

Blakemere . Bredwardine . Clifford . Cusop . Dorstone . Hardwieke . Moccas . Preston-on-Wye



Statement of Needs

Blakemere . Bredwardine . Clifford . Cusop . Dorstone . Hardwieke . Moccas . Preston-on-Wye

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The United Benefice & Abbeydore Deanery

Who we are

The Borderlink Benefice is a group of eight rural parishes along the south bank of the River Wye, and close to the border between England and Wales. Our small communities (the largest is 400 people, the smallest 77) have developed from the almost exclusively agricultural life of the early 20th century, and our parishes are varied and vibrant.

What we need

We are seeking a Rural Pioneer Priest to minister to our eight parishes, and who will play an active role in working with clergy and laity, as part of a Group Ministry, to provide new mission initiatives in our Abbeydore Deanery of 35 churches and 33 parishes.

The successful candidate will be an Ordained Priest within the Church of England (or a Church in communion with it) with completed Initial Ministerial Education. He or she will be commissioned as a Rural Pioneer Priest, working on both mission and ministry.

Our Parishes need a minister who appreciates and responds to the spiritual and pastoral needs of a rural community and who will:

lead worship for all ages and encourage the laity to take non-eucharistic services.

engage with village communities and lead by energy and example in providing pastoral care, at the same time encouraging volunteers to identify and assist in supporting those who are sick, bereaved or lonely.

support the adaptation of church buildings and churchyards to make them more accessible and welcoming to our local communities and visitors.

continue to encourage PCCs to take ownership and initiatives of their churches and activities.

The challenges

We are realistic about the challenges facing the Benefice and the Deanery. Our loyal congregations are getting older and we need to recruit and enthuse a new generation, especially the 10-35 age group which is short of entertainment and transport.

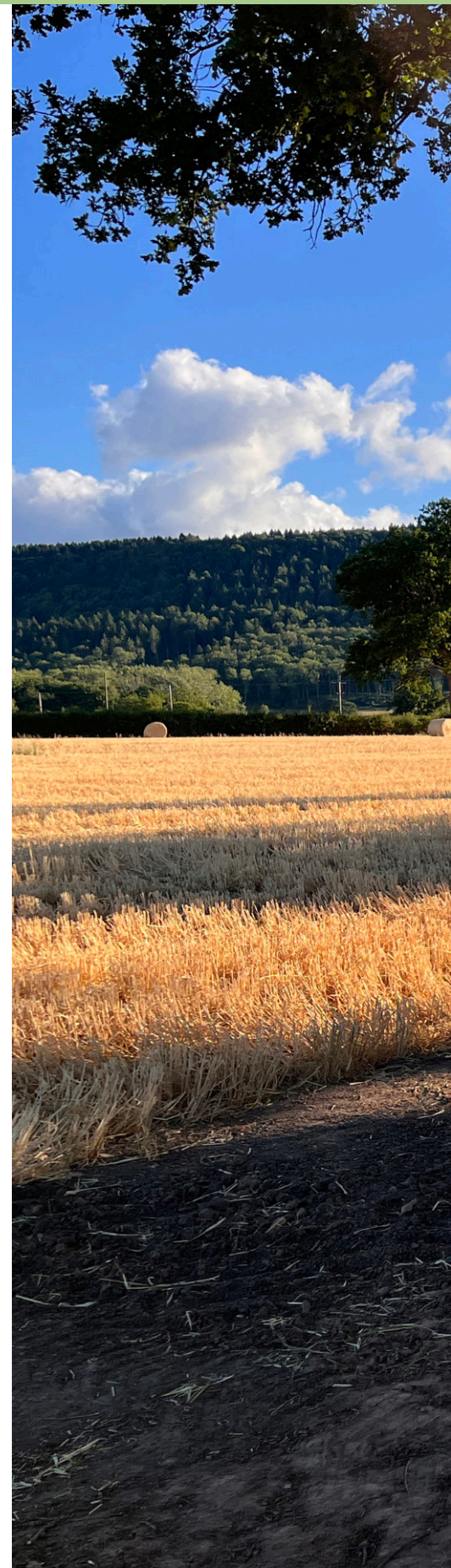
We live in an historic farming landscape that is arguably among the most beautiful in Britain. But our farmers are under immense commercial and climate pressure. What can we as a church do to help them?

Our new incumbent will be someone who is not daunted by these challenges, who can lead us through the hard choices that may have to be made in the knowledge that they can be assured of the adaptability and active support of our PCCs and the Deanery Team.

What we offer

A working life in one of the loveliest parts of England, rich in history and the natural world; a comfortable and well-maintained Rectory, close to the facilities of Hay-on-Wye; good schools; the strong support of our PCCs; the benefits of team collaboration; an inclusive approach in everything we do; a warm and sustained welcome and friendship; a commitment to clergy well-being; and a challenging, rewarding and enjoyable ministry.

We are ready to answer questions on anything not covered in this Statement of Needs, and we look forward to meeting you.



The United Benefice & Abbeydore Deanery





Borderlink Parishes Map



Introduction to the Diocese

Introduction to the Diocese from The Rt. Revd Richard Jackson, Bishop of Hereford.

Thank you for your interest in the role of Pioneer Rural Minister for the Borderlink Benefice. Abbeydore Deanery has pioneered a new approach to rural ministry. Each priest has an area of specialism which they share across the deanery whilst taking pastoral oversight over clusters of parishes. You will join a team of supportive colleagues who work closely together. The Benefice shares many of the challenges common to rural ministry. However, the people of the parishes are deeply committed to ministering to their communities and keeping their churches central to their common life. It is fair to say that the new way of doing things has yet to be embraced fully. At the same time there has been a huge increase in lay leadership over the last few years. These are parishes with committed people with a heart for the Gospel.

We are the smallest diocese in the Church of England and value relationships highly. We seek to make good appointments and then provide incumbents with the best possible support, mentoring and training to be the best they can be. Our diocesan strategy seeks to proclaim Christ and grow disciples around our three foundational values of Christlikeness, prayerfulness and engagement. We leave individual benefices to work out what that looks like in their context. This is a strategy that seeks to be light on grand plans and slogans and strong on prayer and spiritual revitalisation. We recognise the best way to preserve a building as a base for our life and witness is to have a vibrant, spiritual community worshipping and serving within it.

As a small diocese we are diverse and generally rub along pretty well together. You will not find the sort of strident partisanship here that you find in other places.

Thank you again for your interest. I hope you will apply and bring your gifts to serve with us in this beautiful corner of God's creation.

With every blessing etc.



The Rt. Revd Richard Jackson
Bishop of Hereford





OUR DEANERY

The Abbeydore Deanery extends from Hay-on-Wye and Hereford in the north, along the Wye Valley, through the Golden Valley and west towards the Black Mountains.

The pressure on Clergy resources and our emphasis on developing lay leadership were factors in reimagining rural ministry through our Pastoral Plan of 2021. We use an oversight ministry model, encouraging parishes to group in Clusters (groups of churches within benefices collaborating in mission and ministry).

In 2023 we created a legal entity for the Deanery (we think the first in the country), in which the Deanery Joint Council leads the Deanery's mission, as well as being able to hold property and employ staff. The Council approved the organisation of the Deanery into four Benefices:

Wye Dore: five Parishes forming one cluster: Madley with Tyberton, Peterchurch, Turnastone, and Vowchurch;

Borderlink: eight Parishes forming two clusters: Cusop, Clifford and Hardwicke; and Dorstone, Bredwardine, Moccas, Blakemere, and Preston-on-Wye;

Twin Brooks: eight Parishes forming two clusters: Allensmore, Clehonger, Eaton Bishop, Kingstone and Thruxton; and St Devereux, Kilpeck, and Wormbridge;

Black Mountains: twelve Parishes forming four clusters: Kentchurch, Rowlestone, and Walterstone; Ewyas Harold, Abbeydore, and Bacton; Newton St Margaret's, St Margaret's, and Michaelchurch Escley; and Clodock, Llanveynoe, and Craswall.

The legal process of reorganisation may not be finalised until 2026, but the Parishes and leadership teams have already begun to work on these groupings.

Do click on this [link](#) and watch this short video so we can introduce ourselves.



Our Deanery Team

The Deanery Team

As a Deanery we are committed to working as a team of equals, sharing responsibilities and resources according to each other's strengths. Each Rural Pioneer Priest (RPP) has independence and authority in the oversight of their clusters and mission, but they are not isolated and each works closely with the whole team. Rev Jane Rogers (pictured on the right), the Rural Dean (and a Self-Supporting Minister), lives in Blakemere and is available to take services in the Borderlink Benefice two Sundays a month.



The RPP Team is supported by an excellent admin team consisting of the Deanery Mission Co-ordinator, the Finance and Administration Assistant, and the Communications Assistant. This team manages much of the day-to-day administrative burden which otherwise would fall upon the responsible Priest, including invoicing, and collecting and disbursing fees.

The Deanery Leadership Team

The clergy team is theologically inclusive and affirming.

It meets most weeks as Chapter for prayer, mutual support and team business.

Anne Lloyd (Deanery Mission Co-ordinator)

Jane Rogers (Rural Dean, Self-Supporting Minister)

Bill Giles (Lay Chair)

Nigel Sellar (Deanery Treasurer)

Simon Lockett, **Luci Morriss** and **Cate Thomson** (Rural Pioneer Priests) (stipendiary), together with **Geoff Holder** (Self-Supporting Deanery Curate)

Members of the Joint Council are also invited to attend these meetings.

The Clergy team meet most weeks as Chapter for prayer, mutual support, and team business.

To enable this close working, the team aims to meet weekly:

First Tuesday: Chapter meeting (usually in person)

Second Tuesday: Chapter meeting (online)

Third Wednesday, 2pm or 7 pm: Deanery Leadership Team (in person)

Fourth Tuesday: Chapter meeting (in person)

Fifth Tuesday: Retreat/Quiet Day



Our Aspirations for the Future

Rural Pioneer Priests (RPPs)

RPPs work as a Group Ministry to oversee the mission and ministry of all the clusters, with each RPP having direct supervision of “their” clusters. The pioneer aspect of the role is to join with us in reimagining what rural ministry looks like, and to develop a mission stream which benefits the whole Deanery. All Clergy in the Deanery are licensed to every Parish; they collaborate with licensed lay leaders and retired Clergy colleagues to deliver Services across the Deanery. RPPs have primary responsibility to oversee worship in their clusters, but also support Services throughout the Deanery as we endeavour to ensure that every cluster’s needs are met.

Mission Streams

Each RPP oversees a Mission Stream, developing the teams and resources to support it and to enrich the mission and ministry of the Deanery as a whole. We are reviewing the mission streams; but they are likely to be:

The Golden Valley Pilgrim Way, the Hub at St Peter’s and Hedgerow Communion (**Simon Lockett**)

Growing Leaders and Enabling Worship (**Jane Rogers**)

Pastoral Care and Combating Rural Loneliness and Reflective Rambles (**formerly Luci Morriss**)

Children and Young People (**Cate Thomson**)

Lay-led mission projects include *Food for Families* and the *Golden Valley Repair Café*.

This is an exciting opportunity for our new Rural Pioneer Priest to explore and develop their own gifts and interests, to nurture emerging and existing teams of leaders, and creatively to approach new ways of being “rural church”.

Website Links:

www.cusop.net
www.stfaithsdorstone.wordpress.com
www.moccas.church

Gallery Links:

[Blakemere Gallery](#)
[Bredwardine Gallery](#)
[Clifford Gallery](#)
[Cusop Gallery](#)
[Dorstone Gallery](#)
[Hardwicke Gallery](#)
[Moccas Gallery](#)
[Preston-on-Wye Gallery](#)
[The Borderlink Benefice](#)



Our Churches & Services

Our Churches and Services

Each church has one priest-led Holy Communion service a month, apart from Bredwardine, which has sung Evensong; other services are lay-led (including by Churchwardens). Most churches use Common Worship but some prefer BCP. This means that the Rural Pioneer Priest can expect to lead two Holy Communion services each Sunday, plus occasional offices. The Rural Dean leads an online Celtic evening prayer every Monday. The parishes welcome a breadth of theological practice and are largely middle ground.

Four parishes – Blakemere, Bredwardine, Moccas and Preston-on-Wye – rotate a monthly lay-led “Quartet” service with a variable format, including Songs of Praise and a Pets Service. Most of the congregation move round the churches for these.

The Benefice has five commissioned Lay Leaders, three Pastoral Visitors, one Worship Leader and one Local Missioner (who focuses on Reflective Rambles).

On average there are some 20 funerals a year (including cremations and burial of ashes). In this traditional part of the world, funerals are especially significant (and time-consuming). Funerals are held in churches or Hereford Crematorium; all churchyards are open for burials. Each year there are four to five weddings and five to seven christenings.

The two benefice clusters meet quarterly to exchange news and ideas and to agree the service rotas. APCMs are held for each cluster with shared reports, after which the parishes split into their separate PCCs. On average each PCC has four other meetings a year. In normal circumstances no one expects the incumbent to attend.

The Benefice paid parish offer of £58,510 in 2025. The Benefice pays its share of the Deanery administration, and clergy and mission expenses, which are organised centrally.

The Benefice has a Safeguarding Officer – Jeremy Vevers – who co-ordinates the work of the Parish Safeguarding Team.





St Leonard's Church, Blakemere



St Leonard's Church, Blakemere

Blakemere - The population of this tiny parish – only 77 people – is a mix of farming, the professions and the retired. We have two services a month, with a congregation of about a dozen – many more for special services.

The Church, which can hold about 80 at a pinch, dates from about 1190. A good Victorian restoration in 1877 stopped it falling down. It is financially viable and sustainable.

Music is strong. A capable organist (a former Chair of the Royal College of Organists) is teamed with a professional violinist and other instrumentalists on occasion.

We have no community hub in the village, and we would love to adapt the Church so that we could host events as well as worship.





St Andrew's Church, Bredwardine



Borderlink Parishes
United by Christ in our midst

St Andrew's Church, Bredwardine

Bredwardine - The parish of Bredwardine with Brobury, with a population of approximately 220, is served by St Andrew's Church. While the average monthly congregation numbers between 20 and 30, the church maintains a strong community presence through a variety of well-attended services.

A key feature of the church's worship is a monthly choral evensong, complete with a dedicated choir. Seasonal services, particularly on Christmas Eve and for Harvest, are popular.

Beyond regular worship, the church and its community are highly active. Monthly church teas and regular fund-raising activities, such as a summer fete and plant and book sales, are central to parish life. The Friends of St Andrew's, a support group, holds a monthly draw at the local Red Lion pub. The village hall is also a hub of activity, hosting a monthly coffee morning and various classes.

St Andrew's Church is a registered centre for teaching bell ringing, a craft that engages both young and old. The community demonstrates a strong sense of shared responsibility through enthusiastically led churchyard work days. The church has a link to the Victorian diarist, Reverend Francis Kilvert, who served as rector here. The church is also a stop on the Golden Valley Pilgrimage Route.





St Mary's Church, Clifford



St Mary's Church, Clifford

Clifford - Dating from the 13th century, St Mary's Church has spectacular views of the Black Mountains. A Grade 2 listed building, it has 25 listed churchyard tombs, a 14th century font and an 800-year-old wooden effigy, probably of an incumbent priest. Behind the Altar is an evocative war-memorial reredos.

The Church has 8 recently restored bells, albeit no longer a bell ringing team.

Two services are held a month, one taken by a benefice or visiting minister and one by a member of the PCC. The average congregation size is 16. The Church is structurally sound and financially healthy.

The walled and wooded graveyard supports a wide range of recorded flora and fauna. It is managed by contractors and volunteers including a visiting 'Caring for God's Acre' charity team.

Set in beautiful countryside, Clifford has a population of 310. There is a highly-regarded primary school and nursery, and numerous community activities take place throughout the year including a popular village show, keep-fit classes, a choir and an occasional weekly charity sale.





St Mary's Church, Cusop



St Mary's Church, Cusop

Cusop - Cusop is at the foot of the Black Mountains and benefits from its proximity to Hay-on-Wye, a small town thriving on festivals, small independent shops, and a craft and farmers' market. Hay Castle has recently been restored and is now the centre of the community welcoming many tourists.

Hay Theatre Group has a close affinity with Cusop Church so the churchyard is not only a fine resting place but also a community asset. There are several educational information boards for visiting families.

The Vicarage where you will live is in Cusop, and has lovely views. There are excellent schools nearby and a bus service between Brecon and Hereford.

Our church hosts children's concerts, in addition to all the other seasonal festivals. On these occasions the congregation may swell from its normal number of about 20 to over 100.

During the winter months our village hall has regular lunches for meeting and greeting, Friends and Fellowship services for those who find it difficult to access the church, Tea at Three, table top sales and a venue for the drama group. Cusop has a population of 390 and 60% are over 45.





St Faith's Church, Dorstone



St Faith's Church, Dorstone

Dorstone - Dorstone lies 5 miles from Hay-on-Wye at the head of the Golden Valley. It has a population of 420, with a thriving Village Hall and a Playing Field with which the church often collaborates on joint ventures. We have a loyal band of church ringers, and our strong musical tradition shows in our monthly Music Service (part concert, part service); additionally, we put on other concerts, Bring-and-Buy sales, every few years an Open Gardens weekend, our annual, well-established Dawdle (a cross-country run) and a quarterly Repair Café. Our twice-yearly maintenance of God's Acre attracts a loyal bunch of enthusiastic volunteers. We are an extremely popular overnight stop on the Hereford Pilgrim Trail.

Plans for the future:

Following successful lottery bids for the reconstruction of our East window and the restoration of our bells, we have now submitted an application to reorder substantially the space and facilities of the church, with the intention of setting up a Heritage Centre with a digital interpretation of the important archaeological finds in the area – "Arthur's Stone" and the "Halls of the Dead"





Holy Trinity Church, Hardwicke



Holy Trinity Church, Hardwicke

Hardwicke - Most of Hardwicke's population of about 270 used to be farmers but in recent years a number of newcomers have arrived, often with young families, and we now have teachers, writers, artists, yoga instructors, builders, chefs and caterers, and people working in films, TV and technology.

The church has two services a month including an Evensong taken by a local Lay Reader and attended by 18 to 20 people. We also have a Carol Concert and Service at Christmas and a special Easter Service, both with a local choir led by our regular organist and well attended.

Hardwicke Church was completed in 1853 and is in very good condition. Some of the lovely stained-glass windows have recently been restored. The churchyard is beautifully maintained.

The Village Hall is close to the Church and is regularly used by local groups for events including a Pop-up Pub. Every year we have a hugely popular bonfire and firework party with drinks, burgers and hot dogs.





St Michael & All Angels, Moccas



Borderlink Parishes
United by Christ in our midst

St Michael & All Angels, Moccas

Moccas - Moccas is a small village of 107 people, with a strong sense of community. We have a lovely village hall where people meet for coffee and chat, and we hold BBQ evenings, film nights, bingo evenings, art club, WI, morris dancing, beekeeping, and the Moccas flower festival.

The church, dating from 1170, is Grade I listed and set on the edge of Capability Brown parkland, close to the site of a former Saxon abbey. By the late nineteenth century it was in need of repairs. The Revd. Sir George Cornwall of Moccas Court instructed George Gilbert Scott Junior to carry out the restoration, resulting in the outstanding interior we see today.

More recently, with the generous support of HLF and many private donors and charities we have been lucky enough to be able to restore the wonderful Walker organ and the water engine which once powered it. We now have a concert programme for all ages, including organ recitals and student concerts led by our director of music, also the screening of silent movies accompanied by the organ, Gregorian chants and history events.

We have recently improved our visitor experience with new info boards, church trail leaflets, a new website, hearing-loop, PA system, toilet and Info Point, (with a church tour, children's tour, graveyard tour, Moccas stories, and Moccas music)

Music is an important part of the monthly service which has an average congregation of 12. Both the harvest and Christmas services are very well supported.





St Lawrence's Church, Preston-on-Wye



St Lawrence's Church, Preston-on-Wye

Preston-on-Wye - At St Lawrence's we have one service a month with an average congregation of 12 but with special services this could be 40. There is a resident organist. Our bells were restored in 1990 and are rung on special occasions.

Originally the church was built in 1178 and restored in 1878. We are financially viable.

The profile of the village has changed considerably in the last five years. Couples have moved in and take little part in Church life. There is new housing estate. The Church is in a very attractive part of the village, but is away from the village centre and the Village Hall which is used in time of flood. The village population is 194, involving a mix of farming, professionals, retired and those working in Hereford.





The Rectory

Cusop, Hay-on-Wye, HR3 5RF



The Rectory is a substantial house with wonderful views, on the edge of Hay-on-Wye. It has three reception rooms, four bedrooms, bathroom and separate lavatory, garage and large garden. The house has oil fired central heating and double glazing.

For more pictures, click [HERE](#).





Statement of Needs