR PARENTS

malvern link with cowleigh

NEXT GEN
Malvern Link with Cowleigh

Quotes!

Don't just take it from us! Here are some quotes from our schools, family and young peoples ministry!

Very welcoming, very well organised. The children really enjoy themselves, lots of singing and dancing. They seem to enjoy themselves a lot! - P

Brilliant that the church uses its facilities to run something for tots in the community. Really welcoming - brings a lot of joy to parents and children. It shows the outreach looking nature of this church - its faith in action! - S

It's warm and welcoming!

This group is very YIPPEEE!

It's somewhere I can be myself!

Thank you so much to all the team at St Peter's church who support the school in so many ways - weekly assemblies, values afternoons and services to name but a few of the wonderful experiences that enrich the lives of our whole school community. Sarah Green - Headteacher of Northleigh Primary school

At St Matthias we truly value the relationship we have with St Matthias Church. We pride ourselves on building long lasting relationships with our community and the church relationship is one we are very proud of. It has evolved over the last few years, particularly with the development of the Church Education Team who have instilled strong links with our school, supported our school families and built strong relationships with everyone involved. The links with St Matthias Church and its community has enhanced our school vision and ethos enabling the church to become an integral part of our school family. We are very grateful for our thriving and evolving relationship between church and school and look forward to the relationship flourishing even further! Ginie Beale - Headteacher of St. Matthias C of E Primary School

It's a friendly atmosphere here and always helping. Opportunity for us to come together and the children like the activities. They love the creative stuff. It's very important. We wait for every Thursday to come here. T&L (2 Ukrainian mums)

Really enjoy it. My daughter comes out really excited every week. All the helpers are fantastic. S (mum)
Daughter of S: It's good. Like playing games. Like meeting the others.



Our church buildings

Church of the Ascension and Ascension Church Hall

The church is Grade II listed and dates from 1903. It was designed by Sir Walter Tapper in the style of a 13th century Cistercian abbey (Sir Walter also designed the Church of the Community of the Resurrection, Mirfield). The church is connected (although not internally) to a church hall, which is included in the listing. The church grounds are not consecrated for burial. In 2023 the hall interior has benefited from repainting of the walls and ceiling giving it a light fresh feel, plus the laying of a new carpet to complete the warm comfortable space it now offers. In the same year a new kitchen was installed.

We have four buildings, all of which are ageing but generally in a reasonable state of repair, although there are issues of varying significance with them all. As with all old buildings there are always maintenance and repairs to keep them functioning. Quinquennial inspections of all three churches were undertaken by the church architect, Jane Chamberlain of Caroe & Partners, in March 2021, after appointing her as the one quinquennial architect for the entire parish estate. Copies of the quinquennial report plus slides of a presentation on them to the PCC will be provided to any applicant in response to their expression of interest in the post of Priest-in-Charge.

St. Matthias' Church

This large church was newly built between 1844-6 to designs by Sir George Gilbert Scott. The church was extended in 1858 and the tower added in 1862 to designs by F. W. Hunt, when the east and west windows were renewed. The church was reordered in the 1980s when the Link Room, entrance, kitchens and toilets were formed within the west end of the church. The church lies within the Malvern Link Conservation Area, within a large square graveyard containing a busy pedestrian route. The biggest issues to be addressed are the replacement and enhancement of the lighting in the church building and the installation of heating in the Vestry and Outer Vestry, to keep the vestments dry and to give the clergy and ministry team a warm glow.

Our church buildings pt2

St. Peter's Church

The church was designed by G E Street in the 13th Century style and was consecrated on St Peter's Day, 29th June 1866. St. Peter's Church is grade II listed Arts and Crafts church. The church comprises a clerestoried nave, north and south aisles, chancel, east end vestries and undercroft, a north porch and gabled bellcote to the chancel arch wall. The church is reputed to be of such great width for its length, due to the sloping site on the Malvern Hills. The church is set up for worship with a stage within the North aisle and rows of moveable pews facing it, with a band leading worship, having the benefit of a modern audio and video system, and having attracted a new congregation by providing contemporary worship. The Church also provides space for SPARC and the Printmakers, as well as schools and youth activities.

The roof is leaking on the south side of the building during heavy rain. This requires attention with a likely outcome being the replacement of the lower roof. This will make good the issues with it that have built up over time, which will be addressed in 2024. The toilet and kitchen areas do need updating. Ideally with a view to building or installing a toilet on the same level as the church. St Peter's, being the smallest of the three churches, is regarded as best suited for a wholesale solution to address Net Zero challenges.



Choir stalls and high altar at the Ascension



View from the pews of the altar at St Matthias'



St Matthias'



Church of the Ascension



Christmas carols at St Peter's



St Peter's church

Churchyards

The Ecclesiastical Parish of Malvern Link with Cowleigh has 4 churchyards, as follows:

- **St Peter's Cowleigh:** this is a graveyard that is now full, and plans are in preparation for asking for its care to be transferred to the council;
- **St Matthias' Main Churchyard:** this is a graveyard that is similarly full, but with a space set aside and a design made for a Garden of Remembrance to be installed, with a view to responsibility for the graveyard's maintenance being transferred to the council. It contains war graves. This graveyard has an important thoroughfare that cuts through from the retail centre to Church Road with St Matthias' School an important stopping point;
- **St Matthias' Extension Churchyard:** this is likewise full but cannot be closed owing to it having been opened by an Order of the Privy Council, under an anomaly buried in the Burial Act 1853 (section 5). It is overgrown and a way needs to be found to make it a tidy space working with the community. It also contains war graves;
- **Church of the Ascension:** this is not a graveyard and is a large space which offers a great deal to the local community. Its care needs to be put on a more sustainable footing, longer term.

We are hoping to hold community collaboration days to help maintain the St Matthias' churchyards working with local councillors, local businesses, local residents and the local MP to address these important public spaces.

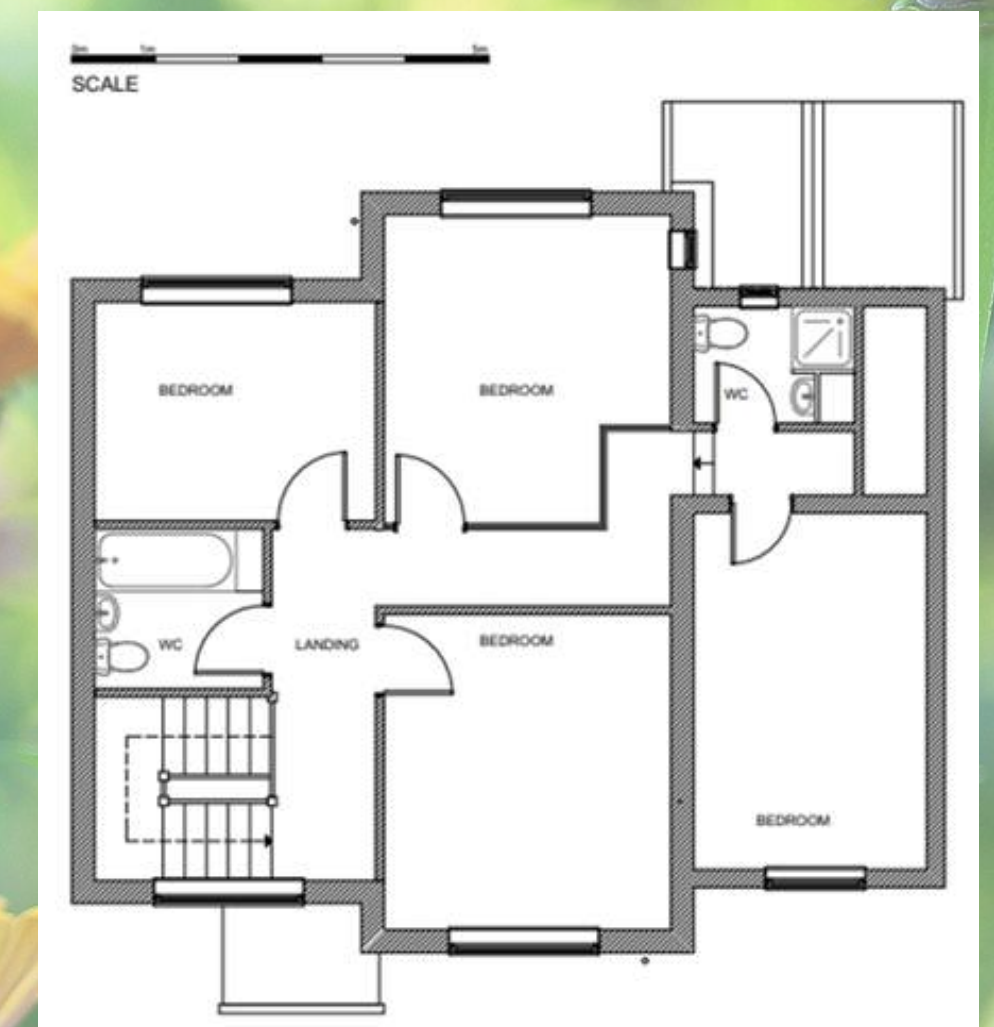
The Vicarage

The Diocese of Worcester is buying 27 Blackmore Road to be a new vicarage for the parish. The estate agent particulars are here: [4 bedroom detached house for sale in Blackmore Road, Malvern, WR14 \(rightmove.co.uk\)](#).

The new vicarage will be:

- 2 minutes' drive, 8 minutes' walk to St Peter's Cowleigh;
- 1 minute's drive, 9 minutes' walk to the Church of the Ascension;
- 4 minutes' drive, 23 minutes' walk to St Matthias' at the Link;
- 3 minutes' drive, 21 minutes' walk to Malvern Link Railway Station;
- 1 minute's drive, 8 minutes' walk to Malvern Clock Tower – and then on to the hills(!)

Once purchased the new vicarage will have works undertaken to make it fit for purpose. Floor plans of the new layout are:



Finances

For the current and the last year we have been in receipt of Ministry Support Funds, which we have needed owing principally to the high utility costs incurred by the parish in 2022 and 2023. We have just been awarded a grant of £18,378 resulting in us having to pay £52,046 by way of Ministry Share Contribution.

The Diocese wants to ensure that we are in a financially viable situation by 2026 and requests that each parish in our cluster completes a financial viability plan as part of the condition of receiving this grant. In our application we outlined the following process that we will work through in more detail:

- Giving: we plan to continue with regular stewardship campaigns and specific appeals for projects;
- Gigs: we will raise income through a more targeted programme of more arts activities;
- Graveyards: we have made good progress with taking the liability for the graveyards out of our accounts working with our councillors – and we are applying for the closure of St Peter’s Cowleigh;
- Growth: with our family club, youth club, work with schools, bereavement café, community fridge, second language English classes, our impact since September 2023 in our neighbourhood has increased substantially – and we are working through how this can be reported by way of impact analysis.

Demographics, comparative poverty and key indicators

The following data are drawn from the Church Urban Fund Database and are constructed using CUF standard criteria.

Child Poverty: The CUF measure is 15% which places the parish in the top quartile, among the least deprived in the country. However, an alternative measure of Child Poverty is entitlement to free school meals. The only acceptable figure for child poverty is 0% however, across the nation, 24% of all children are in receipt of free school meals. At St. Matthias' Primary 43% of the pupils are entitled. At Dyson Perrins School this falls to 30% and at Northleigh School to 14%. This suggests a wide range of deprivation and need across the parish and points to substantial variations within the statistical sample on which CUF draws.

The following data are drawn from the Church Urban Fund Database and are constructed using CUF standard criteria

Comparative poverty – Percentages and ranks	This parish
<p>Child Poverty The proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families. Income deprived families are defined as families that either receive Income Support or income-based Jobseekers Allowance or income-based Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit (Guarantee) or families not in receipt of these benefits but in receipt of Working Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit with an equivalised income (excluding housing benefit) below 60 per cent of the national median before housing costs.</p>	<p>15% Ranked 3070/12239</p>
<p>Pensioner Poverty Percentage The proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation. This includes adults aged 60 or over receiving Income Support or income-based Jobseekers Allowance or income-based Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit (Guarantee).</p> <p>Rank Ranking on the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation older people index, relative to other parishes nationally or in the same diocese. Based on the proportion of all those aged 60 or over who experience income deprivation. This includes adults aged 60 or over receiving Income Support or income-based Jobseekers Allowance or income-based Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit (Guarantee).</p>	<p>10% Ranked 4652/12239</p>
<p>Working age poverty Percentage The proportion of working-age adults who experience income deprivation. This includes those in receipt of Job Seeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance and Carer's Allowance.</p> <p>Rank Ranking on the 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation employment deprivation domain, relative to other parishes nationally or in the same diocese. Based on the proportion of working-age adults who experience income deprivation. This includes those in receipt of Job Seeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance and Carer's Allowance.</p>	<p>11% Ranked 3341/12239</p>

Adult Poverty: CUF estimates Working Age Poverty at 11% and Pensioner Poverty at 10%. This suggests a reasonably comfortable life style for the majority of adults within the parish boundaries. There is no localised alternative measure for these statistics but observation of users of our social outreach programs particularly the Community Fridge suggests that there is a lot of variation across the sample. There is plentiful opportunity for Christian action to provide assistance to the severely needy and disadvantaged.

Key indicators – Percentages	This parish
<p>No qualifications Percentage of adults aged 16 – 70 with no academic, vocational or professional qualifications.</p>	<p>15%</p>
<p>Social housing Percentage of households living in local authority or housing association properties.</p>	<p>16.4%</p>
<p>Older population Percentage of population aged 65 and over. This cohort is substantially over-represented in our congregations.</p>	<p>23.8%</p>
<p>Ethnic diversity Percentage of population who are not white British.</p>	<p>3.8%</p>

The Malvern and Upton Deanery

Time for some blue sky thinking?

Introducing the Malvern & Upton Deanery

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 developing strategic direction

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.



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.



Growing as Kingdom People

As the body of Christ, we join together to worship God, make disciples, share hope, and transform communities.

Kingdom People
love • compassion • justice • freedom

The graphic features three concentric circles on the left. The outermost circle is green and labeled 'Equipping ministers for mission'. The middle circle is blue and labeled 'New worshipping communities'. The innermost circle is purple and labeled 'Renewals'. Below the circles, the text 'Children, families & youth work' is written in a curved path.

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 doesn't 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.

APPENDIX 1

The size and quality of the team available to support the work of the Parish is a particular strength and provides a great resource to sustain and build our outreach and expand our mission further. Here are just some of the names of the folk that we are fortunate to have in different forms of ministry and outreach (as at the date of publication of this parish profile).

Worship

We are enormously blessed by a wide variety of talented and gifted people who support our worshipping life, without whom the richness and diversity of our services would be diminished.

Clergy: Revd James Williams (Curate), Revd Dr Alastair McKay (Associate Priest), Revd Sue Beverly (PTO), Revd Mary Nobles (PTO), Revd Ted Stokes (PTO), Revd Ian Prior (PTO)

Readers: Allen Hudson, Jacqui Green, Mike Hancox, Eileen Tomlin

Schools Chaplain: Vanessa Everitt (employed)

Director of Music: Peter Johnson

Regular Choir Members: Joy Black, Es Hoyle, Liz Johnson, Martin Purser, David Sims and Eileen Tomlin

Our St Peter's Worship Band: Sue Fairchild (violin), Matthew King (bass guitar), Chris Noble (drums), Ella Roberts (keyboard), Peter Thatcher (banjo) and Revd James Williams (guitar)

Our Servers: Richard Tandy (head server), Graham Anderson, Mark Cook, Pauline Gotobed, Pauline Holder, Craig Jones and Sue Tandy.

Our Bell Ringers: led by Ian Panton (Ringing Master)

Our Sacristans: Sue Tandy and Alison Sheehan-Hunt

9:45 Live Streaming Team: Andrew Lane and Graham Rowberry

11:15 Live Streaming Team: Joe Everitt and Andy Smith

Next Gen Team

Our Next Gen Team is one of the healthiest in the Diocese and is led by: Revd James Williams (curate) and Vanessa Everitt (Schools Chaplain) with support from Sarah Clark (Community Builder). We are extremely grateful to our team of dedicated volunteers, without whom we would not be able to develop these new activities.

Monday Tots Volunteers: Deb Cook (ALM – Children and Young People), Alison and David Sims, Olive Wickens, Kit Roberts, Julie MacLusky, Ursula Ashworth and Sandra Eberle

Next Gen Volunteers: Sue Fairchild, Ian Fairchild, Jacqui Green, Julia King, Rosemary Speck, Kit Roberts, Joe Everitt, India Parish, Craig Jones

Community Activities

Community Builder: Sarah Clark (employed with UK Shared Prosperity Fund grant administered by Malvern Hills District Council)

We have a number of volunteers with our Community Fridge, Alongside Café, Warm Space/Friendship Group and other community activities.

We also have a team of volunteers for our Arts activities and events at St Peter's Church Cowleigh (SPARC).

Malvern Dementia Centre

Centre Manager: Es Hoyle (employed). Centre Manager's Assistant: Angela Warburton (employed)

Parish Leads: Anne Hancox and Jane James

Governance and administration

Church wardens: Mark Cook, Richard Tandy and Jane James (newly elected April 2024)

Deputy wardens: Anne Hancox and Ian Fairchild (new roles created April 2024)

Deanery Synod members: Joy Black, Craig Jones, Kit Roberts (PCC Secretary and Electoral Roll Officer), Graham Rowberry

PCC Lay Representatives: Sheilah Daughtree, Tony Eberle (Treasurer), Sue Fairchild, Martin Purser, Sue Tandy, Esther Partridge-Warner (PCC Lay Chair)

Readers Representative on the PCC: Allen Hudson

Also attending the PCC: Revd Dr Alastair McKay (Associate Priest) and Revd James Williams (curate)

Safeguarding

Safeguarding Officer: Joy Black

Assistant Safeguarding Officer: Sue Fairchild

IT and social media

IT Lead: Graham Anderson

We have a social media and publicity task group that works hard to keep our website up to date and to ensure that communications are in good shape.

Parish administration

We have a parish administrator role that is currently vacant and which we are looking to refill by the time the new Priest-in-Charge is appointed.

Thanks and acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who has made this parish profile possible and those who contribute to the life and mission of our parish!

Photos: Ian Thwaites, Craig Jones, Sarah Clark, Revd James Williams, Dyson Perrins, Diocese of Worcester