

The Churches (Appendix 5)



Batcombe – Batcombe is a small dispersed village at the head of the beautiful Wriggle Valley. The parish is mostly dairy farmland and comprises 30 or so houses, spread along the four arms of the central crossroads. Farming families form the bedrock of the population of 75 adults, which also includes business folk working from home or commuting and a few retired or second home owners.

The small but beautiful old church of St. Mary Magdalene is at the extreme south of the village. The church has a locally-built organ with an organist. The surrounding graveyard and adjoining car park are regularly maintained by a small but dedicated group of volunteers from the village.

One mile to the east is Hilfield Friary, one of the foundation houses of the Society of Saint Francis, and Batcombe is blessed by the support of the Brothers, who preside at some services.

Beer Hackett – Beer Hackett (with Knighton) is a thriving village of approximately 90 people. Alongside farms and small holdings is an Automobility business with 47 employees.

Having no pub or shop, St. Michael's church is the only gathering point for village events.



Regular monthly services are held, with special services for festivals. Annual events include the Good Friday Way of the Cross walk, a wine and cheese party and a Christmas carol service. Other events are arranged by the Friends of St. Michael. The church has a proactive PCC and a well-organised team of cleaners and flower arrangers.

Bishops Caundle – set on the main A3030 through the village centre, the parish church has no dedication. Church services are held monthly. The church has good links with the village’s All Saints Primary School, which serves many villages in the surrounding area and operates a weekly Forest School Toddler Group.



Good facilities are available at the nearby well-equipped village hall. Here parishioners support various activities, including a musical Big Bash, a monthly Fair Trade Café and the Harvest Supper, as well as Short Mat Bowls and Badminton. The village also has a pub and a shop owned and run by the community, open daily, with an outreach Post Office available on two afternoons a week.

Bradford Abbas with Clifton Maybank



Bradford Abbas is a large village of around 1000 inhabitants, including some families who have lived in the village for many generations. It is a caring and friendly community, situated away from the main A30 approximately midway between Sherborne and Yeovil. It has a primary school and a pre-school, a pub and a village hall. There is a sports ground with a recreational club, a Variety club, a branch of the WI, a thriving history society, a camera club, and bridge and yoga clubs.

St. Mary’s is a beautiful grade I listed church in good order with a fine organ often used for concerts. There is a Heritage Fund for help with some major fabric works, and any appeals are supported by the villagers, even if they do not attend church. There is a Bible study group, an enthusiastic bell-ringing group which also supports neighbouring churches, and a choir formed for Christmas carols. The church works closely with the primary school, organising several services throughout the year, and also supports the Sherborne Food Bank.

Caundle Marsh – the church of St. Peter and St. Paul stands in a small churchyard adjacent to a working dairy farmyard and is well-loved by the residents of this tiny, scattered village for whom it provides a focus. The congregation are developing a unique identity as “the Church on the Farm”, intent on developing relationships with the nearby Bishops Caundle Primary School and becoming a valuable resource for learners as an Eco Church.

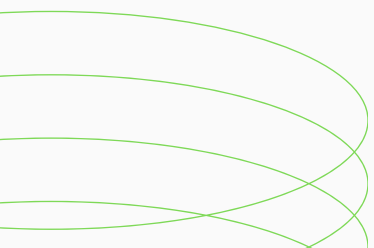


Services are held on the fifth Sunday of the month, and social events are held after the Harvest service and in early December – “Tune Up for Christmas”, a carol-singing gathering. There is a committed PCC and the church has strong links with local farming families.



Chetnole – St. Peter’s Church, Chetnole, has a regular congregation that is slowly growing, but the level of support enjoyed from volunteers across the village gives substance to the claim that the church is at the heart of the village both physically and spiritually. The village population numbers around 300. The village has a pub and its own halt on the Heart of Wessex railway line. The village hall is an Artsreach Dorset venue and hosts an annual Art Exhibition.

There is a strong sense of a church community, and regular church services include a lay-led service where representatives of relevant charities or church groups are often invited to speak. Major festivals and services are very well supported and a thriving Friends group raises funds to maintain the fabric of the church. Many other volunteers are responsible for flower arranging, cleaning and maintenance of the churchyard.



Folke – St. Lawrence Church, Folke, also serves the larger village of Alwston and the hamlets of Bishops Down, Haydon and North Wootton, offering the scattered local community a variety of services, always followed by coffee and chat. Special services include a very popular Carol Service and Nativity and a well-attended Pet Service every autumn. Newcomers to the village receive a welcome pack from the church.



Alwston has a well-equipped Village Hall where an outreach Post Office opens for half a day each week. The Hall is used regularly for WI meetings, an art group and fitness classes. A big attraction locally is the Alwston Car Boot Sale, held on four Bank Holidays a year to raise money for the church and Village Hall.

Glanvilles Wootton – St. Mary the Virgin is a beautiful Grade II* listed church with a peal of six bells and an established band of ringers. The church is generally in good order, with a maintenance programme supported by regular fundraising events. The church leads many community events such as the annual fête, harvest supper, Christmas Fair and a Pop-up Pub, held four times a year in the Village Hall. The Hall is shared with Holnest parish, with which the church has good links.

Newcomers to the parish receive a welcome pack for each household, administered by the churchwardens, and at Christmas each year every home in the village is given a small gift from the PCC.





Hermitage - the little village of Hermitage lies in a small valley with a population of around 80 people working in small businesses, including farming, fishing and building. It is an active and supportive community, taking part in croquet and concerts in aid of the church, coffee mornings and parties in the village hall and a summer festival weekend on the village green.

The simple church is dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin and has a regular small congregation augmented at special services such as Harvest and Christmas Eve.



Hilfield - St. Nicholas, Hilfield, is a lively, well-supported small church at the centre of a farming community, set in glorious countryside with outstanding views. The village itself has no centre, but the church attracts a gathered congregation from the area, including the Friary, for its occasional services. A small team meets regularly and the church is well maintained.

Hilfield Friary

The Benefice is blessed with the presence of the Friary, which is the foundation house of the Society of St. Francis. The Friary lies within the parish of Batcombe but straddles the border with Hilfield. The Community consists of five SSF brothers together with around 20 men, women and children who share in the life and ministry of the Friary. At the heart of the Community's life is a daily rhythm of prayer and worship.

The Friary values being part of the local church and offers a range of resources to the Benefice:

- A community of daily prayer and worship to which all are welcome
- Hospitality towards both individuals and groups (of up to 60 people) for meetings and meals
- A place for study and Christian formation – the library is available to visitors; there is a programme of study days and weekends throughout the year; and individuals come for counsel and guidance
- A centre for mission, connecting through work on the land with the local farming community; the Friary Families and Youth Camps; and environmental concern and action with 'green' groups and individuals. Many of those who come to the Friary are on or beyond the fringe of the Church.
- A community which offers an alternative model of Church and Christian living.
- Assistance with Sunday services – there are usually two priests living at the Friary, and other Community members can lead non-Eucharistic services.



Holnest - the Grade I listed Holnest church is dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and is surrounded by a large churchyard which is a designated Site of Natural Conservation Interest and holds the Eco Church Silver Award. The church interior is renowned for its Georgian boxed pews with unusual candle sconces. There are regular monthly evening services and special services include an Easter Eve Service of Light and a candlelit carol service.



An enthusiastic fundraising group supports the PCC, and the church hosts music and literary events and an annual fête, as well as organising events in Glanvilles Wootton Village Hall such as a regular Community Breakfast and Countryside Walk, quiz and supper evenings. The Friends of Holnest Church aim to involve the wider community, who may not attend church but have a love for the building, in fundraising to conserve and maintain the fabric.

Holwell - Holwell is the most extensive parish in the eastern White Hart Vale area of the Benefice, with a population of 400. It is a dispersed village and St. Laurence church, where two services are held each month, is on the edge of the main settlement. The church is in generally good repair, with bells rung at festivals by a local team.

Church members are very active in the community and are involved in a wide variety of village organisations. A Summer Fete has been held for many years and more recently the church has been used for classical guitar concerts. At Harvest we join in with the Village Harvest Supper.



A home group meets monthly throughout the year and weekly during Advent and Lent. Based on the Village Hall, Holwell hosts a monthly Fresh Expression known as Fourth Sunday – one of two in the Benefice. This is a time of informal worship and fellowship, together with cakes and coffee! Folk come from across the Benefice and beyond.

A modern clergy house is located in the centre of Holwell, until recently occupied by our curate.



Leigh – St. Andrew's church is situated in the centre of the village. It seats 120 people and is in good order both structurally and spiritually, with four Sunday services per month. There are regular morning prayer meetings and the lay-led Community Spirit services, with a band of local musicians, are popular. There are two LWLs and an active PCC. The installation of a toilet has enabled the holding of concerts, talks, training and meetings, and the recent completion of a servery will facilitate further opportunities.

A monthly coffee morning and regular breakfasts are both well attended. A children's sewing club, story time, adult Pilates and the community choir all utilise the facilities. An internet connection is shared with the village hall. A recent Apple Day and Harvest weekend made local apple juice to raise money for the church, hall and RABl. A small team of volunteers manages the churchyard for wildlife and to provide a tranquil space. The completion of a 12-month Living Churchyard survey is awaited.

The village benefits from film shows, live and streamed performances, and a wide variety of fitness and creative activities for all ages. There are many clubs and an annual flower show. The village also has a thriving shop and café and a care home, where the clergy and the wider community participate in regular events. Leigh is a progressive, welcoming village, and the church is valued by the community, whether they attend services or not.

Pulham – Despite being situated well outside the centre of the village, St. Thomas à Becket church plays an important part in community life, and the village residents join in church-run events such as the carol service, harvest supper, open gardens, fête and festival. The PCC ensures that these fundraising events also have a strong social side, and church members work hard to form bonds with the community. The church is happily ecumenical, welcoming members of other denominations, and prides itself on its inclusivity.



Employment within the village is largely agriculture-based, with farms and other related businesses, and there is also a small industrial estate. There is a thriving pub which holds social events and a well-used village hall which also hosts regular events.

Ryme Intrinseca – Ryme Intrinseca is a small ancient parish with a good sense of community. The 12th-century church's dedication to St. Hippolytus, is one of only two in England. The village has no parish council – instead the church hosts twice-yearly residents' meetings. Regular church services are held on alternate months and there are special services at Christmas. There is a small but active PCC, and events include a harvest supper and a summer garden party held every other year.



Thornford – The church of St. Mary Magdalene has an active and committed congregation. Each month there is a lay-led Morning Service, a BCP Communion and a "full" Communion. A regular home study group is led by the Team Vicar, and parish prayer is held in the church every Wednesday morning. The church choir sings at the Easter, Harvest and Christmas services and often at funeral or thanksgiving services. The church building is structurally sound and has a Benjamin Flight chamber organ.



There is a strong link between the church and the village's Voluntary Aided Primary School, with clergy leading some assemblies and school services being held in church on special occasions. The village also has a shop with Post Office, a pub and a garage. The Community Hub meets weekly in the village hall and celebrates special occasions for regular members. Additionally, Sustainable Thornford is an active community group, currently investigating an eclectic mix of bus services, hedgehogs, flooding and wildflowers. There is also a Twinning Association – the village is twinned with Hudimesnil, Normandy, and exchange visits take place. Thornford benefits from a halt on the Heart of Wessex railway line.

Yetminster

Yetminster is a large village, equidistant from Sherborne and Yeovil, with around 1100 residents of a broad social mix. St. Andrew's church, in the centre of the village, offers a range of services, including a monthly informal worship, Taizé services, and weekly Compline. The church's choir, St. Andrew's Singers, accompanies services on one Sunday a month and on special occasions. There is a good organist with deputies available. The tower has six bells and its own bellringing group – also a historic faceless clock dating from 1682, one of the oldest in England. The church and extensive living churchyard are kept tidy by many volunteers

There is a Church of England primary school and a Montessori nursery with a forest school which runs an after-school club at the primary school. The primary school also hosts a monthly Fresh Expressions service known as Second Sunday. Each term a Holy Communion service is held and a small Open the Book team visits. There is a monthly homegroup and a service each month for the nursery school.

The village has its own GP surgery, pharmacy, shop, Post Office, pub, garage and repair shop, Scout hut, sports club and football team. The village hall, known as the Jubilee Hall, is home to many clubs and societies, including Guides and Brownies, bowls, Pilates and gardening clubs, and a history society. It is an Artsreach Dorset venue and also hosts film nights, quiz evenings and coffee mornings. In common with Chetnole and Thornford, the village has its own halt on the Heart of Wessex railway line

