



Parishes together in rural Wiltshire in the  
Devizes Deanery in the Diocese of Salisbury

## The Benefice of Rowde and Bromham

### Rowde

- St Matthew

### Bromham, Chittoe & Sandy Lane

- St Nicholas, Bromham
- St Mary the Virgin & St Nicholas,  
Sandy Lane



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## A message from Bishop Andrew



Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in the post of Rector for the Benefice of Rowde & Bromham. The benefice is part of the ancient See of Ramsbury in the Diocese of Salisbury. Ramsbury, which covers much of Wiltshire, is rich in spiritual heritage, from the cathedral city of Salisbury and the valleys of its five rivers, up to the Marlborough Downs. God is in this place, and it offers an enriching context for ministry and mission today. I am looking for devoted and visionary clergy, who can inspire and guide our communities in 'Making Jesus Known'.

This benefice has not been without its challenges in recent years, but there are opportunities, too, and you will be supported by the active and prayerful ministry teams who have been guiding and supporting the parishes during a lengthy vacancy.

In the Diocese of Salisbury, we place a high value on the encouragement and pastoral support of our parish clergy and, should God guide you to serve here, you will become part of a committed and collaborative team.

Please contact the Ramsbury office (01722 438662) if you need any assistance with your enquiry and be assured of my prayers as you seek the Lord's will for your future.

Sincerely in Christ,

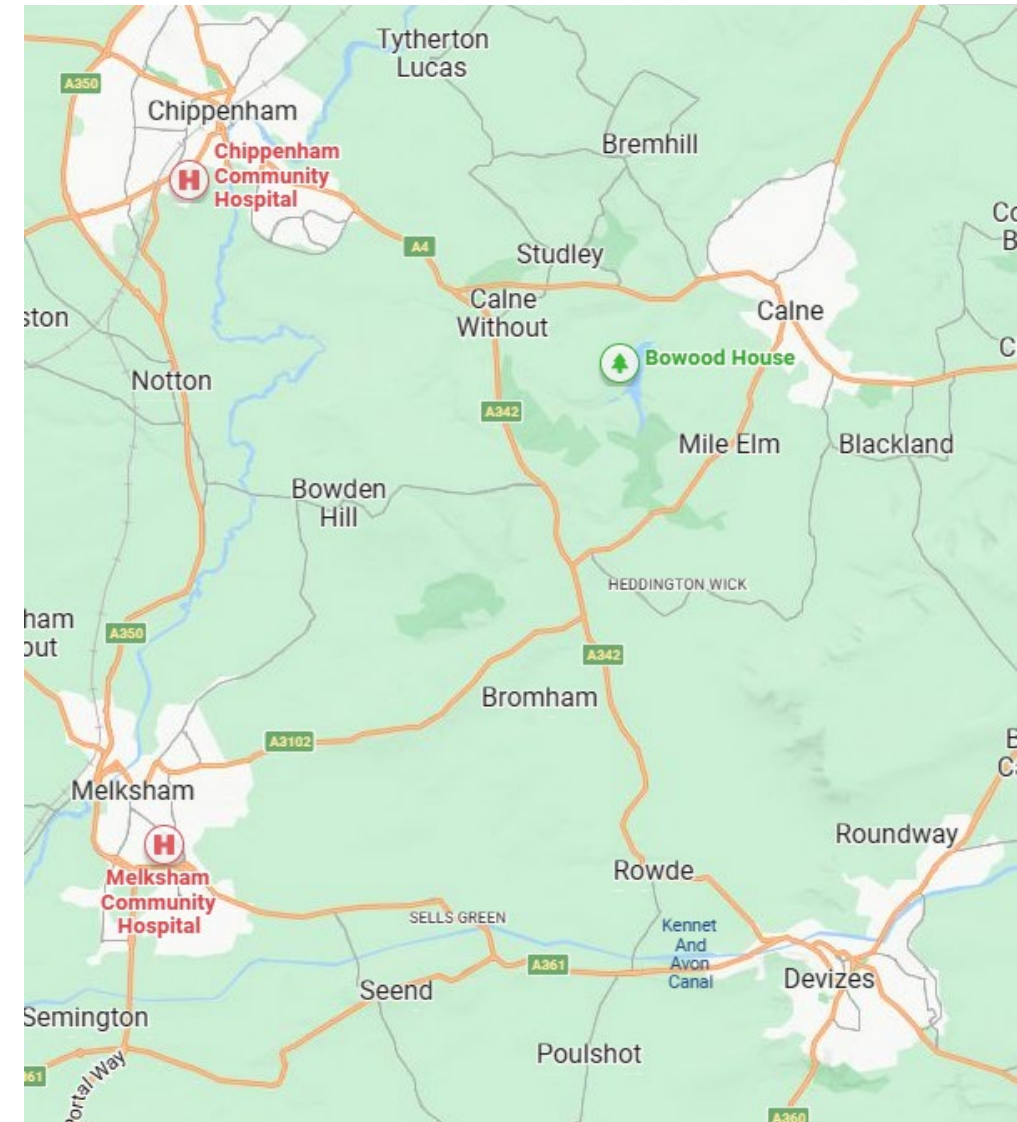
+ Andrew Ramsbury

# Where we are

We're delighted that you're reading this profile and considering whether God is calling you to lead the benefice. Wiltshire is a wonderful place to live and we are blessed to be in beautiful countryside at the foot of Roundway Down, near to the Kennet & Avon canal (whose famous flight of Caen Hill Locks lies between Rowde and Devizes).

The three villages of Rowde, Bromham and Sandy Lane all have a strong sense of community, and between them have a selection of pubs, shops and primary schools.

As you can see from the map, we are well served for local towns, with Swindon, Marlborough, Bath, Bristol and of course, Salisbury all within reach. There are good transport links to the motorway network; Chippenham and Melksham both have railway stations and Bristol has an international airport. But don't take our word for it – come and see!



# Who we are

## WE ARE PRAYERFUL

and our prayer during the vacancy  
has been this:

*Lord, as we seek a new priest may you  
give us open hearts  
and grace to grow in the faith of  
Jesus Christ;  
help us to serve you in our local  
communities.*

*Lord, bless and equip the person you are  
preparing to lead us here.*

*May they have vision and insight and a  
prayerful and pastoral heart  
to serve young and old alike. Amen.*

## OUR VISION & MISSION

To Make Jesus Known and loved throughout  
the Benefice of Rowde and Bromham through  
the life of his churches by:

- ❖ being a focus of worship and prayer for all
- ❖ demonstrating God's love through the way we live
- ❖ being at the heart of our communities
- ❖ seeking collaborative opportunities to reach out and involve people in God's purpose for the world
- ❖ offering friendship, fellowship, prayer and support, and pastoral care to everyone
- ❖ growing in spirituality by offering teaching on Christian faith and life
- ❖ embracing diversity
- ❖ developing our work with children and young families

We look forward to working with you in this





# The Ministry Team

From left: Rev'd Norma Fergusson (retired priest with PTO), Ruth Bray (lay worship leader), Ernest Escott (lay worship leader), Richard Fergusson (LLM with PTO), Fran Hall (lay worship leader)

## Monthly Pattern of Services

Across the Benefice we have embraced both traditional and more informal and modern styles of worship from Iona and Taizé.

During the pandemic we adopted a pattern of alternating communion services: this has largely been maintained during the vacancy to provide consistency for the congregations, but we have recently introduced additional services of the word, led by the LLM and Lay Worship Leaders. We intend to make this a regular part of the pattern.

The monthly “Shine” service has been designed for residents of the Furlong Close supported living community, some of whom also attend services at St Matthew.

We look forward to being able to return to offering services in both Rowde and Bromham every Sunday. Meanwhile, we are deeply grateful to our Deanery colleagues, retired clergy, lay ministers and worship leaders who have supported us during the vacancy and allowed us to maintain a regular pattern of worship and to continue our links with local schools.

We have a range of seasonal booklets which reflect the liturgical calendar and special services are held as required to mark the major festivals and public events. The Remembrance Day service in Bromham is always shared with the local Methodist Church.

	Rowde	Bromham	Sandy Lane
<b>First Sunday</b>	8am Holy Communion (BCP) <i>10am Morning Service from May 2025</i>	10am Holy Communion	
<b>Second Sunday</b>	10am Holy Communion		8am Holy Communion (BCP)
<b>Third Sunday</b>	2.30pm Shine (in Furlong Close)	10am Holy Communion	
<b>Fourth Sunday</b>	10am Holy Communion	<i>6pm Evensong from May 2025</i>	8am Holy Communion (BCP)
<b>Fifth Sunday</b>	10am Holy Communion normally alternates between Rowde and Bromham		



# Singing & Ringing

St. Matthew and St Nicholas have small but committed choirs who sing for Sunday services, coming together for benefice and other major events. The photograph at the foot of the page shows the large combined choir which came together for a visit by the then Prince of Wales in 2007. It was a very proud day for the benefice!



Although both choirs are usually accompanied on the organ or piano, we also have digital sound systems which work very well - and the Sandy Lane congregation is very good at singing a capella!



St Matthew and St Nicholas also have committed bands of bellringers and welcome visiting teams. In December 2024 a full peal was rung in St Nicholas to celebrate the 90th birthday of ringer and villager Dennis Powney. Both towers will ring for VE Day on 8th May.



# Leadership & Finance

There are two PCCs: one for Rowde, the other for Bromham, Chittoe and Sandy Lane. Each has its own treasurer, secretary and safeguarding lead, is responsible for its own finances and produces its own accounts (which include restricted and endowment funds and reserves). Unfortunately, neither has a churchwarden at present. There is a paid part time administrator who works six hours per week, three for each PCC.

The leadership teams are small but strong and enthusiastic, bringing with them the fruits of their life experiences and spiritual journeys to support our worship, outreach, buildings, fundraising and finance. Both are actively considering succession planning and Bromham recently recruited two new members to focus on finance and fundraising.

Both parishes are supported by their congregations both practically and financially, through standing orders, plate collections and donations. In addition, the Friends of Bromham and Sandy Lane churches raise and manage funds to assist with maintenance of the churches and improvement of their fittings, furnishings and amenities. Income from the Bromham Church Estates Trust can be used for major building costs. In Rowde the Odette Perrott bequest is ring-fenced “for the good and benefit of the church.”

# Children & Families

The “Little Angels” parent and pre-school child group in Bromham meets in church twice a month and at other venues for special events. It has proven very successful and is an important first step in bringing young families into church.

We hope that our churches are always welcoming to families, but we have some special services (e.g. Mothering Sunday and Fathers' Day) designed specifically for families.

Across the benefice the Christingle and Christmas crib services are designed especially for families with young children

St Matthew's holds a crib service in the Rowdey Cow (a local café and ice cream parlour) on Christmas Eve. Meanwhile the children of St Nicholas walk from the Greyhound to the church: both seek to involve the whole community

On the morning of Good Friday St Nicholas holds a service which has been created with children in mind.



# Schools

Both our parishes have church primary schools



Rowde is a Church of England Academy whose ethos and vision is *to nurture everyone in our school to, 'Learn, Grow and Love'.* We believe that every member of our community can be supported and inspired to flourish. It is part of Acorn Education Trust. For further information see [www.rowde.wilts.sch.uk](http://www.rowde.wilts.sch.uk)



Bromham is a Church of England voluntary controlled school and is part of the EQUA Mead Learning Trust. The school's vision is *to foster positive relationships and to enable our children to build skills for life as well as a love of learning.* For further information see [www.stnicholasbromham.co.uk](http://www.stnicholasbromham.co.uk)

Both schools have strong links with their local churches and have a number of services in church throughout the year. The benefice is represented on both governing bodies and our enthusiastic Open the Book teams visit regularly. Some members of the congregations also act as "buddy readers." We hope to increase our involvement in collective worship over the coming months.

There are secondary schools in Devizes and Calne.



# Outreach





# Outreach

Despite the challenges of an extended vacancy, we have maintained our links to the community. As well as the work with schools, our churches enjoy and provide a wide range of social events such as harvest suppers; concerts and musical evenings featuring local musicians; coffee mornings; craft afternoons; Souper Saturdays; Lent lunches; Stewsdays and cream teas. Events support a number of local charities as well as contributing to church funds. Also:

- The Benefice Mothers' Union plays a vital role in the life of our churches as well as the wider community. In addition to the monthly meetings, it organises and funds holidays for under-privileged families
- We view pastoral care as a crucial part of ministry in the benefice. We have a small number of trained Lay Pastoral Assistants and would like to recruit more to support the incumbent and local families with aspects of baptisms, funerals, weddings and in giving home communion
- The benefice "Growing in Faith" group meets online to explore ideas around faith and spirituality
- All three churches are members of the Small Pilgrim Places Network (for more information see <https://www.smallpilgrimplaces.org>) and welcome visitors who wish to rest quietly in the presence of God
- The St Nicholas Flower and Christmas Tree festivals attract many visitors to the church and are supported by displays from a number of local businesses and community groups
- The "Shine" service mentioned on page 7 has been specially designed by the worship team in Rowde to meet the needs of the members of the supported living community

# Our challenges

We hope you can see that we haven't been idle during the vacancy and, we believe, have achieved some success in "keeping the show on the road" as well as making Jesus known.

However, this time has not been without its challenges: building work, parish share, declining Sunday attendance and simply maintaining energy and enthusiasm have not been easy.

Looking forward, the last quinquennial inspection at St Matthew's identified an estimated £250,000 of necessary repairs; St Nicholas faces costs of some £50,000 this year having spent £93,000 during 2023/24.

Sadly, both churches will struggle to pay share in full during 2025: if we fail it will not be for want of trying.

We believe these challenges are not insurmountable, so we are praying for and looking forward to working with a priest who will, with God's help, help us to overcome them.

# What we hope you will bring

## We hope that you will be:

- ❖ Compassionate and understanding of the needs of a rural benefice – pastoral, financial, spiritual and organisational
- ❖ Comfortable engaging with all ages, using digital and social media as well as meeting face to face so no-one is left behind
- ❖ Committed to working with schools, young people and families
- ❖ Supportive of the breadth of the Anglican liturgy from BCP to Iona and Taizé
- ❖ Willing to help our PCCs and congregations identify, develop and share their gifts
- ❖ A visible presence in our communities, passionate about sharing God's word and demonstrating its relevance in today's world

We appreciate that, as well as being our Rector, you will also have a Diocesan role as Clergy Retirement Officer and we will support you in maintaining a good work-life balance, including time for retreat.

# Our Churches

Each parish has a church with enviable history (both St Nicholas and St Matthew are mentioned in the *Domesday Book*). We also have a unique wooden and thatched church in the hamlet of Sandy Lane. While the parishes and churches each have their own traditions, they work collaboratively on Benefice-wide matters

We have a joint Facebook page for the churches in the benefice: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/439328832796693>

St Matthew's can be found on A Church Near You: <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/9690/>

St Nicholas is at <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/9620/>

St Mary the Virgin & St Nicholas can be found here: <https://www.achurchnearyou.com/church/9622/>

Please see also <https://www.smallpilgrimplaces.org>

## St Matthew's Church, Rowde

This Grade II\* listed building and its churchyard are places of beauty. There has been a church on this site at least from the time of the first recorded Rector in 1326. By 1400 AD the church, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, was rebuilt and all that remains of the 15th Century building is the tower. In 1833, the church was re-dedicated to St Matthew. The south and north aisles were added in 1860, and in 1871 a new north porch was added.

St Matthew's is open every day from 10am to 4pm. The electoral roll stands at 37.





## St Nicholas Church, Bromham

The church is Grade I listed. It is a beautiful building with a fascinating mix of architectural styles including Norman, English Gothic, small elements of Tudor, and Victorian. The church we see today was founded in 1076 and completed by 1084 and has been extensively added to and altered over the centuries. It has many fine features including the 15<sup>th</sup> century polychrome ceiling of the Bayntun chantry chapel (recognised as one of the most important in the country). There is also a fine early William Morris east window. The Irish poet Thomas Moore is buried in the churchyard and his memorial attracts many visitors from Ireland and America.

St. Nicholas' church is open every day from 9am to at least 5pm. The electoral roll stands at 40.



## St Mary the Virgin and St Nicholas Church, Sandy Lane

A site was given by Captain Wyndham of Wans House to build a wooden and thatched church in the hamlet of Sandy Lane at the cost of some £200 and this was completed in November 1892. The building seats up to 50 people. Services of Holy Communion (BCP) are held on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month with additional services at Easter, Advent and Christmas.

The electoral roll stands at 11. Unfortunately, we have recently had to lock the church during the day but we welcome visitors and access is available on request.





# Accommodation

The Rectory is in Bromham High Street, not far from St Nicholas, close to The Greyhound pub and local shops. The traditional family butcher in the High Street also supplies essential groceries and there is a family run farm shop on the edge of the village.

The Rectory is a substantial and well-maintained modern four bedroomed detached family house with a generous garden, large garage and ample parking.

Downstairs there is a large study, with direct access from the porch, and a good-sized living room, dining room, WC, kitchen/breakfast room, utility room and access to the garage.

There is gas-fired central heating and hot water system.



# The Deanery and Diocese

**Devizes Deanery** is made up of 26 parishes within a ten-mile radius of Devizes. There are three parishes serving Devizes and the remaining parishes are more rural in nature. There is a Deanery Strategic Plan (2021-2026) which sets out four strategic actions which are:

- ❖ Children and Young People
- ❖ Finance
- ❖ Community Engagement and Presence
- ❖ Buildings

The Clergy Chapter meets regularly and has an important role in providing mutual support, prayer and encouragement for all the clergy across the deanery.

**The Diocese of Salisbury** is a community of churches, schools and chaplaincies serving one million people, stretching over 2000 square miles, from North Wiltshire to the Jurassic Coast and Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey.

We're one of the most geographically diverse Anglican dioceses, covering a wide range of landscapes, from rural villages to large towns and cities.

For more than 900 years we have been a regional presence of the Church of England, with a history of serving our communities. Today, as always, we are committed to encouraging people to explore their faith in Jesus Christ and discover how God's love can transform lives.



**Diocese  
of Salisbury**  
Making  
Jesus Known

# What next?

Thank you for reading this far. We hope that you like what you have seen and feel that there is a place for you in the Benefice of Rowde & Bromham.

If you have any questions, please come and see us. You can contact the Archdeacon of Sarum on 01722 438662 or the Rev'd Norma Fergusson on 01249 736986 for an informal conversation.

We look forward to hearing from you!