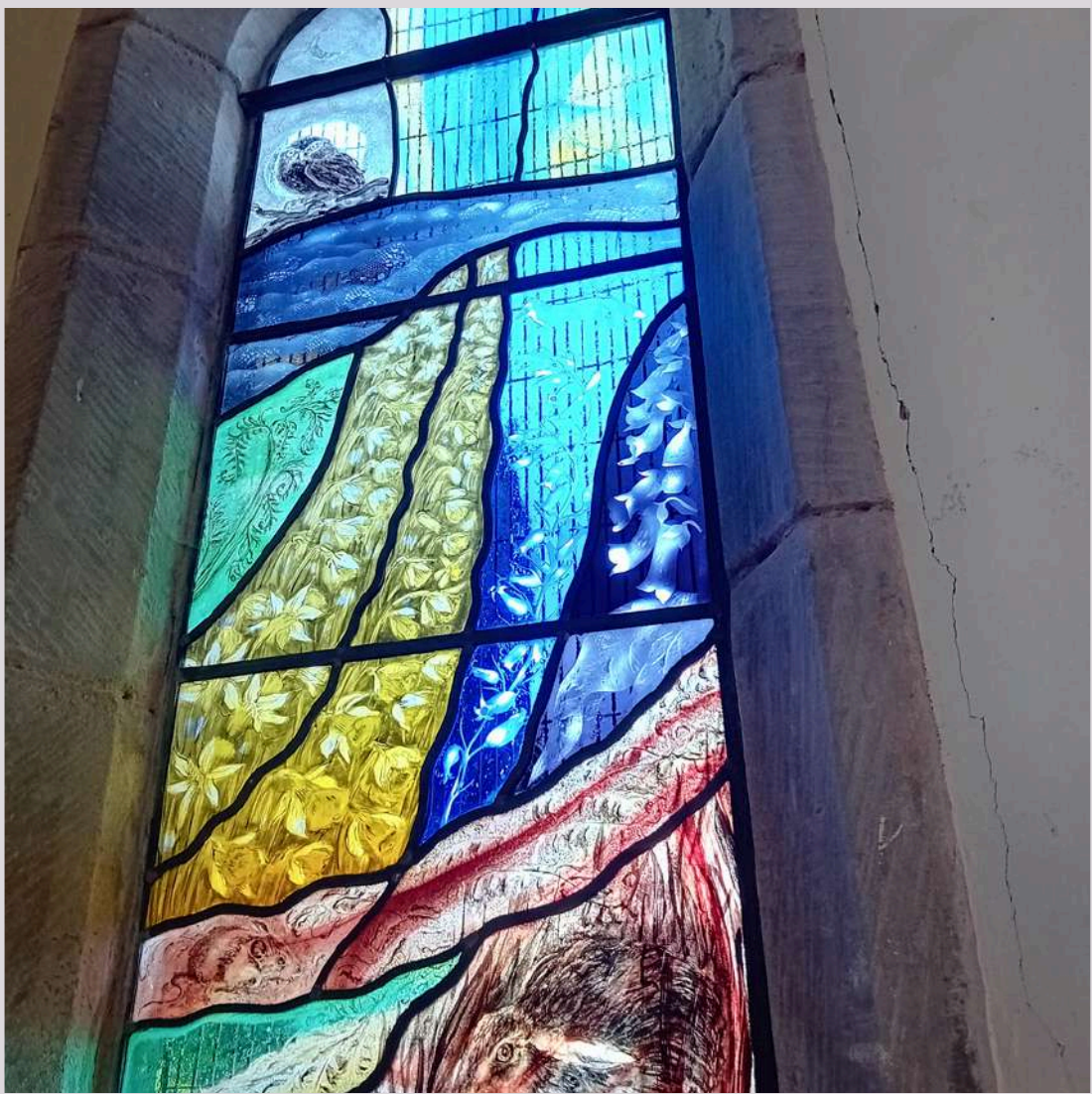


PARISH PROFILE

**BERROW & LONGDON
BENEFICES**

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Welcome

to our idyllic location at the foot of the Malvern Hills that has inspired great music and great faithfulness.

We often reflect how blessed we are to live in some of the most unspoiled countryside in England, which many choose to visit on holiday or for day-trips.

The local economy is shaped by farmland; the position of the area with close motorway links and fast broadband means a diverse range of professions is represented in our congregations and communities. We seek a Priest in Charge with a heart for rural matters who will take an interest in all who live and work here.

Community life is based around a happy combination of the churches, our three church schools, the village halls and the local pubs. We need someone who is going to enter wholeheartedly into our communities, and shine the light of the Gospel for all to see and feel.

As busy and dedicated churchwardens, we work hard with our wonderful teams to care for our beautiful buildings and cherished churchyards, aiming to ensure that they are always places of warmth and welcome to all who visit and worship there.

Together we extend the warmest of welcomes to the person who will lead us on the next step of our journey. In this profile, we hope to give you an idea of who we are, what matters to us, and our vision for the future.

We look forward to meeting you!

The Churchwardens & all the teams from the Benefices of Berrow & Longdon



Our Vision

Our vision is that together we may grow

Deeper in faith - through prayer and study of scripture, so that we are always open to the transforming grace of God

Broader in reach - that we may share the eternal love of God with all our communities through word and deed, growing faithful disciples to carry on His work

Simpler in organisation - by increasing our collaboration and improving our administration, whilst continuing to celebrate the distinctiveness of our individual churches

Who are we looking for?

A leader who

- can connect with, befriend and bring Christ's love to people in our rural benefices
- has a love of the scriptures and is gifted in communicating their truths with grace and clarity to all
- can facilitate and encourage the teamwork we see as so valuable, so enjoyable - and so necessary
- has a heart for the occasional offices and warmly welcomes all outreach opportunities



Our Benefices

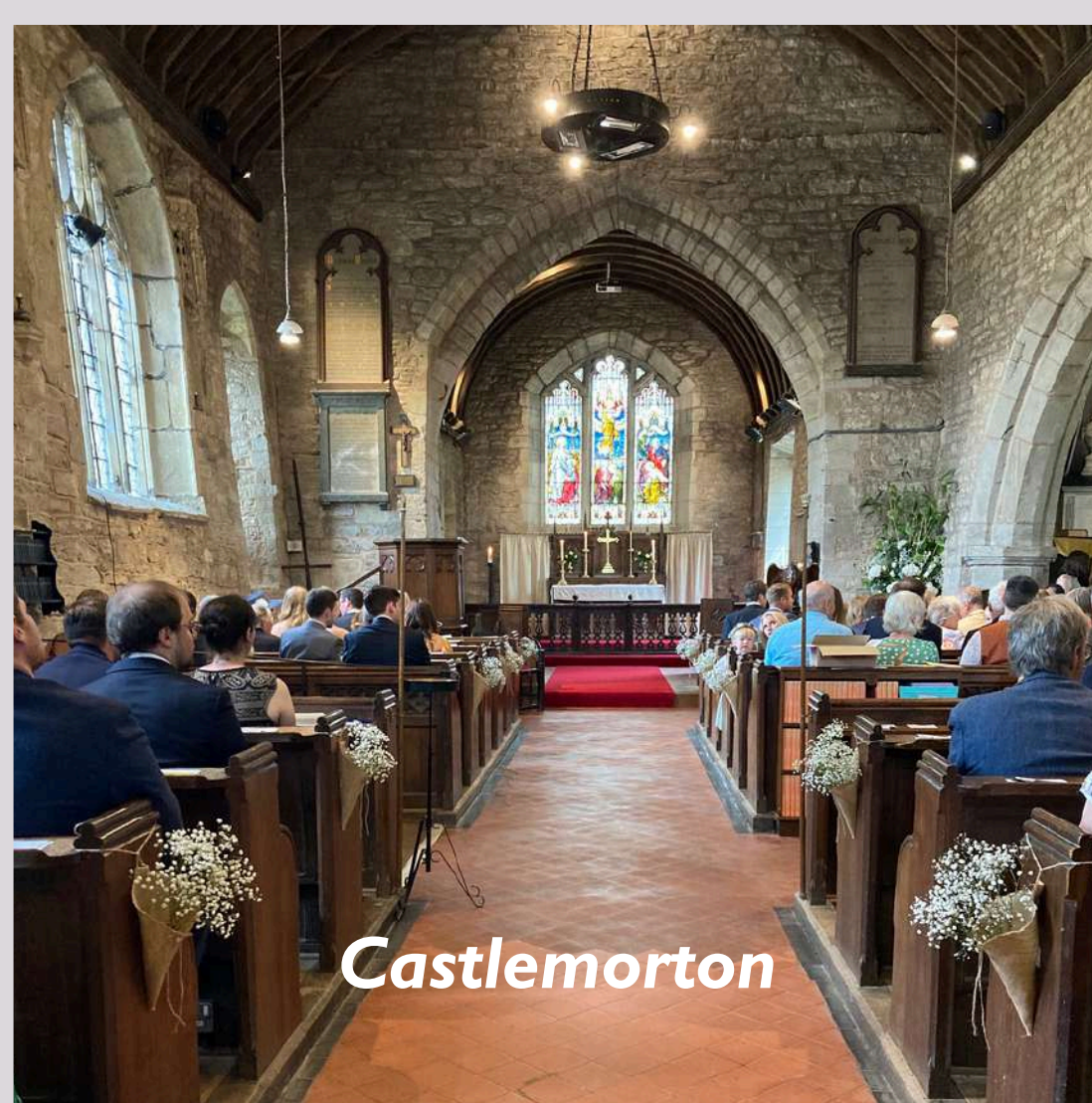
The **Benefice of Berrow** covers the Parishes of Berrow with Pendock, Eldersfield, Hollybush & Birtsmorton

The **Benefice of Longdon** covers the Parishes of Longdon, Bushley, Castlemorton and Queenhill with Holdfast

The **Berrow Benefice** largely reflects its mediaeval past with houses and farms mainly dispersed along the lanes. The three mediaeval churches are set deep in the beautiful countryside: St Faith's, Berrow, St John the Baptist, Eldersfield and St Thomas of Canterbury, with St Peter & St Paul, Birtsmorton. Two charming smaller churches, All Saints at Hollybush and the Church of the Redeemer, Pendock Cross, are Victorian, built in response to the movement of settlement to the arterial roads.

The delightful villages and hamlets of the **Longdon Benefice** all have fine churches at their centre. St Gregory's, Castlemorton and St Nicholas', Queenhill are mediaeval; as well as St Mary's Longdon which was then rebuilt in the 18th century. St Peter's Bushley, also in the heart of the village, was built in the 19th century, a replacement for the original mediaeval church. Bredon School near Bushley is an independent school specialising in dyslexia.

We have worked very hard to make our churches 'fit for purpose' whilst maintaining their historic character. Castlemorton and Longdon have modern kitchens, toilets and social spaces. The proximity of churches to our community halls is really useful in sharing facilities as at Berrow, Bushley and Queenhill. We use our churches for a wide range of community events, concerts, film nights and talks, as well as for art and craft exhibitions. Where possible, we've installed automatic door-openers; and we are committed to keeping our churches open daily.



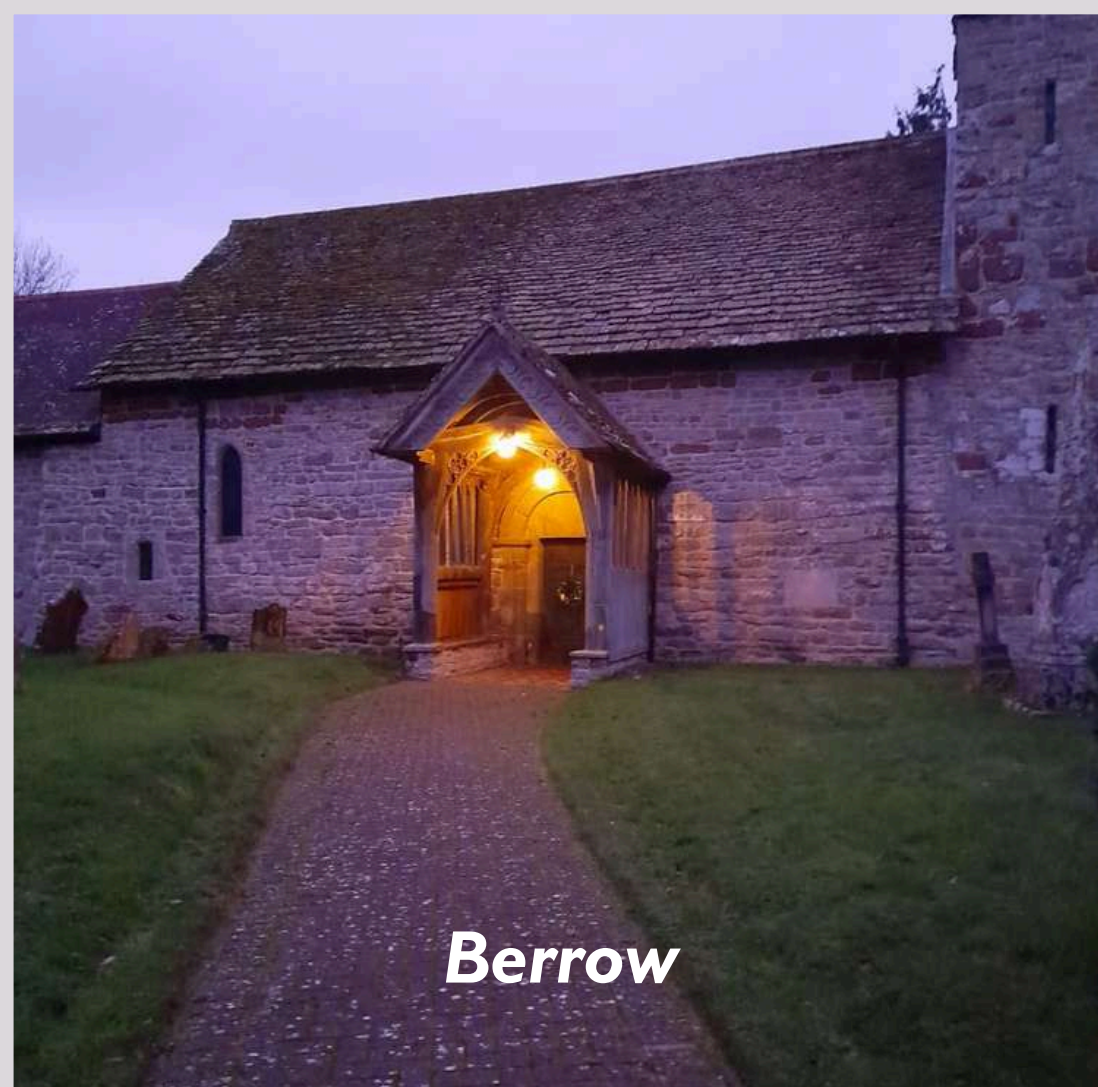
Castlemorton



Eldersfield



Bushley



Berrow

Worship

Our ethos is to be a broad church, sharing the good news of Jesus Christ in a variety of ways from the Book of Common Prayer (BCP) to All Age Worship and everything in between. And, of course, to be there for our communities at times of joy and of sorrow in our occasional offices.

Our main act of worship is 10.30 am every Sunday, usually a eucharistic service using the seasonal Common Worship text. Since the coming together of the two benefices, many of us have enjoyed travelling around, visiting new churches and getting to know a whole new set of fellow disciples – we very much like to think of ourselves as benefice people.

We are blessed with many other worship leaders, both lay and ordained, who act as a real resource to support the incumbent and to give the congregations a variety of voices and preaching styles. One Non Stipendiary Minister (NSM), one retired but still very active priest, a Licensed Lay Minister (LLM) and two Authorised Lay Ministers (ALMs) are all available to preach, lead and, in the case of the two clergy, to celebrate at our communion services. In addition, we have two worship leading groups of talented lay people leading our All Age Worship and Kaleidoscope services.

We try new ways: we've come out of our churches and worshipped on the hills, in our churchyards and along the lanes with Walking Church. We welcome dogs to all our services. We have worshipped in new venues: Church@School and Café Church in our village halls. We have also maintained online worship with Zoom Compline weekly.

Morning services are always followed by hospitality and the chance to enjoy fellowship.



Michael, LLM



Jeremy, ALM



Trish, ALM





Worship

<u>Day</u>	<u>Church</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Service</u>
First Sunday	Queenhill	10.30 am	Holy Communion
	Hollybush	6.30 pm	Evensong *
Second Sunday	Bushley	8.30 am	BCP Holy Communion
	Birtsmorton	10.30 am	Holy Communion
	Castlemorton	6.30 pm	Kaleidoscope *
Third Sunday	Eldersfield /	10.30 am	All Age Worship *
	Pendock Cross		
Fourth Sunday	Castlemorton	10.30 am	Family Communion
	Eldersfield	8.30 am	BCP Holy Communion
	Longdon	10.30 am	Holy Communion / Morning Prayer *
	Berrow	10.30 am	Holy Communion / Morning Prayer *
Every Friday	Zoom	7.00 pm	Compline *

* **Lay-led** service
Compline led online by David, ALM & Doug, lay worship leader

Ceiling detail, Longdon

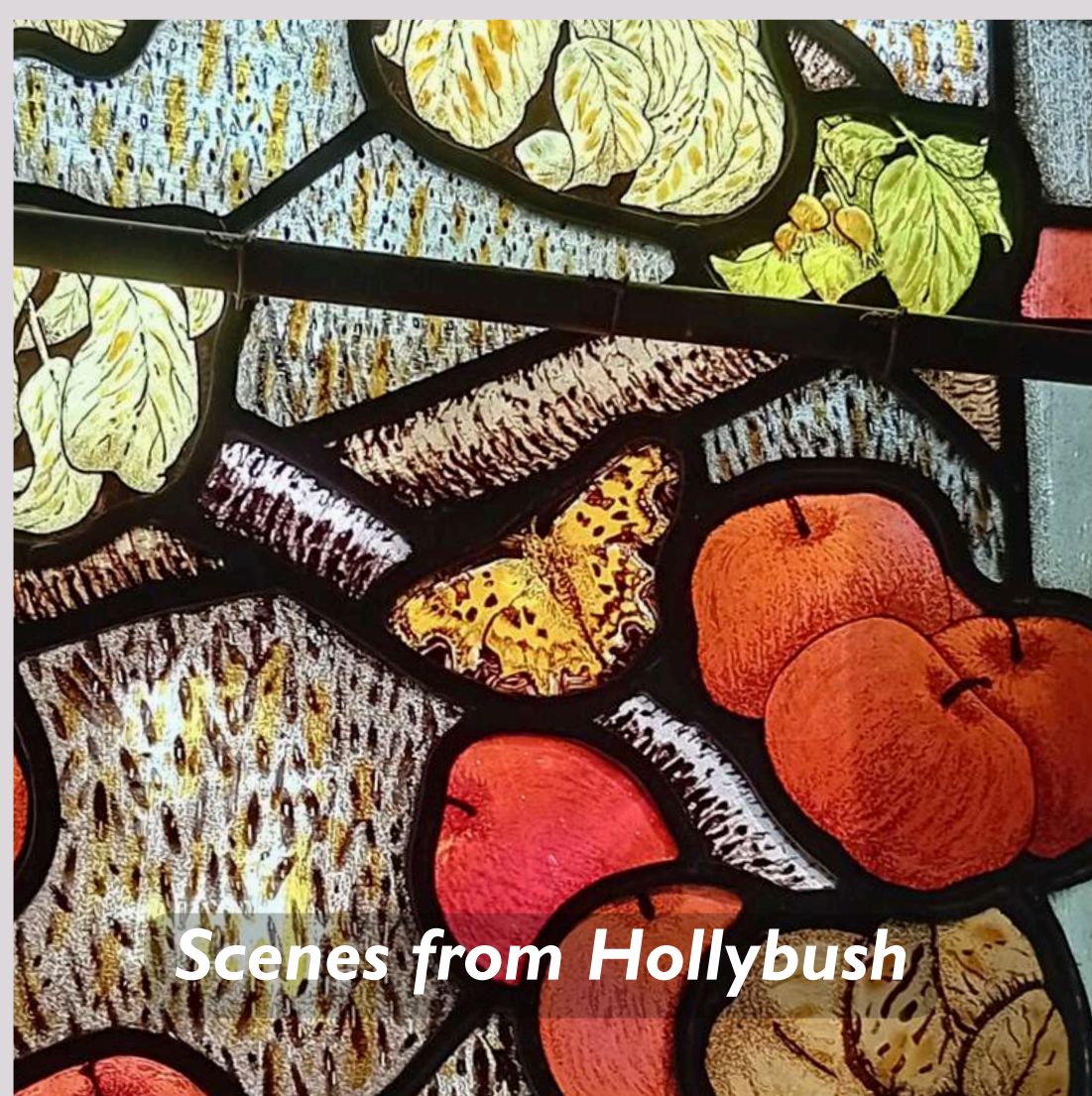




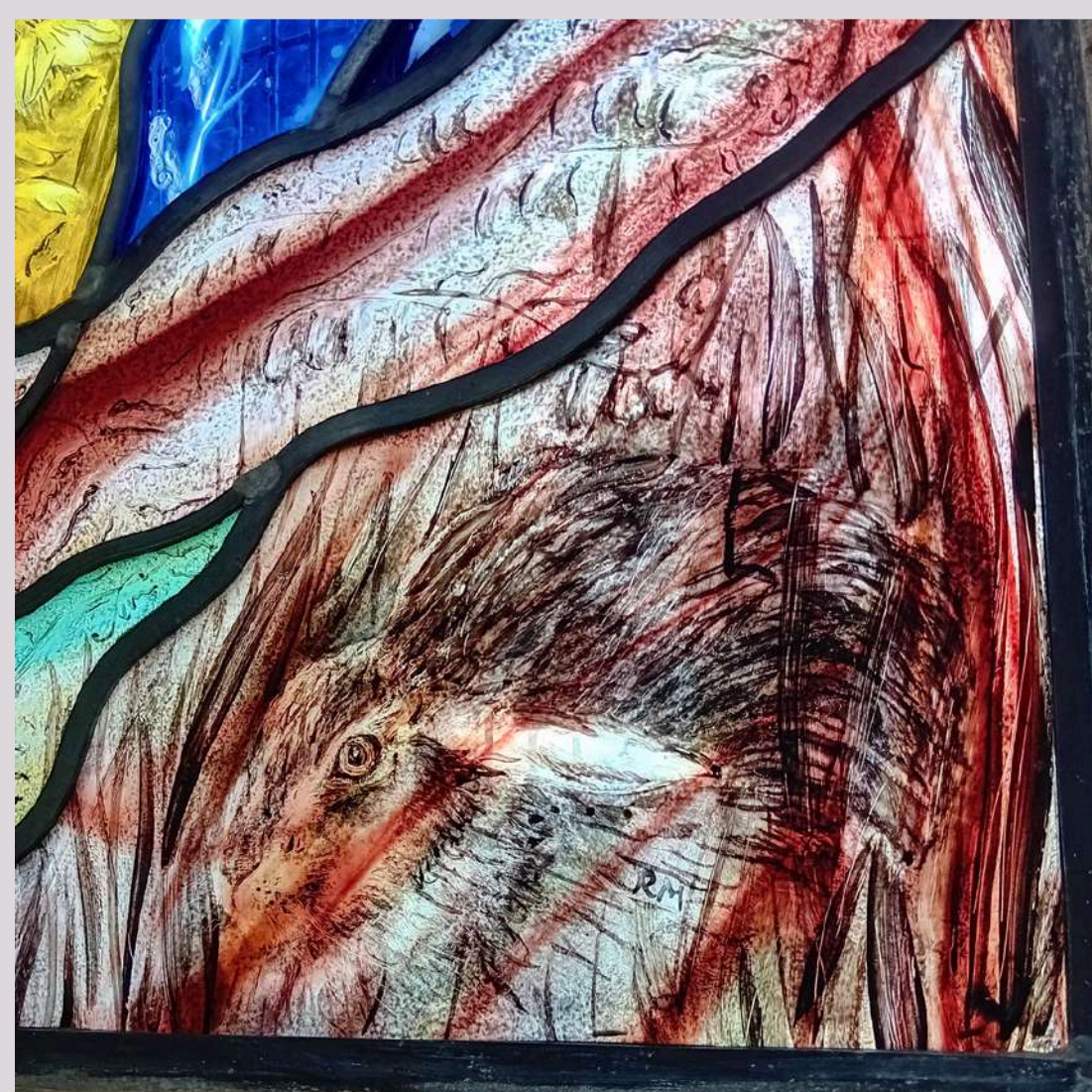
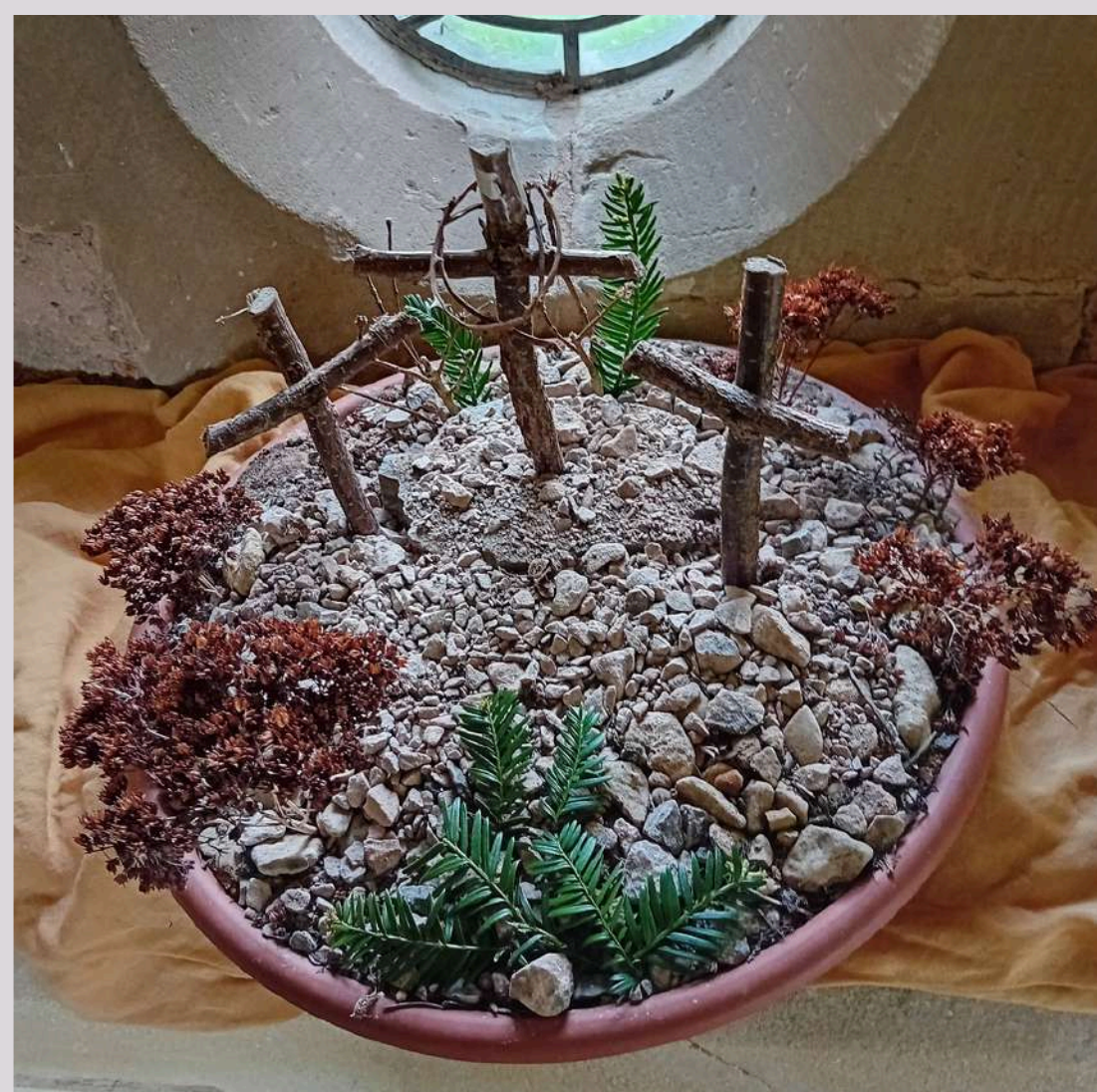
Swifts resident at Berrow each summer



We work together



Scenes from Hollybush



Who we are & what we do

We work well together. There is a really affectionate spirit of co-operation and engagement amongst the benefices, which extends to the deanery and diocesan community.

We are committed to high standards of Safeguarding. Berrow Benefice has a joint Parish Safeguarding Officer; Longdon Benefice has individual officers for each parish.

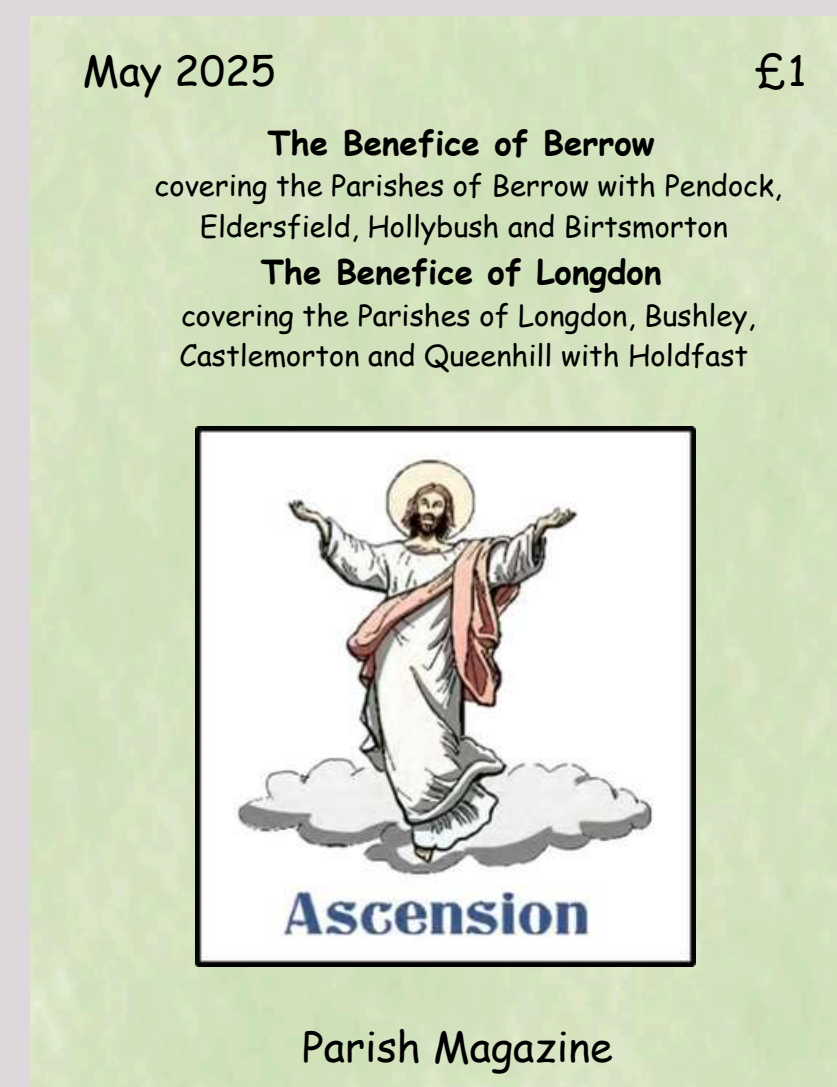
We care for each other. Our Pastoral Visitor quietly moves amongst our congregations to support those in particular need.

We see and assume responsibility, and help each other. Teamwork is really clear in the preparation for worship through to lay participation in worship and of course, tidying up afterwards!

We care for our churches and churchyards. We share tasks of maintenance and our dedication encourages others to volunteer.

We know it's important to keep good records and try hard to be conscientious about this for future generations.

We loyally follow the Christian commitment to devote ourselves to the Community. We serve and lead on our parish councils and as governors at our church schools, and in local charities.



We cherish each other

We value the traditional – and are up for the new!

We try to give a really warm welcome. We look out for ways to help each other and we make sure visitors feel at home.

We're interested in our natural heritage. We take part in the environmental “A Rocha” Church Project and support Sustainable Church Flowers.

We love music making. We have been blessed with highly talented organists. At Castlemorton, CaCoffany, a delightful monthly session of fellowship and hymn singing, is held; and the Berrow Benefice Choir sings at festival services and weddings with lovely enthusiasm.

We value our splendid bell-ringers who practise regularly at Castlemorton and Eldersfield, and ring for weddings and special occasions. Handbells are rung regularly at Bushley.

We like learning. Bible study and Lent courses are thought-provoking, when we get to know each other better.

We enjoy celebrating. Our churches look wonderful at Christmas and there is a whole range of services, mainly lay-led. We love gathering gifts for the Samaritan's Purse shoeboxes.

Bushley PCC members said it for us all –

The church is located in the centre of the village and is very much the heart of the community in good times and bad.



Our Schools

Our benefices are blessed with three successful Voluntary Controlled (VC) primary schools at Castlemorton, Eldersfield and Pendock, set at the heart of their communities in the beautiful Worcestershire countryside. A rich variety of activities is provided to cater for all needs, including wonderful opportunities for outdoor learning. This ensures that high standards are achieved and children are happy to come to school and keen to learn.

The schools have strong Christian visions and maintain close links with their local churches. The incumbent takes regular assemblies at all three schools and the **Open the Book team** visits Pendock and Eldersfield weekly. Children play an active part in collective worship and lead services in church at Christmas, Easter and Harvest Festival which are attended by parents and other members of the local community.

All three schools are rated Good by Ofsted and performed well in their most recent Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) inspections. They are enthusiastically supported by parents, and members of the church community also play a leading role as governors.

For further information:

<https://www.castlemortonprimaryschool.co.uk>

<https://www.eldersfieldlawn.worcs.sch.uk>

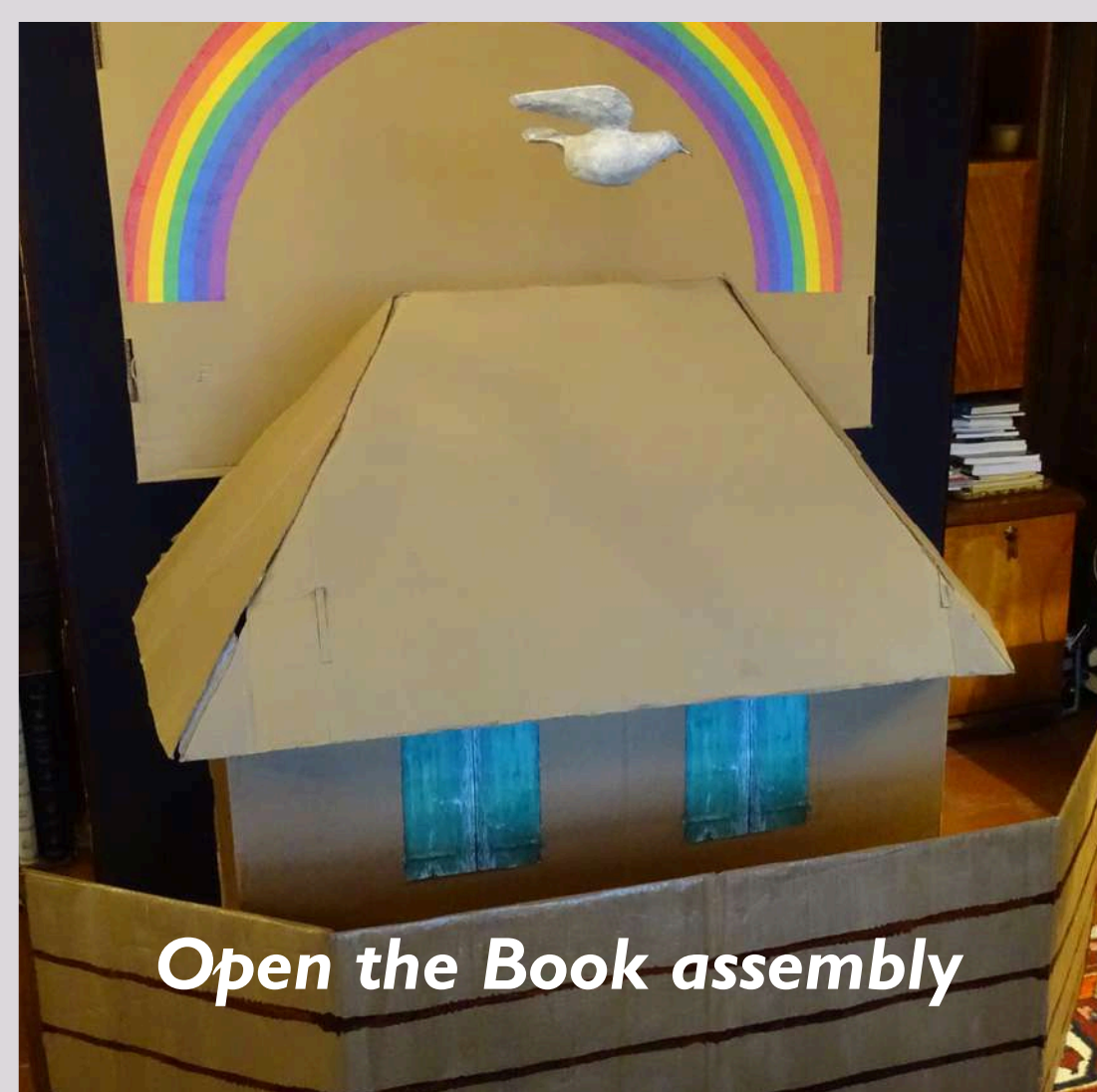
<https://www.pendockprimary.co.uk>



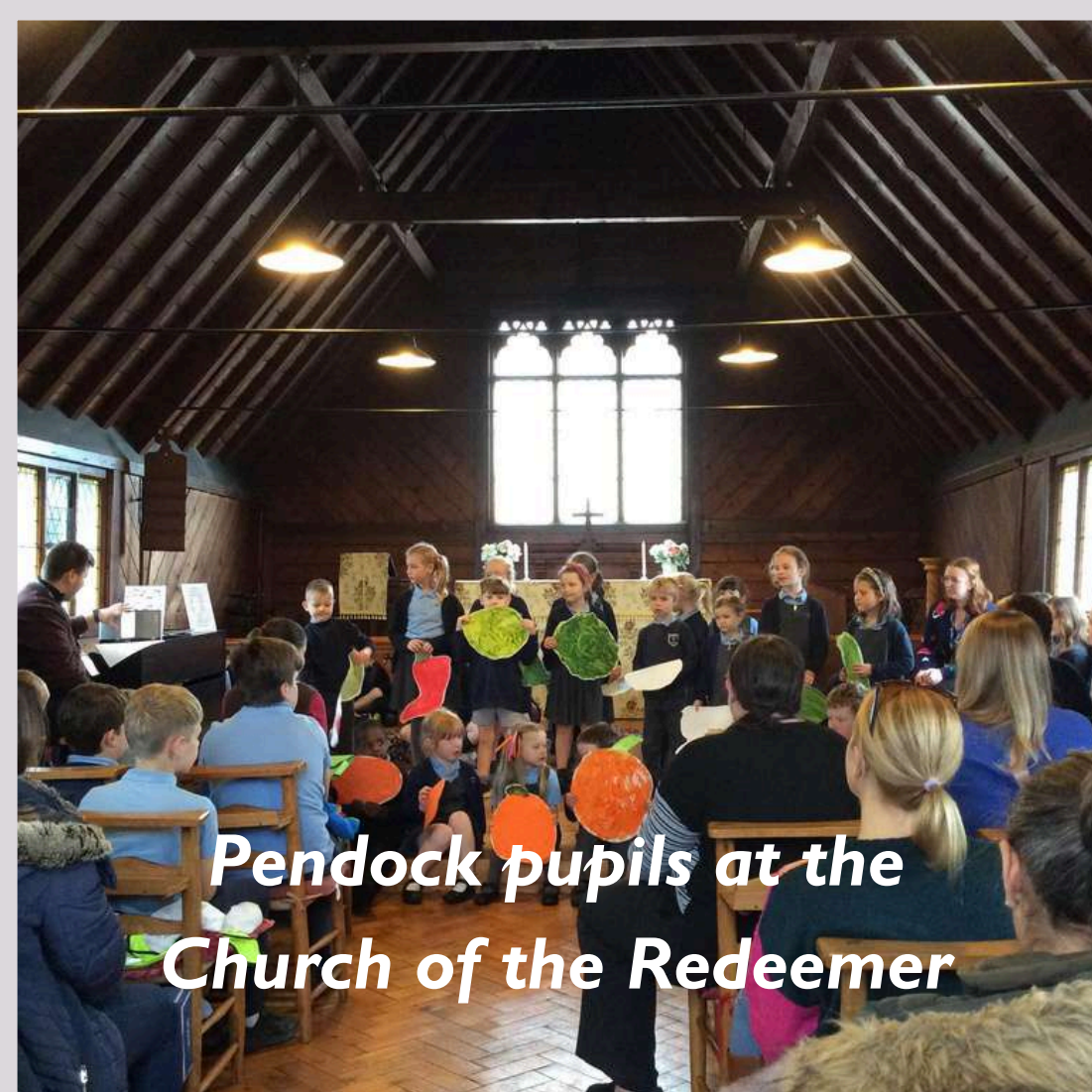
**Castlemorton pupils at
St Gregory's Church**



Eldersfield School



Open the Book assembly



**Pendock pupils at the
Church of the Redeemer**

Wedding Outreach

Berrow Benefice's Wedding Outreach

One of the major forms of outreach for Berrow Benefice is our wedding ministry, centred upon Birtsmorton Church, because of its proximity to Birtsmorton Court, a successful and popular wedding venue.

Why are we enthusiastic about this ministry?

Most of our couples need to establish a qualifying connection to the benefice via attendance at our services over a six month period; thus we have huge opportunity to make connections with them and their families, to preach the gospel to them and to sow seeds of faith. Sometimes we see these seeds germinate into confirmations and baptisms, and even if we don't make the harvest directly, we know that through this ministry we are able to reach an age group which is normally missing from our pews – and whose attendance lifts and enlivens our Sunday congregations.

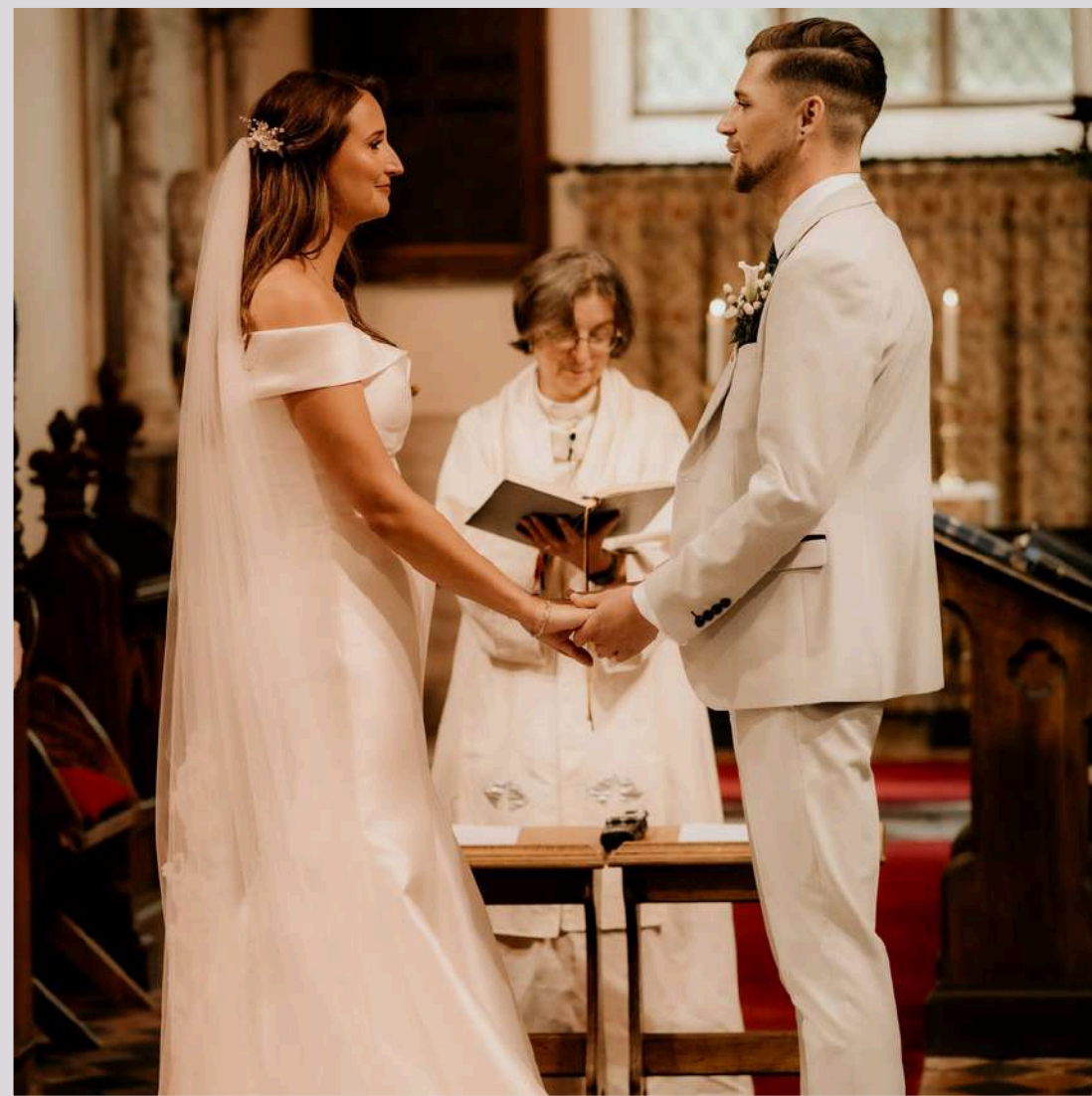
How is this ministry resourced?

We hope that our new Priest will share our enthusiasm for this joyous ministry, one which is shared by non-stipendiary and retired clergy who take on a share of the weddings each year, and a very engaged and active team of volunteer vergers who both assist on the day and also love chatting to couples and their families at services. Underpinning all of this, we also have a highly efficient administrator to handle the paperwork and many of the routine queries which couples often have.

Looking to the future

We rejoice in this ministry but fully understand the commitment adds to the busy and interesting life of ministry and mission in our parishes. Therefore, we are working with Birtsmorton Court and Diocesan officers to develop a sustainable and manageable model for this important ministry in order to enable it to continue to thrive long term.

<https://birtsmortoncourt.com>



Your Home

Thistledown is a spacious four bedroom detached family home situated in the village of Lower Pendock opposite Pendock School with views of the Malvern Hills.

Pendock lies close to the Gloucestershire and Herefordshire borders with easy access to the nearby towns of Ledbury, Malvern and Tewkesbury, and twelve miles from Gloucester. Junction 2 of the M50 motorway is approximately two miles away and both Ledbury and Malvern have main line railway stations.

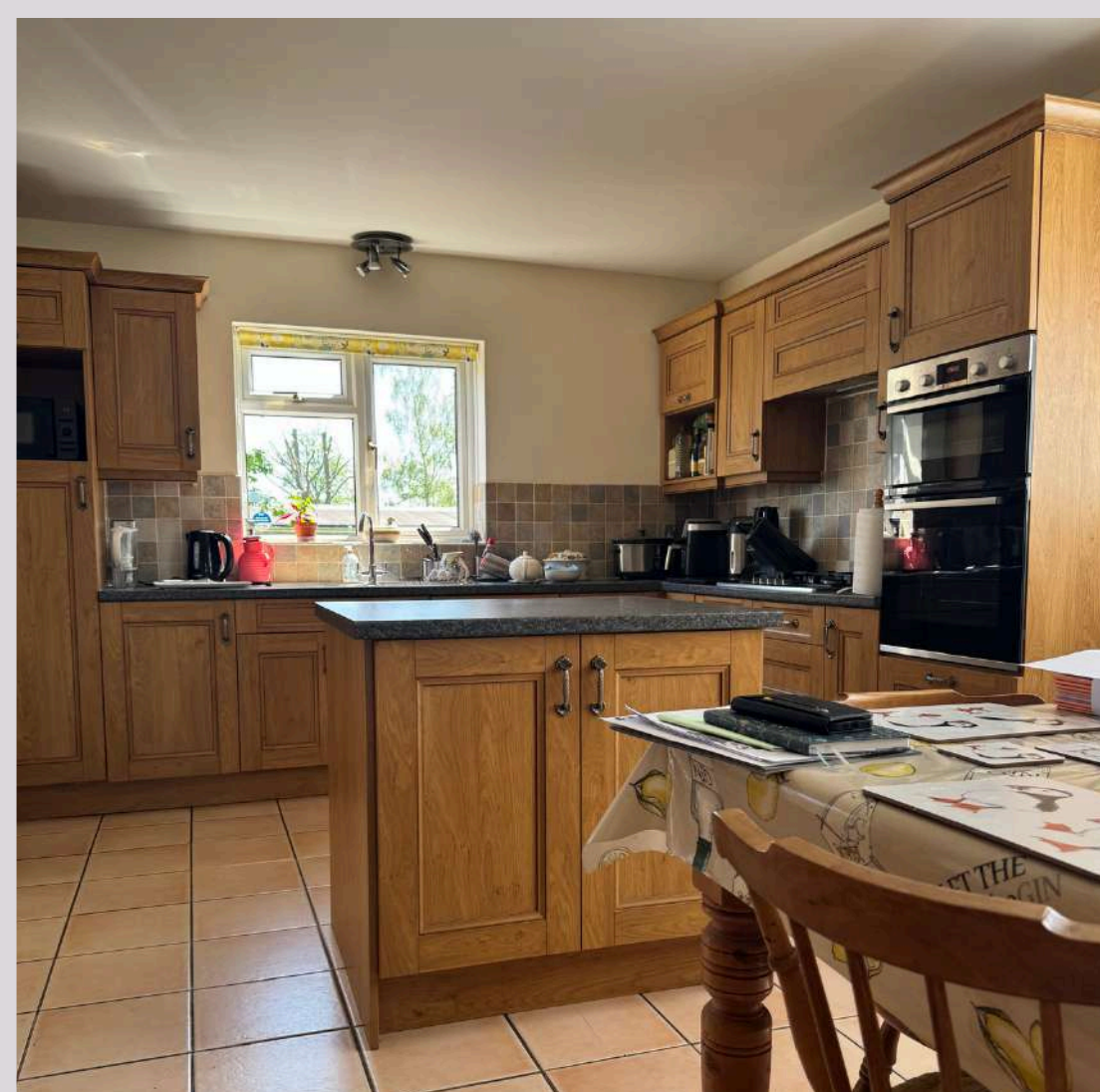
Thistledown, Pendock, Gloucester GL19 3PW

Built in the 1990s and further modernised in 2014, Thistledown offers bright and airy accommodation comprising large open-plan lounge with dining area and patio doors to garden, spacious kitchen with breakfast bar, utility / WC, study, downstairs cloakroom, four bedrooms (master en-suite), family bathroom and garage with further ample driveway parking.

A separate front door leading to study and downstairs cloakroom affords extra privacy to working and family areas.

A mature garden at the rear of the house, mainly laid to lawn, overlooks open countryside and the nearby Malvern Hills.

The property benefits from Flogas heating and there is also a wood burner in the lounge.



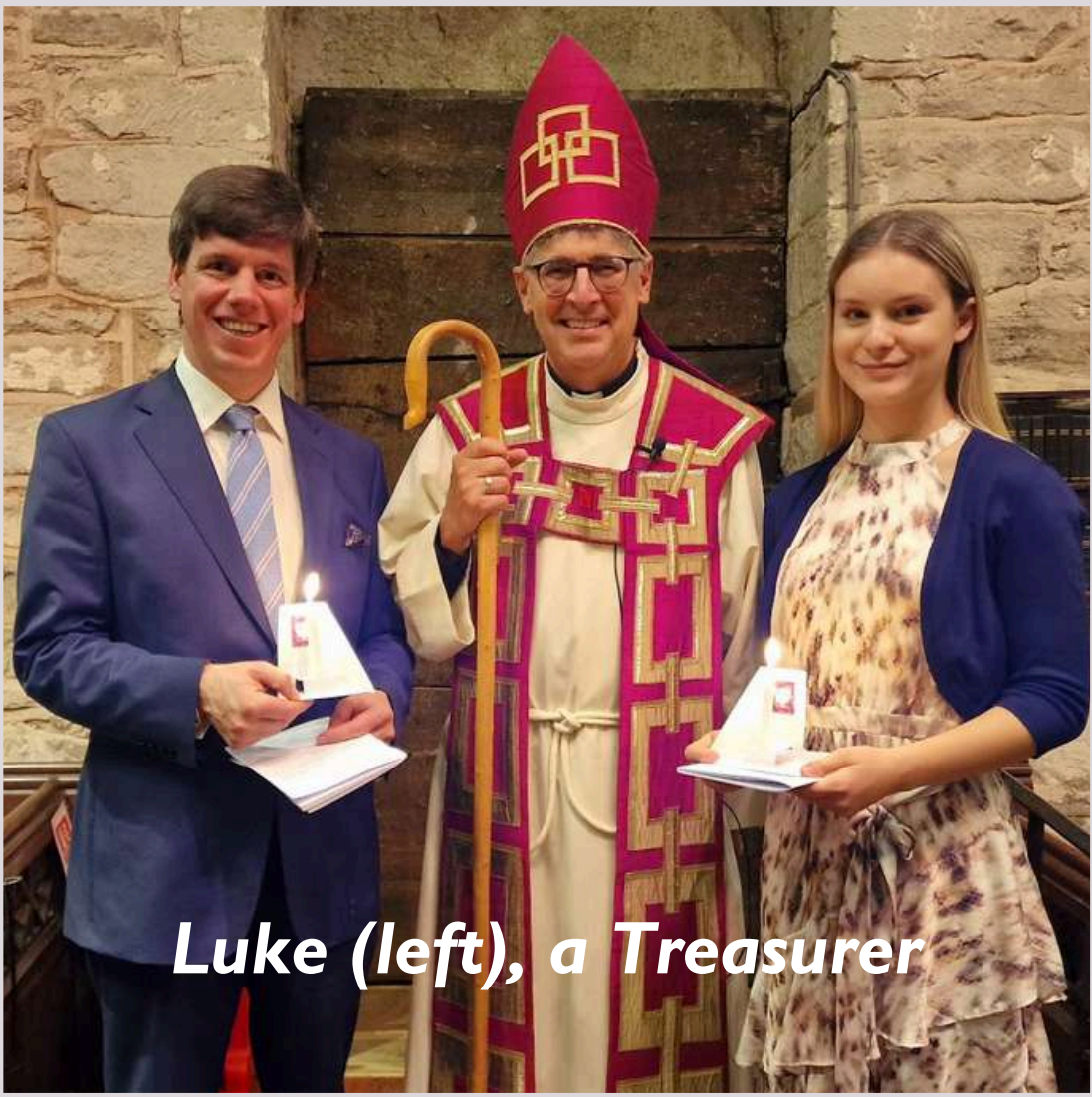
Finance

The generous giving and enthusiastic fundraising of our parishioners mean we are reasonably financially secure and are able to make long-term decisions about how best to develop our ministry and maintain and develop our buildings.

There is a real financial expertise amongst our treasurers, many of whom utilise experience gained in business or accountancy, and all of whom are very committed members of our congregations.

They are realistic optimists, who understand that there is always work to be financed on our beautiful buildings - the spire repair project at St Mary's Longdon being a case in point at the moment - but we are fortunate in also having access to grant gaining expertise amongst our congregations.

They are also concerned to move with the times and to recognise the diminishing use of cash in society in general which impacts on our collection plates. Strategies to combat this include encouraging regular giving by standing order and researching ways to accept donations online or via a device.



Luke (left), a Treasurer



Spire project at Longdon

Income		
Giving	95,553	Collections, standing orders & Gift Aid
Parochial fees	23,811	Parochial fees & occasional office income
Net fundraising income	8,268	Net fundraising receipts
Other	88,591	Legacies & one-off donations
Total income	216,223	
Expenses		
Ministry Share	84,509	Ministry Share, paid in full in 2024
Running costs	75,569	Costs of worship & operating our churches
Investments	40,743	Investments in Berrow's bells and Bushley's fabric
Other	8,135	Charitable donations and other items
Total expenses	208,956	
Surplus	7,267	Before interest & dividends received
Reserves	816,897	Total reserves, including bank accounts

Giving

There's been much resourcefulness in raising funds to pay the Ministry Share and to care for our wonderful buildings. The Landmark Appeal secured the spire at Eldersfield with a grant from English Heritage, also to restore the bells. Experience from this project encouraged an appeal to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a 'belt and braces' restoration and to install state of the art lighting at Berrow. The rare wooden mission church at Pendock Cross, built only to last for 30 years in 1889, is still going strong and its foundations were secured by a project in 2015. There are plans for a kitchen and toilet at Hollybush.

Fund-raising events are successfully held and seen as an excellent way of engaging the wider community; the support benefice people give to each other's churches is a key way in which we have all got to know each other really well, and genuinely live by – a problem shared is a problem solved.

The worth of volunteering expertise and time is huge and we have a very impressive range of specialists who gift us their time and skills. This applies to the excellent care of our bell towers and bells, as well as those with a wealth of knowledge - on energy, the environment (particularly bats and swifts), church lighting, furniture conservation – all generously helping us. There is a fantastic commitment to maintaining our churchyards, and even the opening of gardens to pick flowers all show the level of local investment in our church communities.

We know that God loves cheerful givers so we give generously to a range of charities throughout the year.



Fundraiser at Eldersfield



Heritage Lottery Fund award



*Malcolm our bells advisor
(far left)*

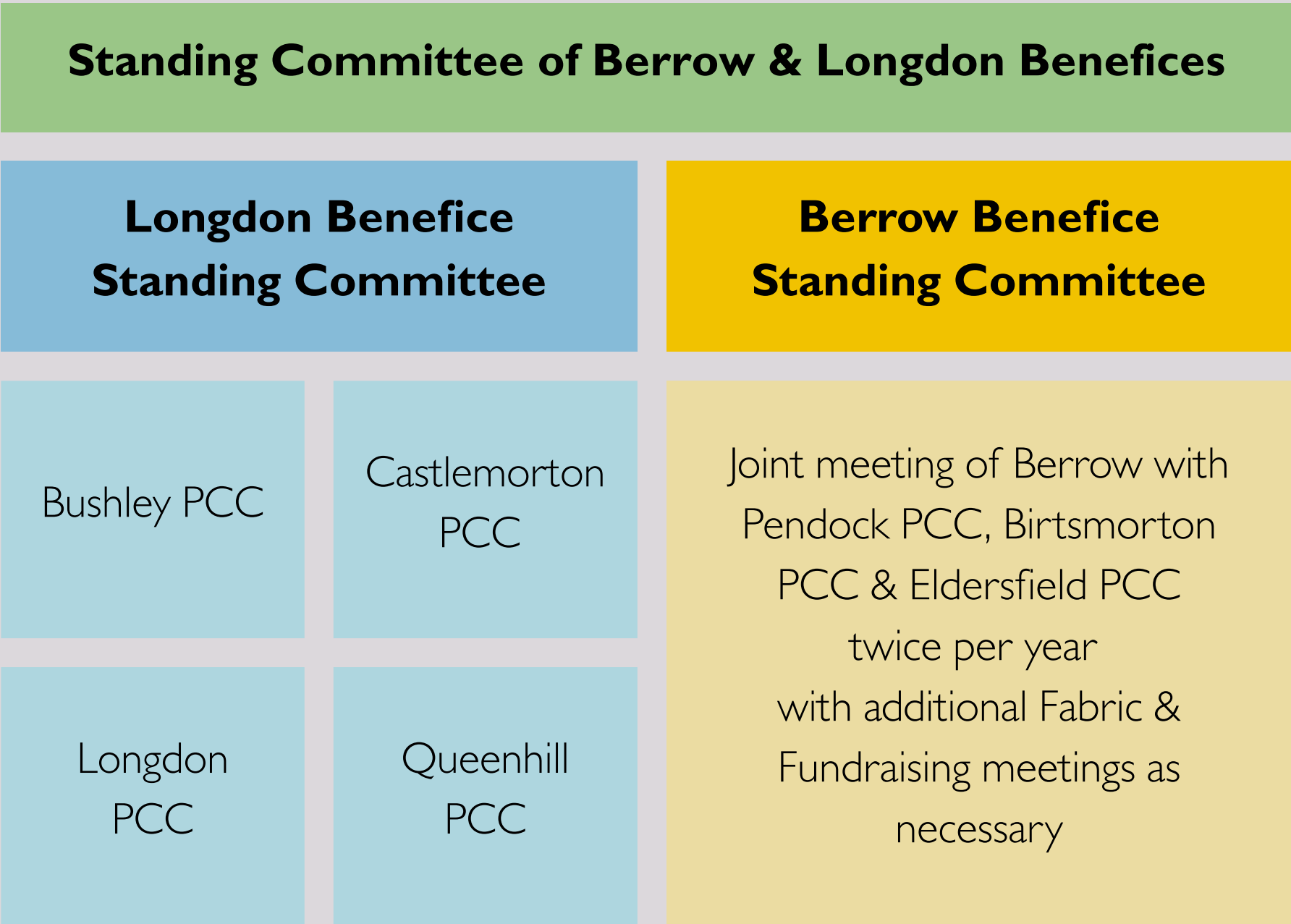
Churchwarden Janet (far right)



Governance

We have been actively working together as the Berrow and Longdon Benefices for over a year, although for legal reasons we remain two separate benefices. It has been most encouraging to experience the willingness to embrace changes for our congregations and PCCs to work effectively together. The wider community’s response has also been very positive.

This diagram summarises where we are in the ongoing process of combining and simplifying our governance.



The Berrow Benefice has a decade of experience of working together and the Longdon Benefice is benefitting from this as we continue our journey and become closer. We are seeking a new Priest in Charge who will build on these strong foundations, encouraging collaborative working while recognising the parishes’ individuality and management of their own finances, buildings and mission.

Lovely details from our churches (right)



Our Area

Surveys regularly feature the Malvern Hills area amongst the ‘Best place to live & visit in England’.

Malvern was probably named by the Ancient Britons – and means ‘bald hill’. Down the south end of the Malvern Hills, the terrain is much prettier; there are mystic and romantic names for the hills and little hamlets, ‘White-leaved Oak’, ‘Midsummer’ and ‘Ragged Stone’. At Longdon Marsh, an impressive restoration project aims to recreate an important wetland site for a wonderful array of birds and wildlife. This is a fabulous area to walk and to enjoy the natural environment.

The pubs in the area are terrific and really debunk all the gloomy reports in the papers about pubs closing nationally. The Farmers Arms, the Butchers Arms, the Hunters Inn, the Robin Hood and the Duke of York are all great signals of the rural community, and the Harvest Auction and Carol Singing are favourite occasions in the shape of the year – also raising important sums of money for local charities.

The characterful towns of Malvern, Ledbury and Tewkesbury have lots on offer, and take a pride in promoting independent businesses. There are theatres in all three; and the Three Counties Showground is busy with events all year.

Nearby **Upton on Severn**, straddling the great river, hosts a number of musical weekends with the Jazz Festival a highlight.

You do of course see **Grocery store vans beetling around** the lanes which has for so many transformed ‘country living’ to make all sorts of things easily available!



Our Diocese



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 2025 – 2030

Over the next few years, we aim to:

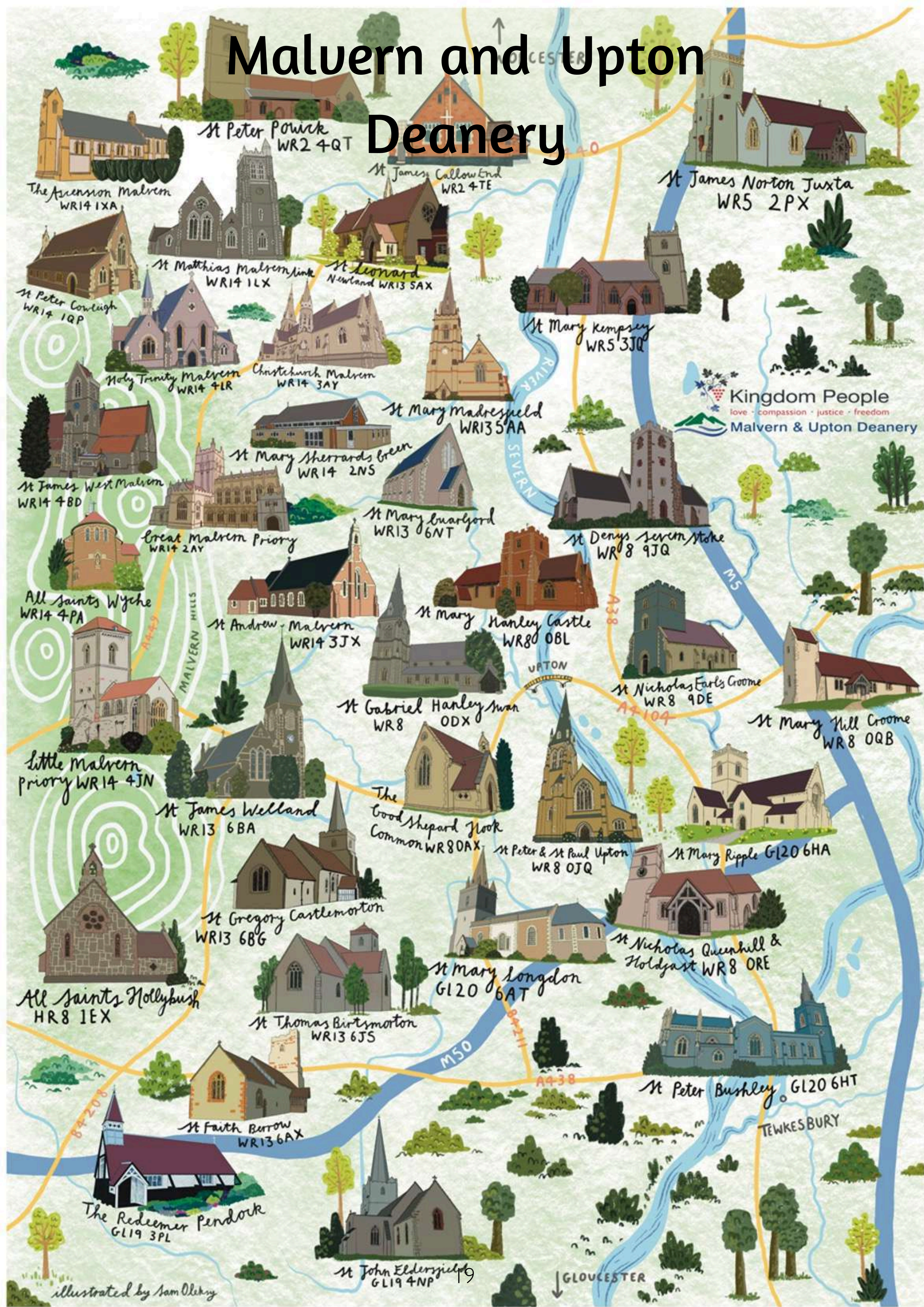
- Double the number of children and young people worshipping in our churches
- Create 100 new worshipping communities offering a range of ways for people to come to faith and worship God. (e.g. Forest Church / Café Church / Walking Church).
- Invest in the renewal of around a dozen churches to ensure 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.

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.

Malvern and Upton Deanery



illustrated by Sam Oleky

Introducing the Malvern & Upton Deanery



We're one of the six deaneries of the Diocese of Worcester. We have a mandate to transform the life of our churches in line with the 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 on Severn, the deanery is an eclectic mix of expanding new housing and rural villages, farmland and agri-economy, tourist attractions, places for concerts and places for festivals, walking trails, traveller sites and a few stately homes.

We have churches straddling the hills and we have churches that endure river floods. We have tourist hotspots and commuter dormitories. 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 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 for 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 regionally 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 (including tourism, rural mission, ministry to new housing developments, dementia care and older persons' care/home support, an arts church 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 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 (such as administration, safeguarding, treasury and 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 who 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!



Concert at Eldersfield



Do come and
meet us!

